Exploring the Drivers of Turnover Intentions Among Kindergarten Teachers in Leshan, Sichuan, China

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined the factors influencing the turnover intentions of kindergarten teachers in Leshan, Sichuan Province, China, with a focus on identifying key predictors, including Principal Support (PS), Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS), Workload (W), Emotional Workload (EW), and Diversity Climate (DC). **Research design, data and methodology:** A quantitative approach was employed, using a survey for data collection. The instrument's validity and reliability were assessed through the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index and a pilot test using Cronbach's Alpha. A total of 300 valid responses were analyzed using Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) to examine significant relationships. Additionally, 40 kindergarten teachers participated in a 14-week strategic intervention, and data collected before and after the intervention were compared using a paired-sample t-test. **Results:** The MLR analysis indicated that EW and TJS were the strongest predictors of kindergarten teachers' turnover intentions (TTI). W, DC, and PS also showed significant effects. The paired-sample t-test revealed significant differences in turnover intentions before and after the strategic intervention. **Conclusions:** The findings underscore the importance of implementing targeted strategies to reduce turnover intentions. Enhancing principal support, improving job satisfaction, reducing both workload and emotional workload, fostering an inclusive environment, and strengthening social support are key recommendations.

Keywords: Kindergarten Teachers, Workload, Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intention, China

JEL Classification Code: D91, E24, J63, L84

1. Introduction

China's preschool-age population has been declining since 2021, with projections indicating a continued decrease through 2050 (Huang & Li, 2023). This demographic shift has led to lower kindergarten enrollment, reducing the demand for kindergarten teachers. Studies reveal an emerging imbalance in the supply and demand of full-time teachers across regions, with urban areas experiencing an oversupply, while rural areas face shortages (Feng et al., 2024). As kindergartens struggle with declining enrollments and financial constraints, teachers may encounter salary reductions, job insecurity, and concerns about career prospects, all of which influence their decision to leave the profession.

Kindergarten teachers in China face significant challenges, including excessive workloads, emotional exhaustion, and high teacher-to-child ratios (Shima, 2018). Many struggle with work-related stress and poor mental health, which limit their ability to provide high-quality early childhood education (Grant et al., 2018). Emotional labor, particularly in interactions with children and parents, adds to their burden (Cumming, 2017; Hall-Kenyon et al., 2014). Burnout rates among kindergarten teachers range from 10% to 56% (Koch et al., 2015), making effective support systems crucial for teacher retention (Simon & Dan, 2017). The strain of excessive workload, emotional workload, and limited institutional support not only affects teachers' job satisfaction but also increases their intentions to leave the profession. Addressing these critical factors is essential to

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prevent turnover and maintain stability within early childhood education.

Teacher turnover is a global concern, with studies confirming a strong correlation between turnover intention and actual resignation (Coward et al., 1995; Mor Barak et al., 2001). In China, research has shown that turnover rates among kindergarten teachers can reach 12-14% in some regions (Hai et al., 2020). High turnover disrupts educational quality, student services, and school stability (Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2013), while imposing financial burdens on the education system (Watlington et al., 2010). The issue is especially pressing in developing countries, where limited research has been conducted on kindergarten teacher retention (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

Several factors contribute to kindergarten teachers' turnover intentions, including excessive workloads (Walewinder, 2013), low salaries (Hu, 2020), and inadequate principal support (Rothmann & Fouché, 2018). Psychological factors such as job satisfaction and professional fulfillment also play a crucial role (Shi et al., 2022). However, existing research has yet to fully explore how key predictors, Principal Support (PS), Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS), Workload (W), Emotional Workload (EW), and Diversity Climate (DC), directly influence turnover intentions among kindergarten teachers. This study aims to address this gap by examining these specific predictors as outlined in the conceptual framework, highlighting their direct impact on teachers' decisions to leave the profession. Understanding these relationships is crucial for formulating effective strategies to reduce turnover and enhance teacher retention in early childhood education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teachers' Turnover Intention (TTI)

Teachers' turnover intention refers to the likelihood that educators will contemplate leaving their profession (Ladd, 2011). It represents a conscious, deliberate desire to voluntarily exit the organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). This intention is often seen as a precursor to career mobility (Clandinin et al., 2009) and is used to predict the probability of job changes over time (Park et al., 2019). Similarly, Bigliardi et al. (2005) define turnover intention as the likelihood of an individual leaving an organization. Shah and Jumani (2015) emphasize that it reflects a strong inclination to withdraw. Additionally, Tiplic et al. (2015) found that teachers' decisions about career mobility are shaped by multiple factors, including professional competence, trust in school leadership, role ambiguity, and emotional attachment. Together, these factors influence

teachers' decisions regarding career mobility.

The psychological strain resulting from unmet expectations and job dissatisfaction can amplify teachers' contemplation of leaving, reinforcing the link between turnover intentions and actual resignation. This perspective is grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which posits that individuals strive to protect and build resources; when workplace conditions threaten these resources (e.g., emotional stability, job security), turnover intentions emerge as a coping mechanism (Hobfoll, 1989).

2.2 Principal Support (PS)

Principal support refers to employees' overall perception of their supervisors' appreciation for their efforts and concern for their well-being (Pazy et al., 2006). A lack of cooperation, trust, and support between principals and teachers remains a key challenge in modern schools (Olsen & Huang, 2018). In this regard, research highlights principal support as a crucial factor in teacher retention (Redding et al., 2019). For instance, Hughes et al. (2015) found that administrative support, across emotional, environmental, and instructional domains, directly influences teachers' decisions to stay or leave. Moreover, principal support positively affects work engagement while simultaneously reducing turnover intentions, mediated by autonomy satisfaction (Rothmann & Fouché, 2018). Additionally, a supportive and trusting school climate significantly fosters job satisfaction (Trace, 2016), ultimately improving teacher retention. Furthermore, its impact on turnover intentions is significantly mediated by job satisfaction (Al-Mahdy & Alazmi, 2023).

The underlying psychological mechanism is explained through the lens of Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that when principals provide support and appreciation, teachers are more likely to reciprocate with organizational loyalty, reducing their intentions to leave (Blau, 1964). Conversely, a lack of support triggers perceived inequity and emotional withdrawal, which heightens turnover intentions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Based on these findings, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Principal support has a significant impact on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.

2.3 Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS)

Teacher Job Satisfaction refers to the favorable or unfavorable assessments teachers make regarding their employment experiences (Weiss, 2002). It is a key determinant of employee retention. Kafumbu (2019) found that teachers' job satisfaction was linked to their turnover intentions, with demographic factors playing a significant role, though school type had no significant impact.

Schwepker (2001) noted that job satisfaction is often correlated with turnover, as employees' interactions within the work environment affect their overall satisfaction. Medina (2012) emphasized the importance of job satisfaction in understanding organizational behavior. In line with this, many researchers have used turnover intentions as a proxy for actual turnover, given its predictive value in employee retention studies. Zhang et al. (2022) demonstrated that job satisfaction negatively influences turnover intention and mediates the effect of burnout on turnover. Hardianto et al. (2019) confirmed that job satisfaction directly reduces turnover intentions. Additionally, Schermerhorn et al. (2008) found that job dissatisfaction often leads to negative behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover, while Locke (1976) highlighted the consistent negative correlation between dissatisfaction and turnover.

From a psychological perspective, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggests that job satisfaction is driven by intrinsic factors (e.g., recognition, achievement), while dissatisfaction is tied to extrinsic factors (e.g., salary, work conditions). When these extrinsic motivators are insufficient, teachers are more inclined to consider leaving, as the emotional cost outweighs perceived benefits (Herzberg et al., 1959). Based on these findings, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Teacher job satisfaction has a significant impact on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.

2.4 Workload (W)

Heilala et al. (2022) defined workload as encompassing factors such as time constraints and the volume of tasks, and found it to be correlated with employees' turnover intentions. In the teaching profession, increasing workloads have prompted many educators to consider leaving (Sugden, 2010). Factors such as policy mandates, parental expectations, curriculum demands, and professional development requirements contribute to this workload (Kamanzi et al., 2007). Additionally, Jomuad et al. (2021) highlighted that workload significantly impacts teacher burnout, which is a strong predictor of turnover intentions (Zhang et al., 2022). Research on kindergarten teachers in China further revealed that workload heightens job stress, with stress mediating its effect on turnover intentions (Hu, 2020).

According to Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, excessive workload is considered a high-demand factor that depletes psychological resources, leading to emotional exhaustion and disengagement. This persistent strain fosters turnover intentions as teachers seek to escape the unsustainable demands of their roles (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Based on these findings, the study proposes the

following hypothesis:

H3: Workload has a significant impact on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.

2.5 Emotional Workload (EW)

Emotional workload refers to work in which emotion regulation and expression are key components, often involving the influence of others' feelings, behaviors, or attitudes (Zapf & Holz, 2006). It has been linked to turnover intentions, with participation acting as a mediator (Heilala et al., 2022). James (1989) expanded the concept of "emotional work" to include tasks involving the management of others' emotions, emphasizing the importance of regulating one's own emotions. Preschool teachers, responsible for both educating and caring for young children, face significant emotional labor, as they must address children's unique needs while managing their own emotional responses. This increased emotional workload is compounded by frequent communication with parents and the community, often leading to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Cumming, 2017). According to Zhang et al. (2022), job burnout is a strong predictor of turnover intentions, indicating that the emotional workload of preschool teachers can significantly influence their decisions to leave the profession.

Emotion Regulation Theory posits that persistent emotional labor without adequate recovery can lead to burnout, which is a strong antecedent of turnover intentions (Grandey, 2000). This is particularly evident in early childhood education, where emotional regulation demands are continuous and taxing. Based on these findings, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Emotional workload has a significant impact on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.

2.6 Diversity Climate (DC)

Diversity Climate refers to the shared perception among employees that an organization applies fair human resource practices and socially includes employees from underrepresented groups (McKay et al., 2008). It influences both organizational outcomes and individual behavior, particularly by affecting productivity and turnover intentions (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009). Buttner and Lowe (2017) highlighted that the relationship between diversity climate and turnover intentions is influenced by employees' perceptions of pay equity. McKay and Avery (2005) observed that diversity recruitment efforts raise expectations for a positive diversity climate. However, when there is a mismatch between these efforts and the actual climate, it can result in a breach of the psychological contract, thereby increasing turnover intentions. Further supporting this,

Buttner et al. (2012) found that for minority employees, unmet diversity expectations heightened turnover intentions, with this link partially mediated by perceptions of the diversity climate.

Psychological Contract Theory explains that when teachers perceive inconsistency between the promised inclusive environment and actual practices, it triggers perceptions of breach and inequity, heightening turnover intentions (Rousseau, 1989). Based on these findings, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Diversity climate has a significant impact on kindergarten teachers' turnover intention.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

This study draws on three theoretical models, Al-Mahdy and Alazmi (2023), Heilala et al. (2022), and Bhagdev (2021) to develop the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

Al-Mahdy and Alazmi (2023) highlighted the importance of principal support and job satisfaction in predicting teacher turnover intentions, emphasizing the mediating role of job satisfaction. Heilala et al. (2022) demonstrated that both workload and emotional workload are significant predictors of turnover intentions, particularly in emotionally demanding professions such as teaching. Bhagdev (2021) underscored the influence of organizational climate, particularly diversity climate, on teacher motivation and retention, reinforcing its inclusion in this study's framework.
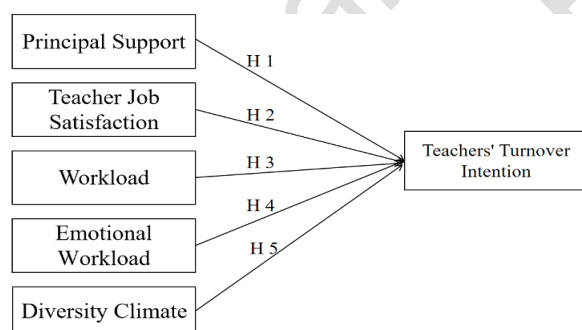

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Research Methodology

The research process was divided into four distinct stages. In the first stage, a survey was conducted with the entire research population (n = 300) to collect data based on the proposed conceptual framework. All hypotheses were then rigorously evaluated using multiple linear regression, with significance determined by a p-value threshold of < 0.05, ensuring that only supported hypotheses were retained.

In the second stage, a survey was administered to 40 teachers prior to the implementation of the Strategic Plan (SP), focusing on the variables identified through the supported hypotheses. The third stage involved the introduction and implementation of the SP, with the same 40 teachers participating in the intervention.

In the final stage, the 40 SP participants completed a follow-up survey, providing data for a paired-sample t-test to compare the results before and after the SP. This comprehensive process allowed for a thorough evaluation of the research objectives and hypotheses.

3.3 Research Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

3.3.1 Research Population

This study focuses on teachers from six kindergartens in Leshan, Sichuan Province, who play a significant role in local early childhood education. Their responsibilities include childcare, organizing and implementing educational activities, and engaging with parents and the community, making them appropriate subjects for analyzing turnover intentions. A proportional random sampling method was employed, selecting 11 senior teachers, 93 first-level teachers, 120 second-level teachers, and 76 third-level teachers, totaling 300 out of 425 teachers.

3.3.2 Sample Size

A pilot study involving 30 teachers was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments, leading to necessary adjustments. A sample size of 30 is considered adequate for pilot studies to identify potential issues in survey design and instrument reliability (Johanson & Brooks, 2010).

The main sample comprised 300 teachers, ensuring sufficient statistical power for multivariate regression analysis. Hair et al. (2019) recommend a minimum of 200 participants for robust multivariate analysis, while Kline (2015) suggests that a 10-to-1 ratio of respondents to parameters is ideal for structural equation modeling (SEM). Thus, the sample size of 300 not only meets but exceeds the recommended thresholds for reliable and valid analysis.

Additionally, 15 teachers participated in in-depth interviews to provide qualitative insights. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that 5 to 20 participants are typically sufficient for qualitative studies aimed at thematic saturation.

During the Current Situation-SP and Expected-SP phases, 40 teachers completed the same questionnaire before and after the implementation of the strategic plan, allowing for comparative analysis. According to Gall et al.

(2007), sample sizes of 30 to 50 are adequate for detecting meaningful differences in intervention studies. The 15 interviewed teachers were also re-interviewed post-intervention to evaluate its effectiveness.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

The researcher conducted the following sampling procedures:

Sampling 1: Pilot Survey and Pilot Test

Purposive sampling was used to select six kindergartens. In the pilot phase, 30 teachers were chosen to test the reliability of the research instruments.

Sampling 2: Pre-Survey

Stratified sampling was used to select 300 teachers from the six kindergartens, based on their academic ranks. Data collected via online questionnaires were analyzed using multivariate linear regression (MLR), which informed the final strategic plan design.

Sampling 3: Strategic Plan (SP) Implementation

Fifteen teachers were randomly selected for in-depth interviews to provide feedback on the design of the strategic plan. Forty teachers participated in the plan's implementation, completing the same questionnaire before and after the intervention to assess changes in their turnover intentions. The 15 teachers who participated in the initial interviews were re-interviewed after the implementation to evaluate the plan's effectiveness.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire Design

The researcher designed the questionnaire following three steps:

Step 1: Identified questionnaire items from five publicly published studies (Heilala et al., 2022; Ho & Au, 2006; McKay et al., 2008; Mobley et al., 1978; Rhoades et al., 2001).

Step 2: Adapted and contextualized the questionnaire to suit Chinese kindergarten teachers.

Step 3: Applied the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method to ensure content validity.

3.4.2 Questionnaire Components

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

Part 1: Questionnaire Instructions

This section provided important guidelines for completing the survey, including information about the confidentiality of responses, the purpose of the study, and the importance of honest participation.

Part 2: Demographic Information

This section collected essential demographic data from the participants, such as gender, age, job title, and other relevant information. The demographic attributes were used

to analyze variations in turnover intentions across different subgroups, providing insights into how factors like gender and age may influence responses.

Part 3: Pre-Survey Questions

This section included questions designed to assess the current levels of the independent and dependent variables among the 300 kindergarten teachers. The survey utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to measure participants' perceptions of Principal Support (PS), Teacher Job Satisfaction (TJS), Workload (W), Emotional Workload (EW), and Diversity Climate (DC), as well as their turnover intentions. This quantitative approach enabled empirical analysis of key factors that significantly influence teacher turnover intention.

3.4.3 IOC Results

The researcher invited three experts in the field to conduct the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) evaluation. During the IOC process, each expert assessed the questionnaire items, assigning a score of +1 for congruent items, 0 for uncertain items, and -1 for incongruent items. In this study, two questionnaire items received scores below 0.67 and were removed, while the remaining items were retained by the researcher.

3.4.4 Reliability and Validity

The researcher conducted a pilot survey with 30 kindergarten teachers, randomly selecting them to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback. Subsequently, a Cronbach's Alpha test was performed to assess the internal consistency reliability of the instrument. The results, as shown in the table below, indicate that all constructs met the required reliability standards.

Table 1: Pilot Test Result (n=30)

Variable	Source of Questionnaire (Measurement Indicator)	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Strength of Association
PS	Rhoades et al. (2001)	4	0.667	Moderate
TJS	Ho and Au (2006)	4	0.818	Very Good
W	Heilala et al. (2022)	3	0.717	Good
EW	Heilala et al. (2022)	3	0.850	Very Good
DC	McKay et al. (2008)	4	0.782	Good
TTI	Mobley et al. (1978)	4	0.847	Very Good

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile

The researcher first presented the demographic profile of the entire research population (n = 300), followed by that of

the group of teachers who participated in the Strategic Plan (SP) (n = 40), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Information

Entire Research Population (n=300)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	16	5.3
	Female	284	94.7
Age	20-25	98	32.7
	26-30	127	42.3
	31-40	50	16.7
	40+	25	8.3
Teaching Years	Less 5	68	22.7
	5-10	132	44.0
	11-15	65	21.6
	15+	35	11.7
Professional Title	Senior Teacher	11	3.7
	First-Level Teacher	93	31.0
	Second-Level Teacher	120	40.0
	Third-Level Teacher	76	25.3
Education Level	Associate's Degree	86	28.7
	Bachelor's Degree	205	68.3
	Master's Degree or above	9	3.0
IDI Participants (n=40)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	4	10.0
	Female	36	90.0
Grade	20-25	7	17.5
	26-30	16	40.0
	31-40	10	25.0
	40+	7	17.5
Major	Less 5	6	15.0
	5-10	15	37.5
	11-15	11	27.5
	15+	8	20.0
Professional Title	Senior Teacher	6	15.0
	First-Level Teacher	18	45.0
	Second-Level Teacher	12	30.0
	Third-Level Teacher	4	10.0
Education Level	Associate's Degree	8	20.0
	Bachelor's Degree	28	70.0
	Master's Degree or above	4	10.0

4.2 Multiple Linear Regression

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, showing that the p-values for all five independent variables were below 0.05, indicating a significant impact on kindergarten teachers' turnover intentions. The R-squared value of 0.847 suggests that 84.7 percent of the variance in turnover intentions was explained, demonstrating a strong model fit.

Table 3: The MLR Results on Teachers' Turnover Intention (n=300)

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta Value	t-value	p-value	R^2
Principal Support	-0.0522	-2.26	0.025*	0.847
Teacher Job Satisfaction	-0.3820	-9.87	<.001*	
Workload	-0.1765	-5.50	<.001*	
Emotional Workload	0.3917	9.64	<.001*	
Diversity Climate	-0.0849	-2.21	0.028*	

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta Value	t-value	p-value	R^2
Dependent Variable: Teachers' Turnover Intention				

Note: p-value <0.05*

The hypotheses were significant at a p-value below 0.05, confirming the impact of the independent variables on turnover intentions. Among them, Emotional Workload was positively correlated, signaling its critical role in increasing turnover risks, while Principal Support, Teacher Job Satisfaction, Workload, and Diversity Climate were negatively correlated, reflecting their contributions to reducing turnover intentions.

The analysis identified Emotional Workload as the strongest predictor, followed by Teacher Job Satisfaction, emphasizing the need to manage emotional demands and enhance job satisfaction to mitigate turnover risks.

Demographic insights further revealed that younger and early-career teachers were more sensitive to Principal Support and Job Satisfaction, whereas longer-serving teachers were more affected by Emotional Workload. These findings suggest that strategic interventions should be tailored to address the varying needs of teachers based on their experience and career stage.

In summary, the five hypotheses mentioned earlier, H1 to H5, were all supported. Therefore, all five variables were retained for the design of the strategic plan to validate the following hypotheses:

H6 There is a significant difference between Current situation- and Expect situation-Strategic plan for Principal Support.

H7 There is a significant difference between Current situation- and Expect situation-Strategic plan for Teacher Job Satisfaction.

H8 There is a significant difference between Current situation- and Expect situation-Strategic plan for Workload.

H9 There is a significant difference between Current situation- and Expect situation-Strategic plan for Emotional Workload.

H10 There is a significant difference between Current situation- and Expect situation-Strategic plan for Diversity Climate.

H11 There is a significant difference between Current situation- and Expect situation-Strategic plan for Teachers' Turnover Intention.

4.3 Strategic Plan Design Process

The MLR analysis identified principal support, job satisfaction, workload, emotional workload, and diversity climate as key predictors of turnover intention. To mitigate turnover and enhance job stability, a systematically designed strategic plan was developed to address these factors. The

details of the plan are outlined below.

Table 4: Implementation Time and Activities as Strategic Plan

Week	Time and Duration	Implementation Keywords
Week 1	Meeting Agenda; Principal Training Program (2 hours each)	Plan Introduction, Team Formation, Goal Setting, Principal Training
Week 2	Establishing a Principal Feedback Mechanism (2 hours)	Support Methods, Group Discussion, Needs Assessment
Week 3	Enhancing Teacher Recognition and Reward System (2 hours)	Contribution Acknowledgment, Achievement List
Week 4-5	Supporting Teacher Professional Development (2 hours each)	Qualification Subsidy, Resource Enrichment, Mentorship Program
Week 6	Developing Career Advancement and Incentive Systems (2 hours)	Incentives, Performance Pay, Growth Opportunities
Week 7	Redistributing Teacher Workload (2 hours)	Task Adjustment, Collaborative Lesson Planning, Admin Work Reduction
Week 8	Implementing Digital Tools for Teaching Efficiency (2 hours each)	Digital Tool Training, Technical Support
Week 9	Designing a Flexible Scheduling System (2 hours)	Flexible Work Arrangements, Rotational Shifts, Feedback Mechanism
Week 10	Stress Management Training (2 hours each)	Stress Awareness, Case Analysis, Coping Strategies
Week 11	Establishing Peer Support Groups (2 hours each)	Teacher Networks, Collaboration, Open Discussions
Week 12	Fostering a Positive Work Culture (2 hours each)	Positive Atmosphere, Micro-Achievement Sharing, Team Engagement
Week 13	Team-Building Activities for Emotional Well-Being (2 hours each)	Mutual Support, Understanding, Inclusivity
Week 14	Evaluation and Feedback (3 hours)	Effectiveness Assessment, Turnover Survey, Suggestions Collection

4.4 Results Comparison between Current and Expect-SP

The researcher conducted paired-sample t-tests for each variable before and after the implementation of the Strategic Plan (SP) to evaluate its effectiveness. The test results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Paired-sample T-test Results

Variable		Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Principle Support	Pre-PS	3.91	0.505	-3.36	0.002
	Post-PS	4.13	0.170		
Teacher Job Satisfaction	Pre-TJS	3.91	0.750	-3.50	0.001
	Post-TJS	4.14	0.686		
Workload	Pre-W	3.96	0.697	-2.93	0.006
	Post-W	4.28	0.533		
Emotional	Pre-EW	3.46	0.883	4.31	<0.001
Workload	Post-EW	2.73	0.759		
Diversity Climate	Pre-DC	3.84	0.590	-2.13	0.039
	Post-DC	4.03	0.571		
Teachers' Turnover Intention	Pre-TTI	3.15	0.893	6.18	<0.001
	Post-TTI	2.22	0.436		

Based on Table 5, there was a significant difference in principal support between the Current-SP condition (M = 3.91, SD = 0.505) and the Expected-SP condition (M = 4.13, SD = 0.170); t(39) = -3.36, p = 0.002 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of -0.22. Therefore, H6 was supported, indicating a significant difference in principal support between the current situation and the expected outcome following the strategic plan.

There was also a significant difference in teacher job satisfaction between the Current-SP condition (M = 3.91, SD = 0.750) and the Expected-SP condition (M = 4.14, SD = 0.686); t(39) = -3.50, p = 0.001 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of -0.23. Thus, H7 was supported.

For workload, a significant difference was found between the Current-SP condition (M = 3.96, SD = 0.697) and the Expected-SP condition (M = 4.28, SD = 0.533); t(39) = -2.93, p = 0.006 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of -0.32. Therefore, H8 was supported.

A significant difference was also observed in emotional workload between the Current-SP condition (M = 3.46, SD = 0.883) and the Expected-SP condition (M = 2.73, SD = 0.759); t(39) = 4.31, p < .001, with a mean difference of 0.73. Thus, H9 was supported.

Regarding diversity climate, there was a significant difference between the Current-SP condition (M = 3.84, SD = 0.590) and the Expected-SP condition (M = 4.03, SD = 0.571); t(39) = -2.13, p = 0.039 (< 0.05), with a mean difference of -0.19. Therefore, H10 was supported.

Finally, a significant difference was found in teachers' turnover intention between the Current-SP condition (M = 3.15, SD = 0.893) and the Expected-SP condition (M = 2.22, SD = 0.436); t(39) = 6.18, p < .001, with a mean difference of 0.93. As a result, H11 was supported.

Overall, the paired-sample t-test results indicate that the strategic plan interventions were effective across all key variables, leading to measurable improvements in teacher retention factors. Notably, demographic analysis suggested that the effectiveness of these interventions varied by age, experience, and professional standing, with younger and early-career teachers demonstrating greater sensitivity to improvements in principal support, workload, and job satisfaction. This highlights the importance of tailoring strategic initiatives to address the unique needs of different teacher demographics for optimized retention outcomes.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions

This study examined the factors influencing kindergarten teachers' turnover intentions in China and explored how a strategic plan could effectively reduce these intentions and enhance teacher retention. Key factors, including principal support, job satisfaction, workload, emotional workload, and diversity climate, were found to significantly impact turnover intentions. The strategic plan, which incorporated training, management reform, salary optimization, and the creation of a supportive environment, successfully lowered turnover rates and enhanced teacher commitment.

The findings revealed that principal support plays a crucial role in reducing turnover intentions by fostering a supportive work environment and enhancing teacher satisfaction. This aligns with Al-Mahdy and Alazmi (2023), who found that principal support directly reduces turnover intentions and indirectly does so by improving job satisfaction. Interventions such as emotional support, clear career development pathways, and increased recognition enhanced teachers' work experiences. However, given the diversity in leadership styles and individual teacher needs (Hoy & Miskel, 2005), further customization of principal support strategies is necessary to ensure that leadership approaches align with teachers' expectations and professional growth. Effective management support not only reduces turnover intentions but also strengthens teachers' trust in institutional stability and technical assistance, which are pivotal in maintaining long-term commitment.

Teacher job satisfaction also emerged as a key determinant of turnover intention. Improvements in job satisfaction following the strategic plan mirror the findings of Shah and Jumani (2015), who reported a strong negative correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Enhanced salary incentives, professional development opportunities, and recognition initiatives contributed significantly to this improvement. To sustain this impact, management should focus on clear communication and transparent policy implementation (Hadziahmetovic & Salihovic, 2022), ensuring that teachers feel secure and valued in their roles. Trustworthy management practices and consistent technical support further bolster satisfaction, increasing teachers' intention to remain in their positions.

The study also found that the strategic plan effectively reduced emotional workload, which is closely linked to burnout and increased turnover intentions (Maslach et al., 2001). Streamlined tasks, minimized non-teaching duties, and enhanced emotional support helped alleviate teacher stress and boost motivation. These adjustments allowed teachers to concentrate on their core teaching responsibilities, enhancing both job satisfaction and performance. These findings support those of Borg and Riding (1991), who concluded that reducing workload stress promotes career stability and satisfaction. Additionally, reliable technical assistance during task restructuring contributed to smoother workload management, further reinforcing teachers' intention to continue their roles.

Furthermore, the study confirmed the importance of diversity climate in shaping turnover intentions. Paired-sample t-tests indicated a significant improvement in diversity climate scores after the implementation of the strategic plan. This supports Bhagdev (2021), who found that teachers perceiving a more positive diversity climate tend to have lower turnover intentions. The strategic interventions, including diversity training, cultural exchange programs, and collaborative team-building activities, enhanced teachers' sense of belonging and inclusivity. However, some teachers experienced challenges adapting to cultural differences, suggesting that management support and continuous cultural competency training are essential for promoting long-term inclusivity (Pless & Maak, 2004). Future efforts should emphasize refining these strategies, particularly in strengthening team culture and providing trustworthy technical support that facilitates smooth adaptation to diverse learning environments.

The study highlights that well-structured management support, trustworthy technical assistance, and a positive institutional climate are critical for reducing turnover intentions and enhancing teacher retention. By aligning strategic interventions with teachers' needs and providing consistent management support, educational institutions can significantly boost commitment and reduce turnover risks.

5.2 Recommendations

Optimizing principal support is essential for fostering a positive work environment and reducing teacher turnover in kindergartens. Effective principal support includes providing emotional encouragement, offering clear career development pathways, and creating opportunities for professional growth. By actively engaging with teachers, understanding their needs, and offering personalized guidance, principals can significantly enhance teachers' job satisfaction and motivation. Furthermore, cultivating a culture of open communication and transparency helps build trust, making teachers feel valued, respected, and supported. Additionally, integrating reliable technical assistance for communication and feedback mechanisms can further enhance transparency and teacher trust in management decisions. Younger and early-career teachers, who tend to be more sensitive to leadership support, may benefit

particularly from targeted initiatives that address their unique expectations and career development needs.

Increasing teachers' job satisfaction is equally vital for promoting a positive and productive educational setting. To achieve this, kindergartens should ensure fair compensation and recognize teachers' efforts. Professional growth opportunities, such as workshops, mentorship programs, and clear career progression, can significantly boost teachers' sense of accomplishment and motivation. Additionally, fostering a supportive and respectful workplace culture where teachers feel heard and appreciated further contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction. Longer-serving teachers often place greater value on career stability and recognition, suggesting that initiatives focused on career advancement and sustained support may be particularly impactful for this group.

Reducing both workload and emotional workload is crucial in preventing teacher burnout and lowering turnover intention. Kindergarten teachers often juggle administrative responsibilities, lesson planning, and significant emotional labor. To ease this burden, it is important to streamline administrative processes, delegate non-teaching tasks where feasible, and provide access to efficient teaching resources. Moreover, integrating reliable technical assistance through digital tools for task automation and workload management can significantly reduce administrative burdens and improve efficiency. Emotional support, through counseling services or peer support networks, can also help teachers manage the emotional demands of their roles more effectively. Teachers with longer teaching experience may benefit particularly from enhanced emotional support, given the cumulative stress associated with extended years of service.

Promoting a positive diversity climate is key to building an inclusive and supportive environment. When teachers feel respected and valued regardless of background, their commitment to the profession strengthens, and turnover intentions decrease. To encourage this, kindergartens should implement diversity training, facilitate cultural exchange, and promote collaboration among staff. However, creating a truly inclusive climate requires more than formal training, it demands ongoing efforts in cultural integration and daily practices that respect individual differences. For teachers who have been in the profession for many years, consistent and ongoing diversity initiatives may be necessary to shift long-established perceptions and enhance inclusivity.

Strengthening social support systems within kindergartens also plays a vital role in reducing turnover intentions and enhancing overall teacher well-being. Teachers who feel supported by colleagues, administrators, and the broader school community are more likely to remain motivated and engaged. Establishing strong peer networks, mentorship programs, and open communication with leadership can create an environment where teachers feel

understood, valued, and connected. Additionally, providing resources such as counseling services and professional development opportunities fosters a sense of security and career advancement. Support structures, such as peer mentoring and collaborative networks, should be tailored to match teachers' experience levels, ensuring that both new and veteran teachers receive the guidance and encouragement they need.

Improving principal support, enhancing job satisfaction, managing workload and emotional demands, fostering a positive diversity climate, and strengthening social support systems are key strategies for reducing teacher turnover in kindergartens. By addressing these areas and integrating trustworthy technical assistance while considering teachers' career stages and experience levels, kindergartens can create a healthier, more supportive work environment, ultimately improving teacher retention and cultivating a motivated, engaged workforce.

5.3 Limitation and Further Study

While this study explored factors influencing kindergarten teachers' turnover intentions and implemented a strategic plan to address them, several limitations remain.

First, the study primarily focused on observed variables, including Principal Support, Teacher Job Satisfaction, Workload, Emotional Workload, and Diversity Climate, without considering other important factors such as school culture, leadership styles, teacher autonomy, and community engagement. Future research should broaden the scope to include these dimensions to capture a more comprehensive understanding of turnover intentions.

Second, the sample was regionally limited to six kindergartens, restricting the generalizability of the findings to other regions and different types of institutions. Expanding the sample to include diverse geographic locations and various kindergarten types, such as rural, urban, public, and private settings, could improve representativeness. Moreover, reliance on self-reported surveys and interviews may introduce bias due to social desirability and subjective perception. Future studies could employ mixed-method approaches to validate findings and minimize bias.

Finally, the 14-week timeframe of this study captured only short-term outcomes. Since turnover intentions evolve over time, longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of strategic interventions and their adaptation to policy shifts and evolving educational contexts.

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