



RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF WORKING CONDITIONS ON TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KITAGWENDA COUNTY, KAMWENGE DISTRICT, UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated influence of working conditions on teachers' Job performance in public primary schools. Ugandans have often experienced teachers' massive industrial action, amidst declining of their professional conduct in schools characterised by teachers' poor time management, inadequate preparations, syllabus coverage and absenteeism. The study was guided by Convergent parallel mixed methods design specifically cross-section survey and phenomenological designs. Participants were sampled using both probability and non-probability sampling procedures. The sample size was 165 teachers, 14 class teachers, 15 head teachers, one district education officer and one district inspector of schools. Research instruments used to collect data were questionnaires, in-depth interview guide, and Focus Group Discussion Guide. These were subjected to content and face validity. Cronbach alpha tested reliability for Likert scale items and yielded a coefficient of 0.897. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages summarized quantitative data. Inferential statistics ANOVA tested hypothesis. Qualitative data was organised into codes and analytical concepts and presented in verbatim and narratives. Key findings revealed availability of reference materials and textbooks facilitated teaching in lower classes. Lack of staff quarters, textbooks and inadequate physical structures hindered teaching and learning processes. The study recommends the government to increase Capitation Grant for school infrastructure. School administration should encourage formation of alumni associations to support schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Performance of employees is key to the survival of the production process in any organization globally and is an important prerequisite for competitiveness. Various organisational aspects including motivational factors affect performance. It is important to note that teachers are key to improving quality education in any educational system and the quality of an educational system cannot be greater than the quality of its teachers (Akyeampong, 2013). Unfortunately, quality of teachers has often been limited to their academic qualifications, hence leaving aside the environment in which they operate. For instance, research shows that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but works under unfavourable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his/her work, thus less productive than a teacher who is unqualified, but works under favourable conditions of service (Etsey, 2005). Similarly, Sergiovanni, (2009) reveals that effective schools endeavour to create professional environments that facilitate teachers to accomplish their tasks.

Conducive environment offers teachers comfort, confidence and pride as they execute their assigned duties. That underlines working conditions as a strong motivation factor that all teachers need as they execute their professional duties in schools. Furthermore, research has shown that when employees are satisfied, organizations experience high productivity, low absenteeism and turnover; less job stress and burnout; and a stronger tendency to perform (Iwu, Gwija, Olumide & Tengeh, 2013). The opposite is true. In the case of schools, teachers may lack the drive to prepare schemes of work and lesson plans, and exhibit other related professional misconduct. There is a broad consensus among stakeholders, including community members, and students in Malawi that poor working conditions have resulted in low morale and thus poor performance among primary teachers (Kadzamira, 2006). Herzberg (1923) categorized working conditions among extrinsic motivation factors, which are agreed to be crucial in motivation and performance management (Gizem, 2013). A report, on rural teachers in Africa by International Labour Organization (2016), reported that, in Tanzania, a number of problems arising from poor working conditions and inefficient administration systems, included teachers' absenteeism, teachers quitting, among others. Poor working conditions demotivate teachers, retard their efforts and reduce their

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efficiency in teaching and learning activities. Further, in Nigeria, research revealed that teacher motivation was much determined by working conditions, availability of opportunities for growth, and remunerations (Adelabu, 2005). The study noted that some schools lacked infrastructure, pupils were overcrowded and there was lack of teaching and learning resources. That impeded effective teaching and teachers could not fulfil their duties well. In East Africa, Komba and Nkumbi (2008) in their study on teacher professional development in Tanzania, reported that despite the improvement in universalization of primary education, there were still overcrowded classrooms and inadequate textbooks. Lack of supportive working conditions places many challenges to teachers in teaching effectively in the classroom. That implies high pupil-teacher ratios, heavy workload and difficulty to manage discipline in class. In Uganda, from the Handbook for Head Teachers and Supervisors (2011), descriptors of performance that are relevant to the teaching profession include work targets, student performance, accuracy and completeness of work, professionalism, resource optimization, innovativeness and self-directed. This study limited teachers' performance to include timely scheming of work, lesson planning, discipline management, lesson delivery, routine assessment of pupils and feedback and record keeping. Working conditions were defined in terms of classrooms, blackboards, workload, staffroom, furniture in classrooms, textbooks, reference materials for teachers, and staff houses. Worth mentioning is that, since 1986, the government of Uganda has undertaken various educational reforms to enable all children to access quality education. For instance, in line with global movements, the Government took wide strides on the policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) since 1997. In addition, the Constitution of Uganda stipulates that education is a fundamental right for every citizen (GoU, 1995); which is in consonance with the declaration of universal human rights by United Nations General Assembly in 1948. In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in Uganda reviewed and adapted the Education Act in order to guide and improve educational practices. The implementation of UPE has made great strides in achieving some goals, especially with improved enrolment which more than doubled from 3.1 million in 1996 to 6.3 million in 1999; 7.5 million in 2007 and over 8 million in 2010 (UNESCO, 2012; Vermeulen, 2013).

Nevertheless, the education sector still faces many challenges such as high repetition rates, low completion rates and high pupil-teacher ratios' and alarming low performance in basic education especially in literacy and numeracy (Ssewamala, Wang, Leyla & Nabunya, 2011; Uwezo, 2011; Vermeulen, 2013; MoES, 2013). Absenteeism and failure to cover syllabus is a common feature in public primary schools in Uganda. Kagolo (2014) observed that teacher absenteeism in rural areas in Uganda stood at 35%, being the highest in the world with Ugandan teachers missing two days of work per week. He also noted that there was inadequate teacher lesson preparation and low syllabus coverage. These problems are at alarming levels in rural public primary schools where services are limited and teacher motivation levels are low as contrasted with urban public primary schools (Vermeulen, 2013). Education stakeholders are concerned about the declining teachers' professional conduct. Its observable characteristics include poor time management, absenteeism, inadequate lesson preparations and syllabus coverage, poor pupil discipline management and inadequate teaching methods. These have compromised teaching effectiveness in schools, especially in

rural setting. Rural areas have lagged behind in terms of service provision, including education and yet over 85% of Uganda's population lives in rural areas and is expanding at 3.2% annually. Neglecting rural children of school going age, would create a threat to the country's development as remarked by International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD (2012). Hence the need for the current study.

## Review of Related Literature

Research studies indicate that working conditions influence teacher performance. For instance, Atiya and Palwasha (2013) study in Pakistan revealed that teachers in private schools were more motivated and had better performance than their counterparts in public schools partly due to supportive working environment. Private schools had enough classroom facilities, enough teaching and learning materials, which created a conducive teaching and learning environment for both teachers and pupils; and teachers can have more control over their classrooms. The study may have covered many participants being quantitative but may lack personal experiences and perspectives for lack of qualitative approach. In addition, most countries may differ from each other due to geographical location. Uganda may have its uniqueness from Pakistan. This study used mixed methods design to cover the gap. In addition, a case study by Tanya (n.d.), also in Pakistan, noted late coming among female teachers, due to poor transport means, and lack of residential facilities for teachers at school. This shows the extent to which lack of staff accommodation at school can affect teachers' motivation and compromise their job performance as the time for teaching is spent on the way coming to school. Also, when the teacher reaches in class, after a long distance, he/she may be tired and thus affecting his/her performance that day in class. Lack of transport could also encourage teacher absenteeism and failure to complete the syllabus. Such a situation may adversely affect teachers' job performance in the long run. The study also cited overcrowded classrooms. Overcrowded classrooms can breed poor discipline among pupils as it can be extremely hard for a teacher to manage pupils' discipline in such an environment. In addition, it can be difficult for teachers to assess all pupils effectively as the workload would be too much. This can lower teachers' motivation to teach effectively. Tanya further reported that most demotivating situations were cited in rural schools where teachers in private schools outperformed their counterparts in public schools. Teachers in elite schools were satisfied with their salary package but complained of their workload. As a case study, the findings remain particular to the area studied. Even within Pakistan, different regions and places may have their own unique aspects that cannot be fully explained by this case study. Uganda needs its own study to understand the situation of its teachers, their motivation and performance.

Similarly, Ramachandran, Pal, Jain, Shekar, and Sharma (2005) found Indian rural schools scoring low on working conditions. In rural areas, there were no usable toilets, and sometimes not even functioning blackboards. Also, pupil: teacher ratios were found to be high. The study reported that working conditions in rural schools were worse than their counterparts in urban schools and teachers had to handle more pupils in a limited physical space. This presupposes that even pupils' discipline may be wanting as it can be very difficult for teachers to control overcrowded pupils. It also presupposes that teachers are overloaded, especially when it comes to

assessing the pupils in class, marking their work and giving feedback. Such conditions compromise the completion of syllabus, and effective teaching and learning processes. The study further found that teacher absenteeism was a serious issue in Indian schools. This was attributed to long distances that some teachers had to travel going to school. As such, some teachers were reported being on the lookout for alternative employment other than continuing with teaching. The researchers also found out that other teachers, who were attending to their school duties faithfully, were getting discouraged by the absence of their colleagues from school. These teachers wondered why they alone should be caretakers of education. This kind of atmosphere makes learning of pupils affected as teachers would not complete the syllabus. If they completed the syllabus, it would be covered so quickly such that it becomes irrelevant as to whether the pupils understood the subject matter or not, hence compromising job performance.

In addition, the study reported that head teachers and other stakeholders admitted that motivated and energetic teachers do not absent themselves without a compelling reason, but a teacher who is dispirited and disillusioned with his or her work is constantly looking for opportunities to stay away from school. Teachers who said they were dissatisfied invariably referred to their physical work environment and pressures from the job. Other reasons cited for dissatisfaction included high pupil: teacher ratio, infrastructure problems, and irregular attendance of children. The study was limited to the qualitative approach, which made it not cover many participants who would have given more insights about their working conditions in their schools. The current study intended to fill this gap.

In Africa, teachers' situation appears to be worse than what is portrayed on the global level. Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011), in their study, "Improving the conditions of teachers and teaching in rural schools across African countries", observed that teachers in many African countries are working in challenging conditions that are aggravated by scarce teaching and learning resources, among others. Teachers, in the study, asserted that poor teaching conditions and decreasing levels of motivation affected their performance in the classroom and reduced the ability of learners to achieve satisfactory learning outcomes, hence affecting teacher performance negatively. In Malawi, Kadzamira (2006) found out that teachers who had left government schools for private schools, returned to government schools following introduction of housing allowances in 2001. Rural schools were seen as disadvantaged for lacking suitable teachers' housing within the vicinity of the school. Actually the study indicated that most teachers tend to migrate to urban centres where living and working conditions are better than those in rural areas. Such a situation could cause high teacher turnover and refusal of teachers to be deployed to the rural schools. This is a strong indicator that accommodation at or near the school, also availability of other key services like running water, electricity and entertainment are contributory motivational factors to teachers' stability at a given school, which also may improve teachers' performance in the long run. For the teachers who may remain in such rural schools, such a situation may lead to stress and burnout, and subsequently affect negatively their levels of motivation and performance. The study recommends giving priority to rural areas especially in improving working conditions. This justified the current study, which investigated how motivation influences teachers' job performance in rural public primary

schools in western Uganda. The case study remained particular to the situation in Malawi, and may not reveal what actually happens in Uganda. A study carried out in Uganda by Vermeulen (2013), reported that most teachers were demotivated due to lack of teaching and learning materials, class sizes being too big, as the pupil: teacher ratio was found at 120:1 in Namasale Sub-county, Northern Uganda. Such a situation implies a large work load for primary school teachers as each teacher has to teach the child, assess the child, assess the learning and support the children with learning difficulties as well. It also means that teachers are most likely to suffer from stress and burnout as they struggle with large classes, sometimes of uncontrollable children. This affects drastically teachers' motivation to teach and to carry out all their expected duties at school and in class. In the long run, the situation may encourage teacher absenteeism, making it difficult to do regular pupil assessment and feedback. The study reported alarming teachers' living/housing conditions. Many teachers were reported often commuting across long distances between home and school, often on foot and rarely on Bicycle, if the teacher was lucky to own one. This was partly because most schools lacked structures to accommodate teachers. This occurrence was observed commonly in rural areas other than in urban centres. The study further reported that, on rare cases, when teachers' housing was provided at or around the school, teachers had to share a hut with other teachers, or the quality of the hut was abominable. Accommodation is a basic need and it is more than just providing shelter. Among other things, accommodation determines how one is perceived in one's own family and by others in the community. In addition, teachers need accommodation at or near the school to avoid reporting at school when one is already tired after walking a long distance, or to avoid absenteeism. Therefore, lack of or inadequate accommodation can drastically affect teachers' motivation levels and by extension their performance in schools. As the study employed a qualitative approach and particularly as a case study, its findings may not easily be generalized to reflect what happens in other parts of Uganda. In addition, geographical regions of Uganda tend to be different from each other in many aspects, such as education, socio-economic, among others.

It has been evidenced that in situations where teachers are provided with basic facilities, their performance is better than otherwise. For instance, a study carried out in Masaka Municipality, Uganda by Aacha (2010), reports that some teachers were motivated to perform with provision of meals such as breakfast, break tea and lunch at school which was at 40.0%; some teachers got free accommodation at 30.0%; and 9.0% of the teachers got transport allowance. Only 18.0% did not get any of the above. On the whole, the study reported a significant positive relationship between intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and teachers' job performance. Nevertheless, the study recommended increase of teachers' salaries as cost of living was high; provision of accommodation for teachers, strengthening supervision as well as instituting awards for good performance. The study relied on a survey design, and this helped to cover many schools, however, the study remains lacking understanding and experience from individual teachers' perspectives on their motivation and performance due to exclusive use of only quantitative approach. Moreover, the study took place in an urban environment where social amenities and other facilities are most likely to be accessed by teachers, unlike in rural areas. Working conditions in a rural setting are assumed to be difficult and for employees, very

demotivating. This is because most rural areas are characterised by poverty, and also experience deprivations due to scarce provision of facilities and services such as health and education, among others. The current study conducted its research in a rural environment, using a mixed methods design, so covered the methodological, geographical, and other related gaps in the reviewed empirical studies.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The study was conducted to determine the influence of working conditions on teachers' job performance in Kitagwenda County, Kamwenge district, Uganda. The study employed Convergent parallel mixed methods design. The methodology involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, analysis and integration of both forms of data (Creswell, 2014). The researcher used the method to collect, analyse and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. From quantitative paradigm, a cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from many informants (Mugenda, 2011). These included teachers from the 18 public primary schools. The design is cherished by most scholars for collecting descriptive data which can be generalized to the population where the sample is drawn. From qualitative paradigm, phenomenological design was chosen to explore the meaning of participants' own perspectives and lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). This enabled the researcher to collect data from class teachers' and head teachers' lived experiences and those of district education officer and district inspector of schools, on working conditions and job performance.

The target population comprised of 67 public primary schools in the six sub-counties in Kitagwenda County. The sample size was 165 teachers, 14 class teachers, 15 head teachers, one District Education Officer and one District Inspector of schools. The study took 30% of the target population, which was considered viable for the survey study as recommended by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009). Both probability and non-probability sampling procedures were used in selecting study participants. From probability sampling procedures, stratified random sampling technique was used to determine proportions of schools from six different sub-counties which were treated as strata. From within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select the number of schools that had been determined through stratified sampling. From non-probability, purposive sampling was used to select class teachers, and district inspector of schools. Head teachers, teachers and district education officer were automatically included in the study. All participants, except teachers, were considered important in generating in-depth data and contributing personal perspectives about working conditions and job performance. For instance, class teachers participated in the Focus Group Discussions for they were in charge of classes, interacted daily with teachers' activities and thus deemed to have more knowledge about teachers' performance. The District Education Officer is responsible for education and staffing of teachers in schools. The District inspector of schools regularly visits the schools, to find out whether teachers are implementing curriculum effectively and obtains information about teachers' challenges in order to find solutions. All research instruments were subjected to content and face validity which is a measure of the degree to which data collected represents a specific content of a particular concept (Mugenda, 2011). Two experts from research and two from

educational administration departments scrutinized the instruments to determine whether the intended content was covered. Their feedback on sentence construction, grammar and clarity on question items were incorporated to improve on the research instruments. Questionnaires were pilot tested in one primary school with similar characteristics with the schools that later participated in the study. Reliability of Likert scale quantitative items was determined using Cronbach alpha that requires only one testing, which yielded a coefficient of 0.897. Thus, meeting the recommendation by McMillan and Schumacher (2001), of a good rule of thumb for a satisfactory reliability of at least 0.70. The Cronbach's Alpha technique is the most appropriate test of internal reliability for survey research and other questionnaires, which use more than two choices, such as the Likert scale (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Qualitative items for interview guide and Focus Group Discussions guide were subjected to trustworthiness in terms of, member checking, transferability, dependability, and credibility and. There was also instrument and source triangulation of instruments and participants respectively. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyse quantitative data and to generate descriptive statistics that included frequencies and percentages presented in tables. Inferential statistics included One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) which was used to test the hypothesis. ANOVA compared differences between group means in order to estimate the effect of age-groups on a single job performance. Qualitative data were organized manually and prepared by the researcher for analysis basing on research questions; meaningful analytical concepts developed and later compared with analysed quantitative data to establish convergence or otherwise. Analytical concepts were then reported in verbatim and narratives.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Teachers were asked to react to statements intended to describe the status of working conditions in rural public primary schools, in order to determine how the conditions influenced teachers' performance. Then Likert-items were developed in relation to the defined working conditions and rated using the scale: Strongly Agree (5); Agree (4); Undecided (3); Disagree (2); and Strongly disagree (1), such that 5 was the highest score and 1 the lowest score. The results are summarised and presented in Table 1. The results in Table 1 show that majority of the teachers either strongly agreed and or agreed that working conditions at school do effectively influence their job performance. This was confirmed by 89.7% of the participating teachers who revealed that provision of blackboards in classrooms enabled them to teach their lessons effectively. Teachers found blackboards handy in serving all pupils in class since text books were not enough for each pupil to have a copy. Blackboards facilitate effective learning since pupils can access and use them, especially in practicing mathematics exercises and any other subject. Another 86.0% of the teachers indicated that provision of teachers' reference materials enabled them to prepare well schemes of work. This meant that teachers had resources to use with guidelines to prepare schemes of work and lesson plans as required, reflecting the actual content of the recommended syllabus. Availability of reference materials made it easy and favourable for teachers to prepare themselves well for effective teaching and learning activities, hence ensuring teachers' satisfaction. The finding resonated well with another 81.8% of the teachers who confirmed that, with provision of reference materials, they were able to prepare their

lesson plans effectively. In addition, 71.0% of the participating teachers agreed that the provision of textbooks for pupils facilitated them to give exercises to pupils often. That was observed in the lower classes, that is, primary one, two and three which had adequate textbooks donated by the World Bank. However, for upper classes, textbooks remained a big challenge for teachers as well as pupils. Although in most schools, pupils' text books were inadequate, teachers ensured the available ones were utilized well by giving group work assignments. That encouraged learners to discuss, share ideas and that enhanced their understanding of the concepts. There were other schools where both teachers' reference materials and pupils' textbooks lacked or were inadequate. That made it difficult for teachers to teach effectively and pupils to learn effectively. Nevertheless, these findings were in agreement with Herzberg's two-factor theory about hygiene factors as dissatisfiers, which provide contentment and prevent dissatisfaction among employees.

In addition, 74% of the participating teachers intimated that, they found uncrowded classrooms favourable for managing pupils' discipline. Teachers can easily reach pupils in a class that is not overcrowded and are able to pay attention to an individual pupil for effective learning. Giving exercises also becomes easy in uncrowded class and the teacher can mark and give feedback to pupils timely. The findings also revealed that 73.9% of the participants were encouraged by uncrowded classes to assess the pupils effectively and give feedback timely. That was only possible in some schools that had a proportionated number of pupils and enough classroom space to accommodate them. It should however be noted that not all teachers found assessing pupils easily nor marking pupils' exercises easily as the pupil-teacher ratio was high in some schools. The situation changes when classes are overcrowded. For example, the researcher observed that some schools had over 60 pupils in a single classroom under one teacher. For instance, during Focus Group Discussions with class teachers, one teacher confessed that "I always feel happy whenever some pupils from my class are absent. Then I have a manageable number of pupils, and giving class exercises and marking them becomes easier. Otherwise, I often have over 90 pupils in my class and this is not easy for me". This finding revealed that teaching an overcrowded class was not effective, and that teaching and learning objectives would never be achieved as only a section of pupils would benefit and the other left without proper learning. This was an indication that some teachers were demotivated with overwhelming class sizes, hence heavy workload for teachers. Furthermore, the study results revealed that 66.0% of the participating teachers did not agree that they had staff quarters at school. This meant that many teachers were not enabled to participate in co-curricular activities as confirmed by 46.7% of the teachers, which activities usually take place at the end of afternoon classes. Many teachers would prefer to travel back home immediately as afternoon classes end since they commute from far. Another 56.4% of the participating teachers felt they were not helped to provide feedback to pupils timely since they lacked accommodation at school. This finding resonated with another 52.1% of the participating teachers who stated, due to lack of staff quarters, they felt inconvenienced in preparing lesson plans. Teachers only endeavour to do their plans while at school. When teachers are occupied with other duties while at school, lesson plans are done hurriedly and that may compromise the quality of these lesson plans. The teachers expressed that, as they get home, they get occupied with other

chores and family responsibilities, and find no time to do the marking of pupils' exercises. Some teachers prefer not to give class exercises frequently due to lack of time. Also 51% of the teachers lamented lack of teachers' accommodation at school which hindered them in the making of schemes of work. Many teachers find difficulties in making their schemes of work amidst equally important chores in the family home.

In the same way, 49.1% of the participating teachers confirmed that due to lack of teachers' housing they could not effectively manage pupils' discipline during co-curricular activities as they would be returning to their distant homes. These findings agreed with the report by Education International (2007) that conducted a survey study in six sub-Saharan African countries and found out that conditions of service were poor and many schools did not have accommodation, or adequate accommodation for teachers. However, the findings on staff quarters deviated from the views of the participating class teachers from the two schools where Focus Group Discussions were conducted. The participating class teachers revealed that staff quarters were available. However, in one school, what was referred to as staff quarters was a semi-permanent structure in a very poor condition. The structure and its conditions could easily lower the esteem of and respect for teachers. The structure has no windows, implying lack of enough light in the rooms where teachers are expected to do their schemes of work and lesson plans. In the same room, the teachers are expected to mark pupils' homework and also prepare teaching aids. The teachers reported that they have no source of light in the evening and at night apart from improvising with flashlight. Such conditions show the extent to which working conditions can negatively affect teachers' job performance. These findings concur with that of Vermeulen (2013) in the rural northern Uganda, who reported that, on rare cases when teachers' accommodation is provided near the school, the quality of the house was abominable. In another primary school, teachers' accommodation was much better and built in permanent materials. But the structure was ideally meant to accommodate only two teachers but instead it is occupied by six teachers, and even some with their families. Such a situation of congested teachers in one house or room would breed easily stress and develop conflicts among teachers. Psychologically such stress and anger from conflicts would easily be rechannelled to pupils in class, hence affecting negatively teachers' performance.

Other class teachers, who did not find accommodation at school, rented nearby the school while others commuted from their family homes. Most teachers found this situation of lacking decent staff houses or no accommodation at all very inconveniencing in carrying out teaching and learning activities. Some teachers found it a reason to absent themselves whenever it rained. This implied that some teachers would not teach on that day. In addition, some teachers would come late and leave school too early due to long distance between the school and their homes, which reduced on the hours of teaching. Information from Focus Group Discussions resonated with what head teachers reported during interviews. Most participating head teachers expressed that few schools had staff quarters, while most of the schools had none. This finding was further clarified by the District Inspector of Schools who reported that the government commits itself every financial year to grant staff quarters to only two schools in every district. In Kitagwenda County alone, there are 68 public primary schools and yet Kamwenge District has three counties.

This implies that it will take decades for each school in the district to have staff quarters. These findings concur with the findings of Tanya (n.d.) in Pakistan, who found out that late coming among teachers was caused by poor or no means of transport at all, and lack of residential facilities for teachers at school. The findings further concur with that of Vermeulen (2013) in northern Uganda, who reported that many teachers were commuting across long distances between home and school, often on foot and rarely on Bicycle, as most schools lacked accommodation for teachers.

Results in Table 1 further revealed that 56.3% of the participating teachers disagreed that there was a staffroom at school. This finding concurred with 52.7% of the teachers who lamented of the inconvenience caused by lack of staffroom in the preparations of schemes of work. In addition, 44.9% of the teachers regretted having no staffroom as they found it difficult to make and update their lesson plans. This finding was in line with the reports of participating class teachers during the FGDs who concurred that there were no staffrooms in their schools. Teachers in these schools simply improvised where they can seat when they are not in class teaching. Often teachers are too congested in the rooms which they improvise as staffroom. One teacher, in agreement with the other participating class teachers said, At times a teacher wants to make a chart or teaching aid but there is nowhere to do it from. One would want to make lesson plans but there is no conducive place. You cannot imagine that it is also difficult to find a place where one can mark pupils' exercises at ease. Most classrooms are congested, the room we improvise as staffroom is also congested because it serves also as a store, so lack of a staffroom is a big problem (Class teachers, FGD, March 29, 2017).

These findings concurred with the reports of participating head teachers during the interviews, who sympathised with their teachers. In addition, the District Inspector of Schools categorically stated that there is no provision for staffrooms in the primary schools. He further clarified that when the government is constructing classrooms, and it adds an office for the head teacher, usually it adds a store. It is this store that is improvised by teachers as a staffroom. It is in this situation where teachers have to find a way of working on their schemes of work, lesson plans, teaching aids and marking pupils' exercises, amidst different items and tools kept in the store. At other times, teachers are forced to use classrooms as an alternative to do their teaching preparations but amidst noise and other inconveniences from pupils. Classrooms are not ideal places where teachers can make teaching and learning aids, or even interact with their fellow teachers given that classrooms themselves are congested with pupils. This implies that teachers have limited opportunities to interact with each other on how to improve their teaching and learning activities, hence causing dissatisfaction among teachers and negatively affecting their performance. Participating teachers made an alarm about insufficiency of text books for pupils. This was revealed in Table 1 by 52.1% of the teachers who disagreed that all pupils in class can access text books. This was found to be a key hindrance to effective teaching especially in upper classes where each pupil needs to have own textbook copy for subjects like English and mathematics. This finding was further confirmed by class teachers during Focus Group Discussions, who complained about the lack of enough text books for pupils, although they appreciated that reference books for teachers were sufficient. This was also in line with

the report by head teachers who conquered that teachers' reference books were sufficient except text books for pupils. Clarifying on the availability of textbooks, the participating head teachers revealed that text books for lower classes were relatively sufficient except for the upper classes, that is, from primary four to primary seven. On average, each desk, with five pupils, in upper classes got two text books while in lower classes, each child accessed a text book. This was further confirmed in the interview with the District Education Officer who stated that, Previously due to change of the curriculum, schools did not have adequate text books, but now the government has provided most of the teaching and learning materials, especially text books, especially for lower classes. The situation is a little better today than before when teachers would look for information from here and there or share one text book, but now they have a good number of text books to give to pupils and references to use when they are preparing schemes of work and lesson plans (DEO, Interviews, April 23, 2017).

The text book situation in primary schools has relatively improved partly because, as the DIS intimated, the government of Uganda has patterned with World Bank. The World Bank funds the program called "Uganda Teacher School Effective Project", and also supplies text books which match with the syllabus taught in the schools. These findings however, deviated from the report by Uwezo (2016), which indicated a major challenge of lack of textbooks, especially in P.2 classrooms nationally, with no textbooks or just one copy for the teacher. The report found national estimates for textbooks, in P.2 classrooms, only at 49.9% for local languages, 31.8% for Mathematics, and 23.5% for English. Nevertheless, the findings from this study agreed with those of Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) in Nigeria; and Vermeulen (2013) in Uganda, who reported that teachers, in many countries in Africa and in northern Uganda respectively, were working in challenging conditions with scarce teaching and learning resources.

The study revealed a lack of enough classrooms to accommodate all pupils in some schools which participated in the study. Some pupils were actually found attending classes under a tree at the time the researcher visited one of the schools. The blackboard was found leaning against the tree. This means that the effectiveness of the teaching and learning activities for both the teacher and the pupils would depend on the mercy of the weather conditions. Otherwise, rains and winds would distract the teaching and learning activities, hence compromising teacher's performance. In addition, pupils may not attend the lessons attentively due to unavoidable distraction from other activities taking place in the surroundings. For example, when people are passing, animals grazing, vehicles passing among others, pupils would not hesitate to take a look while the lesson is taking place. These findings were similar to those of Ramachandra, et al (2005) in India, who reported that rural schools scored low on working conditions, whereby some schools did not have functioning blackboards and enrolled pupils lacked enough classrooms. Lack of enough classrooms was also acknowledged by the participating class teachers, who concurred that often pupils were congested in some classrooms. This situation limits teacher's movements to reach all the pupils in order to make a follow up on how the pupils are progressing with given exercises. In addition, teachers find it difficult to display teaching and learning aids to benefit all the pupils in class. The few classrooms available, which are in permanent materials were not completed; while other

classrooms were in semi-permanent materials. These classroom structures cannot withstand weather conditions like rains and winds during teaching and learning activities. In addition, teachers cannot leave teaching aids in such structures for pupils to interact with for deeper understanding, as the structures cannot close to ensure security of the teaching aids and materials. These findings concurred with the views of one head teacher, who remarked, thus “primary four, which I teach, has 96 pupils, and they are too squeezed. I am helped when some are absent, even then I try to give few numbers or little work as an exercise, but also marking it takes long” (Head teacher, Interviews, March 30, 2017). Normally such a class should be divided into two streams for effective teaching and learning. This situation highlights the heavy workload on the shoulders of teachers in class, which makes it difficult for teachers to give exercises and mark them in time, hence hindering effective teaching and learning processes. The findings were reinforced by what the DEO disclosed, stating that, We still have cases where children seat and study under trees, they are not many but they are there. And of course, teachers who work under such conditions are demotivated, and their performance is negatively affected. Our teachers are enduring a lot (DEO, Interviews, April 23, 2017).

The case of a high pupil-teacher ratio, in the primary schools visited, was consistent with the report by Uwezo Uganda (2016), which indicated a national average pupil-teacher ratio of 45.8%, which was worse than the ratio 40:1 recommended by government. The findings further confirmed those of the report by ILO (2016) which revealed that in Uganda, facilities did not match pupil enrolment, which led to overcrowded classrooms and high pupil-teacher ratios. In regard to provision of furniture, class teachers during Focus Group Discussions reported of an alarming situation for pupils in class. They reported of lower classes (primary one to three) that 6 pupils shared a desk which normally should be shared by only 3. In upper classes (primary four to seven), teachers reported that a desk was shared by 5 pupils instead of only 3. Furthermore, some classrooms in some schools did not have furniture for pupils at all. Some pupils were seated on the classroom floor and very congested. Although some pupils had textbooks, it can be difficult for the teacher to move around reaching each individual pupil to check how they are learning. More so, it can be difficult for the pupils to effectively use the few provided textbooks as there is no place where to place the textbook, just holding it in hand and close to one’s face due to overcrowding. These findings were also attested to by the participating head teachers. In order to improve working conditions for better teachers’ performance, participating teachers suggested increase of class structures fitted with windows and doors. They further suggested of construction of staff quarters and staffrooms furnished with cupboards for every school, and to increase on textbooks and reference materials. Teachers also recommended the involvement of parents in providing meals for teachers at school.

### Testing of Null Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference between teachers’ mean scores in rating the extent working conditions enhance teachers' job performance when categorized by age.

Before testing the hypothesis, the following assumptions were taken into consideration.

### Assumptions of One-Way ANOVA

- The scores have been sampled randomly from the population, assuming independence,
- The sampling distribution of the mean is normal,
- There is homogeneity of variance. The two populations are assumed to have equal variances.

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance/alpha level ( $\alpha$ ). The test statistic was converted to a conditional probability called a  $p$ -value.

### Decision Rule

If  $p \leq \alpha$ , the null hypothesis will be rejected, meaning that the observed difference is significant, that is, not due to chance. However, if the  $p$ -value will be greater than 0.05 (i.e.,  $p > \alpha$ ), the null hypothesis will not be rejected (the study shall fail to reject the null hypothesis), meaning that the observed difference between variables is not significant. The decision rule is that, null hypothesis will be rejected if  $p$ -value is less than the critical level. The results obtained as summarised in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 shows that all age-groups, of the teachers in the public primary schools, have relatively diverse mean scores. Therefore, the study sought to determine whether the mean scores were statistically significant, One Way ANOVA was ran and the results are presented in Table 3. Results in Table 3 indicate a  $p$ -value of 0.82, which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, the study concludes that there is no significant difference between teachers’ mean scores in rating the extent working conditions enhance teachers’ job performance when categorized by age. This implies that teachers’ rating on their job performance based on working conditions is not influenced by their age groups.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Participants acknowledged that to some extent, working conditions positively influenced teachers’ job performance. For instance, provision of reference materials for teachers and textbooks for pupils guided teachers to prepare schemes of work and lesson plans, and to teach lessons effectively. Availability of classrooms in some schools and provision of desks and benches for pupils enabled teachers to have class control, and manage discipline. Furthermore, it enabled teachers to assess and give pupils feedback timely, hence influencing teaching and learning activities effectively. However, many participants indicated dissatisfaction with some working conditions such as lack of staff quarters and staffrooms in most of the schools. Other participants lamented about the lack of enough classrooms to accommodate enrolled pupils. Therefore, many teachers rented for themselves houses in the neighbourhood of the school or commuted from their family homes, a situation that encouraged late coming and absenteeism. This created the challenge of time management for teachers and affected negatively teaching activities and completion of syllabus. Lack of staffroom inconvenienced teachers in preparation of schemes of work, lesson planning, making of teaching aids and marking pupils’ exercises. This caused discontentment among teachers and retarded their effectiveness in carrying out their duties. In order to improve working conditions for better teachers’ job performance, participants suggested that more class structures be constructed

**Table 1. Distribution of Teachers' Responses on the Influence of Working Conditions on Job Performance**

n = 165					
Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	U f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
Uncrowded classroom enables me to manage pupils' discipline	45(27.3)	77(46.7)	6(3.6)	10(6.1)	27(16.4)
As classrooms are not over-crowded, I give timely feedback to pupils	38(23.0)	84(50.9)	5(3.0)	19(11.5)	19(11.5)
Provision of blackboards in class enables me to teach my lessons well	46(27.9)	102(61.8)	2(1.2)	6(3.6)	9(5.5)
Provision of blackboards enables me to complete the syllabus	27(16.4)	67(40.6)	18(10.9)	38(23.0)	15(9.1)
Provision of staffroom enables me to do schemes of work	17(10.3)	61(37.0)	13(7.9)	41(24.8)	33(20.0)
Provision of staffroom helps me to do lesson planning	17(10.3)	62(37.6)	12(7.3)	47(28.5)	27(16.4)
Provision of staffroom helps me to mark pupils' work and give feedback in time	20(12.1)	64(38.8)	12(7.3)	42(25.5)	27(16.4)
Provision of benches in classrooms helps me to manage pupils' discipline	26(15.8)	84(50.9)	9(5.5)	27(16.4)	19(11.5)
Provision of textbooks for pupils helps to teach the pupils effectively	32(19.4)	83(50.3)	14(8.5)	24(14.5)	12(7.3)
Provision of textbooks helps me to give exercises to pupils	26(15.8)	91(55.2)	13(7.9)	25(15.2)	10(6.1)
Provision of teachers' reference materials helps me to prepare well schemes of work	35(21.2)	107(64.8)	6(3.6)	11(6.7)	6(3.6)
Provision of teachers' reference materials enables me to do lesson planning effectively	32(19.4)	103(62.4)	9(5.5)	16(9.7)	5(3.0)
Provision of teachers' housing helps me to do schemes of work	26(15.8)	54(32.7)	11(6.7)	35(21.2)	39(23.6)
Provision of teachers' housing enables me do lesson planning	23(13.9)	56(33.9)	11(6.7)	39(23.6)	36(21.8)
Provision of teachers' housing enables me to manage pupils' discipline	12(7.3)	56(33.9)	16(9.7)	48(29.1)	33(20.0)
Provision of teachers' houses helps me to provide feedback to pupils timely	11(6.7)	61(37.0)	17(10.3)	43(26.1)	33(20.0)

**Table 2. Mean scores Rating the Extent to which Working Conditions Enhance Job Performance of Teachers Categorized by Age Group**

n = 165								
95% Confidence Interval for Mean								
Age Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
21-30	114	4.1711	.53497	.05010	4.0718	4.2703	2.61	5.28
31-40	34	4.2124	.54166	.09289	4.0234	4.4014	3.06	5.28
41-50	17	4.1144	.43322	.10507	3.8916	4.3371	2.94	4.67
Total	165	4.1737	.52462	.04084	4.0931	4.2544	2.61	5.28

**Table 3. One-way ANOVA on Working Conditions at School**

Working Conditions					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.112	2	.056	.201	.818
Within Groups	45.025	162	.278		
Total	45.137	164			

and fitted with windows and doors. They further suggested that every school should get staff quarters and staffrooms, the latter be furnished with cupboards. They called for an increase of textbooks and reference materials, and involvement of parents especially in providing meals for teachers. Basing on the inferential statistical analysis for the third null hypothesis,  $p$ -value of 0.82 was found to be greater than the alpha value of 0.05. The study, therefore, failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that there was no significant difference between teachers' mean scores in rating the extent working conditions enhance teachers' job performance when categorized by age. This implied that teachers' rating on their job performance based on working conditions was not influenced by their age groups.

## Conclusion

Availability of reference materials, textbooks, blackboards, staff quarters and staffrooms in some schools, enabled teachers to prepare well for teaching and learning activities effectively. Other working conditions left majority of the teachers dissatisfied at their job. In most schools, there was a remarkable lack of staff quarters and staffroom. There was inadequacy of text books for the upper classes, shortage of classrooms, and incomplete structures. All these conditions did not favour effective preparations of schemes of work and lesson plans. Effective teaching was challenged as in some subjects like English, in which a pupil needs to have its own book. In some schools, pupils were seated on the classroom floor and overcrowded, making it difficult for teachers to have

class control and reach every child for effective teaching and learning. It was difficult to make teaching aids, hang and leave them in classrooms for pupils to keep referring to them as there was no security with most classrooms lacking doors and windows.

## Recommendations

The study recommends the government to consider introduction of technological infrastructures like Information Computer Technology (ICT), e-learning and online learning in public primary schools to benefit both teachers and pupils. The electricity infrastructure should be extended to reach all primary schools. The government should employ ICT experts at every coordination centre, who will train teachers and pupils under their jurisdiction. That would enable teachers and pupils to easily access information on any subject of their interest other than relying only on textbooks which are even inadequate in most schools. This technological infrastructure would help teachers and pupils updated with recent information and boost their teaching and learning activities. Online learning would enable teachers to upgrade themselves in various programs to improve their effectiveness in teaching. That would solve the challenge of relying only on in-service training during school holidays, which can only be accessed by a few who can meet the costs involved. The study further recommends the government to create more avenues for funds such as seeking funding from external donor agencies and foundation bodies. This would enable the MoES to put up more classroom structures for schools, especially those in rural



areas where there is overcrowding of pupils. Likewise, the funds would be used for construction of staff quarters so that some teachers who come from far can reside near or at the school and be available and punctual for their duties. That would solve the late coming by some teachers who travel long distances to school and also alleviate the problem of absenteeism. The funds would further be used for construction of a staffroom for every primary school so that teachers have a conducive environment where they can do their preparations from, hold discussions with each other and mark pupils' exercises among others. The Ministry of Education and Sports should review its annual budget to improve on capitation grant, which can be used to add classroom structures and furniture in the schools. This would enable all teachers to have a well organised class, easy to control and teach. Likewise, this would enable all enrolled pupils to have desks and benches so that they can attend lessons well in a conducive environment other than sitting on the floor. This would ensure a favourable teaching and learning environment for both teachers and pupils. Furthermore, head teachers should engage parents, with cooperation of local leaders and politicians, to solicit support for school needs. This should be done by holding meetings with parents and community members every term at school. This would further create awareness, among parents and community members, of the teachers' and school needs. For instance, schools where pupils still attend lessons under trees, parents and local community could be mobilised to construct at least semi-permanent structures. This would shield pupils and teachers from bad weather conditions and other distractions during teaching, while waiting for the government's intervention. In addition, the head teachers, teachers and the PTA should encourage the formation of alumni to support their former schools through financial contributions, construction materials, and provision of textbooks among others to enable effective teaching and learning processes.

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