The Influencing Factors on Teacher's Turnover Intention of Higher Vocational Education in Xiamen, China

Lin Weiyi[1], Khunanan Sukpasjaroen[2]

Abstract

This study conducted an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing emotional exhaustion and turnover intention among teachers in vocational colleges in Xiamen, China. The researcher formulated six research objectives as follows: To assess the prevalence of turnover intention among teachers in higher vocational education institutions in Xiamen, China. To explore the relationship of Surface Acting, Deep Acting, Automatic Emotional Regulation, Coworker Incivility, and Caring Climate on Emotional Exhaustion, and its subsequent impact on Turnover Intention. To examine the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intention. To investigate the mediating effect of Emotional Exhaustion between Surface Acting, Deep Acting, Automatic Emotional Regulation, Coworker Incivility, Caring Climate, and Turnover Intention. To explore potential gender, educational background, or professional title differences in the experience of turnover intention. To develop a causal model of influential factors influencing teachers' turnover intention in higher vocational education in Xiamen, China. In this study, the researcher employed a quantitative research approach and conducted a questionnaire survey among nine vocational colleges in Xiamen, China, involving a target population of 3145 individuals. Following the sampling method proposed by Yamane (1967), a minimum of 355 questionnaires needed to be distributed. Therefore, to ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of the research, the researcher utilized a stratified random sampling method, resulting in a total of 710 questionnaires being distributed. In the data analysis process, the researcher employed methods including reliability analysis, validity analysis, correlation analysis, difference analysis, common method bias, and structural equation modeling (path analysis and mediation analysis). Finally, the researcher obtained the following results: This research found the current situation of turnover intention among teachers at higher vocational colleges in Xiamen; Surface acting, deep acting, automatic emotional exhaustion, and coworker incivility have significant positive influences on emotional exhaustion. Caring climate has a significant negative influence on emotional exhaustion. Similarly, surface acting, deep acting, automatic emotional exhaustion, and coworker incivility have significant positive influences on turnover intention. Caring climate has a significant negative influence on turnover intention; Emotional exhaustion has a significant positive influence on turnover intention; There is a mediating effect of emotional exhaustion between surface acting, deep acting, automatic emotional regulation, coworker incivility, caring climate, and turnover intention; There is the potential influence of gender, educational background, and job title differences on turnover intention; This study constructed a causal model of the factors influencing turnover intention among teachers at higher vocational colleges in Xiamen.

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[1] Chakrabongse Bhuvanarth International Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok, Bangkok, Thailand, weiyi.lin@rmutto.ac.th

[2] Chakrabongse Bhuvanarth International Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok, Bangkok, Thailand, khunanan_su@rmutto.ac.th

1. Introduction

In previous research, some experts and scholars have extensively examined the issue of turnover in vocational colleges in Xiamen, China. For instance, Zhang, Liang, and others (2019) conducted an in-depth exploration of turnover issues of higher vocational colleges in Xiamen. They analyzed the turnover situation among teachers, proposed strategies to address teacher turnover of higher vocational colleges in Xiamen, and highlighted the challenges faced during the rapid development of vocational colleges. Particularly, the significant attrition rate among middle-aged and young teachers poses a substantial challenge, directly impacting teaching quality and the composition of the teaching staff, consequently diminishing the overall academic standards and competitiveness of these institutions. They presented measures to control talent turnover of higher vocational colleges in Xiamen.

Additionally, researchers such as Zhang & Zhao (2018), Lyu (2018), Wang (2016), Liang, Gao, & Yang (2014), Wang (2013), and others have conducted comprehensive research on the issue of turnover in higher vocational colleges in China. Their collective research findings emphasize that teachers are the essence of educational institutions, and the stability of the middle-aged and young teaching workforce is pivotal for the sustainable development of vocational colleges. To curtail teacher turnover of higher vocational colleges in China, concerted efforts from the government, educational institutions, and teachers are essential. Only through a collaborative approach can the situation gradually improve, enabling Xiamen's vocational colleges to enter a virtuous cycle of development.

In the research on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention, numerous experts and scholars have examined emotional exhaustion as a mediator variable and turnover intention as a dependent variable. For instance, Wang, Wang, Tang et al. (2023) treated emotional exhaustion as a mediator variable and turnover intention as a dependent variable in their study. In their future research outlook, they stated, "This study only explored the impact of workplace privacy on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Future researchers could further investigate other independent variables."

Based on relevant literature, researchers have found that emotional exhaustion is a response to the depletion of emotional resources under stress (Demerouti et al., 2001). It signifies a state where individuals perceive their emotional and related physiological resources to be drained during work. This is characterized by a lack of energy and enthusiasm, generating negative emotions, experiencing frustration, and feeling fatigued during work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Studies have revealed that emotional exhaustion, as a typical negative experience, significantly influences employee turnover (Cropanzano et al., 2003). Prolonged physical and mental exhaustion among employees weaken their sense of belonging to the organization and result in turnover intention (Zhao et al., 2020).

Employees experiencing emotional exhaustion lack enthusiasm for work, feel fatigued, and struggle to invest time in their tasks (Xi, 2016). Over time, this leads to disillusionment with the current organization and an increase in turnover intention. Leaving the organization is considered a method to alleviate emotional exhaustion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Employees suffering from prolonged emotional exhaustion are more likely to leave their current work setting (Westman & Eden, 1997). To avoid further emotional and physical harm, emotionally exhausted employees intentionally leave their current organization (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). Relevant studies have indicated that turnover intention is a negative outcome that emerges after a certain level

of emotional exhaustion (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Many studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention (Knudsen et al., 2009). Consequently, this study employs emotional exhaustion and turnover intention as mediating and dependent variables, to investigate the factors influencing turnover intention among vocational teachers in Xiamen, China.

2. Literature Review

In previous research, scholars have conducted in-depth studies on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. For example, Yao & Zhang (2022) found that employee turnover has always been a focus of attention in both industry and academia. A high employee turnover rate not only increases recruitment costs for companies but also disrupts normal organizational operations and can lead to a series of issues, including the loss of key client resources. While turnover behavior is an action, most scholars believe that employees' turnover intention can effectively predict turnover behavior (Koon, 2018). Existing research indicates that factors at the organizational level can influence employees' turnover intention (El et al., 2014).

As research has progressed, some scholars have found that emotional factors have a greater impact on employees' turnover intention (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016). Some studies suggest that the formation of turnover intention is a psychological choice made by employees who perceive unfair treatment in the organization (Johnson, 2003). Sutton (2004) and others also propose that turnover intention is a psychological choice. Currently, research on turnover intention mainly focuses on the organizational level, such as organizational identification and culture. However, Yao & Zhang (2022) argue that individual emotions have a more direct impact on turnover intention. Yi, Luo & Wang (2018), Zhao & Xi (2017) believe that emotional exhaustion significantly leads to higher turnover intention among employees.

Additionally, some studies have conducted in-depth investigations into the mediating role of emotional exhaustion, with research findings indicating that if organizations actively fulfill employees' psychological contracts, it helps employees replenish previously depleted emotional resources. Conversely, once the psychological contract is breached, it can lead to more severe emotional exhaustion among employees. After reviewing relevant literature, researchers found that employees' emotional exhaustion is influenced by the workplace environment. Factors such as Surface Acting (SA), Deep Acting (DA), Automatic Emotional Regulation (AER), Coworker Incivility (CI), and Caring Climate (CC) can affect employees' emotional exhaustion. When employees experience negative emotions, they deplete emotional resources. To prevent further depletion, they conserve their resources, resulting in behaviors of emotional exhaustion (Helbesleben et al., 2014) and subsequently higher turnover intention.

On the other hand, when employees' psychological contracts are fulfilled, they experience positive emotions, which can enhance their organizational commitment and lead to a higher intention to stay (Zhao & Xi, 2017). Therefore, researcher has found that both in the academic community of China and internationally, numerous experts and scholars have discovered the significant role of emotional exhaustion in turnover intention (Skaalvik, 2018). Similarly, Yao & Zhang (2022) mentioned that factors like SA, DA, AER, CI, CC directly influence employees' turnover intention. They also explored the mediating role of emotional exhaustion and found that employees' emotional exhaustion leads to differentiated effects, which subsequently influence their turnover intention. Furthermore, their research not only investigated the impact of emotional exhaustion but also verified its mediating role, enriching the understanding of emotional exhaustion's outcomes and further clarifying the relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention.

During the review of research on emotional exhaustion, the researcher compiled historical literature related to emotional exhaustion as follows: Emotional exhaustion originated from the concept of burnout proposed by Maslach (1981). The concept of occupational burnout was initially introduced by Freudenberger (1974). Emotional exhaustion is at the core of the process of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). It is a reaction to stress (Demerouti, Bakker & Nachreiner et al., 2001), resulting from work-related pressures (Cropanzano, Rupp & Byrne, 2003). Maslach and colleagues (1996) expanded the scope of emotional exhaustion to various industries, giving rise to a broader understanding of its implications. In this study, the definition of emotional exhaustion by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was employed, which characterizes emotional exhaustion as a state where an individual's resources are depleted in the workplace.

Simultaneously, the researcher reviewed historical literature related to turnover intention as follows: Turnover intention is an employee's proactive tendency. According to the turnover decision process proposed by Mobley (1977), turnover intention represents the final stage before employees actually leave the organization, which is the preceding stage to the actual turnover behavior. Therefore, turnover intention is an important indicator for predicting actual turnover behavior (Miller & Katerberg, 1979; Fishbein, 1967). Some scholars argue that predicting turnover intention is more direct and straightforward compared to predicting turnover behavior, making research on turnover intention more valuable. Bluedorn (1982) suggested studying turnover intention as an alternative to studying turnover behavior. Thus, scholars have shown more interest in studying turnover intention. Porter and Steers (1973) view turnover intention as the next withdrawal behavior of employees in the organization after experiencing job dissatisfaction. Martin (1979) defined turnover intention in his model as the degree to which employees intend to leave the organization. In Mobley et al.'s (1978) turnover decision process model, turnover intention is a series of cognitive steps that lead to the final stage before actual turnover behavior. Therefore, Mobley et al. (1978) define turnover intention as the comprehensive expression of these cognitive steps. Williams and Hazer (1986) consider turnover intention to reflect an employee's inclination, plan, and willingness to leave the organization. Fu et al. (2002) define turnover intention as an employee's intention and thoughts to leave the organization. Hence, although scholars may have differing conceptual definitions of turnover intention, its essence remains consistent – turnover intention is the inclination and thoughts of employees to leave their current organization, representing a degree of considering voluntary departure. Research generally agrees that turnover intention is the most effective variable for predicting actual turnover behavior (Griffeth and Hom, 2000).

2.2 Research Theories

This study adopts the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which is a significant theory for explaining emotional exhaustion. This theory focuses on the explanatory mechanism of demands and resources, interpreting the process of work stress from the perspective of resource loss and gain. When individuals perceive threats to something they value, emotional exhaustion can arise. Simultaneously, people strive to acquire and conserve valuable resources. Emotional exhaustion can also arise when valuable resources are lost, investments do not yield returns, existing resources cannot fulfill individual needs, and new resources are not accessible. Anything individuals highly value and consider important in their work can be regarded as resources. If individuals invest substantial resources into their work without receiving sufficient returns – such as investing time, effort, overtime, or depleting interpersonal relationships – and work remains inefficiently completed or unfair treatment occurs, this can lead to a spiral of resource loss. This perception leaves employees feeling depleted in energy, mentally and physically exhausted. Additionally, if job demands require the consumption of significant resources, it differs from resource investment. Resource investment falls under the individual's benefit framework in cognition, whereas job demands consuming resources

fall under the loss framework in cognition. For individuals, compared to resource gains, resource losses hold greater significance (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Zhang & Ma, 2006).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework
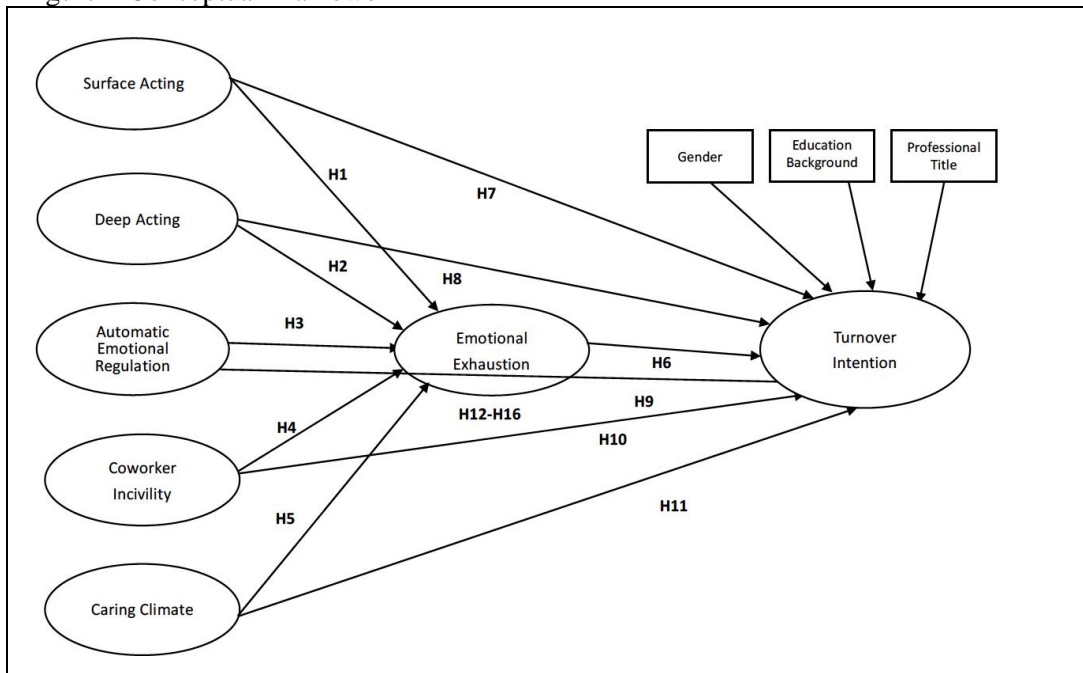
Source: Design by the researcher (2022)

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Methods

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, with the researcher identified the following key points based on relevant literature: Quantitative research involves the examination and study of phenomena in terms of quantity, utilizing mathematical tools to conduct numerical analysis. Quantitative research often necessitates a larger sample size to ensure the representativeness and accuracy of results. Among the most prevalent methods in quantitative research is the questionnaire survey. In the present study, the questionnaire survey was exclusively carried out offline. Offline surveys offer significant advantages: the researcher's presence can provide better guidance to respondents, reducing potential issues related to questionnaire comprehension. Additionally, this approach enhances the overall quality of responses.

3.2 Research Design

In the research design, the researcher first conducted a review of the relevant literature on turnover intention among teachers in vocational colleges in Xiamen, China. The researcher also reviewed literature on emotional exhaustion, turnover intention, and the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Subsequently, based on established and mature scales, the researcher designed a questionnaire, collected data, and obtained 664 valid responses. Data analysis was performed using statistical software. Finally, the study results were analyzed and discussed, and the contributions of this study were presented. This study constructed a theoretical model with emotional exhaustion as a mediating variable, employing three main research methods: 1) Literature Review Method: The researcher summarized the concepts of various variables, understood the research status, conducted a literature review, and analyzed the findings. This formed the basis for the

conceptual model of the study. 2) Questionnaire Survey Method: Building on the literature review, the researcher developed relevant questionnaires, finalized the formal questionnaire, and collected data through offline methods. The collected sample data were then processed and analyzed. 3) Statistical Analysis Method: The research utilized SPSS and Amos software for data processing, including basic reliability and validity analyses, descriptive statistics, and a comprehensive analysis using structural equation modeling.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Table 1 Samples of Higher Vocational Colleges in Xiamen

No	Name of the higher vocational college	No. of full-time teachers	Percentage of teachers	No. of samples
1	Xiamen Ocean Vocational College	546	17.36%	123
2	Xiamen City University	383	12.18%	86
3	The Xiamen Academy for Performing Arts	149	4.74%	34
4	Xiamen Huatian International Vocation Institute	434	13.80%	98
5	Xiamen Xingcai Vocational & Technical College	340	10.81%	77
6	Xiamen Institute of Software Technology	409	13.00%	92
7	Xiamen Nanyang University	487	15.48%	110
8	Xiamen Donghai Institute	218	6.93%	49
9	Xiamen Security Science and Technology College	179	5.69%	40
Total		3145	100.00%	710

Note: Xiamen Federation of Trade Unions contacted the Trade Union of Higher Vocational Colleges and distributed the questionnaires

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Pre-survey

Reliability refers to the reliability of the scale, which mainly demonstrates the internal consistency and stability of the data on the scale. This research applied Cronbach's alpha to test the reliability of the data of each variable in the pre-survey. The range of Cronbach's alpha is between 0 and 1. Based on (George & Mallery, 2003), If Cronbach's alpha is between 0.7 and 0.9, the reliability of the scale is good. As is shown in the table, the Cronbach's alpha of SA, DA, AER, CI, CC, EE and TI was between 0.793 and 0.842 respectively, indicating that the reliability of the scale in this research was good.

Table 2 Pre-survey reliability analysis of the scale

Variables	Items	Cronbach's α
SA	3	0.808
DA	3	0.826
AER	3	0.814
CI	3	0.832
CC	3	0.842
EE	3	0.793
TI	3	0.841

This research applied an exploratory factor analysis on the pre-survey data to test the validity of the scale. According to the test result, KMO of the sample was 0.837, and the chi-square of Bartlett's sphericity test was 1335.262. The degree of freedom was 210 and the significance was much smaller than 0.001, indicating that the pre-survey data of the scale were suitable for an exploratory factor analysis.

Table 3 The KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test on the pre-survey of the scale

The KMO test was based on adequate samples		0.837
Bartlett's sphericity test	Chi-square value	1335.262
	Df	210
	Sig.	0.000

The 7 common factors extracted from the table were the same as the original questionnaire design, and the load coefficient of each question item was greater than 0.5, and the cross-factor load was smaller than 0.4. The total variation explained by the accumulation of common factors was 75.662%, which reflected most of the information of the original variable and demonstrated that the validity of the scale was good.

Table 4 Pre-survey exploratory factor analysis of the scale

Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SA1	-0.132	0.058	0.253	0.051	0.054	0.038	0.833
SA2	-0.149	0.082	-0.001	0.089	0.158	0.136	0.825
SA3	-0.001	0.254	0.161	0.145	0.069	0.090	0.760
DA1	-0.085	0.271	0.816	0.081	0.093	0.114	0.149
DA2	-0.064	-0.044	0.789	0.239	0.133	0.167	0.155
DA3	-0.154	0.150	0.787	0.122	0.018	0.203	0.113
AER1	0.015	0.167	-0.032	0.149	0.814	0.173	0.108
AER2	-0.191	0.088	0.137	0.108	0.793	0.096	0.090
AER3	-0.142	0.075	0.111	0.099	0.837	0.045	0.075
CI1	-0.087	0.121	0.167	0.857	0.138	0.109	0.139
CI2	-0.297	0.162	0.177	0.767	0.122	0.008	0.019
CI3	-0.058	0.119	0.098	0.772	0.138	0.274	0.139
CC1	0.816	-0.236	-0.055	-0.203	-0.037	-0.042	-0.128

CC2	0.843	-0.072	-0.070	-0.094	-0.177	-0.072	-0.094
CC3	0.777	-0.197	-0.183	-0.094	-0.119	-0.243	-0.076
EE1	-0.080	0.192	0.161	0.177	0.070	0.804	0.075
EE2	-0.035	0.122	0.186	0.095	0.240	0.751	0.140
EE3	-0.188	0.061	0.114	0.079	0.038	0.801	0.055
TI1	-0.094	0.803	0.170	0.016	0.164	0.106	0.201
TI2	-0.284	0.744	0.170	0.225	0.072	0.175	0.130
TI3	-0.184	0.818	0.045	0.199	0.132	0.136	0.083
Eigenvalue	7.049	1.763	1.657	1.586	1.390	1.265	1.179
EV （%）	33.565	8.397	7.891	7.552	6.620	6.022	5.615
CEV （%）	33.565	41.962	49.853	57.405	64.025	70.047	75.662

EV: Explanatory variance, CEV: Cumulative explanatory variance

4.2 Descriptive analysis

A total of 710 questionnaires were distributed in the formal survey of this research, and 664 valid questionnaires were recovered, with a valid recovery rate of 93.52%. The basic characteristics of the valid samples are shown in Table 5. Generally speaking, the samples of this survey were in line with the basic situation and were somehow representative.

Table 5 Basic characteristics of the samples

Basic information		n	%
Gender	Male	338	50.9
	Female	326	49.1
	Prefer not to say	0	0
Education Background	Diploma	7	1.1
	Bachelor's Degree	331	49.8
	Master's Degree	271	40.8
	Doctoral Degree	43	6.5
	Post-Doctoral	12	1.8
Professional Title	Lecturer	454	68.4
	Assoc. Prof.	149	22.4
	Prof.	55	8.3
	Assistant Teacher	6	0.9
	Total	664	100.0

As is shown in the table, the mean value of each item was between 2.977 and 3.220, and the consistency of the subjects on SA, DA, AER, CI, CC, EE and TI and their actual situation was toward a neutral level. Moreover, it can be seen from the table that the maximum absolute value of skewness of each variable was 0.147 and kurtosis 1.023, both

of which were smaller than 3, indicating that the sample data basically met the requirements of a normal distribution, and that the statistical method of parameter estimation could be used for further data analysis of the correlation between variables.

Table 6 Descriptive statistical analysis of the variables

Measurement item	Mean value	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
SA1	3.113	1.172	-0.074	-0.828
SA2	3.110	1.235	-0.080	-0.960
SA3	3.102	1.242	-0.129	-0.973
DA1	3.113	1.167	-0.101	-0.814
DA2	3.107	1.193	-0.127	-0.904
DA3	3.075	1.176	-0.124	-0.820
AER1	3.220	1.152	-0.140	-0.826
AER2	3.170	1.262	-0.147	-1.023
AER3	3.157	1.185	-0.115	-0.858
CI1	3.123	1.183	-0.098	-0.836
CI2	3.158	1.180	-0.143	-0.779
CI3	3.157	1.192	-0.139	-0.865
CC1	3.095	1.175	0.028	-0.850
CC2	3.090	1.152	0.042	-0.799
CC3	3.105	1.154	0.030	-0.806
EE1	3.071	1.162	-0.046	-0.834
EE2	2.977	1.181	-0.022	-0.904
EE3	3.063	1.194	-0.112	-0.824
TI1	3.140	1.183	-0.136	-0.821
TI2	3.134	1.177	-0.034	-0.847
TI3	3.131	1.180	-0.035	-0.853

4.3 Reliability Analysis

The reliability test results of the formal survey are as follows. As is shown in the table, Cronbach's alpha of SA, DA, AER, CI, CC, EE and TI was between 0.800 and 0.852 respectively, indicating that the reliability of the scale in this research was good.

Table 7 Formal survey reliability analysis of the scale

Variables	Items	Cronbach's α
SA	3	0.852
DA	3	0.829
AER	3	0.851
CI	3	0.821
CC	3	0.800

| EE | 3 | 0.821 |
| TI | 3 | 0.830 |

4.4 Validity analysis

This research applied a confirmatory factor analysis to analyze the validity of formal survey data of the scale. The analysis process and results are as follows. This research found that the 7-factor measurement model had a good fitting.
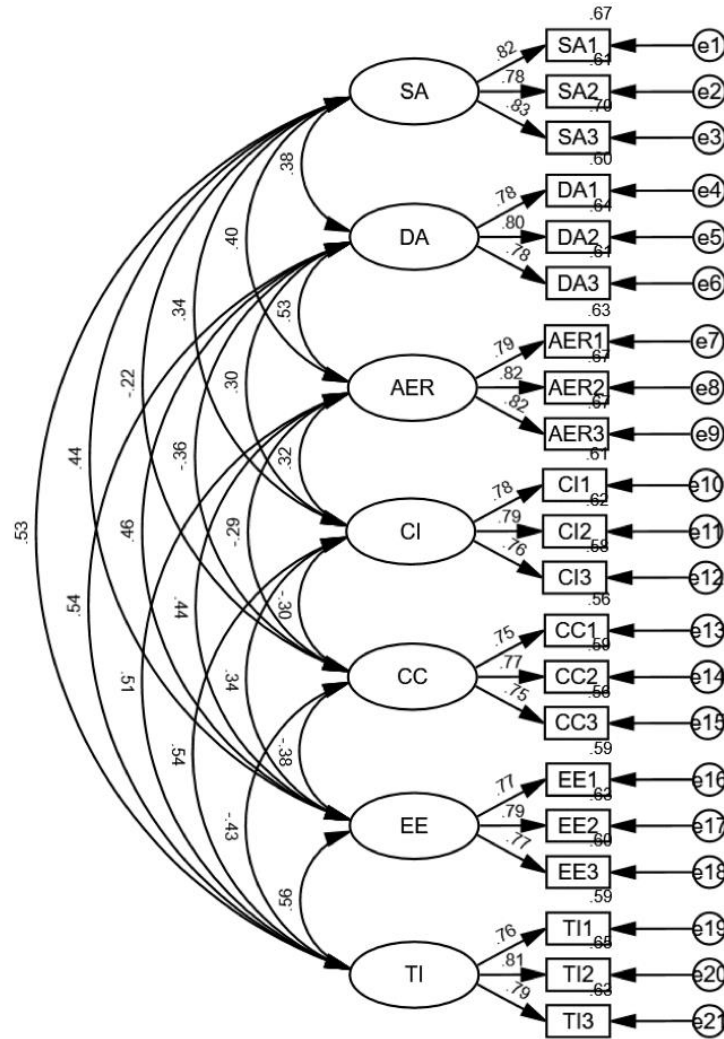

Figure 1 Validity analysis

4.4.1 Aggregation validity

Aggregation validity refers to the degree of the aggregation in the correlation between the expected observed variables and the latent variables, which is usually evaluated by three indexes: load coefficient, combination reliability (CR) and mean variance extraction (AVE). The results of aggregation validity test of each variable in this research are shown in the table below:

Table 8 Aggregation validity results

Variable under study	Measurement item	Load coefficient	Reliability of the combination	Mean variance extraction
SA	SA1	0.821		
	SA2	0.780	0.853	0.659
	SA3	0.834		
DA	DA1	0.777		
	DA2	0.801	0.829	0.618
	DA3	0.780		
AER	AER1	0.791		
	AER2	0.820	0.852	0.657
	AER3	0.820		
CI	CI1	0.783		
	CI2	0.791	0.821	0.605
	CI3	0.760		
CC	CC1	0.746		
	CC2	0.771	0.800	0.571
	CC3	0.751		
EE	EE1	0.766		
	EE2	0.794	0.822	0.606
	EE3	0.775		
TI	TI1	0.765		
	TI2	0.807	0.831	0.621
	TI3	0.792		

4.4.2 Correlation analysis and discriminant validity

The results of the correlation analysis are shown in the Table 9. In addition, discriminant validity refers to the degree of discrimination between variables. This research applied Fornell & Larcker Criterion for verification. It is generally believed that variables are of a good discriminant validity respectively when the correlation between variables is smaller than AVE square root of the variable. It can be seen from the table that the variables were of a good discriminant validity respectively.

Table 9 Results of correlation analysis and discriminant validity test

Variables	SA	DA	AER	CI	CC	EE	TI
SA	0.812						
DA	0.383***	0.786					
AER	0.403***	0.526***	0.81				
CI	0.340***	0.296***	0.325***	0.778			
CC	0.220***	0.355***	0.289***	0.296***	0.756		

EE	0.439***	0.460***	0.437***	0.342***	0.381***	0.778
TI	0.531***	0.539***	0.506***	0.541***	0.428***	0.557*** 0.788

4.5 Difference analysis

4.5.1 Different genders

This research applied the independent sample T-test to test the difference in turnover intention of subjects of different genders. There was no significant difference in turnover intentions of subjects of different genders (t=-0.125, P>0.05).

Table 10 Different genders

Variable	Gender	n	Mean value	Standard deviation	t	P
TI	Male	338	3.1302	1.01788	-0.125	0.901
	Female	326	3.1401	1.02305		

4.5.2 Different education backgrounds

This research applied one way ANOVA to test the difference in turnover intentions of subjects of different education backgrounds. There was significant difference in turnover intentions of subjects of different education backgrounds (F=65.772，P<0.01).

Table 11 Different education backgrounds

Variable	Education background	n	Mean value	Standard deviation	F	P
TI	Diploma	7	4.8571	0.17817	65.772	0.000
	Bachelor's Degree	331	3.5760	0.82501		
	Master's Degree	271	2.7171	0.94777		
	Doctoral Degree	43	1.9457	0.53911		
	Post-Doctoral	12	3.6667	1.09175		
Total		664	3.1350	1.01967		

4.5.3 Different job titles

This research applied one way ANOVA to test the difference in turnover intentions of subjects of different job titles. There was significant difference in turnover intentions of subjects with different job titles (F=11.991, P<0.01).

Table 12 Different job titles

Variable	Job Titles	n	Mean value	Standard deviation	F	P
TI	Lecturer	454	3.2599	0.95058	11.991	0.000
	Assoc. Prof.	149	3.0179	1.07997		
	Prof.	55	2.5394	1.14484		
	Assistant Teachers	6	2.0556	0.44305		
Total		664	3.1350	1.01967		

4.6 Structural equation model

This paper applied the AMOS software to construct a structural equation model (SEM). The initial SEM is shown in Figure 2.
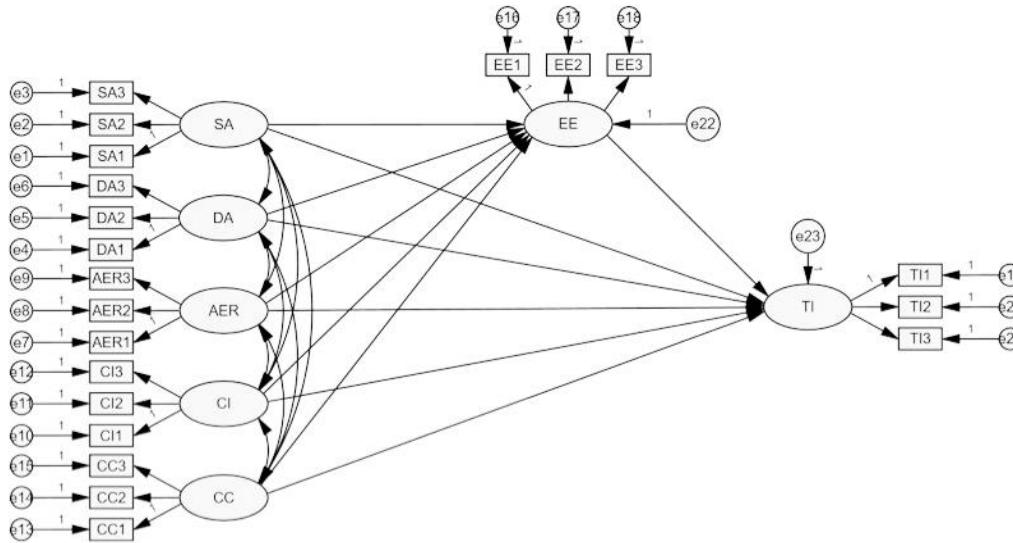

Figure 2 Diagram of the initial SEM

The fitting of the SEM was tested. It showed that the fitting of the SEM in this research was acceptable. The details are shown in the table below:

Table 13 Fitting of the SEM

Fitting index	χ2/df	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMR
Fitting result	1.095	0.012	0.975	0.972	0.997	0.997	0.997	0.031

4.7 Test on model path coefficients

The results of the path test are shown in Table 14, and the standardized path coefficient of the structural model is shown in Figure 3.

Table 14 Test results of model path coefficients

Path correlation			Unstandardized path coefficient	Standardized path coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result of the hypotheses
SA	→	EE	0.209	0.226	0.044	4.702	***	Supported
DA	→	EE	0.191	0.194	0.053	3.596	***	Supported
AER	→	EE	0.153	0.157	0.051	2.989	0.003	Supported
CI	→	EE	0.097	0.101	0.045	2.165	0.030	Supported
CC	→	EE	-0.191	-0.187	0.048	-3.969	***	Supported
EE	→	TI	0.188	0.185	0.049	3.881	***	Supported
SA	→	TI	0.198	0.210	0.041	4.852	***	Supported
DA	→	TI	0.185	0.185	0.048	3.851	***	Supported
AER	→	TI	0.115	0.116	0.046	2.509	0.012	Supported
CI	→	TI	0.269	0.275	0.042	6.462	***	Supported

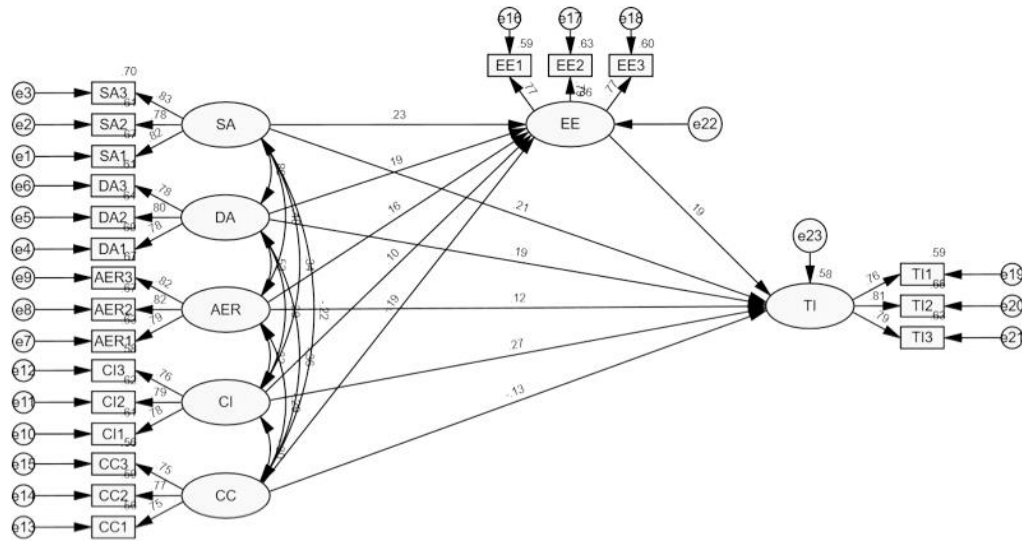| CC	→	TI	-0.135	-0.130	0.043	-3.105	0.002	Supported

Figure 3 Diagram of the standardized path coefficients of SEM

4.2.3 Test on Bootstrapping

Then, this research applied Bootstrapping in AMOS software to test the mediation effect of the model. 5,000 bootstrap samples were selected, and the confidence interval was set at 95%. The test process and results are as follows:

Table 15 Test results of the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion

Indirect path	β	Lower	Upper	P
SA→EE→TI	0.042	0.017	0.079	0.000
DA→EE→TI	0.036	0.014	0.074	0.000
AER→EE→TI	0.029	0.009	0.061	0.003
CI→EE→TI	0.019	0.003	0.043	0.015
CC→EE→TI	-0.035	-0.065	-0.014	0.000

5. Discussions and Conclusions

5.1 Discussion

This study is based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, examining the factors influencing emotional exhaustion and turnover intention among teachers in vocational colleges in Xiamen, China. Using emotional exhaustion as a mediator, the study explores the relationships through which relevant factors impact teachers' turnover intention, some of which are directly correlated with turnover intention. This study makes several contributions: Firstly, the study enriched the Conservation of Resources theory by identifying how relevant factors affect emotional exhaustion and turnover intention, thereby expanding the theoretical understanding and making a significant contribution. Secondly, the study revealed that different factors exert both positive and negative influences on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. This differentiation enhances the understanding of the reasons behind teachers' turnover intention, contributing to a comprehensive view of the topic. Thirdly, while prior research on the antecedents of turnover intention primarily focused on organizational characteristics and leadership attributes, this study extends the range of antecedents by exploring other factors

influencing emotional exhaustion and turnover intention, thus offering new directions for research. Finally, the study delved into the antecedents of emotional exhaustion, revealing diverse impacts of relevant factors. It enhances the understanding of how work environments affect emotional exhaustion, expanding the scope of antecedents for emotional exhaustion.

Furthermore, the study provides practical contributions: The empirical findings provide insights for vocational colleges in Xiamen to create more positive work environments for teachers. This proactive approach can mitigate emotional exhaustion and subsequent turnover intention; Given that turnover intention often precedes actual turnover, the study suggests that enhancing positive emotional experiences at work can prevent teachers from experiencing exhaustion and boost their intention to stay. In summary, this study sheds light on the relationships between various factors, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intention, with implications for both theoretical advancement and practical interventions in vocational colleges in Xiamen, China.

5.2 Conclusion

In summary, this study conducted an in-depth investigation into the emotional exhaustion and turnover intention among teachers in vocational colleges in Xiamen, China. Firstly, the study elucidated the relationship between the work environment and turnover intention. On one hand, prior studies focusing on the impact of the work environment on employees often centered around job satisfaction and performance, lacking empirical research on the psychological factors and their connection to turnover intention. This brings innovation to the exploration of the relationship between the work environment and employee organizational behavior. On the other hand, previous examinations of antecedents to turnover intention mainly concentrated on job characteristics, with the minimal exploration of the impact of relevant psychological factors. This represents an innovative approach to antecedent research regarding turnover intention. Secondly, the study explored and analyzed the relationships between factors in the work environment (Surface Acting (SA), Deep Acting (DA), Automatic Emotional Regulation (AER), Coworker Incivility (CI), and Caring Climate (CC)) and emotional exhaustion, as well as turnover intention, from a unique perspective. This aspect of the study contributes to its innovative angle.

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