



Why is Normative Commitment Invalid? An Empirical Study on Public Elementary School Principals

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Received: April 19th, 2023. Accepted: October 25th, 2023. Published: October 31st, 2023.

Abstract

The commitment of a school principal plays a crucial role in achieving effective school performance. Therefore, ensuring that the indicators measuring the principal's commitment are reliable is essential to establish a suitable construct of principal commitment. This study aims to evaluate the construct validity of the principal's commitment based on the proposed theory, highlighting the observation variable's capacity to form a latent variable. The research approach adopted in this study employs a quantitative method using a measurement model in the form of First Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The sample for this study comprised 233 principals from State Elementary Schools located in Brebes Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. The data analysis process in this research initiates with the development of a theoretical model, constructing a path diagram showing causal relationships, selecting an input matrix, estimating a model, evaluating the identification of structural models, and examining criteria for Goodness of Fit. The research findings reveal that the dimensions used to measure the principal's commitment encompass affective, sustainability, and normative commitment. However, it is indicated that the normative dimension is invalid and insignificant in assessing the principal's commitment. This substantiates that commitment does not solely arise due to concerns about colleagues' negative opinions if the principal does not remain in the school.

Keywords: *normative commitment; principals; public elementary schools; school performance; confirmatory factor analysis.*

Abstrak

Komitmen seorang kepala sekolah memegang peranan penting dalam menghasilkan kinerja sekolah yang efektif, sehingga indikator-indikator yang mengukur komitmen kepala sekolah perlu dipastikan untuk menghasilkan konstruk komitmen kepala sekolah yang sesuai. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menilai validitas konstruk komitmen kepala sekolah terhadap teori yang diajukan sehingga dapat diketahui bahwa variabel observasi dapat membentuk variabel laten. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan model pengukuran berupa Analisis Faktor Konfirmatori Orde Pertama. Sampel dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 233 kepala Sekolah Dasar Negeri. Lokasi dalam

penelitian ini adalah Kabupaten Brebes, Provinsi Jawa Tengah, Indonesia. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini dimulai dengan mengembangkan model teoritis, membuat diagram jalur hubungan sebab akibat, memilih matriks masukan dan mendapatkan estimasi model, menilai identifikasi model struktural, dan menilai kriteria *goodness of fit*. Temuan penelitian ini adalah dimensi pengukuran komitmen kepala sekolah meliputi komitmen afektif, keberlanjutan, dan komitmen normatif, menunjukkan bahwa dimensi normatif tidak valid dan tidak signifikan dalam mengukur komitmen kepala sekolah. Hal ini membuktikan bahwa komitmen tidak muncul hanya karena kekhawatiran akan pendapat buruk rekan sejawat jika kepala sekolah tidak berada di sekolah.

Kata kunci: *komitmen normatif; kepala sekolah; sekolah dasar negeri; kinerja sekolah; analisis faktor konfirmatori.*

INTRODUCTION

The principal, through their commitment to the school, endeavors to fulfill their duties with utmost responsibility, aiming to realize the effectiveness of school performance (Dash & Vohra, 2018; Satyawati & Siswoyo, 2018; Levin et al., 2019). The principal's commitment significantly influences performance across various individual dimensions. Therefore, to maintain high levels of commitment among principals, schools must comprehend the factors that influence it. These factors encompass organizational culture, knowledge of academic supervision, stress management, and job satisfaction (Purba & Purba, 2020). Confidence in the vision and mission in achieving school goals has an impact on the high commitment of the principal in carrying out his duties.

The principal's previous efforts in fulfilling their duties play a vital role in fostering self-awareness, which, in turn, motivates the principal to persevere. This awareness serves as a driving force, encouraging the principal to maintain a high level of commitment towards enhancing school performance. Consequently, the conducive nature of the organizational culture significantly influences the level of commitment demonstrated by the principal, whether it is high or low (Taylor et al., 2008; Suradi, 2019). This is because a conducive organizational culture will give a comfortable impression for the principal to stay in school. Besides that, a conducive organizational culture also has an impact to the emotional bond created among the principal and the school community, so that there will be a feeling of fear of disappointing school members if the principal is not loyal to the school.

The level of job satisfaction (Jena, 2014) and compensation (Yamali, 2018; Okoli et al., 2020) will affect the level of the principal's commitment to the school. Job satisfaction felt by the principal has a positive influence on the high commitment of the principal. The achievements of the principal will increase the confidence of the principal so that it will create an increase in the performance and work commitment of the principal. Compensation is a reciprocal form of performance given by school residents to schools. Compensation plays a crucial role in fostering increased commitment from the principal towards the school. The higher the compensation linked to the principal's performance, the greater the level of commitment demonstrated in their work.

Allen and Meyer suggested three dimensions of organizational member commitment, including (1) affective commitment, (2) continuance commitment, and (3) normative commitment (Luthans, 2011). The affective commitment, emphasizes the emotional relationship of members to the organization. The emotional relationship is related to the

beliefs of members of the organization towards the values adopted by the organization and the goals to be achieved by the organization. Members of the organization who have an affective commitment will be actively involved in all forms of organizational activities to achieve the goals that have been set.

Indicators of affective commitment are related to the principal's emotional bond to the school (Aditya Pradesa & Tanjung, 2021; Houle et al., 2022), including pride, sincerity, and dedication as a principal, concern for school problems, and happiness in providing services to school residents. While the indicators of sustainable commitment are related to the principal's self-awareness to stay in school (Müller et al., 2020), including the sacrifice of the principal's power and thoughts, the meaning of the position/position, self-motivation in realizing school performance, and loyalty to the school. Meanwhile, indicators of normative commitment relate to the bond of feeling between the principal and school members both at the individual and organizational levels (Fullerton, 2014), including the togetherness of the principal with colleagues, willingness to work together, willingness to work together, and self-readiness in increasing capacity as principal.

This enduring commitment highlights the awareness among school members to remain steadfast within the school environment. Once individuals have settled into a comfort zone within the school, departing can evoke a sense of loss. Reflecting on the sacrifices made for the school nurtures loyalty among members, compelling them to maintain their presence. Consequently, normative commitment underscores the emotional attachment of members to the school. Taking into account the viewpoints of colleagues becomes a fundamental moral and ethical rationale for remaining within the school (Demerath, 2018). School members in this case do not want to disappoint their superiors and co-workers and do not want to create a bad perception if members choose to leave school.

The principal's commitment in this study refers to the attitude of the principal's self-dedication to the school. It involves an emotional connection with the school, a conscious determination to remain in the school by leveraging possessed abilities to achieve school goals, and a strong attachment to the school community. The measurement indicators are based on the dimensions of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Luthans, 2011).

These dimensions of organizational commitment enable the principal to contribute their best towards the sustainable development and progress of the school. It can be seen from the attitude of the principal's willingness to maximize his potential, believing that the school's goals are not just a discourse, but actually, it is the principal's job to achieve these goals by all means that can be done (Hardiansyah & Zainuddin, 2022; Kamaludin, 2023). The principal in carrying out his work is based on optimizing the ability to provide maximum results so that the results achieved from his work do not disappoint his superiors and other co-workers.

Previous research conducted by Vandenberghe et al., (2015) shows that normative commitment has a less positive relationship with work performance when commitment to several alternatives is high. Then, research conducted by Jaros, (2017) shows that the constructs used in normative commitment today are mostly invalid. Meanwhile, Yucel et al., (2014) research shows that CEO transformational leadership causes high normative commitment among top executives, but this relationship is nonlinear. In line with this, Hadi & Tentama, (2020) research shows that aspects and indicators form organizational commitment are valid and reliable. The most dominant aspect reflecting organizational commitment is

normative commitment, with a factor loading of 0.926. The aspect that weakly reflects organizational commitment is continuance commitment, with a factor loading of 0.807. Based on this gap analysis, conducting this research is feasible to obtain an overview of the construct of the normative commitment variable among state elementary school principals.

A principal's commitment plays an important role in producing effective school performance (Dude, 2012; Siahaan et al., 2020). Hence, the indicators used to measure the principal's commitment need confirmation to establish a well-fitted construct of the principal's commitment. This will enable the implementation of necessary steps to improve school performance. This study aims to evaluate the construct validity of the proposed theory to demonstrate how the observed variables can form a latent variable.

METHODS

The research methodology employed in this study adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a measurement model known as First Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis. This method, within Structural Equation Modeling, is employed to ascertain the coherence of observed variables in forming a latent variable. The analytical tool utilized in this research is the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS).

The study encompassed a population of 738 principals from public elementary schools. Sampling for this study was conducted using Cluster Random Sampling. In this case, the cluster is divided into three regions, namely (1) the northern region includes Brebes District, Wanasari District, Bulakamba District, Tanjung District, and Losari District, (2) the middle area includes Jatibarang District, Songgom District, Keanggungan District, and Kersana District, (3) the southern region includes Bumiayu District, Larangan District, Bantarkawung District, Paguyangan District, Banjarharjo District, Salem District, Tonjong District, and Sirampog District. Samples were taken based on the Isaac and Michael tables with an error rate of 5%. The total population of the 3 Clusters is 738 Principals of State Elementary Schools in Brebes Regency. Based on Isaac and Michael's table with an error rate of 5%, with a population of 738, a total sample of 233 was obtained. The location in this study is Brebes Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia.

The data collection technique used in this study was a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire. Making a questionnaire based on a rating scale. This graded scale is a statement followed by a choice of answers that indicate the levels achieved by the performance of State Elementary Schools. In this regard, a sample of 233 principals of public elementary schools in Brebes Regency was asked to provide an assessment of the factors that affect the performance of the school through a questionnaire prepared by the researcher.

The data analysis technique in this research is starting by developing a theoretical model, making a causal relationship path diagram, choosing an input matrix and getting a model estimate, assessing the identification of structural models, and assessing the criteria for Goodness of Fit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The principal's commitment construct is assessed using three indicators: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, as proposed by Allen and Meyer. They define organizational commitment as the strong desire and effort of members to persist within the organization and actively contribute to its functions. Fulfill the

wishes of the organization, and accept the values and goals of the organization with full confidence (Luthans, 2011). The latent variable of the principal's commitment will be measured through three dimensions. The first dimension is the affective commitment of the principal with five observation variables including pride as a principal (X1), sincerity as a principal is a calling from the soul (X2), service as a principal (X3), concern for school problems (X4), and happiness of the school principals in providing services to school residents (X5).

The second dimension is the principal's continuance commitment with four observation variables including the sacrifice of power and thoughts in realizing school performance (X6), the meaningfulness of the principal's position for themselves and their families (X7), self-motivation in realizing sustainable school performance (X8), and principal's loyalty towards the school (X9). While the third dimension is the normative commitment with four observation variables, namely the togetherness of the principal and colleagues at work (X10), the willingness of the principal to cooperate with colleagues (X11), the willingness of the principal and colleagues to solve problems (X12), and readiness of principals in increasing capacity as school principals (X13).

The test results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the principal's commitment construct are presented in Figure 1.

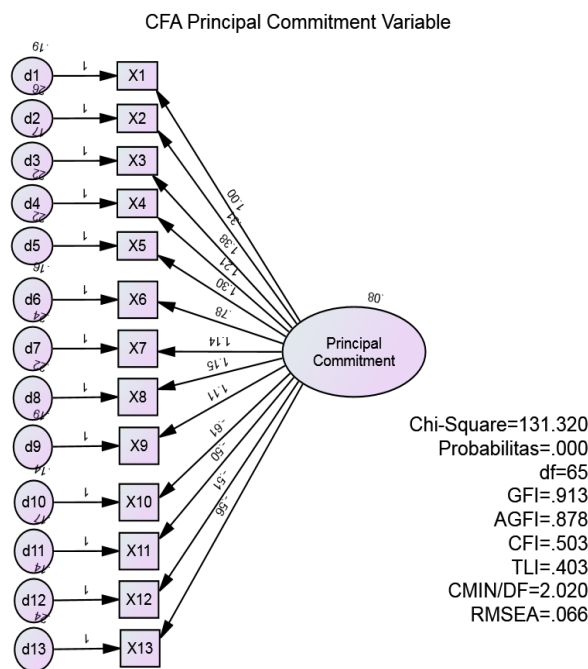


Figure 1. CFA Principal Commitment Variable

Based on the test results of the confirmatory analysis of the principal's commitment construct, shows that all construct variables can be observed. The model can also be identified because the estimated number of parameters (t) is smaller than the Sample Moment (S/2), based on this, the value of Degree of Freedom $(91-26) = 65$. Chi-Square value = 131.320 with $df = 65$, and probability = 0.000. The Chi-Square result exceeds the Cut of Value of 98.105, indicating that the model does not fit. However, the Chi-Square is very sensitive to the number of samples, the larger the sample, the more significant it is. Therefore, the Chi-Square must be accompanied by other test tools so that other fit-size models can be searched (Hair et al., 1998; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

The results of the CFA analysis test obtained that the GFI value = 0.913, already above the Cut of Value of 0.90, and also the RMSEA value = 0.066, already below the Cut of Value of 0.08. So the principal's commitment constructs as a whole are acceptable and have met the fit criteria so that the null hypothesis which states the model is the same as the empirical data is accepted. Based on the Regression Weight value, there is still a principal commitment construct variable showing probability values above 0.05, namely X2, X10, X11, X12, and X13, meaning that the observed variables are not significant and must be dropped from the analysis (Gelman & Stern, 2006). The results of the Regression Weight output are presented in table 1 and the Loading Factor CFA value of the principal's commitment can be seen in Table 2.

Table 1. Value of Regression Weights Variable Principal Commitment

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
X1	<-	PC	1.000			
X2	<-	PC	-0.313	0.361	-0.869	0.385
X3	<-	PC	1.383	0.245	5.634	***
X4	<-	PC	1.206	0.226	5.327	***
X5	<-	PC	1.304	0.246	5.299	***
X6	<-	PC	0.779	0.182	4.291	***
X7	<-	PC	1.136	0.237	4.803	***
X8	<-	PC	1.149	0.26	4.416	***
X9	<-	PC	1.112	0.177	6.284	***
X10	<-	PC	-0.607	0.544	-1.116	0.265
X11	<-	PC	-0.502	0.426	-1.179	0.239
X12	<-	PC	-0.512	0.502	-1.021	0.307
X13	<-	PC	-0.564	0.338	-1.666	0.096

Table 2. Value of CFA Loading Factor Variable Principal Commitment

			Estimate
X1	<---	Principal Commitment	.549
X2	<---	Principal Commitment	-.174
X3	<---	Principal Commitment	.697
X4	<---	Principal Commitment	.597
X5	<---	Principal Commitment	.621
X6	<---	Principal Commitment	.489
X7	<---	Principal Commitment	.554

		Estimate
X8	<--- Principal Commitment	.576
X9	<--- Principal Commitment	.591
X10	<--- Principal Commitment	-.417
X11	<--- Principal Commitment	-.325
X12	<--- Principal Commitment	-.370
X13	<--- Principal Commitment	-.312

Based on the output results of the Standardized Loading Estimate, the confirmatory analysis test of the principal's commitment construct still shows the Loading Factor value below 0.5, namely X2, X10, X11, X12, and X13. So, it can be concluded that the indicators of the principal's commitment construct variable are declared invalid and must be dropped from the analysis. To improve the fit model based on the significant value of the Standardized Loading Factor parameter estimate, the indicator with a probability value > 0.05 was dropped from the analysis because it was declared insignificant and the Convergent Validity value was an indicator that had a loading factor value < 0.5 was declared invalid in measuring construct the latent variable of the principal's commitment so that the indicator is dropped from the analysis. The results of the CFA re-estimation of the principal's commitment variable can be seen in Figure 2.

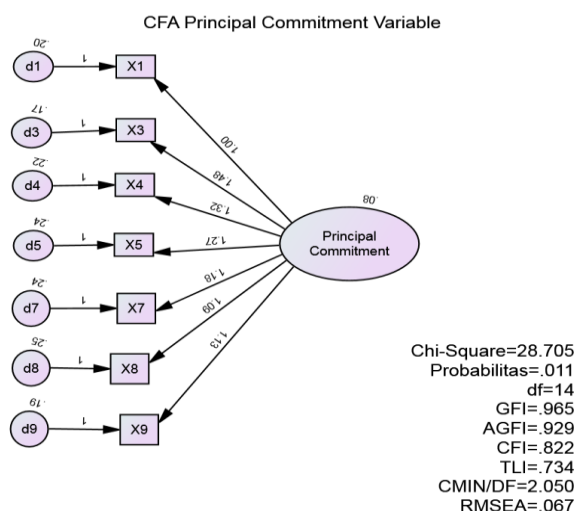


Figure 2. CFA re-estimation of the principal commitment variable

The results of the CFA re-estimation analysis of the principal's commitment variable, the Chi-Square value = 28.705 with df = 14, and probability = 0.011. The Chi-Square result is smaller than the Cut of Value 31.319, but the probability value is less than 0.05, indicating that the model does not fit. The results of the CFA analysis of the principal's commitment are obtained by other fit model values, namely the GFI value = 0.965 already above the Cut of Value 0.90, the AGFI value = 0.929 already above the Cut of Value 0.90, and also the RMSEA value = 0.050 below Cut of Value 0.08. So the principal's commitment constructs as a whole are acceptable and have met the fit criteria so that the null hypothesis which states the model is the same as the empirical data is accepted. Based on the Regression Weight value,

all observation variables are significant because they have a probability value of less than 0.05 and all observation variables are valid. After all, the Loading Factor value is greater than 0.5.

The latent variable of the principal's commitment is measured through three measurement dimensions, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment with 13 observation variables. The confirmatory factor analysis test shows that the principal's commitment construct has met the fit criteria. The construct of the latent variable of school commitment shows a good model, this is based on the results of the conformity assessment between the squared residual values of the estimated model compared to the actual data. The latent variable representing school commitment demonstrates a robust model, evidenced by the close alignment of the squared residual values of the estimated model to the adjusted actual data, considering the degrees of freedom ratio. Additionally, the robustness of the school commitment latent variable model is affirmed through the correction of the Chi-Square value in a study conducted with a large sample size.

The latent variable construct of the principal's commitment reveals that five observation variables lack significance and validity in shaping the principal's commitment as a latent variable. These variables include the principal's sincerity as an intrinsic call, the collaborative rapport of the principal with colleagues, the willingness of the principal to collaborate, the readiness of the principal and colleagues to solve problems, and the preparedness of the principal in enhancing their capacity as a school leader.

There are four variables from the five observational variables that are not meaningful and invalid, which are observation variables from the normative commitment indicator. This condition indicates that the principal's commitment is not merely an attitude stemming from internal motivation but rather due to concerns about the potential assessments that may arise if the principal is not present at the school. This is because normative commitment tends to be influenced by the principal's concern about the opinions of colleagues on the performance of the principal. Based on this, the observation variables of the principal's togetherness with colleagues at work, the willingness of the principal to work together, the willingness of the principal and his colleagues to solve problems, and the readiness of the principal in increasing the capacity as a principal become meaningless and invalid. So, this research found that normative commitment indicators were unable to measure the principal's commitment variable.

The togetherness of the principal with colleagues is an interaction created between the principal and school members through activities carried out within the school (Shah, 2012). This togetherness comes naturally because it is a will that appears in the principal, not a condition that is manipulated to make it seem good. In this context, the principal's commitment cannot be present with a pretend attitude because of the presence of feelings of worry about the assessment of school members on the principal's performance in establishing togetherness with school members. The feeling of worry that arises makes the principal not have an identity so that the principal's commitment to the school will not be realized.

Aligned with this idea, the willingness of the principal and colleagues to solve problems reflects a responsive attitude demonstrated by the principal in addressing every issue within the school, involving all school members in the process. Principals as managers in schools are required to be able to solve any problems that can hinder the optimization of school performance (Tirri et al., 2021; Tamadoni et al., 2021). This is because the policies decided

by the principal will be followed up by school members, therefore every problem that is present in the school requires input or suggestions for improvement from school members.

Principals who do not have a responsive attitude to problems have an impact on the protracted problems which result in increasingly difficult problems to solve (Karakose et al., 2014). Principals who express concerns about evaluating school members' adherence to established policies aimed at addressing existing school problems may lead to the lack of objectivity in the decision-making process. The arising apprehension can hinder the principal's ability to adopt a responsive approach in objectively resolving school issues, potentially impeding the realization of the principal's commitment to the school.

In this regard, the principal's readiness to increase his capacity as a school principal is the self-awareness that the principal has to try to increase his capacity as a principal. This self-awareness determines the effectiveness of every activity that is followed by the principal to increase the capacity of the principal as a leader in the school (Carden et al., 2022). The self-awareness that arises will have meaning in improving the performance of the principal at the individual level if the principal understands well the shortcomings contained in him in carrying out his duties as a principal (Brinia et al., 2014; Sutton, 2016). Self-awareness also arises because of the experience possessed by the principal (Saramolee et al., 2022). However, this condition can be different if the principal does not understand well the shortcomings that exist in him, even this condition will have a worse impact if the principal worries about the opinions that arise from school members. This suggests that the enhancement of the principal's competence is not rooted in an acknowledgment of the necessity for capacity improvement but rather in fulfilling the perception of appearing competent in the eyes of school members. Consequently, the principal's commitment to the school may not be fully realized.

The observed sincerity variable in a principal, indicating a heartfelt dedication, lacks significance and validity in contributing to the latent variable of the principal's commitment. This is because the principal, in the role of a school leader, often fulfills duties as a form of accountability for their role, responsibilities, and functions as a headmaster. The principal, while executing these duties, does not demonstrate a sincere and inherent calling. Their sense of responsibility is formed merely through the execution of tasks inherent in their leadership position at the school, lacking a genuine concern to earnestly improve overall school performance. Consequently, this situation impacts the actualization of the principal's commitment due to the absence of emotional ties to the school.

CONCLUSION

The dimensions used to measure the principal's commitment consist of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The analysis indicates that the normative dimension lacks validity and significance in assessing the principal's commitment. This is due to the fact that the principal's commitment is a voluntary choice that originates from within, focusing on their desire to remain in the school. Therefore, the dimensions of affective commitment and continuance commitment can effectively and validly gauge the latent variable of the principal's commitment. In contrast to the normative commitment dimension, this commitment tends to be influenced by the principal's concern about the opinions of colleagues. This proves that the principal's commitment is an absolute willingness that comes from within the principal and commitment does not arise only because

of concerns about the bad opinions of colleagues if the principal does not stay in school. Therefore, the principal's commitment is not an attitude that arises from within the principal because of concerns about the assessment that can arise when the principal does not stay in school. This study shows that Allen and Meyer's theory which states that the dimensions of member commitment to the organization consist of affective, continuance, and normative commitments have been broken in this study. This is because based on empirical data, member commitment to the organization can only be measured through two dimensions, namely affective commitment and continuance commitment. In terms of limitations, this research was exclusively conducted among principals of State Elementary Schools. Further studies could extend to higher levels of education to comprehensively utilize the principal's commitment construct in the future. To produce more generalizable findings, additional research could also be conducted across diverse regions and countries.

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