

The Role of Work Motivation in Mediating the Influence of Teacher Competence on Teacher Performance at State High School 19 Medan

Iqbal Syahputra, Husni Muharram Ritonga, Hernawaty

Abstract

Teacher performance is a key factor in determining the quality of education and the effectiveness of the learning process in schools. Teachers with high performance can carry out their professional duties effectively, consistently, and responsibly. One of the main factors that influences teacher performance is teacher competence; however, competence alone does not always result in optimal performance without adequate work motivation. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of work motivation in mediating the influence of teacher competence on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 19 Medan. This study uses a quantitative approach using a survey method. The research population consisted of all civil servant teachers at SMA Negeri 19 Medan, totaling 89 teachers, who were selected using a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with SmartPLS software. The results showed that teacher competence had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance and work motivation. In addition, work motivation had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. The indirect effect analysis confirmed that work motivation significantly mediated the relationship between teacher competence and teacher performance. The findings indicate that improving teacher performance requires not only improving teacher competence but also strengthening work motivation to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of education.

Keywords: Teacher Competence, Work Motivation, Teacher Performance

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2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)

Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICIE/index>

Introduction

Teacher performance is a key factor in determining the quality of education and the success of the learning process in schools. Teachers with good performance are able to plan, implement, and evaluate learning effectively so that educational goals can be achieved optimally. Supardi (2020) states that teacher performance is reflected in the ability of teachers to carry out their professional duties consistently, responsibly, and in accordance with established standards. In the context of SMA Negeri 19 Medan as one of the public schools that has a strategic role in producing quality human resources, improving teacher performance is an urgent need in line with curriculum changes, developments in educational technology, and the increasingly diverse characteristics of students.

One of the main factors influencing teacher performance is teacher competence. Teacher competence is not only related to mastery of subject matter, but also includes pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies that are integrated into learning practices. Mulyasa (2021) explains that teacher competence is a set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that teachers must possess and master in carrying out their professional duties. Teachers with adequate competence will be better able to manage the classroom, choose the right learning strategies, utilize learning technology, and develop the potential of students to the maximum. However, in reality, there are still variations in the level of competence among teachers, both in mastering innovative learning methods and in utilizing learning media and technology, which has an impact on differences in teacher performance.

On the other hand, teacher competency does not always automatically result in optimal performance if it is not accompanied by adequate work motivation. Work motivation acts as a driving factor that influences the intensity, direction, and perseverance of teachers in carrying out their duties. Robbins and Judge (2020) state that work motivation is a process that explains the internal and external forces that drive individuals to act and achieve organizational goals. Teachers who have high competence but low work motivation tend to be less than optimal in implementing their abilities. Conversely, motivated teachers will be more enthusiastic, creative, and consistent in carrying out learning, participating in professional development activities, and actively contributing to the achievement of school goals.

Work motivation in the context of education can stem from intrinsic factors, such as professional calling, teaching satisfaction, and the desire to achieve, as well as extrinsic factors, such as rewards, leadership support, work environment, and career development opportunities. At SMA Negeri 19 Medan, there is a tendency for teachers with high work motivation to perform better, as indicated by their readiness to teach, creativity in learning, and responsibility in carrying out administrative tasks and learning evaluations. This shows that work motivation plays an important role in strengthening the relationship between teacher competence and teacher performance.

Based on this description, it can be understood that work motivation not only has a direct effect on teacher performance but also acts as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of teacher competence on teacher performance. Therefore, research on the role of work motivation in mediating the influence of teacher competence on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 19 Medan is important to conduct. This study is expected to provide an empirical description of the relationship between teacher competence, work motivation, and teacher performance, as well as serve as a basis for the school in formulating policies and strategies for continuous improvement of teacher quality to support the achievement of educational goals at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.

Literature Review

Teacher Performance

Definition of Teacher Performance

According to Janah et al (2020), teacher performance is the result achieved by teachers in carrying out the tasks assigned to them, based on their skills, experience, sincerity, and use of

time. Good performance is evident when teachers show loyalty and high commitment to teaching tasks, developing teaching materials, discipline, creativity, cooperation with school members, exemplary leadership for students, and responsibility in their duties.

Factors Affecting Teacher Performance

According to Janah et al (2020), the factors that influence teacher performance include:

- 1) **Teacher Competence**
Competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers must possess in carrying out their profession.
- 2) **Work Motivation**
Motivation is an internal (intrinsic) or external (extrinsic) drive that makes teachers enthusiastic in carrying out their duties.
- 3) **Work Ethic**
Work ethic is the spirit, mental attitude, and values that drive a person to work diligently, with discipline, and full responsibility.
- 4) **Work Environment**
The work environment consists of facilities and a conducive working climate.
- 5) **Training and Development**
Improvement of skills and learning innovation.

Teacher Performance Indicators

According to Janah et al (2020), teacher performance indicators cover several important aspects that demonstrate the quality of their professional duties. Based on this explanation, the following are the main indicators:

- 1) **Loyalty and High Commitment to Teaching Duties**
Teachers are expected to be consistent and highly dedicated in carrying out their teaching responsibilities.
- 2) **Mastery and Development of Teaching Materials**
Teachers must not only master the learning material but also continue to develop their teaching materials to ensure they remain relevant and interesting.
- 3) **Discipline in Teaching**
Punctuality, adherence to rules, and consistency in carrying out the learning process are highly valued.
- 4) **Creativity in Teaching**
Teachers are required to find innovative and varied teaching approaches that are not monotonous.
- 5) **Collaboration with the Entire School Community**
Collaboration with colleagues, parents, and the school administration is an important part of performance indicators.
- 6) **Leadership that Sets an Example for Students**
Teachers' proactive attitude and inspirational leadership serve as role models and motivators for students.
- 7) **Responsibility for Professional Duties**
Teachers must have a high sense of responsibility for their duties both administrative and pedagogical.

Work Motivation

Understanding Work Motivation

According to Robbins & Judge (2022), work motivation is a process that explains the intensity, direction, and persistence of individuals in achieving a goal. So, in the context of motivation, teachers are internal and external forces that encourage teachers to carry out their educational duties whether in teaching, educating, guiding, or carrying out other professional

responsibilities with enthusiasm, consistency, and a focus on achieving educational goals at school.

Indicators of Work Motivation

According to Robbins & Judge (2022), indicators of work motivation consist of:

- 1) Intensity
How much effort teachers put into preparing and conducting lessons.
- 2) Direction
The extent to which teachers focus their efforts on educational goals and character building of students.
- 3) Persistence
The consistency of teachers in teaching despite facing limitations in facilities or diverse student conditions.

Teacher Competence

Definition of Teacher Competence

Mulyasa (2021) defines teacher competency as a set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that teachers must possess, internalize, and master in carrying out their professional duties. Mulyasa emphasizes that teacher competency is not only the ability to teach, but also maturity of personality, social skills, and professionalism reflected in all learning activities.

Indicators of Teacher Competency

Mulyasa (2021) explains that teacher competency consists of four main competencies, in accordance with national education standards. Each competency has the following indicators:

- 1) Pedagogical Competence
This is the teacher's ability to manage student learning.
- 2) Personality Competency
The ability of teachers to demonstrate a stable, mature, wise, and authoritative personality.
- 3) Social Competence
The ability of teachers to communicate and interact effectively.
- 4) Professional Competence
The ability of teachers to master teaching materials in depth.

Conceptual Framework

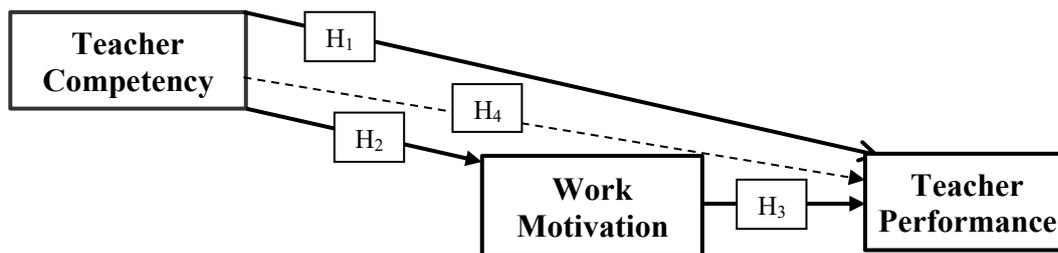


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H₁: Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.
- H₂: Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.
- H₃: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.
- H₄: Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The type of research used by the researcher is quantitative research. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research can be defined as a method based on positivism philosophy, used to study a specific population or sample, with sampling techniques generally conducted randomly, data collection using research instruments, and quantitative/statistical data analysis with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses. This type of quantitative research was conducted to create a study aimed at adjusting a study and analyzing teacher competence and work ethic on teacher performance through work motivation at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at SMA Negeri 19 Medan, located at Jalan Seruwai No.1, Sei Mati, Medan Labuhan District, Medan City. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from October to December 2025.

Population and Sample

According to Arikunto (2025), if the number of subjects is less than 100, it is better to take all of them so that the research is a population study. Furthermore, if the number of subjects is large, 10–15% or 20–25% or more can be taken, depending on the researcher's capabilities in terms of time, energy, and funds. In this study, the population consists of all civil servants at SMA Negeri 19 Medan, comprising 68 civil servants (PNS) and 21 government employees with contract agreements (PPPK), for a total population of 89 people. Since the population size is less than 100, according to Arikunto (2025), the entire population is used as the sample, also known as a saturated sample.

Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Results

Outer Model Analysis

Outer Model Analysis using the PLS Algorithm produced the following results:

Validity Test

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Job Motivation	Teacher Competency	Teacher Performance
X1.1		0.819	
X1.2		0.869	
X1.3		0.869	
X1.4		0.837	
Y.1			0.707
Y.2			0.863
Y.3			0.764
Y.4			0.833
Y.5			0.860
Y.6			0.876
Y.7			0.732
Z.1	0.879		
Z.2	0.791		
Z.3	0.858		

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, which show the results of outer model testing through loading factor/outer loadings values, all indicators in each variable have a loading value ≥ 0.70 . This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and strongly. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.

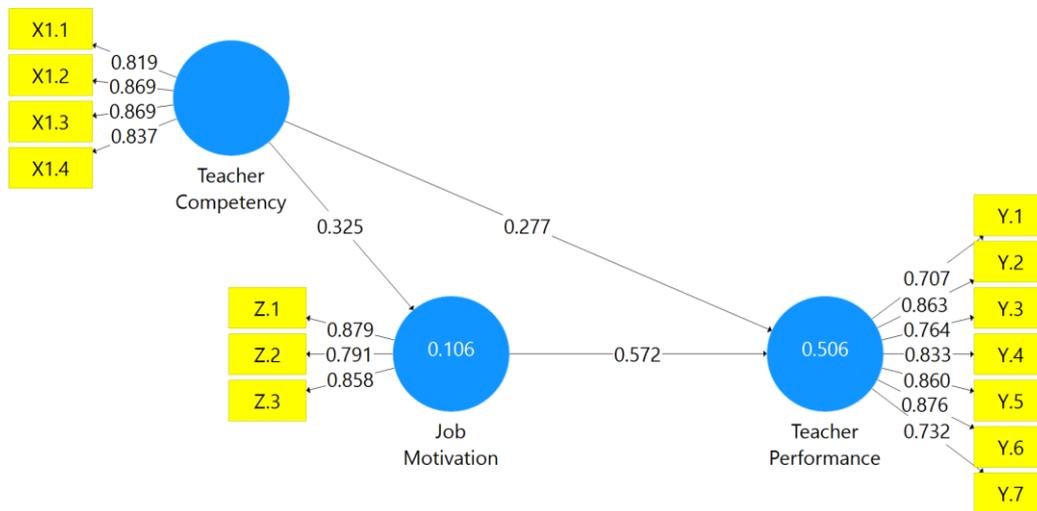


Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job Motivation	0.798	0.808	0.881	0.712
Teacher Competency	0.871	0.876	0.912	0.721
Teacher Performance	0.910	0.921	0.929	0.652

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

From Table 2 above, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and are reliable in measuring their respective constructs. Thus, the research instrument is declared reliable and suitable for use in structural model testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

In assessing the model with PLS, we begin by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the Rsquare estimation results using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Job Motivation	0.106	0.095
Teacher Performance	0.506	0.495

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R square values for both dependent variables. For the work motivation variable, the R square value is 0.106, meaning that the influence of the principal's leadership is 0.106 or 10.6%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-squared value for teacher performance is 0.506, meaning that the principal's leadership and work motivation have an influence of 0.506 or 50.6%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model.

**Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)
Hypothesis Testing**

Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct effect between variables can be seen in the path coefficients. The data analysis results show the direct effect values in the following table.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Teacher Competency -> Teacher Performance	0.277	3.462	0.001	Accepted
Teacher Competency -> Job Motivation	0.325	3.701	0	Accepted
Job Motivation -> Teacher Performance	0.572	7,494	0	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

The results in Table 4 show the following direct effect values:

1. Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance with a t-statistic value of 3.462 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.001 below 0.05, meaning that teacher competence has a real effect on teacher performance because the significance value is above 0.05 (). The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Mesra & Ferine, 2025; Supriadi & Mesra, 2023).
2. Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation with a t-statistic value of 3.701 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that teacher competence has a significant effect on work motivation because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation (Fauzi & Indrawan, 2023).
3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance with a t-statistic value of 7.494 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that work motivation has a real effect on teacher performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies, namely that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Forson et al., 2021).

Indirect Effects Between Variables

The indirect effect between variables can be seen in the specific indirect effects value. The data analysis results show the indirect effect value in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects (Indirect Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Teacher Competency -> Job Motivation -> Teacher Performance	0.186	3.469	0.001	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effect between variables, namely: teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation with a t-statistic value of 3.469 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.001 below 0.05, meaning that work motivation acts as an intervening variable between teacher competence and teacher performance.

Conclusion

1. Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.

2. Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.
3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.
4. Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation at SMA Negeri 19 Medan.

Recommendations

1. Teacher performance with the lowest score was "I have high loyalty and commitment in carrying out my teaching duties." Schools need to maintain and strengthen teacher loyalty and commitment by establishing open communication, rewarding dedication, and creating a fair and supportive work environment so that this commitment is maintained and has an impact on improving the quality of learning.
2. Work motivation with the lowest score was "My work efforts are always directed towards achieving the school's educational goals." Schools need to ensure that educational goals are understood collectively through continuous dissemination of the vision and mission and alignment of teacher work programs with school objectives, so that every effort made by teachers is more focused and contributes directly to the achievement of the school's educational goals.
3. Teacher competence with the lowest value statement "I am able to manage learning in accordance with the characteristics of the students." Schools need to improve teachers' pedagogical competence through training and mentoring on differentiated learning and understanding the characteristics of students, so that learning management becomes more effective and in line with students' learning needs.

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