Journal of Thai-Chinese Social Science
E-ISSN：3057-157X (Online)
https://so19.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JTCSS/AboutJournal

# A Study on the Factors Influencing Turnover Intention among Faculty in Chinese Private Higher Education Institutions

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**Abstract：** This study investigates the factors influencing turnover intention among faculty members in private higher education institutions in China, with a focus on Fujian Province. Guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory (SET), the research explores how demographic characteristics, job demands, and job resources shape faculty members' intention to leave their institutions. A quantitative survey was administered to 400 full-time faculty members from 24 private universities, employing stratified random sampling to ensure representativeness. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and multiple regression analyses were conducted using SPSS 27.0. The results reveal three key findings: (1) demographic characteristics, such as age, academic rank, and income, significantly influence turnover intention; (2) high job demands—including research pressure, role conflict, and technological adaptation—exert a positive effect on turnover intention; and (3) sufficient job resources—especially collegial support, leadership support, and institutional fairness—play a protective role by reducing turnover intention, although career development support was identified as a major shortcoming. Theoretically, this study enriches the application of the JD-R model and SET within the context of Chinese private higher education, addressing a gap in the literature that has predominantly focused on public universities or Western contexts. Practically, the findings highlight the need for private institutions to reduce excessive job demands, enhance professional development pathways, and strengthen leadership and collegial support in order to improve faculty retention. Limitations of this study include its regional scope and cross-sectional design, suggesting avenues for future research involving longitudinal studies and comparative analyses across provinces.

**Keywords:**Faculty turnover intention; Private higher education; Job Demands–Resources model; Social Exchange Theory; Career development; China

## 1.Introduction

In recent years, the rapid expansion and diversification of China's higher education system have created unprecedented opportunities and challenges for universities, particularly within the private sector. Private higher education institutions have become an essential complement to public universities by providing flexible educational models and meeting the growing demand for higher education access (Mok, 2021). According to the *China Private Higher Education Development Analysis Report (2023–2025)*, the number of private higher education institutions increased from 764 in 2023 to 829 in 2025, representing nearly 28.4% of all higher education institutions nationwide (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2025). This expansion underscores the critical role of private institutions in shaping the future of Chinese higher education.

Despite this growth, faculty management within private universities has emerged as a pressing concern. Faculty members are the backbone of higher education, and their stability directly influences teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional reputation. However, recent surveys indicate that turnover intention among university faculty in China is rising, particularly in private institutions. Data from the *China Education Statistical Yearbook* (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2022) show that approximately 15%–20% of private university faculty express strong intentions to resign, and studies reveal that turnover rates in private universities (15%–25%) are significantly higher than those in public institutions (Gao et al., 2025; Li, 2025). In southeastern provinces such as Fujian, where the private higher education sector is highly developed, faculty mobility is particularly frequent, with estimated annual turnover rates ranging from 18% to 25% (Provincial Departments of Education in Southeastern China, 2025). These statistics highlight the urgency of addressing faculty retention as a key policy and management challenge.

The importance of this issue is further reinforced by national and regional policy initiatives. The *2024–2035 Plan for Building a Strong Education Nation*, jointly issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, emphasizes the need to enhance the stability and quality of the academic workforce to support the modernization of higher education (Xinhua News Agency, 2025). Similarly, the *Fujian Province "14th Five-Year" Special Education Development Plan* calls for strengthening faculty teams and improving retention mechanisms in order to build a high-quality regional education system by 2025. These policy directives underscore that faculty turnover is not only an institutional problem but also a matter of national educational strategy and regional competitiveness.

Nevertheless, empirical research on faculty turnover intention in the Chinese private higher education context remains limited. While international studies have extensively applied theoretical models such as the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework to examine employee turnover in corporate and healthcare sectors (Ivziku et al., 2025; Udushirinwa et al., 2022), systematic applications to

university faculty are scarce. Existing domestic studies are often fragmented, focusing on individual cases without offering comprehensive theoretical validation. Moreover, little attention has been paid to regional and institutional variations, even though these differences significantly shape faculty experiences and career decisions (Leisyte & Dee, 2012; Morgan et al., 2022). This research gap restricts the development of effective strategies tailored to the specific conditions of China's private higher education institutions.

## 2.Research Objectives

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to contribute both theoretical and practical insights into faculty turnover intention in China's private universities. Specifically, the objectives are:

**1)** To explore the factors influencing turnover intention among faculty members in China's private higher education institutions.

**2)** To propose optimization strategies aimed at reducing turnover intention among faculty in private higher education institutions, thereby providing reference and policy recommendations for improving faculty retention in China's private higher education sector.

## 3.Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of this study primarily draws upon the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and the Social Exchange Theory (SET). The JD-R model, first proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001), conceptualizes the work environment as consisting of two critical dimensions: job demands and job resources. Job demands, such as workload, role conflict, and administrative duties, require continuous effort and are often associated with psychological strain and burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Conversely, job resources, such as career development opportunities, collegial support, and organizational fairness, play a motivational role by enhancing engagement and job satisfaction (Asamani et al., 2025). The JD-R model has been widely applied in organizational and occupational health research, particularly in corporate and healthcare contexts, and is increasingly employed in educational research to explain faculty stress, well-being, and turnover behavior (Collie, 2023; Marzocchi et al., 2024). Its strength lies in capturing both the negative effects of excessive demands and the protective effects of sufficient resources, making it a robust framework for examining turnover intention in higher education.

Complementing this perspective, the Social Exchange Theory (SET), advanced by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), provides a lens to understand the relational dynamics underlying faculty turnover intention. SET posits that relationships within organizations are governed by reciprocity: when employees perceive organizational support, fairness, and recognition, they tend to reciprocate with loyalty and commitment; when such exchanges are absent, dissatisfaction and withdrawal behaviors, including turnover, become more likely. In academic settings, faculty who experience inadequate institutional support or limited career advancement opportunities may perceive an imbalance in this exchange, thereby increasing their intention to leave

(Boamah et al., 2022; Heffernan & McKay, 2019). Together, the JD-R model and SET provide a coherent analytical framework: the former emphasizes structural and psychological mechanisms linking demands and resources to turnover, while the latter highlights the social and organizational exchanges that shape faculty decisions.

Demographic characteristics have long been regarded as critical determinants of employees' turnover intention in organizational behavior and human resource management research. Early models of employee mobility emphasized that individual attributes such as gender, age, education, tenure, and income significantly affect the likelihood of resignation (Grissom et al., 2016; Schmelzer, 2012). Subsequent empirical studies have reinforced these findings, showing that younger employees and those with lower income are more likely to demonstrate higher turnover intention due to career instability and limited financial satisfaction (Griffeth et al., 2000). In higher education contexts, research has indicated that demographic factors such as academic rank and years of teaching experience are strongly associated with retention, as faculty at lower ranks often face greater job insecurity and weaker career progression opportunities (O'Meara et al., 2008; Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Recent studies further highlight that demographic disparities intersect with institutional contexts, influencing how faculty perceive job satisfaction and career development in different types of universities (Rosser, 2004; Xu, 2008). While these insights have been widely validated in corporate sectors, healthcare organizations, and public universities, the specific context of private higher education in China has not yet been systematically examined. In view of this gap, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

***H1: Demographic characteristics (gender, age, academic rank, educational background, years of teaching experience, and income) have a significant impact on turnover intention.***

High job demands have consistently been identified as a major antecedent of turnover intention in organizational behavior and occupational health research. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001), excessive demands such as workload, time pressure, and administrative responsibilities require sustained physical and psychological effort, which often lead to exhaustion and burnout. Numerous empirical studies support this relationship: for example, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) demonstrated that high job demands were strongly associated with emotional exhaustion, which in turn predicted higher turnover intention. In the academic profession, teaching workload, research pressure, and administrative duties have been highlighted as particularly salient stressors (Houston et al., 2006; Winefield et al., 2003). Evidence shows that faculty who face heavy teaching assignments and simultaneous pressure to publish experience heightened role conflict and reduced job satisfaction, thereby increasing their likelihood of leaving (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Gillespie et al., 2001) Moreover, comparative studies across higher education systems reveal that

administrative burdens and intensified performance expectations are significant predictors of faculty attrition, especially in resource-constrained institutions (Houston et al., 2006; Sabharwal & Corley, 2009). While these findings have been widely validated in Western higher education contexts, systematic evidence from China's private universities remains limited. Considering the unique institutional structures and governance challenges in this sector, it is crucial to examine whether high job demands exert a similar positive effect on faculty turnover intention. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

***H2: High job demands (including teaching workload, research pressure, and administrative duties) have a positive effect on faculty turnover intention.***

Adequate job resources have been widely recognized as protective factors that reduce employees' turnover intention by enhancing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional development. Within the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001), resources such as autonomy, career development opportunities, and supportive leadership are conceptualized as motivational factors that buffer the negative effects of high demands and foster employee engagement. Empirical studies demonstrate that organizational support significantly improves employees' commitment and decreases their intention to leave (Abou Hashish, 2015; Xiu et al., 2019). In higher education, leadership support and collegial collaboration are crucial for maintaining faculty morale and facilitating academic productivity, thereby strengthening retention (Mather & Bam, 2025; Sell, 2023). Research also shows that institutions offering career advancement opportunities and fair evaluation systems are more likely to retain talented faculty members (Barnes et al., 2021; Guglielmo et al., 2011). Conversely, when faculty perceive insufficient recognition, limited development pathways, or weak collegial support, their turnover intention increases substantially (Grissom et al., 2016; Smart, 1990). Despite extensive validation of these mechanisms in Western contexts, evidence from China's private higher education sector remains underdeveloped, particularly regarding how organizational support structures affect faculty retention. Addressing this gap, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

***H3: Sufficient job resources (including career development opportunities, leadership support, and collegial collaboration) have a negative effect on faculty turnover intention.***

The following figure shows the theoretical framework model of this paper:

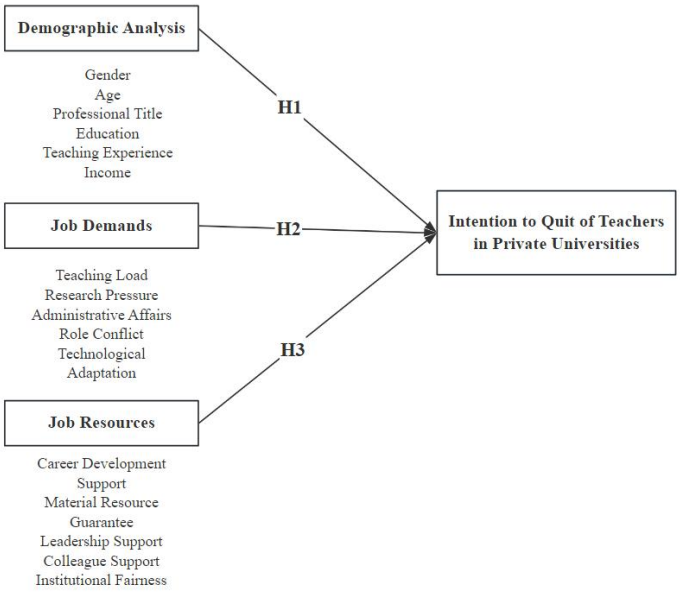


**Figure 1.Theoretical framework**

## 4.Methodology

This study employed a quantitative survey method to investigate the factors influencing turnover intention among faculty members in Chinese private universities. The survey method allowed for the collection of standardized data across a relatively large sample, ensuring both representativeness and reliability of statistical inference. The research population consisted of full-time faculty members from 24 private universities in Fujian Province, which included comprehensive universities, science and engineering institutions, arts institutions, and vocational colleges. This composition reflects the diversity of private higher education in the province and thus enhances the generalizability of the findings. The fieldwork was conducted between June and July 2025, lasting for two months. The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire based on validated scales, measuring demographic characteristics, job demands, job resources, and turnover intention. A pilot test was conducted prior to the formal survey to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument. The following sections present the sampling procedures, research instrument, data collection process, and analytical methods.

### 4.1 Population and Sampling

The research population comprised approximately 12,000 full-time faculty members employed in 24 private universities in Fujian Province. To determine the minimum required sample size, Yamane (1973)'s formula was applied at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, which yielded a sample size of at least 387 valid responses. To ensure sufficient robustness and to compensate for potential invalid responses, the final target sample size was set at 400 valid questionnaires. A stratified random sampling method was employed to guarantee proportional representation across different institutional categories (comprehensive, science and engineering, arts, and vocational institutions) and demographic groups

(gender, age, academic rank, educational background, years of teaching experience, and income). Faculty members were then randomly selected within each stratum to ensure representativeness. The questionnaires were distributed electronically via the Wenjuanxing platform (https://www.wjx.cn/), which facilitated efficient dissemination and ensured anonymity of responses. Ultimately, 400 valid questionnaires were collected, achieving the target sample and satisfying the requirements for statistical inference.

**4.2 Research Instrument**

The principal research instrument was a structured self-administered questionnaire. The design of the instrument was based on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and Mobley (1977)'s turnover intention framework, ensuring theoretical alignment with the study's objectives. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), which has been widely used in turnover and organizational behavior studies. The questionnaire consisted of four main sections. The first section collected demographic information, including gender, age, academic rank, educational background, years of teaching experience, and annual income. The second section measured job demands with 20 items, grouped into five dimensions: teaching load, research pressure, administrative duties, role conflict, and technological adaptation, all adapted from Demerouti et al. (2001). The third section measured job resources with 20 items across five dimensions: career development support, material resources, leadership support, collegial support, and institutional fairness, also adapted from Demerouti et al. (2001). The fourth section assessed turnover intention using five items adapted from Mobley (1977). All items were carefully modified to fit the professional realities of faculty members in Chinese private higher education institutions, thereby ensuring contextual relevance and content validity. A pilot test involving 66 faculty members confirmed that the questionnaire possessed satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values for all dimensions exceeding the threshold of 0.70.

**4.3 Data Collection**

After confirming the reliability and validity of the instrument, full-scale data collection was conducted between June and July 2025. The questionnaire was disseminated digitally via Wenjuanxing and distributed to faculty members through QR codes and hyperlinks shared on widely used communication platforms such as WeChat. An introductory statement assured respondents of confidentiality and emphasized that participation was voluntary. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed and 400 valid responses were obtained, yielding an effective response rate of 100%. This met the minimum required sample size and ensured the adequacy of the dataset for subsequent analyses. The data collection process adhered strictly to academic research standards, guaranteeing both the integrity and representativeness of the sample.

**4.4 Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using SPSS 27.0, employing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize demographic variables, while means and standard deviations were used to present the central tendencies and variability of the key constructs. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficients to evaluate internal consistency, with all values exceeding the benchmark of 0.70. To test the research hypotheses, inferential statistics were applied. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine differences in turnover intention across demographic groups (H1), followed by LSD post hoc tests where significant differences were observed. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the predictive effects of job demands and job resources on turnover intention (H2 and H3), enabling the validation of the JD-R framework in the specific context of Chinese private universities. This combination of descriptive and inferential analysis ensured both a comprehensive overview of the data and a rigorous examination of the hypothesized relationships, thereby providing a robust empirical foundation for the study.

## 5.Research Results

### 5.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

The demographic analysis of the 400 valid responses reveals that the faculty workforce in Fujian's private universities is predominantly female, accounting for 66.5% of the sample compared with 33.5% male. In terms of age, the majority of faculty members are concentrated in the 41–50 years category (63.5%), while younger faculty aged 30 years or below and older faculty aged 51 years and above both represent only 9.0% each. This distribution indicates that the faculty cohort is largely mid-career, with relatively limited generational renewal at both the entry and senior ends of the age spectrum.

Regarding professional rank and educational qualifications, Lecturers (50.5%) constitute the largest group, followed by Associate Professors (33.0%), while Professors (6.0%) are underrepresented. Most respondents hold a Master's degree (71.5%), whereas only 9.0% possess a Doctorate. These patterns suggest that private universities rely heavily on faculty with intermediate qualifications and positions, while opportunities for doctoral-level recruitment and senior promotions remain relatively constrained.

Analysis of years of teaching experience and income further illustrates the composition of the sample. More than half of respondents (56.0%) reported 16 years or more of teaching experience, highlighting the prevalence of experienced educators, while younger faculty with less than five years of service represent just 12.0%. Income levels are concentrated in the RMB 100,100–200,000 and RMB 200,100–300,000 ranges (each 41.0%), with relatively few respondents at the lowest or highest income categories. These findings collectively depict a workforce that is stable, mid-ranked, and moderately compensated, providing an important context for the subsequent analysis of job demands, resources, and turnover intention.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of In-Service Faculty Members in Private Universities in Fujian Province**

| Category | Classification | Count | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 134 | 33.50% |
| | Female | 266 | 66.50% |
| | Total | 400 | 100% |
| Age | ≤ 30 years | 36 | 9.00% |
| | 31–40 years | 74 | 18.50% |
| | 41–50 years | 254 | 63.50% |
| | ≥ 51 years | 36 | 9.00% |
| | Total | 400 | 100% |
| Academic Rank | Assistant Lecturer | 42 | 10.50% |
| | Lecturer | 202 | 50.50% |
| | Associate Professor | 132 | 33.00% |
| | Professor | 24 | 6.00% |
| | Total | 400 | 100% |
| Educational Level | Bachelor's Degree | 78 | 19.50% |
| | Master's Degree | 286 | 71.50% |
| | Doctoral Degree | 36 | 9.00% |
| | Total | 400 | 100% |
| Years of Teaching Experience | ≤ 5 years | 48 | 12.00% |
| | 6–10 years | 80 | 20.00% |
| | 11–15 years | 48 | 12.00% |
| | ≥ 16 years | 224 | 56.00% |
| | Total | 400 | 100% |
| Annual Income | RMB 60,000–100,000 | 54 | 13.50% |
| | RMB 100,100–200,000 | 164 | 41.00% |
| | RMB 200,100–300,000 | 164 | 41.00% |
| | RMB ≥ 300,000 | 18 | 4.50% |
| | Total | 400 | 100% |

### 5.2 Analysis of Interval-Scale Variables

#### 5.2.1 Analysis of Job Demands

As presented in Table 2, faculty members reported relatively high levels of job demands, with research pressure (M = 3.72, SD = 0.883) emerging as the most significant source of strain. This was followed by role conflict (M = 3.66, SD = 0.895) and technological adaptation (M = 3.61, SD = 0.867), indicating that balancing multiple roles and adapting to digital platforms also contribute substantially to workload stress. Teaching load (M = 3.51, SD = 0.772) was rated moderately high, while administrative duties (M = 3.40, SD = 0.981) ranked lowest, though still near the threshold of high demand. Overall, the findings suggest that research expectations and role conflicts represent the most critical pressures shaping faculty job demands.

**Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Job Demands**

| Job Demands Dimension | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Teaching Load | 3.51 | 0.772 |
| 2. Research Pressure | 3.72 | 0.883 |
| 3. Administrative Duties | 3.4 | 0.981 |
| 4. Role Conflict | 3.66 | 0.895 |
| 5. Technological Adaptation | 3.61 | 0.867 |

Table 3 shows that the overall mean score for teaching load was 3.51 (SD = 0.772), reflecting a generally high level of pressure associated with instructional responsibilities. Among the four items, guiding students in theses, competitions, and extracurricular activities (M = 3.74, SD = 1.11) was perceived as the heaviest burden, followed by lesson preparation (M = 3.65, SD = 1.051). Weekly teaching hours also contributed notably (M = 3.56, SD = 0.95), whereas marking assignments and addressing student queries (M = 3.11, SD = 1.101) was rated lower, though still moderately demanding. These results indicate that the most pressing aspects of teaching load stem from individualized student supervision and extensive preparation requirements.

**Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Factors Influencing Teaching Load**

| Code | Item Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| J1 | I am assigned a large number of teaching hours per week. | 3.56 | 0.95 |
| J2 | Marking students' assignments and responding to queries takes up a significant portion of my free time. | 3.11 | 1.101 |
| J3 | To achieve optimal teaching outcomes, I need to devote substantial time to lesson preparation. | 3.65 | 1.051 |
| J4 | Guiding students (e.g., theses, competitions, extracurricular activities) imposes a substantial workload. | 3.74 | 1.11 |
| Overall | | 3.51 | 0.772 |

As indicated in Table 4, the overall mean score for research pressure was 3.72 (SD = 0.883), representing the highest among the job demand dimensions. The most burdensome item was research tasks requiring substantial extra time and effort (M = 3.93, SD = 1.049), followed by the intense competition for research grants (M = 3.81, SD = 1.048). Expectations for publishing high-quality papers were also considerable (M = 3.63, SD = 1.07), while the evaluation system (M = 3.52, SD = 1.033) exerted comparatively less, though still significant, pressure. These findings highlight that both the heavy workload of research activities and the competitive funding environment are the primary drivers of research-related stress among faculty.

**Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations for Factors Influencing Research Pressure**

| Code | Item Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| K1 | My university/college has high expectations for me to publish high-quality academic papers. | 3.63 | 1.07 |
| K2 | The competition for obtaining research grants is extremely intense, creating significant pressure for me. | 3.81 | 1.048 |
| K3 | Research tasks (e.g., experiments, fieldwork, data analysis, writing) require substantial extra time and effort. | 3.93 | 1.049 |
| K4 | The existing research evaluation system (e.g., “up-or-out” policies) places tremendous pressure on me. | 3.52 | 1.033 |
| Overall | | 3.72 | 0.883 |

Table 5 shows that the overall mean score for administrative tasks was 3.40 (SD = 0.981), indicating a moderate but notable burden. The heaviest pressure stemmed from paperwork requirements such as reports and evaluation documents (M = 3.64, SD = 1.149), followed by non-academic administrative or social service work (M = 3.41, SD = 1.056). In contrast, attendance at numerous meetings (M = 3.36, SD = 1.133) and handling student-related administrative matters (M = 3.21, SD = 1.263) were perceived as relatively less demanding, though still time-consuming. Overall, the findings suggest that extensive paperwork and additional service obligations are the primary sources of administrative strain for faculty members.

**Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations for Factors Influencing Administrative Tasks**

| Code | Item Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| X1 | I am required to attend a large number of administrative meetings. | 3.36 | 1.133 |
| X2 | Completing various reports, summaries, evaluation documents, and other administrative paperwork consumes a great deal of my time. | 3.64 | 1.149 |
| X3 | Handling student-related administrative matters (e.g., leave requests, certificates, awards, honors) is rather cumbersome. | 3.21 | 1.263 |
| X4 | I am required to undertake a considerable amount of non-academic administrative or social service work. | 3.41 | 1.056 |
| Overall | | 3.4 | 0.981 |

As shown in Table 6, the overall mean score for role conflict was 3.66 (SD = 0.895), reflecting a relatively high level of strain caused by competing responsibilities. The most prominent source of conflict was the difficulty in simultaneously meeting teaching, research, and administrative expectations (M = 3.91, SD = 1.068), followed by time conflicts between teaching and research tasks (M = 3.67, SD = 1.002). Faculty also reported challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities (M = 3.62, SD = 0.994), while administrative demands conflicting with their core academic identity (M = 3.44, SD = 1.074) were perceived as somewhat less severe. Overall, these results underscore the persistent tension faculty face in reconciling multiple roles, which significantly contributes to job-related stress.

**Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations for Factors Influencing Role Conflict**

| Code | Item Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| JS1 | I often find it difficult to meet expectations in teaching, research, and administrative duties simultaneously. | 3.91 | 1.068 |
| JS2 | Teaching and research tasks often conflict in terms of time investment. | 3.67 | 1.002 |
| JS3 | Administrative requirements often conflict with my core role as a scholar/educator. | 3.44 | 1.074 |
| JS4 | Multiple role demands at work make it difficult for me to balance work and family responsibilities. | 3.62 | 0.994 |
| Overall | | 3.66 | 0.895 |

Table 7 indicates that the overall mean score for technological adaptation was 3.61 (SD = 0.867), suggesting a relatively high level of pressure associated with digital transformation in teaching and administration. The most significant challenges were the need for continuous learning of new technologies (M = 3.87, SD = 0.981) and the additional time required for course design and interactive management in online or blended teaching modes (M = 3.85, SD = 0.89). Meanwhile, increased workload from adopting digital platforms (M = 3.44, SD = 1.031) and technical malfunctions affecting efficiency and mood (M = 3.27, SD = 1.055) were rated moderately high but comparatively less burdensome. Overall, these findings highlight that ongoing adaptation to new technologies and the demands of online pedagogy are key contributors to faculty stress.

**Table 7. Means and Standard Deviations for Factors Influencing Technological Adaptation**

| Code | Item Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| JJS1 | I need to continually learn new teaching technologies (e.g., online teaching platforms, smart classroom equipment, instructional software). | 3.87 | 0.981 |
| JJS2 | Using new technologies for teaching or administration (e.g., online teaching, digital office systems) increases my workload. | 3.44 | 1.031 |
| JJS3 | In online or blended teaching modes, I need to invest more time in course design and interactive management. | 3.85 | 0.89 |
| JJS4 | I often encounter technical malfunctions or hardware/software issues that affect my work efficiency and mood. | 3.27 | 1.055 |
| Overall | | 3.61 | 0.867 |

**5.2.2 Analysis of Work Resources**

As presented in Table 8, the overall evaluation of work resources among faculty members revealed a mixed picture. Collegial support (M = 3.77, SD = 0.814) was rated the highest, indicating that peer relationships and teamwork provide the strongest form of resource support. This was followed by institutional fairness (M = 3.33, SD = 0.722) and leadership support (M = 3.30, SD = 0.757), both reflecting moderate but uneven levels of organizational assistance. Material resource provision (M = 3.22, SD = 0.784) also fell within a moderate range, suggesting partial adequacy of facilities and research support. In contrast, career development support (M = 2.95, SD = 0.717) was rated lowest, highlighting a key shortfall in promotion pathways and professional growth opportunities. Collectively, these findings suggest that while interpersonal support from colleagues is relatively strong, structural and developmental resources remain insufficient, potentially undermining faculty retention.

**Table 8. Means and Standard Deviations for Work Resources**

| Work Resource Dimension | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Career Development Support | 2.95 | 0.717 |
| Material Resource Provision | 3.22 | 0.784 |
| Leadership Support | 3.3 | 0.757 |
| Collegial Support | 3.77 | 0.814 |
| Institutional Fairness | 3.33 | 0.722 |

Table 9 demonstrates that the overall mean score for career development support was 2.95 (SD = 0.717), the lowest among all work resource dimensions, indicating a notable deficiency in this area. Faculty members rated a clear pathway and criteria for academic rank promotion (M

= 3.61, SD = 0.849) as relatively satisfactory; however, other aspects of career development were perceived as inadequate. In particular, funding for participation in domestic or international conferences or training (M = 2.42, SD = 1.059) received the lowest score, followed by limited opportunities for involvement in important research or teaching reform projects (M = 2.72, SD = 1.024). Support for further academic development, such as visiting scholar programs, was rated slightly higher but still insufficient (M = 3.06, SD = 1.084). These findings underscore that despite some clarity in promotion pathways, financial and institutional support for broader academic advancement remains weak, restricting faculty professional growth and potentially exacerbating turnover intention.

**Table 9. Means and Standard Deviations for Career Development Support Items**

| Code | Specific Item | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZY1 | My school/college provides me with a clear pathway and criteria for academic rank promotion. | 3.61 | 0.849 |
| ZY2 | I can obtain sufficient funding support to attend domestic and international academic conferences or training. | 2.42 | 1.059 |
| ZY3 | I have opportunities to participate in important research or teaching reform projects. | 2.72 | 1.024 |
| ZY4 | My school/college encourages and provides resources for faculty to pursue further academic development (e.g., visiting scholar programs, advanced studies). | 3.06 | 1.084 |
| Overall | Career Development Support (Composite) | 2.95 | 0.717 |

As shown in Table 10, the overall mean score for material resource provision was 3.22 (SD = 0.784), reflecting a moderate level of adequacy in institutional support for faculty work. Among the items, adequate office space and equipment (M = 3.50, SD = 1.026) received the highest rating, suggesting that basic workplace infrastructure is relatively well-provided. Access to books, reference materials, and databases (M = 3.31, SD = 0.929) was rated slightly above average, while laboratories, instruments, and facilities (M = 3.10, SD = 0.860) were perceived as less sufficient. The lowest score was observed for teaching and research funding (M = 2.98, SD = 0.936), indicating that financial support often fails to meet faculty needs. Overall, the findings suggest that while basic physical resources are generally available, deficiencies in laboratory facilities and funding constitute persistent challenges, potentially limiting research productivity and faculty satisfaction.

**Table 10. Means and Standard Deviations for Material Resource Provision Items**

| Code | Specific Item | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| WZ1 | I have adequate office space and necessary office equipment (e.g., computer, printer). | 3.5 | 1.026 |
| WZ2 | The books, reference materials, and database resources necessary for my teaching and research are sufficient. | 3.31 | 0.929 |
| WZ3 | The laboratories, instruments, and facilities required for my research are basically guaranteed. | 3.1 | 0.86 |
| WZ4 | The teaching and research funding provided by the institution (e.g., start-up funding, project matching funds) basically meets my needs. | 2.98 | 0.936 |
| Overall | Material Resource Provision (Composite) | 3.22 | 0.784 |

Table 11 indicates that the overall mean score for leadership support was 3.30 (SD = 0.757), suggesting a moderate level of support from institutional leaders. Faculty members reported the highest satisfaction with leaders' consideration of personal circumstances and professional expertise when assigning tasks (M = 3.45, SD = 0.800) and with timely communication of institutional information and policies (M = 3.43, SD = 0.876). In contrast, lower scores were observed for leaders' concern for faculty career development and well-being (M = 3.16, SD = 0.915) and for providing effective assistance when difficulties arise (M = 3.16, SD = 0.929). These results highlight that while communication and task allocation practices are relatively adequate, more attention is needed to enhance leaders' role in mentoring, supporting professional growth, and addressing faculty concerns.

**Table 11. Means and Standard Deviations for Leadership Support Items**

| Code | Specific Item | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| LD1 | My immediate leader (e.g., department chair, dean) cares about my career development and personal well-being. | 3.16 | 0.915 |
| LD2 | When I encounter difficulties at work, I can receive effective help and support from my leader. | 3.16 | 0.929 |
| LD3 | Leaders communicate important institutional information and policies in a timely and effective manner. | 3.43 | 0.876 |
| LD4 | When assigning work tasks, leaders take into account my actual circumstances and professional expertise. | 3.45 | 0.8 |
| Overall | Leadership Support (Composite) | 3.3 | 0.757 |

Table 12 shows that the overall mean score for collegial support was 3.77 (SD = 0.814), the highest among all work resource dimensions, indicating that interpersonal relationships among faculty are generally strong and supportive. The highest-rated item was good communication and cooperative relationships with colleagues (M = 3.99, SD = 0.759), reflecting a positive collegial environment. Team atmosphere and mutual trust were also evaluated favorably (M = 3.79, SD = 0.931), while sharing of teaching and research resources (M = 3.61, SD = 0.978) and emotional support during challenges (M = 3.68, SD = 0.892), though slightly lower, still demonstrated substantial levels of collaboration and assistance. Overall, these findings suggest that collegial support functions as a key buffer against high job demands, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing turnover intention among faculty members.

**Table 12. Means and Standard Deviations for Colleague Support Items**

| Code | Specific Item | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| TS1 | I am able to maintain good communication and cooperative relationships with my colleagues. | 3.99 | 0.759 |
| TS2 | The atmosphere within my team (e.g., teaching and research section, research team) is harmonious, and members trust one another. | 3.79 | 0.931 |
| TS3 | Colleagues are willing to share teaching experiences, research information, and resources. | 3.61 | 0.978 |
| TS4 | When facing challenges at work, I can receive emotional support (e.g., encouragement, understanding) from colleagues. | 3.68 | 0.892 |
| Overall | Colleague Support (Composite) | 3.77 | 0.814 |

Table 13 demonstrates that the overall mean score for institutional fairness was 3.33 (SD = 0.722), indicating a moderate level of perceived fairness within private universities. Faculty members gave the highest rating to policy formulation transparency related to promotion and awards (M = 3.39, SD = 0.943), suggesting some confidence in institutional processes, though variability was notable. Scores for clarity and fairness of performance evaluation criteria (M = 3.33, SD = 0.838) and availability of appeal channels when disagreeing with decisions (M = 3.32, SD = 0.771) reflected similar perceptions of adequacy but not excellence. The lowest score was observed for fairness in resource allocation (M = 3.27, SD = 0.847), highlighting a persistent concern regarding unequal distribution of funding, equipment, and opportunities. Overall, the results suggest that while basic mechanisms of fairness are present, improvements in resource equity and transparent decision-making remain essential to strengthening faculty trust and reducing turnover intention.

**Table 13. Means and Standard Deviations for Institutional Fairness Items**

| Code | Specific Item | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZD1 | I believe the performance evaluation criteria (for teaching, research, and service) are clear and fair. | 3.33 | 0.838 |
| ZD2 | The university ensures fairness and impartiality in resource allocation (e.g., funding, equipment, professional development opportunities). | 3.27 | 0.847 |
| ZD3 | The formulation process of policies that directly concern the vital interests of faculty (e.g., promotion, awards) is transparent. | 3.39 | 0.943 |
| ZD4 | When I have objections to a decision, there are accessible channels to appeal and receive fair treatment. | 3.32 | 0.771 |
| Overall | Institutional Fairness (Composite) | 3.33 | 0.722 |

**5.2.3 Analysis of Factors Influencing University Faculty Turnover Intention**

The descriptive results presented in Table 14 indicate that the overall mean score for turnover intention among faculty members in Fujian's private universities is 2.83 (SD = 0.943), reflecting a moderate level of intention to leave. The highest-scoring item concerns leaving for a more desirable academic position elsewhere (M = 3.58, SD = 1.209), followed by resignation conditional on securing better institutional resources or compensation (M = 3.41, SD = 1.181), suggesting that turnover intention is strongly shaped by external opportunities and comparative benefits. By contrast, short-term resignation tendencies, such as the likelihood of resigning within the next year (M = 2.19, SD = 1.232) and discussing departure plans with others (M = 2.22, SD = 1.149), received the lowest scores, indicating that most faculty members are not currently preparing for immediate departure. The moderate score for frequently thinking about leaving (M = 2.77, SD = 1.227) further suggests that turnover intention exists in a latent form rather than as an imminent action. Collectively, these findings imply that faculty attrition risks are primarily conditional and opportunity-driven rather than based on strong short-term dissatisfaction, highlighting the importance of institutional strategies to enhance career development, compensation, and long-term commitment.

**Table 14. Means and Standard Deviations for Turnover Intention Items**

| Code | Turnover Intention Item | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| LZ1 | I often think about leaving my current university. | 2.77 | 1.227 |
| LZ2 | Within the next year, I am likely to voluntarily resign from my current position. | 2.19 | 1.232 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| LZ3 | If I were offered a more desirable academic position at another university, I would choose to leave my current institution. | 3.58 | 1.209 |
| LZ4 | I frequently talk to others about my intention to leave my current job. | 2.22 | 1.149 |
| LZ5 | My decision to resign largely depends on whether I can find a better academic platform or remuneration package. | 3.41 | 1.181 |
| Overall | Turnover Intention (Composite) | 2.83 | 0.943 |

## 6.Discussion

The results of objective 1 research showed that multiple factors significantly influence turnover intention among faculty in Chinese private higher education institutions. High job demands—particularly research pressure, role conflict, and technological adaptation—were found to be the strongest predictors of turnover intention. Among job resources, collegial support and institutional fairness were the most protective, while career development support emerged as the weakest. Demographic characteristics such as academic rank and income also shaped turnover tendencies. These findings are consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory (SET), confirming that excessive demands increase attrition risk, whereas sufficient resources buffer this effect. Importantly, the study reveals that turnover intention is not immediate but largely conditional, driven by opportunities for better compensation or platforms, underscoring the unique dynamics of Chinese private universities.

The results of objective 2 research showed that optimization strategies must focus on both reducing excessive demands and enhancing institutional resources. At the institutional level, rationalizing teaching loads, easing research pressures through funding and project support, and simplifying administrative requirements are essential measures. At the resource level, strengthening promotion pathways, improving research funding opportunities, and ensuring fairness in evaluation and resource allocation are critical. Collegial collaboration and leadership support should also be cultivated to enhance faculty morale and organizational commitment. For policymakers, providing financial subsidies, supporting exchange programs with public universities, and establishing standardized evaluation systems can help narrow systemic disparities and reduce turnover intention.

## 7.Conclusion

This study investigated the factors influencing turnover intention among faculty in Chinese private higher education institutions, using survey data from 400 faculty members across 24 private universities in Fujian Province. The analysis revealed three major findings: (1) high job demands, particularly research pressure and role conflict, significantly increase turnover intention; (2) job resources, especially

collegial support and institutional fairness, significantly reduce turnover intention; and (3) demographic characteristics such as academic rank and income also shape turnover tendencies. Importantly, turnover intention was found to be moderate overall, but largely conditional on external opportunities, such as better academic platforms and compensation packages.

Despite these contributions, the study is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference; longitudinal data would provide deeper insights into how turnover intention evolves over time. Second, the study is geographically limited to Fujian Province, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions in China. Third, although the study employed validated constructs, self-reported survey data may involve biases such as social desirability or common method variance.

Future research could expand in three directions: (1) conducting longitudinal and multi-regional studies to capture dynamic and regional differences in turnover intention; (2) incorporating qualitative approaches, such as interviews, to better understand the lived experiences and motivations of faculty members; and (3) comparing public and private universities systematically to explore how structural inequalities shape faculty mobility. Such efforts would further refine the theoretical frameworks and provide stronger evidence for effective policy design.

In conclusion, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions by situating the JD-R and SET frameworks in China's private higher education sector. The findings highlight that faculty retention is a multidimensional challenge requiring joint efforts from institutions, faculty, and policymakers. Addressing this issue is essential not only for institutional stability but also for advancing the quality and competitiveness of Chinese higher education in the global landscape.

## 8.Recommendation

For university administrators, reducing excessive teaching, research, and administrative burdens while strengthening career development pathways and resource fairness is essential. For faculty, engaging in proactive career planning and utilizing collegial networks may help reduce dissatisfaction. For policymakers, providing financial support to private universities, facilitating collaboration with public institutions, and standardizing evaluation criteria can reduce systemic inequalities and enhance faculty retention.

## 9.New Knowledge

This study provides an empirical application of the JD-R model and SET in the underexplored context of Chinese private higher education. It demonstrates that turnover intention is shaped by the combined effects of job demands, job resources, and demographic characteristics, but is distinctively conditional and opportunity-driven. This extends existing turnover theories by showing that structural inequalities between institutional types are central to understanding faculty mobility in transitional higher education systems.

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