PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AT A CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL TOWARD PERFORMANCE PAY

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AT A CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL TOWARD PERFORMANCE PAY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this consensual phenomenological study was to delve into the thoughts, perceptions, and personal experiences of teachers at a Christian high school in the Midwest in order to understand the perceived reality of those directly affected by pay for performance. In order to reduce bias, consensual qualitative research method using a research team was utilized. The research team consisted of two additional core members. Teachers were asked questions to determine how performance pay influences their motivation, their teaching, and their relationship with co-workers. For the purpose of this research, performance pay is generally defined as paying teachers according to their performance or the performance of their students rather than the traditional method of looking at years of experience and degrees earned. Performance pay is a controversial topic in most educational fields. Although it is common in sales and other business fields, it is sporadically used in educational settings. In the instances where it has been implemented, the outcomes vary drastically. During this study, the perceptions of teachers who have personally experienced performance pay were collected through one-on-one interviews followed by a focus group. The research team through coding and recoding of the transcribed interviews identified common themes and subcategories.

Keywords: performance pay, merit pay, teacher motivation, teacher incentives

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents and my parents. My grandma and pop-pop made it possible for me to continue in this educational pursuit. They are the most sacrificial people who continually poured into me and encouraged me to continue in education. My grandma has since left this world but I remember how excited she was to know I was pursuing my doctorate; I know she is proud of me. My parents, as in all stages of my life, offer continual support and encouragement by believing in me. I love you all and feel blessed to be part of this family.

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List of Abbreviations

Advanced Placement (AP)

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR)

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Marian Christian Academy (MCA)

National Education Association (NEA)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Project on Incentives in Teaching (POINT)

School-wide Performance Bonus Program (SPBP)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest rewards experienced in the educational profession is positively impacting a student's life. "It appears that no matter at what level teaching occurs, there is a genuine care, concern, and enthusiasm around working with students and seeing them learn and grow" (Marston, 2010, p. 445). "New teachers are quick to point out that theirs is a profession that requires a sense of mission. More than eight in 10 (86%) believe that only those with 'a true sense of calling' should pursue the work" (Wadsworth, 2001, p. 25). It is evident that many teachers choose this profession because of their passion to inspire learning and make a lasting impression on their students' lives. This desire to influence students has led to the introduction of many varied teaching techniques and educational practices.

Over the years, it seems that classrooms have shifted from primarily teacher-directed lectures to student-centered learning. There are many factors that have contributed to this shift. Revolutionary changes in education, such as various scheduling models, technological devices, and new pedagogy are three key contributors to this change. Some models of scheduling demanded teachers and students learn how to utilize longer class periods. Technology has invaded the educational environment with online classrooms, digital textbooks, and immediate access to information. Each trend pressures teachers to modify their pedagogy by learning new skills through attending conferences and workshops. Whether it is scheduling, technology, or pedagogy, education requires dynamic growth in the teacher and constant adjustment to engage students. One educational area that seems to have remained stagnant, however, is the method of paying teachers. Pay for performance is an educational initiative that is not new but has not become the normal system for payment in the majority of schools.

Pay for performance is a controversial topic. Although common in sales and other business fields, it is sporadically used in educational settings. In instances where it has been implemented, the outcomes have been both positive and negative (Gratz, 2009b; Lavy, 2007; Marsh & McCaffrey, 2011; Odden & Kelley, 2002). This study provided an opportunity to evaluate some of the uncertainty surrounding the pay for performance model according to teachers. Questions concerning how teachers perceive pay for performance and its direct impact on teacher motivation, effectiveness, and interpersonal relationships are a few of the topics addressed in this study.

Background

Performance pay is not new. In fact, "in 1918, 48% of U.S. school districts sampled in one study used compensation systems that they called merit pay" (Evendon, 1918, as reported in Johnson, 1984), (Murnane & Cohen, 1986, p. 2). During the 1940s and 50s the majority of schools began to use the traditional single salary schedule. Then in the 1980s, as a response to *A Nation at Risk*, many representatives of school districts explored incentives as a means to improve science and math scores (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). The past three decades have seen multiple efforts to pay teachers according to performance. Many of those efforts however have ended in failure (Murnane & Cohen, 1986). A uniform salary schedule does not benefit the superior teacher nor does it motivate the weaker teacher to improve. Superior teachers should be rewarded and weaker teachers should receive financial consequence (Hess, 2010; Johnson & Papay, 2010; Murnane & Cohen, 1986). Pay for performance does not always generate the desired outcome concerning students or teachers. Gathering teachers' perspectives is an imperative part of the process when trying to determine whether pay for performance leads to effective teaching.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiatives turned the educational focus toward accountability and raising standards. Attempting to reach NCLB goals, educational policymakers began developing programs using performance pay, like Teachers Incentive Fund, Teacher Advancement Program, and Race to the Top (Caillier, 2010; Cissell, 2010; Podgursky & Springer, 2007; Quigney, 2010). Performance pay comes in a variety of forms such as merit pay, bonuses, incentives, and value-added (Levin, 2011). According to Levin (2011), merit pay is "defined as linking some portion of teachers' pay to the academic achievement of their students" (p. 131).

Situation to Self

As an administrator I seek to understand the viewpoint of teachers and desire to reward those who are tirelessly making a difference in students' lives. In my experience the most effective teachers are those called into education. Therefore, they are not driven solely by money. However, financial struggles could greatly hinder even the most effective teacher. By means of this study, I wanted to research how a group of teachers perceive pay for performance and how it altered their environment. This is an interesting topic for me because I struggle with keeping the balance between teachers performing out of their genuine desire to serve versus teachers performing in order to receive a bonus or higher pay. Being able to hear from teachers at a high school similar to mine provided information that correlates to my professional career. Teachers were asked whether pay for performance has restructured their motivational triggers, hindered or helped their collaborative efforts, increased or decreased their instructional effectiveness, and to what extent it may have reshaped relationships with administrators and colleagues.

In terms of epistemology, the relationship between the participants and me were viewed as reciprocal influences. Hill et al. (2005) reveal how "the participant teaches the researcher about the phenomenon, and the researcher influences the participant through the probes used to help the participant explore his or her experiences" (p. 197). The foundation of this phenomenological study of pay for performance was teachers' perspectives gleaned through face-to-face interviews. I respect teachers as professionals and believe that hearing their opinions was an important consideration in the process of reforming their method of payment.

Problem Statement

Due to the rise and fall of educational trends throughout the years, it is difficult to know when new initiatives are worthy of implementation. One educational trend that has received both opposition and support within the educational community is pay for performance. Pay for performance programs can be dated as far back as 1710 in England (Troen & Boles, 2005) and are currently used around the world and in the United States. Substantial research can be found detailing different types of performance pay and showing both positive and negative results, but there is little research presenting the views of teachers (Goldhaber, DeArmond & DeBurgomaster, 2011). While analysts and businessmen can evaluate the successes and failures of pay for performance programs, it will not be until the views of those experiencing its reality are gathered that the program's overall effectiveness is determined. Perkins-Gough (2007) states "a more fundamental flaw is that policymakers have traditionally developed performance-pay policies without consulting teachers themselves" (p. 83). This study examined pay for performance from teachers' perspectives. Turner (2010) believes that most pay for performance failures are due to the lack of buy-in from teachers. "Pay for performance is poised to become more reality than simple rhetoric, but much work must be done to ensure these programs are effective" (Springer & Gardner, 2010, p. 8).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this consensual phenomenological study was to delve into the thoughts, perceptions, and personal experiences of teachers at a Christian high school in Illinois in order to understand their perspectives regarding pay for performance. This study focused on teachers' opinions about how pay for performance influences their motivation, instructional methods and collaborative efforts. For the purpose of this study, pay for performance is generally defined as paying teachers according to their performance or their students' performance rather than, or in addition to, years of experience or degrees earned.

Significance of Study

Throughout the years, educational leaders have experimented with implementing pay for performance with little success. However, beginning with the 21st century, there has been a renewed interest in pay for performance. It is becoming increasingly appealing to schools in their efforts to raise teacher salaries while also boosting student achievement. "Currently, more than 20 states and a range of districts are implementing or discussing some form of performance plan for teachers" (Gratz, 2009a, p. 15). Research has clearly shown that quality teachers are key to student learning. Therefore, finding ways to motivate and/or reward excellent instruction is another way for schools to increase their educational success (Christenbury, 2010; Day, 2012; His-Chi & Ming-Chao, 2010; Springer & Gardner, 2010). This study provides teacher insight with regard to pay for performance, including their thoughts on its effectiveness. The information gained from this study could prove beneficial to schools that are considering adopting a pay for performance plan. When teachers and administrators believe in the goals established and also believe they can reach these goals, pay for performance plans work well (Gratz, 2011; Koppich, 2010; Murnane & Cohen, 1986).

Research Questions

Crewell (2007) recommends establishing a few central questions that are open-ended and nondirectional. Hays and Singh (2012) suggest including questions that address the how or what and not the why because in researching a phenomenon, exploratory is key. From the review of literature, the reoccurring topics relating to pay for performance were motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Pink, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000a), relationships (Odden & Kelly, 2002), and achievement (Koppich, 2008; Lavy, 2007; Levin, 2011). The following central questions guide the study:

Research Question 1: Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a better method of pay than the traditional single salary schedule?

Research Question 2: To what extent and in what ways do teachers perceive pay for performance has influenced or altered their motivation?

Research Question 3: Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a means to improve their instructional effectiveness resulting in increased student learning?

Research Question 4: How do teachers perceive pay for performance affects their relationship with their colleagues, administrators, and students?

The first question generated information dealing with the teachers' views of pay for performance versus single salary schedule. The second question provided the needed insight from teachers as to their motivation. The third question focused on pay for performance used as a means to inspire or reward teachers for improving their effectiveness. The fourth question provided insight into the effect of pay for performance on teachers' working relationships.

Research Plan

A consensual qualitative research (CQR) methodology was utilized in this phenomenological design. Hill (2012) suggests that CQR is "ideal for studying in depth the inner experiences, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals because it allows researchers to gain a rich, detailed understanding that is not usually possible with quantitative methods" (p. 14). This study sought to understand the attitudes and experiences of Christian teachers toward performance pay.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitation

This study focused on teachers at one Christian high school. As an administrator, this researcher sought to understand the viewpoint of teachers and desires to reward those who are tirelessly making a difference in students' lives. Studying a group of teachers who are subject to the same pay standard ensured continuity in the results.

Limitation

A potential weakness of this study was the restriction to one school; therefore, the ability to gain perspective on multiple performance methods was limited. A second possible weakness was the lack of generalizability due to the small sample of teachers being interviewed. A third possible weakness was the interview subjects' lack of familiarity and rapport with the researcher. They might have been reluctant to share the faults of their current employer's payment system. Even though teachers may have strong opinions, they might not have been able or willing to accurately articulate their perceptions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Pay for performance is seen as a way to enhance the quality of instruction by motivating stagnant teachers to improve and encouraging quality teachers to continue in their profession (Goldhaber et al., 2011; Johnson & Papay, 2010). The research is replete with evidence that teachers directly affect a student's learning (Day, 2012; His-Chi & Ming-Chao, 2010). Hunter and Russell (1990) suggest that unless the best teachers of today continually learn and grow professionally, they may not remain at the top of their field. Additionally, it is important for schools to be proactive in finding ways to attract talented individuals to the teaching profession in order to challenge the students of today.

Pay for performance is widely advocated as a method to motivate teachers. However, there is limited research showing a positive connection between pay for performance and an increase in teachers' effort and/or student learning. While the general idea of pay for performance as useful for fostering teacher excellence seems plausible, it is important to study the views and perspectives of teachers to gain a realistic view of what motivates them toward excellence. Pink (2009) suggests that money used as an extrinsic motivator actually results in disinterest and does more harm than good. Pay for performance assumes both that a mediocre teacher will be motivated by money and that an effective teacher will feel rewarded by money. Human nature can sometimes thwart these pay for performance assumptions in that a mediocre teacher's motivation could alternatively be fueled by collaboration, the very thing that pay for performance may hinder. Moreover, effective teachers who are fulfilling their calling may feel less appreciated or even offended at the assumption that they were holding back or that they could have done a better job but waited to receive a higher compensation.

Theoretical Framework

For the Christian, seeking God's will, studying His Word, and following biblical principles are key components to building a biblical framework that encompasses every aspect of their lives. "The acceptance of revelation as the basic source of authority places the Bible at the heart of Christian education and provides the knowledge framework in which all subject matters are evaluated" (Knight, 2006, p. 183). Within that framework, this researcher wholeheartedly believes in Kingdom Education (Schultz, 2002) and its importance in molding students' minds and hearts from a Christian perspective in all academic areas. In order to provide the best educational experience for students, schools must have quality teachers. Teachers choosing to teach in a Christian school are typically answering a call on their life. Duffy, Dik and Blustein (2009) believe that "those who have encountered a calling, their perspective of the work far transcends that of a 'job' or 'livelihood'; it embodies the foundation of their being and purpose in life" (p. 83). Their motivation is intrinsic and flows from their desire to follow God's call on their life and fulfill their purpose in life. Ryan and Deci (2000a) define intrinsic motivation as "the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" (p. 56). There are many theories attempting to explain what motivates people. This study is built upon the following four theories concerning motivation. These theories help explain what motivates teachers to teach a certain way and to keep improving.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Human psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a motivational theory formulated on a basic set of human needs arranged by hierarchical order (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Maslow presents five basic levels required by every person:

1. Physiological: The need for food, drink, sleep and other carnal needs.
2. Safety and security: The need for protection and a stable environment.

3. Belonging, love, and social activities: The need for relationships.
4. Esteem: The need for self-respect, recognition and status.
5. Actualization: The need to achieve goals and continue developing.

Maslow (1970) observed:

> It is quite true that man lives by bread alone – when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there is plenty of bread and when his belly is chronically filled? *At once other (and higher) needs emerge* and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still higher) needs emerge, and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency. (p. 38)

Basically, when two or more needs are calling for satisfaction at the same time, it is the one with the highest prepotency that takes priority and the other one is pushed out of the mind. Hoy and Miskel (2008) suggest people focus on each level in order and can only advance through the levels as the needs are fulfilled. Administrators use motivators that target these needs to encourage teachers to improve performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). This theory asserts that material needs must be met before addressing other needs. In this case, pay for performance is addressing the physiological need in Maslow's hierarchy. However, "a pay-for-performance advocate is implicitly putting emphasis on the material needs of the employees and must be wary of ignoring or understanding other needs, like social relationships or learning" (Bohnet & Eaton, 2003, p. 245).

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene. Herzberg (1987) suggests that there is a set of motivators which cause employees to be satisfied while another set, hygiene, causes dissatisfaction. He suggests the motivators are intrinsic and are met through achievement, recognition, challenging work and advancement while the hygiene factors are extrinsic motivation that comes from job security, interpersonal relations, salary, and work conditions. Herzberg (1987) explains the difference between motivation and movement. “Movement is a function of fear of punishment or failure to get extrinsic rewards” (Herzberg, 1987, p. 118). Motivation is an attempt to start a generator inside of a person. It is “a function of growth from getting intrinsic rewards out of interesting and challenging work” (Herzberg, 1987, p. 118).

Generally, motivation has been seen as either extrinsic or intrinsic. “The term extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome and, thus, contrasts with intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself” (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 71). Herzberg (1987) believes that extrinsic motivation is not really motivation but is movement. According to this theory, pay for performance would not be a motivator but would stimulate teachers to work toward a reward, which according to Herzberg is movement, not motivation. Figure 1 illustrates how pay for performance would represent a hygiene factor effective in mitigating teacher dissatisfaction but inadequate for motivating them.

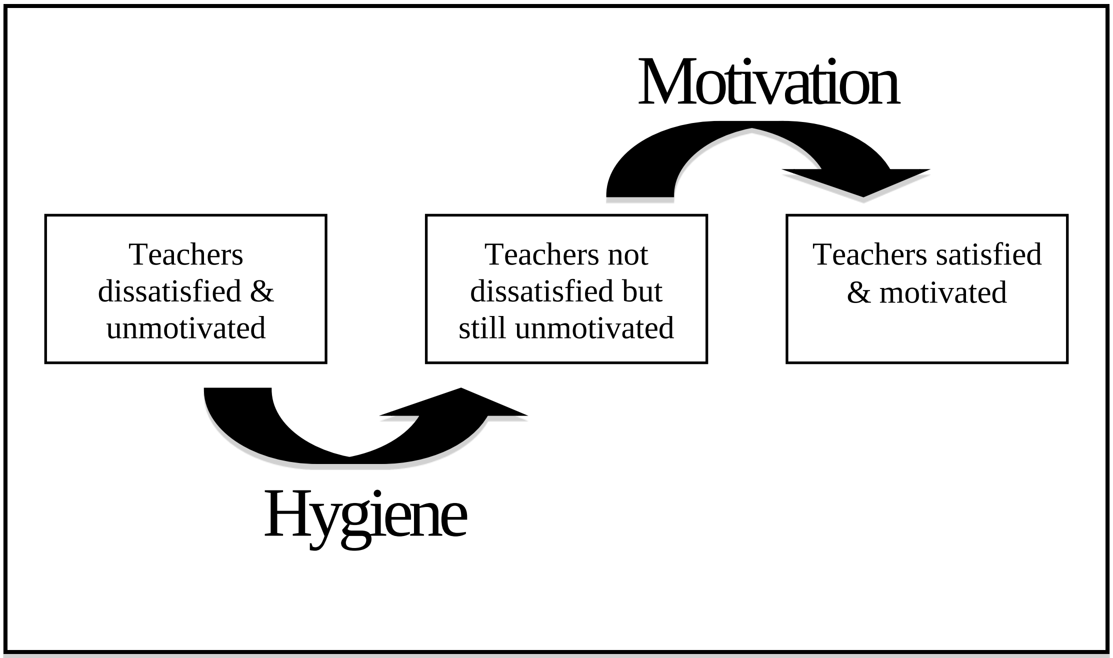

Figure 1. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Applied to Teacher Motivation

Expectancy theory. Lawler and Suttle (1973) depict expectancy theory "as a basic paradigm for the study of human attitudes and behavior in work and organizational settings" (p. 482). Expectancy theory proposes that people will be motivated by incentives when expectancy, instrumentality, and valence conditions are met (Odden & Kelley, 2002). In applying expectancy theory to education, Milanowski (2000) defines expectancy as teachers perceiving that their efforts will improve student performances or reach certain school goals. According to Odden and Kelley (2002), instrumentality can also be called the line of sight. It means "employees must perceive a connection between their individual efforts and receipt of an award" (p. 71). "Valence is the value, or desirability, of these outcomes to teachers" (Milanowski, 2000, p. 520). According to Vroom (1995) the anticipated satisfaction from an outcome is the valence and the actual satisfaction received is the value. Thus, people could receive satisfaction from something that they first anticipated would not bring satisfaction and the opposite could also be true. Vroom (1995) defines the concept of expectancy as "the specific outcomes attained by a person are dependent not only on the choices that he makes but also on events that are beyond his control" (p. 20).

Vroom (1995) believes that a person makes choices, "his behavior is affected not only by his preferences among these outcomes but also by the degree to which he believes these outcomes to be probable" (p. 20). Heneman, Milanowski, and Kimball (2007) describe expectancy theory by providing the following three critical principles: (a) teachers must value the reward; (b) teachers must see the performance-pay link; and (c) teachers must see an effort-performance link. "A performance pay plan seeks to motivate teachers to focus on and exert effort toward desired behaviors and outcomes" (Heneman et al., 2007, p. 6). A teacher's behavior could move toward increased motivation, satisfaction and effectiveness if she/he has a high expectation of a satisfactory reward. However, a teacher's behavior has the potential to move toward negative attitudes and decreased effectiveness if she/he has a low expectation of reward.

Self-determination theory (SDT). SDT provides a broad framework for human motivation and personality using intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. "SDT maintains that the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy are basic and universal" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 183). Ryan and Deci (2000b) suggest that people are naturally curious and self-motivated. When at their best, people strive to learn and are inspired. However, "it is also clear that the human spirit can be diminished or crushed and that individuals sometimes reject growth and responsibility" (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 68). Deci (2009) uses the SDT perspective to suggest that change will occur once the people have "fully internalized its importance" (p. 244). He further suggests that this internalization will happen when the change and method used in the change align with the basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner and Kauffman (1982) studied how “pressured” teachers treated their students. When teachers had accountability pressure, they were more controlling and gave out more commands. They also gave students answers, so students performed more but solved less on their own than the informal group of students with teachers not pressured. Paying for performance is thus a means of pressured accountability that results in taking away teachers’ autonomy. Teachers who do not have autonomy in the classroom do not give autonomy to their students.

Using the aforementioned theories on motivation, this study explored teachers’ attitudes toward pay for performance and whether it motivated them to seek ways to improve their effectiveness. Keeping in mind that every teacher is different and may be motivated by various triggers, by relying upon these theories in connection with this study, it provided added levels of understanding as the researcher delved into the views and perspectives of a select group of Christian educators. Motivation, whether it comes from a drive from within as Maslow states, or from Herzberg’s motivational factor, is paramount if pay for performance plans are going to be successful.

Review of Literature

Effective Teaching

According to Stronge (2002), effective teachers must possess high levels of verbal ability, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, certification status, communication skills, the ability to establish and maintain a proper learning environment, and teaching experience. In addition to those professional qualities, effective teachers must also possess a range of personal qualities such as showing genuine care for students, demonstrating fairness and respect, interacting positively with students, portraying enthusiasm for education, and possessing a positive attitude toward student learning (Stronge, 2002). Effective teaching "results in students gaining more during the time spent in the classroom" (Stronge, 2002, p. 65). Teaching is complex and it is difficult to definitively measure the effectiveness of teachers due to this complexity (Lavy, 2007). Educators have differing opinions regarding the methods used to measure teacher effectiveness. Is success measured by student achievement on standardized tests? Teacher performance as determined through formal evaluations? Students' views obtained from their teacher evaluations? Is success measured by the use of multiple sources of data collection? Frymier (1998) believes "teachers must be held accountable for what they do as teachers but not for what their students do as learners" (p. 234). On the other hand, Stumbo and McWalters (2010) believe in measuring "the outcomes of a teacher's work to see how effective the teacher is (the extent to which the educator has met crucial student needs, such as increasing student achievement)" (p. 10).

Statistically, American students trail behind their peers in other nations in various key measures of educational achievement. According to the Associated Press, "Out of 34 countries, the U.S. ranked 14th in reading, 17th in science and 25th in math" (2010). In order to better educational systems, it is imperative that teacher effectiveness in the classroom be increased. Effective teaching is a central requirement for learning to occur with the students (Christenbury, 2010; Pan et al., 2009). "The quality of teaching has been shown to relate directly to students' ability to succeed in school, the workplace, and in life" (Koppich, 2008, p. 11). Research suggests that students' academic success is directly related to teachers (Koppich, 2008; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Sanders and Rivers (1996) showed that "regardless of their achievement levels, students under the tutelage of teachers in the bottom quintile made unsatisfactory gains" (Conclusion, para. 2). With this in mind, the best way to improve student achievement is to improve the quality of instruction given by teachers. Research has shown that other factors also contribute to improved learning in students. Caillier (2010) proposes that parental support, class size, peers, and socioeconomic status can each influence positively or negatively a student's achievement and learning. Hassel (2002) suggests that research reveals that a teacher's experience and degrees earned are weakly related to how well students learn. "Advanced credentials in education, while certainly a worthy pursuit, do not translate into improved student learning, according to research studies. Teaching experience appears only loosely related to teaching quality, especially beyond the first few years" (Hassel, 2002, p. 2). Yet, the majority of teachers are paid according to years of teaching experience and degrees earned (Johnson & Papay, 2010; Koppich, 2010; Podgursky & Springer, 2007). These facts indicate that it is time to change the way teachers are paid (Hassel, 2002). Lavy (2007) suggests that teacher compensation is an obvious way to increase teacher effectiveness. The challenge is to establish an equitable method of measuring teachers' effectiveness and then link this to compensation.

History of Teacher Compensation

Boarding. The methods of paying teachers changed throughout the years to accommodate societal and economical changes. During the 1800s, teachers received room and board from different townspeople as payment for teaching. Teachers would move from house to house sometimes staying only a week in each home (Gratz, 2009a). This "boarding 'round method of compensating teachers provided the local community with the ability to monitor the moral character of teachers" (Odden & Kelly, 2002, p. 28). Accountability of teachers in the classroom was minimal and a teacher's competence was judged by the way teachers conducted themselves in the community. This method reflected the barter economy that was prevalent in that time period. Teaching was not really seen as a profession. "As such, teaching was both a low-pay and low-status occupation, and one estimate puts the average stay in the job at eighteen months" (Gratz, 2009a, p. 52).

Grade-based pay. The grade-based salary schedule followed in the late 1800s and early 1900s in an attempt to reduce the high teacher turnover rate. The Common School arose in order to provide a common school experience for all students and to teach the American values and ideas along with the basic reading, math, and writing skills. "As different states moved to create common schools funded by taxes, schools were reorganized into age-graded classes and new curricula were developed" (Gratz, 2009a, p. 54). Society began to expect more from schools and teacher training was implemented. Secondary teachers received a higher compensation than elementary teachers due to the differing educational requirements. However, due to societal biases, female and minority teachers received a lower compensation. Accountability of teachers "shifted from the rural community members to county-level administrators" (Odden & Kelly, 2002, p. 30). "These professional educators believed that they could train teachers appropriately, and that they could erase the stigma of low status attached to teaching and turn it into a true profession" (Gratz, 2009a, p. 57).

Single-salary schedule. During the 20th century, in response to the discrimination in grade-based pay, the single-salary schedule was formed. In an attempt to establish equality, all classroom teachers were paid based upon a schedule regardless of gender, race, grade level taught, or societal status. The most common schedule for teachers to receive compensation today is based upon their years of experience and level of degrees earned (Johnson & Papay, 2010; Koppich, 2008; Odden & Kelley, 2002; Podgursky & Springer, 2007). Schools establish their chart or grid. Figure 2 shows an example of a salary chart for a Christian school in Florida for 2013-2014. Looking up years of experience and highest degree earned is the method used to determine a teacher's total salary.

Teacher Salary Guide			
2013-2014 School Year (PY+2%)			
Classes -->	B.A./B.S.	5	7
Years	ACSI	M.A.	Ed.D.
Experience	Certified	M.Ed.	Ph.D.
0	$ 30,242	$ 31,753	$ 34,778
1	$ 30,696	$ 32,231	$ 35,299
2	$ 31,156	$ 32,713	$ 35,830
3	$ 31,623	$ 33,205	$ 36,366
4	$ 32,255	$ 33,868	$ 37,093
5	$ 32,900	$ 34,545	$ 37,835
6	$ 33,558	$ 35,236	$ 38,592
7	$ 34,397	$ 36,117	$ 39,558
8	$ 35,430	$ 37,200	$ 40,744
9	$ 36,139	$ 38,317	$ 41,966
10	$ 36,500	$ 39,275	$ 43,015
11	$ 36,865	$ 40,257	$ 44,092
12	$ 37,234	$ 41,262	$ 45,193
13	$ 37,978	$ 42,088	$ 46,098
14	$ 38,738	$ 42,930	$ 47,019
15	$ 39,513	$ 43,790	$ 47,959
16	$ 40,105	$ 44,445	$ 48,677
17	$ 40,706	$ 45,113	$ 49,409
18	$ 41,317	$ 45,789	$ 50,150
19	$ 41,729	$ 46,248	$ 50,652
20	$ 42,147	$ 46,709	$ 51,157
21	$ 42,569	$ 47,177	$ 51,670
22	$ 42,993	$ 47,648	$ 52,186
23	$ 43,423	$ 48,125	$ 52,707
24	$ 43,859	$ 48,606	$ 53,235
25	$ 44,077	$ 48,850	$ 53,501
26	$ 44,300	$ 49,094	$ 53,768
27	$ 44,520	$ 49,338	$ 54,037
28	$ 44,742	$ 49,586	$ 54,308
29	$ 44,966	$ 49,834	$ 54,579
30	$ 45,191	$ 50,082	$ 54,853

Figure 2. Sample Christian School Salary Schedule 2013-14

Support for single-salary schedule. Supporters of the salary schedule point out the simplicity, objectivity, and predictability of this payment method (Gratz, 2009a; Hassel, 2002; Ramirez, 2010). The simplicity and objectivity comes from teachers with the same level of experience and degrees receiving the same compensation. By paying teachers with the same degree and years of experience the same salary, this eliminated teachers competing with each other. This salary schedule also provides incentives for teachers to remain in teaching because of the guaranteed increase in salary each year along with the incentive to further their education. The predictability provided entry-level teachers with the knowledge of what their salary would be over a period of time and also allows schools to anticipate salary budgets (Johnson & Papay, 2010). According to Odden and Kelley (2002), the single-salary schedule improved the working relationship between the teacher and principal because it "helped eliminate administrative control over teachers' work, giving teachers greater autonomy in the classroom" (p. 33). This schedule also protects the teachers from capricious actions from administrators who might be driven by personal motives or political aspirations (Odden & Kelley, 2002).

The two national teacher unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) remain the most fervent supporters of the single salary schedule (Koppich, 2010). "According to Kathleen Lyons, a spokeswoman for the NEA, 'the single-salary schedule serves us well – it recognizes that teachers become more proficient over time'" (Hassel, 2002, p. 5). The best training that teachers receive is from being in the classrooms. Teachers learn how to teach by teaching, and each year teachers are finding practical solutions for managing their class and teaching their material. "If experience is the single most important ingredient in learning how to teach, then it is both logical and equitable that a compensation system should award additional experience with additional pay" (Bacharach, Lipsky, & Shedd, 1984, p. 40).

Opposition to single-salary schedule. Opponents of the single-salary schedule assert that this system does nothing to reward excellence because all teachers are paid according to years of experience and not according to their effort, skills, professional competencies, or student results (Koppich, 2010; Odden & Kelley, 2002; Teacher Solutions, 2007). "Teachers slowly move through these columns and lanes year after year, with no opportunity or encouragement to accelerate their careers through superior performance and personal dedication" (Teacher Solutions, 2007, p. 15). Figlio and Kenny (2007) suggest that teachers have no incentive to do a good job and that it is difficult to fire poor teachers after they have been teaching and continuing to receive yearly increases in pay. "One-size-fits-all compensation means that we're either paying the most effective employees too little, paying their less effective colleagues too much, or, most times, a little of each" (Hess, 2010, p. 52).

The single-salary schedule looks only at the input of teachers and does not consider the output. "Such a basis, critics say, is not 'results-oriented'" (Lavy, 2007, p. 88). "There is no way for teachers to earn more by exercising initiative or achieving success with students" (Johnson & Papay, 2010, p. 49). Ramirez (2010) found that those favoring pay for performance maintain that the single-salary method of payment ignores the purpose of education, which is for students to learn. Studies show that teachers' level of education and their type of certification only account for about three percent of the difference in student achievement that are attributable to the teachers (Goldhaber, 2009; Springer, 2009). Overall, the "critics of the single salary schedule contend there must be a more efficient and productive way to remunerate teachers" (Springer, 2009, p. 10).

Categorizing Performance Pay

Performance pay is linking pay to some measurable performance - either to the teacher or to the student (Adams, Heywood & Rothstein, 2009). Heneman et al. (2007) define "performance pay as any systematic process for measuring teacher behavior or results, and linking these measurements to changes in teacher pay" (p. 1). Adams et al. (2009) modified a taxonomy developed by Milkovich and Widgor (1991) to categorize the different methods of performance pay. All performance plans can be placed in a two-by-two matrix showing whether the performance is measured individually or by a group and then whether the increase in payment was permanent or a one-time add on. Additionally, the matrix considers whether the increase in pay is based upon the use of a formula or upon judgment. The term "formulaic" refers to "whether or not performance is easily measured, observed by all, and agreed upon in advance" (Adams et al., 2009, p.16). Formulaic measurements could come from the input on the part of the teacher or the output received from the students, or it could use measurements from both input and output. Judgmental measurements require a degree of discretion usually coming from supervisor's evaluations. There are many variations that cross the boundaries of this matrix. Performance plans can benefit individual teachers, groups of teachers, or an entire school. The plans include a way to determine pay: formulaic, judgmental, or a combination of both. Performance pay plans could replace the single salary schedule, supplement it by providing a one-time bonus or some incentive, or develop a mixture of those.

Individual Performance Pay

Judgmental merit pay. "Individual performance pay has traditionally been used to describe systems that evaluate teachers against one another for a fixed pool of funds, often using subjective measures of performance from annual classroom observations" (Odden & Kelley, 2002, p. 102). Bacharach et al. (1984) define merit pay as "a compensation system that links the salaries of individual teachers to evaluations of their performance" (p. 2). This method targeted toward the individual has been referred to as merit pay and it creates competition among teachers. The objective is to find the best teacher or top teachers and award them. Levin (2011) suggests that individual merit pay could have negative outcomes such as teachers avoiding collaborative efforts and hoping for other teachers to be ineffective. Florida has a plan that awards the top 10% of teachers in each school district a 5% bonus based upon student gains on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

Formulaic merit pay. The old merit pay system tied salaries to teachers' evaluations but the new merit pay system ties teachers' salaries to their students' performance on their achievement tests (Bacharach et al., 1984). According to the taxonomy displayed in Figure 2, since measurable student scores are used to determine a teacher's pay, this system would be categorized as formulaic. Teachers and administrators have a definitive measure that they are striving to have their students' reach.

Another type of formulaic pay is the knowledge-and-skill method, which will reward individual teachers for developing and being able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Teachers can demonstrate their knowledge through taking various tests, completing certifications, participating in continuing education courses and through classroom observations (Heneman et al., 2007). In such a system, according to Odden and Kelley (2002), instead of paying teachers for their years of experience and degrees, "teachers would be paid for what they know and can do" (p. 95). Odden and Kelley (2002) suggest the following four types of knowledge and skills: instructional, nondirect instructional, management expertise, and professional development.

Douglas County, Colorado, began using a knowledge-and-skill performance pay plan in 1994. Their plan included seven steps: base pay, pay for years of proficient experience, pay for educational degrees, skills-based pay, responsibility pay, outstanding teacher bonus and group incentive pay (Odden & Kelley, 2002). Cincinnati, Ohio developed a plan using knowledge-and-skills-based pay in 2000. Their goal was to motivate teachers to the larger salary by getting them to move from the lower categories to the higher categories. Teachers started in the Apprentice level at $30,000 and could advance to higher levels by meeting certain performance requirements. The highest level, Accomplished, allowed teachers to receive a salary in the range of $60,000 - $62,000 for the school year 2000-2001.

Group School-Based Pay for Performance

School-based plans recognize and reward all teachers within their school once certain established goals are met (Heneman et al., 2007; Milanowski, 2000; Odden & Kelley, 2002). This method encourages teacher collaboration and focuses on results. The basic premise of school-based awards is that the best way to focus on improving student learning is to have teachers work together (Odden & Kelley, 2002). "Because learning depends on a series of interactions with many different teachers over time, it is critical that educational systems be designed to provide high-quality learning experiences in every classroom" (Odden & Kelley, 2002, p. 130).

An example of school-based performance pay is the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina program. They established core standards, developed diagnostic tests, and trained their teachers (Odden & Kelley, 2002). Performance baselines were established and student improvement was the singular focus. Schools would receive points for meeting their goals. If a school received 75 or more points, they qualified for the top level and were awarded a $1,000 bonus for all professional staff members in the school and about $400 for each support staff member. A bonus of $750 per teacher and $300 for each support staff member was awarded to schools that earned 60–74 points (Kelley, Odden, Milanowski & Heneman, 2000; Odden & Kelley, 2002). Kelley et al. (2000) interviewed teachers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and found that teachers thought receiving the bonus was important. They received satisfaction from knowing that students had improved and enjoyed working collaboratively on improving their instruction. This illustrates Vroom's (1995) expectancy theory, showing motivation as a function of the expectancy, instrumentality and desirability of outcomes. Charlotte-Mecklenburg's teachers believed that their effort would attain the goal (expectancy), that they would receive a reward (instrumentality) and they valued both the reward and the outcome (valence).

Many other schools and districts have used school-based performance pay. The aforementioned Charlotte-Mecklenburg example uses the award money to provide bonus pay to teachers. Other school-based performance pay scales reward the entire school by using the money for various school improvement activities (Odden & Kelley, 2002).

Increasing the Base or Providing Extra Compensations

Some compensation reform plans continue to use the single salary schedule to determine the salary but then add extra compensation to teachers if they meet a certain criteria or fill certain needs, the Cincinnati Proposed Knowledge and Skills Salary structure is an example of this.

Hard-to-staff schools. As a way to meet the needs at a school, district, or state that is either high-poverty, low-performing, or geographically remote location, extra compensation is in some cases offered to teachers (Gratz, 2011; Hassel, 2002). North Carolina defined hard-to-staff schools as "schools with 50% or more students below grade level, 50% or more students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, an annual teacher turnover rate of 15-18%, and 25% of the teachers holding provisional licenses" (Hassel, 2002, p. 14). In addition to offering bonuses or higher salaries for teachers, they also established North Carolina Teaching Scholarships. This included money for teaching assistants to become fully licensed or money for prospective teachers to attend four-year institutions if they would then teach within their district.

Hard-to-staff subjects. Subjects like math, science, or special education sometimes have a teacher shortage. In order to combat that shortage, extra compensation is offered to attract needed teachers. Individuals with backgrounds in fields like math or science are often offered lucrative alternatives to teaching (Hassel, 2002). "Providing additional compensation to such individuals could make it easier for districts to put qualified people in math and science classrooms" (Hassel, 2002, p. 14). This incentive could be a larger salary, a one-time bonus, or some other valued benefit like housing. Georgia targeted new math and science teachers, and offered them a salary equivalent to a six-year level teacher (Badertscher, 2011).

Career ladders. Too often, the single career ladder option for teachers involves moving into administration, removing them from the classroom. Some performance pay plans include an opportunity for teachers to advance in their career without leaving the classroom. Some teachers are provided the opportunity to mentor other teachers, or serve on various committees, or something else that utilizes their expertise (Gratz, 2011). "If you don't have a career ladder that encourages teachers to advance in their profession – and be paid accordingly as they advance – tinkering around the edges by providing $2,000 bonuses for a handful of teachers will not secure the stable, high-quality professional workforce we need" (Teacher Solutions, 2007, p. 3). Johnson and Papay (2010) propose a career-based pay plan. There are four tiers or levels for the teachers to advance. The highest level, Tier IV, is when teachers are highly effective in the classroom, but they also carry out other responsibilities “such as coordinating induction for new teachers, conducting performance reviews as a peer evaluator, or facilitating the introduction of new curriculum” (p. 51).

Teacher Excellence Initiative

In May 2014 the Dallas, Texas school board passed a plan to link their teachers’ pay increases directly to their classroom/evaluation results. According to Sawchuk (2014), “teachers will be judged on a combination of observations, test scores, and student surveys.” It was reported that for most teachers 50% of their evaluation will be derived from their performance as seen through observations, 35% will come from student test scores and the remaining 15% are arrived from the student surveys (Hobbs, 2014). The plan, called the Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI), will begin the 2014-2015 school year but the salary structure will be implemented for the 2015-2016 school year. TEI “eliminates the traditional teacher salary schedule and replaces it with a compensation system based on nine effectiveness levels” (Rewarding Excellence, 2014, www.dallasisd.org). Teachers can advance in pay as they advance levels according to principal reviews and then district reviews for the highest levels (see Figure 3). The levels range from unsatisfactory to master level and teachers new to the profession will receive the novice pay.

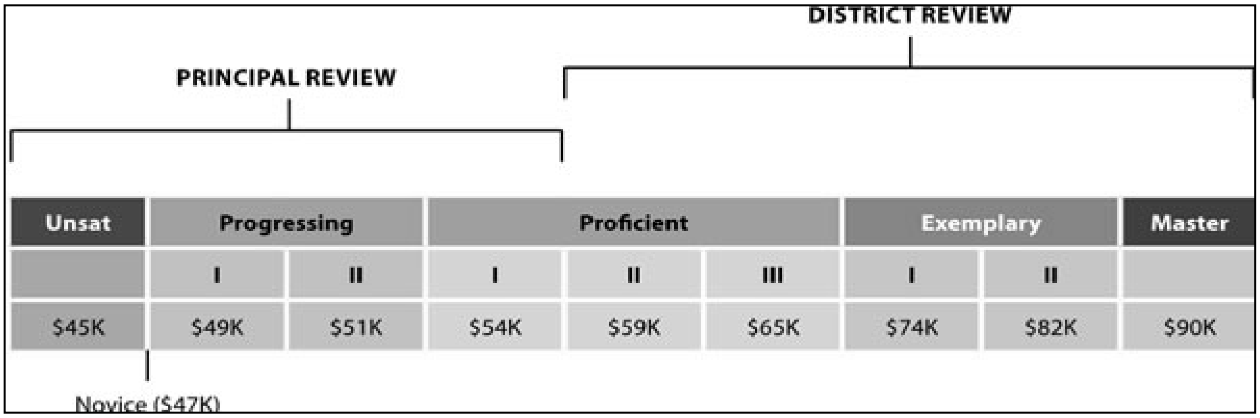

Figure 3. Dallas ISD Compensation System Based on Effectiveness Levels
Data obtained from http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/27323

Hobbs (2014) reveals the district survey of their teachers showing that "33% gave a positive response, 32% were neutral and 35% gave a negative response." It was noted that the more experienced teachers were the ones voicing opposition while the younger teachers favored this new performance pay plan.

TEI was "designed with one primary objective: improving student learning by improving teacher effectiveness" (Teacher Excellence Initiative, Dallas Independent School District (ISD), 2014). The district used research and performance models to establish their three-pronged approach (defining, supporting, and rewarding excellence) as a way to guarantee teacher excellence. Defining excellence provides a vision for effective teaching and how it will be measured. Supporting excellence entails differentiating learning for teachers. Dallas ISD believes that school and district leaders "must ensure a robust, systemic, and individualized support system is in place in order to provide the opportunity for teachers to reach their potential in enhancing student learning" (Supporting Excellence, 2014, www.dallasisd.org). The final aspect is rewarding excellence. Rewarding excellence is paying teachers according to their professional growth and impact on student learning.

Dallas ISD (2014) suggests that an effective performance plan will focus on results and will reward teachers accordingly. An effective performance plan will also:

- Support the recruitment and retention of highly motivated and effective teachers.
- Differentiate salaries to reward teachers who perform well and raise student achievement.
- Enable the organization to shift compensation from factors that have questionable impact on student achievement to those that do.
- Reward professionalism and leadership (Rewarding, para. 2).

The Dallas ISD's compensation plan provides an opportunity to increase their salaries in a shorter amount of time. Their data suggests that over a period of 15 years, a teacher with a master's degree would earn $83,260 more under this plan than the traditional step and ladder scale.

Factors Influencing Pay for Performance

Research stresses that there are three conditions that directly influence pay for performance (Caillier, 2010; Heneman et al., 2007, Slotnik, 2010). If pay for performance is likely to be sustaining and successful, it is vital to ensure that these three categories are addressed. The three factors are (a) the people producing the output; (b) the organizational setting where the output is produced; and (c) the kind of output (Bohnet & Eaton, 2003; Caillier, 2010).

People producing the output. According to Caillier (2010), teachers are the ones producing the output. It is vital that teachers buy into the program (Heneman et al., 2007; Marsh & McCaffrey, 2011; Slotnik, 2010). Slotnik (2010) stresses the importance of establishing the program with the teachers rather than establishing the program and then handing it to the teachers. "Teachers have a rightful role as equal partners in compensation reform" (Slotnik, 2010, p. 45). Teachers need to have input when it comes to determining what performance to consider along with ways to measure this performance (Marsh & McCaffrey, 2011).

It is important to consider teachers and to know what motivates them. Moreover, a plan that works for one school might not work for another school. Caillier (2010) points out, for example, that teachers and employees in a private sector are motivated differently than those employed in public sectors.

Organizational setting. Another important factor that must be considered is the school and how it operates. Two organizational setting factors are particularly noteworthy. First, the school and/or district must have adequate funding (Heneman et al., 2007; Marsh & McCaffrey, 2011; Slotnik, 2010). Slotnik (2010) suggests that compensation reform has a history of failed attempts because of lack of funding. "Teachers are suspicious of performance pay because of funding questions and often are unwilling to buy into the program and respond positively because of this skepticism" (Heneman et al., 2007, p. 5). Performance pay will not be successful without a plan to ensure that money is available to implement whatever plan is selected.

In addition to teacher confidence in stable and adequate funding to support performance pay, schools need to be structured in such a way that teachers answer to one specific person (Caillier, 2010). "According to this theory, teachers should receive tasks, goals, and objectives from one individual, instead of several" (Caillier, 2010, p. 60). Schools are complex in that they have multiple tasks and outcomes, they encourage teamwork, and at times they produce outcomes that are not intended (Eberts, Hollenbeck, & Stone, 2002).

In addition to having multiple aspects to what should be learned, there are multiple factors that contribute to students' learning. Teachers are not the only contributing factor. Research shows that class size (Bruhwiler & Blatchford, 2011; Halbach & Ehrle, 2001; Hattie, 2005), peers (Zimmer & Toma, 2000), and socioeconomic status (Tajalli & Opheim, 2005) also contribute to student learning.

Kind of output measured. The third factor that will strengthen the successful achievement of the goals of performance pay is having a strong measurement system (Heneman et al., 2007). Performance pay has to be linked to some performance from the teacher, the student, or both. Schools and/or districts have many options when it comes to what they measure and how it is measured. The essential aspect is that they have a plan that will deliver reliable data (Heneman et al., 2007). "Performance-based compensation must focus on improving student learning and rewarding teachers' contributions to that learning" (Slotnik, 2010, p. 48). For the most part, the output desired is student learning (Gratz, 2011). This becomes complex because in secondary schools, students will have multiple teachers. It becomes further complicated as teachers are more than instructors, they are disciplinarians and counselors (Caillier, 2010). Gratz (2009b) suggests that contemporary performance pay plans are typically based upon flawed thinking assuming "that standardized test scores accurately measure student academic achievement and that academic achievement constitutes the full range of goals we have for students" (Gratz, 2009b, p. 78). Basic academic skills should not be the only focus when it comes to educating children. Critical thinking, teamwork, ethics, communication skills, and becoming lifelong learners are just a few other important aspects for students to be able to contribute to society (Gratz, 2011).

Validation through Pay for Performance

Educational institutions have used financial incentives tied to performance. Marsh and McCaffrey's (2011) study reveal "financial rewards might not have motivated teachers to change because of how the rewards were viewed and because other factors are more salient to teachers"

(p. 55). When the financial incentive is seen as a reward and not as a reason for doing their job, teachers viewed the bonus as a way of acknowledging their work but not as an influencer on their performance. Validation can come from receiving an increase in salary or a bonus.

Flaws Concerning Extrinsic Rewards

Pink (2009) posits that the best way to use money to motivate is to provide high enough salaries to remove any financial hardship. He further suggests that pay for performance schemes are not the best option and even have negative effects. “Rewards can deliver a short-term boost – just as a jolt of caffeine can keep you cranking for a few more hours. But the effort wears off – and, worse, can reduce a person’s longer-term motivation to continue the project” (Pink, 2009, p. 8). Pink’s (2009) study provides the following flaws of using rewards or bribes: (a) reduced intrinsic motivation; (b) diminished performance; (c) encouragement of cheating, shortcuts, and unethical behavior.

Reduced intrinsic motivation. Deci (1971) conducted a series of three experiments to determine the effects of external rewards on intrinsic motivation. In all three experiments, subjects in the experimental group were observed performing a task without any external rewards; observed doing the same task for a period of time after either introducing a monetary or verbal reward; and finally they were observed for a period of time after the external reward was taken away. The data collected suggest that “when money is used as an external reward for some activity, the subjects lose intrinsic motivation for the activity” (Deci, 1971, p. 114). On the other hand, his experiment using social approval as the external reward showed verbal rewards not affecting the subject’s intrinsic motivation. Adams et al. (2009) conclude that “when they began to think of their goals as financial, they ceased caring as much about the intrinsic worth of the tasks” (p. 93).

Diminished performance. Ariely (2008) conducted an experiment in India where he offered various amounts of monetary incentives for completing concentration tasks. Group one received about one day's pay, group two received two weeks' pay while group three received five months' pay. The result was the first two groups performed about the same, but the group offered the highest monetary reward actually performed worse. The concept of extrinsic rewards producing higher performance is demonstrated invalid. Ariely's team repeated this experiment at Massachusetts Institute of Technology with undergraduates. The results showed that they

> found that as long as the task involved only mechanical skill, bonuses worked as would be expected: the higher the pay, the better the performance. But when we included a task that required even rudimentary cognitive skill, the outcome was the same as in the India study: the offer of a higher bonus led to poorer performance. (Ariely, 2008, para. 6)

Encourage cheating, shortcuts, and unethical behavior. The public schools in Atlanta, Georgia rose in national prominence during the early 2000s. As their test scores steadily improved, their superintendent received recognition along with the school district receiving funding from the Broad Foundation and the Gates Foundation. "But behind that rise, the state found, were teachers and principals in 44 schools erasing and changing test answers" (Jonsson, 2011). Similarly, Figlio and Kenny (2007) believe that incentive programs used in Africa suggested that teachers attempted to "game the system." "The authors show that the specific teacher incentive programs introduced in this experiment led to the manipulation of short-run test scores, but no long-term achievement gains among students" (Figlio & Kenny, 2007, p. 902). Camins (2011) suggests that the emphasis on extrinsic rewards provides only short-term improvement, but it "invites people to game the system in unethical ways" (p. 45).

Goal distortion. Rothstein (2008a) provides an example of goal distortion dealing with bus drivers. Bus drivers have several goals and when a quantitative incentive is created for one of those goals, that goal can undermine the other goals. In Santiago, Chile passengers complained about waiting too long for a bus to come. In an attempt to fix this goal, the bus drivers were paid on an incentive system; they were paid per passenger. Not all bus companies adopted this system but the ones who followed this system showed a reduction in the amount of time that passengers had to wait on buses. However, "incentive contact drivers have 67% more accidents per mile than fixed wage drivers" (Rothstein, 2008a, p. 22). The bus drivers focused on gaining passengers as a priority and they began to neglect their goal of safety.

Teachers, just like bus drivers have many goals for their students. In addition to imparting core academic knowledge, teachers are also training students in various academic skills, critical thinking, responsibility, conflict resolution and more. "Schools threatened with sanctions for failure in only one goal will inevitably divert attention from others" (Rothstein, 2008b, p. 50). Rothstein (2008b) suggests that the reduction of social studies, art, physical education and even science is because of NCLB. Schools chose to spend more time on what NCLB emphasized. Some pay for performance plans include test scores and this causes teachers and schools to place more focus on those and thus remove focus from something else.

Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation

Bruinsma and Jansen (2010) conducted a study indicating the importance of intrinsic motives driving people into the teaching profession. Sinclair (2008) interviewed student teachers revealing their top motivation was the "opportunity for working with children" (p. 94). In fact, the top three motivations were intrinsic. "Finally, altruistic reasons for becoming teachers cover aspects such as seeing teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job, and teachers-to-be who are altruistically motivated have a desire to help children succeed" (Roness & Smith, 2010, p. 170). Sinclair's (2008) study also revealed that most of the student teachers were multi-motivated. Having multiple motivations strengthens the potential that these student teachers will remain in teaching. "Their motivations seem stable or robust enough to weather the personal, financial and academic rigours attached to initial teacher education" (Sinclair, 2008, p. 96). Sinclair's (2008) study showed that extrinsic motivation factors most frequently mentioned were "nature of teaching work, perceived working conditions and perceived life-fit" (p. 88). Perceived working conditions include job security and a good salary. Other extrinsic reasons for becoming a teacher are the rewards of having the summer off or sharing a schedule with their children.

"Although teachers themselves state that they contribute sufficiently to their students' learning, research reveals that motivation levels, rather than teachers' professional competence, play the more important role in student learning" (Atkinson, 2000; Glynn, Aultman, & Owens, 2005)" (Gokce, 2010, p. 487). Another study revealed that teachers from elementary, high school, and college remained in teaching for more than 15 years out of their desire to help students learn. From hundreds of teachers interviewed, "none of the groups of teachers, regardless of level, were highly influenced by salaries and benefits, although elementary teachers ranked them higher than college professors did" (Marston, 2010, p. 445-446). In fact, Little (2009) suggests that using extrinsic motivations with intrinsically motivated people actually reduces their intrinsic motivation (p. 153).

Gokce (2010), a professor in Turkey, collected over 350 elementary teachers' views concerning motivation. "According to the results of this study, the teachers give importance to the needs that will increase their performance during teaching-learning processes, but those needs are not in fact being adequately met" (Gokce, 2010, p. 497). Gokce (2010) concludes that teachers will be motivated to learn and grow when it helps them become better teachers. He advises that schools can use pay for performance but the goal should be in providing the tools and resources that teachers need to continue improving and learning in their field.

Impact of Pay for Performance on Motivation

Rose (2010) watched and interviewed a master teacher, Stephanie, and then made the following comment:

> Merit pay doesn't inspire her inventiveness; it doesn't exist in her district (although she would be happy to have extra money, given that she furnished some classroom resources from her own pocket). Standardized test scores don't motivate her either. In fact, the typical test would be unable to capture some of the intellectual display I witnessed in her classroom. What motivates her is a complex mix of personal values and a drive for competence. These lead her to treat her students in certain ways and to continue to improve her skill. (p. 9)

Stephanie, like many other teachers, was not motivated by money. Her intrinsic motivation was fueled by her desire to help children. Gratz (2011) suggests that teachers are insulted more than motivated when it is assumed that teachers can be motivated by money. "Teachers may need to change their approach or learn new techniques, but few will knowingly withhold their support from children in their classrooms" (Gratz, 2011, p. 160).

It does not matter the occupation, people work expecting to receive compensation. Vroom (1995) suggests that the people work primarily because they desire the money they are receiving for that work. Receiving payment is extrinsic. However, some research indicates that performance pay does positively influence intrinsic motivation if directed toward high-quality and supporting desired teacher behaviors (Hulleman & Barron, 2010). “Receiving a reward can signify high performance quality, which in turn can increase an individual’s confidence and intrinsic motivation” (Hulleman & Barron, 2010, p. 28). Pay for performance could be used in ways to motivate intrinsically and extrinsically.

Bohnet and Eaton (2003) suggest that pay for performance motivates certain types of people. “In some professions, as in the case of a religious vocation, a military career, or social service delivery, other components may be so important that money does not make up a critical portion of the benefits derived from work” (p. 245). They go even further suggesting that focusing on the money can have a negative effect on performance or the employees refer to the pay for performance as bribes (Bohnet & Eaton, 2003, p. 245).

At times having a system of rewards causes teachers to lose their proper focus. When the incentives are linked to student achievement, teachers are only interested in the high scores and begin to do whatever it takes to get those scores (Levin, 2011). Cases of goal distortion, cheating, gaming, and other unethical behaviors have resulted from the pressure of the financial incentives (Rothstein, 2011). Bacharach et al. (1984) suggest that teachers begin to see students as a means to an end. They suggest that merit pay could:

> do more than change teachers’ attitudes toward teaching: it would change the relationships between teachers and students. Poor students would no longer pose challenges, they pose threats. Teachers would have incentives to see poor students are kept out of their classrooms, and they would have incentives to compete for better performers. (p. 17)

Impact of Pay for Performance on Student Achievement

According to Eberts et al. (2002), there is little proof that pay for performance impacts student achievement. Marsh and McCaffrey (2011) for two years looked at the Schoolwide Performance Bonus Program (SPBP) in New York City. They surveyed teachers and staff in 14 case schools. SPBP targeted groups of teachers and the desire was to motivate teachers to improve student achievement through collaborative efforts. “We found that SPBP didn’t improve schools or student outcomes” (Marsh & McCaffrey, 2011, p. 52). They also mentioned that they did not see differences in teachers’ attitudes or overall school climate.

Nashville’s POINT. The Project on Incentives in Teaching, or POINT, “sought to test the proposition that significant bonus dollars can serve as the incentive for teachers to modify their practice in ways that lead to improved student achievement” (Koppich, 2010, p. 25). Middle school math teachers throughout Nashville volunteered to participate and were either placed in the treatment group, which made them eligible to earn bonuses between $5,000 and $15,000 per year based upon their students’ progress on standardized tests or they were placed in a control group, which meant they received their normal salary. Schools that participated had at least one treatment group and at least one control group. Sawchuk (2010) reports that on average, students taught by the teachers in the treatment group did not have large increases in their scores compared to students taught by teachers in the control group. However, Figlio and Kenny (2007) found a “positive association between the use of individual teacher incentives and student achievement” (p. 903). They do admit that caution should be taken when interpreting these results as they could not determine if schools that are willing to attempt performance pay are also the schools that incorporate innovative teaching techniques. Therefore, it was unclear to

Figlio and Kenny (2007) if the higher student achievement resulted directly from the merit pay or from the innovative teaching.

Teachers' Attitudes Regarding Pay for Performance

Ballou and Podgursky (1993) examined data collected on a 1987-1988 Schools and Staffing Survey and found that only 55% of the teachers favor merit pay. Teachers from private schools had a more positive attitude toward merit pay than teachers from public schools. Ballou and Podgursky (1993) concluded that teachers did not support merit pay because they viewed the evaluation process as unfair, expected merit pay to create dissension among the faculty, and felt that the base salary needed to be raised before implementing merit pay. Teachers with more experience, teachers involved in unions, and teachers with strong trust and respect for fellow teachers were all less supportive of merit pay (Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jacob & Springer, 2007). Inexperienced teachers, high school teachers, and teachers with a high trust and confidence in their principal favored the use of merit pay (Goldhaber, et al., 2007; Jacob & Springer, 2007). According to Jacob and Springer (2007) "over half of the surveyed teachers expressed concern that incentive pay will destroy the collaborative culture of teaching and only 34% believed that it would make teachers work harder" (p. 29).

Goldhaber (2009) suggests that support for compensation reform depended upon how the question is framed. His study shows that 17% support pay for performance but 72% support paying teachers more if they are willing to teach in tough neighborhoods with low-performing schools. Around 40% favored paying more to teachers teaching the "hard-to-fill" subjects. The various studies that gather teacher's views about pay for performance indicate that support is mixed among teachers. Goldhaber (2009) suggests "policymakers might also be interested in how teacher attitudes evolve after experiencing first-hand changes in the structure of their pay" (p. 31).

Support for Pay for Performance

"Advocates for changing the way teachers are paid make the case that new salary constructs can further efforts to professionalize teaching by bringing teacher compensation structures, and perhaps levels, in line with other professions requiring similar preparation and training" (Koppich, 2008, p. 4). Furthermore, the pay for performance salary offers incentives for professional improvement and a way to help teachers to increase in salary without having to leave the classroom.

Other advocates suggest that teachers' compensation should be based upon outputs, like performance, instead of inputs. Experience and advanced degrees, which are the primary components of the single salary schedule, only account for a small part of what contributes to student learning and are seen as inputs (Goldhaber, 2009; Hassel, 2002; Lavy, 2007).

Opposition for Pay for Performance

One of the main reasons for opposition toward pay for performance is that there is "little evidence that pay for performance programs make schools better and further note that these programs render schools less effective by crowding out intrinsic rewards; they also say that the education system lacks appropriate measures for evaluating teacher performance" (Springer, 2009, p. 1). Moving away from using the objective single salary schedule toward pay for performance means that salaries are on a slippery slope of salary setting which is open to interpretation and brings in human judgment and therefore, human error (Koppich, 2008). Murnane and Cohen (1986) suggested that merit pay is not good for education because teaching is difficult to evaluate.

Pay for performance has been successful in the business sector where the outcomes can be controlled and where money motivates. Because of the introduction of pay for performance, schools are directed “towards a competitive culture, which has brought with it a ‘tick-box mentality’, a decline in trust, changing attitudes and values in education, and a shifting foci and priorities” (Forrester, 2011, p. 8). Typically, educators are the least motivated by the promise of financial reward (Camins, 2011; Gratz, 2011). Teachers are motivated more by a good collaborative working environment. Podgursky and Springer (2007) suggest that individually based performance incentive plans drive teachers away from working together, which could be a detrimental impact on the school and students.

Critics shared their concern that pay for performance models result in unintended consequences and use faulty performance measuring methods (Eberts et al., 2002; Hassel, 2002; Johnson & Papay, 2010; Lavy, 2007). Performance has been determined using either quantitative output measures or subjective supervisory judgment (Rothstein, 2008a). Measuring teacher performance is difficult to assess in a fair, reliable and consistent way (Murnane & Cohen, 1986). Gratz (2009b) suggests that rewarding teachers according to their students’ standardized tests scores is the most common method used but “flows from flawed logic and several troublesome assumptions” (p. 77). Rothstein (2008a) concluded that quantitative output measures used for performance pay result in “goal distortion, gaming, and corruption” (p. 78). Bacharach et al. (1984) claims that using subjective supervisory judgment through classroom observation creates a problem of validity and changes the relationship between the teachers and principal. “Without clear measures and criteria for judging success, decisions about rewarding performance are, at best, subjective and, at worst, unworkable” (Goldhaber, DeArmond, Player & Choi, 2008, p. 263).

Summary

The traditional steps and ladder method of paying teachers has remained the most predominantly used method of compensation (Hassel, 2002; Johnson & Papay, 2010; Koppich, 2010: Springer & Gardner, 2010). However, the preponderance of contemporary research reveals a weak link between the educational attainment and experience of teachers to student achievement. As education's focus has shifted toward results over teacher input (Dillon, 2008; Koppich, 2010), the pressure to reform teacher compensation has increased. "The single salary schedule began to look more like an artifact of a bygone era. It treats all teachers as if they're the same, offering few rewards for stellar accomplishment and few consequences for underperformance" (Koppich, 2010, p. 23). Many states and private schools are altering their method of paying their teachers. Pay for performance exists in many different forms and can target individual teachers, groups of teachers, or entire schools.

Pay for performance plans are based on the premise that extrinsic rewards will motivate teachers to perform better, or that it will attract talented people into teaching. The problem is that this assumes that teachers are holding back and waiting to be offered more money or more incentives before teaching students to achieve. "This is a highly cynical view of teachers, one that teachers understandably find demeaning, not motivational" (Gratz, 2009b, p. 78).

The research on the attitude of teachers toward pay for performance is limited but growing. However, most of the data obtained has been collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys. Many of the published studies focus on asking teachers their overall perceptions about the concept of pay for performance. This study asked open-ended questions to a group of teachers currently teaching under a pay for performance model. Their perception came from first-hand experience and not just from inference. Current research has produced mixed results

(Ballou & Podgursky, 1993; Springer & Gardner, 2010). In cases where teacher performance pay has failed in its implementation, lack of teacher buy-in is one of the reasons provided (Dillon, 2008; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Gratz, 2011; Heneman et al., 2007; Slotnik, 2010). Schools desiring to implement pay for performance must consider their teachers, their school environment, budgetary limitations, and outcomes they want from their students; pay for performance is not a one size fits all (Koppich, 2010). This in-depth study provides needed insight from teachers in a school using a pay for performance model. Their perceptions could help other schools understand the phenomenon of pay for performance.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Performance pay is a controversial topic in most educational fields. Although it is common in sales and other business fields, it is sporadically used in educational settings. In the instances where it has been implemented, the outcomes vary from positive to negative (Gratz, 2009b; Lavy, 2007; Marsh & McCaffrey, 2011; Odden & Kelley, 2002). Is the best compensation scale based on teachers' years of experience and degrees or should it be based upon performance? Would a financial incentive help motivate teachers to increased effort or results? How are schools able to judge if one teacher is more effective than another teacher?

Typically, teachers working in a Christian school are not motivated by money but are called into Christian education and desire to make a difference in the lives of their students (Dalton, 2001; Michalec, 2002). How do teachers at a Christian school perceive pay for performance? The goal of this study was to discover how teachers working in a Christian high school perceive pay for performance in relation to their motivation, their teaching, and their working relationship with other teachers, administrators, and their students.

This chapter provides information about the research design along with the central research questions guiding this study. Background information on the school site and their specific performance pay model is provided. Demographic information concerning each participant as far as gender, years of experience, years teaching at this particular school, and degrees attained has been charted. However, any information that would reveal their identity has been excluded. An overview of the procedures used in collecting and analyzing data is presented. This chapter concludes with information dealing with the trustworthiness of the study and how the study was ethically safeguarded.

Personal Biography

I am an upper school administrator at a Community Christian school in Central Florida. I have been engaged in Christian education for 29 years and have worked in three different Christian schools; I have served for 26 years at my current school. I received my bachelor degree in science education from Bob Jones University and my master's degree in educational leadership from Covenant Christian College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia, and I am working on my doctoral degree from Liberty University.

This study was motivated by my desire and interest to better understand pay for performance from the view of teachers (Moustakas, 1994). I am called to Christian education and enjoy working with godly talented teachers. I would love to be able to support and appreciate effective teachers in a monetary way without negatively impacting their motivation. In previous years, our school has awarded bonuses to selected teachers and other years bonuses were given to all teachers. Our administration has discussed performance pay. The consensual qualitative research (CQR) methodology was selected in order to reduce my personal biases by not being the only one analyzing the data. Additionally, I have chosen a school in which I do not have any direct connections; however, I do see similarities in Marian Christian Academy with my school.

Design

Since this study was focused on collecting Christian teachers' perceptions concerning pay for performance, a qualitative phenomenological approach with CQR was chosen as the design (Hill, 2012). One key component of CQR is an inductive approach which means "researchers allow the results to emerge from the data without imposing theoretical constructs on the data" (Hill, 2012, p. 8). Van Manen (1990) defines phenomenology as "the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (p. 10). The phenomenon of changing the traditional payment for teachers, in theory, motivates teachers to improve and increase their effort in order to become better teachers.

Research documents both failed and successful attempts at implementing different models of pay for performance. However there is limited research on teachers' perceptions concerning pay for performance once they have experienced teaching under a performance pay model. This study contends that the best approach to understand the impact of pay for performance is to hear the voice of the teachers. Kvale (1996) posits that the best way to know how people perceive something is to talk with them. Talking for this study took place in the form of an individual interview followed by a focus group. Other components of CQR that support the selection of this method are the use of open-ended questions in interviews, use of its words rather than numbers, use of context to understand, use of small samples, and use of multiple viewpoints or consensus (Hill, 2012). The following central research questions guided this CQR study:

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a better method of pay than the traditional single salary schedule?

Research Question 2: To what extent and in what ways do teachers perceive pay for performance has influenced or altered their motivation?

Research Question 3: Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a means to improve their instructional effectiveness resulting in student learning?

Research Question 4: How do teachers perceive pay for performance affecting their relationship with their colleagues, administrators, and students?

Participants

The participants in this study were teachers who had been employed for at least four consecutive years at the selected Christian school using performance pay. This school implemented a pay for performance model in the year 2011–2012. Teachers who taught prior to the performance pay model and continued teaching after the change in compensation were eligible to participate as interviewees. Following this criterion ensured that the participants in this study shared the same experience relative to performance pay. Gender, age, ethnicity, teaching experience, and field of degree of the participants were not the focus of this study. The selection method of this study was aligned with criterion sampling (Creswell, 2007) due to the participants having to meet predetermined criteria. "It is essential that all participants have experience of the phenomenon being studied" (Creswell, 2007, p. 128). Following Hill and Williams' (2012) suggestion to use 12 to 15 participants, this study contacted all 26 eligible teachers. If more than 15 teachers had responded, random purposeful selection would have been used to bring the number to 15. However, 13 teachers responded that they were willing to be interviewed. According to Creswell (2007), credibility is added to a sample when the purposeful sample needs to be smaller.

Site

Marian Christian Academy (pseudonym, MCA) is a large private Christian high school located in the Midwestern part of United States. MCA was founded in 1853 and is known as one of the oldest and most respected Christian schools in America. This academy has high academics, opportunities for student leadership, life-changing relationships with quality teachers, and state-of-the-art facilities located on a 50-acre parcel of land. The school has a student/teacher ratio of 16:1, with an average class size of 20. The average teaching experience of MCA faculty members is nine years and 74% have earned graduate degrees. The current enrollment is 640 high school students. The school's mission is "to nurture growth in our students through relationships, excellence, and service to the glory of God" (the MCA profile). This school was selected because it has a strong Christian emphasis, is similar to the researcher's school of employment, and most importantly this school has been using pay for performance since 2011.

Procedures

Permissions

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University to conduct this study on the participants was requested and obtained first (see Appendix A). After receiving IRB approval, permission from the superintendent and high school principal at MCA was requested (Appendix B) and granted (see Appendix C). An MCA administrator approached their teachers first using a provided script (see Appendix D) and then the researcher followed up with an email invitation to those eligible teachers to participate in this study (see Appendix E). Twenty-six eligible teachers were asked to fill out a questionnaire (see Appendix F), which dealt with demographics and their overall view about performance pay along with their willingness to participate in this study. If more than 15 had been willing to participate, then random selection would have been used to reach 15 participants. However, only 13 teachers responded by filling out the questionnaire. Those 13 were given a consent form (Appendix G) asking for permission to audio record interviews, and stating the purpose, background information, procedures, risks and confidentiality. The participants were told that they could opt out of the research at any time and they did not have to answer all the questions. Participation in the focus group was encouraged but optional. Morgan (1997) recommended having six to ten for an effective focus group.

Recruiting

The administrator at MCA introduced this study first to his teachers and asked them to fill out the questionnaire. He then identified 26 teachers who met the criteria. The 26 potential participants received an email invitation from the researcher to help with this study (Hill & Williams, 2012). Gelso and Hill (1999) reported a higher percentage of participants when given a personal invitation. The potential participants also received relevant information, consent form, and interview protocol (Appendix H) in order to recruit them to becoming part of this study (Hill & Williams, 2012). Participants were told that they could opt out of the research at any time and they did not have to answer all the questions (Seidman, 2006). The participants were also invited to join a focus group conducted after the individual interviews. They received an email invitation prior to the interviews and they were asked during the individual interview to join the focus group. Morgan (1997) recommended having six to ten for an effective focus group. It was difficult to find a common time for all 13 teachers, so a day during lunch was selected and six teachers joined in the focus group.

Site Visit

During the visit to the site, notes were taken concerning teacher collaboration along with the overall school climate. The school provided documents detailing their pay for performance model and their means of implementation. While on campus, a semi-structured interview (Kvale, 1996) with each of the chosen participants occurred in either their classroom or in their general meeting atrium. Participants received the individual interview protocol prior to the interview. This allowed participants time to reflect on their experiences (Hill, 2012). After the individual interviews, following the recommendation from Buckard, Knox and Hill (2012), a second interview took place in the form of a focus group. Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook, and Irvine (2009) share that focus groups enrich the data collected and serve as a clarification step in phenomenological studies. All interviews were recorded in Evernote on an IPad and used to transcribe them on a password-protected computer.

Feedback

Prior to using the interview protocol, two pilot interviews were conducted at the researcher's school to help hone her interview skills and to assess "whether the interview questions actually elicit the sought data" (Burkard, Knox, and Hill, 2012, p. 87). During the pilot interviews, feedback given helped to finalize the protocol used in the actual interviews. After two weeks, the recorded interviews were transcribed and emailed to each participant to allow them an opportunity to read and make any changes or comments (Creswell, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 2006). Using CQR allowed feedback to be collected from the research team as well as from the auditor. The auditor reviewed the procedures and analysis that the research team had conducted.

Consensus

Data collected from humans "are meaningless if the human instrument is not also trustworthy" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 194). Hill (2012) believes that the process of interpreting meaning from experiences shared by people is difficult for the researcher to not impose his or her own experiences thus introducing biases. In an effort to reduce bias, CQR method uses a research team to analyze the data. "A variety of viewpoints thus emerge, helping to circumvent the biases of any one person" (Hill, 2012, p. 10). Schielke, Fishman, Osatuke, and Stiles (2009) propose that "unforced consensus may result in an interpretation that is deeper, richer, and more thorough, precise, and realistic than one generated by a single individual" (p. 559).

The research team consisted of two other core members in addition to me. Vivino, Thompson, and Hill (2012) recommend using a team of three along with an auditor. Their suggested criteria for members include having an interest in the study, commitment to the study, and having an established relationship with the researcher. In addition to those criteria, it was also important that the members of this team have experience in Christian education, and not be under the direct supervision of the researcher. It was important for the team members to have some knowledge and training about how a CQR study is conducted. The primary researcher trained both team members in CQR methodology by providing material for them to read as well as describing what was expected from them. Confidentiality was maintained concerning the participants. Both members of the research team are passionate about Christian education and are gifted teachers who excel in critical thinking. Callie (pseudonym) is a high school English teacher who teaches Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses. She has a BS in Communications/Writing and a Master's degree in English Education. In addition to teaching high school, Callie has been an adjunct college professor. The second member of the team is Caleb (pseudonym). He is a high school history teacher with a BS in Social Studies. He teaches three Advanced Placement courses, has attended numerous AP workshops, and has been an AP reader for three years.

After the team reached consensus, an auditor examined the entire research and asked questions. Peer debriefing provides an added level of trustworthiness to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The person serving as auditor was qualified to perform this vital role having employed CQR extensively while conducting his Liberty University doctoral research just a few years earlier.

Data Collection

"Unquestionably the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 2007, p. 43). Interviews served as the primary means used to understand teachers' views concerning pay for performance (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A focus group provided follow-up on the individual interviews to strengthen the research (Morgan, 1997). Finally, various documents were collected and a reflexive field journal was utilized during the process of collecting data. Approval from IRB was granted prior to collecting any data.

Interviews

"At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). With this definition in mind, interviews were the primary means of collecting data concerning the meaning of the phenomenon pay for performance according to Christian teachers (Creswell, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin (2009) purport that one-to-one interviews "provide insight into people's attitudes, experiences and perspectives and are thus a useful data gathering tool in qualitative research" (p. 313). Once obtaining permission from the school, IRB, and each participant, interviews took place on the MCA campus. The researcher personally conducted individual face-to-face interviews with each participant using a set list of open-ended questions (see Table 1) (Ryan et al., 2009). All 13 interviews took place on the MCA campus and the average length of time was 40 minutes. Conducting the interview in a semi-structured manner allowed flexibility to ask additional questions as the participants answered the prescribed questions (Burkard et al., 2012; Creswell, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Ryan et al., 2007). In-person interviews allowed the opportunity to observe facial expressions and gestures, which enriched the meaning of the information collected (Kvale, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ryan et al., 2009). Interviews were recorded in Evernote on an iPad and transcribed and analyzed (Burkard et al., 2012).

Burkard et al. (2012) suggests having three sections on the interview protocol to accomplish the goals of building rapport and gathering consistent information. The opening section had questions that broadly related to the topic and allowed rapport to be established. Section two focused on the main topic of performance pay. The final section allowed the participant to reflect and helped the researcher "to discern how participants are feeling emotionally" (Burkard et al., 2012, p. 86).

The interview questions (see Table 1) were designed to draw the participants into describing the meaning of performance pay. The protocol served as the guide to keep the interview focused on the topic; however, interviewee's responses lead the researcher to ask additional questions (Kvale, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher's role became an active listener; Kvale (2006) believes that active listening is "more important than the specific mastery of questioning techniques" (p. 132). Questions two, five, six, nine, and 13 generated information answering the central research question about performance pay being perceived as a better method of payment than the traditional single salary schedule. Questions one, three, four, eight, and 14 were asked in order to obtain information on what motivated them to become a teacher, what motivated them to continue to improve in teaching, and what, if any impact pay for performance had on their motivation. Questions nine and 10 collected information dealing with any changes in their teaching or in their student achievement according to the third research question. Finally, questions 11 and 12 sought information dealing with their various relationships, which comes from the final research question driving this study.

The interviews ending with the researcher thanking them for participating, inviting them to the focus group, and letting them know that they could email any additional information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The transcribed interviews were stored in a password-protected computer. The transcriptions were emailed to the participants to provide them with the opportunity to add comments or make changes in what they have shared (Burkard et al., 2012).

Table 1. Individual Interview Protocol

Opening section

1. Tell me why you became a teacher?
2. Tell me what makes an effective teacher?
3. What are some of your favorite aspects about teaching? About your school?

Main section

4. What do you do to become better at teaching? What motivates you to do what you do?
5. Describe the current model used at your school. Do you understand all aspects of the model used?
6. Describe any input that you had into the current performance model used at your school.
7. After implementation of this pay model, how did it change your salary?
8. How has this method of payment changed your attitude about teaching in any way?
9. After implementation of the current performance model, how do you feel it influenced you overall as a teacher? Has it caused you to alter your instructional practices?
10. How has your current method of payment changed the achievement you see in your students?
11. From all your years of teaching (from any school), describe the best working relationship you had with an administrator? What do you think made it so good? How about with a fellow teacher?
12. After implementation of this payment method, how did your relationships change with your peers? Your administrator? Your students?

Reflection section

13. Tell me your thoughts about the method used here. What are you favorite aspects about it? Are there any weak areas that you would rather change?
14. What are some of your favorite aspects about teaching? About your school?
15. Why did you agree to participate in this study?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about performance pay or its implications?

Focus Group

Morgan (1997) suggests using focus groups with individual interviews as a way to follow up and explore issues that arise even further. Burkard et al. (2012) claim that conducting a second interview increases the chances of capturing the meaning of the phenomenon. “The interaction between focus group participants has the potential to create a dynamic synergy that is absent in individual interviews” (George, 2013, p. 257). Conducting a focus group after the individual interviews allowed issues that arose during the analysis to be revisited and allowed the participants to share with each other and remind each other of certain aspects about pay for performance (Morgan, 1997). “What makes the discussion in focus groups more than the sum of separate individual interviews is the fact that the participants both query each other and explain themselves to each other” (Morgan, 1996, p. 139). Conducting a focus group allowed the opportunity to watch the participants interact as they agreed and disagreed on issues concerning performance pay. A general set of questions (see Table 2) was followed, but a semi-structured format allowed questions generated from the discussions. The first two focus group questions allowed the researcher to collect information concerning their perception as to this payment plan in relation to the traditional payment schedule. Allowing them to freely talk about their current plan’s strengths and weaknesses revealed they perceived this plan as better than the traditional payment schedule. The third focus group question correlated to research questions two and three by asking about any changes in their motivation or methods of teaching after this plan was implemented. The final focus group question targeted their relationships, which is research question four. The individual interviews notes were reviewed to help generate additional questions asked during the focus group and the researcher was able to ask questions generated from the discussion. The focus group was conducted in a classroom during lunch and six participants were able to join in the discussion.

Table 2. Focus Group Questions

1. If you were talking to potential teachers joining your faculty: What would you tell them about the performance pay plan?
2. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses in your current performance pay plan used at your school?
3. Tell me if implementing this payment plan changed anything as far as your motivation or your teaching?
4. Because you all taught here before this plan was implemented, what impact did this current performance pay plan have on the collaboration or relationship between you as teachers? Between you and your administrator? Between you and your students?

Reflexive Journal

Gerstl-Pepin and Patrizio (2009) propose that collecting data without writing down thoughts, questions, and other comments during the process will result in a loss of much of the needed information. Their suggestion of keeping a reflexive journal was followed during this research process. The journal "serves as a place to document a researcher's perspective at any one moment in time. It also creates a space to invite others to examine and question the researcher's personal assumptions and beliefs" (Gerstl-Pepin & Patrizio, 2009, p. 304). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to a reflexive journal consisting of three parts: daily schedule and logistics, personal diary, and methodological log. In a notebook, details pertaining to the recommended three sections were kept. Journaling happened throughout the study, during the site visit, during interviews of participants, during the focus group, and during cross-analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Buckard et al. (2012) advises taking notes both during and after the interviews. Taking notes during the interview helped the researcher to remain actively engaged in the process and proved helpful later in the data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seidman, 2006).

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing data is aimed at finding the meaning of a phenomenon. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that data analysis is taking the information collected between the researcher and participants and reconstructing them into meaningful wholes. "Through analysis, we can obtain a fresh view of our data" (Dey, 1993, p. 31).

Coding the Data

The process began by reading the transcripts with an open mind looking for what was important. Seidman (2006) suggests "the first step in reducing the text is to read it and mark with brackets the passages that are interesting" (p. 117). Each CQR team member independently read, marked, and bracketed four transcripts. Themes were established from the bracketed or coded material. The team met three times for about four hours each time to discuss and persuade each other concerning their interpretation. Creswell (2007) recommends establishing five or six main themes along with subthemes. According to Van Manen (1990), "phenomenological themes may be understood as the structures of experience" (p. 79). Determining the themes was the process of analyzing the data. Following Krefting (1991), the material was coded, set aside for a couple of weeks and then recoded again. Van Manen (1990) describes a theme as

1. Theme is the experience of focus, of meaning, of point.
2. Theme formulation is at best a simplification.
3. Themes are not objects one encounters at certain points or moments in a text.
4. Theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand. (p. 87).

The team reached consensus and established five main themes. The overall themes were negative perceptions, positive perceptions, motivation, effective teaching and relationships. The main themes were aligned to the main research questions in this study.

Cross-Analysis

Cross-analysis is the process of "identifying common themes across cases" (Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2012, p. 117). The team determined the categories that repeated among the participants. "The process of developing categories is creative because it involves organizing and conceptualizing the data to see how it clusters together into themes" (Ladany et al., 2012, p. 119). Dey (1993) depicts this as cross-tabulation, a way to compare information within the determined categories. "The core of qualitative analysis lies in these related processes of describing phenomena, classifying it, and seeing how our concepts interconnect" (Dey, 1993, p. 31).

The research team, after spending time reading, rereading, coding and recoding the transcribed interviews established 25 subcategories (See Table 5, Chapter Four). Together the team determined the frequency of each of the subcategories and discussed what the interviewees attempted to say and what implications could be drawn from their views.

Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), any research study should establish trustworthiness and answer the question: is it worth paying attention to the findings of this study? Guba proposed that qualitative studies use the following terms: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility is established when a study measures what it was intended to measure (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) deem credibility as the most important trustworthiness factor in qualitative studies. "It establishes how confident the researcher is with the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants, and context" (Krefting, 1991, p. 215).

It was important to ensure that accurate information was collected from the participants. By allowing participants to refuse to answer any questions or to withdraw from the study at any time, helped to ensure honesty from those participating (Shenton, 2004). In order to ensure the best outcome of the interviews and focus group, pilot interviews with two teachers at the researcher's school was conducted. Kvale (1996) believes "reading books may give some guidelines, but practice remains the main road to mastering the craft of interviewing" (p. 147). A follow up focus group acted as a second interview and allowed the researcher to explore issues that came up during the individual interviews (Morgan, 1997). Both the interviews and the focus group took place at the participants' school in order to provide a location that ensured that they were at ease during the interview (Creswell, 2007).

Member check. It was important to reflect accurately the meaning each participant tried to convey. Once the interviews were transcribed, each participant had the opportunity to make any corrections or additions before this data was analyzed. Taking this information back to the participants helped to ensure the accuracy of their account (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004).

Triangulation. The consensus process is a way of establishing triangulation of researchers and added to the credibility of the findings. Having multiple people analyze the data strengthened the credibility by providing a truer representation of the meaning being shared by the participants (Hill, 2012). Williams and Marrow (2009) "encourage all researchers to recognize that diverse perspectives, shared in a variety of ways, are likely to provide rich data overall" (p. 578). Triangulation also involves "the use of different methods, especially observation, focus groups and individual interviews, which form the major data collection strategies for much qualitative research" (Shenton, 2004).

Saturation. Williams and Morrow (2009) recommend the use of saturation as another means of establishing trustworthiness. They refer to saturation as "themes or categories that are fully fleshed out and reflect the depth and complexity of human life" (Williams & Morrow, 2009, p. 578). Hill (2012) suggests withholding a couple of interviewees' data from the cross-analysis and then introducing them one at a time to determine saturation. From the 13 interviewed, the research team analyzed data from 12 (randomly selected) and then introduced the remaining interview data. The 13th interview did not bring any new additional information, so saturation was reached. If this interview data had introduced new information, an additional eligible MCA teacher would have been contacted and requested to participate in this study.

Site visit. Shenton (2004) suggests that the researcher become familiar with the culture of the participants and location being studied. The more the researcher knew and understood about the school, teachers and their performance pay, the better she was able to collect accurate data during the site visit. She read all available information about the school's performance plan and talked with the administrator prior to the visit as well as during the visit. Lincoln and Guba (1985) encouraged prolonged engagement and persistent observation. The researcher spent three days at the school collecting data through interviews, a focus group and personal interactions throughout the visit.

Transferability

Detailed information about the participants was presented in this study in order for readers to make their own determination as to the transferability of the findings (Hill, 2012; Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that researchers “provide the *data base* that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers” (p. 316). Pay for performance as a phenomenon, participants, setting, and methodology were described in order to provide the reader enough information to understand and then be able to compare their situation to the situation in this study.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative studies considers the consistency of the data (Krefting, 1991). An attempted to describe the processes taken in collecting and analyzing the data was presented as a way to address dependability (Shenton, 2004). From the descriptions provided, another researcher should be able to “follow the decision trail” used. (Krefting, 1991, p. 221). Using code-recode procedures on the data should enhance the dependability. Krefting (1991) suggests waiting a period of time after the data is coded and then recode the data and compare the results. Finally, by using both individual interviews and focus groups, this creates “overlapping methods” which ensured dependability (Shenton, 2004, p. 71).

Confirmability

“The concept of confirmability is the qualitative investigator’s comparable concern to objectivity” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). Lincoln and Guba (1985) advise that the techniques for establishing confirmability are triangulation, an audit, and keeping a reflexive journal. CQR uses a team to analyze the data and calls for an auditor to affirm the results, which ensures objectivity. Using a team similar to Krefting’s (1991) recommendation was a way to confirm data was void of bias. “*Triangulation of investigators* occurs in a study in which a research team, rather than a single researcher, is used” (Krefting, 1991, p. 219). “If multiple people who have studied a set of data can agree on an interpretation, we tend to assume that there is a better basis for believing that we, too, would concur than if only a single investigator had advanced the interpretation" (Schielke et al., 2009, p. 558).

Keeping a reflexive journal applies to all four areas of trustworthiness according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) reference a reflexive journal, "a kind of diary in which the investigator on a daily basis, or as needed, records a variety of information about *self* (hence the term 'reflexive') and *method*" (p. 327). Personal information written in the journal provided insight about the human instrument used to collect data and information about the method allowed the research team and auditor to follow the decisions made and provided understanding of the reasons for those decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Gerstl-Pepin and Patrizio (2009) suggest that using this type of journal "fosters a greater awareness of how knowledge is produced" (p. 306).

Ethical Considerations

Integrity guided this study and the researcher's personal biases or convictions were not imposed. Rather, the role of an analytical recorder and trustworthy analyzer was taken. An important aspect of CQR is consensus. During the consensus process, each member of the team independently perused the collected data. Subsequently, the reviewers came together as a group to finalize the analysis of the data. In so doing, a "variety of viewpoints thus emerge, helping to circumvent the biases of any one person" (Hill, 2012, p. 10). The researcher ensured the participants understood that at any time they could opt out of the study or refrain from answering any questions. The recorded interviews were kept on a password protected iPad. The interview transcriptions were kept on a password-protected computer. Pseudonyms were given to participants, school name, and the county in which the school is located in order to maintain confidentiality for all those involved in the study. "Protection of participants' rights is a fundamental aspect of conducting an interview, and the issues of informed consent and anonymity and confidentiality are of paramount importance" (Ryan et al. 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The focus of this consensual phenomenological study was to hear the voice of teachers currently working in a Christian school that utilizes a pay for performance model. In particular, this study was looking at the impacts that pay for performance had on teacher motivation, effectiveness in the classroom, and interpersonal relationships. The four primary research questions used to guide this study were:

Research Question 1: Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a better method of pay than the traditional single salary schedule?

Research Question 2: To what extent and in what ways do teachers perceive pay for performance has influenced or altered their motivation?

Research Question 3: Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a means to improve their instructional effectiveness resulting in increased student learning?

Research Question 4: How do teachers perceive pay for performance affects their relationship with their colleagues, administrators, and students?

This chapter provides details collected from interviewed participants along with information about the performance model used at Marian Christian Academy (MCA). The research team analyzed the transcribed interview data and determined five primary domains and 25 subcategories, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Participant Pool

In seeking to hear the voice of teachers, it was important that all participants share the same phenomenon; therefore, criterion sampling was utilized. Administrators at MCA identified a total of 26 currently employed teachers who had been teaching at MCA prior to the implementation of the pay for performance model. Of the identified group, 13 teachers volunteered to participate. The desired sample size for CQR study is 12 to 15; therefore, random selection was not necessary (see Table 3).

Table 3. Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Degree	Total years teaching	Years teaching at MCA
Barb	F	B.A.	17	6
Brad	M	M.A.	7	7
Curtis	M	M.A.T.	10	10
Shari	F	B.A.	7	7
Dale	F	M.A.	11	10
Andrew	M	M.A.T.	15	15
Dan	M	M.	13	7
Jason	M	M.A.	12	9
Laura	F	B.S.	28	15
Mark	M	Ed. M.	15	8
Nick	M	B.A.	11	6
Philip	M	M.F.A.	9	6
Shona	F	M.A.T.	12	11

The MCA Pay for Performance Model

MCA developed a unique compensation model that connects a teacher's compensation to performance. MCA decided they wanted to pay their teachers according to impact (output), versatality, and best teaching practices (inputs) (MCA booklet, p. 9). Teachers are paid according to their ranking in four classification levels as deemed by MCA administration: developing, professional, advanced, and lead. In order to reach the professional level, teachers must fulfill 75% of the professional criteria. They must meet 100% of the advanced criteria to be labeled advanced. The lead category is a lofty standard and teachers must fulfill 75% of the lead criteria. Administrators evaluate three primary areas: teaching, learning, and classroom responsibility. Classroom responsibility is a measure of versatility: can they teach all classes within their discipline including Advanced Placement, and can they teach in multiple disciplines? The teaching and learning areas are complex with multiple facets (see Table 4).

Table 4. Teaching and Learning Categories

TEACHING	LEARNING
Instruction: Planning and Preparation ▪ Knowledge of Content ▪ Resources for Teaching ▪ Criteria and Standards ▪ Use of Data for Planning ▪ Directions and Procedures ▪ Execution of Class Time ▪ Variety of Teaching Techniques ▪ Use of Technology	Instructional Items ▪ Focus on Learning ▪ Relevance ▪ Biblical Integration ▪ When Students Struggle
Assessment Items ▪ Assessing Student Progress ▪ Feedback ▪ Intervention Strategies	Assessment Items ▪ Assessment of Learning ▪ Learning Goals ▪ Standardized Test Results (mainly AP)
Learning Environment ▪ Classroom Climate ▪ Expectations ▪ Importance of Content	Learning Environment ▪ Knowing Students as Individuals ▪ Classroom Environment ▪ High Expectations ▪ Desire to Learn
Professional Responsibilities ▪ Credentials ▪ Timeliness ▪ Grooming and Professional Attire ▪ Professional Learning ▪ Supervision of Students	Professional Responsibilities ▪ Problem Solving ▪ Collaboration ▪ Goal Accomplishment
Community Relations ▪ Support of MCA Mission ▪ Parent Contact ▪ Co-curricular support	Community Relations & Spiritual Formation ▪ Student Activities ▪ Parent Communication ▪ Healthy Lifestyle and Attitude ▪ Teacher-Student Relationships

A teacher's performance is measured through multiple observations by their principal or assistant principal, feedback from department heads based on classroom observations and various interactions, student survey data, teacher submitted portfolio, and self-evaluation (the MCA booklet, p. 39). The principal, assistant principal, and department head use the collected data to fill out each teacher's evaluation grid containing all the categories listed in Table 4. The teacher receives a narrative evaluation along with a worksheet revealing their calculated salary. The teacher meets with the principal to discuss their conclusion and they have the opportunity to share any disagreements with their ranking. This process takes place during the first semester to allow next year's teaching contracts to be offered with the teacher's salary during the second semester.

Data Analysis – Interviews

At the foundation of consensual qualitative research (CQR) is utilizing a research team to reduce bias during the analysis of the data collected. As suggested by Vivino et al. (2012), two researchers were selected along with myself to analyze the data as a research team. Caleb and Callie are both educators who agreed to assist in this study. They were chosen for this task because of their passion for education and their gift in critical thinking.

First, the research team analyzed the transcribed interviews independently, looking for domains and coding the statements (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 350). Next, the team met as a group to present their domains and ideas. Team members Caleb, Callie and the primary researcher debated and discussed until a consensus was reached. The primary researcher then independently revisited the data using the group's large domains. In the research team's final meeting, they conducted a frequency analysis and cross-analyzed the data to determine the final list of domains and subcategories. A frequency analysis was used to categorize the "domains into one of four categories: **general** (all or all but one case), **typical** (more than half of the cases up to the cutoff for general), **variant** (at least two cases up to the cutoff of typical), and **rare** (used for sample sizes greater than 15, two or three cases)" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 351). The research team formalized five domains and 25 subcategories (see Table 5).

Table 5. Domains and Subcategories

Domain	Research Questions	Frequency
Negative perceptions	1, 3	
Complexity		General
Subjectivity		Typical
Need to sell self		Typical
Internal conflict/focus shift		Variant
Administrator's teaching background		Typical
Lack of money		Variant
Difficult for new teachers		Variant
Positive perceptions	1, 3	
Felt appreciated		Variant
Salary increase		Typical
Being part of the final discussion		Variant
Multiple means of data collection		Variant
Supported (through professional development opportunities)		General
Better teacher		Variant
Motivation	2	
Called/Intrinsic/Passion		General
Relational/relationship with students		General
Pay for performance		General
Effective Teaching	3	
Master at content		Typical
Strong communicator		Variant
Love for students		General
Passionate/called/Spiritual		General
Professional development/constant learner		General
Mentoring/Collaboration		Variant
Relationships	4	
Administration		
Trust		Typical
Changed relationship		Typical
Department heads		
Trust		Typical
Changed relationship		Variant
Faculty		
Trust		Variant
Mentorship		Variant
Changed relationship		Variant
Students		
Trust/distrust		Variant
Changed relationship		Typical

Negative Perceptions of the MCA Pay for Performance Model

Complexity (General). The MCA pay for performance model requires the administrative team to rank the teacher as developing, professional, advanced, or lead for each subtopic within both the teaching and learning categories (see Table 4). For example, within teaching there is a subtopic "use of data for planning." If the teacher uses assessment results to plan for the class as a whole, then the box under professional would be marked. However, if a teacher uses assessments to develop individual plans to help the students achieve standards, then the box under lead would be checked. Twelve of the 13 teachers interviewed said, "there are too many boxes." Curtis stated that the system is "too complex . . . I know what is being judged, but I do not understand the criteria." He goes on to say that it is overwhelming and he tries to push the boxes out of his mind because he desires to focus on his teaching rather than on the boxes.

Nick declared, "There are some pieces that I don't quite understand." To quote Shari, "I think, to be honest, it is overwhelming to understand, there are so many boxes and asterisks or stars that were never fully explained about how to move from one category to another." She went on to explain that she recently moved from one category to the next but she really does not know what she did differently to move to the next level. Brad felt that the way the boxes are broken down is confusing at times. Dan does not understand how the movement within the boxes relates to his pay – he stated that at the beginning they were given a general formula, but that was removed after the first year.

Subjectivity (Typical). The MCA pay for performance documentation states, "data for the teaching and learning criteria are drawn from teacher evaluation, department head input, student surveys, and administrative evaluation." Eight of the 13 participants mentioned the subjectivity of the MCA model. Curtis voiced, "So the subjective nature takes away from its value. We don't have a good measuring stick, so how do you measure up to it? Well, somebody decides, ok you are good at this; you are not good at that." He went on to say that he does not understand the criteria. Shona referred to the subjectivity as perception. "I do think a lot of it is how you are perceived in the school, actually, I don't think that is true, I know it is true – it is perception. So if you are perceived as a good teacher, you can be ranked higher than if you are perceived as a bad teacher." For instance, Shona described a place on the evaluation form where a teacher is ranked on their impact on the school and she did not see how that can be quantitatively measured. One participant claimed that he would rather the administration just come out and acknowledge that this evaluation is subjective.

Need to sell yourself (Typical). Eight out of the 13 interviewees felt awkward about having to present evidence concerning themselves and their teaching. Brad admitted that when this model was first implemented he struggled with basing his identity on his evaluation. He found himself wanting the administration to see every little thing he was doing, but over time he "is now back to a healthy state" and is doing what is best for his students. Nick confided that he felt disconnected, as he needs to bring a stack of data to the administration to back up what he is doing. He found himself saving emails and notes from students and parents to share with the administration. Philip admitted that he wants to make sure he is getting credit for everything he does, "like, if I help another teacher craft their lesson, I sometimes think, hey does administration see that – do they know that I helped – but then that really is just a crappy feeling." He went on to share that he now forces himself to not think that way and to not worry about the outcome. Shona relayed that they were asked to turn in notes they had received from students, parents, and previous students to the administration as part of their evidence.

Internal conflict/focus shift (Variant). A couple of teachers mentioned that they struggled with focusing on the boxes instead of focusing on teaching and their students. Brad stated, “I got caught up in being more concerned about the boxes in the beginning, but at least for me I have returned to my same sense of mission and purpose.” Curtis acknowledged that he becomes overwhelmed with the evaluation process and forces it to the background otherwise he concentrates on the boxes rather than on teaching. Laura indicated that in her role as a department head she dealt with a colleague that had “lost some of the passion for teaching as opposed to doing well so she could move up in the boxes.” Shari shared, “I constantly checked my own motives – am I doing this just to get higher pay and to have more boxes checked or am I really doing this for the kids.” Nick informed the researcher that he was frustrated because he ended up concentrating on the boxes. Mark suggested that using a checklist is dangerous because it takes away the original purpose or goal of why teachers teach in the first place. Shona felt this process has changed her. “It has changed my heart because I have to be on guard then as to why I am doing this particular thing with the student – am I doing it because I love and care for that student or am I doing it because I want to move up in the boxes?”

Curtis claimed,

> Any evaluation system is going to cause me to focus on myself and I have the desire to be humble, to be a servant; when I talk about myself extensively and I want to show them that I am a good worthy hire, I feel this conflict. I have not resolved that and I don’t know how you would. Do you want me to flaunt all the things that I do and how great I am?

Shari admitted that on the required self-evaluation, she marks herself lower as she does not want to boast and realizes that she has much to learn.

Administrators' teaching background (Typical). Seven teachers touched on the fact that the administrators evaluating them were trained in a different content area than what they were evaluating. They felt that this reality did affect classroom observations. Math, science, English, Bible and elective teachers made up this group of seven teachers. Shari claimed, "they do come in with experience, although it is from a different field than mine, so when they give suggestions, they are not suggestions that are really helpful to my class." Barb pointed out the same feeling, "the administration here are history teachers, and I am a math teacher; it isn't the same thing – not the same thing at all. So, I mean they have great ideas, but what works really good for differentiating in the history classroom really won't work in my math classroom."

Lack of money (Variant). Nick disclosed that according to his rankings on the pay for performance scale, he was supposed to get a 5% raise, but due to the lack of resources available, he only received a 3% raise. He felt that was disingenuous and it was becoming a game. He urged, "If you are going to use a merit based pay, and I can earn a 15% raise, then the money should be there." Brad declared that he was scheduled to receive a certain increase, but the administration approached him honestly and told him, "We want to pay you this but we can't, so we are going to give you this percentage; but if we had remained in the old model the increase would have been just $700." Brad verbalized his frustration but he also realized he was at least getting more money. Barb communicated that her salary has increased over the last three years but that she still has not received the amount she was supposed to get when using the formula. She did say MCA is fair in giving people percentages. She also mentioned that the formula is no longer included on the worksheet.

Difficult for new teachers (Variant). Andrew mentioned that this model would be difficult for new teachers because the main evaluation period is during first semester and he felt new teachers would just be getting into the flow of their teaching. Shona confessed that she thinks she would have left MCA if they were using this model during her first years of teaching. Using a different tool to evaluate the new teachers was suggested by a couple of teachers. Barb suggested that new teachers not be evaluated until the end of the year because they are adjusting to teaching, to new administration, and to the culture of MCA.

Positive Perceptions of the MCA Pay for Performance Model

Felt appreciated (Variant). Dan affirmed, "I think I actually feel more appreciated than I did before." Philip referred to feeling more valued through this evaluation process and new payment plan. When Brad pointed out some negative aspects concerning the model he also mentioned that he appreciated their effort and it left him feeling valued. He pointed out that he would not want to return to the old method of payment.

Salary increase (Typical). Over half of the interviewees admitted to liking the fact that they received an increase in pay. Andrew recognizes that this model benefited him and he believes it is one of the reasons he was able to stay in teaching. He admitted that when looking at the old step and ladder model, he was discouraged because he could see what he might be making in 15 years and that did not excite him. Brad relayed the same sentiment, "I probably would not be working here if this was not in place, only because my salary increase would have been so slow but with this model, there is more movement in me being able to support my family." Dan summed it up, "I love being paid more, but I don't like the process."

During the focus group, the six teachers all agreed that they are being paid more since the performance model was introduced. They laughed and suggested that the model was just a way to justify increasing their salaries. Jason claimed, "I think they wanted to pay us all more money and needed a way to implement it at the same time get us to continue improving."

Part of discussion (Variant). Five of the teachers mentioned the follow-up meetings with the administrative team. Brad depicts this as a time to be able to explain, answer questions, and talk about your teaching. Curtis shared that as they are discussing the classroom observations, "I have the ability to work with them as a peer in one sense to try and make things better." Philip sees the time spent with the administrators as a time to talk over his development as a teacher.

An important way that teachers can be part of the discussion is through their self-reporting. Teachers are encouraged to turn in evidence for various criteria. They are given the opportunity to turn in a portfolio supporting either their teaching practice or student learning. The administrative team reads their portfolio along with their observations. During the focus group, a science teacher shared how he struggles with expressing what he is accomplishing while an English teacher talked about her ease with this task. Laura stated, "I know how to use language to make me look good and not sound like I am bragging." One teacher shared that he moved from one level to the next and the only thing he did different was to self-report what he was doing.

Multiple means of data collection (Variant). Both Jason and Mark replied that one of the strengths of this model is the use of many different inputs from multiple sources. They pointed out the administrator's evaluation, department head evaluation, student survey, self-evaluation, and even parent input, are all used to determine the ranking of the teachers. Andrew likes the process of the two administrators meeting with the department head as they together make decisions about teachers.

Supported by school (General). All 13 teachers felt that the school supported them in their quest to learn and improve as a teacher through professional development. All of the teachers talked about various conferences that MCA paid for them to attend. Just a few of the attended conferences were Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Disney Institute, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) conferences, Advanced Placement (AP) workshops, and the Institute of Faith and Learning. Andrew expounded on how MCA provides collaborative time each week on Wednesday mornings. Students begin classes later that day to allow time for faculty to meet within their departments. Nick recalled a time that MCA provided him a few days to travel as he researched new curriculum. They all mentioned having the opportunity to attend conferences each year. Dan was excited about the opportunity he has to visit other schools to observe teachers and learn from them.

Better teacher (Variant). Mark attributes this model to his progress in becoming a better teacher. He claims that "it has pushed me; very definitely, it has made be a better teacher." Philip claimed that most of the traits listed in this model do make teachers better. Nick replied that since the implementation of this model, he is different and is a better teacher. Although, he suggested, that it is mainly because of the administrator's attitude and his opportunity to attend conferences, try new strategies, and use sharper rubrics. The 10 other teachers felt as though their improvement in teaching was not necessarily because of the pay for performance model. Andrew suggested that this model forces teachers to make a decision to become better teachers in order to increase their salary.

Teachers' Motivation

Calling/passion (General). Mark stated that he wanted to do something special for the Lord. Nick relayed that he had some teachers that impacted him and he wanted to be that person for others. Shona sees her motivation as coming from inside of her. Dale reflected, "For me there is definitely a spiritual dimension that I sense a real calling from the Lord to be here at this place." Curtis claimed that he has a heart for ministry and he wanted to be in a place where God could use him in people's lives. Dan replied that he really wanted to impact others and believes that teachers really can make a difference in the lives of the students.

Relational (General). Mark shared that his motivation comes from his desire to see the students challenged and for them to see the Lord through the subject he is teaching. Philip attributes his enjoyment of student relationships to his draw into teaching. He said, "It feels so rewarding when my students learn something, I mean it can be almost like a drug in that the days it happens I feel like how can I do anything else but this." Brad said he enjoys the relationships with students and commented that teaching is such a rewarding profession. Dan stated that the most important aspect of an effective teacher is relational.

Pay for performance (General). Most of the teachers indicated that they were not motivated by money. Mark suggested that those who become teachers know that the money is not the best. That is not why they go into teaching. Philip pointed out that he actively pursued being a better teacher even before this model was implemented. Nick stated, "I don't work here because I need a job, anybody can get a job. I work here because I believe in what this community is about and what they are trying to do." Brad said, "I feel like my colleagues are trying to get better – they are called into teaching and I do know there are a lot of people here that just want to do excellent work, so I don't know if I could link it to the pay scale."

According to Curtis he should be paid fairly. Curtis made the choice to teach in a place where Christ is talked about in the classrooms. With that choice, he realized that he is not going to be paid the market rate, but he wants to receive enough to live and still be able to minister.

Teacher's View of Effective Teaching

Master content (Typical). Ten out of the 13 teachers discussed having a solid grasp on the subject content as a requisite for being an effective teacher. Philip added, "that it is important to know the content so well that you can then begin to focus on strategies to relay that content to the students." Shona and Curtis believed that content knowledge is the first and foremost aspect of being an effective teacher.

Strong communicator (Variant). Nine teachers interviewed pointed out the importance of being able to communicate and connect with students. Mark suggested that effective teachers are passionate and then can translate that passion to their students. Curtis stressed the importance of being able to relate and communicate in a way that the students learn, feel cared for, and grow in Christ.

Love for students/relational (General). Twelve of the 13 teachers interviewed replied that a love for students is required to be an effective teacher. Laura voiced,

> When I was talking to a young teacher during her first semester . . . she was crying all the time; she was miserable. We were talking after school one day and she said how long have you been doing this? I told her how many years it had been. She asked why have you lasted so long. I stopped and I thought about it: Oh, I love kids! She replied, Oh, I love physics. I think that was the difference. That to me is the thing that makes an effective teacher – loving kids.

Dale and Nick both believed that the first aspect about being an effective teacher is that they possess a love for their students.

Called/Spiritual passion (General). Curtis claimed that effective teachers in a Christian school should help students grow in Christ. Dale mentioned that as a Believer, she feels called to the instruction of their heart and soul and that is just as important as instructing student's mind. Barb suggested that effective teachers have the "it" factor and that "it" is a God-given gift. MCA teachers are passionate about their calling to teach.

Professional development (General). All of the teachers mentioned the importance of continued learning in order to be an effective teacher. Teaching requires constant learning. Many mentioned that effective teachers stay up with current teaching styles and are actively seeking out new techniques. Laura claimed that effective teachers have to evaluate and re-evaluate continually. During the focus group, teachers mentioned that the administrative team has emphasized assessments, differentiation, and curriculum mapping. This encouraged them to grow in those areas.

Mentoring/collaborating (Variant). Mark admitted that when he spends time with other faculty members, he is pushed to excel and to continue growing spiritually and professionally. Philip agreed and said that he feels the accountability with other teachers and it pushes him to be better. Andrew shared that effective teachers collaborate; he went on to share that MCA does a great job of collaborating within their departments. The schedule at MCA included collaborative time weekly.

Relationships

Administration. Half of the teachers interviewed stated that they really trust the administration at MCA. Nick mentioned, "They have invested in me—money to travel, money to go to conferences, and money to buy classroom supplies—these types of things create an attitude that removes the fear factor and this process seems sincere." Brad claimed that he genuinely trusts the administrative team. Dan stated that the administrators already had established trust from the faculty prior to this model being implemented.

Even though the teachers trust their administration, 11 felt that this model did change their relationship with them. Shona stated, “This model has put a divide between me and the administrators – I don’t feel as comfortable in that way – professionally.” Brad shared the relationship between him and the administrators changed in that he is observed more often and at times does not always feel like they are there simply to help him become better. Curtis said there was a negative emotional reaction toward the administration when this was first implemented, but now he attempts to ignore the model. Philip and Barb commented that they now do not feel as free to share their opinion and ideas because they want to be seen as really good teachers. They now see their administration as evaluators and in control of the amount they are paid.

Department heads. Dale felt that this performance pay model did not change her relationship with her department head, but she attributed this to having a fabulous, experienced, mature department head. Shari felt that her department head became her advocate. Barb claimed that she is still able to brainstorm with her department head.

As a department head, Andrew admitted that his role has become more strenuous. “They know that I am either talking about them or evaluating them with the administration, so now I am not just seen as that guy, now I am seen as someone who can potentially be impacting their pay.” The role of the department head is no longer just to support and help; they now play a part in determining their salary along with the administration.

Faculty. Philip mentioned that he has become great friends with other faculty members and that provides him with accountability and mentorship. Shari commented that as a faculty, implementing this model did not get in the way of their collaboration. They met weekly with their department to discuss aspects of their teaching and ways to improve. During the focus group, Laura shared that this administration has an “intense focus on curricular adhesiveness and cohesiveness and faculty are not just doing their own thing.”

Dale shared that this model has added a “level of, well, you can’t help but think at times, I wonder what category they fit into.” Brad shared that he believes the culture of the faculty and staff changed when this model was implemented. When asked if he felt the change was good or bad, he said it really was both. Barb mentioned that the morale of the faculty changed, and she feels it is due to the pressure placed upon them.

Students. Students have the opportunity to fill out teacher surveys. Brad is glad that the administration asks students for input, but he also mentioned that he hopes it only counts a small portion of their overall evaluation. However, he did mention that he is not a big fan of any survey that does not have their name on it. Mark referenced the student input as invaluable.

Andrew shared that at times during the year when he is trying to get students to learn, they are not having the best relationships, so those students then submit bad feedback. Shona seemed frustrated that she is evaluated based upon what her students say and not on what they do. She mentioned that her students have asked her if she could get fired because of what they say on the surveys. Her response was to down play that, but she stated that she is not sure if that could happen or not. She also mentioned that student surveys are better when you teach the older students, but she feels bad for the teachers of the freshmen, who are not as mature and are taking more required classes.

Nick strongly disagreed with the student surveys. He stated, “I think anonymous feedback with no accountability for the one giving feedback is not healthy, and it is not biblical. It upsets me that we empower students to do that – I understand wanting to give them a voice.”

Philip mentioned that students always have a bone to pick with him. One student told him that he needed to be careful because he would "tank" the student survey on him.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the results from conducting interviews with teachers under a pay for performance model at a Christian High School. In addition to the summary and discussion from the data collected, the limitations, implications, and recommendations for further study will be presented.

Summary of the Findings

This study analyzed teachers' views about teaching in a Christian school that uses a pay for performance model. In response to the first research question, all 13 teachers answered that they would not want to go back to their previous method of step and ladder payment schedule. They recognized the limitations from increasing pay simply based upon gaining another year of experience. Andrew shared, "I looked at the pay scale and I could see what I would make in 15 years based upon what I was doing and that was not exciting to me." Brad suggested that good teachers leave the profession because they cannot make it with the slow and small increase in pay from year to year.

The research participants recognized that both the performance pay and step and ladder models have negative aspects and all agreed that receiving an increase in their salary overshadowed the negative components of the pay for performance model. One complaint regarding the process of pay for performance is the complexity of the evaluation that determines the pay rate. The complexity leads to confusion and lack of understanding by the teachers. Another negative is the subjectivity, leaving the teachers in the hands of the administration's opinions. However, despite these negative aspects, this method resulted in an increase in salary for the teachers. These Christian teachers did not enter into teaching for the money, but they need money in order to live and continue in ministry. Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the various aspects of the process but they liked the result of receiving a higher wage.

Motivation. In response to the second research question, none of the teachers interviewed mentioned money when asked what motivates them.   All 13 interviewed spoke about wanting to do their best, wanting to help their students, and the joy they experienced in learning and teaching. They are intrinsically motivated and money or other external stimulators do not motivate them. Most of the teachers mentioned that they would have continued improving as a teacher without the pay for performance model.

Rothstein (2008a) came to the conclusion that just because “intrinsic motivation plays a large role in teaching does not imply that extrinsic (monetary) rewards are not also very important” (p. 76). The importance of these extrinsic motivators, however, does not grow so much that it begins to overtake the intrinsic motivations. Brad suggested that the increase of money they receive is not large enough to take over their motivation for what they are doing as teachers. Many of the other MCA teachers suggested that even though they were initially enamored by increased pay, they returned to their calling as being a primary motivation for doing well.

When this model was first introduced, it had a negative impact. Teachers interviewed suggested that this model generated internal conflict for them. They wanted to focus on doing their best, and they were asked to focus on boxes that would move them up in status and in salary. In fact, Shona and Laura felt that it had generated de-motivation in either them or other teachers. Many participants shared how they worked through the process and then mentally returned to their mission and calling.

Instructional effectiveness. In response to the third research question, MCA teachers were reluctant to claim that the pay for performance model should be given sole credit for instructional improvement. Three teachers declared that they became better teachers while teaching under this pay for performance model. Other teachers stated that this model has emphasized some teaching techniques for the entire school to work on together. Laura suggested that filling out the self-evaluation forces the teachers to think about some basic aspects of teaching like assessing and pre-assessing. Andrew recalled how he selects a few of the boxes as his goals for the year. Shari shared that the evaluation provides specific areas that she needs to work at improving. “Rather than just saying, ‘you need to be a better teacher,’ they say, ‘improve in this category or that category’ – so in a sense, that motivates me.”

Philip explained that teachers are categorized on the different levels based upon the evidence they provide. In order to continue moving up within the levels, specific evidence must be submitted along with their self-evaluation. He went on to explain how he then sets goals based upon those boxes and that became his focus. “The theory is that once I achieve those goals and have those boxes checked, then I am a better teacher.”

Relationships. In response to the final research question, MCA teachers shared that relationships have changed due to the implementation of this model. First, the overall relationship between administrators and teachers has become less open. Teachers guard what they share because they do not want their administrators to see them as struggling. Teachers are cautious and no longer want to brainstorm ideas if that might cause them to be viewed or judged differently when it comes time to do their evaluation. Shona stated that this model has put a divide between her and the administrators.

Most of the teachers stated that their relationships with their colleagues did not change. Jason mentioned that it did not change because they really do not discuss each other's evaluation and amount of money they make. Shona felt that the faculty had already established their solid working relationships and that the introduction of this model did not create any divisiveness. Participants reported that this model did not enhance collaborative efforts but it did not hinder them either. Observations were mixed as far as feeling that the relationship between their colleagues and department heads had changed.

In regard to their relationship with the students, these teachers questioned their own motives when dealing with students. Are they being driven by their desire to help them learn or because they want to check off another box in their evaluation grid? When students shared praise toward their teachers, again they struggled with wanting that information to reach their administrator.

Another tense aspect generated from this model has been the student surveys. Students have openly threatened to "tank the surveys" and have asked if they could cause teachers to be fired. Several of the MCA teachers felt like the student surveys should not be anonymous.

Findings Related to Literature and Theories

Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the MCA teachers touched on aspects of all five basic levels. MCA is a stable environment where teachers respect each other and are offered professional development. Hoy and Miskel (2008) believe that people focus on the five basic levels in order of hierarchy. MCA does a great job of supporting their teachers to reach the highest level, but then through the use of the pay for performance plan, the teachers are forced back to the first basic level. MCA teachers mentioned pushing the boxes, checklist, and other such factors out of their minds so that they could focus on their goal, the students.

In talking with the teachers of MCA, there are motivators that result in creating an environment that satisfied their teachers. These motivators are due to the support they feel from administration to continue improving as teachers. They are encouraged and given the opportunity to attend conferences, visit other schools, and to try new teaching techniques. The teachers mentioned their collaborative efforts challenged them to be better teachers. This is an illustration of Herzberg's motivators creating satisfaction and motivation. Herzberg (1987) believes that extrinsic motivation is really movement rather than motivation and is seen as hygiene factors. The pay for performance model does not motivate the teachers out of a desire to earn more money, but it does provide goals for teachers to work toward. MCA teachers mentioned that the pay for performance model does provide specific areas for them to strive to improve.

Looking at this model through the lens of the expectancy theory, expectancy occurs when teachers observe their efforts reaching certain goals or improving student achievement (Milanowski, 2000). Vroom (1964) assumes that behavior results from choices and that a person's performance will be based upon their individual personality, knowledge, and abilities. He depicts this through expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy is affected by having the right skills, time, and support to accomplish whatever task (Ball, n.d.). It was evident that MCA teachers feel support from their administration. They are encouraged to continue in professional development, and they are given time within their weekly schedule to collaborate.

The concept of instrumentality is the belief that how you perform will result in a certain outcome. Ball (n.d.) suggests that this is affected by having clear understanding about how the reward relates to the performance, trust in those making the decisions about the reward, and transparency concerning the process. MCA teachers have the trust in their administration, but it was consistent that the teachers do not have a clear understanding about how this process results in certain amounts of money.

Finally, valence is how much a person values the outcome (Vroom, 1964). When looking at the model used at MCA, if the outcome is just the money, then the teachers make it clear that is not something they value. However, the teachers value becoming the best teacher they can be and they genuinely desire to invest in their students in a positive way.

The teachers at MCA are self-motivated just as Ryan and Deci (2000b) suggested. This model also aligns with Deci's (2009) view that change will occur once people recognize its importance. MCA teachers believe in becoming better teachers, and they believe in the school's mission and purpose. Their pay for performance model has incorporated many aspects that are associated with effective teaching. The SDT perspective suggests the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci, 2009). Many of the teachers at MCA talked about having autonomy in their classroom and how important that was to them.

Implications for Christian and Non-Christian Schools

According to Ballou (2001), merit pay is used more by private schools than public schools. His survey indicated stronger support from teachers in private schools for merit pay. Ballou (2001) posits that this support from private school teachers "reflects their appreciation of the positive-sum aspect of merit bonuses" (p. 57). He claims that another reason could be the type of teachers drawn to private schools.

> Private schools attract teachers with a more entrepreneurial bent, who are drawn to an environment in which there are fewer bureaucratic constraints and more opportunity to take the initiative in the classroom. Such individuals may be more willing to see compensation based on an assessment of their performance (Ballou, 2001, p. 57.)

A review of the literature along with the insights from this study suggests a few implications worthy of consideration when contemplating designing a pay for performance model. Learning from others is essential; Rothstein (2008a) warns educators not to be ignorant of the literature available when it comes time to make decisions and adjustments about performance pay plans.

Leadership

The majority of the MCA teachers cited their trust in the administrative team. The leaders at MCA had already established a level of trust prior to implementing their pay for performance model. It is important to have the right leaders in place for change to take place. "The fact is that people prefer habitual ways of doing things to new ways, and the deepest habits of people are embodied in the structure and the culture of the organizations where they live out their lives" (Schlechty, 2001, p. 163). Schlechty (2001) goes on to say that the most important thing a leader can do while making changes is to offer support. The administrators at MCA support their teachers. As evidence, during the interviews, MCA teachers said they felt supported, and they mentioned providing input during the initial investigatory phase of this plan. They also shared how after the first year, they were given a survey to collect their opinions and ideas about the performance plan model.

Funding Availability

Rothstein (2008a) suggests that a flaw has been that educational policy makers have not been aware of the costs of certain types of pay for performance models. Research suggests that the better type of pay for performance is when everyone has the opportunity to reach a certain level. However, this will require the amount of available funds to remain flexible until all the evaluations are finished. MCA has experienced this deficit as a few of their teachers received only a percentage of the amount they were eligible to receive. They revised their model so that the mathematical formula was no longer visible to their teachers. This revision apparently helped to resolve the original problem, but then created a different problem, which was the unclear connection to dollar amount for teachers.

Other pay for performance models that involve a limited and fixed pool of money creates competition among the faculty. “Teachers competed with one another for merit dollars that were in short supply, thus diminishing prospects for professional collaboration” (Koppich, 2008, p. 9). Therefore, it is important to have sufficient financial resources available prior to implementing any pay for performance model in order to reward every teacher that meets established performance standards. Perkins-Gough (2007) attributed most of failed pay for performance attempts to lack of funds.

Multifaceted Model

“Teachers’ jobs are complex and multidimensional, and we know very little about how to objectively and accurately quantify their productivity” (Goldhaber, 2009, p. 2). With that in mind, it is vital to design a performance pay model that attempts to observe various aspects of a teacher. Heneman et al. (2007) claimed that successful performance pay models would include teacher professional skills, teacher classroom behavior, and instructional desired outcomes. The MCA model primarily evaluates the teacher’s skills and classroom performance from classroom observations, surveys, department head interactions, and self-evaluations.

The MCA pay for performance model does not include test scores or specific measures of student achievement. Figlio and Kenny (2007) studied the relationship between merit pay and student performance and found that student performance was higher in schools using merit pay. However, they stated that it,

> could reflect students learning more in schools in which the use of merit pay is correlated with more innovation in teaching, for example, and in which higher student achievement is due to the innovation in teaching but not to the use of merit pay. (Figlio & Kenny, 2007, p. 913).

In Marsh and McCaffrey's (2011) study on school performance, however, bonuses showed no improvement in student achievement. They concluded that school performance bonus programs (SPBP) lacked certain needed conditions. "Financial rewards might not have motivated teachers to change because of how the rewards were viewed and because other factors are more salient to teachers" (Marsh & McCaffrey, 2011, p. 56).

Teacher Involvement

According to Perkins-Gough (2007) performance pay models have a better chance of success when teachers are involved in the planning and implementation stages. Marsh and McCaffrey (2011) suggest that teachers must buy-in and truly support the goals in order to be willing to work toward that goal. During the interviews associated with this study, some of the teachers mentioned being part of a committee that was allowed to have some input of the upcoming model. MCA involved their teachers in the planning and implementation of their performance pay model.

School Vision and Mission

During the interviews, it was evident that the MCA teachers support the MCA vision and mission: Relationships, Excellence, and Service to the Glory of God. The MCA pay for performance model is aligned with their school mission. Koppich (2008) claimed that pay for performance models must be structured to meet the specific goals of each school system. There should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. "Each recognizes that context matters, that no single model of teacher pay is appropriate to all settings or circumstances" (Koppich, 2008, p. 24). MCA believes that "your compensation plan must match your school philosophy" (MCA booklet, p. 9).

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this phenomenological study were limited due to the selection of one specific Christian school. Schools have their own school culture and identity so what works in one school might not work in another. Schools need to adjust to their specific culture and desired outcomes.

Interviews bring a level of bias from the interviewee and interviewer. Even though it appeared that MCA teachers shared their honest feeling and opinions, their bias might still have played a part in their answers. For example, teachers may answer in a way to portray them as caring individuals and not as people driven by money. During the interview, every attempt was made by the interviewer to not ask leading questions but the inexperience of the interviewer could have limited this research. The means of data from interviews is interpreting the words gathered from the interviewees.

Another limitation is that the participation pool was limited to teachers still teaching at MCA. If teachers left MCA because of their dissatisfaction with the implementation of the pay for performance model, their voice was not part of this study. This would create a bias in that only teachers willing to remain at MCA after the implementation of their performance plan was interviewed.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study was limited to a single Christian school using a pay for performance model. The following additional lines of research inquiry could help to validate and quantify the findings generated by this study:

1. It would be advisable to study other schools using pay for performance models and to compare the various models used. Are there recurring factors correlated with models that schools are successfully using?
2. Are certain institutional culture similarities among schools having success with their pay for performance plans?
3. Although the implications provided in this study may be applicable to educators in both Christian and non-Christian schools. It could be highly instructive to compare and contrast pay for performance models between Christian schools and public schools. For example, the Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI), which has been implemented in the Dallas school districts, bears many similarities to MCA's model. Both models place teachers in different payment levels according to a variety of means. TEI's model, however, includes student test score whereas MCA's includes teacher portfolios and self-evaluation. Teachers in public school typically receive higher compensation than their Christian school counterparts, but some believe that public school teachers must deal with more student discipline and less parent involvement. It would be interesting to see if the teachers in these two pay for performance models perceive the value and conditions of pay for performance models according to the same or different criteria.
4. This study involved a school where the administrators exercise primary leadership in the implementation of the pay for performance program. They were the ones behind the

scene planning and working on this model. While some teachers were involved in the process, the administrators spear headed this initiative. An interesting alternative study might explore the differences in a model that was primarily developed with teachers driving the initiative.

5. Another worthwhile study of successful pay for performance models might focus on the means of funding their models. This study revealed that funding became a problem and the percentage of increase had to be adjusted so as to correlate with available funding. The teachers were not fully aware of the way money was raised in order to pay for their increases. Additional research could be useful in helping to discover how much funding is required in order to optimize the effectiveness of pay for performance plans in actually producing the desired incentive effects and the ways schools are generating the money to support their pay for performance plans.
6. It would be beneficial to study various teacher motivation and performance conditions in a school prior to implementing a performance model and then during and after implementation of a pay for performance plan. The plan could be similar to the one used at MCA or it could be specific to the school.
7. This study revealed that teachers do not want to return to the previous pay method. Would the same attitudes be observed in cases where the MCA model is implemented at other schools?
8. Finally, this study considered exclusively the view of the teachers. A couple of the teachers mentioned that they would not want to be administrators having to determine the category of the teachers. Thus, it would be beneficial to hear from administrators. What

> is their view about carrying out the performance models? It would also be helpful to compare the attitudes of the teachers and principals.

It should thus be evident that the usefulness of this study could be greatly extended by further research along the lines suggested above and, no doubt, others. Further confirmation of this study's findings and the contributions that the findings of this study and others like it have generated could lead to valuable advances in understanding this significant factor as it relates to the ultimate goal of providing education for the next generation.

Conclusion

Previously it was mentioned that the method of paying teachers has primarily remained stagnant utilizing the single salary schedule. However, the single salary schedule,

> treats all teachers as if they're the same, offering few rewards for stellar accomplishments and few consequences for underperformance. It makes little provision for areas of need or shortage, and it provides little incentive for teachers to improve their practice. In short, the single salary schedule produces neither professionally competitive nor market-sensitive salaries. (Koppich, 2010, p. 23)

Pay for performance methods have proven to have flaws. This study listened to teachers at a school using performance pay. MCA teachers were quick to point out that they did not enter the teaching profession for money. The reasons they provided were consistent with the research – their desire to inspire and connect with young people and to see those light bulb moments happen. These teachers stated that with or without merit pay, they would have continued improving in order to better educate their students. To them, pay for performance is a way for administration to reward effective teachers. The plan provides a way for teachers to set goals to work toward.

Pay for performance should not be viewed as a way to bribe teachers into doing more or performing better. “Rather, rethinking pay can help make employees feel valued, make the teaching profession more attractive to potential entrants, and signal that professional norms are displacing those of the industrial model” (Hess, 2010, p. 52). MCA teachers unanimously appreciated the increase in pay. MCA has been using their performance pay plan since 2010. According to their teachers, regardless of a few flaws, they would not want to return to their previous single salary schedule.

This research has shown that in order for pay for performance to be successful, the general idea of pay for performance must be taken and adapted into a program that is specific to the culture and needs of the school utilizing the plan. While pay for performance can communicate value and appreciation to teachers, there are many factors that can cause the same model to not be sustainable (Levin, 2011). It is understandable how without the right team of individuals developing and implementing the plan, this step toward positive re-enforcement and increased salaries for teachers can turn in an opposite direction. Many schools are either not willing or not capable of pouring the many hours of time and energy that it takes to develop a pay for performance program that fits their specific needs and a poorly thought-out plan will not survive implementation; this is one of the causes for the tenuous relationship that the pay for performance plan has had with the educational community for many years.

After spending time interviewing teachers concerning their thoughts about pay for performance, trust in their administration seems to be a key factor in the successful implementation of the pay for performance plan. The subjective nature of the pay for performance model as well as the sensitive subject of pay requires trust. Alvy and Robbins (2010) suggest “building trust is critical for leaders at every level to accomplish organizational goals” (p. 56). The MCA administrators were successful with implementing the pay for performance plan because they had already established a foundation of trust. “Leaders who inspire trust garner better output, morale, retention, innovation, loyalty, and revenue, while mistrust fosters skepticism, frustration, low productivity, lost sales, and turnover” (Horsager, 2012, para. 1).

The MCA teachers described trusting their administration and sensing their genuine desire to make decisions in their best interest. During this study, it was evident that the administration trusted their teachers by their willingness to allow their participation. In fact, one teacher shared during the interview that she “was surprised they gave my name to be interviewed because I have been vocal about the things I don’t like about it.” The administration trusts their teachers, which fosters reciprocal trust in this important relationship. While the path to success with pay for performance may be narrow, great benefit can be achieved when administrators take the opportunity to make educator salaries a priority with this teacher-focused program.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 11, 2014

Dana Gayle Dionne
IRB Approval Number: 1769.021114: Phenomenological Study: Perception of Teachers at a Christian High School Toward Performance Pay

Dear Dana,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

[redacted]

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Appendix B: Permission Granted from School

Head of School & Principal
Dear Dr. XXXX and Mr. XXXX:

As a graduate student in the Education Department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership.

The title of my research project is PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS AT A CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL TOWARD PERFORMANCE PAY and the purpose of my research is to delve into the thoughts, perceptions, and personal experiences of teachers at a Christian high school in order to understand their perspective of pay for performance.

This study will focus on teachers' opinions about how pay for performance influences their motivation, instructional methods and collaborative efforts. I am writing to request your official permission to conduct my research at XXXXX Academy. My study requires some of your teachers to be willing to participate in this study. For the convenience of your teachers, I would conduct the interviews on your campus. I will be using an audio recording device during the interviews. Once I have conducted the interviews, I will then ask for volunteers to participate in a focus group. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time. Your school name and your teachers' names will not be used and will be kept confidential.

I believe this data will assist other school desiring to implement a pay for performance model. Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide me with a statement on school letterhead indicating your approval or respond by email. I look forward to working with you and your teachers. My desire is to come sometime during this school year. I will gladly work around your schedule.

Sincerely,
Dana G. Dionne

Appendix C: Permission Granted from School

Monday, February 10, 2014

To: Dana Dionne
From: [redacted]

Re: Request to Interview [redacted] Academy Teachers

Dear Dana,

I would like to confirm my permission has been granted for you to interview [redacted] Academy teachers as part of your dissertation. We look forward to welcoming you on campus in March for the interviews. I believe that the dates you mentioned will work with our school calendar. Please connect with my assistant, [redacted] to discuss those details.
Please let me know if there is anything additional that we can help you with.

Warm Regards,

[redacted]
Principal

Appendix D: Script for Principal

Script for principal to use with his teachers:

I would like to give you some information about an opportunity to participate in a study on performance pay. As a school, we have openly shared information with other schools about the performance pay plan that we use and now there is an opportunity for you to share your personal feelings regarding performance pay. Recently, a doctoral candidate from Liberty University, who is studying performance pay as her dissertation topic, contacted us to ask for our help. The following is information from her:

The purpose of this project is to explore the thoughts, perceptions, and personal experiences of teachers concerning their views about performance pay. Since you teach at a school that uses a performance pay plan, you are being asked to consider participating in this research study. The following central questions will guide this study:

1. Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a better method of pay than the traditional single salary schedule?
2. To what extent and in what ways do teachers perceive pay for performance has influenced or altered their motivation?
3. Do teachers perceive pay for performance as a means to improve their instructional effectiveness resulting in increased student learning?
4. How do teachers perceive pay for performance affects their relationship with their colleagues, administrators, and students?

The majority of current research has used questionnaires and surveys to obtain the overall views and feelings concerning pay for performance from educators. Some of those educators were not directly involved in pay for performance plans. This study will target teachers in an environment using pay for performance. This first-hand information will assist other schools seeking to incorporate a pay for performance plan.

Here are a couple of things to keep in mind:

- Pseudonyms will be used to ensure confidentiality.
- You may opt out of the study at any time.
- Participants will be interviewed in person in a location on our campus. The interview will last about 45 minutes and will be recorded.
- Participation in this study will be voluntary and your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with our school.
- At least 15 teachers are needed to participate in the interviews.
- For those that participate in the interviews, there will be an opportunity to participate in a focus group which will last about 45 minutes and will also take place on our campus.
- You will be asked to fill out a consent form before participating in the interviews.

In the next day or so, you will be receiving an email from Dana Dionne, the Liberty doctoral student. This email will include a questionnaire for you to fill out and return via email. She will review the questionnaires to see who meets the criteria for participation. You will be notified via email if you are chosen to be a participant and at that time will sign a consent form. As your employer, I will not be involved in the study and will not know which of you participate and what information you share. This is a time for you to share your voice and opinions to help other schools and we encourage your participation.

Appendix E: Email to Teachers

Dear Teacher,

Your administrator, XXXX, recently introduced you to my research topic and the possibility of your being a part of helping complete my study. It is exciting that your school has been using pay for performance for the past couple of years and my desire is for other schools to be able to learn from your school. I am a graduate student in the Education Department at Liberty University and I will be conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. The title of my research is Phenomenological Study: Perception of Teachers at a Christian High School Toward Performance Pay. The purpose of my research is to delve into the thoughts, perceptions, and personal experiences of teachers at a Christian high school in order to understand their perspective of pay for performance. My study will focus on teachers' opinions about how pay for performance influences their motivation, instructional methods, and collaborative efforts. I would love for you to be part of my research! I am asking for all teachers to read and sign the attached consent form prior to completing the questionnaire. If possible, please sign the form and return it via email. If you are unable to scan and email the form, you may save a copy of the attached consent form, type your name and date on the form, and check the box. Email a copy to ddionne@liberty.edu. After doing that, please fill out the attached questionnaire and return it to me via email so that I may assess whether you are a candidate for this study. If you meet the criteria and are selected as a participant, I will email you and let you know. I will include the dates that I will be on campus and together we will work out a convenient time for your 45-minute interview (right now the plan is to be on your campus March 17-20). Participants will also be given the opportunity to participate in a 45-minute focus group, which will take place on the campus of your school. Interviews and the focus group will be recorded. Participants' identities will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used when reporting the information. I would so appreciate it if each of you would take the time to fill out the attached questionnaire and return it to me.

If you have specific questions, please feel free to email me.

Dana G Dionne
ddionne@liberty.edu

Appendix F: Questionnaire

Name: ____ Date: _____________

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow

Number of children: ________________

1. What degrees have you obtained and from where?

2. How many total years have you been teaching?

3. How many total years have you been teaching at XXXXXX Academy?

4. What is your current position at XXXXX Academy?

5. At how many different schools have you been employed?

6. Are you involved in any extracurricular activities? If so, please list the activity and your role.

7. If you had to describe your current school's method of payment to another teacher without any knowledge about your school – what would you say?

8. Would you be willing to participate in an interview?

Appendix G: Consent Form

Consent Form
Phenomenological Study: Perception of Teachers at a Christian High School
Toward Performance Pay

You are invited to be in a research study of teachers' perceptions toward performance pay. You were selected as a possible participant because you currently teach at ******* Academy, a school using a performance-pay model. Please read this form and feel free to ask any questions before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Dana G. Dionne, a doctoral candidate at Liberty University in the Department of Education.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to delve into the thoughts, perceptions, and personal experiences of teachers at a Christian high school regarding performance pay.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following:

- Fill out a questionnaire providing minimal demographic information and general statements about performance pay. It should take under ten minutes to complete the questionnaire.
- Participate in an interview on your school campus. For transcription purposes, the interview will be audio recorded and reviewed only by the researchers. The interview will last between 30 – 45 minutes and will be conducted in an area designated by the school administration.
- Participate in a focus group. For transcription purposes, the focus group will be audio recorded and reviewed only by the researchers. The focus group will last between 45 – 60 minutes and will be conducted in an area designated by the school administration.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
There is minimal risk to the participants in this research study. Great care will be taken to ensure that the identity of each participant remains confidential and that opinions provided remain anonymous.

There are no direct benefits to the participants.
The benefits to society:

- Adding to the current body of knowledge by contributing your perspective about a performance pay model.
- Assisting other schools as they consider implementing performance pay.
- Aiding a fellow educator to gain perspective on a controversial topic.

Compensation:
You will not receive any payment for your participation.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private and confidential. Any report published, will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject or school. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.
The confidentiality of the subjects will be maintained throughout the research process. Each participant will be identified only by a number when conducting the data analysis and will be referred to by a pseudonym throughout the research documentation. During the focus group, those involved in the focus group will know information shared. All collected data will be kept in a password-protected computer and paper copies will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The audio recordings will be in Evernote on a password-protected iPad. All research data will be kept for a period of three years after the conclusion of the research study. When the data is destroyed, the paper files will be shredded and the computer files will be deleted including the audio recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with ****** Academy or Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. If you choose to withdraw, your interview recording and transcription will be deleted.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Dana G. Dionne. You may ask her any questions. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at The Master's Academy, 321-356-3869 or ddionne@liberty.edu. To verify this study, you may also contact Dr. Barbara Boothe at Liberty University, 434-546-0744, bboothe@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded, and I give my consent.
(please check the box and sign below)

Signature: ____ Date: ________________

Signature of Investigator:___________________________ Date: __________________

Appendix H: Individual Interview Protocol

Opening section

1. Tell me why you became a teacher?
2. Tell me what makes an effective teacher?
3. What are some of your favorite aspects about teaching? About your school?

Main section

4. What do you do to become better at teaching? What motivates you to do what you do?
5. Describe the current model used at your school. Do you understand all aspects of the model used?
6. Describe any input that you had into the current performance model used at your school.
7. After implementation of this pay model, how did it change your salary?
8. How has this method of payment changed your attitude about teaching in any way?
9. After implementation of the current performance model, how do you feel it influenced you overall as a teacher? Has it caused you to alter your instructional practices?
10. How has your current method of payment changed the achievement you see in your students?
11. From all your years of teaching (from any school), describe the best working relationship you had with an administrator? What do you think made it so good? How about with a fellow teacher?
12. After implementation of this payment method, how did your relationships change with your peers? Your administrator? Your students?

Reflection section

13. Tell me your thoughts about the method used here. What are you favorite aspects about it? Are there any weak areas that you would rather change?
14. What are some of your favorite aspects about teaching? About your school?
15. Why did you agree to participate in this study?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about performance pay or its implications?