

The Role of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Effects of Leadership and Intrinsic Motivation on Teacher Performance at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of job satisfaction in mediating the effects of leadership and intrinsic motivation on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency. This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. The study population consists of all 60 teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala. Since the population size is less than 100, the entire population was used as the study sample. Data were collected via a questionnaire using a Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling with the assistance of the SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results indicate that leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. Leadership also has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on both teacher performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The results of the indirect effect test indicate that job satisfaction mediates the effect of leadership on teacher performance. Job satisfaction also mediates the effect of intrinsic motivation on teacher performance. These findings indicate that improvements in teacher performance are determined not only by the principal's leadership and teachers' intrinsic motivation but also by the job satisfaction teachers experience while carrying out their professional duties. Therefore, schools need to strengthen supportive leadership, enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation, and foster job satisfaction so that teacher performance can improve sustainably.

Keywords: *Leadership, Intrinsic Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Teacher Performance*

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Introduction

Teacher performance is one of the key factors in determining the quality of education in schools. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering lesson content but also for designing learning activities, guiding students, conducting assessments, managing the classroom, and creating a conducive learning environment. Good teacher performance can be seen in a teacher's ability to develop instructional materials, deliver lessons effectively, use instructional media, evaluate student learning outcomes, and continuously develop professional competencies.

In today's educational context, the demands placed on teachers' performance are increasing. Teachers are expected to adapt to changes in the curriculum, advancements in educational technology, the needs of students, and the demand for improved quality of educational services. Therefore, teacher performance cannot be judged solely by classroom attendance, but must also be evaluated based on the quality of their professional duties—which must be carried out comprehensively, consistently, and adaptively.

Kuala State High School No. 1, Langkat Regency, is one of the public secondary schools that plays a vital role in providing educational services to the community. As a formal educational institution, the school must ensure that the learning process runs smoothly. Teachers are expected to perform their duties professionally, with discipline, creativity, and a sense of responsibility. However, teacher performance can be influenced by various factors, both those stemming from the school's organizational environment and those inherent to the teachers themselves.

Based on the results of a preliminary survey of 20 teachers at Kuala State High School No. 1, Langkat Regency, there are still indications of issues with teacher performance. Regarding the variable of teacher performance, on average, 12 out of 20 teachers disagreed with statements regarding the implementation of active and innovative teaching methods, the use of instructional media and technology, and the timely completion of learning assessments. These findings indicate that teacher performance still needs to be strengthened, particularly in the areas of instructional innovation, the use of technology, and the timely completion of learning tasks.

One factor believed to influence teacher performance is the leadership of the principal. The principal plays a crucial role in guiding, mentoring, supervising, and motivating teachers so they can perform at their best. Effective leadership can provide clarity on work objectives, improve discipline, foster open communication, and support teachers in carrying out their duties. Conversely, leadership that lacks communication and fails to show appreciation can dampen teachers' morale.

The results of a pre-survey on school principal leadership indicate that, on average, 13 out of 20 teachers disagreed with statements regarding teacher involvement in decision-making, the provision of guidance and feedback, and the recognition of high-performing teachers. These preliminary findings suggest that leadership practices in schools still need improvement. Principals need to be more proactive in fostering communication, providing guidance, and creating a work environment that supports teacher performance.

In addition to leadership, intrinsic motivation is also an important factor that can influence teacher performance. Intrinsic motivation is the inner drive that prompts teachers to carry out their duties, stemming from a sense of responsibility, interest in the profession, a desire for self-improvement, and personal satisfaction in teaching. Teachers with high intrinsic motivation tend to be more proactive in seeking ways to improve instruction, enhance their competencies, and deliver the best possible outcomes for their students.

However, the preliminary survey results indicate that the intrinsic motivation of teachers at Kuala State High School 1 still needs to be strengthened. On average, 12 out of 20 teachers disagreed with statements regarding the motivation to develop teaching methods, improve their competencies independently, and the challenge of achieving better learning outcomes. This

situation suggests that some teachers still need stronger internal motivation to be able to continuously improve the quality of their work.

Teacher performance is also closely linked to job satisfaction. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs tend to have greater enthusiasm, higher loyalty, and a willingness to contribute their best to the school. Job satisfaction arises when teachers feel supported by their superiors, have good working relationships, receive recognition, and have opportunities for professional development. Conversely, teachers who are dissatisfied may still carry out their duties, but they may not necessarily perform at their best.

The results of the pre-survey on job satisfaction showed that, on average, 13 out of 20 teachers disagreed with statements regarding leadership support, work atmosphere, workplace relationships, recognition, and opportunities for professional development. These findings suggest that teachers' job satisfaction still requires attention. This issue is important because job satisfaction is not only related to workplace comfort but can also serve as a factor linking leadership and intrinsic motivation to teacher performance.

Several previous studies have shown that principal leadership influences teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Rudianta, Affandi, and Rusyani (2025) found that principal leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction, and that job satisfaction influences teachers' performance. Huda and Alderite (2024) also demonstrated that leadership behavior is related to teachers' job satisfaction. These findings suggest that a principal's leadership not only plays a role in managing the school organization but also shapes teachers' work experiences.

Other studies have also shown that intrinsic motivation is linked to teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Ompusunggu, Ruspitasari, and Handoko (2025) found that intrinsic motivation influences teacher performance through job satisfaction. Suyatno, Wantini, and Patimah (2024) explain that teachers' intrinsic motivation is related to their interest in teaching, professional development, and comfort in carrying out their teaching profession. This reinforces the argument that intrinsic motivation is important to analyze in efforts to improve teacher performance.

Although many studies have examined leadership, intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and teacher performance, the results of previous research have not always shown the same patterns of relationships. Some studies indicate a direct effect of leadership and intrinsic motivation on teacher performance. However, other studies suggest that these effects may occur through job satisfaction. These differing findings indicate that job satisfaction needs to be examined as a mediating variable so that the relationships among the variables can be explained more comprehensively.

This study focuses on the role of job satisfaction in mediating the effects of leadership and intrinsic motivation on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency. This focus is important because teacher performance is influenced not only by individual ability but also by the principal's leadership and the teachers' psychological state at work. By treating job satisfaction as a mediating variable, this study aims to determine whether leadership and intrinsic motivation have a direct effect on teacher performance or whether they also exert an indirect effect through job satisfaction.

Based on the above discussion, it is important to conduct a study titled "The Role of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Effects of Leadership and Intrinsic Motivation on Teacher Performance at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency." This study is expected to contribute to the development of educational management, particularly in improving teacher performance by strengthening the principal's leadership, enhancing intrinsic motivation, and fostering greater job satisfaction among teachers.

Literature Review

Teacher Performance

Definition of Teacher Performance

Putra et al. (2022): Teacher performance is a teacher's ability to apply knowledge, skills, and pedagogical strategies in the classroom to improve student learning outcomes, adapt teaching methods to students' needs, and demonstrate creativity and innovation in teaching.

Factors Affecting Teacher Performance

According to Putra et al. (2022), the factors influencing teacher performance can be grouped into two main categories: internal factors and external factors.

1) Internal Factors

These factors originate from the teacher themselves. Indicators include personality, motivation, and pedagogical competence. Personality relates to maturity, authority, moral character, exemplary behavior, and the teacher's willingness to develop themselves. Motivation relates to responsibility, work goals, feedback, fulfillment of needs, and work expectations. Pedagogical competence relates to an understanding of educational principles, an understanding of students, curriculum development, lesson planning, and the development of students' potential.

2) External Factors

These factors originate from the school environment. Indicators include school facilities, organizational culture, and the principal's leadership. Facilities encompass the availability of resources to support work. Organizational culture encompasses the implementation of the school's vision, mission, values, rules, and climate. The principal's leadership encompasses the principal's ability to build teachers' trust, enhance professionalism, manage the work environment, and support the planning and implementation of instruction.

Teacher Performance Indicators

Teacher Performance Indicators according to Putra et al. (2022):

1) Instructional Planning

Teachers are able to develop systematic lesson plans, including setting objectives, selecting content, methods, and media appropriate to students' characteristics.

2) Instructional Delivery

Teachers conduct instruction effectively according to the plan, using appropriate strategies and methods, and adapting to students' needs.

3) Classroom Management

Teachers manage the classroom to create a conducive learning environment, maintain discipline, foster positive interactions, and make the best use of classroom resources.

4) Learning Assessment

Teachers accurately assess student learning outcomes, provide feedback, and adjust teaching methods based on the assessment.

5) Continuing Professional Development

Teachers participate in training, workshops, or professional development activities, thereby improving their competencies and the quality of their teaching.

Job Satisfaction

Definition of Job Satisfaction

According to Adeoye (2023), teachers' job satisfaction relates to their attitudes, views, and feelings toward their work, working conditions, and their profession. In the school context, teacher job satisfaction is important because it can influence the quality of teaching, work commitment, productivity, and school effectiveness. Adeoye also explains that teacher job satisfaction is influenced by several key factors, such as supportive working conditions, opportunities for promotion, fair compensation, the nature of the work itself, and teacher empowerment.

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

According to Adeoye (2023), factors that influence teachers' job satisfaction include:

- 1) **Conducive working conditions**
A comfortable work environment, adequate facilities, good working relationships, a reasonable workload, and support from school administration can increase teachers' job satisfaction.
- 2) **Promotion opportunities**
The availability of career development opportunities, promotions, increased responsibilities, and recognition of performance all influence job satisfaction.
- 3) **The work itself**
Teachers tend to be more satisfied when their work is engaging, challenging, meaningful, provides opportunities for learning, and entails professional responsibility.
- 4) **Fair compensation**
Salaries, benefits, incentives, and financial rewards that are considered fair and appropriate can increase job satisfaction.
- 5) **Teacher Empowerment**
Teachers feel more satisfied when they are trusted, involved in decision-making, given the opportunity to develop their competencies, and have autonomy in carrying out their duties.

Indicators of Job Satisfaction

Indicators of Teacher Job Satisfaction According to Adeoye (2023)

- 1) **The Job Itself**
Teachers feel satisfied when their teaching duties are considered interesting, meaningful, challenging, and provide growth opportunities.
- 2) **Compensation or Rewards**
Teachers feel satisfied when the salary, benefits, or rewards they receive are considered fair and commensurate with their workload.
- 3) **Opportunities for promotion and career development**
Teachers feel satisfied when they have opportunities to advance in rank, develop their competencies, and advance their careers.
- 4) **Supervision**
Teachers feel satisfied when the principal or school leadership provides fair guidance, coaching, support, and evaluation.
- 5) **Working conditions**
Teachers feel satisfied when the work environment, school facilities, workload, and work atmosphere support the performance of their duties.
- 6) **Relationships with coworkers**
Teachers feel satisfied when they have good, supportive, and collaborative working relationships with their fellow teachers.
- 7) **Teacher Empowerment**
Teachers feel satisfied when they are trusted, given the space to express their opinions, provided with opportunities to take on roles, and involved in school activities.

Intrinsic Motivation

Definition of Intrinsic Motivation

According to Suyatno et al. (2024), intrinsic motivation in the context of the teaching profession relates to an individual's internal drive to fulfill their role as a teacher, stemming from an interest in teaching, a desire for self-development, and a sense of comfort in teaching activities.

Factors Affecting Intrinsic Motivation

According to Suyatno et al. (2024), the main factors or themes that influence intrinsic motivation are:

- 1) **Personal interest in the teaching profession**

Personal interest in the teaching profession is a factor that drives a person's inner motivation to teach. Individuals who are interested in the world of education will find it easier to feel happy and motivated to carry out their duties as teachers.

- 2) Positive experiences in teaching
Positive teaching experiences can influence intrinsic motivation because they foster a sense of joy, self-confidence, and personal satisfaction. The more positive a person's teaching experiences are, the greater the likelihood of developing an internal drive to continue pursuing a career in teaching.
- 3) The desire for self-improvement
The desire for self-development is a key factor in intrinsic motivation because teachers who are driven to learn will strive to improve their skills, refine their teaching methods, and become more professional educators.
- 4) Personal Suitability for the Teaching Profession
A sense of suitability for the teaching profession influences intrinsic motivation because individuals who feel suited to the role of a teacher will be more comfortable, confident, and enjoy the learning process.
- 5) Personal meaning of the teaching profession
Personal meaning attributed to the teaching profession is a factor that influences intrinsic motivation because a person will be more internally driven if they view teaching as a meaningful, valuable activity that contributes to their students.

Indicators of Intrinsic Motivation

Indicators of teachers' intrinsic motivation according to Suyatno et al. (2024):

- 1) Interest in teaching
Teachers have an intrinsic interest, enjoyment, and willingness to carry out teaching activities.
- 2) Professional Development
Teachers are motivated to improve their knowledge, skills, creativity, and professional quality as educators.
- 3) Comfort in Teaching
Teachers feel comfortable, fulfilled, and satisfied when carrying out their teaching duties and interacting with students.

Leadership

Definition of Leadership

According to Artanti et al. (2024), school principal leadership refers to a principal's ability to manage an educational institution, lead, guide, and inspire teachers, staff, and students to achieve educational goals. School principal leadership also encompasses the ability to make decisions, manage resources, develop policies, and build positive relationships with teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents.

Factors Influencing Leadership

According to Artanti et al. (2024), the factors that influence or explain a principal's leadership are:

- 1) Decision-making ability
Decision-making ability refers to a principal's ability to formulate policies, choose among alternative courses of action, and resolve school issues appropriately so that educational goals can be achieved.
- 2) Ability to manage school resources
The ability to manage school resources is a principal's ability to organize and utilize all available school resources—such as teachers, educational staff, facilities, the budget, and learning materials—effectively and efficiently.

- 3) Ability to develop school policies
The ability to develop school policies refers to a principal's ability to design, establish, and implement policies that align with the school's needs and support improvements in educational quality.
- 4) Ability to build working relationships
The ability to build working relationships is the principal's ability to foster effective communication, coordination, and cooperation with teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, and other parties associated with the school.
- 5) Ability to supervise
Supervisory ability refers to a principal's ability to provide guidance, oversight, evaluation, and follow-up regarding teachers' performance of their duties, particularly in the learning process.
- 6) Ability to foster school innovation
The ability to foster school innovation is the principal's ability to develop new ideas, programs, or strategies to improve school quality and adapt the school to changing educational needs.

Leadership Indicators

Indicators of a school principal's leadership according to Artanti et al. (2024):

- 1) The principal as a manager
As a manager, the principal plays a role in planning, organizing, directing, and managing all school activities to ensure they align with educational goals.
- 2) The principal as a supervisor
As a supervisor, the principal is responsible for guiding, monitoring, evaluating, and assisting teachers so they can conduct the learning process more effectively.
- 3) The principal as an entrepreneur
A principal as an entrepreneur means that the principal plays a role in creating innovations, capitalizing on opportunities, developing school programs, and creatively driving the school's progress.

Conceptual Framework

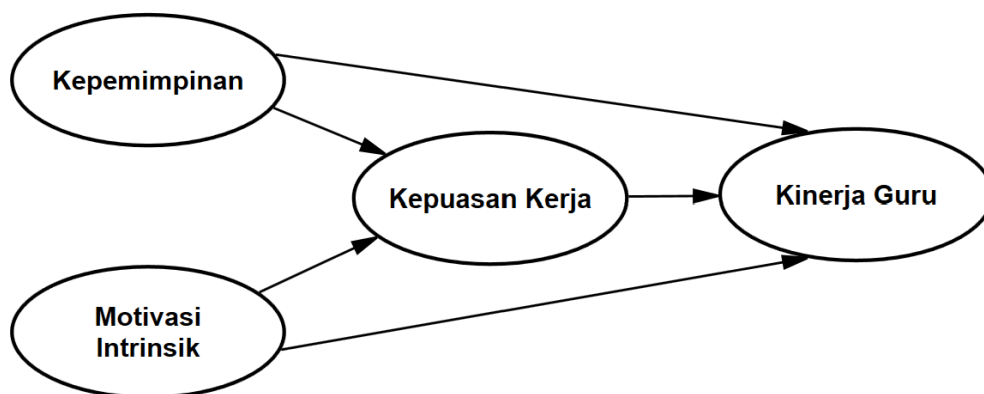


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypotheses

- H₁: Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at State Senior High School 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
- H₂: Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
- H₃: Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at Kuala State High School No. 1, Langkat Regency.

- H₄: Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
- H₅: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at Kuala State High School 1, Langkat Regency.
- H₆: Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' performance through job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
- H₇: Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction at State Senior High School 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The type of research used was quantitative research. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research is defined as a method grounded in the philosophy of positivism, used to study a specific population or sample; sampling techniques are generally conducted randomly; data collection uses research instruments; and data analysis is quantitative/statistical in nature, with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses. This type of quantitative research was conducted to examine the influence of leadership, work culture, and intrinsic motivation on teacher performance through job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.

Research Location and Timeframe

The research was conducted at State Senior High School 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency, located at Jalan Perintis Kemerdekaan No. 3, Pekan Kuala Village, Kuala Subdistrict, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from May to August 2026.

Population and Sample

Arikunto (2025): if the population is less than 100, it is better to include all members so that the study constitutes a population study. In this study, the population consists of all teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, totaling 60 teachers, and the entire population was used as the sample.

Research Data Sources

The data sources used in this study are primary data.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to respondents using a Likert scale as the primary data source.

Data Analysis Techniques

- 1) Data Analysis
This study uses *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) as the data analysis method. The software used for data processing is SmartPLS 3.0.
- 2) Measurement Model (*Outer Model*)
Using *the PLS algorithm*, the following results were obtained:
 - a) Validity Test
Criteria: factor loading values ≥ 0.70
 - b) Reliability Test
Criteria: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) ≥ 0.60 .
 - c) Coefficient of Determination: R^2 Test
Range: $0 < R^2 < 1$; the closer to 1, the greater the extent to which the independent variable can explain the dependent variable.
- 3) Structural Model Test (*Inner Model*)
Using *Bootstrapping*, the results are:
Hypothesis Testing, consisting of:
 - 1) Direct effects between variables (*Path Coefficients*)
 - 2) Indirect effects (*Specific Indirect Effects*)

The hypothesis is accepted if:

- T-statistic (significant: ≥ 1.96 at $\alpha = 5\%$)
- P-value (significant: ≤ 0.05)

Results

Outer Model Analysis

The *Outer Model* analysis using the *PLS algorithm* yielded the following results:

Validity Test

Table 1. Outer Loadings

	Leadership	Job Satisfaction	Teacher Performance	Intrinsic Motivation
X1.1	0.844			
X1.2	0.740			
X1.3	0.815			
X3.1				0.757
X3.2				0.776
X3.3				0.782
Y.1			0.797	
Y.2			0.793	
Y.3			0.747	
Y.4			0.795	
Y.5			0.760	
Z.1		0.714		
Z.2		0.745		
Z.3		0.614		
Z.4		0.699		
Z.5		0.744		
Z.6		0.744		
Z.7		0.727		

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

Based on the values in Table 1 above, the results of the outer model test using factor loadings/outer loadings show that all indicators for each variable have loadings ≥ 0.60 . This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and reliably. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire meet the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.

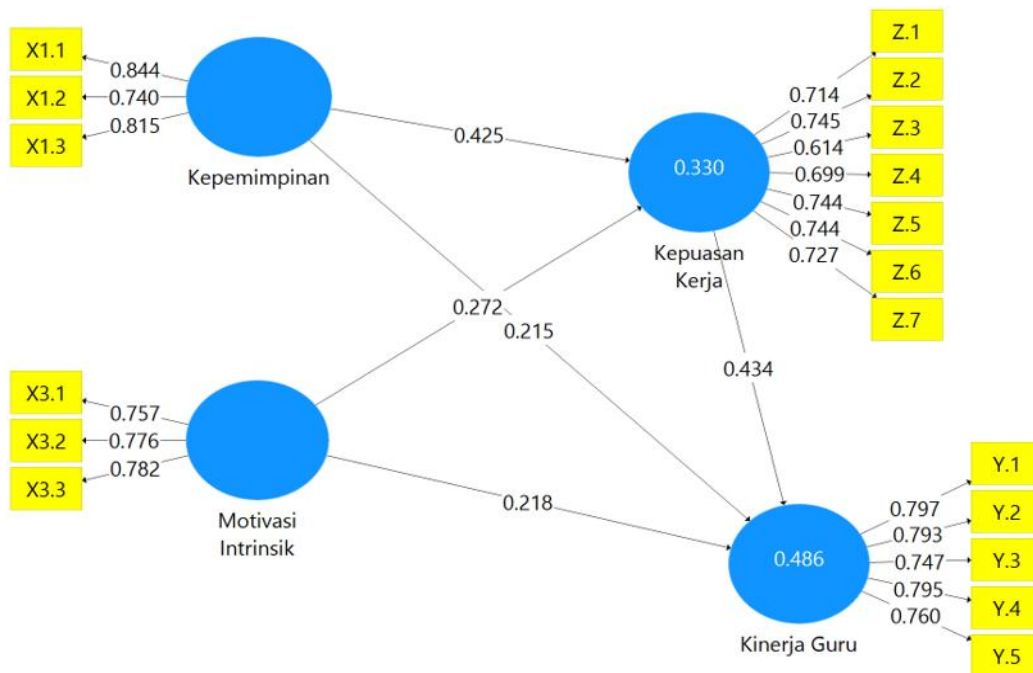


Figure 1. Outer Loadings

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Leadership	0.720	0.732	0.842	0.641
Job Satisfaction	0.839	0.845	0.879	0.509
Teacher Performance	0.838	0.840	0.885	0.606
Intrinsic Motivation	0.661	0.663	0.815	0.595

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

From Table 2 above, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.60 and the AVE values are above 0.05. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and are reliable in measuring their respective constructs. Therefore, the research instrument is deemed reliable and suitable for use in structural equation modeling.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

When evaluating a model using PLS, the analysis begins by examining the R-squared value for each latent dependent variable. The table below presents the estimated R-squared values obtained using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R-Square Results

	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Job Satisfaction	0.330	0.318
Teacher Performance	0.486	0.472

Source: Smart PLS, 2026

Table 3 shows the R-squared values for both dependent variables. For the job satisfaction variable, the R-squared value is 0.330; this means that leadership and intrinsic motivation account for 0.330, or 33%. The remainder is attributed to other variables outside the model. The R-squared value for teacher performance is 0.486, meaning that leadership, intrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction account for 0.486, or 48.6%; the remainder is attributed to other variables outside the model.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effects Between Variables

Direct effects between variables can be seen in the *path coefficients*. The results of the data analysis show that the direct effects are presented in the following table.

Table 4. *Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)*

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P-Values	Conclusion
Leadership -> Teacher Performance	0.215	2.699	0.007	Accepted
Leadership -> Job Satisfaction	0.425	5.951	0.000	Accepted
Intrinsic Motivation -> Teacher Performance	0.218	2.773	0.006	Accepted
Intrinsic Motivation -> Job Satisfaction	0.272	3.334	0.001	Accepted
Job Satisfaction -> Teacher Performance	0.434	6.435	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2026

Table 4 shows the following direct effect values:

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a t-statistic of 2.699 (above 1.96) and a p-value of 0.007 (below 0.05). This means that leadership has a significant effect on teacher performance because the significance level is below 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which also found that leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Haryatno et al., 2026; Affandi et al., 2025).
2. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 5.951 (above 1.96) and a significance level of 0.000 (below 0.05). This means that leadership has a significant effect on job satisfaction because the significance level is below 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which also found that leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Tarigan et al., 2026).
3. Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a t-statistic of 2.773 (above 1.96) and a p-value of 0.006 (below 0.05). This means that intrinsic motivation has a significant effect on teacher performance because the p-value is below 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which also found that intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Haujar et al., 2026).
4. Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 3.334 (above 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (below 0.05). This means that intrinsic motivation has a significant effect on job satisfaction because the p-value is below 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which also found that intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Affandi et al., 2025).
5. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a t-statistic of 6.435 (greater than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). This means that job satisfaction has a significant effect on teacher performance because the p-value is less than 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which also found that job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Islamiyah, 2026).

Indirect Effects Between Variables

Indirect effects between variables can be seen in the values of *specific indirect effects*. The results of the data analysis show that the values of indirect effects are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. *Specific Indirect Effects*

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Leadership -> Job Satisfaction -> Teacher Performance	0.185	4.501	0.000	Accepted
Intrinsic Motivation -> Job Satisfaction -> Teacher Performance	0.118	2.766	0.006	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2026

Table 5 shows the indirect effects between variables, namely:

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 4.501 (above 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (below 0.05). This means that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between leadership and teacher performance.
2. Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction, with a t-statistic of 2.766 (above 1.96) and a p-value of 0.044 (below 0.05). This means that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between intrinsic motivation and teacher performance.

Conclusion

1. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at State Senior High School 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
2. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
3. Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
4. Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
5. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at State Senior High School 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
6. Leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.
7. Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction at SMA Negeri 1 Kuala, Langkat Regency.

Recommendations

1. Leadership Variables
The principal needs to strengthen communicative, participatory, and consistent leadership. The principal can involve teachers in decision-making, provide clear work instructions, conduct regular supervision, and give recognition to teachers who demonstrate good performance. These efforts are important because leadership has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction and performance.
2. Intrinsic Motivation Variable
Teachers need to enhance their intrinsic motivation by developing a commitment to self-improvement, refining teaching methods, utilizing educational technology, and independently participating in professional development activities. Motivation that originates from within the teacher is crucial because it encourages teachers to work more responsibly, creatively, and with a focus on student learning outcomes.
3. Job Satisfaction Variables
Schools need to improve teachers' job satisfaction by providing workplace support, recognition, opportunities for professional development, harmonious working relationships, and fair supervision. Job satisfaction must be prioritized because it has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on teacher performance and can mediate the effects of leadership, work culture, and intrinsic motivation on teacher performance.
4. Teacher Performance Variables
Teachers need to continuously improve their performance through effective lesson planning, active teaching practices, effective classroom management, timely learning assessments, and ongoing professional development. Schools also need to provide adequate support so that teachers can perform their professional duties optimally.
5. For Future Researchers

Future researchers are advised to include other variables suspected of influencing teacher performance, such as teacher competence, work discipline, organizational commitment, workload, school climate, the use of educational technology, or teacher well-being. Future research could also be conducted in different schools with a larger sample size to ensure the findings have a broader scope. Additionally, future researchers may employ a mixed-methods approach—combining quantitative and qualitative methods—so that the results not only explain the relationships between variables but also depict the real-world conditions experienced by teachers in schools.

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