

## **JOB EMBEDDEDNESS AND RETENTION: A STUDY AMONG TEACHERS IN PRIVATE ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Malaysia is in the midst of embracing the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and is working hard to strengthen the educational sector so that the future human capital possesses high ethical values and morality. Term like internet of things become the buzzword of the day but still, Islamic education providers particularly private Islamic schools in Malaysia are still struggling to survive and coupled with high turnover rates among the teachers, they have difficulty in producing high quality Islamic education. They are in dire needs of teachers who are willing to stay and sacrifice for students. Despite the high turnover rate, there are teachers who are still willing to stay and hence, the study was conducted to investigate the reasons for the teachers to stay. Job embeddedness theory was used in this study because it was able to uncover the reasons why employees stay in organizations and thus, the study examined the relationship between job embeddedness and employee retention among teachers in private Islamic schools in Malaysia. Three hundred and ninety school teachers in private Islamic schools participated in the study and the data was collected using survey forms. The findings revealed that fit to organization, fit to Islamic school practices, fit to community, links to school and organization-related sacrifices were significantly related to employee retention. The findings contribute significantly to the school administrators. Islamic education aims to nurture the young people as the future leaders. High turnover rates could negatively affect the goal of Islamic education and thus, the administrators and the policy makers have to give attention to the pressing issue especially in the era of technological sophistication.

**Keywords:** Private Islamic School; Malaysia; Job Embeddedness; Link to School, Community-related Sacrifice, Organization-related Sacrifice, Fit to Community; Fit to Organization; Fit to Islamic School Practices.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The establishment of Islamic schools in Malaysia was started before Malaysia gained its independence in 1957 (Siren, Azmi, Abdul Jalil & Ab Majid, 2018). The aspiration is to uphold the religion of Islam as the official religion in the country. Today, the number of Islamic schools has expanded and the scope covers pre-school education, primary and secondary. However, the Islamic schools can either be privately owned or run by the government. The latter enjoys government support and thus the employees are treated as government servants. On the other hand, the former (i.e. the private Islamic schools) are established by individuals or private organizations. Despite not getting much financial support from the government, Islamic schools are still continuously established with the

intention to provide Islamic education to the community. The high demand for Islamic education is due to the fact that Muslims in Malaysia believe that individuals have to be balanced in terms of worldly knowledge and the spiritual one. In Islam, seeking for education is regarded as compulsory for every Muslim and as the vicegerent (of Allah), an educated individual will be able to contribute to the society and the religion in order to achieve success in the world and the hereafter (Hassan, 1989).

The plight faced by most private Islamic schools is due to the fact that these schools depend on school fees, zakat and contribution from individuals and organizations. Consequently, the school facilities, infrastructure as well as staff compensation and benefits are limited. Further, the curriculum and administration are also unsystematic (Hashim and Langgulung (2008). Nevertheless, the authors also posited that the private Islamic schools play prominent role in Islamic education. To many Muslim parents, sending their children to these schools offer many advantages. First, Muslim parents nowadays are working and thus, the time for them to educate their own children about Islam is limited. Sending their kids to the Islamic schools is one of the solutions for the problem. Second, some parents are not formally educated about Islam. They need people who are educated and trained about Islam such as on tawhid and feqah to teach their own kids. Third, even though public schools provide Islamic education, the parents strongly believe that their children need more exposure and knowledge about Islam. Last but not least, given the moral decay and negative influence that is prevalent in the society, Muslim parents feel that their children must be well equipped with Islamic education as the protection from the unpleasant elements. These are some of the factors that make the demand for Islamic education always high.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Teacher Retention**

Notwithstanding the high demand of Islamic education, the private Islamic schools are still facing various challenges mainly high teacher turnover. From their study, Siren et al. (2018) found that teachers in private Islamic schools in Malaysia have high tendency to quit. Some of them treat the schools as the platform to gain experience before landing a better job elsewhere. The high turnover is due to the low salary and limited school facilities and infrastructure. This is especially true for teachers who have bachelor degrees and are waiting for better job offered somewhere else.

Further, Siren et al. (2018) reported that the root of the problem is due to financial constraints. The schools are privately funded and they are highly dependent on tuition fees paid by parents as well as the donation and zakat from individuals and organizations. Therefore, the teachers' remuneration is based on the schools' ability to pay.

High teacher turnover is also prevalent in other countries. For instance, Ingersoll (1999) noted that teacher attrition is one of the highest among many professions leaving nurses way behind. The literature indicates that the attrition increases from time to time at the growing rate (Ingersoll and Perda, 2009; Nieto,

2003; Sachs, 2004). The high turnover results in increased school expenses mainly on recruitment, selection, training and maintaining teachers. Teachers who are well trained and highly experienced are expected to be able to teach more effectively. But if the teachers leave the schools, new teachers have to be recruited. Costs to recruit new staff include monetary expenses to post the job advertisements and conducting interviews as well as skill assessment. Human resource planning is also an issue here because replacement teachers have to be hired and this would affect the academic sessions such as class postponement and replacement. The students' learning process might also be at stake. The other issue with high teacher turnover is succession planning. Every school needs to prepare high potential teachers to assume the key positions there for example to be the school principals. Most candidates who are targeted as the potential successors have to possess vast experience with the school administration matters. Losing high potential teachers means the schools have to identify and train other teachers.

In their study, Siren et al. (2018) discussed at a great length on how teacher turnover affects the schools and the students. However, they also noted that there are teachers who still continue working in those schools. With regard to the private Islamic schools in Malaysia, despite the low pay and lack of amenities, these teachers continue to stay at the schools and serve the students wholeheartedly and earnestly. At this juncture, one question prevails – what makes the teachers stay?

The present study aims to uncover the factors that contribute to the teachers' retention. The present study employs job embeddedness theory to investigate the issue because the theory is able to explain the variance in retention. Using the theory, three major aspects are examined – fit, links and sacrifices. These aspects cover the non-work and organizational related factors.

### **Studies on Retention**

Zineldin (2000) defined retention as the obligation of a person to continue doing business or exchange with the same organization an organization. Sinha and Sinha (2012) suggest that the literature generally defines retention as the continuous relationship between employees and the employers. Retention is influenced by various factors such as the job itself, the work environment, leadership style, job security, reward and opportunity for growth (Das and Baruah, 2013).

Retaining employees is crucial in organization because high turnover rates result in loss of high performers, employee shortages and having less qualified workers that would eventually affect the organizations' ability to remain competitive (Rappaport, Bancroft and Okum, 2003). Organizations that are unable to retain staff are likely to face uncertainty especially that is due to poor human resource planning. Being able to retain the employees is paramount to all employers because the investment in developing human capital is huge but the benefits outweigh the costs of acquiring new talents (Davidow and Uttal, 1989). The need to retain talent is even more pertinent among professional employees that possess valuable expertise and work experience. Losing highly

knowledgeable employees means the employers have to spend resources to recruit, select, train, develop and maintain the new ones which are very costly (Doh, Smith and Stumph, 2011). The literature also indicated that organizations with high employee retention tend to have more satisfied employees who are committed in job performance and thus increasing customers' satisfaction (Zeytinoglu and Denton, 2000). Mobley et al. (1979) once noted that satisfied employees have lower tendency to quit.

At this juncture, one might equate high employee retention with low turnover. George (2015) posited that extensive literature assumed that the reasons for leaving are the opposite of the reasons for staying. However, he also noted that current researchers (such as Cardy and Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Holtom and Inderrieden, 2006) have found that both constructs (turnover and retention) might have slightly different influencing factors. For instance, in his study, Gidron (1985) revealed that task achievement, relationship with others at work and the work itself could better predict retention than turnover.

### **Job embeddedness and Retention**

Prior research indicates that predictors for turnover fall under two categories – the first category centers on job attitudes and the second one revolves around ease of movement (March and Simon, 1958; Price and Mueller, 1981; Hom and Griffeth, 1995). Nevertheless, scholars posited that attitudinal factors are only able to explain about four to five percent of the variance in turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000; Hom and Griffeth, 1995). For instance, Felps et al. (2009) contended that job satisfaction and organizational commitment could not predict turnover intention as good as job embeddedness could. A study done among employees in grocery stores and a hospital showed that turnover and retention could better be predicted by non-work and organizational factors (Mitchell, Holthom, Lee, Sablynski and Erez, 2001). The authors postulated that non-work factors include off-the-job aspects such as the involvement of the employees with the people inside and outside the organizations. On the other hand, organizational factors are like attachments with team and groups at work. The two categories (non-work and organization) could further be broken into three dimensions – links, fit and sacrifice. These dimensions create a net that makes the employees stuck (or stay) in the organization.

According to Mitchell et al. (2001), links refer to connections that employees have with people and organization. George (2015) posited that one of the major determinants of retention is social support that is obtained from relationships with coworkers. In his study among nurse managers in hospitals, Jasper (2007) found that the nurses regarded unpleasant relationship with colleagues and head of departments as the major drivers for leaving the job. This implies that when employees are happy with the relationships at work, they feel the sense of collegiality and thus they are likely to stay (Tai, Bame and Ronbinson, 1998; Alexander, Lichtenstein, Oh and Ullman, 1998). Employees who are strongly linked to people inside and outside the organization are more likely to stay on the job because they perceive themselves as having the skills and abilities needed by the employer and the people at work. People like co-workers, team members and family could create the need for staying and not leaving the job. Employees tend

to choose organizations that could offer them with jobs that are suitable with their skills, interest and career aspiration. Likewise, employers also have the propensity to hire people with skills and values that match with the organizations' direction. Prior research also indicates that employees have the need to stay with the same employer and job when they perceive having high relationships with people such as family members, teammates and work mates (Maertz, Stevens, Campion and Fernandez, 1996; Presholdt, Lane and Matthews, 1987). If they are involved with projects, society or associations that require team work and group membership, the employees are unlikely to abandon their involvement for a new job.

The second dimension – fit – can be defined as the sense of comfort that employees have with the people (inside and outside of the organizations) as well as the work environment (Mitchell et al., 2001). Some organizations have their unique work culture and if employees feel that their personal values are in line with the company culture, the employees are very likely to stay. Previous studies (Chatman, 1991; Chan, 1996; Cable and Judge, 1996) indicated that person-organization fit is crucial in determining voluntary turnover. Most organizations have their own mission, vision and philosophies that guide their practices and decisions. That is why it is pertinent for recruiters to ensure that the job candidates have the person-organization fit. For instance, a candidate is passionate in teaching but if the school puts high emphasis on community projects or involvement in entrepreneurship activities, the candidate might not be able to fit in with the school's direction that might eventually lead to resignation.

The third dimension is sacrifice that refers to the benefits and entitlements that employees will lose if they leave the employer (Mitchell et al., 2001). The losses are not only in terms of pay, but also the potential job advancement (Shaw et al., 1998), sabbatical leaves that is based on seniority and interesting coworkers (Mitchell et al., 2001). The other things that will be forfeited when leaving an organization also include the convenience of the local community where the employees are living. This is so when the employees have to relocate and thus, the membership in local communities and the comfort of having the amenities will be gone. In short, if the switching cost of leaving the job is high, the tendency to stay is also high. In order to increase loyalty, most employers use seniority as the basis to determine the amount of entitlements employees receive. There are many employee benefits that are based on seniority such as job promotion, opportunity to go for training, the number of annual and sick leaves, sabbatical leaves, retirement benefits (Gupta and Jenkins, 1980) and gratuity. Leaving the current employees would lead to forfeiture of all the time-based benefits and joining new organization means the person has to start from scratch.

As expounded earlier, employees' decision to stay or leave are due to various factors. These factors are pertinent in influencing employees feeling of embeddedness with the job and the current employer. The higher the sense of embeddedness, the more the employees are likely to stay and thus, the following hypothesis is forwarded:

H1: Job embeddedness is positively related to employee retention.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

Data were collected using survey forms that contained items that measured studied variables. The population of the study were teachers who were teaching in Islamic private schools in Malaysia. The schools were registered with either the Ministry of Education or State Religion Department or both. The survey forms were distributed to schools which have given the consents to participate in the study and as a result, three hundred and ninety teachers took part in the study.

### **Measures**

The survey form was divided into several sections that covered all the studied variables. Job embeddedness construct was measured using items that were adopted and adapted from Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski and Erez (2001). All the dimensions in the construct were measured – fit to community, fit to organization, related to school, community related sacrifices and organization-related sacrifices. The items were adjusted in accordance to the Islamic private school context especially items for fit to community. There were also a few items that were self-developed by the researchers as additional to the existing ones. Employee retention was measured using items developed by Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen, and Moeyaert (2009). Some of the items were also slightly adjusted according to the school context. All the items were on a 5-point scale, which ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Demographic Profile of Respondents**

There were more female respondents (73.3 percent) than the male respondents (26.4 percent). The age range of majority of them was between 21 and 30 years (62.3 percent). More than half of them are bachelor degree holder (57.7%). Almost half of them (48.7%) had between one to five years working experiences; approximately 46 percent of them had been in their current position for period between one and five years; and little above 44 percent of them had been working private Islamic school between one and five years.

### **Factor Analysis and Reliability of Measurement Items**

All the items were analyzed using principal component analysis with an orthogonal (varimax) rotation. Besides relying on visual observation of the scree plot in deciding on the number of factors to be extracted, latent roots criterion (eigenvalues greater than 1) was also used. The examinations of the correlation matrix indicated that a considerable number of correlations exceeded 0.3 and so the matrix was suitable for factoring. Inspections of the anti-image correlation matrix revealed that all the measures of sampling adequacy were well above the acceptable level of 0.5.

The factor analysis on all the items that measured job embeddedness and retention produced 8 factors consisting of items for the respective variables which explained 66.49 percent of the total variance. The Bartlett test of sphericity is significant and that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.943 which was far greater than 0.6. Table 1 showed the detail output of the factor analysis, factor loadings, the cronbach's alpha, values for mean and standard deviation.

**Table 1 : Statistics and principal component loadings of the constructs**

Factors	Factor loadings
Factor 1: Organizational-related sacrifices (cronbach's alpha .916, M=3.64, SD=.76)	
I would sacrifice a lot of if I left this job.	.828
My promotional opportunities are excellent here.	.807
I am well compensated for my level of performance.	.762
The benefits are good on this job.	.733
The health-care benefits provided by this organization are excellent.	.728
The retirement benefits provided by this organization are excellent.	.695
The prospects for continuing employment with this company are excellent.	.542
Factor 2:Fit to Islamic School Practices (cronbach's alpha .891, M=4.41, SD=.59)	
The school exhibits Islamic symbols.	.797
The school practice religious preaching regularly.	.785
The school environment is conducive to practice Islamic behaviors.	.732
The leader in this school embraces Islamic teaching.	.731
My co-workers in this school practice Islamic lifestyle.	.590
Factor 3:Links to School (cronbach's alpha .870, M=4.00, SD=.66)	
My values are compatible with the school's values	.682
I can reach my professional's goals working for this school.	.660
I feel good about my professional growth and development.	.605
Factor 4:Fit to Community (cronbach's alpha .898, M=4.21, SD=.68)	
I really love the place where I work.	.723
The Islamic environment where I work is suitable for me	.694
This Islamic community is a good match for me.	.683
I think of the Islamic community where I work as home.	.622
The area where I work offers the leisure activities that I like	.581
Factor 5:Fit to Organization (cronbach's alpha .845, M=4.21, SD=.61)	
I like the members of my work group	.744
My coworkers are similar to me.	.694
Factor 6:Dropped from further analysis	
Factor 7:Retention (cronbach's alpha .827, M=3.75, SD=.69)	
Within this school my work gives me satisfaction.	.676
If I wanted to do another job or function, I would look first at the possibilities within this school.	.659
I see a future for myself within this school.	.587
If it were up to me, I will definitely be working for this company for the next five years.	.554
Factor 8:Dropped from further analysis	

Based on Table 1, there are three major observations. First, factors 6 and 8 were dropped from further analysis due to the nature of the items that were mixed and thus, not interpretable. Second, the factor analysis output did not indicate any items measuring one dimension of job embeddedness i.e. community-related sacrifices. This was due to the very low factor loadings (below .4) obtained by the items and thus not shown in the table. Therefore, the variable (i.e. community-related sacrifices) has to be dropped from the analysis. Third, items in factor 2 were not the original items introduced by Mitchell et al. (2001). The items were self-developed by the researchers and added to the original items in order to measure the Islamic school practices.

### Pearson's Correlations Results

Table 2 presents the output from Pearson's correlations test. The significant correlations (i.e.  $r$  values) that ranged from .405 to .658 indicated moderate relationships between the job embeddedness variables and retention. All the variables were significantly related to retention with positive direction. That means the higher the feeling of embeddedness to the job, the more likely employees will stay (fit to community:  $r = .405$ ,  $p = .000$ ; fit to Islamic school practices:  $r = .593$ ,  $p = .000$ ; fit to organization:  $r = .527$ ,  $p = .000$ ; links to school:  $r = .600$ ,  $p = .000$ ; organizational sacrifices:  $r = .658$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

**Table 2 : Intercorrelations among studied variables (N=390)**

	1	2	3	4	5
Fit to community	1				
Fit to Islamic school practices	.645**	1			
Fit to organization	.641**	.639**	1		
Links to school	.524**	.582**	.652**	1	
Organizational sacrifices	.396**	.589**	.489**	.621**	1
Retention	.405**	.593**	.527**	.600**	.658**

Based on the significant relationships between the job embeddedness variables and retention, there were evidence to support the hypothesis (i.e. H1).

Since all variables were significantly related to retention, it is also pertinent to determine how strong job embeddedness variables could predict retention. Thus, multiple linear regressions were conducted. The results in Table 3 showed that all the five variables explained 52.6 percent of the variance in retention ( $F = 87.244$ ,  $p < .05$ ). It implied that 47.4 percent of the variance in retention was explained by other factors. It was also found that when all the job embeddedness variables were entered into the equation simultaneously, fit to community was no longer significant predictor for retention anymore. The strongest predictor for retention was organization-related sacrifices ( $\beta = .372$ ,  $p = .000$ ) followed by fit to Islamic school practices ( $\beta = .232$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and links to school ( $\beta = .197$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Fit to organization was indicated as the weakest predictor for retention ( $\beta = .111$ ,  $p = .040$ ).

**Table 3 : Summary of multiple linear regression analysis of retention on predictor variables (N=390)**

Predictor variables entered	p	Standardized beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F
Fit to community	.090	-.066	.526	87.244*
Fit to Islamic school practices	.000	.232		
Fit to organization	.040	.111		
Related to school	.000	.197		
Organizational sacrifices	.000	.372		

\*p&lt;.05

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between job embeddedness and retention among school teachers in private Islamic schools in Malaysia. Three dimensions of job embeddedness were examined – links, fit and sacrifices.

In terms of fit, the results revealed that fit to organization, fit to community and fit to Islamic school practices were all significantly related to embeddedness with positive direction. The result is in line with the findings in the previous studies (Chatman, 1991; Chan, 1996; Cable and Judge, 1996). As posited earlier, employees always seek for a match between their own needs, expectations, values and personality with the organizations' values and culture. Mismatch between person and organization might lead to employees feeling out of place. In the case of teachers in the private Islamic schools, it is important for the teachers to love the school practices such as weekly religious tazkirah (preaching) and congregational prayers with the staff and students. Having been surrounded by people (coworkers and students) who practice Shariah complaint dress code, behavior and ethics might have also increased the fit between the employees and the school. The employees' sense of fit could also increase when they enjoy school facilities such as musolla (praying rooms) and masjid (mosques). The Islamic leadership and administration practiced by the schools could also boost the fit. Despite the unsystematic curriculum and poor administration style as posited by Hashim and Langgulung (2008), the teachers are happy to work under the leaders and managers who are perceived as embracing Islamic way of life. The other aspect that might serve as the motivation to stay is the teachers' aspiration and intention to disseminate Islamic knowledge to the students. In Islam, teachers are highly respected figures. Indeed, the salary is low and the career growth prospects might be limited but the teachers look forward to the spiritual rewards. To them, material rewards are worldly in nature and not able to guarantee true happiness in the hereafter.

In terms of link dimension and retention, it was found that both variables were significantly related to each other. The finding is in line with the prior research which indicated that employees who are strongly related to the organization and the people at work have higher tendency to stay (Maertz, Stevens, Campion and Fernandez, 1996; Presholdt, Lane and Matthews, 1987; Tai, Bame and Ronbinson, 1998; Alexander, Lichtenstein, Oh and Ullman, 1998)). As explained earlier, when employees strongly feel that their work ethics and values are in line

with the organizations', they can easily find the connection and tend to feel the chemistry with the schools. At work, teachers not only have to deal with students' learning, but they also have to handle school activities that might involve the parents and the nearby community. It is a common practice for schools to have a close connection with parents and that is why Parent-Teacher Associations are highly regarded in every school. The school programs also require teachers to work closely with the peers. If teachers are passionate about getting involved with the school activities and programs, they are likely to feel the bond with others at work. The other aspect about link with the school is the congruence between employees' professional goals and the schools' objective. Every teacher has career aspiration and that would require them to work for employers who offer such opportunity. If teachers perceive the schools are able to help them in achieving their dream career, they are more than happy to stay. That also explains the need for every school to emphasize the career development programs for the staff.

The study finding is also consistent with the previous ones that showed strong relations between sacrifice and retention (Shaw et al., 1998; Mitchell et al., 2001). Sacrifice refers to the things that employees lose when they leave the organization. Leaving the present job and organization means they will lose the close relationships they have created at work. As posited by many scholars (such as Maertz, Stevens, Campion and Fernandez, 1996; Presholdt, Lane and Matthews, 1987; Tai, Bame and Ronbinson, 1998; Alexander, Lichtenstein, Oh and Ullman, 1998), relationships at work is an important determinant for retention. Creating and maintaining good relationships with people at work take time and trust and not achievable overnight. Other than that, leaving the present job also leads to the forfeiture of many time-based employee benefits such as retirement benefits, gratuity and time-based promotion. Some organizations pay relatively low monthly salary but offer generous benefits that are based on seniority. The intention is to create loyalty among employees. Some Islamic schools pay certain amount of money into the teachers' fund to go for hajj and umrah but the fund will be forfeited if they resign.

The multiple linear regression analysis indicates that sacrifice is the strongest predictor for retention. As expounded earlier, it is obvious how powerful sacrifice is in abstaining employees from leaving. Indeed, time-based benefits and long term good relationships with people at work are able to retain teachers. In private Islamic schools, the monthly salaries might be lower than what is offered by the public Islamic schools and other organizations in general, but employee benefits are able to make the teachers stay. Notwithstanding the significant relationship with retention, fit to community lost its explanatory power on retention when other job embeddedness variables were entered into the equation simultaneously. Fit to Islamic school practices is the second strongest predictor for retention. Referring to the demographic profile of the respondents, fifty-seven percent of them had bachelor degree. We can speculate that they work in the schools just to gain experience before getting a better job offer but it is also fair to assume that they might be truly interested to work in the schools due to the intention to spread the teaching of Islam. Working in schools that reflect Islamic way of life might satisfy their need for attainment of true happiness in the afterlife.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study findings shed lights on factors that contribute to employee retention at private Islamic schools in Malaysia. Given the results from the study, several recommendations could be offered to the school administrations.

Since teachers perceive losses of employee benefits as highly important for them to stay, it is good to provide more attractive benefits that enhance their welfare. Given the low salary, teachers need to feel secured when they face emergency cases like hospitalization, accidents or disaster. Such benefit is only paid when the situation arises. In order to increase loyalty, teachers should also be given time-based benefits that will be forfeited if they leave the school. For example, apart from the compulsory retirement benefit (i.e. EPF), teachers should also be offered with extra retirement benefits that can only be cashed out upon retirement. Career development programs should be strengthened by laying out the career paths that teachers could use. This is to make them see that working in the schools for a longer time gives them better chance for promotion to the higher ranks. In similar vein, succession planning should also be in place. As indicated by the study findings, fit (to the organization and to the community) and link to school are important predictors for retention. That signifies the need to have successors who have the sense of belongingness to the school, who are well versed with the school practices, culture, mission and vision. Having the opportunity to be the successors, the teachers would be motivated to stay in the schools.

The results showed that fit to organization, fit to Islamic school practices and link to school are strong predictors for retention. It reflects the importance of hiring individuals who have both fits (person-organization fit and person-job fit). The recruitment can use variety of ways that not only confined to public advertisement in the media but also using word-of-mouth and employee referrals. These recruitment methods are more effective in relocating the potential candidates. In employee selection, instead of just testing the skill and abilities, the selection methods should also measure the personality, attitude, values, work ethics and career aspiration.

The induction programs for new teachers should emphasize on the school direction, mission and vision. This is because many of those who decide to work there treat the schools as a temporary destination before landing a better job. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that more than half of them have a bachelor degree. They might intend to leave soon after getting a better job elsewhere. These are the employees who add to the staff turnover rate and their resignation from the schools could affect the students' learning and human resource planning. Since the schools cannot stop them from leaving, there should be an agreement between both parties (school and the staff) that indicates the period of time they should fulfil before resigning.

Fit to Islamic school practices was added into the study as the additional items for fit to organization. The regression analysis showed the fit as the second strongest predictor for retention. When teachers believe that the schools practice Islamic way of life, their intention to stay is higher. In Islamic schools, there are many Islamic programs like religious preaching, Quranic classes, discussions with

the Muslim scholars and congregational prayers. These programs are able to fulfill the teachers' needs as Muslims that will increase their religiosity. Furthermore, if the schools organize more programs and events, the bond among the teachers and students will be stronger and create high sense of belongingness. The sense of belongingness to Islam is a powerful weapon that can serve as the glue to retain the teachers.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The regression analysis on all the job embeddedness variables and retention indicated that the R-squared is only 52.6 percent. It means that job embeddedness could explain the variance in retention up to 52.6 percent only and the remaining (i.e. 47.4 percent) is not explained. Other possible factors which could increase the explanatory power to retention are HR factors such as compensation and benefits, training and development programs and performance management practices. Many HR scholars (such as Wells and Thelen, 2002; Messmer, 2000, Pergamit and Veum, 1989) posited that HR policies that are employee friendly are able to increase employee commitment and satisfaction that would increase retention.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research was fully funded by Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS17-009-0575) under the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia.

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