

The Influence of Competence and Training on Teacher Professionalism with Work Motivation as An Intervening Variable Among Elementary School in Sumberejo Village

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Article History: Received on September 16, 2025, Revised on October 12, 2025, Published on October 14, 2025

Abstract: Teacher professionalism in Sumberejo Village remains relatively low, as indicated by limited participation in training and weak motivation for continuous development. This study aimed to analyze the influence of competence and training on teacher professionalism, with work motivation as a mediating variable, using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The research involved 36 elementary school teachers in Sumberejo Village, selected through a saturated sampling (census) technique. The findings reveal that competence and training have a significant positive influence on teacher professionalism, both directly and indirectly through work motivation. These results highlight the critical role of motivation as a mediator linking teacher competence and training with professional outcomes. The study provides context-specific insights for improving teacher development at the elementary level through competence-based training and motivation-oriented policies.

Keywords: Competence, Training, Teacher, Professionalism, Work Motivation

A. Introduction

Teacher competence and professionalism play a crucial role in improving the quality of education, especially in elementary schools that serve as the

foundation for character and intellectual development. In Sumberejo Village, observations show that teacher professionalism remains low. Many teachers have not participated in regular training or applied innovative learning strategies in the classroom. These conditions highlight the urgency of improving teacher competence and professionalism to ensure effective learning and sustainable student development at the local level (Abdullah & Nasution, 2024).

Nationally, disparities still exist in the quantity and distribution of elementary school teachers across regions. The government has made efforts to address this through teacher recruitment, professional certification, and continuous professional development programs. However, the overall quality and competence of teachers in Indonesia remain uneven (Aisyah et al., 2021).

Data from national education evaluations indicate ongoing challenges in teacher quality. Results of the Teacher Competency Test (UKG) and international assessments such as PISA show that Indonesian teachers still face difficulties in mastering subject matter and applying innovative pedagogical approaches. These findings reflect the need to strengthen competence and professional skills through targeted training and motivation-based development (Ansari et al., 2022).

In the specific context of Sumberejo Village, elementary school teachers face limitations in innovation, lesson planning, and classroom management. Interviews and field observations reveal that some teachers tend to repeat conventional teaching methods, rarely attend training, and show limited initiative in self-improvement. These factors indicate low levels of professionalism, which are believed to stem from limited competence and weak motivation for continuous growth (Nurlina & Lestari, 2022).

Previous studies have emphasized the strong relationship between competence, training, and teacher performance (Lestari & Pratiwi, 2019). However, most research has not explored the mediating role of work motivation a key psychological factor that connects teachers' skills and training outcomes with their actual professional behavior (Astuti, 2022).

Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the influence of competence and training on teacher professionalism with work motivation as a mediating variable, focusing on the contextual case of elementary school teachers in Sumberejo Village (Lestari & Pratiwi, 2024).

B. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is applied to the research subjects, namely elementary school teachers in Sumberejo Village. The main focus of the study is on several important variables, namely competence, training, teacher professionalism, and work motivation. These four variables were chosen because they are considered to have a significant role in supporting the improvement of education quality through teacher performance in the field.

The data used in this study was sourced from primary data, which was obtained directly from the respondents. To collect the data, the researcher used a systematically designed questionnaire as an instrument. This questionnaire contained a number of statements designed to elicit relevant information about the teachers' competence, training experience, level of professionalism, and work motivation. The questionnaire technique was chosen so that the data obtained would be truly in line with the research objectives, direct, measurable, and supportive of the analysis conducted.

In the context of methodology, the population is defined as all elements or subjects that are the object of research, while the sample is a part of the population that is used as a representation in data collection (Ramdhan, 2021). In this study, the sampling technique used was the saturated sampling method (census), which is a technique that involves all members of the population as research samples.

The population of this study consisted of 36 elementary school teachers in Sumberejo Village. Because the total population was relatively small, the researchers used a saturated sampling (census) technique, in which all

members of the population were included as respondents. This approach ensures comprehensive data collection and strengthens the validity of conclusions within the local educational context.

Although this study applied the PLS-SEM technique, which is considered robust for small sample sizes and exploratory models, the number of respondents ($N = 36$) remains limited for achieving strong statistical generalization. The use of a saturated sampling (census) approach was chosen to capture all available data within the population of elementary school teachers in Sumberejo Village, thereby minimizing sampling bias. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted as representative only of this particular context, not as generalizable to wider populations.

The decision to use PLS-SEM rather than multiple regression was based on its suitability for complex models involving mediating variables, non-normal data distribution, and small sample conditions. PLS-SEM emphasizes variance explanation rather than parameter estimation, making it appropriate for predictive modeling in small-sample studies (Hair et al., 2021). However, very high R^2 values obtained in this study (0.948 and 0.968) may indicate model overfitting or a high level of dependency on sample-specific data, which is a recognized limitation of using this approach with limited N . The questionnaire consisted of 30 statement items, divided into 7 items for Competence (X1), 7 items for Training (X2), 7 items for Work Motivation (Z), and 9 items for Teacher Professionalism (Y), all measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 1. Operational Definition

Variable	Indicator	Scale
Competence (X1)	1. Lesson Planning Skills	Likert
	2. Mastery of Learning Materials	
	3. Classroom Management Ability	
	4. Evaluation of Learning Outcomes	
	5. Use of Learning Media	
	6. Communication with Students	

Training (X2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Participation in Professional Development Activities 1. Clarity of Training Objectives 2. Relevance of Training Materials to Teaching Needs 3. Effectiveness of Training Methods 4. Usefulness of Training Results in Classroom Practice 5. Quality of Trainers or Instructors 6. Participation and Interaction during Training 7. Institutional or School Support for Teacher Training 	Likert
Work Motivation (Z)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sense of Responsibility in Teaching 2. Persistence in Achieving Learning Goals 3. Enthusiasm and Initiative at Work 4. Creativity in Teaching Activities 5. Satisfaction with Teaching Results 6. Desire for Self-Development and Career Progress 	Likert
Teacher Professionalism (Y)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pedagogical Competence in Teaching 2. Integrity and Professional Ethics 3. Commitment to Teaching Duties 4. Collaboration with Colleagues and the Community 5. Continuous Learning Behavior and Reflective Practice 	Likert

Source: Primary Data, 2025

C. Results and Discussion

This study applied several statistical tests including Validity, Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), R-Square (R^2), and Hypothesis Testing to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the measurement and structural models. These tests confirmed the robustness of the model and the consistency of the indicators.

Table 2. Validity Test

Indicator	Value	Information
X1.1	0.910	Valid
X1.2	0.885	Valid
X1.3	0.951	Valid
X1.4	0.782	Valid
X1.5	0.861	Valid
X1.6	0.842	Valid
X1.7	0.865	Valid
X2.1	0.765	Valid
X2.2	0.923	Valid
X2.3	0.904	Valid
X2.4	0.933	Valid
X2.5	0.893	Valid
X2.6	0.794	Valid
X2.7	0.873	Valid
Y1	0.868	Valid
Y2	0.826	Valid
Y3	0.881	Valid
Y4	0.822	Valid
Y5	0.860	Valid
Y6	0.903	Valid
Y7	0.834	Valid
Z1	0.847	Valid
Z2	0.907	Valid
Z3	0.938	Valid
Z4	0.970	Valid
Z5	0.787	Valid
Z6	0.855	Valid

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, 2025

All indicators met the convergent validity criteria with outer loading values ≥ 0.70 , indicating that each indicator accurately represents its respective construct.

Tabel 3. AVE (Average Variance Extracted) Test

Variabel	Nilai	Keterangan
X1	0.761	Valid
X2	0.759	Valid
Y	0.734	Valid
Z	0.790	Valid

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, 2025

All AVE values exceeded 0.50, proving that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators, and that convergent validity has been achieved.

Tabel 4. Reability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variabel	Reability	Cronbach's Alpha	Keterangan
X1	0.957	0.947	Reliabel
X2	0.957	0.946	Reliabel
Y	0.951	0.939	Reliabel
Z	0.963	0.955	Reliabel

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, 2025

All Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values were above 0.70, indicating high internal consistency and that all instruments were reliable for measurement.

Tabel 5. R Square

Variabel	R Square	Keterangan
Profesionalisme Guru	0.948	Kuat
Motivasi Kerja	0.968	Kuat

Source: Output SmartPLS, 2025

The results of the structural model analysis (inner model) with SmartPLS show that the R Square (R^2) value for the Teacher Professionalism variable is

0.948, while the Work Motivation variable reaches 0.968. These findings indicate that the independent variables in the model are able to explain 94.8% of the variation in Teacher Professionalism and 96.8% of the variation in Work Motivation.

Tabel 6. Hipotesis Test Direct Effect

Variabel	Koefisien Parameter (O)	T Statistics	P Value	Keterangan
X1->Y	0.649	2.735	0.006	Signifikan
X1->Z	0.555	5.390	0.000	Signifikan
X2->Y	0.498	2.361	0.018	Signifikan
X2->Z	0.441	4.298	0.000	Signifikan
Z->Y	0.539	3.216	0.001	Signifikan

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, 2025

The test results show that all direct relationships between variables in the model are significant ($p < 0.05$). Teacher competence (X1) has a significant effect on professionalism (Y) with a coefficient of 0.649 ($t = 2.735$; $p = 0.006$), as well as on work motivation (Z) with a coefficient of 0.555 ($t = 5.390$; $p = 0.000$). Teacher training (X2) also has a significant effect on professionalism (coefficient 0.498; $t = 2.361$; $p = 0.018$) and work motivation (coefficient 0.441; $t = 4.298$; $p = 0.000$). In addition, work motivation (Z) has a significant effect on teacher professionalism (coefficient 0.539; $t = 3.216$; $p = 0.001$).

Tabel 7. Test Result Indirect Effect

Variabel	Koefisien Parameter (O)	T Statistik	P Value	Keterangan
X1->Z->Y	0.339	2.763	0.005	Signifikan
X2->Z->Y	0.265	2.198	0.028	Signifikan

Source: Output SmartPLS 4.0, 2025

The results of the PLS-SEM analysis confirm that competence and training significantly influence teacher professionalism, both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of work motivation. This mediation shows that when teachers possess high competence and receive adequate training, their motivation increases, which in turn enhances their professionalism. All

hypotheses were supported ($p < 0.05$), confirming the robustness of the model.

Discussion

The statistical analysis through SmartPLS 4.0 confirmed that all structural paths were significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that competence, training, and work motivation are interrelated factors influencing teacher professionalism. However, the very high R^2 values for Teacher Professionalism (0.948) and Work Motivation (0.968) should be interpreted with caution. Although these values suggest that the model explains a substantial proportion of variance, such high coefficients may also indicate model overfitting, especially considering the small sample size ($n = 36$). Further testing, such as variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis or cross-validation, is needed to confirm that multicollinearity or sampling limitations do not inflate the explanatory power of the model.

Competence was found to have a positive and significant effect on professionalism. This finding aligns with (Byrne et al., 2020) who argue that higher competence enhances professional attitudes and behaviors. Interpreted through Expectancy Theory, competent teachers perceive a stronger connection between their effort, performance, and outcomes, which reinforces their commitment to professional standards. Thus, competence serves not only as a technical capability but also as a psychological enabler that sustains professional engagement. This finding is consistent with (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that self-efficacy derived from competence enhances professional confidence and effectiveness in performing tasks.

Competence also had a significant impact on work motivation. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory, which posits that feelings of competence foster intrinsic motivation (Gagné et al., 2022). Teachers who master their pedagogical and professional skills are more likely to experience autonomy and purpose, thereby increasing their motivation to perform effectively. Hence, school leadership should focus on developing teachers' sense of

mastery to sustain internal drive and job satisfaction (Lintunen et al., 2024). Similar to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, competence acts as an intrinsic motivator, where mastery of skills fosters a sense of achievement and satisfaction (Forner et al., 2021).

The results confirm that systematic and continuous training significantly strengthens teacher professionalism. This finding supports (Djajadi, 2020) who emphasized that professional training enhances instructional quality. Beyond technical outcomes, training nurtures a culture of reflective practice—helping teachers connect theoretical understanding with real classroom challenges. Therefore, effective performance management should include structured learning opportunities that reinforce both competence and motivation. Continuous professional development not only improves teaching techniques but also strengthens professional identity, as highlighted in their framework for effective teacher training (Suarez & McGrath, 2022).

Training also positively influenced work motivation, suggesting that development programs provide not only new skills but also renewed enthusiasm. This aligns with contemporary HRM perspectives that emphasize learning as motivation. Teachers who feel supported through relevant professional development perceive greater organizational appreciation, enhancing their emotional investment and productivity. Self-Determination Theory, emphasizing that supportive training environments enhance intrinsic motivation through competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Work motivation significantly contributes to professionalism, reinforcing prior studies (Qomariyah et al., 2023). Teachers with high intrinsic motivation demonstrate stronger dedication, discipline, and ethical consistency. From the lens of Self-Determination Theory, motivated teachers internalize professional norms, transforming external expectations into self-endorsed goals. Consequently, motivation acts as the psychological bridge connecting competence and professional behavior. Motivated teachers internalize professional values, aligning Goal-Setting Theory that motivation directs effort toward professional excellence (Latham, 2023).

Work motivation mediates the influence of competence and training on professionalism by transforming skills into consistent professional behaviors. This aligns framework, which emphasizes motivation as the link between ability and performance outcomes (Januardi et al., 2023; Riyanto et al., 2021; Suyono et al., 2021).

The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating the mediating role of work motivation in the influence of competence and training on teacher professionalism a relationship rarely explored in the context of elementary schools in rural areas. The implications are particularly relevant to educational human resource management and school policy formulation (Pausits et al., 2022). School leaders should integrate structured competence-based training with motivation enhancement strategies, such as recognition programs, performance-based incentives, and opportunities for professional growth. These approaches can strengthen teachers' intrinsic motivation and translate training outcomes into sustained professional behavior.

D. Conclusions

This study concludes that competence and training significantly influence teacher professionalism, both directly and indirectly through work motivation as a mediating variable. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening teachers' competence and training programs that foster motivation to enhance overall professionalism.

E. Acknowledgement

The author would like to express his gratitude to Allah SWT for His mercy and blessings, which have enabled this journal to be completed successfully. The author would like to extend his special thanks to his beloved parents, Father and Mother, and his family for their prayers and support, to Dr. Zainarti, M.M. and Dr. Tri Inda Fadhila Rahma, S.E.I., M.E.I. as supervisors for their guidance and direction, to the Sumberejo Village Elementary School and its teachers who assisted in the research, to my friend Sri Widya Harahap and

other friends for their support and companionship, and especially to my beloved Arfi Andi Sahputra, who has always been a source of encouragement, understanding, and inspiration in the preparation of this journal.

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