

Research Paper

Investigating Gender-Based Differences in Job Insecurity, Burnout and Turnover Intentions among Secondary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

As teacher attrition rates climb globally, understanding the psychological drivers of turnover is critical for institutional stability. This study investigates gender-specific differences in job insecurity, burnout and turnover intentions among secondary school teachers. Data was collected from a sample of 170 teachers (50% male and 50% female). Utilising the independent sample t-test, the analysis revealed no significant differences in job insecurity and burnout. However, female teachers reported higher turnover intentions than their male counterparts. These findings underscore a critical need for gender specific retention strategies and highlight that reducing turnover requires fairer workload distribution and formal support for work-life balance.

Keywords: *Burnout, Turnover Intentions, Gender Differences, Secondary School Teachers*

The global escalation of teacher attrition has emerged as a critical threat to the educational systems. When qualified teachers exit the profession, it disrupts the continuity of instruction and diminishes overall educational quality. Furthermore, high turnover rates frequently increase the professional pressure on remaining staff members who must absorb additional responsibilities, leading to systematic strain.

At the heart of this systemic strain lies turnover intentions, i.e. the conscious and deliberate willingness to exit current position or the profession entirely. This construct is recognised as the powerful proximal precursor to actual resignation behaviour. Large scale synthesis demonstrates that among various antecedents, burnout is a significant positive predictor of turnover intentions (Li & Yao, 2022; Madigan & Kim, 2021; van den Elsen, Vermeeren, & Steijn, 2025). Burnout, characterised by emotional exhaustion and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment, functions as the psychological engine that drives a teachers' desire to leave.

Alongside burnout, job insecurity is frequently discussed as a relevant workplace stressor. When teachers perceive a threat to their job continuity or a lack of control over their professional future, they are more likely to report thoughts of leaving (Perveen et al., 2025).

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This insecurity, often shaped by concerns regarding contract renewals, remuneration and career progression, can function as ongoing demand in the work environment. From the perspective of Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, job insecurity can be understood as a threat to valuable resources (stability or income security), which can heighten stress.

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The central dimension of this study concerns in how these pressures are distributed across gender. Research on this role remains characterised by mixed feelings. With respect to job insecurity, Vaghela (2017) found no significant differences in the levels of insecurity experienced by male and female school teachers, suggesting that professional anxieties are experienced uniformly across the profession. In contrast, Kumar and Kumar (2025) reported higher job insecurity score among male teachers (3.67) than female teachers in the reported scale, indicating a gendered pattern in perceived insecurity. This disparity can be linked to traditional “breadwinner” role, since the society frequently places the primary burden of financial provision on men, contractual uncertainty and job insecurity may carry high psychological stakes for them.

While men may feel the weight of job insecurity more acutely, research into burnout often reveals a different trend. Dagar and Mathur (2016) examined 600 teachers in Haryana and found a significant difference in burnout levels, with female teachers exhibiting higher emotional exhaustion than their male counterparts. Similarly, Chatterjee and Kumar (2024) assessing 240 rural secondary teachers in Jharkhand, reported a substantial gender gap as female teachers reported higher burnout levels ($M=98.66$) than their male peers ($M=75.46$). These findings suggest that female teachers, particularly in rural districts, experience a disproportionate amount of professional exhaustion and heightened vulnerability to occupational stress.

The culmination of job insecurity and burnout manifests in the desire to leave the profession. Firoz (2021) examined how gender influences occupational stress and its direct impact on teachers’ intentions to quit and noted that female teachers are particularly prone to turnover intentions, largely due to struggle of balancing professional duties with heavy family commitments. Reinforcing this, Tejasvini et al, (2025) identified systemic issues such as a lack of career growth and ongoing work-life balance struggles as the primary factors driving women to leave their positions.

Conversely, evidence on male teachers’ turnover patterns, particularly in the Indian context remains scarce. Research from other national contexts focusing on male teachers has identified factors such as inadequate pay and aspirations for roles offering greater career advancements as influencing their decision to leave the profession (Jackman & Stephen, 2014). However, comparable large-scale studies specific to India are insufficient.

The Present Study

Given the mixed findings and the limited evidence on gendered patterns, the present study examines gender differences in the levels (mean scores) of job insecurity, burnout and turnover intentions in the Delhi-NCR region. By comparing male and female teachers on these variables, the study aims to inform gender sensitive retention practices and occupational welfare.

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Relevance of the Study:

In the contemporary Indian education sector, job insecurity and occupational burnout have become critical concerns with implications for teacher wellbeing and retention. The present study is relevant because it recognises that teachers' experiences of insecurity and burnout may not be uniform, but may vary with gendered socialisation and role expectations. For male teachers, professional instability can be accompanied by financial anxiety and social pressure associated with "breadwinner" role, whereas for female teachers, the same instability may intensify burnout and turnover intentions by compounding the "double burden" of domestic and professional responsibilities. By examining gender differences in job insecurity, burnout and turnover intentions, the study contributes to the empirical evidence that can inform gender sensitive retention practices in the Indian context.

METHOD

Research Objectives:

- To compare the mean scores of perceived job insecurity between male and female
- To examine the difference in burnout levels between male and female teachers
- To identify significant differences in turnover intentions between male and female teachers.

Hypotheses

- **H 1:** There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of perceived job insecurity among male and female teachers.
- **H 2:** There will be no significant difference in the levels of burnout experienced by male and female teachers.
- **H 3:** There will be no significant difference in the mean of turnover intentions of male and female teachers.

Participants and Data Collection

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who are currently working in the Delhi-NCR region. Due to specific research focus, the data was collected from a total of 170 respondents. To ensure a balanced comparative analysis between the genders, the sample consisted 50% male (n=85) and 50% female participants.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Currently employed as a school teacher at a participating private school within the Delhi-NCR region;
2. Teaching experience ranging from at least three months to more than 10 years;
3. Both male and Female Secondary School-Teachers were eligible to participate.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Administrative staff
2. Teachers on extended leaves
3. Primary School and Senior Secondary School Teachers
4. Teachers who have already left the profession.

Research Design

In the present study, the research design is Cross-Section in nature. Descriptive Statistics were used to study the nature and distribution of scores, while inferential statistics,

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particularly Independent Samples t-test, were used to test the hypothesis regarding gender differences in job insecurity, burnout and turnover intentions.

Instruments

- **Multidimensional Job Insecurity Measure:** Developed by O'Neill and Sevastos, this is 18-item scale measuring four dimensions: job loss insecurity, job changes insecurity, marginalisation insecurity and Organisational Survival Insecurity. It uses a 7-point likert scale.
- **Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey:** A 22-item instrument covering emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. Items are scored on a 7-point frequency scale. The scale demonstrates high internal consistency ($\alpha=.72$ to $.90$)
- **Turnover Intentions Scale:** Originally adapted by Roodt (2004), this 6-item scale measures the likelihood of leaving on a 5-point Likert scale. It has demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha \approx .80$)

Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used for data analysis. To test the hypothesis, an Independent Sample t-test was performed. The statistical measure was used to determine if there were significant differences in mean scores of job insecurity, burnout and turnover intentions based on the gender differences.

RESULTS

Table 1 Showing Descriptive Statistics for Male Sample (N=85) and Female Sample (N=85)

Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Job Insecurity	Male	71.67	13.91	1.51
	Female	72.60	14.07	1.53
Burnout	Male	80.94	6.99	0.76
	Female	81.86	8.54	0.93
Turnover Intentions	Male	18.21	4.88	0.53
	Female	22.46	5.53	0.60

From the above table, it is observed that the mean score of Job Insecurity for males is 71.67 (SD = 13.91) and for females is 72.60 (SD = 14.07). The mean scores of both groups are almost similar.

For Burnout, the mean score for males is 80.94 (SD= 6.99) and for females is 81.86 (SD = 8.54). The mean scores are again close, showing nearly similar burnout among male and female teachers.

For Turnover Intentions, the mean score for males is 18.21 (SD = 4.88) and for females is 22.46 (SD = 5.53). Here the mean score of females is higher than males, indicating higher turnover intentions among female teachers.

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Table 2 showing mean differences, t values for the male and female group

Variable	t	df	p	Mean Diff	SE Diff	95% CI for Mean Diff
Job Insecurity	-0.43	168	.666	-0.93	2.15	- 5.17, 3.31
Burnout	-0.77	168	.444	-0.92	1.20	-3.28, 1.45
Turnover Intentions	-5.31	165.45	<.001	-4.25	0.80	-5.83, -2.67

From the above Table, for job insecurity, there is no statistically significant differences between males ($M = 71.67$, $SD = 13.91$) and females ($M = 72.60$, $SD = 14.07$), $t(168) = -0.43$, $p = .666$. The mean difference was small (Mean diff = -0.93) and the 95% CI [-5.17, 3.31], indicating that job insecurity levels were similar across the gender groups.

Burnout also showed no statistically significant differences between males ($M = 80.94$, $SD = 6.99$) and females ($M = 81.86$, $SD = 8.54$), $t(168) = -0.77$, $p = .444$. The mean difference was small (Mean diff = -0.92) and the 95% CI [-3.28, 1.45], suggesting no reliable gender-based difference in burnout.

Turnover Intentions showed a statistically significant difference between males and females. Females ($M = 22.46$, $SD = 5.53$) reported higher turnover intentions than males ($M = 18.21$, $SD = 4.88$), $t(165.45) = -5.31$, $p < .001$. The mean difference was -4.25 and the 95% CI [-5.83, -2.67], indicating a clear and meaningful difference, with females being more likely to consider leaving.

DISCUSSION

Not only does teaching demand significant emotional and cognitive efforts, but it can also influence teachers' wellbeing and their intention to stay in the profession. Teachers may continue the same job if the work feels manageable or if job security feels certain but they may consider leaving due to job insecurity, persistent exhaustion or burnout. In this background, the present compares male and female on job insecurity, burnout and turnover intentions by using Independent-samples t-test.

The findings indicate that gender differences were not evident for job insecurity and burnout. For job insecurity, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis (H_1), suggesting that male and female teachers perceived job insecurity at comparable levels. This may imply that job security related perceptions are shaped more by shared institutional realities such as school policies, employment terms and administrative expectations than gender specific factors. Similarly for burnout, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis (H_2). This supports the view that burnout in teaching often reflects professional demands such as, limited institutional support, excessive non-teaching duties and insufficient salaries. (Matthew, 2023; Tripathy et al, 2022).

However, a different pattern emerged for turnover intentions. For turnover intentions the study rejected the null hypothesis, showing that female teachers reported significantly higher turnover intentions than their male counterparts. This result suggests that even when job insecurity and burnout are similar, the tendency to think about leaving may depend on additional factors that affect the feasibility of continuing the job. For many teachers, leaving

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is not only a response to stress but also a response to whether a job remains sustainable in daily life.

There are several reasons why female teachers may report stronger turnover intention despite comparable insecurity and burnout. Lack of career growth, heavy workloads and ongoing work-life balance struggles are the factors driving women to leave their positions (Tejasvini et al, 2025). Additionally, female teachers prioritize proximity to home more than male teachers (Bertoni et al, 2023) which can contribute to higher turnover.

Based on these findings, schools and administrators should focus on retention oriented and wellbeing practices for teachers. To mitigate the perceived job insecurity, schools should implement clear and transparent communication regarding employment terms, appraisal criteria and contractual continuity. At the same time, burnout and turnover intentions can be addressed through practical workload management such as ensuring fair distribution of administrative duties among faculties and setting realistic timelines. Lastly, schools and administrators should provide formal access to mentorship sessions and professional development programs. Such measures are essential to navigate career stagnation and work-life balance struggles which can effectively lower the intent to exit.

Limitations

The cross-sectional nature of this study limits the ability to track how these gender-based disparities in job insecurity and burnout evolve over time. Future research employing longitudinal data would be valuable in determining whether these trajectories diverge further across different stages. Furthermore, incorporating variables such as marital status, family income, appointment status (contractual vs permanent), salary delays would provide a more nuanced understanding.

CONCLUSION

The present study identifies gender-based disparity in professional outcomes: while male and female teachers report statistically comparable levels of job insecurity and burnout, female teachers exhibit higher intent to exit the profession. These results indicate that the intent to leave is not merely a product of occupational stress but a response to unique pressures such as work-life conflict, heavy workloads and limited career progression. To address this, school administrators must implement specific strategies. Providing transparent communication, equitable workload distribution and formalised mentorship is essential to stabilise workforce and mitigate the risk of teacher turnover.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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