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## BURNOUT AND TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG ELEMENTARY TEACHERS: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

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### Abstract:

Teacher turnover is a crucial issue and has a significant impact on student outcome and school performance in the education sector. Burnout is characterized by anxiety, fatigue and indifference towards work is a major factor that influencing teachers' turnover intention affects the quality of education. Consideration to leaving their position increases teachers to accept alternative employment. To maintaining excellent teaching, students' achievement and learning outcome, improving work environment, practical and supportive policies and effective workload management are essential to reduce burnout and increase teacher well-being and retention. This study is focused to examine the relationship between burnout and teacher turnover intention on elementary teachers in the Melaka Tengah District of Melaka. Sample size was 332, using via Google Form utilizing quantitative method approach. Positive relationship was found in this study indicating that higher level of burnout significantly influenced teacher's turnover intention. Critical role of burnout is recognized and to manage this issue holistic approach is essential to cope teacher turnover intention. These findings, provide valuable comprehension for educational stakeholder and institutional focus to escalate supportive work environment with feasible intervention to delineation specific initiative to enhance teacher retention and well-being in their profession.

### Keyword:

Burnout, Elementary Teachers, Turnover Intention, Well-Being



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## Introduction

Teachers are the foundation of the education system. They support the long-term growth of society by balancing two major roles: delivering academic instruction and guiding the personal development of their students. In today's environment, educators are expected to adapt quickly to new challenges, such as mastering digital tools and meeting the diverse emotional needs of a modern classroom. However, maintaining this level of performance requires more than just professional competence; it also requires a supportive environment that enables teachers to manage these intense demands effectively. Recent research indicates that teacher attrition rates are steadily rising, posing a significant challenge to educational stability (Faria & Porto, 2026; Hatfield & Kuvaas, 2026). This trend is largely driven by the increasing prevalence of burnout, which has become a primary factor in many educators' decisions to leave the profession.

In the education sector, teacher turnover is a significant challenge which affects student outcomes and school performance (Bazer & Estigoy, 2021). Burnout manifest through symptom by exhaustion, emotional detachment from work, restlessness has been identified as key factor influencing teachers' turnover intention (Li et al., 2022). Employees intentional contemplation to quit from their job is refers as turnover intention (Tetteh et al., 2022). The concept of turnover intention comprehends both psychological and behavioural demonstrates an employee willing or quit from the roles (Menziez, 2023). This represents a conscious psychological readiness of an employee whereby may have continuous negative and bad performance, low morale and potentially higher organizational costs (Tetteh et al., 2022; Safutra & Herianti, 2024). The desire to leave by an employee happens normally in a specific period manifesting as turnover intention (Lazzari et al., 2022).

Turnover intention is a global concern affecting teachers in various educational settings. According to Metin et al., (2021), Turkish teachers leave their professions due to excessive workload that cause to burnout impacting the students and school performance. Studies conducted by Anees et al. (2021) and Ejimonye (2025) has shown that there is high likely the emergent of brain drain which many skilled and qualified teachers migrating to other sectors and countries in higher education due to constant pressure facing by teachers. In previous study in Finland, half of the teacher having intention leave their profession (Arvidsson et al., 2019). Public school in Beijing, China, facing a crucial issue which is 23.6% of teachers are wanted to leave their profession and around 14.43% have intention to leave in the following years (Fu et al., 2020).

In the context of Malaysia, teacher turnover is a significant issue and demand to rise driven by several unique set of challenges such as large class sizes, curriculum changes, time management and increased administrative responsibilities (Che Ali & Surat, 2025; Che Ani et al., 2025; Razman et al., 2025). It is crucial to investigate how burnout impacts teacher turnover

intention. Holistic approach to address these challenges, targeted interventions and advocating for systematic changes is needed. Prioritizing improvements in burnout, educational stakeholders can make fundamental progress in alleviating teacher turnover intention, enhancing well-being and ensuring the high-quality education.

## Literature Review

### *Turnover Intention*

According to Henry & Redding (2020) affecting of quality education and student outcomes remains a critical challenge in Malaysia school because of turnover intention. Number of early retirements among teachers is roses with approximately 10,000 expected retire by 2022 (National Union of Teachers, 2022). This development poses significant obstacle to achieving the Millenium Development Goals and the target outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (News Straits Times Online, 23 April 2022). With significant gap in key subjects' areas such as special education, science and mathematics due to the teacher shortages and high turnover, particularly problematic in schools serving disadvantaged communities (Boamah et al., 2022). The decline in the attractiveness of the teaching profession, rising student enrolment, and a reduced supply of new teacher candidates are among the contributing factors.

Furthermore, high turnover rates are considered unacceptable and will negatively impact teacher performance, productivity and morale in any organization, including the education sector. This evident in studies conducted by Skelton et al. (2019) and Suyono et al. (2020) have significantly demonstrated the disruptive effects of high turnover in organization. Other findings also found that the most significant effect of high turnover is the decline in the morale of teachers (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2023).

On the other hand, the cost of recruiting, training and advertising new teachers, especially when employees retire or resign, result in significant financial implications from high turnover rates in organizations which impacts operating costs through recruitment (Memon et al., 2021). The cost replacing employees who have left can be as much as six to nine months of their salary, further burdening the organization financially (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). Replacing experienced teachers with novice teachers is costly in term of quality and effectiveness because the education system may impact student achievement and learning (Jones-Presly, 2023: Stock & Carriere, 2021: Taie & Lewis, 2023).

As a result, schools are unable to organize proper and adequate learning platforms for students facing high turnover intention (Herdianto et al., 2019). This poses a major challenge for educational institutions to ensure continuity of quality teaching and effective replacement of specialized expertise as the negative impact of high turnover on the quality of education and student learning is compounded by the loss of the qualified and experienced teachers. These findings highlight the need for a supportive environment, addressing burnout, organizational culture, job satisfaction and encouraging teacher engagement to improve teacher retention and educational outcome (Javed & Riaz, 2019: Li & Guo, 2019: Ma & Kam, 2019: Oberes & Tan, 2022: Johnson Nughro & A, et al.,2024).

## ***Burnout***

According to Srivastava and Agraval (2020) prolonged stress at work among teachers in workplace commonly known as burnout. Cynicism, emotional exhaustion and reduced efficacy is a dimension of burnout (Maslach et al., 1986).

Additionally, factors like lack of support, excessive workload and limited resources are increasingly that are prevailing in teaching profession (Rajendran et al., 2022). Studies found by Zhang et al. (2022) teachers consider leave their organization because of burnout. Frequent symptoms comprise lower job satisfaction, emotional detachment and fall of sense of accomplishment contribute to escalate turnover intention (Madigan & Kim, 2021).

In fact, organizational changes such as restructuring, staff reductions or limited resources have also been found to accelerate burnout, which can lead to higher teacher turnover. This increases the changing demands of workload while reducing support, resulting in emotional strain (Menon et al., 2023). Having a strong support system and professional growth opportunities to minimize the negative effects of burnout will make this situation even more important (Chenevert et al., 2019). Development and career programs become more difficult when teachers exhaust in energy and motivation just because of burnout (Shestakova et al., 2019).

According to Fiorillo et al. (2020) inadequacy of acknowledgement predominantly from superior significantly influences teachers' turnover intention. Scarcity in career development opportunities, less support from organization and emotional demands intensifies burnout and turnover intentions (Heffernan et al., 2022). Moreover, Johnson et al. (2021) found due to a chronic stress disorder, teachers leaving their profession make an increasing risk career growth because of prolong burnout and turnover intentions.

### ***The Relationship Between Burnout and Turnover Intention***

The existing body of research confirms the positive relationship between burnout and turnover intentions in education sector, prompting many teachers to change careers (Bautista, 2026; Faria & Porto, 2026; Hatfield & Kuvaas, 2026).

Studied by (Izzati & Amirah, 2025) stated in recent years, burnout has received increasing attention from educational management due to its implications for institutional stability, making it essential for ensuring effective and efficient learning and teaching. Teachers experiencing burnout are increasingly exposed to mandated and high-stakes performance appraisal due to work stress (Amelia, 2024). Burnout serves as a major risk factor leading to turnover intentions, a natural outcome of most teacher decision making.

Burnout is a strong and direct predictor of teachers' decision to leave according to a significant empirical study (Rahimi & Arnold, 2024). The increase in teachers' turnover intentions is indirectly through psychological stress caused by job variables such as excessive workload, poor work-life balance, limited job autonomy or insufficient organizational support this pattern underlines the position of burnout as an important mediating mechanism. According to O'Connor et al. (2022), burnout is the expeditious and significant of turnover intentions. This support of the JD-R and exhaustion on turnover intention. Formerly burnout take place, probability of turning to segregation increases significantly because the consistency of the high correlation (Nyki & Owusu, 2023).

Job Demand-resources (JD-R) Model is an anticipate a theoretical basis for this relationship. This model indicate that persevering job demands without sufficient resources steer to burnout, ultimately decrease motivation and leave the organization. Heffernan et al. (2022) emphasized that without adequate institutional support, increased turnover and symptoms of burnout are likely to increase. This emphasizes the need for educational institutions to prioritize and integrate strategies that foster support among teachers, a sense of worth, and subsequently improve overall teacher well-being and reduce burnout (Bautista, 2026; Ntouka et al., 2026).

Based on this evidence, it is reasonable to hypothesize that;

H1: There is a positive relationship between burnout and teacher turnover intention.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Sample and Procedure***

This study used quantitative approach to measure burnout and turnover intentions of public-school teachers. The survey includes validated scales for burnout and turnover intentions. Through an online survey conducted using Google Forms and total of 332 teachers participated in this study, sharing valuable insights. Systematic collection of information from a sample of the study population was conducted in the data collection process (Sundram et al., 2016). In this study, respondents self-completed an inline questionnaire for convenience, minimal resource requirements, low costs and very fast completion time (Verma et al., 2024). The questionnaires were distributed and shared using the WhatsApp application. The flexibility to complete the questionnaire at the most convenient time made it for the respondents. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was used in this study of its complete acceptability and easy to handle. According to Sundram et al. (2016) convenience sampling consists of and involves subjects identified according to their availability and proximity to the researcher.

This study integrates several basic steps in exploring the dimensions of various aspects of burnout. Specifically, the concept of burnout is examined through the lens of Chen et al. (2019). In addition, this study uses a comprehensive 5- item scale that captures the essence of the burnout phenomenon, allowing for a nuanced understanding of burnout and teachers disengagement. Each section uses a Likert Scale response (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree) to assess specific characteristics of the variable.

Questionnaires were distributed to the 30 teachers as a respondent to which surveys that were answered were not included in the study sample. This pilot study was a preliminary study to examine whether the main study material elements were important and to test reliability (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). It is important for the researcher to fully recognize and understand, scheduling concerns, specific aims and experimental techniques before beginning the pilot study. Ethical considerations were also considered during the study. Respondents will be informed of the objectives of the research and provide informed consent before starting. Confidentiality and anonymity are ensured, and participation is voluntary.

Next, to summarize data on participant demographics, variable scores and relationships between variables, descriptive statics were used. Accordingly, to assess the internal consistency of item in each scale measuring the independent and dependent variables, Cronbach's Alpha

was used. This statistical test assesses the extent to which items in a set are positively correlated with each other and whether they measure the same underlying concept. By ensuring adequate internal consistency for each variable, researchers can be more confident in the accuracy of the measurements and the validity of their findings from subsequent multiple regression analysis.

Finally, to test the hypothesized relationship between burnout and turnover intention, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The relative influence of independent variables on turnover intention allowed the researcher to conduct an analytical study. In this research, measurement refers to the ability to assess the study variables of burnout and turnover intention in a way that is relevant and accurate to achieve the research objectives. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), scale in this context refers to the elements or extended ranges of categories, serving to measure both items and individuals in a quantitative framework. The researcher used nominal scales for the demographic profile of the respondents and interval scales for the independent variable (burnout) and dependent variable (turnover intention) in this study.

### Measures

Various aspects of burnout in explored integrates several basics for this study. Using comprehensive five (5) item scale that captures the essence of the burnout (independent variable) allows for a nuanced understanding of burnout and disengagement to be studied from the lens of Chen et al. (2019) the concept of burnout is studied. Each part used Likert-scale responses (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). Each part used Likert-scale responses (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree) to evaluate certain characteristics of variables. The dependent variable scale, six (6) items measuring turnover intention, the short version of Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) Bothma & Roodt, (2013) was used. In assessing the likelihood of hiring, staying or leaving their positions, this scale has been validated (Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Nemeth et al., 2024).

### Results

**Table 1: Demographic Profile (n=332)**

| Category                   | Details   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Gender                     | Female: 50.6% (n=168)<br>Male: 49.4% (n=164)  |
| Age                        | 41-45 years: 19.9% (n=132)<br>46-50 years: 19.9% (n=132)<br>51-55 years: 16.3% (n=54)<br>30-35 years: 9.6% (n=32) |
| Ethnicity                  | Malay: 54.5% (n=181)<br>Chinese: 25.6% (n=85)<br>Indian: 16.9% (n=56)   |
| Marital Status             | Married: 73.8% (n=230)<br>Single: 28.6% (n=95)  |
| Educational Qualifications | Degree: 73.8% (n=245)<br>Master's: 16.6% (n=55)<br>Diploma: 8.7% (n=29)   |
| Roles                      | Ordinary Teachers: 53.0% (n=176)  |

|               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
|               | Subject Committees: 35.8% (n=119) |
|               | Headmasters: 11.1% (n=37)         |
| Salary Levels | RM6501 - RM7500: 27.4% (n=91)     |
|               | RM5501 - RM6500: 24.7% (n=82)     |
|               | RM4501 – RM5500: 14.8% (n=49)     |

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. With (50.6%) female and (49.4%) male teachers in Melaka Tengah District, which the sample was gender balanced. The largest proportion aged between 41-50 years; most respondents were in the mid-career category and indicated experienced teachers. Smaller proportions were observed among teachers aged 30-35 and 51-55 years.

The majority of respondents were Malay teachers (54.5%), followed by Chinese (25.6%) and Indian 16.9%, reflecting the multicultural context of education teachers in Malaysia. Most respondents were married (73.8%). In terms of education, the majority had a bachelor's degree (73.8%), while (16.6%) had a master's degree. Professionally, ordinary teaches formed largest group (53.0%), then, followed by subject committee members (35.8%) and headmasters (11.1%). In terms of salary rates, most respondents were in the middle-income range, which is with the highest portion earning RM6,501-RM7,500, in line with their experienced and professional role.

## Findings

The result of the regression analysis to examine the relationship between burnout and turnover intention are shown in table 2. Studied explains burnout as a predictor which contributes to turnover intention.

**Table 2: Results Of Multiple Regression (Turnover Intention as a Dependent Variable)**

| Model                   | Standardized Coefficient $\beta$ | Sig. |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------|
| (Constant)              |                                  | .000 |
| Burnout                 | .717                             | .000 |
| F-Change                | 349.413                          |      |
| Sig.                    | .000                             |      |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | .512                             |      |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | .514                             |      |

The findings of this study show teachers in Melaka Tengah District confirm a strong and statistically positive relationship between burnout and turnover intention. A high positive correlation was shown in the correlation analysis ( $r = 0.717$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while the regression results showed that burnout explained 51.4% of the variance in turnover intention ( $\beta = 0.717$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $R^2 = 0.514$ ). Previous studies have shown consistency (Rajendran et al.,2020; Madigan & Kim, 2021), strongly confirming that burnout is a key predictor of teacher turnover intention. It is likely that teachers are considering leaving their jobs from this possible finding.

This intention caused by a variety of factors, including low self-esteem, job dissatisfaction, unmet personal goals and the previously mentioned symptoms of burnout (Zhang et al., 2022)

## Discussion

Indifference, the main symptom of burnout, appears to increase teachers' willingness to leave the profession due to emotional exhaustion and lack of achievement (Johnson and Smith, 2022). The regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.717$ ) indicates that as burnout increases, so does the likelihood that teachers intend to leave. The suggestions that an imbalance between job demands and available resources leads to burnout and increased turnover intentions is consistent with the findings of JD-R theory (Demeroutie & Bakker, 2023).

The data highlights that teachers feel lack of career advancement, are overwhelmed by administrative workload, and have limited emotional support. Wan and Salahudin, (2023) documented situation contributes not only to reduced sense of purpose, but also job dissatisfaction, which in turn increases turnover intentions. Thus, teachers who feel that their work fails to meet their personal and professional goals report the highest level of burnout. This aligned with the finding's studies by Md Shah et al., (2024) which emphasized the relationships of work environment, work-life balance and workload on teacher burnout.

To reduce burnout, supportive work environment is needed to act as a protective factor in institutions. A holistic approach to teacher well-being is important in developing supportive organizational cultures and workload management (Bonilla, 2013; Rasheed et al., 2020; Skelton et al., 2020). Developing targets intervention and policies aimed at this study may give valuable insight for better understanding of this complex relationship, and from these strategies reduce burnout and ultimately increase teacher retention in education sector.

Systematic approach is crucial to dwelling this matter including unwavering institutional support, better workload arrangements and mechanism to resemblances teachers' enhancements (Belay et al., 2023). Teacher well-being is a priority that educational stakeholders and schools should provide and create surroundings that encourage autonomy and provide professional career development (Al Sabei et al., 2020). Quality of education will be good if this happens, but without these changes, teacher retention will be an ongoing issue (Rahman et al., 2024).

A significant and positive relationship between burnout and turnover intention among primary school teachers in empirical studies has been proven which is toxic environment caused them to leave their profession (Rasool et al., 2021). The main factor driving teachers to desire to leave their profession is burnout which is manifested through emotional exhaustion, anxiety and feelings of disconnection from work. Teoh and Kee (2020) studied with more than half of the variance in turnover intention explained by burnout.

## Conclusion

Accordingly, interventions need to be implemented to address the causes of burnout, this may include ensuring reducing excessive administrative tasks, improving support structures and fostering a culture that values and recognizes teachers, drawing attention from education stakeholders, including school administrators and government bodies (Zarin et al., 2021). This also supports the study from Na lipay et al. (2021) that promoting mental well-being and

providing growth opportunities can play a key role in increasing retention and maintaining a motivated, high performing teaching workforce. Collie, (2020) stated that students' outcome will be strong and increase teachers' morale when creating supportive work surrounding ensuing decrease burnout among teachers.

### **Limitation**

Few limitations concede in this research, which suggests beneficial comprehension into the relationship between burnout and teacher turnover intention. Data collection used self-reports which may be subject to social bias or unreliability in self-perception when respondents answer the questionnaire. Mixed methods such as interviews use qualitative to enhance and validate findings and confidentiality is maintained. Moreover, samples are only from a public primary school in the Melaka District only which limit the generalizability.

Finally, the recent studies focused on burnout as independent variable, not examining as a moderating or mediating factor. Next research needs to examine role of variables such as perceived organizational support, job autonomy and leadership style in shaping this relationship. Using the JD-R and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory offer valuable insight for a better understanding of the teacher retention (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). This will support the development of evidence-based methods purpose at reducing teacher turnover would dwelling this limitation.

### **Recommendation For Future Research**

Approachable from educational institutions to the factors that influence teacher well-being and turnover intentions will make an environment harmonious thus boost teaching performance. Initiative to deploy administrative burdens and give flexible work arrangements is needed to support work-life balance to the teachers. Reliable from organization is necessary to teachers who can manage tasks, give responsibilities and evaluation to identify any areas that require adjustment and including resources. Professional support by recognizing them, fostering a culture support and ensuring adequate resources will achieve teacher retention and job satisfaction. In addition, counselling programs that are related to burnout, stress management courses and wellness initiatives for health programs are fundamental to institutions that should targeted as interventions to prevent burnout among teachers. Quality of education is very important to make a better outcome in student performance and teachers job satisfaction.

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