

## Teacher Well-Being and Turnover Intention Among Teachers: A Systematic Review

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**Abstract.** Teaching is a profession that requires high dedication and commitment due to the heavy workloads and responsibilities. There has been a trend of turnover intention among teachers that results from the undervaluation and underappreciation of the profession. Schools have to manage teacher turnover since it impacts student outcomes, teacher well-being, and school performance. This systematic review aimed to summarize the findings of teacher turnover intention and its impacts on teacher well-being and explore well-being factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in the profession. The review was done following PRISMA guidelines with 11 articles published from 2013 to 2024. The studies consistently show that higher well-being is associated with lower desire to leave the profession. The implications of this study emphasize the need for systemic interventions to enhance teacher well-being and keep teachers in their roles, which will benefit the broader education sector.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction; systematic review; teacher well-being; turnover intention

### Introduction

Teachers and lecturers worldwide deal with heavy workloads and diverse responsibilities. In Indonesia, the responsibilities range from educating, advising, supporting students academically, and even managing students' behaviors and problems (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia, 2018). They also have to do additional administrative tasks, such as lesson planning and student assessments. Similar challenges are seen in other countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand, where teachers have an intense workload that involves face-to-face teaching, student evaluation, extracurricular activities, preparing and planning learning programs, attending meetings with colleagues, working on curriculum development, developing or redesigning learning programs, handling administrative tasks, and being involved in parental engagement at school (Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Manuel et al., 2018). Meanwhile, university lecturers face analogous demands, balancing teaching, research, and community service (Presiden Republik

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Indonesia, 2009).

Due to the heavy workloads and diverse responsibilities, the number of teachers who choose to leave the profession has increased significantly. As noted in the 2016 OECD member countries survey, the public school teacher turnover at the elementary and secondary levels ranges from 3.3% to 11.7% (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016). Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) found that many instructors leave their positions within the first three years of work. Teachers have different intentions that drive them to move to other schools or leave their profession permanently, a phenomenon known as teacher turnover. This trend has adverse impacts on the school's systems concerning: finding replacements with equal competence and experience, which also affects student achievement (Lucksnat et al., 2022; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). Besides this, the turnover causes distress on remaining teachers and even the administrators in the school, which according Lucksnat et al. (2022), should be a concern for the government and schools.

Teachers deserve significant support and appreciation from the community in managing their workload, which is quite demanding. However, despite their important role, many teachers feel undervalued by the community due to public scrutiny and policy that emphasizes student performance as a key indicator of educational success, potentially undermining teachers' sense of professional appreciation (Lavery & Dahill-Brown, 2024; Spruyt et al., 2021). This persistent challenge is further exacerbated by intensive weekly requirements, e.g., teaching at least twenty-four hours (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia, 2018). Issues often arise when teachers struggle to manage their workload effectively. A heavy workload has been associated with increased mental strain and a heightened risk of deteriorating mental health among teachers (Ortan et al., 2021; Pan et al., 2023; Wahab et al., 2024).

Teacher mental health or well-being is defined as perceived healthy and successful functioning in an occupation, which is the key factor in the performance and retention of teachers (Renshaw et al., 2015). Well-being has been associated with positive self-evaluation, excellent work performance, job satisfaction, and sound mental health. Such conditions not only enhance teacher performance and resilience, but also play a critical role in reducing turnover rates, thereby promoting stability and consistency in education quality (Wahab et al., 2024). Additionally, supportive working environments with manageable workloads, professional recognition, and sufficient resources contribute to higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved mental health (Pan et al., 2023). Conversely, poor well-being has been associated with stress, burnout, and turnover (Collie, 2022; Ortan et al., 2021; Pan et al., 2023; Renshaw et al., 2015). Therefore, maintaining teacher well-being is important to ensure a stable, quality education system.

Previous investigations into teacher well-being and turnover intention identified some factors that may serve as mediators or moderators between the two variables. Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2023) concluded that workplace support could enable teacher retention. Lei et al. (2024) identified an inter-relationship between job satisfaction, workplace climate, and turnover intention. Other studies have also emphasized the unique yet interrelated factors that influence well-being and intentions to leave a job. In her studies, Collie (2022, 2023) found that a supportive work environment, e.g.,

autonomy and time pressure, could mitigate stress-related turnover during disruptions, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies by McNerney et al. (2018) and Wang et al. (2022) also revealed the role of job satisfaction and coping strategies in reducing burnout and challenges in retention. However, most previous studies focused on isolated individual factors or resources, with limited exploration of how these factors interact or combine to influence turnover intention. Additionally, many of these studies were context-specific or relied on cross-sectional data, leaving a significant gap in generalizable and longitudinal insights into the dynamic relationship between teacher well-being and turnover intention. This gap is particularly pronounced in the Indonesian context, where research on this topic remains scarce. Given the high workloads and challenging conditions faced by Indonesian teachers, who are vulnerable to leaving the profession, this study is critical in providing effective strategies for improving teacher retention in Indonesia.

As teachers hold an important role in educating students, there is a need to address these research gaps. This systematic review explored and synthesized findings on the relationship between teacher well-being and turnover intention. This study aimed to gain knowledge and provide a comprehensive overview of well-being factors affecting teachers' intention to stay in their jobs. Unlike previous studies, which focused on isolated factors, this review offers new insights by examining how various teacher well-being factors collectively influence turnover intention.

## Method

This systematic literature review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009). The PRISMA diagram shows the different phases of this systematic literature review (Figure 1). The articles in this research were searched in the following databases: Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC); PsycInfo; PubMed; Sage Journals; Scopus; Science Direct; World of Science (WoS) Journal. We also used GARUDA (Indonesian journal database) to gain more knowledge about the trends in teacher well-being research in Indonesia. We limited the year between 2013 and 2024 in the database search. We limited the publication period from 2013 to 2024 in the database search. The following terms were combined to form search strings: "teacher\* well-being" OR "teacher\* subjective well-being" OR "teacher\* psychological well-being" OR "teacher\* emotional well-being" OR "teacher\* occupational well-being" OR "teacher\* life satisfaction" AND "quitting intention\*" OR "intentions to quit\*" OR "turnover\* intentions". For Indonesian journal database research, we used the following terms: "Kesejahteraan guru" OR "Kebahagiaan guru" OR "Kepuasan kerja guru" AND "keinginan berhenti" OR "keluar dari pekerjaan" OR "Turnover intention guru". Four scholars discussed the search terms to ensure we found relevant empirical research publications. We looked for the terms in the titles, abstracts, and keywords, and found 1,758 results.

The study selection was based on eight criteria (Table 1). First, we removed duplicate articles ( $n=106$ ) and 1,652 articles remained. Second, these studies were screened by reading titles and abstracts. At this screening stage, the purpose was to identify unrelated articles for this research topic. Exclusion criteria being implemented: (1) not discussing teacher well-being, (2) not an empirical study, or (3) written in languages other than English and Indonesian. The implemented criteria were decided by four researchers and the coding was conducted individually as it did not call for interpretation.

Moving to the second screening stage, the 31 articles were assessed for eligibility by analyzing full-text articles. It was conducted through an inter-rater process, and eight articles remained. The full-text analysis has exclusion criteria being implemented: (1) participants were not preschool teachers or lecturers in higher education, (2) participants worked as special needs teachers, (3) the article was not peer-reviewed, (4) the study used an experimental design, or (5) the article did not define well-being as subjective or psychological well-being.

The searches were limited due to the availability of database access at the moment. The systematic literature review's exclusion criteria can be seen in the table below (Table 1). After considering the final articles we attained, we conducted a hand-search to maximize the results in the second search. Using ConnectedPaper, applying the same terms in search strings, and excluding the articles using the same criteria, we attained three more articles, for a total of 11 articles (Table 2). The following information was gathered from the included studies: bibliographic information (author and year), contextual details (country, sample sizes, and characteristics of participants), research design, methods, data collection technique, as well as the theories about teacher well-being and turnover intention, and the key findings.

## Result

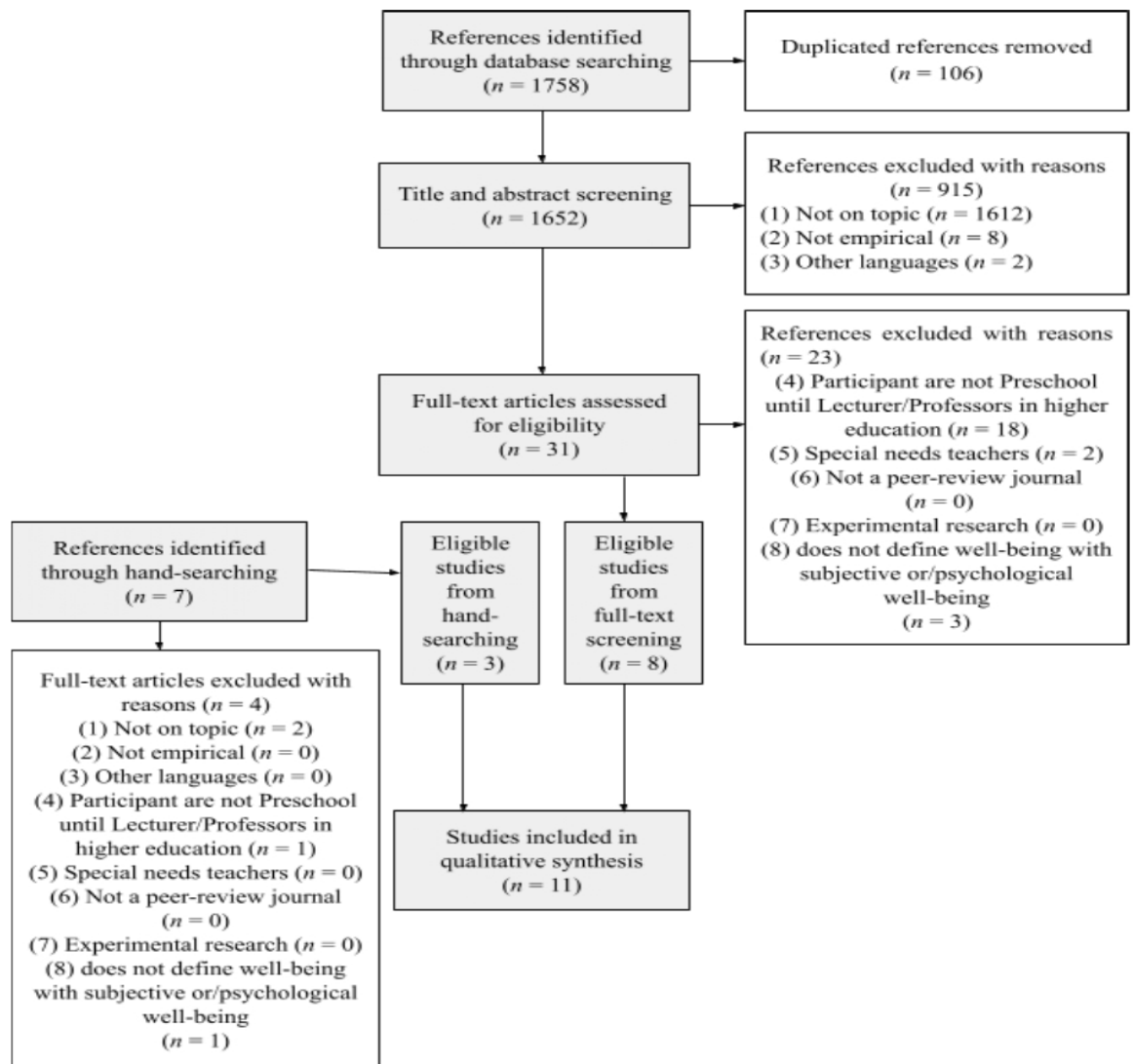
The screening process according to PRISMA guidelines resulted in 11 eligible articles published between 2013 and 2024. This section presents the results, which are described in detail under the following subheadings.

### *Included Studies Characteristics*

The qualitative synthesis of this study involved a total of 11 studies, as shown in Table 2, and were published from 2013 to 2024. These studies were carried across ten countries, with most studies related to teacher well-being and turnover intention conducted in Asia compared to other regions: Australia ( $n=2$ ), Canada ( $n=1$ ), China ( $n=1$ ), Germany ( $n=1$ ), Ghana ( $n=1$ ), Hong Kong ( $n=1$ ), Lithuania ( $n=1$ ), Pakistan ( $n=1$ ), Taiwan ( $n=1$ ), and Tanzania ( $n=1$ ). Unfortunately, no related articles were found from Indonesia or the GARUDA database. Education levels for studies reviewed range from early childhood education ( $n=2$ ), primary school ( $n=5$ ), and secondary school ( $n=8$ ); each study had a sample size of more than 100 participants. Only one study failed to explain the level of education,

**Figure 1**

*PRISMA Flow Chart Diagram*



**Table 1***Exclusion Criteria*

Criterion	Description	Example	
1	Not on topic	The article addressed another topic.	Alreshidi et al. (2021)
2	Not an empirical study	The article did not report an empirical study.	Dignath et al. (2022)
3	Another language	The article was in a language other than English and Indonesian.	Fernández-Puig et al. (2015)
4	Preschool teachers or lecturers in higher education	The participants were not kindergarten to lecturers at university.	Li et al. (2022)
5	Special needs teachers	The participants were special needs teachers.	Fu et al. (2020)
6	Not a peer-reviewed journal	The article was published without a peer-review process.	N/A
7	Experimental research	The article discussed an experimental study.	N/A
8	Did not define well-being as subjective or psychological well-being	The article does not use teacher well-being with subjective or psychological well-being.	Russell et al. (2020)

Note. N/A = not available.

namely Zaheer et al. (2022). These studies were quantitative in nature and used questionnaires as a collection instrument. Lastly, most of the studies adopt a cross-sectional design, with only one utilizing a longitudinal approach.

*Teacher Well-Being Conceptualizations*

Most of the studies used subjective well-being ( $n=9$ ), then occupational well-being ( $n=4$ ), and one assessed psychological well-being (see Table 2). Kosi et al. (2015), Lei et al. (2024), and Zaheer et al. (2022) defined teacher well-being with job satisfaction. Since job satisfaction is categorized as subjective well-being, the discussion of job satisfaction will fall under this term. Smith et al. as cited in Kosi et al. (2015) and Madigan and Kim as cited in Lei et al. (2024) referred to job satisfaction as affective and cognitive job satisfaction. It was described as how satisfied a teacher is with their job. Job satisfaction is determined by factors like salary, work environment, job stress, and opportunities for career development (Coomber & Louise Barriball, 2007).

Teachers' positive evaluation of their profession and workplace, along with the absence of negative affect, is strongly associated with higher job satisfaction (Jonathan et al., 2013; Lucksnat et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Conversely, low job satisfaction may adversely affect teaching quality and work commitment (Zang & Feng, 2023). In addition to job satisfaction, subjective work vitality was observed by Collie (2022, 2023); while Zheng et al. (2015) used the term "life well-being" to describe teachers' subjective well-being.

Subjective vitality refers to the energy and excitement of the teacher over their work. It is influenced by the relationship the teacher has at work, the responsibility of completing tasks, and

the number of disruptive student behaviors to be dealt with (Collie, 2022, 2023). Life well-being is differentiated into two types: family members who are associated with family life matters; personal and family care, which represent an employee's feelings (Zheng et al., 2015).

In terms of occupational well-being measurement, all related studies went by the same definition: how a teacher functions effectively at work, e.g., at school, and has the opportunity to grow professionally (Bagdžiūnienė et al., 2023; Collie, 2023; McInerney et al., 2018). Satisfaction gives teachers an incentive to stay in their profession (Lucksnat et al., 2022; McInerney et al., 2018). Different measures have quantified the functions of teachers to be effective in this respect, for example, Dagenais-Desmarais and Savoie (2011) described teacher well-being as a perception of a teacher about the good relationship among colleagues, meaningful achievements, appreciation received for their work or as a person, and the capability to execute the task effectively for the organization. Since teaching is a long-term profession for teachers, they must maintain high enthusiasm in their job to mitigate emotional exhaustion (Aldrup et al., 2018). Workplace policies, labor protection, logistic services, compensation and benefits, and management style shape teacher well-being. Cortina and Hoover Thames (2013) and Zheng et al. (2015) stated that the facets of psychological well-being that the measurement is related to are learning and growth, work achievement, and self-actualization. None of these studies used the psychological well-being measurement that is specifically concerned with teachers. Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2023) and Collie (2023) synthesized subjective well-being and psychological well-being in measuring teacher well-being. It was merely defined as the perceptions and positive evaluations of teachers in their jobs; a set of abilities to become engaged in their profession.

#### *Turnover Intention Conceptualizations*

Various conceptualizations were used in the research to define teacher turnover intention, from cognitive decision-making theory, social exchange theory, psychological contract theory, organizational identity theory, expectancy-value theory, to organizational commitment theory (Table 2). There were two definitions used to describe turnover intention: (1) Turnover intention is defined as teachers' willingness to leave their workplace (Collie, 2023; Kosi et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2022). (2) Turnover intention is also defined by teachers' intention to leave their profession to seek other working opportunities (McInerney et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2018).

There are numerous antecedents affecting teachers' turnover intention. Jonathan et al. (2013) mentioned that psychological, economic, and demographic factors are the main factors of teacher turnover intention. Psychological factors that emphasize teachers' feelings, behaviors, or perceptions (Jonathan et al., 2013), e.g., heavy workloads, unappealing working conditions, lack of autonomy at work, and little supporting resources from school, might lead to the rising teacher turnover rate (Bagdžiūnienė et al., 2023; Collie, 2023; Lucksnat et al., 2022). Economic factors emphasize the balance between the reward teachers received and the cost of staying in their profession (Mueller & Price) as cited in Jonathan et al. (2013). Teachers may become dissatisfied and more likely to plan to leave if this balance is not ideal and they perceive their efforts are worth more than the benefits (Bagdžiūnienė et al., 2023; Collie, 2022, 2023; Jonathan et al., 2013; Kosi et al., 2015). Kosi et al. (2015) used the

effort-reward imbalance model that explains the distribution of rewards to employees, from adequate salary, respect, and support, to security or career opportunities. Similarly, Collie (2022, 2023) used the job demands-resources model to explain the antecedents of teacher turnover intention. Demographic factors emphasize individual characteristics, e.g., work location, gender, age, or education level (Price) as cited in Jonathan et al. (2013). To sum it up, turnover intention is defined as teachers' desire to leave their school/educational organizations or to quit their job as teachers to seek better opportunities. However, there were several studies ( $n=4$ ) that did not clearly define turnover intention.



Table 2

Summary of Studies

Author, Year	Country	N	Sample	Design	Methods	Data Collection Technique	Teacher Well-Being Theory	Turnover Intention Theory	Findings (direction of relationship)
Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2023)	Lithuania	522	Primary and secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Online questionnaires	Occupational, psychological, and subjective well-being	-	Negative correlation
Collie (2022)	Australia	325	Primary and secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Online questionnaires	Subjective well-being	Cognitive decision-making theory	Negative correlation
Collie (2023)	Australia	426	Primary and secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Occupational, and subjective well-being	Cognitive decision-making theory	Negative correlation
Jonathan et al. (2013)	Tanzania	117	Secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Subjective well-being	Social exchange theory	Negative correlation
Kosi et al. (2015)	Ghana	203	Secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Subjective well-being	Social exchange theory	Negative correlation
Lei et al. (2024)	China	3,950 (T1), 3,602 (T2), 3,450 (T3)	Early childhood teachers	Longitudinal	Quantitative	Online questionnaires	Subjective well-being	Psychological contract theory, and organizational identity theory	Negative correlation

**Table 2 (Continued)***Summary of Studies*

Author, Year	Country	N	Sample	Design	Methods	Data Collection Technique	Teacher Well-Being Theory	Turnover Intention Theory	Findings (direction of relationship)
Lucksnat et al. (2022)	Germany	446	Secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Online questionnaires	Occupational well-being	Expectancy-value theory	Enthusiasm for teaching (+), Emotional exhaustion (-) McInerney et al. (2018)
Hong Kong	1,109	Primary and secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Online Questionnaires	Occupational Well-Being	Organizational commitment theory	Negative correlation	
Wang et al. (2022)	Canada	947	Primary and secondary school teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Questionnaires	Subjective Well-Being	-	Negative correlation
Yang et al. (2018)	Taiwan	272	Early childhood teachers	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Online questionnaires	Subjective well-being	-	Negative correlation
Zaheer et al. (2022)	Pakistan	269	-	Cross-sectional	Quantitative	Online questionnaires	Subjective well-being	-	Negative correlation

*Note.* \* - ; study does not state the information

## Discussion

The findings indicate that teacher well-being is negatively associated with the turnover intention (Bagdžiūnienė et al., 2023; Collie, 2022, 2023; Jonathan et al., 2013; Kosi et al., 2015; Lei et al., 2024; McInerney et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2018; Zaheer et al., 2022). Specifically, when teachers' well-being is high, they are less likely to develop the intention to quit. All of the studies measured teacher well-being as an independent variable, except for three, which examined the following: job demands and resources as a mediator for turnover intention (Collie, 2022, 2023), role stress for turnover intention (Yang et al., 2018), and perceived work stress for turnover intention (Zaheer et al., 2022). In all, three studies that measured teacher well-being and turnover intention as dependent variables were selected: Bagdžiūnienė et al. (2023), Lei et al. (2024), McInerney et al. (2018), and Wang et al. (2022); which studied workplace climate and teacher well-being as independent variables.

Teacher turnover intention has a prominent impact on schools, teachers, and students. Guin (2004) found that teachers and school administrators experience distress because of teacher turnovers. Students' school performance is also affected by the replacement of teachers (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). The impact can be felt even before their departure; they may display poor work motivation and engagement, which affects the work climate (Bagdžiūnienė et al., 2023). One's intention to leave their teaching position can be exacerbated by individual factors, e.g., motivation and work experience (Van den Borre et al., 2021). organizational factors, e.g., work stress, mentoring, and collaborative school culture (Yang et al., 2018).

Collie (2022) and Lei et al. (2024) explained that teachers with positive perceptions and evaluations of their teaching and education or their workplace will be less likely to develop a turnover tendency. Such feelings at work, high energy levels manifested in a positive attitude toward one's job, mostly result from positive interactions with colleagues and students. In line with this argument, Kosi et al. (2015), Lucksnat et al. (2022), and Yang et al. (2018) found that high levels of happiness, enthusiasm, life and job satisfaction, and job security reduce teachers' intention to leave the profession significantly. Improvement in those aspects can ensure that teachers perform their work excellently and are capable of fostering good relationships.

Additionally, teacher well-being is closely related to their workplace. Lei et al. (2024) showed the importance of workplace climate and teacher well-being on turnover intention in the context of early childhood education teachers. The teachers perceive themselves to be a part of the organization as they develop trust with coworkers; thus, they are more committed to the organization, willing to contribute to the development of the organization, and motivated to remain in their profession. However, it is worth noting that the rise in turnover intentions cannot always be prevented. Some studies have explored the teacher turnover intention trend during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that the pandemic influenced teachers' decision to leave their job (Collie, 2022; Zaheer et al., 2022). Herman et al. (2023) found that increased turnover intentions at any given time may heighten teachers' sensitivity to perceived shortcomings and inadequacies in their workplace and thus intensify their

desire to quit. Schools should work to improve and maintain the stability of workplace climate (Lei et al., 2024).

This study highlights unique findings of previous studies. Teachers who leave their jobs see an increase in well-being and job satisfaction. Contrary to the previous findings, several studies provide a new insight that turnover intention might have a good impact on teachers, especially in countries with a teacher-centered education system like Germany. For instance, turnover intention allows teachers to brainstorm new ideas at school (Kosi et al., 2015) and have higher resilience than peers who do not experience it (Wilkins & Comber, 2015). This is shown by the teacher churning phenomenon, which, generally, creates an opportunity for teachers to explore and find suitable classes, grade levels, or even schools (Dhaliwal et al., 2023). Some studies use the term “employee” for teachers, which provides a new perspective from organizational psychology. The high number of teachers who decide to leave can affect the school as an organization, e.g., the school’s public image and spending for recruiting new employees (Kosi et al., 2015).

Studies have also highlighted that teacher well-being increases the likelihood of teachers staying in their profession. Another interesting finding is that teacher retention is higher the older teachers get (Jonathan et al., 2013; Lucksnat et al., 2022). It might happen due to supportive working conditions, pension benefits that they might receive, the higher chance of promotion in the organization, a high level of enthusiasm for the profession, or having gone through a thorough decision-making process before settling for the teaching profession (Jonathan et al., 2013; Lucksnat et al., 2022).

#### *Limitations*

Based on the findings of this literature review, there are several limitations, along with recommendations for future teacher well-being and turnover intention research. First, this review focused only on the relationship between teacher well-being and turnover intention. Future research can further explore the predictors of teacher well-being that may influence turnover intention. Second, the scope of the research was still limited. All of the included studies were from outside of Indonesia. Considering that the phenomenon of teacher turnover occurs globally, this can be a consideration for future research in Indonesia to help schools and governments reduce teacher turnover, such as by raising awareness of the importance of teacher well-being. Third, the included studies had limited in-depth analysis on teacher well-being and turnover intention among different sample groups. Further studies are needed to compare differences among these groups, e.g., a comparative study on primary and secondary grade teachers that may help enrich the findings.

### **Conclusions**

Teachers have a crucial role as part of the school’s ecosystem and educators for students. Therefore, this review has led to significant findings regarding the effect of teacher well-being and turnover intention. The review implied that teacher well-being negatively contributes to their turnover intention. The higher the teacher’s well-being, the lower the teacher’s intention to leave the job or school. Several

factors of teacher well-being influence their intention to remain in the profession, including positive emotions, happiness, enthusiasm, life satisfaction, and job security. These factors contribute to reduced work stress and foster positive relationships among teachers, offering a more comprehensive understanding of effective teacher retention strategies. There are some limitations regarding this literature review. Only a relatively small amount of content in the articles can be utilized for analysis despite the use of several journal databases. Despite the phenomenon of teacher turnover intention happening globally, the scope of the research conducted was still limited.

#### *Implication*

Teacher well-being is significantly influenced by the workplace environment. Understanding this relationship emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and healthy work climate that fosters both personal and professional growth among teachers.

#### *Recommendation*

The government and educational institutions should collaborate to develop and implement policies that address the various aspects of teacher well-being. Such policies are essential to promote teachers' longevity, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in the workplace.

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#### *Conflict of Interest*

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest to this article's research, authorship, and/or publication

#### *Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing*

The author declares that no artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or others) were used in the preparation of this paper

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