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Job Satisfaction of Private Teachers: The Role of Compensation, Work Environment, and Motivation from a Two-Factor Theory Perspective

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh kompensasi dan lingkungan kerja terhadap kepuasan kerja guru swasta dengan motivasi kerja sebagai variabel mediasi. Penelitian dilakukan pada guru swasta di wilayah Brebes, Tegal, dan Kota Tegal dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui penyebaran kuesioner kepada 186 responden dan dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kompensasi dan lingkungan kerja berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap motivasi kerja dan kepuasan kerja. Selain itu, motivasi kerja juga berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja serta memediasi hubungan antara faktor higienis dan kepuasan kerja. Temuan ini memperkuat relevansi Two-Factor Theory dalam menjelaskan dinamika kepuasan kerja di sektor pendidikan swasta. Implikasi dari penelitian ini mengarah pada pentingnya penyusunan kebijakan manajerial yang integratif antara dukungan struktural dan penguatan psikologis dalam upaya meningkatkan kesejahteraan dan kinerja guru swasta.

Kata Kunci: kompensasi, lingkungan kerja, motivasi kerja, kepuasan kerja, two-factor theory

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of compensation and work environment on job satisfaction among private school teachers, with work motivation serving as a mediating variable. The research was conducted in the regions of Brebes, Tegal, and Tegal City using a quantitative approach. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 186 respondents and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that both compensation and work environment have a positive and significant impact on work motivation and job satisfaction. Furthermore, work motivation significantly affects job satisfaction and mediates the relationship between hygiene factors and satisfaction. These findings reinforce the relevance of the Two-Factor Theory in explaining the dynamics of job satisfaction in the private education sector. The study implies the need for integrative managerial policies that combine structural support with psychological reinforcement to enhance the well-being and performance of private school teachers.

Keywords: compensation, work environment, work motivation, job satisfaction, two-factor theory

INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation for developing competitive and integrated human resources (Arteaga-Cedeno et al., 2025). Within the education system, teachers play a central role as the primary drivers of the learning process and the character



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builders of the nation's next generation. However, behind this strategic role lies the dynamics of welfare and the work environment that often do not favor educators, particularly private teachers. When working conditions are unfavorable, the resulting psychological stress can disrupt emotional stability, reduce motivation, and ultimately negatively impact teaching quality (Erdem & Koçyiğit, 2025).

The significant disparity in welfare between public and private teachers remains an unresolved issue in Indonesia. Private teachers, particularly those working in Brebes, Tegal, and Tegal City, often face inadequate salaries, limited work facilities, and contract systems that offer no long-term job security. This disparity not only impacts teachers' psychological well-being but also directly impacts the quality of education services in private schools. When teachers find themselves in less-than-ideal working conditions, their enthusiasm for service and teaching declines (Nurpibadi & Rulianti, 2023; Williams, 2022).

Meanwhile, efforts to improve the quality of education cannot be separated from teacher well-being and job satisfaction as key elements in the learning system (Darmawan et al., 2021; Fitriadi et al., 2022). Satisfied teachers will demonstrate loyalty, high teaching enthusiasm, and consistency in providing quality educational services (Kartiko et al., 2024; Maisyaroh & Rosyidi, 2024; Nurlaili et al., 2025). Unfortunately, studies that comprehensively examine private teacher job satisfaction, considering structural and psychological variables, are still limited, particularly at the local level. This indicates a scientific gap that needs to be filled.

In response to this, the theoretical approach used in this study refers to the Two-Factor Theory proposed by Herzberg (1974). This theory explains that job satisfaction is influenced not only by external factors but also by intrinsic motivation from within the individual. Herzberg divided two main groups of work factors: hygiene factors such as compensation and the work environment, and motivational factors such as achievement and self-development (Herzberg, 2017; Ser & Webber, 2024). If hygiene factors are not met, dissatisfaction will arise; however, if motivational factors are met, job satisfaction will increase significantly (Zhi et al., 2025).

Compensation is a key component of hygiene factors (Ohunakin & Olugbade, 2022). In the context of private teachers, compensation is often highlighted because it is not commensurate with the workload and responsibilities they carry. Compensation is not limited to a base salary but also includes allowances, incentives, and performance rewards (Quintero et al., 2024). According to Rojikkinnor et al. (2022), adequate compensation can increase employee loyalty and motivation, including teachers. Conversely, low and uncertain compensation can reduce morale and even encourage teachers to seek additional employment outside the teaching profession (Camelo & Ponczek, 2021; Thiele Strong & Corredor, 2025).

Furthermore, delays in salary payments and an unclear wage system are a source of psychological stress for private teachers. In many cases, teachers must seek additional income to meet basic needs, ultimately reducing their focus on teaching and learning. This situation reinforces the urgency of a fair, transparent, and sustainable compensation system, especially for private teachers in areas with minimal institutional support (Meyer et al., 2022; Naaman & Magnan, 2025).

In addition to compensation, the work environment also plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction. Herzberg categorized the work environment as a hygiene factor that serves to prevent dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 2017; Ståhl et al., 2025). An ideal work environment includes harmonious social relationships, adequate work facilities, a comfortable work atmosphere, and supportive leadership. Kim et al. (2025) stated that

a healthy work environment can reduce stress, increase emotional engagement, and strengthen overall job satisfaction.

However, in practice, many private teachers work in conditions that are far from ideal. They face limited resources, administrative pressures, and a lack of attention from school leaders. This can erode morale and motivation, impacting classroom performance. Therefore, creating a conducive work environment is not just a physical necessity, but also a form of respect for the teaching profession (Byun & Jeon, 2023).

Work motivation, within Herzberg's theoretical framework, falls under the category of motivational factors. This factor becomes crucial when teachers face limitations in the work environment and in compensation. Motivation enables individuals to remain productive and achievement-oriented even under challenging conditions (Van der Hauwaert et al., 2022; Wau, 2022; Yesilyurt et al., 2023) Amin et al. (2024) added that motivation stems from the need for achievement, power, and affiliation. In the context of teachers, motivation encourages innovation, capacity building, and perseverance in teaching.

Highly motivated teachers will continue to carry out their duties responsibly and creatively, even when facing external pressures. This makes work motivation a strategic intermediary variable in explaining how compensation and the work environment can indirectly influence job satisfaction (Abdul Aziz et al., 2024; Haeckl et al., 2024). Therefore, the role of motivation in teacher work systems cannot be ignored, especially for those in the private sector with various structural limitations.

Job satisfaction is the end result of a complex interaction between external conditions and internal motivation (Popoola & Fagbola, 2023). Ren et al. (2022) define job satisfaction as a positive emotional state arising from the assessment of job aspects. Satisfied teachers not only demonstrate high performance but are also loyal to the institution and demonstrate enthusiasm in interacting with students. Conversely, dissatisfaction can potentially lead to apathy, burnout, and even a desire to leave the profession (Wang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024).

In the proposed conceptual model, compensation and work environment are seen as having both direct and indirect influences on job satisfaction, through the mediation of work motivation. This relationship reflects the psychological complexity experienced by teachers in their work context. Therefore, this study was designed to empirically test this relationship model, thereby providing a comprehensive picture of the determinants of private teacher well-being. Against this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of compensation and work environment on private teacher job satisfaction in Brebes, Tegal, and Tegal City, both directly and through work motivation as a mediating variable. This research is expected to enrich the scientific body of knowledge in the field of educational human resource management and provide a basis for consideration for policymakers in designing strategies to improve private teacher well-being.

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical phenomena, the hypothesis in this study is formulated as follows:

H1: Compensation has a positive effect on the work motivation of private teachers.

H2: The work environment has a positive influence on the work motivation of private teachers.

H3: Compensation has a positive effect on job satisfaction of private teachers.

H4: The work environment has a positive influence on the job satisfaction of private teachers.

H5: Work motivation has a positive effect on private teacher job satisfaction.

H6: Compensation has a positive effect on private teacher job satisfaction through work motivation.

H7: The work environment has a positive influence on the job satisfaction of private teachers through work motivation.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey method as the primary data collection technique (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This approach was chosen because it provides an objective and measurable picture of the relationships between the variables studied: compensation, work environment, work motivation, and job satisfaction among private teachers. The survey technique allows researchers to obtain data directly from a large number of respondents, thus supporting the generalizability of research results to the relevant population (Bihu, 2021; Haque, 2022).

Primary data was collected through a closed-ended questionnaire structured based on indicators for each research variable. The questionnaire instrument was designed using a five-point Likert scale, with a rating range from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Prior to use, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability through a limited pilot test to ensure that the instrument was capable of accurately and consistently measuring the intended variables (Sharma, 2022).

The data sources in this study were private teachers teaching in Brebes Regency, Tegal Regency, and Tegal City. The study population included teachers from various levels of education, from kindergarten (TK), elementary school (SD), junior high school (SMP), to senior high school or vocational school (SMA/SMK). Sampling was conducted using a purposive sampling technique (Hossan et al., 2023), with criteria including: active teachers who have taught in private schools for at least one year, and willing to complete a complete questionnaire. The number of respondents used as a sample in this study was 186 private teachers, which was considered representative to describe the characteristics of the population.

The data collection process was conducted directly and indirectly (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The researchers directly distributed questionnaires to predetermined private schools. Meanwhile, the indirect method involved distributing questionnaires in digital format (Google Forms) through social media and online communication platforms to teachers who were difficult to reach physically. This combined approach was used to optimize the number and diversity of respondents while minimizing geographic barriers (Asensio & Revilla, 2022).

The collected data were then analyzed using path analysis techniques with the aid of SmartPLS version 4 statistical software. This analysis was chosen because it can test direct and indirect relationships between variables and accommodate models involving mediating variables. The analysis stages included testing the measurement model (outer model), testing the structural model (inner model), and testing hypotheses by considering the t-statistic value and path coefficient at a 5% significance level (Becker et al., 2022).

To ensure data validity and reliability, convergent validity tests were conducted using composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE). Furthermore, discriminant validity tests were used to ensure that each construct has specific characteristics that can be distinguished from other constructs (Hair et al., 2019). The interpretation of the analysis results was carried out by referring to the theory used, namely Two-Factor Theory, and comparing them with the results of relevant previous research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analyzing respondent characteristics is crucial for understanding the context and relevance of research data. These characteristics provide a demographic and

professional overview of the private teachers participating in the study. By analyzing aspects such as gender, age, income, education level, teaching qualifications, length of service, and teaching level, researchers can assess the representativeness of the data and strengthen the interpretation of the research results.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

No	Characteristics		Total	%
1	Gender	Man	74	39.8
		Woman	112	60.2
2	Age	20-30	84	45.2
		31-40	65	34.9
		>40	37	19.9
3	Income	<3 million	83	44.6
		>3 million	103	55.4
4	Level of education	D IV	37	19.9
		S1	149	80.1
5	Educator Qualifications	Certification	56	30.1
		Non-Certification	130	69.9
6	Length of work	<5 years	83	44.6
		5-10 years	65	34.9
		>10 years	38	20.4
7	Work place	Kindergarten	28	15.1
		Elementary	65	34.9
		School	56	30.1
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL		
		High School		
		School/Vocational School	37	19.9

Source: Data Processing Results 2025

The characteristics of the respondents in this study provide a comprehensive overview of the social and professional backgrounds of the participating private teachers. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female, at 112, or 60.2 percent, while 74 were male, or 39.8 percent. This composition reflects a general trend in education, particularly at the elementary and kindergarten levels, where female educators tend to outnumber male teachers.

The majority of respondents in this study were of productive age, with the largest proportion aged 20–30 (45.2%), followed by those aged 31–40 (34.9%), and the remainder over 40 (19.9%). This composition reflects the significant presence of young teachers, but still accompanied by a group of experienced teachers, which has the potential to create diverse work dynamics. In terms of income, more than half of respondents (55.4%) earned an income above Rp 3 million per month, while 44.6% earned less. This difference indicates a relevant financial gap in discussing compensation issues within the Two-Factor Theory framework, as it can influence perceptions of fairness and the level of job satisfaction of private teachers. In terms of qualifications, the majority of respondents (80.1%) had completed a bachelor's degree, while the remainder were D4 graduates (19.9%), indicating compliance with minimum academic standards, although opportunities for advancement remain open. However,

only 30.1% of respondents had obtained teacher certification, demonstrating limited access to professional recognition for private teachers.

Furthermore, respondents' tenure indicates that 44.6% were novice teachers with less than five years of experience, and 34.9% had between five and ten years of experience. This indicates that most teachers are in the early to mid-career stages, where expectations of career stability and development significantly influence their motivation and job satisfaction. In terms of teaching level, the composition of respondents was fairly even. Sixty-five (34.9%) taught in elementary schools, 56 (30.1%) in junior high schools, and 37 (19.9%) in senior high schools or vocational schools. The remaining 28 (15.1%) taught in kindergartens. This distribution indicates that this study covers a wide range of educational levels, allowing for a more comprehensive cross-level analysis. Overall, these characteristic data reflect the diversity of respondents' backgrounds and provide an important basis for understanding the relationship between compensation, work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction. This demographic variation also strengthens the external validity of the study and confirms that the findings obtained have broad relevance in the context of human resource management in education in the private sector.

Factor loading analysis is a crucial step in testing the validity of indicators against the constructs they represent in a measurement model. Factor loading values describe the strength of the relationship between each indicator and the latent variable. In this study, the cut-off value used was 0.70, meaning only indicators with values above this threshold are considered valid and suitable for use in the structural model.(Becker et al., 2022). Indicators with values below this limit are considered weak in representing the construct and need to be eliminated to maintain the accuracy of the research results.

Table 2. Factor Loadings

Indicator	Job satisfaction	Compensation	Work environment	Work motivation
K1.2		0.790		
K1.4		0.873		
K1.5		0.787		
KK1.1	0.806			
KK1.2	0.857			
KK1.4	0.812			
KK1.5	0.770			
LK1.2			0.830	
LK1.3			0.796	
LK1.5			0.722	
MK1.1				0.862
MK1.2				0.936
MK1.3				0.895

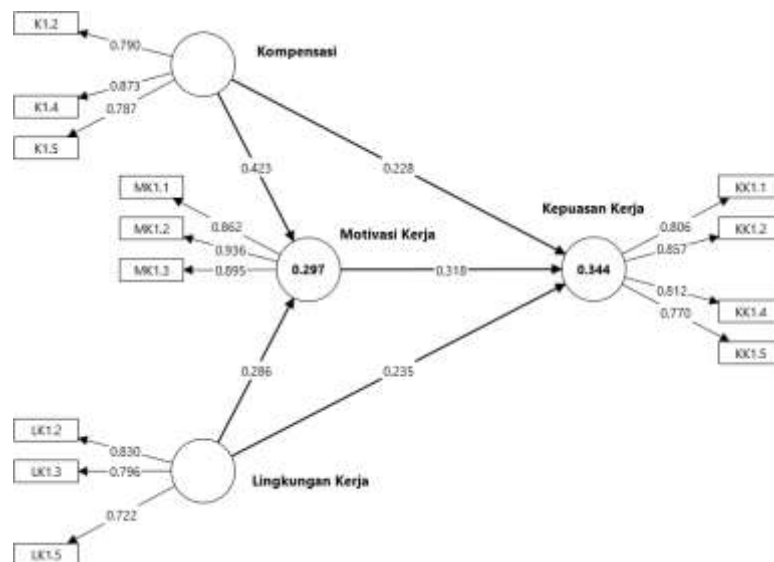


Figure 1. *Structural Model*

Based on the results in Table 2 (Factor Loadings) and Figure 1 (Structural Model), there are seven indicators that did not reach the minimum value of 0.70 and were therefore removed from the analysis model. These seven indicators are: K1, K3, KK3, LK1, LK4, MK4, and MK5. The removal of these indicators was done so that the remaining constructs have strong convergent validity and are able to reflect the variables more accurately. For example, indicators such as K1.2 (0.790), K1.4 (0.873), and K1.5 (0.787) indicate that the compensation dimension is well represented by the remaining indicators, after K1 and K3 were eliminated. A similar thing happened to the variables of job satisfaction, work environment, and work motivation, where the remaining indicators have strong factor loading values, including KK1.2 (0.857) and MK1.2 (0.936).

Analysis of instrument validity and reliability is an important foundation to ensure that the constructs used in this study truly represent the concepts to be measured. Based on Table 3, all variables in the model have an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.50 and a Composite Reliability (CR) above 0.70, indicating that the instrument meets the criteria for convergent validity and high internal reliability. For example, the work motivation variable has an AVE value of 0.807 and a CR of 0.926, indicating that this construct is well-defined and its indicators have excellent consistency.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test

Variables	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE	CA
Job satisfaction	0.841	0.885	0.659	0.828
Compensation	0.780	0.858	0.669	0.754
Work environment	0.706	0.827	0.615	0.689
Work motivation	0.884	0.926	0.807	0.880

CR: Composite Reliability; AVE : Average Variance Extracted; CA: Cronbach's alpha

Theoretically, the high construct validity of work motivation confirms that motivational elements such as achievement, responsibility, and recognition as formulated by Herzberg (1974) The Two-Factor Theory is well operationalized. In other words, motivation as an intrinsic factor in the theory is not only conceptually relevant

but also statistically robust in the context of private teachers in the study area. The same applies to compensation and work environment as hygiene factors, each of which shows adequate indicator consistency. High construct reliability indicates that teachers' perceptions of these external aspects are quite stable and can serve as a reliable basis for explaining job satisfaction.

Next, Table 4 presents the results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker approach. This test compares the square root of the AVE (diagonal values) with the correlation between variables. The results show that all diagonal values are higher than their horizontal and vertical correlations, indicating that each construct in the model can be empirically distinguished from the other constructs. (Becker et al., 2022). This discriminant validity is important in the context of Two-Factor Theory, because this theory emphasizes the existence of two groups of job satisfaction determinants that are psychologically and functionally different: hygiene factors (compensation, work environment) and motivational factors (work motivation). Therefore, the ability of the instrument to distinguish between these factors provides empirical validation of the structure of Herzberg's theory, which does not assume all satisfaction determinants are on a single linear spectrum.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variables	Job satisfaction	Compensation	Work environment	Work motivation
Job satisfaction	0.812			
Compensation	0.412	0.818		
Work environment	0.381	0.151	0.784	
Work motivation	0.506	0.466	0.350	0.898

Source: Data Processing Results 2025

Next, Table 5 presents the results of the hypothesis tests, all of which were statistically accepted ($p < 0.05$). In H1, compensation had a positive and significant effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.423$; $t = 7.052$; $p = 0.000$). This confirms that although compensation is considered a hygiene factor, in the context of private teachers facing vulnerable economic conditions, increased compensation can trigger psychological motivation to work more optimally. Similarly, in H2, the work environment was shown to have a significant effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.286$; $t = 4.590$; $p = 0.000$). A comfortable, supportive, and administratively stress-free work environment serves as a stimulus for teachers to maintain their enthusiasm and work ethic.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

	Variables	Original Sample (β)	T-statistics (t)	P-values (p)	Results
H1	Compensation → Work motivation	0.423	7,052	0,000	Accepted
H2	Work environment → Work motivation	0.286	4,590	0,000	Accepted
H3	Work motivation → Job satisfaction	0.318	4,515	0,000	Accepted

H4	Compensation → Job satisfaction	0.228	3,255	0.001	Accepted
H5	Work environment → Job satisfaction	0.235	3,367	0.001	Accepted
H6	Compensation → Work motivation → Job satisfaction	0.134	3,873	0,000	Accepted
H7	Work environment → Work motivation → Job satisfaction	0.091	3,252	0.001	Accepted

Testing H3 shows that work moti Source: Data Processing Results 2025

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vation has a direct influence on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.318$; $t = 4.515$; $p = 0.000$). This finding is in line with Herzberg's theory, where achievement, recognition, and responsibility are motivational elements that form the core of true job satisfaction. Meanwhile, in H4 and H5, compensation and work environment also have a direct influence on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.228$ and $\beta = 0.235$, respectively). This indicates that in practice, hygiene factors in private educational environments have a direct contribution to job satisfaction, not merely as a protective factor against dissatisfaction as Herzberg classically described.

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23
36
Mediation tests through H6 and H7 strengthen the role of work motivation as a psychological bridge connecting hygiene factors with job satisfaction. H6 shows that compensation influences job satisfaction through work motivation ($\beta = 0.134$; $t = 3.873$; $p = 0.000$), while H7 shows the influence of the work environment on job satisfaction through work motivation ($\beta = 0.091$; $t = 3.252$; $p = 0.001$). Both of these results support the concept of interdependence between external and internal factors described by Herzberg: when external work conditions are sufficiently supportive, space will be created for the growth of intrinsic motivation, which ultimately strengthens overall job satisfaction.

Thus, the results of this study not only support the statistically designed structural model but also provide strong theoretical justification for the dual structure in Two-Factor Theory. In the context of private teachers in areas such as Brebes, Tegal, and Tegal City who often face challenges in terms of welfare and institutional support, compensation and work environment are not merely administrative complements, but are an important foundation for the formation of sustainable motivation and job satisfaction. Therefore, an integrative managerial strategy needs to consider the synergy between hygiene and motivational factors in a balanced and contextual manner.

24 CONCLUSION

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Based on the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that job satisfaction among private teachers in Brebes, Tegal, and Tegal City is significantly influenced by compensation, work environment, and work motivation. Compensation and work environment, categorized as hygiene factors within the Two-Factor Theory framework, have been shown to not only prevent dissatisfaction but also trigger increased motivation and job satisfaction when optimally managed (Avisiena & Haryoto, 2024; Barriga Medina et al., 2024). This means that the role of hygiene factors in the context of

private teachers is not passive, but has the potential to directly and indirectly influence teachers' psychological well-being.

Work motivation, as a motivational factor, has been shown to have a strong influence on job satisfaction. Teachers who feel meaningful in their work, are valued for their contributions, and have opportunities for development tend to display positive attitudes toward their profession. This demonstrates that intrinsic motivation is a crucial catalyst for building loyalty and persistence in teaching, especially in a constrained work environment (Collie, 2023; Yang et al., 2022). These findings confirm the relevance of Two-Factor Theory in understanding the work behavior of private teachers comprehensively.

This study also shows that work motivation mediates the relationship between hygiene factors and job satisfaction. When compensation and the work environment are well managed, a psychological climate fostering intrinsic motivation is created. This mediation process demonstrates that a purely structural policy approach will not be optimal without addressing the psychological aspects of teachers (Erdem & Koçyiğit, 2025). Therefore, integrative and holistic interventions are essential for fostering sustainable workplace well-being.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that private educational institution managers seriously consider teacher compensation and the work environment. A fair, timely, and performance-based payroll system should be developed as a way to recognize teachers' contributions. Furthermore, creating a physically and emotionally healthy work environment, with strong managerial support, will foster a sense of security and comfort in carrying out educational tasks. This structural support is a crucial foundation for building sustainable work motivation.

On the other hand, self-development programs, regular training, and non-material appreciation systems also need to be designed to strengthen teachers' intrinsic motivation. Private schools need to treat teachers not merely as implementers of the curriculum, but as strategic partners in developing educational quality. By establishing a balanced system of external support and internal encouragement, teachers will be better able to deliver high-quality and transformative learning processes. Ultimately, teacher well-being is not merely a personal issue, but a key foundation for creating equitable and sustainable education.

This study has several limitations that require consideration in interpreting the results and formulating policies. One major limitation lies in its limited geographic scope within Brebes, Tegal, and Tegal City, making the results inconclusive to the context of private teachers in other regions with differing characteristics. Furthermore, the quantitative approach employed did not fully explore the psychological dynamics and social contexts that influence teacher job satisfaction. For future research, it is recommended that studies be conducted with a broader scope and employ mixed methods to more comprehensively capture the empirical nuances and personal narratives of teachers. The use of additional variables such as workload, principal leadership, or organizational climate could also enrich the conceptual model in understanding the factors that influence teacher well-being comprehensively.

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