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Teachers' Professional Competence in Increasing Students' Interest in Learning

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Abstract

This study focuses on the influence of teacher professional competence on students' learning interest at SMK Negeri 1 Kota Jambi. The background of this study is based on the reality in the field which shows variations in students' learning interest which can be influenced by teachers' ability to manage learning. This study aims to understand the extent to which teachers' mastery of the material, pedagogical skills, and the application of effective learning methods can increase students' learning interest. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with semi-structured interview techniques for teachers and students. The study's findings demonstrated that subject-matter experts can employ a wide range of effective teaching techniques. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that fostering a favorable learning atmosphere in the classroom can boost students' motivation for learning. Children are more interested and motivated to learn when teachers employ innovative and dynamic teaching methods and establish deep emotional bonds with their students. These findings demonstrate how crucial it is to raise instructors' professional proficiency in order to provide engaging and productive learning environments for students.

Keywords: teacher professional, interest in learning

INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, teachers are crucial to implementing a successful and advantageous learning process. Teachers' professional competency is essential to learning achievement. Professional teachers' proficiency in the social context and their ability to communicate with others demonstrate their social responsibility (Fitria et al., 2019)

Teachers must have the scholastic credentials, abilities, teacher certificates, and physical and mental health required to accomplish national education goals. Teachers must possess pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence. The development of professional competence is the responsibility of educators.

Professionalism is a necessity that cannot be put off any longer, and teacher professionalism needs to be enhanced in the age of globalization due to the fiercer competition. Teachers need to give their students more creative learning opportunities if they want to become more professional. Professional competencies include the following: 1) comprehending the curriculum's structure and content; 2) comprehending the science's content and methods; 3) arranging the curriculum's resources; and 4) carrying out action research in the classroom to raise learning standards ((Kristiawan & Rahmat, 2018)

Competencies include mastering instructional materials, comprehending what pupils are learning, and developing and implementing effective teaching strategies. Real-world data indicates that there is a wide range of learning interests among students. This is explained by differences in how well teachers plan lessons. Because learning interests are directly tied to students' motivation, involvement, and learning outcomes, literature studies demonstrate that seasoned teachers are better equipped to select and implement teaching strategies that meet the requirements and characteristics of their students.

This study focuses on the use of learning methods because it has been demonstrated that

interactive, varied, and contextual learning approaches can increase student participation in the learning process and that effective learning methods are positively correlated with increased student interest in lessons. However, there is still a lack of research on the direct relationship between teacher professional competence and student learning interest, particularly at the elementary and secondary education levels. It is believed that this research would aid in the creation of educational policies, particularly by assisting educators in improving their ability to create more stimulating learning environments and motivate students to engage.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to understand and describe in depth how teacher professional competence plays a role in increasing student learning interest at SMK Negeri 1 Kota Jambi. At SMK Negeri 1 Kota Jambi in 2025, this study involved students and teachers as the main sources. Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data, both directly and electronically. While virtual interviews were done via virtual communication platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp, which were tailored to the informant's availability and circumstances, direct interviews took place at the school. This approach was selected to guarantee that the data gathering procedure may be modified while still yielding precise and comprehensive data.

Teachers' and students' interviews provided both primary and secondary data for this study. Supporting documentation, including lesson plans, school profiles, syllabuses, and student attendance records, provided secondary data. The research informants were chosen using the purposive sampling technique. Students from different majors who dared to speak and had high or low learning interests were chosen, as were teachers with more than three years of experience who actively taught in the classroom.

Thematic analysis methods will be used to look at the data collected from the interviews. Data reduction is the initial stage of the analytical process. In this step, the most significant material from the interview findings is chosen, presented as a quote or narrative, and conclusions are made based on the themes that surface. Source triangulation procedures, which compare student and instructor data with prior records, were employed to guarantee the veracity of the data. To make sure that the data recorded matches that supplied by the sources, member checking, or reconfirmation, was also carried out with informants, either in person or via online chat.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

According to the findings of the interviews, teachers work very hard to make the class enjoyable and beneficial. Teachers stressed that in order to present the topic and make it easy for pupils to learn, they must have a solid comprehension of the subject matter. Furthermore, they concluded that different teaching methods have to be used. Group projects, the use of instructional resources, and contextual approaches that connect the lesson to the students' everyday lives are some examples of these tactics. These teachers also underlined how crucial it is to establish a positive emotional bond with kids in order to foster a relaxed and comfortable learning environment. They acknowledged that when students feel valued and are not afraid to ask questions, the learning process goes better. This demonstrates the utilization of professional competence in the classroom.

Professional competency, according to Syahrudin in Araini (2018) entails knowing the subject matter, employing the appropriate delivery strategy, and adjusting to the circumstances of the learner. In addition to having a thorough mastery of the subject matter, teachers are skilled in delivering lessons in a way that will grab students' interest and encourage participation. According to Law Number 14 of 2005, professional competence encompasses both a broad and in-depth understanding of the subject area.

(Tin, 2013) argument, which claims that situational interest that results from instructor zeal and the material's relevance to students' needs can likewise fuel learning interest, lends credence to this issue. Furthermore, the results of the interviews revealed that learning problems are frequently experienced by students when the classroom environment is uncomfortable, the teaching methodology is repetitive, or they are fatigued and not paying attention to the lesson. Additionally, pupils find it difficult to focus when lecturers merely impart theoretical knowledge without engaging them directly. When teachers make learning activities engaging and enjoyable, students are more likely to stay engaged and motivated.

According to Gary and Margaret in (Araniri, 2018), professional competent teachers are those who can enhance student qualifications, use appropriate learning strategies, create a fun learning environment, and provide feedback. This demonstrates that teachers need to be able to develop interactive, creative, and appropriate learning strategies for the classroom environment in addition to having a solid understanding of the material.

According to the findings of student interviews, a welcoming classroom environment, a variety of enjoyable teaching strategies, and the manner in which instructors present their lessons all have a significant impact on students' motivation to study. If the instructor is clear, engaging, and connects the lesson to real-world situations, students will be more eager to learn. Activities like group projects, practical experience, conversations, and the usage of media like pictures or films are also beneficial to them. Students also stated that praising professors and receiving good scores can boost their motivation to learn. Showing concern and providing emotional support, such as applauding or encouraging their work, makes teachers feel content and inspired.

The findings indicate that a wide range of internal and external influences affect students' motivation to learn. The teacher's function as a facilitator of learning is the most crucial. The professional competency of teachers and the learning interests of pupils both clearly influence the quality of learning. Therefore, it can be said that teachers who are proficient in the subject matter, have a good understanding of their students' needs, can develop a variety of pertinent learning strategies, and build strong emotional bonds with their students will be more successful in igniting their interest in learning than those who are professionally competent.

CONCLUSION

According to this study, SMK Negeri 1 Kota Jambi students' growing enthusiasm in learning is significantly influenced by the professional competency of the teachers. It has been demonstrated that teachers who are proficient with the teaching materials, can employ a variety of teaching strategies that suit the needs of their students, and can establish a welcoming and pleasurable learning environment can boost students' motivation and engagement in the process of learning. According to field research, students are more likely to be engaged, passionate, and active in class when teachers employ innovative and interactive teaching strategies like project-based learning, give constructive criticism, and strengthen their bonds with one another.

However, dull instruction and little engagement might make pupils feel disinterested and bored. Two key elements that boost kids' motivation to learn are a positive classroom environment and a positive interaction between teachers and students. As a result, enhancing teacher professional competence requires not just content mastery but also interpersonal and instructional skills. According to this study, enhancing teachers' professional competency is crucial for creating engaging, purposeful learning opportunities and inspiring students to take an active, independent role in their education.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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