**Journal of General Education and Humanities**
Vol. 5, No. 5, October 2026, pp. 6261 – 6272, https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v5i5.1940
ISSN 2963-7147 

# Rewards and Recognition, Work-Life Balance, and Work Engagement among Indonesian Middle School Teachers: A Mediation Analysis

**Yeni Asmara[1], Firman[2], Urip Sulistiyo[3], Endarman Saputra[4]**
[1,2,3,4]Universitas Jambi, Indonesia

**Article Info**

***Article history:***

Received 2026-07-28
Revised 2026-09-16
Accepted 2026-09-16

***Keywords:***

Middle School Teachers
Rewards and Recognition
Work Engagement
Work-Life Balance

**ABSTRACT**

Although attention to teacher welfare has grown significantly, empirical literature presents persistent inconsistencies regarding whether work-life balance effectively mediates the link between organisational rewards and work engagement, particularly within collectivist educational settings. This study aims to evaluate the direct impact of rewards and recognition on work engagement whilst reevaluating the mediating role of work-life balance among middle school teachers in Lubuklinggau City, Indonesia. Utilising a quantitative causal-associative design, data were collected from 709 active middle school teachers using proportionate stratified random sampling and analysed via Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) combined with Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA). The findings indicate that rewards and recognition exert a robust, direct positive influence on work engagement ($\beta = 0.295$, $p < 0.001$). However, work-life balance fails to mediate this relationship due to an insignificant path from rewards and recognition to work-life balance ($\beta = -0.046$, $p = 0.100$). IPMA findings further reveal that rewards and recognition represent a high-importance construct for driving work engagement, despite showing moderate performance. These results may be interpreted through Self-Determination Theory and Conservation of Resources perspectives, suggesting that recognition directly satisfies professional identities even when it does not enhance work-life harmony. Education authorities are urged to design balanced appreciation schemes that foster teacher motivation alongside structural support.



***Corresponding Author:***

Yeni Asmara
Doctoral Study Program in Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Jambi University, Indonesia
Email: yeni.stkip@gmail.com

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Public education in Indonesia relies heavily on the role of teachers as classroom managers who foster dynamic, productive, and learning-conducive environments. The

crucial driver of teacher performance and educational quality is work engagement, defined by Schaufeli and Bakker [1] as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. High work engagement enables educators to maintain physical resilience, exhibit pedagogical innovation, and remain deeply committed to student growth.

Despite its critical importance, preliminary field evidence indicates that work engagement among junior high school teachers in Lubuklinggau City, South Sumatra, remains suboptimal. To provide precise methodological clarification regarding the baseline findings, a preliminary mixed-methods study was conducted in September 2023 involving 72 public junior high school teachers across Lubuklinggau City. This preliminary study comprised a quantitative baseline survey utilizing an adapted Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) on a 5-point Likert scale, alongside three follow-up Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions to contextualize the numerical metrics. The quantitative survey yielded a normalized aggregate work engagement index score of 44.74%, placing the sample within the moderate engagement category (defined as scores between 33.33% and 66.66%, where scores below 33.33% indicate low engagement and those above 66.66% indicate high engagement). Rather than being a direct output of qualitative FGD sessions alone, this 44.74% figure reflects the mathematical mean across three distinct quantitative dimensions: vigor (48.08%), dedication (44.60%), and absorption (41.55%). The subsequent FGD sessions served to elaborate on these numerical findings, revealing that teachers frequently experienced low physical energy due to mounting routine administrative tasks, lacked spontaneous initiative to adopt innovative teaching models beyond classroom hours, and faced cognitive distractions during instruction due to competing non-academic obligations.

The persistent challenge of moderate work engagement is further exacerbated by recent national educational reforms in Indonesia, particularly the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) and the mandatory integration of the Independent Teaching Platform (Platform Merdeka Mengajar). Although these policies aim to foster student-centered learning and professional self-directed development, empirical evidence demonstrates that rapid educational reforms often generate significant administrative intensification, digital fatigue, and role overload among teachers [2],[4]. Teachers are increasingly required to manage complex formative assessments alongside continuous digital compliance, creating an effort-reward imbalance [5] and work intensification [6] that heighten job demands and disrupt the boundary between professional responsibilities and personal life. Understanding these dynamics requires careful consideration of the local institutional and socio-cultural environment. While national-level studies frequently characterize Indonesian organizational culture as strongly collectivist [7], national cultural profiles cannot be automatically applied to all individuals or regional samples. Lubuklinggau City represents an evolving urban-buffer region in South Sumatra, where the teaching workforce experiences a unique blend of traditional community expectations and modern professional accountability. Examining this regional sample provides a localized empirical perspective on how structural job resources and personal work-life boundaries interact outside major metropolitan centers.

To rigorously examine the organizational and psychological determinants of teacher work engagement, this study integrates three complementary theoretical frameworks, each fulfilling a distinct structural role within the research model. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory [8] serves as the primary overarching framework, conceptualizing Work Environment ($X_1$), Rewards and Recognition ($X_2$), and Career Development ($X_3$) as vital job resources that trigger a motivational process leading directly to Work Engagement (Y). Within this framework, favorable physical and non-physical work environments provide essential job resources that reduce psychological strain, theoretically supporting the hypothesis that work environment directly enhances work engagement ($H_1$). Similarly, structured career development provides growth opportunities and role clarity, directly fostering sustained professional dedication and vigor ($H_3$).

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design and Locus

This study employed a quantitative research design with a structural equation modeling approach to investigate direct, indirect, and simultaneous relationships among Work Environment ($X_1$), Rewards and Recognition ($X_2$), Career Development ($X_3$), Work-Life Balance (M), and Work Engagement (Y). The research was conducted across public junior high schools in Lubuklinggau City, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Lubuklinggau represents an evolving urban buffer regional educational hub undergoing rapid administrative digitization, such as the mandatory adoption of the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) and the Independent Teaching Platform (*Platform Merdeka Mengajar* or PMM), while maintaining localized socio-cultural structures. This locus provides an ideal empirical setting to examine how structural job resources interact with teacher work-life harmony and engagement under modern educational administrative demands.

### 2.2 Population, Sampling, and Ethical Procedures

The target population comprised all active public junior high school teachers across Lubuklinggau City (N = 889). To ensure proportional representation across various employment categories, including civil servant, contractual, and honorarium teachers, as well as functional school units, a proportionate stratified random sampling technique was utilized. Based on standard sample size determination frameworks at a five percent margin of error [11], the minimum required sample size was calculated at 269 respondents. To maximize statistical power, minimize non-response bias, and account for potential data screening exclusions, questionnaires were distributed to a broader cohort of 750 teachers. A total of 724 questionnaires were returned, from which 709 fully completed usable responses were retained for structural modeling, yielding an effective response rate of 94.5 percent.

Ethical approval and institutional permissions were formally secured prior to data collection from the Education and Culture Office of Lubuklinggau City under Protocol Reference 420/108/Disdik/2023. Participation was strictly voluntary, and all respondents provided written informed consent after being briefed on the objectives of the study. Anonymity and data confidentiality were guaranteed, and participants were explicitly

informed of their right to withdraw from the survey at any point without career or administrative repercussions.

### 2.3 Data Screening, Careless Responding, and Common Method Bias Control

Data cleaning procedures were systematically performed before structural evaluation. First, missing data were eliminated because the electronic data collection platform enforced a mandatory completion constraint, while physical questionnaires with missing entries were excluded during initial screening. Second, careless responding was identified and removed using procedural control checks, including minimum completion time thresholds that eliminated surveys completed in less than five minutes, as well as intra-individual response variability screening to identify straightlining or longstring patterns where respondents selected the same rating consecutively across all construct items. Third, multivariate outliers were evaluated using Mahalanobis distance ($d^2$) tests at $p < 0.001$, resulting in the removal of 15 anomalous response vectors from the initial 724 submissions, leaving $n = 709$ clean observations.

Because all predictor, mediator, and outcome constructs were measured using a single self-report survey instrument at a single time point, Common Method Bias (CMB) posed a potential methodological threat. To mitigate CMB, both procedural and statistical remedies were implemented [12]. Procedurally, item order was counterbalanced, constructs were separated into distinct thematic sections, item wording was kept clear and concise to reduce cognitive load, and respondents were assured that there were no right or wrong answers. Statistically, CMB was assessed using two rigorous procedures: a) Harman's Single Factor Test: An unrotated exploratory factor analysis revealed that the single largest factor accounted for 36.42 percent of the total variance, well below the standard 50 percent threshold [12], b) Full Collinearity Assessment: Lateral collinearity tests were performed in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). All variance inflation factors (VIF) for latent constructs yielded values between 1.42 and 2.68, strictly below the conservative threshold of 3.3 [13], confirming that common method variance did not contaminate the structural relationships.

### 2.4 Measurement Scales, Item Adaptation, and Pilot Testing

Primary data were gathered using a structured questionnaire evaluating five latent constructs on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for Strongly Disagree to 5 for Strongly Agree. All items underwent forward and backward translation from English to Indonesian and vice versa by bilingual educational experts to ensure semantic equivalence, face validity, and contextual appropriateness. The summary of scale adaptation, item retention, and screening results is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Measurement Scale Adaptation and Indicator Screening

| Construct | Original Items | Retained Items | Deleted Indicator and Reason | Key Theoretical Source and Dimension |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work Environment ($X_1$) | 8 | 7 | WE-04 deleted due to low factor loading | Physical and social classroom environments [14] |
| Rewards and Recognition ($X_2$) | 8 | 7 | RR-06 deleted due to cross-loading | Monetary and non-monetary incentives [15], [16] |
| Career Development ($X_3$) | 7 | 6 | CD-05 deleted due to low factor loading | Career path and training access [17] |
| Work-Life Balance (M) | 8 | 7 | WLB-03 deleted due to low factor loading | WIPL, PLIW, and WEPL dimensions [18], [19] |
| Work Engagement (Y) | 9 | 9 | None because all items were retained | UWES 9 covering vigor, dedication, and absorption [20] |

The detailed operationalization, contextual adaptation, and indicator screening outcomes for each construct are elaborated below: a) Work Environment ($X_1$): Adapted from Spector [14], measuring physical classroom conditions, including lighting, spatial layout, and instructional tools, as well as physical and social climates, such as collegial support and principal leadership. Out of 8 original items, 1 item (WE-04: "Noise levels outside the classroom do not disturb instruction") was deleted due to a low factor loading below 0.60. Retained item example: *"My school provides adequate facilities and a supportive atmosphere that enable me to teach effectively."* b) Rewards and Recognition ($X_2$): Adapted from Eisenberger et al. [15] regarding the Perceived Organizational Support framework, as well as Kurtessis et al. [16].

While Perceived Organizational Support represents broader organizational care, its subscales explicitly measure how employees perceive financial appreciation, public praise, and formal rewards. To align with the teaching context, items were operationalized specifically around teacher incentives, performance awards, and administrative recognition. Out of 8 original items, 1 item (RR-06: "School management gives equal monetary bonuses for extracurricular duties") was eliminated due to cross-loading during pre-testing. Retained item example: *"My school and local education office provide formal recognition and appreciation when I achieve excellent teaching results."* c) Career Development (X3): Adapted from Greenhaus et al. [17], evaluating promotional clarity, rank advancement support, and professional training access. Out of 7 original items, 1 item (CD-05) was removed due to low outer loading. Retained item example: *"I have equal and transparent opportunities to participate in professional development programs to advance my teaching career."* d) Work-Life Balance (M): Adapted from Netemeyer et al. [18] and Hayman [19]. Netemeyer et al. [18] primarily measure Work-Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict, whereas Hayman [19] expands Work-Life Balance to include Work Interference with Personal Life, Personal Life Interference with Work, and Work Enhancement of Personal Life.

To operationalize Work-Life Balance without conflating low conflict with high balance, negative conflict items were reverse-coded and complemented with positive resource enhancement items to capture genuine balance and resource recovery [10], [19]. Out of 8 original items, 1 item (WLB-03) was dropped due to insufficient loading. Retained item example: *"I am able to maintain a healthy balance between my teaching obligations and my personal or family life without feeling overwhelmed."* e) Work Engagement (Y):

Measured using the shortened 9 item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES 9) by Schaufeli et al. [20], assessing three dimensions: Vigor (3 items; for example, *"At my work, I feel bursting with energy"*), Dedication (3 items; for example, *"I am enthusiastic about my job"*), and Absorption (3 items; for example, *"I feel happy when I am working intensely"*). All 9 original items met statistical retention criteria.

A pilot test was administered to n = 30 public junior high school teachers outside the final study sample to rigorously verify the psychometric properties of the instrument prior to full deployment. Reliability analyses yielded high internal consistency across all preliminary scales, with Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$) and Composite Reliability (CR) values comfortably exceeding the 0.70 threshold: Work Environment ($\alpha$= 0.842), Rewards and Recognition ($\alpha$ = 0.816), Career Development ($\alpha$ = 0.835), Work-Life Balance ($\alpha$ = 0.851), and Work Engagement ($\alpha$ = 0.887). Content and face validity were verified by three senior professors in educational management, confirming item clarity, semantic accuracy, and contextual alignment.

### 2.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) executed via SmartPLS software version 4.0. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its capability to handle complex structural models containing direct, indirect, or mediating, and simultaneous relationships without strict multivariate normality assumptions [21]. The analytical process followed a two-step evaluation framework [21]:

1. **Measurement Model or Outer Model Evaluation:** Internal consistency reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha ($\geq$ 0.70) and Composite Reliability (CR $\geq$ 0.70). Convergent validity was established through factor loadings ($\geq$0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE $\geq$ 0.50). Discriminant validity was established using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT < 0.85) [21].

2. **Structural Model or Inner Model Evaluation:** Structural relationships were assessed using path coefficients ($\beta$), coefficients of determination ($R^2$), effect sizes ($f^2$), and predictive relevance ($Q^2$). Specific indirect effects (X $\rightarrow$ M $\rightarrow$ Y) testing the mediating role of Work-Life Balance were evaluated using nonparametric bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples at a 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval [21]. Finally, Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) was conducted at the construct level to provide managerial insights for educational policymakers.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model confirmed the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of all constructs. All constructs demonstrated robust internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) and Composite Reliability (CR $\geq$ 0.70) values exceeding established psychometric benchmarks. Convergent

validity was established, as Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassed the 0.50 threshold across all latent variables. Furthermore, discriminant validity was confirmed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), where all paired construct values were strictly below the conservative limit of 0.85 [21].

### 3.2 Structural Model, Predictive Power, and Hypothesis Testing (Inner Model)

Prior to hypothesis testing, the structural model was evaluated for collinearity, predictive power ($R^2$), effect size ($f^2$), and blindfolding-based predictive relevance ($Q^2$). Lateral collinearity was ruled out because all inner Model Variance Inflation Factors were below 2.68. The model explained 28.4 percent of the variance in Work Life Balance ($R^2$ = 0.284) and 46.8 percent of the variance in Work Engagement (Y, $R^2$ = 0.468). Blindfolding procedures using an omission distance of seven yielded positive cross-validated redundancy values ($Q^2$) of 0.215 for Work-Life Balance and 0.352 for Work Engagement, confirming substantial predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs [21].

Hypothesis testing was conducted via nonparametric bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples at a 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval. Table 2 outlines the direct and indirect path coefficients, sample means, t-statistics, p-values, and 95 percent confidence intervals.

Table 2. Structural Model Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypothesis | Structural Path | Path Coeff (β) | Sample Mean (M) | t-Statistic | p-Value | 95% Confidence Interval | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **H1** | Rewards and Recognition → Engagement | 0.295 | 0.297 | 7.842 | p < 0.001 | [0.221, 0.369] | Supported |
| **H2** | Rewards and Recognition → Work-Life Balance | -0.046 | -0.045 | 1.648 | 0.100 | [-0.101, 0.009] | Not Supported |
| **H3** | Work-Life Balance → Engagement | 0.182 | 0.184 | 4.215 | p < 0.001 | [0.098, 0.266] | Supported |
| **H4 (Med)** | Rewards and Rec. → WLB → Engagement | -0.008 | -0.008 | 1.512 | 0.131 | [-0.019, 0.002] | Not Supported |

*Note: WLB = Work-Life Balance; Rewards and Rec. = Rewards and Recognition. Bootstrap resamples = 5,000. Significance at p < 0.05.*

As reported in Table 2, Rewards and Recognition exert a statistically significant direct positive effect on Work Engagement ($\beta$ = 0.295, p < 0.001), supporting H1. Work-Life Balance also significantly and positively influences Work Engagement ($\beta$= 0.182, p < 0.001), confirming H3. Conversely, the direct relationship between Rewards and Recognition and Work-Life Balance is statistically non-significant ($\beta$ = -0.046, p = 0.100),

leading to the rejection of H2. Because p = 0.100 exceeds the significance threshold, this output indicates insufficient empirical evidence of a relationship, meaning that Rewards and Recognition are not significantly associated with Work Life Balance in this sample. Consequently, the specific indirect effect test demonstrates that no statistically significant indirect effect through Work Life Balance was detected ($\beta$ = -0.008, p = 0.131), requiring the rejection of H4.

### 3.3 Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

To provide actionable practical insights, an Importance-Performance Map Analysis was executed at the construct level using Work Engagement as the target variable. IPMA contrasts total structural effects (importance) against unstandardized, rescaled latent variable performance scores on a scale from 0 to 100.

Table 3. Importance-Performance Map Analysis for Work Engagement

| Predictor Construct | Total Effect (Importance) | Index Performance Score (0 to 100) |
|---|---|---|
| Work Environment ($X_1$) | 0.342 | 68.45 |
| Rewards and Recognition ($X_2$) | 0.287 | 62.10 |
| Career Development ($X_3$) | 0.214 | 58.30 |
| Work Life Balance (M) | 0.182 | 55.20 |

As detailed in Table 3, Work Environment exhibits the highest overall importance (total effect = 0.342) and performance (68.45), followed by Rewards and Recognition (total effect = 0.287; performance = 62.10). Work Life Balance demonstrates a modest total importance of 0.182 and the lowest performance score of 55.20. These findings indicate that while Work-Life Balance represents an important standalone resource for teachers, interventions targeting physical and social work environments along with financial or non-financial rewards yield higher efficiency when seeking to elevate teacher work engagement directly.

### 3.4 Discussion

#### 3.4.1 Direct Determinants of Teacher Work Engagement (H1 and H3)

The empirical support for H1 ($\beta$= 0.295, p < 0.001) demonstrates that institutional rewards and formal recognition serve as primary motivational drivers for public school teachers. This finding aligns directly with prior studies [15], [16], which established that organizational appreciation fulfills fundamental psychological needs for competence and professional respect. In line with Self-Determination Theory [9], receiving formal awards, performance bonuses, or administrative praise boosts intrinsic motivation, thereby encouraging teachers to dedicate greater physical vigor and cognitive absorption to their daily pedagogical roles.

Similarly, the confirmed relationship between Work-Life Balance and Work Engagement ($\beta$ = 0.182, p < 0.001, H3) aligns with empirical evidence in educational management [18], [19]. This finding highlights that Work-Life Balance operates as a vital independent resource for teacher engagement. Even though Work-Life Balance does not

function as an intermediate bridge for institutional rewards, teachers who achieve personal resource recovery and temporal harmony outside school hours return to the classroom with replenished energy reservoirs. In accordance with Conservation of Resources theory [10], preserving personal time directly sustains professional vigor and emotional dedication.

### 3.4.2 Non-Significant Association Between Rewards and Work-Life Balance (H2 and H4)

The statistical non significance of H2 ($\beta$ = -0.046, p = 0.100) and the resulting lack of mediation in H4 ($\beta = -0.008$, $p = 0.131$) require careful interpretation. Unlike early theoretical assumptions suggesting that job resources automatically improve personal life harmony, the data indicate that institutional rewards and recognition are simply not significantly associated with teacher work-life balance.

This non-significant outcome can be explained through several empirical and theoretical nuances: Work-Life Balance as an Independent Resource rather than a Mediating Mechanism**.** The contrast between a supported H3 and an unsupported H4 reveals an important theoretical distinction. Work-life balance is an independent antecedent that directly enhances engagement, but it is not the structural channel through which institutional rewards operate. External recognition directly stimulates professional identity and intrinsic motivation [9], satisfying psychological needs without necessarily altering domestic time allocations or work-life boundaries.

Construct Heterogeneity of Rewards and Recognition: Combining financial bonuses, public praise, and career advancement into a single composite construct may conceal divergent operational mechanisms. For instance, formal career advancement or promotional awards often carry increased administrative responsibilities, school committee leadership, and heightened compliance duties, which may consume personal time. Conversely, straightforward financial incentives or non-monetary appreciation do not alter administrative workload. Aggregating these distinct components into one latent variable masks opposing micro dynamics, yielding an overall neutral association with Work-Life Balance.

Alternative Mediators within Self-Determination Theory**:** The failure of Work-Life Balance to act as a mediator suggests that alternative psychological mechanisms likely bridge rewards and engagement. According to Self-Determination Theory [9], constructs such as Perceived Organizational Support [16], competence satisfaction, autonomous motivation, or professional identity serve as more natural proximate mediators. Rewards directly nourish a teacher's professional self-concept and sense of meaningful work rather than affecting domestic boundary management.

Boundary Conditions of Resource Depletion**:** If structural resource depletion occurs when teachers strive for awards under administrative reforms like the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) and digital platforms (*Platform Merdeka Mengajar*), future models should incorporate explicit demand constructs. Variable dimensions such as objective administrative workload, work intensification [6], role overload, or emotional exhaustion should be directly measured to test whether administrative demands offset the personal life benefits of institutional rewards.

Nuanced Socio-Cultural Perspectives**:** While regional educational settings outside major metropolitan areas are often characterized as collectivist [7], cultural orientations should not be treated as uniform across all educators without individual-level measurement. Local teachers balance traditional community expectations with modern professional accountability, meaning that personal responses to organizational recognition vary based on individual career stage and personal family obligations.

## 4. CONCLUSION

### 4.1 Conclusion

This study evaluated the structural relationships among organizational rewards and recognition, work-life balance, and work engagement among public junior high school teachers in Lubuklinggau City, Indonesia. The empirical results confirm that rewards and recognition exert a statistically significant, direct positive impact on teacher work engagement ($H_1$). Furthermore, work-life balance was found to positively influence engagement as a direct, independent antecedent (H). However, the statistical testing revealed a non-significant direct association between rewards and recognition and work-life balance ($H_2$), resulting in a non-significant indirect pathway ($H_4$). Contrary to initial mediation assumptions, institutional rewards and recognition are not significantly associated with teacher work-life balance in this context, and work-life balance does not operate as an intermediary mechanism linking rewards to engagement.

### 4.2 Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the educational management and organizational behavior literature in two main ways: Refining Resource Frameworks in Educational Contexts: The findings refine the application of the Job Demands and Resources framework [8] by demonstrating that work-life balance functions primarily as an independent resource for engagement rather than a mediating conduit for institutional rewards. External recognition directly stimulates teacher engagement without necessarily altering personal or domestic boundary management. Contextualizing Self-Determination and Motivation Dynamics: The robust direct association between recognition and engagement aligns broadly with Self-Determination Theory [9], suggesting that institutional appreciation directly supports professional identity and intrinsic motivation. However, rather than claiming superior explanatory power over other models, these results indicate that psychological resource mechanisms and personal life balance operate along distinct structural pathways.

### 4.3 Practical and Policy Implications

Because variables such as administrative platform workload were not directly included in the structural model, the following recommendations are presented as tentative policy implications based on observed empirical trends: Tentative Bureaucratic Optimization: School administrators and local education authorities should consider reviewing how administrative duties and digital reporting expectations are linked to performance recognition programs. Future policy frameworks should strive to ensure that

institutional recognition is accompanied by adequate operational support so that professional appreciation translates effectively into sustained organizational commitment.

Designing Balanced Recognition Systems: Educational leadership is encouraged to pair formal appreciation with targeted workload management strategies, such as providing dedicated administrative assistance or offering flexible scheduling options where feasible. Protecting Work-Life Boundaries: School management should foster an institutional culture that respects personal time, encouraging clear operational boundaries between professional school obligations and domestic life to prevent unnecessary work spillover.

### 4.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several methodological and theoretical limitations of this study highlight valuable avenues for future investigation: a) Cross-sectional and Single-Source Design: The use of a cross-sectional, single-source self-report survey design limits the ability to draw definitive causal inferences and introduces potential common method variance. However, formal diagnostic tests indicated that common method bias was within acceptable bounds [12], [13]. b) Absence of Direct Demand and Psychological Variables: The structural model did not include direct measures of administrative workload, work intensification [6], role overload, work-family conflict [18], or specific Self-Determination Theory psychological need constructs such as autonomy or competence satisfaction [9]. c) Construct Aggregation: Financial bonuses, public praise, and career advancement opportunities were aggregated into a single composite construct. Combining distinct reward types may mask divergent operational relationships with work-life balance. d) Geographic Scope: Data were gathered exclusively from middle school teachers within a single regional urban center in Indonesia, limiting immediate generalizability across different educational levels or cultural contexts.

To address these limitations, future research should directly test the proposed organizational compensation mechanisms using longitudinal or diary study designs, mixed methods approaches, and disaggregated reward constructs. Incorporating explicit measures of administrative workload, psychological need satisfaction, and work-family conflict will provide deeper theoretical clarity regarding teacher well-being and performance dynamics.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express her deepest gratitude to the junior high school teachers in Lubuklinggau City for their invaluable participation during the data collection process. Sincere thanks are also extended to the author's supervisors and colleagues for their constructive feedback and guidance throughout this research. The author gratefully acknowledges the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia, alongside the Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) and Indonesian Education Scholarship (BPI), for providing the financial support and scholarship funding for her doctoral studies. Additionally, the author recognises the foundational contributions of the theorists and researchers in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, whose works laid the conceptual framework for this study. Finally, appreciation is expressed to all parties who provided technical and administrative assistance during the completion of this work.

Statement on the Use of AI-Assisted Technologies: During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools solely for language editing, grammar refinement, and improving the clarity of expression. The authors reviewed and edited the content as required and take full responsibility for the originality, data accuracy, interpretation of findings, and final content of the publication.

## REFERENCES


[1] W. B. Schaufeli and A. B. Bakker, "Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 293–315, 2004.

[2] Mailizar, A., Almanthari, S. Maulina, and S. Bruce, "Secondary school mathematics teachers' views on e-learning implementation barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic: The case of Indonesia," *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, vol. 16, no. 7, p. em1860, 2020.

[3] I. Sumarsih, T. Marliyani, Y. Hadiyansah, A. H. Hernawan, and P. Prihantini, "Analisis implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di sekolah penggerak," *Jurnal Basicedu*, vol. 6, no. 5, pp. 8248–8258, 2022.

[4] A. Rosser, "The political economy of education in Indonesia," in *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, R. W. Hefner, Ed. London, UK: Routledge, 2018.

[5] J. Siegrist, "Adverse health effects of high-effort/low-reward conditions," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 27–41, 1996.

[6] F. Green, "It's been a hard day's night: The concentration and intensification of work in late twentieth-century Britain," *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 53–80, 2001.

[7] G. Hofstede, "Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context," *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011.

[8] E. Demerouti, A. B. Bakker, F. Nachreiner, and W. B. Schaufeli, "The job demands-resources model of burnout," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 86, no. 3, pp. 499–512, 2001.

[9] E. L. Deci and R. M. Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum Press, 1985.

[10] S. E. Hobfoll, "Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress," *American Psychologist*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 513–524, 1989.

[11] R. V. Krejcie and D. W. Morgan, "Determining sample size for research activities," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 607–610, 1970.

[12] P. M. Podsakoff, S. B. MacKenzie, J. Y. Lee, and N. P. Podsakoff, "Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 88, no. 5, pp. 879–903, 2003.

[13] N. Kock, "Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach," *International Journal of e-Collaboration*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 1–10, 2015.

[14] P. E. Spector, *Job Satisfaction: Application, Assessment, Causes, and Consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1997.

[15] R. Eisenberger, R. Huntington, S. Hutchison, and D. Sowa, "Perceived organizational support," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 71, no. 3, pp. 500–507, 1986.

[16] J. N. Kurtessis, R. Eisenberger, M. T. Ford, L. C. Buffardi, K. A. Stewart, and C. S. Adis, "Perceived organizational support: A meta-analytic evaluation of organizational support theory," *Journal of Management*, vol. 43, no. 6, pp. 1854–1884, 2017.

[17] J. H. Greenhaus, S. Parasuraman, and W. M. Wormley, "Effects of race on organizational experiences, job performance evaluations, and career outcomes," *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 64–86, 1990.

[18] R. G. Netemeyer, J. S. Boles, and R. McMurrian, "Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 81, no. 4, pp. 400–410, 1996.

[19] J. R. Hayman, "Psychometric evaluation of an instrument designed to measure work-life balance," *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 85–91, 2005.

[20] W. B. Schaufeli, A. B. Bakker, and M. Salanova, "The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 701–716, 2006.

[21] J. F. Hair, G. T. M. Hult, C. M. Ringle, and M. Sarstedt, *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2021.