

Teacher Teaching Commitment and Its Influence on Teacher Morale: A Survey Study in Catholic Elementary Schools of Merauke

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<p>Corresponding Author Basilius Redan Werang</p> <p>Ganesha University of Education, Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia</p> <p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 16 / 06 / 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 29 / 10 / 2025</p> <p>Published: 06 / 11 / 2025</p>	<p>Abstract:</p> <p>Background: The different levels of teacher morale across elementary schools deserve particular attention, as they have important implications for students' engagement, behavior, and academic outcomes, as well as for teachers' job satisfaction and emotional well-being.</p> <p>Objective: This study aimed to explore the influence of teacher teaching commitment on their morale in Catholic elementary schools in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia.</p> <p>Method: We utilized a survey research approach to obtain data from a total of 95 Catholic elementary school teachers in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia. Obtained data were analyzed statistically using a simple linear regression analysis by employing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 25.</p> <p>Findings: The results of data analysis reveal a positive and significant effect of teacher teaching commitment on their morale in Catholic elementary school teachers in Merauke, South Papua, and Indonesia.</p> <p>Implication for Practice and Research: The findings highlight the need for school leaders and education policymakers to foster teacher commitment through supportive work environments, professional development opportunities, and recognition of teachers' contributions. Strengthening teachers' commitment may enhance their morale, which in turn can positively influence student outcomes and the overall quality of education in Catholic elementary schools.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>teacher teaching commitment, teacher morale, Catholic elementary schools.</i></p>
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Introduction

The overall quality of education largely depends on the morale and well-being of teachers, as they serve as the primary motivators and sources of support for students. According to Webster's Dictionary (2025), teacher morale refers to the mental and emotional state of teachers, typically reflected in their behavior and motivation to perform their duties. Bentley and Rempel (1970) describe teacher morale as a sense of satisfaction that arises when teachers perceive their efforts as meaningful and their personal and professional needs as adequately fulfilled. In general, teacher morale reflects the extent to which teachers maintain a positive and supportive attitude toward their institution, encompassing their perceptions of school leadership and collegial relationships. It involves elements such as trust, self-esteem, pride in professional accomplishments, and confidence in both leadership and the overall success of the institution.

Teacher morale may be high-or-low. High levels of teacher morale reflect a positive organizational culture in which teachers feel valued, engaged, and motivated to perform their duties

effectively (Evans, 1997; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Werang et al., 2023). Such morale is often associated with strong team cohesion, open communication, and a shared sense of purpose and accomplishment (Sergiovanni, 1996; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Werang, 2014), all of which contribute to enhanced instructional quality and improved student learning outcomes. Conversely, low teacher morale is typically characterized by reduced productivity, diminished motivation, and weakened professional commitment, which may ultimately lead to teachers' intentions to leave their current positions or even the profession as a whole (Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Bogler & Nir, 2012).

As a vital element of school effectiveness, teacher morale has been shown to influence teachers' motivation and classroom performance (Abazaoğlu & Aztekin, 2016; Ehineni, 2017; Samsudin et al., 2025; Sundari & Raja, 2017; Suryani et al., 2025). Teacher morale, however, does not develop in isolation. It is shaped by a variety of factors, including administrative support, collegial relationships, the quality of leadership demonstrated by

school principals, and, most importantly, teacher teaching commitment itself. A teacher’s teaching commitment refers to the extent of a teacher’s psychological attachment to the profession, characterized by a strong belief in its value, a willingness to exert significant effort to fulfill professional responsibilities, and a sustained dedication to promoting student success and remaining actively engaged in the teaching profession.

Teachers’ teaching commitment plays a vital role in enhancing student achievement, improving the overall quality of education, fostering a positive learning environment, and strengthening the teaching profession itself (Werang et al., 2022). It is a key factor in the success of schools and the advancement of the broader educational system. Teachers with high levels of commitment are more likely to build strong, respectful relationships with their students, forming the foundation for effective and meaningful learning. In contrast, teachers with weak commitment may struggle to maintain enthusiasm and engagement in their teaching, potentially leading to reduced student motivation and lower educational outcomes.

Although numerous studies have highlighted the significant influence of teacher teaching commitment on teacher morale (Asy’ari et al., 2021; Simamora et al., 2023; Werang et al., 2023; Wolomasi et al., 2019), most have been conducted in urban or general contexts, with limited attention to schools located in remote or culturally diverse regions. In Indonesia—particularly in the eastern region of South Papua—empirical research on this topic remains scarce. Catholic elementary schools in Merauke offer a distinctive context in which teacher commitment is shaped not only by organizational and pedagogical factors but also by religious values and local cultural norms. These contextual dimensions may uniquely influence both teachers’ levels of commitment and their overall morale. However, little is known about how teacher teaching commitment specifically affects teacher morale in these settings. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into strategies that enhance teacher well-being, motivation, and professional engagement within faith-based and culturally diverse educational environments. Furthermore, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on educational development in Indonesia by emphasizing the importance of context-sensitive approaches that promote positive school climates and sustainable teacher commitment.

To address this research gap, the present study investigates the influence of teacher teaching commitment on their morale in Catholic elementary schools in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research question: *Does teacher teaching commitment have a significant positive effect on the morale of teachers working in Catholic elementary schools in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia?* To address the research question, a quantitative research approach employing a survey design was adopted.

Method

This study aimed to analyze the influence of teachers’ teaching commitment on the morale of Catholic elementary school teachers in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia. To achieve this objective, a quantitative research approach with a survey design was employed, as it allows for the collection of objective data that can be quantified and statistically analyzed. This design also enables the observation of the relationship between teachers’ teaching commitment and their morale (Burrell & Gross, 2017). Moreover, several recent studies (Jim et al., 2025; Werang et al., 2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d) have emphasized the advantages of survey research, including its cost-effectiveness in data collection, the ability to gather information efficiently and in real time, flexibility in administering instruments and managing responses, and the potential for generalizing findings across broader contexts.

Data were collected using two structured questionnaires designed to measure teacher teaching commitment and teacher morale. The questionnaires were distributed to 95 Catholic elementary school teachers, who were purposively selected as research participants. All questionnaire items were presented in Indonesian to ensure clear understanding among respondents. The collected data were analyzed using simple linear regression to examine the effect of teaching commitment on teacher morale. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the statistical results.

Results

As aforementioned, the data collected on teachers’ teaching commitment and morale were analyzed using simple linear regression. This analysis aimed to determine the extent to which teaching commitment influences the morale of Catholic elementary school teachers in Merauke. The results of the regression analysis, which revealed a significant positive effect of teaching commitment on teacher morale, are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Teacher Teaching Commitment and Its Effect on Teacher Morale

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.614 ^a	.376	.370	3.04527	.376	56.131	1	93	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teacher_Teaching_Commitment

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the correlation coefficient (R = .614) reflects a moderately strong positive relationship between teachers’ teaching commitment and their morale. This means that as teachers’ commitment to their teaching

duties increases, their level of morale tends to rise correspondingly. The R-square coefficient value of .376 reveals that approximately 37.6% of the variation in teacher morale can be explained by differences in teaching commitment. Furthermore, the Adjusted R Square value of .370 confirms the stability and reliability of this relationship after accounting for the sample size and the number of

predictors included in the model. The F_{Change} coefficient value of 56.131 with $p < .001$ further indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. In other words, teaching commitment significantly predicts teacher morale among Catholic elementary school teachers in Merauke, Indonesia. The standard error of estimate (3.04527) suggests a moderate level of prediction accuracy.

Discussion

Teachers' teaching commitment plays a crucial role in shaping not only their own morale but also students' academic achievement and overall learning experience. This study examined the effect of teachers' teaching commitment on their morale among Catholic elementary school teachers in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia. The results revealed a significant positive effect of teachers' teaching commitment on their morale, with an R-Square value of 0.376 and a significance level of 0.001. This indicates that approximately 37.6% of the variation in teacher morale can be explained by differences in teaching commitment. In other words, teachers who demonstrate stronger commitment to their instructional responsibilities tend to exhibit higher morale, while those with lower commitment report correspondingly lower morale.

These findings align with those of Werang et al. (2019) and Werang et al. (2023), who also reported that teachers' teaching commitment significantly and positively predicts teacher morale. Collectively, these studies suggest that committed teachers are more likely to display enthusiasm, job satisfaction, and a strong sense of professional fulfillment—factors that contribute to sustained morale and motivation in the workplace. Teachers who exhibit high levels of commitment often devote additional time and effort to lesson planning, classroom management, and crafting meaningful learning experiences. When teachers teach with passion and enthusiasm, their attitudes tend to encourage greater student engagement, improved performance, and higher classroom satisfaction. Thus, strengthening teachers' commitment is not only essential for maintaining teacher morale but also for advancing the broader goals of educational quality and student success.

Taken together, the present findings and previous studies underscore the interconnectedness of leadership, teacher commitment, morale, and student achievement. Fostering teachers' professional commitment is therefore a critical strategy for enhancing morale and promoting effective learning environments that support both teacher well-being and student success.

Conclusion

Based on the result of data analysis, it can be concluded that teacher teaching commitment has a positive and significant effect on the morale among Catholic elementary school teachers in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia. In practical terms, this finding suggests that teachers who demonstrate greater dedication and professional commitment are more likely to experience higher morale, motivation, and overall satisfaction in their work.

Despite the valuable insights derived from this study, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the correlational design of the research limits the ability to establish causality. Although teaching commitment and morale were found to be strongly related, it cannot be concluded that higher commitment directly causes increased morale; it is equally plausible that teachers with higher morale demonstrate greater commitment.

Second, the study may be affected by self-report bias, as participants' responses could reflect socially desirable attitudes rather than their actual behaviors or emotions. Third, the scope of variables was limited to teaching commitment as a predictor, excluding other potential factors that may influence morale, such as leadership practices, school culture, compensation, or student behavior. Finally, the generalizability of the findings may be constrained, given that the sample was drawn exclusively from Catholic elementary schools in Merauke, South Papua, Indonesia.

Future research should address these limitations by incorporating a more diverse range of variables, employing longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to explore causal relationships, and expanding the sample to include teachers from different regions, school types, and educational contexts. Such efforts would enhance the robustness and applicability of findings related to teachers' teaching commitment and morale.

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