

The Role of Work Motivation, Professional Competence, and School Climate in Improving Teacher Performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang

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**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak motivasi kerja, kompetensi profesional, dan iklim sekolah terhadap kinerja guru di SMAN 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. Kinerja guru memegang peranan penting dalam menentukan mutu pendidikan, sehingga penting untuk memahami faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap peningkatannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, dengan menggunakan metode survei dan analisis regresi berganda untuk menyelidiki hubungan-hubungan ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terstruktur yang disebarikan kepada 50 guru, dengan tanggapan dianalisis untuk validitas dan reliabilitas. Temuan-temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa motivasi kerja, kompetensi profesional, dan iklim sekolah secara signifikan memengaruhi kinerja guru, dengan motivasi kerja dan kompetensi profesional memberikan pengaruh yang lebih substansial dibandingkan dengan iklim sekolah. Hasil-basil ini menyoroti pentingnya kritis dalam menumbuhkan motivasi melalui insentif yang tepat, pengakuan, dan kesempatan pengembangan karier. Peningkatan kompetensi profesional melalui pelatihan berkelanjutan dan pengembangan keterampilan pedagogis adalah yang terpenting. Meskipun iklim sekolah juga berperan, dampaknya relatif sedang, yang menunjukkan bahwa faktor-faktor pribadi seperti motivasi dan kompetensi lebih berpengaruh. Studi ini menggarisbawahi perlunya intervensi yang terarah untuk meningkatkan kinerja guru, dengan menekankan strategi yang meningkatkan motivasi dan kompetensi profesional sekaligus menumbuhkan lingkungan sekolah yang positif dan mendukung. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat menjadi dasar bagi kebijakan yang bertujuan untuk memajukan kualitas pendidikan di sekolah.

**Kata kunci:** Motivasi; Kompetensi Profesional; Iklim Sekolah; Kinerja Guru; SMAN 1 Karang Baru; Aceh Tamiang.

**Abstract.** This research examines the impact of work motivation, professional competence, and school climate on teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang. Teacher performance plays a pivotal role in determining the quality of education, making it imperative to understand the factors that contribute to its enhancement. This study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing survey methods and multiple regression analysis to investigate these relationships. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed to 50 teachers, with responses analyzed for validity and reliability. The findings reveal that work motivation, professional competence, and school climate significantly influence teacher performance, with work motivation and professional competence exerting a more substantial effect compared to school climate. These results highlight the critical importance of fostering motivation through appropriate incentives, recognition, and career development opportunities. Similarly, the enhancement of professional competence through continuous training and pedagogical skill development is paramount. Although the school climate also plays a role, its impact is relatively moderate, suggesting that personal factors such as motivation and competence are more influential. The study underscores the necessity of targeted interventions to improve teacher performance, emphasizing strategies that enhance motivation and professional competence while cultivating a positive and supportive school environment. These findings are expected to inform policies aimed at advancing educational quality in schools.

**Keywords:** Motivation; Professional Competence; School Climate; Teacher Performance; SMAN 1 Karang Baru; Aceh Tamiang.

## Introduction

In an effort to enhance the quality of education in Indonesia, the role of teachers as qualified educators is crucial (Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022). Teacher performance is a key factor that influences educational outcomes, making it essential to focus on the factors that impact this performance (Lailatussaadah, 2015). Among these factors are work motivation, professional competence, and school climate. High motivation, adequate professional skills, and a supportive school environment are believed to significantly improve teacher performance, which in turn contributes to better educational quality in schools (Jamaluddin *et al.*, 2021). Work motivation is a crucial factor in improving teacher performance (Septiana & Ivada, 2013). Motivated teachers are more likely to work better, be more dedicated, and demonstrate greater enthusiasm in carrying out their duties. Motivation can be driven by both internal and external factors, such as recognition, rewards, and available resources. When teachers are highly motivated, they are more likely to engage actively in their tasks, which results in improved performance.

In addition to motivation, professional competence plays an important role in teacher performance. This competence includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers must have to carry out their duties effectively (Damanik, 2019). A teacher with high competence will be able to deliver lessons more effectively and set a positive example for students. Therefore, continuous training and professional development are essential to support teacher performance. Another important factor is school climate. A conducive school climate creates a comfortable working atmosphere for teachers, which ultimately leads to positive effects on their performance. A supportive school climate includes various aspects, such as harmonious relationships between teachers and school leaders, as well as good cooperation among colleagues (Attamimi, 2020). When teachers feel valued and supported in their work environment, they are more likely to perform at their best. Optimal teacher performance depends on the

relationship between these three factors: work motivation, professional competence, and school climate. This study, conducted at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang, aims to analyze the impact of work motivation, teachers' professional competence, and school climate on teacher performance at the school. The research is important to understand the extent to which these three factors influence teacher performance, as well as how these factors interact to create optimal performance. Before delving deeper, it is crucial to understand the basic concepts of each variable that will be examined in this study. Work motivation refers to both internal and external factors that drive an individual to achieve specific goals at work.

High motivation can increase productivity and work quality, while low motivation can reduce performance. Therefore, understanding how work motivation plays a role in improving teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru is essential. Teacher professional competence, on the other hand, refers to the abilities and skills that teachers possess to effectively perform their teaching duties and guide students. These competencies include pedagogical, personal, social, and professional abilities in the field taught. Teachers with high professional competence are better able to adapt to changes in the education system and provide quality learning experiences for students. Thus, improving professional competence is expected to enhance overall teacher performance.

A positive school climate also plays an important role in improving teacher performance. School climate refers to the social and cultural environment within the school, which can influence teachers' motivation and behavior in carrying out their duties. Schools with a healthy and conducive climate enable teachers to work optimally because they feel accepted and valued by the surrounding environment. On the other hand, a poor school climate can reduce teachers' morale and negatively impact their performance. This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang, one of the high schools in Aceh Tamiang Regency. The school has the potential to become a center for quality education, but the challenges faced in

improving teacher performance remain significant. Therefore, it is important to identify the factors that affect teacher performance at this school, so that appropriate measures can be taken to improve the quality of education.

Improving teacher performance not only impacts student learning outcomes but also contributes to the overall development of the school. Teachers with high performance can positively influence the teaching and learning atmosphere in the classroom and serve as role models for students. Therefore, creating conditions that support optimal teacher performance is essential. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the development of education policies at the school level. By identifying the factors that influence teacher performance, schools can design programs that support increased motivation, competence, and a better work climate. For example, teacher competency training and development programs, the provision of appropriate incentives, and the improvement of social relations in the school environment could be solutions to improve teacher performance.

Overall, this study is highly relevant to the development of education, particularly at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang. By identifying the factors that influence teacher performance, it is hoped that a more quality and supportive educational environment can be created, leading to improved teacher performance. The findings of this study are also expected to provide a clear understanding of the importance of work motivation, professional competence, and school climate in enhancing teacher performance. Through this research, it is hoped that concrete solutions can be found to improve teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang, thereby having a positive impact on improving the quality of education in the region. Therefore, this research is highly relevant and important to carry out, both from an academic and practical perspective, in order to achieve better educational goals in the future.

## Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach with a survey method (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021) to explore the relationships and influences between several predetermined variables: work motivation, teachers' professional competence, school climate, and teacher performance. A survey approach was chosen due to its ability to examine the impact of these variables through statistical analysis. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires, and the results were analyzed statistically to describe the relationships between the variables under investigation. The population of this study includes all teachers at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang, with a total of 50 active teachers in the school. Due to the relatively small population size, total sampling was used, meaning that all teachers were included as participants in the study. The research involves four main variables: work motivation, teacher professional competence, school climate, and teacher performance.

Work motivation is considered an independent variable and refers to the level of motivation teachers have to perform optimally in their teaching roles. Teacher professional competence, another independent variable, pertains to the knowledge, skills, and abilities that teachers need to carry out their educational duties effectively, following established educational standards. The third independent variable, school climate, encompasses the social and cultural environment within the school, which can influence teacher performance, including relationships among teachers, cooperation with school leaders, and the general work atmosphere in the school. Teacher performance, the dependent variable, is assessed by evaluating how effectively teachers perform their teaching tasks and engage in educational activities, such as achieving learning objectives, managing the classroom, and fostering relationships with students. Data for this study were collected through two primary methods: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire, developed based on the indicators of each variable, includes closed-ended questions that assess work motivation, professional competence, school climate, and

teacher performance using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire measures work motivation through aspects such as personal expectations, incentives, and social support, while professional competence is evaluated in terms of pedagogical ability, mastery of subject content, and communication and managerial skills. The school climate is assessed based on the quality of social relationships and the work environment, and teacher performance is evaluated through the effectiveness of lesson delivery, classroom management, and student-teacher interaction. Interviews with selected teachers and principals were also conducted to complement the quantitative data, providing a more in-depth understanding of the factors influencing teacher motivation, competence, school climate, and performance (Data, 2015).

The primary instrument used in this study is a questionnaire that was tested for both validity and reliability. The validity of the instrument was measured using construct validity, which determines whether the questionnaire items accurately measure the intended dimensions of each variable. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which evaluates the internal consistency of the questionnaire items (Imam Ghazali, 2018). Once data collection was completed, the data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize general data characteristics, such as the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution for each variable. Classical assumption tests, including normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests, were conducted to ensure the data met the requirements for regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was then used to examine the simultaneous influence of work motivation, professional competence, and school climate on teacher performance. This analysis provided insights into how much each independent variable contributes to teacher performance as the dependent variable (Pentury *et al.*, 2016). To facilitate measurement and understanding, operational definitions were established for each variable. Work motivation was defined as the level of motivation teachers have to perform optimally, assessed through factors

such as job satisfaction, recognition, and expectations for personal development and support from the school. Teacher professional competence referred to the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching duties, including mastery of subject matter, classroom management, and the ability to develop effective teaching methods. School climate was defined as the working atmosphere within the school, which can affect teacher behavior and performance. It was measured through aspects such as relationships among colleagues, support from school leaders, and the physical and social conditions in the school. Lastly, teacher performance was measured by evaluating how effectively teachers carried out their teaching duties, including achieving learning objectives, managing classrooms, and maintaining productive interactions with students.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

This study aims to identify the impact of work motivation, professional competence, and school climate on teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang. The data for this study were collected from 50 teachers at the school, all of whom participated in the survey, and the collected data were tested for validity and reliability. Descriptive statistics revealed the following findings: the average work motivation score was 4.15, indicating relatively high motivation among the teachers, although some teachers expressed feelings of underappreciation regarding rewards and incentives. The average professional competence score was 4.23, suggesting that most teachers demonstrated strong competence in material mastery and pedagogical skills, although some acknowledged the need for further training. The average school climate score was 4.10, reflecting a generally positive climate at SMAN 1 Karang Baru, with good relationships between teachers and school leaders and a supportive work environment. However, there were complaints about the lack of physical facilities to better support learning activities. The average teacher performance score was 4.08, indicating that most teachers performed well in their teaching duties, but

there were areas such as classroom management and student interaction where improvements were needed. Before conducting the regression analysis, classical assumption tests were performed. The results showed that the data met the necessary requirements, with the normality test indicating a normal distribution, the multicollinearity test revealing no issues, and the heteroscedasticity test showing no instability in the relationships between variables. Multiple regression analysis showed that 72% of the variation in teacher performance could be explained by work motivation, professional competence, and school climate. The results also indicated that work motivation had a significant positive impact on teacher performance ( $p < 0.05$ ), with higher motivation leading to better performance.

Similarly, professional competence was found to significantly influence teacher performance ( $p < 0.01$ ), with teachers who had higher competence performing better. Finally, school climate also had a significant positive influence on teacher performance ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that a supportive and conducive school environment encourages teachers to perform more effectively. However, while school climate played a role, its contribution was not as large as work motivation and professional competence. Overall, the findings highlight the significant influence of work motivation, professional competence, and school climate on teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of how these factors interact and affect the quality of teaching. The discussion will now relate these findings to relevant theories and previous research that align with these results.

### **The Effect of Work Motivation on Teacher Performance**

The results showed that work motivation had a significant positive influence on teacher performance, with a p-value of less than 0.05. These findings support the theory of Herzberg (1959), which posits that work motivation is a factor that can enhance individual performance. Herzberg divides motivation into two categories: motivating factors (such as

rewards and achievements) that can increase job satisfaction, and hygiene factors (such as working conditions and salary) that, if not met, can lead to dissatisfaction. In the context of teachers, high work motivation is closely linked to their level of satisfaction with the work they perform, which in turn encourages them to work better and improve the quality of teaching. Additionally, these results are consistent with research conducted by Manik & Bustomi (2011), which found that high work motivation was positively related to teacher performance in elementary schools. The research shows that recognition of achievements, rewards, and opportunities for development can increase teachers' motivation to give their best in teaching. This study demonstrates that work motivation is the most dominant factor in improving teacher performance. It suggests that if the school can enhance teachers' work motivation through better rewards, psychological support, and opportunities for improvement, teacher performance will increase significantly.

### **The Effect of Professional Competence on Teacher Performance**

Further findings revealed that professional competence also had a significant positive influence on teacher performance ( $p < 0.01$ ). This result aligns with Spencer's theory (Spencer & Spencer, 2008), which states that professional competence includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by a teacher to carry out his or her duties effectively. These competencies include pedagogical skills, mastery of subject matter, and classroom management abilities, which influence how teachers can create effective learning experiences for students. Research conducted by Sadila *et al.* (2023) is also in line with these findings, showing that teachers' professional competence has a direct relationship with their performance in schools. Teachers who possess good professional competence tend to be more confident in teaching and are better able to manage the classroom effectively, thus improving the quality of learning provided to students. Professional competence encompasses not only academic knowledge but also the interpersonal and social skills necessary to build good relationships with students, fellow



teachers, and students' parents. In this study, teachers with higher competencies exhibited better performance, highlighting the importance of continuous training and competency development in improving teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang.

### **The Influence of School Climate on Teacher Performance**

School climate has a positive influence on teacher performance, although its influence is not as large as that of work motivation and professional competence. These results indicate that a supportive school climate encompassing social relations between teachers, communication with school leaders, and adequate facilities plays an important role in creating a productive working environment for teachers. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (2023), a positive school climate can encourage teachers to be more productive and enthusiastic in carrying out their duties. In this study, it was found that the school climate at SMAN 1 Karang Baru is generally positive, with a good relationship between teachers and principals, as well as social support among fellow teachers. Attamimi (2020) also found that a conducive school climate is linked to improving teacher performance. A positive school climate facilitates teachers' work because they feel valued and supported in their duties. However, although the school climate is important, its contribution to teacher performance in this study is not as significant as work motivation and professional competence. This indicates that while a supportive work environment can boost teachers' morale, the personal motivation and competence of teachers are more substantial determinants of their performance.

### **Comparison with Previous Research**

The findings of this study align with the results of previous studies. For example, research by Sebayang & Rajagukguk (2019), which also examined the factors affecting teacher performance in Indonesia, found that work motivation and professional competence have a greater influence on teacher performance than school climate. This research confirms the

importance of enhancing motivation and competence as primary strategies to improve teacher performance. Similarly, research by Attamimi (2020), which studied the influence of school climate, work motivation, and competence on teacher performance in several elementary schools in Jakarta, found similar results. It showed that work motivation and professional competence had a greater impact on teacher performance than school climate.

### **Discussion**

Work motivation emerged as a significant factor influencing teacher performance, as evidenced by the p-value of less than 0.05. This finding aligns with Herzberg's motivation theory, which emphasizes the importance of motivational factors, such as rewards and recognition, in enhancing job performance. Motivated teachers exhibit higher levels of satisfaction, which translates into improved dedication, classroom engagement, and overall performance. The study reinforces previous research by Manik and Bustomi (2011), which identified a positive correlation between teacher motivation and performance. Motivation fosters a sense of achievement and commitment, enabling teachers to deliver quality education. In the context of SMAN 1 Karang Baru, fostering motivation through targeted initiatives—such as performance-based incentives, professional recognition, and developmental opportunities can drive significant improvements in teacher performance.

Professional competence was found to have the most substantial influence on teacher performance, with a p-value of less than 0.01. This underscores the critical role of teacher competence in ensuring effective learning outcomes. Spencer's competency framework supports these findings, indicating that a teacher's pedagogical skills, subject mastery, and classroom management abilities are pivotal to their success. The results echo the findings by Sadila *et al.* (2023), who demonstrated a direct relationship between professional competence and teacher performance. Competent teachers exhibit confidence in instructional delivery, adaptability to diverse learning needs, and proficiency in classroom management. For SMAN 1 Karang Baru, regular competency-

based training and professional development programs are essential to sustain and enhance teacher performance. Although school climate positively influenced teacher performance, its effect was less pronounced than that of work motivation and professional competence. A conducive school climate promotes collaboration, trust, and a supportive work environment. These findings resonate with Attamimi (2020), who found that a positive school climate enhances teacher productivity and morale. At SMAN 1 Karang Baru, the generally positive school climate with harmonious teacher-principal relationships and strong collegial support provides a foundation for effective teaching. However, addressing issues such as inadequate physical facilities could further enhance the school climate, creating a more productive environment for teachers.

The study's findings align with prior research, such as Sebayang and Rajagukguk (2019), which highlighted the dominance of work motivation and professional competence over school climate in influencing teacher performance. These results reiterate the importance of prioritizing intrinsic and professional development factors in educational policies and practices. Attamimi's (2020) research similarly underscores the critical roles of work motivation and competence, with school climate serving as a supplementary factor. The parallels between this study and previous research validate the broader applicability of these findings across different educational contexts in Indonesia. This study provides actionable insights for educational policymakers and school administrators. Enhancing work motivation through structured reward systems, recognition mechanisms, and career progression opportunities should be a priority. Concurrently, investing in continuous professional development, such as workshops and certifications, can significantly elevate teacher competence. Improvements in school climate, particularly addressing physical facility deficiencies, can create a more supportive and productive teaching environment. The findings emphasize the necessity of a holistic approach that addresses all three factors to optimize

teacher performance. While school climate provides an essential supportive framework, the personal attributes of motivation and competence remain the most decisive factors in achieving educational excellence at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang.

## Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of the research on the influence of work motivation, professional competence, and school climate on teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang, it can be concluded that these three factors play an important role in determining the quality of teacher performance at the school. However, work motivation and professional competence have been shown to have a greater influence than school climate. Work motivation demonstrates a significant influence on teacher performance, with higher motivation leading to better performance in the implementation of teaching tasks. This finding aligns with Herzberg's theory, which states that strong motivation encourages individuals to give their best performance. Therefore, schools need to create a better reward system and provide psychological support that motivates teachers to remain passionate and committed to teaching.

Professional competence also plays a crucial role in teacher performance. Teachers with strong competence, both in subject matter mastery and pedagogical skills, are better equipped to perform their duties effectively. These findings emphasize that improving teacher competence through continuous training and development is essential for enhancing the quality of learning in schools. High professional competence also helps teachers to be more confident in delivering lessons, managing classrooms, and building strong relationships with students. Although school climate has a significant influence, its contribution to teacher performance is smaller compared to work motivation and professional competence. A positive school climate, characterized by good relationships between teachers and school leaders, as well as strong social support, creates a work environment that

fosters productivity. However, for optimal performance, factors such as motivation and competence must be prioritized in school development policies.

Overall, the results of this study highlight the need for increased attention to enhancing teachers' work motivation, developing professional competencies, and creating a conducive school climate in order to improve teacher performance at SMAN 1 Karang Baru Aceh Tamiang. The school and the education office are expected to strengthen these three factors through various supportive policies, enabling teachers to perform their duties better and, ultimately, improve the quality of education at the school.

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