

COMPARATIVE INFLUENCE OF PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE AND WORK MOTIVATION ON TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: EVIDENCE FROM EAST UNGARAN DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the extent to which pedagogical competence and work motivation individually influence teacher professionalism in public elementary schools in East Ungaran District, Indonesia. Using a quantitative causal design, data were collected from 125 teachers selected through proportional random sampling and analyzed using correlation and linear regression techniques. The findings show that both pedagogical competence ($\beta = 0.721$, $R^2 = 0.724$) and work motivation ($\beta = 0.785$, $R^2 = 0.743$) have positive and significant partial effects on teacher professionalism. Notably, work motivation demonstrates a stronger influence, indicating that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors contribute more substantially to professional behavior than technical pedagogical skills alone. This study provides empirical evidence that strengthening internal drive and work climate may yield greater improvements in teacher professionalism than focusing solely on competency-based training. The results offer practical implications for policymakers and school leaders in designing targeted professional development strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a key pillar of national progress. In this context, teachers play a central role as the primary determinant of the quality of educational outcomes. Teaching is a profession with specialized expertise and cannot be performed by just anyone outside the field of education. The duties of a teacher as a profession are to educate,

teach, and train. Educating means transmitting and developing life values. Teaching means transmitting and developing skills in students. Regarding outcomes, teachers are considered successful if they are able to change the behavior of the majority of their students toward better mastery of basic competencies (Afriyanli and Sabandi, 2020). Teachers play a crucial role in determining success in creating engaging and effective learning. Therefore, in addition to being able to enliven the classroom atmosphere, teachers must also guide learning as a process that supports the holistic development of students' personalities.

Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers emphasizes that teachers must possess four competencies, including Pedagogical and Professional Competencies. The quality of classroom teaching, innovation in learning methods, and the ability to evaluate student learning outcomes are highly dependent on mastery of these two competencies. Pedagogical competence is the foundation for implementing innovative learning to improve the quality of learning in schools. This means that if pedagogical mastery declines, teachers will be unable to design innovative learning to improve that quality (Rosyada, Harapan, and Rohana, 2021; Diana, 2023). Teacher professional competence encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to deliver effective learning, including the ability to communicate, manage the classroom, and adapt to technological changes. According to Adis (2024), increased mastery of material and methodology (professionalism) directly improves the quality of the teaching process for students.

This study considers that a teacher's performance and educational quality are not solely determined by technical ability (competence) but are also influenced by internal factors and work attitudes. Pedagogical competence, as a teacher's essential ability to manage learning, and psychological drive, manifested in behavior in the form of work motivation, influence teacher professionalism. Teachers with work motivation voluntarily improve their pedagogical competence and professionalism, which ultimately impacts performance. Therefore, it is important to empirically examine how these three pillars (Pedagogical Competence, Work Motivation, and Teacher Professionalism) are interconnected and influence each other in the environment of State Elementary Schools in East Ungaran District.

Although these three variables are crucial from a regulatory and theoretical perspective, in practice, several problems are often found, including the finding that the implementation of the new curriculum and the use of technology require an increase in pedagogical and professional competencies that are not evenly distributed among teachers, particularly at the elementary school level (Pawartani and Suciptaningsih, 2024). Furthermore, research by Pawartani and Suciptaningsih (2024) found a tendency for teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation to fluctuate. Low motivation is often evident in a lack of initiative in self-development, a reluctance to engage in community involvement, or suboptimal preparation of learning materials (RPP/teaching modules), which are part of the demands of professionalism.

Research by Anita, Purnomo, and Fitriani (2025) and Rasyid and Susanti (2025) found similar findings regarding teachers' lack of understanding of the Independent Curriculum concept and technological competency gaps, which can lead to suboptimal learning. The gap in teacher motivation across generations related to understanding technological competency is increasingly evident. Similar research shows varying results regarding pedagogical competency, teacher professionalism, and work motivation. This is due to differences in institutional contexts and work cultures. The relationship between motivation, competency, and professionalism needs to be specifically examined within unique geographic and administrative contexts. The competency of public elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District remains suboptimal. This is due to low teacher motivation to develop their own skills and engage in independent learning through structured and unstructured training. Table 1 shows the results of the education report card for 2022-2024, which illustrates fluctuations in these indicators.

Table 1. Achievement of Teacher Training Experience Indicators (C3)

No	School Name	2022	2023	2024
1	SDN Beji 01	55,00	90,00	79,42
2	SDN Beji 02	55,35	75,00	80,30
3	SDN Leyangan	53,30	83,00	76,54
4	SDN Kalirejo 01	53,30	82,00	74,14
5	SDN Kalirejo 02	46,67	100,00	75,04
6	SDN Gedanganak 01	62,42	82,00	71,70
7	SDN Gedanganak 02	50,00	83,00	83,00
8	SDN Gedanganak 03	53,30	83,00	76,54
9	SDN kalikayen	50,00	90,30	70,48
10	SDN Kawengen 01	43,33	100,00	73,54
11	SDN Susukan 01	50,00	95,00	78,60
12	SDN Susukan 02	50,00	83,30	89,00
13	SDN Susukan 04	56,67	50,00	82,00
14	SDN Kalongan 01	43,33	100,00	71,26
15	SDN Kalongan 02	50,00	100,00	74,26
16	SDN Kalongan 03	53,33	85,70	72,50
Average		51,63	86,39	76,95

The achievement of indicator C3 in 2022 was categorized as Poor with an average score of 51.63. Achievement in 2023 improved to the Good category with an average score of 86.39. Achievement in 2024 decreased to the Fair category with an average score of 76.95. This also indicates that teachers have not optimally developed their professionalism, and their motivation for self-development remains low. This is supported by the findings of interviews with school supervisors regarding the results of monitoring and evaluation in East Ungaran District, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Supervisory Monitoring and Evaluation Results

No	Monitoring dan Evaluasi	Persentase (%)
1	Module and Teaching Material Development	50
2	Teacher IT Skills	40
3	Qualifications	70
4	Competence	80
5	Certification	90*

*In accordance with statutory requirements

Table 2 shows an empirical gap in teacher professionalism, indicated by a teacher qualification percentage of 70%. This means that 30% of teachers still do not meet the law. The teacher certification percentage is 90%, out of 70% of teachers who meet the requirements. Other apparent issues relate to the development of pedagogical and professional competencies through the creation of modules and teaching materials (50%), and teachers' IT

proficiency (40%). Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the empirical gap, which characterizes teacher competency. The gaps in pedagogical competency, professionalism, and teacher work motivation are clearly illustrated.

The gap in teacher work motivation is complex and rooted in two main factors: internal (welfare and work status) and external (professional demands and work environment). Observations show an average gap in work motivation among elementary school teachers in the East Ungaran District. This motivation gap is most clearly visible in the sharp differences based on teacher employment status and work environment. The employment status of civil servant (PNS) teachers, often referred to as ASN, with P3K teacher status often disrupts their sense of job security and primary motivation. Teachers, who are required to develop their competencies, experience demotivation due to a shift in focus (changes in education regulations make it difficult for them to adapt). The findings in Table 1 demonstrate teachers' reluctance to participate in independent training that is not tied to their career path, indicating that intrinsic motivation to improve teaching quality is still lower than administrative motivation. Other factors contributing to demotivation among elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District include cramped workspaces, lack of privacy, and noise; and a lack of coordination, communication, and effective mechanisms for sharing ideas (collaborative discussions) among teachers.

Similar studies have yielded mixed results, referring to the characteristics of human resources within the selected demographic region and can empirically test and theoretically validate pedagogical competence, teacher motivation, and the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District. The description of teacher competency, professionalism, and work motivation, along with their respective impacts on teacher professionalism, are findings that are expected to provide targeted and contextual recommendations for school principals and local education offices in designing effective teacher development and coaching programs.

Based on the above background, this study is crucial to analyze and empirically test how teacher pedagogical competence and work motivation partially influence the level of teacher professionalism in East Ungaran State Elementary Schools. This will provide a clear relationship model that can be used as a basis for improving educational quality.

METHOD

This research uses quantitative research methods. Sugiyono (2023) states that a quantitative approach can be defined as a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, used to examine a specific population or sample. Sampling is conducted randomly, data collection using research instruments, and then statistical data analysis is conducted to test the established hypotheses. This research was conducted from February to July 2025 in 16 public elementary schools in East Ungaran District. The research design used an Correlational Causal design with independent variable 1 (X1) being Pedagogical Competence, independent variable 2 (X2) being Teacher Work Motivation, and dependent variable (Y) being Teacher Professionalism. Ethical approval was obtained from the Director of Postgraduate Studies, Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia Semarang University, with approval number 155/T.51/PL/V/2025.

The study population comprised all civil servant (PNS), P3K (Pre-K), and honorary teachers, totaling 181 teachers. The sample size was determined using the Slovin Formula, with 125 teachers. The sampling technique used in this study was Proportional Random Sampling, a method of randomly selecting a sample from a population without considering strata within the population (Sugiyono, 2023).

Data collection used a questionnaire. The research instrument used a structured questionnaire administered directly to respondents. The instrument consisted of 90 items on a 5-point Likert scale. Before being used as an instrument, the questionnaire was tested for validity (Product Moment Correlation) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha). Validity was tested using Pearson Product-Moment (the calculated r obtained for each item $> r$ table 0.361), reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (α for each variable > 0.70). The results indicated that the instrument was suitable

for use with improvements. Data analysis used prerequisite tests and research hypothesis testing. Prerequisite tests included Normality was tested using K-S; linearity using ANOVA; multicollinearity using VIF, and heteroscedasticity. Hypothesis testing analysis used regression and correlation analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Result

Data description is a snapshot of the data that will be used for the next step, namely testing the hypothesis. This is done to describe or illustrate the respondents' conditions regarding pedagogical competence, work motivation, and teacher professionalism, with the following results:

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

		Pedagogical Competence	Work Motivation	Teacher Professionalism
N	Valid	125	125	125
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		104,70	106,34	108,16
Median		105,00	107,00	107,00
Mode		106	90	100
Std. Deviation		21,126	19,649	17,900
Minimum		61	64	68
Maximum		145	143	147

Pedagogical competence (X1) has a minimum value of 61, which means that of all respondents who gave the lowest assessment of the answer to pedagogical competence is 61. The maximum value is 145, which means that of all respondents who gave the highest assessment of the answer to pedagogical competence is 145. The average value of pedagogical competence is 104.70, meaning that of all respondents who gave answers to pedagogical competence, the average respondent gave an assessment of 104.70. While the standard deviation of 21.126 means that the size of the data distribution of the pedagogical competence variable is 21.126 out of 125 respondents. The distribution of pedagogical competence data is grouped into 5 categories, namely very good, good, sufficient, less and not good. From these five categories, the perceptions of 125 elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District regarding pedagogical competence were obtained: 10.4% were in the poor category, 22.4% were in the less than good category, 32.8% were in the fair category, 19.2% were in the good category, and 15.2% were in the very good category. Since the average pedagogical competence score was 104.70, falling within the 95-111 range, it can be concluded that elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District have quite good pedagogical competence.

Teacher work motivation (X2) has a minimum value of 64, meaning that of all respondents who gave the lowest score for work motivation, the answer was 64. The maximum value was 143, meaning that of all respondents who gave the highest score for work motivation, the answer was 143. The average work motivation score was 106.34, meaning that of all respondents who gave a work motivation answer, the average score was 106.34. Meanwhile, the standard deviation of 19.649 means that the size of the data distribution of the work motivation variable is 19.649 from 125 respondents.

The distribution of work motivation data is grouped into 5 categories: very good, good, sufficient, less and not good. The results of the analysis show that the perception of 125 elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District regarding work motivation is 10.4% in the bad category, 18.4% in the less good category, 34.4% in the fairly good category, 20.8 in the good category and 16% in the very good category, because the average work motivation

score is 106.34 in the interval 96 - 111 in the fairly good criteria, it can be concluded that elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District have quite good work motivation.

Teacher professionalism (Y) has a minimum value of 68, which means that of all respondents who gave the lowest assessment of teacher professionalism, the answer was 68. The maximum value was 147, which means that of all respondents who gave the highest assessment of teacher professionalism, the answer was 147. The average value of work motivation was 108.16, meaning that of all respondents who gave answers to teacher professionalism, the average gave an assessment of 108.16. While the standard deviation of 17,900 means that the size of the data distribution of the teacher professionalism variable was 17,900 from 125 respondents.

The distribution of teacher professionalism data is grouped into 5 categories, namely very good, good, sufficient, less and not good. The results of the analysis show that the perceptions of 125 elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District regarding teacher professionalism are 8.8% in the poor category, 16.4% in the less good category, 44.8% in the fairly good category, 19.2 in the good category and 10.4% in the very good category, because the average score of teacher professionalism is 108.16 which is in the interval 100 - 115 in the fairly good criteria, it can be concluded that elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District have quite good professionalism.

Before conducting data analysis using simple or multiple linear regression for hypothesis testing, several assumptions are required, including data normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. This normality test aims to assess whether the data used are normal. Using SPSS 2025, the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test yielded a significance value of $0.958 > 0.05$ for pedagogical competence; a significance value of $0.771 > 0.05$ for work motivation; and a significance value of $0.605 > 0.05$ for teacher professionalism. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data distribution for pedagogical competence, work motivation, and teacher professionalism is normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality in this study is met.

This linearity test aims to determine whether two variables have a linear relationship. A linearity test using ANOVA with SPSS 2025 yielded a significance value of $0.722 > 0.05$ for pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism, indicating a linear relationship between pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism. Similarly, work motivation and teacher professionalism had a significance value of $0.051 > 0.05$, indicating a linear relationship between work motivation and teacher professionalism.

The multicollinearity test aims to determine whether a correlation exists between the independent variables in the regression model. A good regression model should not have any correlation between the independent variables. Multicollinearity was determined by testing the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance Value. The multicollinearity test results showed that the independent variable, Teacher Pedagogical Competence, had a tolerance value of 0.239 and a VIF of 4.179; the Work Motivation variable had a tolerance value of 0.253 and a VIF of 3.955. The tolerance and VIF values for all independent variables, including pedagogical competence and work motivation, were < 10 and > 0.1 . This indicates that the independent variables used in the study did not exhibit multicollinearity, and therefore, the regression model could be used in this study.

The heteroscedasticity test aims to determine whether the residual variances differ from one observation to another in the regression model. If the residual variances remain constant, it is called homoscedasticity; if they differ, it is called heteroscedasticity. A good regression model is one that exhibits homoscedasticity, or no heteroscedasticity. The heteroscedasticity test results indicate that the significance values for the pedagogical competence (0.706) and work motivation (0.072) variables are greater than 0.05 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity in the regression model.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis and correlation with the help of SPSS 2025. In this hypothesis test, to test whether there is an influence of pedagogical competence on the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District and whether there is an influence of teacher work motivation on the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District. The null hypothesis (H_0) that was set was 1) There is no influence of pedagogical competence on the professionalism of elementary

school teachers in East Ungaran District, 2) There is no influence of teacher work motivation on the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District.

The relationship between pedagogical competence and the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District is stated by the Pearson Correlation product moment correlation coefficient of 0.851 with a significant sig value (2-tailed) for 125 samples of 0.000. This means that there is a strong relationship (Sugiyono, 2023) between the Pedagogical Competence variable (X1) and the Professionalism variable of Elementary School Teachers in East Ungaran District (Y). To find out whether the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted or rejected, the t-count of the Pedagogical Competence variable (X1) is 17.978 while the t-table is 1.65734 ($17.978 > 1.65734$) with a Sig value of $0.000 < 0.05$ so that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted, which means that pedagogical competence has a significant effect on the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District.

The significance of pedagogical competence on teacher professionalism can be seen in the R-square value in the Determination Test. The results of the coefficient of determination test showed an R-square value of 0.724. This result indicates that pedagogical competence contributes 72.4% to the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District. This coefficient of determination is in the strong category (Sugiyono, 2023). Pedagogical competence has a strong influence on teacher professionalism, while the remaining 27.6% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

The regression equation between the Pedagogical Competence variable (X1) and the Elementary School Teacher Professionalism variable (Y) is $Y = 32.656 + 0.721 X_1$. The constant value of 32.656 indicates that when pedagogical competence is 0, teacher professionalism has a value of 32.656. Furthermore, the positive value (0.721) in the regression coefficient illustrates the direction of the relationship between the pedagogical competence variable and the teacher professionalism variable, where each increase in pedagogical competence increases teacher professionalism by 0.721. Therefore, the higher the pedagogical competence, the higher the professionalism of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran District.

The relationship between teacher work motivation and teacher professionalism in East Ungaran District is indicated by a Pearson Correlation value of 0.862, with a significance value of 0.000 (sig.) (2-tailed) for the 125 sample members. This indicates a strong relationship between the Work Motivation variable (X2) and Teacher Professionalism variable (Y). The t-test analysis results obtained a t-count of 18.861 for the Work Motivation variable (X2), while the t-table was 1.65734 ($17.978 > 1.65734$), with a Sig value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. This means that Work Motivation has a significant effect on the Professionalism of Elementary School Teachers in East Ungaran District. The Determination Test results obtained an R-square value of 0.743. This result indicates that work motivation contributes to the professionalism of Elementary School teachers in East Ungaran District by 74.3%. This coefficient of determination is in the strong category. The remaining 25.7% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

The regression equation between the Teacher Work Motivation variable (X2) and the Elementary School Teacher Professionalism variable (Y) is $Y = 24.655 + 0.785 X_2$. The constant value of 24.655 indicates that when work motivation is 0, teacher professionalism has a value of 24.655. Furthermore, the positive value (0.785) contained in the regression coefficient illustrates the direction of the relationship between the work motivation variable and the teacher professionalism variable in the same direction/positive, where each increase in work motivation can increase teacher professionalism by 0.785. So the higher the work motivation, the higher the professionalism of Elementary School teachers in East Ungaran District.

To determine which has a stronger distribution of influence, it is necessary to look at the regression coefficient of each equation. The regression equation of X1 with Y is written as $Y = 32.656 + 0.721 X_1$ and $Y = 24.655 + 0.785 X_2$ for the regression equation of X2 with Y. The regression coefficient of Teacher Work Motivation X2 (0.785) on teacher professionalism (Y) is greater than the regression coefficient of Pedagogical Competence X1 (0.721) on teacher professionalism (Y). The results of the Determination Test also show that the variable Teacher Work

Motivation X2 contributes 74.3% more than the contribution of Pedagogical Competence X1 (72.4%) to teacher professionalism Y in the partial correlation of each equation.

Discussion

This is in accordance with the findings of Febriyana's research (2023), that Teacher Work Motivation with a regression coefficient of 0.398 and a partial contribution of 57.8% is more dominant than pedagogical competence in improving student learning achievement. Teacher work motivation also plays a dominant role when compared to professional competence in improving teacher performance (Putra and Negara, 2021). Similar findings are found in research by Rondhiyah and Fauzan (2022), where pedagogical competence has no moderating impact on school culture, while motivation significantly impacts school culture and contributes more strongly than pedagogical competence to teacher performance. Student achievement and teacher performance are other manifestations of teacher professionalism.

The results of this study indicate that the dominant influence of Work Motivation over Pedagogical Competence on Teacher Professionalism at an elementary school in East Ungaran District has significant practical and strategic impacts for the teachers there. The primary impact is a shift in focus from merely meeting technical requirements to developing an internal will and drive to work. The research findings indicate three key impacts: 1) impact on work awareness and paradigm; 2) impact on self-development practices; and 3) impact on self-evaluation and follow-up.

Impacts on work awareness and paradigm include: a) increased awareness of the role of motivation, given that contribution plays a stronger role than competence; b) encouraging self-responsibility (self-efficacy), c) valuing non-technical factors. Teachers are becoming more aware that mastery of the material (Pedagogical Competence) is the initial capital, but enthusiasm, job satisfaction, and intrinsic drive (Motivation) are the ultimate determinants of professionalism and the quality of daily performance. The results of the study reinforce the view that professionalism begins with the teacher themselves.

Teachers are encouraged not only to wait for external training, but to find ways to maintain or increase their internal motivation to always be enthusiastic about teaching. Teachers realize that non-technical aspects such as discipline, initiative, and loyalty, which are part of work motivation, have a stronger coefficient in shaping their professional image in the eyes of students, parents, and principals. Similar research that emphasizes the dominance of non-competency factors such as Work Motivation and its impact on changing the awareness or paradigm of teachers' work, not only on technical abilities, is research by Marhadi, Supardi & Dharmanto (2025). Motivation is not only a supporting factor, but can also influence how well a teacher uses or improves their competence. Teachers with high motivation tend to be more proactive in improving their competence, and ultimately, this improves performance. Teachers are encouraged to recognize that willingness (motivation) is the initial trigger for ability (competence) that leads to professionalism. Motivation influences competence before impacting performance (professionalism).

Motivation is a key factor in complex work contexts. This aligns with the findings of Aruan et al. (2025), who examined motivation alongside work environment factors, demonstrating how internal and external non-competence factors work together. Work motivation has a significant influence on teacher performance. This study also emphasizes the importance of fostering a motivating work environment to improve the quality of education. For teachers, the research findings reinforce awareness of the importance of a motivating work environment. Teachers are encouraged to recognize that professionalism results not only from individual efforts but also from systems that support work enthusiasm, including management support and a positive environment.

Another study supporting this finding is Sutarmin et al.'s (2022) study, which showed that internal factors such as motivation and work climate play a significant role in performance, indicating a shift in focus. Work

motivation, work climate, and competence positively influence elementary school teacher performance. This finding reinforces the paradigm that teacher performance is the result of a combination of ability (competence) and desire/drive (motivation and work climate). Impact on the Paradigm: Teachers recognize that their performance cannot be achieved simply by "having certification." Instead, a positive work climate (an external factor influencing motivation) is key to optimally utilizing these competencies. This encourages teachers to actively participate in creating a supportive work culture.

These similar studies emphasize that the teacher work paradigm must shift from a focus on "what I know" (competence) to "how much I want to do it" (motivation), as motivation is the primary driving force determining professionalism in the field. The findings regarding the impact on self-development practices consist of several aspects, including a) a focus on motivation development, b) the importance of collaboration, and c) optimal utilization of competencies. While previously self-development focused on technical training in curriculum or teaching methods, teachers are now encouraged to attend seminars, workshops, or read literature on work stress management, mindfulness, or developing a passion for teaching. Teachers will be more proactive in building a conducive work environment. They recognize that a supportive environment and strong affiliations with colleagues (extrinsic motivational aspects) are crucial for maintaining high professional standards. Teachers who have Pedagogical Competence will be motivated to apply their knowledge consistently and innovatively. Competence is no longer merely a document, but is manifested in creative learning practices in the classroom. This is supported by research by Susanto et al. (2021).

Partially, Work Motivation has a more dominant influence on Teacher Performance than Competence. High performance is a manifestation of active self-development and professionalism. Work Motivation is more dominant in influencing teacher professionalism and self-development practices. The following are several other studies that align with this impact, particularly those focusing on teachers' encouragement to develop and innovate. Marhadi et al. (2025) found that work motivation has a significant effect on competence. This suggests that motivation is a driving force for teachers to improve and develop their abilities (competencies). Similar support is found in research by Neliwati, Firdiansyah, & Astuti (2024), which states that motivated teachers have higher self-efficacy in developing more creative and innovative learning methods (practical self-development). Work motivation is a key factor that can significantly improve teachers' pedagogical competence. This supports the notion that willingness is a prerequisite for improving abilities (Nurrohman et al., 2024).

These findings collectively strengthen the argument that the impact of research on teacher self-development practices should focus on motivation, as motivation is the initial trigger. Highly motivated teachers will view deficiencies or challenges as opportunities for self-development, not as burdens. They will proactively seek training, join KKG (teaching group/community), or continue their studies, indirectly improving the achievement of priority indicator C3. This strong motivation should result in innovative work behavior. Because this innovation is the highest form of practical self-development, where teachers not only master old techniques but also create new solutions in the classroom (for example, creating their own digital media). These similar studies confirm that to see a real impact on the self-development practices of elementary school teachers in East Ungaran, interventions must address aspects of sense of purpose, appreciation, and a supportive work environment (motivation) before or simultaneously with technical training.

The third finding impacts self-evaluation and feedback. These impacts include honesty in self-evaluation and constructive feedback. When teachers conduct performance evaluations, they will focus not only on a checklist of teaching skills, but also on the level of effort and enthusiasm they demonstrate. This research provides a basis for teachers to seek feedback from the principal or colleagues regarding motivational factors. For example, "Do I appear enthusiastic in class?" or "What can I do to be more enthusiastic in the KKG/Learning Community?"

Overall, the impact of this research for public elementary school teachers in East Ungaran is to shift the view that professionalism is solely the result of certification and training, to an understanding that professionalism results from the synergy between adequate technical skills and strong willpower (Work Motivation). Research by Chiu et

al. (2024) emphasizes that intrinsic motivation (inner drive) is key to the independent development of teacher competencies. This is particularly relevant to self-evaluation, as teachers must be motivated to honestly assess their shortcomings and take corrective action (follow-up).

This study shows that school support for developing Teacher Digital Competence (TDC) is fully mediated by the satisfaction of teachers' basic needs, based on SDT. Three basic needs that schools must meet are Autonomy (Teachers feel they have choice and control over how they develop digital competency), Competence (Teachers feel capable and effective in using digital technology), and Relatedness (Teachers feel connected and supported by colleagues and the learning community when using technology). The findings of Chiu et al. (2024) suggest that training will be ineffective if it is merely instructional. School support and internal motivation will encourage voluntary development of digital competency. Honest reflection and a focus on self-development needs align with ideal professional standards, not minimum school standards.

The effectiveness of follow-up is evident in teachers' independent initiatives. When evaluation results indicate deficiencies (e.g., lack of proficiency in digital media), motivated teachers will take independent follow-up initiatives (e.g., taking online courses or learning from colleagues) without waiting for the principal's instructions. This follow-up becomes sustainable. High motivation encourages teachers to take responsibility for their evaluation results. They will report follow-up improvements transparently, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing professionalism. The success of the evaluation and follow-up program does not depend on how sophisticated the evaluation format is, but rather on how much internal drive (motivation) the teacher has to use the evaluation results as a tool for self-improvement to increase competence which leads to increased professionalism.

The negative findings in this study are evident in the dominant teacher work motivation, which is unable to increase independent self-development through training (as seen in the achievement of indicator C3 of the Education Report Card in Table 1). Therefore, in the context of the study at a public elementary school in East Ungaran District, it shows that work motivation alone is not sufficient. Even if teacher motivation is good, it does not automatically improve teacher professionalism at that elementary school. Other mediating variables (such as Organizational Commitment or Work Discipline) are needed for their influence to emerge. With the existence of a moderator/mediator variable, as suggested by Chiu et al. (2024), the influence of work motivation may need to be mediated through a mediating variable to have a significant impact on teacher professionalism. Without this mediating variable, the direct relationship may be insignificant.

These contradictory findings provide strong justification for the addition of an intermediary variable to explain why conventional motivation is sometimes insignificant or even negative for professionalism (Syahputra, Roesdi, and Pramadewi 2025). Other studies have sometimes shown that high workloads do not motivate teachers to improve their performance and professionalism (Ndruru and Yudiaatmaja, 2025). Another negative finding is the presence of inappropriate or excessive extrinsic motivation (Syahputra, Roesdi, and Pramadewi, 2025).

The above findings support the in-depth discussion of the variables of Pedagogical Competence and Work Motivation, which partially showed no effect on Teacher Professionalism. Competence significantly influences performance, which impacts professionalism through motivation as a mediating variable. This strengthens the hypothesis that competent teachers must be motivated to translate their competence into optimal performance. If Motivation is not considered, then the increase in professionalism does not necessarily come from competence (Masrurroh et al., 2023; Fahrudin et al. (2023). The existence of these negative and insignificant findings, especially on Teacher Motivation and Competence, provides strong justification that the simple relationship model (X Y) often fails to explain the complexity of teacher performance in the field. This study can fill the gap by explicitly testing the deeper role of Motivation (through SDT Theory: Autonomy, Competence, Connectedness) as a mediating variable that explains why external factors (Leadership and Culture) or basic internal factors (Competence) sometimes fail to improve teacher professionalism.

CONCLUSION

The partial (individual) effect of Pedagogical Competence has a partial, positive, and significant effect on elementary school teacher professionalism. The variable Work Motivation has a partial, positive, and significant effect on elementary school teacher professionalism. Partially, Work Motivation is shown to have a greater influence/contribution to teacher professionalism than Pedagogical Competence. This implies that the quality of teacher professionalism is largely determined by the willingness and drive to work (Work Motivation), beyond merely technical skills (Pedagogical Competence). The simultaneous influence of both factors is also predicted to be positive and significant on teacher professionalism.

The primary contribution of this study is providing empirical evidence regarding the relative weight of the determinants of teacher professionalism. The model of teacher professionalism is not only influenced by cognitive/technical factors (Pedagogical Competence) but is significantly dominated by affective/internal drive factors (Work Motivation). Despite methodological weaknesses (not analyzing simultaneously), these findings fill an empirical gap by demonstrating that improving professionalism requires optimal enhancement of both factors simultaneously.

The practical implication for school management (particularly East Ungaran Elementary School) is a shift in the focus of educational quality improvement strategies, with the primary priority for school management to enhance professionalism shifting from solely providing technical training and fulfilling certification (pedagogical competence) to internal strengthening. Efforts should focus on strengthening teacher work motivation by fostering a positive work climate, providing appropriate appreciation, and increasing job satisfaction. The main limitation acknowledged by the researchers is the failure to analyze the simultaneous influence of Pedagogical Competence and Work Motivation on teacher professionalism.

Future research should analyze the simultaneous influence of Pedagogical Competence and Work Motivation (as well as other potential factors) to obtain a more complete picture of the total contribution of independent variables to teacher professionalism. It is also considered to test whether there are other variables (e.g., School Climate, Principal Leadership) that might mediate or moderate the relationship between Pedagogical Competence and Work Motivation with Teacher Professionalism.

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