

**AGE AND PERFORMANCE:
THE PERFORMANCE
OF YOUNG AND OLDER TEACHERS
IN THE DISTRICT OF LARUT MATANG IN PERAK
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This research is conducted to ascertain the school principals' perspective toward the performance of the younger and the older teachers in schools of Larut Matang and Selama district in the state of Perak.. The research also investigates whether the appraisal result is consistent with their perception as the school principals are directly involved in the appraisal process.

There are many accusations saying older teacher decline in their performance as compared to their younger counterparts. This decline is quite similar to the trend of goods in the marketplace, which perform better in the early stages but gradually decline in performance later in their life cycle. Through the study, it has been endeavored and examines the relationship between the life cycle stage of a teacher and his/her performance.

A random sample of 21 primary and secondary school principals are given questionnaires to diagnose their assessment based on the "Borang JPA (Prestasi) 2/96" used in the annual appraisal for teachers. The questionnaire has four sections, namely, the contribution, working output, skill and knowledge, and personality. The data is analyzed using descriptive statistic provided by SPSS Version 8.

The finding of the study reveals that the younger teachers generally perform better than their older counterparts. However, the result reflects the performance of the group of teachers and not any particular teacher. Nevertheless, if the performance of an individual teacher is to be reviewed, the teacher has to be appraised based on his carrier since his appointment. The findings will also corroborate whether people's perception on the performance of young and older teachers is different.

APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT PAPER:

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AND OLDER TEACHERS
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FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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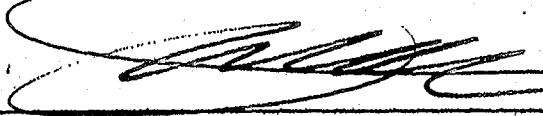
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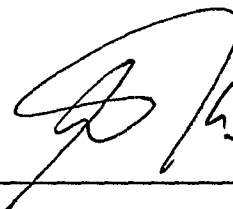
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference notes and bibliography is appended.

Date: 17 November 2000

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DEDICATION

To Fairouz Hakim, Leila Farah, Puteri Balqis,
Muhammad Abdul Qayyum, and Siti Salwa,
the source of my inspiration. Thanks for the time sacrificed

To my beloved wife **Wati**
who always pray
for my success and share my pain.
Your prayers and sacrifice would never be forgotten.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Teachers' performance is always in the news. Currently many people give their comments about teachers relating to their performance and services. Many have the opinion that younger people have more endurance than the older especially physically. This is quite true as no elderly people can possibly match up the physical ability of a younger person, for example in athletics. A man's physical form is at its best during the 18-25 year period. When his age climbs up beginning from early 60s the physical ability declines significantly. A younger man is more efficient and quick thinking, especially in matters involving mathematical skills. A younger man also has greater opportunities to procure better employment.

Another phenomenon on the young teacher is how the students respond differently compared to the old one. Students

like them very much especially those who are pretty, handsome, kind and caring.

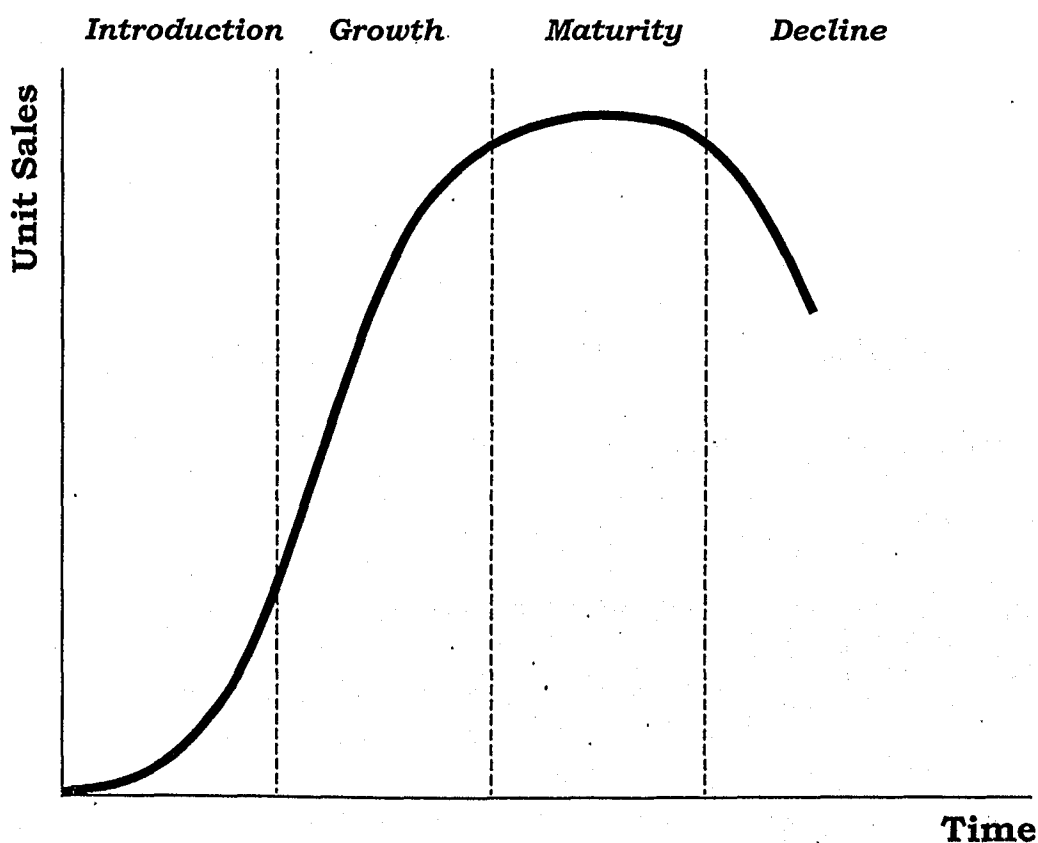
On the one hand some young teachers were said to be lazy than the old one but in the co-curricular activities the young teachers as claimed by many observers are the useful group.

Some people claimed in the early stage of their service the young teachers will go to the class fully prepared. They bring along their teaching aids to every class they teach but this phenomenon does not last very long. In the end these new teachers will become burnout just like the old one. They go to class without preparation anymore and the exercise books that they use to mark everyday before, now take them several days to finish.

The declining performance of the older teachers seems to be a natural factor as manifested in the marketing sector where the price of goods tend to decline toward the end of their life cycle which is stated in the PLC theory (Boyd, 1999) as shown in **Figure 1**. The product life cycle is concerned with the sales history of a product. The concept holds that a product's sales change overtime in a predictable way and that products go

through a series of five distinct stages: introduction, growth, shakeout, maturity, and decline. Therefore, in this study it would be meaningful to investigate the role of the school principal in handling evaluation that have been made to both the younger and the older teachers.

Figure 1: PLC Theory



Source: Adopted from J. E. Swan and D. R. Rink, "Effectiveness of Industrial Product Life Cycle Trend", in Marketing in '80s (New York: American Marketing Association, 1980), pp. 198-199.

The findings would help the school principal and the Ministry of Education as a whole to be sincere in the evaluation, in order to avoid bias in the organization. The younger teachers also have

their own right and privilege for better performance. They should not have to wait until their age is in the declining stage in order to enjoy their reward from the employer.

So far, what are the researches that have been carried out to determine all these phenomena? There are mere speculation rather than analysis that have been made.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Generally, the performance of the older teachers is assumed to decline toward the end of their service. This situation is however, very much in contrast compared to the younger teachers who are considered to be more energetic, responsive, caring, and committed but lack of experience.

Data from the Education District Office of Larut Matang Selama Perak shows that the number of older teachers that have been awarded as "Melintang" and "Menegak" exceed the number of their younger counterparts. However, in a preliminary data that has been collected by researcher through

informal conversation with some senior teachers and principals around the projected area before this survey actually done indicates that the younger teachers have better performance than their older counterparts. If the respondent claimed that the younger teachers performed better performance than the older teachers, the school principals should indicate the same in the evaluation process (SSB or New Numeration Scheme). This is to ensure that the younger teachers' chances to have better performance appraisal are not being denied.

1.3 Significance of Study

This study is carried out to show the school principals' perspective on the performance of the younger teachers and the older counterparts. If the younger teachers perform better, they should be rewarded accordingly, even though they are still young and have many more years in the teaching service. On the other hand, if the older teachers do not perform well or perform below the expected standard, the employer should do something in order to ensure that their invaluable experience is being maintained as well as fully utilized.

This study would also provide supportive information to those who are involved in dealing with teachers' welfare and education in general.

Finally, the study proposes to show that the PLC concept in marketing could be applied in assessing the performance of those in the teaching profession. It is conventionally agreed that teachers perform their level best at the early stages of their service but tend to decline at the end. This is left to be studied.

1.4 Research Question

This study addresses the following research questions:

- a. What is the school principal's perspective toward the performance of the younger teachers and the older counterparts?
- b. Do they evaluate them equally in the annual appraisal?
- c. If not, what are the reasons the annual appraisal generally differ from their informal perspective?

1.5 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions are used:

The teacher

The younger teachers (*guru muda*) are those aged between 23-35 years old and older teachers (*guru lama*) are those aged between 50 - 55 years old.

The school principal

The school principal is the head of the school (primary or secondary school).

The performance and the perspective

The performance is the teachers' ability to perform the job.

Whereas, perspective is the process of perception, which people select, organize and interpret the information around them.

1.6 Organization of the Project Paper

This project paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the background of the study and its significance, the need for the study, statement of the problem, purpose of study, research question and definition of terms.

Chapter two gives a brief overview of the literature review and related research of workers performance in various aspects. Historical as well as contemporary research work done abroad and locally are also cited.

Chapter three describes the methodology adopted in the study, an overview on the sampling procedures, instrument design, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Presentation and analysis of data including the respondent's characteristic; reliability of the instrument of findings are discussed in chapter four.

Chapter five concludes the study with a discussion of the finding, implication, recommendation and areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Older workers are commonly perceived as more resistant to change, less motivated to keep up with new technology, less creative, less enthusiastic, less capable of handling stressful situations, less hardworking, less ambitious, less healthy; and less mentally alert (5). Many employers in Europe and Australia accepted these stereotypes and, these phenomena also exist in Malaysia today.

Currently old teachers in Malaysia are also labeled by the same perception by many observers. But there is no evidence that shows the phenomena nor related research carried out to prove the perception. In informal interviews there are few arguments about the performance of the young and older teachers in the District of Larut Matang, Perak. Some respondents say that the young teachers perform better than the older teachers do whereas some other respondents say

otherwise. Through my experiences and observations there are many differences between these two groups. The young teachers have some advantages in particular areas and, so do the older teachers. The older teachers attract more students in the learning process as they have more experience and, the ways they conduct their classes are varied. Many of them are able to produce good results for their students in the examination. In preparing a lesson, the older teachers show better preparation than their younger counterparts.

In a particular element, the younger teachers have very dominant abilities, for example, in introducing and using new technologies. The younger teachers maintain most of the sophisticated machines that are currently used in school. They are more confident in dealing with those apparatus compared to the older teachers.

In the co-curricular activities the younger teachers as claimed by many observers are more energetic; unafraid; hard working; and have talent in particular sports event. But not the older teachers, they are lazy; less motivated; and less healthy in this area. However they are dominant in handling the sports

organization in schools as they have good experience and many contacts in that field. In the preliminary data it was shown that younger teachers have better performance in general compared to their older counterparts. But as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the perception of some management toward the younger remains the same. They evaluate their younger employees as below performance than the older employees. We can see this through the SSB (New Numeration Scheme) result, which is conducted every year by school principals. The percentage shows that more than 60 percent of the receiver or the SSB awards are those who are in their late 40's.

What about the perception of the school's principal toward these groups? Generally, the school principals have their own evaluation. This evaluation is carried out every year on both groups through the SSB. Based on this evaluation a number of teachers are offered certain reward by the Ministry of Education. An early sampling shows that only 5 % of the rewards are awarded to the younger teachers in the District of Larut Matang Perak. This is strong evidence, which shows that the performance of the younger and older teachers is not in line with the current findings. Some school's administrators

say, "We award that particular older teacher as he is already old and this will let him have better pension. The others (younger teachers) have a longer time to serve and are still young". Are they biased in measuring the teachers' performance?

This chapter reviews research and related literature on the variance of work performance at different ages and across different occupations. Before proceeding further, listed below are the definitions of some key-words as they are used in this paper.

2.1 Age and Performance

Aging is the process of growing old or changes that occur as the result of time passing, while performance is a process or manner of performing (Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary, 1990). Blumberg and Pringle (1982) and Waildman and Spangler (1989) as quoted in (Bruce 1990), emphasized that a model of work performance is the product of ability, motivation, and context (opportunity). Aging can be viewed as a dimension along which those factors may systematically

change over time. According to Baltes (1990) aging is a picture of loss, decline, and approaching death.

2.2 Older Worker Performance

On-the-job studies reflect individual variation in the ability of older workers. Generally, older workers are as good as - if not better than - their younger counterparts. Employment studies indicate that older workers have superior attendance records. They are more likely to be stable and happy, and that their output is equal to that of younger workers. In a study of human service workers, older workers indicate more job satisfaction than younger workers (McNeely, 1988).

2.3 Age and Experience

Experience can often offset any decrements that come with aging. The ability to do heavy labor does decline with age, but this decline is gradual and jobs vary greatly in the physical strength required. Furthermore, an older worker in good physical condition can possibly outwork a younger person in poor physical condition. Studies of work loss due to illness