



A Review of the Relationships among Perceived Organizational Support, Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction and Turnover

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Abstract	Original Research Article
Against the backdrop of booming private higher vocational education, teacher turnover intention has severely hindered institutional stable operation and high-quality educational development. Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources model and Conservation of Resources theory, this study systematically reviews relevant literature and focuses on teachers in private higher vocational colleges to explore the dual influencing mechanisms of occupational stress and perceived organizational support on turnover intention, with job satisfaction as the mediating variable. The results reveal that occupational stress acts as a negative resource depletion factor to reduce job satisfaction and exacerbate turnover intention, while perceived organizational support serves as a positive resource supplement to enhance job satisfaction and restrain teachers' turnover tendency, and job satisfaction plays a critical mediating role in the above two causal paths. This study further identifies situational heterogeneity and threshold effects in variable correlations, explaining inconsistent conclusions in existing empirical research. It also summarizes key research gaps: insufficient integration of resource gain and loss dual-path mechanisms, neglected situational boundary conditions, and over-reliance on cross-sectional data. Future research is suggested to explore the interactive buffering effect of the two core factors, introduce moderating variables to construct conditional process models, and adopt longitudinal data to verify dynamic causal relationships. This study complements the theoretical system of teacher turnover research and provides practical references for private vocational colleges to optimize human resource management and stabilize teaching staff. Keywords: private higher vocational colleges; teacher occupational stress; perceived organizational support; job satisfaction; turnover intention.	
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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

With the continuous reform and rapid development of vocational education, private higher vocational

institutions have become an indispensable component of China's higher education system, undertaking the core mission of cultivating technical and skilled talents to support industrial upgrading and economic development (Akinrinlola et al.,



2021). A stable and high-quality teaching workforce serves as the fundamental guarantee for institutional curriculum construction, steady educational quality improvement, and long-term sustainable development. Nevertheless, teacher turnover has emerged as a critical bottleneck constraining the high-quality development of private higher vocational education both domestically and internationally. Unlike public educational institutions, private vocational colleges typically impose heavy workloads on teachers involving teaching, scientific research, and administrative affairs, accompanied by less competitive salary packages, restricted career progression pathways, and insufficient organizational support. These unique occupational and institutional characteristics easily induce sustained occupational stress, undermine teachers' positive work emotions, and ultimately trigger turnover intention (Jing, 2025).

Turnover intention, as the most proximal psychological predictor of actual employee withdrawal behavior, has long been a core research focus in educational human resource management. High teacher turnover poses substantial organizational risks, including elevated recruitment and training costs, weakened team stability, and impeded institutional sustainable development. Grounded in existing occupational management research, employees' work attitudes and retention decisions are dominantly shaped by two interactive workplace mechanisms: negative resource depletion and positive resource supplementation (Thapa & Shrestha, 2025). Specifically, occupational stress corresponds to continuous individual resource loss under high-intensity work demands, whereas perceived organizational support embodies the emotional care and practical resources provided by institutions. These two dual-path factors jointly shape teachers' job satisfaction and further determine their willingness to remain in or depart from private vocational colleges, providing a fundamental theoretical basis for this study to explore teachers' turnover mechanisms.

1.2 Research Significance

The existing literature has separately verified the

relationship between single antecedent variable and turnover intention, but few studies integrate positive support factors and negative stress factors into a unified theoretical framework, and lack systematic sorting of mediating mechanisms. This review comprehensively combs the conceptual definitions and internal logical relationships of the four variables, summarizes research controversies and deficiencies, which can enrich the theoretical system of employee turnover research and provide practical guidance for private higher vocational colleges to reduce employee turnover rate, relieve employee work pressure and optimize human resource management strategies.

1.3 Research Framework

This paper firstly defines the core variables one by one, then sorts out the binary relationship and mediating transmission mechanism among variables, further analyzes the dialectical disputes and heterogeneous conclusions in existing research, summarizes the current research gaps, and finally puts forward research prospects, forming a complete and standardized literature review system.

2. Conceptual Definition of Core Variables

2.1 Occupational Stress

Occupational stress refers to a sustained negative physical and psychological adaptive state formed by the imbalance between work demands and individuals' coping resources, rather than a single temporary work pressure event (Bakker et al., 2007). Theoretical research on occupational stress has formed multiple academic schools. The stimulus theory focuses on external environmental stress sources, while the response theory emphasizes individual physical and mental negative reactions to external work stimuli. In contrast, the comprehensive interaction theory integrates environmental stimuli and individual subjective cognition, arguing that occupational stress is the interactive outcome of external work situations and internal individual perceptions, which has become the mainstream theoretical perspective in current academic research. Foreign scholars have formed mature definitions of

occupational stress. Park et al. (2019) defined occupational stress as adverse psychological, emotional and physical responses generated when individual abilities and resources cannot match job task requirements.

Domestic scholars have supplemented and localized the connotation of occupational stress based on China's workplace context. Xu and Zhang (2017) pointed out that persistent adverse work stressors in the organizational environment will continuously threaten individuals' work goals and trigger long-term psychological and behavioral discomfort. Further, Windon et al. (2019) proposed that occupational stress is a series of negative adaptive reactions formed by individuals under the long-term impact of work environmental stressors. From the dimensional perspective, occupational stress can be divided into endogenous stress and exogenous stress. Endogenous stress derives from internal organizational factors such as heavy workload, job insecurity and tense interpersonal relationships, while exogenous stress stems from external environmental factors including work-family conflict and industry competition pressure. Combined with the occupational characteristics of teachers in private higher vocational colleges, this study defines teachers' occupational stress as the negative physiological, psychological and behavioral chain reactions formed by the interaction of heavy teaching and administrative workload, long working hours and other environmental stressors, as well as individual perceived work-family imbalance and occupational development anxiety.

2.2 Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is defined as employees' holistic subjective perception of organizational recognition for individual contributions and organizational concern for personal well-being, which reflects the overall supportive atmosphere of the workplace (Yoon et al., 2017). Employees with high POS tend to obtain a strong sense of belonging, respect and psychological security in the organization, which further motivates them to generate positive work attitudes and proactive organizational behaviors (Xue et al., 2024).

Rooted in social exchange theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, POS serves as a crucial positive job resource that offsets workplace resource consumption and maintains individual work engagement. In recent years, scholars have continuously contextualized the connotation and structural dimensions of POS according to occupational characteristics, arguing that the traditional unidimensional definition cannot fully adapt to the professional attributes of higher vocational teachers (Zhang et al., 2023).

Combined with the practical situation of private higher vocational colleges, this study adopts a three-dimensional conceptual framework of POS, including work support, value recognition, and well-being concern (Wang et al., 2023). Specifically, work support refers to the material and psychological resources provided by school administrations to meet teachers' daily teaching and administrative work needs. Value recognition reflects the school's affirmation of teachers' professional abilities and organizational value. Well-being concern embodies institutional attention to teachers' life quality, personal interests and long-term professional development. In the vocational education context, multi-dimensional organizational support can effectively alleviate teachers' work pressure, satisfy their emotional and developmental needs, and become a core driving factor for stabilizing teachers' work attitudes.

2.3 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a multi-dimensional, subjective affective evaluation that has long been a core research topic in organizational behavior and educational management. Scholars have not reached a fully unified definition of job satisfaction due to diverse theoretical perspectives and research methods, showing obvious conceptual ambiguity and contextual heterogeneity (Weiyi & Sukpasjaroen, 2023). Essentially, job satisfaction refers to employees' overall favorable or unfavorable emotional attitudes toward their work, which originates from the perceived congruence or discrepancy between actual workplace conditions and individual work expectations. As the

foundational definition proposed by Larkin et al. (2013), job satisfaction is a positive emotional state formed when individuals perceive that their work can meet personal work values and achieve expected work outcomes. In the field of teacher research, contemporary studies further define teacher job satisfaction as a comprehensive emotional experience shaped by individual intrinsic motivation, organizational support, and institutional policy environments (Boudreault et al., 2022).

Combined with the occupational characteristics of private higher vocational college teachers, this study defines teachers' job satisfaction as a three-dimensional construct, including supervisory fairness, peer comradery, and occupational pride (Cai, 2023). Specifically, supervisory fairness reflects teachers' perceived fairness in institutional management, task arrangement and performance evaluation; peer comradery embodies the harmonious, supportive and trusting interpersonal atmosphere among colleagues; occupational pride represents teachers' sense of professional value, identity and accomplishment in educational work. As the core mediating emotional variable in the JD-R model and social exchange theory, job satisfaction is the most intuitive emotional feedback of teachers facing occupational stress and organizational support resources, and undertakes a critical bridging function in the influence mechanism of external work factors on teachers' turnover intention.

2.4 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to employees' subjective psychological tendency to voluntarily leave their current organization and seek alternative employment opportunities, which covers three progressive cognitive stages: generating resignation thoughts, searching for external job alternatives, and forming formal turnover plans. As the most direct proximal precursor of actual turnover behavior, turnover intention features high stability and measurability, thus being widely adopted as a core predictive variable in organizational behavior empirical research (Villella & Sider, 2023). Foreign research on teacher turnover intention has formed a mature theoretical system since the 1980s, with

classic models such as the March and Simon Model, Extended Mobley Model, Steer and Mowday Model, and Price-Mueller Model systematically explaining the psychological mechanism and driving factors of employee turnover.

In contrast, domestic research on educational talent turnover, especially private vocational college teachers' turnover, remains insufficient, with relevant studies still dominated by qualitative analysis. Revised based on the Price-Mueller model, localized turnover theories emphasize that the mismatch between actual work conditions and individual expectations, together with the temptation of superior external employment opportunities, constitute the core determinants of turnover intention. Specifically, low job satisfaction and insufficient organizational commitment will significantly amplify employees' willingness to resign. According to Wang et al. (2025), the key indicators reflecting turnover intention include work dissatisfaction, persistent work stress, weak emotional attachment to the organization, inadequate managerial support, and blocked career development. In the educational context, teacher turnover intention poses severe threats to institutional operation, including disrupted teaching continuity, increased human resource costs, weakened institutional innovation capacity, and deteriorated student learning outcomes. Synthesizing existing empirical findings, teachers' turnover intention is jointly affected by multi-level factors including individual psychology, organizational environment, and occupational characteristics, among which occupational stress and insufficient organizational support are critical situational predictors.

3. Review of Variable Relationship Mechanisms

3.1 The Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Consistent with mainstream academic viewpoints, occupational stress is verified as a critical negative predictor of job satisfaction based on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Hobfoll, 2018; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). As defined in previous chapters,

occupational stress stems from the imbalance between excessive job demands and limited individual coping resources, which triggers continuous psychological and physical resource depletion (Xu et al., 2024). According to COR theory, sustained resource loss without effective supplement and corresponding rewards will induce severe work strain and negative affective experiences, fundamentally reducing employees' positive evaluation of work and lowering job satisfaction.

A large number of empirical studies have confirmed this negative correlation in educational scenarios. Bernardo et al. (2023) verified that persistent high occupational stress breaks work balance, triggers negative emotions such as anxiety and burnout, and significantly impairs teachers' job satisfaction. Trejo-Rivera & Sánchez-Cardona (2024) further pointed out that work pressure caused by role ambiguity, administrative workload and work-goal obstacles will continuously erode individual work enthusiasm and reduce positive work experience. In the research of vocational education teachers, Turan-Torun et al. (2025) also concluded that long working hours, heavy administrative tasks and occupational pressure are core factors leading to decreased job satisfaction. Notably, a small number of heterogeneous studies supplement the boundary condition of this correlation. Polyong et al. (2026) found that moderate and controllable work pressure can produce motivational effects, forming a coexistence state of high stress and high satisfaction among individual teachers. Nevertheless, chronic and excessive occupational stress is universally detrimental to job satisfaction. In general, this study holds that for private higher vocational college teachers, occupational stress triggered by resource depletion will significantly inhibit their job satisfaction, which lays a theoretical foundation for analyzing the mediating transmission mechanism of job satisfaction.

3.2 The Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction

Perceived organizational support (POS) serves as a pivotal positive job resource that exerts a stable

positive predictive effect on employees' job satisfaction. As defined previously, POS reflects employees' overall perception of institutional value recognition, emotional care, instrumental resource support, and fair institutional treatment (Wang et al., 2024). Two classic theoretical perspectives adequately explain the intrinsic positive linkage between POS and job satisfaction: Leader-Member Exchange Theory and Social Exchange Theory. From the perspective of Leader-Member Exchange Theory, organizational support acts as a critical conditional workplace resource. Sufficient supervisory assistance, institutional resource supply, and peer collaboration can continuously supplement individual resource stock, effectively offsetting psychological resource depletion caused by heavy workload, role conflict, and work-family pressure. The replenished work resources further foster positive work emotions and enhance overall job satisfaction. In accordance with Social Exchange Theory, the employee-organization relationship is built on reciprocal reciprocity norms. When organizations provide continuous care, performance recognition, and development guarantees, employees will generate a sense of normative obligation and voluntarily form positive work attitudes to repay organizational kindness (Oberes et al., 2022).

A wealth of empirical studies have verified this positive correlation across occupational scenarios. Saad et al. (2022) confirmed that multi-dimensional organizational support is a core positive factor boosting employee job satisfaction by satisfying intrinsic emotional needs and extrinsic development demands. İlhan et al. (2022) further pointed out that supportive organizational climate and collegial interaction optimize workplace experience and significantly elevate individual work satisfaction. For private higher vocational college teachers who face heavy teaching administrative tasks and relative job insecurity, POS plays an even more prominent protective role. Adequate institutional support can not only directly meet teachers' psychological needs for respect, belonging and career growth to improve satisfaction, but also indirectly buffer the negative impact of occupational stress and resource loss, avoiding the sharp decline of positive work emotions. In summary, POS promotes teachers' job

satisfaction through dual direct psychological incentive and indirect stress-buffering mechanisms, laying a solid theoretical foundation for its inhibitory effect on turnover intention.

3.3 The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Job satisfaction stands as one of the most robust psychological predictors of employee turnover intention, with its negative predictive effect widely verified in educational occupational research across different national contexts. Unlike generalized organizational behavior studies, teacher turnover intention in vocational education is highly sensitive to workplace emotional experience, among which job satisfaction functions as the core proximal psychological variable bridging organizational working conditions and individual withdrawal behaviors. Empirical evidence from cross-national educational research has consistently validated this causal linkage. Focusing on vocational teacher groups, Preechawong et al. (2021)'s research on Thai vocational educators confirmed that job satisfaction dominates other occupational factors and serves as the strongest negative predictor of turnover intention, reflecting that teachers' emotional perception of work experience outweighs material conditions in determining retention decisions. Anees et al. (2021) further supplemented the internal mechanism of this relationship in the research of Malaysian private university faculty, verifying that job satisfaction undertakes a complete mediating role between workplace stressors and turnover intention, and negative work environments primarily induce withdrawal behaviors by eroding individual work satisfaction. In domestic vocational education research, Jiang et al. (2019) targeted young teachers in private higher vocational colleges and pointed out that institutional management, salary treatment and career development opportunities affect teachers' turnover willingness entirely through changing their overall job satisfaction level. From a broader industry perspective, Choi et al. (2025)'s large-sample cross-profession study also proved that improved job satisfaction can effectively restrain individual turnover cognition, which is a universal

psychological rule in organizational scenarios.

Collectively, existing domestic and foreign studies confirm that for private higher vocational college teachers, job satisfaction is a decisive emotional factor inhibiting turnover intention, and insufficient work satisfaction will directly prompt teachers to form resignation cognition and stable turnover tendency.

3.4 Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction functions as a core mediating emotional variable that bridges external workplace factors and teachers' turnover intention, forming a complete psychological transmission path in employee retention mechanisms. Combined with the Job Demands-Resources theory and Conservation of Resources theory, job satisfaction essentially reflects the balance state of individual workplace resource gain and loss, which directly determines employees' subsequent work behavioral decisions. As a key proximal emotional outcome, it effectively undertakes the explanatory role of translating objective organizational environments and occupational stressors into subjective withdrawal cognition, making it the critical intermediate link in predicting teacher turnover behaviors.

On the negative resource depletion path, occupational stress induced by excessive job demands and role conflict cannot directly trigger turnover intention. Instead, chronic resource loss and unrelenting work strain first erode teachers' positive work emotions and reduce overall job satisfaction. Empirically, Chun-Yan & Liao (2024) illustrated that persistent occupational stress arouses negative psychological states such as anxiety and emotional exhaustion, which fundamentally weaken individual work evaluation and satisfaction. Without positive emotional feedback, teachers gradually develop negative workplace attitudes and ultimately form stable turnover willingness. This stress-satisfaction-turnover pathway explains why high-stress working environments are consistently linked to high teacher turnover rates in vocational education scenarios.

On the positive resource supplementation path, perceived organizational support inhibits turnover

intention precisely by repairing and boosting teachers' job satisfaction. Based on Social Exchange Theory and Leader-Member Exchange Theory, multi-dimensional organizational support including institutional resource supply, supervisory recognition and collegial collaboration supplements teachers' depleted work resources, meets their psychological needs for respect and career development, and enhances positive work experience. New empirical evidence confirms that favorable organizational support optimizes teachers' job satisfaction and organizational attachment, thereby restraining their withdrawal behaviors (Jogi, 2025). In general, job satisfaction plays a critical mediating role in the dual influencing paths of occupational stress and perceived organizational support on turnover intention, constructing the core theoretical mechanism of this study's research model.

4. Dialectical Analysis and Research Controversy

4.1 Heterogeneity of Stress-Satisfaction Relationship

Most empirical studies grounded in the Job Demands-Resources model and Conservation of Resources theory have corroborated a robust negative linear association between occupational stress and job satisfaction across educational and occupational samples (Hulin et al., 1985). Prevailing academic consensus holds that sustained work pressure triggers resource depletion and emotional exhaustion, continuously undermining employees' positive work evaluation and reducing overall job satisfaction. Nevertheless, emerging targeted studies have overturned the single linear assumption and identified significant situational and threshold heterogeneity in this correlation. From the perspective of challenge-hindrance stress theory, moderate and controllable occupational stress belongs to challenge stressors, which can stimulate employees' intrinsic work motivation and task engagement, and generate a sense of accomplishment after goal completion, thereby moderately boosting job satisfaction (Hong et al., 2025). In educational scenarios, appropriate teaching

and administrative task pressure can prompt teachers to optimize work efficiency and professional competence, forming a positive stress-motivation-satisfaction cycle (Hoch et al., 2018). Only excessive, long-term hindrance stress such as role ambiguity, unreasonable task overload and institutional pressure will cause irreversible psychological resource loss, significantly erode work satisfaction and induce negative work attitudes. Longitudinal research by Khan et al. (2021) further verified this inverted U-shaped relationship, confirming that stress exerts dual effects on job satisfaction with an obvious critical threshold, which explains the inconsistent individual sample conclusions in previous cross-sectional studies.

4.2 Boundary Differences of Organizational Support Effect

The predictive efficacy of perceived organizational support (POS) on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention is not static across research contexts but is constrained by distinct industry attributes and situational boundary conditions, resulting in inconsistent empirical conclusions in existing studies (Kelly, 2016; Lachaine & Duchesne, 2020). Core differences in workplace resource abundance, occupational pressure intensity, and turnover risk fundamentally moderate the functional strength of POS, forming differentiated influence mechanisms across various occupational groups.

From an industry heterogeneity perspective, the resource supplementation and stress-buffering functions of POS exhibit prominent disparities between high-pressure and low-stability industries versus low-pressure and high-stability industries. In high-intensity occupational scenarios represented by vocational education and service industries, employees suffer from long-term resource depletion caused by heavy workloads, role conflicts, and uncertain career development, accompanied by a high inherent turnover tendency (Khan & Shamsi, 2021). In such resource-deficient work environments, multi-dimensional organizational support including institutional work resources,

supervisory care, and career development incentives can effectively compensate for individual psychological and behavioral resource losses, alleviate the negative impact of occupational stress, significantly enhance teachers' job satisfaction, and further produce a robust inhibitory effect on turnover intention. In contrast, in stable occupational fields such as public administration and traditional public school teaching, employees are equipped with stable job security, sufficient institutional resources, and low turnover pressure. The baseline job satisfaction of employees in these scenarios is generally high, so the marginal incentive and improvement effect of POS is substantially weakened, leading to a less significant indirect restraining pathway on turnover intention.

Beyond industry-level differences, the conditional effect of POS is further regulated by the matching degree between organizational support supply and actual workplace demands, which determines the stability of the mediating pathway of job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2022). When organizational support is targeted, sufficient, and highly compatible with employees' work pressure and developmental needs, it can effectively repair employees' negative workplace emotions, stabilize job satisfaction, and form a complete and efficient mediating transmission mechanism to curb turnover intention. However, redundant, mismatched, or formalized organizational support that fails to address core work pain points cannot effectively optimize employees' workplace experience. In such cases, the mediating efficiency of job satisfaction declines significantly, and the indirect inhibitory effect of POS on turnover intention becomes negligible or even insignificant. This dual-layer boundary heterogeneity of POS well explains the divergent empirical results in previous literature regarding the strength of the POS–job satisfaction–turnover intention pathway across different samples and research contexts, resolving existing academic inconsistencies in related variable relationships.

5. Research Gaps

First, extant studies predominantly adopt a single-factor research perspective and lack systematic

comparative analysis of the dual-path mechanism of “resource loss (occupational stress) and resource gain (perceived organizational support)”. Most literature separately explores the independent influence of occupational stress or organizational support on employees' work attitudes and turnover behaviors, while few scholars integrate these two contradictory antecedent factors into a unified theoretical framework. The synergistic interaction and mutual check-and-balance mechanisms between positive resource supplementation and negative resource depletion have not been fully elaborated, resulting in insufficient theoretical explanation of their joint predictive effect on job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Second, existing empirical research generally neglects the situational boundary conditions of variable relationships. Consistent with the heterogeneous research controversies clarified in the previous chapter, the influencing effects of occupational stress and perceived organizational support exhibit significant contextual differences across industries and working environments. However, most existing studies ignore moderating factors such as organizational atmosphere and individual personal traits, and fail to systematically explore the contingent mechanism of the research model. This deficiency makes it difficult to thoroughly explain the heterogeneous empirical conclusions and inconsistent mediating effect strengths in different sample scenarios.

Third, most prior empirical studies rely on cross-sectional data to verify variable relationships, with insufficient longitudinal tracking and dynamic investigation. Cross-sectional research can only verify the static correlation among occupational stress, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction and turnover intention at a single time point, but cannot effectively infer their dynamic causal logic and time-lag effect. Meanwhile, the over-reliance on static cross-sectional design leads to unavoidable model endogeneity problems, which restricts the robustness and causal validity of the empirical conclusions of existing turnover intention research.

6. Research Summary and Prospect

6.1 Research Summary

This study systematically sorts out the conceptual connotations, dimensional structures and intrinsic logical relationships of four core variables including occupational stress, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, based on the JD-R model and Conservation of Resources theory. Through combing domestic and foreign empirical literature, this paper clarifies the dual influencing paths of resource loss and resource gain in the employee turnover mechanism. Specifically, occupational stress acts as a negative resource depletion factor that reduces job satisfaction and further aggravates teachers' turnover intention, whereas perceived organizational support serves as a positive workplace resource that improves job satisfaction and effectively inhibits turnover tendency. Job satisfaction plays a stable and complete mediating bridging role between the two independent variables and dependent variable. Furthermore, by summarizing existing academic dialectical disputes, this study confirms that the correlations between core variables are not absolute linear relationships, but possess prominent situational heterogeneity and threshold effects, which provides a targeted theoretical basis for explaining the divergent empirical results in previous studies.

6.2 Research Prospect

Future research can further explore the synergistic and interactive effects of occupational stress and perceived organizational support, and analyze the buffer mechanism of organizational support on stress negative impact. In addition, subsequent research can add moderating variables to build a more complete conditional process model, and adopt longitudinal data to verify the dynamic causal mechanism among variables, so as to make up for the deficiencies of existing research and enrich employee turnover theory research.

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