

**PERFORMANCE PAY FOR TEACHERS: A
COMPARATIVE MULTI-CASE STUDY**

A Record of Study

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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December 2015

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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ABSTRACT

Voluminous studies of performance-based compensation for teachers have been conducted to ascertain the dynamics of programs that are successful in improving teacher effectiveness and in turn student achievement. Few studies have concentrated on what the perceptions of teachers are on performance-based compensation models and what they consider fair and equitable components and structures of such models.

This study surveyed four school districts that had the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) model and four school districts that did not have a performance pay model associated with their school districts. The research questions that guided the study were: “How do teachers in TAP school districts perceive the performance pay components of TAP?” and “How do teachers in non-performance pay schools perceive performance pay program components?” and finally, “How do these two groups of teachers’ perceptions compare to one another about performance pay models?”

Comparing the findings from the data analysis, both the TAP and non-TAP districts agreed that performance pay components might cause resentment among staff members, undermine staff morale, and create an atmosphere where teachers would be less willing to assist colleagues.

Focus group interviews were conducted at three campuses from a TAP school district to gain in-depth insight on how teachers really perceived the components of the specific program implementation in their school district. Four themes emerged from the data analysis of the focus group interviews: (a) transparency and communication of

procedures, (b) reliability of observations and evaluations of teachers, (c) additional workload for teachers not worth the extra pay, and (d) increased professional development worthwhile.

While studies show that implementation of the TAP program with fidelity has increased student achievement based on test scores, the results of this study suggested that performance pay components within the surveyed schools was not a favorable way of increasing teacher pay. Future research should include compensation models that can be constructed without using test scores as a major component and increasing the amount of teacher input to construct the program.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my beautiful wife of 30 years, Debbi. You have encouraged me to keep going and “get it done.” Thank you and I love you more. To my daughters, Sammi, Syndi, Andi, and Kalli, for their willingness to let dad “do his homework” and to my grand babies, Jamisyn, Hutton, and Graisyn, who were all born during my program of study at Texas A&M, I love you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Lori Taylor, Dr. Vicente Lechuga, and Dr. Robert Muller for their guidance through my educational journey. A special thank you to Dr. Beverly Irby for her expertise and unwavering support with my study. I could not have done it without your assistance. To my friends and colleagues in the 2012 cohort, a heartfelt thanks for your support and encouraging words. It truly was an exercise in persistence, and you all helped me keep going.

I would also like to thank my current superintendent Michelle Carroll Smith and Dr. Randy Ewing of Lytle ISD for supporting my goal of completing my doctoral program. To Joyce Nelson whose knowledge of the process kept me from missing deadlines and on track to complete my program, you are the best. Finally, to Marilyn Oliva of Action Ink, thank you for your expertise and professionalism in editing and formatting my work. You saved me hours of headaches and helped me realize my goal.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mrs. Pritchard (a pseudonym) surveys her fifth grade classroom of 23 students and begins her reading lesson as she has done since September. Now that it is April, she has 10 days to review and get her students ready for the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness or STAAR exam. Has she been thinking about how her students will do on the STAAR test in terms of how it will affect her bonus pay next November? Does she, in fact, really understand how the calculations are even made for her score on the printouts that come from some unknown secretive company in another state?

Mrs. Pritchard tells me that the almost \$1,500 she gets around Christmas is great, but it is not what motivated her to become a teacher and it certainly does not induce her to work harder. She already puts in countless hours a week and on weekends for her kids, and her main objective is to get little Jamisyn and Hutton along with the rest of her class to pass the test so they can move on to the sixth grade. Mrs. Pritchard's and many other stories are part of the growing trend toward paying teachers on how well their students perform on state assessments.

Performance pay for teachers, also referred to as merit or incentive pay, usually based on student tests scores, has been gaining momentum since the inception of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2002 legislation and new state accountability systems derived from Texas and sponsored by President George Bush (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Educational reformers have promoted a myriad of reasons for the

movement. Advocates of the movement believe that paying teachers for student achievement will increase student success, improve teacher motivation and reward exceptional teaching. While detractors warn of unhealthy competitiveness, disagreement on school goals, excessive budgets, and even cheating (Chamberlin, Wragg, Haynes, & Wragg, 2002), a large amount of literature has been compiled on teacher pay scales and performance-based compensation that spans hundreds of years as depicted in Chapter II.

Background

Littleton Independent School District (pseudonym) has had a performance-pay program associated with the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant program for the past 6 years using the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). The goal of the TAP program is to improve the quality of teaching in the profession and in turn improve student achievement, stating excellent teachers enhance student-learning (Solomon, 2005).

School district performance-based compensation plans in TAP include an incentive pay portion for teachers who teach STAAR-tested subjects of math and reading in grades 4 through 8 and in high school, the End-of-Course exams for English I, English II, Biology, U.S. History, and Algebra I teachers. The performance pay dollars for the STAAR-tested subject instructors are based on teacher evaluation, 50%, and value-added growth for the students in the teacher's classroom, 30%, and a school-wide score based on State assessment results, the final 20%. Not all teachers are evaluated the same in this system, meaning that teachers of other than STAAR-tested subjects receive performance pay based on 50% teacher evaluation and 50% school-wide scores. The school-wide score is based on the test scores that of the entire campus for reading and

math in grade 4 through 8 and the end-of-course exams in English I, English II, Biology, U.S. History, and Algebra I.

This may become an equity issue, as teachers who do not teach the tested subjects may earn more performance money than the ones who actually earn the school-wide score. The equity issue may arise based on the pools that the teachers are divided into by subjects taught for the performance pay portion of TAP. Teachers who teach one of the STAAR-tested subjects noted above are grouped in one small teacher pool. All the other teachers including elective teachers are grouped into another larger teacher pool. As the money for each teacher is put into the pool, \$2,000 for teachers in most TAP school districts, the pool of money for the larger group of teachers is naturally larger than the small group of STAAR-tested subject teachers. An example may be that there are 10 teachers who instruct STAAR subjects for a total of \$20,000 dollars and a group of 30 elective teachers on campus for a total of \$60,000 dollars. As the teachers earn each portion of the performance pay, some may not earn the total \$2,000, and that money is put back into the pool or redistributed. The result could be that one teacher may benefit or be given some of the redistributed funds from the underperformance of a colleague, and thus, a perceived inequity may surface within the payout models.

The term free riders comes into play as elective physical education teachers may gain more payout dollars from the inefficiency of their colleagues but through no extra work of their own. As an administrator, it is very hard to explain to a fourth grade math teacher why a high school physical education teacher and coach may receive \$2000

more dollars in bonus pay than she did. The amounts are intended to be confidential, but in small districts people talk.

Teacher Attitudes and Motivation

In reviewing the literature on teacher attitudes toward performance-based compensation, I found the discussion evolves into what motivates teachers. The consensus is that teachers do not enter into the field of education to make huge salaries, but money does matter to them. Kelley, Heneman, and Milanowski (2000) listed 17 potential outcomes for teachers, one of which was salary bonuses for meeting performance goals. When teachers were surveyed and asked to rank the 17 indicators, the pay bonus was at the top of the list along with professional satisfaction of observing student learning. The findings indicated that teachers not only value extrinsic rewards but other intrinsic success as well, including professional development that improves the quality of their teaching toolbox (Odden, & Kelley, 1996).

Farkas, Johnson, and Folen (2000) created teacher focus groups and surveyed them on how to improve teacher quality. Educators ranked the most effective ways to improve quality, and smaller class size was the number one response followed by four other responses from 50 to 60% of the teachers. Increased salary was among the four other responses. As Farkas et al. (2000) suggested, higher pay for a job well done is a motivator for teachers as it is in any other outside industry. However, other structures need to be in place for teachers to support pay-for-performance schemes as they are called in many articles.

In a report from the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR, 2011), the CECR discussed emerging issues in compensation structures and specifically details research on stakeholder attitudes and opinions on reward structures. The stakeholders include teachers, administrators, and teacher unions. The CECR indicated that stakeholder engagement and buy in are essential to the success of any differentiated compensation model.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has conveyed tentative support for certain types of different compensation plans in recent years. Moving beyond the traditional salary schedule, they have said compensation plans must include multiple measures of student outcomes and should reward both individual teachers and groups or as an entire school and would include multiple ways for teachers to earn extra incentive pay (AFT, 2010).

The National Education Association (NEA) by 2008, however, had not supported compensation plans based on student test scores as a major component of teacher eligibility for monetary rewards (Flannery & Jehlen, 2008). In addition, the NEA cautioned that before any alternative pay system could be successful in school districts, there needed to be a valid, reliable, and standards-based evaluation system in place (Little, 2009). When these characteristics are in place, the system gives the teachers a perception of fairness.

Perceived fairness of the program in addition to the values and beliefs of the teachers correlate with their attitudes toward any compensation plan being suggested. The term distributive fairness is used to describe the reasonableness of a compensation

plan based on the fairness of the components of the model. The components include the form of compensation, the dollar amount, and formula to reach the monetary reward distributed (Heneman, Milanowski, & Kimball, 2007). Heneman et al. (2007) suggested that teachers are more likely to support a program that they believe fosters change in behavior, but more importantly behaviors that they value. Some teachers who value extra effort believe that individuals that contribute more and at a higher level to the goals of the school should receive higher pay (Milanowski, 2007).

The attitude of public and private school teachers and merit pay systems was the topic of a study by Ballou (2001). Ballou surveyed private school and public school teachers to gain insight into how they felt about rewards for exceptional performance. He used results for the SASS survey from 1987 to 1988 to compile the evidence. Schools with and schools without merit pay systems in place were surveyed. Notably in schools without merit pay systems, private school teachers strongly favored bonuses for exceptional performance with 41% and public schools with only 26% strongly in favor of bonuses. In schools with merit pay plans, private school teachers also topped the list with 45% in favor of the system and public school teachers 33% in favor. From the results, it appears that support for merit pay was greater in schools that had one in place and the attitudes of the private sector were very positive in schools with or without merit pay. Public school teacher attitudes were also slightly more positive in schools with merit pay plans. Compensation plans in private schools, as noted earlier, do not have to deal with teacher unions that can stifle attempts to install alternative compensation models (Ballou, 2001).

Regardless of the presence of unions, teachers across the nation tend to agree that their primary motivator is improved student achievement. Educational systems designed to increase student achievement will therefore also enhance teacher motivation. Engaging in professional development and school-wide activities are also motivators for teachers, as are clear goals for student achievement within the school. Along with the intrinsic motivators, salary and compensation are also important. The structure of the performance-based compensation model is the determining factor in the success of the program. The research is clear on poorly structured models; they do not work and are detrimental to the educational system (Odden & Kelley, 1996).

New incentive pay plans are being tried around the country that will encompass more than a student performance measure. These plans include competitive salary levels; knowledge and skills-based pay and school performance awards. They should be viewed as a strategy to enhance student learning and advance teacher knowledge and expertise (Odden & Kelley, 1996).

Performance-based compensation models should take into account what motivates teachers, and as the research suggests and the findings of this study did confirm, is that money alone does not motivate teachers to work harder. A well-constructed plan that encompasses not only monetary incentives but also professional development and collaboration with colleagues is paramount if the performance pay plan is to achieve the intended goals of increased student achievement and high quality teaching in the classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

Incentive pay plans for teacher performance have been used in Texas school districts for several years with a variety of funding sources including the Governors Educator Excellence Grant (GEEG), the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG), and District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE). Evaluation of these different grants used for local school district-created performance pay programs has been done by the National Center on Performance Incentives through Vanderbilt University with cooperation from the Texas Education Agency in the form of research briefs and working papers. The TAP program has been the subject of one of these evaluations and reviews the program through the lens of improving tests scores as compared to non-TAP schools (Springer, Ballou & Peng, 2008).

Surveying the perceptions and attitudes of TAP school district teachers toward the incentive pay component of the TAP program in Texas as compared to non-TAP schools without any kind of incentive pay program in place seems to be lacking in the research. Comparing the perceptions of the structure of a performance-based compensation plan of campuses with and campuses without such a plan gives insight into whether the program is sustainable after the grant funds have ended. If the teachers feel that the plan is worthwhile and equitable, then the district can make an informed decision to sustain the TAP model or invest in another performance-based compensation program.

Improved teacher effectiveness, increasing the amount of professional development, and added skills and responsibility are also part of the teacher incentive

pay program provided by the TAP model. In opposition to the structured TAP model, locally created incentive plans funded by the TEEG grant were evaluated for three consecutive years of implementation by Springer et al. (2007, 2008, 2009) where the findings suggested that the local design of the plan and the characteristics of the schools influenced the attitudes and behaviors of teachers, school environment, and teacher turnover.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to compare teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the performance pay components of the TAP program in four Texas school districts and their non-TAP counterparts in four school districts. The school districts were matched by using indicators including student enrollment numbers, number of teachers, and demographic information, including percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled at the campus. I wanted to compare the responses to questions about the implementation and perceived fairness of the TAP performance-based compensation program with teachers in school districts without a performance pay model to determine their perceptions and attitudes if such a model were being contemplated by their school district. Finally, I investigated if the perceptions and attitudes of the teachers in TAP schools and non-TAP schools toward a performance-based compensation program would influence their teaching practices. The data collected from survey instruments of both TAP and non-TAP schools and the focus group interviews from the TAP campuses were analyzed to provide information to be used by school districts in Texas to determine if the TAP program may be a viable

choice for a performance-based incentive program and if the campuses without a performance pay program would be willing to attempt such a plan in their school districts.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may provide an avenue for districts considering the System for Teacher and Student Advancement, formerly the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) and its performance-based compensation components to thoroughly evaluate all aspects of the program. It may also provide school districts that are contemplating a performance-based compensation plan with the necessary insight regarding teacher's attitudes and perceptions of performance pay models and various components of these types of plans going forward.

In addition, the results should provide school leaders with the tools to effectively communicate to stakeholders all the inter-connecting parts of the model. Many studies and articles have been published regarding performance pay and teacher motivation, including Ballou (2001), who researched the attitudes of public and private school teachers and merit pay systems. A comparative multi-case study of TAP school districts and non-TAP school districts in Texas, including the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers in schools that have adopted the performance-based compensation program and ones that have not, has not been done.

By conducting a comparative multi-case study, the emphasis was to determine if such programs were considered fair, equitable, and a viable performance-based model as Little (2009) suggested. It is my hope that the findings will contribute to the field of

research on performance pay for teachers and their attitudes of this specific program as compared to non-TAP schools or schools without a performance-based compensation plan already in place.

Theoretical Framework

I applied the economic theory of principal-agent relationship also known as agency theory (Mitnick, 1973) to my study of TAP and the teachers who work within the guidelines of the program. First, I defined the concept of the principal-agent relationships, and then I outlined the similarities between the economic theory and the educational setting of the study. Finally, I described the pertinent principal-agent relationships and the dilemmas that may arise in the public school domain.

In defining the principal-agent theory, Delves and Patrick (2010) described the principal-agent relationship in the business context as when one person (the principal) engages another person (the agent) to perform a service on behalf of the principal. They explained that although the principal and the agent may be working toward the same goal, they may not have the same interests. The principal is trying to maximize profits for his own benefit by employing the agent for the least amount of salary and incentives to remain cost effective. The agent on the other hand, actually may have more information than the principal may about the work and knows how to increase production but may not have the same incentive to produce at a high quality level since they may not be included in the profit-sharing and only receive minimum payment.

In the education field, the principal-agent relationship may include many scenarios. This may include the state as the principal and the local school district as an

agent and the local school district as a principal and the teacher as the agent. Examples of principal-agent relationships for this study can be seen in Figure 1 that was adapted from Levacic (2009).

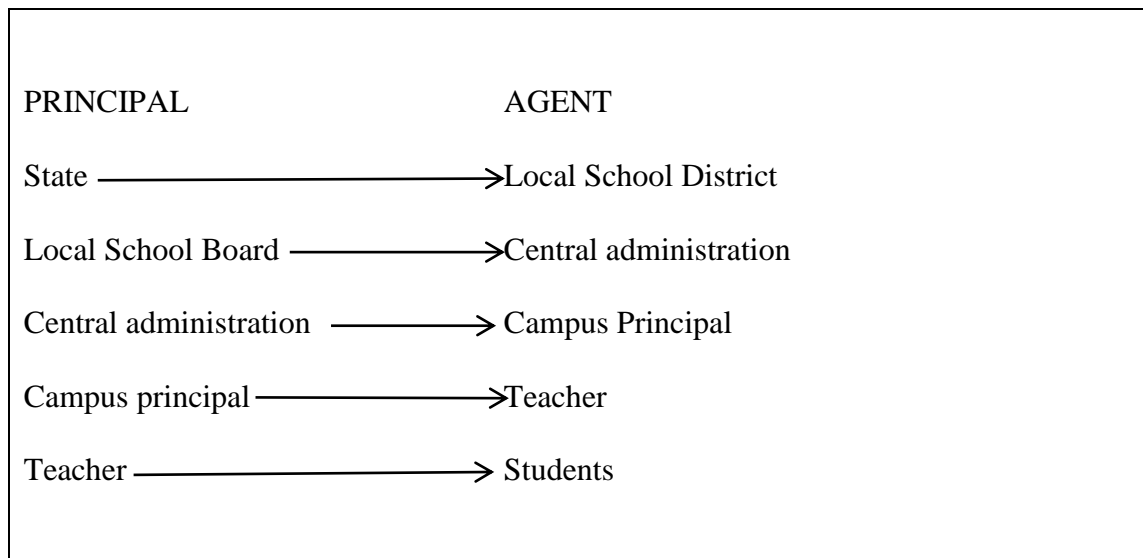


Figure 1. Principal-agent relationships in public education.

In her paper for the Oxford Developmental Studies, Levacic (2009) summarized and applied the principal agent theory to the teaching profession in Great Britain. She described the variables that face educators when dealing with students who may not present themselves in the business world. These included the student’s family background and preparation for schooling. Casson (2007) also elaborated on the variables that teachers cannot control using the term “student quality” (p. 90). He characterized student quality as income status, social status, and the education of the student’s parents. These uncontrollable variables in the teaching profession lead to the relationship dilemmas teachers and administrators may have when working within the constraints of the TAP program.

Framing the principal-agent theory for the purpose of this study, I extend the reference to local school districts (principals) that adopted the Teacher Advancement Program (the contract) as the performance pay compensation model and the teachers (agents) they employ, working toward educating the students in the district. The goal of the district in adopting the TAP performance-based compensation model is to provide incentives for teachers to improve student achievement through additional pay for improving standardized tests scores, providing positive evaluation results, and increasing knowledge and skills in their field.

The TAP program itself may also be considered the contract and the school district the principal in the relationship as teachers, or agents, are complying with the principal and the guidelines of the program in order to earn the extra pay based on their student’s performance (see Figure 2). The principal-agent dilemma occurs when the performance pay of the teachers is based on the test scores of the students that the teachers may have limited influence on as several variables, described earlier, can affect the outcome of standardized tests. In addition, the school-wide score, of the TAP incentive plan can induce some teachers to become free riders as the scores are based on the STAAR results for only a limited number of teachers and all teachers benefit from those few.

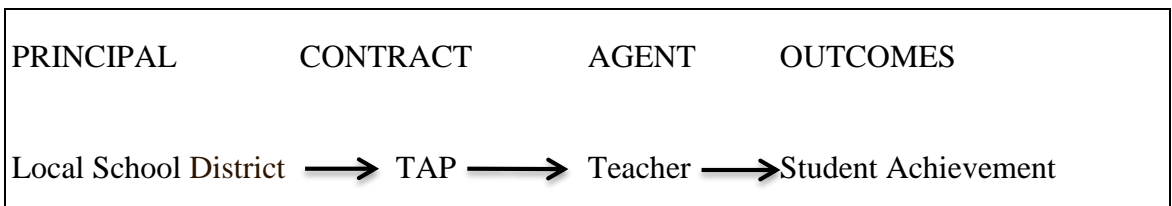


Figure 2. Principal-agent relationships involving TAP.

Research Questions

If, as the principal-agent theory suggests, the goal of the school district in using the TAP program or any other performance-based incentive can be viewed, according to Odden and Kelley (1996) as a strategy to enhance student learning and advance teacher knowledge and skills, the structure of the model and how teachers perceive it is imperative to the success of the plan. In an attempt to gather these perceptions of teachers in an incentive pay model (TAP) and teachers not in an incentive pay model, the following research questions guided my study.

1. How do teachers in TAP school districts perceive the performance pay components of TAP?
2. How do teachers in non-performance pay schools perceive performance pay program components?
3. How do these two groups of teachers' perceptions compare to one another about performance pay models?

Secondary research questions developed in my study with data gathered from a qualitative method using focus group interviews at a TAP school included:

4. What components of the TAP performance pay model do the teachers feel are beneficial?
5. What do teachers suggest as ways to improve the TAP performance pay model?

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, many educational terms were used that may be foreign to the reader of this study, and therefore, I provide the definition and context that was used in the research.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) – The American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2013), an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, was founded in 1916 and today represents 1.5 million members in more than 3,000 local affiliates nationwide.

National Education Association (NEA) – The National Education Association (NEA), the nation’s largest professional employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA’s 3 million members work at every level of education—from pre-school to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States (NEA 2012).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act – The No Child Left Behind Act is also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001. George W. Bush enacted the act in 2001 to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Performance-Based Compensation – In the context of this study, performance-based compensation is the extra monetary payment a teacher may receive based on a set of standards that is created by an outside organization or an internal committee and then adopted by the district. It is also known as merit pay, incentive pay and performance pay.

Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) – The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) is a system of related questionnaires that provide descriptive data on the context of elementary and secondary education and policymakers and a variety of statistics on the condition of education in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 1988).

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) – The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness is a series of state-mandated standardized tests used in Texas public primary and secondary schools to assess a student's achievements and knowledge learned in the grade level.

Standardized Test – Any test in which the same test is given in the same manner to all test takers is a standardized test.

Student Achievement – For the purpose of this study, student achievement refers to the students' scores on the STAAR test in reading and math for grades 4-8 and end-of-course exams in high school.

Teacher – The term is used in this study to include core classroom teachers of STAAR-tested subjects as well as athletic coaches and elective teachers including band, drama, music, technology, and agriculture teachers.

TAP – Teacher Advancement Program now known as The System for Teacher and Student Advancement is dedicated to attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining high-quality human capital in order to raise achievement levels for all students. Launched in 1999 by education pioneer Lowell Milken and colleagues at the Milken Family Foundation, TAP restructures and revitalizes the teaching profession by

providing teachers with powerful opportunities for career advancement, ongoing professional development, a fair evaluation system, and performance-based compensation (National Institute of Excellence in Teaching [NIET, 2013]).

TIF – The Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) was established to encourage states and districts to develop comprehensive programs that include other elements, in addition to performance pay, that have been shown to increase student achievement and teacher skill levels. Specifically, the federal program encourages grantees to include (a) multiple measures of teacher performance, such as multiple classroom evaluations and measures of student academic growth over time; (b) additional compensation for teachers who take on additional roles or responsibilities; (c) a financial commitment from states and districts; and (d) support from a majority of teachers at the schools (TIF, 2012).

Limitations

The research study had the following limitations;

1. The focus of the study was the TAP program on campuses in four school districts in Texas as compared to non-TAP campuses in four school districts also in Texas and the results may not be generalizable to other school districts with different performance pay plans across Texas or in other states.
2. The accuracy and candidness of the data collected from the participating school district during focus group interviews were beyond the control of the researcher.
3. The focus groups were conducted in one TAP school district with participants from grade spans of elementary school (grades K-5), middle school (grades 6-

8) and high school (grades 9-12). Their response may not be generalizable to other TAP schools that may implement the program differently.

4. Several TAP School districts chose not to participate.

Delimitations

The study was bounded by surveying school districts in Texas that used a specific performance pay program, specifically the Teacher Advancement Program and the perceptions and opinions of teachers who do not teach in a TAP district. This limited the study to the performance pay components of the TAP program used to incentivize teacher performance. Other performance pay programs were not included in the study.

Assumptions

The assumptions included in this study of the perceptions and attitudes of teachers toward performance pay components were that the teachers were sent the links to the survey by the district liaisons and that the teachers accurately responded to the survey questions provided. I also assumed that the focus group participants spoke truthfully and without fear of retaliation.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Performance pay for teachers, also referred to as merit or incentive pay, usually based on student tests scores on standardized tests, has been gaining momentum since the inception of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2002 legislation and new state accountability systems sponsored by President George Bush. Educational reformers have fostered a myriad of reasons for the movement (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Advocates of the movement believe that paying teachers for student achievement will increase student success, improve teacher motivation, and reward exceptional teaching, while detractors warn of unhealthy competitiveness, disagreement on school goals, excessive budgets, and even cheating (Chamberlin et al., 2002). A large amount of literature has been compiled on teacher pay scales and performance-based compensation that spans hundreds of years. A summary of this literature is included in Table 1.

In Chapter II, I develop a systematic review as described by Randolph (2009) of the pertinent literature for my study, the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) and its performance-based compensation component that rewards teachers with additional pay for the performance of their students on a standardized test in Texas, the STAAR. I began by defining the purpose of my study guided by the following research questions:

1. How do teachers in TAP school districts perceive the performance pay components of TAP?

Table 1. Summary of Findings from Literature Reviewed

Literature	Summary
American Federation of Teachers (2010)	Compensation plans must include multiple measures of student outcome. It should reward both individual and groups or the entire school. Also include multiple ways for teachers to earn incentive pay.
Ballou (2001)	Little evidence can be cited for skills and knowledge of teachers to support student achievement. More teachers in favor of merit pay plans that already exist in their schools.
Ballou & Prodgursky (1997)	Although religious schools have an easier time implementing merit pay systems, many avoid them as they may appear contrary to ethical beliefs of the school.
Bourne & MacArthur (1970)	Two forms of performance pay traced back to Great Britain in 1860, knowledge and skills-based pay, also known as “notorious payment for results.” Created cheating and teaching to the test.
Brandt (1995)	Tennessee program most comprehensive of its kind using summative evaluations, ongoing professional development and mentoring for monetary rewards for teachers.
Center for Educator Compensation Reform CECR (2011)	Most models use individual or group monetary rewards or a hybrid that includes both. Stakeholder buy in is essential in any differentiated compensation model.
Chamberlin, Wragg, Haynes, & Wragg (2002)	Pay used to reward employees in five ways: piecework, equity, profit sharing, one off bonus, and merit or performance pay.
Dee & Keys (2004)	Evaluated Tennessee Career Ladder Evaluation System. Made significant improvements in math but not reading.
Denver Public Schools (1999) ProComp System	Four components to program: knowledge and skills acquisition, evaluations, market incentives, and student growth on state tests.
Eberts, Hollenbeck, & Stone (2002)	Michigan pilot merit pay program was two steps: teachers to keep students in class and students evaluated teachers. Unintended results may occur.
Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno (2000)	Created teacher focus groups and asked most effective way to improve quality in education. Smaller class sizes were number one and increased salary was agreed upon by 50% to 60% of teachers.
Goldin (2003)	Grade-based compensation model description.
Guthrie, Springer, Rolle, & Houck (2007)	Secondary teachers in 1900s paid more than elementary.

Table 1 (Continued)

Literature	Summary
Kelly, Heneman, & Milanowski (2000)	Teachers do not enter field to make large salaries, but money does matter. Bonus pay was near the top of 17 ranked survey indicators.
Murnane & Cohen (1986)	Described many other goals schools strive for besides test scores.
National Institute of Excellence in Teaching (NIET, 2012)	Description of four elements of program.
Odden & Conley (1992)	Constructing a performance pay program agreeable to all parties and sustainable over time is a big challenge.
Odden & Kelley (1996)	Poorly structured performance pay plans do not work. Primary teacher motivator is improved student achievement.
Odden & Kelley (2002)	Previous merit pay schemes failed outright or are not sustainable over time.
Podgursky & Springer (2007a)	Single salary schedule or step system created in 1900s. Inequities in 1900s of grade based pay. White males had more access to secondary jobs.
Prostik (1996)	History of teacher compensation room and board model.
Sharpes (1987)	By 1950, 97% of all schools had salary step system.
Solomon (2005)	TAP program proposed to improve teaching practices and in turn enhance student learning.
Vanderbilt University (2015), National Center on Performance Incentives	Compiles research and tracks progress on national performance pay experiments.

2. How do teachers in non-performance pay schools perceive performance pay program components?
3. How do these two groups of teachers' perceptions compare to one another about performance pay models?

Secondary research questions developed in my study with data gathered from a qualitative method using focus group interviews at a TAP school included:

4. What components of the TAP performance pay model do the teachers feel are beneficial?
5. What do teachers suggest as ways to improve the TAP performance pay model?

Next, I searched online databases including ERIC, Academic Search Complete, EBSCO, and Proquest for journal articles, theses, and dissertations with similar search terms, followed by selecting the most pertinent articles and studies from the United States that meet the criteria of my topic, performance pay or merit pay programs and teacher attitudes toward those schemes. Finally, I analyzed and synthesized the material into a cohesive review that follows my purpose of the study.

In my review of the literature, I reviewed the history of the TAP program model and its performance-based compensation component for teachers. I also investigated the history of performance-based compensation models and transition into the ones currently being used in the schools of the United States including comparing the structure and components of these models.

The next phase of the literature review included reviewing research on teacher attitudes and perceptions toward performance-based compensation models. Also included were studies dealing with student achievement and the latest information available on value added calculations and student progress.

Chapter II is divided into the following sections, (a) the history and components of the TAP program, (b) the brief history of performance-based compensation models, (c) current performance-based compensation models, (d) research on teacher attitudes

and perceptions of performance-based compensation models, (e) student achievement, including value add scores and standardized test scores.

Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)

While researching performance-based compensation models, several merit pay models will be discussed, including the TAP program that has gained notoriety over the past 15 years since it was developed. The Teacher Advancement Program now called The System for Teacher and Student Advancement and was created in 1999 by Lowell Milken and his colleagues at the Milken Foundation and implemented in schools in the 2000-2001 school year (NIET, 2013). Lowell Milken is a businessman, real estate developer, and philanthropist and has co-founded Knowledge Universe, the largest provider of early childhood education in the world. The program description from the organization's website (NIET, 2015) describes it as an educational reform that revitalizes and restructures the teaching profession and is comprised of four components that include

1. Multiple career paths for educators, including different levels that teachers may aspire to and earn extra stipends for an increased amount of responsibility. These levels are the regular classroom or career teacher, the next level upward is the mentor teacher who also has a class of students but receives an additional stipend to be an evaluator of peers and assist in leading professional development. The highest level for a teacher in a TAP campus is called the master teacher. These educators are given a sizeable stipend, do not have a classroom of students, and are also trained in the

evaluation process based on the instructional rubric included in the program. The master teachers lead the professional learning community meetings called cluster meetings.

2. Ongoing applied professional growth is the emphasis of the above-mentioned cluster meetings. This meeting time is built into the school day for all teachers to collaborate and acquire new skills and strategies presented by the master and mentor teachers. The time is very structured and must follow the protocol that is designated by the program.

3. Instructionally focused accountability is the third component and the way the teachers at the TAP campuses are evaluated. Each teacher is observed at least three times per year by the master, mentor, or an administrator and includes a preconference and a post conference to discuss strengths and weaknesses noted during the observations.

4. Performance-based compensation is the financial equivalent to merit pay based on several components that is tied to the teacher's performance throughout the school year. The educator receives extra bonus money based on evaluation results, student performance on standardized assessments, and responsibilities that are noted in the rubric called an SKR score that is skills, knowledge, and responsibility.

I surveyed the subjects of my study to determine their perceptions and attitudes toward the above-mentioned components of TAP in place in their respective school districts.

A Brief History of Teacher Compensation

Teacher compensation can be traced to the one-room schoolhouse that was born out of the increased transportation system of rural areas in the early nineteenth century.

Almost 80% of people lived in the rural communities and half of them were farmers (Protsik, 1996). Teachers received room and board for their services to the local community; hence, the room and board compensation model was created. They moved from home-to-home of the families they served (Prostik, 1996).

As the industrial age approached, more and more students required schooling and the one-room schoolhouse was not sufficient and the demand for teachers rose. This new era ushered in the grade-based compensation model for teacher compensation in the late 1800s. As Goldin (2003) described “the new economy involved a greater use of science by industry, a proliferation of academic discipline, a series of critical inventions and their diffusion” (p. 75). The compensation model rewarded secondary school teachers with higher salaries than elementary teachers.

At the time, it was believed that the skills needed to instruct older students required advanced levels of knowledge and elementary age students were easier to educate (Guthrie et al., 2007). The grade-based model created a standard to pay teachers in a constant manner by grade, but it led to inequities of compensation resulting not only in nepotism, but also in inequalities based on gender and race as White males had unequal access to secondary positions (Podgursky & Springer, 2007a).

The grade-based compensation model for teachers gave way to the single salary schedule in the early twentieth century. The single salary or position-automatic schedule, as it was originally called, created the step system that is primarily used today. The step system for paying teachers compensates teachers the same salary with similar years' experience and educational level (Podgursky & Springer, 2007b). Since the step system

came into existence, it has been the primary model used by districts across the nation. By 1950, 97% of all schools had adopted the single salary schedule or step system (Sharpes, 1987). Currently, an estimated 96% of all public school districts use a similar compensation schedule to pay its teachers (Podgursky & Springer, 2007b). As educational reformers react to lower worldwide test scores on math and science for U.S. students as compared to other countries, some current step system salary scales are being shelved for experimental compensation models, compensation models based more on performance outcomes that use student test scores as the measuring stick.

Merit-based pay or knowledge and skill-based pay are two forms of performance-based compensation that can be traced back to Great Britain in the 1860s. During this period, the evaluation and position of each teacher was based on the results of an examination taken by their students, also referred to as the “notorious payment for results” system in Britain and lasted almost 30 years (Bourne & MacArthur, 1970, p. 20). The system created cheating and teaching to the test or examination. The system also ignored the high students and concentrated resources on lower level students or the bubble kids as we call them today (Bourne & MacArthur, 1970).

Knowledge and skill-based compensation is a system where teachers are rewarded for gaining additional knowledge in their field or subject matter. The compensation is more about the input for the teacher than the output of the students (Odden & Kelley, 1996). Although the knowledge the teachers gain may help in classroom management, curriculum awareness, and content knowledge, little evidence can be cited to support student achievement in this system (Ballou, 2001; Ballou &

Podgursky, 2001; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2004). Results or output-oriented compensation has been and continues to be the basis of salary schedules in the private sector.

Payment for results is described by Chamberlin et al. (2002) as pay that can be used to reward employees in five ways. These include piecework, equity, and profit sharing that are not applicable to the teaching profession, a fourth is called one-off bonuses that occur when a project is completed or in recognition for an award that is very seldom used in education. The fifth option is merit or performance related pay that is added to a teacher's salary and is counted for pension purposes.

In reviewing the literature, I discovered that this type of pay for performance compensation is being tested throughout the nation in response to educational reformers calling for improvements in our educational system. As the interest grows in performance-based pay for public education, several organizations have begun to compile research and track progress of current experiments across the nation. The most notable in this field are: (a) The Center for Education Compensation Reform, (b) Vanderbilt University's (2015) Peabody College's the National Center on Performance Incentives, and (c) the Education Commission of the States (Podgursky & Springer, 2007a).

Current Performance-Based Compensation Models

Innovative and bold performance pay model proposals are growing throughout the nation in response to educational reformers bellowing for higher educational standards for students and communities wanting better schools for their children. There has not been such an outcry for reform for the teacher salary system since the early

1990s. Previously, all movements to change teachers' pay to depend on other factors including student performance, have failed outright or have not been sustainable over long periods of time (Odden & Kelley, 2002).

In this section, a review of some of the latest attempts to improve education by creating a performance-based compensation model for the teachers who work in the public school districts across our nation will be explored. Compensation for educators includes both salary and benefits, but many researchers include the terms teacher pay, teacher salary, and compensation interchangeably as meaning a benefit package. The challenge is constructing a teacher benefit package based on performance that is agreeable to all parties and can be financed and sustained for more than a few years (Odden & Conley 1992).

Teacher performance-based compensation models use a variety of structures and qualifications for the educator to earn more money in addition to their base salary. The basic structures of most are individual or group monetary rewards or a hybrid program that includes both types of awards (CECR, 2011). Most use a combination of teacher evaluations by administrators and student performance on a standardized assessment and professional development attainment as qualifications to earn awards. What follows are several descriptions of programs that have been attempted in the United States.

The Denver Public School's Professional Compensation System for Teachers known as ProComp began in 1999. According to the Denver Public Schools website, this model has four components that teachers may use to increase their salary. These include knowledge and skills that pay for professional development and advanced degrees and

includes tuition and student loan reimbursement. The comprehensive professional evaluation component is based on satisfactory performance evaluations. Market incentives are a third component that rewards teachers in hard-to-serve or staff schools in the district. The student growth measure of the system rewards teachers for advancing student achievement on the state-standardized test, CSAP.

Funding for the Denver compensation model was provided by an additional \$25 million in taxes as voted on by the taxpayers and \$22.67 million in federal money in the form of a five-year Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Podgursky & Springer, 2007a). President George W. Bush initiated the Teacher Incentive Fund program in 2004. The stated goals of the TIF grants were to “develop and implement performance based teacher and principal compensation systems in high need, disadvantaged schools” (Bush, 2004, para. 3).

A TIF grant along with other district funding sources have also been used to fund other performance pay models including the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) proposed in 1999 by the Milken Family foundation out of Santa Monica, California (Podgursky & Springer, 2007a). The goal of the TAP program is to improve the quality of teaching in the profession and in turn improve student achievement, stating excellent teachers enhance student learning (Solomon, 2005).

One interesting experiment with performance pay was conducted in Michigan in 1996 as a pilot program. The school was an alternative campus with approximately 500 students who were seeking high school diplomas. The alternative campus staff was given the opportunity to participate in a two-step incentive plan. Step 1 was retention of

students in the class and step 2 was a student evaluation of the teacher in the classroom (Eberts, Hollenbeck, & Stone, 2002). Retention in the class was whether the student was in attendance when the principal walked through and did a spot check count of the number of students in the teacher's classroom as compared to the beginning of the grading period. The teacher evaluation was similar to a college professor evaluation, rating the teacher effectiveness and the class content to determine the size of the incentive the teacher earned.

The average merit pay for the teachers in this pilot was approximately \$5,000. Results of the study concluded that pay for performance can motivate teachers to produce outcomes that are directly rewarded. It also suggested that complex organizations such as schools that have multiple daily tasks and stakeholders along with a team approach may produce unintended results as well unless the plan is carefully constructed and implemented (Eberts et al., 2002). Unintended results are the main reason many of the models fail. One such result is that the plan does not reward the most effective teachers but rather all teachers in a group.

Dee and Keys (2004) examined data from the Tennessee Career Ladder Evaluation System and the Project Star class-size experiment. The teachers and students were selected at random so as not to have any bias in the results. The researchers in this case compared career ladder teachers, those who received merit pay and the students they served with non-career ladder teachers, ones who did not receive merit pay to observe any significant difference in student achievement. Their results showed a significant 3% gain in math with students who had teachers on the career ladder as

compared to those that did not. However, there was no significant difference in reading scores.

Effectiveness of a good teacher, Dee and Keys (2004) argued, is very hard to evaluate and the “evaluation problem” in schools is compounded by the fact that there are so many variables and goals in schools other than simply student achievement (p. 472). Socialization skills, promoting good citizenship, encouraging differentiated thinking are examples of goals that schools strive for (Murnane & Cohen, 1986). The pessimism of merit pay systems often hinges on what makes an effective teacher and how they are evaluated. In the study of the Tennessee Career Ladder Evaluation System, Malo and French (1987) found that it used more than one method to reward teachers. Praise for the components of the system has come from outside observers. Brandt (1995) stated that the Tennessee program is “perhaps the country’s most comprehensive experiment in summative evaluation” (p. 475). The system includes ongoing professional development rewards as well as monetary rewards for taking on more responsibilities, as mentoring new staff members.

The system combines five stages or rungs on the career ladder including probation, apprentice, Level I, Level II, and Level III. Under this system, teachers must apply and be evaluated for each level of the system to be rewarded with an additional salary stipend. Evaluations at each stage of the career ladder assess teachers on multiple domains and indicators using distinct district guidelines (Furtwengler, 1985). Once the teacher earns the stipends, they can range from an additional \$1,000 to as much as \$7,000 for the top level. Evaluating teacher effectiveness in the way the Tennessee

system does, by adding more requirements for teachers to meet to be rewarded, seems to be one of the more popular models for performance-based compensation. In the previous section of the paper, I looked at several different performance-based compensation programs throughout the nation that have been attempted.

Private school versus public school merit pay is another topic that falls in the realm of incentive pay. The literature on the use of merit pay in private schools, specifically, Ballou (2001) suggested the overwhelming reason that merit pay fails in public schools are teacher unions. The private school sector, with the exception of some of the large Catholic dioceses, does not contend with teacher unions. This gives the private schools more flexibility in contract renewals, salary schedules, and teacher certifications when negotiating incentives with their teachers. Many private schools can make awards or incentives available in a quiet, non-public manner and do not have to deal with unions representing unsatisfied employees. With the absence of teacher unions, educator contracts at the private institutions can be dissolved at the end of the school year as warranted by poor performance. Teachers who complain in a private school about salary differentiations in a merit pay system could be deemed as non-team players who put personal gain before the school (Ballou, 2001). The possibility of contract non-renewal in private schools stifles their outcry that their public school counterparts with union backing can pursue. In the public schools, many teachers are on term contracts and, therefore, are more difficult to terminate even if they do not perform well in the merit pay system. The influence of teacher unions has led to many performance-based compensation plans being undermined.

Several factors contribute to the reasons more private schools do not use a merit pay system as described by Ballou (2001). Particularly, the private sector is much smaller than the public schools and professional norms established in the public schools are adopted by the private schools. Many religious schools avoid the merit pay systems as they feel it runs contrary to their ethical values in promoting a Christian learning environment (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997). Private schools have also embraced the salary schedules of public schools to avoid discriminatory issues that would have legal consequences. Consequently, private schools are wary of attempting any incentive pay systems that their public school counterparts do not approve. Teacher attitudes toward incentive pay in both private and public schools is a continuing topic of discussion among educators. In the next section, literature regarding teacher attitudes and what motivates faculty toward incentives will be discussed.

Teacher Attitudes and Motivation Related to Performance-Based Compensations

A review of the literature on teacher attitudes toward performance-based compensation evolved into what motivates teachers. The consensus was that teachers do not enter into the field of education to make huge salaries, but money does matter to them. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education, in a report by Kelley et al. (2000), listed 17 potential outcomes for teachers related to performance-based compensation – one of which was – salary bonuses for meeting performance goals. When teachers were surveyed and asked to rank the 17 indicators, the bonus pay was at the top of the list along with professional satisfaction of observing student learning. The findings showed that teachers not only value extrinsic rewards but other intrinsic success

as well, including professional development that improves the quality of their teaching toolbox (Odden & Kelley, 1996).

Farkas et al. (2000) created teacher focus groups and surveyed them on how to improve teacher quality. The educators were asked to rank the most effective ways to improve quality and smaller class size was the number one response followed by four other responses from 50 to 60% of the teachers. Increased salary was among the four responses. The Farkas et al. study suggested higher pay for a job well done is a motivator for teachers as it is in any other outside industry. However, other structures need to be in place for teachers to support pay for performance schemes as they are called in many articles.

In a report from the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR, 2011), the CECR discussed emerging issues in compensation structures and specifically details research on stakeholder attitudes and opinions on reward structures. The stakeholders included teachers, administrators, and teacher unions. The CECR stated that stakeholder engagement and buy in are essential to the success of any differentiated compensation model.

The two major national teachers unions, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) have conveyed tentative support for certain types of different compensation plans in recent years. The AFT (2013) actually offered a resolution on professional compensation for teachers who move beyond the rigid hierarchy of the traditional salary scales. Moving beyond the traditional salary schedule, the teachers say that compensation plans must include multiple

measures of student outcomes and should reward both individual teachers and groups or as an entire school and would include multiple ways for teachers to earn extra incentive pay (AFT, 2013).

The NEA has not supported compensation plans based on student test scores as a major component of teacher eligibility for monetary rewards (Flannery & Jehlen, 2008). In addition, the NEA cautioned school districts that before any alternative pay system can be successful, there needs to be a valid, reliable, and standards-based evaluation system in place (Little, 2009). When these characteristics are in place, the system gives teachers a perception of fairness.

Perceived fairness of the program in addition to the values and beliefs of the teachers correlate with their attitudes toward any compensation plan being suggested. The term, distributive fairness, is used to describe the reasonableness of a compensation plan based on the fairness of the components of the model. The components include the form of compensation, the dollar amount, and formula to reach the monetary reward distributed (Heneman et al., 2007). Heneman et al. (2007) also suggested that teachers are more likely to support a program that they believe fosters change in behavior but more importantly behaviors that they value. Some teachers who value extra effort believe that individuals who contribute more and at a higher level to the goals of the school should receive higher pay (Milanowski, 2007).

The attitude of public and private school teachers and merit pay systems was the topic of a study by Ballou (2001). The author surveyed private school and public school teachers to gain insight into how they felt about rewards for exceptional performance.

The study used results for the SASS survey from 1987-1988 to compile the evidence. Schools with and schools without merit pay systems in place were surveyed. Notably in schools without merit pay systems, private school teachers strongly favored bonuses for exceptional performance with 41% and public schools with only 26% strongly in favor of bonuses. In schools with merit pay plans, private school teachers also topped the list with 45% in favor of the system and public school teachers 33% in favor. From the results, it appears that support for merit pay was greater in schools that had one in place and the attitudes of the private sector were very positive in schools with or without merit pay. Public school teacher attitudes were also slightly more positive in schools with merit pay plans. Compensation plans in private schools, as noted earlier, do not have to deal with teacher unions that can stifle attempts to install alternative compensation models (Ballou, 2001).

Regardless of the presence of unions, teachers across the nation agree their primary motivator is improved student achievement. Educational systems designed to increase student achievement also enhance teacher motivation. Engaging in professional development and school-wide activities are also motivators for teachers as are clear goals for student achievement within the school. Along with the intrinsic motivators, salary and compensation are also important. The structure of the performance-based compensation model is the determining factor in the success of the program. The research is clear on poorly structured models; such models do not work and are detrimental to the educational system (Odden & Kelley, 1996).

New incentive pay plans are being implemented around the country that will encompass more than a student performance measure. These plans include competitive salary levels, knowledge and skills-based pay, and school performance awards. They should be viewed as a strategy to enhance student learning and advance teacher knowledge and expertise (Odden & Kelley, 1996).

Performance-based compensation models should take into account what motivates teachers and as the researchers have suggested, money alone does not motivate teachers to work harder. A well-constructed plan that encompasses not only monetary incentives but also professional development and collaboration with colleagues is paramount if the performance pay plan is to achieve the intended goals of increased student achievement and high quality teaching in the classrooms.

Summary

The topic of performance-based compensation, merit pay, or incentive pay for teachers is well researched and continues to be a pivotal issue in the educational reform movement. In this literature, I reviewed and discussed the inception of teacher compensation that began as room and board in exchange for teaching in rural areas to the introduction of the salary step schedule at the beginning of the industrial age where salary schedules were developed to reward teachers on years of experience regardless of performance in the classroom. Performance compensation models were patterned after industry, but the teaching profession has so many variables that cannot be measured by piecework so other models were developed.

The other models included multiple requirements or opportunities for teachers to earn extra pay. Districts are experimenting with professional development, knowledge and skills attainment, student achievement, and extra duties and activities. Compensation models are funded through various sources including taxpayer dollars and federal grants such as the TIF grant, state grants, and local school district budgets. Sustainability of the compensation models often was determined by the amount of funding and the years available to the school districts.

Merit pay systems in private schools versus public schools have been studied, and it was mentioned that the lack of union presences in the private sector makes compensation models more attractive to private schools. However, many private schools use similar pay scales and policies as public schools to avoid legal issues with contract nonrenewal. Private schools sometimes shy away from merit pay based on ethical or organizational beliefs as well.

Teacher attitude and motivation are the most important indicators in successful implementation of any alternative compensation model. Teachers must believe the plan is fair, and they must value the structure of the model. Money does motivate teachers as in any other field, but the primary motivator is improved student achievement (Odden & Kelley, 1996). Unique performance-based compensation models are ongoing and funded by the Department of Education through the TIF grant funds and Race to the Top program funds. Educational reformers will continue to lobby for improved teacher quality that in turn leads to improved student achievement for our nation and performance-based compensation models will continue to be investigated.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to compare teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward performance pay components of the TAP program in four Texas school districts to those responses of survey questions about implementation and perceived equity of a performance-based compensation program in four non-TAP schools districts or schools without a performance pay program. In addition, I investigated the perceptions and attitudes of the teachers toward the program components in regards to influencing their teaching practices through added professional development

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative methods was used in the participating districts as related to the research questions. A survey design described by Creswell (2003) as a "design that provides quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 153) was used for the quantitative portion of the study.

The strategy for the qualitative component of my study was the case study of a participating school district in the form of focus group interviews. The focus group interview questions were general and open-ended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2003). The data collected from the survey instrument and the focus group interviews from the school districts were analyzed to provide information

that may be used by school districts in Texas to determine if the TAP program or a similar performance based compensation program may be considered as one of their alternatives for an incentive pay plan.

According to Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, and Clegg Smith (2011) “mixed method research is more than simply collecting qualitative and quantitative evidence, it involves the intentional collection of both types of data and the combination of the strengths of each to answer research questions” (p. 5). Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneous gave me a better connection to the data and strengthened my study. The chapter is organized into four sections: (a) selection of participants, (b) instrumentation, (c) data collection, and (d) data analysis and with a summary at the end of the chapter.

Selection of Participants

Quantitative Participants

Participants of TAP school districts were solicited from a list of the school districts in Texas that currently use the TAP program as a performance-based compensation model as reported by The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET). A request to participate was sent by email to each of the 10 TAP school districts superintendent (see Appendix A) explaining the record of study. Out of the 10 school districts, five replied in the affirmative that they would be willing to forward the survey to their teachers on the TAP campuses.

However, only four actually did forward the survey to their teachers; one district administrator did not forward the survey link. When I called a principal at that school

district, I was informed that they never received the link from the district administration, and therefore, no responses were recorded from that district. Of the five districts that would not participate, one district said that request for research in their district was only approved in the fall of a school year and the other four school districts did not reply.

A letter of authorization was sent to the five school districts that agreed to participate (see Appendix B). They were asked to sign the letter of authorization and return to me on school district letterhead to submit to the IRB at Texas A&M University for approval. Participants of five non-TAP school districts were also sent a request to participate based on similar enrollment and an authorization letter similar to the TAP schools. Only four of the non-TAP school districts responded with an authorization form in time for IRB approval. The larger school districts use the TAP program in a limited number of schools, and those were the campuses requested to participate in the survey. The breakdown of the enrollment of each participant school district is listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Size Comparison of Participating School Districts

TAP Districts	Enrollment	Non-TAP Districts	Enrollment
A	12,282	A	13,275
B	3934	B	3872
C	357	C	530
D	186	D	339

The confidential survey link was sent to each teacher in the school districts that agreed to participate in my study. The TAP schools responded at a rate of 32% and the non-TAP at a rate of 40%. Table 3 illustrates the anonymous survey respondent numbers included. The number of teachers working on each campus was taken from the 2013-2014 TAPR report from the Texas Education Agency. The appropriate sample size for

my study was determined by using information from Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The suggested sample size for the population surveyed was 254 responses for the TAP school districts and 248 responses for the non-TAP school districts.

Table 3. Anonymous Survey Respondent School Districts

Authorized School Districts	Total Possible Teachers	Total Survey Respondents	Percentage
TAP 4	789	254	32%
Non-TAP 4	732	295	40%

The target population for my study was classroom teachers from each of the four school districts that were included in the performance-based compensation component of the TAP program and four school districts that were not in a performance-based compensation program of any kind. All teachers at both types of selected districts were invited to participate in the study and were sent the anonymous survey link through the Qualtrics online survey system and participation was voluntary.

Qualitative Participants

According to Hays and Singh (2012), participants in the study are the “experts in relation to the phenomenon under study” (p. 8); therefore, selecting participants for the detail they could provide about the TAP program was crucial. A focus group from three TAP campuses that included an elementary campus (grades K-5), middle school campus (grades 6-8), and a high school campus (grades 9-12) at one TAP school district was selected based on volunteers from each campus. The focus group district was selected

due to proximity to reduce travel time and expenses. Contact was made with the district administrator in charge of the TAP program to request permission to conduct focus groups in their district (see Appendix C). Each campus principal was forwarded an email through the district administrator requesting permission to interview from 5-8 teachers on their campuses.

A mixed-model approach that includes an anonymous participant survey and focus group interviews was conducted to give the study more credibility. The instruments used in this study included both quantitative and qualitative strategies to gather information that may be useful to future leaders considering a performance pay program in their own school districts.

Instrumentation

Similar survey instruments were administered to the participants in the TAP schools (see Appendix D) and non-TAP schools (see Appendix E), prompting responses to gain insight on my research questions about the teacher's perception and attitudes of performance pay. To increase construct validity of my survey instruments, items that were used in previous studies from Vanderbilt University to evaluate performance pay models were adapted and used with permission from Dr. Matthew Springer (see Appendix F). In addition, Dr. Sandra Forand from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, granted permission (see Appendix G) to modify some of her survey questions from a similar study on teacher attitudes and perceptions about performance pay that she conducted (Forand, 2012).

Likert item answer choices ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree were used. An internal consistency reliability coefficient was calculated on both survey instruments using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficient for the TAP survey instrument was .808, and the reliability coefficient for the non-tap instrument was .809. A breakdown of the two sections of the TAP survey instrument follows. Demographic information on the survey was used as independent variables:

1. Gender
2. Years' experience: (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26 or more)
3. Indicate your category as an educator: Probationary contract, Term contract
4. Indicate your work assignment: Elementary, Middle, High School
5. Indicate your current position: STAAR-tested subject, Special Education teacher, Elective teacher (art, PE, music, technology education, vocational, library/media, other)

The next set of questions was used to measure the participant's perceptions and attitudes toward the TAP program on a scale of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree):

6. The current TAP incentive pay structure is an adequate way to pay educators.
7. I believe that my performance pay should be (a) based on student STAAR test scores; (b) based on performance of students in my classroom (individual growth, portfolios, targeted growth, other); or (c) based on building wide STAAR performance criteria.
8. TAP performance pay is the best option to increase teacher wages.

9. TAP performance pay is a fair way to reward teacher performance.
10. TAP performance pay will affect the retention of highly qualified teachers.
11. The principle of relating teachers' pay to performance is a good one.
12. The idea of the TAP performance pay for teachers is fundamentally unfair.
13. Experience on the job should count more towards determining pay levels.
14. TAP performance pay will be problematic because it is hard to link the work done in schools to individual performance.
15. TAP performance pay will have no effect on the quality of my work because it is already at the appropriate standard.
16. TAP performance pay has made the staff less willing to assist colleagues.
17. TAP performance pay has undermined staff morale.
18. TAP performance pay has discouraged teamwork and cooperation between teachers.
19. The TAP performance pay motivates me to improve my teaching skills.
20. The TAP performance pay components: (a) leads to greater motivation amongst teachers, (b) has a positive effect on teacher recruitment, (c) has a positive effect on teacher retention, (d) reinforces good performance, (e) results in better and more effective teaching, (f) improves the quality of my work, (g) increases the quantity of my work, (h) makes me work harder, (i) makes me work longer hours, and (j) causes resentment among staff.

A case study qualitative approach as described by Creswell (2003) as exploring the depth of a program, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals was

used in my study. To gather information for the study, three focus group interview sessions, one from each designated school type: elementary (grades K-5), middle (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12) were held on the campus of each school. I conducted the focus group interviews with approval from the school administration. The interview questions for the focus group consisted of open-ended and general questions to illicit discussion for the focus group script used (see Appendix H).

Data Collection

I used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies for data collection in my study. The online survey responses and focus group interviews were conducted concurrently. The following sections were explained sequentially beginning with the quantitative process followed by the qualitative procedures.

Quantitative Data Collection

My initial step to collecting quantitative data for this study was to email a request to the school district superintendents of authorized TAP school districts detailing my study and asking to distribute a survey link to the principals in their school districts that in turn would be forwarded to the teachers at the designated TAP campuses. The same procedure was followed for non-TAP school districts that had agreed to participate. Once permission was granted, an online survey link, using Qualtrics survey software, was distributed to each participating school district through the email of the district administration to be sent to all participating TAP and non-TAP campuses. Qualtrics is an online survey tool that has the capability to compile anonymous results and export data for analysis in a statistical format.

The purpose and goals of the survey were given in a brief introduction to each participant when they decided to complete the survey in an introduction section included in the online survey. The survey link was open to both groups of participating school districts for three weeks near the end of the school year. A reminder email was sent to the district contact at the end of each week to enlist more participants.

Qualitative

To gather more in-depth perceptions of the teachers at one TAP school district about the current performance pay program used, I asked permission to perform focus group interviews at three campuses of the school district (Sunset ISD, a pseudonym) in close proximity to my school district. The district administrative contact assisted in setting up interview times with each principal at an elementary, middle, and high school at the TAP school district. The focus groups were scheduled based on the availability of the teachers during the school day. Participation in the focus group was voluntary at each campus. Focus group participants were given consent forms (Appendix I) at the beginning of each interview session with information regarding their privacy and the structure and process. I explained the purpose for my study and reinforced that all information was completely anonymous and gave each participant a chance to decline being interviewed. No one declined being interviewed. Focus group participants included five elementary teachers (four females and one male), five middle school teachers (two females and three males), and four high school teachers (one female and three males).

I conducted the group sessions at each campus as an outside researcher to alleviate any concern about maintaining confidentiality and to not influence any answers from the groups. An interview protocol, as suggested by Creswell (2007), was created that included designating each participant with letters on a place card on the table in front of them, i.e., participant A, B, C, D, E. Each participant was given a pseudonym for this study to ensure confidentiality. A list of responses were written in the form of field notes as each participant responded to the questions in order to recall which participant responded to each question and in what order. The groups were asked to describe their perceptions of the performance pay components of the TAP program in the district they were employed using a predetermined script of open-ended questions. Each session lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour and was recorded using a digital audio recorder to maintain privacy of each participant. The transcripts from each focus group session were transcribed verbatim from the digital audio file to maintain accuracy of the information collected. The data files were kept on a password-protected computer with access only to me.

Data Analysis

The data analysis section of this chapter also occurred in sequential order with quantitative analysis followed by qualitative data analysis.

Quantitative Data

The response from each online survey question was downloaded into a spreadsheet and the data were imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The demographic variables were measured on a nominal scale and

were analyzed with descriptive statistical procedures including measures of percentages and frequencies. A one-way ANOVA was performed to compare the TAP and non-TAP groups and their responses to the online survey questions on performance pay models. The perceptions and attitudes section of the survey that was answered on the 5-point scale of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, was coded using an interval scale. The research questions were analyzed with frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency, and variability.

Qualitative Data

Focus group transcripts were analyzed using the two-step process of analytic induction as described by (Patton, 2002). The first step involved analyzing the data to identify and code themes and patterns. The transcripts of each grade level group were reviewed separately and themes for each interview were established using an Excel spreadsheet with nine columns, one for each interview question, to record topics that emerged from each group in each area. A compilation of the major topics from each focus group interview was also entered onto a separate Excel spreadsheet, with four columns, one for each major theme that developed, with quotes from the participants that gave insight into their perceptions of each question on the different components of the TAP performance pay program.

The second phase was to take a fresh look at the data and to see if any new themes or patterns emerged that were missed on the first analysis. Peer debriefing was used to accomplish this. Dr. Randy Ewing, a retired superintendent, was enlisted to review my study and data to give me an outside opinion of the findings. The questions

for the focus group were scripted prior to the interviews and contained specific questions that related to the research questions of the study. Open-ended questions were used to gain more insight into “What components of the TAP performance pay model did the teachers feel were beneficial?” and “What did the teachers suggest as ways to improve the TAP performance pay model?”

Validity of the data was addressed by using data triangulation as described by (Denzin, 1978). By interviewing groups from three different grade spans, including elementary, middle, and high school teachers who were comprised of male and female teachers with varying degrees of teaching experience, the study included a variety of data sources.

Summary

The methods for data collection for my study were a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in order to compare the perceptions of more than one school district and their teachers’ perceptions of the performance-based compensation component of the TAP program. The data were collected using online surveys of teachers from TAP and non-TAP schools and focus group interviews from a TAP school district. Permission was sought and granted from each district prior to attempting to contact any employees from the districts.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The intent of this study was to gather data on the perceptions of two groups of teachers on performance-based compensation components for educators, specifically a group of teachers involved in the TAP program in Texas and a group of teachers not involved in any performance pay model or non-TAP. A mixed-method approach was used to gather data from the participants. An online anonymous survey was performed with both the TAP school district teachers and the non-TAP school district teachers, inquiring about their perceptions of a performance pay model to reward teachers. The results of the surveys were used in the quantitative data portion of the study. Qualitative data were collected from focus group interviews from one TAP district to determine beliefs and perceptions of teachers from three grade spans: elementary, middle, and high school.

Chapter IV presents the analysis of the quantitative data using descriptive statistics to address the three primary research questions of the study. Research question 1 asked, “How do teachers in TAP school districts perceive the performance pay components of TAP?” Research question 2 asked, “How do teachers in non-performance pay schools perceive performance pay program components?” Research question 3 asked, “How do these two groups of teachers’ perceptions compare to one another about performance pay models?”

Research questions 1 and 2 about the perceptions of teachers toward performance pay components are addressed with the use of tables that divide the anonymous survey questions into four categories. The categories include the use of student standardized test scores, specifically the STAAR test in Texas, as an indicator of teacher success and thus earning extra pay. A second category is the concept of performance pay itself in compensating teachers in addition to their actual salary. The third category analyzes the survey responses to the effort of the teacher and if performance pay incentives have any bearing on that work. Finally, questions that can be linked to school climate are discussed from the standpoint of each group.

Two secondary research questions developed in my study are analyzed next with data gathered from a qualitative method using focus group interviews at a TAP school district, “What components of performance pay models do the teachers feel are beneficial?” and “What do teachers suggest as ways to improve performance pay models?” The analysis includes themes that surfaced from each interview transcript and specific perceptions from the different grade levels and years of experience of the participants.

Quantitative Data

Descriptive Statistics

Participants in the study had the opportunity to respond to an anonymous survey using Likert items on a 5-point scale with response 1 corresponding to strongly agree, 2 to agree, 3 to neutral, 4 to disagree, and 5 strongly disagree. Scores lower than the midpoint of 3, lean toward agreement with the question and scores higher represent

disagreement. The data from the surveys were collected and analyzed using the survey components from the online program Qualtrics. A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine any significant differences between the TAP and non-TAP teachers in their response to the online survey questions. The null hypothesis would be there is no difference in perceptions between the TAP teachers and non-TAP teachers. A significance level of .05 was used for each statistical analysis. The effect size for each survey statement that showed a significant difference from the one-way ANOVA analysis between TAP and non-TAP teachers is noted for each category of the online survey.

Each table includes a list of the questions compiled for the category detailed in the introduction to this chapter, designates the respondent non-TAP for the participants who are not teaching in a TAP school and TAP for the participants who do work in a TAP school, gives the number of respondents who answered the question, the mean of the response from the participants, and the standard deviation. Using the Qualtrics program data analysis feature, a demographic comparison of both TAP and Non-TAP participants was created and is pictured in Table 4.

Table 4. Demographics of Survey Participants

	Gender	Years Experience		Contract Type		Grade level Taught	Subject Taught
TAP	Male 21%	0-15	75%	Term	84%	Elem 43%	STAAR 49%
	Female 79%	16 +	26%	Prob.	16%	Middle 34% High 19% Comb. 4%	Elective 23% Core Non STAAR 27%
Non-TAP	Male 24%	0-15	67%	Term	86%	Elem 51%	STAAR 49%
	Female 76%	16 +	34%	Prob.	14%	Middle 22% High 22% Comb. 6%	Elective 21% Core Non STAAR 30%

Student standardized test scores. Table 5 shows that non-TAP teachers believe more strongly in not using STAAR scores for an indicator of teacher performance pay with a mean score of 4.07 or disagree, while TAP teachers are more neutral with a mean score of 3.21. However, the TAP teachers agree more than non-TAP teachers that the performance pay should be based on other indicators in the classroom, 2.92 for TAP and 3.63 for non-TAP. The teachers in TAP schools agree that performance pay should be based on school-wide STAAR scores as an indicator with a mean of 2.32 in opposition to non-TAP schools that scored closer to the disagree side with a mean of 3.67.

Table 5. Survey Responses Regarding Test Scores

I believe that performance pay should be	Participant	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
based on student STAAR test scores.	Non-TAP	259	4.07	1.081
	TAP	215	3.21	1.124
based on other performance indicators of students in my classroom.	Non-TAP	260	2.92	1.342
	TAP	210	3.63	1.147
based on building-wide STAAR performance criteria.	Non-TAP	258	3.67	1.218
	TAP	213	2.32	1.129

From Table 5, the questions related to student test scores (STAAR). In reporting the significant results with the one-way ANOVA for the three questions in Table 5, the TAP teachers are more agreeable that STAAR test scores should be used for

performance indicators (TAP = 215) (non-TAP = 259), $F(1, 214, 258) = 71.628 < .00$ a medium effect size of $\eta^2 = .066$ was found for this statement. They are also more agreeable than non-TAP teachers that school-wide STAAR scores should be used in a performance pay calculation (TAP = 213) (non-TAP = 258), $F(1, 212, 257) = 153.419 < 0.00$, a medium effect size of $\eta^2 = .104$ was found for this statement.

Teacher performance pay. Using the same format as Table 5 for the second category, the concept of performance pay itself and how teachers from both groups perceive them is examined using Table 6. Both the non-TAP and TAP teachers seemed to be neutral or lean slightly to disagree in their belief that performance pay is the best option to increase teacher wages, is a fair way to reward teacher performance, has a positive effect on teacher retention of highly qualified people, and that relating a teacher's pay to performance is a good principle. Non-TAP teachers agreed that the idea of performance pay is fundamentally unfair with a mean of 2.47, and TAP teachers were neutral in their responses to this question. Using years of experience as a more meaningful way to pay teachers was agreeable to both TAP and non-TAP educators.

From Table 6 for the questions relating to teacher performance pay, the results showed a statistically significant difference with respect to category of educator or contract type, either probationary or continuing contract. In reporting the significant results with the one-way ANOVA for the questions in Table 6, the non-TAP teachers were more agreeable that performance pay was unfair (TAP = 214) (non-TAP = 260), $F(1, 213, 259) = 21.764 < .00$, a small effect size of $\eta^2 = .024$ was found for this statement. They also agreed more than TAP teachers that years of experience should count more

toward determining pay levels for teachers (TAP = 213) (non-TAP = 260), $F(1,212, 259) = 17.512 < .00$, a small effect size of $\eta^2 = .012$ was found was found for this statement.

Table 6. Survey Responses Regarding Teacher Performance Pay

I believe that	Participant	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
performance pay is the best option to increase teacher wages.	Non-TAP	256	3.82	1.074
	TAP	211	3.40	1.181
performance pay is a fair way to reward teacher performance.	Non-TAP	259	3.51	1.268
	TAP	213	3.63	1.036
performance pay will positively affect the retention of highly qualified teachers.	Non-TAP	260	3.41	1.374
	TAP	212	3.11	1.232
the principle of relating teachers' pay to performance is a good one.	Non-TAP	260	3.53	1.212
	TAP	212	3.50	1.230
the idea performance pay for teachers is fundamentally unfair.	Non-TAP	260	2.47	1.213
	TAP	213	3.00	1.237
years of experience on the job should count more towards determining pay levels.	Non-TAP	260	2.46	1.173
	TAP	213	2.90	1.063

Teacher's work. A third category that the respondents were asked to give their opinion on was the work that the teachers do, including quality and quantity of work, effort put into their job, and the hours they dedicate to teaching. The final question delineated in Table 7 gives a response to the problem of linking the improvement of student achievement to one specific teacher. The non-TAP teachers disagreed when it came to a performance pay component improving the quality of a teacher's work or instruction, whereas the TAP teachers were on the agree side of the question. They both were in the neutral range when it came to increasing the quantity of work by teachers and if a performance pay incentive would make teachers work harder.

The TAP teachers did agree that the component would have teachers working longer hours, rating the question at 2.74 when the non-TAP group scored it in the neutral range at 3.16. When asked about linking the work of one individual teacher to student achievement, the non-TAP teachers leaned toward strongly agree with a 1.90 mean, that would be problematic, while the TAP teachers were closer to the neutral range at a mean of 2.64. In reporting the significant results with the one-way ANOVA for the questions in Table 7, the TAP teachers were more agreeable that a performance pay component improved the quality of work (TAP = 215) (non-TAP = 262), $F(1, 214, 261) = 36.084 < .00$, a small effect size of $\eta^2 = .017$ was found for this statement. They also agreed more than the non-TAP teachers that the performance pay component would make them work longer hours (TAP = 214) (non-TAP = 261), $F(1, 213, 260) = 13.340 < .00$, a small effect size of $\eta^2 = .013$ was found for this statement.

Table 7. Survey Responses Regarding Work

Performance Pay Component	Participant	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
improves the quality of my work.	Non-TAP	262	3.53	1.140
	TAP	215	2.89	1.169
increases the quantity of my work.	Non-TAP	262	3.26	1.214
	TAP	215	3.02	1.150
makes me work harder.	Non-TAP	261	3.50	1.115
	TAP	214	3.10	1.158
makes me work longer hours.	Non-TAP	261	3.16	1.267
	TAP	214	2.74	1.240
is problematic because it is hard to link the work done in schools to individual teachers.	Non-TAP	262	1.90	.959
	TAP	214	2.64	1.277

School climate. In Table 8, the participants were asked questions that contribute to the school climate when a performance pay component is involved. The topics were teacher motivation, resentment among staff members, willingness to assist colleagues, staff morale, and teamwork and cooperation among teachers. The TAP teachers agreed with a 2.49 mean response that the performance pay component increased motivation of teachers, but the non-TAP teachers were more neutral in their responses with a mean of 3.35.

Table 8. Survey Responses Regarding Climate

A performance pay component	Participant	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
leads to greater motivation amongst teachers.	Non-TAP	260	3.35	1.217
	TAP	213	2.49	1.160
causes resentment among staff.	Non-TAP	262	2.05	1.096
	TAP	214	2.96	1.190
makes the staff less willing to assist colleagues	Non-TAP	261	2.45	1.184
	TAP	214	2.13	.973
may undermined staff morale.	Non-TAP	261	2.08	1.019
	TAP	214	2.39	.990
may discourage teamwork and cooperation between teachers.	Non-TAP	261	2.36	1.190
	TAP	214	3.31	.997

Both groups of educators agreed that a performance pay incentive might create resentment among teachers, make them less willing to assist each other, and undermine staff morale. Interestingly, the TAP teachers were neutral with a mean of 3.31 when it came to teamwork and cooperation, but they were agreeable that it would inhibit teachers assisting each other with a mean of 2.13, as the non-TAP teachers continued the trend in this category of agreeing that it may be a possibility with a mean score of 2.36.

In reporting the significant results with the one-way ANOVA for the questions in Table 8, the non-TAP teachers were more agreeable that a performance pay component caused resentment amongst staff (TAP = 214) (non-TAP = 261), $F(1, 213, 260) = 76.290 < .00$, a small effect size of $\eta^2 = .028$ was found for this statement. They also agreed

more than TAP teachers that the performance pay component would undermine staff morale (TAP = 214) (non-TAP = 261), $F(1,213, 260) = 10.701 < .00$, a small effect size of $\eta^2 = .010$ was found for this statement.

In analyzing the data from the online survey within the four categories, I have described some major themes that emerged. Category 1, using student test scores as an indicator toward teacher performance pay, the non-TAP teachers disagreed with using test scores and the TAP teachers were more neutral. In the second category, performance pay itself, both groups were in the neutral to disagree range when it came to using a performance pay model.

The third category, teacher work, seemed to be neutral responses for the non-TAP teachers but agreeable to the TAP teachers who had actually been in a program. They both agreed that it was hard to link the work done or effectiveness in schools to one individual. Effectiveness of a good teacher, Dee and Keys (2004) argued that it is very hard to evaluate and the “evaluation problem” (p. 472) in schools is compounded by the fact that there are so many variables and goals in schools other than simply student achievement. In discussing the fourth category, both the non-TAP and TAP teachers agreed that a performance pay component might affect the school climate of a campus by causing resentment, undermining staff morale and discouraging teachers to assist and work with colleagues.

Table 9 compiles the information regarding the questions about work from Sunset ISD teachers who responded to the anonymous online survey. Sunset ISD is the same district where I conducted the focus group interviews at three different campuses:

one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school campus. I wanted to compare the survey responses from the three campus groups with the themes that emerged from the focus group interviews.

Table 9. Sunset ISD Participants by Grade Level Regarding Work

TAP Performance Pay Component	Participant	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
improves the quality of my work.	Elementary	52	2.87	1.07
	Middle	22	2.36	1.18
	High School	40	2.98	1.23
	District Total	122*	2.82	1.16
increases the quantity of my work.	Elementary	52	2.42	1.14
	Middle	22	2.27	1.12
	High School	40	2.53	1.28
	District Total	122*	2.43	1.16
makes me work harder.	Elementary	52	2.71	1.16
	Middle	22	2.36	1.22
	High School	40	2.65	1.14
	District Total	122*	2.65	1.32
makes me work longer hours.	Elementary	52	2.23	1.06
	Middle	22	2.32	1.18
	High School	40	2.45	1.34
	District Total	122*	2.37	1.19
is problematic because it is hard to link the work done in schools to individual teachers	Elementary	52	2.06	0.98
	Middle	22	2.55	1.30
	High School	40	2.25	1.01
	District Total	122*	2.21	1.06

*District total number may contain teachers who are in combined grade level assignments.

The participants at each grade level seemed to respond in the agreement category to the entire set of questions about work with the high school teachers closer to neutral for all questions. The middle school teachers scored every question closer to the agree index except for the question dealing with the problematic nature of linking work in schools to one individual where the elementary staff was virtually to the agree index with a 2.06. The results and analysis of the focus group interviews follow in the qualitative section.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data analysis section of this chapter is delineated by using the four major themes that emerged from the interviews in the TAP school district as headings for discussion: (a) transparency and communication of procedures for performance pay, (b) reliability of observations and evaluations of teachers, (c) additional workload not worth the pay, and (d) increased professional development evolving as the strongest part of the program. Within each of these sections, I will relate the analysis of each focus group topic to the literature reviewed in Chapter II and compare it to information from Lewis Solomon, former President of the TAP foundation, in his 2005 presentation at Harvard University. In that presentation, he explained the implementation of the TAP program in its textbook form (Solomon, 2005). In comparing my results with Solomon, the intent was to describe the opinions of the teachers in a TAP school district as compared to the optimum expectations of a TAP school as Mr. Solomon presents.

Examples of responses from each theme were given for focus group participants using pseudonyms for confidentiality. Table 10 shows the participants in more detail with pseudonyms for each grade level span of teachers and demographic information that included gender, years' experience, grade level and subject taught at the time of the interview, and that was collected at the beginning the focus group interviews.

Table 10. Focus Group Participants

	Participants	Gender	Experience	Grade	Subject
Elementary	Samantha	Female	3 years	4th	Reading/ELA
	Syndi	Female	18 years	2nd	All
	Andi	Female	7 years	2nd	All
	James	Male	10 years	2nd	All
	Kalli	Female	12 years	4th	Reading/ELA
Middle	Troy	Male	13 years	8th	Math
	Kyle	Male	8 years	6th-8th	PE
	Daniel	Male	9 years	6th	Math
	Debbi	Female	1st year	8th	Sp. Ed
	Bekki	Female	1st year	7th	Social St.
High School	Derek	Male	5 years	10th	ELA
	Zach	Male	9 years	9th-12th	CTE-Ag.
	Misti	Female	25 years	9th-12th	Elective
	Brad	Male	10 years	11th	Social St.

Themes

The four themes that emerged from the focus group interviews are discussed in the following order: (a) transparency and communication of procedures for performance pay, (b) reliability of observations and evaluations of teachers, (c) additional workload not worth the pay, and (d) increased professional development evolving as the strongest part of the program.

Transparency and Communication

Under this heading, subtopics that needed more transparency and better communication included staff input before implementation, amount of bonus pay that can be earned, how value added and school-wide scores are calculated from STAAR data. Analyzing the data from the different grade levels of teachers who were interviewed at the TAP school district, Sunset ISD, unmasked many of the reasons why so many performance pay models fail. Odden and Conley (1992) discussed that performance pay plans must be agreeable to all parties and understood by teachers to be successful. Solomon (2005) stated that one of the reasons performance pay plans fail is that it is imposed on teachers.

As I will discuss, the Sunset ISD teachers who were interviewed had very strong opinions about the TAP program. When asked if the staff had any input in the implementation of the program, several teachers at each campus were very clear that the program was imposed on them and was not fully explained to them in a transparent way. Samantha, an elementary teacher said, “We were just told that the program was being expanded to the elementary, there was no input.” Similar statements from the middle school and high school teachers corroborated Samantha’s comment. Misti from Sunset High School stated, “A better explanation of the program was needed, they (school administration) were very defensive when challenged on the explanations, and they don’t like it when you question them.”

Using the principal-agent theory as my framework as I described in Chapter I, the school district is the principal and the teachers are the agents employed to perform

the duties that the district requires, improving student achievement. The TAP program was inserted in the framework as the contract that was mandated or imposed on the agents to accomplish improved student achievement.

Other areas of the performance pay program were just as mysterious to the staff when probed about how much extra money they could earn and how it was calculated. The discussion became volatile from several staff members. Kyle, a middle school PE teacher became frustrated and divulged, “Payouts are a mystery. It’s like a big secret, you have a magic eight ball, and turn it over and see the number you are going to get because you have no idea.” A colleague of his, Debbi, spoke in a similar manner, “I have knowledge of the rubric but have no idea how the compensation works.” A middle school math teacher, Daniel, stated, “It gets hairy when you start messing with people’s money.” An English teacher, Derrick, with 10 years’ experience from the high school explained his objection to the performance pay components by stating, “The structure was very wrong because they don’t account for years’ experience. I get that it should be for performance, but experience should count for something.”

Student growth and value added scoring from student test scores brought about many comments about the lack of communication and the enigmatic perception that teachers had developed over the TAP implementation process and how the student growth and value added scores are derived. James, an elementary teacher, was very calm when talking about the communication of the value-added scores and student growth in his class when he commented, “Better communication leads to better perception.”

On the other end of the spectrum, Zach, a high school Agriculture teacher held nothing back when he talked about how using student test scores for one of the factors that influences their performance pay stated, “They (students) could really screw us if they had any idea about the test score part.” Solomon (2005) described evaluation criteria for performance pay as not being fair if the teachers do not understand how student test scores are converted into value-added numbers. Along with the secretive nature of the value-added score calculations and referring back to the theoretical framework, a principal-agent dilemma occurs when the performance pay of the teacher is based on the test scores of students that they may have limited influence on or in fact do not have in class at all, but may earn performance pay for their test scores. This occurs when school-wide scores are determined by a few core teachers, an example made clear by Samantha, a fourth-grade reading teacher who commented, “The finger points at me, as our fourth-grade reading scores are what determines the campus score.”

Advancing the idea of having limited influence on students and depending on others for test scores, the same high school agriculture teacher, Zach, stated, “I have to depend on the core teachers to do well for me to earn extra money; I would rather do it myself. It does not seem fair for them to have all the pressure.”

As noted in Chapter II, the term distributive fairness is used to describe the reasonableness of a compensation plan based on the fairness of the components of the model. The components include the form of compensation, the dollar amount, and formula to reach the monetary reward distributed (Heneman et al., 2007). The interviews revealed a lack of understanding on both the dollar amount that could be earned and the

formula that determined the bonus. The CECR (2011) reiterated that buy-in from teachers is essential for any performance pay plan to be successful. Lack of communication and transparency leads to distrust and eventual failure of the program.

Reliability of Observations and Evaluations

Solomon (2005) stated that a performance pay program must be supported by a strong, transparent, and fair teacher evaluation system. He goes on to say that if there is fear of bias and nepotism from evaluators or if the teachers do not trust the principal, the program has little chance of success. The lack of inter-rater reliability was a major issue with many of the teachers with whom I spoke. An additional subtopic was the inconsistency in the number of evaluations and walk-throughs the teachers were given from year to year. Teacher appraisers are recertified every year in a training that includes watching videos of teachers and rating them on a rubric. The human element and perceived biases of some of the evaluators was very apparent.

A high school female teacher, Misti, was adamant about performing the same lesson to two different evaluators and receiving totally different scores. She said, “It is just a good ‘ole boy system, really, you can take your money and stick it where the sun don’t shine. I would rather have my salary step.” A high school mentor teacher and evaluator, Brad, commented that the inequity of the scoring between administrators can be a problem, elaborating that “every time I sit across from someone in an evaluation post conference, I know I am thinking about dollars and so are they and I know it should not be that way.” Debbi, a first-year middle school special education teacher, revealed an excellent point about knowledge of content that the administrator was observing. She

said that, “One evaluator told me that he did not know what inclusion should look like; how can he observe me when he doesn’t know what he is looking for?”

The elementary focus group was not as negative as the other campuses as two of the evaluators were on the panel. They agreed that the time it takes to be an evaluator and teach your own class was difficult and showed more compassion toward the evaluators. One mentor teacher, Kalli, calculated the number of days she was out of her own classroom and she missed almost 20 days with training and evaluating other teachers. “That is very hard on my own students, having a sub for all those days,” she noted. The conversation turned to people leaving the district because of the number of observations and walkthroughs with the TAP program. Andi, an elementary teacher with seven years’ experience, suggested that, “people left the district because they felt hounded by all the walkthroughs and felt their classes were always being interrupted.”

The number of observations for the TAP program is mandated at four for each teacher per year with one of them being a practice observation that does not count for the teacher. The number of walkthroughs is a district decision, and it appeared that each campus had different procedures for walkthroughs and the number fluctuated. The calm elementary teacher James explained that the first year of the program, 2014, he had close to 15 walkthroughs on top of the scheduled observations, and this year, 2015, he only had two. The middle school process for walk throughs was noted to be erratic in the eyes of the group. Bekki, a first-year middle school teacher, said that the feedback she received was great from one administrator but was inconsistent from another who seemed to use a checklist.

Although the evaluation piece of the TAP program is tied to an observation rubric, the interpretation of that rubric and the differences of evaluation styles can be troublesome if the teachers feel the system is inequitable or unfair. The observation rubric adds many more responsibilities to teachers in the TAP program. The next section describes perceptions of the additional work for teachers.

Additional Workload

Solomon (2005) indicated that performance pay models that include additional work for teachers with small bonus pay or models that may cause some teachers to actually lose money may lead to the failure of performance pay programs. When asked about additional duties and work tied to the observational instructional rubric the teachers had to become familiar with, the professional learning community meetings called cluster time, the sentiment varied. Several teachers said they enjoyed working with and learning from other teachers. Odden and Kelley (1996) showed that teachers not only value extrinsic rewards but other intrinsic success as well, including professional development that improves the quality of their teaching toolbox. Bekki from the middle school referred to the additional work as exactly that, “adding to her teaching toolbox.”

An elementary response said that the assignments in cluster helped hold all teachers accountable and working toward the same goals for the campus. “TAP does not make us work harder; it helps us get better, but you have to have intrinsic motivation to be a teacher,” a sentiment expressed by Kalli from the elementary focus group. Intrinsic

motivation was also alluded to by Samantha, a second year teacher. She explains that, “I enjoy my kids, I love my kids. I am not here because of TAP or anything else.”

However, when the variable of bonus money was added to the question and whether the pay justified the work, a more robust discussion ensued. Zach, from Sunset High School was boisterous in expressing his opinion, “They just keep the money if that’s what it takes, keep the damn money. We won’t do half the work and still will do what we need to get it done.” Misti, the high school teacher with many years’ experience, was more defiant when she spoke about the cluster meetings. She expressed her disdain by saying, “They wanted me to do homework. I am sorry I am not doing homework. I have too many other things to worry about.” Troy from the middle school talks about hearing the same information from year to year in the cluster meetings, saying, “We hear the same stuff for five years in a row, like really we have to do this all over again?” He also goes on to say, “We are like a farm team for other districts. We get new teachers coming in, and they will be here one year and then they will go because it isn’t worth it.”

The concept of professional development and adding extra work for teachers and then tying it to performance pay by using a rubric to hold teachers accountable for those additional duties exposed many emotions from the teachers in the focus groups. The next section talks more about the professional development component of TAP and how the teachers perceived it.

Professional Development

The focus group interviews from all three campuses did reveal that the chance to collaborate in a professional learning community (cluster) was the most successful part of the TAP program at their campuses. Comments from several teachers praised the concept. James from the elementary group indicated, “It is more enjoyable to be an effective teacher and the professional development helps me be more effective.” There was a disagreement between two middle school teachers about the cluster time. Debbi did not like giving up conference periods to meet as a group explaining, “We basically get only one conference period a week.” Bekki her colleague said, “I disagree. For a first-year teacher, I would be like a chicken with my head cut off without cluster.” The Sunset High School group also was in favor of the cluster time and working with colleagues in different subjects.

Professional development and being able to collaborate with colleagues to improve teaching skills is an essential component of the TAP program. Teachers are able to deal with areas of improvement or refinements as noted during post-observation conferences (Solomon, 2005). The professional development component was by far the most agreeable component to keep when the groups were asked how to improve the performance pay model. Some of the comments included, “Take the pay out of it and keep the professional development,” stated Misti from the high school. Samantha from the elementary concurred by saying, “Keep the PD and the feedback, but the pay can go.”

Adding to the comments on professional development, Debbi, a special education teacher from the middle school, had a different opinion. She explains that “I probably would not keep any of it (TAP); it’s too frustrating with the amount of stuff we have to do for it (the money). Sometimes I feel like it is too much.”

This section of the qualitative analysis discussed the major themes that evolved from the focus group interviews at Sunset school district in South Texas. The research questions that my focus group script intended to address included, “What components of performance pay models do the teachers feel are beneficial?” and “What do teachers suggest as ways to improve performance pay models?” The analysis of the focus group interview results and the online anonymous survey will be discussed in the summary of this chapter. I will compare the data in detail in Chapter V, Summary, Discussion, and Conclusions chapter.

Summary

Chapter IV analyzed the data from my study with the first section designated for the quantitative methodology and results for the statistical tests that included a one-way ANOVA to compare TAP and non-TAP teachers’ perceptions for the responses to an anonymous online survey and chi-square measurements to determine any significant differences using the demographic information of gender, years of teaching experience, contract type (continuing or probationary), grade level taught (elementary, middle or high school), and subjects taught (STAAR subject, elective, core but non-STAAR and special education). The survey responses were broken into four categories including

student standardized test scores, teacher performance pay, teacher work, and school climate in the form of tables to simplify the information.

The qualitative data from the three focus group interviews from the TAP school district was summarized in a narrative form with four specific themes that emerged from the analysis. Those themes were: (a) transparency and communication of procedures for performance pay, (b) reliability of observations and evaluations of teachers, (c) additional workload not worth the pay, and (d) increased professional development evolving as the strongest part of the program. Each theme was given rich description with quotes from participants to reinforce the opinions that came to the forefront as the interviews were analyzed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, I will conclude this record of study with a summary of the study I conducted followed by a discussion of the findings from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Implications for practice in the current field of education were explored as they pertained to future performance pay models and recommendations for further research concerning those different incentive pay models for teachers are made. I will synthesize my study in the conclusions sections of this chapter.

Summary of Study

I begin this chapter with a review of the purpose of the study and the theoretical framework lens that was used, followed by the research questions that drove the methodology I used in conducting the mixed methods study. I was involved in a TAP performance pay model in a district and had some questions as to how it was working in other schools. I began researching performance pay models and was intrigued by the vast difference in components and implementation of the models across the nation.

Incentive pay plans for teacher performance have been used in Texas school districts for several years with a variety of funding sources including the Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (GEEG), the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG), and District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE). Evaluation of these different grants

used for local school districts created performance pay programs that have been done by the National Center on Performance Incentives through Vanderbilt University (2015) with cooperation from the Texas Education Agency in the form of research briefs and working papers. The TAP program has been the subject of one of these evaluations and reviews the program through the lens of improving tests scores as compared to non-TAP schools (Springer, Ballou & Peng, 2008).

Surveying the perceptions and attitudes of TAP school district teachers toward the incentive pay component of the TAP program in Texas as compared to non-TAP schools without any kind of incentive pay program in place seemed to be lacking in the research. Comparing the perceptions of the structure of a performance-based compensation plan of campuses with and campuses without such a plan gives insight into whether the program is sustainable after the grant funds have ended. If the teachers feel that the incentive plan is worthwhile and equitable, then the district can make an informed decision to sustain the TAP model or invest in another performance-based compensation program.

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study was to compare teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the performance pay components of the TAP program in four Texas school districts (254 participants) and their non-TAP (295 participants) counterparts' perceptions of similar performance pay components in four school districts. The school districts were matched by using indicators including student enrollment, number of teachers, demographic information, and percentage of economically disadvantaged

students enrolled at the campus. I wanted to compare the responses to an anonymous survey about the implementation and perceived fairness of the TAP performance-based compensation program with teachers in school districts without a performance pay model to determine their perceptions and attitudes if one were being contemplated by their school district.

Focus group interviews were conducted at a TAP school district, including elementary, middle, and high school groups, to gain more in-depth knowledge of the perceptions of teachers at different grade levels and experience levels with the program. The data collected from survey instruments of both TAP and non-TAP schools and the focus group interviews from the TAP campuses were analyzed to provide information to be used by school districts in Texas to determine if the TAP program may be a viable choice for a performance-based incentive program and if the campuses without a performance pay program would be willing to attempt such a plan in their school districts.

Theoretical Framework

The study was viewed through the lens of the economic theory of the principal-agent relationship also known as the agency theory (Mitnick, 1973). In defining the principal-agent theory, Delves and Patrick (2010) described the principal-agent relationship in the business context as when one person (the principal) engages another person (the agent) to perform a service on behalf of the principal.

Framing the principal-agent theory for the purpose of this study, I extended the reference to local school districts (principals) that adopted the Teacher Advancement

Program (the contract) as the performance pay compensation model and the teachers (agents) they employ, working toward educating the students in the district. The goal of the district in adopting the TAP performance-based compensation model was to provide incentives for teachers to improve student achievement through additional pay for improving standardized tests scores, positive evaluation results, and increasing knowledge and skills in their field.

Discussion of Findings

The literature in the field of education and performance pay encompasses many aspects of the topic ranging from structure (CECR, 2011; Odden & Conley, 1992; Odden & Kelly, 1996) to financing and sustaining the programs (Goldin, 2003; Heneman et al., 2007; Podgursky & Springer, 2007). The goal of my study was to focus on one specific program (TAP) and to compare four school districts that have TAP as a performance pay model to four districts that do not have a performance pay model implemented in their school district. The following three quantitative research questions guided my study and are discussed together in the quantitative findings from my study. The qualitative results are discussed using the last two supplemental qualitative questions from the study.

Quantitative Research Questions and Findings

Research question 1. How do teachers in TAP school districts perceive the performance pay components of TAP?

The finding from the TAP teachers who responded to the survey agreed that the performance pay component created some negative issues within their schools including creating resentment among teachers, creating an atmosphere where teachers would be

less willing to assist colleagues, and undermining the morale of the campus. There were positive significant relationships between the perceptions that the performance pay component would increase motivation of teachers and the increase of quality work, improving teaching skills. However since no comments were included in the survey, motivation could be termed either positive or negative. TAP teachers believed that a teacher's years of experience should count more toward salary than a performance pay component. According to the data, TAP teachers also believed that a performance pay component would have no effect on their work as it was already at the appropriate level. Moreover, it was hard to link the work of an individual to student improvement when there were so many other things going on in schools.

Interestingly, the teachers who were involved in TAP programs scored the other items in the survey with a neutral indicator. Items that included TAP were a fair way to reward teachers, the best option to increase teacher wages, would have a positive effect on teacher recruitment, and would retain highly qualified teachers. Other glaring neutral scores should be noted on the survey questions that dealt with performance pay—reinforces good performance, results in better and more effective teaching, makes us work harder, increases the quantity of our work, and discourages teamwork.

Ballou (2001) suggested that more teachers are in favor of merit pay plans that already exist in their schools. The findings of my study suggested the opposite with the TAP program schools that were surveyed; they were neither in favor or disapproving of the program. Research questions 2 and 3 are answered with the findings that follow.

Research question 2. How do teachers in non-performance pay schools perceive performance pay program components?

Research question 3. How do these two groups of teachers' perceptions compare to one another about performance pay models?

The findings of the data from the non-TAP teacher survey responses reinforced the sentiment from American Federation of Teachers (2010) that compensation plans must include multiple measures of student outcome. They disagreed with using only STAAR scores for a performance pay indicator and part of it should be based on other performance indicators in the classroom. They also agreed that teaching years' experience should count more toward a teacher's salary. The non-TAP teachers agreed that a performance pay model would have no effect on their work as it was already at the appropriate level and that it was hard to link the work of an individual to student improvement when there were so many other things going on in schools. Non-TAP teachers also agreed that the incentive component would discourage teamwork within the campus.

Comparing the findings for research question 3, both groups of educators, TAP and non-TAP, agreed that a performance pay component may create some negative issues within their schools. Resentment among teachers and creating an atmosphere where teachers would be less willing to assist colleagues and undermining campus morale were the scenarios with which they both agreed. They also agreed on the topic that a teacher's years of experience should count for more of the salary for a teacher.

The findings from my data are in opposition to the reports that are disseminated by the National Institute for Effective Teaching (NIET), the headquarters for the TAP program. While there are many studies on the effectiveness of TAP in raising student achievement (NIET, 2015), and there seems to be little doubt that implementing the TAP program with fidelity will lead to gains in test scores and value-added scores for teachers, the NIET research on teacher attitudes, however, conflicts with the data that my study showed. Reasons for this conflict may include the differences in the implementation of the program for performance pay incentives across districts. School districts may choose to finance the bonus pay in the program in a way that is best for the school district. The teachers from both TAP and non-TAP in my study were not in favor of the performance incentives. This leads into the qualitative section and the next two research questions.

Qualitative Research Questions' Findings

Supplemental question 1. “What components of performance pay models do the teachers feel are beneficial?”

The focus group interviews were very enlightening, and each group interview took on a persona of its own. Implementation of the TEEG grant programs were evaluated for three consecutive years by Springer et al. (2007, 2008, 2009) where the findings suggested that the local design of the plan and the characteristics of the schools influenced the attitudes and behaviors of teachers, school environments, and teacher turnover. As I conducted the interviews with a script that asked open-ended questions, four themes emerged about the program implementation of TAP. The findings of my

focus group interviews supported the findings of Springer et al. (2007, 2008, 2009). First, it was imposed upon them, there was no input from the stakeholders, and the implementation of the plan was not communicated in a way that everyone involved could understand. Second, reliability of observations and evaluations of teachers was not consistent, and the teachers felt it became a punitive point system. The third theme was the additional workload not being worth the incentive pay that they may or may not receive. Finally, each group did feel the increased professional development and the instructional rubric evolved as the strongest part of the program.

The district administration arranged the focus groups and each level was completed on their own campus. The elementary group was teachers who had the same conference period, as was the middle school group. The high school focus group was volunteers who wanted to attend the interview session before school. This may have been an invitation for the ones who showed up to vent on negative issues of the program. They seemed to be more negative overall than the others were. In “staying with the data” as Lunenburg and Irby (2008) suggested, the focus groups were conducted near the end of the school year when teachers are more apt to be tired and ready for a break. This may have led several of them to express negative opinions, especially the ones who were leaving the district.

Supplemental question 2. “What do teachers suggest as ways to improve performance pay models?”

The focus groups were asked which part of the program was most beneficial in supplemental question 1 and to a person they responded that the professional

development and the instructional rubric were the best part for their teaching. Each group felt that the money incentive part of the program could be eliminated and a regular salary scale step be put back into place. The district had frozen salaries by offering a \$50 a year step raise. This was the crux of the entire rebellion for the teachers interviewed. They had no way to determine the amount of bonus money they could earn or whether they would get any at all. Several teachers used phrases such as “You can keep the money” and “Stick it (the money) where the sun don’t shine.”

The findings of the focus group interviews suggested that implementation is the most important part of the TAP program. Within the application of all the components of the program communication was by far the most talked about issue in the teacher groups I interviewed. Followed by the lack of information on the amount of performance or bonus pay.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of the study was to compare perceptions and attitudes of teachers in the TAP program and ones who did not have incentive pay programs in their schools to further the educational literature on performance pay models, specifically to give some insight into what teachers think about such programs and how they can be better constructed and implemented in the future. Implications for future use of the information can be distributed to all stakeholders in educational decision-making. School district administration may use the findings to help determine pitfalls to avoid if implementing the TAP program or another district-created incentive model. As Springer et al. (2007,

2008, 2009) suggested, a locally designed incentive plan with stakeholder input is more likely to be accepted by teachers.

Campus principals should be able to understand the implications of the findings by increasing the communication level of any program and listening to the staff when they voice their concerns about their salaries and livelihood. This will lead to retaining more teachers who would otherwise move to other districts with a stable salary scale. Teacher leaders and classroom teachers may be able to further the relationship with district administration by expressing their opinions in a fair and nonthreatening environment when asked about what kind of incentive program they can help create.

Finally, the results of the study may be only a small section of TAP schools in Texas, but clearly their opinion of the implementation and the components of the program can give way to improved communication and new and untried incentive pay plans in the future.

Recommendations for Further Research

In making recommendations for further research in the area of performance pay models, it may be beneficial to expand the scope of the studies to include more TAP schools and more schools that are thinking about implementing performance pay models. The timing of this study could have been better as the online survey and focus group interviews were all conducted at the end of a school year. This could have created the limitation of several school districts choosing not to participate. Performing a study near the middle of a school year and with more focus groups or individual face-to-face

interviews of not only teachers but school administrators with outside researchers to lend more validity to the answers would give more insight to what they truly think.

Conclusions

This study was conducted as a part of my growing curiosity of how teachers can be compensated for the work that they do and creating a way for them to earn additional bonus money for the extra effort that so many of them put in. In studying the TAP model, the thinking was twofold: I wanted to investigate how other teachers from other districts implemented the program and how they were paid.

In trying to eliminate any bias in the questioning of the participants, I did not ask about dollar amounts, specifically in either the survey or focus group interviews. It was clear in the focus group that bonus pay was a mystery to many of them as was the case in my district several years ago. This uncertainty caused some very uncomfortable conversations for administrators with teachers who wanted to know how the amount was calculated and rightfully so. The data suggest that a better model can be created to pay teachers who actually do the extra work and should be compensated for that effort.

Epilogue

Using the research and the data I collected from this study, I will be able to apply the information in the upcoming year to help design an incentive pay plan for teachers in my school district. The information from the surveys and focus group interviews described pitfalls to avoid in the process. A committee of teachers and administrators will be gathered to contribute suggestions as to what would be an effective and

sustainable plan to pay those teachers who put in the extra effort and should be paid for their leadership and additional work.

Using the four themes from the focus groups as a guide, we will attempt to have more transparency and communicate all of the components constructed by the stakeholders, identify and implement a fair evaluation system for teachers, give the teachers a choice of doing additional work for additional pay, and provide the professional development that the teachers will want and use in their instructional practices. The purpose would be to develop a plan that could be used for years to come to retain our current teachers and to attract educators in the future.

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APPENDIX A

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jimmy Gouard and I am working on my doctoral dissertation study at Texas A&M University and would like to send the teachers in your district an online survey to gather their perceptions of performance pay. All responses are anonymous and used for data collection only. Attached is the information regarding my study.

I would appreciate your participation in my study. I do need an authorization notice of some kind on district letterhead for the approval process at Texas A&M. It can be emailed back to me at your convenience. Thank you for your time.

Jimmy Gouard
Assistant Superintendent
Lytle ISD
830-709-5100 Ex. 4008

APPENDIX B

AUTHORIZATION LETTER TO CONDUCT SURVEY

Letter Head

Date

I authorize Jimmy Gouard, a doctoral student at Texas A&M University, to conduct an online survey and/or focus group interviews in my district this school year (2014-2015) as part of his record of study. Both the online survey and the focus group interviews will be voluntary and all identities will be kept confidential

The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions and attitudes of teachers in TAP schools and non-TAP schools regarding performance pay components for teachers.

Sincerely,

Authorizing Signature

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

I would like to set up some time to conduct some focus group interviews with a group from one of your elementary schools, your junior high, and your high school. I need 5-8 teachers in each group. Would you be able to help me with this? I can come after school or during a conference period.

I will have a set of questions and no names will be used in the results. I will audio tape the conversation so I can transcribe the interview for my study.

I know school is almost out, but I need to conduct them before everyone leaves for the summer. I am expecting approval from Texas A&M sometime this week. Could I schedule something next week or the week of June 1-5th? Let me know thank you.

Jimmy Gouard
Assistant Superintendent
Lytle ISD
830-709-5100 Ex. 4008

APPENDIX D

TAP TEACHER ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

My name is Jimmy Gouard and I am working on my doctoral degree at Texas A&M University. The topic of my research is: Teachers' perceptions of the performance pay components of the TAP program. I would like to better understand your personal beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes about the performance pay components of the TAP program currently in use in your school district.

The following survey is strictly voluntary and I would appreciate your candid input. The results of the survey will be confidential and will not include any names of people completing the survey.

I. Demographic Information

1. Gender

Female *Male*

2. Indicate your current level of experience as an educator:

0-5 years *6-10 years* *11-15 years* *16-20 years* *21-25 years* *26 or more*

3. Indicate your category as an educator:

Term Contract Teacher *Probationary Contract Teacher*

4. Indicate your work assignment:

Elementary School *Middle School* *High School*

5. Indicate your current position:

STAAR tested subject *Special Education Teacher* *Elective Teacher*

II. Perceptions and attitudes toward the TAP program

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the TAP program in your district. Please check one of the following responses that best fits your beliefs.

Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Neutral (N) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

6. The current TAP incentive pay structure is an adequate way to pay educators.

Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Neutral (N) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

7. I believe that my performance pay should be
- based on student test scores. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - based on performance of students in my classroom. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
(individual growth, portfolios, targeted growth, other)
 - based on building-wide performance criteria. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
8. TAP performance pay is the best option to increase teacher wages.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
9. TAP performance pay is a fair way to reward teacher performance.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
10. TAP performance pay will affect the retention of highly qualified teachers.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
11. The principle of relating teachers' pay to performance is a good one.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
12. The idea TAP performance pay for teachers is fundamentally unfair.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
13. Experience on the job should count more towards determining pay levels.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
14. The TAP performance pay component:
- leads to greater motivation amongst teachers. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - has a positive effect on teacher recruitment. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - has a positive effect on teacher retention. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - reinforces good performance. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - results in better and more effective teaching. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - improves the quality of my work. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - increases the quantity of my work. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - makes me work harder. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - makes me work longer hours. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
 - causes resentment among staff. (SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
15. TAP performance pay will be problematic because it is hard to link the work done in schools to individual performance.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
16. TAP performance pay will have no effect on the quality of my work because it is already at the appropriate standard.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

17. TAP performance pay has made the staff less willing to assist colleagues.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

18. TAP performance pay has undermined staff morale.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

19. TAP performance pay has discouraged teamwork and cooperation between teachers.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

20. The TAP performance pay motivates me to improve my teaching skills.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX E

NON-TAP TEACHER ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

My name is Jimmy Gouard and I am working on my doctoral degree at Texas A&M University. The topic of my research is: Teachers' perceptions of performance pay. I would like to better understand your personal beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes about performance-based compensation for teachers.

The following survey is strictly voluntary and I would appreciate your candid input. The results of the survey will be confidential and will not include any names of people completing the survey.

II. Demographic Information

1. Gender

Female Male

2. Indicate your current level of experience as an educator:

0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years 21-25 years 26 or more

3. Indicate your category as an educator:

Term Contract Teacher Probationary Contract Teacher

4. Indicate your work assignment:

Elementary School Middle School High School

5. Indicate your current position:

STAAR tested subject Special Education Teacher Elective Teacher

II. Perceptions and attitudes toward about performance pay programs

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about performance based compensation plans. Please check one of the following responses that best fits your beliefs.

Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Neutral (N) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

6. The current TAP incentive pay structure is an adequate way to pay educators.

Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Neutral (N) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

7. I believe that performance pay should be *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
- based on student test scores. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - based on performance of students in my classroom. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
(individual growth, portfolios, targeted growth, other)
 - based on building-wide performance criteria. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
8. Performance pay is the best option to increase teacher wages.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
9. Performance pay is a fair way to reward teacher performance.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
10. Performance pay will affect the retention of highly qualified teachers.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
11. The principle of relating teachers' pay to performance is a good one.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
12. The idea of performance pay for teachers is fundamentally unfair.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
13. Experience on the job should count more towards determining pay levels.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
14. Performance-based pay:
- leads to greater motivation amongst teachers. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - has a positive effect on teacher recruitment. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - has a positive effect on teacher retention. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - reinforces good performance. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - would result in better and more effective teaching. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - would improve the quality of my work. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - would increase the quantity of my work. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - would make me work harder. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - would make me work longer hours. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
 - causes resentment among staff. *(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)*
15. Performance pay will be problematic because it is hard to link the work done in schools to individual performance.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)
16. Performance pay will have no effect on the quality of my work because it is already at the appropriate standard.
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

17. Performance pay would make the staff less willing to assist colleagues.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

18. Performance pay would undermine staff morale.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

19. Performance pay would discourage teamwork and cooperation between teachers.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

20. Performance pay would motivate me to improve my teaching skills.

(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION REQUEST TO USE SURVEY QUESTIONS

From: Matthew Springer mgspringer@gmail.com
Sent: Wed 12/3/2014 1:17 PM

Jimmy,

Sure thing. Go for it.

Best wishes, Matt

From: Jimmy Gouard [<mailto:jgouard@lytleisd.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 02, 2014 2:18 PM
To: matthew.g.springer@vanderbilt.edu
Subject: Request permission

Dr. Springer,

My name is Jimmy Gouard and I am currently a doctoral student at Texas A&M University and have Dr. Lori Taylor on my committee. She had suggested that I use survey instruments that have already been validated. I am referencing your work in my research and am working on a proposal to research the performance pay components of the TAP program in Texas within the TIF grant. I wanted to ask permission to use some of the survey questions for teachers and staff from the Texas studies you and your colleagues used in evaluating the DATE, TEEG and GEEG grants. Is there any particular process or form I need to fill out in order to request permission? Any assistance you could provide would be appreciated. Thank you.

Jimmy Gouard
Assistant Superintendent
Lytle ISD
830-709-5100 Ex. 4008

APPENDIX G

PERMISSION REQUEST TO USE SURVEY QUESTIONS

From: Forand, Sandra [mailto:Sandra.Forand@ride.ri.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2015 6:45 AM
To: Jimmy Gouard
Subject: RE: permission to use survey questions

Good Morning,

You're welcome to use whatever you need. Good luck on your dissertation. Please feel free reach out if you have any questions.

Regards,
Sandy

From: Jimmy Gouard [mailto:jgouard@lytleisd.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 08, 2015 12:09 PM
To: Forand, Sandra
Subject: permission to use survey questions

Dr. Forand,

My name is Jimmy Gouard and I am working on my doctoral proposal at Texas A&M University. I have a similar topic of teacher performance pay and teacher perceptions regarding the TAP program used in Texas. I was wondering if you would mind if I used you and your work for a reference and if I could adapt some of your survey questions to fit my specific topic of research. Thank you for your time.

Jimmy Gouard
Assistant Superintendent
Lytle ISD
830-709-5100 ext. 4008

APPENDIX H

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT

Hello. My name is Jimmy Gouard and I am conducting this focus group interview as part of my research for the doctoral program at Texas A&M University. The purpose of this focus group is to gather information on your attitudes and perceptions of the TAP program currently in use in your school district.

Please answer the questions honestly, so that we can obtain accurate information about the TAP program at this school. This session will be recorded using audio only. Your responses will be completely confidential and reported in a way that does not identify you. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Let's start by learning about the school's involvement with TAP.
When did implementation begin? What did you know about it, and how were you or other teachers involved in the decisions and processes?
2. What do you feel are the main reasons that your school adopted TAP?
3. What type of professional development and support have you received for implementing TAP? Do you feel sufficiently prepared as result of the PD?
4. Describe how the TAP performance pay components attempts to influence, and what its impacts have been for, each of the following areas:
 - a. Developing a positive school climate.
 - b. Increasing teacher's motivation and collegiality.
 - d. Increasing students' academic achievement.
 - e. Increasing parent and community involvement.
 - f. Making teaching more enjoyable and effective.
5. What parts of TAP have been *most* successful, and why?
6. What parts of TAP have been *least* successful, and why?
7. How can TAP be made better for the future?
8. What is your perception of the performance pay components of TAP?
9. Would you support the TAP program being implemented in other schools?
10. Is there anything else anyone would like to add before we conclude this interview?

Thank you for time.

APPENDIX I

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM CONSENT FORM

Project Title:

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Jimmy Gouard, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions and attitudes of teachers in TAP schools and Non-TAP schools regarding performance pay components for teachers.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a classroom teacher in either a TAP school or Non-TAP school.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Three focus groups will be asked to volunteer with 5 to 8 people in each focus group. A focus group from each grade span, including one group for Elementary (K-5), Middle school (6-8) and high school (9-12) campuses will be invited to participate in this study. Overall, a total of 24 people will be invited at multiple study centers.

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?

None, the alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to answer questions in a focus group, interview setting. All response will be recorded using audio recording only. All participants will be assigned pseudonyms and no personal identification will be disclosed. Your participation in this study will last up to one hour and is a one-time event.

Will Photos, Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

Audio recordings of the focus group interviews will be conducted.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation of this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation of this research study.

Language for Required recordings:

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study so that a transcript may be obtained from the recording and analyzed for codes and themes. If you do not give permission for the audio recording to be obtained, you cannot participate in this study.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing are no more risks than you would come across in everyday life.

Version Date:

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IRB NUMBER: IRB2015-0292D
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 05/22/2015
IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 05/15/2016

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM
CONSENT FORM**

Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Jimmy Gouard and Beverly Irby will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in locked file cabinet; computer files protected with a password. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Information about you and related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Beverly Irby at 936-870-5536 or irbyb@tamu.edu, to tell her about a concern or complaint about this research. You may also contact the Protocol Director Jimmy Gouard, at 830-931-4511 or jgouard@lytleisd.com.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or call toll free at 1-855-795-8636 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time

Any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

Version Date:

Page 2 of 3



IRB NUMBER: IRB2015-0292D
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 05/22/2015
IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 05/15/2016

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM
CONSENT FORM**

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Date