

Organizational and Psychological Predictors of Turnover Intention among Elementary School Teachers: The Mediating Roles of Professional Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction, and Burnout

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ABSTRACT

Teacher turnover intention is a major organizational concern because it can weaken school stability, instructional continuity, and educational quality. The present study aimed to examine a structural model of organizational and psychological predictors of turnover intention among elementary school teachers. This study was applied in purpose and descriptive-correlational in design. The statistical population consisted of all elementary school teachers in Falard County, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Iran, during the 2025–2026 academic year. 228 teachers were selected at random sampling method as the study sample. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires measuring organizational commitment, organizational identification, perceived organizational support, job motivation, ethical organizational climate, professional self-efficacy, job satisfaction, burnout, and turnover intention. Data were analyzed using SPSS and LISREL through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and path analysis. The results showed that professional self-efficacy and job satisfaction had significant negative direct effects on turnover intention, while burnout had a significant positive direct effect. Organizational commitment, organizational identification, perceived organizational support, job motivation, and ethical organizational climate also had significant indirect effects on turnover intention. The model explained 32% of the variance in turnover intention and showed acceptable fit indices. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers' turnover intention is shaped by both organizational resources and psychological mechanisms. Strengthening organizational support, professional self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and ethical climate, along with reducing burnout, may help decrease teachers' intention to leave.

Introduction

Teacher turnover intention has become one of the most important concerns in educational and organizational psychology because it represents an early psychological signal of withdrawal before actual resignation occurs. Turnover intention refers to an employee's conscious tendency to leave the current job or organization, and decades of organizational research have shown that it is among the strongest attitudinal predictors of actual turnover. In educational settings, this issue is especially critical because



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teachers are not easily replaceable human resources; their departure disrupts instructional continuity, weakens school stability, and may reduce the quality of student learning. Therefore, examining teachers' intention to leave is not merely a staffing issue but a core organizational-health problem in school systems ([Mobley, 1977](#); [Nguyen et al., 2020](#); [Tett & Meyer, 1993](#)).

Recent evidence shows that teacher turnover intention is shaped by a combination of individual, occupational, and organizational factors. Meta-analytic findings indicate that burnout, workload, job stress, job satisfaction, professional identity, organizational commitment, and school management conditions are among the most important correlates of teachers' intention to quit. In particular, job dissatisfaction and burnout consistently appear as proximal psychological mechanisms through which adverse school conditions are translated into withdrawal tendencies. This means that teachers may not decide to leave simply because of one isolated organizational problem; rather, turnover intention often emerges when organizational conditions gradually erode motivation, satisfaction, professional energy, and attachment to the school system ([Li & Yao, 2022](#); [Madigan & Kim, 2021](#); [Nguyen et al., 2020](#)).

The Job Demands–Resources theory provides a useful framework for explaining this process. According to this theory, job demands such as workload, emotional pressure, role conflict, administrative burden, insufficient support, and interpersonal tension consume teachers' physical and psychological resources. When these demands remain high and are not balanced by adequate job resources, teachers become vulnerable to burnout and may gradually develop thoughts of leaving. Conversely, job resources such as organizational support, ethical climate, professional autonomy, collegial trust, and recognition can strengthen motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment. Thus, turnover intention can be understood as the outcome of two parallel processes: a health-impairment pathway that increases burnout and a motivational pathway that strengthens satisfaction and retention ([Bakker et al., 2023](#); [Hlado et al., 2025](#); [Maslach et al., 2001](#)).

Among the psychological variables related to teacher retention, job satisfaction and burnout are particularly important. Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which teachers evaluate their work positively and perceive that their occupational expectations and needs are being met. Burnout, in contrast, refers to a chronic work-related syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment. Evidence from teacher samples shows that job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intention, while burnout is positively associated with it. Moreover, recent structural models suggest that job satisfaction may mediate the relationship between burnout and turnover intention, meaning that burnout increases teachers' intention to leave partly because it damages their satisfaction with work ([Madigan & Kim, 2021](#); [Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011](#); [Toropova et al., 2021](#); [Zhang et al., 2022](#)).

Organizational commitment is another central predictor of turnover intention. The three-component model conceptualizes organizational commitment as affective attachment, perceived cost of leaving, and normative obligation to remain in the organization. Teachers with stronger commitment are more likely to feel psychologically connected to their school and less likely to search for alternative jobs. Recent empirical research among teachers confirms that organizational commitment and job satisfaction are both negatively related to turnover intention and that commitment may play a mediating role in the relationship between leadership, satisfaction, and teachers' intention to leave. Therefore, commitment should be treated not merely as a background attitude but as a key explanatory mechanism in teacher-retention models ([Anse et al., 2025](#); [Meyer & Allen, 1991](#); [Toala-Mendoza et al., 2025](#)).

Organizational identification is closely related to commitment but conceptually distinct. While commitment reflects attachment to the organization, organizational identification refers to the extent to which individuals define themselves in terms of their organizational membership. In schools, teachers who identify strongly with their organization are more likely to see the school's success and failure as personally meaningful, which may strengthen belongingness and reduce withdrawal tendencies. Recent evidence from kindergarten teachers indicates that organizational identification can weaken the effect of negative workplace conditions on turnover intention by strengthening teachers' sense of belonging and psychological connection to the organization. Accordingly, organizational identification may function as an important protective factor in explaining teachers' intention to remain in their profession or workplace ([Feng et al., 2025](#); [Mael & Ashforth, 1992](#)).

Perceived organizational support is also a major organizational resource in explaining teachers' occupational attitudes. Organizational support theory argues that employees develop general beliefs about whether the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. For teachers, such support may include administrative backing, fair treatment, professional respect, instructional resources, recognition, emotional support, and assistance in managing work-related difficulties. Empirical evidence shows that organizational support can reduce turnover intention directly and indirectly by lowering burnout and strengthening adaptation to the job. Therefore, when teachers perceive that the educational organization stands behind them, they are more likely to experience satisfaction, energy, and attachment rather than detachment and intention to leave ([Eisenberger et al., 1986](#); [Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002](#); [Yang et al., 2026](#)).

Ethical organizational climate is another important organizational condition, especially in school systems. Ethical climate refers to shared perceptions about what is ethically correct behavior and how ethical issues are handled within the organization. Schools are value-based institutions; therefore, teachers' perceptions of fairness, respect, responsibility, trust, and moral consistency may influence their satisfaction, commitment, and willingness to remain. Research in organizational psychology has shown that ethical climate is related to affective commitment and turnover intention, and that ethical leadership can shape employees' perceptions of climate, thereby influencing withdrawal-related outcomes. In the school context, this suggests that a weak ethical climate may intensify dissatisfaction and detachment, while a strong ethical climate may strengthen psychological attachment and reduce turnover intention ([Demirtaş & Akdoğan, 2015](#); [Victor & Cullen, 1988](#)).

In addition to organizational variables, individual psychological resources should be considered. Work motivation is a central factor in teachers' persistence because it explains why teachers invest effort, continue under difficulty, and maintain a sense of purpose in their work. Self-determination theory suggests that motivation is strengthened when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their workplace. In teaching, this means that motivation is not only a function of salary or external reward; it is also shaped by teachers' sense of meaningful contribution, professional competence, and social connection. When organizational conditions frustrate these needs, teachers' motivation and satisfaction may decline, increasing the likelihood of turnover intention ([Deci et al., 2017](#); [Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011](#); [Toropova et al., 2021](#)).

Professional self-efficacy is another psychological resource that may protect teachers against burnout and turnover intention. Teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their capability to manage classroom demands, support student learning, handle instructional challenges, and perform professional duties successfully. Evidence shows that self-efficacy is negatively associated with burnout and positively associated with job satisfaction and perceived work ability. Longitudinal findings also suggest that teacher self-efficacy and burnout influence one another over time, indicating that teachers who feel more capable are less vulnerable to exhaustion and more likely to maintain professional functioning. Thus, professional self-efficacy may reduce turnover intention directly or indirectly by increasing job satisfaction and reducing burnout ([Burić & Kim, 2021](#); [Hlado et al., 2025](#); [Kim & Burić, 2020](#); [Wang et al., 2015](#)).

Despite the rich literature on teacher turnover intention, several gaps remain. First, many studies have examined isolated predictors such as job satisfaction, burnout, organizational commitment, or support, but fewer have tested an integrated structural model that combines organizational and psychological variables. Second, although evidence supports the role of organizational support, ethical climate, commitment, identification, motivation, self-efficacy, satisfaction, and burnout, their simultaneous direct and indirect effects have been less frequently examined in elementary-school contexts. Third, research from less-studied local educational settings remains necessary because teacher retention is shaped by context-specific organizational realities. Therefore, a structural model that examines both organizational and psychological components can provide a more complete explanation of teachers' turnover intention ([Anse et al., 2025](#); [Li & Yao, 2022](#); [Madigan & Kim, 2021](#); [Yang et al., 2026](#)).

Accordingly, the present study aimed to analyze the role of organizational and psychological components in predicting turnover intention among elementary school teachers. The proposed model examined organizational commitment, organizational identification, perceived organizational support,

ethical organizational climate, and job motivation as antecedent variables, while professional self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and burnout were considered as key mediating psychological mechanisms. By integrating organizational resources, motivational processes, and health-impairment mechanisms within a structural framework, this study seeks to contribute to organizational psychology in education and provide evidence for designing teacher-retention strategies in school systems ([Bakker et al., 2023](#); [Hlado et al., 2025](#); [Meyer & Allen, 1991](#); [Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002](#)).

Method

Research Design and Participants

The present study was applied in purpose and descriptive-correlational in design, using structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of all elementary school teachers in Falard County, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Iran, during the 2025–2026 academic year. Based on the official population frame, 561 teachers were included in the population, from whom 228 teachers were selected random sampling. According to Kline (2016) more than 200 participants is sufficient for structural equation modeling. Data were analyzed using SPSS24 and LISREL 8.8.

Tools Used

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

Organizational commitment was assessed using the 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). This scale measures employees' psychological attachment to organizational goals, willingness to remain in the organization, and readiness to exert effort on behalf of it. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with higher scores indicating stronger organizational commitment. The questionnaire is generally treated as a unidimensional measure of attitudinal organizational commitment. The construct has continued to be used in recent teacher-retention models alongside job satisfaction and turnover intention (Anse et al., 2025). Mowday et al. (1979) reported satisfactory internal consistency for the OCQ, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .82 to .93 across samples. In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .84.

Organizational Identification Scale (OIS)

Organizational identification was measured using the 6-item Organizational Identification Scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). This scale assesses the extent to which teachers define themselves through their organizational membership. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with higher scores indicating stronger organizational identification. The scale is commonly treated as a unidimensional measure of organizational identification. Previous studies using Mael and Ashforth's scale have reported acceptable internal consistency; for example, Irshad and Bashir (2020) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .80 and .84 across two studies. It was suitable for the present study because identification reflects a self-definitional bond with the school organization. The content validity of the adapted version was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology. Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .81.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Perceived organizational support was measured using the 8-item short form of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986). This scale evaluates teachers' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with higher scores indicating stronger perceived organizational support. Negatively worded items, if included in the adapted form, were reverse-scored before computing the total score. The SPOS has also received recent psychometric attention in organizational research (Odagami et al., 2024). Previous studies have reported excellent internal consistency for the SPOS, with Cronbach's alpha values of .97 for the original 36-item version and .93 for the 8-item version (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Worley et

al., 2009). In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .84.

Job Motivation Questionnaire

Job motivation was measured using the 14-item Work Motivation Scale developed by Yılmaz (2009), which was based on motivational foundations relevant to occupational needs and is consistent with Maslow's motivational framework (Maslow, 1943). The scale has been used in teacher work-motivation research by Özcan (2023). It evaluates teachers' work motivation across four dimensions: team coherence, job involvement, organizational commitment, and personal development. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not satisfied at all to 5 = very satisfied, with higher scores indicating stronger job motivation. In the original version, Cronbach's alpha was .81 for the overall scale and .71, .69, .66, and .63 for the four subscales, respectively (Yılmaz, 2009, Özcan, 2023). Özcan (2023) also reported an overall Cronbach's alpha of .85 for the scale. In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .83.

Ethical Organizational Climate (EOC)

Ethical organizational climate was assessed using an 11-item ethical climate scale based on the ethical climate literature of [Victor and Cullen \(1988\)](#) and [Tseng and Fan \(2011\)](#). The scale measures teachers' perceptions of fairness, ethical norms, responsibility, and moral conduct in the workplace. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with higher scores indicating a stronger ethical organizational climate. Recent organizational studies continue to define ethical climate with reference to these foundations ([Chen & Tang, 2024](#)). Earlier psychometric work on the Ethical Climate Questionnaire reported strong support for the validity and reliability of ethical climate measurement at the individual level ([Cullen et al., 1993](#)). Previous studies using ethical climate measures based on Victor and Cullen's framework have reported acceptable reliability coefficients; for example, [Gwamanda \(2023\)](#) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .79 to .87 across ECQ subscales. In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .82.

Professional Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES)

Professional self-efficacy was measured using the 14-item job-related self-efficacy scale developed by [Riggs et al. \(1994\)](#). This instrument assesses teachers' beliefs about their capability to perform professional duties successfully. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with higher scores indicating stronger professional self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy has also been examined in recent teacher well-being and burnout research ([Hlado et al., 2025](#)). [Riggs et al. \(1994\)](#) reported acceptable reliability and validity evidence for job-related self-efficacy measures. In a later occupational study, [Peterson et al. \(2011\)](#) reported an internal reliability coefficient of .82 for the Personal Efficacy Beliefs Scale based on Riggs et al.'s job-related efficacy framework. In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .80.

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ)

Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by [Weiss et al. \(1967\)](#). The version used in this study included 19 items and assessed teachers' satisfaction with different aspects of their work. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied, with higher scores indicating higher job satisfaction. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire is commonly interpreted through intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and general satisfaction dimensions; however, the present study used the total job satisfaction score. Previous studies have reported acceptable to excellent internal consistency for the MSQ, with Cronbach's alpha values of .83, .86, .927, .924, and .935 ([Yıldız et al., 2021](#); [Suleman & Hussain, 2018](#); [Huynh et al., 2024](#); [Pana et al., 2025](#)). In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .80.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

Burnout was assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory framework developed by [Maslach and Jackson \(1981\)](#). The MBI measures three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale in the present study, with higher scores indicating higher burnout after appropriate scoring of the scale dimensions. The MBI has remained widely used in teacher burnout research ([Hussein et al., 2025](#)). Previous psychometric evidence has reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .90 for emotional exhaustion, .79 for depersonalization, and .71 for personal accomplishment ([Maslach & Jackson, 1981](#)). In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .89.

Turnover Intention Questionnaire (TIQ)

Turnover intention was measured using a 15-item turnover-intention questionnaire based on [Kim, Leong, and Lee's \(2005\)](#) intention-of-leaving measure. This scale assesses teachers' tendency to think about leaving their current job or profession. Items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with higher scores indicating stronger turnover intention. Previous studies have reported acceptable internal consistency for this questionnaire, with Cronbach's alpha values of .76, .84, .88, and .89 ([Mirzaei et al., 2021](#); [Mousavi et al., 2023](#); [Nonehkaran et al., 2023](#); [Yazdanirad et al., 2024](#)). The scale was scored as a total-score measure in the present study. In the present study, content validity was examined by specialists in educational sciences and organizational psychology, and Cronbach's alpha was .88.

Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and preliminary assumption tests were conducted in SPSS. The proposed model was then tested using path analysis in LISREL. Model fit was evaluated using χ^2/df , GFI, AGFI, CFI, and RMSEA.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1. The results show that the highest mean score belonged to burnout, followed by job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Table – 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Research Variables

Variable	M	SD
Organizational commitment	51.19	4.24
Organizational identification	20.47	3.23
Perceived organizational support	27.90	2.59
Job motivation	43.07	3.98
Ethical organizational climate	41.89	4.08
Professional self-efficacy	47.48	3.19
Job satisfaction	56.58	2.79
Burnout	77.01	2.49
Turnover intention	53.74	4.54

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among the research variables. Turnover intention had negative and significant correlations with organizational commitment, organizational identification, perceived organizational support, job motivation, ethical organizational climate, professional self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. In contrast, burnout had a positive and significant correlation with turnover intention.

Table – 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix of the Research Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Organizational commitment	1								
Organizational identification	.28**	1							
Perceived organizational support	.27**	.26**	1						
Job motivation	.24**	.15**	.17**	1					

Ethical organizational climate	.25**	.27**	.24**	.07	1				
Professional self-efficacy	.18**	.20**	.29**	.32**	.12*	1			
Job satisfaction	.29**	.42**	.30**	.22**	.30**	.21**	1		
Burnout	-.27**	-.29**	-.28**	-.18**	-.22**	-.17**	-.30**	1	
Turnover intention	-.15**	-.28**	-.24**	-.18**	-.21**	-.44**	-.43**	.34**	1

Note. *p < .05. **p < .01.

The direct effects of the structural model are reported in Table 3. Organizational commitment had a positive direct effect on job satisfaction and a negative direct effect on burnout. Organizational identification also had a positive direct effect on job satisfaction and a negative direct effect on burnout. Perceived organizational support positively predicted professional self-efficacy and job satisfaction and negatively predicted burnout. Job motivation positively predicted professional self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Ethical organizational climate positively predicted job satisfaction, but its direct effect on burnout was not significant. Among the direct predictors of turnover intention, professional self-efficacy had the strongest negative effect, followed by job satisfaction. Burnout had a positive direct effect on turnover intention.

Table – 3: Direct Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

Path	β	SE	t	Result
Organizational commitment → Job satisfaction	.10	.03	1.96	Supported
Organizational commitment → Burnout	-.15	.03	-2.75	Supported
Organizational identification → Job satisfaction	.30	.04	5.80	Supported
Organizational identification → Burnout	-.18	.04	-3.26	Supported
Perceived organizational support → Professional self-efficacy	.24	.05	4.59	Supported
Perceived organizational support → Job satisfaction	.14	.03	2.62	Supported
Perceived organizational support → Burnout	-.17	.05	-3.09	Supported
Job motivation → Professional self-efficacy	.28	.04	5.26	Supported
Job motivation → Job satisfaction	.12	.03	2.38	Supported
Ethical organizational climate → Job satisfaction	.15	.03	2.87	Supported
Ethical organizational climate → Burnout	-.09	.03	-1.60	Not supported
Professional self-efficacy → Turnover intention	-.36	.04	-7.59	Supported
Job satisfaction → Turnover intention	-.31	.05	-6.54	Supported
Burnout → Turnover intention	.19	.05	4.02	Supported

The indirect effects are presented in Table 4. Organizational commitment, organizational identification, perceived organizational support, job motivation, and ethical organizational climate all had significant negative indirect effects on turnover intention. The strongest indirect effect belonged to perceived organizational support, followed by job motivation and organizational identification.

Table – 4: Indirect Effects on Turnover Intention

Indirect path	β	SE	t	Result
Organizational commitment → Turnover intention	-.06	.02	-2.90	Supported
Organizational identification → Turnover intention	-.13	.03	-5.21	Supported
Perceived organizational support → Turnover intention	-.16	.05	-5.33	Supported
Job motivation → Turnover intention	-.14	.03	-4.87	Supported
Ethical organizational climate → Turnover intention	-.06	.02	-3.05	Supported

Note. All indirect effects were significant at p < .01.

Table 5 presents the direct, indirect, and total effects on turnover intention. The results show that professional self-efficacy had the strongest direct effect on turnover intention, whereas perceived organizational support had the strongest indirect effect.

Table – 5: Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects on Turnover Intention

Predictor	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Organizational commitment	—	-.06**	-.06**
Organizational identification	—	-.13**	-.13**
Perceived organizational support	—	-.16**	-.16**
Job motivation	—	-.14**	-.14**
Ethical organizational climate	—	-.06**	-.06**
Professional self-efficacy	-.36**	—	-.36**
Job satisfaction	-.31**	—	-.31**
Burnout	.19**	—	.19**

Note. **p < .01.

The coefficient of determination values are reported in Table 6. The model explained 32% of the variance in turnover intention, 27% of the variance in job satisfaction, and 16% of the variance in both burnout and professional self-efficacy.

Table – 6: Explained Variance of Endogenous Variables

Endogenous variable	R ²
Burnout	.16
Job satisfaction	.27
Professional self-efficacy	.16
Turnover intention	.32

The model fit indices are shown in Table 7. The results indicated an acceptable fit for the proposed model. The χ^2/df value was below 3, RMSEA was below .05, and CFI, GFI, and AGFI were above .90.

Table – 7: Model Fit Indices

Fit index	Value
χ^2	15.03
df	12
χ^2/df	1.25
p	.24
CFI	1.00
GFI	.99
AGFI	.96
RMSEA	.028

Overall, the results supported the proposed structural model. All hypothesized direct paths were significant except the direct effect of ethical organizational climate on burnout. Moreover, all indirect effects on turnover intention were significant, indicating that organizational and psychological factors influence teachers' turnover intention through job satisfaction, burnout, and professional self-efficacy.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the role of organizational and psychological components in predicting turnover intention among elementary school teachers. Overall, the findings supported the proposed structural model. The model explained 32% of the variance in turnover intention, indicating that teachers' intention to leave is not determined by a single factor but by the combined operation of organizational resources, psychological resources, job satisfaction, and burnout.

The strongest direct negative predictor of turnover intention was professional self-efficacy. This finding suggests that teachers who believe they are capable of managing professional responsibilities are less likely to think about leaving their job. From the perspective of the Job Demands–Resources theory,

self-efficacy can be considered a personal resource that helps teachers interpret occupational demands as manageable rather than threatening. This result is consistent with recent evidence showing that teacher self-efficacy is closely related to burnout, mental health, and perceived work ability ([Bakker et al., 2023](#); [Hlado et al., 2025](#)).

Job satisfaction also had a significant negative effect on turnover intention. This means that teachers who evaluate their job conditions more positively are less inclined to leave. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that job satisfaction is one of the most important proximal predictors of teachers' retention and intention to remain in the profession ([Madigan & Kim, 2021](#); [Toropova et al., 2021](#)). In contrast, burnout had a significant positive effect on turnover intention. This finding supports the view that emotional exhaustion and reduced professional accomplishment increase teachers' withdrawal tendencies. Recent meta-analytic and longitudinal studies have also emphasized burnout as a major factor associated with teachers' intention to leave the profession ([Li & Yao, 2022](#); [Martinsone et al., 2024](#); [Räsänen et al., 2020](#)).

Among the indirect effects, perceived organizational support had the strongest negative indirect effect on turnover intention through professional self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and burnout. This finding indicates that organizational support does not merely reduce turnover intention directly; rather, it works by strengthening teachers' sense of professional capability, increasing job satisfaction, and reducing burnout. Therefore, support from school administrators and educational authorities becomes meaningful when teachers experience it as real assistance, recognition, fair treatment, and problem-solving support.

Organizational commitment and organizational identification also had significant negative indirect effects on turnover intention. This result suggests that teachers who feel emotionally attached to the organization and define themselves as meaningful members of the school system are more likely to experience satisfaction and less likely to experience burnout. In other words, commitment and identification help teachers remain connected to their work even when they face occupational difficulties.

Job motivation had a significant negative indirect effect on turnover intention through professional self-efficacy and job satisfaction. This finding shows that motivation reduces withdrawal intention mainly when it is translated into a stronger sense of competence and positive job evaluation. Thus, motivational programs should not be limited to general encouragement; they should strengthen teachers' actual experience of competence, autonomy, and meaningfulness in work.

Ethical organizational climate had a significant indirect effect on turnover intention through job satisfaction, but its direct effect on burnout was not significant. This finding is important. It suggests that teachers' perception of fairness, ethical conduct, and moral responsibility in the school environment may improve their satisfaction, but it may not be sufficient by itself to reduce emotional exhaustion. Burnout may require more direct interventions related to workload, emotional demands, classroom pressure, administrative burden, and recovery opportunities. This interpretation is consistent with recent organizational research showing that ethical climate is more strongly connected with job satisfaction and positive work attitudes than with all dimensions of occupational strain ([Köroğlu et al., 2024](#)).

The practical implication of these findings is that reducing teacher turnover intention requires a multi-level approach. At the organizational level, educational managers should strengthen perceived organizational support through fair decision-making, administrative backing, recognition of teachers' work, access to resources, and responsive supervision. At the psychological level, professional development programs should focus on improving teachers' self-efficacy, especially in classroom management, instructional problem-solving, parent communication, and coping with occupational stress. At the school-climate level, improving ethical climate, trust, and fairness can increase job satisfaction and indirectly reduce thoughts of leaving.

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow causal conclusions. Second, all variables were measured through self-report questionnaires; therefore, common-method bias may have influenced the results. Third, the study was conducted among elementary school teachers in one county, so generalization to other educational levels and regions should be made with caution. Future research is recommended to use longitudinal designs, include objective indicators such as absenteeism or actual turnover, compare different educational levels, and test whether the model remains stable across gender, teaching experience, and school type.

In conclusion, the findings show that teachers' turnover intention is best understood as the result of both organizational and psychological processes. Professional self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and burnout were the most immediate predictors of turnover intention, while organizational support, commitment, identification, motivation, and ethical climate influenced turnover intention mainly through these mediating mechanisms. Therefore, teacher retention policies should move beyond isolated motivational slogans and focus on strengthening real organizational support, professional capability, job satisfaction, ethical climate, and burnout prevention.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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