

The Influence of Servant Leadership and Teachers' Pedagogical Competence on Primary School Quality Mediated by Teachers' Work Motivation

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Article Info

Keywords:

servant leadership, pedagogical competence, work motivation, primary school quality, mediation

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study was designed to empirically examine how school principals' servant leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence contribute to primary school quality, with teachers' work motivation positioned as the mediating variable in the relationships among these constructs. **Research Methodology:** The study employed a quantitative explanatory survey design involving 157 teachers as the unit of analysis from 21 public primary schools in Serang City, Banten Province. Primary data were collected through a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and subsequently analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with SmartPLS 4. **Results:** All proposed hypotheses were statistically significant. Servant leadership had direct effects on teachers' work motivation ($\beta = 0,515$; $p = 0,000$) and primary school quality ($\beta = 0,286$; $p = 0,000$). Pedagogical competence also affected work motivation ($\beta = 0,429$; $p = 0,000$) and primary school quality ($\beta = 0,180$; $p = 0,008$). Among the three predictors, teachers' work motivation emerged as the strongest determinant of primary school quality ($\beta = 0,482$; $p = 0,000$). Overall, the proposed model explained 73,6% of the variance in primary school quality. **Conclusion:** Efforts to improve primary school quality cannot be undertaken in isolation; rather, they require synergy among strengthening servant leadership, developing teachers' pedagogical competence, and enhancing work motivation as an integrated strategy. **Limitations:** This study was limited to one subdistrict in Serang City, used a cross-sectional design, and relied on teachers' perceptions as the sole source for assessing primary school quality. **Contribution:** This research provides empirical evidence that teachers' work motivation functions as an important pathway linking leadership quality and pedagogical competence to primary school quality outcomes, while also offering considerations for education policymakers in designing school development programs.

Article History

Received : 28/07/2026

Revised : 12/08/2026

Accepted : 21/08/2026

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1. Introduction

Primary education constitutes the foundation that shapes the development of Indonesian youths' competencies at subsequent educational levels. The quality of services provided by primary schools equips students with literacy, numeracy, and character competencies that serve as essential assets for addressing the demands of an ever-changing era, including digital economic transformation and increasingly intense global competition. Within this framework, the government has established several regulations as guidelines for the provision of quality education, including Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System and Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 on National Education Standards, both of which emphasize the importance of comprehensively meeting quality standards in every educational institution.

Although an adequate regulatory framework is in place, conditions in the field indicate that achieving primary education quality in Indonesia continues to face several challenges. National Assessment results consistently show year after year that students' literacy and numeracy achievement in many regions remains in the moderate-to-low categories. Serang City, the capital of Banten Province, encompasses 221 public primary schools with a student population of more than 70 thousand children. Despite being located within the same administrative region, disparities in quality outcomes among schools remain evident, indicating that internal school factors also play a substantial role in determining the outcomes achieved.

Preliminary field observations conducted by the researchers further reinforced this assumption. The leadership practices of several school principals remained inclined toward bureaucratic approaches and administrative compliance rather than teacher empowerment. Teachers' pedagogical competence also varied considerably across schools, while teachers' work motivation frequently fluctuated, indicating that internal and external motivational factors had not been optimized. These three phenomena are interrelated and call for a more comprehensive understanding of how each factor, both individually and collectively, shapes primary school quality.

Previous literature has extensively examined the roles of leadership, teacher competence, and work motivation in educational outcomes; however, most studies have treated these three factors separately or examined only pairs of relationships at a time. For example, Wahyudi and Setiawan (2023) found that servant leadership and teacher competence simultaneously influenced education quality, but their study was conducted at the vocational secondary school level, where organizational characteristics and respondent demographics differ substantially from those of primary schools. This research gap creates an opportunity for a study that specifically presents an integrated model of servant leadership, pedagogical competence, work motivation, and primary school quality in the context of Indonesian primary education.

Based on this rationale, this study was designed to examine the extent to which school principals' servant leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence influence primary school quality, both directly and through teachers' work motivation as a mediating variable. More specifically, this study aims to: (1) analyze the effect of servant leadership on teachers' work motivation; (2) analyze the effect of pedagogical competence on teachers' work motivation; (3) analyze the direct effects of servant leadership and pedagogical competence on primary

school quality; (4) analyze the role of teachers' work motivation as a predictor of primary school quality; and (5) examine the mediating role of teachers' work motivation in linking the effects of servant leadership and pedagogical competence to primary school quality.

The novelty of this study lies in its use of an integrated analytical model that positions teachers' work motivation as a linking mechanism and tests it specifically in the context of public primary schools in Serang City, which have received limited attention in similar research. Using the PLS-SEM approach, this study can also capture the complexity of direct and indirect relationships among variables more precisely than conventional regression approaches. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to both the academic domain by strengthening empirical evidence on mechanisms for improving primary school quality and the practical domain by providing considerations for school principals and education offices in formulating more targeted school development policies.

Disparities in quality among primary schools are also inseparable from the broader context of digital economic transformation, which requires primary education graduates to possess adequate digital literacy, critical-thinking skills, and adaptability to continue their education at subsequent levels. These demands make the roles of school principals and teachers increasingly central, as they are the primary actors who interact directly with daily learning processes. School principals can no longer serve merely as administrators; rather, they are expected to become instructional leaders who can mobilize and empower teachers, while teachers are expected to continuously update their pedagogical competence to remain relevant to the needs of contemporary students.

Within this framework, this study is systematically organized into several main sections. The literature review outlines the theoretical foundations and relevant findings from previous studies as the basis for hypothesis development. The methodology section explains the design, population and sample, instruments, and data analysis techniques used. The results and discussion section presents the empirical findings and their theoretical and practical interpretations. The final section includes conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research, enabling readers to follow the complete logical flow of this study from the background to the final conclusions.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The Concept of Primary School Quality

Primary school quality can be understood as the totality of characteristics of an educational institution that reflects its ability to meet or even exceed the standards and expectations of stakeholders. This understanding is considerably broader than the conventional view, which often reduces primary school quality solely to students' academic achievement. Based on the National Education Standards framework, quality dimensions include standards for graduate competencies, content, learning processes, assessment, educators and education personnel, facilities and infrastructure, management, and financing, all of which are interrelated in forming a comprehensive picture of primary school quality.

Danim (2021) emphasized that primary school quality emerges from the ongoing interaction among educational inputs, processes, and outputs, rather than simply from the outcomes of any single component. This view is enriched by Leithwood et al.

(2020), who found that high-performing schools consistently exhibit three main characteristics: strong leadership, effective teaching practices, and an organizational climate that supports teachers' professional growth. Accordingly, the assessment of primary school quality in this study encompasses the quality of classroom learning processes, the competencies of graduates, the effectiveness of school management, the comfort of the learning environment, and the transparent accountability of school management to the public.

In practice, the assessment of primary school quality in Indonesia is also inseparable from the role of the National Accreditation Board for Schools/Madrasahs, which evaluates educational institutions against the eight National Education Standards. Nevertheless, several scholars argue that formal accreditation alone may not necessarily reflect the actual quality experienced by members of the school community in their daily lives, as the accreditation process is generally periodic and document-based. Therefore, the teacher perception-based approach used in this study provides a complementary and more dynamic picture of school quality conditions from the perspective of actors directly involved in daily learning processes.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that places the needs and growth of subordinates as the foremost priority, ahead of the leader's personal interests and the organization's short-term interests. Sendjaya (2022) defines this concept as a leadership style that consistently prioritizes the well-being, growth, and success of those being led. In school contexts, school principals who embrace this principle focus more on empowering teachers, fostering a climate of mutual trust, and providing tangible support for teachers' professional development than on merely demanding administrative compliance.

Empirical evidence supports the relevance of this concept in primary education contexts. In a study conducted in West Java, Hamzah et al. (2023) found a positive relationship between school principals' servant leadership practices and improvements in teacher performance and primary school quality. Similarly, Kurniawan (2022) documented the significant contribution of servant leadership to achieving primary education quality standards in Lebak Regency. Based on these studies, the dimensions of servant leadership examined in this study include the willingness to actively serve teachers' needs, role modeling, teacher empowerment in decision-making, the creation of mutual trust, and an orientation toward the collective well-being of all members of the school community.

Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence is teachers' ability to manage the learning process in ways that create meaningful and effective learning experiences for students. Ministerial Regulation of National Education No. 16 of 2007 specifies this competence across several aspects, including understanding student characteristics; mastery of learning theories and principles of educational instruction; curriculum development; implementation of educational instruction; use of learning technology; facilitation of student potential development; effective communication; administration of learning assessment and evaluation; and the ability to engage in reflection for the continuous improvement of learning quality.

Several studies reinforce the importance of this competence. Hidayat and Sari (2022) found that teachers with high pedagogical competence were able to create more interactive and enjoyable classroom environments, which in turn promoted student learning motivation. Meanwhile, Supardi (2022) identified a direct relationship between teachers' pedagogical competence and the quality of learning processes and student learning outcomes. At the primary school level, this competence becomes increasingly crucial because teachers work with students who exhibit highly diverse cognitive and emotional developmental characteristics, requiring substantial pedagogical sensitivity and flexibility.

In addition to Self-Determination Theory, several other theoretical frameworks of work motivation, such as Herzberg's two-factor theory and expectancy theory, are relevant to understanding the dynamics of teacher motivation in school organizational contexts. The two-factor theory, for example, distinguishes between hygiene factors, such as salary and working conditions, and motivator factors, such as recognition and responsibility, which influence job satisfaction and work motivation through different mechanisms. Although this study specifically draws on Self-Determination Theory as its primary foundation, these theoretical frameworks further enrich understanding of the complexity of factors that shape teachers' work motivation in practice.

Teachers' Work Motivation

Work motivation is understood as an impetus, originating either internally (intrinsically) or externally (extrinsically), that drives individuals to work with dedication and initiative. Self-Determination Theory, developed by Ryan and Deci (2020), explains that intrinsic motivation tends to produce more stable and sustainable performance than motivation driven solely by external incentives. This theory emphasizes that intrinsic motivation develops optimally when three basic psychological needs are met: competence, autonomy, and positive social relatedness.

Prasetyo and Wulandari (2021) demonstrated that teachers' work motivation serves as a significant mediator between professional competence and teaching quality. The findings of Hasan and Nurdiana (2022) also indicate that school principals' servant leadership can create a conducive work climate, which ultimately enhances teachers' work motivation. Teachers with high work motivation are generally characterized by sustained enthusiasm for teaching, initiative in developing learning methods, a sense of responsibility for their duties, and a strong commitment to achieving school goals.

Relationships Among Variables and Hypothesis Development

The preceding literature review indicates mutually reinforcing relationships among servant leadership, pedagogical competence, work motivation, and primary school quality. Wahyudi and Setiawan (2023) found that servant leadership and teacher competence jointly influenced education quality, although their study was conducted in a vocational secondary school context with respondent characteristics that differed from those of the present study. These differences in educational level and context constitute one reason why the model needs to be retested at the primary school level.

Theoretically, school principals who practice servant leadership are expected to enhance teachers' work motivation because this

leadership style creates an environment that supports the fulfillment of the three basic psychological needs described in Self-Determination Theory. Similarly, high pedagogical competence strengthens teachers' sense of self-efficacy in carrying out their teaching responsibilities, which is an important component of work motivation. Based on this theoretical foundation and empirical evidence, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

- H1: School principals' servant leadership has a significant positive effect on teachers' work motivation.
H2: Teachers' pedagogical competence has a significant positive effect on teachers' work motivation.
H3: School principals' servant leadership has a significant positive effect on primary school quality.
H4: Teachers' pedagogical competence has a significant positive effect on primary school quality.
H5: Teachers' work motivation has a significant positive effect on primary school quality.
H6: Teachers' work motivation mediates the effect of servant leadership on primary school quality.
H7: Teachers' work motivation mediates the effect of pedagogical competence on primary school quality.

These seven hypotheses form the research model, which positions servant leadership and pedagogical competence as exogenous variables, teachers' work motivation as the mediating variable, and primary school quality as the endogenous variable. The model was subsequently tested empirically using PLS-SEM procedures, as described in the following methodology section.

Research Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical review and formulated hypotheses, this study develops a conceptual model that positions servant leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence as two independent exogenous variables. Both variables are proposed to have direct paths to teachers' work motivation and primary school quality. Teachers' work motivation is positioned as a mediating variable linking these two exogenous variables to primary school quality, the primary endogenous variable in the model. Schematically, the relationships are as follows: servant leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence each lead to teachers' work motivation (paths H1 and H2), teachers' work motivation leads to primary school quality (path H5), and servant leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence also have direct paths to primary school quality (paths H3 and H4), in addition to indirect paths through teachers' work motivation (mediation paths H6 and H7).

This type of conceptual model is consistent with approaches commonly used in organizational behavior research, in which psychological variables such as work motivation often serve as explanatory mechanisms for how structural factors, such as leadership style, and individual factors, such as competence, ultimately contribute to organizational outcomes in the form of service quality. By testing this model simultaneously through PLS-SEM, the study can capture the magnitudes of direct and indirect effects concurrently while avoiding potential bias that may arise when each relationship is tested separately using simple regression.

2. Research Methodology

Research Design and Location

This study employed a quantitative explanatory survey design to explain causal relationships among variables based on data collected at a single point in time (cross-sectional). Data were collected from teachers at public primary schools in Curug District, Serang City, Banten Province. This area was selected because schools in the district varied considerably in accreditation status and were therefore considered sufficiently representative of the general conditions of public primary schools in Serang City.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised 261 teachers from 21 public primary schools in Curug District. The sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a minimum sample of 157 respondents. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) teachers who were civil servants or permanent contract teachers and had taught for at least two years; (2) teachers working in schools with A or B accreditation; and (3) teachers willing to participate voluntarily in the study. These criteria were established to ensure that respondents had sufficient work experience to reflectively assess leadership, competence, motivation, and quality conditions in their respective schools.

Operational Definitions of Variables

To ensure measurement consistency, each study variable was operationalized into a set of indicators, as summarized in Table 1.

Variable	Operational Definition	Key Indicators
Servant Leadership	Teachers' perceptions of the school principal's service orientation in meeting the needs of school community members	Active service, role modeling, empowerment, trust, welfare orientation
Pedagogical Competence	Teachers' ability to manage meaningful and effective learning	Understanding of students, mastery of learning theories, curriculum development, assessment, reflection
Work	Teachers' internal	Teaching enthusiasm,

Motivation	and external drive to work with dedication	initiative, responsibility, commitment to school goals
Primary School Quality	The extent to which standards and the expectations of education stakeholders are met	Learning processes, graduate competence, management, facilities, accountability

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument comprised four sections: school principal servant leadership (20 items), teachers' pedagogical competence (20 items), teachers' work motivation (20 items), and primary school quality (20 items). Before administration to the study sample, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability with 30 teachers in a pilot group to ensure that each item was clearly understood and consistently measured the intended construct.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with SmartPLS 4 software (Ringle et al., 2020). The first stage involved evaluating the measurement model (outer model) to ensure the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability of the research instrument. The second stage involved evaluating the structural model (inner model) to test causal relationships among variables and the significance of each path through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resampling iterations, as commonly used in PLS-SEM-based studies to produce stable estimates with medium sample sizes.

Instrument Pilot Testing

Before the instrument was distributed to the 157 primary respondents, a pilot test was conducted with 30 teachers who were not included in the main study sample but had comparable characteristics in terms of educational level and work area. The pilot-test results showed that all items across the four study variables had item-total correlation coefficients above the critical value and were therefore considered valid for use. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha coefficients also showed values above 0.80 for each variable, indicating that the instrument had good internal consistency before its use in the main data collection stage.

Research Ethics Considerations

This study adhered to several ethical principles in its implementation. Each respondent received an explanation of the study objectives and was asked to provide voluntary informed consent before completing the questionnaire. Respondents' identities were kept confidential by removing information that could directly identify individuals, and all collected data were used solely for the academic purposes of this study. Respondents were also free to withdraw from participation at any time without consequences.

3. Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics and Descriptive Statistics

Of the 157 teachers who participated as study respondents, most had more than five years of teaching experience, with a relatively balanced gender composition between male and female teachers. Descriptive statistical information for each variable is presented in

Table 2. Standard Deviation

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Servant Leadership	59,08	16,16	Substantial Variation in Respondents' Perceptions
Pedagogical Competence	60,11	15,31	Moderate variation among respondents
Work Motivation	61,11	20,15	Largest variation among all variables
Primary School Quality	61,18	17,99	Considerable variation across schools

The highest standard deviation for work motivation among the four variables indicated that teachers' perceptions of their own work motivation were the most diverse, consistent with the researchers' preliminary field observations, which documented fluctuations in teachers' work motivation across schools.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The convergent validity test results showed that all outer loading values exceeded the 0,70 threshold, ranging from 0,788 to 0,935, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded 0,50. The Composite Reliability values for each construct were above 0,98, substantially exceeding the minimum threshold of 0,70, indicating a very high level of internal consistency of the instrument. Discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) showed that the four constructs had adequate discriminant validity, with the highest HTMT value of 0,839, which remained below the 0,85 threshold. Based on all these indicators, the research instrument was considered valid and reliable for use in the structural model testing stage.

Hypothesis Testing and Direct Effects

Direct effects were tested by examining the path coefficients (β) and t-statistic values obtained through the bootstrapping procedure. A summary of the test results is presented in

Table 3. Direct Effect Coefficients

Hypothesis	Effect Path	Coefficient (β)	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Servant Leadership → Work Motivation	0,515	10,167	0,000	Accepted
H2	Pedagogical competence → Work motivation	0,429	8,503	0,000	Accepted
H3	Servant leadership → Primary school quality	0,286	4,756	0,000	Accepted
H4	Pedagogical competence → Primary school quality	0,180	2,683	0,008	Accepted
H5	Work motivation → Primary school quality	0,482	6,193	0,000	Accepted

All five direct-effect hypotheses (H1 through H5) were accepted, with positive coefficient directions consistent with theoretical predictions. The R Square value for the primary school quality variable was 0,736, indicating that 73,6% of the variation in primary school quality can be jointly explained by servant leadership, pedagogical competence, and teachers' work motivation, whereas the remainder is explained by other factors outside this research model.

Mediation Effect Testing

The specific indirect effect test showed that teachers' work

motivation significantly mediated the effect of servant leadership on primary school quality ($\beta = 0,248$; $t = 5,476$; $p = 0,000$). Because the direct effect of servant leadership on primary school quality was also significant, the mediation was partial. The total effect of servant leadership on primary school quality was 0,534, with 46,4% transmitted through the teachers' work motivation pathway.

A similar pattern was found for the pedagogical competence pathway. Teachers' work motivation mediated the effect of pedagogical competence on primary school quality with a coefficient of 0,207 ($t = 4,632$; $p = 0,000$). Notably, the magnitude of this indirect effect exceeded that of the direct effect (0,180), indicating that teachers' work motivation served as the primary pathway linking pedagogical competence to primary school quality rather than merely as a supplementary factor. Thus, both mediation hypotheses, H6 and H7, were found to be significant.

Table 4. Mediation Coefficients

Hypothesis	Mediation Pathway	Indirect Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value	Type of Mediation
H6	Servant leadership → Work motivation → Primary school quality	0,248	5,476	0,000	Partial mediation
H7	Pedagogical competence → Work motivation → Primary school quality	0,207	4,632	0,000	Partial mediation

Discussion of Findings

The finding that servant leadership strongly affects teachers' work motivation is consistent with the principles of Self-Determination Theory. When school principals demonstrate a service-oriented attitude, listen to teachers' aspirations, provide tangible support, and foster a climate of mutual trust, teachers' three basic psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and social relatedness—tend to be more fully met. This condition, in turn, stimulates the growth of teachers' intrinsic motivation, encouraging them to work more effectively not merely because of external pressures but because of internal drive.

The significant effect of pedagogical competence on work motivation indicates that teachers who feel capable of carrying out instructional duties experience greater professional self-confidence. Successful teaching experiences gained through mastery of pedagogical competence reinforce perceptions of self-efficacy and encourage teachers to continuously improve their instructional practices. This finding is consistent with several previous studies confirming a positive relationship between perceived competence and the intrinsic motivation of professional workers.

The finding that teachers' work motivation is the strongest predictor of primary school quality offers an important lesson for school management. Intrinsically motivated teachers tend not only to perform routine tasks but also to demonstrate extra-role behavior, such as innovating instructional methods, actively collaborating with fellow teachers, and showing high dedication to students' learning success. These behaviors directly contribute to improving both the quality of the learning process and the quality of school graduates.

The mediating role of teachers' work motivation indicates that investments in developing servant leadership and enhancing teachers' pedagogical competence will have a far greater impact when accompanied by parallel strategies to strengthen work motivation. Teacher development programs and changes in school leadership practices will be more effective when they also address psychological aspects and work environments that support the development of teachers' work motivation, rather than focusing solely on technical aspects.

These findings also enrich the academic discourse on integrative models for improving primary school quality by demonstrating that the relationship among leadership, teacher competence, and primary school quality is neither direct nor simple but is mediated by the psychological factor of teachers' work motivation. Consequently, school quality improvement policies that focus solely on strengthening leadership or developing teachers' competence without considering work motivation risk failing to achieve an optimal impact on overall primary school quality.

Comparison With Previous Research

Compared with the findings of Wahyudi and Setiawan (2023) at the vocational secondary school level, this study indicates a similar pattern regarding the significance of the effects of servant leadership and teacher competence on education quality, although the coefficient magnitudes tend to differ. This difference is likely influenced by the distinct characteristics of the educational levels, as relationships among school principals, teachers, and students in primary schools tend to be more personal and intensive than those in vocational secondary schools, which have more complex organizational structures. This reinforces the argument that testing the model at each educational level remains necessary rather than directly

generalizing findings from one level to another.

Meanwhile, the findings regarding the mediating role of work motivation in this study reinforce the results of Prasetyo and Wulandari (2021), who likewise identified work motivation as an important mediator between professional competence and teachers' instructional quality. The consistency of these findings across contexts suggests that teachers' work motivation is not merely an additional variable but rather a psychological mechanism that consistently serves as a key link between organizational input factors and education quality outcomes, both in primary schools and at other educational levels.

Implications for Education Policy

For local education policymakers, the findings of this study suggest the need for school principal development programs that focus not only on managerial and administrative aspects but also emphasize the development of servant leadership capacity. Leadership training for school principals may be designed to include modules specifically intended to develop active listening skills, empower subordinates, and build organizational trust. In addition, programs to enhance teachers' pedagogical competence should also consider motivational dimensions, for example, by providing teachers with greater professional autonomy in designing instructional methods so that improvements in technical competence are simultaneously accompanied by strengthened intrinsic motivation.

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that improving primary school quality requires an integrated approach rather than partial implementation. School principals' servant leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence jointly contribute to improvements in primary school quality, both directly and through strengthened teachers' work motivation as a linking mechanism. Teachers' work motivation was shown to serve as an important pathway linking leadership quality and pedagogical competence to improvements in primary school quality.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study reinforces the relevance of Self-Determination Theory in the context of educational organizations, particularly in explaining how leadership styles and professional competence may influence individuals' intrinsic motivation through the fulfillment of basic psychological needs. The findings regarding the mediating role of work motivation also enrich models for improving primary school quality, which have tended to focus on direct relationships among variables without considering the psychological mechanisms that mediate these relationships.

Furthermore, this study proposes an expanded integrative model that combines organizational leadership perspectives (servant

leadership), individual competence perspectives (pedagogical competence), and motivational perspectives (Self-Determination Theory) within a single analytical framework in the context of primary education. Such a model extension is relevant for enriching the body of educational management theory, which has relatively rarely examined these three perspectives simultaneously, particularly in Indonesian primary education institutions characterized by distinctive sociocultural features and bureaucratic structures.

Practical Implications

The practical implication of this study is that school principals need to develop leadership practices that are more oriented toward serving teachers, create systems that support teachers' ongoing professional development, and build work environments capable of fulfilling teachers' psychological needs. Education offices also need to consider servant leadership and teachers' work motivation when designing school development policies, rather than focusing solely on students' academic achievement as the only indicator of success. Operationally, schools may consider establishing regular dialogue forums between school principals and teachers to accommodate teachers' aspirations and needs on a regular basis, while also providing school principals with an opportunity to put servant leadership principles into practice. In addition, continuing professional development programs for teachers should be designed not only to improve technical instructional skills but also to include components that strengthen work motivation, for example, through recognition of teachers' achievements, autonomy to innovate in the classroom, and the creation of a supportive collaborative culture among teachers.

Study Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. The study was limited to one district in Serang City and employed a cross-sectional design; therefore, its findings may not be generalizable to broader contexts or fully describe causal relationships. Data collection through self-reports may also have introduced subjective bias, as assessments of primary school quality relied entirely on teachers' perceptions without confirmation from other data sources, such as direct observations or student performance data.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research is recommended to employ a longitudinal design to capture the dynamics of relationships among variables over time, expand the geographic scope beyond Serang City, and consider additional variables such as school organizational culture and parental support. Qualitative approaches are also recommended to examine in greater depth the specific mechanisms through which servant leadership and pedagogical competence influence teachers' work motivation, as well as to

explore moderating variables such as schools' socioeconomic conditions and test the model at other educational levels, such as secondary schools.

Acknowledgments

The researchers extend their gratitude to the Serang City Education Office for granting permission to conduct this study, to all school principals and teachers who participated as respondents, and to the academic supervisors who provided valuable guidance in refining this research manuscript.

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