

The Influence of Competence and Work Environment On Performance Mediated by Motivation Among Teachers At TK Mondial Batam

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Abstract

Introduction/Main Objectives: TK Mondial Batam is an international-standard kindergarten integrating national and international curricula through a trilingual approach while emphasizing character, creativity, and independence. Despite its strong reputation, the past three years show declining student enrollment and a shift in teacher performance from “very good” to “fair.” This study analyzes the influence of competence and the work environment on teacher performance, with motivation as a mediating variable.

Background Problems: The study addresses declining enrollment and reduced teacher performance, leading to the question of how competence, work environment, and motivation affect teacher performance.

Research Methods: A quantitative approach was used involving all 34 teachers through saturated sampling. Data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed using SMART PLS 4.0.6, incorporating validity, reliability, and model testing, supported by secondary data.

Findings/Results: Results show that competence, work environment, and motivation each have positive and significant effects on teacher performance, and motivation significantly mediates the effects of competence and the work environment.

Conclusion: The study concludes that improving competence, ensuring a supportive work environment, and strengthening motivation are essential to enhancing teacher performance and sustaining educational quality at TK Mondial Batam.

Keywords: competence, work environment, motivation, teacher performance.



Introduction

Education is a learning process aimed at enhancing individuals' abilities, knowledge, and skills, as well as shaping good character and personality. Early Childhood Education plays a crucial role in developing children's character, intelligence, and personality as the foundation for creating high-quality human resources. The success of national education development greatly depends on the quality of Early Childhood Education services provided from an early age. The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Abdul Mu'ti (2025), stated that Early Childhood Education serves as the primary foundation for building a strong and sustainable education system, as the resilience of future education begins with a solid foundation at an early age.

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 1 Paragraph 14 (Sisdiknas, 2004), defines Early Childhood Education as a developmental effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age, carried out through the provision of educational stimulation to support growth and development so they are prepared to enter further levels of education. The learning process in Early Childhood Education is designed to be enjoyable through play-based learning and daily routines that foster children's character and independence.

Teacher performance reflects professional competence in carrying out tasks in accordance with the learning objectives established within an educational institution. According to Juniarti et al. (2020), teacher performance refers to the ability to carry out educational roles that include planning learning activities, implementing the learning process, and creating a conducive classroom environment to support the achievement of optimal learning outcomes. Good performance is evident from the teacher's ability to integrate planning, implementation, and learning management effectively to provide meaningful learning experiences for young children.

Mondial Kindergarten is one of nine international-standard kindergartens in Batam City and has been operating since 2003 under the Mondial Anugrah Indonesia Foundation. The school stands out due to its combined curriculum integrating the National Curriculum and Pearson Edexcel which emphasizes character building and trilingual learning (Indonesian, English, and Mandarin). Teachers conduct various habituation activities such as lining up for handwashing, using the "three magic words" (sorry, please, and thank you), and games that promote cooperation as part of early character formation. The implementation of Mandarin language activities every Friday reinforces the school's identity as an institution committed to multilingual education.

Mondial Kindergarten demonstrates advantages that distinguish it from other kindergartens in Batam through its comprehensive learning system focused on child development. The school provides complete facilities and a comfortable learning environment that supports creativity, independence, and social development. The daily trilingual language program helps students develop broader communication skills compared to schools that do not apply a similar approach. Graduates who are disciplined, independent, and able to use three languages reflect the school's consistency in delivering quality education.

The researcher selected Mondial Kindergarten as the research site due to its unique learning approach and positive parental evaluations attributed to teacher performance. The school is experiencing changes in teacher performance and a slight decline in student enrollment, prompting the need to examine factors that affect learning quality. The role of teachers is a crucial focus because they directly influence children's character development and language abilities. This selection allows the researcher to examine the influence of competence, work environment, and motivation on teacher performance in an international-standard Early Childhood Education institution.

Mondial Kindergarten maintains a strong reputation in Batam; however, data over the past three years indicate a decrease in student enrollment, as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Mondial Kindergarten Batam Student Data for Academic Years 2023/2024 to 2025/2026

No	Class	Number of Students		
		2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
1	Nursery 1	16	17	16
2	Nursery 2	52	52	54
3	Kinder 1	88	89	87
3	Kinder 2	105	97	96
Total		261	255	253

Source: Mondial Kindergarten Administrative Data, 2025

The decline in student numbers draws the researcher's attention to internal factors affecting learning quality, particularly teacher performance. Teacher performance plays a key role in maintaining the quality of learning processes and supporting student development in educational institutions. The school principal actively supports teachers in planning and evaluating learning activities to enhance teacher professionalism and performance.

Teachers with good performance demonstrate enthusiasm in preparing learning materials and conducting interactive learning activities, thereby creating an enjoyable learning environment. Teacher performance evaluation data from 2023–2025 show changes, as presented in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Mondial Kindergarten Batam Teacher Performance Data for 2023–2025

No	Year	Number of teachers	Teacher Performance Scores					Performance Scores (%)				
			A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E
1	2023	34	9	7	6	12	0	26	21	18	35	0
2	2024	34	11	10	8	4	1	32	29	24	12	3
3	2025	34	8	10	12	3	1	24	29	35	9	3

Source: Processed by the Researcher, 2025

Based on the table, teacher performance at Mondial Kindergarten shows significant changes from 2023 to 2025, reflecting shifts in performance categories. The percentage of teachers receiving an A rating declined from 26% in 2023 to 24% in 2025, while category C showed a substantial increase from 18% to 35%, indicating a shift toward average performance levels. These results provide valuable insights for school management in designing strategies to enhance teacher professionalism and performance continuously.

Teachers are professional educators responsible for teaching, guiding, and evaluating students at various levels of formal education. Their role significantly contributes to learning quality and student development, requiring broad abilities to deliver material, shape character, instill moral values, and nurture academic and nonacademic potential (Hidayat et al., 2021). Teacher competence encompasses pedagogical, personal, social, and professional dimensions that form the foundation for effective, creative, and adaptive learning (Perdikjen, 2020).

The government continues to show strong commitment to improving teacher competence and welfare as part of efforts to advance national education quality. One concrete form of this support is certification allowances intended to enhance teacher professionalism and learning quality. Abdul Mu'ti, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, explains that programs such as incentives for non-civil servant teachers, subsidies for nonformal ECE teachers, and support for upgrading academic qualifications to bachelor's level (S1/D4) are evidence of the state's commitment to strengthening the teaching profession. However, at Mondial

Kindergarten, several teachers still do not meet the government's certification standards, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Mondial Kindergarten Teacher Data

No	Highest Educational Qualification	Number of Teachers	Certified	Not Certified
1	Master's Degree (S2)	1	-	1
2	Strata-1 (S1)	25	3	22
3	Diploma (D1-D3)	3	-	3
4	Senior High School (SMA)	5	-	5
	Total	34	3	31

Source: Administrative Data, 2025

Of the 34 teachers at Mondial Kindergarten, only three possess professional certification, while five hold only high school qualifications. Training facilities to enhance teacher competence provided by the foundation remain limited. This situation may negatively affect education quality if not addressed promptly. This aligns with findings by Maure, F.S., Arifin, and Datuk (2021), who report that low teacher professionalism often stems from limited access to training, low motivation, and insufficient institutional support, ultimately affecting learning quality.

Another factor influencing teacher performance and comfort in carrying out daily tasks is the work environment, consisting of physical and nonphysical aspects. Adequate facilities, principal support, and harmonious interactions among colleagues can enhance teachers' motivation and effectiveness. A supportive work environment enables teachers to work efficiently and create a comfortable and conducive learning atmosphere, aligning with findings by Angrainy et al. (2020), which show that a positive work environment significantly affects teacher performance.

The physical environment at Mondial Kindergarten is designed to optimally support teachers' performance in learning activities. The school is located in a quiet residential area surrounded by trees, creating a cool, comfortable, and conducive working atmosphere. Facilities include 63-m² classrooms for two teachers, a clean staff office with desks, chairs, storage cabinets, computers, printers, clean drinking water, restrooms in each classroom, a computer lab, cooking room, medical room staffed by a nurse, multipurpose hall, indoor and outdoor play areas, and a spacious sports field. Security measures include 24-hour guards, CCTV monitoring, face-ID attendance, restricted entry with official stickers, and dismissal cards for registered guardians.

The nonphysical environment supports teacher performance through discipline management, collaboration, tolerance, and mutual respect among school members. Teachers participate in routine activities such as morning walks, joint prayers, attendance checks, and weekly reflections involving experience sharing and evaluations. This supportive nonphysical environment fosters a sense of safety and comfort for teachers and students, resulting in comprehensive, effective, and productive learning.

Despite the availability of supportive environments, teacher performance remains inconsistent. Some teachers hesitate to share opinions or experiences during discussions, indicating a need for encouragement, mentoring, and opportunities to express ideas openly from leaders and the foundation. This reluctance aligns with findings by Jiaowei Gong (Tian & Wenbo, 2024), who state that fear of judgment and discomfort in expressing oneself can affect professional behavior and work effectiveness.

In addition to competence and the work environment, motivation also plays an important role in influencing teacher performance. Highly motivated teachers are generally more enthusiastic, diligent, and committed to improving learning quality, influenced by job satisfaction, recognition, promotion opportunities, and welfare. Previous studies indicate that work motivation can mediate the relationship between competence and performance (Masrurroh et al., 2023; Roni Roni et al., 2023), while Lianasari & Ahmadi (2022) found that motivation does not mediate the relationship between competence, work environment, and performance. Most previous studies also focus on teachers at the primary and secondary levels, leaving limited research on kindergarten teachers whose roles and responsibilities differ. This study seeks to fill this gap and contribute new insights into performance management in early childhood education.

Given the phenomena observed at Mondial Kindergarten, issues related to competence, work environment, and motivation appear to affect teacher performance. Teachers who lack understanding of child development, demonstrate limited creativity, remain in their comfort zones, receive insufficient support from leaders and the foundation, and resist change show declining enthusiasm in performing their duties. Therefore, it is important to examine the influence of competence and work environment on teacher performance mediated by motivation. This study is expected to contribute to theoretical and practical advancements in improving teacher performance and education quality.

Research Methods

This study employs a quantitative approach, which emphasizes the collection of numerical data through statistical analysis to test the formulated hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2019). This approach was selected because the study aims to analyze the relationships among the independent variables—competence and work environment—the mediating variable, namely motivation, and the dependent variable, namely teacher performance. The quantitative method is deemed appropriate as it enables measurable explanation of inter-variable effects through inferential statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which allows for simultaneous model testing.

The research was conducted at TK Mondial Batam, located on Jl. Pasir Putih, Komplek Ruko Batam Mas Ocarina, Sadai Subdistrict, Bengkong District, Batam City, Riau Islands Province. The study took place over approximately three months, from September to November 2025. The research activities included proposal preparation, instrument distribution, data collection, data processing, result analysis, and the final research seminar. A detailed description of the research site and duration is necessary to enable replication by other researchers within the same context.

The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling with a saturated sampling (census) technique, as the population size was relatively small; therefore, all members of the population were included as samples (Arikunto, 2017; Sugiyono, 2012). The sample consisted of 34 teachers, including 22 permanent foundation teachers and 12 non-permanent teachers. All teachers shared similar job responsibilities and workloads, meaning that employment status did not serve as a distinguishing variable in this study.

Primary data were obtained through an online questionnaire containing items on competence, work environment, motivation, and teacher performance (Sugiyono, 2020). In addition to primary data, the study also utilized secondary data collected from various sources such as scientific journals, books on human resource management, motivation and work behavior, teacher administrative reports, as well as relevant previous studies (Sugiyono, 2019). Secondary data were used to strengthen the theoretical foundation, develop variable

indicators, and ensure that the research instruments aligned with established standards in prior studies. All instruments were developed based on relevant theories and subsequently validated by experts prior to their use.

Data collection was carried out using a Google Form–based questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' level of agreement with each statement. Data analysis was conducted using SEM-PLS through SmartPLS 4.0.6 software. SEM-PLS was chosen due to its advantages, including its ability to simultaneously analyze relationships among latent variables, handle complex research models, perform effectively with small sample sizes, and operate without requiring normal distribution assumptions (Hair et al., 2019; Ringle et al., 2024). Model evaluation was conducted through both outer and inner model assessments. The outer model was evaluated using Convergent Validity (loading factor > 0.50), T-statistics (> 1.96), AVE (≥ 0.50), and reliability measures (Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70) (Ghozali, 2016). Meanwhile, the inner model was assessed through R^2 , Q^2 , and the significance of path coefficients (Chin, 1998).

To ensure replicability, the research procedures were carried out in several systematic stages. The preparation stage included formulating the research problem, defining variables, developing indicators and questionnaire items, and conducting expert validation. The data collection stage involved preparing the Google Form, distributing it to all teachers via WhatsApp, providing filling instructions, and following up until all respondents completed the questionnaire. The data processing stage included exporting data from Google Forms, cleaning the data, converting them into .csv format, and inputting them into SmartPLS. The analysis stage consisted of model development, testing the outer and inner models, and conducting mediation analysis. The final stage included reporting the results, discussing the findings based on theory, and formulating research recommendations. With these clear and detailed procedures, the study can be replicated by other researchers to achieve consistent results.

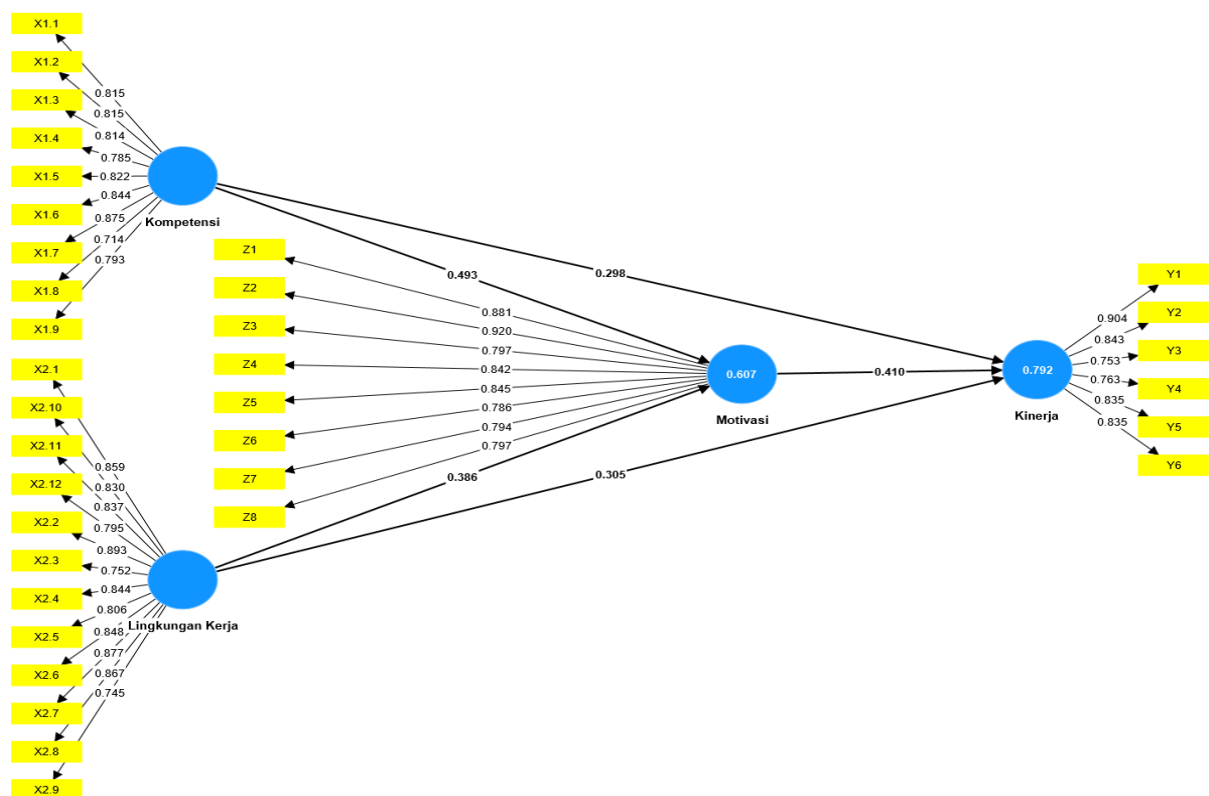


Figure 1. PLS Analysis Results of the Outer Model Algorithm

The convergent validity test indicates that all indicators are valid, as each has an outer loading value greater than 0.7, as presented in Table 1. A total of 35 indicators were proven to accurately measure their respective constructs, including competency, work environment, motivation, and performance. This is further supported by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values in Table 2, all of which exceed the minimum threshold of 0.5, demonstrating that each latent variable is able to explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators. Thus, the measurement model fully meets the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 3. Outer Loading Validity Test Results

Variable	Number of Indicators	Loading	Conclusion
Competency	9	0.714–0.875	Valid
Work Environment	12	0.745–0.893	Valid
Motivation	8	0.786–0.920	Valid
Performance	6	0.753–0.904	Valid

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE
Competency	0.655
Work Environment	0.690
Motivation	0.696
Performance	0.679

Discriminant validity is also achieved based on the cross-loading results and the Fornell–Larcker Criterion. Each indicator has its highest correlation with the latent variable it is intended to measure, indicating a clear distinction among constructs. The square root of the AVE values—competency (0.809), work environment (0.831), motivation (0.834), and performance (0.824)—are all higher than their correlations with other variables, further confirming that the model meets discriminant validity requirements. Additionally, construct reliability is excellent, as shown by Cronbach’s Alpha values (0.905–0.959) and Composite Reliability values (0.927–0.964), both well above the 0.7 threshold. These results indicate strong internal consistency, meaning that all constructs are considered reliable.

After confirming validity and reliability, the analysis proceeded to evaluate the structural model that describes the relationships among latent variables. The R-Square values for performance (0.792) and motivation (0.607) fall into the strong and moderate categories, respectively. These findings indicate that the combination of competency, work environment, and motivation explains 79.2% of the variance in performance and 60.7% of the variance in motivation. Furthermore, the Q-Square values of 0.504 for performance and 0.378 for motivation demonstrate strong predictive relevance. The Effect Size (f^2) values show that competency, work environment, and motivation have medium to large effects on other variables, indicating that all relational paths are substantively meaningful and statistically significant.

The hypothesis testing results show that all five proposed direct effects are significant. Competency and work environment have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with p-values < 0.05 for both paths. This indicates that higher teacher competency and better work environment conditions lead to improved performance. In addition, competency and work environment also have positive and significant effects on motivation, meaning that competent teachers and those working in supportive environments tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation. Motivation itself has a positive and significant direct

effect on performance, highlighting the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors in driving teachers' work outcomes.

Table 5. Direct Effects of PLS-SEM

Path	Estimate	p-value	Description
Competency → Performance	0.298	0.008	Significant
Work Environment → Performance	0.305	0.010	Significant
Competency → Motivation	0.493	0.000	Significant
Work Environment → Motivation	0.386	0.001	Significant
Motivation → Performance	0.410	0.005	Significant

In addition to the direct effects, this study also analyzed the indirect (mediating) effects and found that motivation mediates the relationship between competency and performance, as well as between work environment and performance. Both mediation paths are significant, with p-values of 0.039 and 0.023, respectively. These results indicate that competency and work environment influence performance not only directly but also indirectly through the enhancement of teacher motivation, which serves as an essential psychological mechanism in improving performance.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing (Indirect Effects)

Hypothesis	Estimate	T Statistic	P Value	Description
Competency → Motivation → Performance	0.202	2.067	0.039	Positive, Significant
Work Environment → Motivation → Performance	0.158	2.278	0.023	Positive, Significant

Overall, the PLS-SEM model in this study is valid, reliable, and demonstrates strong predictive capability. The findings confirm that competency, work environment, and motivation play crucial roles in enhancing teacher performance at Mondial Kindergarten Batam. These results emphasize the importance of teacher capacity development, the provision of a supportive work environment, and effective motivation strategies in fostering sustainable professional performance.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that competency and work environment play a crucial role in determining teacher performance at Mondial Kindergarten Batam, both directly and indirectly through motivation as a mediating factor. These findings provide insights into how internal factors, in the form of teacher competency, and external factors, such as work environment conditions, interact to influence the effectiveness of professional teaching tasks.

Effect of Competency on Teacher Performance. The analysis shows that teacher competency, encompassing pedagogical, personality, social, and professional dimensions, has a significant effect on teacher performance ($p < 0.05$; 0.008). This result is consistent with the findings of Caecilia et al. (2025) and Imron et al. (2025), who reported a positive influence of competency on teacher performance. The most prominent pedagogical indicator is the ability to design lesson plans (mean = 4.50), while in the personality dimension, teacher discipline (mean = 4.65) stands out. This confirms that comprehensive mastery of competency supports the optimal execution of professional duties.

Social and Professional Dimensions of Competency. Furthermore, the social and professional dimensions also contribute significantly to teacher performance. Effective communication with the school community (mean = 4.38) and the ability to utilize technology in learning (mean = 4.50) serve as supporting factors that enhance teaching effectiveness. These findings reinforce the evidence that teacher competency encompasses not only technical skills but also interpersonal abilities and adaptation to digital innovations, which are highly relevant in modern education.

Effect of Work Environment on Teacher Performance. The work environment at Mondial Kindergarten Batam, including both physical and non-physical aspects, is also proven to have a significant impact on teacher performance ($p = 0.010$). Descriptive analysis indicates that adequate work facilities (mean = 4.32), high job responsibilities (mean = 4.41), and leadership support (mean = 4.24) significantly contribute to performance. These results are consistent with the study of Meta & Slamet (2022) but differ from Angela et al. (2025), who reported that work environment does not significantly influence teacher performance at Strada in Central Jakarta.

Effect of Competency on Teacher Motivation. Teacher competency is also shown to enhance motivation ($p = 0.000$). The pedagogical dimension encourages learning innovation (mean = 4.44), personality fosters exemplary behavior (mean = 4.44), social competency supports teamwork (mean = 4.18), and professional competency improves mastery of material (mean = 4.29). These findings align with the studies of Arief et al. (2021) and Ari et al. (2025), which demonstrate competency as a significant factor in building teacher motivation.

Effect of Work Environment on Teacher Motivation. In addition, both physical and non-physical aspects of the work environment significantly affect teacher motivation ($p = 0.001$). Supportive facilities (mean = 4.32) and attention from school leadership (mean = 3.97) are important indicators. This finding corroborates the studies of Eni et al. (2024) and Meta & Slamet (2022), which suggest that a conducive work environment can enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Effect of Motivation on Teacher Performance. Teacher motivation is proven to be a determinant of performance ($p = 0.005$), with indicators including achievement needs (mean = 4.41), power needs (mean = 4.26), and affiliation needs (mean = 4.26). This is consistent with the findings of Imron et al. (2025) and Angela et al. (2025), who reported that motivation positively influences teacher performance. This underscores that motivation acts as an internal driver that strengthens performance through recognition, job security, and harmonious social relationships.

Mediating Role of Motivation in Competency and Work Environment. Mediation analysis shows that motivation mediates the effect of competency ($p = 0.039$) and work environment ($p = 0.023$) on teacher performance. This means that improvements in competency and a conducive work environment affect performance not only directly but also indirectly through increased work motivation. These findings are in line with Roni et al. (2023) and Sedarmayanti (2017), although they differ from Ervina et al. (2024) regarding work environment mediation, which may be explained by the characteristics of educational institutions that emphasize social relationships and emotional support.

Overall, this study confirms that competency and work environment significantly contribute to improving teacher performance at Mondial Kindergarten Batam, both directly and through motivation. The findings provide empirical evidence that systematic development of competency, creation of a supportive work environment, and structured motivation enhancement are crucial strategies for promoting professionalism and effectiveness in teacher performance.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conducted through the distribution of questionnaires to 34 teachers at Mondial Kindergarten Batam and analyzed using Smart PLS, it can be concluded that competency and work environment have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, both directly and indirectly through motivation as a mediating variable. Teacher competency, which includes pedagogical, personality, social, and professional dimensions, has been proven to enhance both motivation and performance. Similarly, a conducive work environment, both physical and non-physical, is able to foster teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Work motivation itself acts as a reinforcing factor in the influence of competency and work environment on performance, indicating that improvements in competency and the creation of a supportive work environment will result in more optimal teacher performance. These findings support previous research and strengthen the theoretical understanding of motivation as an important psychological variable in human resource management in early childhood education.

The limitations of this study include a relatively small number of respondents, which limits the generalizability of the findings, a focus on the variables of competency, work environment, and motivation without considering other factors such as leadership or organizational culture, and a quantitative approach that does not fully capture the context of teachers' social and emotional interactions. Therefore, it is recommended that schools enhance teacher competency development, improve work facilities, and strengthen leadership support and communication. Future research should expand the sample size, employ a mixed-methods approach, and include additional variables that may influence teacher performance to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting educators' performance.

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