

Distributed Leadership and Organizational Commitment in International Schools in China

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship among the different dimensions of distributed leadership and organizational commitment, as well as the impact of distributed leadership on organizational commitment of foreign school teachers in international schools in China. A total of 101 respondents from various international schools in China, including Chinese internationalized schools, participated in the study. Data was gathered using the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) developed by Hulpia and Devos and the Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) by Allen and Meyer. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship among the variables while multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of the dimensions of distributed leadership. The findings of the study indicated that the support and coherent leadership dimensions of distributed leadership were significantly correlated with both affective and normative commitment, but not with continuance commitment. Multiple regression analysis revealed that leadership coherence and support significantly predicted affective commitment and normative commitment, respectively. Surprisingly, supervision was a negative predictor of both the affective and normative domains of organizational commitment based on the analysis conducted.

Keywords: distributed leadership, organizational commitment

1.0 Introduction

International schools in China have experienced significant growth in recent years, positioning it as one of the top countries in the world with the highest number of international schools. This remarkable growth is expected to continue in the foreseeable future, driven by increasing demand for international education, the expanding expatriate community, and the rise of China's middle class.

The primary challenge for international schools in China is the intense competition particularly in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, therefore schools are continually striving to innovate, improve, and differentiate themselves in order to attract students and maintain enrollment. However, amidst this competition, a significant issue that many international schools face is teacher retention. With annual turnover rates averaging between 15 and 17% (Bunel & Poole, 2023), this

presents a huge concern as it adversely influences curricular and program continuity, threatens the dynamic stability of the school, and undermines the continuity of important relationship among teachers, students, and members of the wider school community. This turnover rate may be influenced by several factors such as career advancement opportunities, school climate, staff interpersonal relations, employment package, and other personal reasons. Although specific factors that influence a teacher's decision to remain in the organization or leave vary from individual to individual, there is a general consensus among researchers that teachers often leave schools due to their dissatisfaction with some aspects of their job. According to Culibrk and colleagues (2018), there is a strong link between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in that those who are more committed to an organization are less likely to leave their job. This claim is supported by Harbatkin and Nguyen (2023) who found that teacher intentions and eventual turnover are largely influenced by the organizational conditions and the level of organizational commitment among teachers.

Improving teachers' organizational commitment in order to improve teacher job satisfaction could be a solution to the problem of teacher turnover in international schools, particularly in China. In the literature, there is evidence to suggest that distributed leadership can significantly impact teachers' organizational commitment, potentially leading to reduced turnover rates among teachers. Additionally, studies suggest that schools which foster distributed leadership practices and prioritize organizational commitment are in a better position to achieve their mission, improve student outcomes, and create a positive working environment for teachers.

According to the literature, the practice of distributed leadership has the potential to promote empowerment and a culture of collaboration among teachers, which encourages them to take ownership of their roles. This sense of ownership and involvement in decision-making processes can lead to increased teacher commitment to the school. By fostering a culture of collaboration and empowerment through distributed leadership, schools can cultivate committed teachers who are dedicated to achieving collective goals and improving student outcomes.

However, despite numerous studies showing the positive link between distributed leadership and organizational commitment, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the relationship of these constructs in international school settings. Specifically, there has been a lack of studies conducted in international schools in China to investigate this relationship. In addition, there is a dearth of research exploring which dimensions of distributed leadership specifically influence teachers' organizational commitment within the context of international schools in China.

By gaining insights into this relationship, school leaders will be better equipped to develop and employ strategies to increase teacher commitment to the organization, thereby minimizing teacher turnover rates which can adversely affect the school in many aspects. Consequently, if schools are able to retain their teachers, they will be able to maintain their high-quality standards and effectively meet the needs and preferences of students and parents, enabling them to survive in a highly competitive educational environment.

2.0 Objectives of the Study

In general, the objective of this study is to determine the relationship of distributed leadership and organizational commitment of teachers working in international schools in China. Specifically, this research seeks to:

1. describe the level or state of the
 - a. distributed leadership as practiced in international schools in China in terms of support, supervision and coherent leadership team; and
 - b. organizational commitment of international school teachers in terms of normative commitment, affective commitment and continuance commitment.
2. find out the relationship between distributed leadership and organizational commitment among foreign teachers in international schools in China; and
3. determine the effect of distributed leadership on organizational commitment.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized to address the research problem and achieve the purpose of the study. This research method examines the relationship between the variables of the study without attempting to establish or draw conclusions about causal relationships among the variables. In this study, descriptive-correlational design was used to describe the variables and their relationships using measures of central tendency and dispersion as well as establish the strength and direction of these relationships using statistical techniques.

3.2 Study Site

The study was conducted in mainland China, particularly in municipality of Shanghai and the provinces of Shandong, Guangdong, and Jiangsu. Shanghai is situated on China's eastern coastline at the mouth of the Yangtze River, bordered by Jiangsu Province to the north and Zhejiang Province to the south. Shandong is northern coastal province of China that faces the Korean Peninsula across the Yellow Sea while Jiangsu lies on the east coast bounded by the Yellow Sea to the east, Zhejiang to the south, Shandong to the north and Anhui to the west. Guangdong, on the other hand, is a coastal province on the southern coast of China adjacent to Hong Kong and Macau. Shanghai is China's most populous city while Guangdong and Shandong are two of the country's most highly populated provinces. Many international schools, including internationalized Chinese schools, are found in these locations.

3.3. Population Sampling and Respondents of the Study

Convenience sampling was used as the schools were geographically dispersed across the different areas. The respondents were foreign educators teaching in international schools in China, including Chinese internationalized schools. A total of 101 foreign teaching staff, teaching from kindergarten to high school (Grade 12), participated in the study. Data gathering was conducted from September 2022 to January 2023 after approval of the research proposal.

The study participants are predominantly female (68.3%). Only 3% of the total number of respondents are between the ages 20 and 25 while early half (49.5%) of them are 40 years old, indicating a predominantly mature cohort. Among the respondents, 19.8% hold positions as supervisors or heads of departments while the remaining 20.8% are classroom teachers. Slightly over half (50.5%) possess a bachelor's degree while the remaining 49.5% either have finished postgraduate studies or earned postgraduate units. Approximately 15% have been teaching for more than 21 years, while 20% have been educators for five years or less.

3.4 Research Instrument

Research instruments from open-source literature which various researchers had content validated, pilot tested, and evaluated for internal and external consistency were adopted for this research. The instruments used in this study consisted of two sections.

Section I covers the questions related to the practice of distributed leadership. The scale, popularly known as Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) was developed by Hulpia and Devos (2009). The DLI is composed of 23 items on a 5-point Likert scale that measures the three dimensions of distributed leadership namely, support, supervision and leadership coherence (coherent leadership team). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for support was 0.91 while supervision was 0.90. The computed Cronbach's alpha value for coherent leadership was 0.94.

Section II is made up of questions that measure the organizational commitment of teachers. The instrument used was the shortened version of Allen and Meyer's (1990) organizational commitment scale (OCS), consisting of 18 items. The tool measures three dimensions of organizational commitment, namely, affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. The OCS is a self-assessed instrument where respondents rated the questions using a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – partially agree, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree). There were six questions for each dimension, and the negatively worded questions were reversed score. The computed values for Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.74 to 0.81, indicating that the instrument passed the test for internal consistency.

3.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data gathered in this study. The means and standard deviations were examined to determine the level of the respondents' organizational commitment and their perception regarding the practice of distributed leadership in their schools. Pearson's correlation was used to determine the relationship between the different variables. Multiple regression model was used to examine the predictive power of the distributed leadership variables on the three dimensions of organizational commitment.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Care was taken to ensure that the rights of the study participants were respected and safeguarded. They were informed about what the study was about and what was required of them, including the time required to finish the survey and the information that they may or may not wish to provide. It was made clear that participation in the study was purely voluntary. The participants were given the option to withdraw anytime during the data gathering stage. They were likewise

informed that the data collected and information they provided would be kept confidential and would be used solely for this study.

4.0 Results

This section contains detailed information presentation and discussion of data analysis and the results of the study.

4.1 Teacher organizational commitment and the practice of distributed leadership in international schools in China

Table 1 displays the perception of the respondents regarding the practice of distributed leadership in international schools in China. The findings showed that international school teachers perceived a high level of distributed leadership practice in their respective schools, indicating that within their schools, leadership roles and responsibilities are shared by multiple teacher leaders. This also suggests that distributed leadership is not solely confined to international schools offering International Baccalaureate (IB) program which employs a system of distributing instructional leadership functions through the middle leaders, e.g. subject area coordinators, cross-school leaders, grade-level leaders (Bryant et al., 2019) but also in Chinese internationalized schools that practice dual culture co-principalship where the foreign principal and the Chinese principal collaborate in decision making through discussions and interactions with each other and other stakeholders (Neufield, 2019).

Table 1

Respondents' Perception of the Level of Distributed Leadership in International Schools in China

SUPPORT	Mean	SD	Description	
1. champions a long-term vision	4.14	.775	High	
2. debates the school vision	3.27	1.10	Moderate	
3. compliments teachers	4.09	.939	High	
4. helps teachers	4.21	.875	Very high	
5. explains his/her reason for criticism of teachers	3.97	.984	High	
6. is available after school to help teachers when assistance is needed	3.89	.958	High	
7. looks out for the personal welfare of teachers	3.89	1.04	High	
8. encourages me to pursue my own goals for professional learning	3.76	1.14	High	
9. encourages me to try new practices consistent with my interests	3.74	1.12	High	
10. provides organizational support for teacher interaction	3.82	.953	High	
	Mean	3.88	.744	High
SUPERVISION				
11. evaluates the performance of the staff	4.01	.964	High	
12. is involved in summative evaluation of teachers	3.89	.926	High	
13. is involved in formative evaluation of teachers	3.82	.942	High	

	Mean	3.91	.862	High
COHERENT LEADERSHIP TEAM				
14. There is a well-functioning leadership team in our school.	3.75	1.01	High	
15. The leadership team tries to act as well as possible.	4.01	1.03	High	
16. The leadership team supports the goals we like to attain with our school.	4.01	.889	High	
17. All members of the leadership team work together on the school's core objectives.	3.89	1.02	High	
18. In our school, the right person sits in the right place, taking competencies into account.	3.54	.998	High	
19. Members of the management team divide their time properly.	3.61	.973	High	
20. Members of the management team have clear goals.	3.72	.946	High	
21. Members of the management team know which tasks they have to perform.	3.96	.905	High	
22. The leadership team is willing to execute a good idea.	4.04	.871	High	
23. It is clear what members of the leadership team are authorized to do.	3.85	.910	High	
	Mean	3.84	.772	High
	Overall distributed leadership	3.88	.988	High

Legend: 1.00– 1.80 (very low); 1.81 – 2.60 (low); 2.61 – 3.40 (moderate); 3.41 – 4.20 (high); 4.21 – 5.0 (very high)

In terms of the support dimension, the pooled mean was 3.88. The respondents gave the highest ratings to helping teachers (Q4), championing a long-term vision (Q2), and complimenting teachers (Q3) and they gave the lowest ratings to encouraging teachers to pursue their own goals for professional learning (Q8) and debating the school vision (Q2). It is interesting to note that while respondents rated championing a log-term vision the second highest, they rated debating the school vision as the lowest.

The pooled mean for supervision was 3.91, which is relatively high. This indicates that leaders share the responsibility of evaluating the performance of their teachers to inform professional development and use this as basis for accountability systems.

Coherent leadership team had a mean of 3.84, indicating a high rate. The highest scores were given to willingness to execute a good idea (Q22), trying to act as well as possible (Q15, and supporting teachers' goals which they like to attain within the school (Q16). On the other hand, the lowest scores were given to items 18 and 19 which asks if the right person is in the right place and if the management team divide their time properly, respectively. This indicates that although teachers rated coherent leadership team highly, they have reservations regarding the composition of the school leadership and the allocation of time by the management team.

As shown in Table 2, the computed mean for organizational commitment was 3.35, which suggests the presence of organizational commitment among international school teachers in China but at a moderate level.

The pooled mean for affective commitment was 3.51, implying that the respondents have high emotional attachment to their workplace. They gave the highest rating to item 5 asking them if

the organization has a great personal meaning to them. Likewise, there is apparent high levels of affective commitment in terms of their sense of belonging to the organization (Q6) and their willingness to spend the rest of their career in that organization (Q1). However, the respondents do not feel that the problems of the organization are also their own (Q2), indicating a lack of sense of ownership or misalignment of their values with that of their organization.

In terms of continuance commitment, the pooled mean was 3.22. This indicates a moderate commitment in terms of the continuance aspect. The respondents gave the highest rating to question 7, asking them whether it would be hard to leave the organization now even if they wanted to. The other two items that received the highest scores were “staying with my job is a matter of necessity” (Q9) and “leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice” (Q12). The lowest rating was given to item 10, which states, “I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.” This indicates that the respondents are not afraid to leave their current workplace because they feel it is relatively easy to find alternative employment elsewhere.

The computed pooled mean for normative commitment was 3.31, which is moderate. Respondents gave a high score to item 16, which measures their loyalty towards the organization, while scoring the other statements as moderate. They gave the lowest score to item 14 (“Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave”), indicating relatively low normative commitment as the respondents prioritize personal advantage over ethical considerations.

According to Reichers (1985), a low level of organizational commitment is characterized by lack of acceptance of the organization’s goals and values as well as the absence of willingness to exert effort to stay with the organization. Therefore, it follows that with a moderate level of normative commitment, international school teachers in China exhibit a partial loyalty to their organization, which means that when offered better opportunities elsewhere, such as in other schools, they may opt to leave their current school.

Table 2*Respondents' Level of Organizational Commitment*

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT	Mean	SD	Description
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.	3.59	1.01	High
2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	3.23	1.01	Moderate
3. I do not feel like "part of my family" at this organization. *	3.47	1.05	High
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. *	3.49	1.06	High
5. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	3.66	.926	High
6. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization. *	3.59	.998	High
Mean	3.51	.676	High
CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT			
7. It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to.	3.60	1.09	High
8. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I leave my organization.	3.13	1.12	Moderate
9. Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	3.40	1.12	Moderate
10. I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.	2.90	1.08	Moderate
11. One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere.	3.03	1.19	Moderate
12. One of the reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice.	3.27	1.14	Moderate
Mean	3.22	.736	Moderate
NORMATIVE COMMITMENT			
13. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization. *	3.32	1.04	Moderate
14. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave.	3.11	1.04	Moderate
15. I would feel guilty if I left this organization now.	3.14	1.24	Moderate
16. This organization deserves my loyalty.	3.60	1.06	High
17. I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it.	3.40	1.14	Moderate
18. I owe a great deal to this organization.	3.28	1.13	Moderate
Mean	3.31	.792	Moderate
Overall organizational commitment	3.35	1.098	Moderate

Legend: 1.00– 1.80 (very low); 1.81 – 2.60 (low); 2.61 – 3.40 (moderate); 3.41 – 4.20 (high); 4.21 – 5.0 (very high)

4.2 Relationship between distributed leadership and organizational commitment

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the dimensions of distributed leadership and organizational commitment. As shown in Table 3, support and affective commitment have a moderately significant positive relationship ($r = .458, p < .01$) which suggests that teachers who perceive that the school leadership team provides them with adequate support scored higher in terms of their affective commitment to the organization. Research on organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1990; Ghazzawi, 2018) indicates that individuals who are emotionally connected to their organization exert efforts at the highest level, driven by feelings of loyalty and affection. Therefore, it can be inferred that a supportive leadership may enhance the level of affective commitment of teachers to be loyal to the organization and achieve its goals even in the absence of monetary incentives.

Results of the analysis likewise showed that there was a positive but moderately significant relationship between the support dimension of distributed leadership and the normative dimension of organizational commitment ($r = .407, p < .01$). However, there was no correlation between support and continuance ($r = .069, p > .01$), which indicates that a supportive leadership is not enough to convince teachers to remain in the organization. According to Shaw et al. (2003), continuance commitment may arise when individuals choose to stay in the organization because of the benefits they anticipate receiving, such as retirement plans, compensation packages, or insurance coverage. In the context of foreign teachers working in international schools in China, it can be inferred that a supportive leadership does not significantly impact their decision to continue working in their organization.

The findings of the study further showed that leadership coherence (coherent leadership) exhibited a moderately significant positive correlation with affective commitment ($r = .525, p < .01$) and a relatively weak positive relationship with normative commitment ($r = .386, p < .01$) at the .01 level of significance. This implies that high levels of cooperation in the school's leadership team is associated with high levels of teachers' commitment in terms of the affective and normative dimensions. However, no significant correlation was found between leadership coherence and continuance commitment ($r = .121, p < .01$).

Moreover, the analysis revealed that supervision did not exhibit any significant correlation with any of the dimensions of organizational commitment.

Table 3

Correlation between Distributed Leadership and Organizational Commitment

	Affective		Continuance		Normative	
	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value
SUPPORT	.458**	.000	.069	.496	.407**	.000
SUPERVISION	.126	.208	.079	.431	.097	.332
COHERENT LEADERSHIP	.525**	.000	.121	.229	.386**	.000

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

4.3 Results of multiple regression analysis on the influence of distributed leadership on organizational commitment

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to find out if distributed leadership can be used to account for differences in organizational commitment using a regression equation. The various domains of distributed leadership were examined to determine their influence on the affective, continuance, and normative aspects of organizational commitment.

Table 4 presents the regression model predicting affective commitment, with support, supervision, and coherent leadership as the predictor variables. The regression model was found to be statistically significant [$F_{(3,97)} = 14.80$, $p=.000$]. It also accounted for 31.4% of the variance in affective commitment, which was significant.

Table 4

Regression Model Predicting Affective Commitment

Model Summary				ANOVA		
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	df	Sig
1	.560	.314	.293	14.804	97	.000

a. dependent variable: affective

b. predictors: (constant), support, supervision, coherent leadership

Table 5 displays the regression model predicting continuance commitment. The model failed to achieve significance [$F_{(3,97)} = .69$, $p=.563$] which suggests that none of the predictor variables significantly predict the outcome variable. The R^2 value of .021 indicates that only 2.1% of the variance in affective commitment can be explained by the independent variables.

Table 5

Regression Model Predicting Continuance Commitment

Model Summary				ANOVA		
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	df	Sig
2	.144	.021	-.010	.685	97	.563

a. dependent variable: continuance

b. predictors: (constant), support, supervision, coherent leadership

Shown in Table 6 is the regression model predicting normative commitment, with the dimensions of distributed leadership as the predictor variables. The model was significant [$F_{(3,97)} = 8.29$, $p=.000$] and demonstrated an R^2 value of .204. This suggests that 20.4% of the variance in normative commitment can be accounted for by the predictor variables.

Table 6*Regression Model Predicting Normative Commitment*

Model Summary				ANOVA		
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	df	Sig.
3	.452	.204	.179	8.285	97	.000

a. dependent variable: normative

b. predictors: (constant), support, supervision, coherent

Table 7 shows the result of the multiple regression analysis related to the prediction of the affective dimension of organizational commitment. Specifically, leadership coherence emerged as a significant predictor of affective commitment ($B = .456$, $p < .01$). The relationship was positive which means that teachers who rated the coherent leadership domain of distributed leadership highly were more likely to exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment in terms of the affective domain. Supervision, however, was identified as a negative predictor ($B = -.190$, $p < .05$), implying that higher scores on supervision were associated with lower affective commitment. In addition, multiple regression analysis also showed that for every one-point increase in supervision, affective commitment decreased by a factor of 0.19. This suggests that the more teachers perceived supervision to be more widely shared among the different members of the leadership team, the less committed they are to the organization in terms of the affective domain. This supports Goldstein's (2003) assumption that involving other members in the process of teacher evaluation (i.e. supervision) could create potential issues between teachers and administrators in terms of occupational boundaries. Therefore, this could imply that teachers believe that having more leaders (e.g. subject area coordinators, curriculum coordinators, teaching and learning leads) to evaluate their performance is not desirable. In fact, it decreases teachers' emotional attachment to their school. Conversely, support was not found to be a significant predictor of affective commitment ($B = .141$, $p > .05$).

Table 7*Results of Multiple Regression Predicting the Influence of Support, Supervision, and Leadership Coherence on Affective Commitment*

Variable	B	t	Sig.
Support	.141	.911	.364
Supervision	-.190	-2.317	.023
Coherent leadership	.456	3.202	.002

As shown in Table 8, none of the dimensions of distributed leadership was found to significantly predict continuance commitment. According to Beck and Wilson (2000), continuance commitment can be viewed as a pragmatic attachment to the organization, wherein an individual's affiliation is primarily determined by their evaluation of economic benefits received. Therefore, it can be argued that distributed leadership does not enhance teachers' motivation to remain in the organization as it does not provide them substantial positive extrinsic rewards.

Table 8

Results of Multiple Regression Predicting the Influence of Support, Supervision, and Leadership Coherence on Continuance Commitment

Variable	B	t	Sig.
Support	-.154	-.761	.448
Supervision	.043	.407	.685
Coherent leadership	.216	1.167	.246

Further analysis was conducted to predict normative commitment from support, supervision and leadership coherence. The results, presented in Table 9, indicate that both support ($B = .428$, $p < .05$) and supervision ($B = -.208$, $p < .05$) emerged as significant predictors of normative commitment, whereas coherent leadership did not ($B = .165$, $p > .05$). Support was a positive predictor of normative commitment or one's feeling to stay in the organization out of moral duty and indebted obligation. This finding can be interpreted through the lens of social exchange theory which suggests that employees feel an obligation to help those who helped them. According to Lahiry (1994), normative commitment develops in situations where an exchange takes place. In the context of distributed leadership, distribution of support implies that not only the principal but also the teacher leaders are involved in terms of providing organizational support, making themselves available to help teachers when assistance is needed, encouraging teachers to pursue their own goals for professional learning, and looking out for the personal welfare of teachers. This suggests that teachers receive more support when there are more leaders. Consequently, it can be inferred that teachers demonstrate higher normative commitment when they perceive they are adequately supported by multiple leaders. Interestingly, supervision was identified as a negative predictor. In fact, the results show that normative commitment decreased by a factor of .21 for every one-point increase in supervision, indicating that teachers' sense of obligation to stay in the organization tends to decrease when multiple leaders are involved in evaluating their performance.

Table 9

Results of Multiple Regression Predicting the Influence of Support, Supervision, and Leadership Coherence on Normative Commitment

Variable	B	t	Sig.
Support	.428	2.188	.031
Supervision	-.208	-2.011	.047
Coherent leadership	.165	.921	.359

5.0 Conclusion

Distributed leadership and organizational commitment remain significant topics of interest among researchers in the field of education due to their documented impacts on school improvement, increased student achievement, and reduced turnover intention among teachers. While several studies have explored the individual relationships between these variables, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the relationship of their various dimensions, particularly in how the dimensions of distributed leadership influence organizational commitment. Therefore, this study aimed to examine these relationships within the context of international schools, with a particular focus in China, where studies of this nature are scarce. The objective is to shed light on the interplay of these variables and contribute to the understanding of educational dynamics in international schools.

The study revealed some significant findings which have implications to the implementation of distributed leadership and further research in the field of distributed leadership and organizational commitment. Firstly, except for the supervision dimension of distributed leadership, support and coherent leadership are positively correlated with both affective and normative commitment, but not with continuance commitment. This aligns with expectations as the development of continuance commitment is typically associated with the economic benefits derived from remaining with the organization. It tends to be strongest when alternative opportunities are scarce and investment levels are high, underscoring the notion that employees may opt to leave the organization when presented with better alternatives. Consequently, to retain teachers who are continuance committed, schools must provide elements such as pensions, insurance coverage and other forms of rewards, which increases their commitment to stay within the organization.

Secondly, none of the dimensions of distributed leadership predicted continuance commitment. This finding is somewhat unexpected, given that literature on distributed leadership suggests that continuance commitment can be nurtured through supportive measures, such as offering feedback and mentoring, as well as fostering collaboration among teachers. Similarly, it has been suggested that a coherent leadership team, marked by shared goals, group cohesion and well-defined roles has the potential to influence continuance commitment. However, the findings of this study were not able to confirm these relationships, suggesting the presence of other contextual factors that impact the continuance commitment of teachers, thus warranting further investigation.

Thirdly, supervision (i.e. formal teacher-evaluation) was found to be a negative predictor of both affective and normative commitment. This corroborates the results of Hulpia et al. (2012) who found that supervision had a marginally significant negative effect on teachers' organizational commitment but it contrasts with the results of the studies of Hartati and Purba (2020) who suggested that principal supervision has a profound impact on teachers' commitment to the school. These discrepancies underscore the complexity of the relationship between the supervision dimension of distributed leadership and organizational commitment. Moreover, the findings of this study emphasize that the impact of supervision on the dimensions of organizational commitment is multifaceted and context-dependent. Within the context of international schools in China, the findings suggest that greater involvement of multiple school leaders (in addition to the principal) in the evaluation of teachers' performance may diminish teachers' emotional attachment and sense of obligation to the organization. Therefore, for supervision to positively impact teachers'

commitment, it is crucial for school leaders to carry out supervision in a manner that is fair, collaborative, and supportive of teachers' professional growth and development in order to enhance their commitment to the organization.

Overall, the study's findings suggest that organizational commitment is significantly influenced by specific dimensions of distributed leadership. To promote organizational commitment, school leaders should prioritize creating a supportive school culture where teachers feel valued and supported by both their colleagues and the administration. Moreover, establishing a shared vision and goals for teachers to collectively pursue and implementing strategies that promote a culture of commitment among teachers, such as recognizing achievements and promoting collaboration, are essential for fostering teacher commitment towards the school.

6.0 References

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