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The Impact of English Teachers' Professional Competence on Students' Performances of the Second Grade at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli in 2023/2024

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the impact of English teachers' professional competence on the performance of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli. Employing a quantitative research approach, the study utilized a correlational design to identify patterns between teacher professional competence and student performance. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using simple linear regression. The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation between teacher professional competence and student performance, indicating that higher teacher competence level significantly enhance student academic outcomes. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. These results underscore the importance of continuous professional development for teachers to improve student performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental aspect of education, serving as a medium for communication and the transmission of knowledge. The inseparable relationship between language and education underscores the necessity of language proficiency for effective teaching and learning. As Hadi (2024) asserts, the success of the English teaching-learning process is reflected in student performance during class. Effective learning activities significantly enhance student performance, defined as the ability to carry out tasks or accomplish goals. According to Popham (2017), performance is measured based on how students complete specified tasks, and academic performance is often evaluated through tests, assignments, and exams.

Teacher's professional competence encompasses the skills and knowledge required for effective teaching. It aids teachers in organizing and enhancing their performance, instructional delivery, classroom management, and assessment. Mulyasa (2017) describes teacher competence as a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that teachers or lecturers must master to fulfill their professional duties. Competent teachers can effectively utilize resources and facilitate the teaching process.

Student performance in class is a direct indicator of the success of the English teaching-learning process. Several studies measure student performance using their Grade Point Average (GPA) from the latest semester, which is a standard measure of academic performance (Kumar et al., 2021). Various factors influence student performance, including student attitudes, school resources, classroom atmosphere, and teacher skills and abilities (Kapur, 2018). Teachers have a significant impact on students' academic outcomes and must be sufficiently competent to fulfill their responsibilities in an organized manner. This study focuses on one such factor: teacher competence, particularly in the professional field.

Amir (2019) identifies four essential teaching competencies: pedagogical, personality, professional, and social competence. Pedagogical competence refers to the ability to manage student learning; personality competence involves being stable, mature, and a role model; social competence

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pertains to effective communication and societal roles within the classroom; and professional competence relates to the skills necessary for the teaching-learning process. These competencies are interconnected, and a teacher must possess all of them to be considered professional.

Analyzing professional teachers within the framework of the 2013 Curriculum Concept reveals the importance of aligning teaching practices with curriculum developments. The transition from the KTSP curriculum to the 2013 curriculum represents the government's effort to advance education in Indonesia. The 2013 curriculum encourages students to use their reasoning abilities to discover and formulate learning theories independently through collaborative efforts with peers. The characteristics of professional teachers under the 2013 Curriculum include: (i) knowledgeability and the pursuit of knowledge due to the easy access to information through technology; (ii) encouraging students to take responsibility for the environment, interpersonal skills, and critical thinking; (iii) aiming to develop a productive, creative, and innovative generation; and (iv) for elementary school levels, the integrative thematic approach allows students to understand themes across various subjects.

In the context of SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli, a formal educational institution under the Sibolga Diocese Budi Bakti Foundation, teachers are provided with adequate preparation to teach competently. This study focuses specifically on English teachers, examining the depth of their professional competence and its influence on student performance. The research aims to determine the relationship between English teachers' professional competence and student performance and whether the former positively impacts the latter.

According to Indonesian Government Regulation No. 74 of 2018, verse 7, professional competence is defined as the teacher’s capacity to master knowledge in science, technology, and arts and culture. A professionally competent teacher can effectively guide students, solve problems efficiently, and carry out learning activities based on educational standards and goals. This competence encourages active student participation in classroom activities, leading to more effective knowledge acquisition and improved student performance.

Research on the impact of English teachers' professional competence on students' performances is crucial in understanding the dynamics of education and its outcomes. Dervenis et al. (2022) highlighted the direct relationship between teacher competencies in higher education and student achievements, emphasizing the importance of educators developing strong teaching competencies to enhance the quality of education. This underscores the significance of investigating how English teachers' competencies influence student performance.

Moreover, Saputro et al. (2023) delved into the development of pre-service teachers' professional competence in teaching English, exploring the correlation between teachers' competencies and student outcomes. Understanding this relationship is essential for improving overall school quality and enhancing educational practices. By examining the implementation of pedagogical and professional competence within classroom settings, this research sheds light on the critical role of teacher competence in shaping student success.

Furthermore, Şen & Yildiz Durak (2022) focused on the lifelong learning tendencies of English teachers and their self-efficacy in integrating technology, indicating a multidimensional approach to professional development. This study underscores the need to continuously enhance teachers' competencies to adapt to evolving educational landscapes. By examining the intersection of lifelong learning, professional competencies, and technology integration, this research provides valuable insights into the dynamic nature of teacher development.

Additionally, Dewi et al. (2023) compared the pedagogical competence performances of English and non-English educational background teachers in teaching English at an elementary school. This comparative analysis offers a nuanced understanding of how different educational backgrounds may impact teaching effectiveness. By emphasizing the importance of various competencies, including pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competence, this study contributes to the discourse on effective teaching practices.

Moreover, Coşgun & Savaş (2023) explored the professional identity development of English teachers, highlighting the evolving nature of professional competencies throughout teachers' careers. By differentiating between novice and experienced teachers' emphases on various competencies, this research underscores the dynamic nature of teacher growth and the importance of continuous professional development. Understanding how teachers perceive and prioritize different competencies is essential for designing targeted training programs.

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Furthermore, Lei & Xu (2022) emphasized the significance of teachers' psychological empowerment in promoting their professional development. This psychological aspect of teacher competence plays a crucial role in shaping teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction. By focusing on internal factors that empower teachers, this research highlights the intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being necessary for effective teaching practices. Sunarti & Rumyani (2018), and Khotimah (2019) have examined the effect of teacher professional competence on student learning motivation and outcomes, as well as the relationship between teacher competence and teacher performance.

Despite extensive research on teacher professional competence and its impact on student performance, several gaps remain. Many studies focus broadly on teacher competence without isolating specific competencies such as pedagogical, personal, or technological skills. This research specifically targets English teachers' professional competence, providing more targeted insights. Additionally, existing literature often limits itself to certain educational levels or regions, making it difficult to generalize findings. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli, offering new geographical and educational perspectives. Finally, while much research links teacher competence to student motivation or general performance, this study specifically examines the correlation between teacher professional competence and student performance in English, a frequently overlooked subject area in broader educational research. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of teachers' professional competence on student performance at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli. It is a correlational study designed to determine the relationship between a teacher's professional competence and student performance and the subsequent effects on student academic outcomes.

Literature Review

Teacher's Professional Competence

Teacher competencies are essential for organizing and enhancing performance, instructional delivery, classroom management, and assessment. Indonesia Law No. 14 of 2015 mandates that teachers must hold academic qualifications, demonstrate competence, be certified, be physically and mentally healthy, and achieve national education goals. Mulyasa (2017) describes teacher competence as the capacity to fulfill their duties as educators. Suprihatiningrum (2017) further explains it as a combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that teachers must master to perform their professional responsibilities. Indonesia Law No. 14 of 2005 outlines four teaching competencies: pedagogical, personality, professional, and social competence. These interconnected competencies must be possessed together to be considered professional.

Pedagogical competence refers to a teacher's ability to manage student learning, including understanding learners, instructional design, learning outcomes evaluation, and developing learners to their full potential (Mulyasa, 2017). Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008, verse 4, specifies it includes understanding knowledge, students, curriculum development, lesson preparation, educational and dialogic learning implementation, learning outcomes assessment, and realizing students' potential.

Personality competence involves being steady, mature, thoughtful, and a role model. Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 and Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008, verse 5, outline it as encompassing personal stability, maturity, wisdom, authority, exemplary behavior, personal performance evaluation, self-growth, and religiosity. Social competence refers to a teacher's ability to communicate and function effectively within the classroom and society. Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008, verse 6, detail it as including oral and written communication skills, use of communication and information technologies, effective interactions with students, peers, educational staff, and maintaining positive community relations. Professional competence refers to a teacher's ability to master the learning process. Febrina (2021) and Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008, verse 6, describe it as acquiring extensive and in-depth knowledge of learning materials to assist students. It includes mastering subject matter, scientific concepts, and relevant techniques.

Professional competence is a teacher's ability to master detailed learning content and perform teaching tasks proficiently. Government Regulation No. 14 of 2015 defines it as mastering learning material to guide students to meet national education standards. Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007 outlines five core competencies: (i) mastering material, structure, concept, and scientific mindsets; (ii) mastering

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competency standards and essential competencies; (iii) creating learning resources independently; (iv) eEngaging in reflective practices for professional development; and (v) utilizing information and communication technology for communication and self-development. Selvi (2010) identifies key features/components of professional competence: (i) field competencies; (ii) research competencies; (iii) curriculum competencies; (iv) lifelong learning competencies, (v) emotional competencies, (vi) social-cultural competencies; (vii) communication competencies, (viii) ICT competencies; and (ix) environmental competencies. Mulyasa (2017) outlines professional competence as: (i) applying educational foundations and learning theories; (ii) Managing and advancing research responsibilities; (iii) utilizing diverse learning techniques; (iv) developing and using appropriate tools and media; (v) planning and executing learning programs; (vi) conducting evaluations; and (vii) enhancing learners' character.

Students Performance

Student performance is the ability to carry out tasks or achieve goals, influenced by the interaction between ability and motivation (Popham, 2017). Academic performance, evaluated through class participation, written works, exams, projects, and presentations, is determined by teachers using marks and learning goals (Narad & Abdullah, 2016). Teachers' delivery and communication methods significantly impact student performance (Gilbert, 2019). GPA is often used as a standard measure of academic performance (Kumar et al., 2021).

Factors influencing student performance can be categorized into student-related and teacher-related aspects. From the student's side, student performance is influenced by (i) attitude; (ii) school resources; (iii) leadership; (iv) classroom environment; (v) role of parents; (vi) social circle; (vii) psychological and health factors; (viii) motivation and encouragement; (ix) visual and hearing impairments; (x) counselling and guidance; (xi) study skills; (xii) time management; and (xiii) home environment ((Alabdulkarem et al., 2021; Goddard, 2003; Kapur, 2018; Kumar et al., 2021; Maganga, 2016; Maina, 2010; Rüppel et al., 2015). Teacher's side: (i) skills and abilities; (ii) teaching-learning methods; and (iii) approachability and professionalism (Kapur, 2018; Maina, 2010; Okwuduba & Okigbo, 2018).

Understanding how teacher competencies influence student learning outcomes is critical to improving education quality and enhancing the learning experience. Several studies have investigated different aspects of this relationship, shedding light on the diverse nature of teacher competencies and their implications for student achievement. Puspitasari et al. (2021) focused on the sustained impact of teacher action research on EFL teachers in Indonesia. The study emphasized the long-term benefits of professional development initiatives on teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes by investigating the factors contributing to teachers' engagement in ongoing action research and the pedagogical and professional competencies affected by this practice.

Yavuz Tabak et al. (2021) explored prospective teachers' expectations and concerns for the future using Self-Possibility Theory. The study revealed that prospective teachers' concerns and expectations mostly revolved around pedagogical formation and general culture, indicating the importance of addressing these aspects in teacher training programs to improve teacher competence and, subsequently, student performance. Liao & Huang (2022) studied the impact of reading anxiety in English professional materials on intercultural communication competence. Their results showed that various factors, such as concerns about comprehension and lack of satisfaction with reading ability, affected various aspects of intercultural communication competence. This research highlights the importance of addressing students' anxiety to improve their language skills and attitudes. Gao et al. (2024) explored the relationship between classroom teaching and student achievement in English language teaching. The study emphasizes the critical role of quality teaching in influencing student learning outcomes and performance, underscoring the importance of effective teaching practices in improving student achievement.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative research approach, which involves precise measurement techniques to obtain generalizable results (Watson, 2015). The research is a correlational study, aiming to identify patterns between two variables using statistical tests (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The variables studied are student performance and teacher professional competence, with data collected

through questionnaires and analyzed using simple linear regression. Variables are characteristics that vary and are measured in research. The independent variable is the English teacher's professional competence, while the dependent variable is student performance. The population consists of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli for the academic year 2023/2024, totaling 115 students. Using purposive sampling, the study includes 115 second-grade students from four classes, taught by two teachers. The primary instrument is the researcher, who designs, collects, analyzes, interprets data, and reports results. Tools used include observation, questionnaires, and documentation. The questionnaire is a closed-ended Likert Scale model assessing students' perceptions of teacher professional competence.

Data were collected using questionnaires. The questionnaire, based on Indonesian Government Regulation No. 74 of 2008 and Khotimah's (2019) instrument, contains five questions regarding teacher professional competence, rated on a Likert Scale. Data were analyzed using statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and correlation tests. Descriptive analysis describes data characteristics, while correlation tests examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The criteria for interpreting teacher professional competence and student performance levels are as follows. Teacher's professional competence: 80-100 (very good), 60-79 (good), 40-59 (enough), 20-39 (not enough), and 0-19(very less). Student performance: 80-100 (very good), 60-79 (good), 40-59 (medium), 20-39 (low), and 0-19 (very low). Statistical formulas used include the mean and standard deviation, and hypothesis testing involves correlation coefficient analysis.

RESULT

To answer the research question, descriptive statistical techniques were used to compile a frequency distribution table. To address the second research question, a correlation method was employed to investigate the relationship between teachers' professional competence and students' performance. The following sections detail the data analysis process.

The teacher's professional competence variable was analyzed separately for two English teachers, coded as Teacher A and Teacher B.

Teacher A:

- Data from 29 students.
- Scores: 91, 89.
- Mean score: $\mu X = \frac{\sum Xi}{n}$ $\mu X = \frac{180}{2}$ = 90

Teacher B:

- Data from 29 students.
- Scores: 89, 83.
- Mean score: $\mu X = \frac{\sum Xi}{n}$ $\mu X = \frac{172}{2}$ = 86

Summary:

- Teacher A: Mean score = 90 (very good)
- Teacher B: Mean score = 86 (very good)

Both teachers were perceived to have very good professional competence, indicating effective handling of learning materials, preparation, enthusiasm, and evaluation methods.

Student performance data was collected from questionnaires and analyzed to define the variable.

Teacher A's Students:

- Scores: 1.740, 2.304.
- Mean score: $\mu Y = \frac{\sum Yi}{n}$ $\mu Y = \frac{4.044}{2}$ = 2.022

Teacher B's Students:

- Scores: 2.274, 2.260.
- Mean score: $\mu Y = \frac{\sum Yi}{n}$ $\mu Y = \frac{4.534}{2}$ = 2.267

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Summary:

- Teacher A's Students: Mean score = 2.022 (very good)
- Teacher B's Students: Mean score = 2.267 (very good)

Both sets of students performed very well, indicating a positive impact of their teachers' professional competence.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis of this study is that "teacher professional competence has an impact on the student performance of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli." This is the alternative hypothesis (Ha). To test this, it was compared against the null hypothesis (H0), which states that "teacher professional competence does not have an impact on the student performance of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli."

To evaluate this hypothesis, a correlation test was conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables. The correlation coefficient measures the linear relationship between two variables and ranges from -1 to 1. A coefficient of zero indicates no correlation, while a coefficient of 1 or -1 indicates a perfect correlation. A higher correlation coefficient closer to 1 or -1 signifies a stronger relationship between the variables. The sign of the correlation coefficient also indicates the direction of the relationship: a positive sign (+) denotes a direct relationship, while a negative sign (-) denotes an inverse relationship.

Table 1. Interpretation for the correlation coefficient

Coefficient	Classification
0.00-0.199	very weak
0.20-0.399	weak
0.40-0.599	moderate
0.60-0.799	strong
0.80-1.000	very strong

Teacher A:

- Correlation coefficient

$$\rho\chi\gamma = \frac{1}{N}\sum I = 1\frac{(\text{xi}-\mu\text{x})\,(\text{yi}-\mu\text{y})}{\sigma x\sigma y} = \frac{1}{2}\frac{(180-90)\,(4.044-2.022)}{1\times 282}$$

$$= \frac{181.980}{564} \qquad = 323$$

- Strength: Moderate
- Direction: Positive

Teacher B:

- Correlation coefficient

$$\rho\chi\gamma = \frac{1}{N}N\sum I = 1\frac{(\text{xi}-\mu\text{x})\,(\text{yi}-\mu\text{y})}{\sigma x\sigma y} \qquad = \frac{1}{2}\frac{(172-86)\,(4.534-2.267)}{3\times 7}$$

$$= \frac{194.962}{42} \qquad = 47$$

- Strength: Moderate
- Direction: Positive

The analyses showed a moderate and positive correlation between teacher professional competence and student performance for both teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. This indicates that teacher professional competence significantly impacts the student performance of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli.

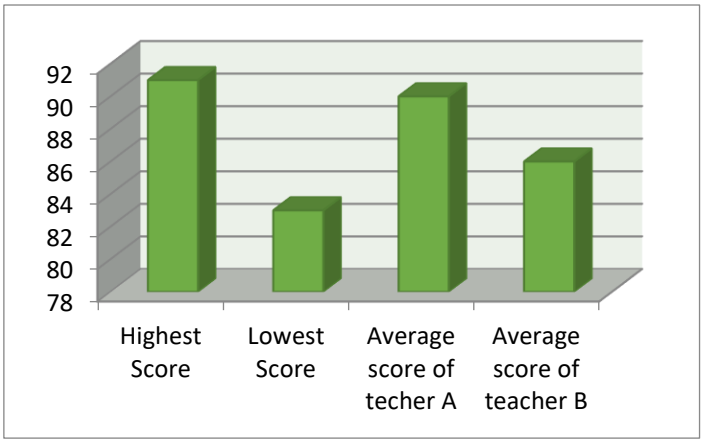
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Discussion

Based on the results of the study, the analysis provided answers to the two research questions. The first research question examined the professional competence of the English teachers at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli. The professional competence of two English teachers, coded as Teacher A and Teacher B, was measured and analyzed separately.

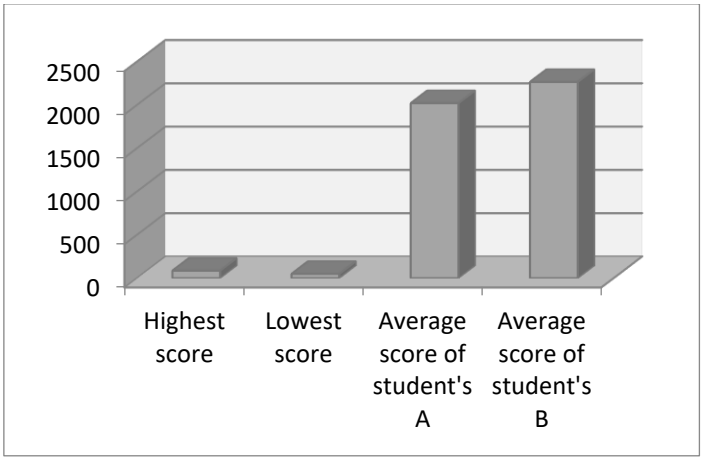
The analysis revealed that Teacher A had an average score of 90, while Teacher B had an average score of 86, with scores ranging from 83 to 91. Both teachers were rated as having very good professional competence. This indicates that students perceive both teachers as highly competent in handling learning materials, preparing lessons, igniting student enthusiasm for learning, and efficiently evaluating student learning outcomes.

Table 2. Professional Competence Scores of English Teachers



Based on the analysis of the student performance of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli, the highest score was 87 and the lowest score was 50. Students taught by Teacher A had an average score of 2.022, classified as medium, while students taught by Teacher B had an average score of 2.267, classified as very good. Therefore, it can be concluded that second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli who learned English from Teacher A and Teacher B exhibited medium and very good performance levels, respectively.

Table 4. Student Performance Scores of Second-Grade Students



Furthermore, the data was analyzed using the correlation coefficient method to determine the relationship between teacher professional competence and student performance. The correlation coefficients for the two data sets were 0.4 and 0.5. This indicates that both Teacher A and Teacher B's data sets fall within the 0.40-0.599 range, suggesting a moderate correlation between teacher professional competence (variable X) and student performance (variable Y). Thus, it can be concluded

that teacher professional competence has a moderate impact on the student performance of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli.

The findings of this study reveal a moderate and positive correlation between teacher professional competence and student performance for both teachers, indicating that teacher professional competence significantly impacts the performance of second-grade students at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli. This conclusion is supported by the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). These findings align with a previous study by Murti (2018), which demonstrated that professional competence and teaching style simultaneously influence student motivation in social science subjects at State Junior High School 1 Kesamben Blitar.

Some researchers have conducted several studies related to this topic. For example, Sunarti & Rumyani (2018) investigated the effects of teacher professional competence and learning facilities on students' learning motivation among eighth-grade students at National Junior High School 3 Kuningan. This study utilized a survey method with a Likert scale distributed to 174 respondents. The findings indicated a significant impact of teacher professional competence and learning facilities on student motivation, suggesting that teachers should master learning materials, improve engaging teaching methods, and create a pleasant learning environment. Additionally, students were encouraged to expand their reading to use their abilities independently rather than relying on others' opinions.

Research by Ugbe & Agim (2010), examined the impact of teachers' expertise on students' academic achievement in chemistry at the senior high school level. This survey included 200 students, 20 instructors, and 6 principals from 12 secondary schools in Yala Local Government Area, Nigeria. The study found a close relationship between chemistry teachers' competence and their students' academic success. Students taught by qualified teachers performed significantly better than those taught by unqualified teachers. Teacher professional competence refers to the skills necessary for effective teaching. Febrina (2021) states that professional competence involves the ability to acquire extensive and in-depth knowledge of learning materials, helping students to learn effectively. Student performance is the ability to complete tasks or achieve goals. According to Popham (2017), student performance results from a combination of ability and motivation, leading to significant differences among individuals in the same classroom. Performance is usually measured by class participation, written works, exams, group projects, and presentations.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings underscore the significant impact of teacher professional competence on student performance. By fostering a professional and supportive teaching environment, teachers can positively influence student achievement, confirming the importance of teacher quality in education. These results are consistent with existing theories and previous research, reinforcing the critical role of teacher competence in educational success. Moving forward, it is crucial to continue exploring ways to enhance teacher professional development to ensure sustained improvements in student performance.

Implication

The research findings indicating a moderate and positive correlation between teacher professional competence and student performance at SMA Swasta Santu Xaverius Gunungsitoli carry several important implications for various stakeholders in the educational sector. These implications are relevant for educators, school administrators, policymakers, and researchers aiming to improve educational outcomes.

1. For Educators
   (a) The findings highlight the importance of continuous professional development for teachers. Investing in training programs that enhance teachers' knowledge and pedagogical skills can significantly improve student performance.
   (b) Teachers should engage in reflective practices to continually assess and improve their teaching methods. Understanding the impact of their professional competence on student outcomes can motivate teachers to pursue further education and training.
   (c) Encouraging collaboration among teachers to share best practices and teaching strategies can foster a supportive professional environment that benefits both teachers and students.

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2. For School Administrators
   (a) The implementation of comprehensive teacher evaluation systems that assess professional competence can help identify areas for improvement. This ensures that teachers receive the necessary support to enhance their teaching practices.
   (b) Schools should allocate resources towards professional development workshops, training sessions, and educational materials that aid teachers in improving their competence.
   (c) Creating a supportive school environment that encourages ongoing learning and professional growth among teachers can lead to better educational outcomes for students.
3. For Policymakers
   (a) The findings support the need for policies that prioritize teacher professional competence. Policymakers should develop and implement standards for teacher qualifications and ongoing professional development.
   (b) Adequate funding should be directed towards professional development programs for teachers. Ensuring that schools have access to high-quality training resources can enhance teacher competence and, consequently, student performance.
   (c) Policies aimed at attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers are crucial. Competitive salaries, career advancement opportunities, and professional support can help maintain a competent teaching workforce.
4. For Researchers
   For researchers, the moderate correlation found in this study suggests the need for further research to explore additional factors influencing student performance, including different aspects of teacher competence, teaching styles, and classroom environments. Conducting longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of teacher professional competence on student performance, helping to identify sustained impacts and inform continuous improvement efforts. Additionally, comparative research across different schools, regions, and educational contexts can offer a broader understanding of how teacher competence influences student outcomes in various settings.

Limitations of Research

The research process encountered several limitations. Firstly, the data collected through questionnaires may not fully reflect the respondents' true opinions due to differences in thoughts, assumptions, understandings, and honesty in responses. Secondly, the research focused solely on teachers' professional competence and student performance, limiting the scope of the study. Lastly, there was a lack of understanding by the researcher about certain aspects of the subject matter and its creation, which may have impacted the depth of the analysis. Future researchers should address these limitations to enhance the quality and comprehensiveness of their studies.

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