

FACTORS INFLUENCING TURNOVER INTENTION: A STUDY AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SELANGOR

Hanita Sarah Saad^{1*}, Djasriza Jasin², Simranpreet Kaur Hansaram@ Rammilah Hansaram³, Chong Kim Loy⁴

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Business and Technology, UNITAR International University, Malaysia

⁴ UNITAR Graduate School, UNITAR International University, Malaysia

*Corresponding author, hanita@unitar.my

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing turnover intention among primary school teachers in Selangor, Malaysia. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed online, and 313 usable responses were analyzed. The independent variables are salary and benefits, training and career development, job stress, nature of work, and relationship with co-workers while the dependent variable is turnover intention. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the variables. Correlation and regression analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between the variables. The results confirmed that salary and benefits, training and career development, job stress, nature of work, and relationship with co-workers are significantly associated with teachers' turnover intention with job stress and nature of work having the greatest influence on teachers' turnover intention. Thus, aside from making sure that teachers are kept engaged and providing support for them to make teaching a meaningful and rewarding job, a proactive stress management and wellness program must be implemented to ensure the well-being of teachers in our nation.

Keywords: turnover intention, job stress, nature of work, primary school teachers

INTRODUCTION

The shortage of teachers is a cause for concern not only in Malaysia but all over the world. In the United States, the annual attrition rate is 8% and more than two-thirds of teachers in service are leaving their job before they reach retirement age (Sutcher et al, 2018; Castro et al, 2018). In Finland, where usually teachers are celebrated and teaching is considered an honorable profession, 50% of teachers have indicated their wish to leave the job (Rasanen et al, 2020) In the United Kingdom, acute shortage of teachers in the past few years has been called a catastrophe and is alarming especially with the increase in students' population (Hayes, 2016; See & Gorard, 2020). If this problem of shortages is not addressed and solutions are found to mitigate it, it may lead to an education crisis that hampers the objective of UNESCO in making education, especially at the primary level accessible to all.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia acknowledged this problem and is on a mission to ensure a sufficient number of teachers in all schools across the country. The latest statistics show that there are 7780 primary schools in Malaysia with a total of 236,993 teachers deployed throughout. In

Selangor alone, there are 662 public primary schools being served by about 34,000 teachers but the number is still insufficient to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Many reasons have been proffered as the cause of teachers shortages. Among them are early retirement, death, no-pay or half-pay leave, training, termination, and resignation (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Jacob & Abiola, 2021). While leave and training are only temporary causes, it is early retirement and resignation that must be addressed by the authorities. A multitude of reasons exists that cause teachers' attrition. Past studies have shown that salary is the main factor leading teachers to leave the profession (Nawaz et al, 2019; Ali et al, 2018). Comparatively, teachers are receiving pay that is at par with the industry, but the sentiment is that the level of pay does not commensurate with the level of workload expected from teachers (Xuehui, 2018). Other cited reasons are work-related stress, burnout, and lack of support from peers and the school's administrator. Studies have shown that stress and burnout have a significant impact on the decision to quit not only among teachers but other jobs as well (Rajendran et al, 2020). However, the job stress of teachers needs to be urgently addressed as it will affect teachers' commitment to carrying out their duties leading to adverse impacts on the students.

Research also has consistently established the role of peer and supervisory support towards teachers in maintaining their motivation and reducing their intention to leave the job (Gonzales et al, 2020). Lack of social support and a negative working climate have been shown to be the push factors that lead to teachers' early resignation (Zafar et al, 2022)

An education system with the optimum deployment of qualified teachers brings long-term positive effects to the socioeconomic status of a country. Especially at the primary level, adequacy and quality of teachers are essential as competent teachers provide children with basic academic skills that lay the foundation for the rest of their schooling years (Reinsfield & Lee, 2022). When teachers leave the system before time, this results in a shortage of teachers that threatens our public education system.

Currently, several states in Malaysia especially Selangor, Sabah, and Sarawak are facing a critical shortage of teachers (Povera, 2022). To address this issue, the Ministry of Education has planned a massive recruitment campaign to hire 18,702 teachers since July 2021. The ministry is targeting candidates with university qualifications including those who graduated with non-teaching background (Menon, 2021). These new hires will be placed in the states from October 2021 onwards. However, there is also a concern about the hiring of teachers with a non-teaching background as this may affect the quality of teaching and could lead to negative impacts on students' learning. Hiring to fill up the vacancies is important but ensuring the quality of teachers is imperative. Hence rather than having stop-gap measures and reacting to problems, it is better if the reasons for the exodus of a teacher from the system are investigated so proactive actions could be taken to stem the outflow of vital manpower from our public schools.

Thus, this study is undertaken to determine the reasons for teachers' turnover intention. The Selangor state is chosen because it is one of the states facing high teacher turnover and is the most developed state in the country. With the increasing demands for schools to cater to increasing students' enrolment, an understanding of the factors that leads to teachers leaving can prompt intervening actions from the Ministry and related agencies.

Hertzberg's Motivation and Hygiene Theory was used to underpin the research framework. The hygiene factors are extrinsic needs that do not directly contribute to job satisfaction but are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction. Motivators are factors that affect job satisfaction and consequently impact turnover intention (Low & Panatik, 2019). This study selected salary and benefits and relationships with co-workers to represent the hygiene factor while the nature of work and training and development is the motivator. An additional variable on job stress is included as

various researchers have shown that job stress is a predictor of turnover intention (Fasbender et al, 2019; Liu, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

TURNOVER INTENTION

Turnover intention is defined as a behavior of interest to quit and separate from the organization (Ngo-Henha, 2017). Employee turnover has been a perennial issue for organizations for decades. When an employee leaves, the company has to bear many costs, both hidden and apparent that will eventually affect the company's performance (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). A company stands to lose valuable skills, experience, and tacit knowledge when an employee resigns, something that cannot be duplicated by new hires. A high turnover rate has also proven to affect morale and productivity in the company (Skelton et al, 2019; Suyono et al, 2020). Financially, studies have shown that on average, it cost anything from 6 to 9 months of salary each time an employee exits the company. When it comes to teachers, the issue becomes more crucial since teachers are vital to the schooling system and a high turnover rate will have an adverse consequence to the quality of education.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Salary is described as a payment in monetary value to employees for work done, while benefits commonly refer to non-monetary compensation such as health insurance, extra leaves, and flexi-hours. Attractive pay packages can be used strategically to entice talents into the organization. Monetary compensation is a crucial element in motivating employees and has a positive impact on the productivity and commitment of employees (Alam & Asim, 2019). Studies have reported that high-commitment compensation practices have also been shown to reduce the intention to leave the company (Rubel & Kee, 2016; Springer & Taylor, 2021). The level of pay and benefits are important as stable and higher income provides a sense of security and motivation (Bhatt & Sharma, 2019). Because wages influence living conditions, workers place a high value on compensation and bonuses, and this is an important motivation for employees to be more engaged and committed and stay on the job.

H1: There is a significant relationship between salary and benefit and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CO-WORKER

A recent study showed that good relationships among colleagues can influence job satisfaction, which in turn impacts staff performance, work engagement, level of productivity, and staff retention (Bulinska-Stangrecka & Bagienska, 2021). Since employees spend a large percentage of their time at work and in the office, having good relationships with their colleagues is an important component of social and emotional support. People who have a pleasant and constructive relationship with their peers are more likely to feel confident and secure at the workplace and this will influence their decision to stay in an organization. Past studies have revealed that teachers who enjoy supportive relationships with their co-workers have a shared sense of responsibility for their school's growth and academic achievement and have high work contentment, all of which significantly reduce their turnover intention (Msuya, 2016; Ekabu, 2019)

A study by Dreer (2021) also established that when support is available, positive emotions are experienced and this becomes a strong predictor of job satisfaction and reduces turnover.

H2: There is a significant relationship between relationships with co-workers and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.

NATURE OF WORK

The nature of work is described as the work itself, the content of the work, and the job characteristics one is required to perform. Sukriket (2014) defined the nature of work as the type of job or responsibilities that workers are currently doing. Her study found that the nature of work and work conditions are both related to turnover intention, and the relationships were significant. The researcher further explained that employees are motivated by the actual content of the job tasks given; when the content is interesting, fun, and achievable, workers may like the job and are likely to perform well. According to Chin (2018), the effects of the work contents on employees are various, and it depends on individual expectations. It can be interesting or boring, innovative, or degrading, challenging or non-challenging.

The nature of work is among the most critical factors influencing an employee's desire to quit or stay in a company (Khaliq & Miftahuddin, 2019). According to the preceding study done by Khaliq & Miftahuddin (2019), the nature of work is also linked to employment conditions and the working environment. School infrastructure, teaching hours, students' characters, supervision and administrative supports, and safety, all have their share in contributing to teachers' like or dislike of the job, and subsequently, turnover intentions are affected. Employees feel more at ease working in a pleasant work atmosphere and enjoy what they are doing. Employees in such companies believe they can contribute their knowledge and make a change to the business when working conditions are favorable.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the nature of work and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

According to Chong & Yazdani (2020), training is an event that attempts to assist employees in acquiring job-related information, skill, and conduct while a planned program and activity that attempt to enhance employees' knowledge, skills, and expertise is known as career development. Training and development are crucial elements for performance in Human Resource practices, with better output seen in businesses that invested in such programs (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Career development is a continual process or a series of events in career advancement (Niati et al, 2021). Most employees have career development goals. Thus, organisations are encouraged to offer a reasonable amount of promotion opportunities to increase the employees' commitment to the organization. Training and competence development offers a sense of security and importance to the employee, especially if it leads to better pay and job promotion (Chungtai, 2013). The greater the commitment level that employee has toward the company, the least is their intention to leave the company. Lack of training and career development on the other hand results in limited personal growth and progress and employees will be inclined to look elsewhere for their career growth.

H4: There is a significant relationship between training and development and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.

JOB STRESS

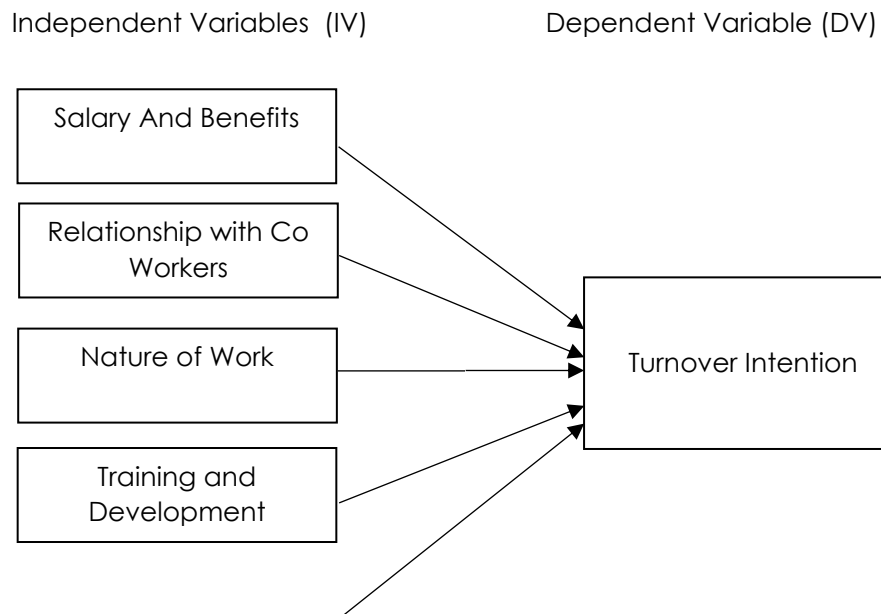
Several studies (Dodanwala & San Santoso ,2021; Mensah ,2021) have equated job stress to mental well-being of employees in the organization. Job stress frequently arises when a person's emotional and physical capabilities cannot manage their own expectations or external demands put on their performance by others. Job stress occurs whenever there is a contradiction between the professional expectations imposed on an individual and the level of control in achieving those objectives. Job stress can result in physical, mental, and behavioral reactions. Stress is defined as 'an event when an individual thinks that demands exceed the resources' (Kavita & Hassan, 2018). Job stress arises in the event of job overload, job responsibilities, or time pressure. Alternatively, workplace stress can also emanate from multiple factors linked with the workplace environment or can be caused by the nature of the work itself that causes distress in a person.

Organisational factors, lack of management backing and institutional transformation, unsupportive superiors, and co-workers, and individual expectations are common ingredients of job stressors. For teachers, a study done by Kavita & Hassan (2018) has identified workload, time constraints, student attitude, recognition, and lack of resources as the main triggers for stress. According to Ong et al (2022), work stress and job satisfaction influence employees' turnover intention. It is suggested that if the level of job stress is high, the turnover intention will increase as well. Salahudina et al (2016) also investigated on the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention among schoolteachers in Malaysia. The finding indicated that teachers who perceived a high level of job stress have strong turnover intentions.

H5: There is a significant relationship between job stress and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework in this study is shown in Figure 1. The dependent variable is turnover intention. Five independent variables constitute the factors that the study aims to examine on whether they have a significant relationship with turnover intention.



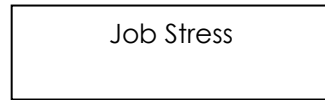


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Research

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used the quantitative method that will help the researchers to gain information and insight into the relationship among the variables and their level of significance. This study collected primary data using an online questionnaire that was distributed to schools in Selangor. Likert scales were used to measure the responses from the participants.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The target population of this study is the public primary school teacher in the state of Selangor. Selangor has the highest number of teachers in government primary schools. As of 2019, Selangor has 34,600 teachers in government primary schools which accounts for 15.04% of Malaysia's total number of teachers in government primary schools.

For this research, non-probability sampling was used utilizing convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling is defined as sampling by obtaining units and people who are most conveniently available. Using this sample strategy, a large number of completed questionnaires were successfully obtained in a timely and cost-effective manner. Snowball sampling allows researchers to choose sampling elements based on the initial respondents' recommendations.

SAMPLING SIZE

The size of the sample in research is crucial because it can determine the study's outcome. To obtain an accurate result from the research project, a correct sampling design should be followed to get an effective sample size. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2012), too high or too low sampling size will affect the outcome. The Krejcie and Morgan Sampling Size chart can be used to determine the sampling size in research studies.

The target population for this study is 34,600 teachers, with a required minimum sample size of 379. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to public primary school teachers in Selangor. However, only 313 responses were returned and were used for analysis.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire consists of 41 questions and is divided into two sections: Sections A and B. There are five questions in Section A on demographic such as gender, age, education level, years of employment, and place of origin. On the other hand, section B consists of 36 questions that

examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Section B is designed for the independent variables which are salary and benefits, training and career development, job stress, nature of work, and relationship with co-workers. There are 6 questions on salary and benefits, 5 questions about training and career development, 10 questions on job stress, 7 questions about the nature of work, 5 questions on relationships with co-workers, and 3 questions for turnover intention. All 36 questions are measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with answers ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items are adopted and adapted from previous studies.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The survey respondents are mostly female teachers, with the highest frequency in the gender group with 222 (71%) respondents. The majority of the respondents are from the age group of 50 and above. Almost three fourth or 232 of the respondents graduated with bachelor's degree, and 13.4% hold a master's degree while 9.9% are diploma holders.

The years of employment of the respondents are categorized into five. About 37.4% or 117 of the respondents have been working as a teacher for 20 years and above. The second highest group is teachers with 10 to 14 years of experience (21.4%). More than half (56.9%) of the respondents are from other states but taught in Selangor while 43.1% are originally from the Klang Valley area.

RELIABILITY TESTING

Table 1. Reliability Test

Question	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Number of Items
Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention	.900	3
Independent Variables:		
Salary and Benefits	.817	6
Training and Career Development	.923	5
Job Stress	.678	10
Nature of Work	.886	7
Relationship with Co-Workers	.938	5

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the variables. Results in Table 1 shows that the items for turnover intention have a high Cronbach's Alpha value of .900. The Cronbach's alpha for Salary and Benefits (0.817), Training and Career Development (0.923), Nature of Work (0.886), Relationship with Co-Workers (0.938) shows high reliability, Cronbach's Alpha for Job stress (0.678) shows acceptable reliability. The gen rule of thumb states that items are considered reliable if Cronbach's alpha value is equal to or greater than 0.7.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2. Correlation Analysis results (Dependent variable: Turnover Intention)

Variable	Correlation coefficient, r (p-value)
Salary and Benefits	-0.393** p<0.001
Training and Career Development	-0.215** p<0.001
Job Stress	0.217** p<0.001
Nature of Work	-0.435** p<0.001
Relationship with Co-Workers	-0.303** p<0.001

Referring to Table 2, there is a significant and weak negative ($r=-0.393$) relationship between turnover intention and salary and benefits. The p-value (< 0.001) demonstrated that the two variables are significantly associated. The correlation coefficient indicates that there is a weak negative (-0.215) relationship between turnover intention and training and career development. Despite the weak correlation, there is sufficient evidence that demonstrates the relationship between training and career development and turnover intention to be significant as the p-value is < 0.001 .

The correlation coefficient indicates that there is a weak positive (0.217) relationship between turnover intention and job stress. The p-value (< 0.001) proved that the two variables are significantly associated despite the weak correlation coefficient. The result shows that there is a weak negative (-0.435) relationship between turnover intention and the nature of work. The p-value (< 0.001) demonstrated that the two variables are significantly associated.

Furthermore, there is a weak negative (-0.303) relationship between turnover intention and relationships with co-workers. The p-value (< 0.001) also suggested the two variables are significantly associated.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Multiple Linear Regression analysis is a statistical method to identify the significant predictor variables. Based on the standardized regression coefficient we would be able to identify which factor is more significant in influencing the turnover intention of teachers. Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 below show the results of the multiple regression analysis.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.581 ^a	0.337	0.327	0.97638

Table 4. ANOVA Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	149.01	5	29.802	31.262	<0.001 ^b

Residual	292.67	307	0.953		
Total	441.68	312			

Table 5, Regression coefficients results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1		B	Std. Error			
	(Constant)	2.791	0.470		5.941	<0.001
	SB	-0.481	0.103	-0.286	-4.674	<0.001
	TCD	0.223	0.103	0.137	2.172	0.031
	JS	0.953	0.118	0.397	8.091	<0.001
	NW	-0.707	0.136	-0.396	-5.210	<0.001
	RCW	-0.023	0.092	-0.014	-0.251	0.802

Table 3 demonstrated how much of the variance in teachers' turnover intention is influenced by salary and benefit, training and career development, job stress, nature of work, and relationship of co-workers. The R Square of 0.337 shows that 33.7% of the variance of teachers' turnover intention is explained by the independent variables. While the remaining 66.3% of turnover intention could be influenced by other factors not under consideration in this study. The ANOVA results in table 4 with $(F(5,207)=31.262, p<0.001)$ show that the regression model is significant.

The multiple regression coefficients table demonstrated all variables are significant predictors of teachers' turnover intention except RCW (relationship with co-workers) In the regression model for this study. B-coefficient values reveal the average change in turnover intention associated with each unit of change in the predictors. Using salary and benefits, for example, a unit increase in salary and benefits results in an average of 0.481 (-) decrease in turnover intention.

Standardized Coefficients (Beta) allow us to identify the most influential factors. In this case, job stress is the highest contributor with a standardized beta value of 0.397 followed by the nature of work (beta=-0.396).

Sig. value (p-value) is an indicator of statistical significance for B-coefficients. By the rule of thumb, a B-coefficient with $p \leq 0.05$ is proven statistically significant. In reference to Table 5 which shows the p-value of 0.802 for relationships with co-workers, this means that this is the only predictor that is not statistically significant.

SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

Based on the analyses done above, several conclusions can be derived from the study especially the outcomes for the hypotheses that were developed for the study. The summary of the hypotheses results is shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Hypotheses Result

HYPOTHESES DESCRIPTION		RESULT
H1	There is a significant relationship between salary and benefit and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.	ACCEPTED
H2	There is a significant relationship between relationship with co-workers and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.	REJECTED

H3	There is a significant relationship between the nature of work and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.	ACCEPTED
H4	There is a significant relationship between training and development and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.	ACCEPTED
H5	There is a significant relationship between job stress and turnover intention among public primary school teachers in Selangor.	ACCEPTED

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The majority of those who responded were from the age group above 50 years old (29.4%), while the youngest group of people under 25 years old had the lowest number of respondents (2.9 %). The result demonstrated a massive gap between the number of senior teachers and the newer generation; this can be alarming as older and experienced teachers may already plan for their retirements. A lower proportion of new replacements may result in teacher shortages in the foreseeable future and the ministry must take proactive steps to escalate the recruitment process for new teachers.

The correlation coefficient shows that there is a moderate negative (-0.393) relationship between turnover intention and salary and benefits. The inverted correlation coefficient indicated that when the salary and benefits level is high, the teacher's turnover intention will be low. Among others, this paper corroborated findings from other studies like Bhatt & Sharma (2019) that attractive compensation will lead to a high level of job satisfaction and a lower chance of turnover intention. Being on the government's payroll, there is the assurance for public school teachers that their pay and benefits are guaranteed due to their security of tenure. The only question is whether their pay is competitive enough and commensurate with the heavy workload faced by teachers nowadays. A revision of teachers' allowances and pay scales would be time to recognize the contributions of teachers to society.

For training and development, while the relationship is significant, training and development have a low negative relationship with turnover intention. While this concurs with previous studies that training has a significant influence on employee retention (Elsafy & Oraby, 2022; Ekabu, 2019), the low correlation can be explained by the demographic factor of this study. Since many respondents are teachers aged 50 years and above thus nearing retirement, they might not place importance on training and development at this juncture of their career but on other aspects (Lopina et al, 2019). The results might be different if respondents comprise more of young teachers in their early careers.

Job stress has always been associated with burnout and the intention to leave a company. Job stress can be caused by the nature of work, peer pressure, or lack of managerial support in doing one's work. In this study, job stress is one of the independent variables that is included to see its influence on teachers' turnover intention. The results showed that job stress indeed has a relationship with turnover intention whereas job stress increases, so does the intention to leave the job. However, the relationship is somewhat low but statistically, job stress still has the most significant influence on turnover intention compared to other independent variables in this study. Reflective on many studies that have been done on teachers' work stress and burnout

phenomena, this finding adds to the evidence that employees who are stressed at work will normally have the intention to quit their job even as a temporary respite from all the pressure. Thus, school administrators and the relevant education department should look into easing unnecessary clerical and administrative work that has been burdening teachers for many years so they can focus on their work as teachers (Jomuad et al, 2021, Masyhum et al, 2021)

From this study, nature of work of a teacher is proven to have a strong relationship with turnover intention among primary school teachers in Selangor. In line with similar studies investigating the factors influencing teachers' turnover and retention, teachers who are proud of their work, who feel happy and believe they are making meaningful contributions in a job that also provides security and social status, will be content to stay. For this to happen, it is recommended that teachers are given wider autonomy to plan their lessons and concentrate on teaching rather than clerical work. This is to enable teachers to focus on educating the students and increasing student-teacher engagement that is intrinsic to job satisfaction and reduced turnover intention.

Finally for the independent variable of relationship with worker, although is proven to have an inverse relationship with turnover intention of teachers, but concurrent with previous studies that gives mixed results on the relationship and significance of co-worker support with turnover intention (Tews et al, 2019; Kmiecik, 2021) this study also reports that relationship with co-worker does not influence the teachers' intention to leave the job. Further studies could be done to find out how much impact does collegial support among teachers have on their job satisfaction and engagement and how this influences their decision to leave or stay in the profession.

This study has added to the literature on understanding factors that influence the turnover intention among primary school teachers in Selangor. As argued, interventions from the relevant department in mitigating job stress and promoting teachers' job engagement would be instrumental to the morale and productivity of teachers thus reducing their turnover intention.

There are some limitations in this research that can be addressed by future study. This study is done only among primary school teachers in Selangor where the respondents mainly come from schools situated in urban or suburban areas that are generally well equipped and have good support from the Parents-Teachers Association. These factors could have effect on the teachers' perception of job stress, nature of work and training and development opportunities, among others cumulating in how the teachers responded to the questionnaire.

Future study could ensure a more equitable distribution of urban and rural schools to see the difference in turnover intention of the teachers. Given the fact that this study is conducted only in Selangor also means that the results cannot be generalized to represent teachers in other parts of the country. Further study could also be done to explore other variables, including moderating and mediating variable in examining the factors that influence teacher's turnover intention.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHOR

All authors are participants in the data collection, analysis, writing and revising the manuscript.

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