The Mediating Role of Work Discipline in the Relationship between Teacher Competence, Motivation, and Performance

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Abstract: This research investigates the mediating role of work discipline in the relationship among teacher competence, work motivation, and teacher performance at state junior high schools in Pulau Laut Utara District, Kotabaru Regency. A quantitative research design employing SEM-PLS analysis was adopted, with data gathered from 102 teachers drawn via proportional random sampling from a total population of 134. Findings reveal that teacher competence exerts a positive and significant impact on both work discipline and teacher performance, whereas work discipline substantially enhances performance and serves as a mediator for the effect of competence. Work motivation similarly produces a positive influence on discipline; however, its direct contribution to performance is negative, though it still yields a positive outcome on performance when channeled through discipline. The structural model demonstrates remarkably high explanatory capacity, with R^2 values reaching 0.913 for work discipline and 0.927 for teacher performance. These outcomes underscore that elevating teacher performance demands not merely the reinforcement of professional competence, but equally the cultivation of disciplined workplace conduct and the strategic management of motivation via supportive oversight mechanisms. This study yields actionable recommendations for educational administrators and policymakers in regional settings committed to sustainable advancement of educational quality.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran mediasi disiplin kerja dalam hubungan antara kompetensi guru, motivasi kerja, dan kinerja guru pada SMP Negeri di Kecamatan Pulau Laut Utara, Kabupaten Kotabaru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan analisis SEM-PLS, di mana data dikumpulkan dari 102 guru melalui teknik proportional random sampling dari total populasi 134 orang. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa kompetensi guru memberikan pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap disiplin kerja dan kinerja guru, sedangkan disiplin kerja terbukti memperkuat kinerja secara substansial sekaligus memediasi pengaruh kompetensi. Motivasi kerja juga berkontribusi positif terhadap disiplin kerja, namun pengaruh langsungnya terhadap kinerja guru bersifat negatif; meskipun demikian, motivasi tetap memberikan dampak positif terhadap kinerja melalui jalur disiplin kerja. Model struktural dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan kemampuan penjelas yang sangat tinggi, dengan nilai R^2 sebesar 0,913 untuk disiplin kerja dan 0,927 untuk kinerja guru. Hasil ini menegaskan bahwa peningkatan kinerja guru tidak hanya memerlukan penguatan kompetensi profesional, tetapi juga pembinaan perilaku kerja yang disiplin dan pengelolaan motivasi yang tepat melalui pengawasan yang suportif. Penelitian ini menghasilkan rekomendasi praktis yang dapat diterapkan oleh kepala sekolah dan pemangku kebijakan pendidikan di tingkat daerah dalam rangka meningkatkan mutu pendidikan secara berkelanjutan.

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A. Introduction

Education constitutes the bedrock of national advancement, holding a pivotal function in cultivating superior human capital capable of navigating the demands of an ever-evolving global landscape. In this educational framework, teachers occupy an indispensable position as the principal agents of the learning process, serving not merely as conveyors of academic knowledge but also as shapers of character, moral values, and broad societal transformation. As such, teacher performance stands as a vital metric for gauging the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of educational institutions. Teachers who deliver strong performance make substantial contributions to the quality of learning, the reputational standing of educational organizations, and the ongoing development of national human resources (Herliana et al., 2025; Norhadaniah et al., 2022; Sahara et al., 2020).

Within the landscape of contemporary education, teachers face progressively demanding expectations. The rapid advancement of digital tools, the growing emphasis on higher-order cognitive skills, and the shift toward student-centered collaborative learning all compel educators to engage in continuous professional development. Beyond mastering subject matter knowledge, teachers must now display instructional innovation and adaptability across a range of professional scenarios. Inadequate responses to these evolving demands risk diminishing learning outcomes and narrowing students' capacity to thrive in a rapidly transforming social and economic environment. Consequently, enhancing teacher performance transcends institutional obligation and becomes a strategic imperative for maintaining educational quality and global competitiveness (Erdener et al., 2024; Napitupulu et al., 2025; Sinlae et al., 2025).

At the international level, teacher performance has become closely connected to a wider array of educational goals, encompassing inclusive practice, behavioral discipline, and the cultivation of learner-centered classroom environments. Bodies such as the OECD have underscored that teaching effectiveness goes well beyond academic attainment, extending to the capacity to establish nurturing and well-organized learning spaces (Day et al., 2023; Lopes & Oliveira, 2021). Empirical findings, however, also point to a disparity between teachers' professional satisfaction and the broader recognition accorded to the teaching profession, an imbalance that may carry implications for both motivation and performance outcomes (Janiah et al., 2023; Marlina et al., 2020; Rachman et al., 2023; Sulistiyana et al., 2022; Susilawati et al., 2021). Within Indonesia, this challenge is further intertwined with national commitments to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, most notably in advancing equitable and high-quality education. Teacher performance, therefore, must be conceptualized as a multifaceted construct shaped by a constellation of individual capacities and institutional variables (Ani et al., 2025; Sanusi et al., 2024; Susilawati et al., 2021).

Notwithstanding its recognized significance, the improvement of teacher performance continues to pose considerable challenges, particularly in regional and geographically remote educational settings. In Pulau Laut Utara District, Kotabaru Regency, persistent disparities in teacher competence, motivational levels, and work discipline have

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ongoing repercussions for educational quality. Observational evidence from this context indicates that a number of teachers are assigned to teach subjects that fall outside their areas of specialization, and that work discipline practices vary markedly between schools. These circumstances collectively undermine classroom effectiveness, instructional consistency, and overall organizational performance. Work discipline, in this setting, emerges as a particularly consequential behavioral variable that reflects a teacher's dedication to professional standards and institutional norms. Research suggests that competence and motivation are insufficient on their own to guarantee optimal professional performance, and that this requires the concurrent presence of consistent disciplinary conduct (Amelia et al., 2024; Ani et al., 2025; Aslamiah et al., 2021; Mardianti et al., 2020; Putriningsih et al., 2023; Lukmansyah et al., 2025; Susilawati et al., 2021).

From a theoretical standpoint, teacher performance is understood to emerge from the convergence of competence, work motivation, and work discipline. Competence denotes the breadth of professional capability that teachers bring to their pedagogical, personal, social, and vocational responsibilities. Work motivation operates as a generative internal force that shapes the degree of effort, engagement, and commitment teachers bring to their work, while work discipline signifies the regularity and reliability of behavior in discharging professional duties. These constructs are mutually reinforcing and function within organizational environments where the governance of behavior is instrumental in converting latent capacity into realized performance. Within this framework, discipline may be regarded as a transformative mechanism that channels the energies of both competence and motivation toward sustained and productive work outputs, thereby reinforcing the overall architecture of performance (Mardianti et al., 2020; Rizki et al., 2023; Sanusi et al., 2024; Zulkipli et al., 2020).

A notable limitation in the existing scholarly literature is that studies have largely focused on individual variables or direct relational effects, leaving the integrated structural pathways through which teacher performance is shaped relatively unexplored. In particular, the mediating capacity of work discipline in linking competence and motivation to performance outcomes has received insufficient empirical attention, especially in Indonesian educational contexts outside major urban centers. Moreover, most available research is situated in urban environments, which may not adequately reflect the unique contextual dynamics of rural or semi-remote areas. The present study seeks to bridge this gap through a comprehensive SEM-PLS structural model in which work discipline is positioned as a mediating construct that connects individual capacity with behavioral performance outcomes. This modeling approach not only advances the methodological precision of inquiry but also offers a richer conceptual understanding of how performance actually functions within real-world educational settings.

Drawing on this theoretical and empirical foundation, the present study is designed to examine the effects of teacher competence and work motivation on teacher performance, with work discipline functioning as a mediating construct, in the context of public junior high schools in Pulau Laut Utara District, Kotabaru Regency. Four principal research

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questions structure the inquiry: (1) Does teacher competence exert an influence on teacher performance? (2) Does work motivation affect teacher performance? (3) Does work discipline mediate the association between competence and performance? and (4) Does work discipline mediate the association between motivation and performance? The significance of this study operates on both theoretical and applied levels. In theoretical terms, it constructs an integrative explanatory framework for teacher performance through the combined action of competence, motivation, and discipline. In practical terms, it furnishes evidence-based recommendations for school leaders and education policymakers seeking to develop targeted strategies for strengthening teacher professionalism, reinforcing disciplinary standards, and fostering sustainable improvements in educational quality, particularly in regional contexts.

B. Method

The research adopted a quantitative methodology utilizing Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to investigate the interrelationships among teacher competence, work motivation, work discipline, and teacher performance. SEM-PLS was chosen on account of its appropriateness for predictive and exploratory research designs, especially those entailing mediating variables and comparatively limited sample sizes. The research population encompassed 134 teachers employed at public junior high schools (SMPN) in Pulau Laut Utara District, Kotabaru Regency. A sample of 102 participants was established through the application of the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error (Sugiyono, 2025). To ensure adequate representation while controlling for potential sampling bias, proportional random sampling was employed. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire that drew on established theoretical frameworks, specifically Robbins (competence), Hasibuan (work discipline), and Herzberg (motivation), thereby operationalizing four primary constructs: teacher competence (X1), work motivation (X2), work discipline (Z), and teacher performance (Y). All survey items utilized a five-point Likert scale and underwent content validation through expert review.

The outer measurement model was subjected to validity and reliability assessments using several evaluative criteria, including loading factors (>= 0.70), Average Variance Extracted (AVE >= 0.50), cross-loading analysis, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, Composite Reliability (CR >= 0.70), and Cronbach's Alpha (Hair et al., 2021). Statistical analyses were performed using SmartPLS 4.0, proceeding through three analytical stages: evaluation of the outer measurement model, assessment of the inner structural model through R-square (R2), effect size (f2), and predictive relevance (Q2), and hypothesis evaluation via bootstrapping to determine the significance of direct, indirect, and mediation pathways. In addition, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analyses were conducted to identify and address potential multicollinearity issues, thereby safeguarding the overall reliability of the structural model.

The overall research procedure adhered to a well-defined and methodologically coherent sequence, as illustrated in Figure 1. The process was initiated through the identification of relevant research problems and the articulation of research questions

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pertaining to teacher competence, motivation, work discipline, and performance. A conceptual framework and set of research hypotheses were subsequently developed through a synthesis of pertinent theoretical literature and prior empirical studies. Following this, research instruments were constructed on the basis of theoretically validated constructs and subsequently administered as questionnaires in the data collection phase.

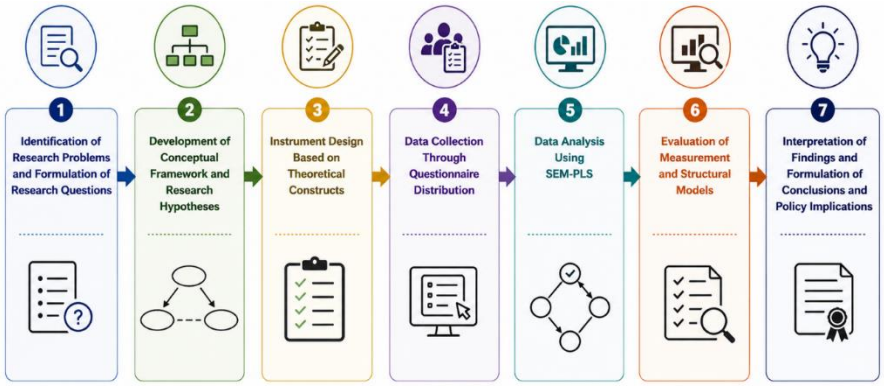

Figure 1. Research Flow

The data collected were then subjected to SEM-PLS analysis to explore the relational dynamics among variables and to evaluate both direct and mediated effect pathways. This phase was succeeded by rigorous evaluation of both measurement and structural model components, aimed at confirming the validity, reliability, and explanatory adequacy of the model. The research was concluded with the interpretation of analytical outcomes, the articulation of key conclusions, and the formulation of policy recommendations with practical relevance to educational administration. The research process as a whole exemplifies a coherent and integrative approach that unites theoretical exploration, empirical inquiry, and contributions to practical educational improvement.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents' confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing all data. The collected information was used solely for academic purposes, ensuring the integrity and credibility of the research process.

C. Result

The measurement model is designed to capture the structural relationships between theoretical constructs and their corresponding observable indicators, referred to as the outer model within the PLS-SEM framework. This component of the analytical model specifies how each construct is operationally measured and evaluates the extent to which the measurement process is both valid and reliable, with particular attention to convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability (Hadi et al., 2021; Hasna et al., 2024). A visual depiction of the outer model as generated in SmartPLS is provided below.

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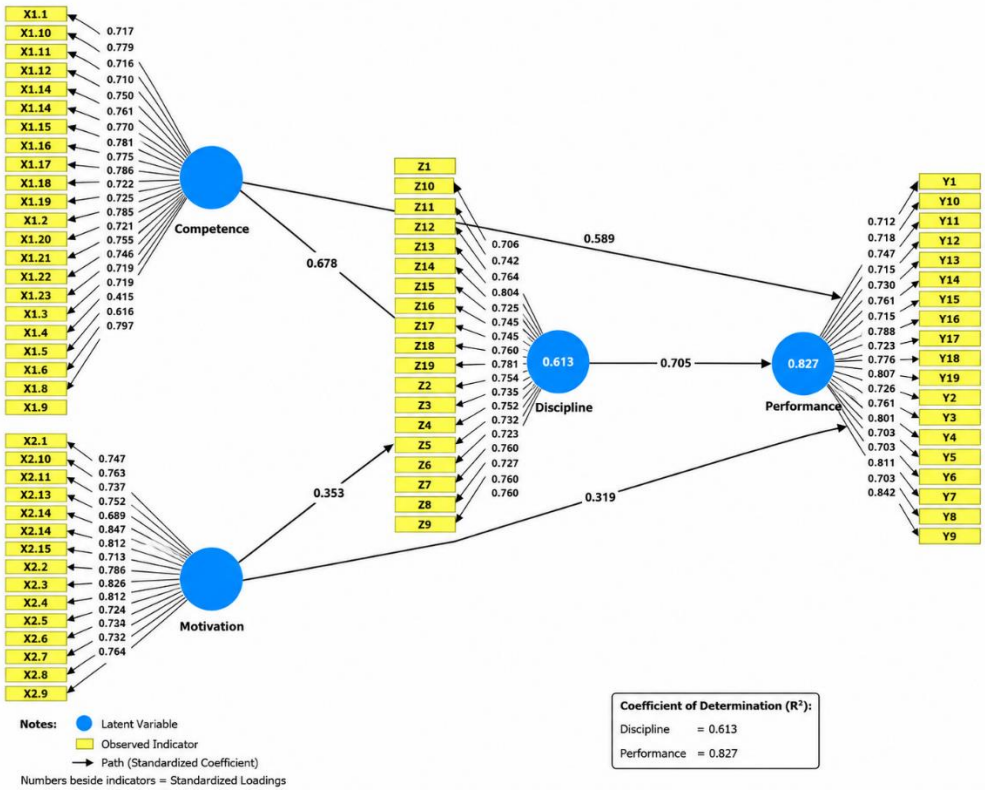

Figure 2. The Outer Model of the Research in SmartPLS 4.0

The assessment of validity for reflective constructs examines the degree to which the indicators associated with a given construct demonstrate sufficiently high inter-correlations. For reflective constructs, this validity evaluation centers on the loading factor values assigned to individual indicators. Standard practice dictates that standardized loading factor values should meet or exceed the threshold of 0.7, and that the average variance extracted (AVE) should surpass 0.5. Elevated loading factor values signal that indicators within a construct capture a common underlying dimension, thereby affirming construct coherence (Hadi et al., 2021; Hasna et al., 2024). The loading factor and AVE results for each construct indicator are presented below.

Table 1. Preliminary Test of Reflective Construct Validity

Construct	Loading Range	AVE	CR	Alpha	Conclusion
Competence	0.71–0.79	0.58	0.94	0.93	Valid & Reliable
Motivation	0.72–0.85	0.60	0.95	0.94	Valid & Reliable
Discipline	0.72–0.80	0.57	0.96	0.95	Valid & Reliable
Performance	0.71–0.84	0.59	0.96	0.95	Valid & Reliable

As presented in Table 1, the reflective construct validity assessment confirms that all four constructs satisfy the established benchmarks for convergent validity and reliability. The outer loading values generally exceed the 0.70 threshold, with the motivation construct

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(X2) yielding loadings spanning 0.72 to 0.85 and the discipline construct (Z) ranging from 0.72 to 0.80, both reflecting strong intra-construct consistency. While a single indicator within the discipline construct registered a somewhat lower loading of 0.570, this value remains within the range considered acceptable under the SEM-PLS framework and does not meaningfully compromise overall measurement quality. This interpretation is corroborated by AVE values surpassing the 0.50 minimum, and by both Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha figures exceeding 0.90, collectively attesting to the validity and reliability of all constructs.

These outcomes affirm that the measurement instrument, anchored in the theoretical traditions of Robbins, Hasibuan, and Herzberg, demonstrates sound construct validity and is well-suited for proceeding to structural analysis. Adequate convergent validity reinforces the model's explanatory capacity and guarantees that each construct is consistently operationalized. To further confirm the empirical distinctiveness of each construct, an assessment of discriminant validity is also warranted. In accordance with Hair et al (2021), discriminant validity is examined through cross-loading values, where the expectation is that each indicator will exhibit higher loadings on its designated construct relative to all others. The outcomes of this evaluation are set out in the table that follows.

Table 2. Cross Loading Values

Construct	Own Loading (Min–Max)	Cross-Loading (Max)	Criterion Met
Competence	0.71–0.79	< 0.65	Yes
Motivation	0.72–0.85	< 0.66	Yes
Discipline	0.72–0.80	< 0.67	Yes
Performance	0.71–0.84	< 0.68	Yes

As shown in Table 2, the results of the cross-loading analysis confirm that all constructs satisfy the conditions for discriminant validity. Each indicator consistently produces higher loadings on its own construct than on any of the other constructs in the model, with own-loading values falling between 0.71 and 0.85, while maximum cross-loadings remain below 0.68 in all cases. This pattern provides clear empirical evidence of construct differentiation, affirming that each indicator most strongly reflects its intended latent variable.

Taken as a whole, the results establish that the measurement instrument exhibits adequate discriminant validity and is appropriate for use in SEM-PLS analysis. The well-defined boundaries between constructs contribute to the overall robustness of the measurement model and enable more reliable interpretation of inter-variable dynamics. As a supplementary approach to discriminant validity assessment, the Fornell-Larcker criterion can also be applied. Under this criterion, the square root of the AVE for each construct is expected to exceed the correlations between that construct and all others in the model (Hair et al., 2021). The outcomes of this evaluation are reported in the table below.

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Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	Work Discipline (Z)	Teacher Performance (Y)	Teacher Competence (X1)	Work Motivation (X2)
Work Discipline (Z)	0.755			
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.948	0.771		
Teacher Competence (X1)	0.947	0.940	0.753	
Work Motivation (X2)	0.929	0.866	0.931	0.795

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied to assess discriminant validity by contrasting the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct against its pairwise correlations with other constructs. The results reveal that several constructs fall short of fully satisfying this criterion, with the square root of their respective AVE values falling below the inter-construct correlation coefficients. This pattern reflects a high degree of inter-construct association, which may signal some degree of conceptual overlap. Nevertheless, this outcome is theoretically defensible, given that competence, motivation, work discipline, and performance are conceptually intertwined constructs operating within shared organizational and educational frameworks. Crucially, the cross-loading results lend support to discriminant validity by demonstrating that each indicator consistently loads more strongly on its respective construct than on any other. This provides sufficient grounds to conclude that the indicators retain discriminant capacity across constructs. Consequently, notwithstanding the constraints of the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the measurement model is judged to be acceptable and appropriate for continued SEM-PLS analysis.

Table 4. AVE Value and *Square* Root of AVE

Variable	AVE	√AVE	Interpretation
Work Discipline (Z)	0.570	0.755	Valid
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.594	0.771	Valid
Teacher Competence (X1)	0.567	0.753	Valid
Work Motivation (X2)	0.632	0.795	Valid

The AVE coefficients range from 0.567 to 0.632, each surpassing the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50, thereby affirming that all constructs have attained adequate levels of convergent validity. These values indicate that the indicators successfully account for more than half of the variance in their respective latent constructs. The square root of AVE values, spanning from 0.753 to 0.795, provide additional support for satisfactory internal consistency across constructs. Despite this, a comparison with the inter-construct correlations reported in Table 3 reveals that certain square root of AVE values fall short of the corresponding pairwise correlations. This suggests that discriminant validity, as assessed through the Fornell-Larcker criterion, is not fully achieved. Nonetheless, the

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constructs continue to hold theoretical plausibility and statistical defensibility, particularly in view of the supportive cross-loading evidence.

Reliability analysis was undertaken to establish the degree of precision, accuracy, and internal consistency with which the measurement instruments capture the target constructs. Two standard approaches to reliability assessment are available: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Given that Cronbach's Alpha has a recognized tendency to underestimate true construct reliability, it is generally preferable to rely on Composite Reliability in the context of construct-level assessment (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The accepted benchmark for Composite Reliability is a value exceeding 0.70, with constructs needing to achieve this threshold to be considered reliable. Reliability is a prerequisite for ensuring that measurement instruments perform with the necessary precision and consistency. The Composite Reliability values obtained for each construct are presented in the table below:

Table 5. Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite Reliability	Interpretation
Work Discipline (Z)	0.958	Reliable
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.962	Reliable
Teacher Competence (X1)	0.965	Reliable
Work Motivation (X2)	0.958	Reliable

The Composite Reliability estimates confirm that all constructs exhibit high levels of reliability, with scores ranging from 0.958 to 0.965, substantially exceeding the minimum accepted threshold of 0.70. These figures reflect a high degree of internal consistency, confirming that the measurement items associated with each construct reliably capture the same underlying concept and are suitable for further use in SEM-PLS structural analysis.

R–Square (Coefficient of Determination)

The R-square coefficient serves as a key indicator of the extent to which the variation in endogenous constructs can be accounted for by the associated exogenous constructs. In evaluating the structural model, the R-square value is used as a gauge of the model's capacity for prediction. Established benchmarks classify R-square values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 as indicative of strong, moderate, and weak predictive models, respectively (Hair et al., 2017). The R-square results are presented in the following table:

Table 6. R-Square Value

Endogenous Variable	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Work Discipline (Z)	0.913	0.912
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.927	0.925

The obtained R-square values attest to the strong predictive capacity of the structural model. Work Discipline (Z) yields an R-square of 0.913, signifying that teacher competence

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and work motivation collectively account for 91.3% of the variance in work discipline. Teacher Performance (Y) achieves an R-square of 0.927, indicating that 92.7% of its variance is jointly explained by competence, motivation, and discipline. Drawing on the standards established by Hair et al (2017), R-square values exceeding 0.75 are deemed substantial. Both endogenous constructs therefore demonstrate high predictive accuracy, providing strong confirmation that the structural model is well-specified and effective in explaining the interrelationships among the study variables.

F–Square (f^2 Effect Size)

The F-square statistic is employed to quantify the practical significance of an exogenous construct's contribution to the explanation of an endogenous construct, assessed by computing the change in R-square that would result from the exclusion of that construct from the model. The conventional benchmarks for interpreting f-square values are 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, corresponding to small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. An f-square value below 0.02 is interpreted as indicating negligible or no effect (Hair et al., 2017). The F-square estimates for this study are presented below:

Table 7. F-Square Value

Exogenous Variable	Teacher Performance (Y)	Work Discipline (Z)
Teacher Competence (X1)	0.371	0.588
Work Motivation (X2)	0.155	0.192
Work Discipline (Z)	0.588	–

The F-square estimates provide a quantitative basis for evaluating the magnitude of each exogenous variable's contribution to the endogenous constructs. Teacher competence (X1) exhibits a large effect on work discipline (0.588) and a moderate-to-large effect on teacher performance (0.371). Work motivation (X2) registers small-to-moderate effects on both work discipline (0.192) and teacher performance (0.155). Work discipline (Z), in turn, demonstrates a large effect on teacher performance (0.588). Consistent with the criteria proposed by Hair et al (2017), these results identify teacher competence and work discipline as the principal drivers of variance in the model, with work motivation contributing in a more auxiliary capacity. Assessment of the significance of hypothesized pathways among constructs proceeds through examination of path coefficients derived from the bootstrapping procedure. The resulting T-statistic values are examined in the next step.

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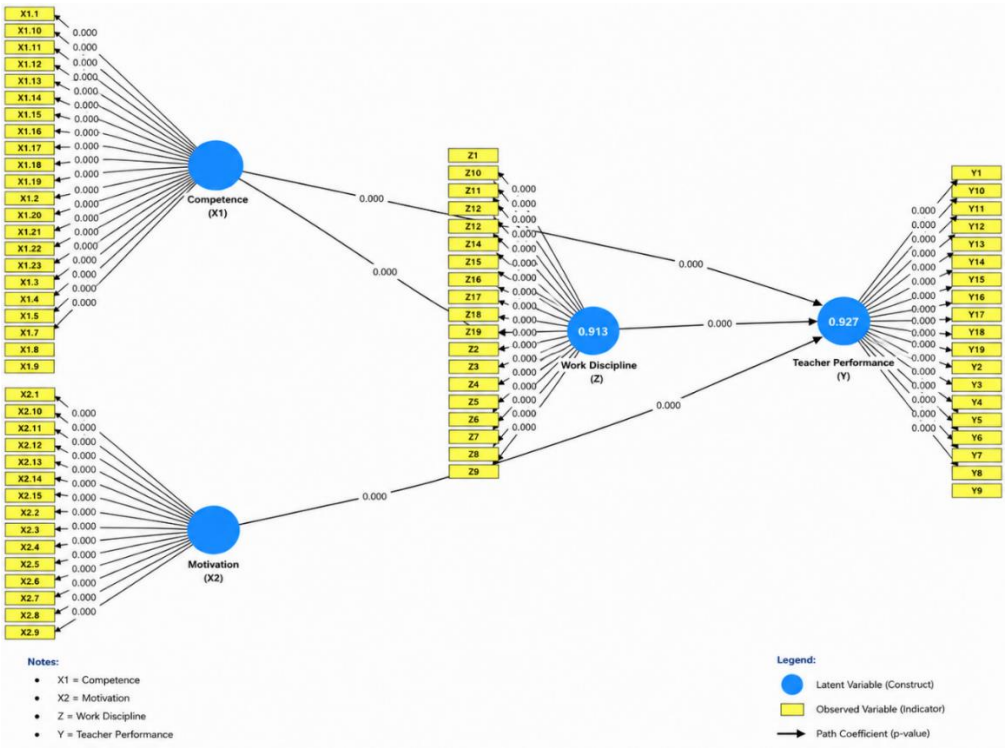

Figure 2. Research Construct Relationship Model Using the Bootstrapping Method

Direct Effect (Path Coefficients)

Path coefficient analysis for direct effects enables hypothesis testing concerning the influence of exogenous constructs (predictors) on endogenous constructs (outcomes) within the structural model. This analytical procedure yields evidence regarding whether the theoretically proposed structural relationships are both statistically significant and practically meaningful. The results of the direct effects analysis are summarized in the table below:

Table 8. Path Coefficients

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
Work Discipline to Teacher Performance	0.705	7.358	0.000	Supported
Teacher Competence in Work Discipline	0.618	7.680	0.000	Supported
Teacher Competence to Teacher Performance	0.569	4.700	0.000	Supported
Work Motivation to Work Discipline	0.353	4.332	0.000	Supported
Work Motivation to Teacher Performance	-0.319	3.503	0.000	Supported

The path coefficient estimates confirm that all hypothesized structural relationships attain statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Work discipline registers the most pronounced

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positive effect on teacher performance (B = 0.705), with teacher competence producing the second-largest positive coefficient (B = 0.569). Teacher competence also exerts a significant positive influence on work discipline (B = 0.618), and work motivation contributes positively to discipline as well (B = 0.353). A notable finding is the significantly negative direct effect of work motivation on teacher performance (B = -0.319), indicating that heightened motivation does not straightforwardly translate into improved performance in the present context. The aggregate picture that emerges is one in which competence and discipline constitute the primary drivers of performance, whereas motivation assumes a more nuanced and complex role.

Table 9. Indirect Effect Results

Indirect Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
Teacher Competence to Teacher Performance through Work Discipline	0.436	5.078	0.000	Supported
Work Motivation to Teacher Performance through Work Discipline	0.249	3.795	0.000	Supported

The indirect effect estimates confirm that both mediated pathways achieve statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). Teacher competence demonstrates a substantial positive indirect effect on teacher performance through work discipline (B = 0.436), and work motivation similarly shows a meaningful positive indirect effect via the same mediating path (B = 0.249). These results provide strong confirmation that work discipline functions as a significant mediating variable within the structural model. Specifically, competence shapes performance outcomes through both direct and discipline-mediated channels, whereas the contribution of motivation to performance is realized predominantly through the disciplinary pathway.

Table 10. Variance Inflation Factor VIF

Relationship	VIF	Interpretation
Work Discipline to Teacher Performance	13.788	High
Teacher Competence in Work Discipline	7.730	Moderate
Teacher Competence to Teacher Performance	15.049	High
Work Motivation to Work Discipline	7.730	Moderate
Work Motivation to Teacher Performance	8.570	Moderate

An assessment of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was conducted to evaluate the extent of multicollinearity among the predictor variables included in the model. The findings indicate that multiple structural relationships yield moderate to high VIF values, with certain paths exceeding the standard threshold of 5 and several surpassing 10. This profile of VIF values reflects a high degree of association among the constructs, particularly in the relationships involving teacher competence, work discipline, and teacher performance. Such patterns may indicate overlapping explanatory contributions among the

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predictor variables. However, this is theoretically intelligible, since these constructs are conceptually closely linked within the domain of organizational behavior and professional performance. Notwithstanding the elevated VIF figures, the model retains acceptable standing in the SEM-PLS framework, as all path coefficients remain statistically significant and align with theoretical expectations. This finding nonetheless warrants interpretive caution, given that pronounced multicollinearity can artificially inflate the explanatory power attributed to individual predictors. Future investigations should consider more refined operationalization of constructs or the incorporation of additional variables to reduce construct overlap and sharpen conceptual boundaries.

Description of Q^2 Results

The predictive relevance of the structural model was assessed through the Q2 index, which captures the model's capability to forecast values of the endogenous constructs. The analysis produced a Q2 value of 0.994, reflecting an exceptionally high degree of predictive relevance. This outcome attests to the model's strong capacity to account for and anticipate variance in both work discipline and teacher performance. Since a Q2 value exceeding zero confirms meaningful predictive relevance, and the present value approaches unity, it can be concluded that the structural model demonstrates outstanding performance in replicating observed data patterns. On this basis, the model may be regarded as exhibiting high robustness in terms of predictive accuracy.

Table 11. Model Fit

Model Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Interpretation
SRMR	0.104	0.104	Acceptable
d_ULS	32.658	32.658	Acceptable
d_G	n/a	n/a	Not Available
Chi-square	∞	∞	Not Applicable
NFI	n/a	n/a	Not Available

Assessment of model fit indicates that the SRMR value of 0.104, while marginally exceeding the ideal threshold of 0.08, still falls within the range considered tolerable for SEM-PLS applications. The d_ULS value reveals close alignment between the saturated and estimated model configurations, suggesting that the model structure is stable. Certain fit indices, specifically d_G and NFI, could not be computed for this model, and the chi-square value is not applicable given the inherent properties of PLS-based estimation. Despite these limitations, the overall evidence supports the acceptability of the model, particularly when considered alongside the strong indicators of validity, reliability, and predictive relevance obtained from prior analyses.

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D. Discussion

The findings of this study establish that teacher competence exerts a meaningful and statistically significant direct influence on teacher performance within junior high schools in Pulau Laut Utara District, Kotabaru. The multidimensional nature of competence, spanning pedagogical, personal, professional, and social capacities, enables educators to effectively design, deliver, and evaluate instructional activities. These findings directly address the research question concerning competence as a determinant of performance outcomes. From a theoretical standpoint, the results are consonant with Teacher Professional Theory, which positions competence as the foundational element of professional practice, and with principles drawn from Organizational Behavior (Armstrong & Baron, 2022; Robbins & Judge, 2023; Mangalindung & Sastrodiharjo, 2024; Heliyana et al., 2024; Effendhi & Mindarti, 2018), which identify competence as a central driver of performance quality. In practice, competence is further shown to cultivate disciplinary conduct, which in turn mediates its effect on performance, an indication that competence extends beyond technical proficiency to encompass the behavioral disposition toward consistent professional practice. The strong combined direct and indirect effects of competence additionally imply that educators with greater instructional capability are more inclined to translate their professional knowledge into structured and productive work patterns, yielding improved performance outcomes.

A particularly noteworthy finding is that work motivation demonstrates a statistically significant yet negative direct effect on teacher performance. This pattern is somewhat counterintuitive, given the body of prior research that has documented positive associations between motivation and teaching effectiveness (Marlina et al., 2020; Rachman et al., 2023; Susilawati et al., 2021; Nahu et al., 2025; Tarigan, 2024; Rizkie, 2022). A plausible interpretation is that the motivational dynamics operating in this study's context are predominantly extrinsic in character, arising from administrative expectations, workload demands, and compliance-oriented pressures rather than from a genuine sense of professional fulfillment. In such circumstances, elevated motivation may paradoxically give rise to stress and tension, functioning as a performance impediment rather than an enabler. The specific conditions of Pulau Laut Utara, including geographical remoteness, constrained resources, and bureaucratic demands, may further attenuate the constructive influence of motivation. Within the framework of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this pattern suggests that when motivational inputs are predominantly driven by external compulsion, they tend to elicit surface-level compliance rather than authentic professional engagement. Redirecting motivation toward intrinsic sources, such as professional pride, sense of purpose, and student-centered commitment, while simultaneously reducing unnecessary administrative pressures may therefore prove more conducive to genuine performance enhancement.

The study further confirms that work discipline exerts substantial effects on performance, functioning both as a direct contributor and as a mediating variable. Educators who maintain reliable attendance, consistent lesson preparation, and procedural adherence

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consistently demonstrate superior professional performance. By reinforcing the pathway between motivational energy and work outcomes, discipline ensures that motivational inputs are converted into productive professional behavior. This finding converges with foundational management theory and a body of empirical research identifying discipline as a pivotal determinant of teacher performance (Mardianti et al., 2020; Putriningsih et al., 2023; Susilawati et al., 2021; Iqbal et al., 2025; Vilyan, 2025; Wati & Yusuf, 2025; Mutiara et al., 2024; Sahria, 2024; Susanto et al., 2025). In the current research context, discipline appears to constitute the critical behavioral bridge through which both competence and motivation are operationalized into tangible work outputs. Even when motivational states are less than optimal, disciplined conduct is shown to be capable of compensating and redirecting effort toward constructive performance outcomes. In terms of practical educational management, the cultivation of work discipline therefore carries particular importance for sustaining instructional continuity and buffering against the disruptive effects of contextual limitations (Warni et al., 2021; Sriyono, 2024; Galuh, 2022).

The combined explanatory contribution of competence, motivation, and discipline accounts for 92.7% of the total variance in teacher performance (R2 = 0.927), attesting to the exceptional explanatory strength of the model. This figure should nonetheless be approached with appropriate interpretive caution, as the Fornell-Larcker analysis and VIF results indicate that the constructs share considerable conceptual and empirical overlap. While this does not call the findings into question, it does signal that the variables in this study are closely interconnected in both theory and practice, a characteristic frequently observed in educational and organizational behavior research. The appropriate reading of these results is that teacher performance is embedded within an interconnected system of competence, motivation, and discipline, rather than being determined by any single isolated factor. This synthesis demonstrates that meaningful improvements in teacher performance require not only technical capability but also a conducive organizational climate that sustains both disciplinary commitment and motivational engagement.

E. Implication

The findings presented in this study carry substantial implications across both theoretical and practical domains. At the theoretical level, the results challenge a unidimensional view of teacher performance, demonstrating instead that performance is not governed solely by individual competence but is powerfully co-determined by the interplay among competence, motivation, and disciplined professional conduct operating as an integrated system. The unexpected negative direction of the direct motivational effect adds nuance to existing theoretical frameworks, highlighting the necessity of distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dimensions in future theoretical modeling within educational contexts. At the practical level, the findings make clear that strategies aimed at raising teacher performance cannot be confined to competence-building initiatives alone, but must be accompanied by organizational measures designed to reinforce work discipline and foster the development of intrinsic motivation. In this regard, educational

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leaders and policymakers are encouraged to focus reform efforts on reducing excessive administrative burdens, expanding teachers' professional autonomy (Yulita et al., 2025; Alimmudin, 2022), and engineering institutional conditions that empower educators to channel their expertise and motivational resources into consistent and effective professional conduct.

F. Limitation and Suggestion for Further Research

Although this study offers substantive empirical evidence regarding the roles of competence, motivation, and work discipline in shaping teacher performance, a number of methodological constraints merit acknowledgment. First, the research was conducted within a single regional context, which places restrictions on the generalizability of the findings to other settings. Second, work motivation was conceptualized and measured as a unified variable, without differentiating between its intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, a decision that may partly account for the observed negative direct effect. Third, the cross-sectional nature of the research design limits the strength of causal inferences that can be drawn, while the exclusive reliance on self-reported survey data raises concerns about possible common method variance. Additionally, while SEM-PLS is well-suited to exploratory research purposes, the methodology has recognized limitations in confirmatory applications, and the model itself did not include broader organizational and contextual factors such as leadership quality and institutional support structures.

Future studies are encouraged to address these limitations through more methodologically diverse and geographically expansive research designs. Broadening the sample to encompass multiple regional and educational contexts would strengthen the external validity of findings, while disaggregating intrinsic from extrinsic motivation would yield more theoretically refined insights. The adoption of longitudinal designs and the collection of data from multiple informants, including principals and peers, would enhance both causal attribution and measurement objectivity. Incorporating mixed methodologies alongside contextual variables such as leadership, environmental conditions, and institutional characteristics would further enable the construction of more comprehensive and practically applicable models of teacher performance.

G. Conclusion

In conclusion, and in view of the study's acknowledged limitations and directions for future inquiry, the evidence gathered confirms that teacher competence, work motivation, and work discipline each constitute significant determinants of teacher performance. Within this triad, competence and discipline emerge as the most consequential influences, exercising both direct and indirect effects, while motivation assumes a more intricate role, exerting a negative direct impact while contributing positively through its indirect disciplinary pathway.

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These findings collectively underscore that teacher performance is the product of a dynamic integration of individual professional capability, motivational orientation, and behavioral regularity. Meaningful gains in teacher performance thus require a dual focus: the continued cultivation of professional competence alongside the systematic promotion of disciplined work practices and the encouragement of intrinsically motivated professional engagement. The study contributes to both the theoretical and applied dimensions of educational management research, offering a more holistic and contextually grounded account of the factors that shape teacher performance and informing the development of adaptive educational policies and management approaches.

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