



Applying maslow's motivation theory to enhance teacher productivity in islamic boarding schools

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ABSTRACT

Background: Education is a fundamental pillar in developing high-quality human resources, with teachers playing a central role. Teacher productivity is strongly influenced by work motivation, which is closely linked to the fulfillment of needs based on Maslow's hierarchy. This study aims to analyze the application of Maslow's theory in improving teacher productivity, a pesantren-based school with an integrative curriculum. The focus is to identify dominant teacher needs and propose strategic recommendations to enhance motivation and productivity. **Method:** This qualitative descriptive study used structured and unstructured interviews with 14 teachers, participatory observation, and school document analysis. Data were thematically analyzed based on Maslow's hierarchy; physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. **Findings:** The study identified seven dominant teacher needs; (1) salary increase, (2) regular recognition, (3) modern learning facilities, (4) improved work infrastructure, (5) regular training, (6) enhanced school safety, and (7) healthcare access. Most teachers reported that physiological (salary) and esteem needs were not optimally fulfilled, while self-actualization (professional development opportunities) was relatively well-supported. Teachers generally responded positively to the work environment, although dissatisfaction in welfare and recognition affected motivation. **Conclusion:** Fulfilling Maslow's hierarchy of needs is crucial for enhancing teacher productivity. Strategic recommendations include optimizing budgets for welfare, implementing performance-based rewards, improving support facilities, and ensuring continuous training. Schools should integrate responsive policies to foster a motivational work environment. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This study offers practical insights for Islamic boarding schools implementing the independent curriculum. The analysis of teacher needs through Maslow's framework within this unique setting provides a holistic policy recommendation, combining welfare, professional growth, and a culture of appreciation which is contributing to underexplored literature on teacher motivation in Islamic education institutions.

KEYWORDS: maslow's motivation; professional development; teacher productivity.

1. Introduction

Education is the main foundation for a nation's progress and a strategic instrument for creating high-quality, character-driven, and globally competitive human resources. In the context of Indonesia, efforts to improve the quality of education have become a fundamental national agenda, considering the central role of education in driving economic growth, social development, and equal opportunities. Various strategic policies continue to be developed to adapt to the demands of the twenty-first century, which are marked by the dynamics of innovation, the adoption of digital technology, and a strong emphasis on

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strengthening moral and ethical values. Amid increasingly complex global transformations, education is not only responsible for delivering knowledge but also serves as a medium for character building, creativity development, and mental maturity of future generations.

Teachers, as the spearhead of education, play a crucial role that goes beyond their traditional function as classroom instructors. They are responsible for instilling values such as integrity, discipline, and patriotism through intensive interaction with students. Teachers also act as motivators and agents of change who inspire and encourage students to reach their fullest potential. However, a teacher's productivity in fulfilling these multidimensional roles depends heavily on internal motivation, which, according to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is significantly influenced by the fulfillment of basic human needs (Ranchman 2015). Physiological needs, safety, esteem, and self-actualization are essential components that must be met for teachers to perform optimally in their duties. Therefore, creating a supportive work environment, providing adequate facilities, and recognizing teacher achievements are vital aspects in improving teaching effectiveness. In this regard, the role of educational management is highly strategic in identifying and implementing initiatives that can optimize teacher motivation so that they not only serve as knowledge transmitters but also as drivers of innovation and educational transformation in the global era. If this integrated effort is carried out consistently, it is expected to produce excellent and highly competitive human resources while contributing significantly to national development as a whole.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, introduced in 1943, emphasizes that individual productivity and performance depend on the fulfillment of five levels of needs: physiological, safety, love or social belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. In the educational context, this theory is relevant for understanding how the school environment can create an ecosystem that enables teachers to reach their full potential. Maslow's hierarchy is commonly used to improve educational outcomes by ensuring that students' basic needs such as nutrition and safety are met, which serve as the foundation for academic success (Akhan, 2024; Timashinova & Anokhina, 2024). Unfortunately, many educational institutions still overlook a holistic analysis of teacher needs, resulting in policies that often fail to address the root causes of motivation issues. In fact, teachers whose basic needs are fulfilled tend to be more productive, more innovative in designing learning processes, and more adaptive to technological and curricular developments.

This study presents a case study at SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam, an institution that integrates formal education with Islamic values and a boarding school environment. This unique context introduces its own complexities, where teachers are expected not only to carry out academic responsibilities but also to serve as mentors in character building and boarding life. However, there has been no in-depth research on how Maslow's hierarchy of needs is applied in such an environment or how its fulfillment influences teacher productivity. Based on this, the study is designed to explore, (1) the level of fulfillment of Maslow's hierarchy of needs among teachers; (2) the most dominant needs experienced by teachers in a boarding school context based on Maslow's hierarchy; (3) the relationship between the fulfillment of these needs and teacher productivity; and (4) strategic recommendations that can be proposed to optimize teacher motivation through the application of Maslow's theory.

This study aims, first, to analyze the gap between Maslow's theory and its practical implementation in a boarding school environment; second, to identify unmet teacher needs as a basis for policy formulation; third, to explore the correlation between need fulfillment and teacher productivity in the context of holistic education; and fourth, to design evidence-based recommendations to improve teacher resource management quality.

The contribution of this article lies in three aspects. First, it fills a gap in the literature by analyzing the application of Maslow's theory in the context of boarding school education, an area that has been underexplored. Second, the study offers practical recommendations for school management in designing teacher-centered policies, such as improving welfare, strengthening workplace safety, recognizing performance, and providing self-development opportunities. Third, it offers an integrative perspective that bridges humanistic psychology

theory and educational management, serving as a reference for other institutions in building sustainable teacher motivation systems. Thus, this study is not only theoretical but also practical, aiming to create a humane educational ecosystem focused on empowering teachers.

2. Methods

The type of research conducted by the researcher is descriptive qualitative research, which involves collecting data in the form of words rather than numbers. It is referred to as a qualitative method because the research results consist of data related to the interpretation of findings obtained in the field (Sugiyono, 2013). This study aims to examine the influence of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam Senior High School. The research was conducted from December 11 to December 13, 2024, and included activities such as observation, questionnaire distribution, and the collection of supporting documents or archives. The research site was SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam, located at Jl. Raya Ajibarang No. 9, Pernasidi Village, Cilongok Subdistrict, Banyumas Regency, Central Java.

The data collection procedure in this study employed purposive sampling, a method based on the assumption that the selected sample consists of individuals who are most knowledgeable about the information sought by the researcher, thereby facilitating the research process (Sugiyono, 2013). The data collection techniques used included interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information about the research object, utilizing both structured and unstructured interview methods. The interview subjects in this study were teachers at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam Senior High School. Observation was carried out to gather information through the examination of the setting—namely, SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam; individuals such as the principal and teachers; and ongoing activities, including teaching and learning processes and school management. Documentation was used to complement the information obtained from observations and interviews. This documentation included various sources such as books, relevant journals, policies, and regulations related to the research.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon through the exploration of narrative and interpretative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Descriptive research, as part of the qualitative approach, aims to systematically and accurately describe and interpret a phenomenon or event (Sugiyono, 2017). In the context of this study, the descriptive method is used to provide a detailed account of the application of Maslow's motivation theory in enhancing teacher productivity at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam Senior High School. Thus, this research not only seeks to present data as it is but also aims to offer a deep interpretation of the data in order to achieve a holistic understanding.

3. Results and Discussion

SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam, established in 2012, has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to providing quality education by integrating pesantren values into every aspect of its learning. Strategically located at Jl. Raya Pernasidi No. 9, Pernasidi Village, Cilongok District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java, the school implements the Merdeka Curriculum enriched with pesantren subjects, Al-Islam, and Kemuhammadiyahan in order to instill strong moral and Islamic foundations in its students.

Supported by a teaching staff of 50 educators, including 41 with bachelor's degrees, 9 with master's degrees, and 7 of whom hold professional certification, the school continuously works to improve the quality of its graduates by enhancing teacher competence. Strategic efforts include providing adequate supporting facilities for both

students and educators, conducting workshops and training tailored to the specific needs of teachers, and improving services to the broader community.

This approach is not only aimed at improving teacher capacity and performance but also at creating a conducive and innovative learning environment, thus producing graduates who possess not only strong academic capabilities but also character and integrity in line with Islamic values. In this way, SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam affirms its position as an adaptive and responsive educational institution, playing an important role in shaping competitive and high-quality human resources in the global era.

3.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

One of the theories proposed by Abraham H. Maslow is the theory of human motivation known as the hierarchy of needs theory. According to Maslow, as outlined in Bagas (2020), human needs are arranged in a hierarchical structure, where each level plays a crucial role in driving an individual's motivation to reach their optimal potential. This hierarchy suggests that lower-level needs must be fulfilled first before a person can focus on higher-level needs. Therefore, each level in the hierarchy is interconnected, and the successful fulfillment of higher needs depends on how well the more fundamental needs have been satisfied.

Iskandar (2016) explains that there are five levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy. The first is physiological needs which include basic necessities such as food, drink, rest, and other physiological needs that are essential for survival. The second is safety needs which relate to the creation of security and protection from both physical and emotional threats. Once these are met, individuals pursue social needs which emphasize the importance of social interaction and harmonious interpersonal relationships. The fourth is self esteem needs which are related to self-respect and recognition for achievements. These needs are important for boosting confidence and motivation to perform. The final level is self actualization which refers to the desire to realize one's fullest potential through continuous self-development and achieving optimal performance.

Thus, Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides not only a deep conceptual framework for understanding human motivation but also acts as a strategic foundation for developing policies and programs aimed at enhancing performance and well-being in fields such as education, management, and human resources. The first level, physiological needs, is associated with human primary needs which are the most basic requirements that must be fulfilled. In the professional environment, these needs may include receiving a salary, having holidays, opportunities to rest, a pleasant working atmosphere, and adequate supporting facilities. These physiological needs can be considered the strongest motivators which constantly drive individuals to meet them. Once these physiological needs are fulfilled, individuals move to safety needs. In an organization, this may involve job clarity, participation in insurance programs such as health or employment insurance, rewards like bonuses, and pension guarantees.

After meeting the physiological and safety needs, individuals will shift focus to social needs. At this stage, people desire to feel accepted and appreciated within their work environment. They find satisfaction when they are embraced by their colleagues and can establish meaningful social relationships at work. The next level is self esteem needs. At this stage, individuals want to be recognized, maintain a positive image, and receive appreciation from others. These needs emerge once the three previous levels are met and often drive individuals to maintain or even improve their motivation through personal achievement and professional performance. The final level is self actualization. This is considered the highest human need. It includes the desire to develop competence, enhance creativity, and gain opportunities to attend workshops or training programs that contribute to personal and professional growth.

In fulfilling Maslow's hierarchy of needs, SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam has implemented the Subject Teacher Forum/*Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP) activities to enhance collaboration and communication among teachers. In the first

semester of the 2024 or 2025 academic year, subject teacher forum was held twice. The first session took place on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, focusing on the development of diagnostic test items, determining essential material boundaries for the semester, and scheduling outing class activities. The second session was held on Friday, November 8, 2024, and concentrated on coordinating the odd semester assessment activities known as End of Semester Summative Assessment/*Penilaian Sumatif Akhir Semester* (PSAS), determining the scope of PSAS test materials, and drafting PSAS question blueprints. These efforts align with Maslow's theory which emphasizes that the fulfillment of basic needs serves as the foundation for achieving optimal performance.

In addition to subject teacher forum, the school also organized workshops and training programs to improve teacher competencies in facing the challenges of modern education. One such workshop was conducted on Friday, August 9, 2024, with the theme "Implementation of Artificial Intelligence in Optimizing Learning," delivered by Mr. Y.H. The workshop discussed the benefits of using AI, the differences between traditional learning and AI-based learning, and practical AI tools that can be implemented in teaching activities. Furthermore, training programs for National Science Olympiad/*Olimpiade Sains Nasional* (OSN) mentors and Computer-Based Written Exam/*Ujian Tulis Berbasis Komputer* (UTBK) subject teachers were also conducted to improve their ability to guide students. These programs focused on problem-solving techniques, the format and structure of computer-based written exam questions, as well as strategies and tips for answering them. An example of this is the computer-based written exam preparation training held on Saturday, November 2, 2024. These activities reflect the fulfillment of teachers' self actualization needs in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy.

However, the results of observations also revealed that during the first semester of the 2024 or 2025 academic year, there was no record or implementation of teacher recognition or reward programs. The absence of such recognition indicates that although professional development efforts through subject teacher forum, workshops, and training have been carried out, the esteem needs level of Maslow's hierarchy has not been adequately fulfilled. Acknowledging teacher performance is a critical factor in motivating them to continue improving their achievements and productivity. Therefore, this finding highlights the need for evaluation and implementation of a more effective reward system as part of a comprehensive strategy to meet teacher needs. See the table below which presents teachers' perceptions of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Table 1. Philosophical needs section

No.	Question	Informant Answer
A1.	Is the salary you currently receive enough to fulfill your daily needs (food, shelter, and clothing)?	3 people: agree 9 people: neutral 2 people: disagree
A2.	Does your current work schedule allow you to rest and maintain your health?	9 people: agree 2 people: neutral 2 people: disagree 1 person: strongly disagree

The responses to the philosophical needs section indicate that most teachers are neutral about whether their salary is sufficient to meet their basic daily needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. Only a few agreed that their income is enough, while some disagreed, suggesting that financial concerns still exist for several teachers. On the other hand, when asked whether their work schedule supports health and rest, most participants agreed. This suggests that despite salary concerns, the current workload is relatively manageable in terms of physical and mental well-being. A few respondents remained neutral or disagreed, showing that a minority may still experience fatigue or health-related stress due to their schedule. Therefore, while basic financial needs are somewhat unmet, there is a positive perception of work-life balance among most teachers.

Table 2. Security needs section

No.	Question	Informant Answer
B1.	Does your work environment provide a sense of security from physical threats or psychological pressure?	1 person: strongly agree 10 people: agree 2 people: neutral
B2.	Do you get health insurance from the school?	2 people: strongly agree 9 people: agree 4 people: neutral

The data shows that the majority of teachers feel physically and psychologically safe in their work environment, with many agreeing and a few strongly agreeing to this statement. This indicates that the school has been somewhat successful in providing a secure atmosphere. Regarding health insurance, most teachers agree that they receive it from the school, although a few remained neutral and only a small number strongly agreed. This reflects a relatively satisfactory provision of health benefits, though not all feel strongly supported in this aspect. The presence of neutral responses suggests room for improvement in both communication and the actual scope of these benefits. Overall, the findings reflect that security needs are mostly met but still require some enhancement to ensure complete coverage and satisfaction.

Table 3. Needs to be accepted (social) section

No.	Question	Informant Answer
C1.	Does the principal support you emotionally?	10 people: agree 3 people: neutral 1 person: disagree
C2.	Does the school organize activities that encourage togetherness and cooperation among teachers?	1 person: strongly agree 10 people: agree 2 people: neutral 1 person: disagree

Responses indicate that most teachers agree that the principal provides emotional support, which implies a positive leadership approach that prioritizes teacher well-being. However, some respondents were neutral and one disagreed, suggesting that not all feel equally supported on a personal level. In terms of social activities that promote cooperation among teachers, most participants also responded positively. A few teachers expressed neutrality and one disagreed, highlighting potential gaps in inclusivity or participation. The strong overall agreement reflects that efforts have been made to build a sense of community within the school. This supports the idea that social acceptance needs are largely fulfilled, although certain individuals may benefit from more targeted engagement efforts.

Table 4. Award needs section

No.	Question	Informant answer
D1.	Are you appreciated by the principal for your work?	1 person: strongly agree 10 people: agree 1 person: neutral 1 person: disagree
D2.	Do you get recognition from the school for your achievements?	2 people: often 3 people: sometimes 1 person: rarely 7 people: never 1 person: did not answer

The responses show mixed feelings about how teachers are recognized and appreciated at school. While most feel appreciated by the principal, institutional recognition for achievements is lacking. Ten respondents agreed they feel appreciated by the principal, and one strongly agreed, showing positive individual appreciation. However, seven teachers said they never receive recognition for achievements, and others responded with low or

uncertain frequencies. This suggests a gap between personal appreciation and systemic acknowledgment. The school may need to create a more structured program to formally recognize teachers' accomplishments.

Table 5. Open-ended question 1

No	Question	Answer
E1.	Name your main needs that have not been fulfilled by the school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs to be valued and recognized for their work - The need for exercise time - Social needs - In general, they have been met, but there are some that have not - Physiological needs (related to health) - Self-actualization needs - Security needs - More or less enough - Physiological needs - I think it is enough - A school environment that is free from violence, bullying, or threats, as well as rules that protect students, teachers, and employees - The need for WiFi facilities in every building - Physiological needs (repetition)

Teachers reported several unmet needs that affect their overall well-being and performance. These include physiological needs, social interaction, safety, and the desire for recognition. Some responses mentioned basic infrastructure like WiFi and a safe, bully-free school environment. A few teachers stated that their needs were generally met, but recurring themes like health and self-actualization show that important areas remain unfulfilled. Multiple mentions of physiological needs reflect ongoing concerns about health and working conditions. Overall, the data signals that many basic and psychological needs still require attention.

Table 6. Open-ended question 2

No.	Question	Answer
E2.	What are your suggestions for how the school can best support your needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reward teachers on a regular basis - Organize regular sports activities and meaningful activities to increase teacher togetherness - Improve the teacher's office space (provision of air conditioning, storage shelves for goods/learning media, motorcycle parking lot with canopy) - Organize sports with teachers and employees - More frequent training and workshops - Improve employee welfare - Improve employee welfare more optimally - Increase salary - Organize an anti-bullying program involving students, teachers, and school staff - Optimize WiFi in each building - Appreciate hard work done - Increased achievement for teachers

Participants suggested numerous improvements the school can make to better support their needs. Common proposals included regular rewards, better workspaces, and more training opportunities. Teachers also called for improved welfare, salary adjustments, and structured anti-bullying programs. Suggestions reflect both practical and emotional support, such as appreciation for hard work and fostering a sense of togetherness. The desire for team-building activities and improved infrastructure like WiFi shows a balance

between social and operational needs. These inputs offer clear guidance for school leaders to enhance staff satisfaction and retention.

Table 7. Open-ended question 3

No.	Question	Answer
E3.	Describe how you feel about going to work at SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ordinary - Happy, ready for activities - Happy, excited - Happy to meet students and be able to share stories with coworkers - <i>Bismillah</i>, enthusiasm - Ordinary - Quite happy and excited - Full of joy and enthusiasm to educate the nation's children - Happy - Sometimes happy, sometimes ordinary, but always grateful - Departing to carry out work obligations - <i>Insha Allah</i>, happy - Ordinary - Neutral

Teachers' feelings about going to work at the school vary but lean mostly positive. Many described themselves as happy, enthusiastic, or grateful for the opportunity to teach. Some mentioned feelings of neutrality or routine, indicating emotional fatigue or a stable but unexciting work environment. Several responses included spiritual expressions like "*Bismillah*" or "*Insha Allah*," showing a connection between personal values and professional duties. Teachers expressed joy in meeting students and sharing with colleagues, indicating strong relational bonds. Overall, while many feel fulfilled, a few responses hint at emotional disengagement that should be addressed.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, human needs are structured in a tiered system comprising five levels: physiological needs, safety, social belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Bagas, 2020; Iskandar, 2016). This theory asserts that fulfilling lower-level needs is a prerequisite for achieving higher-level needs. In the context of education, physiological needs such as receiving a salary and having adequate rest time serve as primary motivators; if these are not met, they can hinder the desire to achieve higher levels of safety, social belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Data in Table 1 indicates that although some respondents feel sufficiently compensated, there are signs of dissatisfaction regarding work-rest balance.

Furthermore, the open responses in Tables 6 through 8 indicate teachers' desire for more comprehensive improvements, including enhanced supporting facilities, regular recognition, and self-development programs. This aligns with Maslow's principle that social and self-actualization needs emerge once basic needs have been met. The gaps identified in the areas of esteem and self-actualization highlight the necessity for a holistic institutional strategy, including human resource planning and a fair compensation system. Thus, the application of Maslow's theory in the educational context not only helps identify unmet needs but also provides policy direction for improving overall teacher well-being and performance (Bagas, 2020; Iskandar, 2016).

3.2 Productivity indicators in education organizations

According to Ridwan Purnama in Arofah (2018), the word productivity originates from the English word product, meaning result or outcome, which evolved into the word productive, meaning to produce, and productivity, meaning "having the ability to make or create: creative." The term productivity is borrowed into Indonesian as produktivitas, which means "the power or ability to produce something." Productivity can also be defined as an enthusiastic attitude that encourages self-development and work progress. Productivity is

related to both the individual and the job. Personal productivity can be achieved through increasing knowledge, skills, discipline, internal drive, and creating a harmonious work atmosphere. Work-related productivity can be demonstrated through good work ethics, financial efficiency, time discipline, and technological improvement. Therefore, a productive worker is defined as a skilled laborer capable of producing goods and services faster than the designated time while maintaining quality (Arofah, 2018).

Indicators of human resource productivity in educational organizations suggest that a teacher is considered professional not only when they teach and assess student competencies, but also when they are able to guide students according to their talents and interests. A productive teacher is a professional who can carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently to produce students who meet the established graduate competency standards (Arofah, 2018). Sedarmayanti, as cited in Arofah (2018), mentions that a productive person is characterized by; (1) acting constructively, (2) having self-confidence, (3) being responsible, (4) loving their work, (5) being future-oriented, (6) being solution-focused, (7) being adaptive, (8) contributing positively to the environment, and (9) being able to realize their potential.

Productivity indicators in educational organizations are essential for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of educational services. These indicators encompass various metrics that evaluate inputs, outputs, and outcomes, emphasizing both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The following section outlines the main productivity indicators and their implications in educational settings. Input-output analysis is a method used to evaluate the relationship between resources (inputs) and educational results (outputs). In the context of higher education, this method serves to assess university performance, which in turn supports more effective budget allocation and resource management (Klump & Zelewski, 2008). One example of applying this method is analyzing the ratio of degrees awarded to faculty members, which can reflect the productivity level of the educational institution (Otto, 2013).

Organizational learning and the work environment also have a significant impact on employee productivity in the higher education sector. Research shows that a positive work environment, combined with effective organizational learning practices, can substantially enhance employee productivity (Hanaysha, 2016). Findings from surveys indicate that better working conditions not only contribute to improved educational outcomes but also increase employee satisfaction, which is a crucial factor in creating a productive academic atmosphere (Hanaysha, 2016). Although productivity indicators are important for improving educational outcomes, some researchers argue that an excessive focus on quantitative metrics may overlook qualitative aspects of education, such as student engagement and holistic development (Schiopu & Jivan, 2014). Therefore, it is important to strike a balance between quantitative and qualitative measurements in educational evaluation.

3.3 The relevance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in improving teacher productivity

The relevance of Maslow's motivation theory in enhancing teacher productivity is evident through its application in various educational contexts. By addressing the hierarchy of needs, schools can significantly improve teacher performance and motivation. Research indicates that fulfilling basic needs, particularly physiological and safety-related aspects, has a substantial impact on teacher performance. In Cirebon City, teachers whose basic needs such as salary and a safe working environment were met demonstrated better performance in carrying out their responsibilities (Eliana et al., 2024). Conversely, a study in Rivers State revealed that the lack of fulfillment of basic needs could lead to a decline in teaching quality and the emergence of unethical practices among educators. Maslow's theory emphasizes the importance of fulfilling lower-level needs to boost teacher productivity. The study shows that unmet physiological and safety needs result in low motivation, negatively affecting teaching quality, thereby highlighting the importance of addressing these needs to improve educational outcomes (Adiele & Abraham, 2013; Fahrurrozi et al., 2024).

Psychological needs, such as social belonging and esteem, also play a crucial role in shaping teacher motivation and performance. Findings in Sumedang reveal a moderate correlation between teacher motivation and performance, where self-actualization emerged as a key factor in enhancing their productivity (Sariah & Nugraha, 2024). A supportive work environment and recognition of achievements contribute positively to job satisfaction, directly impacting overall teacher performance. This study underscores that work motivation, a central component of Maslow's theory, significantly improves teacher performance. By meeting teachers' needs through strategic human resource planning and a supportive environment, educational institutions can effectively increase productivity and job satisfaction (Aryani & Rindaningsih, 2024).

The implications of these findings suggest the necessity of a holistic approach within education systems to optimize educator performance. In Tanzania, the inability to fulfill teachers' psychological needs contributed to low motivation, ultimately hindering the effectiveness of the education process. Maslow's theory highlights the importance of fulfilling psychological needs such as self-esteem and a sense of belonging, which are vital in enhancing teacher productivity. Addressing these needs can lead to increased motivation among teachers in Tanzania, thereby improving their performance and educational outcomes (Abdulrahman & Hui, 2018). Therefore, strategic human resource planning and the implementation of equitable compensation systems are essential to sustain motivation and enhance teacher performance across educational institutions (Aryani & Rindaningsih, 2024). While Maslow's theory offers a useful framework for understanding motivational dynamics, it is also important to consider external factors such as institutional support in efforts to comprehensively improve teacher productivity.

Teachers hold a central role as the primary drivers in educational organizations, serving not only as conveyors of knowledge but also as agents of change and motivators for students. According to Etomes et al. in Alfajaro & Alfajaro (2023), teachers are at the heart of the teaching and learning process, while student performance—as the primary stakeholder in education—reflects the extent to which an educational institution achieves its goals. Therefore, if teachers fail to demonstrate optimal productivity, it directly impacts the performance and productivity of students. This assertion underscores that the responsibilities of teachers go beyond traditional instructional roles; they are also expected to inspire, facilitate, and guide students toward achieving their fullest potential. By enhancing their productivity, teachers not only optimize classroom learning processes but also contribute significantly to the overall performance of educational institutions, fostering an environment conducive to academic and character development.

According to Putri in Djuwita (2011), productivity means obtaining more results with a certain amount of cost, doing things correctly, working smarter and harder, or systematically working to achieve faster outcomes. Productivity can also be interpreted as a mental attitude that consistently believes today's quality of life must be better than yesterday's, and tomorrow must be better than today (Djuwita, 2011; Suprihanto, 2018). From these definitions, productivity can be understood as a mental attitude that drives individuals to work more intelligently and diligently to achieve better results than the previous day, and to continuously improve. Such a mindset is particularly valuable for teachers, as it encourages them to continually enhance their productivity.

One important aspect of improving teacher productivity is work motivation. Motivation is the driving force that enables individuals to act in order to achieve goals (Surani & Mifthahudin, 2018). Motivation encourages teachers to reach learning objectives. Bagas explains that based on Maslow's motivation theory there is a positive relevance to teachers' work motivation (Bagas, 2020). The fulfillment of teachers' physiological needs such as salary increases and a comfortable workplace can enhance work motivation; however if these physiological needs are unmet it will lead to decreased motivation which in turn disrupts organizational work patterns. After meeting basic needs the organization must provide security guarantees for teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The organization can establish rules that set limits and prohibitions aimed at creating a comfortable and safe working environment. For the fulfillment of the third need social needs

the organization can provide recognition to teachers. It can also foster a sense of being valued among teachers to increase their productivity. Enhancing teachers' work motivation can further be achieved by fulfilling the fourth need the need for esteem. The organization can give teachers the freedom to develop their competencies and be receptive to their feedback. When the fourth need is fulfilled teachers can more easily meet the final need which is self-actualization.

The principal acts as a leader responsible both physically and mentally for the success of all staff work activities under their supervision (Siswadi & Munjin, 2023). In this context teachers' needs including welfare professional development and a conducive work environment become a collective organizational responsibility. Therefore principals are required to formulate and implement strategic policies that accommodate and fulfill these needs. Such responsive and innovative policies aim not only to increase teacher productivity but also to create an educational ecosystem that supports the overall improvement of teaching quality. Thus effective leadership in human resource management within schools becomes the key factor in driving improved performance and achieving quality sustainable educational goals.

3.4 Discussion

Based on the research findings, several dominant needs were identified as crucial by teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam in achieving optimal work performance. These needs include salary increases, regular recognition and rewards, improved learning support facilities and teacher amenities, more frequent workshops and training sessions, enhanced school security programs, and better access to healthcare facilities. These findings are consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which posits that the fulfillment of basic needs—such as physiological and safety requirements—forms the foundation that must be met before individuals can pursue self-actualization through esteem, social belonging, and competency development.

The relationship between the level of need fulfillment and teacher work productivity is reflected through improved well-being as a key factor influencing motivation. The fulfillment of teachers' basic needs, particularly in terms of well-being, plays a crucial role in enhancing productivity and professional performance. Teachers who experience optimal well-being tend to be more intrinsically motivated, actively engaged, and highly creative in the teaching and learning process. This aligns with research findings indicating that meeting fundamental needs not only increases engagement but also reduces levels of burnout, thereby positively impacting the quality of instruction (Claudia, 2023; Lee, 2023).

In addition to well-being, the fulfillment of psychological needs—such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness—is also a key determinant of teacher work engagement. Teachers who have control over their professional activities and feel supported by a conducive work environment tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. An institutional climate that provides such support, while also addressing gender disparities among educators, is essential for maintaining mental health and enhancing overall performance (Lee, 2023; Garg, 2024).

Work motivation, driven by fair compensation and recognition, serves as a fundamental pillar in enhancing teacher performance effectiveness. Strategic planning in human resource management, along with the implementation of policies that are responsive to teachers' needs, has proven effective in sustaining work morale and optimizing productivity. However, challenges such as institutional bias and difficulties in maintaining work-life balance remain significant barriers that must be addressed to achieve more comprehensive educational outcomes (Aryani & Rindaningsih, 2024; Garg, 2024). Adequate salaries and facilities not only boost morale and job satisfaction but also encourage teachers to design more creative and innovative learning experiences. This is reflected in teachers' enthusiasm for participating in workshops and training, as well as the positive feelings they report when starting their workday—factors that collectively contribute to improved work productivity. Thus, the comprehensive fulfillment of teachers'

needs can serve as a critical indicator in determining the quality of instruction and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

The unique environment of the pesantren, particularly at Pondok Pesantren Muhammadiyah Zam-Zam, is manifested through the integration of fundamental Islamic values into educational practices and the dynamics of teacher-student interactions. These values not only shape the orientation of the learning process but also influence the contextual understanding and management of teachers' needs, thereby enabling the implementation of development strategies that are aligned with local cultural characteristics. This provides a strategic foundation for educational management in fostering a harmonious and supportive work environment that enhances productivity and pedagogical innovation.

In the context of Islamic education, Islamic Boarding Schools (IBS) emphasize moral and religious instruction by integrating Islamic values into all aspects of students' lives (Lestari et al., 2024). The ta'lim muta'alim approach, which fosters respect for teachers, also contributes to the development of moral behavior among students (Nurhidayah & Choiri, 2024). Furthermore, the Muhammadiyah educational framework combines religious and general knowledge, with a primary focus on character building and integrity. As a result, it produces graduates who are not only academically competent but also grounded in strong ethical principles and Islamic values (Anissa et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the needs of teachers within the pesantren environment require fulfillment strategies that are aligned with Islamic values as well as the demands of modern education. Teachers in boarding schools require training that accommodates both dimensions, making professional development programs that integrate technology and Islamic teachings highly relevant (A'yun et al., 2024; Anissa et al., 2024). The cultural context of pesantren, which emphasizes spiritual and moral development, leads to a unique interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs—where self-actualization is not solely associated with professional achievement, but also with spiritual fulfillment and service to the community (Nurhidayah & Choiri, 2024). In contrast, public schools that place greater emphasis on academic achievement tend to offer broader exposure to diverse educational perspectives, thereby enriching the overall learning experience (Lestari et al., 2024).

External factors play a highly significant role in influencing teacher productivity, which in turn affects overall effectiveness and performance. Various external elements—such as environmental conditions, administrative support, and social dynamics—exert a complex and interrelated influence on the teaching process. Understanding these influences is crucial for improving educational outcomes, as such factors not only impact teacher motivation and performance but also create a framework that supports professional development and classroom innovation (Igho, 2024; Gang & Ban, 2024).

In the context of the school environment, both physical and social conditions play a crucial role in shaping a conducive work atmosphere. A safe school environment equipped with adequate resources can enhance teachers' comfort and work enthusiasm, while the quality of school facilities has been shown to positively correlate with both academic achievement and teacher satisfaction (Gang & Ban, 2024). In addition, administrative support is a key element; effective leadership and strong support systems contribute significantly to increased teacher motivation and creativity. Studies have shown that strong instructional leadership improves teacher performance, while support from educational authorities has a positive impact on overall teaching effectiveness (Mariana et al., 2023; Odit et al., 2023).

Social and economic factors also play an equally important role in influencing teacher productivity. Higher socioeconomic status (SES) is often correlated with more supportive working conditions, which directly impact job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness (Gang & Ban, 2024). In addition, social support from the community and peers serves as a significant source of motivation, encouraging teachers to enhance their productivity across various professional activities, including academic publication and self-development (Lestari et al., 2018). While these external factors exert substantial influence, internal factors—such as personal motivation and efforts toward professional growth—are also

essential in determining classroom teaching effectiveness. Therefore, the integration of both external and internal factors should be a primary focus in creating an optimal educational environment.

Performance and productivity indicators can be categorized into several key dimensions. Individual performance indicators involve competency-based assessments such as job knowledge, quality and quantity of output, initiative, leadership ability, dependability, teamwork, flexibility, and job satisfaction—particularly as they relate to fair performance appraisal systems. Organizational productivity indicators assess efficiency in generating outputs per unit of resource, responsiveness to client or stakeholder needs, improvements in customer satisfaction, as well as transparency and accountability in performance management (Ndakanwa et al., 2024; Nanda et al., 2025). Meanwhile, outcome-based indicators measure the achievement of program or project goals, such as increases in farmers' income or the conservation of plant genetic resources in a sustainability context, including the use of gender-differentiated indicators to ensure gender inclusion. A continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanism adopts a systematic approach to the collection, analysis, and utilization of data over time, using a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework. This framework includes the establishment of a baseline as a reference point, periodic technical monitoring to capture real-time information, outcome-based evaluation to assess the impact of implementation on strategic objectives, and risk management through the use of a risk matrix that identifies potential obstacles from the outset of the project. Thus, effective performance and productivity management requires indicators that encompass individual, organizational, and outcome-based dimensions, while monitoring and evaluation mechanisms such as the MEL framework offer a structured and adaptive approach that ensures the continuity of evaluation processes and strengthens organizational learning. This, in turn, enhances efficiency, effectiveness, and the strategic impact of programs and projects.

Strategic interventions—such as salary increases, recognition, and participation in training and workshops—have been proven to significantly impact the effectiveness of policy implementation, particularly in the context of human resource development (HRD) and organizational performance enhancement. Strategically designed salary increases can boost employee motivation and productivity. Performance-based compensation systems, as implemented in various OECD countries, demonstrate that transparent, competency-based salary structures can improve fairness, competitiveness, and staff retention. In addition, performance-based incentives encourage employees to meet both individual and organizational targets. Salary system reforms are also frequently accompanied by non-financial benefits, such as improved work-life balance, to retain high-quality personnel (Dumalang, 2021). Regarding employee recognition, whether through promotions or other incentives, it plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Studies show that recognition based on individual performance achievements can strengthen intrinsic motivation and encourage employees to work more effectively. For example, the implementation of performance appraisal systems based on measurable indicators allows for fair and transparent recognition, thereby fostering a workplace culture that is both competitive and healthy.

Training and workshops represent long-term investments in the development of human resource competencies. Well-designed training programs can enhance both the technical and managerial skills of employees, thereby supporting the achievement of organizational goals. Training also helps employees adapt to technological changes or new work methods, particularly in the era of digitalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Evaluating training programs is essential to ensure their effectiveness in improving work productivity and efficiency (Hayati & Yulianto, 2021; Suryanto et al., 2021). Lastly, regarding the effectiveness of policy implementation, these three interventions complement each other in creating a work environment that supports organizational performance improvement; (1) salary increases provide direct financial incentives, (2) recognition-based rewards strengthen intrinsic motivation by acknowledging individual contributions, (3) training equips employees with relevant skills to face future challenges.

this holistic approach not only boosts productivity but also promotes the retention of high-quality personnel, fostering an adaptive, innovative, and collaborative work culture (Dumalang, 2021; Panda & Sahoo, 2021). Thus, the implementation of policies based on these strategic interventions is effective in achieving organizational goals in a sustainable manner.

Based on this analysis, strategic recommendations to enhance teacher productivity include the implementation of policies aligned with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Priority should be given to increasing salaries through the optimization of school funding and the provision of incentives for high-performing teachers, as well as the regular granting of awards through annual and monthly programs. Additionally, the provision of modern learning facilities, along with improvements to supporting infrastructure for teachers—such as comfortable offices, rest areas, and adequate parking spaces—are essential steps to fulfill basic needs. Furthermore, the regular organization of workshops and training sessions, along with the implementation of school-based health and safety improvement programs, is expected to encourage teachers to achieve higher levels of self-actualization, thereby significantly enhancing both productivity and teaching quality.

4. Conclusions

Maslow's theory suggests that individuals are motivated to fulfill internal needs first, which, once satisfied, are followed by the pursuit of needs related to external factors, ultimately driving each person to reach their optimal potential. The conceptual framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is highly useful for school management in analyzing and identifying the fundamental needs of teachers that underlie their work motivation, and thus is expected to significantly improve teacher productivity. Research conducted at SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Zam-Zam revealed that there are seven dominant needs that must be met to enhance teacher performance and effectiveness, including physiological needs, the need for safety, the need for recognition, and the need for self actualization. Therefore, the school organization is required to create and facilitate a conducive work environment by implementing innovative strategies that not only fulfill the basic needs of teachers but also support ongoing professional development. By providing adequate facilities, recognition of achievements, and relevant training and workshop programs, teachers are expected to be motivated to increase their productivity and, in turn, deliver high quality educational outcomes. This holistic approach, which integrates the fulfillment of both internal and external needs, becomes a key factor in driving innovation, adaptation, and organizational success in facing global dynamics, while also realizing the school's vision and mission to produce graduates who are both competitive and have strong character.

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Author Contribution

A.E.S. was responsible for designing the research framework, collecting and organizing field data, and drafting the initial version of the manuscript. F.A.R. contributed to the methodological design, performed the data analysis, and critically revised the manuscript for significant intellectual content. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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