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Abbreviations
ITRE : Intention to retire early
JOBSAT : Job satisfaction
WORKST : Work Stress
PI : Perceived inequities
ORGCOM : Organisational commitment
This research aimed to study the factors associated with intention to opt for early retirement among primary school teachers in Kuching city. Four independent variables i.e. job satisfaction, work stress, perceived inequities and organisational commitment were explored to determine their relations with intention to opt for early retirement. Five demographic characteristics along gender, medium of school taught, salary scale, age and length of service of the respondents were investigated whether they moderate the relationships between the intention to opt for early retirement and the four independent variables mentioned above. A total of 209 respondents from teachers of 10 primary schools within the vicinity of 10 km from Kuching city were chosen for the study. Descriptive methods like mean, frequency, and percentage and inferential methods such as Pearson correlation, Multiple regression, independent T-test, one way ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses of the study. The significance level was fixed at $\alpha \leq 0.05$. The major findings of the study showed that intention to opt for early retirement among the respondents were relatively high, with the mean of 3.612 and it was positively and significantly related to perceived inequities and work stress, but negatively and significantly related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The four independent variables jointly accounted for about 21.3% of the total variance in intention to opt for early retirement. The best predictor was the perceived inequities, followed by work stress. Job satisfaction and organisational commitment did not appear to have any significant effect on intention to retire early. Personal demographic characteristics along gender, medium of school taught, age, salary scale and length of service did not appear to moderate the relationships between intention to retire early and the four independent variables. The five personal characteristics only contributed an insignificant 2.1% of the variance in intention to retire early. Some other notable factors accounted for their opting of early retirement were family problems, health problems, leadership inefficiency, welfare of teachers neglected.
ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang berhubung dengan keinginan untuk bersara awal di kalangan guru sekolah rendah di bandar raya Kuching. Empat pembolehubah tak bersandar iaitu kepupusan kerja, tekanan kerja, tanggapan ketidakcadilan dan komitmen organisasi telah dikaui untuk menentukan hubungkannya dengan keinginan untuk bersara awal. Ciri-ciri demografi iaitu jantina, bahasa pengantar sekolah diajar, skala gaji, umur dan tempoh perkhidmatan responden juga dikaui untuk melihat sama ada ia mempengaruhi hubungan antara keempat-empat pembolehubah dengan keinginan untuk bersara awal. Seramai 209 responden dari 10 buah sekolah rendah di dalam lingkungan 10 km dari bandar raya Kuching dipilih untuk kajian tersebut. Kadah deskriptif seperti min, frekuensi dan peratusan, serta kadah inferensial seperti korelasi Pearson, Regresi berganda, Ujian i tak bersandar, ANOVA sehala digunakan untuk menguji hipotesis kajian. Paras signifikan ditetapkan pada \( \alpha \leq 0.05 \). Dapatan utama kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa keinginan untuk bersara awal di kalangan responden adalah tinggi secara relatif dengan min 3.612 dan ia mempunyai hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan tanggapan ketidakcadilan dan tekanan kerja, tetapi mempunyai hubungan negatif dan signifikan dengan kepuasan kerja dan komitmen organisasi. Keempat-empat pembolehubah menyumbang sebanyak 21.3 % daripada varian untuk bersara awal. Faktor yang utama ialah tanggapan ketidakcadilan diikuti oleh tekanan kerja. Kepupusan kerja dan komitmen organisasi tidak menunjukkan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap keinginan untuk bersara awal. Ciri-ciri demografi seperti jantina, bahasa pengantar sekolah diajar, skala gaji dan tempoh perkhidmatan tidak mempengaruhi hubungan antara keinginan untuk bersara awal dengan keempat-empat pembolehubah tak bersandar tersebut. Kesemua ciri demografi hanya menyumbang 2.1% yang tidak signifikan dalam varian untuk bersara awal. Faktor-faktor lain yang mempengaruhi keinginan untuk bersara adalah seperti masalah peribadi, masalah kesihatan, ketidakfasewan pentadbiran, pengabaian kebijakan guru-guru.
CIIAYTEK

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

There were 229,014 teachers in the educational service in Malaysia registered on January 1, 1995 (Education Planning & Research Division, 1995). This figure constitutes 27% of the total number of civil servants in the public sector. These teachers are the people who are going to shape and influence the future of 4.4 million school children throughout the country.

However teachers today are faced with a myriad of problems. There has been a great deal of disgruntlement on the part of teachers regarding their profession especially since early 1990s. This has resulted in a rapid increase in the number of experienced teachers opting out for early retirement (New Straits Times, September 27, 1994). In October 1995, Education Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced that a special committee will be set up to study the weaknesses of the present teaching system including salary scheme, career administration opportunities and working conditions (GURU, 1995(2)).

This clearly underlines the problems facing teachers today in the sphere of their profession that have resulted in their opting for early retirement. In order to look at this problem in a better light, it is deemed necessary to explore some of these factors in detail. However, research done on early retirement among teachers is extremely limited. So far there was only one study on secondary school teachers in an urban setting. This is of course far from adequate to shed light on why teachers want to leave the service before their mandatory retirement, and especially regarding primary school teachers where none of the research of this nature has been carried out thus far.

1.1 Background of the study

In the Malaysian Civil Service, the mandatory retirement age is 55 years for both male and female. If they were to opt for early retirement, it is 50 years of age for men and 45 for women (1980 Pension Laws, Act 227). A new system was introduced in April 12, 1991, whereby civil servants can exercise optional retirement at the age of 40, upon which they receive a gratuity. Their monthly pension only commences when they turn 45 for female retirees and 50 for male retirees.
Since then, more and more school teachers have expressed the intention to opt for early retirement. The figure was alarming indeed. According to The Sunday Star (December 18, 1994), a total of 2,423 teachers went on optional retirement over 18 months from April 1991 and this works out to be 135 teachers opting each month. In view of the high number involved, the Education Ministry has issued an “internal” circular in September 1994, raising the optional retirement age for women to 45 and 50 for men. Meanwhile the Education Ministry has frozen all applications for optional retirement in a move to stop teachers from leaving the profession, except for health reasons (Ministry of Education Circular, January 1, 1994).

According to The Star (September 7, 1996), the Deputy Education Minister, Dr. Fong Chan Onn said the Education Ministry cannot allow teachers to opt for early retirement because of the acute shortage nationwide as primary schools still faced a shortage of about 10,000 teachers.

There is no denying that the loss of experienced and competent teachers is significant in terms of lost investment in training, disruption to students’ studies and replacement procedures. Indirect costs include the ill effects on the morale and productivity of those teachers remaining in the department while, at the same time, depleting the vitality of the profession. Teachers with years of successful experience behind them may be replaced by teachers with less experience and at a lower salary, but years of lost experience have an impact on the quality of teaching in school.

For national interest, the maintenance of quality standard for education must be maintained. However keeping these teachers against their will to quit is not healthy, as they will be a disinterested lot with little commitment.

In order to tackle this problem in a better light, it is deemed necessary to look at this problem in-depth. A sample survey has been carried out for this research to study why some teachers want to leave service.

1.2 Objectives of the study

In view of the persistent crisis in the teaching profession, it was deemed timely to identify those contributing factors associated with intention to retire early. This study attempts to:

i) Investigate the level of intention to retire early among the respondent teachers.

ii) Investigate the relationship between intention to retire early with such areas as
   a) Job satisfaction
   b) Work stress
   c) Perceived inequities, and
   d) Organizational commitment.
iii) Investigate whether the variance in intention to retire early can be explained by the four variables i.e. job satisfaction, work stress, perceived inequities and organizational commitment

iv) Investigate the best predictor of the four factors mentioned above for intention to opt for early retirement.

v) Investigate the moderating effects of some personal demographic characteristics on intention to retire early and the four variables i.e. job satisfaction, work stress, perceived inequities and organizational commitment.

vi) Investigate other factors apart from the above-mentioned ones, that account for their intention to retire early.

vii) Provide some useful suggestions to reduce the problems that lead to early retirement.

1.3 Research Questions

This study attempts to provide answers for the following questions

i) Is intention to retire early related to such areas as
   a) Job satisfaction
   b) Work stress
   c) Perceived inequities, and
   d) Organizational commitment?

ii) Will the variance in intention to retire early be significantly explained by the four variables i.e. job satisfaction, work stress, perceived inequities and organisational commitment?

iii) Will personal demographic characteristics moderate the relationships between intention to retire early and the four variables i.e.
    a) Job satisfaction, b) Work stress, c) Perceived inequities, and
    d) Organizational commitment?

iv) What are the other factors that account for their opting for early retirement?
1.4 Statement of hypotheses

This study attempts to investigate the following research hypotheses:

Null hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between intention to retire early and job satisfaction.

Null hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between intention to retire early and work stress.

Null hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between intention to retire early and perceived inequities.

Null hypothesis 4: There is no relationship between intention to retire early and organizational commitment.

Null hypothesis 5: The variance in intention to retire early is not significantly explained by job satisfaction, work stress, perceived inequity and organizational commitment.

Null hypothesis 6: Personal demographic characteristics along gender, medium of school taught, age, salary and length of teaching service do not moderate the relationships between intention to retire early and the four variables.

Null hypothesis 6a: Intention to retire early is not significantly different between male and female.

Null hypothesis 6b: Intention to retire early is not significantly different between Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Cina medium.

Null hypothesis 6c: Intention to retire early is not significantly different between various age groups.

Null hypothesis 6d: Intention to retire early is not significantly different between various salary scale.

Null hypothesis 6e: Intention to retire early is not significantly different between various length of service.
1.5 Importance of study

This study may help to shed some light on various reasons why teachers opt for early retirement. It may provide some help to the policy makers in the Ministry of Education, in the formulation of policies that are beneficial for the general welfare, morale, image, interest and pride of the teaching profession.

This study may open new areas for further research on intention to retire early among school teachers in particular and employees of other public sectors in general. For example, in which areas and why they are dissatisfied with their present job, so that more in-depth studies can be carried out later. It is hoped that in doing so, the predicaments and grouses concerning the welfare of the teachers will be better understood and their problems be tackled in better ways.

This study may also provide some insight into human resource development areas such as the selection, recruitment and training needs of teachers in teachers' training colleges or in other institutions for that matter. It also enables the principal or immediate supervisor to seek new ways to minimise problems arising from such areas as performance appraisal, work conditions, discipline and work load so as to enhance the prestige of the teaching profession instead.

1.6 Scope and delimitations of the study

This study was conducted among teachers of primary schools in Kuching City. Ten primary schools of Type A in the vicinity of 10 km from the heart of the city were selected for this study. They were comprised of five Bahasa Malaysia and five Bahasa Cina medium schools. The validity of the study was purely based on the assumptions that the respondents were sincere in their response to the questionnaires administered to them.
1.7 Operational Definitions

For purposes of this study on factors associated with intention to opt for early retirement, the following operational definitions were used.

**Intention to retire early**
It implies the intention to withdraw or quit from school at a pensionable age before the mandatory retirement. It also implies the termination of a job at a pensionable age even if the individual takes another job involving as many hours of work.

**Job satisfaction**
Job satisfaction is defined as the affective orientation on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying (Vroom, 1964). Harder (1985) views job satisfaction as the degree to which an employee is aware of a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience.

**Work stress**
Work stress refers to a condition of negative effects resulting from aspects of a teacher’s job which are perceived by the teacher as a threat to his/her psychological or physical well (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1987). In this context, pressure indirectly from environmental aspects such as classroom size, student’s discipline and the school settings and expectation from the principal and community were taken for this study.

**Perceived inequity**
Adam (1965) has conceptualised fairness by stating that employees determine their perception of fairness in the workplace by comparing their input/outcome ratio to those of their co-workers. In this respect, the question of fairness of managerial decision, pay prospect or opportunity advancement were included in this study.

**Organizational commitment**
Reyes and Imber (1992) view commitment as loyalty to the organization. A committed teacher identifies closely with the school and district and is heavily involved in the affairs of the organisation, meaning that the extent of involvement of a committed teacher goes beyond personal interest.

1.8 Summary

The intention to opt for early retirement among teachers, especially those serving in primary schools, is currently a pressing problem in Malaysia. A comprehensive understanding of the whole issue is deemed necessary before any remedial solutions for the problems are commendable. The objectives and importance of this research study were also explored in this chapter in the light of the problem.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with some literature reviews of the turnover process which influence intention to quit in an organisation. Essential elements in such areas as the organisational factors like job satisfaction, work stress, commitment, perceived inequity, promotion, the job itself and the demographic characteristics of the individual were explored.

2.1 Organisational Turnover

Models of the turnover process (e.g. Mobley et al. 1979, Mowday, Porter & Steers 1982) appear to converge around the following essential elements: characteristics of the individual, the organization, and the job itself which contribute the effective responses to the job (such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment) which influence the intention to quit.

A variety of organizational factors have been studied in relation to labour turnover. According to Porter and Steers (1973), pay and satisfaction with promotion (taken to mean perceived inequities) are having consistently significant inverse relationship with turnover.

According to a study cited by Pithers & Gorgaty (1995), both internal and external pressures (i.e. within and outside of the school) continue to undermine the job satisfaction of teachers, and the result in many teachers is a syndrome popularly called “burnout” or “stress” which is the progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose experienced by people in the service profession as a result of the conditions of their work (Cottrell, 1982).

2.1.1 Intention To Retire

According to Werbel & Bedeian (1989), the intention to quit (or retire in the context of this study) refers to an individual’s perceived probability of staying in an employing organization or terminating employment. The association between intent and actual quitting (and retiring) is far from perfect. Some intentions may not materialize and some resignations are impulsive (Mobley, 1982).

However studying the intention to quit or retire may improve our understanding of the psychological process of withdrawal which most study models depict as an important factor in employee turnover (Mobley et al., 1979; Mowday et al., 1982). Therefore the focus of this study was on the psychological process of withdrawal leading to the intention to opt for early retirement from the teaching profession.
Bruce and Cacioppe (1989), in a survey done on government secondary schools in Western Australia, found that perceived discriminatory practices (taken to mean perceived inequities, in this context) in the general management of the school, especially among the males, appear to be the major reason why they retired from their profession.

On the other hand, female teachers were more concerned with the encroachment of teaching duties on their family and social lives, problems of classroom discipline and lack of administrative support. Both lack of administrative support with discipline problems and lack of effective school policies were cited by members of both sexes as contributing to their resignation, but to a greater extent with female teachers. The major causes of discipline problems were found to be the failure of students to do their homework and their general lack of motivation. One of the most significant findings was the perceived lack of competence of the principal in administrative skills such as decision making, staff support and general school management.

For career-oriented teachers, the lack of promotional opportunities was given as the major reason for their resignation, while dissatisfaction with assessment procedures compounded this problem. Male teachers were concerned about perceived discriminatory practices by the subject superintendents. For example male teachers felt that they were being given greater class sizes, more frequent playground duties, etc.

In a qualitative study on teachers leaving the teaching profession by Cottrell (1982), it was reported that public school teachers in United State of America (U.S.A.) were becoming increasing dissatisfied with their jobs. He examined some general issues surrounding public education and the expectations which teachers must live up to pressures and the elements of job dissatisfaction. In fact, schools have traditionally been expected to impart knowledge, inculcate values and socialize the young. The task of juggling these three functions in a society now characterised by a weakening of other familiar institutions, like the family, is clearly not an easy one. Teachers said that the public is holding schools responsible for things beyond their control, asking them to fulfill roles from social worker to baby-sitter to instructor. At the same time that expectations on teachers have intensified, public respect for teachers has plummeted (Moore, 1987).

This is a paradoxical situation resulting in considerable teacher stress and burnout. The research as cited by Moore (1987) reported that teachers feel that their low salaries are, in a way, a reflection of their community's disrespect for them, and this perception decreases their job satisfaction. They feel overworked, unappreciated and underpaid. All these unpleasantness have some serious implications on their intention to leave the office.
As in Malaysia, according to the Sunday Star (December 18, 1994), of the 355 teachers who responded to a "Teachers’ optional Retirement Poll", 88% felt the ministry should approve all applications to opt for early retirement; and 77% felt that the individual’s need should come first before the government’s. The results show that, among the major reasons for opting out were: the increase in teaching work loads, increase in paper work, low wages, the perceived inequities in SSB (The new remuneration system), increase in co-curricular activities and students’ attitude. However there is no evidence whatsoever, these factors mentioned above would be the reasons behind the opting of early retirement among primary school teachers in Kuching city.

In the context of Malaysia, there was a study done by Mok (1995) on intention to retire early among secondary school teachers, in an urban setting in Penang. The major findings of the study showed that intention to retire was closely related to work stress, perceived inequities, job dissatisfaction, and low organisational commitment and advancement opportunities. Personal demographic characteristics like gender, teacher category, age and salary of respondents did not appear to moderate the relationships between intention to retire and the five variables mentioned. However this research was only confined to secondary schools in Penang. Insofar, the reasons for primary school teachers opting out are still unclear and unfounded as no research has been done whatsoever.

However the trend of quitting in the teaching profession is not an isolated case in Malaysia. It took place in other parts of the world as well, for example The National Education Association, the largest teacher organization in U.S.A revealed a striking pattern of discontent (cited in Moore, 1987) that 35% were dissatisfied with their current jobs as teachers. In United Kingdom, Travers (1990) found that 66% of her sample actively considered leaving the teaching profession during the last five years.

2.1.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been a subject of concern for many researchers in business, industry and education. The study of job satisfaction is concerned with the understanding of a person’s affective reaction to his or her total work role (Lawler, 1973). Teachers’ job satisfaction may serve to influence their morale, motivation and general willingness to maximize their teaching potential (Schulz & Teddie 1988). This is because job satisfaction is the pleasure or emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Locke, 1976).

According to Mobley (1982), the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover, although not particularly strong, is consistent. In other words, dissatisfied employee is more likely to leave than satisfied ones. How far this relationship is applicable to the present study has left to be seen later.
However Middlemist and Hitt (1988) have mentioned that much has been written on job satisfaction, but there are still many unanswered questions. Research has not shown a conclusive link between satisfaction and performance on the job. According to Bateman and Organ (1983), although high levels of job satisfaction have not been linked directly to high performance, satisfaction leads to high performance, satisfaction leads to other positive outcomes. People who are highly satisfied with their jobs tend to be better corporate citizens, that is, they are more dependable, comply with the rules, have fewer complaints, are more cooperative, have fewer criticisms of others, and display more unselfishness. However there is no conclusive link that a satisfied teacher will hold on to their job until retirement.

Borg et al. (1993) also indicated that teachers were dissatisfied with their job due to following situations: worsening student discipline, increasing clerical functions, large class size, and increase in workload. How far this dissatisfaction in teaching life has affect the intention to retire early in this present study is left to be seen.

In the context of Malaysia, the study done by Mok (1995) indicated that job dissatisfaction was related to high incidence of intention to retire early among school teachers in Penang. Teachers who perceived that their capabilities were underutilised and would prefer to venture into other more challenging professions elsewhere, was found to be highly related to turnover.

2.1.3 Work Stress

Work stress or job stress can be viewed as an individual’s reactions to work environment characteristics that appear threatening to the individual. It indicates a poor fit between the individual ability and the work environment in which either excessive demands are made from the individual, or the individual is not fully equipped to handle a particular situation (French, 1963).

That teaching is one of the most potentially stressful occupations is a major international concern (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1987). Claims are being made that school teachers in Australia are quite seriously stressed (Otto, 1986) and that this has economic, educational and personal implications. Teacher stress has economic implications because of the need to allow teachers to retire early or to take sick leave to recover from stress. There are also educational implications, in that many students are being taught by teachers, whose competence is reduced because of high levels of stress, while other students are subjected to changes of teachers during an academic year through teacher stress. At a personal level, stress affects the general health and well-being of the individuals concerned.
According to Equity Theory by J. S. Adams (1965), motivation is influenced by one's perception of how equitably or fairly he is treated at work. He proposed that in any work environment, people assess their input and their outcomes. They calculate, perhaps unconsciously, the ratio of outcome to input and mentally compared it with what they believe is the ratios with co-workers. If they think they are getting less than other people, the feeling of tension or inequity that results motivates them to act – to do something to create instead a state of equity. If people perceive that they are receiving the same ratio of reward to effort that others are receiving, then a state of equity exists.

Summers & Hendrix (1991) found that pay equity perceptions have an impact on voluntary turnover, but not necessary on job performance. The impact on turnover, however was indirect, through its influence on pay satisfaction, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intent to leave.

Steers (1987) found a positive association between perceived pay equities and organizational commitment. Perceived inequities were found to be negatively related to job satisfaction. Witt & Nye (1992) found that perceived fairness of pay accounts for a significant amount of the variance in job satisfaction. Gender has been found to influence equity perceptions (Major & Forcey, 1985; Summers & Hendrix, 1991). In an investigation of the determinants of pay satisfaction by Berkowitz et al. (1987), small but significant effects were found for age and educational level.

According to Schultz & Schultz (1994), in an employing organization, rewards are in the form of salary increases, bonuses, promotions, and transfers to positions providing greater opportunities for advancement. However, to maintain employee initiative and morale, performance appraisals has to be kept as fair and justice as possible, so that any perceived inequities can be kept to the minimal level among the employees. They hold the opinion that senior people should be given the first opportunity for promotion, but they should be qualified for that promotion on the basis of their skills, not solely because of length of service, so that there would be more equitable for that matter.

According to Coker & Tassell (1992), teaching is often described as the profession in which an individual does about the same thing, has about the same authority, influence, and professional status the first or second year of teaching as one does after 25 or 30 years in the classroom. While most professions offer career incentives such as promotions, responsibilities, higher salaries, and increased opportunities in the decision making process, teachers however, are faced with a one-stop organisational structure – career responsibilities and expectations are the same regardless of ability, performance or seniority. If teachers increase their career opportunities in any significant way, they must leave the classroom for administrative or supervisory positions.

Such a system encourages the most ambitious, competent and brightest teachers to leave the activities they do best in order to gain career benefits (Conley & Levinson, 1993).
Lowther & Chapman's (1984) study reflected that teachers suffer from a "job-lock-in" situation, both horizontally and vertically, when compared with other occupations. Horizontally, there was a lack of available equivalent positions outside the organization, low control by the employee over job assignment policies and practices, static organizations and little opportunity for the teachers to modify a presently disliked situation by a change in job assignment. On the vertical axis, teachers are denied the opportunity for promotion resulting from outstanding performance as in the case of other occupations.

Porter & Steers (1973) indicated that perceived inequity as a result of lack of promotional opportunities is a primary reason for withdrawal from an organization. Similarly, Cotton & Tuttle (1986) had also shown that there exists negative correlation between promotion opportunity and turnover, but only at a lower level. Miller & Wheeler (1992) found that, for both men and women, opportunities for promotion were significant predictors of the intention to leave an organization.

However the question of perceived inequities manifested in areas like promotion opportunities, performance appraisal or future prospects that had been done in foreign setting may not necessary hold true in Malaysia. For example giving promotion to someone might not necessary hold him or her in the teaching profession if promotion means to be away from home to some interior parts of Sarawak.

In the context of Malaysia, Mok (1995) argued that perceived inequities in areas like low salary, not much remuneration (like rewards, bonus & etc), better prospect in other professions, unjustified assessment in SSB evaluation were moderately related to teachers opting for early retirement.

2.1.5 Organizational Commitment

According to Kushman (1992), organizational commitment, in general terms, refers to the degree to which an individual internalizes organizational values and goals and feels a sense of loyalty to the workplace. This type of commitment reflects an alignment between individual & organizational needs and values, thereby resulting in a strong unity of purpose among workers & work groups.

In the field of education, Reyes (1990a) defined organizational commitment as psychological identification of individual teachers with their school goals and values, the desire to maintain membership in the organization, and the willingness to go beyond issues of personal interest. Given this definition, Reyes argues that commitment will positively influence the performance of both students and teachers.
The basic model pervading commitment research is one in which organisational commitment is directly and positively linked to desirable work outcomes (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1982). For instance, high levels of organizational commitment are believed to be associated with low turnover, limited tardiness, low absenteeism, and enhanced job performance.

Some of the important features found to be associated with organizational commitment are:

a) highly committed employees may perform better than less committed ones (Kushman, 1992).

b) organizational commitment is often a better predictor of turnover than is job satisfaction (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982), and

c) organizational commitment can be used as an indicator of the effectiveness of an organization (Steers, 1987).

Organizational commitment was found to be positively related to job satisfaction (Kushman, 1992). Older workers tend to have higher levels of organizational commitment compared to younger ones (Yusoff Hanifah, 1981), whereas more educated workers tend to have lower levels of commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Fukami & Larson, 1984, Morris & Sherman, 1981). Females show higher organizational commitment than males (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982, Yusoff Hanifah, 1981).

Employees report low levels of commitment when the job produces stress (Fukami & Larson, 1984; Morris & Sherman, 1981). Turnover is the major behavioral outcome consistently associated with low levels of organizational commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Porter & Steers, 1973). The evidence suggests negative effects on organizational performance in the form of higher turnover and absenteeism.

However, in Kushman’s (1992) study of teacher commitment on 750 teachers from 63 schools, it was found that organizational commitment was not related to teacher turnover.

In the context of Malaysia, Mok (1995) found that teachers who contemplating early retirement were those with low commitment in the organisation. The study further showed that teaching profession was not so highly valued as the respondent teachers said they would never choose going to teaching, if they could start their professional life all over again. How far this rather pessimistic view holds true in the context of this study is left to be seen.