

## Relationship Between Wellbeing and Organizational Commitment Among Teachers: A Quantitative Study in Sabah, Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

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The primary purpose of this study was to investigate teacher wellbeing and organizational commitment in Sabah, Malaysia. The sample comprised 102 secondary school teachers from Sabah, Malaysia, who completed two questionnaires on Google Forms, and data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Nonparametric tests showed significant differences in teachers' perceptions of their wellbeing by way of age job experience at  $p < 0.05$ . Significant age differences were also found in terms of teacher qualifications at  $p < 0.05$ . Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed that 11 of the wellbeing items were significantly different from the median value at  $p < .001$ . Only one item was significantly different from the median value at  $p < .05$ . Additionally, Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed that none of the organizational commitment items was significantly different from the median value at  $p < .001$ ; only one item was significantly different from the median value at  $p < .05$ . Percentages of agreement showed that a low-average to average proportion of teachers tends to demonstrate high wellbeing. Spearman's rank correlation indicated that the coefficient between wellbeing and organizational commitment was 0.456, which was significant at  $p < .01$ . Lastly, in light of the findings, some recommendations were made on ways to enhance teacher wellbeing and organizational commitment in Sabah, Malaysia.

**Contribution/Originality:** This research offers a valuable contribution by examining teacher wellbeing and organizational commitment in Sabah, Malaysia. Besides narrowing the gap that exists in the educational psychology literature, it is the first quantitative study that examines teacher wellbeing and organizational commitment in the Bornean state. Therefore, it adds to the very limited evidence base on the

psychosocial functioning among teachers, while reporting a novel conceptual framework of factors associated with the two multifaceted constructs.

## 1. Introduction

Two viewpoints are often adopted to elaborate on the association between staff wellbeing and organizational commitment. First, according to the conservation of resources theory, the pathway between organizational commitment wellbeing can be theoretically explained by assuming that valuable resources can reverse stressful situations (Hobfoll, 2002). On the other hand, organizational commitment can equip staff with the resources that help them cope with adverse resource situations, thus protecting their wellbeing (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Therefore, organizations should initially establish affective bonds with staff by promoting their wellbeing at work, which can be done by equipping them with the fundamental resources to counter organizational challenges (Hobfoll et al., 2015). Second, according to the job-demand resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), organizational commitment can predict staff wellbeing at work. Overall, staff wellbeing tends to have a favorable impact on organizational commitment, which can be augmented through a supportive and thriving workplace culture that encompasses physical, mental, and psychosocial healthcare.

### 1.1. Significance of the Study

Organizational commitment, which is associated with individuals' emotional ties to the organization, has been underscored as an indispensable criterion for organizational performance and sustainability (Grego-Planer, 2019; Meyer et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the impact of organizational commitment on staff wellbeing, has been under-researched, and is therefore, less understood (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Meyer and Maltin (2010) reiterated that, although several studies have highlighted the implications of organizational commitment, little attention is devoted to its ramifications for staff wellbeing, while suggesting that the construct should be widened to include components of eudaimonic and hedonic wellbeing. Given the acknowledged need for wellbeing promotion in Malaysia, an understanding of the relationship would help organizational leaders establish healthier workplaces (Noman, et al., 2020; Zainuddin, 2025).

Therefore, there is a need for a more in-depth examination of the the link between teacher wellbeing and organizational commitment in Sabah, Malaysia. More systematic research is needed to derive more consistent findings pertaining to the association between the two constructs. Besides providing a theoretical framework to guide future research, findings would provide a benchmark for organizational leaders to formulate policies and procedures to simultaneously improve employee organizational commitment and wellbeing. Overall, the study would help establish the link between wellbeing and organizational commitment, while identifying the factors associated with the two constructs. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between wellbeing and organizational commitment among teachers in Sabah, Malaysia.

Four research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Were there any significant differences in teachers' wellbeing and organizational commitment by way of gender, age, and job experience?
- ii. Were there any significant differences in the wellbeing and organizational commitment items based on a hypothesized value of 3.5?

- iii. What were the percentages of agreement (highly crucial/crucial) on wellbeing and organizational commitment and their implications?
- iv. Was there a significant relationship between wellbeing and organizational commitment?

## 2. Review of Literature

A literature review was conducted to showcase the writers' understanding on the implications of wellbeing and organizational commitment among Malaysian teachers. It enables them to provide the most prevalent theories and studies on the two constructs, besides identifying gaps in the literature. Overall, it helps the authors establish credibility and reliability in their research. By reviewing the literature on wellbeing and organizational commitment, the authors attempt to synthesize and evaluate the material and information according to the problem statement and research questions.

### 2.1. Wellbeing and Organizational Commitment

In an earlier study, [Khalaf and Adam \(2018\)](#) probed the relationship between organizational commitment, psychological wellbeing, and burnout among nurses. It was found that about half of the nurses tend to exhibit high organizational commitment with low burnout levels. A significant and positive relationship between organizational commitment and psychological wellbeing was also found. Similarly, occupational wellbeing and organizational commitment among health and protracted care staff were investigated by [Vadean \(2018\)](#). Findings showed that health and protracted care staff tend to demonstrate relatively good initial levels of occupational wellbeing; however, it seems to significantly diminish over time. Nevertheless, they tend to reject a better paid job elsewhere, thus demonstrating high organizational commitment. Findings imply that, while healthcare staff tend to be committed to the industry, their job quality should be improved to boost their wellbeing and intrinsic motivation.

In their empirical study, [Rani et al. \(2019\)](#) explored the effect of organizational wellbeing on organizational commitment and work engagement among tertiary staff. Findings revealed a significant relationship between organizational wellbeing and affective commitment, indicating that organizational wellbeing tends to strengthen the emotional attachment among tertiary staff, which leads them to develop strong feelings of connection and affection with the institution and form close bonds that drive them to establish meaningful and healthy relationships and gain a sense of belonging. On the other hand, [Mebarki et al. \(2019\)](#), who examined the relationship between psychological wellbeing and organizational commitment among customs staff, disclosed that psychological wellbeing tends to be significantly correlated with organizational commitment.

Additionally, [Yalcin, Akan, and Yildirim \(2021\)](#) explored the relationship between organizational commitment and psychological wellbeing among academicians. Findings revealed that academicians tend to demonstrate a high level of psychological wellbeing, while their organizational commitment seems to be moderate. Besides, a significant and positive relationship was also found between psychological wellbeing and organizational commitment, with psychological wellbeing acting as a significant predictor on emotional and normative commitment. On the other hand, [Pan and Lin, who \(2022\)](#) analyzed the factors influencing the job wellbeing at small and medium-sized enterprises, disclosed that organizational justice, job insecurity, and decent work tend to have a significant effect

on organizational commitment, with organizational commitment showing a significant and favorable impact on job wellbeing.

On the other hand, [Lee and Kim \(2023\)](#) studied the impact of mental toughness on the psychological wellbeing, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction among office workers. Findings indicated that mental toughness tends to have a significant effect on psychological wellbeing, besides having a positive impact on organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Findings imply that mental toughness should be increased to improve job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which can augment professional competency and staff retention.

Further, [Islaha, Kadiyono, and Islaha \(2023\)](#), who investigated the impact of perceived organizational wellbeing on telecommunication employees' commitment, concluded that organizational wellbeing tends to have a significant influence on affective, continuance, and normative commitment, with organizational wellbeing contributing most to affective commitment. In another study, [Zhao et al. \(2023\)](#) examined dispositional gratitude as a predictor of wellbeing and organizational commitment among biomedical staff. Findings indicated that dispositional gratitude tends to be favorably linked to wellbeing and organizational commitment, with leader-member exchange and coworker exchange mediating the effects. Findings imply that dispositional gratitude plays an important role in crafting wellbeing, with grateful staff being more likely to establish effective relationships with coworkers and supervisors.

A study by [Rahmawati and Herachwati \(2024\)](#) analyzed the impact of psychological wellbeing and staff integrity on organizational commitment at a commercial business center. Findings showed that psychological wellbeing tends to exert a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment, while staff integrity tends to have a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment and psychological wellbeing. Additionally, [Hemanthakumara \(2024\)](#), who probed the relationships among psychological wellbeing, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction among IT employees, asserted that psychological wellbeing tends to be significantly and positively related to job satisfaction. Findings imply that the IT sector ought to prioritize employees mental and emotional wellbeing to enhance their job satisfaction, productivity, and loyalty.

## **2.2. Locus of control, Life Quality, Stress, and Anxiety**

[Jain, Giga, and Cooper \(2008\)](#), who studied the impact of work locus of control as a moderator of the relationship between staff wellbeing and organizational commitment, disclosed that staff wellbeing tends to be negatively linked to conditional continuance commitment, whereby staff seem to be influenced by the benefits of continued organizational participation, opportunity costs associated with resigning, and moral-ethical aspects of organizational commitment.

In the same year, [Rathi \(2008\)](#) explored the relationships among organizational commitment, psychological wellbeing, and quality of work life among bank employees. Findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between quality of work life, organizational commitment, and psychological wellbeing, with quality of work life acting as a significant predictor of organizational commitment and psychological wellbeing. Further, [Panaccio and Vandenberghe \(2009\)](#), who examined the influence of perceived organizational support and four dimensions of organizational commitment (affective,

normative, perceived sacrifice) on the psychological wellbeing among staff and managers, disclosed that affective organizational commitment tends to mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support and wellbeing.

In their investigation into the impact of organizational commitment on the relationship between stressors and wellbeing, [Jain, Giga, and Cooper \(2013\)](#) found that perceived organizational commitment tends to mediate the relationship between organizational stressors, and psychological wellbeing and physical health. In their recent study, [Stark, Smith, and Carter \(2025\)](#) examined how employees' organizational commitment profiles impact their job stress, workplace anxiety, and work interference with family. Findings revealed that staff with high affective commitment tend to display the lowest levels of detrimental outcomes compared to those with high continuance and normative commitment, but low affective commitment. Findings imply that organizations should enhance staff's affective, continuance, and normative commitment to mitigate stress, anxiety, and work interference, while promoting a sense of belonging, loyalty, and duty, besides making them feel obliged to stay with the organization.

Lastly, [Nazeer et al. \(2025\)](#), who analyzed the impact of wellbeing programs on staff retention and satisfaction at private banks, disclosed a significant and positive correlation between wellbeing programs and organizational commitment, implying that organizational support tends to increase job satisfaction, while reducing stress and turnover intentions. Findings imply that financial assistance and healthcare benefits can substantially improve staff loyalty, while wellbeing measures can foster dedication, productivity, and long-term engagement amongst staff.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design and Approach**

This study adopted a quantitative research approach, using two online questionnaires to gather numerical data for statistical analysis. This method allowed for the calculation of significant differences based non-parametric tests and percentages of agreement on teachers' perceptions of wellbeing and organizational commitment. Additionally, this study was based on a positivist research paradigm because it focused on objective measurement, statistical analysis, and empirical evidence. This particular design was appropriate because it could be applied to capture teachers' perceptions within a short period.

#### **3.2. Research Locations**

The research was conducted in two locations, namely, Kota Kinabalu and Kudat. Both were chosen for their position as highly accessible locales that are deemed representative of the teaching workforce in Sabah. Kota Kinabalu is the capital city situated strategically in the west coast of the same island state ([Sabah Tourism Board, n. d.-a](#)). On the other hand, Kudat, also known as the Tip of Borneo, is located on the upper north of the Malaysian state of Sabah ([Sabah Tourism Board, n. d.-b](#)).

#### **3.3. Sample and Justification**

The sample was obtained through convenience sampling whereby teachers were selected for inclusion because they were the easiest for the first author to access. Further, this

sampling method was adopted because of cost-effectiveness, feasibility, geographical proximity, availability of teachers at the given time, and willingness of both teachers and principals to participate in the research. Forty-one (41) teachers in Kota Kinabalu were recruited with the help of three principals who were asked to share the survey link with teachers and urge them to respond to the questionnaire online. Another 61 teachers in Kudat were asked to fill out the questionnaire with a pen/pencil after attending a presentation on effective teachers and teaching strategies by the first author.

The sample size of this study was limited to 102. Nevertheless, according to Roscoe (1975), a sample size greater than 30 and less than 500 is suitable for most survey studies; the argument behind this rule of thumb is derived from the central limit theorem (CLT), which states that the distribution of means will reach a normal distribution as the sample size increases. This rule of thumb was applied by RUBIKTOP (2023), a prominent market research company committed to delivering high-quality, actionable data. First, the CLT provides a good approximation of the sampling distribution of the mean for the current sample size of 102, which indicates that the normal distribution can be used to calculate confidence intervals and  $p$ -values for the findings. Second, for most statistical tests in education, the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true (Type I error) is controlled at a significant level of 0.05; therefore, the current researchers are willing to accept a five (5) percent chance of making a Type I error (rejecting the null hypothesis when it is actually true). With the current sample size, this level of control for most statistical tests can be achieved. Third, the power of a statistical test also lies in its probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is false (Type II error). Since power can be reasonably derived from a minimal sample size of 30, the present sample will yield relatively high power. Lastly, a minimal sample size of 30 can help achieve a reasonable level of power for non-parametric tests; therefore, the current sample would be sufficient to indicate significant differences for the Kruskal-Wallis H, Mann-Whitney U, and Wilcoxon signed rank tests that were utilized to analyze data in this study.

Teachers come from a variety of backgrounds and possess different levels of experience and expertise, thus reflecting a wide range of perspectives on perceptions of digital leadership within their schools. Males comprised 49, while females comprised 51 percent of the sample. Age-wise, 38.2 percent are 22 to 33 years old, 32.4 percent are 34 to 44 years old, 20.6 percent are 45 to 55 years old, and 8.8 percent are 56 and above. With regards to job experience, 23.5 percent have worked for 1 to 5 years, 28.4 percent for six to 11 years, 19.6 percent for 12 to 17 years, and 16.7 percent for more than 23 years. About 15.7 percent have earned a diploma, 52.9 percent a bachelor degree, 21.6 percent a master degree, and 9.8 percent a PhD (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Teachers ( $n = 102$ )

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	50	49.0%
	Female	52	51.0%
Age	23-33	39	38.2%
	34-44	33	32.4%
	45-55	21	20.6%
	56 and above	9	8.8%
Job experience (years)	1-5	24	23.5%
	6-11	29	28.4%
	12-17	20	19.6%
	18-23	12	11.8%

Highest qualification	More than 23	17	16.7%
	Bachelor	54	52.9%
	Master	22	21.6%
	PhD	10	9.8%
	Diploma	16	15.7%

### 3.4. Instruments

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), designed by [Goldberg and Williams \(1988\)](#), was adapted to assess wellbeing. Its responses are based on a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5. [Sánchez-López and Dresch \(2008\)](#) determined its internal consistency and external and structure validity by administering it to a stratified sample of 1,001 respondents. Results indicated that its Cronbach's alpha is .76, with a three-factor structure, reflecting that it is a multidimensional tool that measures several distinct socioemotional components, rather than just a linear assessment device; therefore, it was deemed to have sufficient internal consistency to assess the overall psychological wellbeing among teachers in the current study.

On the other hand, the Organizational Commitment Scales (OCS), designed by [Meyer and Allen \(2012\)](#), was adapted to assess organizational commitment among teachers. Its responses are based on a Likert scale ranging from Never = 1 to Often = 5. [Efthymiopoulos and Goula \(2024\)](#) examined its reliability and validity by using a stratified random sample of 205 employees. Results confirmed that item correlations of the scales are greater than or equal to 0.552, with the factor showing excellent reliability at  $\alpha = 0.908$ .

To determine their suitability for the current study, both questionnaires were pilot-tested on 25 teachers. Data were analyzed by using SPSS 26.0. Results showed that the Cronbach's alphas of the GHQ-12 Questionnaire and OCS are .916 and .944, respectively. The questionnaires have high homogeneity because their items are measuring the same underlying constructs (wellbeing and organizational commitment), and high interrelatedness because the items correlate well with each other.

### 3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was carried out by requesting Kudat teachers to circle their answers on their hardcopy using a pen or pencil, while the Kota Kinabalu teachers were reminded by their principals to complete the questionnaires on Google Forms. Further, research conditions and confidentiality concerns were clearly and succinctly communicated to the respondents, who were assured of their anonymity, while their responses would be kept strictly confidential. They were also told that they could stop participating in the survey any time. Data collection was done during lunch break that allowed sufficient time for the teachers to respond or ask questions.

Subsequently, the available data were recorded on a spreadsheet and double-checked to ensure accuracy; they were then analyzed using SPSS 29.0. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted. First, descriptive statistics was used to summarize demographic information, including gender, age, job experience, and qualifications. This analysis provided valuable insight into the attributes of the sample and contributed to greater understanding of the general characteristics of the teachers. Second, inferential statistics was conducted by running non-parametric tests, namely, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis H, and Wilcoxon signed rank test on determine significant differences in terms of gender, age, qualifications, and job experience, respectively. Third, Wilcoxon

signed rank test was conducted to determine the level of significance of each wellbeing and organizational commitment item by using a hypothesized value of 3.5. Fourth, percentages of agreement (highly crucial/crucial) of each item were collapsed to gain an overall impression of teachers' perceptions of their wellbeing and organizational commitment. Finally, Spearman's rank correlation was run to determine if the two constructs were significantly related.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Nonparametric Test Results

Nonparametric tests showed significant differences in teachers' perceptions of their wellbeing by way of age job experience at  $p < 0.05$ . Significant age differences were also found in terms of teachers' qualifications at  $p < 0.05$  (see Table 2).

Table 2: Nonparametric Test Results on Key Variables

Wellbeing	Nonparametric test	<i>p</i> -value
Gender	Mann-Whitney U test	0.273
Age	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.008*
Job Experience	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.002*
Highest qualification	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.746
Organizational Commitment	Nonparametric test	<i>p</i> -value
Gender	Mann-Whitney U test	0.685
Age	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.007*
Job Experience	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.068
Highest qualification	Kruskal-Wallis H test	0.914

\* $p < 0.05$

### 4.2 Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Results on Wellbeing

Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed that 11 of the items were significantly different from the median value at  $p < .001$ . Only one item was were significantly different from the median value at  $p < .05$  (see Table 3).

Table 3: Wilcoxon signed rank test on Wellbeing (Hypothesized Value = 3.5)

Item	<i>p</i> -value
I have been able to concentrate on my work over the past few weeks	< 0.001**
I have been able to sleep without any worry over the past few weeks	0.063
I have been playing a useful part at my organization over the past few weeks	< 0.001**
I have been capable of making decisions over the past few weeks	0.001**
I have not felt under any strain over the past few weeks	0.029*
I could overcome difficulties over the past few weeks	0.001**
I have been able to enjoy day-to-day activities over the past few weeks	< 0.001**
I have been able to face problems over the past few weeks	< 0.001**
I have been feeling cheerful over the past few weeks	< 0.001**
I have been feeling confident over the past few weeks	< 0.001**
I have been thinking of myself as useful/valuable over the past few weeks	< 0.001**
I have been feeling reasonably happy over the past few weeks	< 0.001**

\*\* $p < .001$ ; \* $p < 0.05$

### 4.3. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Results on Organizational Commitment

Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed that none of the items was significantly different from the median value at  $p < .001$ . Only one item was significantly different from the median value at  $p < .05$  (see Table 4).

Table 4: Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test on Organizational Commitment  
(hypothesized value = value 3.5)

Item	p-value
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in my organization	0.572
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	0.861
I feel like "part of my family" at my organization	0.753
I feel "emotionally attached" to my organization	0.191
My organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	0.971
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	0.719
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now even if I wanted to.	0.067
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I leave my organization	0.890
Right now, staying at my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	0.379
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving my organization	0.833
A consequence of leaving my job at my organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere	0.062
I continue to work for my organization since leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	0.090
I feel obligated to remain with my organization	0.003*
Even if it were to my advantage, I feel it would be wrong to leave my organization	0.078
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now	0.166
This organization deserves my loyalty	0.297
I am staying in this organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	0.589
I owe a great deal to my organization	0.547

\* $p < 0.05$

### 4.4 Means, Percentages of Agreement, and Spearman Correlation

The overall group mean of wellbeing was 46.30/60. Percentages of strongly agree/agree were collapsed on the wellbeing items to gain an overview of perceived wellbeing. Findings showed that only 59.8 to 69.6 percent of teachers strongly agreed/agreed that, over the previous few weeks, they have (1) been able to sleep without any worry, (2) not felt under any strain, (3) been capable of making decisions, (4) overcome difficulties, (5) been feeling cheerful. Another 70.6 to 75.5 percent strongly agreed/agreed that, over the previous few weeks, they have (1) been able to enjoy day-to-day activities, (2) been feeling confident, (3) been feeling reasonably happy, (4) been thinking of themselves as useful/valuable, and (5) been able to face problems. Overall, findings showed that a low-average to average proportion of teachers tends to demonstrate high wellbeing (see Table 5).

Table 5: Percentages of Agreement on Wellbeing

Item	1	2	3	4	5	4+5 (collapsed)
I have been able to concentrate on my work over the past few weeks	1.0%	5.9%	20.6%	47.1%	25.5%	72.6

I have been able to sleep without any worry over the past few weeks	2.0%	11.8%	26.5%	37.3%	22.5%	59.8
I have been playing a useful part at my organization over the past few weeks	1.0%	5.9%	21.6%	46.1%	25.5%	71.6
I have been capable of making decisions over the past few weeks	1.0%	8.8%	24.5%	38.2%	27.5%	65.7
I have not felt under any strain over the past few weeks	2.0%	8.8%	29.4%	37.3%	22.5%	59.8
I could overcome difficulties over the past few weeks	2.9%	6.9%	24.5%	35.3%	30.4%	65.7
I have been able to enjoy day-to-day activities over the past few weeks	1.0%	5.9%	22.5%	43.1%	27.5%	70.6
I have been able to face problems over the past few weeks	1.0%	2.0%	21.6%	46.1%	29.4%	75.5
I have been feeling cheerful over the past few weeks	0.0%	4.9%	25.5%	45.1%	24.5%	69.6
I have been feeling confident over the past few weeks	1.0%	7.8%	20.6%	42.2%	28.4%	70.6
I have been thinking of myself as useful/valuable over the past few weeks	2.0%	4.9%	22.5%	39.2%	31.4%	70.6
I have been feeling reasonably happy over the past few weeks	0.0%	7.8%	21.6%	39.2%	31.4%	70.6

Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Always = 4, Often = 5

The overall group mean of organizational commitment was 61.26/90. Percentages of strongly agree/agree were collapsed on the organizational commitment items to gain an overview of perceived organizational commitment. Findings showed that 39.2 to 47 percent of teachers strongly agreed/agreed that they would (1) continue to work for the school, (2) have too few options outside, (3) face the scarcity of options, (4) feel obligated to remain with the school, and (5) feel wrong or guilty to leave the school due to their sense of obligation. Another 50 to 61.7 percent strongly agreed/agreed that they (1) really feel as if the school’s problems are theirs, (2) would be very happy to continue working in the school, (3) feel emotionally attached to the school, (4) derive personal meaning from the school, (5) would be find it hard to leave the school, (6) would feel highly disrupted if they left, (7) remain in the school due to both necessity and desire, (8) feel loyal to the school, and (9) feel a strong sense of belonging to the school. Overall findings showed that low to low-average proportions of teachers tend to exhibit high organization commitment (see [Table 6](#)).

Table 6: Percentages of Agreement on Organizational Commitment

Item	1	2	3	4	5	4+5 (collapsed)
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in my organization	3.9%	12.7%	32.4%	41.2%	9.8%	50.9%
I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own	3.9%	8.8%	37.3%	38.2%	11.8%	50.0%
I feel like “part of my family” at my organization	3.9%	10.8%	30.4%	43.1%	11.8%	54.9%
I feel “emotionally attached” to my organization	2.0%	11.8%	36.3%	35.3%	14.7%	50.0%
My organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	5.9%	6.9%	35.3%	36.3%	15.7%	52.0%

I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	3.9%	8.8%	25.5%	44.1%	17.6%	61.7%
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now even if I wanted to.	3.9%	12.7%	29.4%	40.2%	13.7%	53.9%
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I leave my organization	2.9%	9.8%	29.4%	47.1%	10.8%	57.9%
Right now, staying at my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	2.0%	12.7%	33.3%	42.2%	9.8%	52.0%
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving my organization	3.9%	10.8%	44.1%	32.4%	8.8%	41.2%
A consequence of leaving my job at my organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere	2.0%	12.7%	43.1%	33.3%	8.8%	42.1%
I continue to work for my organization since leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	5.9%	14.7%	40.2%	34.3%	4.9%	39.2%
I feel obligated to remain with my organization	3.9%	10.8%	44.1%	31.4%	9.8%	41.2%
Even if it were to my advantage, I feel it would be wrong to leave my organization	5.9%	12.7%	34.3%	38.2%	8.8%	47.0%
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now	3.9%	8.8%	44.1%	30.4%	12.7%	43.1%
This organization deserves my loyalty	4.9%	12.7%	30.4%	42.2%	9.8%	52.0%
I am staying in this organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	2.0%	14.7%	36.3%	32.4%	14.7%	47.1%
I owe a great deal to my organization	3.9%	12.7%	32.4%	41.2%	9.8%	51.0%

*Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5*

Lastly, Spearman's rank correlation indicated that the coefficient between wellbeing and organizational commitment was 0.456, which was significant at  $p < .01$ .

## 5. Implications and Recommendations

### 5.1. Wellbeing: Implications and Recommendations

#### 5.1.1. Low to Low-average Levels of Wellbeing

Findings imply that teachers in Sabah tend to exhibit low to low-average levels of wellbeing, which are supported by previous research. Sagar (2021) found that the level of wellbeing, happiness, and mental health among teachers tend to be average. Additionally, the Ministry of Education in Malaysia reported that the majority of Malaysian teachers tend to possess low to medium levels of wellbeing (Yahya et al., 2020). Further, Pau et al. (2022) found that a majority of Malaysian secondary school teachers tend to be at risk of job exhaustion in relation to personal accomplishments, time management, and occupational stressors, which reflect their vulnerability to lower mental health. Findings imply that psychological interventions and self-care programs should be implemented to help teachers address the initial symptoms of job exhaustion.

Additionally, recent research showed that Malaysian teachers tend to encounter several issues and challenges that can bring a toll to their wellbeing. Besides, early retirement rates have escalated, with approximately 10,000 teachers retiring early, often citing mental health problems. Teachers in the state of Selangor tend to report the highest rates of job stress due to increasingly heavy workloads, high student enrollment, and urban pressures. Despite the existence of more counsellors and stress management programs, anxiety, stress, and depression among Malaysian teachers remain alarmingly high (Alzahari, Ahmad, & Bahari, 2025; Sitheravellu, 2022).

#### *5.1.2. Significant and Positive Correlation*

Current findings imply that wellbeing and organizational commitment tend to be significantly and positively related, which were supported by previous research (Lee & Kim, 2023; Rani et al., 2019; Yalcin, Akan, & Yildirim, 2021).

#### *5.1.3. Teacher Empowerment and Wellbeing*

Yusoff and Tengku-Arifin (2020), who examined the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher wellbeing at the workplace, found that both variables tend to be significantly and positively related. Findings imply that school administrators should empower teachers to boost their wellbeing. Further, findings also indicated that decision-making, a teacher empowerment dimension, tends to significantly predict teacher wellbeing. Findings imply that school administrators should try the best way to propagate an enjoyable working environment for teachers, for example, by allowing them to participate in the decision-making process. Teachers who are given the trust and responsibility in decision-making tend to feel more assertive in executing tasks, while displaying greater self-efficacy, work motivation, and job satisfaction. To engage teachers more, school administrators should take their opinions and suggesting into consideration to instill a positive outlook and job pride among teachers.

Moreover, Yusoff and Tengku-Arifin (2020) recommended that relevant parties, including school administrators, educational departments, and school staff enhance teacher wellbeing through collective efforts to propagate a favorable and productive school environment, while ensuring full support and trust from administrators and colleagues. Moreover, with the emphasis of decentralization by National Education Policy way back in 1992, principals and top administrators should minimize the hierarchical approach and practice consensus in the decision-making process instead. In the context of modern educational leadership, top management should show greater empathy toward teachers to propagate an environment that is conducive to achieving the goals of SDG 4 Quality Education. Lastly, district or state educational departments should implement empowerment programs for principals, administrators, and teachers to promote healthful living and overall wellbeing.

#### *5.1.4. Prevention of Teacher Burnout and Attrition*

Thomas, Ahmad, and Mohd Fakhruddin (2024), who explored the issue of teacher burnout in Malaysia, indicated that burnout is not only increasing, but it is also affecting teachers' emotional and mental wellbeing, besides causing teacher attrition. Findings imply that more intervention programs are needed to alleviate burnout among teachers by increasing awareness of the dire need for stress reduction among them, while raising their wellbeing for them to thrive in their profession. Besides, the Ministry of Education

should also increase efforts to prevent teacher burnout and attrition by providing focused treatments and support networks to enhance teacher wellbeing. In tandem with the government, the Ministry should also increase the social services for teachers, while subsidizing their living expenses of those in the rural areas to elevate their quality of life.

#### *5.1.5. CALMERSS Multimodal Wellbeing Program*

[Taylor \(2017\)](#) pioneered a wellness program known as CALMERSS, the acronym for cultivating awareness, mindfulness, empathy, resilience, and self-compassion in schools. It is a multimodal approach that encompasses cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation, mindfulness, exercise, and positive psychology interventions to improve teachers' emotional and social wellbeing, work-life balance, and overall work practices. Research has provided empirical evidence for its effectiveness in enhancing wellbeing among participants by significantly ameliorating physical, psychological, and personal strain, while improving self-care.

To enhance wellbeing among teachers, schools should focus on cultivating awareness, mindfulness, empathy, resilience, and self-compassion among them. One of the primary goals should be enhancing teacher wellbeing by improving their emotional regulation, which enables them to manage and respond to their emotions in a socially appropriate and resilient manner. It allows them to influence which emotions they feel, when they experience them, and how they express or experience them by consciously monitoring and adjusting their emotional responses. Besides, teachers can adopt various techniques to manage their emotions, including (1) cognitive reappraisal that requires them to change how they think about a situation to influence their emotional response, (2) mindfulness that requires them to paying attention to the present moment without judgment, (3) deep breathing exercises that can help deescalate intense emotions, (4) physical exercise that can help reduce anxiety and stress, and (5) seeking support by consulting a therapist or trusted friend to gain valuable insight ([Taylor, 2017](#)).

#### *5.1.6. PERMA-H Model of Positive Psychology*

[Avola et al. \(2025\)](#) suggested that the PERMA-H model of positive psychology be implemented to unify the heterogeneous field of teacher wellbeing. PERMA-H encompasses positive emotions (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), accomplishment (A), and health (H). It includes the use of gratitude, therapy, physical activity, and mindfulness and meditation ([The School of Positive Psychology, 2024](#)). Developed by Martin Seligman, its framework can be used to appraise and enhance the overall psychological wellbeing ([Seligman, 2018](#)) among teachers. First, teachers should engage in activities that enable them to experience positive feelings, including gratitude, joy, and contentment. Second, they should be fully engaged and immersed in activities that align with their own interests and skills, which often result in a state of flow. Third, they should establish favorable interpersonal relationships by forming strong and supportive social connections with others. Fourth, they should derive meaning from life by having a sense of purpose while asserting that their lives have significance and value. Fifth, they should set and achieve goals to gain a sense of mastery and success. Lastly, they should focus on physical and mental wellbeing, including having adequate sleep, nutrition, and exercise.

## **5.2. Organizational Commitment: Implications and Recommendations**

### *5.2.1. Job Stress and Adverse Factors*

Current findings imply that teachers tend to demonstrate a low-average level of organizational commitment. Wang et al. (2020) reiterated that high job stress can adversely affect the organization commitment among university teachers who are burdened by high expectations from students, parents, and other stakeholders as they have assumed the mission to play an exemplary role in pedagogy, research, and community service. On average, many Malaysian teachers carry higher than the average workload, which explains why they experience high job stress, which is often linked to low organizational commitment and wellbeing. Compared to their counterparts at large urban schools who enjoy more favorable working conditions, those from smaller rural schools often have to work much harder because of the lack of basic facilities and social amenities. Lastly, experiencing a mismatch between organizational support and ambition, with their efforts being disproportionate with fair financial return, it is not surprising that many teachers tend to have exhibit low job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Isa and Palpanadan (2020) summarized several factors that could adversely affect the organizational commitment among teachers. Besides instruction, teachers have to shoulder several other job responsibilities that demand effective time management and quality output. Additionally, a heavy teaching workload, student-related issues, career development, and endless paperwork often contribute significantly to the high stress, and even burnout, among teachers. The lack of acknowledgement for achievements, role conflict, and remuneration that does not commensurate with their workload further aggravate their psychological distress. Lastly, many teachers often work in crowded staffrooms, while striving to keep pace with multifarious demands, role expectations, and sociocultural norms.

### *5.2.2. Employee Wellbeing Initiatives*

According to Symonds (2022), organizational commitment can be increased by nurturing staff development and implementing staff wellbeing initiatives. First, teachers need opportunities for lifelong learning and development, besides administrative support to enhance their knowledge, skills, and experience. They need appropriate training opportunities and exposure to make them feel more efficacious and assertive in their roles, guide them on a successful personal path, help them attain their professional and personal goals, and boost their performance and productivity. Besides making teachers feel empowered, development programs should also make them feel more challenged and appreciated, which can increase their sense of psychological safety, which in turn, makes them feel confident in voicing their opinions. Second, wellbeing programs are essential to boost the organizational commitment among teachers, which can be achieved by nurturing the staff experience. Teachers who enjoy and feel proud of their work are more likely to develop a greater sense of loyalty and commitment toward teaching and community service. Moreover, wellbeing initiatives for teachers can include discount vouchers, a common room for them to relax, or a canteen with subsidized food and drink. Overall, school administrators should listen to teachers to understand their needs, thus leading them to feel appreciated and intrinsically motivated to maintain their own wellbeing and organizational commitment.

### *5.2.3. Inclusivity, Transparency, and Open Communication*

Additionally, organizational commitment can be increased through inclusivity, transparency, and effective communication (Symonds, 2022). First, schools should

develop a vision of diversity and inclusion as their workplace culture so that teachers will form a strong emotional bond with them. Teachers need to feel that they are respected and acknowledged to develop a sense of belonging, regardless of their job title and scope. Those who feel included tend to exhibit higher job engagement and enthusiasm in their role. To emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion, schools should value and honor teachers as the most powerful human assets, for instance, by recognizing and rewarding achievements, praising accomplishments, and offering support to those who encounter problems. They can also implement a staff recognition program that comprises team-building exercises, bonuses, or other fringe benefits. Second, schools can increase organizational commitment by upholding trust and transparency through favorable interactions and reciprocal communication. To clarify their organizational goals, vision, and mission, school administrators should communicate realistic expectations to all teachers, thus ensuring that they will internalize how they can contribute to attaining school outcomes. For example, schools can promote transparency and dual communication by producing quarterly newsletters to keep everyone updated or conducting informal meetings to establish open lines of communication to keep everybody under the same radar.

#### *5.2.4. Fair Remuneration*

Organizational commitment can be enhanced by instituting an equitable remuneration policy (Symonds, 2022). First, since fair remuneration is the primary reason for most teachers to continue their services, rewarding them fairly will not only reinforce their continuance commitment, but it will also help nurture a school-wide sense of organizational development. To demonstrate a staunch belief in equal pay for equal work to all staff, schools should provide specific salary frameworks and compensation strategies that align with industry standards. Second, to determine if their incentives and strategies positively impact organizational commitment, school administrators should track teacher job satisfaction through annual surveys or interviews.

#### *5.2.5. Transformational Leadership*

A study by Musa (2014) revealed that transformational leaders tend to significantly influence teacher commitment, via intellectual stimulation, idealized behavior and attribute influences, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation. They tend to increase teachers' dedication to educational ideals, besides a sense of obligation to disseminate knowledge as an ethical-moral responsibility. Moreover, school leaders who adopt transformational principles tend to motivate teachers to advance their vision and mission, while elevating their organizational commitment by inspiring them to engage in proactive decision-making and creative problem-solving. Besides demonstrating trustworthiness and respecting diversity, transformational leaders also motivate teachers to teach for a higher purpose to maximize their potential.

Additionally, transformational leaders tend to enthuse and stimulate staff through authenticity, passion, self-assertiveness, and high expectations, which ultimately enhance their self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-determination (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Besides, they also tend to empower staff to transcend self-interests to accomplish wider educational goals. By endorsing intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, transformational leaders inspire staff to engage in innovative problem-solving, while offering constructive feedback. While their intellectual stimulation tends to

enhance staff's sense of responsibility and trust, their individualized consideration tends to increase their productivity, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy.

#### *5.2.6. Organizational Commitment and Professionalization*

Noordin et al. (2010) revealed that teachers tend to have moderate levels of organizational commitment, besides a low to moderate level of teacher professionalization. Findings imply that school leaders need to find innovative ways to inspire and nurture teacher commitment because bribery, cajoling, or humor is ineffective in raising teacher dedication, engagement, and loyalty. School leaders should strive to craft management strategies around their teachers, who are inevitably the most valuable human resource assets in the field of education. It is paramount for school leaders to analyze the behavior of teachers, teaching teams, and school to capitalize on their human resources. One way is to raise teacher professionalization, which can enhance teacher commitment and improve retention rates. Moreover, teacher professionalization should stem from school leaders, and it must be demonstrated and valued at all levels of the educational bureaucracy. For example, teachers should be sponsored for continuing education, given decision-making power, and compensated on a level commensurate to their education and value to society. Lastly, policymakers and administrators at educational departments should implement measures to increase teacher commitment, while trying to reduce attrition among them.

#### *5.2.7. Organizational Commitment Strategies*

Zhong (2024) recommended three strategies that can be used to increase staff organizational commitment. First, organizations should provide career development opportunities by emphasizing employee autonomy and personal advancement. To improve teacher organizational commitment, schools should emphasize three fundamental psychological needs, namely, autonomy, competence, and a sense of belonging. Teachers who feel supported in their professional growth, acknowledged for their abilities, or free to determine their own career path tend to become more intrinsically motivated, which in turn, increases their organizational commitment. Therefore, schools should promote professional development and lifelong learning, with a focus on teacher job satisfaction as a means to further stakeholder satisfaction. They can strengthen teachers' sense of belonging and professional autonomy through various training courses, mentoring programs, and career development plans.

Second, to increase employee organizational commitment, organizations should promote work-life balance (Zhong, 2024). Schools should promote life-work balance as one of the key strategies to increase teacher satisfaction and enhance organizational commitment. They can help teachers gain a healthy work-life balance by offering wellness programs and initiatives to promote physical, emotional, and psychological health. Teachers who have balanced personal and professional lives tend to display greater engagement, job satisfaction, and loyalty, which ultimately translate into educational progress and academic achievement. By offering flexible working hours or hybrid office models, schools enable teachers to adapt to current socioeconomic and global trends. Flexible office modes can help teachers better balance their family and work responsibilities, while reducing their commuting time and stress. Besides, schools can support teachers by setting family-friendly policies, such as parental leave and family emergency leave. By recognizing teachers' familial roles and responsibilities, schools not only help them mitigate conflicts between family and work, but also show them that they care about staff

wellbeing. Besides, schools should also encourage teachers to relax after work hours and during weekends to get a good rest and recharge.

Third, a positive organizational culture is crucial for developing employee organizational commitment (Zhong, 2024). Schools can enhance teacher organizational commitment by cultivating and maintaining a productive organizational culture characterized by common values, beliefs, and codes of conduct. A strong organizational culture can make teachers feel a sense of belonging, which often increases their loyalty and commitment, while fostering trust and transparency within the job setting. Besides, schools also need to practice open and reciprocal communication, involve teachers in decision-making, and demonstrate integrity in all interactions. Since trust is key to promoting organizational commitment, schools need to ensure effective two-way communication, transparency, and constructive feedback so that teachers will feel that they are acknowledged and valued. Teachers who are involved in decision making and goal setting will feel part of the institution, which increases their sense of belonging and commitment. Additionally, schools should incorporate employee cultural fit when hiring, as culturally sensitive teachers can represent the institution's values through speech and action. By aligning institutional goals with teachers' personal goals, schools can promote a sense of achievement amongst them. Lastly, by driving teachers to bring change and innovation within the school and encouraging them to seek recognition for their roles and contributions can also enhance their organizational commitment, accompanied by a stronger sense of belonging and motivation.

#### *5.2.8. Administrator Support and Motivation*

Finally, Abdullah and Taat (2025) found that teacher commitment tends to be moderately high at 73.8 percent of agreement. Findings imply that schools should foster behaviors, beliefs, and shared values that align with teachers' daily professional life. Administrators should support and motivate teachers by providing a firm foundation for them to remain engaged and committed. Strong administrator support and motivation can make teachers enthuse about their profession, ultimately enhancing their commitment. Teachers with a strong commitment often align their personal goals with the school's objectives; therefore, they strive to promptly fulfill their responsibilities. Further, a high level of teacher commitment can also help reduce such issues as tardiness, absenteeism, attrition, and early retirement. Moreover, committed teachers are more responsive to innovation and change, particularly in adapting to the educational demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, school administrators should provide stronger support to all teachers through administrative, evaluative, and affective measures. Lastly, by providing a supportive environment, schools can foster a productive milieu that enables teachers to demonstrate greater work efficiency, enthusiasm, and job satisfaction, which ultimately leads to greater organizational commitment amongst them.

## **6. Generalizability of Findings**

To enhance the generalizability of findings and minimize bias, future research on wellbeing and organizational commitment should recruit more diverse, representative samples with a wider range of demographic characteristics. Further, a larger sample size should be employed to increase the likelihood that the findings can be generalized to the broader population of teachers. Besides, future research should also be conducted in various states and locations to account for contextual variations and increase the applicability of findings. More valid and reliable instruments should be utilized to ensure

accuracy and consistency of data collection. Lastly, mixed methods that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data collection should be practiced to gain a more comprehensive understanding of wellbeing and organizational commitment in relation to education.

### **Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate**

This study has strictly adhered to all ethical procedures involving the use of human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents who were ascertained of their anonymity, with their responses kept strictly confidential. They were also informed that the study was of low risk and that they could stop participating any time without any repercussions.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors report no potential conflict of interest regarding this study in terms of the research, or publication of this article.

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