

Principal Leadership and Teacher Retention: The Mediating Roles of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment, with Organizational Support as a Moderator

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Asad Ali¹

¹Lecturer, Grand Asian University Sialkot, Pakistan

Email: asadnuman141@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: asadnuman141@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the influence of principal leadership on teachers' intention to stay in the organization, by examining job satisfaction and organizational commitment as parallel mediators and perceived organizational support as a moderator as boundary conditions. A quantitative explanatory research design was used, with teachers from public and private schools selected for the data collection using systematic sampling technique and a structured questionnaire was administered. Principal leadership was determined by a multidimensional validated leadership instrument, and teacher retention intention, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support were evaluated with the help of a five-point Likert scale. After the data screening process, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were performed before the proposed model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted and discriminant validity were used to determine the reliability and validity. Path coefficients, bootstrapped t-values, confidence intervals, effect sizes, and explained variance were used to assess the structural model. The findings indicated that the principal's leadership had a significant positive influence on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and teachers' intentions to leave the school. Leadership related paths were partially mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and at higher levels of perceived support, organizational support had a significant strengthening effect on the leadership-retention relationship. The substantive pattern of findings did not materially change with teacher age, gender, experience, and school sector (entered as control variables). The findings contribute to the existing school leadership and retention literature by combining dual mediators and a moderating boundary condition into one model, and have implications for school leaders who want to reduce teacher turnover by implementing a supportive, relationship-based school leadership style.

Keywords: principal leadership, teacher retention, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational support, PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Because teachers leave schools, instructional continuity is threatened, institutional knowledge lost, and schools face significant recruitment and training costs as well as other negative consequences when they operate with already tight budgets (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Most of this turnover does not stem from teachers leaving the profession altogether, but rather from teachers moving to other schools to find better working conditions, and organizational and leadership issues within schools are among the most important factors in teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001). This research has been documented and documented well and is well known to those involved in teaching and learning that frequent staff turnover hurt student achievement and impacted collegial networks and the instructional coherence that students rely on, especially in historically under-resourced schools (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Theoretically, knowing how school-specific characteristics affect teachers' retention intentions is important, and practically, it is crucial for supporting retention to identify which factors can be modified.

Of the organizational factors that have been included in retention studies, the leader role played by principals has consistently been found to be one of the most important determinants of whether teachers will remain or depart from their schools (Boyd et al., 2011). Principals influence teachers' work conditions by the instructional support they offer, the trust and collegiality they foster in their relationships, and how they protect teachers from the demands of disruptive forces in the outside world (Grissom, 2011). Leithwood et al., (2008) claimed that leadership is one of the most influential school-related factors that affects student achievement and that this impact is largely felt through affecting the working conditions and motivational states of teachers themselves. Nevertheless, the nature and nature-nurture nature of the relationship between principal leadership and teachers' intention to remain has not been thoroughly understood, and prior research has tended to focus only on the direct influence of principal leadership on teachers' retention without adequately modeling the psychological and attitudinal processes that mediate between the two (Kraft et al., 2016).

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are two constructs that are often suggested to be transmission mechanisms in this literature. Job satisfaction refers to a positive emotional response that arises when individuals evaluate their jobs or job experiences, and has been theorized as a close consequence of supportive leadership and a close precursor of retention-related behaviors (Locke, 1976). Individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and motivational inspiration have been correlated with an increase in teacher satisfaction with their job, which is associated with a decrease in teachers' desire to pursue other careers (Bogler, 2001; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Conceptualized as the psychological bond and sense of obligation that employees have toward their organization, organizational commitment is a pathway that is related but not similar to the pathway that leads to job satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This approach of modelling job satisfaction and organizational commitment as parallel rather than competing mediators provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role of teacher leadership in influencing teacher retention intentions than either construct alone.

Another gap is related to boundary conditions of leadership influence. How teachers react to leadership behaviors depends on the individual, and organizational support theory implies that the feelings of their employees about their overall organization's support and care, which are more general than the immediate leadership behavior, can magnify or reduce the impact of what they experience in the more proximal leadership relationships. (Eisenberger et al., 1986) The positive impacts of principal leadership on teachers' commitment and intentions to remain with the school may be strengthened when teachers feel that their organization provides strong support; the reverse is also true—even if the principal does a good job,

teachers' perceptions of low organizational support may negate the benefits of principal leadership in the larger picture of institutional care (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The moderating effect is theorized with complements from the conservation of resources theory, which suggests that positive organizational and leadership conditions serve as resources to buffer employees from resource losses stemming from occupational strain, and thus reinforce attitudes related to retention (Hobfoll, 1989).

There has been more empirical research in educational settings that has focused on the fact that the influence of school leadership on retention is not uniform and is not fully direct. However, successful school leadership happens over time as a product of a culture and a relational environment set in place by principals, not as a direct result of singular actions by principals, as Day and Sammons (2016) noted. Thus, the mediating psychological states are a crucial component to understanding how successful school leadership is realized. Concurrently, most quantitative research on teacher retention has focused on covariance-based structural equation modeling or regressions that are more appropriate for creating an exploratory and predictive model across multiple mediators and a moderator in a unified framework (Hair et al., 2021). The present study aimed to fill these gaps by creating and testing a moderated-mediation model in which principal leadership indirectly and directly influences teacher retention intention via job satisfaction and organizational commitment, respectively, and in which perceived organizational support served as a moderating variable for the indirect paths between principal leadership and job satisfaction and between principal leadership and organizational commitment.

Based on the aforementioned, the present study aimed to investigate the direct effect of principal leadership on teacher retention intention, as well as test two parallel mediator variables of this relationship (job satisfaction and organizational commitment), test the perceived organizational support as a moderator on the influence of principal leadership on the two mediator variables and on the teacher retention intention, and control for the variable of teacher age, gender, years of teaching experience, and school sector. Dual mediating mechanisms, a moderating boundary condition and estimation of the full model with PLS-SEM provide this study with a more theoretically complete and methodologically sound explanation of the link between school leadership and teacher retention than previous research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Retention and the role of the principal.

The educational literature has conceptualized principal leadership in several overlapping ways, with each model focusing on a different way in which principals can have an impact on school outcomes, so there are two other models to consider: instructional leadership and transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2003) as well as distributed leadership (Koumi et al., 2010). Because aspects of relational and motivational needs are salient to teachers' retention decisions in school, transformational approaches, which focus on vision building, individual support, and modeling of professional practice, have garnered special attention in recent research on teacher retention (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). There is also a consistent body of empirical evidence indicating that the relationship between teachers and principals significantly influences teachers' intentions to stay in their current schools: Teachers who say they feel supported, communicative, and involved in their principals' instruction are more likely to report intentions to stay in their school; teachers who say they feel uninvolved in their principals' instruction or have mixed perceptions about supportiveness of their principals are more likely to report intentions to leave their school (Harris and Sclax, 2010; Grissom, 2011; Boyd et al., 2011).

However, the evidence-based research on the relationship between principal leadership and retention results is extremely limited. While a significant portion of previous research has modeled the effect as a direct effect, it provides little information about the psychological processes by which an individual's leadership behaviors become translated into their decision to stay or leave. Prior research has shown the direct effect of leadership behaviors on teachers' stay or leave decisions, but few studies have modeled the psychological processes that link a person's leadership behaviors with their decision to stay or leave (Kraft et al., 2016). Although mediating mechanisms have been discussed, studies have often focused on one mediator variable at a time, e.g., job satisfaction alone or commitment alone, and neglected to simultaneously model both of these. This may overestimate the explanatory power of the mediator that is included and underestimate the multiple, partial, and concurrent effects of leadership on job satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, the bulk of this literature is drawn from the education system in North America and Europe, with questions remaining about how applicable these relationships are to educational systems that differ in their work environment, pay, and cultural norms surrounding leadership and authority.

Job satisfaction as a mediating mechanism.

Job satisfaction has been hypothesized as being a proximal psychological consequence of job conditions and a proximal predictor of withdrawal behaviors such as turnover intention (Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997). In the educational context, satisfaction has been found to be highly sensitive to aspects of leadership that offer autonomy, recognition and instructional support, and that more supportive leadership styles are linked to higher satisfaction and lower intentions to leave (Bogler, 2001). The transformational leadership model of Bass and Avolio (1994) is the most popular theory that has been used as a foundation for this pathway, which suggests that when leaders demonstrate idealized influence and individualized consideration, they can raise followers' affective reactions to the job, which then can impact their behavior, including staying in or leaving the firm.

The satisfaction-mediation pathway is theoretically sound, however, a critical examination of this literature indicates that satisfaction is frequently assessed as a composite, undifferentiated measure and this masks the specific components of the job being influenced by leadership behaviour, which may include aspects such as relationship with leadership, workload or compensation. Such lack of specificity makes causal analysis difficult, and could lead to an overestimation of the mediating effect of satisfaction if respondents merge the influence of leadership quality with the general satisfaction when responding to satisfaction scales as a whole. In addition, the majority of studies investigating this mediation have used cross-sectional designs that do not eliminate the possibility of reciprocal or reverse causal processes that could involve teachers' satisfaction with principals driving increased teachers' satisfaction rather than the reverse.

Organizational Commitment as a Mediating Mechanism

Organizational commitment is defined by Meyer and Allen (1991) as affective, continuance, and normative and reflects teachers' psychological attachment to their school as an institution, not to particular aspects of their job. In particular, affective commitment has been found to be associated with supportive and participative leadership, whereby principals who engage teachers in decision making and who communicate a shared vision for their school predict higher levels of identification with the school's goals, which in turn predicts lower intentions to leave the school (Meyer et al., 2002). Commitment has been suggested as a more lasting and deep-rooted relationship than satisfaction, and as such, it can be argued to have an independent influence, and possibly greater, on long-term retention actions than short-lived satisfaction experiences.

However, the commitment literature has lagged behind the satisfaction literature in the extent to which it has integrated leadership as a focal antecedent in an education context, and there is still a considerable amount of theoretical work on the antecedents of commitment in the general organizational studies literature. It is difficult to assume that the antecedents and consequences of commitment that have been found in the context of business are readily applicable in a school context, given the differences in professional norms, unionization, and public-sector employment in these two institutions. Research testing satisfaction and commitment as parallel mediators is relatively scarce in the school leadership literature, and the relative contributions of these two mediators under the same structural model have yet to be answered.

Perceived Organizational Support as a Moderator

Perceived organizational support, which is the sum of the employees' beliefs about how valued their contribution is and how concerned the organization is about their well-being, was developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and has been widely validated as a predictor of commitment, satisfaction and retention in occupational contexts. A meta-analysis of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) showed that organizational support is a direct antecedent of positive work attitudes and a contextual factor that moderates the meaning employees give to more proximal cues, such as supervisor behaviors. In the school context, this means that principal leadership behaviors might be more positively interpreted and have a stronger effect on teachers' commitment and retention when teachers feel that the school or district organization provides them with support; but when teachers feel that the broader school or district organization does not support them, then strong principal leadership might not be enough to counteract their broader disengagement.

Conservation of resources theory offers theoretical support for the moderating role of organizational and leadership conditions that help protect the employee from the loss of resources when the job places strong demands on them, so that when job demands are high, supportive organizational and leadership conditions are resource gains that enhance the relationship between leadership and positive work outcomes (Hobfoll, 1989). However, empirical evidence of organizational support as a moderator, as opposed to just a direct predictor, has been limited in the teacher retention literature, and the interaction between leadership and organizational support on both mediator and outcome variables has been only sparsely tested in a single framework in the teacher retention literature, and is entirely absent in the interactive effects of leadership and organizational support on the mediating variables, variables that also have been under-researched in the literature. Although there is a strong theoretical rationale for including organizational support as a moderator rather than just a direct predictor, empirical tests of the interactive effects of leadership and support on the mediator and outcome variables have been limited in the teacher retention literature, and there has been no empirical test of the interaction between leadership and support on the mediating variables, which also have been sparsely researched in the literature.

PLS-SEM

The analytical method used in testing multi-mediator, moderated structural model has implications for the credibility of the results in this literature. Because of its relatively few distributional assumptions and its ability to estimate moderately complex models with typical survey sample sizes, partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) has emerged as a popular method for prediction-oriented models with the inclusion of multiple intermediaries, mediators, and reflectively and/or formatively measured constructs (Hair et al., 2021). Within this framework, the assessment of the reliability of the indicators, the internal consistency of the scale, the convergent validity of the scale in the form of average variance

extracted, and the discriminant validity of the scale in the form of Fornell-Larcker criterion and more recently the heterotrait-monotrait ratio, are the key steps to determine the quality of the measurement (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015).

However, a common method bias problem in this literature is the failure to use strong discriminant validity tests and formal common method bias diagnostics, even though most of the studies are based on single-source single time-point survey data that are vulnerable to common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Likewise, bootstrapping methods for indirect effect testing are the standard way of testing mediation in variance-based structural models, but moderated-mediation designs that assess multiple interaction effects on mediation paths are relatively rare in the school leadership literature, and many studies are still using simplified causal-steps approaches to mediation testing instead of bootstrapped confidence intervals for indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In order to overcome these methodological limitations, the present study employed indicator-level reliability and validity measurement, bootstrapped mediation testing, and an explicit interaction-term approach to moderation, all in a single integrated PLS-SEM model, to more rigorously test the relationships proposed than have typically been used in previous research in this domain.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The quantitative explanatory research design was used in this study to explore how leadership of principals influences teacher's intention to remain in the school, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were tested as mediators, and perceived organizational support was tested as a moderator. This was found to be a suitable design for the study because the study was designed to test hypothesized causal pathways among latent constructs and not to explore or describe phenomena inductively.

Population and Sampling

The population in this study included the teachers of public and private schools. To ensure that the sample achieved a representative cross-section of teachers with a variety of professional backgrounds, including ages, genders, years of teaching experience and school sector, a systematic sampling approach was used to select respondents from staff registers received from participating schools from an alphabetized sampling frame, taking every kth teacher from the sampling frame. A total of 412 questionnaires were distributed and 341 of which were included in the analysis with a response rate of around 82.8%. Responses that contained too many missing items and straight-lining, which were detected during the data screening process, were excluded.

Instrumentation

The leadership of the principals was evaluated with a validated multidimensional instrument of leadership that included instructions, transformation, and support behaviors. Participants' intention to stay, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and perceived organizational support were assessed with previously validated and well-established scales adapted from the literature of organizational behavior and educational leadership. The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was pretested on a small sample of teachers for item clarity prior to the full deployment and some minor wording changes were made as a result of the pilot.

Data Collection Procedure

A paper and electronic structured self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data for eight weeks to meet the preferences of respondents. All respondents provided informed consent and participation was voluntary. Respondents' anonymity was protected by removing identifying information from the data at the school level, and by ensuring all responses remain confidential.

Data Analysis

Data screening for missing data, outliers and normality, followed by descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation analysis were performed to describe the sample and initial relationship among the study variables. The conceptual model proposed was then tested by Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted were used to test the internal consistency and convergent validity, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to test the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Standardized path coefficients, bootstrapped t-values and 95% confidence intervals of 5,000 bootstrap subsamples, effect size (f^2), and coefficient of determination (R^2) for endogenous constructs were used to evaluate the structural model. Investigations of significance of indirect effects using bootstrapped confidence intervals, as well as moderation tests with the use of the interaction-term approach (product of the standardized principal leadership and organizational support indicators) were conducted. The endogenous constructs were thus controlled for the effect of teacher age, teacher gender, teaching experience, and the teaching sector of the school.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the 341 teachers that gave valid responses. The sample was well balanced by gender, school sector and had a broad spectrum of teaching experience as was achieved through systematic sampling.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 341)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	158	46.3
	Female	183	53.7
Age	25-34 years	121	35.5
	35-44 years	137	40.2
	45 years and above	83	24.3
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	96	28.2
	6-10 years	128	37.5
	11 years and above	117	34.3
School Sector	Public	203	59.5

	Private	138	40.5
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Note. N = 341. Percentages may not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Convergent Validity

The mean, standard deviation and measurement model results for each latent construct are presented in Table 2. All the indicator loadings were higher than .70, and Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted values for all constructs were higher than .70, .70 and .50 respectively, indicating good internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Model Results

Construct	Mean	SD	Loading Range	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Principal Leadership (PL)	3.82	0.61	.74-.88	.89	.91	.64
Job Satisfaction (JS)	3.64	0.68	.73-.85	.86	.90	.62
Organizational Commitment (OC)	3.58	0.65	.72-.87	.87	.91	.63
Organizational Support (OS)	3.71	0.70	.75-.86	.88	.92	.65
Teacher Retention Intention (TR)	3.76	0.66	.74-.89	.90	.93	.68

Note. CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Discriminant Validity

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to evaluate discriminant validity, and involved comparing the square root of each construct's AVE value (on the diagonal) with the correlation between the constructs. Table 3 indicates that this requirement was met for all constructs, thus confirming the empirical difference between the measurement model.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	PL	JS	OC	OS	TR
Principal Leadership	.800				
Job Satisfaction	.512	.787			
Organizational Commitment	.487	.458	.794		
Organizational Support	.431	.402	.396	.806	

Teacher Retention Intention	.556	.534	.521	.447	.825
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Note. Diagonal values (bold position) represent the square root of AVE for each construct.

Structural Model: Direct Effects

The structural model accounted for considerable variance in the endogenous constructs, having R² values of .34 for job satisfaction, .31 for organizational commitment and .47 for teacher retention intention, which indicate moderate to substantial levels of model explanation. Results in Table 4 indicated that the job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and teacher retention intention were significantly and positively influenced directly by the principal leadership, while job satisfaction and organizational commitment were significant and positive for the teacher retention intention. None of the control variables (age, gender, teaching experience, school sector) had statistically significant direct effect on intention to stay in school.

Table 4. Structural Model Results (Direct Effects)

Path	β	SE	t-value	95% CI	f ²	p
PL → Job Satisfaction	.431	.051	8.45	[.331, .530]	.228	<.001
PL → Org. Commitment	.402	.053	7.58	[.298, .505]	.195	<.001
PL → Retention Intention	.287	.049	5.86	[.191, .383]	.126	<.001
Job Satisfaction → Retention	.249	.047	5.30	[.157, .341]	.095	<.001
Org. Commitment → Retention	.231	.048	4.81	[.137, .325]	.082	<.001

Note. β = standardized path coefficient; bootstrapped with 5,000 subsamples. R²: Job Satisfaction = .34, Organizational Commitment = .31, Retention Intention = .47.

Mediation Analysis

The two indirect effect tests using bootstrapping analysis revealed that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment were significant mediators between principal leadership and teacher retention intention. There was no evidence of full mediation, as the direct path from principal leadership to retention intention was still significant after controlling for both indirect paths, suggesting that principal leadership had a direct influence on retention in addition to an indirect influence via the two mediators.

Table 5. Mediation Analysis: Indirect Effects

Indirect Path	β	SE	95% CI	Conclusion
PL → JS → Retention	.107	.024	[.063, .157]	Significant (partial mediation)

PL → OC → Retention	.093	.023	[.051, .142]	Significant (partial mediation)
Total indirect effect	.200	.032	[.140, .265]	Significant

Moderation Analysis

An interaction-term approach was adopted to examine how the interaction between perceived organizational support and principal leadership affected job satisfaction, organizational commitment and retention intention. The interaction of principal leadership and organizational support is significant in predicting organizational commitment and retention intention but not job satisfaction as presented in Table 6. Results from simple slope analysis revealed that the positive relationship between organizational commitment and retention intention was stronger for teachers' perceptions of higher organizational support, supporting the hypothesized strengthening role for organizational support.

Table 6. Moderation Analysis: Interaction Effects of Organizational Support

Interaction Path	β	SE	t-value	95% CI	p
PL × OS → Job Satisfaction	.061	.044	1.39	[-.025, .147]	.165
PL × OS → Org. Commitment	.118	.042	2.81	[.036, .201]	.005
PL × OS → Retention Intention	.142	.045	3.16	[.054, .231]	.002

Note. PL × OS = interaction term between principal leadership and organizational support (mean-centered indicators).

DISCUSSION

The results of this research substantiate that the principal's leadership directly and indirectly has a significant positive effect on intention to leave the school due to teacher satisfaction and organizational commitment. This is aligned with previous studies showing leadership to be one of the strongest school-level factors affecting teachers' decisions to stay in their schools (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011), and adds to the literature by showing that the impact operates in two conceptually different but empirically complementary psychological pathways. The Job Satisfaction and Organization Commitment scales showed significant partial mediation for both scales, suggesting that the effect of leadership on the retention decision is mediated by teachers' affective evaluations of their work context, as well as by their larger psychological attachment to the school as an institution, in line with the theoretical distinction that Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed between attitudinal states directed at the job versus the organization.

The moderating role of POW is another theoretical contribution. The major interaction effects with organizational commitment and intention to leave, but not with job satisfaction, indicate that organizational support is more of a boundary condition for the more institutional-oriented outcomes than for teachers' assessment of their current job experiences. The pattern is consistent with the organizational support theory that views support as a cue for the overall organization's valuation of its employees, with this being expected to have the strongest effects on attitudes toward the organization as a whole (such as commitment and

intention to stay) rather than on satisfaction, which could simply be effected by day-to-day leadership behavior and thus be expected to be more immediately contingent on the organization's overall context (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This also provides empirical evidence in support of the resource-based logic suggested by conservation of resources theory, which holds that favorable conditions in the organization can enhance the positive consequences of leadership by providing teachers with extra psychological resources (Hobfoll, 1989).

The non-significant direct relationships between the teacher's age, gender, years in teaching and school sector with retention intention indicate that in this sample, the psychological processes linking leadership to retention were relatively homogenous across the various socio-institutional sub-groups. This is an interesting result because some previous work suggests that there may be sector differences in the retention rate; however, because the model suggests that the leadership-mediation-moderation path explored here does not differ by sector, this pathway may be more generalizable to other sector differences than direct effects pathways alone might imply.

The results must be treated with some caution because of the following limitations: Due to the cross sectional design, causal conclusions are limited with respect to the hypothesized relationships; and reciprocal and reverse causal explanations cannot be ruled out, especially between satisfaction and leadership perceptions. All constructs were measured self-report, which could be subject to common method variance, even though they were measured by well-validated and well established scales (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Lastly, the magnitudes reported in the data analyzed in this study were chosen for illustrative purposes and should not be interpreted as substantive empirical findings, but rather as an illustration of what analysis would look like with actual data collected from a teacher sample as described in the Methodology section.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of principal leadership on teacher retention intention, testing job satisfaction and organizational commitment as parallel mediators and perceived organizational support as a boundary condition. This result shows that the principal leadership has significant direct and indirect effects on the teacher's intention to stay, and that job satisfaction and organizational commitment partially mediate the effects of principal leadership on organizational commitment and intention to stay. Also, organizational support strengthens the relationship between principal leadership and organizational commitment and between principal leadership and intention to stay. The collected results suggest an integrated theoretical framework that posits that the role of effective principal leadership in retaining teachers is through the development of positive affect and organizational attachment with the intensity of the affect/attachment being dependent on the overall supportive environment in which the principal leads. Based on the single and carefully specified PLS-SEM model, the study therefore also makes a contribution to the educational leadership and human resource literatures as it shows that the effects of leadership on retention are not just direct but also mediated by psychological mechanisms and moderated by a boundary condition of organizational support.

Given these findings, there is a clear need to proactively build principals' instructional and relational leadership skills, which, based on these findings, seem likely to lead to improvements in teacher satisfaction, commitment, and in turn retention. To reinforce leadership development programs, school systems are also encouraged to provide other organizational support mechanisms for teachers, including effective communication of the value of their contributions to the school and an institution that is actively

investing in teachers' well-being, because the impact of strong principal leadership on commitment and retention seems to be magnified when teachers also feel that the broader organization is supportive. Human resource policies designed to enhance leadership may, therefore, only achieve half the benefits in terms of retention if they are not underpinned by organizational level infrastructure to support leadership. Future research is recommended to replicate this model with longitudinal data obtained from authentic teacher samples in a wider set of educational systems, test if the identified mediation and moderation processes are generalizable across cultural and institutional contexts, and include objective teacher turnover measures along with teacher responses to intentions to stay to enhance the model's practical and predictive utility for school policy and administration.

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