

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Recently, teacher's occupation become more challenge due to pandemic of COVID 19 where all education sectors need to be close to prevent infection of coronavirus among students and teachers. The pandemic of COVID 19 had an impact on early retirement among teachers due to sudden changes in teaching methods and there is also contribute to the increase stress level among teachers, was mentioned in Berita Harian under the title "Tekanan Pengurusan Punca Guru Bersara Awal" authored by Nasbah Nas in June 2022. Rosli of the Berita Harian newspaper noted burnout and fatigue caused by overloaded tasks in May 2022 as further factors that contribute to this problem. The government had investigated this scenario because the issue is quite challenging for Malaysian future generation where there is a shortage of teachers at school. Recently in 2022, Malaysian newspaper which is Berita Harian had uploaded many articles about the issues regarding to the trend of application among teachers to retire early.

The word 'teacher' comes from the word 'teach' an English old language in the last ninth century which is connected to words with a similar meaning in other Germanic language. The word 'teacher' had been utilized since the 13th century. Teacher is defined as a professional educator where their main responsibility is to teach, train, guide and educate pupils at school (Republik Indonesia, 2005). Educators or teachers play important roles for student to achieve their educational goals (Basir, 2020). Other than that, teaching is an important occupation for a nation to build a

quality generation. Teaching is the most important occupation which is considered as the center of a country's well-being and development.

Based on Ministry of Education (2016) teacher occupation in Malaysia was organized under Ministry of Education where they have 6 levels under it which are DG41, DG44, DG48, DG52, DG54 and special Grade C. The roles of each grade level are different between each other where DG41 plays a role as executor. The executor understands and performs duties and responsibilities with supervision and guidance. A DG44 plays a role as activator where they always carry out duties and responsibilities with minimal and capable supervision and guidance solve the problem. For DG48, they are called as guider and mentor where they have extensive experience, able to supervise and guide as well able to make educated guesses about organizational problems may arise and implement preventive measures. For DG52, DG54 and special grade C play quite similar roles where they have high expertise in education sector and could manage change efficiently and effectively.

To maintain the country's well-being and development, the nation must work together to build a generation with intelligence and proactiveness. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain the well-being and health of the teachers who are held responsible to educate and train the upcoming generation. Hawkins (2017) had written in his book title "Mindful Teacher, Mindful School: Improving Wellbeing in Teaching and Learning". He mentioned the importance of maintaining the wellbeing for demanding professions, such as teachers. Being a teacher can nourish students' potential and overall character building but, they also can be at risk of burnout or fatigue (Hawkins, 2014). Wellbeing is crucial in helping people manage their life physically and psychologically. The person's mind, emotion and action are stable. The definition of well-being is the state of feeling well and being able to function well; it includes

having positive feelings like happiness and satisfaction as well as achieving one's potential and exercising some degree of control over one's life having a purpose in one's life, feeling positive relationships, and having a sense of meaning (Ruggeri K et al., 2020).

A study conducted by Seibt, Spitzer, Druschke, Scheuch and Hinz (2013) where the study found that female teacher age 47 until 54 years old have high stress as compared to other people. Another study found to discuss on the stress and challenge faced by teacher in Sarawak, Malaysia during pandemic of Covid-19 by Sze, Surat and Amat (2022). Study found that level stress of teacher was at medium state. However, the study was conducted by using quantitative methods by using a previous questionnaire.

There is a framework that has been used to understand a person's life experience like social constructivism approach where the knowledge gain from other people's life experience. Life experience is defined as the condition or events that happen to a person throughout their lifetime and they learn from their past events. Previous research conducted by Azevedo, Martins and Maia (2020) had defined life experience with a set of events, perceptions and conditions that happen along their life. However, this definition has been described further by indicating that life experience is not only limited to the event and condition. It also depends on the person's environment, people, and their interaction.

The World Bank report indicated that in the year 2020, there are 226, 725 teachers in Malaysia where 154, 186 are female teachers, while 72, 539 is male teachers. In this study, Malay female married teacher was chosen as the targeted participant because it is important to understand their life experience in managing daily tasks at school and home. The task at school is very different from the task at

home. At school, female teachers involve in the school systems, students, and professional teaching skills. While at home, their task is shifted to being responsible to fulfill the needs of their children in terms of food, shelter, educational support, economic support, and emotional support.

Women in Malaysia is still traditionally considered as the center of family where they play the role as a mother and a wife (Ainurliza, Dini Farhana, Norazirawati, Siti Norbaya & Mohd Faizal, 2017). While having a successful career outside their home, they still carry vital roles as their child's educator and home manager. Thus, now a day woman needs to go out and find their own money to survive. There are so many factors that cause woman to work like a man such as economic status, gender equality and to give autonomy to woman in fulfill their desire. There are four principles in Feminism Theory which are advancing sexual freedom, equality between men and women, increasing individual autonomy, reducing gender stratification, and fighting to improve equality (Reese et al., 2022).

There are many issues arise among Malaysian female teacher such as the increase in number of applications for early retirement among younger teachers. Therefore, this study can help to understand how teachers manage their daily life as being teacher, wife, and a mother. On top of that, every nation needs to consider the wellbeing of a teacher's life as they are one of the important professions for developing a better nation. Hence, the objective for this study is to understand the life of married female teacher, the challenges faced by the married female teacher in their career and to explore their level of satisfaction of their profession of being female married teacher.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

A considerable amount of literature has been published on teacher's wellbeing. These study were studying mental health of female teacher in Germany (Seibt et al., 2013) and another study had conducted on teacher's wellbeing focusing on improving teaching and learning (Hawkins, 2017). So far, however, there has been little discussion about female teachers' mental health and wellbeing, but the study was not conducted on Malaysian female teacher. Most of studies focused on teachers in other countries such as India (Aftab & Khatoon (2012), Sweden (Isaksson, Anna Eriksson and Sara (2022), Italy (Fiorilli, Schneider, Buonomo & Romano (2019) and others. Other than that, the studies on role and responsibility of teachers mostly focused on the teacher itself and none of it found focused on female teacher or being a married female teacher. In addition, the study on teachers was mostly conducted using quantitative approach (Bolin, 2014; Ma & Macmillan, 2010; and Saeed & Farooqi, 2014) where there is a limited knowledge in understanding their life experience. Last but not least, one of the study on managing life as being Malay married female teacher is basically focused on work-family conflict or family-work conflict by using quantitative approach (Maeran, Pitarelli & Cangiano, 2013). Thus, this study needs to be conducted in order to understand about Malay married female teacher life experience in detail.

## 1.3 Research Objectives

The problem statement directs the development of research objectives of this study. The objectives are as follows.

- i. To explore the life of married female teachers.
- ii. To understand the challenges of being married female teachers.

- iii. To describe the strategies in managing their stress as married female teacher.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The objectives of the study guide the development of research questions as follows.

- i. What is the life of married female teacher looks like?
- ii. What are the challenges of being female married teachers?
- iii. What is the satisfaction of being female married teachers?

#### **1.5 Significance of The Study**

This study is important to understand the life of married female teacher who considered as minority among citizens which the result can be the guideline to understand the challenges faced by female teacher in their daily life. Hopefully, this research can help the government to analyze the factor that contribute to the stress issue among Malaysian teachers.

Next, by exploring the life experience of married female teacher, it can help to improve the quality of life for the teachers by reflecting their self in handling challenge of being teacher. Besides, it also contributes to the better management in educational system in Malaysia if the factor of teacher's stress can be carried out form this study. It will involve the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to look at these issues seriously.

Furthermore, this research can be source for other researcher who further their studies in the related area since lack of research had been conducted by using

qualitative approach to understand the life experience of Malay female married teacher.

### **1.6 Limitations of The Study**

Due to practical constraints, this study cannot provide a comprehensive review of all female Malay married teacher around Malaysia because of limited time. This research only focusses on three (3) participants. Other than that, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the male Malay married teacher in Malaysia. The reader must bear in mind that the study is based on a small sample of female Malay married teacher. Another potential problem is that the scope of my thesis may be too broad. The last limitation of this research is the selection of participant is only limited from age 45 to 54 years old due to the issue mentioned by Bernotaite and Malinauskiene (2017) and (Seibt, Druschke, Scheuch & Hinz (2013) in their research title Workplace Bullying and Mental Health Among Teachers in Relation to Psychosocial Job Characteristics and Burnout and Predictors of mental health in female teachers.