



Between Loyalty and Precarity: Teachers Living as “Precarious Workers” of Education Sectors in Indonesian Rural Areas

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Abstract. The working conditions of Indonesian teachers were marked by precariousness, defined by low wages, job insecurity, and limited professional support. These challenges often led to diminished motivation and professional dissatisfaction, creating significant hurdles for educators. This research delved into the lived experiences of Indonesian teachers as they navigated the uncertainties of their employment. Employing a qualitative approach, the study focused on teachers in both formal and non-formal education sectors. Data were gathered through interviews and document analysis, offering valuable insights into their struggles and resilience. The findings revealed that teachers in precarious conditions faced a multitude of daily challenges that affected both their professional responsibilities and personal lives. The factors contributing to this precarization included inconsistencies in educational policies, economic constraints exacerbated by impractical institutional practices, and inefficiencies in bureaucratic systems. These conditions significantly impacted teachers’ professional commitment and personal well-being. Professionally, the lack of job security and inadequate compensation diminished their motivation and job satisfaction, resulting in higher turnover rates and reduced engagement in teaching. On a personal level, financial instability and job insecurity strained family relationships, increased stress, and led to mental health challenges. Despite these adversities, teachers in both formal and non-formal settings exhibited remarkable resilience and dedication. Their commitment to their profession was fueled by a belief in the noble and impactful nature of their work, the sense of fulfilling a religious duty, and the encouragement and aspirations instilled by their families. This study underscored the complex interplay between systemic challenges and the enduring spirit of educators, offering a nuanced understanding of their experiences and perseverance.

Keywords: Education Sectors, Indonesia, Precarious Workers, Precarity, Teachers

1 Background

The education sector in Indonesia plays a critical role in the country's development, with teachers serving as its cornerstone. As the world's fourth most populous nation, Indonesia faces significant challenges in its education system, including disparities in the quality of education and resources across regions. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) for the 2022/2023 academic year, the country has 399,376 schools, reflecting a 1.18% increase from the previous year's total of 394,708 schools. These include 93,385 kindergartens, the majority of which are privately managed, and 31,049 Raudatul Athfal (RA) schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Elementary schools number 148,975, complemented by 26,503 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), of which 93.54% are private. Junior high schools include 41,986 units, with public institutions making up 56.83%, while 19,150 Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) schools—92.03% private—operate alongside them. Senior high schools total 14,236, vocational high schools 14,265, and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) 9,827, with 91.75% of these institutions privately run. Most schools in Indonesia are concentrated at the elementary level, and the majority of educational institutions at various levels are privately managed. Higher education in the country is equally extensive, with over 4,000 campuses [1].

Indonesia's education system is diverse, encompassing both formal and informal schools. Formal education includes public and private institutions that adhere to the national curriculum, while the non-formal sector consists of alternative learning programs such as community learning centers and vocational training [2]. Teachers are pivotal in shaping the standard of education, as they are the primary facilitators of student learning and growth. Historically, the teaching profession has been highly regarded in Indonesia, seen as both noble and essential for the nation's social and economic progress [3].

Despite their critical role, teachers in Indonesia face significant challenges, particularly regarding staffing shortages and precarious employment conditions. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2022 indicates that the country has approximately 3.1 million teachers—2.5 million in public schools and 600,000 in private institutions—well below the ideal requirement of 4.2 million [4]. With many teachers nearing retirement, Indonesia is projected to face a shortage of 1.3 million educators by 2024. This shortage is compounded by precarious working conditions, where an estimated 60% of teachers are employed on temporary contracts. Such arrangements leave educators without job security, benefits, or adequate compensation, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of those working in rural and remote areas where educational access is already limited [5].

Teachers in precarious conditions encounter numerous challenges that affect both their professional and personal lives [6] [7]. Financial instability is a significant concern, as many educators struggle to meet basic needs due to low wages and frequent delays in payment. The absence of essential benefits, such as health insurance and pensions, further contributes to their sense of insecurity. Professionally, they face overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources, and limited opportunities for professional development, all of which hinder their ability to deliver high-quality education [8] [9] [10]. These challenges often result in diminished job satisfaction and motivation. On a

personal level, the financial strain and uncertainty affect their well-being, family relationships, and mental health, creating additional stress that impacts their overall quality of life [11] [12] [13].

This precarious situation not only undermines the welfare of teachers but also threatens the broader goals of Indonesia's education system [14]. Addressing the challenges faced by educators is essential for improving the quality of education and ensuring long-term stability in the sector. However, there is limited research on the relationship between job instability and professional commitment among Indonesian teachers. This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring the lived experiences of educators navigating precarious employment [15]. It aims to understand how instability affects their professional dedication and personal lives, shedding light on the key obstacles they face and offering insights into potential solutions [16]

By examining how teachers manage their professional roles under uncertain conditions, this research highlights the broader implications of precarious work on Indonesia's education system. The findings may inform policies and initiatives to improve working conditions, promote stability, and support professional growth for educators, ultimately enhancing the quality of education in Indonesia.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Precarious Work: Definition and Characteristics

Precarious work refers to employment that is insecure, uncertain, and lacks the protections and benefits typically associated with stable jobs. This concept has gained significant attention in labor studies, particularly in discussions around the changing nature of work in the global economy [7]. Precarious work is often characterized by temporary or short-term contracts, part-time work, low wages, and limited access to social benefits such as health insurance, pensions, and job security [17]. Workers in precarious positions often experience instability in their employment, with little to no guarantee of job continuity, which can lead to financial insecurity and increased stress [18].

In the context of education, precarious work manifests in the form of temporary teaching contracts, lack of tenure, and insufficient professional support. Teachers working under such conditions face challenges that go beyond financial instability, including reduced opportunities for career advancement, inadequate resources for effective teaching, and diminished professional autonomy [19]. The rise of precarious employment in various sectors, including education, reflects broader socio-economic trends such as labor market flexibilization and the erosion of traditional employment relationships [20].

Precarious work has significant implications for workers' well-being, professional commitment, and overall quality of life. The insecurity and unpredictability associated with such jobs often lead to stress, anxiety, and a sense of disempowerment among workers [21]. Moreover, the lack of stable employment can undermine workers' ability to plan for the future, invest in their personal and professional development, and main-

tain a healthy work-life balance [22]. In the education sector, these challenges are particularly pronounced, as precarious employment not only affects teachers but also has a direct impact on the quality of education provided to students [23]

2.2 Precarious Work in Education: Existing Research on the Condition of Teachers in Various Contexts

Precarious work within the education sector has become a significant area of research, as educators worldwide increasingly face insecure and unstable employment conditions. Numerous studies have highlighted how these precarious conditions manifest and impact teachers across different contexts. In many countries, teachers are employed on short-term contracts, often renewed on a yearly or even monthly basis, without any guarantee of long-term employment [24]. This lack of job security creates an environment of uncertainty, where teachers must constantly prove their worth to retain their positions, often leading to increased stress and decreased job satisfaction [25]. Research conducted in European contexts, for instance, has shown that temporary contracts are prevalent among teachers, especially in regions undergoing austerity measures or budget cuts [26]. These contracts offer limited access to benefits such as pensions, healthcare, and professional development opportunities, further exacerbating the precarious nature of their work (Wilson, 2020).

In developing countries, the situation can be even more dire, with teachers frequently working under extremely poor conditions. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, teachers often face not only low wages but also delayed or irregular payments, forcing many to take on additional jobs to survive (Bennell, 2004). The lack of adequate resources, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient support from the education system are common issues that precariously employed teachers in these regions must contend with (Dejaeghere & Wiger, 2013).

Research in Asia has also revealed similar trends, with a significant number of teachers working under precarious conditions in countries like India and the Philippines. These teachers often work in remote or rural areas where the government struggles to provide adequate support and infrastructure (Ramachandran et al., 2018). The precarious nature of their employment not only affects their economic stability but also has a direct impact on the quality of education, as teachers are less able to focus on their professional duties when they are preoccupied with job security concerns (Bernardo, 2014).

Moreover, the global trend of privatization in education has further exacerbated the issue of precarious work for teachers. In many regions, the rise of private and charter schools has led to an increase in contract-based and part-time teaching positions, where teachers lack the protections afforded to those in the public sector (Robertson & Dale, 2017). This shift has been linked to neoliberal policies that prioritize cost-efficiency over the well-being of educators, leading to a deterioration in working conditions and job satisfaction (Ball, 2012).

Overall, the existing body of research underscores the widespread nature of precarious work in education and its detrimental effects on both teachers and the educational systems they serve. The challenges faced by precariously employed teachers are not

only professional but also deeply personal, affecting their motivation, mental health, and overall quality of life (Chang & Davis, 2009). Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring that teachers can provide quality education and contribute positively to their communities.

2.3 The Indonesian Context: Specific Challenges Faced by Teachers in Indonesia

Teachers in Indonesia face a unique set of challenges shaped by economic, social, and political factors that contribute to their precarious employment conditions. These challenges are deeply intertwined with the broader context of Indonesia's education system and labor market, reflecting both historical and contemporary issues.

One of the most significant challenges faced by Indonesian teachers is economic instability. Many teachers, particularly those in rural and remote areas, receive low wages that are often insufficient to meet basic living expenses [27]. Furthermore, delayed or irregular payments are common, exacerbating financial insecurity among teachers [28]. The limited access to social benefits such as health insurance, pensions, and housing allowances further contributes to the economic vulnerability of teachers, making it difficult for them to achieve financial stability.

Social factors also play a crucial role in shaping the precarious conditions of teachers in Indonesia. The teaching profession, while traditionally respected, has seen a decline in social status over recent decades. This is partly due to the perception that teaching is a low-paying job with limited opportunities for career advancement. Additionally, teachers in Indonesia often face significant pressure from their communities to perform well despite the lack of adequate resources and support. This societal expectation, combined with the realities of underfunded schools and large class sizes, places a heavy burden on teachers, contributing to stress and job dissatisfaction [29].

The political landscape in Indonesia also impacts the working conditions of teachers. Educational policies and reforms are frequently influenced by broader political agendas, which can lead to inconsistent and sometimes poorly implemented changes [30]. For example, the decentralization of education in Indonesia, intended to empower local governments, has often resulted in uneven resource distribution and varied quality of education across regions [31]. This has created disparities in teacher employment conditions, with those in less developed regions facing more significant challenges in terms of job security and working conditions.

Moreover, the recruitment and retention of teachers are often subject to political influence, where local leaders may prioritize hiring teachers based on connections rather than qualifications or merit [32]. This practice undermines the professionalization of teaching and contributes to the precarious status of many educators who may be employed on temporary contracts without the assurance of continued employment.

The combination of economic instability, social pressures, and political challenges creates a precarious environment for teachers in Indonesia. These factors not only affect their financial security and job satisfaction but also have broader implications for the quality of education in the country. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that considers the complex interplay of economic, social, and political factors,

and aims to improve the working conditions and professional status of teachers in Indonesia.

This research aimed to make several critical contributions to understanding and addressing the precarious conditions faced by teachers in Indonesia. By examining the interplay of economic, social, and political factors that shaped their employment, the study provided a nuanced perspective on the systemic challenges within the country's education sector. Specifically, it sought to highlight the profound impacts of economic instability, social expectations, and political inconsistencies on teachers' professional and personal lives. The research contributed to existing literature by documenting the lived experiences of educators, particularly in underrepresented rural and remote areas, and analyzing how these conditions influenced their professional commitment and well-being.

Furthermore, the study aspired to inform policymakers, educational stakeholders, and labor advocates by offering evidence-based insights into the root causes of teacher precarity. Its findings were intended to guide the development of targeted interventions, such as more equitable resource allocation, improved teacher compensation, and professional development opportunities. Ultimately, the research underscored the importance of addressing precarious employment not just as an issue of workforce welfare, but as a pivotal factor in improving the overall quality and equity of education in Indonesia. By bridging the gap between policy and practice, the study aimed to empower educators and enhance the sustainability of the teaching profession, ensuring that quality education became accessible to all Indonesian students.

3 Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to delve into the lived experiences of Indonesian teachers navigating precarious employment conditions. The qualitative approach was particularly well-suited for examining complex social phenomena through the perspectives of those directly affected. It enabled an in-depth exploration of the personal and professional challenges faced by teachers, shedding light on the subtleties of their experiences, beliefs, and motivations [33]. By focusing on the subjective interpretations and meanings that teachers attributed to their working conditions, the research aimed to provide rich, contextualized insights into the phenomenon of precarious employment within Indonesia's education sector.

Data Collection

The data for this study were gathered through two primary techniques: interviews and document analysis. The interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of ten teachers, selected to reflect a diverse range of experiences across various geographic locations, school types, and levels of teaching experience. Using a semi-structured format, the interviews offered the flexibility to explore participants' responses in detail while ensuring that key topics relevant to the research questions were thoroughly addressed [34] [35]. Interviews were conducted either in person or through online com-

munication platforms, depending on the participants' availability and geographic constraints. The discussions covered a range of themes, including employment conditions, financial stability, professional challenges, personal motivations, and coping strategies, offering valuable insights into the teachers' lived experiences. To complement the interviews, document analysis was conducted to contextualize and corroborate the findings. The documents reviewed included policy reports, government statistics, educational regulations, and previous research studies on teacher employment conditions in Indonesia. Sources such as annual reports from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, publications from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), and academic journals provided a wealth of background information [36]. This analysis offered a broader understanding of the structural and policy-related factors influencing the precarious employment of teachers, adding depth and context to the study's findings.

3.2 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative analysis technique, which focused on summarizing and interpreting data to identify patterns, themes, and categories relevant to the research questions [37]. The process began with a careful and thorough reading of the interview transcripts and documents to develop a deep familiarity with the content. Following this, the data were coded inductively, allowing themes to emerge naturally from the participants' narratives and the analyzed documents.

The coding process involved identifying significant statements, phrases, and ideas that reflected the teachers' experiences of precarious employment. These initial codes were then grouped into broader categories and themes that captured the key dimensions of the phenomenon under study. Emerging themes included financial insecurity, professional dissatisfaction, coping mechanisms, and the influence of cultural beliefs on teachers' professional commitment.

To enhance the reliability of the analysis, an intercoder agreement process was implemented. Multiple researchers independently coded a subset of the data, and any discrepancies were discussed collaboratively until a consensus was reached. This method ensured a comprehensive understanding of the data and bolstered the trustworthiness of the findings, providing a robust foundation for interpreting the experiences of Indonesian teachers under precarious conditions.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Teachers' Experiences of Precarious Work

The findings of this research revealed the harsh realities faced by teachers in Indonesia as they navigated precarious work conditions. Through interviews and document analysis, three key themes emerged: job insecurity, low wages, and lack of institutional support, all of which profoundly impacted the professional and personal lives of teachers.

Many teachers, both in formal and non-formal education sectors, reported experiencing significant job insecurity, particularly due to the lack of insurance coverage, even after being designated as permanent teachers. One respondent from Tuban District shared that after a decade of teaching, no insurance benefits, including BPJS Employment or Health, had been provided. Similar accounts came from teachers in Probolinggo and Bojonegoro districts, highlighting systemic issues in employment practices.

Low wages were a recurring theme, with many teachers struggling to meet basic living expenses. According to official data from Bappeda East Java (Regional Development Planning Agency), the minimum wage in Tuban District is Rp 2,864,225, in Probolinggo District Rp 2,701,086, and in Bojonegoro District Rp 2,371,016. However, many teachers earned far less.

One teacher explained:

"The salary is so low that it's barely enough to feed my family, let alone cover other expenses. Sometimes, we don't even get paid on time, and I have to borrow money just to get by."

To cope with financial strain, many teachers took on additional jobs, which affected their ability to focus on teaching. One single mother shared that her Rp 2 million monthly income from teaching 36 JP (Training Hours) (Rp 60,000 per JP) was insufficient to meet her family's needs. To make ends meet, she conducted private tutoring sessions after school hours. Another teacher mentioned earning just Rp 500,000 per month after two years of work but eventually received a government certification bonus, bringing their income to Rp 2 million monthly.

A respondent stated:

"If I relied only on my teaching salary, it would not be enough. Thankfully, I have other sources of income, like revenue from a shop managed by my wife and a transportation service business I run with a friend. From the beginning, I knew teaching was a dedication, not a money-driven job."

The lack of institutional support was another critical issue. Many teachers expressed frustration over inadequate teaching resources, minimal professional development opportunities, and large class sizes. One teacher shared:

"We're expected to teach effectively, but the resources are outdated and insufficient. There are too many students in each class, and we don't get any support from the administration. It feels like we're set up to fail."

However, not all teachers experienced these challenges. Some institutions actively supported their teachers by encouraging them to pursue higher education, such as master's degrees, and offering career development opportunities. One teacher noted:

"The institution encourages us to improve our qualifications, for example, by pursuing master's degrees. They also provide regular information and policies to support our professional growth."

The process of obtaining an official teacher identification number (NUPTK) also highlighted systemic inefficiencies. While some teachers received their NUPTK after two years of teaching, others waited five years or more, with some still waiting after nine years. This inconsistency added to their sense of professional instability.

These findings paint a concerning picture of the working conditions faced by many teachers in Indonesia. Job insecurity, low wages, and insufficient institutional support not only hinder their professional performance but also take a significant toll on their personal well-being. Addressing these challenges requires urgent policy reforms to ensure better working conditions, enabling teachers to perform their roles effectively and contribute positively to Indonesia's education system.

4.2 Factors Contributing to Precarity: Economic, institutional, Social and policy-related factors impacting teachers' employment conditions

The precarious employment conditions faced by teachers in Indonesia stem from a complex interaction of economic, institutional, social, and policy-related factors, each contributing to the challenges educators endure. Economic constraints play a pivotal role, with many teachers, particularly in rural and underdeveloped areas, earning salaries that fail to cover basic living expenses. Irregular or delayed payments exacerbate this financial strain, forcing educators to take on supplementary work to make ends meet [28]. This financial insecurity not only hinders their ability to invest in professional development or teaching resources but also impacts their job satisfaction and overall performance. From a Marxist perspective, these economic difficulties reflect the capitalist system's tendency to exploit labor by prioritizing profit over worker well-being, reducing teachers to mere cogs in an exploitative machine [39] [40].

Institutional factors further intensify the precariousness of teaching in Indonesia. Budget constraints and administrative inefficiencies often leave schools with inadequate teaching materials, outdated infrastructure, and oversized classes. Many educators work under temporary contracts without access to essential benefits like health insurance or pensions, contributing to job insecurity and a lack of career progression. This systemic lack of support alienates teachers, stripping them of control and autonomy in their roles. Despite expectations to deliver quality education, they are left to navigate an environment that prioritizes cost efficiency over educational excellence, resulting in frustration and diminished morale [29] [41] [42].

Social factors also play a significant role in shaping the precarious conditions of teachers. Although teaching is traditionally regarded as a noble profession, this respect is not always reflected in practical support or adequate compensation. Educators often face societal pressure to perform at high standards despite limited resources, leading to stress and burnout. The declining social status of the profession further exacerbates feelings of undervaluation among teachers. The societal expectation that teaching should be driven by a sense of moral duty rather than financial reward perpetuates the exploitative dynamics of the education sector, aligning with Marxist notions of ideological control that justify poor working conditions under the guise of nobility and self-sacrifice [27] [40].

One teacher stated:

"I become a teacher because my parents are teachers. You know, teaching is considered noble activities. My parents are proud of this profession."

Another teacher stated

“One of the reasons why I choose this profession because of my kyai. I studied in pesantren and my teacher (kyai) stated that it’s noble to deliver or share our knowledge (ilmu) to others. All of my family supported this profession and they are very proud of this”

Policy-related factors add another layer of complexity to the challenges faced by Indonesian teachers. Educational policies shaped by political agendas often lead to inconsistent implementation and unequal resource distribution [30]. Decentralization, intended to empower local governments, has instead created disparities in education quality and teacher support across regions. Frequent curriculum changes have also added to teachers’ workloads without providing sufficient training or resources to adapt effectively. The absence of standardized national policies on salaries and benefits further exacerbates these challenges, leaving many teachers without financial security or clear career advancement opportunities. These fragmented policies reflect the broader capitalist agenda of maintaining class structures, with the state functioning as an instrument of class domination [31] [32].

In Indonesia, the workload for teachers is significantly impacted by the frequent changes to the national curriculum, which has undergone 12 major revisions since the country’s independence. Wahyono (2023) highlights these changes, beginning with the 1947 Curriculum, the first curriculum aimed at fostering independent and sovereign Indonesian citizens. Known as the “1947 Lesson Plan,” it emphasized character development. The 1952 Curriculum built on this foundation, introducing detailed subject guidelines and earning the name “1952 Detailed Lesson Plan.”

The 1964 Curriculum, referred to as the “1964 Education Plan,” sought to provide academic knowledge for elementary education while emphasizing moral, emotional, and artistic development. This was followed by the 1968 Curriculum, the first introduced during the New Order era under President Suharto. It focused on implementing the 1945 Constitution and shaping Pancasila-oriented individuals who were physically and mentally healthy. The 1975 Curriculum marked a shift toward procedural efficiency, adopting the PPSI (Procedural Instructional System) approach, which used MBO (Management by Objectives) to achieve educational goals.

In the 1984 Curriculum, a CBS (Active Student Learning) approach was introduced, emphasizing interactive learning through observation, grouping, discussion, and reporting. The 1994 Curriculum sought to integrate elements of its predecessors but faced criticism for imposing a heavy learning load on students. This was marginally revised in the 1997 Curriculum, which made only minor changes without altering its overall structure. The 2004 Curriculum, known as the KBK (Competency-Based Curriculum), marked a shift toward competencies, including selecting specific evaluation indicators and promoting diverse learning resources. This was followed by the 2006 Curriculum, referred to as KTSP (School-Based Curriculum), which allowed schools to tailor their syllabus based on central government standards. In 2013, the KTSP was replaced by the 2013 Curriculum, which focused on competency and character development with standardized benchmarks for graduates, content, processes, and assessments. The most recent revision, the Merdeka Curriculum, was introduced as an emergency measure to address learning setbacks caused by the pandemic. This curriculum simplifies the content to focus on essential materials, character development, and student competencies.

It also grants senior high school students the flexibility to choose subjects based on their interests. These frequent curriculum changes, while aimed at improving the education system, place a heavy burden on teachers who must constantly adapt to new policies, methodologies, and requirements, often without adequate training or resources to facilitate the transition.

The combination of economic hardship, institutional inefficiencies, social undervaluation, and inconsistent policies creates a challenging environment for Indonesian teachers. Addressing these interconnected issues requires targeted reforms, including improving salary structures, providing adequate resources, restoring the social recognition of the teaching profession, and ensuring consistent and equitable policy implementation. By tackling these systemic issues, stakeholders and policymakers can work towards creating a stable and supportive environment that empowers teachers and enhances the quality of education across the country.

4.3 Between Loyalty and Precarity: Impact on Professional Commitment and Personal Lives

The precarious working conditions faced by Indonesian teachers profoundly impact their professional commitment and overall well-being. Many teachers enter the profession with a strong sense of dedication and idealism, driven by a desire to educate and inspire students. However, the challenges they face—ranging from job insecurity and low wages to inadequate institutional support—gradually erode this initial enthusiasm.

Persistent financial instability and insufficient resources diminish teachers' motivation and engagement. Financial struggles, compounded by delayed salaries and the necessity of taking on multiple jobs, overshadow their passion for teaching. This constant stress often leads to burnout and a decline in job satisfaction. Over time, teachers may become disillusioned, feeling undervalued and unsupported in their efforts to provide quality education [27].

These adverse conditions also affect the quality of teaching. Financial concerns and the exhaustion from juggling multiple responsibilities leave teachers with limited energy for lesson planning, student engagement, and professional development. The lack of resources and institutional support further exacerbates the situation, making it difficult to adopt innovative teaching methods or address diverse student needs. This cycle of stress and diminished effectiveness ultimately impacts students' educational outcomes [29].

The precarious nature of teachers' employment also deeply affects their personal lives. Financial instability extends beyond the workplace, creating significant stress that impacts their ability to provide for their families and manage daily expenses. Many teachers are forced to make difficult choices, such as taking on additional jobs or cutting back on essential expenditures. This financial strain not only disrupts their work-life balance but also reduces opportunities for rest, relaxation, and meaningful family engagement. The relentless pressures of job insecurity and financial hardship strain personal relationships and overall quality of life [28].

The psychological toll of these challenges is profound. Teachers frequently experience heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout due to the instability of their employment and the lack of adequate support. These factors often lead to long-term health issues and diminished mental well-being. The emotional burden is further complicated by their sense of loyalty to the profession, creating a complex interplay between dedication and frustration [43].

A respondent poignantly illustrates the toll of these challenges:

"I have been teaching for 11 years. After five years, I received a scholarship for my master's degree and obtained an NPK (Ministry of Religious Affairs Educator Number). After graduating, I passed the pretest selection for the PPG (each Professional Education) program for teachers, but after waiting a long time for its implementation, I was dismissed in my 11th year of service. The school's principal dismissed teachers based on a 'like and dislike' system. My SIMPATIKA (Information Management System for Educators and Education Personnel) account was cut off, and I couldn't get certified. As the breadwinner for my family and a single mother of three, I was devastated and sought psychiatric help."

This testimony underscored the emotional and professional challenges many Indonesian teachers face. The interplay of eroding motivation, diminished teaching quality, financial hardship, disrupted work-life balance, and psychological strain highlighted the multifaceted impact of precarious employment. Addressing these issues required a comprehensive approach that prioritizes both professional support and personal well-being. By creating a more stable and supportive environment, policymakers can help teachers thrive in their roles and continue to deliver quality education.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing the precarious working conditions faced by teachers in Indonesia requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. To ensure that teachers can effectively perform their roles while maintaining their well-being, improvements in economic conditions, institutional support, and policy stability are essential. Although teachers' commitment to their profession is commendable, systemic changes are necessary to provide them with the stability and support they need to thrive in their careers.

Based on the research findings, several policy recommendations have been proposed to improve the working conditions of teachers in Indonesia. First, increasing teachers' salaries and financial support is crucial. Teachers' salaries should better reflect the true value of their work, with regular reviews and adjustments to keep pace with inflation and the rising cost of living. Addressing financial instability will alleviate stress, enhance job satisfaction, and foster greater commitment to the profession. Second, job security and benefits must be enhanced. Providing permanent contracts and comprehensive benefits, including health insurance and retirement plans, for all teachers—whether in public or private schools—will reduce financial anxiety and contribute to greater stability and satisfaction in their roles.

Third, stabilizing and simplifying the curriculum is essential. Reducing the frequency of curriculum changes and involving teachers in the development and review

process will create a more stable framework for teaching and learning. A consistent curriculum will ease the administrative burden on teachers, allowing them to focus on effective teaching. Fourth, improving institutional support is necessary. Policies should be developed to ensure that teachers have access to adequate resources, support, and professional development opportunities. Programs that encourage continuous professional growth and career advancement will help teachers manage their workload and develop their skills.

Lastly, addressing social and policy-related issues is critical. Efforts should be made to improve the social status of teachers through public recognition campaigns that highlight their contributions to society. Additionally, education policies must be consistent, equitable, and effectively implemented across regions. Strengthening the social perception of teaching and ensuring equitable policy implementation will help attract and retain talented educators. By addressing these areas, the government can alleviate the precarious conditions faced by teachers, improving their job satisfaction and effectiveness in the classroom.

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