Indonesian teachers' emotional exhaustion and commitment to teaching: A correlational study

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Abstract

This study intends to explain whether or not emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment of Catholic primary school teachers in Merauke regency correlate prospectively. This study was guided by one research question: 'Does the Catholic primary school teachers' emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment correlate significantly negatively?' To answer the research question, two survey questionnaires were disseminated to 157 teachers. Employing the SPSS programme version 21, the study shown a significant negative correlation among the surveyed research variables. The findings may be authoritative for the Catholic primary school leaders and the Chief of the Catholic Foundation for Education in Merauke regency, Indonesia, to take major efforts to eliminate emotional exhaustion of teachers in order to foster the organisational commitment of teachers at the Catholic primary schools to teaching the youth.

Keywords: emotional exhaustion, primary school, organisational commitment, teacher

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1. Introduction

The teaching profession has a comparatively degree of danger of depleting one's mental investments and, thus, feeling mentally strained (Evers et al., 2004). The high-rate of teacher absence and of pupils' inability in mastering three basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic) as it was recounted by Werang, Leba, and Pure (2017a) and Werang, Agung, and Hurit (2019) should, in nature, be addressed to the low level of teacher organisational commitment.

Commitment is an integral part of teacher's expressive reactions to his/her experience in a school situation (Nicklaus & Ebmeier, 1999). Through these expressive responses, teachers make decisions about their level of willingness to be a part of and to personally involve in that particular school. Schools, as education organisations, would only be moved to its end through the hard work of teachers. Teachers' organisational commitment has been recognised as an essential concept underpinning how teachers relate to a particular school. Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) described a teacher's organisational commitment as a concept that reflects the attitudes of a teacher to his/her respective school and the willingness required to incorporate into the school. However, Morrow (1983) defined teacher's organisational commitment as the readiness of a teacher to stay in school, the willingness of a teacher to perform the best to achieve school's objectives and the willingness of a teacher to accept the school's values and objectives. Meanwhile, Werang, Betaubun and Pure (2015a) and Werang and Pure (2018) viewed teachers' organisational commitment as an attitude that exposes the existing connectivity a teacher has to his/her respective school.

The organisational commitment of a teacher may be high and may be low. Werang, Leba and Pure. (2017b, p. 8) asserted that teachers with the high level of commitment tend to put their students' learning and interest above everything else, knowing that the continuity of work started during the term of the school year is essential and do their best to comply with the commitment they have made. In a similar vein, Webrecruit Ireland (2015) argued that teachers with a high level of commitment seem happier at work, enabling them to quench their thirst for new knowledge and skills. Webrecruit Ireland (2015) further argued that high-level committed teachers would not need much direction from the school leaders and would be able to achieve better than those who are not.

The pivotal role of teachers in bringing the nation's youth into success is undoubtedly them striving, from day to day, to educate the nation's youth on how to be a winner in the global competition (Wea, Werang, Asmaningrum & Irianto, 2020). Therefore, there is a daily demand for teachers to be fully involved in school, with both minds and hearts (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004). Teachers, in this point of view, have the extra load of marvellous obligations for the growth and welfare of the nation's youth on top of numerous stressors that restrict them from regular job activities (Werang, Asmaningrum & Irianto, 2015b). Not surprisingly, teaching has long been seen as an emotional practice (Hargreaves, 1998).

Teachers' emotional involvement plays a decisive function in controlling school effectiveness and students' academic success as recommended by many researchers (e.g., Becker, Goetz, Morger & Ranellucci, 2014; Cubucku, 2012; Hogekamp et al., 2016) to underline the importance of conducting a study investigating individual's emotions in a particular organisation (Werang, 2018). Despite the different terms used to describe what are the components of emotions, most academics and investigators (e.g., Corcoran & Tormey, 2012; Izard, 2010; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Zembylas, 2003) refer to the same components, which are assessment, individual attachment, physical transition, mental expression and behaviour patterns.

Teachers' emotions are now considered to be one of the key areas of research. Fried, Mansfield and Dobozy. (2015, p. 416–417) identified two factors as to why teachers' emotions are crucial. First, in the prospective of high teacher attrition rates, the mental welfare of teachers has become hazardous. In an

effort to better understand teachers' turnover intentions, some researchers (e.g., Akin, Aydin & Demirkasimoglu, 2013; Hoigaard, Geiske & Sundsli, 2011; O'Brien, Goddard & Keeffe, 2008) have investigated the stress of teachers, while others investigated the welfare (e.g., Parker, Martin, Colmar & Liem, 2012) and the pliability of teachers (e.g., Day & Gue, 2009; Hong, 2012). Second, the work of teachers has progressively been driven by accountability and high-profile assessment. This emphasis has influenced the different ways in which the emotional environment of a classroom is affected by the essence of student–teacher relationships and behaviours (Schroeder, 2006).

The term 'emotions' here refers to 'emotional exhaustion' which has been described as the essential element and is most often the studied facet of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Emotional exhaustion is a form of stress that results in various forms of labour stressors, such as heavy workload, poor working conditions and the dearth of observed mental support from both superiors and colleagues (Rehman, Karim, Rafiq & Mansoor, 2012). These persistent levels of work-related stress may, in turn, contribute to repeated absences, finding victims in difficulties, anxiety, irritability, depression and low productivity (Fowler, 2006; Maslach, et al. 2001).

Emotional exhaustion has been considered by academics and investigators to be linked closely to teachers' organisational commitment and the quality of teaching (Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Ludtke & Baumert, 2008). There are several accessible literature/studies that have emphasised how workers' commitment was predicted by their emotional exhaustion. Wullur and Werang (2020) assessed whether or not the correlation exists between the elementary school teacher emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment. A total of 243 teachers were involved. Employing the SPSS software programme as the means for analysing data, the study revealed that the correlation exists significantly positively between the two surveyed variables. The study, then, suggested that the findings might be authoritative for the principals to secure teachers' emotions to adequately foster the high level of teachers' commitment to teaching.

Ali (2019) assessed whether the burnout and the commitment of nurses in a health care service were eventually correlated. Applying confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as the tool for analyzing data from a total of 150 nurses, the result shown that the surveyed research variables were correlated significantly. In other words, a significant correlation between Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) subscales and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) scales was exposed. The researcher, then, recommended the need for nursing managers to grasp organisational factors that may affect directly to the level of nurses' burnout in order to minimize negative outcomes.

Abbas, Kanwai and Iqbal (2018) assessed how burnout predicts the organisational commitment of universities members in Lahore, Pakistan. A questionnaire was used to collect data from a total of 300 faculty members. Applying the SPSS software programme as the means for analysing data, the study shown that the university members' commitment was predicted negatively by burnout.

Werang et al. (2015b) investigated whether job burnout, organisational commitment and performance of the state primary school teachers were related eventually. A total of 123 teachers were involved. Applying the SPSS software programme as the means for analysing data, the study shown that all surveyed research variables were associated significantly. The study recommended a need for school leaders to reduce burnout in order to promote teachers' commitment to teaching.

Yener, Oskaybas and Dursun (2014) assessed how burnout predicts the organisational commitment of logistic sector staff in Turkey. Employing Pearson's correlation test as the tool for analysing data from a total of 420 personnel, the result showed that the antecedents of burnout, except organisational justice, and the burnout factors are positively correlated. Meanwhile, the feeling of burnout is negatively correlated with its consequences.

Gemlik, Sisman and Sigri (2010) assessed how burnout predicts the commitment of the healthcare sector staff in Turkey. The statistical regression was employed as the tool for analysing data from a total of 459 personnel of the healthcare sector in Turkey. The result showed that burnout was usually believed to be a good predictor of organisational commitment.

In spite of the possibility of similar results between this study and existing studies found in the literature, the results of this study may putatively offer a precious evidence on the issue to the accessible group of understanding within the real setting of the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency, Indonesia. This study intends to explain whether or not emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment of the Catholic primary school teachers of Merauke regency, Indonesia, correlate hypothetically. One research problem guided this study: 'Does the Catholic primary school teachers' emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment correlate significantly negatively?' To answer the research problem, two survey questionnaires were employed to obtain research data. Using the SPSS software programme version 21, data obtained from 157 surveyed teachers were analysed.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study, as aforementioned, was directed to explain whether or not emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment of teachers at the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency correlate hypothetically. A quantitative survey was used to investigate the facts based on the present perceptions about the emotional exhaustion of teachers at the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency and how it relates to their commitment to teaching.

We applied the survey study, similar to several previous studies (Asaloei, Wolomasi & Werang, 2020; Wula et al., 2020; Yunarti, Asaloei, Wula & Werang, 2020) showing the following advantages: (a) low price, (b) excessive representation, (c) great statistical inference, (d) appropriate data collection, (e) little investigators bias and (f) rigorous outcome.

2.2. Data Collection and Measurements

As aforementioned, two survey questionnaires (Indonesian versions) were used to obtain field data. A total of 157 teachers were involved. Field data relating to teachers' perception of emotional exhaustion were assembled by adopting a questionnaire of seven items from Werang (2018). Each informant was asked to rate their personal perceptions of their emotional exhaustion on a 4-point Likert scale, scoring from *firmly disagree* (1) to *firmly agree* (4). The English version of the questionnaire is as follows: 'I feel worn out of my present job', 'I feel like I've lost my passion for work', 'I feel consumed at work physically and mentally', 'My work periods make me run-out' and 'I am worry of being in constant contact with co-workers at work all day long'.

However, field data relating to teachers' perception of organisational commitment were assembled by adopting a questionnaire of fifteen items from Wullur and Werang (2020). Each informant was asked to rate their personal perceptions of organisational commitment within a 4-point Likert scale, scoring from *firmly disagree* (1) to *firmly agree* (4). The English version of the questionnaire is as follows: 'I am proud of telling others that this school is very good', 'I am pleased to tell people that I work at this school', 'My position relates closely to the priorities and goals of this school', 'I know well of where this school is going', 'This school standards are closely related to my own values' and 'I work in a well-organised school'.

2.3. Data Analysis

This study is intended to explain whether or not emotional exhaustion and organisational commitment of teachers at the Catholic primary schools correlate hypothetically. The SPSS software programme version 21 was employed to analyse data obtained from the surveyed teachers.

Data were statistically analysed to verify whether or not the proposed hypothesis (H_a) 'emotional exhaustion correlates significantly negatively with organisational commitment of teachers at the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency is proven. Otherwise, the opposite hypothesis will be verified as true.

2. Result and Discussion

As aforementioned, the SPSS software programme version 21 was used to analyse data obtained from 157 surveyed teachers. The statistical results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The statistical correlation of the results of the surveyed research variables

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	β		
1	(Constant)	63.583	1.938		32.802	0.000
	Emotional_Exhaustion	−0.576	0.101	−0.417	−5.705	0.000

[a]Dependent Variable: Organisational_Commitment.

Data in Table 1 show that emotional exhaustion correlates significantly negatively with organisational commitment of teachers at the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency. As the value of β is −0.417 and the value of Sig. is 0.000, the proposed hypothesis (H_a) that emotional exhaustion correlates significantly negatively with organisational commitment of teachers at the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency is affirmed, whereas the reverse is excluded.

Since the value of β is significantly negative, it indicates that for every single digit increase in emotional exhaustion, there would be a 0.417-point decrease in organisational commitment and vice versa. The study demonstrates that the lesser the emotional exhaustion, the greater the organisational commitment; the greater the emotional exhaustion, the lesser the organisational commitment. It infers that teachers at the Catholic primary schools would be more committed to teaching when they feel less drained and, consequently, they are more uncommitted to teaching when they feel psychologically drained. This result confirms Azeem's (2010) research finding that emotional exhaustion is negatively connected to workers' organisational commitment. This result also supports Jackson and Maslach's (1982), Leiter and Maslach's (1988), Motowidlo and Packard's (1986), Shirom's (1989), Wright and Bonett's (1997) and Wright and Cropanzano's (1998) findings that workers' behaviour towards organisational work is negatively predicted by their emotional exhaustion. Maslach and Leiter (1999) found that the emotional exhaustion of teachers may lead to their less engagement and less suitable social actions towards superiors, co-workers and pupils. Teachers with persistent emotional exhaustion appear to be more critical and less tolerant to students' achievement (Klusmann, Richter & Ludtke, 2016).

Teaching has long been branded among the critical in stress-related work and the responsive attachment of a teacher to his/her students would be a crucial factor in students' engagement, well-being

and academic success (Spilt, Koomen & Thijs, 2011). Teachers who experience emotional exhaustion are in a state of mental and somatic exhaustion induced by continuous attachment in conditions that are passionately challenging (Harrison, 1996, p. 25). The organisational commitment of teachers is therefore projected to be steadily reduced over the passage of their teaching careers (Fraser, Draper & Taylor, 1998). To always be energetic and enthusiastic in teaching the nation's youth, teachers need to preserve their individual commitment to their teaching careers (Day as cited in Werang et al., 2017a). Teachers, in this point of view, should be emotionally committed to their teaching profession because without this emotional link teachers will face a continuous risk of burnout in an increasingly extended work climate (Nias, 1996).

Despite personal capabilities of teachers to enhance their organisational commitment by coping with their own emotional exhaustion, the role of a school principal is reflected to be very critical in affecting teachers' engagement with and commitment to new creativities and improvements (Day, 2000; Fullan, 2002; Louis, 1998). Teachers are motivated to perform their best and achieve more when they are guided by sympathetic and caring principals who view and treat them as part of their own family (Werang, 2015). Teachers respond to the school principal if they are inspired, motivated and supported by him/her (Wula et al., 2020). Teachers who work in a favourable school environment and are active in the decision-making process appear to generate more than what is required from them and are more likely to stay in their teaching career.

4. Conclusion and Implications

The study provides empiric information about emotional exhaustion and how it correlates to teacher organisational commitment to teaching the youth in Merauke regency. The conclusion portrayed from the result of statistical analysis is that emotional exhaustion correlates significantly negatively with the organisational commitment of teachers. It implies that the teachers would be more committed to teaching the youth at the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency when they feel less drained and, in contrast, they would be more uncommitted to teaching when they feel drained mentally.

The findings practically recommends the Catholic primary school leaders and the Chief of the Catholic Foundation for Education in Merauke regency, Indonesia, to take major efforts to eliminate emotional exhaustion of teachers in order to foster the organisational commitment of teachers at the Catholic primary schools to teaching the youth. The lesser the emotional exhaustion, the greater the organisational commitment of teachers to teaching the youth; the greater the emotional exhaustion, the lesser the organisational commitment of teachers to teaching the youth at the Catholic primary schools in Merauke regency. The findings may also hypothetically enlarge the current understanding on how emotional exhaustion correlates with organisational commitment by providing a cherished extension of relevant studies in other parts of Indonesia and in other countries alike.

This study is limited in both territory and samples. Therefore, the results of this study should be strictly interpreted in generalising the findings. In order to generalise the findings, future studies with a wider range of territory and a bigger sample are fully recommended.

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