

THE EFFECT OF PRINCIPAL'S SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP DIMENSION ON TEACHER AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

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Abstract:

In managing educational organizations, the role of the principal is vital to support the organization's performance. In high school, the principal's leadership role is used as an essential determinant in building the commitment of teachers in the institution. The purpose of this study was to examine the concept of spiritual leadership from the principal on the affective commitment of the teacher. It is essential to review how attached the teacher is to his organization and how each aspect of spiritual leadership is; vision, hope/faith, and selfless love. By using a quantitative approach in solving this problem, the non-probability sampling method was used in this study and made the teacher the unit of analysis. Forty-eight teachers from Islamic Junior High School in Medan City participated in this study. The results show that among the three aspects of spiritual leadership, hope/faith is found to have the most outstanding value in influencing teachers' affective commitment. Meanwhile, the vision was found to have no significant effect on teachers' affective commitment at Islamic Senior High Schools in Medan City. The findings of this study are discussed further as a basis for further research.

Keywords : *Spiritual Leadership, Affective Commitment, Teacher, Islamic Higher School*

Abstrak:

Dalam mengelola organisasi pendidikan, peran kepala sekolah menjadi sangat penting untuk menunjang kinerja dari organisasi. Pada sekolah menengah atas, peran kepemimpinan dari kepala sekolah dijadikan sebagai determinan penting dalam membangun komitmen para guru di lembaganya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji konsep kepemimpinan spiritual dari kepala sekolah terhadap komitmen afektif dari guru. Penting untuk mengulas seberapa besar keterikatan guru dengan organisasinya dan bagaimana setiap aspek dari kepemimpinan spiritual yakni; *vision, hope/faith, dan altruistic love*, dapat mempengaruhinya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dalam memecahkan persoalan ini, metode *non-probability sampling* digunakan pada penelitian ini dan menjadikan guru sebagai unit analisisnya. Sebanyak 48 orang guru dari Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam di Kota Medan yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa diantara ketiga aspek kepemimpinan spiritual, *hope / faith* ditemukan mempunyai nilai terbesar dalam mempengaruhi komitmen afektif dari guru. Sementara *vision* ditemukan tidak mempunyai pengaruh yang bermakna penting terhadap komitmen afektif guru di SMA Islam di Kota Medan. Hasil temuan penelitian ini didiskusikan lebih lanjut sebagai dasar bagi penelitian selanjutnya.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Spiritual, Komitmen Afektif, Guru, Sekolah Menengah Islam*

INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers in education is vital and strategic; this has been recognized by many parties, both academics, practitioners, and researchers. Teachers are considered the front line of learning activities in educational institutions and an essential part of the educational organization to be competitive (Kaya, 2015). Apart from their duties as educators, teachers are still seen as part of an organization with various characteristics. Empirically, teachers and the performance they produce have been examined previously (Garaika, 2020), and often, the most widely recognized determinant of teacher performance is leadership (Nasukah et al., 2020; Purwanto et al., 2020).

In educational institutions such as high school, learning about teacher retention is significant for understanding how to influence teachers to stay on and grow into effective classroom teachers (Park & Jung, 2015). In this case, organizational commitment is considered as means to understand teacher retention. Teacher retention has become an essential issue for principals, administration, work environment, student achievement, and mentoring for senior high school institutions because of the many complexities involved in the teacher retention concept (Gunther, 2019). Yet it is believed there is still no current systematic way of measuring it. However, some authors argued that organizational commitment is a broader concept that could include teacher retention as its part (Gunther, 2019; Park & Jung, 2015). As teachers feel more committed, they will be more likely to be more satisfied and intend to stay with the organization and be more productive.

Many factors have contributed to teacher retention and attrition, such as principal support and working conditions (Hughes et al., 2015). Many Islamic High School principals often feel under pressure to improve teaching quality and learn in their institutions. Thus, educational advocates also have shared the urgency and need for spiritual values within Islamic School leadership (Kasor, 2017; Nasukah et al., 2020).

Because teacher retention has no current valid and reliable instrument due to limited research, an organizational commitment was used to study the problem of teacher retention as it is known that the main component of organizational commitment is affective commitment (Eby et al., 1999; Mercurio, 2015; Stazyk et al., 2011), which in many previous studies this form of responsibility has been recognized and tested as independent variables (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2015; Pradesa, 2018; Pradesa et al., 2019; Stazyk et al., 2011). The theoretical foundation of spiritual leadership can be a means to help mend the problem of teacher retention and also commitment. Spiritual leadership is developing in research and calls for more excellent in-depth analysis. Thus, in an Islamic school organization, it is believed that spirituality is an essential factor to be managed and encouraged in improving quality and institutional performance.

Many leadership approaches and theories based on historical development approaches have been developed to explain the nature of leadership. Spiritual leadership theory is one form of leadership theory that has

been studied for organizational transformation in which it has been designed to create an intrinsically motivated and learning organization (Fry & Cohen, 2009; Fry, 2008). While Fry (2008) developed Spiritual Leadership Theory (SLT) for demonstrates the relationship between hope/faith, selfless love, and vision among leaders by area of vocation and membership. Spiritual leadership has received significant attention from experts and researchers in behavioral studies. Spiritual leadership is believed to have an essential impact on individuals' attitudes and behavior in organizations.

A leader has a vital role in communicating strategic matters in guiding the achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Wibowo, 2021; Muali et al., 2021), as well as strengthening governance (Hefniy et al., 2020), including the pattern or leadership style applied in school (Puspitasari, 2019; Wahyudin et al., 2021). A school's principal who uses a spiritual leadership style is believed to provide ample space for teachers further to increase their emotional and psychological attachment to the organization. Principals who apply spiritual leadership not only motivate and inspire individuals, but also involve every organization member to achieve school goals (Rostiawati, 2020).

Previous research has explored the leadership of school principals in developing institutional quality (Syadzili, 2019) and education quality (Egel & Fry, 2017). At the same time, some authors notice theoretical transposition and exploration among the main components of spiritual leadership that could be manifested into a model of Islamic leadership that is more appropriate for Islamic organizations (Osboei & Nojabae, 2016), including Islamic High School institutions. Several previous studies have examined spiritual leadership by deriving it into every aspect or dimension (Jeon & Choi, 2020; Rumangkit, 2020). The type of spiritual leadership, which is derived into three parts (vision, hope/faith, and selfless love), has been tested for its relationship with affective commitment (Jeon & Choi, 2020) and employee creativity (Osboei & Nojabae, 2016), while it could be possible that highly committed employees may perceive the spiritual aspect of leadership better. Interestingly, aspects of spiritual leadership were found to have different values and characteristics of influence from one another. For example, if it is associated with the quality of work-life, then altruistic love is insignificant compared to vision and faith (Osboei & Nojabae, 2016). It will be interesting to examine how each aspect of spiritual leadership can affect a teacher's emotional attachment or sense of belonging toward an organization.

This study was designed to provide a direct perspective from teachers related to Fry & Cohen (2009) genuine spiritual leadership attributes in organizational experience and transformation. Also, teachers' views are explored to determine how spiritual leadership contributes to teachers' emotional attachment to Islamic high schools. Answering research questions reveals strengths and weaknesses of Fry's original spiritual leadership attributes (Fry et al., 2017; Fry & Cohen, 2009) that can be identified as related to teachers' affective commitment and suggest future areas of study for scholars and organizations based on a dynamic perspective.

It was unknown to what extent three main dimensions of spiritual leadership (vision, hope/faith, and selfless love) could predict organizational commitment. Previous studies explored the relationship between the dimension of spiritual leadership with commitment. Spiritual leadership is considered a model of organizational transformation to improve personal views of self, commitment, social responsibility, and organizational performance. Measurement of the concept of spiritual leadership also includes measuring the elements of spiritual leadership (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the literature, which shows that organizational performance increases and results are favorable such as employee calls and satisfaction levels increase, the elements of leadership guiding to such solutions are considered influential and essential for understanding the phenomenon.

Spiritual leadership and organizational commitment are at the core concept of this study. Both of them are based on a theoretical foundation and describe the variables for this study. In this study, organizational commitment is the connection between spiritual leadership and teacher retention. Corporate commitment represents the strength of attitudes and behaviors one has towards one's organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Both spiritual leadership and organizational commitment are the core concepts of this research. They are explored in this study based on a theoretical foundation and describe the variables. Corporate commitment represents the strength of attitudes and behaviors that a person has towards their organization (Egel & Fry, 2017). Organizational commitment is considered an essential outcome of spiritual leadership. At the same time, spiritual leadership itself is regarded as a model of Islamic leadership (Egel & Fry, 2017). Teachers' affective organizational commitment and school principals' spiritual leadership have shared a similar empirical research gap: more research is needed in these areas. This is related to teacher retention has been a recent problem in academic research. Teacher retention and organizational commitment are similar in that many factors affect these two concepts outside of the control of the workplace.

Based on this background, both theoretically and empirically, this study seeks to frame in a simple way how the spiritual leadership of Islamic senior high school organizations can affect the level of emotional and psychological attachment of teachers. It is believed that spirituality in educational leadership can empower school principals to build good relationships with teachers and improve their emotional attachment. This simple relation is derived from a series of relationships between concepts. While the idea of spiritual leadership in this study is divided into three: vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love (Agustina et al., 2021; Dharmanegara et al., 2016; Pradesa et al., 2021). The pattern of relationships built within the conceptual framework of research is considered essential to study and research because affective commitment is a form of attitude from someone who contributes positively to the organization (Agustina et al., 2021; Dharmanegara et al., 2016; Stazyk et al., 2011).

This study aims to examine the impact of the spiritual leadership aspect of the principal who has the most critical influence on the affective commitment of teachers in Islamic senior high school organizations in Medan City. The significance of this study could lie in its potential to bring more empirical evidence in research regarding the effect of spiritual leadership on an affective commitment by filling the gap in understanding the relationship between the variables. Specifically, this study intends to fill the gap in knowledge of spiritual leadership consisting of vision, selfless love, and hope/faith as a leadership tool that serves to understand teachers' affective organizational commitment. At the broader level of an organization, it can provide an in-depth description of spiritual leadership theory as a theoretical basis for the research proposed in this study.

RESEARCH METHODS

The quantitative method used in this study is in line with the deductive paradigm used to explain how well aspects of spiritual leadership could increase affective commitment among teachers at Islamic Senior High Schools in Medan City. Data analysis in this study uses multiple regression analysis to answer the research questions proposed in this study. Teachers from Islamic High Schools in Medan City were taken as samples in this study and used the non-probability sampling technique. This research was conducted in the Medan City area within one month in March 2021. Data collection methods by providing electronic questionnaires to all Islamic high school teachers in Medan by non-probability sampling. The sample in this study is 87 teachers who have responded to the online questionnaire.

Table 1: Variables and Indicator

Variables	Indicator	Source
Vision	Leaders who are committed to the vision	Fry & Cohen, (2009); Fry, (2008)
	A vision statement that encourages the best	
	The vision of the organization is enforced by leaders to inspire performance	
	The vision of the organization is guarded by the leader	
Hope / Faith	Principal's confidence to ensure mission is achieved	Fry & Cohen, (2009); Fry, (2008)
	Leader's persistence to help the organization's success	
	Challenging goal setting	
	Demonstrate confidence in the organization's mission	
Altruistic Love	The leader is nice to the teacher	Fry & Cohen, (2009); Fry, (2008)
	Principal leaders are trustworthy and loyal	
	The leader in the school is honest and has no false pride	
	Leaders have the courage to defend teachers	
Affective Commitment	A great deal of personal meaning in working	Allen & Meyer, (1990)
	Feel a strong sense of belonging	
	Feel emotionally attached to organization	
	Feel caring about organization entirely	
	Feel as if organization problem is my own	

To collect quantitative data, purposive sampling and cross-sectional surveying were used in this study. All the questionnaires used were adopted from previous existing measures. Each spiritual leadership dimension was measured with the SLT theory on a Likert continuous scale from 1-5, taking an average of the scores. While effective commitment construct, which is based on organizational commitment theory, was also measured on a Likert continuous scale from 1-5 using the average score. Teachers responded to spiritual leadership dimensions (vision, hope/faith, and selfless love) and affective organizational commitment questionnaires. All of the self-administered questionnaires were distributed online and completed by respondents by using online media.

As far as many scholars' concerned, the relationship between spiritual leadership and commitment is considered an emerging relationship patterns subject. Scholars still seek to demonstrate quantifiable drivers and empirical evidence of spiritual leadership, which has led to a burgeoning interest in illustrating a correlation between spiritual leadership and affective commitment. Thus, the conceptual framework developed for this study is shown in Figure 1 below;

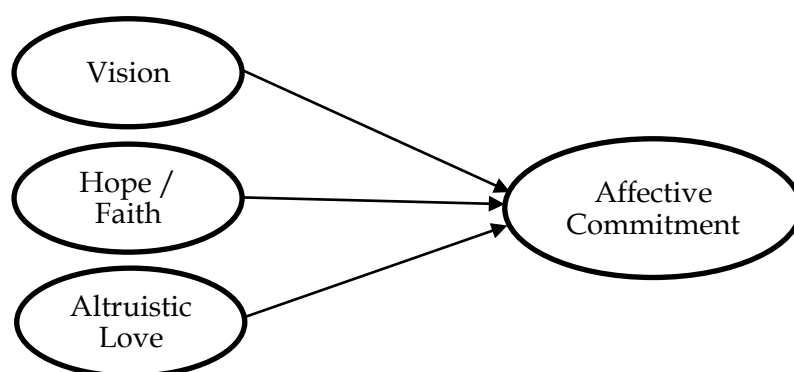


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The following hypotheses are proposed below to investigate the direct relationship between the variables discussed in this study.

- H1: Vision will have a positive and significant effect on teacher' affective commitment.
- H2: Hope / faith will have a positive and significant effect on teacher' affective commitment.
- H3: Altruistic love will have a positive and significant effect on teacher' affective commitment.

Based on the quantitative research method used and to answer the research questions, this study uses multiple regression analysis to test each influence between variables and assess coefficient value among its relationship. Descriptive statistical processing is also carried out to obtain the mean value of each variable so that it can be appropriately interpreted. All variables observed in this study were previously tested with explanatory factor analysis to evaluate the factor structure of the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research instruments that have been distributed in the field and have been answered by the respondents, the data that has been collected is processed and analyzed.

Table 2: Variables, Indicator, Mean and Loading Factor

Variables	Indicator	Mean	Loading Factor
Vision	Leaders who are committed to the vision	3.52	0.6207
	A vision statement that encourages the best	3.56	0.6237
	The vision of the organization is enforced by leaders to inspire performance	3.64	0.7568
	The vision of the organization is guarded by the leader	3.67	0.8198
Hope / Faith	Principal's confidence to ensure mission is achieved	3.69	0.6898
	Leader's persistence to help the organization's success	3.70	0.7372
	Challenging goal setting	3.59	0.7994
	Demonstrate confidence in the organization's mission	3.54	0.6165
Altruistic Love	The leader is nice to the teacher	3.69	0.7591
	Principal leaders are trustworthy and loyal	3.66	0.6938
	The leader in the school is honest and has no false pride	3.56	0.8088
	Leaders have the courage to defend teachers	3.51	0.6516
Affective Commitment	A great deal of personal meaning in working	3.75	0.6537
	Feel a strong sense of belonging	3.74	0.8567
	Feel emotionally attached to organization	3.79	0.8103
	Feel caring about organization entirely	3.69	0.6913
	Feel as if organization problem are my own	3.76	0.7651

Tables 2 present the means and factor loadings for each indicator among constructs. The impressive discriminant validities as seen in each factor loadings among these constructs (vision, hope/faith, selfless love, and affective commitment) measures demonstrate a good fit in constructs validity. From loading factor value, findings reveal that vision is most reflected in the organization's vision that the leader well guards. At the same time, hope/faith tends to be remembered by leaders who set challenging goals for the organization. The principal's honesty most reflects selfless love, and there is no wrong self-esteem. Lastly, affective commitment is reflected by the high sense of belonging from the teacher.

Four indicators measure vision in this study: leaders who are committed to the vision, a vision statement that encourages the best, the vision of the organization is enforced by leaders to inspire performance, and the leader guards the vision of the organization. The average score of the vision is 3.598, which is categorized as moderate criteria. Thus, the leader's highest indicator of vision is that the organization's vision is guarded by the leader, indicating that teachers in Islamic High School experience that the principal would defend organizational vision in daily activities.

Four indicators measure hope/faith in this study: the principal's confidence to ensure mission is achieved, leader's persistence to help the organization's success, challenging goal setting, and demonstrating confidence in the organization's mission. The average score of the vision is 3.629, which is categorized as moderate criteria. Furthermore, the highest indicator of hope/faith is the leader's persistence to help the organization's success indicating that teacher in Islamic High School feels that their principal is persistent in helping success in an organizational context.

Four indicators measure altruistic love in this study; the leader is friendly to the teacher; principal leaders are trustworthy and loyal; the leader in the school is honest and has no false pride; leaders dare to defend teachers.

The average score of altruistic love is 3.603, which is categorized as a medium criterion. Thus, the highest indicator of altruistic love is that the leader is friendly to the teacher, indicating that teachers in Islamic High School feel that the principal would treat them well.

Five indicators measure affective commitment in this study: A great deal of personal meaning in working, feel a strong sense of belonging, feel emotionally attached to the organization, feel caring about organization entirely, and feel as if organization problems are my own. The average score of altruistic love is 3.745, categorized as a medium criterion. Thus, the highest indicator of affective commitment is feeling emotionally attached to the organization, indicating that teachers in Islamic High School experience that the principal feels a strong emotional bond with the organization.

Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and also correlations coefficient. Thus, it also shows the reliability coefficients of each variable respectively. Table 3 reveals initial correlation tests that show several good relationships that prompted further investigation. The majority of these relationships were significant at the .01 probability level, which offers a meaningful relationship for all predictors of affective commitment (vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love) and the affective commitment itself. Alpha Cronbach of all constructs varied from 0.676 – 0.813. Findings are consistent with previous empirical studies, which pointed out good internal consistency in an observed construct.

Table 3 : Descriptive Statistic and Intercorrelations

	1	2	3	4
1. Vision	(.731)			
2. Hope / Faith	0.683**	(.676)		
3. Altruistic Love	0.349*	0.654**	(.709)	
4. Affective Commitment	0.465**	0.691**	0.607**	(.813)
Mean	3.598	3.629	3.603	3.745
Standard Deviation	2.700	2.723	2.756	3.216

Notes: **p, 0.01; *p, 0.05; Cronbach's alphas for each scale are italicized and shown in the diagonal.

Table 3 show that mean of each construct that observed in this study ranged from 3.598 – 3.745. All correlations were founded significant. vision was positively correlated with hope / faith ($r = 0.683$, $p, 0.01$), altruistic love ($r = 0.349$, $p, 0.01$), and affective commitment ($r = 0.465$, $p, 0.01$). Hope/faith was

positively related to altruistic love ($r = 0.654$, $p, 0.01$), and affective commitment ($r = 0.691$, $p, 0.01$). In addition, altruistic love was found to be positively related to affective commitment ($r = 0.607$, $p, 0.01$).

Figure 2 display the result of the analysis of model proposed in this study. Standardized parameter estimates for the model are presented. The results reveal that vision ($\beta = 0.037$, $p < 0.05$) have no significant effect on affective commitment. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected. Hope/faith ($\beta = 0.483$, $p < 0.01$) have significant effect on affective commitment, while altruistic love ($\beta = 0.278$, $p > 0.05$) also have significant effect on affective commitment. Both hypothesis 2 and 3 are accepted. From the calculation of data analysis, it is revealed that the Rsquare value is 0.5199, which means that vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love have an explanatory variance level of affective commitment of 51.99 percent. The remaining 48.01 percent are factors other than those three things that are not observed in the conceptual framework of this study.

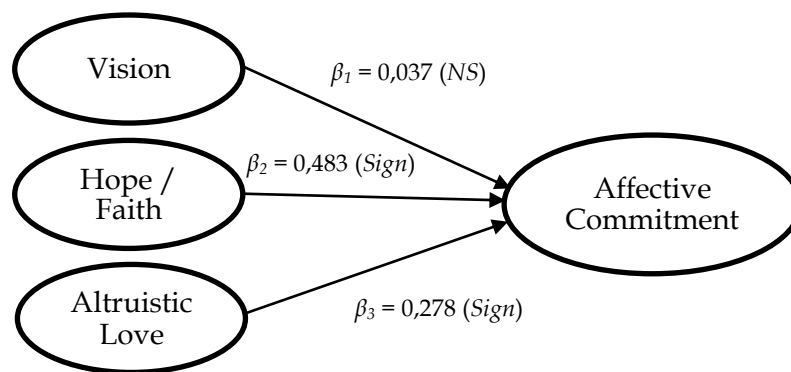


Figure 2: Path Analysis

For the insignificant effect of vision toward affective commitment, it could be argued with the task of a leader of the organizational steering mandate who will direct the direction of the goals to be achieved; good emotional intelligence management becomes an integral part in the preparation of strategic steps to lead the organization to achieve goals. It is argued that the top school's good spiritual management and intelligence would foster emotional attachment, especially as a sense of belonging among teachers. While the previous study highlighted the importance of articulate vision in promoting affective commitment experienced, the finding of this study could not confirm the results of earlier authors such as Zachary (2013) and also Jeon & Choi (2020). The teachers that did not consider vision as an essential aspect to impact teachers' affective commitment described spiritual leaders in Islamic Senior High School must be more concerned in building hope/faith and altruistic love for the teachers. Leaders have an important role as a motivator for the people they lead to face change and use the change as an opportunity to be more successful (Kaya, 2015). Many people believe that leaders at any level and organization are born, but they must be grown and developed in a person from the leader's internal process (Wibowo, 2021).

Hope/faith showed up more than altruistic love, which meant that the principal's confidence to ensure the mission is achieved, the leader's persistence to help the organization's success, challenging goal setting, demonstrating belief in the organization's mission resounded deeply in the organization. This study reveals that spiritual leadership does not always encompass three main elements: vision, hope/faith, and selfless love in a specific case. The elements can be demonstrated in many ways using attributes unique to each leader.

Therefore, this study adds a significant contribution, as not all spiritual leadership aspects could positively and significantly affect teachers' affective commitment, which arises from high levels of a strong bond and sense of belonging to the organization. This shows that the mechanism of spiritual leadership is considered to have a different impact on the results in individual attitudes and behavior. Based on the theory of spiritual leadership, the articulation of vision is essential besides hope/faith and altruistic love. The finding of this study provides something different that makes it possible that a leader who applies his spiritual leadership style can influence his subordinates in various forms and results.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study indicate that there is one path coefficient that is not significant. There is no significant effect in the relationship between vision and affective commitment, while hope/belief and altruistic love were important influences on affective commitment. Thus, the research model was found to have a moderate strength value. The most significant effect is revealed in the impact of hope/faith on affective commitment. Based on findings, affective organizational commitment emerged as an effective investigative method to further empirically examine this aspect of the effect of spiritual leadership. This study investigated a model involving vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love as an independent variable to measure the effectiveness of spiritual leadership on building a strong sense of belonging among teachers. This study examines the dimensions of spiritual leadership with affective organizational commitment. Spiritual leadership and organizational commitment are two topics in academic research that have developed in future research recommendations. It is hoped that the data obtained through this research will allow principals to adjust programs and resources to refine further and develop school teachers to internalize and demonstrate the spiritual values brought by principal leaders that will increase affective organizational commitment. The findings also showed that the altruistic love program could be an important implication of future practice. The impact of future research can also be to study another variable with descriptive statistical categories to analyze the variance in all these factors. Additional recommendations for future research specifically for spiritual leadership focused on different samples, qualitative research, and characteristics of spiritual leadership.

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