

Job Satisfaction, Job Dissatisfaction and Turnover Intention of Generation Z Employees Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: Evidence from Primary Schools in China

Tian Wang ^a, Nutteera Phakdeephirot ^{b, *}

Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin, Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand

^a 1681110471142@rmutr.ac.th, ^b nutteera.pha@rmutr.ac.th

Abstract: Drawing on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this study examines the theoretically hypothesized relationships among job factors, job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was first conducted using 413 valid questionnaires, followed by thematic analysis of interview data from 15 participants. The qualitative findings were used to complement the quantitative results, and the two sets of findings were integrated through a joint display. The results show that work atmosphere is significantly and negatively associated with job dissatisfaction, while career development opportunities and work meaningfulness are significantly and positively associated with job satisfaction. The path between compensation and benefits and job dissatisfaction did not reach statistical significance. Job dissatisfaction is strongly and positively associated with turnover intention, whereas job satisfaction is weakly and negatively associated with turnover intention. Bootstrap results support three specific indirect effects: work atmosphere has a negative indirect relationship with turnover intention through job dissatisfaction, while career development opportunities and work meaningfulness each have a negative indirect relationship with turnover intention through job satisfaction. The corresponding indirect effect of compensation and benefits was not supported. The interview findings further indicate that positive and negative work experiences can coexist and that thoughts of leaving are predominantly latent and conditional. Overall, this study provides partial empirical support for the applicability of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in this research context. Given the cross-sectional design, the findings should be interpreted primarily as statistical associations among variables rather than as established causal relationships.

Keywords: Generation z employees; Herzberg's two-factor theory; Job satisfaction; Job dissatisfaction; Turnover intention; Primary school in china.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Generation Z has gradually become an important component of the contemporary labor market. Although definitions of its birth-year range vary across studies, Generation Z is generally defined as the cohort born between 1995 and 2009 [1]. Based on the age characteristics of the target population, this study defines Generation Z as individuals born between 1995 and 2005. In a rapidly digitalizing work environment, Generation Z employees tend to place considerable importance on career growth, a supportive work environment, compensation, and work-life balance [2, 3]. For sectors that depend on workforce stability to maintain continuity of service, retaining Generation Z employees has become an important concern. Unmet workplace expectations among Generation Z employees have been associated with higher turnover intention and lower organizational loyalty [4, 5].

Primary education in China provides a practically relevant context for examining this issue. According to the Statistical Bulletin on National Education Development in 2025, released by the Ministry of Education of China in 2026, China had 101.7829 million primary school students and 6.4582 million full-time primary school teachers, with a student-teacher ratio of 15.76:1 [6]. The above data indicates that

Chinese primary schools have a large student population and a large teaching staff. Statistics on full-time primary school teachers by professional rank and age, released by the Ministry in 2025, reported 364,213 teachers aged 24 or younger and 1,094,888 teachers aged 25–29. Together, these groups accounted for 22.14% of the 6,590,072 full-time primary school teachers [7]. These age groups substantially overlap with the 1995–2005 birth cohort defined in this study. However, the official statistics cover only full-time teachers and therefore cannot directly represent all Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China.

Existing research indicates that primary school teachers in China face occupational pressures arising from teaching responsibilities, emotional labor, parent-school communication, and administrative duties. These demands are closely related to workload and negative work experiences [8, 9]. However, existing educational research has focused largely on full-time teachers and has less frequently included employees in managerial, administrative, and support positions. Some studies have treated job satisfaction as a single attitudinal variable, paying limited attention to the distinct theoretical pathways associated with job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Existing research on job satisfaction, retention, and turnover intention among Generation Z employees has examined service sectors such as banking and hospitality [10, 11]. However, the context of primary schools in China has received comparatively limited attention in the

existing literature.

To address these gaps, this study applies Herzberg's two-factor theory. Compensation and benefits and work atmosphere are treated as hygiene factors, whereas career development opportunities and work meaningfulness are treated as motivators. Two theoretical pathways are specified: the hygiene factors–job dissatisfaction–turnover intention pathway and the motivators–job satisfaction–turnover intention pathway. The study adopts a quantitatively driven explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, with qualitative evidence serving a supplementary role. It examines the theoretically specified relationships and uses interviews to clarify the work contexts underlying the statistical results.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on Herzberg's two-factor theory and the research background of this study, this paper proposes the following research questions:

How do compensation and benefits and work atmosphere, and career development opportunities and work meaningfulness, relate to job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction, respectively?

How do job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction relate to turnover intention, with the corresponding work factors exerting specific indirect effects through these two work attitudes?

1.3. Research Objectives

Corresponding to the research questions above, this study has the following two research objectives:

(1) To examine the relationships of compensation and benefits and work atmosphere with job dissatisfaction, and of career development opportunities and work meaningfulness with job satisfaction, within the corresponding paths specified by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

(2) To analyze the respective relationships of job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction with turnover intention, and to examine the specific indirect effects between the corresponding work factors and turnover intention through job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

Herzberg's two-factor theory proposes that the factors contributing to job satisfaction are not necessarily the same as those contributing to job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors, such as compensation, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, and organizational management, primarily serve to prevent or reduce job dissatisfaction, whereas motivators, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, growth, and the work itself, are primarily associated with job satisfaction and positive motivation [12, 13]. Accordingly, this study measures job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction separately and focuses on the corresponding pathways specified by the theory. This modeling choice does not imply that all hygiene factors are exclusively associated with job dissatisfaction or that all motivators are exclusively associated with job satisfaction. Nor does this study draw conclusions regarding cross-paths that are not specified in the model.

2.2. Research Hypotheses

According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, hygiene factors primarily reduce job dissatisfaction, whereas motivators enhance job satisfaction [12]. Therefore, based on this theoretical framework and relevant empirical research, the following hypotheses are proposed.

2.2.1. Hygiene Factors and Job Dissatisfaction

Herzberg's two-factor theory proposes that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not two opposite ends of the same continuum. When hygiene factors, such as compensation, organizational policies, interpersonal relationships, and working conditions, are inadequate, they are likely to cause job dissatisfaction. Improvements in these factors primarily reduce job dissatisfaction [12]. Compensation and benefits and work atmosphere are important external working conditions in the primary school context. Previous studies have found that compensation and benefits, working conditions, and school organizational climate are closely related to employees' job attitudes [14, 15]. Although most previous studies have focused on job satisfaction, based on two-factor theory, inadequate compensation and benefits and a negative work atmosphere may increase employees' job dissatisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Compensation and benefits are significantly negatively associated with job dissatisfaction among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China.

H2: Work atmosphere is significantly negatively associated with job dissatisfaction among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China.

2.2.2. Motivator Factors and Job Satisfaction

Among the motivators emphasized in Herzberg's two-factor theory, career development opportunities and work meaningfulness are considered important factors influencing job satisfaction among primary school employees. Career development opportunities provide employees with opportunities for training, learning, and promotion. Previous studies have shown that career development is significantly and positively related to job satisfaction [16, 17]. Work meaningfulness reflects employees' perceptions of the value, purpose, and personal contribution of their work. Teachers' recognition of the social value of their work is generally associated with higher career satisfaction [18]. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Career development opportunities are significantly positively associated with job satisfaction among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China.

H4: Work meaningfulness is significantly positively associated with job satisfaction among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China.

2.2.3. Job Attitudes and Turnover Intention

Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction reflect employees' positive and negative evaluations of their work, respectively. Previous studies have shown that teachers' job satisfaction is significantly and negatively related to turnover intention. Higher job satisfaction is generally associated with lower turnover intention [19, 20]. Persistent job dissatisfaction may increase employees' tendency to leave their current organization. For Generation Z employees who value career development and the work environment, job attitudes may be an important basis for their career decisions. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Job dissatisfaction is significantly positively

associated with turnover intention among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China.

H6: Job satisfaction is significantly negatively associated with turnover intention among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China.

2.2.4. Mediating Effects

Herzberg's two-factor theory provides a theoretical basis for distinguishing between hygiene factors and motivators and their corresponding work attitudes. Building on this theoretical distinction and previous research on turnover intention, this study proposes that different job factors may be indirectly associated with turnover intention through job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction. Previous research has found a significant negative relationship between pay satisfaction and teachers' turnover intention [21]. A positive work atmosphere and higher job satisfaction have also been associated with lower turnover intention among teachers [22]. Research focusing on Generation Z employees further suggests that career development opportunities may reduce turnover intention through increased job satisfaction [23]. Similar findings have been reported for work meaningfulness, which may reduce employees' turnover intention through

increased job satisfaction [24]. However, previous studies have typically focused on overall job satisfaction or pay satisfaction and have less frequently incorporated job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction simultaneously as two distinct work attitudes within the same model. Therefore, based on two-factor theory, this study further examines the mediating roles of these two work attitudes in the relationships between the corresponding job factors and turnover intention. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H7: Job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between compensation and benefits and turnover intention among Generation Z primary school employees.

H8: Job dissatisfaction mediates the relationship between work atmosphere and turnover intention among Generation Z primary school employees.

H9: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between career development opportunities and turnover intention among Generation Z primary school employees.

H10: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work meaningfulness and turnover intention among Generation Z primary school employees.

Based on the proposed hypotheses, the conceptual framework of this study is shown in Fig. 1.

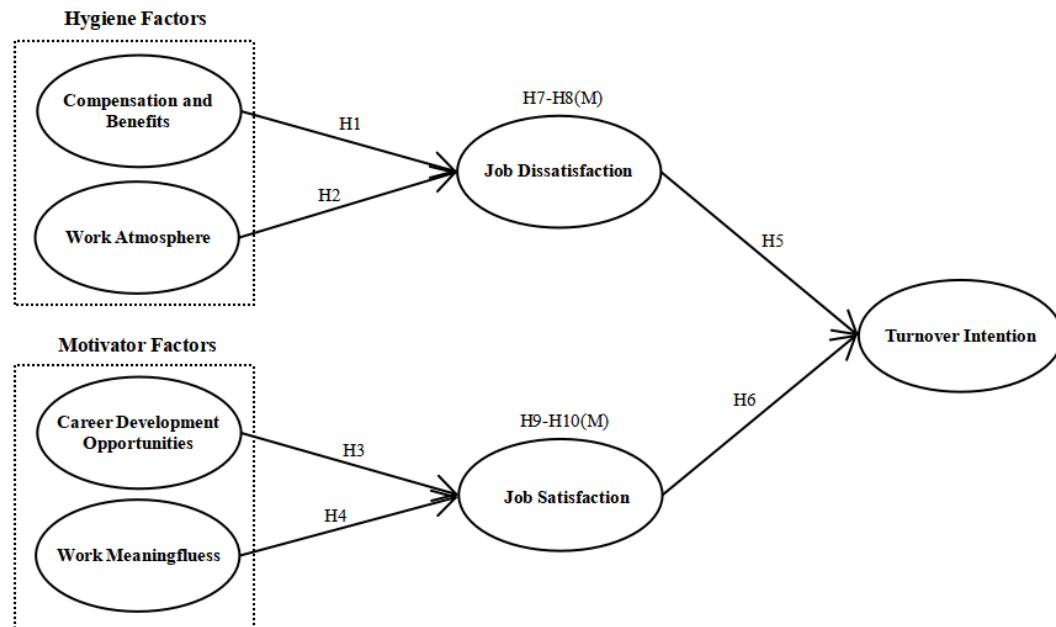


Figure 1. Research Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Based on Herzberg's two-factor theory, compensation and benefits and work atmosphere were conceptualized as hygiene factors, whereas career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were conceptualized as motivators. On this basis, a theoretical model linking job factors, work attitudes, and turnover intention was developed. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, with the quantitative component serving as the primary approach and the qualitative component as a supplementary approach [25].

To test the hypothesized theoretical paths, a questionnaire survey and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used in the quantitative phase. After the quantitative analysis was completed, interviews were conducted to help explain both significant and non-significant findings and to provide

additional insight into participants' actual work experiences. The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately and subsequently integrated through a joint display.

3.2. Quantitative Study

3.2.1. Target Population

The target population of this study consisted of Generation Z employees born between 1995 and 2005 who were currently employed in primary schools in China, including those in teaching, management, and support positions in both public and private primary schools. Participants were required to meet both eligibility criteria: being born between 1995 and 2005 and currently working in a primary school in China.

3.2.2. Sample

Convenience sampling was employed, with screening questions used to verify whether participants met the eligibility requirements regarding year of birth and current employment sector. Following the guideline proposed by

Bentler and Chou [26] regarding the ratio of sample size to the number of measured items, this study adopted the rule of thumb that the effective sample size should be at least ten times the number of measurement items to estimate the minimum required sample size. The final questionnaire contained 35 measurement items; therefore, at least 350 valid responses were required. Considering that online surveys may include responses that fail to meet the eligibility criteria or data quality requirements, approximately 420 questionnaires were targeted to ensure that the final valid sample would meet the study requirements.

3.2.3. Data Collection

The survey was primarily distributed through primary school staff groups and social media platforms. The first page of the questionnaire included screening questions to verify participant eligibility, together with information about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, and informed consent. The questionnaire also included open-ended questions to collect supplementary comments on participants' work experiences and their considerations regarding turnover and retention. These open-ended responses were used only as supplementary contextual information and were not included in the quantitative hypothesis testing. A total of 430 questionnaires were collected during the data collection period. After eligibility verification and data quality screening, 17 invalid responses were excluded, resulting in a final sample of 413 valid questionnaires and a valid response rate of 96.05%.

3.2.4. Measurement of Variables

Measurement items were adapted from previously published scales and relevant empirical studies. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Compensation and benefits were measured using five items [27], work atmosphere using four items [28, 29], career development opportunities using five items [29], work meaningfulness using ten items [30, 31], job satisfaction using four items [32, 33, 34], turnover intention using four items [35], and job dissatisfaction using three items. Given that previous studies have often operationalized job dissatisfaction using negatively worded items from overall job satisfaction scales or through reverse-scored items, this study drew on the measurement approach of Zhou and George [36] and developed the job dissatisfaction items with reference to negatively worded statements in the Job Satisfaction Index developed by Brayfield and Rothe [32]. Higher scores indicate higher levels of job dissatisfaction. Because these items were derived from negatively worded statements in a job satisfaction scale, the empirical distinctiveness between job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction was further examined in the subsequent measurement model analysis.

3.2.5. Data Analysis

Descriptive analyses were first conducted to summarize the sample characteristics and main study variables, followed by correlation analysis, reliability analysis, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA was conducted using principal axis factoring with Direct Oblimin rotation. Confirmatory

factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) were subsequently performed using maximum likelihood estimation. The reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model were assessed using standardized factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), and comparisons among competing measurement models. Direct paths were evaluated based on path coefficients, critical ratios (C.R.), and p-values. Mediating effects were examined using the bootstrap method with 5,000 resamples. The significance of each specific indirect effect was determined based on whether its 95% confidence interval included zero.

3.3. Qualitative Study

Following completion of the quantitative phase, a qualitative study was conducted to explain and supplement the results of the structural equation modeling analysis. Consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, this study used interviews to further explore the specific reasons underlying job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention among Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China. The qualitative findings were intended to provide contextualized explanations for the quantitative results and enhance the interpretive depth of the study.

Purposive sampling was employed in the qualitative phase [37], and 15 valid interviews were obtained from primary school employees with diverse occupational roles, lengths of service, and income levels. The selection of qualitative participants emphasized diversity in work experience and job roles. The qualitative sample was intended to provide supplementary explanations for both significant and non-significant pathways identified in the quantitative analysis rather than to support statistical generalization. The interviews focused primarily on compensation and benefits, work atmosphere, career development opportunities, work meaningfulness, job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention. After the interview data were organized, thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke [38] was used to code and categorize the data and develop themes. Anonymous identifiers were used to protect participants' identities.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Results

4.1.1. Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 presents the main demographic and work-related characteristics of the sample. Women accounted for 69.25% of respondents, employees in professional and technical positions accounted for 73.37%, and 68.28% had worked at their current school for three years or less. A total of 77.48% reported a monthly net income of RMB 3,001-8,000. Regarding working hours, 47.46% worked 9-10 hours per day, 30.02% worked 11 hours or more, and 38.74% reported high or very high work pressure.

Table 1. Demographic and Work-Related Characteristics of Respondents (n = 413)

Items	Categories	n	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	127	30.75
	Female	286	69.25
Currently Employed in a Primary School in China	Yes	413	100
	No	0	0
Year of Birth	1995-2000	212	51.33
	2001-2005	201	48.67
Current Position Type	Management Position	58	14.04
	Academic and Technical Position	303	73.37
	Operational and Support Position	50	12.11
	Others	2	0.48
Education Degree	vocational Degree	72	17.43
	Bachelor's Degree	276	66.83
	Master's Degree or Above	65	15.74
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	93	22.52
	1–3 years	189	45.76
	3–5 years	83	20.10
	More than 5 years	48	11.62
School Type	Public Primary School	292	70.70
	Private Primary School	121	29.30
Monthly Net Income	Below RMB 3,000	43	10.41
	RMB 3001–5000	178	43.10
	RMB 5001–8000	142	34.38
	RMB 8001-10000	37	8.96
	Above RMB 10,000	13	3.15
School Location	Tier 1 Cities	70	16.95
	New Tier 1 Cities	81	19.61
	Tier 2 Cities	106	25.67
	Tier 3 Cities and Below	156	37.77
Average Daily Working Hours	8 hours or less	93	22.52
	9–10 hours	196	47.46
	11–12 hours	91	22.03
	More than 12 hours	33	7.99
Average Time Of Overtime Hours Per Week	Almost no overtime	62	15.01
	1–2 times	189	45.76
	3–4 times	110	26.63
	5 times or more	52	12.59
Work Pressure	Very Low	28	6.78
	Low	62	15.01
	Moderate	163	39.47
	High	137	33.17
	Very High	23	5.57

4.1.2. Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's α and corrected item–total correlations (CITC). Cronbach's α values of .70 or above are generally considered acceptable [39], while CITC values below .30 may indicate problematic items [40, 41]. Item analysis of the initial 35-item instrument showed that WM8, a reverse-worded item in the work

meaningfulness scale, retained a negative CITC (–.365) after reverse scoring, indicating inconsistency with the remaining items in the construct. After WM8 was removed, Cronbach's α for the work meaningfulness scale increased to .948. Therefore, WM8 was excluded from subsequent analyses, leaving 34 items in the final measurement model. Table 2 presents the reliability results for all constructs.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
Compensation and benefits	CB1	0.788	0.895	0.915
	CB2	0.812	0.891	
	CB3	0.803	0.893	
	CB4	0.745	0.904	
	CB5	0.773	0.899	
Work atmosphere	WA1	0.739	0.845	0.879
	WA2	0.752	0.84	
	WA3	0.704	0.858	
	WA4	0.76	0.836	
Career development opportunities	CDO1	0.786	0.892	0.913
	CDO2	0.766	0.896	
	CDO3	0.787	0.892	
	CDO4	0.775	0.895	
	CDO5	0.779	0.893	
Work Meaningfulness	WM1	0.804	0.942	0.948
	WM2	0.842	0.94	
	WM3	0.782	0.943	
	WM4	0.829	0.94	
	WM5	0.792	0.942	
	WM6	0.786	0.943	
	WM7	0.776	0.943	
	WM9	0.781	0.943	
	WM10	0.762	0.944	
Job satisfaction	JS1	0.802	0.816	0.877
	JS2	0.674	0.866	
	JS3	0.691	0.86	
	JS4	0.777	0.826	
Job dissatisfaction	JD1	0.802	0.793	0.878
	JD2	0.716	0.869	
	JD3	0.776	0.817	
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.795	0.908	0.923
	TI2	0.833	0.896	
	TI3	0.817	0.902	
	TI4	0.841	0.893	

4.1.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Test	Statistic	Value
KMO		0.975
Bartlett's test	Approx. chi-square	13405.780
	df	561
	p value	< .001

As shown in Table 3, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .975, exceeding the recommended threshold of .60 [42]. Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi^2(561) = 13,405.780$, $p < .001$, indicating sufficient correlations among the 34 items and supporting the suitability of the data for exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using principal axis factoring with Direct Oblimin oblique rotation. Three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, with initial eigenvalues of 19.097, 3.139, and 1.729, respectively. Following extraction using principal axis factoring, the three factors cumulatively explained 67.773% of the variance. The first factor primarily comprised items measuring work

meaningfulness, work atmosphere, and some job satisfaction items. The second factor primarily comprised job dissatisfaction and turnover intention items. The third factor primarily comprised compensation and benefits and career development opportunities items, with some items exhibiting cross-loadings.

These findings indicate that the empirical factor structure observed in the sample did not fully correspond to the theoretically specified seven-factor structure, suggesting potential empirical overlap among some constructs. Because EFA is primarily a data-driven approach for identifying underlying factor structures, the theoretical model was not modified solely based on the EFA results. Instead, the measurement structure was further evaluated through a seven-factor confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), and comparisons of competing measurement models.

4.1.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the seven-factor measurement model comprising 34 observed items, with WM8 having been removed during the item analysis stage. The model fit indices were $\chi^2(506) = 1,511.743$, $\chi^2/df = 2.988$, IFI = .924, TLI = .916, CFI = .924, and RMSEA = .069, with the major fit indices meeting commonly used

empirical criteria [43, 44]. The NFI was .891, slightly below the .90 reference value, while the GFI and AGFI were .786 and .749, respectively, indicating inadequate fit on some indices. Because model fit indices can be affected by sample size, model complexity, and the number of measurement items, fixed cutoff values should not be treated as absolute criteria [45, 46, 47]. Overall, the fit of the seven-factor model was acceptable, although not ideal.

As shown in Table 4, standardized factor loadings across the constructs ranged from .768 to .893, composite reliability (CR) values ranged from .880 to .948, and average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from .646 to .750. These values exceeded the respective reference criteria of .50, .70, and .50, indicating good composite reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model [48].

Table 4. Standardized Factor Loadings, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted for the Seven-Factor Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Compensation and Benefits (CB)	CB1	0.834	0.916	0.686
	CB2	0.856		
	CB3	0.836		
	CB4	0.792		
	CB5	0.821		
Work Atmosphere (WA)	WA1	0.782	0.880	0.646
	WA2	0.821		
	WA3	0.772		
	WA4	0.839		
Career Development Opportunities (CDO)	CDO1	0.840	0.913	0.677
	CDO2	0.826		
	CDO3	0.814		
	CDO4	0.826		
	CDO5	0.809		
Work Meaningfulness (WM)	WM1	0.825	0.948	0.671
	WM2	0.859		
	WM3	0.800		
	WM4	0.864		
	WM5	0.822		
	WM6	0.820		
	WM7	0.808		
	WM9	0.791		
	WM10	0.780		
Job satisfaction (JS)	JS1	0.868	0.880	0.648
	JS2	0.768		
	JS3	0.774		
	JS4	0.806		
Job Dissatisfaction (JD)	JD1	0.874	0.881	0.711
	JD2	0.799		
	JD3	0.855		
Turnover Intention (TI)	TI1	0.835	0.923	0.750
	TI2	0.881		
	TI3	0.855		
	TI4	0.893		

4.1.5. Discriminant Validity and Comparison of Competing Measurement Models

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among the Main Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CB	3.547	1.005	1						
2. WA	3.766	0.927	.779**	1					
3. CDO	3.572	1.01	.863**	.764**	1				
4. WM	3.858	0.951	.769**	.866**	.787**	1			
5. JS	3.679	0.975	.808**	.838**	.826**	.869**	1		
6. JD	2.862	1.157	-.445**	-.525**	-.453**	-.565**	-.552**	1	
7. TI	2.975	1.202	-.509**	-.518**	-.518**	-.529**	-.550**	.843**	1

Note. ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). CB = compensation and benefits; WA = work atmosphere; CDO = career development

opportunities; WM = work meaningfulness; JS = job satisfaction; JD = job dissatisfaction; TI = turnover intention.

Table 5 reports descriptive statistics and correlations for the main variables. Variable means ranged from 2.862 to 3.858. Compensation and benefits, work atmosphere, career development opportunities, work meaningfulness, and job satisfaction were all significantly and positively associated with one another ($r = .764-.869$, $p < .01$) and were significantly negatively correlated with both job dissatisfaction and turnover intention. Job dissatisfaction was strongly positively correlated with turnover intention ($r = .843$, $p < .01$). The directions of the correlations were generally consistent with theoretical expectations, although several high coefficients suggested a degree of empirical overlap

between related constructs.

To further assess discriminant validity, the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) was calculated. Most construct pairs had HTMT values below the reference threshold of 0.90 [49]. However, CB–CDO (0.943), CB–JS (0.902), WA–WM (0.948), WA–JS (0.954), CDO–JS (0.924), WM–JS (0.953), and JD–TI (0.937) exceeded this threshold, indicating a certain degree of empirical overlap among several constructs. Therefore, competing measurement models were further compared to evaluate the discriminability of the proposed seven-factor structure.

Table 6. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT)

Construct	CB	WA	CDO	WM	JS	JD	TI
CB	-						
WA	0.870	-					
CDO	0.943	0.855	-				
WM	0.827	0.948	0.848	-			
JS	0.902	0.954	0.924	0.953	-		
JD	0.498	0.599	0.510	0.619	0.630	-	
TI	0.554	0.575	0.565	0.565	0.612	0.937	-

Note. Values greater than .90 indicate limited empirical distinctiveness between the corresponding constructs.

Given that the HTMT assessment indicated overlap among some constructs, this study further compared the seven-factor model with several competing measurement models. As shown in Table 7, the seven-factor model demonstrated an acceptable overall fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.988$, IFI = .924, TLI = .916, CFI = .924, and RMSEA = .069. Although the NFI was .891, slightly below .90, the seven-factor model showed a better overall fit than the competing models and had the lowest AIC and BIC values among all models examined.

Specifically, the six-factor model combining JD and TI showed a decline in model fit, and the chi-square difference from the seven-factor model was statistically significant, $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 88.092$, $p < .001$. The six-factor model combining

JD and JS exhibited a substantially poorer fit, $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 705.934$, $p < .001$. For the three-factor model constructed according to the rotated EFA solution, the CFI decreased to .906, and the RMSEA increased to .076, while both the AIC and BIC were higher than those of the seven-factor model. The one-factor model exhibited the poorest fit, with a CFI of only .755 and an RMSEA of .122. Overall, the comparison of competing measurement models indicated that fully combining job satisfaction with job dissatisfaction, combining job dissatisfaction with turnover intention, or specifying a three-factor structure based on the EFA results did not provide a better representation of the sample covariance structure than the theoretically specified seven-factor model.

Table 7. Comparison of Competing Measurement Models

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	AIC	BIC
M1: Seven-factor model	1511.743	506	2.988	0.891	0.924	0.916	0.924	0.069	1689.743	2047.83
M2: Six-factor model (JD + TI)	1599.835	512	3.125	0.884	0.918	0.91	0.918	0.072	1765.835	2099.781
M3: Six-factor model (JD+JS)	2217.677	512	4.331	.839	.872	.859	.871	.090	2383.677	2717.623
M4: Three-factor EFA-derived model	1774.378	524	3.386	0.872	0.906	0.899	0.906	0.076	1916.378	2202.042
M5: One-factor model	3776.065	527	7.165	0.727	0.755	0.739	0.755	0.122	3912.065	4185.659

The comparison of competing models showed that the theoretically specified seven-factor model outperformed the three-factor model and other alternative models in terms of CFI, TLI, RMSEA, AIC, and BIC. Therefore, the theoretically specified seven-factor structure was retained. However, considering the three-factor clustering pattern observed in the EFA and the finding that some HTMT values exceeded .90, the empirical distinctiveness among some constructs remained limited. Accordingly, the subsequent structural paths and indirect effects should be interpreted with caution.

4.1.6. Structural Equation Modeling and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model showed an acceptable overall fit. The χ^2/df ratio was 3.049, slightly above 3.00; IFI (.921), TLI (.913), and CFI (.920) were all above .90, while RMSEA (.071) was below .08. Although NFI (.886) was slightly below .90, model fit should be evaluated using multiple indices rather than relying on a single cutoff criterion [44, 50]. Taken together, the fit indices indicated that the structural model achieved an acceptable level of overall fit, allowing further examination of the structural paths and hypotheses. Fig. 2 presents the standardized estimates of the structural equation model.

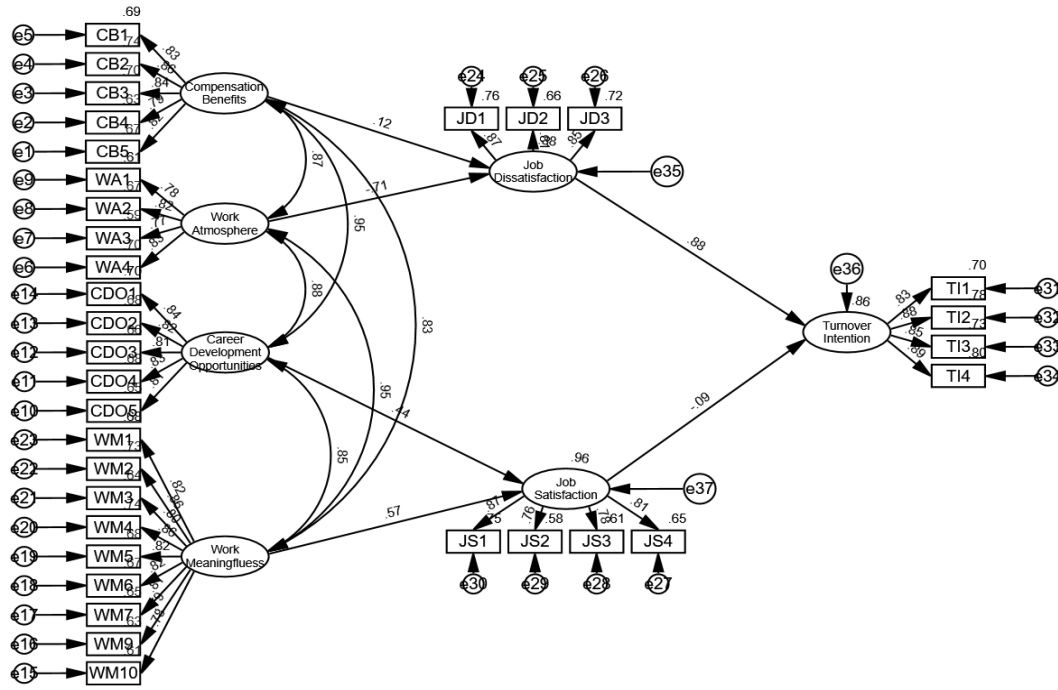


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

4.1.7. Structural Path Tests (H1-H6)

This study assessed the direct effects based on the standardized path coefficients, critical ratios (C.R.), and p-values. For a two-tailed test at the 5% significance level, $|C.R.| > 1.96$ (corresponding to $p < .05$) indicates that the path

coefficient is statistically significant [51]. For directional hypotheses, a hypothesis was considered supported when the corresponding path was statistically significant, and its direction was consistent with the hypothesized relationship. Table 8 presents the results.

Table 8. Structural Paths and Direct-Effect Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Path	β	C.R.	p	Result
H1	CB $\rightarrow$ JD	0.115	1.031	0.302	Not Supported
H2	WA $\rightarrow$ JD	-0.712	-6.189	< .001	Supported
H3	CDO $\rightarrow$ JS	0.442	8.173	< .001	Supported
H4	WM $\rightarrow$ JS	0.573	10.093	< .001	Supported
H5	JD $\rightarrow$ TI	0.877	16.939	< .001	Supported
H6	JS $\rightarrow$ TI	-0.086	-2.343	0.019	Supported

As shown in Table 8, work atmosphere was significantly negatively associated with job dissatisfaction; career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were significantly positively associated with job satisfaction; job dissatisfaction was significantly positively associated with turnover intention; and job satisfaction was weakly but negatively associated with turnover intention. The path between compensation and benefits and job dissatisfaction was not statistically significant ($\beta = .115$, C.R. = 1.031, $p = .302$), and its direction was inconsistent with the theoretical expectation. Therefore, H1 was not supported.

4.1.8. Bootstrap Tests of Indirect Effects (H7-H10)

As shown in Table 9, the bootstrap results indicated that

H8–H10 were supported, whereas H7 was not supported. Specifically, work atmosphere had a significant negative specific indirect effect on turnover intention through job dissatisfaction, while career development opportunities and work meaningfulness each had a significant negative specific indirect effect on turnover intention through job satisfaction. In contrast, the specific indirect effect of compensation and benefits on turnover intention through job dissatisfaction was 0.116, with a 95% Bootstrap confidence interval of $[-0.098, 0.365]$. Because the confidence interval included zero ($p = .284$), this specific indirect effect was not statistically significant. Therefore, H7 was not supported.

Table 9. Bootstrap Tests of Specific Indirect Effects (Unstandardized Estimates; 5,000 Resamples)

Hypothesis	Indirect Path	Indirect Effect	95% Bootstrap CI	p	Result
H7	CB $\rightarrow$ JD $\rightarrow$ TI	0.116	$[-0.098, 0.365]$	0.284	Not Supported
H8	WA $\rightarrow$ JD $\rightarrow$ TI	-0.748	$[-0.969, -0.556]$	< .001	Supported
H9	CDO $\rightarrow$ JS $\rightarrow$ TI	-0.044	$[-0.099, -0.004]$	0.026	Supported
H10	WM $\rightarrow$ JS $\rightarrow$ TI	-0.06	$[-0.114, -0.007]$	0.026	Supported

Note. The table reports unstandardized indirect effects and

their 95% bootstrap confidence intervals. A specific indirect

effect was considered statistically significant when its confidence interval did not include zero. CB = compensation and benefits; WA = work atmosphere; CDO = career development opportunities; WM = work meaningfulness; JD = job dissatisfaction; JS = job satisfaction; TI = turnover intention.

Because the model did not include direct paths from compensation and benefits, work atmosphere, career development opportunities, or work meaningfulness to turnover intention, the analysis only determined whether each specific indirect path was supported and did not distinguish between full and partial mediation.

4.2. Qualitative Results

4.2.1. Participant Characteristics

The qualitative study included 15 participants, comprising eight in teaching positions, two in managerial positions, and five in support positions. Three participants had less than one year of work experience, seven had one to three years of experience, and five had more than five years of experience. Eight participants reported a monthly income below RMB 5,000, while seven reported a monthly income between RMB 5,000 and RMB 8,000. Nine participants worked in public primary schools and six in private primary schools.

To emphasize the explanatory and supplementary role of the qualitative data in relation to the quantitative findings, the results were organized according to the functions of the interview questions and the content of participants' responses into four areas: negative work experiences, positive work experiences, individual turnover intention, and overall perceptions of the reasons for turnover and conditions for retention among Generation Z employees. During coding, repeated references to the same theme by the same participant across different interview questions were counted only once. Because themes were not mutually exclusive, the total number of participants mentioning individual themes could exceed 15.

4.2.2. Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data showed that participants' negative work experiences mainly involved workload, organizational management and support, effort–reward balance, and parent–school communication. Fourteen participants mentioned heavy workloads, administrative duties, or pressures associated with job responsibilities; eight mentioned insufficient management support, organizational support, or recognition at work; seven reported a mismatch between work effort and compensation; and seven mentioned pressure arising from parent–school communication. Limited career development was explicitly identified as a current negative work experience by only one participant.

Positive work experiences mainly arose from a supportive work atmosphere, work accomplishments, student development, contributions through one's job role, and recognition from others. Fourteen participants mentioned colleague collaboration, leadership support, or organizational trust; ten mentioned recognition or affirmation of their professional role; nine referred to student development or

improvements in student adjustment; seven derived satisfaction from task completion, problem solving, or contributing to school operations; and four considered their current compensation and benefits or working-hour arrangements to be generally acceptable. Positive and negative work experiences were not mutually exclusive, as the same participant could recognize the value of their work while simultaneously expressing dissatisfaction with certain working conditions.

Turnover intention was predominantly latent and conditional. Eleven participants had considered leaving their jobs, changing positions, or moving to another school, but none reported having set a definite departure date in the near future or initiated a formal resignation process. Four participants reported no clear current intention to leave. When reflecting more broadly on potential reasons for turnover among Generation Z employees, 13 participants mentioned salary growth, perceived fairness in performance-related rewards, or an imbalance between effort and reward; 12 mentioned limited career development; and 12 referred to workload. Conditions considered important for retention were concentrated around clear career development pathways (15 participants), organizational support and fair management (12 participants), reduced administrative burden and adequate rest (11 participants), and reasonable compensation (11 participants). These counts are presented solely to indicate the coverage of each theme across the 15 interviews. They should not be interpreted as prevalence estimates for the broader population or used to compare the relative importance of different themes.

Notably, only one participant identified limited career development as a major current negative work experience, whereas 12 participants mentioned limited career development when discussing potential reasons for turnover among Generation Z employees, and all 15 identified career development opportunities when discussing conditions for retention. These findings are not contradictory. The former reflects the more immediate sources of pressure in participants' current personal work experiences, whereas the latter two reflect their broader assessments of turnover among Generation Z employees and the conditions necessary for long-term retention. This suggests that limited career development was not the most salient current negative experience for most participants; nevertheless, career development opportunities were a widely recognized consideration when evaluating long-term career prospects and retention conditions.

4.3. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

To compare the quantitative findings with the qualitative interview results, the two strands were integrated using a joint display. The quantitative results indicate whether the theoretically specified paths received statistical support, while the qualitative findings clarify the actual work experiences corresponding to those statistical relationships. The integrated results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Research Theme	Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Supplement	Integrated Interpretation
Job Dissatisfaction	Work atmosphere was significantly negatively related to job dissatisfaction, whereas the path from compensation and benefits was not significant.	Negative experiences mainly involved workload, administrative tasks, organizational support, compensation and returns, and parent–school communication.	Job dissatisfaction was associated with multiple working conditions. Compensation remained a concern, but its independent path was not supported by the quantitative results.
Job Satisfaction	Career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were significantly positively related to job satisfaction.	Positive experiences mainly arose from a supportive work atmosphere, work achievements, recognition from others, and student growth.	The qualitative findings further illustrated positive work experiences related to career development, work meaningfulness, and organizational support.
Turnover Intention	Job dissatisfaction was positively related to turnover intention, whereas job satisfaction was negatively related to turnover intention.	Eleven participants had considered leaving their jobs, changing positions, or moving to another school, but none reported a definite intention to leave in the near future.	Among the interview participants, turnover intention was largely latent and conditional and should not be equated with actual turnover behavior.
Turnover and Retention Conditions	The specific indirect effects proposed in H8, H9, and H10 were supported, whereas H7 was not supported.	Potential reasons for leaving mainly involved compensation, career development, and workload, while retention conditions involved career development, organizational support, workload, and compensation and returns.	Turnover and retention involved multiple working conditions, and the qualitative findings provided contextual detail that complemented the quantitative pathways.

Overall, the quantitative and qualitative findings showed a degree of convergence. Work atmosphere was significantly related to job dissatisfaction, while career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were significantly related to job satisfaction. The qualitative findings provided further contextual descriptions of workload, organizational support, compensation, work achievements, and the value associated with different roles. Among the interview participants, thoughts of leaving were largely latent and conditional rather than being attributable to compensation alone. The interviews also identified workload and organizational support as relevant factors that were not included in the quantitative model. These qualitative findings provided contextual insights into factors beyond the scope of the quantitative model but did not constitute statistical validation of untested relationships.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

5.1. Conclusion

This study provides limited contextual support for the applicability of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to Generation Z employees working in primary schools in China. Work atmosphere was associated with lower job dissatisfaction, while career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were associated with higher job satisfaction. The two work attitudes were further associated with turnover intention at different levels of strength, whereas the direct path between compensation and benefits and job dissatisfaction was not statistically significant. Three specific indirect relationships were also supported: work atmosphere was negatively associated with turnover intention through job dissatisfaction, whereas career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were negatively associated with turnover intention through job satisfaction. The corresponding compensation-related indirect relationship was not supported. The interview findings showed that employees considered multiple factors, including workload, organizational support, reward fairness, career growth, work meaningfulness, job stability, and external opportunities, and that their turnover intention was more often latent and

conditional. Overall, the work attitudes and turnover intention of Generation Z employees in primary schools in China were associated with multiple dimensions of their work experiences. Therefore, retention management in primary schools should not only reduce negative work experiences but also strengthen positive work experiences and long-term retention intentions by providing clear and attainable career development pathways, appropriate recognition mechanisms, and opportunities for employees to realize the value of their work.

5.2. Discussion of Research Questions

5.2.1. Hygiene Factors, Motivators, and Job Attitudes

Work atmosphere was significantly and negatively related to job dissatisfaction ($\beta = -0.712, p < .001$), while career development opportunities ($\beta = 0.442, p < .001$) and work meaningfulness ($\beta = 0.573, p < .001$) were significantly and positively related to job satisfaction. The structural path between compensation and benefits and job dissatisfaction was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.115, p = .302$). Therefore, H2, H3, and H4 were supported, and H1 was not supported. Research Question 1 examined the relationships between four work-related factors and job attitudes.

The result for work atmosphere was consistent with the basic expectations of two-factor theory and with the findings of Otrębski [15], which showed that a positive school organizational climate was associated with favorable job attitudes. A positive work atmosphere is also an important working condition for Generation Z employees [52]. The qualitative findings showed that 14 participants viewed colleague collaboration, leadership support, smooth communication, organizational trust, or employee participation as positive work experiences. By contrast, some participants reported negative experiences related to inadequate management support and poor communication. These findings indicate that work atmosphere reflects not only interpersonal relationships among colleagues but also the communication, coordination, and organizational support provided by schools.

The non-significant result for compensation and benefits did not fully align with the finding of Hee, Shi [14] that

compensation and benefits were significantly related to job satisfaction. However, the two studies used different outcome variables and were conducted in different research contexts. Hee, Shi [14] examined overall job satisfaction, whereas the present study measured job dissatisfaction as a separate construct. The bivariate correlation between compensation and benefits and job dissatisfaction was significant ($r = -.445$, $p < .01$), but the structural path was no longer significant after work atmosphere was considered in the model. In the qualitative data, compensation issues usually appeared together with workload, additional responsibilities, performance appraisal fairness, and effort–reward balance. Therefore, compensation remains an important part of the overall evaluation of working conditions, but this study did not find a significant independent relationship with job dissatisfaction after controlling for work atmosphere.

The results for career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were consistent with the expectations of two-factor theory regarding the relationships between motivators and positive job attitudes. Previous studies have shown that professional development among teachers is closely related to job satisfaction [17]. Higher career satisfaction is also associated with a stronger perception of work value and social recognition among teachers [18]. The qualitative findings showed that positive work experiences mainly came from career growth, task completion, problem-solving, student growth, and contributions to school operations. These findings suggest that growth opportunities, work value, and a sense of achievement are important sources of job satisfaction among Generation Z primary school employees.

Overall, Research Question 1 was answered, with three of the four hypotheses supported. Work atmosphere was associated with lower job dissatisfaction, while career development opportunities and work meaningfulness were associated with higher job satisfaction. Compensation and benefits did not show the expected independent relationship with job dissatisfaction. The findings provide partial support for the application of two-factor theory to Generation Z primary school employees. However, the observed relationships of different hygiene factors and motivators may still depend on the specific work context.

5.2.2. Job Attitudes, Turnover Intention, and Specific Indirect Relationships

Research Question 2 examined the relationships of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction with turnover intention, as well as the specific indirect relationships between the corresponding work-related factors and turnover intention through the two job attitudes. The results showed that H5, H6, H8, H9, and H10 were supported, whereas H7 was not supported.

The direct path results showed that job dissatisfaction was significantly and positively related to turnover intention ($\beta = 0.877$, $p < .001$), while job satisfaction had a significant but weak negative relationship with turnover intention ($\beta = -0.086$, $p = .019$). Therefore, H5 and H6 were supported. These findings were generally consistent with previous studies showing a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention among teachers [19, 20]. Positive evaluations of work were associated with lower turnover intention, whereas negative evaluations were associated with higher turnover intention. However, the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) between job dissatisfaction and turnover intention was 0.937, indicating a high level of measurement overlap between the two

constructs. Therefore, the large path coefficient may be partly related to similarities in measurement content and should not be interpreted as evidence of a strong causal relationship.

The Bootstrap analysis showed that the specific indirect effect of work atmosphere on turnover intention through job dissatisfaction was significant and negative (unstandardized indirect effect = -0.748 , 95% Bootstrap CI [-0.969 , -0.556]). Therefore, H8 was supported. This finding was generally consistent with the study by Lei, Pan [22], which identified relationships among work atmosphere, job attitudes, and turnover intention among teachers. The qualitative data also showed that inadequate leadership support, poor communication, and collaboration problems were associated with negative organizational experiences. These experiences may occur together with job dissatisfaction and turnover intention.

The specific indirect effects of career development opportunities and work meaningfulness on turnover intention through job satisfaction were also statistically significant. The unstandardized indirect effects were -0.044 (95% Bootstrap CI [-0.099 , -0.004]) and -0.060 (95% Bootstrap CI [-0.114 , -0.007]), respectively. Therefore, H9 and H10 were supported. These findings were generally consistent with the study by Jamalulel and Chang [23] on career development opportunities, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among Generation Z employees, as well as the study by Kuancintami and Heryjanto [24] on work meaningfulness, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The learning opportunities, promotion paths, work recognition, task achievement, and job value reported in the open-ended responses and interviews provided contextual explanations for these statistical relationships.

The specific indirect effect of compensation and benefits on turnover intention through job dissatisfaction was not statistically significant (unstandardized indirect effect = 0.116 , 95% Bootstrap CI [-0.098 , 0.365]). Therefore, H7 was not supported. This result was consistent with the non-significant structural path between compensation and benefits and job dissatisfaction. The qualitative data showed that participants usually considered compensation together with workload, performance appraisal fairness, career development, and external job opportunities when making career decisions. Compensation rarely appeared as the sole reason for leaving. Therefore, this study did not provide statistical support for the proposed compensation and benefits–job dissatisfaction–turnover intention path. However, this result does not mean that compensation and benefits are unimportant in career decisions.

The qualitative findings further showed that 11 participants had considered leaving their jobs, transferring to another role, or moving to another school, but none had formed a clear plan to leave in the near future. Some participants recognized the meaning and value of their current work but might still consider leaving if better development opportunities became available. This finding suggests that turnover intention is a psychological tendency formed after employees consider work experiences, career development, and external opportunities. Neither job satisfaction nor job dissatisfaction alone can fully explain career decisions.

Overall, Research Question 2 was answered, with five of the six hypotheses supported. The two job attitudes were related to turnover intention in different directions and were involved in different specific indirect relationships linking the corresponding work-related factors to turnover intention. Because this study used a cross-sectional design and some

constructs showed measurement overlap, the findings should be understood as statistical relationships within the present sample rather than confirmed causal mechanisms.

5.3. Theoretical and Practical Implications

5.3.1. Theoretical Implications

This study extends the application and understanding of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in several respects. First, while existing research in the education field has primarily focused on teachers, this study expands the research population to Generation Z employees in Chinese primary schools across multiple occupational roles, including teachers, management and administrative staff, and support staff, thereby extending the application of the theory to a specific generational group and primary school work context. Second, this study incorporates job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction into the model as two distinct job-attitude variables and develops two analytical pathways: "hygiene factors–job dissatisfaction–turnover intention" and "motivator factors–job satisfaction–turnover intention." This provides a more differentiated analytical framework for understanding the relationships between different work-related factors and turnover intention. Third, the findings provide partial support for Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The results concerning work atmosphere, career development opportunities, and work meaningfulness are consistent with the theoretical expectations, whereas the compensation and benefits-related pathway was not supported. This suggests that the roles of specific factors may vary across employee groups and work contexts, further indicating the theory's contextual boundaries of applicability.

5.3.2. Practical Implications

This study provides practical guidance for improving the work experiences of Generation Z primary school employees and reducing the risk of employee turnover. Schools should address both negative and positive work experiences. They can improve organizational communication, collaboration among colleagues, and leadership support by assigning tasks reasonably, clarifying job responsibilities, and reducing repetitive administrative work. Schools should also improve training, promotion, and employee recognition mechanisms to strengthen employees' career development prospects and their sense of value in their work. Although the paths related to compensation and benefits were not statistically significant, pay fairness and effort–reward balance remained important concerns among the participants. These issues should therefore be addressed together with workload, performance appraisal fairness, and career development. Government and education authorities could further implement policies to reduce unnecessary workload in schools, improve compensation and the protection of teachers' rights and interests, clarify the boundaries of responsibility between families and schools, and strengthen support for training, professional title assessment, and career development. These measures could provide institutional support for improving the work experiences of Generation Z primary school employees and maintaining a stable primary school workforce.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the theoretical model included only compensation and benefits, work atmosphere, career development opportunities, and work meaningfulness. It did not include workload, organizational

support, work–life boundaries, or performance appraisal fairness, which were prominent in the open-ended responses and interviews. Therefore, the explanatory scope of the model is limited. Second, the cross-sectional self-reported data cannot establish the temporal order or causal relationships among the variables. The possible influence of common method variance also cannot be completely ruled out. Third, the discriminant validity of some constructs was limited, particularly job dissatisfaction and turnover intention. Job dissatisfaction was measured using negatively worded items from overall job satisfaction scales. The overlap may therefore be related to both item content and negative wording. Fourth, EFA and CFA were conducted using the same formal sample. The convenience sample was also unevenly distributed across regions, school types, and job roles, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Fifth, the number of responses to the open-ended questions was limited, and the qualitative analysis included only 15 interviews. These findings were mainly used to supplement and explain the quantitative results and are not statistically representative.

Future research could employ exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using independent samples and develop or adopt a job dissatisfaction scale that is more clearly distinguished from job satisfaction. Data could be collected at multiple time points to examine how the variables change over time and their relationship with actual turnover behavior. Future theoretical models could incorporate factors such as workload, organizational support, work-life balance, and fairness in performance evaluations. Samples could also encompass a wider range of regions, school types, and job roles to compare the work attitudes and turnover intentions of Generation Z employees across different job roles in primary schools. Additionally, qualitative studies could include a larger number of participants to explore further how employees weigh work conditions, career development, and external employment opportunities when deciding whether to stay or leave.

References

- [1] Dreyer, C., & Stojanová, H. (2023). How entrepreneurial is German generation Z vs. generation Y? A literature review. *Procedia Computer Science*, 217, 155–164.
- [2] Gabrielova, K., & Buchko, A. A. (2021). Here comes Generation Z: Millennials as managers. *Business Horizons*, 64, 489–499.
- [3] Gochangco, J. P. M., & Ocenar, M. (2024). Exploring the work motivational factors of Generation Z workforce in selected BPO companies: Basis for job satisfaction. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 6, 1–7.
- [4] Schroth, H. (2019). Are you ready for gen Z in the workplace?. *California Management Review*, 61, 5–18.
- [5] Zahari, S. N. S., & Puteh, F. (2023). Gen Z workforce and job-hopping intention: A study among university students in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13, 902–927.
- [6] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2026). Statistical communiqué on national educational development in 2025. http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_fztjgb/202607/t20260706_1442870.html
- [7] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2025). Number of full-time teachers in primary education by professional rank and age.

- http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/moe_560/2024/quanguo/202603/t20260319_1431389.html
- [8] Du, L. (2023). Comparative study on occupational pressure of young rural primary school teachers in the new era. Ningxia University.
 - [9] Liu, D., & Bian, B. (2024). Emotional labor among primary school teachers participating in after-school services: An empirical study of 1,300 primary school teachers in City W. *Global Education*, 53, 118–136.
 - [10] Brown, D. M. (2025). How internal marketing can increase the satisfaction and retention of Generation Z employees in the banking sector. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 43, 1122–1145.
 - [11] Soares, C. S., & Putri, R. K. (2025). The influence of job satisfaction and work-life balance on turnover intentions: A study of Generation Z employees in the hospitality industry of Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. *Enrichment: Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 3, 699–706.
 - [12] Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed). John Wiley & Sons.
 - [13] Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man*. World Publishing Company.
 - [14] Hee, O. C., Shi, C. H., Kowang, T. O., Fei, G. C., & Ping, L. L. (2020). Factors influencing job satisfaction among academic staffs. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 9, 285–291.
 - [15] Otrębski, W. (2022). The correlation between organizational (school) climate and teacher job satisfaction—the type of educational institution moderating role. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19, 6520.
 - [16] Prayudi, A., & Komariyah, I. (2023). The impact of work motivation, work environment, and career development on employee job satisfaction. *Jurnal Visi Manajemen*, 9, 100–112.
 - [17] Toropova, A., Myrberg, E., & Johansson, S. (2021). Teacher job satisfaction: The importance of school working conditions and teacher characteristics. *Educational Review*, 73, 71–97.
 - [18] Büyükgöze, H. (2023). Job satisfaction with profession among teachers in Türkiye: Perceptions of social utility and educational policy influence. *Participatory Educational Research*, 10, 200–213.
 - [19] Ertürk, R. (2022). The effect of teachers' quality of work life on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 9, 191–203.
 - [20] Zhang, H., Shi, Y., & Teng, L. S. (2024). Exploring relationships of job satisfaction and burnout with turnover intention among Chinese English language teachers. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 33, 587–601.
 - [21] Zhou, H., & Ma, J. (2022). Organizational justice and teachers' turnover intention in primary and secondary schools: The importance of sustainable salary management. *Sustainability*, 14, 13314.
 - [22] Lei, Y., Pan, F., & Guo, Q. (2024). A longitudinal analysis of the reciprocal relationship between teacher job satisfaction, workplace climate, and early childhood teachers' turnover intention. *Acta Psychologica*, 251, 104559.
 - [23] Jamalulel, I., & Chang, C.-L. (2025). Work-life balance and career development: How job satisfaction mediates their impact on turnover intention among Indonesian Generation Z?. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 26, 907–926.
 - [24] Kuancintami, A., & Heryjanto, A. (2023). Increase employee retention: Impact work-life balance, meaningful work, and job satisfaction towards turnover intention. *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains*, 4, 1099–1113.
 - [25] Dawadi, S., Shrestha, S., & Giri, R. A. (2021). Mixed-methods research: A discussion on its types, challenges, and criticisms. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2, 25–36.
 - [26] Bentler, P. M., & Chou, C.-P. (1987). Practical issues in structural modeling. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 16, 78–117.
 - [27] Xing, P. (2025). Research on the incentive strategies for grassroots employees of W Property Service Company. Sichuan Normal University.
 - [28] Yan, R. (2023). Research on teachers' compensation satisfaction in private junior and senior schools: A case study of AY City. Tianjin University.
 - [29] Zhao, Q. (2025). A study on the turnover of teachers in a private primary school. Hebei Normal University.
 - [30] Feng, X. (2024). A study on the impact of perceived organizational support on employee work engagement—Work remodeling and sense of meaning. Southwest Minzu University.
 - [31] Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). Measuring meaningful work: The work and meaning inventory (WAMI). *Journal of Career Assessment*, 20, 322–337.
 - [32] Brayfield, A. H., & Rothe, H. F. (1951). An index of job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 35, 307–311.
 - [33] Cammann, C. (1983). Assessing the attitudes and perceptions of organizational members. In *Assessing organizational change: A guide to methods, measures, and practices* (pp. 71–138).
 - [34] Spector, P. E. (1985). Measurement of human service staff satisfaction: Development of the Job Satisfaction Survey. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 13, 693–713.
 - [35] Liu, Y. (2024). Research on the impact of work connectivity behavior after-hours on turnover intention of the young employees. Sichuan Agricultural University.
 - [36] Zhou, J., & George, J. M. (2001). When job dissatisfaction leads to creativity: Encouraging the expression of voice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44, 682–696.
 - [37] Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.
 - [38] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2024). Supporting best practice in reflexive thematic analysis reporting in Palliative Medicine: A review of published research and introduction to the Reflexive Thematic Analysis Reporting Guidelines (RTARG). *Palliative Medicine*, 38, 608–616.
 - [39] Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16, 297–334.
 - [40] Kline, P. (2013). *Handbook of psychological testing*. Routledge.
 - [41] Nunnally, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. McGraw Hill.
 - [42] Kaiser, H. F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika*, 39, 31–36.
 - [43] Collier, J. (2020). *Applied structural equation modeling using AMOS: Basic to advanced techniques*. Routledge.
 - [44] Hair Jr, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*.
 - [45] Fan, X., Thompson, B., & Wang, L. (1999). Effects of sample size, estimation methods, and model specification on structural equation modeling fit indexes. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6, 56–83.
 - [46] Marsh, H. W., Hau, K.-T., & Wen, Z. (2004). In search of golden rules: Comment on hypothesis-testing approaches to setting cutoff values for fit indexes and dangers in

- overgeneralizing Hu and Bentler's (1999) findings. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 11, 320–341.
- [47] Groskurth, K., Bluemke, M., & Lechner, C. M. (2024). Why we need to abandon fixed cutoffs for goodness-of-fit indices: An extensive simulation and possible solutions. *Behavior Research Methods*, 56, 3891–3914.
- [48] Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18, 39–50.
- [49] Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43, 115–135.
- [50] Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen & J. S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136–162).
- [51] Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming* (2nd ed). Routledge.
- [52] Ragin-Skorecka, K., & Falfer, R. (2024). Values and expectations of generation Z. *Zeszyty Naukowe. Organizacja i Zarządzanie/Politechnika Śląska*, 289–302.