

The Role of Motivation in Mediating the Influence of Teacher Certification on Teacher Job Satisfaction at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah

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Abstract-This study aims to analyze the influence of teacher certification on teacher job satisfaction through motivation as an intervening variable at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah. The background of this research is based on the importance of job satisfaction in improving the quality of learning, which is influenced by internal and external factors such as professional certification, work environment, and motivation. This study uses a quantitative approach with a population of 74 teachers, all of whom are used as a sample (saturated sample). The data analysis technique uses Partial Least Square (PLS) through SmartPLS software. The results of the study showed that: (1) teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction and motivation; (2) motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction; and (3) motivation significantly mediates the influence of teacher certification on job satisfaction. These findings confirm the importance of the role of motivation in strengthening the influence of certification on teacher job satisfaction.

Keywords-teacher certification, motivation, job satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of vocational education is highly dependent on the performance and job satisfaction of teachers as the main agents in the learning process. Teachers who have high job satisfaction tend to be more motivated in carrying out tasks, have a passion for self-development, and provide more meaningful learning to students (Sari & Prasetya, 2021). In the context of Vocational High Schools (SMK), the role of teachers is becoming increasingly crucial considering that they not only deliver theoretical material, but also equip students with practical skills that are ready to be used in the world of work.

One of the strategic steps taken by the government to improve teacher professionalism is through a teacher certification program. This certification is expected to be able to improve the competence, welfare, and job satisfaction of teachers. According to Mulyasa (2023), teacher certification is a formal recognition of teachers' competence in carrying out their professional duties, which is achieved through competency tests and continuous training. Certification that is carried out effectively can motivate teachers to improve the quality of learning. However, some studies show that the

success of certification in improving job satisfaction is not always significant, depending on the perception and internal conditions of teachers (Rahayu & Nugroho, 2022).

In this case, work motivation is an important variable that can mediate the relationship between certification and teacher job satisfaction. Motivation acts as an internal driver that directs and maintains productive work behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Teachers who have high motivation will be better able to appreciate the results of certification as a form of achievement and opportunity to develop, so that it has a positive impact on their job satisfaction. A recent study by Wulandari and Sugiarto (2023) shows that work motivation plays a significant role in bridging institutional policies and individual job satisfaction, including in the education sector.

This context is relevant to be studied in more depth at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah, one of the vocational schools in Aceh Province that has a strategic role in producing job-ready graduates. Although most teachers have taken part in certification, there has not been a comprehensive study that examines the extent to which the certification has an impact on job satisfaction, as well as whether motivation plays a role as an intervening variable. This research is important to provide an empirical understanding and policy implications related to human resource management in the vocational school environment.

Thus, this study aims to analyze the role of motivation in mediating the influence of teacher certification on teacher job satisfaction at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

1) Job Satisfaction

a) Definition of Job Satisfaction

Robbins and Judge (2022) job satisfaction is a positive feeling about a person's job that is the result of an evaluation of his or her job characteristics.

b) Job Satisfaction Indicators

Robbins and Judge (2022) identify several indicators that can be used to measure employee job satisfaction levels:



- 1) Satisfaction with the Job Itself
The extent to which employees find their work engaging, challenging, and meaningful.
- 2) Satisfaction with Salary
Employees' perceptions of the fairness and adequacy of the financial compensation received.
- 3) Satisfaction with Promotions
Employees' views on fairness and frequency of promotion opportunities within the organization.
- 4) Satisfaction with Supervision
Employee assessment of competence, support, and communication from direct superiors.
- 5) Satisfaction with Coworkers
The level of comfort and cooperation that employees feel with their colleagues.

III. MOTIVATION

A. Definition of Motivation

Robbins & Judge (2022) motivation is the process that initiates, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behaviors in organizations. The focus of this definition is on the components of the process: what triggers (initiation), choice (direction), and maintains intensity and persistence (persistence) in work.

B. Motivation Indicators

Motivation Indicators According to Robbins & Judge (2022)

- 1) Goal Clarity
The extent to which a person understands and accepts the purpose of the job.
Indicator:
 - Have clear work objectives
 - Acceptance of the purpose
 - Efforts to achieve challenging targets
- 2) Ekspektasi (Expectancy)
Belief that effort will produce good performance.
Indicator:
 - Perception that hard work → good work results
 - Believe in one's ability to complete tasks
- 3) Instrumentalitas (Instrumentality)
Confidence that performance will produce the desired results.
Indicator:
 - The relationship between performance → reward
 - Certainty of the reward system
- 4) Valensi (Valencia)
The value that an individual gives to the expected outcome.
Indicator:
 - The extent to which the results of the work are considered interesting or important
 - Motivation to achieve rewards of personal value
- 5) Keadilan Persepsional (Perceived Equity)
Perception of fairness in the reward and contribution system.
Indicator:
 - Balance between inputs (effort, time, experience) and outputs (salary, rewards)
 - Comparison with colleagues
- 6) Penguatan (Reinforcement)
Response to rewards and punishments received.

Indicator:

- Frequency of rewarding
 - Consistency and fairness in punishment
 - Behavior that changes according to consequences
- 7) Ciri Pekerjaan (Job Characteristics)
Structural aspects of work that can increase intrinsic motivation.
Indicator:
 - Skill variety
 - Task identity
 - Signifikansi tugas (task significance)
 - Otonomi (autonomy)
 - Feedback

IV. TEACHER CERTIFICATION

A. Definition of Teacher Certification

Mulyasa (2023) stated that teacher certification is a formal recognition of teachers' competence in carrying out their professional duties, which is carried out through competency tests and continuous training.

B. Teacher Certification Indicators

Mulyasa (2023) also put forward several indicators that can be used:

- 1) Teacher Participation Rate
Percentage of teachers who registered and participated in the certification process
- 2) Competency Test Pass Rate
Percentage of participants who passed the educator competency test
- 3) Improving Professional Competencies
Post-certification assessment results (e.g. portfolio scores, class observations)
- 4) Implementation of Learning Practices
Measurable changes in teaching methods and techniques in the classroom
- 5) Teacher Satisfaction with the Certification Process
Surveys or interviews regarding teachers' perceptions of the relevance and benefits of certification
- 6) Impact on Student Learning Outcomes
Changes in student grades or learning outcomes after certified teachers

C. Conceptual Framework

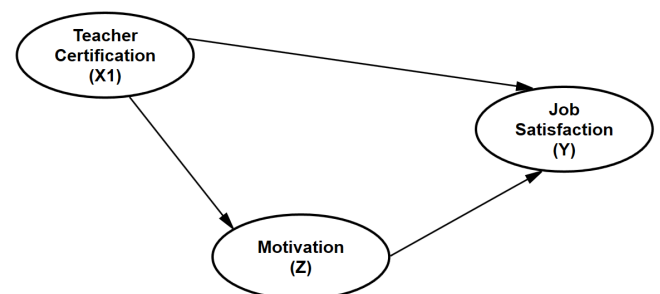


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

D. Research Hypothesis

H1: Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction in SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.

- H2: Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on motivation at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.
- H3: Motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.
- H4: Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction through motivation at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.

V. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Types of Research

The type of research that the researcher uses is quantitative research. This type of quantitative research is carried out to make a study that aims to adjust a research and to analyze the analysis of teacher certification analysis on teacher job satisfaction through motivation at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.

B. Research Location and Research Time

The location of the research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah, which is located on Jl. Bandara Rembele, Bale Atu, Kec. The research period was carried out for 3 months, from April to June 2025.

C. Population and Sample

According to Sugiyono (2022), population is a generalized area consisting of: objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics that are determined by researchers to be studied and then drawn conclusions. In this study, the population is 74 people, consisting of 55 ASN and 19 PPPK teachers. The sample used in this study is a saturated sample because all populations are used as samples because the number is relatively small and it is possible to study it as a whole.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Outer Model Review

Outer Model *analysis* using the *PLS Algorithm*, yielding:

1) Validity Test

Table 1. Value of Outer Loadings

	Job Satisfaction	Motivation	Teacher Certification
X1.1			0,821
X1.2			0,754
X1.3			0,852
X1.4			0,766
X1.5			0,871
X1.6			0,784
Y.1	0,863		
Y.2	0,784		
Y.3	0,753		
Y.4	0,878		
Y.5	0,862		
Z.1		0,847	
Z.2		0,868	
Z.3		0,885	
Z.4		0,826	

Z.5		0,856	
Z.6		0,738	

Source: PLS Smart Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, showing the results of the outer model test through the loading factor / outer loadings value, all indicators in each variable have a loading value ≥ 0.70 . This shows that each indicator is able to represent a measured construct validly and robustly. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the criteria of convergent validity and can be used in subsequent analysis. For more details on the above value, you can also see the following figure.

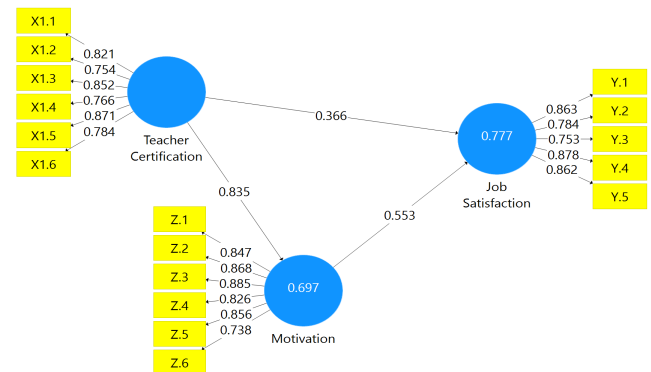


Figure 2. Outer Loadings

2) Reliability Test

Tabel 2. Uji Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job Satisfaction	0,886	0,896	0,916	0,688
Motivation	0,915	0,919	0,934	0,703
Teacher Certification	0,894	0,901	0,919	0,655

Source: PLS Smart Output, 2025

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

3) Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

In assessing a model with PLS it starts by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below is the result of R-square estimation using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Motivation	0,697	0,694
Job Satisfaction	0,777	0,773

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In table 3, there is an R square value in both dependent variables for the motivation variable, there is an R square

value of 0.697, meaning that the influence of the teacher's certificate is 0.697 or 69.7%, the rest is on other variables outside the model. The R square value of job satisfaction is 0.777, meaning that the influence of teacher certificates and motivation is 0.777 or 77.7%, the rest is on other variables outside the model.

B. Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

1) Hypothesis Testing

a) Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct influence between variables can be seen in the value of *path coefficients*. The results of the data processing show the value of direct influence can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. *Path Coefficients* (Direct Influence)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Teacher Certification -> Job Satisfaction	0,366	4,052	0,000	Accepted
Teacher Certification -> Motivation	0,835	21,504	0,000	Accepted
Motivation -> Job Satisfaction	0,553	6,399	0,000	Accepted

Source: PLS Smart Output, 2025

In the results of Table 4, there is a direct influence value which will be explained as follows:

- 1) Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistical value of 4.052 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that teacher certificates have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at SMA N 1 Bagan Sinembah, Rokan Hilir Regency, Prov. Riau (Febyansyah, 2023)
- 2) Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on motivation with a t-statistical value of 21.504 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on motivation because the significance value is below 0.05. This research is in accordance with research conducted by Ravaa (2019) which states that teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on motivation.
- 3) Motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction with a t-statistical value of 6.399 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction because the significance value is below 0.05. Research by Rivaldo & Ratnasari (2020) also states that motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

C. Indirect Influence Between Variables

The indirect influence between variables can be seen in the value of *specific indirect effects*. The results of data processing show the value of indirect influence can be seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5. *Specific Indirect Effects*

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion

Teacher Certification -> Motivation -> Job Satisfaction	0,461	6,237	0,000	Accepted
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Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In table 5, there is an indirect influence between variables, namely teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction through motivation with a t-statistical value of 6.237 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000, meaning that motivation plays an intervening variable between teacher certification and job satisfaction. Suparjo et al (2025) also stated in their research that teacher certification through motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction in Public and Private Elementary Schools in Talang Kelapa District.

VII. CONCLUSION

- 1) Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.
- 2) Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on motivation at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.
- 3) Motivation has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.
- 4) Teacher certification has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction through motivation at SMK Negeri 1 Bener Meriah.

VIII. SUGGESTION

- 1) Teacher certification with the lowest statement "I have taken and passed the teacher competency test". The recommendation is that teachers should take advantage of the results of this competency test to apply for promotions or professional allowances, if they meet the administrative requirements.
- 2) Motivation with the lowest statement "My work is challenging and keeps me learning". Suggestions that can be done by schools are to continue to improve their self-competence through training, reading, and sharing experiences with colleagues so that they are able to face work challenges more professionally and innovatively.
- 3) Job satisfaction with the lowest indicator with the statement "I have a fair chance of getting a promotion". Suggestions that can be given are in the form of improving performance, showing dedication, and completing administrative and competency requirements to be ready when job promotion opportunities open.

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