

The Role of Job Satisfaction in Mediating the Effect of Recognition on Teacher Performance at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai

Hamnah Yasari, Elfitra Desy Surya, Kiki Farida Ferine

Abstract

Teacher performance plays a strategic role in determining the quality of education in schools. Various organizational factors are thought to influence teacher performance, including rewards and job satisfaction. This study aims to analyze the effect of rewards on teacher performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai. This study uses a quantitative approach with a census method, in which all 64 teachers were respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS software. The test results show that rewards have a positive but not significant direct effect on teacher performance. However, rewards have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, and job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. In addition, the indirect effect test results prove that job satisfaction can significantly mediate the effect of rewards on teacher performance. These findings indicate that job satisfaction plays an important role as a connecting mechanism between rewards and teacher performance. This study implies that improving teacher performance is not enough through the provision of rewards alone, but needs to be balanced with efforts to continuously improve teacher job satisfaction. The results of this study are expected to be taken into consideration by schools in designing human resource management policies that are oriented towards the welfare and performance improvement of teachers.

Keywords: Recognition, Job Satisfaction, 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 in schools, because teachers play a direct role in the learning process, character building, and the achievement of student competencies. Teachers with good performance are able to plan, implement, and evaluate learning effectively in accordance with curriculum requirements and professional standards. Research by Fitriani and Kurniawan (2021) confirms that optimal teacher performance will have a positive impact on the quality of learning and student learning outcomes. Therefore, improving teacher performance is an important agenda in human resource management in educational institutions, including at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.

One factor that influences teacher performance is the rewards given by the school organization. Rewards are not only in the form of financial compensation, but also include recognition of achievements, career development opportunities, and other non-financial appreciation. Artanti, Kurnia, and Futra (2025) state that a fair and transparent reward system can increase teachers' motivation and positive attitudes toward their work. In addition, Pratikno and Sutianingsih (2023) found that rewards have an indirect relationship with teacher performance through an improvement in more positive psychological working conditions. This shows that rewards are an important instrument in encouraging productive work behavior.

However, the influence of rewards on teacher performance is not always direct. One of the psychological variables that plays an important role in this relationship is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction describes teachers' emotional attitudes toward their work, which are formed from perceptions of rewards, work environment, and organizational support. Indayani, Heryanda, and Telagawathi (2025) explain that teachers who are satisfied with their work tend to show higher commitment, loyalty to the school, and more optimal performance. Thus, job satisfaction is a strategic factor in improving the quality of teacher performance.

A number of studies in the last five years show that job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable between rewards and teacher performance. Pratikno and Sutianingsih (2023) prove that rewards given to teachers can increase job satisfaction, which in turn has a significant impact on performance improvement. Similar findings were also reported by Indayani et al. (2025), who stated that job satisfaction functions as a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of organizational factors on teacher performance. This confirms that without adequate job satisfaction, the rewards given may not necessarily result in optimal performance improvement.

In the context of SMP Negeri 1 Binjai, the demands for teacher professionalism are increasing in line with education policies and community expectations regarding the quality of graduates. However, the reward system that is implemented has not been fully examined empirically in relation to teacher job satisfaction and performance. Wahyudi's (2025) research shows that job satisfaction is still one of the determining factors of teacher performance in public schools, but its role as a mediating variable has not been specifically researched. Therefore, in-depth research is needed to analyze how job satisfaction mediates the influence of rewards on teacher performance.

Based on this description, this study aims to examine the role of job satisfaction in mediating the influence of rewards on teacher performance at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of educational human resource management and provide a practical basis for schools in designing effective reward systems to improve teacher job satisfaction and performance.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Teacher Performance

Definition of Teacher Performance

According to Muspawi (2020), teacher performance is the work results or work achievements attained by a teacher in carrying out their duties as an educator based on the required standards, procedures, and competencies.

Teacher Performance Indicators

According to Muspawi (2020), teacher performance indicators cover several aspects:

- 1) Ability to plan learning
The quality of planning greatly determines the direction, effectiveness, and results of learning because it forms the basis for the teaching and learning process.
- 2) Ability to carry out learning activities
High-performing teachers must be able to manage the classroom, deliver material clearly, develop active interactions, use varied methods, and create a conducive learning environment. This indicator also includes the teacher's creativity in overcoming learning obstacles.
- 3) Ability to evaluate learning
Teachers must be able to assess student learning outcomes using appropriate evaluation techniques. Evaluation indicators include the ability to develop assessment instruments, conduct formative and summative assessments, provide feedback, and analyze evaluation results to improve the learning process.
- 4) Responsibility for professional duties
Professional responsibility is not only reflected in technical teaching abilities, but also in the teacher's willingness to comply with rules, complete work programs, and maintain integrity in carrying out tasks.
- 5) Ability to collaborate with school community members
Collaboration is an important part of performance because teachers cannot work individually to improve the quality of education. This cooperation is also reflected through participation in school activities, teacher meetings, and professional development activities.
- 6) Discipline and work ethics
Teachers' performance is also measured by their discipline in terms of attendance, adherence to schedules, and orderliness in carrying out learning activities.
- 7) Ability to develop oneself and professionalism
This professional development strengthens pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies, thereby improving the quality of learning.

Job satisfaction

Definition of Job Satisfaction

According to Atmaja (2022), job satisfaction is a pleasant emotional attitude and love for one's work.

Job Satisfaction Indicators

According to Atmaja (2022), job satisfaction can be measured through several indicators that describe employees' emotional responses to their work. These indicators include:

- 1) Satisfaction with the Job Itself
Describes the extent to which employees feel that their work is meaningful, interesting, and in line with their abilities.
- 2) Satisfaction with Salary/Rewards
Refers to the level of employee satisfaction with the fairness, adequacy, and appropriateness of the rewards received (salary, incentives, benefits).
- 3) Satisfaction with Promotion Opportunities
Assessing whether employees feel they have opportunities for growth and advancement to higher positions, with a transparent and fair promotion process.
- 4) Satisfaction with Supervision/Superiors

Describes employees' feelings about their superiors' leadership style, support, communication, and fairness in leadership.

5) Satisfaction with Coworkers

Measuring the extent to which employees feel comfortable and supported by their coworkers, including aspects such as cooperation, social relationships, harmonious communication, and team solidarity.

Work Environment

Definition of Work Environment

Saefullah (2022) states that the work environment is everything that surrounds workers and can influence them in performing their jobs.

Work Environment Indicators

According to Saefullah (2022), the work environment can be measured through the following indicators:

1) Physical Work Environment

This indicator focuses on the physical conditions of the workspace that affect employee comfort, thereby increasing focus and productivity.

2) Non-Physical Work Environment

This includes psychological and social factors in the workplace, such as: a good social atmosphere promotes the psychological well-being of employees.

3) Management Support

Supervisors have a strong influence on the quality of the work environment, such as supportive leaders increasing motivation and work enthusiasm.

4) Work Facilities

Adequate facilities are crucial for smooth operations; good facilities enhance work efficiency and effectiveness.

Recognition

Definition of Rewards

Robbins & Judge (2022) state that rewards are all forms of compensation, both financial and non-financial, given by organizations as a form of recognition for the performance, contribution, or positive behavior of employees, and are used to increase motivation and work performance.

Reward Indicators

Robbins & Judge (2022) state that the indicators of rewards are:

1) Financial Rewards

Financial rewards can increase motivation and desired work behavior when linked to achievement.

2) Non-Financial Rewards

Recognition is one of the most effective behavior reinforcers in reinforcement theory.

3) Development Opportunities (Developmental Rewards)

Rewards can also take the form of opportunities for growth and development, creating more competent and motivated teachers.

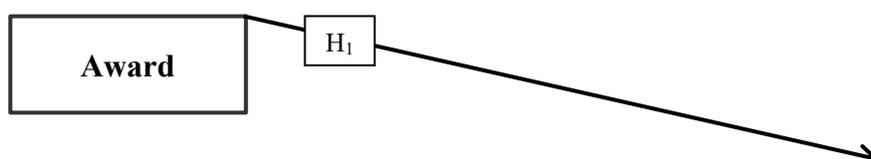
4) Social Rewards

A form of reward that increases emotional support and social satisfaction is one of the important rewards in interpersonal needs theory.

5) Intrinsic Rewards

The teaching profession is greatly influenced by personal satisfaction and meaning.

Conceptual Framework



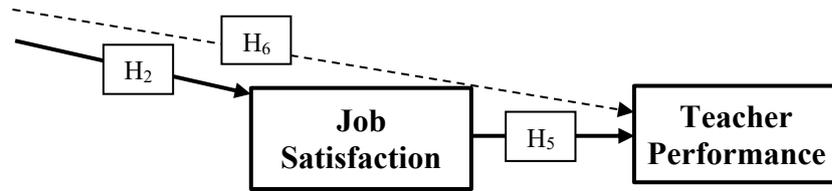


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H₁: Awards have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMP Negeri 1 Binja.
- H₂ Awards have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.
- H₃: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.
- H₄ : Rewards have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.

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 rewards and work environment on teacher performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai, located at Jalan Sultan Hasanuddin No. 28 Binjai. 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. In this study, the population consists of all employees at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai, with a total of 64 teachers, and the entire population will be used as the 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

	Award	Teacher Performance	Work Satisfaction
X1.1	0,834		

X1.2	0,833		
X1.3	0,894		
X1.4	0,816		
X1.5	0,834		
Y.1		0,761	
Y.2		0,891	
Y.3		0,727	
Y.4		0,829	
Y.5		0,856	
Y.6		0,878	
Y.7		0,810	
Z.1			0,874
Z.2			0,734
Z.3			0,849
Z.4			0,854
Z.5			0,894

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.

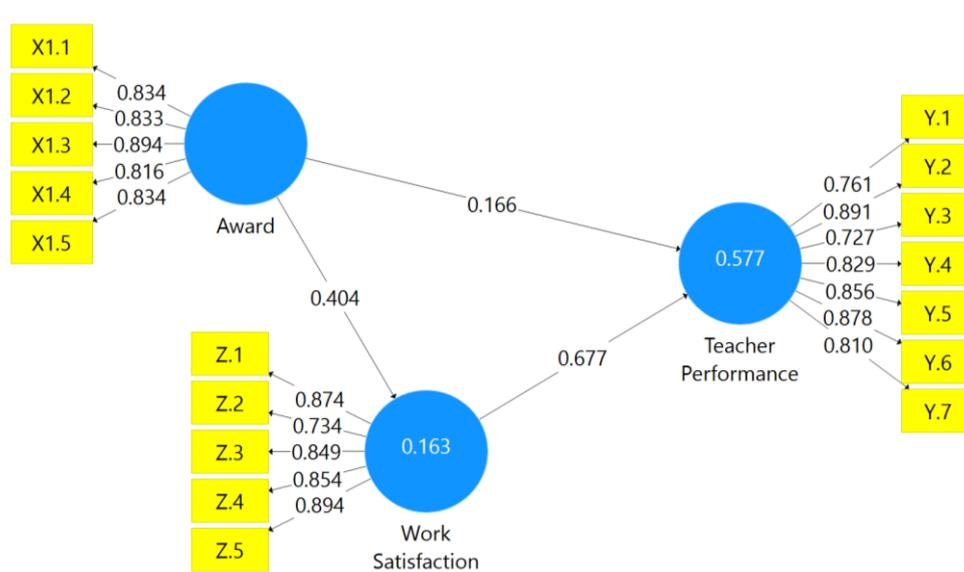


Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Award	0.898	0.899	0.925	0.710
Teacher Performance	0.920	0.926	0.936	0.678
Job Satisfaction	0.898	0.919	0.924	0.710

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
Work Satisfaction	0.163	0.150
Teacher Performance	0.577	0.564

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R square values for both dependent variables. For the job satisfaction variable, the R square value is 0.163, meaning that the influence of reward is 0.163 or 16.3%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-square value for teacher performance is 0.577, meaning that rewards and job satisfaction account for 0.577 or 57.7%, 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
Award -> Teacher Performance	0.166	1.730	0.084	Rejected
Award -> Job Satisfaction	0.404	4.191	0.000	Accepted
Job Satisfaction -> Teacher Performance	0.677	10,279	0	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Table 4 shows the following direct effect values:

1. Awards have a positive but insignificant effect on teacher performance with a t-statistic value of 1.730 below 1.96 and a significance of 0.084 below 0.05, meaning that awards have 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 compensation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Safari et al., 2020).
2. Rewards have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 4.191 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that rewards have a significant effect on job satisfaction because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that rewards have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Michella & Edalmen, 2022).
3. The work environment has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance with a t-statistic value of 2.277 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.023 below 0.05, meaning that the work environment has a real effect on teacher performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Ferine & Surya, 2025; Damanik et al., 2025).
4. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance with a t-statistic value of 10.279 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction has a significant effect on teacher performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that job

satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Ferine & Rahayu, 2025; Tahib et al., 2025).

Indirect Influence Between Variables

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

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Award -> Work Satisfaction -> Teacher Performance	0.273	3.802	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effect between variables, namely: rewards have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction with a t-statistic value of 3.802 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that job satisfaction acts as an intervening variable between rewards and teacher performance.

Conclusion

1. Rewards have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.
2. Rewards have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.
3. Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.
4. Recognition has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through job satisfaction at SMP Negeri 1 Binjai.

Recommendations

1. Teacher performance with the lowest score was "I use a variety of teaching methods to help students understand the material." Therefore, the recommendation is to improve the consistency of using a variety of teaching methods with more careful planning, for example, combining short lectures, discussions, practice, and interactive learning media in a structured manner in each meeting, so that all students have the opportunity to learn optimally and easily understand the material.
2. Job satisfaction with the lowest score being "My job gives me a sense of pride and meaning." The school needs to increase teachers' sense of pride and meaning in their work by providing fair and continuous appreciation, creating a supportive work environment, and providing space for teachers to contribute to decision-making and school development, so that teachers feel that their role is valued and their work is meaningful.
3. Recognition with the lowest score: "My work achievements are recognized by my superiors and colleagues." Schools need to strengthen their performance recognition systems by providing clear and continuous appreciation, both formally and informally, and building a culture of mutual respect between superiors and colleagues, so that the motivation and performance of educators and educational staff can continue to improve.

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