

The Influence of Certification And Professionalism on Teacher Motivation and Performance in Madrasah Aliyah Throughout Kendari City

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Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of certification and professionalism on teacher work motivation and performance, as well as the mediating role of work motivation among Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Kendari City. The study involved 135 respondents selected using proportionate stratified random sampling from 262 teachers. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that certification and professionalism have a positive effect on work motivation. Work motivation and professionalism have a positive effect on teacher performance, while certification has no direct effect on performance. Work motivation fully mediates the effect of certification and partially the effect of professionalism on teacher performance.

Keywords: Certification, Professionalism, Work Motivation, Teacher Performance.

Introduction

Improving the quality of education is a strategic priority for national development, as mandated by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and the RPJMN (National Medium-Term Development Plan). In this context, teachers are the primary actors determining the quality of learning, making improving their professionalism and competence a focus of educational reform. The government then implemented a certification policy through Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Government Regulation Number 74 of 2008, and Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 18 of 2007 as an instrument for professional recognition and improving teacher welfare. The certification program is implemented through portfolio pathways, Teacher Professional Education and Training (PLPG), and Teacher Professional Education (PPG) with the aim of improving professional eligibility, learning quality, and teacher dignity. Hayat (2022) explains that certification assessments consider portfolios, work experience, and professional training, while Latiana (2017) emphasizes that certification does not automatically improve teacher motivation or performance because it is influenced by other factors, such as professionalism, perceptions of incentives, and work environment support. Findings by Restianey et al. (2021) showed that certification and work motivation positively impact teacher performance, while Abubakar (2016) demonstrated that certification improves the quality of Madrasah Aliyah education in Kendari City by strengthening program planning, teaching implementation, improving teacher competency, and utilizing professional allowances.

Madrasah Aliyah have unique characteristics because they integrate general and religious curricula, requiring professional, motivated, and high-performing teachers. However, initial observations for the 2024/2025 academic year indicate that the certification process in Madrasah Aliyah throughout Kendari City still faces various obstacles, including portfolio development, administrative requirements, technological mastery, limited training, and inadequate facilities, particularly in private madrasahs. These conditions mean that certification has not yet fully improved teacher performance directly. Furthermore, limited budget support, learning facilities, laboratories, libraries, information technology, and human resource development prevent certified teachers from optimally implementing their professional competencies. Teacher professionalism also still faces challenges in mastering pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies, including the ability to adapt to technological developments and the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Iqmalia, Istiqomah, & Hartono, 2022). Therefore, work motivation is suspected to be an important mechanism bridging the relationship between certification, professionalism, and teacher performance, as professional recognition, improved welfare, and opportunities for self-development have the potential to increase motivation, ultimately driving performance.

Several previous studies have demonstrated that certification, professionalism, and work motivation contribute to improved teacher performance, including those by Restianey et al. (2021), Abubakar (2016), Latiana (2017), and Iqmalia, Istiqomah, and Hartono (2022). However, most of these studies only partially examine the relationships between variables and thus fail to explain the structural linkages between certification, professionalism, work motivation, and teacher performance simultaneously. Furthermore, empirical studies specifically conducted on Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School) in

Kendari City are still very limited, even though these institutions have different characteristics compared to public schools. Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the influence of certification and professionalism on teacher work motivation and performance and examine the role of work motivation as a mediating variable. The novelty of this study lies in the development of a structural model that integrates certification, professionalism, work motivation, and teacher performance in one empirical model using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, while providing new empirical evidence in the context of Madrasah Aliyah in Kendari City which is still very rarely studied.

Literature Review And Research Hypothesis

Certification

Teacher certification is a mechanism to ensure teachers possess competencies that meet national standards, enabling them to provide quality education and enhance the professionalism of educators, as stipulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers and Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 18 of 2007 (Ministry of National Education, 2007). The Human Capital Theory perspective proposed by Becker (1993) explains that education and training are investments that enhance individual competence, productivity, and well-being. In the context of teacher certification, this theory is reflected in increased professional capacity, competency recognition, economic benefits in the form of professional allowances (Hayat, 2022), and encouragement for continuous self-development (Pandipa, 2019). Professional recognition also increases motivation, credibility, and public trust in teachers (Wahyuni, 2019; Sutrisno, 2020; Rahayu & Hartono, 2021), ultimately contributing to improved learning quality and teacher performance (Kemendikbudristek, 2023).

Professionalism

Teacher professionalism is the ability and commitment of teachers to carry out their duties responsibly based on competence, ethics, and dedication to achieve educational goals. Professional teachers are required to have intellectual, professional, social, moral, spiritual, and personal responsibilities, and are able to carry out their roles as educators, teachers, mentors, administrators, curriculum developers, and learning leaders (Darmadi, 2015; Nasrullah, 2020; Munawir, Erindha, & Sari, 2023). Professionalism is realized through mastery of four main competencies, namely pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies as regulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. Teachers are also required to be able to create a conducive learning climate, develop learning strategies, provide effective feedback, and continuously improve their competencies (Muslimah, 2023). In addition, professional teachers must have integrity, communication skills, leadership, mastery of technology, and adapt to educational changes (Nur & Mardiah, 2020; Qowama et al., 2024). Efforts to strengthen professionalism are supported through a certification policy that assesses teacher competency based on a portfolio that includes education, training, teaching experience, scientific work, professional organizations, and achievements as a form of competency recognition while improving the quality of human resources in education (Alfath & Huliatusna, 2021; Iskandar & Anriani, 2023).

Motivation

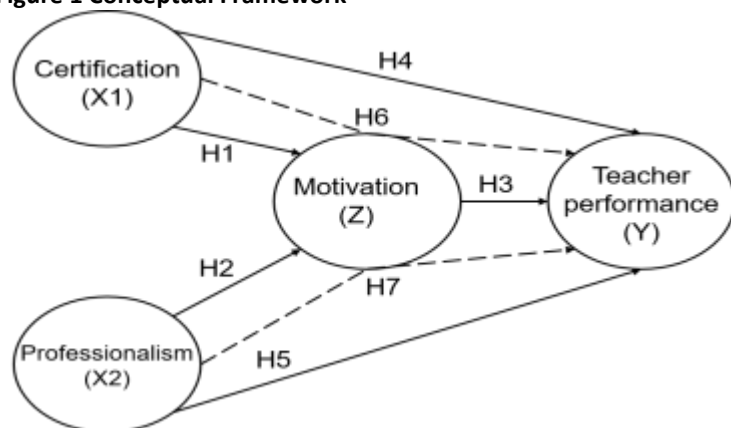
Work motivation is an internal drive that awakens, directs, and sustains individual behavior to achieve specific goals. The term motivation comes from the Latin word *move*, meaning to move, so motivation is understood as a force that drives someone to act in a directed manner (Kusumadyahdewi, 2017; Huzni, Saputra, & Zain, 2023). Munandar in Hapsari and Mardiana (2016) explain that motivation is a process of fulfilling needs that directs individuals to achieve goals, while Irma Julita, Neviyarni, and Nirwana (2025) emphasize that motivation provides energy, direction, and persistence to behavior. In an organizational context, motivation functions to increase enthusiasm, productivity, creativity, discipline, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty (Esisuarni, Alkadri, & Nellitawati, 2024). The theoretical basis of this research is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1954), which explains that motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. The higher the needs to be fulfilled, the greater the individual's motivation to work. Therefore, teachers whose psychological and professional needs are met tend to have high work motivation, thereby improving the quality of learning and performance continuously.

Teacher Performance

Teacher performance is the level of success of teachers in carrying out their professional duties and responsibilities to achieve educational goals effectively and efficiently. Gibson (2003) explains that performance is the result of work related to the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of achieving organizational goals. In the educational context, teacher performance reflects the ability to plan, implement, evaluate, and follow up on the learning process according to established standards. Professional teachers not only act as educators and instructors, but also as guides, administrators, leaders, managers, facilitators, innovators,

motivators, evaluators, and supervisors in supporting student success (Munawir, Salsabila, & Nisa', 2022; Nasrullah, 2020). Teacher performance is influenced by various factors, especially work motivation, which encourages individuals to give their best effort in achieving organizational goals (Faddila, 2020). Conversely, low motivation can reduce the quality of teacher performance, while high motivation requires the support of a conducive work environment (Tuhagana, 2020). In addition to motivation, internal factors such as abilities, attitudes, and needs, as well as external factors such as salary, job security, work relationships, supervision, and supporting facilities also determine teacher performance (STIT PN, 2021). Teacher performance assessment refers to Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 41 of 2007, which includes four main indicators: learning planning, learning implementation, learning evaluation, and follow-up on learning outcomes as a basis for improving professionalism and educational quality.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



Research Hypothesis

- H1. There is a significant direct effect of certification on teacher work motivation in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) throughout Kendari City.
- H2. There is a significant direct effect of professionalism on teacher work motivation in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) throughout Kendari City.
- H3. There is a significant direct effect of work motivation on teacher performance in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) throughout Kendari City.
- H4. There is a significant direct effect of certification on teacher performance in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) throughout Kendari City.
- H5. There is a significant indirect effect of professionalism on teacher performance in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) throughout Kendari City.
- H6. There is a significant indirect effect of certification on teacher performance through teacher work motivation in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) throughout Kendari City.

Research Methods

This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the causal relationship between certification, professionalism, work motivation, and teacher performance. The study was conducted at Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) throughout Kendari City for six months, from October 2025 to March 2026. The study population consisted of 262 teachers spread across 12 Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah). A sample of 135 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula with a precision level of 6%, then distributed proportionally across each Madrasah through a proportionate random sampling technique. The research variables consisted of certification (X₁) and professionalism (X₂) as independent variables, work motivation (Y) as a mediating variable, and teacher performance (Z) as the dependent variable.

Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-level Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The research instrument was developed based on the indicators of each variable: certification, which encompasses capacity building, professional recognition, economic benefits, and encouragement of self-development; professionalism, which encompasses pedagogical, personality, professional, and social competencies; and teacher performance, which encompasses teacher performance. Work motivation, which refers to Maslow's hierarchy of needs; and teacher performance, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of learning. All instruments were structured

in the form of positive and negative statements to obtain objective data regarding respondents' perceptions of each research construct.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe data characteristics using mean, median, mode, range, standard deviation, and percentage values. Furthermore, hypothesis testing was carried out using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) included outer loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), discriminant validity, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability. Evaluation of the structural model (inner model) was conducted using R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Hypothesis testing was based on path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and direct and indirect effects (bootstrapping) to test the mediating role of work motivation.

Results And Discussion

Convergent Validity Test

Table 1 Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	Outer Loading	Outer Loading Limits	Decision
Certification (X1)	X1.1	0.795	0,70	Valid
	X1.2	0.871	0,70	Valid
	X1.3	0.783	0,70	Valid
	X1.4	0.848	0,70	Valid
Professionalism (X2)	X2.1	0.847	0,70	Valid
	X2.2	0.835	0,70	Valid
	X2.3	0.858	0,70	Valid
	X2.4	0.848	0,70	Valid
Motivation (Z)	Z.1	0.853	0,70	Valid
	Z.2	0.886	0,70	Valid
	Z.3	0.843	0,70	Valid
	Z.4	0.890	0,70	Valid
	Z.5	0.888	0,70	Valid
Performance (Y)	Y.1	0.884	0,70	Valid
	Y.2	0.869	0,70	Valid
	Y.3	0.922	0,70	Valid
	Y.4	0.876	0,70	Valid

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

Based on the table above, all indicators in the Certification, Professionalism, Work Motivation, and Teacher Performance variables have loading factor values ≥ 0.70 , thus being declared valid. These results indicate that all indicators accurately represent the variable constructs and meet convergent validity criteria, making them suitable for use in further analysis.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

The output of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) estimation results shows that a variable is valid if its AVE value is > 0.50 . The AVE results from the Convergent Validity test can be seen in the following table:

Table 2 Results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value Test

	AVE value	Outer Loading Limits	Decision
Teacher Performance	0.788	0,50	Valid
Work Motivation	0.761	0,50	Valid
Professionalism	0.728	0,50	Valid
Certification	0.681	0,50	Valid

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

Based on the table above, all variables in this study—Certification, Professionalism, Work Motivation, and Teacher Performance—have an AVE value > 0.50 , thus all variables are declared valid. This result indicates that each variable is able to

explain more than half of the variance in its indicators, meaning the research instrument has met the requirements for convergent validity and is suitable for use in further analysis.

Validity of Fit Model

Table 3 Model Fit Test Results

Parameter	Rule of Thumb	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Information
SRMR	< 0,10	0,050	0,050	Fit
d_ ULS	> 0,05	0,379	0,379	Fit
d_ G	> 0,05	0,236	0,236	Fit
Chi-Square	χ^2 statistik $\geq \chi^2$ table	181,814	181,814	Fit
NFI	Approaching the value 1	0,894	0,894	Fit

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.050 (<0.10) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.894 indicate that the model has a good level of fit with the data, thus meeting the goodness of fit criteria (Henseler et al., 2014).

R Square (R²) Test

Table 4 Results of R Square (r²) Values

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Information
Teacher Performance	0.678	0.670	Strong
Work Motivation	0.553	0.547	Strong

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

The analysis results show that the Adjusted R-Square value for Work Motivation is 0.547 and Teacher Performance is 0.670. These findings indicate that the model is able to explain 54.7% of the variation in Work Motivation and 67.0% of the variation in Teacher Performance, so the structural model (inner model) has strong explanatory power.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis		Original Sample	P Values	Information
H1	$X1 \rightarrow Z$	0,464	0,000	Significant
H2	$X2 \rightarrow Z$	0,417	0,000	Significant
H3	$Z \rightarrow Y$	0,750	0,000	Significant
H4	$X1 \rightarrow Y$	-0,073	0,240	Not Significant
H5	$X2 \rightarrow Y$	0,174	0,002	Significant
H6	$X1 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	0,348	0,000	Significant
H7	$X2 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	0,313	0,000	Significant

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2026

The Effect of Certification on Work Motivation

The test results show that Certification has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation with an original sample value of 0.464, a T-Statistic of 8.456 > 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted. This finding indicates that the better the implementation of teacher certification, the higher the teacher's work motivation. Certification not only impacts financial aspects but also encourages teachers to be more committed and enthusiastic in carrying out their professional duties.

The Effect of Professionalism on Work Motivation

The test results show that Professionalism has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation with an original sample value of 0.417, a T-Statistic of 7.472 > 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) is accepted. These

findings indicate that teachers with a high level of professionalism tend to have better work motivation, as professional awareness encourages teachers to continuously improve their quality and provide their best in the learning process.

The Effect of Work Motivation on Teacher Performance

The test results indicate that Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Teacher Performance (Z), with an original sample value of 0.750, a T-Statistic of $13.931 > 1.96$, and a P-Value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis (H5) is accepted. The coefficient value of 0.750 is the highest among all paths in the model, indicating that Work Motivation is the most dominant factor in determining Teacher Performance. This confirms that teachers with high work motivation will demonstrate significantly better performance in carrying out their professional duties and responsibilities.

The Effect of Certification on Teacher Performance

The test results indicate that certification does not have a direct, significant effect on teacher performance, with an original sample value of -0.073 , a T-statistic of $1.175 < 1.96$, and a P-value of $0.240 > 0.05$. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H4) is rejected. This finding indicates that certification alone does not automatically improve teacher performance directly. The effect of certification on teacher performance appears to be more indirect, primarily through increased work motivation before impacting performance improvement.

The Effect of Professionalism on Teacher Performance

The test results indicate that professionalism has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with an original sample value of 0.174, a T-statistic of $3.045 > 1.96$, and a P-value of $0.002 < 0.05$. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is accepted. This finding proves that teacher professionalism contributes directly to improved performance. Professional teachers have high competence, dedication, and responsibility so that they are able to produce optimal performance in the educational process.

The Effect of Certification on Teacher Performance through Work Motivation

The test results show that certification has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation (Y), with an original sample value of 0.348, a T-statistic of $6.847 > 1.96$, and a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis (H6) is accepted. This finding proves that work motivation significantly mediates the effect of certification on teacher performance. Although certification does not directly affect teacher performance, it is evident that certification can increase work motivation, which ultimately has a positive impact on teacher performance.

The Effect of Professionalism on Teacher Performance through Work Motivation

The test results show that professionalism has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through work motivation, with an original sample value of 0.313, a T-statistic of $6.841 > 1.96$, and a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis (H7) is accepted. These findings demonstrate that work motivation can significantly mediate the influence of professionalism on teacher performance. This means that high levels of professionalism not only directly impact performance but also indirectly, by first increasing teacher work motivation.

Conclusion And Suggestions

This study proves that certification and professionalism have a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Kendari City. Work motivation is also proven to be the most dominant factor in improving teacher performance. Professionalism has a positive and significant direct effect on teacher performance, while certification does not have a direct effect on performance. However, certification can improve teacher performance through work motivation as a mediating variable, indicating that the benefits of certification will be more optimal if it can increase teacher enthusiasm, commitment, and responsibility in carrying out their professional duties. In addition, work motivation also mediates the effect of professionalism on teacher performance, so that professionalism not only improves performance directly but also through increased work motivation. Thus, work motivation is the main mechanism that bridges the influence of certification and professionalism on improving teacher performance.

Madrasahs and policy makers need to optimize the implementation of the certification program by strengthening post-certification coaching, giving awards, and developing teacher professionalism on an ongoing basis in order to increase work motivation and teacher performance. Madrasah heads are also expected to create a conducive work environment, provide support for competency development, and build an appreciation system that is able to maintain teacher motivation. For future researchers, it is recommended to develop the research model by adding other variables that have the potential to influence

teacher performance, such as madrasa head leadership, organizational culture, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or work environment. Future research can also expand the research object to other educational levels or different regions and use a longitudinal or mixed methods approach to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence teacher performance.

Relevance And Implications

The results of this study are highly relevant to efforts to improve the quality of education, particularly in Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High Schools), as they demonstrate that work motivation is the primary factor linking certification and professionalism to teacher performance. These findings reinforce Human Capital Theory, which positions certification and professional development as a form of investment in human resources, while also supporting motivational theory, which explains the importance of internal drive in achieving optimal performance. Therefore, improving teacher quality is not sufficient through certification alone; it must also be carried out through strengthening professionalism and strategies that can continuously increase work motivation so that the goal of improving the quality of education can be optimally achieved.

Practically, this research has implications for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, madrasah principals, and education administrators to design policies that are not only oriented towards increasing the number of certified teachers, but also on post-certification development, professional competency development, and the creation of a work environment that can increase teacher motivation. Continuous training programs, performance-based reward systems, professional mentoring, and periodic evaluations need to be optimized so that the benefits of certification are truly reflected in improved teacher performance. Thus, human resource development policies in Madrasah Aliyah environments can be implemented more effectively, sustainably, and oriented towards improving the quality of learning.

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