

The Role of Work Motivation in Mediating the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Teacher Performance at State High School 1 Pintu Rime Gayo Bener Meriah Regency

Yusni Haujar, Darmilisani, Yohny Anwar

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of work motivation in mediating the influence of emotional intelligence on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo, Bener Meriah Regency. This study was motivated by the continuing variations in work enthusiasm, discipline, teaching creativity, lesson preparation, and teachers' ability to cope with work-related stress. These differences are suspected to be influenced by teachers' levels of emotional intelligence and work motivation. The study employed a quantitative approach using a census method. The study population consisted of all 60 teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo, and the entire population was used as the research sample. Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires using a Likert scale and analyzed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with SmartPLS. The results showed that all indicators met the criteria for validity and reliability. The R^2 value indicates that emotional intelligence explains 11.6% of the variation in work motivation, while emotional intelligence and work motivation together explain 56.6% of the variation in teacher performance. The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.169$; $p = 0.048$), emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.340$; $p = 0.000$), and work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.678$; $p = 0.000$). Furthermore, work motivation was found to positively and significantly mediate the effect of emotional intelligence on teacher performance ($\beta = 0.231$; $p = 0.001$). The conclusion of this study is that high emotional intelligence can enhance teachers' work motivation, which in turn leads to improved teacher performance. Thus, work motivation plays a crucial role as a mediating variable in the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher performance. This study offers practical implications that schools need to develop teachers' emotional intelligence through training and coaching, as well as create policies capable of enhancing work motivation to support the sustainable improvement of teacher performance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work Motivation, Teacher Performance

Yusni Haujar¹

¹Management, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

e-mail: yusnihaujar@gmail.com¹

Darmilisani², Yohny Anwar³

^{2,3}Management, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia e-mail:

darmilisani@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id², yohnyanwar@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id³

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Introduction

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of quality human resources. The success of education is largely determined by the quality of teachers as the primary implementers of the learning process in schools. Teachers are not only tasked with delivering lesson material but also with designing learning activities, guiding students, evaluating learning outcomes, and instilling character values. Therefore, teacher performance is a critical factor in determining the quality of education and student success.

Teacher performance reflects the extent to which teachers successfully carry out their professional duties effectively and efficiently. This performance is evident in a teacher's ability to develop instructional materials, manage the classroom, employ innovative teaching methods, assess student learning outcomes, and engage in continuous professional development. Teachers with high performance are able to create active, creative, effective, and enjoyable learning experiences. Conversely, low teacher performance can lead to a decline in the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes.

Over the past five years, improving teacher performance has remained a significant challenge in Indonesia's education system. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2024) reports that Indonesia still faces a shortage of more than 1.3 million teachers due to high retirement rates and limited recruitment of new educators. This situation has led to an increased workload for teachers and requires them to maintain the quality of instruction despite limited resources. Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment 2022, released in 2023, indicates that Indonesian students' achievements in literacy, numeracy, and science remain below the average of OECD countries. This situation underscores that improving the quality of teacher performance remains an urgent priority.

Various empirical studies over the past five years have shown that emotional intelligence is one of the key factors influencing teacher performance. Emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively use emotions when interacting with others. Daniel Goleman states that emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In an educational context, teachers with high emotional intelligence tend to be better able to manage stress, build positive relationships with students, collaborate with colleagues, and resolve conflicts constructively.

A study by Rahmawati et al. (2023) shows that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. A study by Prasetyo et al. (2024) also found that teachers who are able to manage their emotions well have higher levels of motivation and work performance. These findings confirm that teachers' emotional competence is a key asset in supporting the effective performance of their professional duties.

In addition to emotional intelligence, work motivation is also a key factor in determining teacher performance. Work motivation refers to the internal and external drives that generate an individual's enthusiasm, direction, and persistence in achieving work goals. According to Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge (2022), motivation is a process that explains the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual in achieving goals. Teachers with high work motivation will demonstrate enthusiasm, responsibility, creativity, and a strong commitment in carrying out their teaching duties.

Theoretically, the relationship between emotional intelligence, work motivation, and teacher performance can be explained through Self-Determination Theory, developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan. This theory posits that an individual's ability to manage emotions and understand themselves enhances their intrinsic motivation to perform at their best. Consequently, teachers with high emotional intelligence tend to have stronger work motivation, which ultimately improves their performance.

This phenomenon is also evident at Pintu Rime Gayo State High School No. 1 in Bener Meriah Regency. Based on initial observations, differences were still found in work ethic, discipline, teaching creativity, and teachers' ability to cope with work-related stress. Some

teachers were able to remain calm and productive in the face of various job demands, while others were easily overwhelmed, lacked enthusiasm, and demonstrated suboptimal work motivation. In addition, there are still variations in teachers' lesson preparation, attendance, and participation in school activities. These conditions suggest that teachers' ability to manage their emotions and maintain work motivation likely influences the observed performance differences.

Numerous studies have examined the influence of emotional intelligence on teacher performance; however, research that specifically identifies work motivation as a mediating variable remains relatively limited, particularly in the context of high schools in Bener Meriah Regency. Yet, understanding the role of work motivation as a mediator is crucial for explaining the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence can more effectively enhance teacher performance.

Based on these empirical phenomena, theoretical support, and the results of previous research, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled "The Role of Work Motivation in Mediating the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Teacher Performance at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo, Bener Meriah Regency." This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management and organizational behavior, as well as practical recommendations for schools in designing strategies to improve teacher motivation and performance through the enhancement of emotional intelligence.

Literature Review Theoretical Framework 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.

Indicators of Teacher Performance

Indicators of Teacher Performance 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 student 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 optimize classroom facilities.
- 4) Learning Assessment
Teachers accurately assess student learning outcomes, provide feedback, and adjust teaching methods based on the evaluation.
- 5) Continuous Professional Development
Teachers participate in training, workshops, or professional development activities, thereby improving their competencies and the quality of their teaching.

Work Motivation Definition of Work Motivation

According to Jud et al. (2023), in the context of teaching, motivation is an internal state that activates and directs teaching behavior. This means that teachers' work motivation is an internal driving force that prompts them to take action, make choices, and carry out their teaching duties in a focused manner.

Indicators of Work Motivation

Indicators of teacher motivation according to Jud et al. (2023) in Indonesian

- 1) Expectations of success / belief in one's own abilities

This reflects a teacher's belief that they are capable of performing their teaching duties or specific professional tasks effectively. In a school setting, this is evident in a teacher's confidence that they can conduct lessons effectively.

2) Intrinsic interest

This reflects the teacher's enjoyment, interest, and enthusiasm for teaching. In other words, the teacher performs their work because they are genuinely interested in and enjoy the activity.

3) Extrinsic utility value

This indicates the extent to which a teacher views their duties as useful and beneficial for the implementation of instruction or the achievement of educational goals. Thus, the teacher is motivated because they see their work as having tangible benefits.

4) Personal values

This indicates that teachers view the teaching profession as personally important and meaningful to them. In other words, teachers feel that their work is valuable and meaningful to their sense of self.

5) Opportunity cost

This indicates the sacrifice of time or opportunities to do other things when teachers perform their duties. The more time and opportunities that must be sacrificed, the higher the perceived opportunity cost.

6) Effort cost

This indicates the amount of effort, energy, and work a teacher must expend to carry out their duties. The greater the effort required, the higher the effort cost perceived by the teacher.

Emotional Intelligence Definition of Emotional Intelligence

According to Wang and Qin (2025), emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, express, understand, manage, and use emotions. This definition emphasizes that emotional intelligence is not just about recognizing feelings, but also about how emotions are appropriately used in life and work.

Indicators of Curriculum Innovation

The indicators of emotional intelligence, according to Wang and Qin (2025), are:

1) Ability to identify emotions

Teachers are able to recognize emotions they feel themselves as well as those evident in others.

2) Ability to express emotions

Teachers are able to express emotions appropriately and proportionately in work situations.

3) Ability to understand emotions

Teachers are able to understand the meaning, causes, and changes in emotions in themselves and others.

4) Emotional regulation skills

Teachers are able to control, regulate, and stabilize their emotions to ensure they remain supportive of task performance.

5) Ability to use emotions appropriately

Teachers are able to utilize emotional awareness to make decisions, interact, and solve problems in their work.

Conceptual Framework

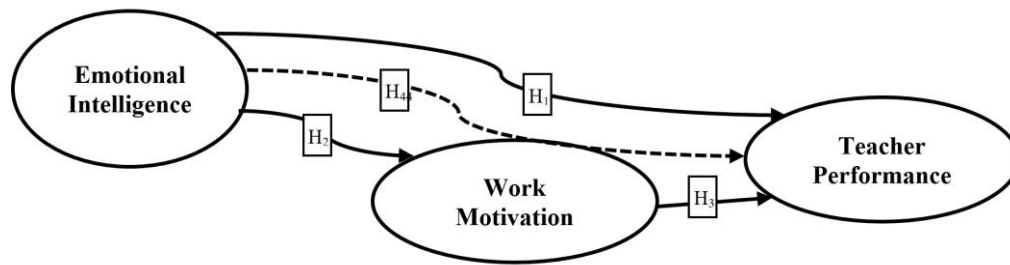


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypotheses

- H₁: Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.
- H₂: Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher work motivation at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.
- H₃: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.
- H₄: Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation as an intervening variable at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.

Research Methodology Type of Research

The type of research used is quantitative research. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research is defined as a method based on 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, to test established hypotheses. This type of quantitative research was conducted to create a study aimed at adapting a research framework and analyzing the role of work motivation in mediating the influence of emotional intelligence on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo, Bener Meriah Regency.

Research Location and Timeframe

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo, located on Jalan Takengon-Bireuen Km 58, Blang Ara Village, Pintu Rime Gayo Subdistrict, Bener Meriah Regency, Aceh Province. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from April to July 2026.

Population and Sample

According to 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 Pintu Rime Gayo, totaling 60 teachers, and the entire population was used as the sample.

Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Data Collection Techniques

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

Results

Outer Model Analysis

The *Outer Model* analysis using the *PLS Algorithm* yielded the following:

Validity Test

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Emotional Intelligence	Teacher Performance	Work Motivation
X1.1	0.819		
X1.2	0.831		
X1.3	0.901		
X1.4	0.811		
X1.5	0.824		
Y.1		0.787	
Y.2		0.922	
Y.3		0.756	
Y.4		0.852	
Y.5		0.871	
Z.1			0.873
Z.2			0.694
Z.3			0.822
Z.4			0.837
Z.5			0.888

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, the results of the outer model testing through factor loadings/outer loadings indicate that all indicators for each variable have loadings ≥ 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.

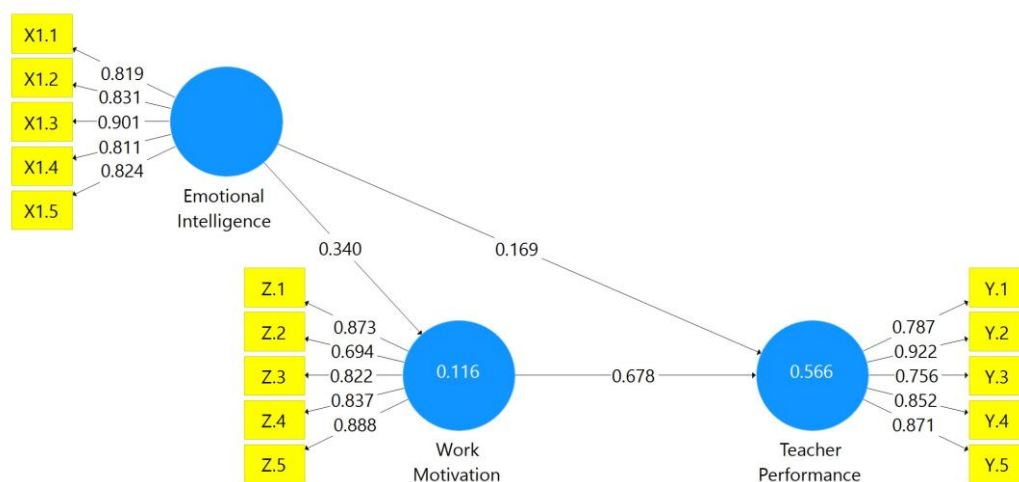


Figure 2. Outer Loadings

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Emotional Intelligence	0.894	0.896	0.922	0.702
Teacher Performance	0.894	0.905	0.922	0.705

Work Motivation	0.882	0.911	0.914	0.681
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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. 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 process begins by examining the R-square for each latent dependent variable. The table below presents the estimated R-square values using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R-Square Results

	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Work Motivation	0.116	0.101
Teacher Performance	0.566	0.551

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In Table 3, there are R-squared values for both dependent variables. For the work motivation variable, the R-squared value is 0.116; this means that the influence of emotional intelligence is 0.116 or 11.6%. The remainder is attributed to other variables outside the model. The Rsquared value for teacher performance is 0.566, meaning that emotional intelligence and work motivation account for 0.610 or 61%; 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 coefficient* values. The data analysis results show that the direct effect values can be seen in the following table. **Table 4.** *Path Coefficients* (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values	Conclusion
Emotional Intelligence -> Teacher Performance	0.169	1.986	0.048	Accepted
Emotional Intelligence -> Work Motivation	0.340	3.891	0.000	Accepted
Work Motivation -> Teacher Performance	0.678	11.997	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Table 4 shows the following direct effect values:

1. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a t-statistic value of 1.986 above 1.96 and a significance level of 0.048 below 0.05. This means that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on teacher performance because the significance level is below 0.05. These findings align with previous research, which indicates that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Nasution & Indrawan, 2025; Abdillah et al., 2025).
2. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation, with a t-statistic of 3.891 (above 1.96) and a significance level of 0.000 (below 0.05). This means that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on work motivation because the significance level is below 0.05. These findings align with previous research, which also

found that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on work motivation (Rahman et al., 2025; Aries et al., 2025).

3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a t-statistic of 11.997 (above 1.96) and a significance level of 0.000 (below 0.05). This indicates that work motivation has a significant effect on teacher performance because the significance level is below 0.05. These findings align with previous research, which indicates that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Rizaldi et al., 2026; Abdillah et al., 2025; Arisa et al., 2026).

Indirect Effects Between Variables

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

5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Emotional Intelligence → Work Motivation → Teacher Performance	0.231	3.464	0.001	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows an indirect effect between variables: emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation, with a t-statistic of 3.464 (above 1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (below 0.05). This means that work motivation acts as an intervening variable between emotional intelligence and teacher performance.

Conclusion

1. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.
2. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teachers' work motivation at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.
3. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.
4. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation as an intervening variable at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo.

Recommendations

1. Teacher performance needs to be continuously improved as it is a key indicator of the success of the learning process and the quality of education at the school. The school is advised to conduct regular training and performance evaluations of teachers, particularly regarding lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management, assessment of learning outcomes, and the completion of administrative tasks related to teaching. Additionally, teachers should be encouraged to enhance work discipline, teaching creativity, and professional responsibility to ensure sustainable improvements in learning quality. Teacher performance improvements will be more effective when supported by a positive work environment, strong work motivation, and supportive school leadership.
2. Teacher work motivation must be a key focus because this variable serves as a link between emotional intelligence and the principal's leadership and teacher performance. Schools are advised to establish a work system capable of boosting teachers' enthusiasm, passion, and sense of responsibility toward their work. Principals need to recognize teachers' achievements, foster open communication, provide moral support, and cultivate a work environment that encourages teachers to continue developing. The higher a teacher's work motivation, the greater the likelihood that the teacher will demonstrate dedication, loyalty, and better performance quality in carrying out their professional duties.

3. Teachers' emotional intelligence must be continuously developed as it influences their ability to manage emotions, cope with work-related stress, build positive social relationships, and maintain professionalism in the classroom. Schools are advised to support teachers through training, mentoring, or professional development activities that enhance self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, self-motivation, and social skills. Teachers with good emotional intelligence will be better equipped to handle teaching challenges, build positive relationships with students and colleagues, and maintain motivation in their work. Therefore, strengthening emotional intelligence can be a key strategy in supporting the improvement of teachers' work motivation and performance.

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