Teacher Commitment to Teaching ⓐ

Hasan Hariri and Bambang Sumintono

Summary and Keywords

Teachers matter for many reasons, particularly because they can make a difference in student achievement. Student achievement can help improve school and education quality. Teacher commitment to teaching and its associated aspects are explored, including the characteristics of committed teachers. Committed teachers are characterized by four qualities: having a desire to be good teachers, being more fact purveyors and sources, recognizing and accepting individual worth, and meeting professional responsibilities. Thus, committed teachers need to be prepared, to maintain their commitment, and to improve their performance. Principals can help teachers be committed to teaching, for example, by implementing leadership styles that contribute to their commitment. Education policymakers can make the teaching profession be more appealing by elevating its status, similar to that of doctors, to attract the best candidates.

Keywords: teacher commitment, teaching, student, learning, student achievement, committed teachers

Introduction

Teachers matter and are regarded as one of the most important assets in schools. Teachers play a very important role in many societies in the world. Undoubtedly, the academic achievement of students in schools is highly influenced by teachers (Hattie, 2003). In particular, scholars agree that teachers have an essential impact on student achievement (Park, 2005). Even after school education is completed, teachers continue to provide an important long-term influence on a society's economic competitiveness in our interconnected world. Teachers are also regarded as an agent of change in society where their students' social and emotional growth and preparedness to live and work contribute significantly to local communities and the wider society, mostly because of their teachers' work and dedication.

In order to continue giving quality service to the community by educating a younger generation of global citizens, teachers' jobs in the classroom are not simple. In most cases, teacher effectiveness is supported by a good preservice education that gives her or him an understanding of their chosen subject matter and excellent knowledge of teaching skills. However, only teachers who are motivated, enthusiastic, committed, and care

about their students' academic growth and the teaching profession will attain a quality education (Manning & Patterson, 2005).

The issue of teacher commitment is critical, since many reports, particularly in the Western world, indicate high turnover rates and even shortages of teachers (OECD, 2005; Peters & Pearce, 2012). Recruiting good-quality new teachers is not easy and maintaining them in the system is very challenging (Bradley, Sampson, Ma, & Cunningham, 2006). In the United States, for instance, nearly one third of new teachers chose to find other professions after their first year (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). The issue of teacher retention is worldwide and needs to be addressed through methods that will make teachers committed to teaching. For example, by elevating the teaching profession to the same level as other professions, such as doctors, may make teaching more attractive and help retain good-quality new teachers in schools (Price & Weatherby, 2018).

Without a doubt, teacher commitment is a complex issue that needs further elaboration, since it is a very important factor that correlates highly with student achievement. Without a better understanding of teacher commitment, including the characteristics of committed teachers and associated factors that contribute to this commitment, we may not be as effective in improving, maintaining, and supporting committed teachers.

This article presents an overview of research on teacher commitment, particularly as related to teaching and its associated characteristics and influences. A brief discussion of the concept of commitment is included, followed by a discussion of teacher commitment and its types, teacher commitment to teaching, the urgency of teacher commitment, and the characteristics of committed teachers. Also, teacher preparation is discussed, together with key components of a good teacher program and the typology of prospective teachers as well as administrators' viewpoints on teacher commitment.

This article attempts to provide a better understanding of teacher commitment to teaching as well as of committed teachers, including those factors that improve, maintain, and support committed teachers. Equally important, this article provides discussion about teaching theory, practice, and policy.

Concept of Commitment

Commitment is important for the teaching profession and a critical component for the efficiency and effectiveness of all organizations. The concept of commitment has been the focus of research for a number of years, particularly among sociologists regarding behaviors of both individuals and groups in phenomena such as religion, power, occupational recruitment, political behavior, and bureaucratic behavior (Becker, 1960; Reyes, 1990). Operationally, Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) see commitment as an exchange phenomenon. For example, people tend to remain committed as long as they perceive associated positive benefits that they are reluctant to lose (Nir, 2002).

In the context of organizations, according to Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982), commitment is characterized by strong confidence in an organization's goals, a willingness to perform extra work for the organization, and loyalty in continuing to serve the organization. Commitment is thus the "glue" that keeps an employee attached to the organization. Such commitment is called affective commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) assert that there are three forms of commitment: (a) affective commitment, strongly related to employees' emotional connections, identification with, and attachment to the organization; (b) continuance commitment, referring to employees' attendance, performance, and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as their financial rewards; and (c) normative commitment, referring to employees' feelings of moral obligation toward the organization. They argue that these forms of commitment should be viewed psychologically and that employees need to work collaboratively with their employers.

Related to commitment are motivation and self-efficacy (Chesnut & Burley, 2015). Commitment is regarded as an extended form of motivation where targeted social behaviors are undertaken and sustained, whereas self-efficacy is related to an individual's belief in her or his ability to perform specific tasks satisfactorily. Thus, commitment does not happen easily or without constraint; rather, it needs to be associated with job satisfaction that will enhance itself along the way (Fresko, Kfir, & Nasser, 1997). In addition, teacher commitment is associated with positive principal instructional leadership (Al-Mahdy, Emam, & Hallinger, 2018). Thus, instructional leaders (i.e., principals) need to find ways to motivate teachers to be committed, since such commitment is critical for student outcomes and achievement (Dannetta, 2002).

Teacher Commitment and Its Types

Teacher commitment is a multidimensional concept and has been classified into various types. In particular, Thien and Razak (2014) outlined four types: commitment to the school organization, commitment to students and student learning, commitment to the profession, and commitment to teaching.

First, commitment to the school organization entails teachers believing in and accepting the goals and values of the organization and then working toward achieving these goals and values as agents of their schools (Thien & Razak, 2014). Teachers may put forth such efforts in order to retain their jobs, but also because they have pride in their school and their work and care about the school's future success (Celep, 2000). Principals also play a role as well because an effective principal leadership style toward the staff positively and significantly predicts teacher commitment (Cerit, 2010)

Second, teacher commitment to students demonstrates teachers' involvement in and responsibility for student learning (Thien & Razak, 2014). Teachers show this commitment through helping students increase their engagement in learning and achievement (Kushman, 1992). Such work can be carried out in a variety of ways, such as the following: spending time with students outside the classroom on activities associated with the subject matter; seeking extra courses to teach; being punctual to classes; completing tasks

enthusiastically; getting to know students more personally; putting forth best efforts, particularly for unsuccessful students; and enjoying being involved in student learning (Celep, 2000).

Third, commitment to the profession of teaching in order to advance knowledge, to enhance professional skills, and to further teaching capabilities is a strong motivator (Thien, Razak, & Ramayah, 2014). Such commitment to the profession can be demonstrated by the following: believing that the choice of being a teacher was the best decision to take; being proud of being a teacher; believing that the value of being a teacher is more significant than other professions; believing that the teaching profession is the best occupation in life; and striving for a good reputation as well as continuing to teach without being financially motivated (Celep, 2000).

Finally, a teacher's commitment to teaching is essential to being in the teaching profession (Thien & Razak, 2014). It is important to note that teachers' commitment to teaching and their commitment to the profession are closely related, if not overlapping, since teaching is a profession and the teacher's primary work is to teach. Also, a commitment to teaching is inseparable from a commitment to a school organization and to students.

Teacher Commitment to Teaching

Teacher commitment to teaching is one type of teacher commitment and is discussed in this section.

Urgency of Teacher Commitment to Teaching

Like teacher commitment in general, teacher commitment to teaching is very important for school organization, the teaching profession, and student learning in enhancing student achievement.

First, commitment is important in any organization, including schools (Nir, 2002). This notion is based on research showing that student achievement is intertwined with teachers' commitment to teaching (Park, 2005). How much commitment profession members have (including teachers) determines the strength of that profession (Fox, 1964).

Likewise, teacher commitment to teaching is essential when teachers mainly work in schools, as researchers agree that such commitment is an important variable for school success (Heinz, 2015) and for education success (Yildiz & Celik, 2017). The strength of the teaching profession relies on how strongly teachers are committed to it. In this case, committed teachers behave consistently with their education philosophy.

In addition, in his classic work, Weick (1976) claimed that schools are unique and loosely coupled organizations. This means that a school is an organization "characterized by weak or relatively absent control, influence, coordination, and interaction among events, components, and processes" (Pajak & Green, 2003, p. 395). Also, schools' stakeholders constantly provide feedback and, in fact, teachers work as professionals with limited su-

pervision. Classroom instruction is the teacher's essential work and the school's main goal and function, which underlies such an organization (Ingersoll, 1993). Thus, each teacher plays a critical role in the classroom and greatly influences student learning based on his or her initiatives. The nature of teaching thus demonstrates that teachers' independence makes their commitment to teaching an essential part of good-quality student learning.

Additionally, teacher commitment is very important for schools to produce high-quality students, since it influences students' learning processes and thus is considered necessary to enable teaching to succeed (Mart, 2013). In contrast, when teacher commitment to teaching is low, student academic performance is poor, and low teacher commitment can also lead to high attrition rates. Thus, having strong committed teachers is considered a valuable asset for schools (Thien, Razak, & Ramayah, 2014).

Furthermore, Jo (2014) asserts that teacher commitment to teaching involves educators' efforts in terms of supporting school effectiveness. It is also about their willingness to work hard to provide effective teaching, be enthusiastic, and devote more time to interact with students as learners as well as as individuals. Equally important, good teacher commitment to teaching entails an emotional tie toward their profession, which is a contributing factor in enhancing student learning and can make a difference to student achievement and to school enhancement.

Taken together, based on a systematic literature review by Nir (2002), teacher commitment to teaching comprises three types. These are: (a) commitment to teaching, referring to the degree of psychological attachment the teacher holds toward his or her profession; (b) commitment to students, denoting teacher devotion to facilitating students to learn and to encouraging them to be socially integrated in the classroom; and (c) commitment to the organization, denoting teachers' dedication to their school.

Nir (2002, pp. 324–325) also asserts that teachers tend to display a high commitment to student achievement when student achievement lead to "a potential increase in their professional prestige and symbolic rewards they receive from children and parents and from their principal and district officials." Commitment to the context of the organization in public schools can indicate a sense of being loyal to the school as well as "identification with its values and goals." Undoubtedly, when receiving greater benefits, teachers' commitment to their schools increases.

Teacher commitment to teaching is also regarded as essential to teacher performance, teaching quality (Ingersoll, Alsalam, Bobbitt, & Quinn, 1997), and school effectiveness (Nir, 2002). One main challenge for schools is not only to seek a strong commitment from teachers but also to understand how schools and policymakers can help teachers maintain high teaching quality and engage in effective learning (OECD, 2005). Therefore, one important agenda item for any principal is to retain high-quality teachers, since evidence indicates that such teachers are the single most vital element for student achievement (Opper, 2018). As emphasized by Hattie (2003, p. 2), teachers really make a difference to student learning, since "what teachers know, do, and care about . . . is very powerful in

this learning equation." What teachers do in terms of teaching preparation, including selection of appropriate teaching methods and subject matter as well as working with diverse students, is strongly associated with student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

In the same fashion, in their study, Tsui and Cheng (1999) found that teacher commitment to teaching is regarded as an essential predictor of teacher turnover, absenteeism, and work performance. They also found that teacher commitment is greatly influenced by such factors as school environment despite not finding a connection between school environment and individual teacher characteristics. Thus, it is important to understand teacher commitment in order to prevent teacher attrition (Frelin & Fransson, 2017).

Like teacher commitment in general, teacher commitment to teaching is important for the school organization, the teaching profession, and student learning, in particular the enhancement of student achievement. To better understand teacher commitment to teaching, it is necessary to be familiar with the characteristics of committed teachers.

Characteristics of Committed Teachers

Committed teachers possess positive characteristics that contribute to their commitment to teaching, the school organization, and student learning. These characteristics can differ based on various factors, such as demographics. Reyes (1990) revealed that data showing committed teachers' profiles and demographic variables such as age, experience, gender, marital status, position, and intention to continue study are associated with positive commitment. He found that older and more experienced teachers, as well as married and female teachers, tended to have higher levels of commitment. School administrators with higher positions, combined with more years of experiences, were found to be more committed as well, and the same holds true for teachers who work in smaller districts. Having more expected material reward (increased salary) does not necessarily make teachers more committed compared to public recognition of their performance in addition to having learning opportunities for professional growth (Reyes, 1990).

Further, other studies show common characteristics of committed teachers even though many differences are apparent. Fox (1964), for instance, conducted a classic study and identified four characteristics of committed teachers in the context of teaching: (a) they have a desire to be good teachers; (b) they are more than purveyors of facts and sources; (c) they recognize and accept individual student worth; and (d) they meet professional responsibilities.

By having the desire to be good teachers, such individuals evaluate their teaching, do their best to improve their weaknesses, and seek to benefit from their strengths. The most essential characteristic of such teachers is that they want to teach and want to teach well. Such teachers love working with students and try to help them develop to their full potential. This is significant because a good teacher cannot depend on desire alone (Reyes, 1990). Thus, Darling-Hammond (2003) supports the notion that principals prioritize teacher retention. Such good teachers, among all school resources, significantly

determine student achievement. Evidence shows that student achievement is strongly associated with teachers' teaching preparation, expertise in subject matters, and work with diverse students. In addition, recruiting committed teachers is fundamental to school reform because they are the main drivers in attaining qualified human resources (Raman, 2015). Committed teachers are good teachers who foster and stimulate life-long learners, and they are responsible as well in insuring the fulfillment of society's future goals (Gordon, 2018).

By being more than sources of facts, committed teachers need to prepare their materials well before they teach. For such preparation, they may use a variety of instructional media such as television, videos, computers, tablets, and even smartphones. In a rapidly changing world, teachers must also be able to understand their discipline well, including its concepts and principles, in order to help their students comprehend the changes in their field. Teachers need to play a significant role in stimulating their students' intellectual curiosity and willingness to learn (Hattie, 2003). In fact, committed teachers effectively accomplish their roles and establish good relationships with their students in facilitating student learning (Mart, 2013).

Committed teachers recognize and accept the worth of individual students. They are aware of student diversity in such areas as socioeconomic background, motivation, ethnicity, and intelligence. Teachers need to accommodate for these differences as the classroom is provided to facilitate the development of all students (Fox, 1964). Thus, committed teachers should be recruited, retained, and supported to enhance student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2003) and to prevent teacher attrition (Frelin & Fransson, 2017).

Finally, in fulfilling their professional responsibilities, committed teachers recognize their obligations to all people, including students, parents, administrators, colleagues, and the community. They accept the responsibilities of advancing teaching quality, promoting teacher welfare, and elevating the teaching profession. They work with people at the local, state, and national levels to attain school goals because they cannot work alone (Fox, 1964). To do this job well, teachers need to commit to the teaching profession, and how strong the teaching profession is may rely on their degree of commitment (Werang & Pure, 2018).

Making Teachers Committed to Teaching

Because committed teachers are so important, it is essential to make a strong effort toward establishing committed teachers. Understanding the characteristics of good or effective teachers and the factors that influence them will help to further teacher commitment and retention. Such understanding may be one solution to the issue of teacher retention and recruitment in both developed and developing countries (Price & Weatherby, 2018). Maintaining teacher commitment is also a useful way to keep teachers in the teaching profession. Equally important, prospective teachers who have enrolled in teacher education programs need to be equipped with good skills and knowledge so that

they are well prepared prior to teaching for the first time. Coupled with teacher prepara-
tion, identifying the characteristics of prospective teachers in association with their pro-
fession choice will help teacher preparation effectiveness in selecting for teacher commit-
ment to teaching. Examining administrators' views about teacher commitment is also es-
sential.

Characteristics of Good or Effective Teachers

To be effective, particularly regarding student achievement, committed teachers need to
be good teachers. Thus, the qualities of good teachers are necessary in building commit-
ted teachers.

The characteristics of good teachers need to be owned in order for teachers to be com-
mitted teachers. As many researchers have asserted, the term "good teacher" is essen-
tially interchangeable with "effective teacher." Researchers distinctly outline such char-
acteristics, and all tend to label good teachers as those who contribute to improving stu-
dent outcomes as opposed to bad or ineffective teachers who have poor effects on stu-
dent outcomes.

Azer (2005), for instance, specified 12 characteristics of good teachers that need to be
fulfilled and sustained as a manifestation of teacher commitment to teaching. These char-
acteristics are as follows: (1) being committed to teaching, (2) encouraging and appreci-
ating diversity, (3) interacting and communicating with respect, (4) motivating students
and co-workers, (5) bringing a wide range of skills and talents to teaching, (6) demon-
strating leadership in teaching, (7) encouraging an open and trusting learning environ-
ment, (8) fostering critical thinking, (9) encouraging creative work, (10) emphasizing
teamwork, (11) continually seeking to improve teaching skills, and (12) providing positive
feedback (Azer, 2005).

Another researcher (Walker, 2008), based on his longitudinal study that examined percep-
tions of in-service and preservice teachers about their favorite and most memorable
teachers, also identified 12 characteristics of effective teachers. These are as follows: (1)
being prepared, (2) being positive, (3) holding high expectations, (4) being creative, (5)
being fair, (6) displaying a personal touch, (7) cultivating a sense of belonging, (8) being
compassionate, (9) having a sense of humor, (10) respecting students, (11) forgiving mis-
takes, and (12) admitting mistakes.

These two sets of characteristics have relatively different points, but the researchers are
in agreement about the necessity of teacher commitment to teaching in order to effective-
ly help students develop their potential and ensure their success. This thinking is in line
with Azer (2005), who asserts that good teachers are role models and help students to
achieve their potential. Good teachers need to be continuously nurtured and rewarded.
Teacher commitment to teaching enables teachers to alter teaching practices to help stu-
dents in learning. Teacher performance is one of the most important criteria contributing
to a conducive learning environment for students.

Teacher Commitment to Teaching

Committed teachers emphasize that teacher commitment is at the core of their contribution to student achievement and school goals, and in turn in creating quality education. Committed teachers love teaching and work with students through building good relationships with them and showing them respect. Such teachers also have unquestionable loyalty to the profession, which leads to effective teaching and student learning.

In contrast, researchers have identified the characteristics of bad or ineffective teachers which result in ineffective teaching and student learning. Thus, the characteristics of good teachers should be actively promoted to avoid those of bad teachers. In addition, other factors that contribute to teacher commitment enhancement should be actively promoted.

Influencing Factors Contributing to Increasing Teacher Commitment

Evidence shows that several factors such as school leadership, teacher relationships, and school climate have an influence on teacher commitment and retention. It is also important to understand what may contribute to a teacher's decision to leave the profession. Research has revealed a significant direct relationship between the commitment and retention of teachers and leadership practices (Al-Mahdy et al., 2018). Thus, principal support contributes to retaining teachers. In contrast, a dearth of principal support, particularly emotional support, contributes to teacher attrition (Gordon, 2018).

Fransson and Frelin (2016) identified five teacher commitment factors, described from the most significant to the least significant: teaching itself, the school context, personal issues, professional development, and the system context. First, teaching factors refer to tasks such as lesson planning, lesson conducting, and relationships with students. The most prominent driving forces toward commitment in these factors include positive student feedback, positive interactions and relationships, and student success. The emotional components of caring, joy, love, and feelings of worth are also important.

Second, different school contexts need to be managed because school context factors can challenge commitment in addition to contributing to it. School contexts include the socioeconomic backgrounds of students and parents, different principal leadership styles, and different school cultures. School context factors affect teacher commitment.

Third, personal factors refers to teacher personalities, which influence teacher commitment.

Fourth, professional development may affect teacher commitment. This refers to teachers' willingness to better themselves and can be motivated by either small or major job challenges, particularly when seeking new ways of assisting students and finding solutions to teaching challenges.

Fifth, system context factors (e.g., teacher education), not commonly expressed as an issue, can provide possibilities for professional development and contribute to teacher competence (Fransson & Frelin, 2016).

Teacher Commitment to Teaching

In addition to these five factors, teacher satisfaction leads to teacher commitment (Mensah, 2011). Thus, increasing teacher satisfaction is important to teacher commitment. Helping with teacher satisfaction is the implementation of effective school leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership in addition to transactional leadership (Hariri, Monypenny, & Prideaux, 2014). In addition, a rational decision-making style can positively and significantly predict teacher job satisfaction (Hariri, Monypenny, & Prideaux, 2016). Preventing, or at least decreasing, teachers' work-related stress is also crucial because stress can contribute to decreased job satisfaction and the decision to leave teaching (Klassen & Chiu, 2011).

Finally, as previously argued, elevating the teaching profession and holding it to the same level of prestige as other professions is also a way to attract good candidates to the profession and to retain them (Price & Weatherby, 2018). Further research is needed to explore other factors that will ensure teacher job satisfaction. Not only is it necessary to promote such factors, but it is crucial to enhance these components in order to maintain teacher commitment.

Teacher Commitment Maintenance

Frelin and Fransson (2017) conducted research, building on their previous work (Fransson & Frelin, 2016), to identify four critical components for teacher commitment maintenance. These are as follows: moral perspective; action and motivation; knowledge and self-confidence; and reward and self-esteem (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Four components of teacher commitment.

Adapted from Frelin and Fransson (2017).

Figure 1 shows a cycle for the four teacher components in maintaining teacher commitment. Based on their findings, Frelin and Fransson (2017) assert that teachers need to deal with values and morality in their interactions with students. They state that moral

dilemmas presented by students to teachers can be more easily handled when teachers are acquainted with different ways of addressing such problems. Teachers need to help troubled students. This moral support will trigger teacher self-confidence. Teachers need to know what to do in such situations, which will stimulate teacher commitment, and in turn, their self-confidence will lead to appropriate actions. In other words, these actions are spurred by a moral calling and self-confidence. Finally, these actions will result in rewarding outcomes and heightened self-esteem, which will move teachers ahead and reinforce their commitment to their profession.

Thus far, teacher commitment to teaching has been examined in the literature and discussed in this article. We argue that understanding committed teachers, the factors associated with them, and how such commitment can be maintained may be insufficient without understanding how teachers can be made committed and effective. In particular, teacher preparation, which educates prospective candidates to be committed teachers, needs to be focused on, especially considering the key components of good teacher education programs, as specified by education experts. Administrators' views on how to make teachers effective and committed will also be discussed.

Teacher Preparation

Critical characteristics of good or effective teachers that are associated with effective teaching that benefits students and enhances their achievement levels need to be understood (Hadley, 2011). Clearly, it is critical that teachers be well prepared to be effective prior to teaching for the first time.

Key Components of a Good Teacher Program

Education experts such as Linda Darling-Hammond, C. Emily Feistritzer, Linda G. Roberts, Sonia Hernandez, and Arthur E. Wise outline the key components of effective teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, Feistritzer, Roberts, Wise, & Hernandez, 2007).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) stated that teacher preparation requires a comprehensive program that is administered by expert master teachers. A good program organizes course work and clinical experiences in a way that connects theory to practice. Expert master teachers with whom prospective teachers can work in the classroom are essential for good teacher education programs. Prospective teachers need to understand how students learn, how to use teaching strategies effectively, and how to assess student learning.

Additionally, C. Emily Feistritzer asserts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) that the most essential part of teacher preparation is the provision of two components: mentor teachers and real-life classrooms. Teacher preparation where mentor teachers work with prospective teachers in real-life classrooms is critical to training. These two components ensure that prospective teachers learn how to teach and develop the competencies to teach. In

other words, developing the competencies to teach requires two significant things: the first is doing it, and the second is working with other teachers.

Linda G. Roberts agrees with C. Emily Feistritzer that what is most important in teacher preparation is an opportunity for prospective teachers to have practical experience in classrooms. Such experience is linked to a vital knowledge base and the theory that teacher training teaches about what works and how students learn. The other important item in teacher preparation is, as with medical training, to be taught by very experienced and knowledgeable mentors. When working together, prospective teachers and mentors can share a knowledge base that will grow over time.

Sonia Hernandez also supports the idea that teacher preparation must be linked to a good teacher program which puts theory into practice to help teachers make a difference in children's lives. Prospective teachers need to be aware of this role in order to provide them with a real understanding of how significant the teaching profession is. Being aware of this role, prospective teachers will be highly motivated to acquire competencies and skills for effective teaching. Finally, Arthur E. Wise adds that teacher preparation needs to be finalized through licensing or certification (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Licensing or certification measures teacher qualifications regarding the components of subject matter knowledge and learning and teaching competency (Darling-Hammond, 2000), qualifications found to be associated with effective teaching (Hadley, 2011).

The essential components of effective teacher preparation, as outlined by researchers, are as follows: a comprehensive education program, working with expert master teachers or mentor teachers, participating in real-life classroom situations, and meeting high standards for licensing or certification. Comprehensive education programs are characterized by courses that link theories to practices in real-life classrooms, facilitated by very experienced and knowledgeable mentors or master teachers, and completed through a process of rigorous licensing or certification.

Teacher preparation is necessary not only to prevent teachers from being ineffective, but also to engender effective characteristics in future teachers. Thus, coupled with a good teacher education program are effective characteristics prospective teachers need.

Typology of Prospective Teachers

Typologies of teacher commitments in teacher preparation also need to be identified to improve our understanding of prospective teachers' levels of commitment. Researchers have classified prospective or preservice teachers who enrolled in a teacher education program based on their focus. For instance, Pop and Turner (2009) conducted a study on prospective teachers that focused on levels of teaching commitment to teaching. The results identified three types: (1) prospective teachers who considered teaching as their future career; (2) prospective teachers who were undecided about their career choice; and (3) prospective teachers who were no longer considering teaching as their career choice.

Teacher Commitment to Teaching

Thomson, Turner, and Nietfeld (2012) conducted a study on prospective teachers based on motivational aspects. Three types of prospective teachers were identified: (1) enthusiastic; (2) conventional; and (3) pragmatic. Enthusiastic prospective teachers were those who were both intrinsically and altruistically motivated to teach. Their decisions to teach were greatly influenced by professional development opportunities offered through teaching as well as by social factors, including inspiration from former teachers or family members. Conventional prospective teachers were those who were also intrinsically and altruistically motivated, but their choice was least influenced social factors. Last, pragmatic prospective teachers were who were least intrinsically and altruistically motivated, and their choice was least influenced by social factors.

Watt, Richardson, and Wilkins (2014) identified from their study three types of prospective teachers: (1) classroom-engaged careerists; (2) highly engaged persisters; and (3) lower-engaged desisters. Classroom-engaged careerists were those who were enthusiastic about teaching and felt morally, emotionally, and psychologically gratified by their choice of the teaching profession as their lifelong career. Highly engaged persisters were those who were passionate about teaching but intended to eventually leave to pursue other education careers outside the classroom. Finally, lower-engaged desisters were those who saw teaching as a valuable and morally good career as well as rewarding, but intended to leave teaching and move on to other jobs.

A more recent study was carried out by Moses, Berry, Saab, and Admiraal (2017) on prospective teachers' levels of commitment to teaching. They identified four types: (1) committed passionate; (2) committed compromisers; (3) undecided; and (4) uncommitted. The committed passionate type was at the highest level of commitment, where prospective students felt satisfied that the teaching profession had been their first choice. They were enthusiastically and intrinsically motivated to become teachers for their lifelong career. Their choice of teaching profession was not influenced by such extrinsic rewards as employment opportunities and salary.

Committed compromisers were at the second level of commitment, where they had decided to become teachers but teaching was not their first career choice. They either had not been selected for their first career preference or external circumstances including financial problems had excluded them from it. They compromised but seemed satisfied with the teaching profession as their future career. The third level of commitment was the undecided, where these prospective teachers had not decided whether they would choose teaching as their career. They seemed uninterested in the teaching profession and wanted to work in a profession other than teaching; however, they were aware of obstacles to other professions. Therefore, they considered teaching as their temporary career. Last, the lowest level was the uncommitted type, where prospective students had decided that teaching was not their choice. They were not interested in becoming teachers but enrolled in teacher education merely to get a degree and to keep themselves busy while waiting for other opportunities (Moses et al., 2017).

Understanding the four types of prospective teachers is important for educators and policymakers in providing appropriate interventions for each type. One important intervention may be through policymaking by elevating the teaching profession and holding it to the same level of prestige as other professions, such as doctors, in order to attract high-quality candidates (Price & Weatherby, 2018). For the committed passionate types, such an intervention can strengthen their decision about choosing teaching as their lifelong career. For the other three types, such an intervention may motivate them to change their minds. Also, such an intervention is important for addressing one of the major causes of teacher shortages. Prospective candidates need to feel they are joining a high-prestige profession by choosing teaching. Additionally, the issues of low pay and prestige as well as low status in the teaching profession can be addressed (Sinclair, 2008).

All the researchers on prospective teachers acknowledged the limitations of their studies. They recognized that cultural contexts where their studies were conducted may have influenced their findings. However, we argue that their findings provided valuable insights into understanding prospective teachers' reasons for their career decisions. This evidence provides a useful basis for finding ways to make prospective (and current) teachers everywhere become committed to teaching and stay in the profession. The limitations of past studies merely provide avenues for future researchers to replicate these studies and close research gaps in different settings.

Administrators' Perspectives on Teacher Commitment

Administrators' perspectives on teacher commitment are important to explore, particularly regarding how administrators behave and what they do to contribute to teacher commitment. Based on research, administrators' support as an important component in the teaching profession has been the most significant driver of teacher dissatisfaction as well as teacher attrition. Teacher dissatisfaction and attrition are at risk of disadvantaging students. Administrators therefore need to pay more attention to teachers by giving them more support and recognition in handling day-to-day issues (Boyd et al., 2011).

Despite being important, the literature on administrators' perspectives on teacher commitment is lacking. Further research is needed on teacher commitment by including administrators' perspectives about it.

Conclusion and Implications

Teachers really matter. Their commitment to teaching is essential for improving student outcomes, including achievement. Student achievement leads to school quality and eventually quality education. Committed teachers are valuable school assets because they want to be good teachers, want to be more than fact purveyors and knowledge sources, recognize and accept individual students' worth, and want to fulfill their professional responsibilities. Therefore, the characteristics that make up committed teachers and influencing factors such as good teacher preparation programs and activities that will increase teacher commitment to teaching need to be developed, enhanced, and maintained.

Elevating the teaching profession to be an appealing, high-prestige profession, like that of doctors, needs to be considered to attract high-quality candidates.

Without a better understanding of the importance of teacher commitment to teaching and its associated aspects, including the characteristics of committed teachers and associated factors, we may not be as effective as we could be at developing and keeping committed teachers. This article has attempted to contribute to the understanding of teacher commitment to teaching and committed teachers, as well as what influences such teachers.

This article is merely a step in understanding teacher commitment to teaching in general. It has many weaknesses. We do not provide enough information on the literature on teacher commitment to teaching and its associated characteristics and factors, particularly administrators' perspectives about teacher commitment. However, optimistically, these weaknesses give researchers avenues to carry out further research to cover the gaps associated with teacher commitment to teaching.

In addition to its implications for further research, this article extends prior literature on teacher commitment to teaching and characteristics and factors associated with committed teachers. It makes a distinct contribution to the growing body of knowledge on teacher commitment to teaching. In practical terms, administrators, particularly principals, should apply leadership styles such as transformational, servant, and instructional leadership that significantly contribute to teacher commitment to teaching. Equally important in terms of policy, education policymakers should look for ways to elevate teachers as well as prospective teachers, for example, by giving the teaching profession a high-prestige status to enhance its attraction as the best career choice.

Acknowledgments

Further Reading

Frelin, A., & Fransson, G. (2017). **Four components that sustain teachers' commitment to students: A relational and temporal model**. *Reflective Practice, 18*(5), 641–654.

Hallinger, P., Hosseingholizadeh, R., Hashemi, N., & Kouhsari, M. (2018). **Do beliefs make a difference? Exploring how principal self-efficacy and instructional leadership impact teacher efficacy and commitment in Iran**. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 46*(5), 800–819.

Moses, I., Berry, A., Saab, N., & Admiraal, W. (2017). **Who wants to become a teacher? Typology of student-teachers' commitment to teaching**. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 43*(4), 444–457.

Price, H. E., & Weatherby, K. (2018). **The global teaching profession: How treating teachers as knowledge workers improves the esteem of the teaching profession**. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 29*(1), 113–149.

Thien, L. M., & Razak, N. A. (2014). **Teacher commitment: A comparative study of Malaysian ethnic groups in three types of primary schools**. *Social Psychology of Education, 17*(2), 307–326.

References

Al-Mahdy, Y. F. H., Emam, M. M., & Hallinger, P. (2018). **Assessing the contribution of principal instructional leadership and collective teacher efficacy to teacher commitment in Oman**. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 69*, 191–201.

Azer, S. A. (2005). **The qualities of a good teacher: How can they be acquired and sustained?** *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 98*(2), 67–69.

Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). *The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study*.

Becker, H. S. (1960). **Notes on the concept of commitment**. *American Journal of Sociology, 66*(1), 32–40.

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). **The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions**. *American Educational Research Journal, 48*(2), 303–333.

Bradley, K., Sampson, S., Ma, L., & Cunningham, J. (2006). **Where are the teaching opportunities? A longitudinal study of educator supply and demand**. *Teachers College Record*.

Carpenter, P., & Byde, P. (1986). **The meaning of commitment to teaching: The views of beginning teachers**. *South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 14*(1), 13–26.

Celep, C. (2000). **Teachers' organizational commitment in educational organizations**. *National Forum of Teacher Education Journal, 10*(3).

Cerit, Y. (2010). **The effects of servant leadership on teachers' organizational commitment in primary schools in Turkey**. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 13*(3), 301–317.

Chesnut, S. R., & Burley, H. (2015). **Self-efficacy as a predictor of commitment to the teaching profession: A meta-analysis**. *Educational Research Review, 15*, 1–16.

Dannetta, V. (2002). **What factors influence a teacher's commitment to student learning?** *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 1*(2), 144–171.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). **Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence**. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*(1), 1–44.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 6–13.

Darling-Hammond, L., Feistritzer, C. E., Roberts, L. G., Wise, A. E., & Hernandez, S. (2007). **The key components of effective teacher preparation: The experts speak**.

Fox, R. B. (1964). The committed teacher. *Educational Leadership, 22*(1), 18.

Fransson, G., & Frelin, A. (2016). **Highly committed teachers: What makes them tick? A study of sustained commitment**. *Teachers and Teaching, 22*(8), 896–912.

Frelin, A., & Fransson, G. (2017). **Four components that sustain teachers' commitment to students: A relational and temporal model**. *Reflective Practice, 18*(5), 641–654.

Fresko, B., Kfir, D., & Nasser, F. (1997). **Predicting teacher commitment**. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 13*(4), 429–438.

Gordon, S. D. (2018). *Leadership's role in teachers' commitment and retention: A case study analysis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Delaware State University, Dover.

Hadley, D. H. (2011). *Characteristics of effective teachers: A Comparison of the perceptions of upper level secondary school students and secondary school administrators* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).

Hallinger, P., Hosseingholizadeh, R., Hashemi, N., & Kouhsari, M. (2018). **Do beliefs make a difference? Exploring how principal self-efficacy and instructional leadership impact teacher efficacy and commitment in Iran**. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 46*(5), 800–819.

Hariri, H., Monypenny, R., & Prideaux, M. (2014). **Leadership styles and decision-making styles in an Indonesian school context**. *School Leadership & Management, 34*(3), 284–298.

Hariri, H., Monypenny, R., & Prideaux, M. (2016). **Teacher-perceived principal leadership styles, decision-making styles and job satisfaction: How congruent are data from Indonesia with the Anglophile and Western literature?** *School Leadership & Management, 36*(1), 41–62.

Hattie, J. (2003). *Teachers make a difference, What is the research evidence?* Paper presented at the Building teacher quality: What does the research tell us? Melbourne, Australia.

Heinz, M. (2015). **Why choose teaching? An international review of empirical studies exploring student teachers' career motivations and levels of commitment to teaching**. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 21*(3), 258–297.

Hong, J., Greene, B., Roberson, R., Cross Francis, D., & Rapacki Keenan, L. (2018). **Variations in pre-service teachers' career exploration and commitment to teaching.** *Teacher Development, 22*(3), 408–426.

Hrebiniak, L. G., & Alutto, J. A. (1972). **Personal and role-related factors in the development of organizational commitment**. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 17*(4), 555–573.

Ingersoll, R. M. (1993). **Loosely coupled organizations revisited.***Research in the Sociology of Organizations, 11*, 81–112.

Ingersoll, R. M., Alsalam, N., Bobbitt, S., & Quinn, P. (1997). *Teacher professionalization and teacher commitment: A multilevel analysis.* Collingdale, PA: DIANE.

Jo, S. H. (2014). **Teacher commitment: Exploring associations with relationships and emotions**. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 43*, 120–130.

Kissau, S., Davin, K. J., & Wang, C. (2019). **Aspiring world language teachers: Their influences, perceptions, and commitment to teaching**. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 78*, 174–182.

Klassen, R. M., & Chiu, M. M. (2011). **The occupational commitment and intention to quit of practicing and pre-service teachers: Influence of self-efficacy, job stress, and teaching context**. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 36*(2), 114–129.

Kushman, J. W. (1992). **The organizational dynamics of teacher workplace commitment: A study of urban elementary and middle schools**. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 28*(1), 5–42.

Manning, M., & Patterson, J. (2005). **Special publications**. *Childhood Education, 81*(4), 249–251.

Mart, C. T. (2013). A passionate teacher: Teacher commitment and dedication to student learning. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, 2*(1), 437–442.

McInerney, D. M., Ganotice, F. A., King, R. B., Morin, A. J., & Marsh, H. W. (2015). **Teachers' commitment and psychological well-being: Implications of self-beliefs for teaching in Hong Kong**. *Educational Psychology, 35*(8), 926–945.

Mensah, W. K. (2011). *Motivation and job commitment among teachers in four selected senior high schools in the Ashanti region of Ghana* (Unpublished master's thesis). Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Meyer, J. P., Morin, A. J., Stanley, L. J., & Maltin, E. R. (2019). **Teachers' dual commitment to the organization and occupation: A person-centered investigation**. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 77*, 100–111.

Mitten, C., & Ross, D. (2018). **Sustaining a commitment to teaching in a research-intensive university: What we learn from award-winning faculty**. *Studies in Higher Education, 43*(8), 1348–1361.

Moses, I., Berry, A., Saab, N., & Admiraal, W. (2017). **Who wants to become a teacher? Typology of student-teachers' commitment to teaching**. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 43*(4), 444–457.

Mowday, R. T., Porter, L. W., & Steers, R. (1982). *Organizational linkages: The psychology of commitment, absenteeism, and turnover*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Nir, A. E. (2002). **School-based management and its effect on teacher commitment**. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 5*(4), 323–341.

OECD. (2005). *Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Opper, I. M. (2018). *Teachers matter: Understanding teachers' impact on student achievement*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Education and Labor.

Pajak, E., & Green, A. (2003). **Loosely coupled organizations, misrecognition, and social reproduction**. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 6*(4), 393–413.

Park, I. (2005). **Teacher commitment and its effects on student achievement in American high schools**. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 11*(5), 461–485.

Peters, J., & Pearce, J. (2012). **Relationships and early career teacher resilience: A role for school principals**. *Teachers and Teaching, 18*(2), 249–262.

Pop, M. M., & Turner, J. E. (2009). **To be or not to be . . . a teacher? Exploring levels of commitment related to perceptions of teaching among students enrolled in a teacher education program**. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 15*(6), 683–700.

Price, H. E., & Weatherby, K. (2018). **The global teaching profession: How treating teachers as knowledge workers improves the esteem of the teaching profession**. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 29*(1), 113–149.

Raman, A. (2015). **Motivated and committed teacher: Dire need in our education system**. *Current Science, 108*(7), 1197.

Reyes, P. (1990). Linking commitment, performance, and productivity. In P. Reyes (Ed.), *Teachers and their workplace: Commitment, performance, and productivity* (pp. 15–21). San Francisco, CA: SAGE.

Sinclair, C. (2008). **Initial and changing student teacher motivation and commitment to teaching**. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(2), 79–104.

Thien, L. M., & Razak, N. A. (2014). **Teacher commitment: A comparative study of Malaysian ethnic groups in three types of primary schools**. *Social Psychology of Education, 17*(2), 307–326.

Thien, L. M., Razak, N. A., & Ramayah, T. (2014). **Validating teacher commitment scale using a Malaysian sample**. *Sage Open, 4*(2), 215824401453674.

Thomson, M. M., Turner, J. E., & Nietfeld, J. L. (2012). **A typological approach to investigate the teaching career decision: Motivations and beliefs about teaching of prospective teacher candidates**. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(3), 324–335.

Tirri, K. (2019). The purposeful teacher. In R. B. Monyai (Ed.), ***Teacher education in the 21st century***. London, U.K.: IntechOpen.

Tsui, K. T., & Cheng, Y. C. (1999). **School organizational health and teacher commitment: A contingency study with multi-level analysis**. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 5*(3), 249–268.

Walker, R. J. (2008). **Twelve characteristics of an effective teacher: A longitudinal, qualitative, quasi-research study of in-service and pre-service teachers' opinions**. *Educational Horizons, 87*(1), 61–68.

Watt, H. M., Richardson, P. W., & Wilkins, K. (2014). **Profiles of professional engagement and career development aspirations among USA preservice teachers**. *International Journal of Educational Research, 65*, 23–40.

Weick, K. E. (1976). **Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems**. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 21*(1), 1–19.

Werang, B. R., & Pure, E. A. G. (2018). **Designing strategy for improving teacher's organizational commitment in the remote elementary schools of Merauke district, Papua, Indonesia**. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education, 7*(1), 15–28.

Yildiz, Y., & Celik, B. (2017). **Commitment to the teaching profession**. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies, 4*(2), 93–97.

Hasan Hariri

Universitas Lampung, Indonesia

Teacher Commitment to Teaching

Bambang Sumintono

Universiti Malaya, Malaysia