



Enhancing public school quality in Toraja: The role of teacher well-being, competence, and commitment

Mesta Limbong¹, Bintang Simbolon^{1*}, Dian Hidayati², Nikodemus Saung¹

¹ Department of Education Administration, Universitas Kristen, Indonesia

² Department of Education Management, Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

This study aims to examine the contribution of teacher well-being, competence, and commitment to the quality improvement of public schools in Toraja, Indonesia. Employing a quantitative approach, the research involved 87 teachers selected from public schools through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire encompassing 81 items across four constructs: school quality, teacher well-being, teacher competence, and teacher commitment. The instruments were validated through expert judgment and analyzed using the Rasch model and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that teacher well-being has a significant positive impact on school quality ($R^2 = 0.6267$), indicating that teachers who experience greater well-being are more likely to contribute to improved educational outcomes. Teacher competence was also found to positively influence school quality ($R^2 = 0.5801$), although it showed the lowest contribution among the three independent variables, suggesting a need for professional development in this area. Meanwhile, teacher commitment showed a moderate yet significant effect ($R^2 = 0.62$), reinforcing the importance of emotional engagement and responsibility in educational performance. Collectively, the three variables contributed 84% ($R^2 = 0.84$) to the variance in school quality, highlighting their combined influence in shaping institutional excellence. The study suggests that increasing teacher well-being and strengthening professional competence and commitment are essential strategies for enhancing public school performance. These findings offer practical implications for policymakers, educational leaders, and teacher training programs aimed at improving school effectiveness through teacher-centered interventions.

Keywords: Teacher well-being, teacher competence, teacher commitment, school quality, public education

Introduction

In recent years, growing attention has been directed toward the factors that influence school quality, particularly in developing regions. Among these, teacher-related variables have emerged as critical components in driving educational excellence [1, 2, 3]. The well-being, competence, and commitment of teachers are increasingly recognized as essential contributors to effective teaching and learning environments, especially in public school systems situated in geographically and economically diverse areas such as Toraja, Indonesia [4, 5].

Teacher well-being encompasses physical, emotional, social, and psychological dimensions that affect a teacher's performance and engagement. Prior studies have shown that low levels of teacher well-being are often associated with job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and attrition, which, in turn, compromise the overall educational quality delivered to students [6]. Research in developed contexts, such as the United States and Europe, has highlighted how improved well-being leads to higher motivation and greater teacher retention. However, such dynamics remain underexplored in rural and semi-rural regions in Southeast Asia, where systemic and economic challenges persist.

In addition to well-being, teacher competence—covering pedagogical, personal, professional, and social dimensions—is fundamental to instructional effectiveness. Competent teachers are better able to design inclusive and impactful learning experiences, respond to student needs, and foster a culture of academic excellence [7, 8]. The Indonesian Teacher and Lecturer Law (Undang-Undang No. 14 Tahun 2005) mandates four core competencies, yet the extent to which these are consistently demonstrated across

public schools remains variable, especially in areas where access to continuous professional development is limited. Teacher commitment, defined as the psychological attachment and dedication to professional responsibilities, also plays a pivotal role in educational quality [9]. Highly committed teachers are more resilient, adaptive, and driven to support student growth despite institutional constraints. Commitment fosters a sense of responsibility toward school goals, enhances collaboration, and encourages sustainable teaching practices. In many public schools in Indonesia, commitment is often tested by insufficient resources, large class sizes, and limited administrative support [10, 11].

This study seeks to examine the combined and individual contributions of teacher well-being, competence, and commitment to school quality in the context of public schools in Toraja. By identifying the degree to which these factors influence educational outcomes, the research aims to offer data-driven insights for policymakers, school leaders, and teacher education programs in designing more effective interventions for educational improvement in rural Indonesia.

Literature Review

Teacher well-being has increasingly become a subject of international concern, particularly in light of rising teacher attrition, stress, and burnout. Defined as a multidimensional construct involving emotional, psychological, and social wellness, teacher well-being significantly influences job satisfaction, classroom management, and student achievement. Time pressure and low institutional support were major stressors contributing to reduced teacher engagement and increased intention to leave the profession

[12, 13]. Although teacher well-being improved slightly during the COVID-19 recovery phase in the U.S., many educators continued to report lower well-being than professionals in other sectors [14, 15, 16].

In the Indonesian context, teacher well-being is often compromised by limited income, job insecurity, and heavy workloads, especially among contract or honorary teachers. According to a national survey by the Indonesian Teachers Association, 94% of non-civil servant teachers earn below the living wage threshold. These economic challenges affect not only their quality of life but also their motivation and presence in the classroom [17, 18]. Consequently, enhancing well-being through financial, social, and psychological support mechanisms is crucial for maintaining a stable and effective teaching workforce.

Competence among educators refers to their ability to integrate pedagogical knowledge, content expertise, and professional disposition in teaching practices. The Indonesian Teacher and Lecturer Law (Law No. 14/2005) mandates four core competencies: pedagogical, personal, professional, and social. Each of these dimensions contributes to a teacher's capacity to support diverse learners, manage classrooms effectively, and engage in reflective practices.

Previous studies have consistently shown a positive correlation between teacher competence and student outcomes. The importance of ongoing professional learning and contextual responsiveness in strengthening teacher competence [19]. In Indonesia, it is found that both professional and social competencies significantly influenced the success of bilingual classrooms [20]. However, disparities in access to training and resource allocation across regions present a major challenge in ensuring equitable teacher competence.

Teacher commitment encompasses the emotional and moral investment teachers make toward their profession, school, and students. Committed teachers demonstrate a high sense of responsibility, persistence, and willingness to overcome barriers to student learning. Teacher commitment is driven not only by institutional expectations but also by an internal motivation to build affective bonds with students and the school community. The literature suggests that teacher commitment is associated with increased instructional quality, student engagement, and overall school effectiveness. Commitment stems from personal values such as care, empathy, and integrity, which influence the educator's professional conduct and resilience. In practice, commitment can be seen in consistent attendance, preparedness, willingness to innovate, and participation in school-wide initiatives [21, 22, 23, 24].

School quality is a multifaceted concept that includes academic outcomes, learning environments, leadership, and stakeholder satisfaction. As comprising quality control, quality assurance, and quality management. In this framework, teacher-related factors function as inputs that directly influence institutional outputs [25, 26]. Empirical findings in Toraja, Indonesia, indicate that teacher well-being, competence, and commitment collectively contribute to school quality. Regression analysis in the present study shows a combined explanatory power of 84%, emphasizing the critical role these variables play in shaping educational outcomes. Thus, any effort to improve school performance must address not only structural reforms but also the

professional and personal dimensions of teacher development.

Research Method

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between teacher well-being, competence, and commitment, and the quality of public schools in Toraja, Indonesia. The research used a correlational approach with multiple regression analysis to determine both individual and combined contributions of the independent variables to school quality.

The target population consisted of public-school teachers in Toraja. Using purposive sampling, 87 teachers were selected based on shared characteristics such as certification status, teaching experience, and school type. Although the sample did not reach the ideal size based on Krejcie and Morgan's table due to geographical constraints, it was considered representative of the region's teacher demographics.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 81 items across four constructs: a) Teacher Well-being (items 21–41); b) Teacher Competence (items 42–65); c) Teacher Commitment (items 66–81); d) School Quality (items 1–20). All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument underwent expert validation and was tested for reliability and construct validity using the Rasch model. This model was chosen for its capacity to yield interval-level measurements and its robustness in analyzing latent constructs with relatively small sample sizes. Data were collected between October and November 2024. Respondents completed the questionnaires in-person under the supervision of the research team. Ethical clearance was obtained, and participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data and examine the predictive power of teacher well-being, competence, and commitment on school quality. The analysis also tested for multicollinearity, normality, and linearity to ensure the robustness of the model. The Rasch model was applied using Winsteps software to validate item reliability, difficulty indices, and item-person fit.

Results

Data for this study were collected from 87 public school teachers in Toraja, Indonesia, between October and November 2024, using a self-administered structured questionnaire consisting of 81 Likert-scale items. The instrument measured four key variables: teacher well-being, competence, commitment, and school quality. Prior to distribution, the instrument was reviewed by experts and validated using the Rasch model, ensuring both reliability and unidimensionality. Ethical clearance was obtained from the affiliated institution, and confidentiality of responses was ensured.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression techniques through SPSS and Winsteps. The sample was composed of 71% female and 29% male teachers. Most participants held a bachelor's degree (S1), with the remainder holding master's degrees (S2). Teaching experience among participants varied, offering diverse perspectives regarding their roles and experiences in public education settings. These demographic variations were considered in the interpretation of statistical outcomes.

Contribution of Teacher Well-being to School Quality

Regression analysis showed that teacher well-being had a significant linear relationship with school quality. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.6267, suggesting that teacher well-being alone accounted for 62.7% of the variance in school quality. This finding indicates that emotionally and psychologically satisfied teachers are more likely to foster effective educational environments.

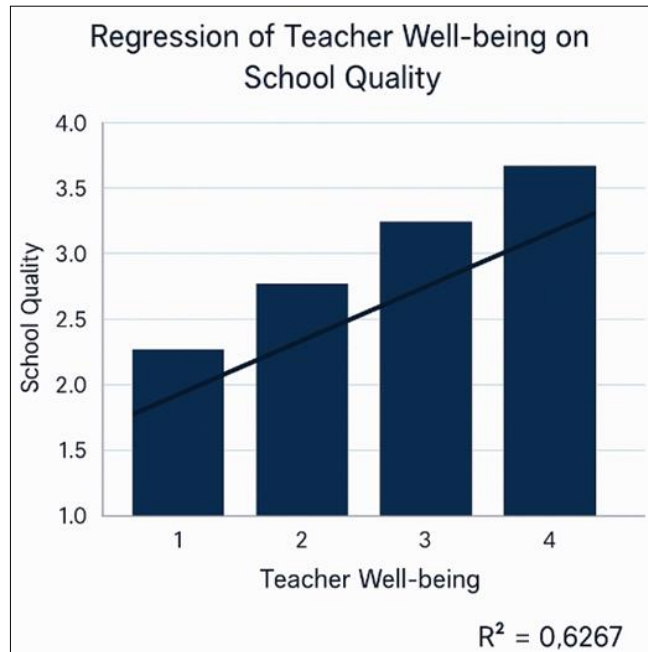


Fig 1: Regression of Teacher Well-being on School Quality

Figure 1 illustrates the direct relationship between teacher well-being and perceived school quality. The regression line demonstrates a strong positive slope, suggesting that as well-being increases, so does school quality. This supports the hypothesis that psychological fulfillment and job satisfaction among teachers translate into improved institutional performance.

Contribution of Teacher Competence to School Quality

Teacher competence also exhibited a statistically significant positive correlation with school quality, with an R^2 value of 0.5801. Although this level of contribution is substantial, it represents the lowest among the three independent variables measured in the study. This indicates that while teacher competence plays a meaningful role in enhancing educational outcomes, its effect is comparatively less dominant than that of well-being and commitment. Several factors may account for this finding. First, competence as a multidimensional construct—encompassing pedagogical knowledge, content mastery, classroom management, and interpersonal communication—requires ongoing support and reinforcement through professional development programs. In many rural and under-resourced regions such as Toraja, access to continuous training, mentoring, and updated pedagogical tools remains limited. As a result, teachers may find it challenging to consistently apply best practices or innovate in their instructional approaches.

Second, the practical application of competence is often mediated by contextual constraints. Even when teachers possess strong theoretical foundations, their ability to translate that competence into classroom effectiveness may

be hampered by large class sizes, lack of learning materials, minimal technological integration, or inadequate institutional leadership. These environmental limitations reduce the observable impact of teacher competence on school quality metrics. Moreover, some aspects of competence, such as reflective practice, curriculum adaptation, and differentiated instruction, may require systemic support and collaborative school cultures that are still underdeveloped in some public schools. Without a supportive environment that values and nurtures teacher professionalism, the full potential of competence cannot be actualized.

Therefore, while teacher competence remains a vital pillar in achieving school quality, its impact can only be optimized when supported by accessible capacity-building opportunities, adequate resources, and institutional encouragement. These findings suggest that policymakers and educational leaders should not only acknowledge competence as a critical factor but also invest in the structural conditions necessary for it to thrive.

Contribution of Teacher Commitment to School Quality

Teacher commitment demonstrated a notable impact, contributing 62% to the variance in school quality ($R^2 = 0.62$). This finding underscores the importance of psychological and emotional engagement in shaping school performance. Committed teachers are characterized by a strong sense of purpose, loyalty to institutional values, and a willingness to go beyond routine expectations to support students, colleagues, and the broader school mission. In the context of Toraja, where schools may face resource limitations and geographic isolation, teacher commitment becomes a critical driver of stability and continuity. Highly committed teachers are more likely to maintain instructional consistency, show resilience in the face of challenges, and actively participate in school development efforts. Their presence often correlates with stronger school culture, improved student behavior, and increased parental trust.

Furthermore, teacher commitment contributes not only to pedagogical outcomes but also to non-academic aspects of school quality, such as discipline management, extracurricular engagement, and staff collaboration. Teachers who exhibit emotional investment in their roles are more inclined to mentor struggling students, initiate innovative classroom practices, and foster inclusive environments that promote equity and empathy. However, the strength of commitment may be influenced by various institutional and cultural factors. In some cases, excessive administrative demands, limited recognition, or a lack of supportive leadership can erode long-term commitment, especially among younger or early-career teachers. Therefore, while commitment proves to be a powerful internal motivator, it must be sustained through external reinforcement—such as acknowledgment, career progression, and participatory decision-making. Teacher commitment is more than an abstract ideal; it is a measurable and impactful construct that directly correlates with school performance. As such, it should be strategically nurtured through supportive policies, positive school climates, and leadership practices that value teachers as key agents of educational transformation.

Combined Effects of All Three Predictors

When the three variables—teacher well-being, competence, and commitment—were analyzed simultaneously through

multiple regression, the resulting R^2 value was 0.84. This indicates that 84% of the variability in school quality was collectively explained by the three predictors. The regression model produced the following equation: School Quality = $0.099 + 0.385 \times \text{Well-being} + 0.264 \times \text{Competence} + 0.311 \times \text{Commitment}$

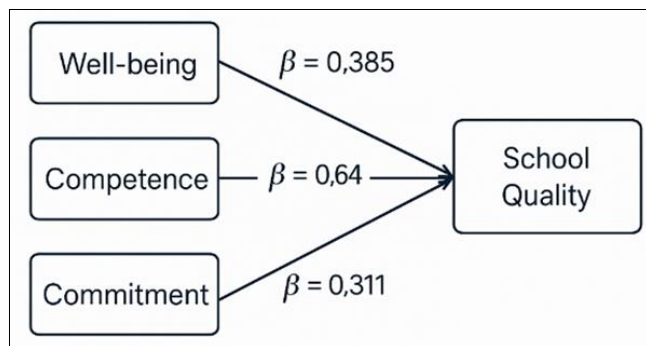


Fig 2: Conceptual Model of Teacher Factors Influencing School Quality

Figure 2 presents a visual model summarizing the contributions of each independent variable to school quality. Teacher well-being emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.385$), followed by teacher commitment ($\beta = 0.311$) and teacher competence ($\beta = 0.264$). The model highlights the complementary role of psychological, professional, and motivational dimensions in driving school performance.

The present study aimed to determine the extent to which teacher well-being, competence, and commitment contribute to the quality of public schools in Toraja. After conducting a series of descriptive and inferential analyses, this section outlines the major findings that directly address each of the four research questions. By aligning the statistical outputs with the study's objectives, these findings provide insight into how teacher-related factors influence institutional effectiveness in the context of rural Indonesian education.

a. Contribution of Teacher Well-being to School Quality

The first research question asked whether teacher well-being contributes to the improvement of public-school quality in Toraja. Based on the regression analysis, teacher well-being showed a statistically significant positive impact on school quality, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.6267. This suggests that approximately 63% of the variance in school quality can be attributed to teachers' psychological, emotional, and social satisfaction. Teachers who reported higher levels of well-being were also more engaged, motivated, and effective in their instructional roles, thereby fostering better learning environments. This strong relationship reflects the integral role of teacher well-being as a foundational factor in sustaining school effectiveness. Well-being enables teachers to maintain emotional regulation, resilience, and optimism, all of which are essential for navigating the complex demands of the classroom. In low-resource contexts like Toraja, where teaching conditions may include large class sizes, limited infrastructure, and administrative burden, a teacher's inner sense of wellness becomes even more crucial.

Empirical evidence also supports the idea that well-being enhances teacher-student relationships, reduces burnout, and improves professional satisfaction. Teachers who feel appreciated and balanced are more likely to stay in the

profession, commit to long-term development, and model positive behavior for their students. Moreover, well-being correlates with reduced absenteeism and improved collegial collaboration, both of which are important indicators of institutional health. However, maintaining high levels of teacher well-being requires systemic support. Without fair compensation, manageable workloads, opportunities for voice and participation, and emotional safety, even the most passionate teachers may experience decline in morale. Thus, while the findings affirm the predictive power of teacher well-being on school quality, they also highlight the urgent need for structural interventions that prioritize teacher health—both mental and material. In sum, enhancing teacher well-being is not a peripheral issue but a strategic imperative. Investing in teachers' psychological wellness directly strengthens the instructional core of the school and creates the conditions necessary for sustainable educational quality.

b. Contribution of Teacher Competence to School Quality

The second research question examined the influence of teacher competence on public school quality in Toraja. The analysis demonstrated that teacher competence contributed positively and significantly to school quality, with an R^2 value of 0.5801. This means that approximately 58% of the variance in school quality can be explained by the extent to which teachers possess and apply pedagogical, professional, and interpersonal competencies. Although this contribution was slightly lower than that of teacher well-being and commitment, it remains substantial, affirming that competence is a critical pillar of educational performance. Teacher competence includes the ability to design and implement effective learning strategies, manage diverse classrooms, communicate clearly with students and stakeholders, and reflect on teaching practices for continuous improvement. In the context of public schools in rural Indonesia, such as in Toraja, the practical application of competence is often challenged by limited access to updated resources, inadequate infrastructure, and scarce opportunities for sustained professional development.

The relatively lower score, when compared to the other two variables, may reflect structural issues that hinder the optimization of teacher competence in daily practice. For example, even highly capable teachers may struggle to exercise their skills effectively when faced with outdated teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, or a lack of institutional support. Furthermore, some schools may not yet foster a culture of peer learning or encourage pedagogical innovation, which are essential for the maturation of professional competence. This finding suggests a pressing need for strategic interventions in the form of targeted capacity-building programs. These may include mentoring, subject-based workshops, blended learning modules, and professional learning communities tailored to local school contexts. By addressing these gaps, educational stakeholders can strengthen the pedagogical core of the school and ensure that teacher competence directly translates into higher learning outcomes and broader institutional quality. While competence alone cannot guarantee educational transformation, it serves as an indispensable foundation upon which other dimensions—such as well-being and commitment—can exert their full impact. Its development must be prioritized within a

systemic framework that values teacher professionalism as a key agent of school improvement.

c. Contribution of Teacher Commitment to School Quality

The third research question focused on the contribution of teacher commitment to the quality of public schools in Toraja. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between teacher commitment and school quality, with a coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.62$). This indicates that approximately 62% of the variance in school quality is associated with the extent to which teachers exhibit dedication to their professional roles and institutional missions. Teacher commitment encompasses a sense of moral obligation, emotional investment, and long-term loyalty to both students and the broader school community. Teachers with high levels of commitment are more likely to demonstrate professional consistency, maintain high standards in lesson delivery, and remain proactive in addressing student needs—even under constrained conditions. Their engagement often manifests in a strong presence at school, regular participation in school initiatives, and a willingness to collaborate constructively with peers and leadership.

In educational environments marked by limited infrastructure and support—as is often the case in rural areas such as Toraja—teacher commitment becomes a stabilizing force. It compensates for material deficiencies by ensuring that the human element of schooling remains strong and reliable. Committed teachers serve as role models for students, providing continuity, empathy, and care that contribute to a supportive school climate. They also play a central role in sustaining community trust and engagement with the school. However, sustaining teacher commitment is not merely a matter of individual disposition. It is also shaped by institutional culture, leadership style, and perceived value within the organization. Schools that foster participatory decision-making, provide avenues for recognition, and ensure fair treatment are more likely to retain committed teachers. Conversely, environments that neglect teacher voice or overload staff with administrative tasks may erode even the most intrinsically motivated educators. Thus, commitment is not only a personal virtue but also a professional asset with tangible outcomes. Strengthening commitment requires intentional efforts from school leaders and policymakers to create environments where teachers feel respected, supported, and aligned with a shared educational purpose. When cultivated properly, teacher commitment becomes a powerful driver of school improvement.

d. Joint Contribution of Teacher Well-being, Competence, and Commitment

The final research question explored whether the three factors—teacher well-being, competence, and commitment—collectively contribute to school quality. The multiple regression analysis confirmed a robust combined effect, with the model explaining 84% of the variance in school quality ($R^2 = 0.84$). This high explanatory power underscores the interdependent and reinforcing nature of these teacher-related variables in shaping educational outcomes, particularly in the context of public schools in rural Indonesia. The derived regression equation was:

$$\text{School Quality} = 0.099 + 0.385 \times \text{Well-being} + 0.264 \times \text{Competence} + 0.311 \times \text{Commitment}$$

Among the three predictors, teacher well-being emerged as the most influential, indicated by the highest standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.385$). This suggests that psychological and emotional satisfaction has the strongest direct association with perceived school performance. However, teacher commitment ($\beta = 0.311$) and competence ($\beta = 0.264$) also contributed significantly, emphasizing that no single factor operates in isolation. These results highlight the need for holistic interventions that address both personal and professional dimensions of teaching. Improving school quality requires more than academic reforms or infrastructural improvements; it demands investment in the people who deliver education. Enhancing teacher well-being through better work-life balance, emotional support systems, and fair compensation creates a strong motivational foundation. Simultaneously, competence must be cultivated through ongoing training and mentorship, while commitment must be nurtured by building inclusive school cultures and visionary leadership.

The integration of these three variables into one predictive model provides an empirical framework for decision-makers. It affirms that efforts to raise school quality are most effective when strategies target multiple teacher dimensions simultaneously. Such an approach not only amplifies the impact of individual reforms but also ensures sustainable transformation rooted in teacher empowerment and institutional integrity.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm the centrality of teacher-related variables—well-being, competence, and commitment—in shaping the quality of public schools. The high combined explanatory power of these variables ($R^2 = 0.84$) offers robust empirical support for the theoretical premise that educational outcomes are closely tied to the human resources within schools. This section discusses each dimension in relation to previous studies and highlights implications for research and practice.

The strong association between teacher well-being and school quality ($R^2 = 0.6267$) aligns with a growing body of international literature emphasizing the importance of psychological health in sustaining teacher effectiveness. Scholars have shown that well-being reduces burnout and promotes job satisfaction, leading to higher instructional quality. In contexts where material and infrastructural constraints are present—such as rural Indonesia—teacher well-being becomes even more critical as a compensatory factor that sustains motivation despite systemic challenges^[27]. The current study reinforces these conclusions and suggests that well-being is not just a supportive element but a core driver of institutional performance.

The role of teacher competence as the second contributor ($R^2 = 0.5801$) confirms findings from earlier research emphasizing the importance of pedagogical knowledge and professional mastery in improving classroom practices and student learning^[28]. While slightly lower in predictive strength compared to the other variables, competence remains a cornerstone of teacher professionalism. Previous studies argue that without regular training and reflective practice, teacher knowledge can stagnate, especially in isolated or underfunded school systems^[29]. This study extends the discourse by identifying not only the strength of

competence but also its limitations when not supported by organizational structures.

Meanwhile, teacher commitment ($R^2 = 0.62$) proved to be a significant emotional and professional anchor. Teachers who demonstrate deep engagement with their roles tend to offer greater consistency, emotional support, and alignment with school goals^[30]. Commitment has been linked to lower absenteeism, stronger school culture, and more resilient responses to adversity^[31]. The current findings support these assertions and add nuance by suggesting that while commitment is partly intrinsic, its sustainability depends heavily on recognition, autonomy, and participatory school leadership^[32].

What distinguishes this study is its examination of these three factors in combination, revealing how they interrelate to form a coherent explanatory framework. The regression model shows that teacher well-being exerts the greatest influence, but only when accompanied by sufficient competence and stable commitment do these effects translate into systemic improvement. This aligns with multidimensional models of school effectiveness that view teacher quality as both a personal and institutional construct^[33].

From a policy perspective, the findings call for an integrated strategy to enhance school quality. Rather than focusing solely on curriculum reform or physical infrastructure, stakeholders must prioritize teacher empowerment through investments in well-being programs, continuous professional development, and mechanisms that promote sustained commitment. In doing so, education systems can move from reactive to proactive modes of quality assurance. In terms of contribution to theory, this study adds to the literature by offering evidence from a non-urban, developing country context, thus expanding the applicability of global teacher quality models. It affirms that although local challenges differ, the core dynamics between well-being, competence, and commitment remain universally relevant to educational success.

Conclusion

This study concluded that teacher well-being, competence, and commitment significantly and collectively contribute to the quality of public schools in Toraja, with a combined predictive power of 84%. Among these variables, teacher well-being emerged as the most dominant factor, followed by commitment and competence. Each dimension, though distinct, plays a complementary role in shaping educational effectiveness by influencing not only the classroom experience but also the broader institutional climate.

The findings underscore the importance of viewing teacher quality as a multidimensional construct that must be addressed through integrated strategies. Improving school quality requires more than academic curriculum changes or infrastructure upgrades—it demands a people-centered approach that places teachers at the core of educational transformation. When teachers feel emotionally supported, professionally equipped, and morally committed, they are more likely to foster high-quality learning environments and student outcomes. From a policy perspective, this study suggests that investments in teacher well-being—through improved working conditions, mental health resources, and financial incentives—should be prioritized alongside targeted professional development programs. Furthermore, school leadership practices that promote inclusion, trust, and

recognition are essential to sustaining teacher commitment over time. These interventions are particularly critical in geographically and economically disadvantaged regions, where structural limitations often undermine teacher performance despite their intrinsic motivation. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing literature on teacher effectiveness by offering empirical evidence from a rural, underexplored educational context. It affirms that the interplay between well-being, competence, and commitment is not only relevant but essential across different settings and systems. Future research may build on these findings by exploring longitudinal impacts, contextual mediators, and comparative analyses across regions. In sum, enhancing school quality begins with empowering those who lead learning. Teacher-centered policies and practices are not optional—they are imperative for building equitable, resilient, and high-performing educational systems.

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