

PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL UNION OF  
TEACHING PROFESSION AMONG TEACHERS  
OF SELECTED NATIONAL SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS AND NATIONAL TYPE SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS IN KLANG, SELANGOR

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons teachers in selected secondary schools in Klang, Selangor joined National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP). The reasons were expressed in terms of these independent variables: role commitment, demographic and attitudinal.

The research administered a bilingual questionnaire on teachers who are members of the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) from four secondary schools in Klang, Selangor. Out of the four schools, two are classified as national secondary and the other two national type. Out of one hundred and eighty sets of questionnaires distributed, one hundred and twenty two sets were completed.

One of the major findings of the study revealed that union commitment was positively and significantly related to union participation. Male teachers were significantly more inclined to participate in union activities but there was insufficient evidence to claim that age, salary and race were related to union participation. Intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, involvement in decision-making, perceived union effectiveness and belief in union instrumentality were important determinants for influencing teachers' participation in NUTP.

The multiple regressions analysis showed that union commitment, involvement in decision-making, intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction were better predictors for union participation than gender, perceived union effectiveness and belief in union instrumentality. Participants had ranked “support if I had a problem at work” as the most important reason for joining a union. It appears that there is no difference between male and female teachers in ranking the reasons for joining unions.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Teacher unions have always professed their professional as well as their bargaining orientation. The dichotomy of whether a teacher union is essentially "professional" or "industrial" appears a perennial debate, as discussed in Lois Weiner's (1992) paper on Margaret Haley's 1904 speech to the National Education Association, in which Haley promoted the concept that teachers need to be organized both as unionists and intellectuals. Darling-Hammond (1992) who argued for teacher unions with a better balance between the inherent responsibilities to protect members and the long-term responsibility to advance the profession similarly addressed the dichotomy (Naylor, 1997).

Kerchner and Cauffman (1995) argue that current conditions and laws mean that teachers are still subject to coercion and exploitation, and that teachers' "professional definition" cannot progress within existing external constraints, which force a focus on economic and work conditions at the expense of professional focus (Naylor, 1997). Englund (1993) informs us that the phrase teaching as a profession "has no unequivocal meaning, and that the conceptual meaning of profession is a void, being no more than a 'buzzword' ". Professionalization can be viewed as a sociological process by which an occupation gains professional status and privilege. It is culturally and

temporally bound. Therefore, the processes of professionalization undergone by other occupations do not necessarily serve as guideposts for teaching's long struggle toward professional status (Kelly, 1998).

Norini Sharif (1997) said that teachers have been blamed for everything that has gone wrong with the education system. The result was that morale crashed in the teaching profession, as did its dignity. While the public was lambasting the teachers, the teachers themselves felt suffocated by the increasing demands. Expectations were high, but most were not working in conducive environments. Classes were big but facilities were insufficient. The workload had also increased tremendously and included not only teaching many new subjects, but carrying out administrative duties. For instance, teachers were laden with paperwork, and involved in co-curricular activities. In other words, teachers were not given the opportunity to concentrate on their main duty, which is teaching.

It has been a reality that teachers are so lowly paid even if compared to a blue-collar worker. The values of the society have been changed. The changes of values toward teaching profession have caused this profession to drop from a lofty level to the lowest of social ladder.



## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

This study examines the determinants of union participation among teachers. It will identify the reasons for secondary school teachers joining a union.

Teachers are government servants. They sign contracts with the government at the start of their career. They are neither restricted nor protected by the labor law. The decision on the amount of remuneration, responsibilities, pay, work load, and benefits teachers receive, have always been controlled by the government without much consideration of the special and varied situations teachers face each day. Thus, teachers have the motivation to be united to gain bargaining power in dealing with the government.

Before any teacher decides to join a union, he or she has to consider a number of factors. These include the benefits, privileges and services provided by the union, its finances, membership strength and the commitment of its leaders. Indeed an effective union will definitely help to project the future of the teaching profession.