

**ANALYSIS OF WORKLOAD AND NON PHYSICAL WORK  
ENVIRONMENT ON JOB-RELATED STRESS ON TEACHERS IN  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS IN PANDEMIC TIMES**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of workload and non-physical work environment on elementary school teachers' job-related stress during a pandemic. The study included a poll of 68 primary school teachers who taught during the Covid-19 outbreak. Multiple Linear Regression was used to evaluate the data. The empirical tests indicate that respondents perceive an increase in workload, which leads to tremendous job stress. Simultaneously, the concept that a tremendous non-physical work environment might help minimize job-related stress is not supported. Additionally, respondents prefer face-to-face learning in the long run due to the various hurdles they confront. This study sheds light on the growth of job stress among elementary school teachers due to excessive workloads and the pressure to perform a variety of "new" activities in a short amount of time. However, generalizing the findings of this study has several limitations. The subsequent researchers can investigate with a longitudinal design to see the long-term effects of future changes in teaching and learning patterns.*

**Keywords:** Workload, Non-Physical Work Environment, Job-related Stress, Elementary School Teachers, Covid-19 Pandemic

**INTRODUCTION**

Human resources are critical to fulfilling the vision and objective of the business and the desired outcomes. In education, one of the essential resources in determining the success of the process is in the teacher's hands. Since Covid-19 hit Indonesia, the implementation of the majority learning system has shifted from

offline to online, which is carried out from home by utilizing telecommunications networks. The government then took steps to conduct distance learning for teaching and learning activities, no exception in elementary school. Teachers in elementary schools must carry out learning with various obstacles faced. Teachers in eastern Indonesia who are still not familiar with the use of the internet, including the geographical location of the Indonesian territory, which telecommunications networks have not touched, are obstacles among the many problems that arise. Other things, such as the problem of expensive data packages, are a burden for students and teachers (Utami et al., 2020). The interactions that previously took place directly, between teachers and students, who could meet face-to-face, were full of psychological touch, were mutually responsible, and interacted directly, both verbally and non-verbally, have disappeared due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Muslim, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in much work being done differently. Many allegations of this have a psychological impact, including on teachers. Collie (2021) stated that teaching is considered one of the most stressful professions. Work stress on teachers can occur when teachers face a condition that arises when facing student progress. The teacher often feels dissatisfied and disappointed with their efforts when everything that has been planned in educating students fails (Ferlia et al., 2016).

Work stress on a teacher can occur because the teacher's workload is very much. Under normal circumstances, the teacher's burden is too significant, and environmental factors are not supportive (Akbar & Pratasiwi, 2017). Due to Covid-19, teachers' workload is increasing because learning is still focused on completing the curriculum, reduced teaching time, the limited ability of teachers to do modules that are interesting and fun for students, and demands for various kinds of innovations. Another thing is that teachers have worked longer hours than before the pandemic. Before the pandemic, the average working hours of teachers were only eight hours, but during the pandemic, it became 12 hours. In addition, limited learning media, not to mention parents' limitations in assisting children to learn from home because they have to work, appear to be new obstacles in the learning process (Enre et al., 2020).

Teachers are exposed to high standards and expectations when assisting students. That matter arises not only from the parents of the students themselves but also from changes in the learning approach model that urgently requires adaptation and innovation in a short time. On the other hand, there are factors that teachers and students are not accustomed to in carrying out online learning, including the support of facilities and infrastructure. Various combinations of situations cause teachers to be under high and continuous pressure. The occurrence of a mismatch between expectations and reality triggers stress for teachers, which, if it occurs in the long term, will affect their mental health so that it can harm the learning process (Siti & Cahya, 2021).

The work environment can influence another factor that causes work stress for teachers during a pandemic. The work environment consists of the physical and non-physical environments attached to employees not to be separated from performance development efforts. The work environment, such as the work atmosphere, relationships with colleagues, the availability of work facilities, noise, and unpleasant odors, will contribute to the comfort of employees in carrying out their duties (Nidaul, 2019). Activities carried out by teachers cannot be separated from a supportive work environment, and this work environment also affects the work stress experienced by teachers. A conducive work environment can create high morale for all personnel, motivate and encourage teachers to work, increase creativity (Luma, 2018).

The Covid-19 pandemic causes high stress on teachers and tends to burn out due to the all-digital work environment and online learning, especially in non-physical work environments (Ansley et al., 2021). According to (Sedarmayanti, 2001) The non-physical work environment is related to work relations, superiors, co-workers, or relationships with subordinates. The pandemic occurrence created a different learning system than usual, no face-to-face meetings to avoid the spread of Covid-19, or at least minimized meetings, including teacher meetings with their students. The process of teaching and learning activities must continue to run by maximizing technology that supports distance learning, and those require teachers to change their work system (Handayani & Azizah, 2021).

The non-physical work environment significantly affects employee job satisfaction. Suppose the situation or situation around the employee is conducive to work. In that case, colleagues are easy to work with, and the relationship with superiors is good. Employees will enjoy their work to feel satisfied while working in that place (Pangarso, 2015). Cappe et al. (2021) stated that teacher work stress during the Covid-19 pandemic was mainly caused by the work environment, self-efficacy, and social support. The change in the work system to WFH impacts the process of teaching and learning activities, including meetings or meetings held using remote applications and online learning systems. A work-from-home policy causes employees to have new communication patterns, namely by utilizing information technology and online media. Virtual communication technologies such as the Zoom application or Google Hangouts are famous examples (Komalasari, 2020).

This study examines the effect of workload and non-physical work environment that can affect work stress based on elementary school teachers' perceptions during the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 1). The study results are expected to contribute to an increased understanding of the factors that cause work stress for elementary school teachers during the pandemic. Based on the described background, this research was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the workload affect the work stress of elementary school teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2. How does the non-physical work environment affect the work stress of elementary school teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic?

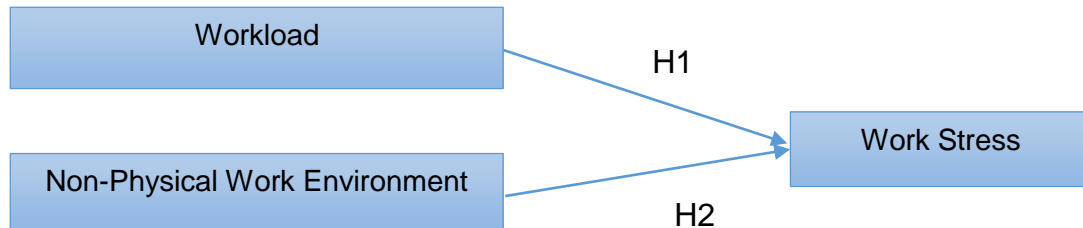


Figure 1. Research Model

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Job-related Stress during a Pandemic

Since February 2020, Indonesia and the whole world have been shocked by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Various activities of human life that previously took place typically must change drastically and significantly following various regulations set by the Government to reduce the spread of this coronavirus (Aulia A, 2020). The spread of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on education globally. When schools and universities close, many turn to technology to continue teaching and learning (Jain et al., 2020).

In the current situation, national governments worldwide are implementing new preventive and responsive measures every day to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and overcome the crisis. They have established a situation of lockdown, social distancing, and educational measures such as the temporary closure of educational institutions. These global school closures affect more than 60% of the world's student population, and in some countries, implemented local closures could impact millions of additional students (UNESCO, 2020b).

As part of this, teachers have faced significant stress about their work. The pandemic required a sudden shift to distance learning. Teachers are being asked to support student's academic development and well-being during this transition and cope with difficulties and stressors in their life (Collie, 2021). Teachers experience confusion and stress because they are often unsure of their responsibilities and maintain relationships with students to support learning. Distance learning changes are messy and stressful, even in the best circumstances (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021).

Stress during the COVID pandemic-19 due to the risk of persistent infection led to mandatory self-isolation. At the same time, teachers must optimize modern technology and distance teaching practices quickly while supporting students and their parents, including maintaining students' motivation to learn. Their stress is caused not only by the pandemic that threatens life and health but also by the

emergency transition to distance learning and uncertainty (Petrankova et al., 2021). Teacher work stress can harm the teacher's personality, the school where he teaches, and students. Teachers who experience job stress can be identified by their absence from class, heightened emotions, and physical and mental illnesses that arise. Excessive stress is often manifested through negative behavior, such as being absent from teaching, being angry, conflicts with superiors or colleagues, and lacking a sense of love and responsibility in their work (Luma, 2018).

### **Workload and Job-related Stress**

According to Prabu & Puspitasari (2015), work stress for teachers is a feeling experienced teacher caused by stressful situations, actions, or events originating from environmental, organizational, and individual factors in dealing with their duties and responsibilities in workers resulting in physiological, psychological, and behavioral. Petrankova et al. (2021) stated that the main stress factors that affect teachers are job stressors, which include high workloads, unsupportive administration, and excessive emotional involvement with students, their parents, and coworkers.

The workload is one of the factors that can affect the occurrence of stress in employees, and every employee most often feels this factor. The workload is also a factor that is most often experienced by every employee, where this condition can lead to stressful conditions for employees (Miqdad, 2014). The workload is one of the factors that affect employee performance. One of the causes of the teacher's work being not optimal is that the teacher's workload is felt too much. The Covid-19 pandemic has increased teachers' workload because the learning system that was initially carried out face-to-face now has to do distance learning (Prabowo, 2020)

Renny (2020) Revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic condition requires teachers to be creative and innovative. The pandemic conditions have changed habits and forced new activities to be carried out so that teachers continue to provide learning to students. Not a few teachers, especially elementary school teachers, experience anxiety, which causes stressful conditions at work. Sethi & Saini (2021) revealed that distance learning and working from home caused teachers to experience work stress. Therefore, significant efforts should be made to support teachers during this pandemic and future distance learning situations. Distance learning systems and work from home make the teacher's workload more and more because teachers have to prepare engaging learning media. They consider that these activities are carried out without prior preparation, complex technological innovations that cause stress and physical fatigue.

**Hypothesis 1:** The higher workload leads to increased work stress according to the perception of elementary school teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic

### **Non-Physical Work Environment and Job-related Stress**

The non-physical work environment is referred to as the psychic work environment, namely the conditions around the workplace that are non-physical. This work environment cannot be captured directly with the five human senses, but the situation can be felt. This non-physical work environment can be felt through relationships with fellow employees, subordinates and superiors, and superiors with subordinates (Pangarso, 2015). An organization's relationship is an essential thing to maintain a harmonious working environment or relationship. Carrying out tasks with good interpersonal relationships between superiors and co-workers can increase the ease of carrying out work, high work accuracy, create good communication and atmosphere and work cohesiveness to produce high work productivity (Anam & Rahardja, 2017).

The Covid-19 pandemic has pushed for new policies in the non-physical work environment. The relationship between colleagues is more limited by the necessity to keep a distance. There are more and more standards and work procedures related to implementing the Covid-19 prevention protocol (Meilina et al., 2019). The non-physical work environment that exists during WFH is different from the work environment in the office. When working from home, the aspect that affects the trust between employees and other employees and employees and superiors. Therefore, maintaining a harmonious relationship between employees and superiors is essential while working from home (Nuramalina & Cahyadi, 2021). According to Arilaha et al. (2020), Teachers who work from home will be willing to work if they have an encouraging environment and much-needed support from organizations to work from home. The work environment will affect work stress, so the school management must create a work environment starting from adopting technology and creating good communication to reduce teacher work stress during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**Hypothesis 2:** An excellent non-physical work environment will reduce work stress according to the perception of elementary school teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic

## **METHODS**

This study used a quantitative research design using a survey approach. The data collection technique is through a google form distributed to primary school teachers: <https://bit.ly/QuestionerBehavior> and Attitude of the Teacher. The final responses involved in data processing are 68 individuals, all of whom were active primary school teachers during the Covid-19 epidemic. Table 1 contains a general description and characteristics of the research respondents in this study. Based on Table 1 from 68 respondents, 24 respondents were male (35.3%), and 44 were female (64.7%). Based on the age distribution, the majority (29.4%) are aged 31-40 years. Based on the level of Education, 79.5% of teachers are bachelor, 17.6% are master, and there are still 3% who has Diploma degree. Lastly, most respondents (38.3%) have been teachers 16-20 years.

Table 1 Respondents Profile

No	Profile of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	<u>Gender</u>		
	Male	24	35.3%
	Female	44	64.7%
2.	<u>Age</u>		
	21-30 Years	19	27.9%
	31-40 Years	20	29.4%
	41-50 Years	13	19.2%
	51-60 Years	16	23.5%
3.	<u>Education</u>		
	Diploma	2	2.9%
	Bachelor	54	79.5%
	Master	12	17.6%
4.	<u>Tenure</u>		
	1-5 Years	16	23.5%
	6-10 Years	7	10.3%
	11-15 Years	19	27.9%
	16-20 Years	26	38.3%

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test show that all statement items from each variable are valid. According to Nunnaly (1978) for the reliability test, the instrument is said to have high reliability if the value of Chronbach's Alpha is more than 0.6 (see Table 2).

Table 2 Reliability Test

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Workload	8	.735
Non-Physical Environment	17	.905
Work Stress	11	.851

Source: Data Proceed

### Descriptive Statistics

The primary purpose of this research is to examine the effect of workload and non-physical work environment on work stress. Table 3 presents the mean, standard deviation, and correlation between the variables measured in this study. As shown

in Table 3, there is a positive relationship between workload variables and work stress ( $r = .633, p < .05$ ), and there is a negative relationship between non-physical environmental variables and work stress ( $r = -.225, p > .05$ ).

Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation

No	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3
1	Workload	2.83	.765	1		
2	Non-Physical Environment	4.13	.487	-.181	1	
3	Work stress	2.79	.624	.633**	.225	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data Proceed

The researcher uses the average value for each variable and each item to determine respondents' high/low perception on each item of each variable and for each variable. After getting the mean value, the next step is to classify it into the criteria in Table 4. Classification of the average score compared to the average score for each item in Table 5, 6, and 7.

Table 4 Criteria Classification

No	Score	Criteria
1.	1.00 – 1.80	Very low
2.	1.81 – 2.60	Low
3.	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
4.	3.41 – 4.20	High
5.	4.21 – 5.00	Very High

Table 5 Survey Results on Workload

No.	Statements Item	Frequency						Total score	Average	Criteria
		SA	A	F	DS	SDS	SA			
1.	I often feel physically exhausted due to the workload.	3	27	18	12	8	-	209	3.07	Moderate
2.	I often find it difficult to concentrate at	3	9	23	21	12	-	174	2.56	Low



No.	Statements Item	Frequency						Total score	Average	Criteria
		SA	A	F	DS	SDS	SA			
	work because of my workload.									
3.	I often find it difficult to finish my work on time.	-	8	24	29	7	-	169	2.49	Low
4.	My workload often prevents me from doing a good job.	1	3	16	37	11	-	150	2.21	Low
5.	My job interferes with activities outside of work.	-	6	10	39	13	-	145	2.13	Low
6.	My job interferes with my time for family and friends.	-	3	15	32	18	-	139	2.04	Low
7.	There are many lags between one workload period and another.	3	23	23	18	2	-	212	3.15	Moderate
8.	I have a responsibility for the welfare and lives of others.	12	26	16	13	1	-	239	3.51	High
<b>Average Score</b>									<b>2.65</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Source: Processed data

SS: Strongly Agree, S: Agree, F: Fair, DS: Disagree, SDS: Strongly Disagree

Respondents' perceptions of the workload stored during teaching from home showed an average value of 2.65 in the medium category. Specifically, there is only

one highly-rated item, namely that the respondent has responsibility for the welfare and lives of others. In addition, at the moderate level, respondents often feel physically tired due to work even though there is a gap between the execution of one job and another. The rest of the respondents assessed the low category for various indicators measuring workload when the pandemic occurred. The average value shows that the respondents describing the workload experienced can slowly be perceived positively; this means that the workload is not too high. This result can be the beginning of the emergence of the learning process from individual teachers to various teaching and learning activities carried out with new patterns and techniques compared to during the pandemic.

Table 6 Survey Results on Non-Physical Work Environment

N o.	Statement Items	Frequency						Total score	Aver age	Crit eria
		SA	A	F	D S	SD S	S A			
1.	My job is challenging in a good way.	15	49	4	-	1	-	280	4.18	High
2.	My job matches my skills and interests.	22	43	4	-	-	-	290	4.32	Very high
3.	I have the opportunity to provide input as a decision maker whose decisions can affect my work.	7	44	13	4	1	-	255	3.81	High
4.	I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I received.	10	47	9	2	-	-	269	3.96	High
5.	I am satisfied with my department/institution/organization.	16	36	16	-	-	-	272	4.00	High
6.	I am satisfied with the way my department communicates with staff.	12	40	13	2	1	1	263	3.88	High
7.	I like to socialize with my coworkers at work.	41	26	1	-	-	-	312	4.59	Very high
8.	I have a positive working relationship with my co-workers.	36	30	1	1	-	-	305	4.49	Very high
9	I am aware of my role and responsibility to	40	25	3	-	-	-	309	4.54	Very high

N o.	Statement Items	Frequency						Total score	Aver age	Crit eria
		SA	A	F	D S	SD S	S A			
	protect my personal health and safety at work.									
10	My department seems committed to ensuring my health and well-being.	20	36	11	1	-	-	279	4.10	High
11	I am satisfied with the number of hours I work.	19	39	9	1	-	-	280	4.12	High
12	Innovation is valued in my work.	21	36	8	3	1	1	276	4.12	High
13	The work I do gives me a sense of satisfaction with the results obtained.	15	41	12	-	-	-	275	4.04	High
14	I have support at work to provide a high level of service.	16	37	15	-	-	-	273	4.01	High
15	I am satisfied with my work.	17	37	14	-	-	-	275	4.04	High
16	My co-workers are very helpful to help me.	25	35	7	1	-	-	288	4.24	Very high
17	I have a positive working relationship with my co-workers.	36	29	3	0	0	0	305	4.49	Very high
<b>Average Score</b>									<b>4.17</b>	<b>Hig h</b>

Source: Processed data

SS: Strongly Agree, S: Agree, F: Fair, DS: Disagree, SDS: Strongly Disagree

The average respondent assesses the non-physical work environment is in the high category. Respondents considered that the work they had was following their interests and expertise. They also like to socialize with co-workers so that the relationship created is perceived positively, including coworkers are very helpful at work. In addition, the respondents are aware of their roles and responsibilities related to personal health and safety at work. The lowest average value appears on the opportunity respondents have to provide input for decision-making that can affect their work. Perhaps that perception happened because decision-making in the

work environment was more centralized, especially regarding safety and security at work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Table 7 Survey Results on Work Stress**

No	Statement Items	Frequency						Total score	Average	Criteria
		SA	A	F	DS	SDS	SA			
1.	My job doesn't match my skills and interests.	0	4	16	26	22	1	137	2.03	Low
2.	I am not satisfied with my department/agency/organization.	0	4	18	26	20	-	142	2.09	Low
3.	I often get irritated because of something that happens unexpectedly.	3	13	36	12	5	1	198	3.00	Moderate
4.	I often feel unable to control the important things in life.	0	7	23	27	10	2	159	2.37	Low
5.	I often feel nervous and stressed.	1	6	28	22	11	-	168	2.47	Low
6	I often find that I can't cope with all the things I need to do.	0	4	25	26	13	-	156	2.29	Low
7	I often feel superior to others.	1	7	21	25	13	2	157	2.34	Low
8	I often find myself struggling and piling up so much work that I can't handle it.	0	9	23	28	8	-	169	2.49	Low
9	I often get angry because of things that are out of control	2	5	22	21	19	1	151	2.31	Low
10	My job requires a lot of concentration.	16	38	12	2	-	-	272	4.00	High

1 1	My work doesn't require much concentration.	-	3	20	30	15	-	147	2.16	Low
<b>Average Score</b>									<b>2.50</b>	<b>Low</b>

Source: Processed data

SS: Strongly Agree, S: Agree, F: Fair, DS: Disagree, SDS: Strongly Disagree

The average respondent's perception of work stress experienced is in a low category. Only one indicator is in the high category: their work requires much concentration. Respondents in this study were teachers with students as customers. The service or learning process is centered on the teacher's role. Another exciting thing is the moderate value that appears that respondents are often irritated because of something that happens unexpectedly, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

### HYPOTHESIS TEST

This research model passes all of the classical assumption tests. Multiple regression models were used to test the hypotheses through the estimation parameters (t values) and coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>). The independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable if the coefficient is significant at  $p < .05$ . The greater the R<sup>2</sup> number, the better the model can explain variation in the dependent variable. The results of hypothesis testing indicate that the hypothesis that workload improves work-related stress is supported ( $\beta = .520$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Weken et al. (2020), Azzahra (2020), and Sethi & Saini (2020), which states that workload has a positive effect on teacher work stress. While the results of testing the hypothesis that an excellent non-physical work environment can reduce work stress for elementary school teachers are not supported ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The value of the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> is 0.280 indicating the percentage value for the workload variable (X1) and non-physical work environment (X2) on work stress (Y) of 28%.

**Table 8 Hypothesis Testing**

Variable	Std. $\beta$	Std. Error	t - Value	t sign	F- Value	F Sign	R <sup>2</sup>
Constant	-	2.015	3.243	.000			
Workload	.520	.086	4.935	.000	12.629	.000	.280
Non-Physical Work Environment	-.080	.135	-.761	.449			

Source: Data Proceed

## **RESPONSE TOWARD AN OPEN QUESTION**

There were three open-ended questions given to respondents to explore further the perception of elementary school teachers towards online learning during Covid-19. *What are the positive things about implementing online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?*

88.2% of respondents stated that when learning went online due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was positive because it aimed to prevent virus transmission under health protocols. In addition, another thing is that the learning process can be done from anywhere.

*What are the negative things about online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?* 63.2% of respondents stated that unpleasant things arise due to technology in learning. Respondents were not used to it and had to learn quickly, not to mention the complaints of elderly teachers in a short time. In addition, the respondents stated that they had difficulty knowing the character of each student because the interactions were often challenging to control.

*Which is preferable for the long term: offline or online learning?*

97.1% of respondents chose to do direct learning, with the main reason being that they can interact directly with students. Online learning is considered less effective for students in understanding the material presented. The teacher must provide a more detailed explanation and exciting things to understand better what the teacher is saying.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the perceived workload of respondents in this study is in the "Medium" category and the non-physical work environment is in the "High" category. In contrast, job stress is perceived as the "Low" category. In addition, this study found that only the teacher's workload had a significant effect on work stress when learning was done online but not for non-physical work environments. This research was conducted almost two years after the pandemic occurred, so there is an assumption that respondents have learned and adapted to new patterns and techniques of the teaching and learning process. Respondents may have undergone an adaptation process to perceive work stress as low. Various new work activities that initially added to the workload are now considered normal. This study also found several things related to teachers' perceptions of positive and negative things when the teaching and learning process was carried out from home. In the long term, most respondents prefer to carry out the learning process offline or face-to-face.

This study has several limitations that may affect the results' generalizability. First, the number of respondents who are only 68 people and the limited scope of distributing questionnaires, of course, is still not enough to describe the actual situation. Second, the research object on the work environment only focuses on the

non-physical work environment. Further research can examine the effect of the physical work environment on teacher work stress if online learning is carried out, such as the availability of rooms and other infrastructure. Third, in the data collection process, the information provided by respondents through questionnaires can have the potential for bias. This situation can happen because this study does not categorize respondents based on age or length of work.

This research provides some suggestions as follows. First, up-skilling for teachers in elementary schools is an important thing that must be done, primarily related to the competence to utilize technology. Second, although many respondents prefer online, many experts state that the learning pattern that combines offline and online is a pattern that will be widely used in the future. That is, not only up-skilling but, more importantly, changing the mindset of individuals to utilize technology in their work.

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