School factors that are related to school principals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment

Yan Liu[a,*], Mehmet Sukru Bellibas[b]

[a] *Department of Educational Leadership, Policy an Instructional Technology, School of Education & Professional Studies, Central Connecticut State University, Barnard Building-Room 23106, 1615 Stanley St., New Britain, CT 06050, USA*
[b] *College of Education, Adiyaman University, Turkey*

A B S T R A C T

Despite that principals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment are substantial for recruitment and retention of effective leaders, research exploring school factors for the deterministic role in such attitudes has been unexpectedly rare. Given the crucial role of a school principal in leading school success, understanding the status of the principal's psychological conditions and the antecedent school factors is important. This research is a secondary analysis using the TALIS 2013 dataset, and applied a rigorous quantitative approach. Latent Trait method was first applied to construct latent variables of principals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment to compare the interests across countries. Then a two-level Generalized Structural Equation Model was used to detect the structured relationship between a set of school factors and principals' attitudes with pooled 32-country data. Finally, Generalized Structural Equation Model was fitted for each country's data to investigate how school factors influence principals' attitudes in different contexts. The study revealed significant variations among countries and continents in the principal's job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The school's positive social interaction, safety, human resource, autonomy for staffing, school management type and the funding resources significantly predict the principal's attitudes towards the job and the school.

1. Introduction

The principal is regarded as an imperative leading force for school success (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2011). Through the principal's leadership, schools can create optimal conditions to support student learning by fostering positive social interaction and stimulating intellectual development (Dimmock, 2013; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). A school's organizational learning (Schechter, 2008) of maintaining effectiveness or transforming from failure to success needs consistent focus and continuous effort guided by school leaders (Fuller, Young, & Baker, 2007; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). However, principals' turnover will potentially interrupt or even terminate the process because of inconsistency in school goals, missions, and efforts (Baker, Punswick, & Belt, 2010; Miller, 2013).

Retaining experienced principals is fundamental for school success (Printy, 2010). However, a report (Markow, Lara, & Helen, 2013) by Metlife revealed that regardless of demographic backgrounds, almost three-quarters of principals in the US indicated that their jobs had become too complicated. This same survey conducted since 2001 indicated the principal turnover intention was at a historical high that one-third was likely to leave the job in five years. The increase of principal turnover rate (Clifford & Chiang, 2016; Palmer, Watch, & Gibson, 2017) has resulted in extra costs and labor for schools to fill the vacancy. In addition, excessive principal

* Corresponding author.
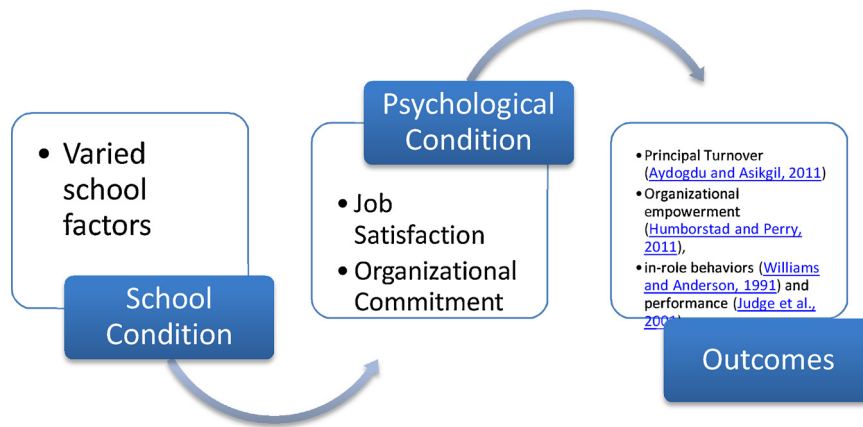 *E-mail address:* yanliu@ccsu.edu (Y. Liu).

Fig. 1. Framework of the relationship among school factors, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and outcomes.

turnover is also associated with increased teacher turnover and decreased student outcomes (Fuller et al., 2007; Miller, 2009). Such negative effects of high principal turnover are even more notable and detrimental in low-performing and minority-student dominant schools (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012).

To prevent principal turnover, it is strategically important to find out principals' attitudes toward the job before they leave. Job satisfaction (JS) and organizational commitment (OC) are two essential indicators for this purpose because job turnover intention is closely related to JS and OC (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011). Therefore, delving in the status and antecedents of these two job-related psychological features are crucial in providing supportive interventions. In addition, JS and PC are important factors that influence organizational empowerment (Humborstad & Perry, 2011), in-role behaviors (Williams & Anderson, 1991) and performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Therefore, the research on the principal JS and OC is vital not only for preventing turnover, but also for increasing principal effectiveness. Fig. 1 illustrates such relationship.

Despite the importance, there is surprisingly limited research for the topic. To date, researchers have been exclusively interested in JS and OC of teachers while mostly overlooking JS and OC of school leaders (Dude, 2012). There are only few studies that have provided empirical evidence on influential factors of principal JS and OC respectively (Chang, Leach, & Anderman, 2015; Eckman, 2004; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Suman & Srivastava, 2012). Given that JS and OC are related to each other (Liu & Printy, 2017), there is little evidence regarding how determining factors are related to JS and OC by controlling the covariance between them. In addition, there are few studies that have conceptualized school-related factors through a comprehensive lens and investigated the effect of the whole-school experience on principal JS and OC. The gap in the literature calls for rigorous research to investigate to what extent comprehensive school-related factors impact a principal's JS and OC in order to provide the information needed to prevent turnover of school principals. An international comparative study is even more meaningful as it can situate each individual country in a global community in order to reveal cross-national variation in principal attitudes and the factors that might impact such attitudes in different contexts.

2. Literature review

2.1. Principal job satisfaction

There is no agreed-upon definition for JS. Yet, the conceptual investigations of JS have revealed two major components in the definition and measuring of the concept: affective (emotional) and cognitive. One of the most widely used definitions of JS was produced by Locke (1976), who defined JS from an affective perspective. According to his statement, job satisfaction can be defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p. 1300). From this perspective, JS is substantially related to one's emotions and therefore, "an individual's appraisal of the degree to which the job fulfils one's own job values can cause a positive emotional state of satisfaction or a contrasting negative feeling of dissatisfaction" (Coomber & Barriball, 2007, p. 297). In addition to affect, cognitive component of JS has also been acknowledged in the literature. Cognitive component of JS is defined in terms of discrepancy between an individual's perceptions of the situation and a known standard or his/her expectation level (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). Although two components (affective and cognitive) of JS may have different effect on organizations (Moorman, 1993), research has provided evidence that they are not totally separated from one another; indeed, they operate in parallel (Edwards, 1990).

JS is not only derived from how people perceive and feel about their jobs, it is also related to their experiences with the job. Therefore, the study of JS has drawn on two major theoretical bodies of knowledge (Spector, 1997). One is Process Theory, which emphasizes "how" and deals with processes by which factors such as expectations and procedures impact JS. The other one is Content Theory, which emphasizes "what" and is concerned with individual needs and goals for the job. For instance, Maslow (1975)'s Hierarchy of Needs, which list several categories of needs to be met for an individual to be satisfied with the work and (Herzberg (1966)'s Two-Factor Theory, which identifies maintenance and motivating factors determining an individual's satisfaction with the