

MOTIVATION FACTORS AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT INFLUENCING TEACHER RETENTION IN QIXIAN NO. 2 MIDDLE SCHOOL, SHANXI PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of motivation factors and organizational support on teacher retention at Qixian No. 2 Middle School in Shanxi Province. A total of 231 teachers participated, selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation across teaching levels, academic departments, and administrative roles. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of four sections measuring demographic characteristics, motivation factors based on ERG Theory, organizational support, and teacher retention. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale and validated for content accuracy prior to administration. Descriptive results indicated generally high levels of perception across all variables, although these elevated means should be cautiously interpreted due to potential social desirability tendencies. Among the motivation dimensions, Growth Needs received the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.78$, $SD = 1.07$), followed closely by Existence Needs ($\bar{X} = 3.75$, $SD = 1.09$) and Relatedness Needs ($\bar{X} = 3.73$, $SD = 1.05$). Organizational support was also rated highly, with Institutional Benefits showing the strongest perception ($\bar{X} = 3.94$, $SD = .93$). Teacher retention demonstrated similarly high values, with Commitment to Stay recording the highest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.88$, $SD = 1.05$). Inferential analysis revealed that motivation factors had a statistically significant but very weak positive correlation with teacher retention ($r = .233$, $p < .01$) and with organizational support ($r = .110$, $p < .05$). In contrast, organizational support demonstrated a very weak and non-significant correlation with teacher retention ($r = .070$), suggesting that although teachers perceived the school environment as supportive, such perceptions did not meaningfully influence their intention to remain. These results underscore the central role of motivation and the limited direct effect of organizational support on teacher retention within this context.

Keywords: Motivation Factors, Organizational Support, Teacher Retention

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher retention has become an increasingly critical concern in contemporary educational systems, as schools worldwide face challenges in maintaining a stable, qualified, and motivated teaching workforce. Recent research highlights that persistent teacher turnover disrupts instructional continuity, undermines student outcomes, and generates substantial financial and administrative burdens for educational institutions. Beyond these systemic effects, turnover erodes professional collaboration, weakens school climate, and limits long-term organizational development. In the post-pandemic context, intensified workloads, growing emotional demands, and shifting educational priorities have further amplified pressures on teachers, reinforcing the importance of understanding the factors that influence their long-term commitment (Steiner & Woo, 2021; Pressley, 2021). Contemporary studies emphasize that retention is shaped not by a single determinant but by the interplay of individual motivation, institutional support, and broader contextual influences that together affect teachers' decisions to remain in the profession.

Within this framework, motivation stands out as a foundational psychological factor influencing teachers' professional persistence. Drawing from Alderfer's ERG Theory, recent scholarship reaffirms that the satisfaction of existence, relatedness, and growth needs plays a central role in fostering teachers' intrinsic motivation and attachment to their institutions (van der Walt, 2022). Teachers who perceive stable working conditions, supportive relationships, and meaningful opportunities for professional advancement tend to exhibit stronger commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Collie, 2021). At the same time, organizational support has emerged as a pivotal structural factor. Guided by Perceived Organizational Support Theory, modern research demonstrates that when teachers feel valued, trusted, and supported by their institutions, they experience lower levels of burnout and enhanced organizational loyalty (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2021). Particularly after 2020, the presence of supportive leadership, equitable workload arrangements, and accessible professional development has been shown to significantly influence teachers' intentions to stay in their schools (Kim & Asbury, 2020). In light of these interconnected insights, this study aims to examine the relationship between motivation factors and teacher retention, as well as the relationship between organizational support and teacher retention at Qixian No. 2 Middle School.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Relationship between Motivation Factors and Teacher Retention

Motivation factors influencing teacher retention can be explained effectively through Alderfer's ERG Theory, which reorganizes human needs into existence, relatedness, and growth. Alderfer (1969) emphasizes that these needs may operate simultaneously, and the satisfaction of any category can strongly influence workplace persistence. When applied to teaching contexts, existence needs relate to adequate compensation and job stability; relatedness needs involve interpersonal support and collegial relationships; and growth needs refer to professional development and autonomy. The frustration-regression mechanism further suggests that unmet growth needs may redirect teachers' focus toward more basic needs, thereby shaping their retention decisions. Complementary perspectives such as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) reinforce the role of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, competence, and valued outcomes as determinants of occupational commitment. Collectively, these frameworks indicate that fulfilment of motivational needs enhances teachers' intention to remain, supporting the hypothesis that motivation factors positively relate to teacher retention. Based on these theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Motivation factors have a positive relationship with teacher retention at Qixian No.2 Middle School.

Relationship between Organizational Support and Teacher Retention

Organizational support, grounded in Organizational Support Theory, posits that employees develop beliefs about the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When schools provide resources, constructive feedback, and emotional support, teachers experience stronger affective commitment and reduced turnover intention. Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1961) and the Norm of Reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) further explain that supportive organizational environments foster reciprocal loyalty, prompting teachers to remain with their institutions. Additionally, theoretical perspectives on organizational climate (Litwin & Stringer, 1968) and job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001) highlight the influence of workplace cohesion, structural support, and contextual fit on retention behaviour. These converging insights affirm that organizational support is a significant predictor of teacher retention, forming the basis for the hypothesis that organizational support positively affects teachers' intention to stay. Accordingly, the following three hypotheses derived for this study:

H2: Organizational support have positive relationship to teacher retention at Qixian No.2 Middle School.

From the literature review, the conceptual framework can be drawn as shown in Figure 1.

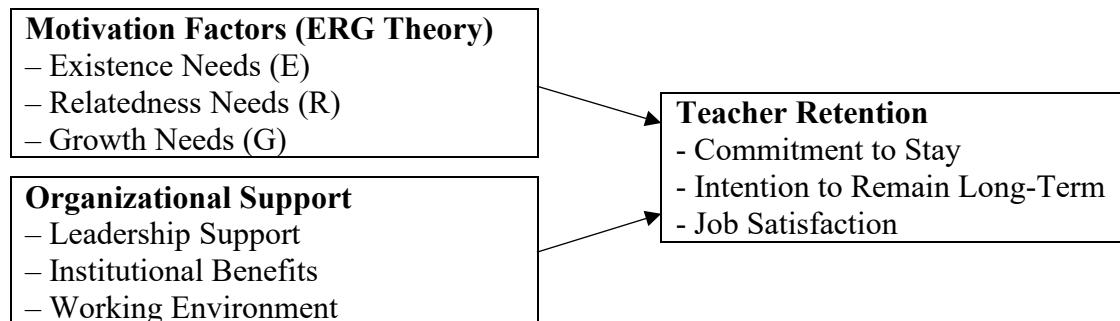


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the influence of motivation factors and organizational support on teacher retention at Qixian No. 2 Middle School in Shanxi Province, this study employed a quantitative research approach. The population comprised all full-time teachers currently working at the school. A total of 231 respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on predefined criteria to ensure adequate representation of teachers across key functional areas within the institution. Specifically, teachers were purposively selected from different teaching levels (lower and upper secondary), various academic departments (such as Chinese, Mathematics, English, and Science), and designated administrative roles (including homeroom teachers, subject-group leaders, and assistant administrators). This sampling approach ensured that participants reflected the diversity of instructional and administrative responsibilities within the school and possessed relevant experience to evaluate the variables under study.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure the three principal variables. The instrument consisted of four sections. The first section gathered demographic information including gender, age, educational background, years of teaching experience, and job position. The remaining sections measured motivation factors based on ERG Theory, organizational support, and teacher retention using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent item-objective congruence (IOC) assessment and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha to ensure content validity and internal consistency. All items met the acceptable IOC threshold, and reliability coefficients exceeded the recommended minimum of 0.70, confirming that the instrument demonstrated satisfactory measurement quality. Questionnaires were distributed directly to teachers through the school's administrative office, and all 231 completed forms were returned for analysis.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondent characteristics and assess overall perceptions of each variable. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed as the inferential statistical technique to examine the relationships among motivation factors, organizational support, and teacher retention. The results were presented in narrative and tabulated formats to provide a clear and systematic interpretation of the findings, with emphasis on the strength and significance of the correlations among the studied variables.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Results of general data analysis of respondents

The analysis of general information from 231 respondents indicates that the sample consisted of slightly more females (50.6%) than males (49.4%). In terms of age distribution, the majority were between 25-34 years old (49.4%), followed by those aged 35-44 years (17.3%) and those above 45 years (18.6%), while respondents under 25 years accounted for 14.7%. Regarding educational background, most participants held a master's degree (62.3%), whereas those with bachelor's and doctoral degrees represented equal proportions of 17.7% each, and other qualifications accounted for 2.2%. For work experience, the largest group had 11-15 years of experience (42.4%), followed by those with more than 15 years (35.9%), 5-10 years (19.5%), and less than 5 years (2.2%). Concerning job positions, the majority were teachers (61.5%), followed by heads of departments (29.4%), administrators (8.2%), and other roles (0.9%), reflecting the predominance of teaching personnel within the school's organizational structure.

Level of Respondents' Opinions

Table 1 Shows the mean and standard deviation of motivation factors (ERG Theory)

Motivation Factors (ERG Theory)	\bar{X}	SD	Level of opinion
- Existence Needs (E)	3.75	1.09	High
- Relatedness Needs (R)	3.73	1.05	High
- Growth Needs (G)	3.78	1.07	High
Total	3.75	1.04	High

From the table 1, the mean scores of motivation factors based on ERG Theory show that Growth Needs recorded the highest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.78$, SD = 1.07), followed by Existence Needs ($\bar{X} = 3.75$, SD = 1.09) and Relatedness Needs ($\bar{X} = 3.73$, SD = 1.05). The overall mean score for motivation factors was 3.75 with a standard deviation of 1.04, indicating a high level of opinion across all dimensions.

Table 2 Shows the mean and standard deviation of organizational support

Organizational Support	\bar{X}	SD	Level of opinion
- Leadership Support	3.93	.94	High
- Institutional Benefits	3.94	.93	High
- Working Environment	3.91	.95	High
Total	3.93	.91	High

According to the table 2, the mean score for Institutional Benefits was the highest ($\bar{X} = 3.94$, $SD = .93$), followed closely by Leadership Support ($\bar{X} = 3.93$, $SD = .94$) and Working Environment ($\bar{X} = 3.91$, $SD = .95$). The total mean score for organizational support was 3.93 with a standard deviation of .91, reflecting an overall high level of opinion.

Table 3 Shows the mean and standard deviation of teacher retention

Teacher Retention	\bar{X}	SD	Level of opinion
- Commitment to Stay	3.88	1.05	High
- Intention to Remain Long-Term	3.85	.99	High
- Job Satisfaction	3.84	1.01	
Total	3.86	.97	High

The table 3, shows that Commitment to Stay had the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.88$, $SD = 1.05$), followed by Job Satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 3.84$, $SD = 1.01$) and Intention to Remain Long-Term ($\bar{X} = 3.85$, $SD = .99$). The total mean score for teacher retention was 3.86 with a standard deviation of .97, categorized as a high level of opinion.

Relationship between Motivation Factors, Organizational Support, and Teacher Retention

Table 4 Shows the relationship between motivation factors, organizational support, and teacher retention

	Motivation Factors	Organizational Support	Teacher Retention
Motivation Factors	-	.110*	.233**
Organizational Support		-	.070
Teacher Retention			-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Based on the table 4, motivation factors had a statistically significant positive correlation with organizational support ($r = .110$, $p < .05$) and with teacher retention ($r = .233$, $p < .01$). Organizational support showed a positive but non-significant correlation with teacher retention ($r = .070$). The table presents these correlation coefficients and their respective significance levels.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers at Qixian No. 2 Middle School reported high levels of motivation, organizational support, and retention intention. While these results initially appear to reflect favorable perceptions across all variables, the uniformly high mean scores should be interpreted with caution. Such elevated averages may be partially influenced by social desirability tendencies, cultural norms that discourage negative evaluations, and the hierarchical nature of the Chinese school system, in which teachers may feel compelled to respond positively. Therefore, rather than focusing solely on absolute levels, it is more meaningful to consider relative differences. In this regard, growth needs obtained the highest ratings, suggesting that opportunities for professional development and advancement play a particularly important role in shaping teachers' attitudes. This is consistent with Alderfer's ERG Theory, which posits that existence, relatedness, and growth needs jointly influence employee engagement, and with empirical findings demonstrating that growth-oriented

motivators strongly predict teacher commitment and long-term retention (Alderfer, 1969; Kiazad et al., 2015).

Similarly, organizational support was reported at a high level across all dimensions, with institutional benefits and leadership support receiving particularly positive evaluations. This aligns with Eisenberger et al. (1986), who argued that perceived organizational support enhances employees' sense of value and contributes to greater affective commitment. However, despite these high mean scores, organizational support exhibited only a very weak and statistically non-significant correlation with teacher retention in this study. This unexpected finding warrants deeper reflection. One possible explanation is that teachers may acknowledge the presence of supportive policies and leadership, yet these factors alone may not be sufficient to influence their long-term decision to remain. Retention may instead be driven by other powerful determinants, such as workload pressures, career expectations, burnout levels, or personal circumstances. Prior research suggests that even in supportive environments, teachers may still leave the profession due to stress, demanding administrative duties, or external job opportunities (Ingersoll, 2001; Liu and Ramsey, 2008). In the local context of Shanxi Province, where competition for teaching positions across regions is common, perceived organizational support may not outweigh broader labor market dynamics or salary-related concerns. This also implies the presence of potential mediating or moderating variables, such as job embeddedness, organizational commitment, or professional identity, which may influence the support-retention link.

In contrast, motivation factors exhibited a statistically significant, although relatively weak, correlation with teacher retention. This result reinforces the notion that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational drivers contribute to sustaining educator commitment, but the strength of this association should not be overstated. While motivation plays an important psychological role, the correlation coefficients indicate that motivation on its own explains only a small proportion of the variance in retention intention. Nonetheless, this pattern aligns with findings by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011), who emphasized that growth-oriented professional fulfillment supports teachers' willingness to remain in their roles. Thus, motivation functions as a meaningful, although not dominant, mechanism influencing occupational stability.

In conclusion, the study highlights that teachers perceive high levels of motivation and organizational support, yet these perceptions translate into retention intention in different ways. Motivation demonstrates a clearer statistical relationship with retention, suggesting that enhancing professional development, career opportunities, and meaningful work experiences may be more effective for sustaining long-term teacher commitment. Conversely, the absence of a significant relationship between organizational support and retention indicates that supportive policies and leadership practices, while valued, may not be sufficient on their own to impact retention decisions. This finding underscores the need for school leaders to identify deeper structural or contextual factors that affect teacher turnover intentions. Future policy and administrative initiatives should focus on reducing workload burdens, strengthening professional identity, and aligning support systems with teachers' evolving needs. Further research, particularly qualitative studies or models incorporating mediating and moderating variables, would offer additional insight into why organizational support does not exert a direct influence on retention within this setting.

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