

Implementation Of Influencework Engagementin Mediating Paternalistic Leadership And Professional Development Programs On Teacher Performance

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ABSTRACT

Teacher performance is a crucial factor in determining the success of education in schools. However, teacher performance at State Vocational High Schools in Serang City still faces various challenges, such as suboptimal quality of task implementation, work discipline, and teacher engagement in carrying out professional responsibilities. This study aims to analyze the influence of paternalistic leadership and professional development programs on teacher performance, examine the influence of both variables on work engagement, analyze the influence of work engagement on teacher performance, and examine the role of work engagement as a mediating variable. The study used a quantitative approach with an associative method. The study population was 85 teachers, with a saturated sampling technique so that the entire population was sampled. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 4.0. The results showed that paternalistic leadership and professional development programs had a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. Professional development programs also had a positive and significant effect on work engagement. Conversely, paternalistic leadership did not have a significant effect on work engagement, while work engagement did not have a significant effect on teacher performance. Furthermore, work engagement was unable to mediate the influence of paternalistic leadership or professional development programs on teacher performance. This finding suggests that teacher performance improvements are more directly influenced by the quality of principal leadership and the implementation of professional development programs than by work engagement mechanisms.

INTRODUCTION

Management is the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling all organizational resources to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. In the education sector, human resource management is a strategic factor because school success is largely determined

by the quality of teachers, the primary implementers of the learning process. Teacher management is not only oriented towards fulfilling administrative requirements but also towards continuously improving competency, motivation, work engagement, and performance. A modern management approach positions teachers as organizational assets that must be developed through effective leadership, a conducive work environment, and ongoing professional development programs. Rosalina et al. (2023) assert that *work engagement* is one of the main factors capable of improving the well-being, productivity, and performance of individuals in organizations, while Gürbüz et al. (2023) showed that work engagement contributes to the sustainability of employee performance by increasing enthusiasm and dedication to work.

In education, teacher performance is a key indicator of a school's success in achieving learning objectives and improving educational quality. High-performing teachers are able to effectively implement learning processes, develop learning innovations, and contribute to student achievement. Conversely, low teacher performance will impact the quality of educational services and school competitiveness. Prasetyo and Widodo (2023) explain that teacher performance is closely related to the success of achieving educational objectives, while Yuliana and Nugraha (2024) state that creativity, commitment, and organizational support are important determinants in improving teacher performance. Therefore, improving teacher performance is a primary focus in educational management development, particularly in vocational high schools that are expected to produce work-ready graduates.

State Vocational High Schools (SMK) in Serang City are vocational educational institutions that play a strategic role in preparing competent human resources to meet the needs of the business and industrial world. These demands require teachers to possess professional competence, adaptability to technological developments, and a strong commitment to carrying out their duties. However, empirical conditions indicate that teacher performance at several state vocational high schools in Serang City is still suboptimal. The results of a 2025 pre-survey showed that work quality indicators achieved 78%, punctuality 76%, work initiative 79%, and responsibility 79%, while work quantity and work discipline each only reached 65%. This data indicates that there is still a gap between expected performance targets and actual performance, requiring a more comprehensive performance improvement strategy.

One of the factors suspected of influencing teacher performance is paternalistic leadership, professional development programs, and *work engagement*. Paternalistic leadership emphasizes a balance between assertiveness, caring, and moral example, thus creating a harmonious relationship between leaders and teachers. Halawa et al. (2025) found that paternalistic leadership positively influences teacher performance improvement, while Muhammed et al. (2024) explained that this leadership style can build a positive organizational environment through mutual trust. On the other hand, professional development programs are also an important instrument in improving teacher competency through training, continuing education, and career development. Chudgar and Choi (2026) emphasized that the success of professional development is greatly influenced by organizational support, while Muzakky et al. (2025) showed that professional development is an effective strategy in improving teacher quality and performance. In addition to these two factors, *work engagement* is seen as a psychological mechanism that strengthens the relationship between human resource management practices and improved performance.

Bakker and Demerouti (2025) through the development of the theory *Job Demands-Resources* explains that work engagement is the result of the interaction between organizational resources and individual motivation which ultimately improves work performance.

A survey at Serang City State Vocational High Schools revealed several issues that require serious attention. Internal observation data showed that approximately 25% of teachers were still late more than three times a month, the average attendance rate was only 88%, still below the school standard of 95%. Approximately 30% of teachers received a performance rating of "adequate," and 40% of teachers were assessed as lacking initiative in completing their work. Furthermore, the internal survey also showed an average score of *work engagement* A score of 3.1 on a scale of 5 indicates a low emotional attachment of teachers to their work. This indicates that some teachers lack the enthusiasm, dedication, and focus to carry out their professional duties, impacting work productivity and the quality of educational services.

This phenomenon demonstrates that improving teacher performance cannot be achieved solely through administrative policies, but requires a more comprehensive approach to human resource management. Implementing paternalistic leadership that builds a sense of security and trust, coupled with professional development programs focused on improving competency, is expected to be more effective if it can improve *work engagement* teachers. However, research integrating these three variables in the context of vocational education, particularly in Serang City State Vocational High Schools, is still relatively limited.

A number of studies increasingly strengthen the importance of the relationship between leadership, professional development, *work engagement*, and teacher performance. Kartadiharja (2023) proved that *work engagement* has a positive relationship with teacher performance, so the higher the work engagement, the better the performance achievement. Research by Pribadhi and Sulisty (2025) shows that *work engagement* acts as a mechanism that strengthens the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance. Meanwhile, Perera and Vîrgă (2024) explain that teachers who have a high level of *work engagement* high tend to be more satisfied with their profession because of the low level of *burnout* Chudgar and Choi's (2026) research also confirmed that the effectiveness of professional development programs is greatly influenced by organizational support, thus improving teacher competence and performance. Furthermore, Rahayu (2025) demonstrated through a systematic review that paternalistic leadership is an effective leadership approach in building trust, commitment, and subordinate performance. These findings provide a strong empirical basis for the integration of paternalistic leadership, professional development programs, and *work engagement* worthy of being tested in explaining the improvement of teacher performance at State Vocational Schools in Serang City.

Based on the results of previous research reviews, there are still several *research gap* which needs further study. Most studies only examine the direct effects of paternalistic leadership, professional development programs, or *work engagement* on teacher performance separately. Research that places *work engagement* as a mediating variable is still relatively limited, particularly in simultaneously linking paternalistic leadership and professional development programs. Furthermore, empirical studies in the context of public vocational schools, particularly in Serang City, are still very limited, so research that can fill this gap is needed.

Novelty this research lies in the development of a conceptual model that integrates paternalistic leadership and professional development programs as organizational factors with *work engagement* as a mediating variable in explaining teacher performance improvement. This study also presents a new empirical context in Serang City State Vocational High Schools, which have vocational education characteristics different from those of previous research. The results are expected to enrich the development of human resource management theory in education and serve as a basis for formulating policies for sustainable teacher performance improvement.

Paternalistic leadership is seen as capable of improving teacher performance through a combination of assertiveness, concern, and moral example provided by the principal. Teachers who receive attention, guidance, and protection from leaders will have higher loyalty, motivation, and responsibility in carrying out their professional duties. Findings by Halawa et al. (2025) indicate that paternalistic leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance, while Muhammed et al. (2024) explain that paternalistic leadership can create an organizational environment that supports improved performance.

H₁: It is suspected that paternalistic leadership has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance at State Vocational Schools in Serang City.

Professional development programs provide teachers with opportunities to improve their competencies, skills, and pedagogical abilities through training and continuing education. Improved competencies will enhance the effectiveness of learning and the quality of educational services. Chudgar and Choi (2026) state that organizational support for professional development is a critical factor in successfully improving performance, while Muzakky et al. (2025) emphasize that professional development is an effective strategy for improving teacher performance.

H₂: It is suspected that the professional development program has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance at Serang City State Vocational Schools.

Paternalistic leadership creates harmonious working relationships through the attention, protection, and trust given to teachers. A supportive work environment will increase teacher enthusiasm, dedication, and engagement in carrying out their duties. Rahayu (2025) explains that paternalistic leadership can build commitment and loyalty among subordinates, while Tang et al. (2021) proves that paternalistic leadership increases subordinate trust by fulfilling psychological needs, thus strengthening teachers' morale. *work engagement*.

H₃: It is suspected that paternalistic leadership has a positive and significant influence on work engagement at Serang City State Vocational School.

Professional development programs provide teachers with opportunities to develop competencies while increasing their self-confidence and appreciation for their profession. Organizational support for career development strengthens teachers' emotional attachment to their work. Chudgar and Choi (2026) explain that the success of professional development is strongly influenced by organizational support, while Njenga (2023) states that teacher participation in professional development can increase commitment and work engagement.

H₄: It is suspected that the professional development program has a positive and significant impact on work engagement at Serang City State Vocational School.

Work engagement is a positive psychological condition that encourages teachers to work with enthusiasm, dedication, and concentration, resulting in optimal performance. Teachers who have a high level of...*engagement* High students tend to be more productive, innovative,

and responsible in carrying out learning tasks. Rosalina et al. (2023) stated that *work engagement* is the main driver of improving employee performance, while Perera and Vîrgă (2024) explain that engaged teachers have higher job satisfaction and better performance.

H₅: Allegedly work engagement has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at State Vocational Schools in Serang City.

Paternalistic leadership is thought to improve teacher performance through increased *work engagement*. The principal's attention, concern, and exemplary behavior can foster a sense of security, trust, and commitment to the organization among teachers. This increases teacher enthusiasm and dedication, which in turn improves performance. Pribadhi and Sulisty (2025) demonstrated that *work engagement* able to mediate the relationship between leadership and performance, while Schaufeli (2021) explains that effective leadership is the main factor in forming *work engagement*.

H₆: Allegedly work engagement has a positive and significant influence in mediating paternalistic leadership on teacher performance at State Vocational Schools in Serang City.

Professional development programs are expected to improve teacher performance through increased *work engagement*. Opportunities to participate in training and competency development will improve teachers' abilities, self-confidence, and commitment to their work. Teachers who feel they are developing will demonstrate greater dedication and work engagement, resulting in more optimal performance. Hakanen and Kaltiainen (2026) explain that *work engagement* increase motivation and work resilience, while Gürbüz et al. (2023) showed that *work engagement* contribute to continuous performance improvement.

H₇: Allegedly work engagement has a positive and significant influence in mediating professional development programs on teacher performance at State Vocational Schools in Serang City.

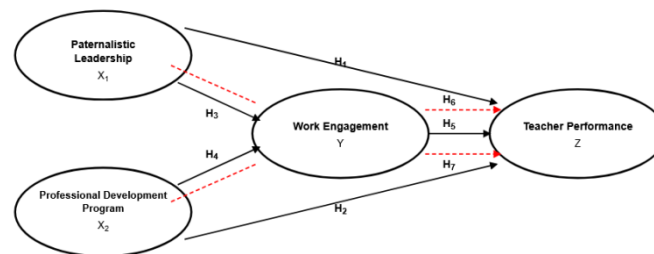


Figure 1. Framework of thinking

METHOD

Research methods are scientific guidelines that systematically guide the process of collecting, processing, analyzing, and interpreting data. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to analyze the influence of paternalistic leadership and professional development programs on teacher performance through *work engagement* as a mediating variable at State Vocational Schools in Serang City.

Place and Time of Research

The research was conducted in all state vocational schools in Serang City, Banten Province. This location was chosen because it has characteristics that are in line with the research objectives, particularly regarding variations in paternalistic leadership of school principals, implementation of professional development programs, and the level of *work*

engagement teachers. Furthermore, State Vocational High Schools (SMK Negeri) play a role in preparing graduates who meet the needs of the workforce, making improving teacher performance an important aspect to examine. The research was conducted over four months, from April to July 2026. Activities included instrument development, licensing, data collection, data processing and analysis using SmartPLS 4, and research report preparation. Data collection was adjusted to the school's academic schedule to avoid disrupting the learning process and to allow respondents to provide objective answers.

Research methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The quantitative approach was chosen because it aims to objectively examine the relationship between variables based on numerical data analyzed using statistical techniques. This research is explanatory research, namely research that aims to explain the causal relationship between paternalistic leadership and professional development programs on teacher performance through...*work engagement* as a mediating variable. Data were obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents based on the indicators of each research variable so that the results could be used to test the formulated hypotheses.

Research Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all 85 active teachers at eight public vocational schools in Serang City. The entire population was selected as respondents because they were directly involved in the principal's leadership, professional development programs, and teacher performance. The sampling technique used was a questionnaire *saturated sampling* or *total sampling*, that is, all members of the population are sampled. This technique is appropriate because the population is relatively small, allowing for an accurate picture of the situation.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through questionnaires, documentation, and limited observation to obtain complete and objective information. The questionnaire was compiled based on indicators of paternalistic leadership, professional development programs, and *work engagement*, and teacher performance. The research instrument used a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-level Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Each indicator was developed based on theory and previous research to systematically and validly measure respondents' perceptions in accordance with the research objectives.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study uses an approach *Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS) with the help of the SmartPLS 4 application. This method was chosen because it is able to analyze the relationship between variables simultaneously, both direct and indirect influences through mediating variables *work engagement*. The analysis stages include descriptive statistical analysis to describe the characteristics of the data, evaluation *outer model* to test the validity and reliability of the instrument, as well as evaluation *inner model* to determine the strength of the relationship between constructs. Next, hypothesis testing is carried out using the procedure *bootstrapping* with the significance criteria of value *t-statistic* > 1.96 and *p-value* < 0.05. The results of the analysis are used to

explain the influence of paternalistic leadership and professional development programs on teacher performance through *work engagement*.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

The research results were obtained from data from 85 teachers at State Vocational High Schools in Serang City, which were analyzed using SEM-PLS through SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis included respondent characteristics, evaluation, and *outer model*, *inner model*, and hypothesis testing between research variables.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Woman	47	55,29%
	Man	38	44,71%
Age	<30 Years	12	14,12%
	30–40 Years	28	32,94%
	41–50 Years	30	35,29%
	>50 Years	15	17,65%
Education	S1	72	84,71%
	S2	13	15,29%
Working Hours	<5 Years	14	16,47%
	5–10 Years	23	27,06%
	11–20 Years	31	36,47%
	>20 Years	17	20,00%

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on the respondent characteristics table, the majority of teachers are female (55.29%), aged 41–50 years (35.29%), with a bachelor's degree (84.71%), and with 11–20 years of service (36.47%). This condition indicates that the respondents are predominantly experienced teachers with adequate academic qualifications, thus being able to provide objective assessments of the variables of paternalistic leadership, professional development programs, *work engagement*, and teacher performance.

Outer Model Analysis

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variables	Indicator	Loading Factor	Information
Paternalistic Leadership	KP1	0,967	Valid
	KP2	0,970	Valid
	KP3	0,969	Valid
Professional Development Program	PPP1	0,955	Valid
	PPP2	0,973	Valid
	PPP3	0,919	Valid
	PPP4	0,781	Valid
	PPP5	0,806	Valid
	PPP6	0,937	Valid
Work Engagement	WE1	0,898	Valid
	WE2	0,744	Valid

	WE3	0,909	Valid
Teacher Performance	KG1	0,965	Valid
	KG2	0,908	Valid
	KG3	0,879	Valid
	KG4	0,787	Valid
	KG5	0,941	Valid
	KG6	0,958	Valid
	KG7	0,860	Valid

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

Based on the test results in the table above, all indicators have loading factor values above 0.70. The highest loading factor is found in the PPP2 indicator at 0.973, while the lowest is found in the WE2 indicator at 0.744. All indicators meet convergent validity requirements, effectively representing the constructs being measured. Therefore, all questionnaire items are declared valid and suitable for use in the structural model testing phase.

Table 3. Hasil Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	Information
Paternalistic Leadership	0,938	0,910	Valid
Professional Development Program	0,807	0,880	Valid
Work Engagement	0,729	0,913	Valid
Teacher Performance	0,813	0,933	Valid

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

The AVE test results show that all constructs have values greater than 0.50. The highest AVE value is for Paternalistic Leadership at 0.938, while the lowest value is for Work Engagement at 0.729. These values indicate that each construct is able to explain more than 50% of the variance in its constituent indicators. Thus, all variables have met the criteria for convergent validity, making the measurement model suitable for further analysis.

Table 4. Hasil Discriminant Validity (Cross Loading)

Variables	Highest Cross Loading Value	Information
Paternalistic Leadership	0,967–0,970	Valid
Professional Development Program	0,781–0,973	Valid
Work Engagement	0,744–0,909	Valid
Teacher Performance	0,787–0,965	Valid

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

The discriminant validity evaluation results showed that all indicators had the highest loading values on the measured constructs compared to other constructs. This indicates that each indicator is able to accurately differentiate latent variables. No indicators were found to have higher cross-loadings on other constructs, thus all variables met the discriminant validity requirements and could be used in SEM-PLS analysis.

Table 5. Composite Reliability Results

Variables	Composite Reliability	Information
Paternalistic Leadership	0,968	Reliable
Professional Development Program	0,957	Reliable
Work Engagement	0,829	Reliable
Teacher Performance	0,965	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

The composite reliability values for all variables were above 0.70. Paternalistic Leadership had the highest value of 0.968, while Work Engagement had the lowest value of 0.829, but still met reliability standards. This indicates that all indicators have excellent internal consistency in measuring their respective constructs, thus declaring the research instrument reliable.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Paternalistic Leadership	0,967	Reliable
Professional Development Program	0,951	Reliable
Work Engagement	0,810	Reliable
Teacher Performance	0,961	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

Based on the Cronbach's Alpha test results, all values were above the minimum threshold of 0.70. This indicates that the instrument has a high level of internal consistency and is stable when used on respondents with similar characteristics. Therefore, the research instrument meets reliability requirements and is suitable for use in structural model testing and hypothesis testing.

Inner Model Analysis

Table 7. R-Square Value

Variables	R ²	Category
Work Engagement	0,609	Currently
Teacher Performance	0,959	Very strong

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

The results of the R-Square test show that *Work Engagement* Paternalistic Leadership and Professional Development Programs account for 60.9% of Teacher Performance. Meanwhile, 95.9% of Teacher Performance is explained by these three variables. This value indicates that the structural model has very strong predictive power, particularly in explaining variations in Teacher Performance.

Table 8. Path Coefficient Test Results

Variable Relationship	Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value	Results
Paternalistic Leadership → Teacher Performance	0,580	4,536	0,000	Accepted
Paternalistic Leadership → Work Engagement	-0,094	0,409	0,683	Rejected
Professional Development Program → Work Engagement	0,371	2,881	0,004	Accepted
Professional Development Program →	0,870	3,863	0,000	Accepted

Work Engagement				
Work Engagement → Teacher Performance	0,049	1,136	0,256	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

The test results show that Paternalistic Leadership and Professional Development Programs have a significant positive effect on Teacher Performance. Professional Development Programs also improve *Work Engagement*. However, Paternalistic Leadership towards *Work Engagement* as well as *Work Engagement* Teacher performance did not show a significant influence. Teacher performance was more influenced by direct factors such as leadership and professional development.

Table 9. Mediation Test Results (Indirect Effect)

Mediation Relationship	Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value	Results
Paternalistic Leadership → Work Engagement → Teacher Performance	-0,005	0,324	0,746	Rejected
Professional Development Program → Work Engagement → Teacher Performance	0,043	1,053	0,292	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026)

Based on the results of the mediation test, it was found that Work Engagement was unable to mediate the influence of Paternalistic Leadership on Teacher Performance or the influence of Professional Development Programs on Teacher Performance. Both mediation relationships had p-values greater than 0.05 and t-statistics below 1.96. Thus, teacher performance improvements were more influenced by the direct influence of the two independent variables than through the work engagement mechanism.

Discussion

The research discussion aims to interpret the results of hypothesis testing using SEM-PLS by connecting empirical findings, theory, and previous research. This analysis explains the influence of paternalistic leadership, professional development programs, and work engagement on the performance of teachers at Serang City State Vocational Schools, both directly and through mediation.

1. The Influence of Paternalistic Leadership on Teacher Performance

The test results show that paternalistic leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. This is evidenced by the path coefficient value of 0.580, the t-statistic value of 4.536, and the p-value of 0.000, so the first hypothesis is accepted. This finding indicates that the better the principal implements paternalistic leadership, the higher the teacher performance in carrying out their professional duties. Leadership that prioritizes exemplary behavior, attention, protection, and moral responsibility can create harmonious working relationships so that teachers feel appreciated and motivated to improve the quality of learning, educational administration, and responsibility towards students.

These findings align with research by Farh et al. (2022), which explains that paternalistic leadership can improve performance by creating harmonious interpersonal relationships between leaders and subordinates. Research by Chen and Kao (2023) also shows that leaders' attention and role models contribute to teacher effectiveness. However, these results differ from research by Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2024), which found that

paternalistic leadership does not always improve performance if the organizational culture is not supportive. These differences indicate that the success of implementing paternalistic leadership is influenced by organizational conditions, school culture, and teachers' readiness to accept the leadership style implemented by the principal.

2. The Influence of Paternalistic Leadership on Work Engagement

The results of the study indicate that paternalistic leadership does not significantly influence teacher work engagement. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of -0.094, a t-statistic of 0.409, and a p-value of 0.683, thus rejecting the second hypothesis. These findings indicate that the principal's attention, protection, and role model have not been able to directly increase teacher work engagement. The level of teacher engagement in work is more influenced by other factors, such as job satisfaction, well-being, career development opportunities, the work environment, and the intrinsic motivation of each individual.

The results of this study support Saks' (2022) research, which states that work engagement is more influenced by the availability of job resources than by leadership characteristics alone. Bakker and Demerouti's (2023) research also explains that work engagement develops when employees receive organizational support, a balanced workload, and opportunities for development. Conversely, Li et al.'s (2024) research found that paternalistic leadership can increase work engagement by increasing trust in the leader. These differences in results indicate that the relationship between leadership and work engagement is strongly influenced by organizational characteristics, school culture, and teachers' psychological well-being.

3. The Impact of Professional Development Programs on Teacher Performance

The results of the study indicate that the professional development program has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.371, a t-statistic of 2.881, and a p-value of 0.004, thus accepting the third hypothesis. These findings indicate that the implementation of training, workshops, seminars, continuing education, and competency improvement activities can improve teachers' abilities in carrying out their professional duties. Teachers gain new knowledge, strengthen pedagogical competencies, improve teaching skills, and are able to implement learning innovations that are in line with developments in the world of education.

These findings are consistent with Desimone's (2022) research, which states that professional development is a crucial factor in improving the quality of learning and teacher performance. Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2023) research also concluded that ongoing training can enhance teacher competency while improving student learning outcomes. Furthermore, research by Nugroho and Suryani (2024) shows that teachers who actively participate in professional development programs have higher work productivity than teachers who rarely participate in training. Therefore, school investment in teacher competency development is a crucial strategy for improving educational quality.

4. The Impact of Professional Development Programs on Work Engagement

The results of the study indicate that professional development programs have a positive and significant effect on work engagement. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.870, a t-statistic of 3.863, and a p-value of 0.000, thus accepting the fourth hypothesis. These findings indicate that the greater the opportunities for teachers to participate in training, workshops, and competency-building activities, the higher their

enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in carrying out their work. Teachers feel supported by the organization, resulting in a higher sense of self-confidence, responsibility, and commitment to the school.

The results of this study support Bakker and Albrecht's (2022) study, which explains that learning opportunities are one of the job resources that can increase work engagement. Schaufeli's (2023) research also found that organizations that provide ongoing competency development programs are able to build employee dedication and work enthusiasm. Furthermore, Prasetyo et al.'s (2025) research in the education sector shows that training relevant to teachers' needs can increase work engagement and strengthen commitment to the organization. Therefore, professional development has benefits that are not only technical but also psychological.

5. The Influence of Work Engagement on Teacher Performance

The results of the study indicate that work engagement does not significantly influence teacher performance. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.049, a t-statistic of 1.136, and a p-value of 0.256, thus rejecting the fifth hypothesis. This finding indicates that high teacher enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in the work do not necessarily result in direct performance improvements. Teacher performance is likely more influenced by professional competence, teaching experience, evaluation systems, and school policies governing the implementation of educational tasks.

These findings align with research by Kim and Park (2023), who found that work engagement does not always directly impact performance if an organization already has clear work standards. However, these findings differ from those of Schaufeli et al. (2022) and Bakker (2023), which found that work engagement has a positive relationship with employee productivity and performance. These differences indicate that the characteristics of the teaching profession have their own dynamics, so that performance improvement is determined not only by work engagement but also by competency and organizational factors.

6. The Influence of Paternalistic Leadership on Teacher Performance through Work Engagement

The test results indicate that work engagement is unable to mediate the influence of paternalistic leadership on teacher performance. This is evidenced by the indirect coefficient value of -0.005, the t-statistic value of 0.324, and the p-value of 0.746, thus the sixth hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that teacher performance improvements occur more through the direct influence of principal leadership than through work engagement mechanisms. Principals who provide direction, coaching, supervision, and role models can encourage teachers to work more optimally without having to first increase work engagement.

These findings support the opinion of Hair et al. (2022), who explained that a mediating variable is considered ineffective if the indirect influence pathway is insignificant. Yusuf and Hidayat's (2024) research also found that work engagement does not always mediate the relationship between leadership and performance when the direct influence is very strong. Therefore, the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership in the school environment is more reflected through coaching, supervision, and direct support for teachers than through changes in psychological well-being in the form of work engagement.

7. The Influence of Professional Development Programs on Teacher Performance through Work Engagement

The results of the study indicate that work engagement is unable to mediate the effect of professional development programs on teacher performance. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.043, a t-statistic of 1.053, and a p-value of 0.292, thus rejecting the seventh hypothesis. These findings indicate that professional development programs improve teacher performance directly through increased competence, pedagogical skills, and learning management abilities, without increasing work engagement as an intermediary variable.

The results of this study align with Desimone's (2022) study, which explains that the effectiveness of professional development directly influences teaching competence. Research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2023) also shows that teacher training directly impacts learning quality and performance. However, these results differ from Saks' (2024) study, which found that work engagement can act as a mediator if the organization provides psychological support and a reward system after training. Therefore, the success of mediation is strongly influenced by school culture, organizational climate, and implemented human resource management policies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS 4.0, it can be concluded that paternalistic leadership and professional development programs are important factors that contribute to improving teacher performance at SMK Negeri Kota Serang. The results of the study indicate that paternalistic leadership has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, so that the better the principal implements leadership that prioritizes exemplary behavior, attention, protection, and guidance, the higher the teacher performance. In addition, professional development programs have also been shown to have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance and work engagement. These findings indicate that various competency improvement activities, such as training, workshops, seminars, and continuing education, can improve professional abilities while strengthening teacher engagement in carrying out their duties.

Paternalistic leadership did not significantly influence work engagement, nor did work engagement significantly influence teacher performance. These results indicate that teacher work engagement is still influenced by factors other than leadership, such as the work environment, job satisfaction, reward systems, and intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, work engagement was also unable to mediate the relationship between paternalistic leadership and professional development programs on teacher performance. Thus, improvements in teacher performance are more influenced by the direct influence of principal leadership and the effectiveness of professional development programs than through the mediation mechanism of work engagement. Overall, the research model indicates that strengthening the quality of principal leadership and the implementation of ongoing professional development programs are key strategies for improving teacher performance. Meanwhile, efforts to improve work engagement require the support of other organizational factors to be able to make a more optimal contribution to improving teacher performance in the future.

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