

# Distributed Leadership Contribution towards Organizational Commitment of the NPQEL-Certified Principals in Malaysia

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**ABSTRACT---** *Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 has outlined that high-performance leaders will be placed in every school, among others. Distributed leadership is seen as an alternative for teachers to provide opinions on school administration as it emphasizes the sharing of leadership among followers. In addition, organizational commitment is seen as an important aspect of improving organizational performance and success in an organization. This study aimed to determine the level of distributed leadership practice among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia. This study also aimed to identify the distributed leadership relationship among NPQEL-certified principals with their organizational commitment and the contribution of the different dimensions of distributed leadership towards principals' organizational commitment. This quantitative study used a survey method on a population of 1169 principals with 278 samples. A descriptive data analysis was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 and while inferential data analysis was obtained through the use of SEM SmartPLS 3.0. The results showed that the level of practice of distributed leadership of NPQEL-certified principals is high and there is a positive and significant relationship between distributed leadership and organizational commitment. While, teamwork and supervisory dimensions contributed significantly to the principals' organizational commitment.*

**Keywords---** *Distributed Leadership, Organizational Commitment, NPQEL-Certified Principal.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Distributed leadership refers to teamwork and collective work (Hulpia et al., 2010). This leadership is distributed not just by delegating it to the subordinates but rather by integrating all the tasks, materials and organizational structure with the school community to move and work together (Harris, 2012). Distributed leadership has three dimensions namely support, supervision and team work (Hulpia et al., 2009). Organizational commitment is defined as the willingness to work towards achieving organizational goals (Meyer & Allen, 2004). Organizational commitment is divided into three namely affective, continuous and normative commitments (Meyer & Allen 2004). NPQEL-certified principals are those appointed after they have passed the NPQEL program run by the Institute of Aminuddin Baki. The National Professional Qualification for Headmasters (NPQH) program launched on June 1, 1999 has given a new breath and later was continued as the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders Program (NPQEL) since 2008. Through the fifth shift in the Malaysian Education

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Blueprint 2013-2025, among others, high performance leaders will be placed in every school. Seniority or term of service are no longer a determinant for the position of principal and headmaster (PHM) but are based on competencies in management and leadership.

Distributed leadership refers to a thinking framework in analyzing the uncommon leadership practice which focuses on involving more individuals as leaders either formally, informally or ad-hoc (Spillane, 2006). Distributed leadership can be understood as a combination of activities which emerge from actions and decision making made by various members of the organizational group (Gronn, 2002). This suggests a need for collective actions to be implemented in this type of leadership. In this study, distributive leadership is defined as the practice of sharing and distributing work by principals within school organizations including support, supervision and teamwork. Distributed leadership has three dimensions namely support, supervision and teamwork.

Organizational commitment is also important to the success and achievement of an organization because it is an integral part of an individual in an organization (Sabariah et al., 2011). Mohammed Sani et al. (2015) pointed out that organizational commitment is an important variable in creating excellent educational organization especially in a complex and challenging environment. In this study, organizational commitment is defined as the involvement and willingness of the principal to achieve his or her organizational goals, the principal's desire to remain in the school due to the lack of choice as well as loyalty and responsibility of the principal to his organization. Organizational commitment involves three dimensions of affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment.

This study is based on two theories namely Distributed Leadership Theory (Gronn, 2002) for distributed leadership variables and Sit-Bet Theory (Becker, 1960) for organizational commitment variables. The two models used in this study are Hulpia et al. (2009) model for distributed leadership and Three Component Model (Meyer & Allen, 2004) for organizational commitment.

## **II. PURPOSES OF STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of distributed leadership practice among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia and their relationship to organizational commitment. This study also seeks to identify the dimensions of the distributed leadership component that contribute to the organizational commitment of the principal.

### ***1) Research Question***

- i. What is the level of distributed leadership practice among NPQEL-certified school principals in Malaysia?
- ii. Is there a significant relationship between distributed leadership and their work commitment among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia?
- iii. What are the dimensions of distributed leadership that contribute to the organizational commitment among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia?

### ***2) Hypothesis***

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between distributed leadership and their organizational commitment among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia.

Ho2: There is no contribution of distributed leadership dimension towards organizational commitment among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia.

Ho2<sub>1</sub>: There is no contribution of support dimension towards organizational commitment among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia

Ho2<sub>2</sub>: There is no contribution of supervisory dimension towards organizational commitment among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia

Ho2<sub>3</sub>: There is no contribution of teamwork dimension towards organizational commitment among NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia

### 3) *Sample*

This study focuses on the NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia. According to figures from the Secondary School Management Division (BPSH) in February 2017, the total number of NPQEL-certified principals was 1169 from the total of 2408 principals in Malaysia. The sample size was 278 people. The researcher used multi-stage cluster sampling techniques and proportional ratio techniques to meet the characteristics of the desired study sample and to ensure that the sample being studied is representative of the population. Multi-stage batch sampling techniques were used because the samples are geographically scattered and proportional ratio techniques were used for non-homogeneous samples (Creswell, 2014).

### 4) *TOOL*

The instruments used to measure the principal distributed leadership level are Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) developed by Hulpia et al. (2009). On the other hand, the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey Revised Version (TCM-ECS) developed by Meyer and Allen (2004) was used to measure organizational commitment. DLI instruments consists of three dimensions namely support, supervision and teamwork. To fulfill the purpose of this study, the researcher has adapted and modified the total of 35 items for this DLI instrument and are deemed suitable based on the object for the study based on research objectives and research questions. For TCM-ECS instruments, a total of 20 items were used in this study which were adapted to suit the local context. The scores used in this survey were based on a five-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (moderately disagree), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree).

## III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive analysis, SPSS version 25.0 was used while inferential data were analysed through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using Partial Least Square (PLS) version 3.0.

### 1) *The Level of Distributed Leadership Practice Among NPQEL-Certified Secondary School Principals in Malaysia*

**Table 1:** Mean score, standard deviation of distributed leadership dimensions

No.	Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Score Interpretation
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1	Support	4.72	0.28	High
2	Supervision	4.50	0.39	High
3	Team Work	4.61	0.34	High
	Overall	4.61	0.29	High

Table 1 shows the mean score, standard deviation and score interpretation for the variable of distributed leadership and its dimensions. In order to interpret the mean score, the score interpretation was referred as shown in Table 2. Based on Table 1, the overall mean score of distributed leadership level is high (mean=4.61, SD=0.29). The comparison of mean score for each dimension shows that support dimension has the highest mean score (mean=4.72, SD=0.28), followed by team work dimension (mean=4.61, SD=0.34) and supervision dimension (mean=4.50, SD=0.39).

**Table 2:** Interpretation of mean score for each dimension

No.	Mean Score	Level
1	1.00 – 2.33	Low
2	2.34 – 3.66	Moderate
3	3.67 – 5.00	High

**2) *H<sub>01</sub>: There is No Significant Relationship Between Distributed Leadership and Principals' Commitment Among NPQEL-Certified Principals in Malaysia***

**Table 3:** Relationship between distributed leadership and Organizational Commitment of NPQEL-certified principals

Relationship	B Value	SD	T value	P Value
Distributed Leadership → Organizational Commitment	0.197	0.082	2.402	0.023

The relationship between variables which is determined by the significant level of path coefficients, and that the coefficient value is matched with *t*-value. Critical value for two tail test is 1.96. Based on table 3, the path coefficient value is 0.197 while the *t*-value is 2.402 (*t* > 1.96). This indicates that *H<sub>01</sub>* failed to be accepted. The value shows there is significant relationship between distributed leadership and organizational commitment among NPQEL-certified principals ( $\beta = 0.197$ ,  $t = 2.402$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ). The analysis shows that the strength of the relationship between distributive leadership and organizational commitment is positive. This indicates that the higher the distributed leadership practices of NPQEL graduates, the higher their organizational commitment.

**3) *H<sub>02</sub>: There is No Contribution of Distributed Leadership Dimension Towards Organizational Commitment Among the NPQEL-Certified Principals in Malaysia***

*H<sub>021</sub>*: There is no contribution of support dimension of the NPQEL-certified principals towards their organizational commitment in Malaysia

*H<sub>022</sub>*: There is no contribution NPQEL Principal's Supervisory dimension has no contribution to NPQEL's Principals' organizational commitment in Malaysia

Ho<sub>23</sub>: There is no contribution of team work dimension towards work commitment of NPQEL-certified school principals in Malaysia

**Table 4:** Level of Significance of the support, supervision and team work contribution towards organizational commitment

	<i>B Value</i>	<i>T Value</i>	<i>P Value</i>	<i>Significant Level</i>
Support -> Organizational Commitment	0.064	0.649	0.516	t < 1.96
Supervision -> Organizational Commitment	0.163	1.967	0.049	t > 1.96
Team Work -> Organizational Commitment	0.206	2.049	0.041	t > 1.96

Table 4 shows that the support dimension did not have a significant contribution to organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.064$ ,  $t = 0.649$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This shows that Ho<sub>21</sub> is rejected. This means that there is no significant contribution of the dimension of support of the NPQEL-certified principals towards organizational commitment. The supervisory dimension had a significant contribution to organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.163$ ,  $t = 1.967$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that Ho<sub>22</sub> failed to be accepted. This means that there is a significant contribution of supervisory dimensions to the commitment of the NPQEL-certified principals. The findings also show that teamwork dimensions have a significant contribution to organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.206$ ,  $t = 2.049$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that Ho<sub>23</sub> failed to be accepted. This means that there is a significant contribution of team work towards the NPQEL-certified principals' organizational commitment.

**Table 5:** Data analysis based on R<sup>2</sup> and f<sup>2</sup> Value

<i>Endogenous Variable</i>	<i>Exogenous Variable</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup> Included</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup> Excluded</i>	<i>f<sup>2</sup></i>
Organisational Commitment	Support	0.142	0.139	0.003
	Supervision		0.126	0.019
	Team work		0.113	0.034

Based on the analysis conducted, all three factors, namely support, supervision and teamwork, accounted for 14.2% change in organizational commitment ( $R^2 = 0.142$ ). This means that overall, this model has small strength. In this study, the value of  $R^2 = 0.35$  was categorized as large, 0.15 as moderate and 0.02 as small (Cohen, 1988). This finding shows that support, supervision and team work have little predictive power over organizational commitment factors. Based on the result shown in table 5, the effect size for factors explaining organizational commitment were small for factors of support ( $f^2 = 0.003$ ), supervision ( $f^2 = 0.019$ ) and teamwork ( $f^2 = 0.034$ ). According to Cohen (1988), the  $f$  value of 2 = 0.02 is categorized as small, 0.15 as moderate and 0.35 as large (Hair et al., 2017). However, the dimensions of distributed leadership that have the largest effect size for forecasting strength on organizational commitment is teamwork dimension ( $f^2 = 0.034$ ), followed by supervisory dimension ( $f^2 = 0.019$ ) and support dimension ( $f^2 = 0.003$ ).

## IV. DISCUSSION

Findings show that the level of distributed leadership practice of NPQEL-certified principals in Malaysia is at a high level. This finding is in line with the findings of Zoolaiha (2015), Rosnarizah and Hussein (2015). However,

the findings of this study are not in line with the findings of Mohd Izham et al. (2018) and Nurulaim (2013) which stated that the level of distributed leadership practice in schools is at a moderate level. The findings show that there is a positive and significant relationship between distributive leadership and organizational commitment. This indicates that the higher the distributed leadership practices of NPQEL graduates, the higher their organizational commitment. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Ross et al. (2016), Cogaltay and Karadag (2016). The findings also show that teamwork and supervisory dimensions contribute significantly to organizational commitment of NPQEL-certified principals. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of Siva (2014) who found that supportive dimensions and teamwork contributed significantly to organizational commitment.

## **V. IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this study contribute greatly to the school principals' understanding of the importance of distributive leadership practices in schools. The findings show that the practice of distributed leadership is practiced in schools by NPQEL-certified principals. To increase organizational commitment of school principals, they must practice distributed leadership. The higher the practice of distributive leadership of NPQEL-certified principals, the higher their organizational commitment. There are also dimensions of teamwork such as cooperation among principals and management teams, distribution of power, sharing of work fairly and in proportion based on expertise of respective leadership teams, also contribute to the organizational commitment of the principal. Likewise, supervisory dimensions such as evaluating teachers' performance from time to time, engaging in pre, while and post-supervision sessions with teachers consistently also contribute to the organizational commitment. Teamwork and supervision must be done by the principal as it contributes significantly to the organizational commitment.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the findings show that the overall level of distributed leadership practice of NPQEL graduates is at a high level. The findings of this study prove that there is a significant relationship between distributed leadership and the organizational commitment of principals. In addition, two dimensions of distributed leadership, namely teamwork dimensions and supervisory dimensions contribute significantly to organizational commitment. On the other hand, all three factors, namely support, supervision and teamwork, accounted for 14.2% change in organizational commitment ( $R^2 = 0.142$ ). This means that overall, this model has a small strength. In terms of impact size, the dimensions of distributed leadership that explain organizational commitment are small in size.

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