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Abstract

Despite ample research on commitment in industrial settings, there has been no systematic attempt to investigate outcomes associated with teacher commitment. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the relationship between teacher commitment and psychological well-being in the workplace using questionnaires. Hong Kong teachers (N = 857) participated. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to investigate how the three aspects of commitment pertaining to the organization and occupation predicted relevant outcomes. Results showed that affective and normative commitment positively predicted psychological well-being in the workplace: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work, desire for involvement at work, and job satisfaction. Continuance commitment was a negative predictor of some outcomes. Results of the current study provide support to Meyer’s 3 X 2 factor model of commitment. Findings are discussed in relation to the situation of teachers in the Hong Kong context.

Keywords: teacher commitment, psychological well-being, Hong Kong teachers
Commitment is a word used to describe teachers’ affective or emotional response to their experience in an educational setting where there is evidence of a psychological bond between the work force and the institution to which they show commitment (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999; Firestone, 1996). Teachers’ commitment reflects the sense of fidelity and adherence of the teachers to the institution they serve and it has been referred to as an effective mechanism influencing school success (Fink, 1992). The relationship of teacher commitment to a myriad of educational and psychological outcomes has been documented in previous research (Day, 2008; Dee, Henkin, & Singleton, 2006). The literature suggests that committed teachers are those who give their best and put effort in their jobs, focus on attainment of school goals, and stay in their schools. As a result commitment has been found to be an important antecedent of affective and achievement outcomes such as teaching performance, absenteeism, burnout and turnover, including influence on students’ achievement gains and their attitude towards school (Firestone, 1996; Park, 2005; Ebmeier, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; Somech & Bogler, 2002; Tsui & Cheng, 1999; Weiss, 1999).

A number of studies concerning teacher commitment have been conducted (see, for example, Abd Razak, Darmawan, & Keeves, 2010; Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008; Choi & Tang, 2009; Dee, Henkin, & Singleton, 2006; Shin & Reyes, 1991; Henkin & Holliman, 2009; Sezgin, 2009b). However, most of these studies considered commitment as a generalized identification with either the school or the teaching profession and not as a multidimensional construct. Recent theorizing and research in industrial and organizational psychology has
shown that commitment is a multidimensional construct which has differential impacts on
various outcome measures (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002).

In this context there has been, to our knowledge, no large scale and systematic attempt
within Hong Kong or elsewhere to map the multidimensional nature of teacher commitment
and its relationship to multiple measures of teachers’ psychological well-being within the
school setting. Yet it would seem that self-beliefs about why one is committed to teaching, and
the multidimensional nature of teachers’ commitment to their schools, as well as to the
teaching profession as a whole, should have a strong influence on both teaching effectiveness
and psychological well-being.

Extensive examination of how the multidimensional nature of teacher commitment relates
to multiple measures of psychological well-being is important. Doing this provides us with a
more nuanced picture of the dynamics of the multidimensional nature of teacher commitment
and multiple measures of well-being (e.g., interpersonal fit at work, feeling of competency,
perceived recognition at work, desire for involvement at work). Previous research has mostly
clarified how commitment relates with a narrower set of constructs (e.g., life satisfaction) only.
Involving multiple measures of psychological well-being is an opportunity for us to understand
clearly how they are influenced by the two objects of commitment, the organization and the
occupation. This study makes an additional important contribution by exploring the
relationship between commitment and its eventual outcomes (i.e., psychological well-being)
among Hong Kong teachers. Setting the current investigation in a collectivist culture like Hong Kong different from the typical Western context allows us to expand our understanding about employees’ commitment beyond the Western context.

Meyer and Allen (1990) developed the three-component model of commitment which has been widely used in the Industrial and Organizational Psychology literature. Affective commitment is defined as the employee’s positive emotional attachment to the organization; continuance commitment, is defined as the employee’s attachment to the organization because of the perceived high costs of leaving the organization (such as retirement benefits, leave benefits), and Normative commitment is defined as an employee’s attachment to the organization because of feelings of obligation, loyalty and duty. To further highlight conceptual differences among the three dimensions of commitment Allen and Meyer (1990, p. 3) said that “employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to, those with strong continuance commitment because they need to, and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they ought to do so”. Each of these has presumed differential effects on job satisfaction, employee psychological well-being and their intent to stay in their current profession and organisation.

While initially the focus was on commitment to the organization in which a person worked, in a subsequent refinement of their model, Meyer et al. (1993) added a second dimension, affective, continuance and normative commitment to the occupation, career or
profession as a whole. They argued that organizational and occupational commitments are distinct constructs, with each contributing to the understanding of, and ability to predict work behavior. As Meyer et al., (1993, p 540) said adding occupational commitment “provides a more complete understanding of a person’s tie to his or her occupation” which may pave the way to understand differential commitment to organization (i.e., school) and occupation (i.e., teaching).

Psychological well-being

The teaching profession is a demanding and stressful occupation (Borg, 1990; Dunham & Varma, 1998; Kyriacou, 2001; Stoeber & Renner, 2008). Research suggests that the stress in the teaching profession affects the general health, teaching career, students’ achievement gains, and well-being of teachers (Chan, 2006; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; O’Connor & Clarke, 1990; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). Teacher stress and burnout have received increasing attention given their impact on a wide range of important outcomes such as impairment of teaching quality, job dissatisfaction, work alienation, physical and emotional ill-health, and teachers’ leaving the profession (e.g., Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995; Kyriacou, 2001; Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). In the Hong Kong context, the study of Chan and Hui (1995) involving secondary school teachers indicated that heavy workload, among other sources, was the major source of stress for teachers. If one is to believe that students’ scholastic success is largely dependent on teachers’ quality and well-being (see for example Good &
Brophy, 2003; Helmke, 2001; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002; Wentzel, 1998) then this must inform policies in the teaching-learning environment because this will impact on teachers’ capacity to be effective teachers.

Specific to teaching profession, the literature defines teacher well-being as “a positive emotional state that is the result of a harmony between the sum of specific environmental factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations of the pupils vis-à-vis the school on the other” (Engels, Aelterman, Van Petegem & Schepens, 2004 p. 128).

Psychological well-being at work (PWBW) is a construct describing an individual’s subjective positive work experience, and is composed of five eudemonic dimensions: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work, and desire for involvement at work (Dagenais-Demarais and Sovoie, 2011).

The Hong Kong context

In this study, we focus on Hong Kong teachers’ commitment and psychological well-being. Thus, it might be helpful to present certain facts about the HK context to set the stage for the current study. It is commonly thought that the Hong Kong teaching profession is a highly stressful one (see Lau, Yuen, & Chan, 2005; Mo, 1991), with heavy teaching loads (Titus & Ora, 2005), forced downsizing of schools, and potential staff redundancies. On the other hand, the teaching profession is still very highly regarded and relatively well paid (Education Bureau, 2013).
Given that the Hong Kong school context is characterized by strong inducements to teach (relatively high status and salary) and strong social obligations (the issues of not losing face and not giving-up because of discontent), it is quite likely that affective, normative, and continuance commitments may work differently than in some Western contexts (see for example Eisinga, Teelken & Doorewaard, 2010). We anticipated that continuance and normative factors may be more strongly related to various aspects of psychological well-being than affective commitment. In other words, whether one likes or does not like the school one is teaching in, or the teaching profession as a whole (affective commitment), is less likely to be a determining factor in how a Hong Kong teacher feels about teaching than continuance and normative commitments, and hence these two are more likely strongly related to psychological well-being than affective commitment.

This may contrast with some research findings in Western settings in which affective commitment is more dominant (Glazer, Daniel & Short, 2004). It was also anticipated that continuance commitment may be negatively related to both normative and affective commitment, as well as to psychological well-being because the reasons for remaining in the profession and job relate to external pressures such a preserving face, earning an income, preserving superannuation and so on. For example a teacher may dislike teaching, and not be particularly concerned about normative obligations, but nevertheless remain in the profession because it is too hard to leave. In this case continuance commitment should be a negative
predictor of, for example, thriving at work. In line with previous research, affective commitment is posited to be positively related to psychological well-being.

Examination of the relationships between psychological well-being and affective, normative and continuance commitment is, therefore, especially important for the Hong Kong school system as it strives to provide the strongest teaching force while facing teacher unrest due to perceived heavy workloads, and teaching redundancies through downsizing of schools (Education Bureau, 2013). Commitment to work is operationalized in terms of commitment to organization (such as a particular school) and commitment to occupation (that is, the teaching profession). Psychological well-being is operationalized through 5 dimensions: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work, and desire for involvement at work.

The present study

Using the three component model of commitment this study hopes to contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation on teacher commitment in a number of ways. First, it attempts to identify the dimensions of teacher commitment and psychological well-being of Hong Kong teachers by validating the Affective, Continuance and Normative Organizational Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1990) and the Psychological well-being Scale (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2011) in an Asian setting specifically in the Hong Kong context. It was noted by Meyer et al., (2002) in their meta-analysis of organizational commitment studies that an important next step in
establishing the generalizability of the three-component commitment model is to do a
cross-cultural validation in other countries outside North America, and therefore research
involving other cultural settings is warranted. The importance of establishing the cross-cultural
validity of instruments has been emphasized by a number of researchers (see for example
Hambleton, 2001; Maneesriwongul & Dixon, 2004; van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996; van de
Vijver & Leung, 1997; and van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004). Second, this study will provide an
understanding of the nature and level of psychological well-being of Hong Kong teachers. This
study will also examine the relationships of six commitment predictors to the psychological
well-being of Hong Kong teachers to determine the relative salience of each. Finally, this study
may partly address Meyer et al’s., (2002) observation that more work is needed to understand
the nature of normative commitment and whether it contributes uniquely to the prediction of
work-related behavior and experiences.

Specifically, the study sets out to:

1. Establish the construct validity and reliability of the three-component model of
   organizational and occupational commitment, and the construct validity and reliability
   of the Psychological Well-being scales for a sample of teachers in Hong Kong;

2. Examine the nature and level of commitment and psychological well-being among a
   sample of teachers in Hong Kong; and
3. Examine the relationships between affective, normative and continuance commitment to organization (school) and occupation (teaching), and their relationships to psychological well-being.

**Method**

**Participants**

The participants of this study were 859 Hong Kong teachers from 15 primary and 15 secondary schools located in a cross section of educational regions in Hong Kong. Of these participants, 295 (34.3%) were males and 560 (65.2%) were females, (4 or .4% failed to indicate their sex). The mean age was 43 years \( (SD = 43.09) \) and the median age was 40 years old. The average year of teaching experience was 15.15 with a range of 1-40 years. In terms of family income, there were 13.50% whose income ranged from 15,000 – 29,999 HKD; 35.97% from 30,000 – 49,999 HKD and 47.26% from 50,000 – 79,999 HKD. The remaining 3.27% failed to indicate their family income. In terms of highest education attainment, 2.44% of participants completed diploma or associate degrees, 51.29% completed college degrees, 44.47% completed master’s degrees, 0.6% received doctoral degrees while 1.8% did not indicate their highest education attained.

**Measures**

*Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment*. An adaptation of The Affective, Continuance, and Normative Organizational and Occupational Commitment Scales (Meyer,
Allen, & Smith, 1993) was used to measure teacher commitment. Commitment has three components: affective, continuance, and normative.

**affective** – defined as the employee’s positive emotional attachment. Affective commitment has the following dimensions: affective commitment to occupation (3 items, e.g. “Being in the teaching profession is important to my image”) and affective commitment to the organization (3 items, e.g. “I do not feel like part of the family at my school”).

**continuance** – defined as the employee’s attachment due to the perceived high cost of leaving such as retirement benefits and leave benefits and lack of alternatives. Continuance commitment has the following dimensions: continuance commitment to occupation (3 items, e.g. “Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do”), and continuance commitment to organization (3 items, e.g., “It would be very hard for me to leave my school right now, even if I wanted to”).

**normative** – defined as an employee’s attachment due to feelings of obligation, loyalty, and duty. Normative has the following dimensions: normative commitment to the occupation (3 items, “I feel a responsibility to the teaching profession to continue in it”) and normative commitment to the organization (3 items “This school deserves my loyalty”).

Note that the original scales had six items each (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993), but because the full survey contained a number of other dimensions measuring a wide range of teacher attributes it was decided to reduce the number of items used for brevity and ease of completion.
by the teachers. In order to reduce the number of items we selected the three highest loading items from the Meyer et al CFA analyses. A five-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) was used for the Affective, Continuance, and Normative Organizational and Occupational Commitment Scales.

_Psychological Well-Being at Work._ Psychological well-being at work is comprised of five dimensions (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2011). These include _interpersonal fit at work_ – perception of experiencing positive relationships with individuals interacting with oneself within the work context (5 items, e.g. “I value the people I work with”), _thriving at work_ – perception of accomplishing a significant and interesting job that allows one to fulfill oneself as an individual (5 items, e.g. “I find my job exciting”), _feeling of competency_ – perception of possessing the necessary aptitudes to do one’s job efficiently and have mastery of the tasks to perform (5 items, e.g. “I know I am capable of doing my job”), _perceived recognition at work_ – perception of being appreciated within the organization for one’s work and one’s personhood (5 items, e.g. “I feel that my work is recognized”), and _desire for involvement at work_ – will to involve oneself in the organization and to contribute to its functioning and success (5 items, e.g. “I want to take initiative in my work”).

A 7-point Likert-type scale was used for Psychological Well-Being self-report questionnaires ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) with higher values indicating a greater degree of endorsement.
Procedures

The original commitment to occupation and organizational scales were designed for the nursing profession and each question referred to the nursing profession. In order to make the questionnaire appropriate to teachers and schools a slight adaptation was made to the scales by adding the word ‘school’ or ‘teaching profession’ to the stems of the questions. This approach was consistent with the suggestion of Meyer et al., (1993). Teachers contributing to this study were invited to complete a paper and pen version of the survey. Teachers were given the choice to answer the surveys in English or Chinese. However, all teachers chose to answer the Chinese versions. The Chinese version of the scale had been translated from the English using forward and backward translation procedures (Maneesriwongul & Dixon, 2004).

Statistical analysis

In order to establish construct validity evidence for the hypothesized six-factor structure of the Affective, Continuance and Normative Occupational and Organizational Commitment Scales and the five-factor Psychological Well-being scales for use with Hong Kong teachers we conducted a series of CFAs using AMOS 16 (Arbuckle, 2007).

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the six dimensions of teacher commitment and the various indices of psychological well-being. Teacher commitment to organization (affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment) and to occupation (affective commitment, normative commitment,
continuance commitment) were used as predictor variables while psychological well-being (interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency perceived recognition at work, desire for involvement at work) served as the criterion variables.

In order to control for any effects of gender, income and educational level, these three variables were entered at the first step of the regression equation as covariates. Following procedures used by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993), we entered commitment to organization at the second step. At step 3, we entered commitment to occupation. We were interested to know whether commitment to occupation would account for a significant amount of variance in predicting psychological well-being of Hong Kong teachers after controlling for the effects of demographics and commitment to organization. Recall that in the study of Meyer et al., (1993), they controlled for commitment to organization to evaluate if subscales of commitment to occupation are independent constructs which can contribute uniquely in predicting work behavior. Therefore, in this paper we adopted a similar approach.

Results

Preliminary analyses

We checked the normality of data by first assessing the skewness and kurtosis values for each item. Absolute values of skewness and kurtosis beyond 2 and 7, respectively, may imply a lack of univariate normality (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). A look at the skewness and kurtosis values showed that there does not seem to be a violation of normality assumptions. We also
checked for outliers by looking at the Mahalanobis distance ($D^2$). Values that stand
distinctively apart from other values can be considered outliers. No such outliers were found.

Maximum likelihood was used as the method of estimation.

Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients and correlations among study variables are
shown in Table 1. Internal consistency for each scale was established by calculating
Cronbach’s alpha coefficients. Subscales of the Affective, Continuance, and Normative
Organizational and Occupational Commitment scales had alpha values ranging from .67 to .85.
Subscales of the Well-Being scale had alpha values ranging from .75 to .92. The internal
consistency of the scales were generally acceptable.

An examination of the means for the commitment scales indicated that the two highest
ranked scales in order of mean size were normative commitment to the organization followed
by normative commitment to the occupation. The two lowest ranked scales were continuance
commitment to the occupation followed by continuance commitment to the organization. The
mean distribution of the commitment scales was quite wide ranging from 5.24 for normative
commitment to the organization and the lowest, 3.61 for continuance commitment to the
organization.

Mean scores for the psychological well-being scales did not have a large range with the
highest endorsed scale being thriving at work ($M=5.13$) and the least endorsed scale being
perceived recognition at work ($M=4.62$).
An examination of the zero order correlations showed that continuance commitment to
the organisation was negatively related to all other commitment subscales (range -.24 to -.64,
$p<.001$), and negatively related to all five psychological well-being scales (range -.24 to -.57,
$p<.001$). Normative commitment to the organization was positively related to all other
variables (range $r = .17$ to $r = .89$, $p < .001$) except for continuance commitment to organization
to which it was negatively related ($r = -.24$, $p < .001$). Affective commitment to the
organization was significantly and positively related to normative and continuance
commitment to organization, affective and normative commitment to occupation, interpersonal
fit at work, thriving at work (range $r = .10$ to $r = .48$, $p < .01$ to $p < .005$) and negatively related to
continuance commitment to the occupation and feelings of competency (range -.14 to -.44,
$p < .001$). Of particular interest is the negative relationship between continuance commitment to
the organization and psychological well-being, and the positive relationship between
continuance commitment to occupation and psychological well-being.

***Insert Table 1 about here

Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analyses for the two scales indicated good fit: commitment scale:
($\chi^2 = 799.596$, df=118, RMSEA= .08, TLI=.90, CFI=.91, NFI=.90, IFI=.91); and psychological
well-being scale: ($\chi^2 = 1965.10$, df=254; RMSEA=.08, TLI=90, CFI=.93, NFI=.92, IFI=93).

All factor loadings were significant at the $p < .001$ level (Byrne, 2010; MacCallum et al., 1996).
Additional CFA investigated the fit of alternative model for commitment: a one-factor model in which all commitment items loaded onto one factor: ($\chi^2 = 3638.207$, df=135, RMSEA=.17, TLI=.49, CFI=.55, NFI=.54, IFI=.55). Similarly, we also tested a one-factor alternative model for psychological well-being in which all items load into one factor ($\chi^2 = 4274.882$, df=275, RMSEA=.13, TLI=.74, CFI=.76, NFI=.75, IFI=.76). The fit indexes indicated that none of the alternative models provided a good fit to the data and suggest that the five-factor model of psychological well-being and the six-factor model of teacher commitment provided a better fit than any of the alternative models.

**Regression analyses**

In order to examine the relationships between affective, normative and continuance commitment to organization and occupation, and their relationships to psychological well-being, we conducted a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. To control for the effects of different demographic backgrounds of the teachers we entered three demographic variables (gender, income, and level of education) at the first step. These three variables accounted for a negligible amount of variance in the outcome measures of psychological well-being. At step 2, we entered the subscales of the teacher commitment to organization (affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment). These three variables were able to explain a significant amount of variance across the five outcome variables, ranging from 36% to 81.8%. An analysis of the beta weights indicates that
across the five psychological well-being scales normative commitment to the organization was consistently the strongest predictor. Specifically at step 2, *normative commitment to organization* was the strongest predictor of all psychological well-being subscales: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work and desire for involvement at work. This was followed by affective commitment to the organization (predicting feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work, and desire for involvement at work). Continuance commitment to the organization negatively predicted interpersonal fit at work and thriving at work, while positively predicting feeling of competency and desire for involvement at work. In step 3, the subscales of the teacher commitment to occupation (affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment) were entered. The addition of these variables contributed a small, yet significant amount to the overall variance explained by the equation across the five psychological well-being scales (from 3.4% to 18.2%) after controlling for the effect of demographic variables and organizational commitment.

The full block of variables explained from 54.4% to 89.9% of the variance across the five outcome variables. Based upon the ranked order of standardized beta weights normative commitment to the organization and normative commitment to the occupation were the strongest predictors of psychological well-being. Affective commitment to the organization and the occupation was a weak positive predictor of psychological well-being, although
affective commitment to the occupation was the strongest predictor of interpersonal fit at work.

Continuance commitment to the occupation was not a strong predictor except for desire for involvement at work. Continuance commitment was a negative predictor of interpersonal fit at work and thriving at work

The order of entry of variables in hierarchical regression may provide different patterns of prediction (Ho, 2006). It is possible that, although we entered our blocks of variables following the logic of Meyer et al. (1993), the order of entry of the commitment variables blocks (organization and occupation) could be reversed with occupational commitment variables being entered first, followed by the organizational commitment variables. To examine the independent effects of the occupational variables when not controlling for the organization variables we entered the occupational variables as a second block after the demographic variables. What clearly emerged from this analysis was the importance of normative values, with normative commitment to the occupation being the strongest predictor across all five psychological well-being variables. Indeed, across the five sets of analyses there were very few significant predictor variables other than for the normative commitment to occupation.

This strongly supports the results of the previous analyses.

Discussion
The primary aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between Hong Kong teachers’ affective, normative and continuance commitments and their relationships to psychological well-being. In order to do this we had to evaluate the construct validity and reliability of the three-component model of organizational and occupational commitment and psychological well-being scales for a sample of teachers in Hong Kong. We also wished to examine the nature and level of commitment and psychological well-being among these teachers.

Our initial CFA analyses demonstrated commitment is multi-dimensional, comprising three of elements: affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC) and continuance commitment (CC). Commitment can also be construed either as commitment to the organization or commitment to the teaching profession. It also appears from an analysis of the mean scores that the teachers in our sample self-report good interpersonal fit at work ($M = 4.85$), thrive at work ($M = 5.13$), feel competent ($M = 4.73$), are recognized ($M = 4.62$), and desire to be involved with work ($M = 4.72$). Although we expected continuance commitment to be highly endorsed, it was the least endorsed commitment of the three-component model. An analysis of the means for each of the six commitment subscales shows, in contrast to our expectations, that continuance commitment (that is an attachment to the organization or occupation because of the perceived high costs of leaving the organization or occupation), was the least endorsed ($M = 3.61$; refer to Table 1).
Normative commitment (that is an attachment to the organization and occupation because of feelings of obligation, loyalty and duty), was the most highly endorsed. This suggests, in line with our hypothesis, that the teachers in our sample had high levels of loyalty and obligation towards their career. Affective commitment was also highly endorsed but not as high as normative. Our finding is consistent with the earlier finding of Fischer and Mansell’s (2009) meta-analysis which showed that normative commitment is more salient in societies with high degrees of collectivism, compliance to authority, and power distance which is the case for the Hong Kong Chinese culture (Hofstede, 1993; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Tseng, 2004).

In line with our hypothesis, the zero order correlations showed that continuance commitment to the organization (measured by items such as ‘I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this school’) was negatively related to all five psychological well-being scales and to all other commitment scales. This indicates that to the extent one is motivated by continuance commitment the more negative the effect on psychological well-being, affect towards teaching, and normative commitment to teaching. This finding expands previous research on the negative relationship between continuance commitment to organization and job performance and organizational citizenship behavior and positive relationship with stress and work-family conflict (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer et al., 2012).

Using hierarchical regression, we were able to demonstrate that both commitment to the
organization and commitment to the occupation predicted psychological well-being even when controlling for demographic variables. In line with expectations, normative commitment to the organization was found to be the most important positive predictor of well-being. Normative commitment is believed to develop as the result of socialization experiences that underscores the appropriateness of remaining loyal to one’s employer (Winner, 1982). Normative commitment to organization was the most significant predictor of all psychological well-being variables involving Hong Kong teachers: interpersonal fit at work, thriving at work, feeling of competency, perceived recognition at work and desire for involvement at work. In other words, teachers’ feelings of loyalty and responsibility to remain in the teaching profession as a function of normative pressures, social ties and in-group goals (e.g., Near, 1989; Randall, 1993) enhance their psychological well-being.

Normative commitment may be triggered by employees’ experiences either prior to and following entry to work (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer et al., 2012; Weiner, 1982). While research findings among Western samples consistently suggest the importance of affective commitment in influencing organization- and employee-relevant outcomes (e.g., Eisinga, et al., 2010; Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001), our present findings demonstrate that for Hong Kong teachers, normative commitment was more important in determining their psychological well-being. This suggests the importance of understanding the influence of cultural elements in the study of commitment to organizations and occupations.
Cross-cultural research has shown that normative commitment is greater in collectivist and/or high power distance cultures (Hofstede, 2001; Meyer et al., 2012) such as Hong Kong while affective commitment is higher in more individualistic cultures. In fact, it is assumed that greater collectivism (setting personal interest aside in favor of group interest) is associated with higher degree of normative commitment (Fischer & Mansell, 2009). Our result on the importance of normative commitment in determining the well-being of Hong Kong Chinese teachers speaks to the importance of understanding commitment within the lens of individualism-collectivism dimension of cultural variability. Building on this, it may be conjectured that the promotion of loyalty and obligation to the workplace may enhance psychological well-being among Hong Kong teachers. It seems that their high regard for norms and duties imposed by collective entities reflective of their normative commitment promotes their psychological well-being at work. Of course, the converse may be true; teachers with high levels of psychological well-being may also be the ones who develop stronger loyalty to their organizations. A longitudinal study is needed to test out the direction of effect.

We had thought that continuance commitment to the organization and the occupation would be significant negative predictors of psychological well-being because the reasons for remaining in the profession such as ‘changing professions now would be difficult for me to do’ are rather extrinsically oriented. Research findings demonstrate that continuance
commitment is negatively related to job performance and organizational citizenship behavior that are beneficial to organizations or occupations (Meyer et al., 1993; Meyer et al., 2012).

We had assumed that there may be teachers in Hong Kong continuing to teach because it is too disruptive (i.e., losing salary and benefits earned for long years of service) for them to change to another profession. In general, continuance to the organization was a weaker predictor than normative commitment. In line with our hypothesis, continuance commitment to the organization was a negative predictor of interpersonal fit at work, and thriving at work. However, it was a positive predictor of feeling of competency and perceived recognition at work suggesting that measures of competence (such as ‘I know my value as a worker’) and recognition (such as ‘I feel that my work is recognised’) are stronger for those who are high in continuance commitment. This finding may have something to do with the Asian achievement goal structure suggesting that extrinsic motivation and performance goal are not always negative in effect for Asians (see for example Ng & Renshaw, 2002; Zhue & Leung, 2011).

Affective commitment to the organization did not predict interpersonal fit at work or thriving at work. It did however significantly and positively predict feeling of competency. It was a negative predictor of perceived recognition at work and desire for involvement at work, suggesting that those teachers who are positively emotionally aligned with their schools do not feel strong recognition and desire for involvement, a somewhat counter-intuitive finding.
It may be possible that teachers who are high in affective commitment to their organization might already be highly involved in school-work endeavors. Therefore, they may not want to have any extra involvement or earn extra recognition from doing their school duties.

Affective commitment to the occupation was generally a low order predictor; teachers having a high affective commitment to the occupation also had better interpersonal fit at work and feelings of competency. Although affective commitment was significantly related to well-being in terms of bivariate correlations (refer to Table 1) it did not become a significant predictor of psychological well-being in the multiple regression analyses which suggests that normative commitment is more salient than affective commitment in determining the well-being of Chinese teachers.

The ‘take home’ message from these analyses is the important role played by normative commitment to the organization and occupation in Hong Kong teachers’ psychological well-being. Teachers who feel their school deserves their loyalty, and feel they owe a great deal to their schools and the teaching profession, have stronger psychological well-being, they feel good fit with their profession, are proud of the job they have, feel confident at work, feel appreciated and want to contribute to achieving the goals of their schools. Normative commitment to both organization and occupation was, by far, the most important predictor. Hence, it is essential that school administrators provide teachers with a working environment that facilitates the development and maintenance of loyalty to both
their schools and the teaching profession in general.

Conversely, continuance commitment can have a negative influence on psychological well-being; hence the inducements to continue with teaching need to go beyond the mere constraints people assume they may have in changing professions. Finally, it is interesting to note that affective commitment, in contrast to some Western findings (Eisinga et al., 2010), was not a significant predictor for most variables, perhaps indicating that whether one feels emotionally attached or not to one’s school or profession is not so relevant in a culture in which values of loyalty and responsibility are paramount. This finding may be understood within the context of a collectivist culture (see Triandis, 2001) where a person’s identity is defined by his or her group membership.

This study showed commitment to organization functioned as an important predictor of teachers’ psychological well-being. In this way the study extends the existing literature by focusing on the consequences of teacher commitment. We found that commitment to organization and occupation (especially normative commitment) has an important impact on the psychological well-being of Hong Kong teachers. Specifically, Hong Kong teachers who express commitment through a sense of loyalty and responsibility to their school and the teaching profession have enhanced psychological well-being. This has important practical implications since social relationships may be more malleable to change through intervention compared to more stable trait variables. In the light of the findings, it is interesting to reflect
that commitment goes beyond simple compliance, emotional attachment to the organization is also important (Storey, 1995) emphasizing the importance of harnessing employees’ commitment.

Limitations and Future Directions

We would like to acknowledge a number of limitations. First, the data were obtained from self-reports, hence, may be subject to social desirability response bias and common method variance. Second, we posited a relationship from commitment scales to psychological well-being and tested this through hierarchical multiple regression. However, the direction of effect is open to further investigation. For example, the direction of effects may be from commitment to psychological well-being, from psychological well-being to commitment, or reciprocal. Longitudinal studies are needed to provide stronger evidence for the direction of the effects. Third, while every care was taken to translate the items into Chinese so that they retained the original meaning of the English items we can never be sure that the nuances of items and scales are retained in the Chinese version. Fourth, we averaged responses across all levels of respondents. A more refined study with a larger sample size could examine moderation effects associated with length of service (e.g., teachers in the profession longer may have stronger continuance commitment), type of school (church based schools may have different patterns from public schools), level of position (school administrators may have different patterns of commitment to class teachers), and by gender the interactions by length of
service. In the future, it would also be interesting to clarify the differential psychological well-being of teachers whose commitment is characterized as high normative and low affective in comparison with teachers whose commitment is characterized as low normative and high affective. It is equally interesting to explore the relationship between teacher commitment and intention to stay in school in the context of groups of teachers characterized as high normative in comparison with low normative. Finally, further exploration can be done on the cultural and/or group variability on teacher commitment to account for East-West differences using the Meyer’s et al., (1993) three-component model (TCM) of commitment to organizations and occupations.

Implications

This paper contributes to the existing literature by showing that both organizational and occupational commitment can be integrated in order to better understand the commitment of teachers. Rather than studying a single focus of commitment (i.e., organizations), we believe that a better grasp of commitment will be attained if commitment to occupations is also included in studies. While commitment theory has been widely tested in other industrial or organization settings this study provides evidence that commitment theory is applicable to understanding the dynamics of the commitment of teachers and how commitment relates to their psychological well-being.
Building on these findings, there are some clear practical implications which may inform school administrators and teachers themselves. To enhance the psychological well-being of Hong Kong teachers, it is essential to nurture a healthy organizational climate in schools. Our results demonstrate that commitment to occupation alone is insufficient to trigger the psychological well-being of Hong Kong teachers. More importantly, they must feel committed to the organization because this strongly influences psychological well-being in the workplace. In terms of practice, an understanding of Hong Kong teachers’ commitment should help inform school administrators on the ways in which multi-dimensions of commitment relate to psychological well-being, and using this information consider how they might further sustain and/or improve positive teacher commitment.
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Appendix A

Teacher Commitment Items

Affective commitment to the occupation
1. Being in the teaching profession is important to my self-image
2. I am proud to be in the teaching profession
3. I am enthusiastic about the teaching profession

Continuance commitment to the occupation
1. Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do
2. Too much of my life will be disrupted if I were to change my profession
3. Changing professions now would require considerable personal sacrifice

Normative commitment to the occupation
1. I feel a responsibility to the teaching profession to continue in it
2. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave the teaching profession now.
3. I am in the teaching profession because of a sense of loyalty to it

Affective commitment to the organization (reversed coded)
1. I do not feel like part of the family at my school
2. I do not feel emotionally attached to this school
3. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my school

Continuance commitment to the organization
1. It would be very hard for me to leave my school right now, even if I wanted to
2. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my school now
3. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this school

Normative commitment to the organization
1. This school deserves my loyalty
2. I would not leave my school right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it
3. I owe a great deal to my school
Appendix B

Psychological Well-being Items

Interpersonal fit at work
1. I value the people I work with
2. I enjoy working with the people at my job
3. I get along well with the people at my job
4. I feel that I am accepted as I am by the people I work with
5. I have a relationship of trust with the people at my job

Thriving at work
1. I find my job exciting
2. I like my job
3. I am proud of the job I have
4. I find meaning in my work.
5. I have a great sense of fulfillment at work

Feeling of competency
1. I feel confident at work
2. I feel effective and competent at work
3. I feel that I know what to do with my job
4. I know my value as a worker
5. I know I am capable of doing my job

Perceived recognition at work
1. I feel that my work efforts are appreciated
2. I know that people believe in the projects I work on
3. I feel that the people I work with recognize my abilities
4. I feel that's am a full member of my school
5. I feel that my work is recognized

Desire for involvement at work
1. I want to take initiative in my work
2. I care about the good functioning of my school
3. I like to take on challenges in my work
4. I want to contribute to achieving the goals of my school
5. I want to be involved in my school beyond my work duties
Table 1
Descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliability, and zero-order correlations among the variables

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Note: Bolded means are the two highest ranked means for commitment and psychological well-being. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
Table 2
Summary of hierarchical regression predicting dimensions of psychological well-being (standardized beta coefficients are shown)

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Step 2 change in $R^2$  .729***  .818***  .609***  .360***  .602***
Step 3 change in $R^2$  .072***  .062***  .034***  .182***  .072***
Total $R^2$  .814  .899  .656  .544  .682

Note: * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$
Table 3
Summary of hierarchical regression predicting dimensions of psychological well-being (standardized beta coefficients are shown)

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<td>.007</td>
<td>.086*</td>
<td>-.130**</td>
<td>.394***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment (Org)</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.058**</td>
<td>-.351***</td>
<td>-.433***</td>
<td>-.148***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative commitment (Org)</td>
<td>.301***</td>
<td>.374***</td>
<td>.466***</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>.512***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance commitment (Org)</td>
<td>-.202**</td>
<td>.129***</td>
<td>-.371***</td>
<td>.141***</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 1 change in R²  .013*     .018*     .013      .003      .008
Step 2 change in R²  .768***    .840***   .524***  .445***  .610***
Step 3 change in R²  .033***    .040***   .119***  .097***  .064***
Total R²              .814      .899      .656      .544      .682

Note: * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001
Table 4  
Summary of standardized beta coefficients ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Interpersonal fit at work</th>
<th>Thriving at work</th>
<th>Feeling of competency</th>
<th>Perceived recognition at work</th>
<th>Desire for involvement at work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank 1</td>
<td>ACOcc</td>
<td>NCOcc</td>
<td>NCOrg</td>
<td>NCOcc</td>
<td>NCOrg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 2</td>
<td>NCOrg</td>
<td>NCOrg</td>
<td>CCOrg</td>
<td>ACOrg (-)</td>
<td>CCOcc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 3</td>
<td>NCOcc</td>
<td>CCOrg (-)</td>
<td>ACOrg</td>
<td>CCOrg</td>
<td>NCOcc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 4</td>
<td>CCOrg (-)</td>
<td>ACOrg</td>
<td>NCOcc</td>
<td>CCOcc (-)</td>
<td>ACOrg (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 5</td>
<td>HEd (-)</td>
<td>ACOrg</td>
<td>CCOcc</td>
<td>ACOrg</td>
<td>HEd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 6</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>HEd</td>
<td>CCOcc</td>
<td>ACOrg</td>
<td>HEd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Affective commitment to the organization = ACOrg, Normative commitment to the organization = NCOrg, Continuance commitment to the organization = CCOrg; Affective commitment to the occupation = ACOcc, Normative commitment to the occupation = NCOcc, Continuance commitment to occupation = CCOcc; Highest education = HEd