

The influence of sad sasana leadership, work motivation, and emotional intelligence on elementary school teacher performance in Buleleng regency

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Abstract

This study employs a structural model to examine how Sad Sasana leadership, work motivation, and emotional intelligence influence teacher effectiveness. Teachers are central figures in education, as highlighted by the challenges identified in this study. One of the key issues addressed in this research includes the heavy administrative workload imposed on teachers, significant quality disparities between teachers in urban and rural areas, differences between those teaching in public versus private schools, and income disparities among teachers across various schools. This study is quantitative research employing an ex post facto approach. Multivariate analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The population consisted of 4,088 elementary school teachers in Buleleng Regency, Bali. Proportional random sampling was applied, resulting in a sample of 446 teachers. The sample was distributed across nine sub-districts within Buleleng Regency. This study is distinguished by one of its variables, Sad Sasana leadership. The finding that Sad Sasana leadership has a positive and direct effect on teacher performance indicates that school leaders must understand and apply the principles and teachings of Sad Sasana leadership. Leaders who foster an environment integrating values derived from Nitisastra teachings, who demonstrate subordinate-oriented interactions, wisdom, intelligence, mastery of science and technology, proactiveness, creativity, initiative, and innovation, who lead with high integrity, noble morals, and objectivity, who supervise effectively and efficiently, and who accommodate participation and input from subordinates can motivate teachers to become more committed and enhance their performance.

Keywords: Sad sasana leadership, Work motivation, Emotional intelligence, Teacher performance, Elementary school

Introduction

Teachers are essential to the school system, yet they continue to face persistent challenges related to low-quality teaching, education, and instructional practices (Adriani & et al., 2023). Teachers play a critical role in the learning process and in advancing education. The quality of students is highly dependent on teacher quality. Therefore, teachers must meet national educational standards and demonstrate high levels of competence in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, thereby producing knowledgeable and skilled learners (Iqbal & et al., 2021).

Teacher performance is crucial to the success of schools. Concerns regarding teacher effectiveness are consistently expressed by parents, communities, and government bodies. Numerous initiatives have been implemented to improve teacher performance (Kustianah & et al., 2023). The mandated allocation of 20% of the national budget for education, as stipulated by law, has begun to be socialized,

reflecting the government's prioritization of education. Consequently, teacher performance remains a focal point for all stakeholders. Teachers must possess mastery over their subject matter and effectively apply their expertise in practice (Ratnasari & et al., 2021). Teacher performance is influenced by a range of internal and external factors. Indonesian teachers have undergone significant changes due to policy reforms, particularly concerning performance-related challenges. School administrators and teachers alike have attempted various innovative methods to translate government policies into meaningful teacher development initiatives. Educational institutions must emphasize open management systems and provide both infrastructural and suprastructural support that empowers and challenges teachers to grow professionally (Imam Sigit Widiyanto et al., 2023). The cultural and structural flexibility of each school plays a vital role in fostering teacher awareness of the need to innovate across all aspects of teaching to enhance educational quality.

The Indonesian schooling system faces a shortage of

teachers. According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS), there were 3.1 million teachers in Indonesia in 2023, consisting of 2.5 million public school teachers and 600,000 private school teachers. This number falls short of the estimated 4.2 million teachers required nationwide (Naibaho, 2022). In addition to the quantitative shortage, low teacher quality further hinders the progress of Indonesian education. Teacher quality is determined by competence, professionalism, and welfare. Teacher competence encompasses mastery of subject content, pedagogical methods, learning media, and effective interaction with students, parents, and the community. Teacher competency can be assessed through instruments such as the Teacher Competency Test (UKG), school examination results, and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Imam Sigit Widiyanto et al., 2023; Moghavvemi et al., 2025).

Based on interviews conducted with representatives of elementary school principals and several elementary school teachers in Buleleng Regency, it was found that teacher performance has not yet reached optimal levels. This is evident from several conditions: a) Heavy administrative workloads imposed on teachers, who are still adapting to a new curriculum and increased teaching responsibilities. This issue hampers the proper development of pedagogical competence. Teaching methods remain monotonous, whereas they should be varied and more interactive to stimulate student interest, resulting in suboptimal development of pedagogical skills; b) Significant disparities in teacher quality exist between urban and rural areas, as well as between public and private schools. The facilities available to support the teaching and learning process vary greatly among schools; c) Income disparities among teachers across different schools may affect their motivation and performance.

These issues underscore the central role of teachers in education. Every learning experience is shaped by the teacher. Teachers are expected to assist students in becoming individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, and are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens. The leadership style of school principals is critically important. Nitisastra is the study of state politics. The teachings of Nitisastra in Hindu literature are always

concerned with the importance of efforts to create a prosperous society. Therefore, politics from a Hindu perspective is the knowledge of how to govern a country to achieve the goal of creating a prosperous society (Nadra, 2022). The teachings of Nitisastra, as explained above, besides teaching Hindu leadership, also teach a great deal about ethics. Ethical education is the character or habit of good behavior and actions. Social life will certainly involve good and bad behavior. Good things will certainly be admired and imitated by someone, while bad things will be abandoned by someone (Huynh & Hua, 2020).

The same is true for a leader. A leader must have ethics, morality, and always pay attention to problems occurring in the community they lead so that the people they lead will always respect and obey their leader. *Sad Sasana* leadership, rooted in Balinese knowledge and philosophy and derived from the teachings of Nitisastra, a classic text on statecraft, leadership, and ethics, emphasizes wisdom, ethical behavior, and harmony (Giri, 2021).

Hindu leadership in the Nitisastra teachings which emphasize the purpose of human life will be able to realize a complete human being. *Sad Sasana* leadership, rooted in Balinese knowledge and philosophy, emphasizes wisdom, ethical conduct, and harmony. *Sad Sasana* leadership represents a values-based leadership model that continues to evolve. This leadership style addresses the need for comprehensive leadership that recognizes human beings as the core resource within an organization. Alongside leadership, work motivation significantly influences elementary school teacher performance. Motivated teachers tend to exhibit higher work ethics and greater engagement (Prasetya & et al., 2020).

In addition to leadership and motivation, emotional intelligence is a key factor influencing teacher performance (Ramdani & et al., 2023). In an evolving educational landscape, the role of a teacher extends far beyond mere information delivery (Rosita & et al., 2023). An effective educator must possess high emotional intelligence, a skill equally important as subject-matter expertise. Emotional intelligence serves as the foundation for building strong interpersonal relationships (Rahmi & et al., 2023). A teacher's empathy enables the development of meaningful connections with students, parents, and

colleagues. Research indicates that *Sad Sasana* leadership, work enthusiasm, and emotional intelligence collectively contribute to improved teacher performance. Poor individual performance negatively impacts overall school performance (Nyoto & et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that *Sad Sasana* leadership, work motivation, and emotional intelligence positively influence teacher performance. However, to date, no study has simultaneously integrated *Sad Sasana* leadership, work motivation, emotional intelligence, and organizational commitment in examining elementary school teacher performance (Sutarti, 2020).

Theoretical framework and research questions

This study examines how *Sad Sasana* leadership, work motivation, and emotional intelligence influence elementary school teachers in Buleleng Regency. The methodology integrates the variables of *Sad Sasana* leadership, work motivation, emotional intelligence, and teacher performance. Organizational commitment was also measured and analyzed as a mediating variable that explains the indirect influence of work motivation and emotional intelligence on performance (Sartono & et al., 2023; Abbas et al., 2025). This research is innovative in that it incorporates key variables into a single model that has not been extensively explored previously, particularly within the context of Bali.

The study is urgent as it addresses the persistent issues of low teacher performance and educational quality in Indonesia. It is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to improving school quality. The administrative burden placed on teachers remains a significant challenge, as teachers are still adapting to a new curriculum and increased teaching loads. This issue hinders the proper development of pedagogical competence. Teaching methods remain monotonous, whereas they should be varied and more interactive to stimulate student learning interest (Wang & Krosnick, 2020). Additional challenges include significant disparities in teacher quality between urban and rural areas, as well as between public and private schools. Educational facilities for teaching and learning vary considerably across schools. Differences in salaries among schools may also affect instructor motivation and performance.

Method

Study design

This quantitative study tests theoretical constructs through numerically measured variables and statistical procedures to verify the predictive generalizability of the theory. The ex post facto method is employed to identify factors causing an event that has already occurred. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used for quantitative data analysis in this research.

Population

The study involves the entire population of 4,088 elementary school teachers in Buleleng Regency. The sample population is drawn from nine sub-districts in Buleleng Regency: Buleleng, Sukasada, Banjar, Seririt, Gerokgak, Kubutambahan, Sawan, Tejakula, and Busungbiu.

Sampling technique

Proportional random sampling is applied to select samples proportionally from each subpopulation. Sample selection from the subpopulations, comprising teachers from the nine sub-districts, and it is conducted randomly using a lottery technique, ensuring equal opportunity for every teacher. As a result, the final sample consists of 446 teachers. Using the Warwich and Linenger (1975) formula, the sample size for distributing the questionnaire can be calculated at 11%.

The sample distribution in nine sub-districts in Buleleng Regency is as follows: 88 teachers from Buleleng Sub-district, 56 teachers from Sukasada Sub-district, 52 teachers from Banjar Sub-district, 52 teachers from Seririt Sub-district, 46 teachers from Gerokgak Sub-district, 42 teachers from Kubutambahan Sub-district, 42 teachers from Sawan Sub-district, 38 teachers from Tejakula Sub-district and 38 teachers from Busungbiu Sub-district.

Instrument for data collection

The questionnaire serves as the primary research instrument. Respondents provide answers to structured questions or statements. The researcher

developed the questionnaire based on theoretical review, formulating items across various research variables. A five-point Likert scale is used in this study.

Method of data analysis

Variance-based Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), also known as component-based SEM or Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM), is employed for data analysis. SEM-PLS enables the estimation of complex models involving multiple constructs, indicator variables, and structural paths without imposing strict distributional assumptions on the data. Descriptive analysis is used to analyse data by describing or depicting the collected data. One form of analysis is the activity of summarizing large amounts of raw data so that the results can be estimated.

Result and Discussion

Initial evaluation of the structural model confirmed its robustness and predictive relevance. A Q^2 value of 0.853 (>0.50) indicated strong predictive relevance, and a SRMR value of 0.059 (<0.08) confirmed good model fit. This indicates that the model is able to accurately represent and explain the relationships between the study variables before testing specific hypotheses. The structural model evaluation indicates a high level of model fit, demonstrating that the model is capable of accurately representing and explaining the relationships among the research variables. Empirically, the structural model successfully predicts and explains the influence of *Sad Sasana* leadership, work motivation, and emotional intelligence on the performance of elementary school teachers in Buleleng Regency.

Table 1. Direct effects of research variables

Direct Effects	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
X1 <i>Sad Sasana</i> Leadership → Y2 Teacher Performance	0,248	5,912	0,000	Significant
X2 Work Motivation → Y2 Teacher Performance	0,218	7,525	0,000	Significant
X3 Emotional Intelligence → Y2 Teacher Performance	0,286	5,534	0,000	Significant

Table 1 shows that *Sad Sasana* leadership (X1) has a direct positive effect on teacher performance (Y2), as indicated by a positive path coefficient of 0.248, a t-value of 5.912 (greater than 1.96), and a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). Work motivation (X2) influences teacher performance (Y2) with a positive path coefficient of 0.218, a t-value of 7.525 (greater than 1.96), and a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). Emotional intelligence (X3) affects teacher performance (Y2) with a positive path coefficient of 0.286, a t-value of 5.534 (greater than 1.96), and a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). Overall, the testing results confirm seven significant direct effects among the variables.

These findings are consistent with the view that emotional intelligence plays a key role in shaping teacher performance. Emotional intelligence is an

invisible foundation that determines teacher success, both in pedagogical and interpersonal aspects. Positive and well-maintained emotional intelligence will create a comfortable work environment, thereby improving teacher performance. This suggests that teachers' ability to manage their own emotions and understand the emotions of others is crucial for effective performance, likely because teaching is a highly interpersonal and emotionally demanding profession. The subsequent bootstrap analysis was conducted using SmartPLS to examine both the direct and indirect effects of *Sad Sasana* leadership (X1), work motivation (X2), emotional intelligence (X3), and teacher performance (Y2). The analysis also confirms the significant indirect influence of work motivation and emotional intelligence on teacher performance through the mediation of organizational commitment.

Table 2. Summary of research hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Hypothesis Result
H1	The structural model of relationships among variables affecting teacher performance is empirically confirmed.	Supported
H2	<i>Sad Sasana</i> Leadership (X1) has a positive direct effect on Teacher	Supported

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Hypothesis Result
	Performance (Y2)	
H3	Work Motivation (X2) has a positive direct effect on Teacher Performance (Y2)	Supported
H4	Emotional Intelligence (X3) has a positive direct effect on Teacher Performance (Y2)	Supported

The structural model is empirically validated in predicting the effects of *Sad Sasana* leadership (X1), work motivation (X2), and emotional intelligence (X3) on teacher performance in elementary schools in Buleleng Regency.

Conclusion

This study provides insight into several factors influencing teacher performance in elementary schools in Buleleng Regency, focusing on the variables of *Sad Sasana* leadership, work motivation, emotional intelligence, and teacher performance. The findings highlight the significant role of *Sad Sasana* leadership within the context of elementary schools in Buleleng Regency. The result that *Sad Sasana* leadership has a positive and direct effect on both organizational commitment and teacher performance indicates that school leaders need to understand and implement the principles and teachings of *Sad Sasana* leadership. Leaders who create an environment that integrates values derived from Nitisastra, who demonstrate subordinate-oriented interactions, wisdom, intelligence, mastery of science and technology, proactiveness, creativity, initiative, and innovation, who lead with high integrity, noble morals, and objectivity, who supervise effectively and efficiently, and who accommodate participation and input from subordinates are better able to motivate teachers toward greater commitment and improved performance (Werang & et al., 2023).

Sad Sasana leadership, grounded in the teachings of Niti Sastra, is one solution to the challenges faced by teachers. Implementing Sad Sasana teachings can indirectly improve teacher performance, particularly in elementary schools. This directly addresses practical challenges such as administrative burdens by fostering a supportive, efficient, and participatory work environment.

Work motivation enhances organizational

commitment, thereby enabling improvements in elementary school human resource management strategies. Therefore, school administrations must invest strategically in tangible motivators such as the development of relevant reward systems, performance recognition, and career advancement opportunities to capitalize on the proven positive relationship between motivation and performance. The development of relevant reward systems, performance recognition, and career advancement opportunities can serve as strong motivators for teachers. Motivated teachers exhibit higher levels of commitment to their schools (Trisna et al., 2022).

The study shows that emotional intelligence, by fostering organizational commitment, contributes to enhanced teacher performance. This underscores the importance of a stable emotional environment for teacher engagement. These findings can assist schools in creating a supportive and conducive workplace that encourages instructors to perform at higher levels.

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