



# Working conditions and work performance of remote elementary school teachers

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## ABSTRACT

Working conditions are a critical component in determining an employee's productivity as well as their ability to be efficient and successful. The purpose of this study was to characterize working conditions and their impact on the job performance of elementary school teachers in Boven Digoel district. Data were gathered using survey from 171 respondents, conveniently selected from a total of 536 elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel district. The gathered data were statistically analyzed using the program SPSS version 21. The findings indicated that the working conditions of the elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel district strongly affected their job performance. In addition, the research show that school principals and regional education policymakers must develop favorable working conditions for teachers in order to motivate them to contribute more than is necessary to educate the youth of nations.

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## INTRODUCTION

Working conditions are a critical component in determining an employee's productivity, as well as their ability to be efficient and successful. A more favorable work conditions increases productivity and lowers costs connected with absenteeism, turnover, expenses, working hours, security, safety, health, and medical claims. The term "working conditions" refers to the environments in which an employee works, which may include a variety of factors such as equipment, structures, and location, as well as air freshening and lighting (Law Insider, N/d).

Improving teachers' working conditions have a substantial effect on their motivation and, consequently, on their performance. Given the widespread recognition of teachers' critical role in guiding students to success, it's easy to ignore whether or not teachers are satisfied with their working conditions (Bascia and Rottmann, 2011; Liang and Akiba, 2017). Inadequate school working conditions may tarnish the teaching profession's

reputation and make it more difficult to recruit new teachers (Ingersoll, 2001).

However, hiring additional teachers may not fix the teacher turnover problem as long as many new teachers quit schools due to dissatisfaction with their working conditions (Ingersoll, 2017; Sutchter et al., 2016).

Working conditions have long been documented as a factor in determining whether or not teachers do effectively on the job (Al-Omari and Okasheh, 2017; Bushiri, 2014; Ollukkaran and Gunaseelan, 2012; Wea et al, 2020). Numerous researchers and experts have offered theoretical foundations for the job performance that reflect the intricacies inherent in the concept of performance. Munchinsky (2003) defined job performance as a collection of distinguishable, quantifiable, and evaluable individual activities. On the other side, Mathis and Jackson (2000, p. 381) defined work performance as "what an employee does or does not do." Whereas Cascio (2006) defined job performance as the extent to which the mission of a workplace contributes to an employee's

job. While there is no universal agreement on what constitutes job performance, the literature is consistent in describing how an employee does his or her job.

Employers analyze an employee's performance during work performance reviews by considering aspects such as leadership abilities and productivity in order to evaluate each employee individually. The term 'job performance' here refers to what teachers do in the classroom and how it affects students' learning (Werang and Agung, 2017). Teachers' job performance is a critical determinant of a school's performance (Wall et al., 2004). Teachers' performance is largely determined by the following factors: (a) teacher characteristics such as commitment to teaching; willingness to upgrade knowledge, communication skills, and the capacity to motivate students to participate actively in the teaching-learning process; (b) student characteristics such as motivation and family background; (c) curriculum elements such as lesson structure and schedule; and (d) learning environment. Teachers' performance will be significantly enhanced if they pay close attention to these elements (Chamundeswari, 2013, p. 420-421).

Given that the quality of education and graduates is often defined by the quality of teacher performance, this study emphasizes the importance of documenting the working conditions of the elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel and its impact on performance. Even though numerous studies have examined how working conditions affect teachers' job performance (e.g. Al-Omari and Okasheh, 2017; Bushiri, 2014; Jayaweera, 2015; Nduku et al., 2015; Ollukkaran and Gunaseelan, 2012; Samson et al., 2015; Wea et al., 2020), we are still motivated to investigate this topic further to address the issue of elementary school students' inability in reading, writing, and arithmetic (Werang et al., 2017, Werang et al., 2019; Wullur and Werang, 2020; Yunarti et al., 2020a), as well as the issue of indigenous students' low rank (Sianturi et al., 2018; Leba et al., 2021).

To our knowledge, there are relatively few empirical studies that assess the effect of working circumstances on teachers' job performance in elementary schools in the Indonesian district of Boven Digoel. Thus, this study sought to close the gap by examining how teachers' working conditions affect

their performance, with the population being elementary schools in the Boven Digoel district of Indonesia. The following research topic was addressed: "Do working conditions have a substantial favorable effect on the job performance of elementary school teachers in Indonesia's Boven Digoel district?" To address the research issue, a quantitative study employing a survey research approach was conducted.

## ■ METHODOLOGY

As previously stated, the study employed a survey research approach to assess how working conditions affect the performance of elementary school teachers who were selected from a certain community (Werang, 2015). Two survey questionnaires were administered to 171 teacher-respondents who were conveniently selected from a pool of 536 elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel. There are six advantages to employing the survey are as follows: low cost, exact results, high representativeness, ease of data collection, good statistical significance, and little subjectivity on the part of the investigators (Wea et al., 2020; Wullur and Werang, 2020; Yunarti et al., 2020b).

We used 15 questions from the questionnaires developed by Yunarti et al. (2020b) and Wula et al. (2020a) to assess the work performance of instructors in our study. The inventory is scored on a four-point Likert scale, with four being the strongly agree and one being the strongly disagree. Items of questionnaire include the following: "I do the best for helping troubled students", "I organize learning materials at the beginning of the semester for student success", "I assess students' work attentively", "I afford learning media that the school does not provide to help students' understanding", "I used to upgrade my knowledge and skills by actively participating conferences and seminars in education manner", and "I allow students to practice leadership in the classroom-discussion". The reliability of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as shown in Table 1.

We employed a survey consisting of 16 items from an existing study piloted by Wea et al. (2020) to assess teachers' working conditions. The inventory is scored on a four-point Likert scale, with four being the

strongly agree and one being the strongly disagree. Items of questionnaire include the following: "I am being salaried properly," "My monthly pay is sufficient," "I am satisfied with my workload," "School housings are healthy and well-equipped," "Learning facilities are adequately provided," "I am treated respectfully," "All teachers here are working well as a team," "My coworkers are supportive of me," "School principal treat me with deference," and "School principal appears to be interested in me as a person." In order to determine the reliability of the

instruments, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, as shown in Table 2. The statistical analysis of the gathered data was carried out using the SPSS program version 21. The research hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is that the working conditions of elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel district, Indonesia, have a considerable favorable impact on their performance. This hypothesis was evaluated using an alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient value of 0.05, which corresponds to a 95 percent confidence level in the results.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's coefficient value of the instruments of job performance

Case Processing Summary			Reliability Statistics		
		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	30	100.0	0.875	15
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0		
	Total	30	100.0		

<sup>a</sup>Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Table 2.** Cronbach's coefficient value of the instruments of working conditions

Case Processing Summary			Reliability Statistics		
		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	30	100	0.881	16
	Excluded <sup>1</sup>	0	0		
	Total	30	100		

<sup>1</sup>Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

## ■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to look into the possibility that teachers' working conditions had an impact on their job performance. As previously stated, the statistical analysis of the gathered data was carried out using the SPSS program version 21. The statistically significant result is shown in Table 3. The data in Table 3 indicate that the study hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) that the working conditions of the elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel district, Indonesia, have a considerable favorable impact on their performance is accepted; whereas the opposite is rejected. Additionally, the regression analysis results indicate that working conditions have a significant positive impact on the job performance of elementary school teachers in Indonesia's Boven Digoel district, as the  $R^2$

value of .887 is positive and the value of 0.000 is significant at the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05. It implies that teachers' working conditions account for 88.7 percent of their job performance.

The statistical results suggest that adding one point to the research variable "teachers' working conditions" increases the dependent variable "teachers' job performance" by 0.887 points. In the opposite direction, subtracting one point from the research variable "teachers' working conditions" results in a loss of 0.887 points in teacher performance. In other words, any improvement in teachers' working conditions will result in an increase in teachers' job performance. On the other hand, any deterioration in teachers' working conditions will result in a decline in the job performance.

**Table 3.** Working conditions (X) and the job performance of teachers (Y)

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.942 <sup>a</sup>	0.887	0.886	1.55552	0.887	1327.351	1	169	0.0001

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: (Constant), Working-Conditions

The findings indicated that when teachers are provided with adequate devices, resources, and supportive environments, they will contribute more than is needed of them, either individually or jointly. The findings are consistent with those of previous research (Ahmed et al., 2016; Chandrasekarr, 2011; Khan et al., 2011; Naharuddin and Sadegi, 2013; Nanzushi, 2015; Nduku et al., 2015; Ohide and Mbogo, 2017). The findings demonstrated how teachers' working conditions have an effect on their job performance in both positive and bad ways. Adequate working conditions ensure that employee performance is positively impacted and vice versa.

While remaining attentive to one another, teachers maintain their own identities through varying degrees of exclusivity (Weick, 1976), and "this relative operational independence enables them to construct individual judgments to deal with the classroom environment's uncertainty and complexity on their own" (Timperley and Robinson, 2000, p. 48). Several scholars (e.g. Croninger et al., 2007; Jackson and Bruegmann, 2009; Johnson et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011; Loeb et al., 2005) have examined how various aspects of working conditions influence significant aspects of employees' behavior and attitudes. According to other experts (Kahya, 2007), uncomfortable working conditions have a significant impact on employees' job performance, including productivity, quality, and emotional stress.

To assist teachers in overcoming physical exhaustion and emotional stress, K-12 Education at Arkansas State University (2017, p. 1) emphasized the following: "Teachers typically draw support from each another and may allocate chores that allow each teacher to feel effective. When teachers rely on one another for help, they establish relationships based on trust and empathy. These regular meetings are vital in developing lasting professional and mentorship

ties." In a similar spirit, Futernick (2007, as referenced in Ye, 2016) suggested that when teachers are permitted to work collaboratively with other skilled teachers who share the same vision, they can jolt the school out of its disequilibrium and change it into a high-achieving school.

Shann (2001) suggested that when it comes to the relationship between working circumstances and employee productivity, workers' performance is influenced by their environment and coworkers. Schools in good condition are safe, clean, comfortable, and equipped with necessary tools. Teachers enjoy comfortable working conditions that encourage them to work diligently toward school objectives and student success (Halpert, 2011). Teachers become upset when they lack of sufficient and adequate working materials, which has a significant impact on their performance. Zembylar and Papanastasiou (2006) discovered a strong correlation between teacher job unhappiness and poor working circumstances.

## ■ CONCLUSION

When the statistical analysis is interpreted broadly, it is concluded that working conditions have a considerable favorable effect on the job performance of elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel district. This finding has the following practical and theoretical implications: (a) school principals and regional education policymakers should make an effort to create pleasant working conditions for teachers in order to retain them and educate the nation's future generations; and (b) because research on this subject is still scarce in the Boven Digoel district, the findings of this study may contribute to the accessible literature by elucidating how the

elementary school teachers of Boven Digoel district perceived their working conditions.

The statistical results of this study should be interpreted cautiously when generalizing the conclusions due to the study's restricted geographic coverage and sample size. Future research on this subject using a diverse variety of geographical areas and sample sizes is strongly recommended to ensure that the findings are generalizable.

## ■ DECLARATION

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### Authors' contribution

Each researcher is interested in conducting study on school administration, school climate and culture, teacher behavior, student engagement, and achievement. D. Wea aided with data collection and the initial draft's construction. A. K. Wolomasi aided in the collecting and analysis of data. B. R. Werang aided with the collecting and analysis of data, as well as the evaluation and editing of manuscripts. He also served as the corresponding author for the manuscript.

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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