

The Moderating Role of Gender between Perceived Organizational Support and Teacher Commitment

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i2/25297> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i2/25297

Published Online: 11 May 2025

Abstract

In the field of higher education, private universities have recently faced the dual pressures of institutional growth and high teacher turnover. Teacher commitment is considered a key factor in reducing turnover, and perceived organizational support plays a crucial role in promoting teacher commitment. In addition, gender as a moderating variable should not be ignored as gender differences may affect teachers' perceptions of and responses to organizational support, thus producing different effects in the formation of teacher commitment. This study aims to explore the moderating role of gender between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment. Through data analysis of 417 teachers from five private universities in China, the study found that teachers' perceived organizational support and teacher commitment were both at moderate levels, and that perceived organizational support positively affected teacher commitment. Moreover, gender played a significant moderating role in this relationship, with female teachers demonstrating a stronger association between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment than male teachers. This conclusion further emphasizing the need to consider gender-differentiated management strategies when promoting teacher commitment.

Keywords: Teacher Commitment, Perceived Organizational Support, Gender, University

Introduction

With the intensifying competition in China's higher education sector of—particularly in private universities facing high faculty turnover and weak career attractiveness—enhancing teacher commitment has emerged as a core issue in educational management (Zhou & Thanichanun, 2024; Thien et al., 2021). Teacher commitment is an important predictor of teacher retention and reduced turnover. High levels of commitment contribute to the stability of the teaching workforce and help lower teacher attrition rates (Price, 2021; Henkin & Holliman, 2009). There is a significant positive correlation between teachers' perceived organizational support and their organizational commitment. When teachers perceive higher levels of support from their institutions, they tend to exhibit stronger affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the school (Qureshi et al., 2021). Specifically, perceived

organizational support not only enhances teachers' overall commitment but is also closely associated with their job satisfaction, work engagement, and intention to remain in the profession (Ismail et al., 2011; Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012).

However, most studies have focused on the direct effects of perceived organizational support on teacher commitment, while the potential moderating role of gender in this relationship remains under-explored. Emerging evidence suggests that gender may play a significant moderating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and work-related behaviors. For example, Al-Taie and Khattak (2024) found that gender significantly moderated the relationship between perceived organizational support and innovative work behavior among academic staff in higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates. Similarly, Sun and Zhou (2023) found that perceived organizational support moderated the relationship between person-job fit and occupational commitment among kindergarten teachers in China, though gender was not explicitly tested in that study.

There are studies have shown that female teachers have higher levels of organizational commitment than male teachers when they perceive organizational support (Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012; Aftab et al., 2020). This implies that female teachers are more inclined to show higher levels of commitment to the organization when they perceive support. Therefore, exploring the moderating role of gender between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment can provide a valuable theoretical basis and practical guidance for educational administration and teacher support policy development.

The primary research objective of this paper is to explore the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment and to examine the moderating role of gender in this relationship. By identifying the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment among male and female teachers, this study will provide insight into how gender moderates this relationship and provide a theoretical basis for educational administrators to develop gender-sensitive policies and support strategies. Through this study, we expect to provide new perspectives and empirical evidence for the enhancement of teacher commitment, the optimization of educational policies, and the improvement of teacher support systems.

Literature Review

Definitions and Theories of Teacher Commitment

The broad definition of teacher commitment is usually based on Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-dimensional theory of organizational commitment, which divides teacher commitment into three dimensions, which are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. However, Thien et al. (2014) suggested that most of the traditional conceptualizations of teacher commitment are based on Western samples and fail to adequately take into account the multidimensional nature of teacher commitment in different cultural contexts.

Teacher commitment is psychologically related to schools, students, and subject matter content to some extent (Yang et al., 2019). Thien et al. (2014) extended the conceptualization by proposing that teacher commitment should encompass four dimensions: commitment to school, commitment to students, commitment to teaching, and commitment to the

profession. Teacher commitment is closely related to teacher retention intentions. Research has shown that teacher commitment has a profound impact on educational systems and school effectiveness. High levels of teacher commitment are typically associated with increased student achievement, improved quality of instruction, and an improved school environment (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers with high levels of commitment typically exhibit greater career stability, lower burnout, and a greater tendency to remain in their educational positions for longer periods of time, which in turn reduces turnover rates. Thus, teacher commitment is seen as a key factor in improving the quality of education and promoting sustainable school development (Zou et al., 2024; Dwiyantri et al., 2022).

Definition and theory of Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support refers to an employee's perception of the support provided by his or her organization, and it has been found that higher perceptions of organizational support enhance job satisfaction, commitment, and job engagement (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Perceived organizational support plays a vital role in satisfying employees' socioemotional needs—such as recognition, connection, respect, and emotional care—which subsequently fosters stronger organizational identification, greater well-being, and higher levels of affective commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Teachers who perceive more organizational support typically show higher job engagement and greater career commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In addition, perceived organizational support has been found to be strongly associated with teachers' psychological well-being, job burnout, and intention to leave (Chen et al., 2022). Thus, perceived organizational support plays an important role in promoting teachers' work behaviors and career development.

Summary of Previous Research

It has been shown that there is a relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment. Perceived organizational support has been identified as a key factor influencing teacher commitment. Several studies have found that perceived organizational support directly enhances teachers' professional commitment, and perceived organizational support is positively related to teachers' affective and normative commitment (Wulandari et al., 2023; Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012; Bibi et al., 2019). Also, gender plays an important moderating role in these relationships. Although some studies have found that gender differences have a smaller effect on teacher commitment, there are also studies that show that female teachers exhibit higher levels of commitment when they perceive organizational support (Nasir et al., 2022; Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012; Malik & Asma, 2020).

Gender, as an important social variable, has a profound impact on individual behavior, attitudes, and perceptions (Beltz & Kelly, 2023). The moderating role of gender has received extensive attention in psychological and educational research. The moderating role of gender in work commitment, work attitudes, and behavior has been revealed by many studies. Specifically in the field of teaching, research suggests that gender differences may influence teachers' professional commitment and work attitudes. Research on the moderating role of gender provides a more complex perspective for understanding teachers' behaviours and attitudes, and contributes to the design of more flexible and individualized teacher management policies. However, the role of gender as a moderating variable in educational research is still in the exploratory stage, and further empirical studies are needed to reveal the specific mechanisms of its role in modeling teacher commitment.

In summary, the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment has been well documented in the literature and reveals the moderating role of gender in this relationship. Future research could further explore the specific effects of gender on teacher commitment in different cultural and educational contexts, particularly how gender differences can be used to optimize teacher management and development strategies.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

This study models the relationship between perceived organizational support, teacher commitment, and gender based on Social Exchange Theory. Social Exchange Theory was proposed by Blau (1964) and emphasizes that the interaction between individuals and organizations is an exchange process based on reciprocity. In this framework, teachers' perceived organizational support in their work environment affects their level of commitment to the organization. The higher they perceived support, the more likely teachers are to show greater loyalty and responsibility to the school, thus increasing their teacher commitment. Gender, as a sociocultural variable, may play a moderating role in this relationship. Male and female teachers may have different response patterns in perceiving organizational support, which in turn affects their level of commitment. The concepts of reciprocity and reward in social exchange theory may explain how gender affects the way teachers perceive support and how this perception further affects their commitment to education.

The research hypotheses of this paper are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment. Specifically, female teachers may exhibit higher teacher commitment than male teachers when they perceive organizational support.

The theoretical framework and hypotheses of this study incorporate social exchange theory to explore how gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment, with the aim of providing educational administrators with recommendations for gender-sensitive policies and interventions that can improve teacher commitment and educational quality.

Research Methodology

The samples for this study were obtained from the 10 private universities in Qingdao, China. In order to maximize the validity of the data, a combination of cluster sampling and simple random sampling was used to select 5 schools from these 10 schools. The total number of teachers in these 10 schools in Qingdao was 8,487, which resulted in a valid sample of 417 according to Kregcie and Morgan's (1970) sample selection criteria. This sample selection method aims to ensure the quality and relevance of the data, while also taking into account the feasibility and practical implementation of the study.

There are two scales were included in this study. For the measurement of teacher commitment, the present study employed the scale developed by Thien et al. (2014), which comprises four sections corresponding to four dimensions of teacher commitment: commitment to school (coded as TCA), commitment to students (coded as TCB), commitment to teaching (coded as TCC), and commitment to the profession (coded as TCD). For the

measurement of perceived organizational support, the present study employed the scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), which consists of two components: one assessing the organization's evaluative judgments (coded as POSA), and the other addressing the actions the organization might take in hypothetical situations (coded as POSB). Two primary statistical methods were employed to analyze the data. Firstly, the basic characteristics of the sample were analyzed using descriptive statistics using SPSS 27.0 to provide important information of the sample. Subsequently, regression analyses and moderating effects tests were conducted to explore the moderating role of gender in the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment using the PROCESS plug-in for SPSS 27.0, which is a statistical tool used to test for mediating and moderating effects and is effective in analyzing relationships between multiple variables. Secondly, Smart-PLS 4.0 was used for path analysis to further validate the mechanism of gender as a moderating variable in the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment through structural equation modeling. Smart-PLS 4.0 is a widely used software for PLS-SEM analysis, which is able to accurately validate causal paths and relationships between potential variables in the model. Through the two data statistical methods, this study aims to deeply explore the moderating role of gender between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment, and to validate the related hypotheses to provide empirical support for understanding the formation mechanism of teacher commitment.

Research Findings

Basic Characteristics of the Samples

In this study, there are 417 valid samples from five private universities in Qingdao.

Table 1

The Statistics of Demographic Profile

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	159	38.1	38.1	38.1
	Female	258	61.9	61.9	100.0
	Total	417	100.0	100.0	
Age	≤ 30 years	202	48.4	48.4	48.4
	31-39 years	139	33.3	33.3	81.8
	40-49 years	54	12.9	12.9	94.7
	≥ 50 years	22	5.3	5.3	100.0
	Total	417	100.0	100.0	
Educational Background	Associate Degree	14	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Bachelor's Degree	44	10.6	10.6	13.9
	Master's Degree	282	67.6	67.6	81.5
	Doctorate	77	18.5	18.5	100.0
	Total	417	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 demonstrates the gender distribution, age distribution and educational background of the sample. According to the table, it can be seen that the gender ratio of the sample is relatively balanced, while teachers of different age groups and educational levels are involved.

Status of Teacher Commitment and Perceived Organizational Support

In this study, the status was categorized into three levels—low, medium, and high—based on the score ranges presented in Table 2. This classification facilitates the evaluation of the overall levels of teacher commitment and perceived organizational support.

Table 2

Score Range and Classification

Score Range	Mean Score (Min)	Explanation
1.00 - 2.33		Low
2.34 - 3.66		Medium
3.67 - 5.00		High

Source: Azizah Rajab et al (2005); Syarul Azman Shaharuddin and Razaleigh Muhamat (2014). The mean and standard deviation of teacher commitment (TC) and perceived organizational support (POS) are shown in the Table 3 and Table 4. Through descriptive statistical analysis, the study found that the overall level of perceived organizational support and teacher commitment was Medium.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Commitment

Statements	Completely disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree (%)	Completely agree (%)	Mean	SD	level
TCA1	4.6	26.4	15.3	24.9	28.8	3.47	1.277	Medium
TCA2	4.1	24.9	22.1	22.1	26.9	3.43	1.236	Medium
TCA3	4.1	23.0	21.1	22.8	29.0	3.50	1.241	Medium
TCB1	3.1	25.9	22.1	24.5	24.5	3.41	1.200	Medium
TCB2	3.8	27.6	16.8	24.9	26.9	3.43	1.252	Medium
TCB3	5.0	24.0	18.7	25.7	26.6	3.45	1.251	Medium
TCC1	5.5	23.0	21.8	23.0	26.6	3.42	1.254	Medium
TCC2	3.8	26.9	19.2	21.3	28.8	3.44	1.262	Medium
TCC3	4.3	26.4	18.5	23.0	27.8	3.44	1.262	Medium
TCD1	4.6	23.7	21.6	23.7	26.4	3.44	1.235	Medium
TCD2	4.6	25.2	21.8	21.3	27.1	3.41	1.251	Medium
TCD3	4.3	25.2	17.5	24.7	28.3	3.47	1.258	Medium
TCD4	4.8	28.1	19.2	22.1	25.9	3.36	1.266	Medium
Overall						3.44	1.25	Medium

Table 3 reveals that all the level of the four dimensions of teacher commitment at a moderate level. Teachers show a balanced attitude towards the different aspects of commitment, with no significant variation in the overall responses. The consistency in the results suggests that teachers perceive the various factors of commitment similarly, indicating a general sense of moderate engagement and dedication. Although there are slight individual differences, the overall trend highlights that teacher commitment is stable, with no extreme views towards any of the dimensions. This suggests that teacher commitment of private universities is neither exceptionally high nor low, but rather falls within a middle ground.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Organizational Support

Statements	Completely disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Agree (%)	Completely agree (%)	Mean	SD	Level
POSA1	3.1	14.9	18	41.7	22.3	3.65	1.077	Medium
POSA2	3.4	17.5	24.7	25.2	29.3	3.59	1.175	Medium
POSA3	4.1	19.9	23.5	13.4	39.1	3.64	1.288	Medium
POSA4	1.9	16.5	24.5	31.2	25.9	3.63	1.096	Medium
POSB1	3.6	13.9	23.5	31.2	27.8	3.66	1.131	Medium
POSB2	1.4	19.9	23.3	25.9	29.5	3.62	1.146	Medium
POSB3	2.4	12.9	30.5	30.0	24.2	3.61	1.062	Medium
POSB4	4.3	13.2	27.8	24.5	30.2	3.63	1.168	Medium
POSB5	3.4	12.7	27.3	33.1	23.5	3.61	1.080	Medium
POSB6	4.8	13.4	27.6	24.5	29.7	3.61	1.180	Medium
POSB7	3.8	12.5	30.5	22.1	31.2	3.64	1.156	Medium
Overall						3.63	1.14	Medium

Table 4 reveals that all the level of the two dimensions of perceived organizational support at a moderate level. Teachers express a balanced perception of organizational support, with most responses falling within the "agree" or "completely agree" categories, reflecting a moderate level of perceived support. While there are some variations in the specific statements, the overall trend suggests that teachers feel reasonably supported by their organization. This consistency across the different statements implies that organizational support is seen as present but not exceptionally high, and there is a general sense of stability in the responses.

The Direct Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Teacher Commitment and the Moderating Role of Gender

In this study, Smart PLS 4.0 was used to conduct significance testing on the path coefficients. Table 5 shows the path coefficients and significance testing results for the relationship between Perceived organizational support and teacher commitment. The p-value of 0.000 indicates a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment.

Table 5

Bootstrapped Path Coefficients and Significance Testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
POS -> TC	0.270	0.271	0.046	5.831	0.000

Table 6

Path Coefficient of Moderation Effect of Gender

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
GENDER x POS -> TC	0.284	0.284	0.088	3.218	0.001

Further analysis was conducted using the PROCESS plugin in SPSS 27.0 to examine the moderating effect of gender. Table 6 presents the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment. The interaction term between gender and POS (GENDER x POS -> TC) has a p-value of 0.001, suggesting that gender plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment.

Table 7

Conditional Effects of Perceived Organizational Support on Teacher Commitment by Gender

Gender	Effect	SE	T-value	P-value	LLCI	ULCI
Male (1)	0.2822	0.0777	3.631	0.0003	0.1294	0.435
Female (2)	0.8025	0.0549	14.6049	0.0000	0.6945	0.9105

Table 7 displays the conditional effects of perceived organizational support on teacher commitment by gender. For male teachers, the effect of perceived organizational support on teacher commitment is 0.2822, indicating a significant effect. For female teachers, the effect of perceived organizational support on teacher commitment is 0.8025, which is both significant and stronger. These results demonstrate that the impact of perceived organizational support on teacher commitment varies significantly between male and female teachers, with the effect being notably stronger for female teachers.

The above analysis indicates that gender not only moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment, but also reveals that the effect of this moderation varies by gender, with female teachers showing greater sensitivity to perceived organizational support. In particular, female teachers tend to respond more strongly to the presence or absence of organizational support, meaning that when they feel recognized, valued, and supported by their institutions, their levels of organizational commitment increase significantly. Conversely, a lack of support may lead to a sharper decline in their commitment compared to male teachers.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the levels of teacher commitment and perceived organizational support among teachers in private universities in Qingdao are moderate, and there exists a significant positive correlation between the relationship. This finding aligns with previous studies, further supporting the notion that perceived organizational support plays a crucial role in fostering teacher commitment (Wulandari et al., 2023; Bibi et al., 2019; Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012). Moreover, the study reveals that gender moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment, which provides additional validation for the theoretical importance of perceived organizational support in influencing teacher commitment, as suggested in previous research. Specifically, gender

differences suggest that male and female teachers exhibit varying responses to perceived organizational support, with female teachers demonstrating a higher sensitivity to organizational support. This finding is consistent with gender-related research (Nasir et al., 2022; Malik & Asma, 2020; Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012), where gender, as a moderating variable, significantly affects both the perception of organizational support and the level of teacher commitment.

The innovation of this study lies in its empirical exploration of the moderating role of gender in the relationship between teacher commitment and perceived organizational support among teachers in private universities in Qingdao. It reveals the unique role of gender in this relationship. While previous studies have explored the impact of perceived organizational support on teacher commitment, few have specifically considered the moderating effect of gender. This research not only fills the gap in the literature regarding gender differences in teacher commitment but also provides a new perspective for further studies on the diverse mechanisms of teacher commitment. Particularly, the influence of gender adds complexity and diversity to the formation mechanisms of teacher commitment.

From a practical perspective, the results of this study offer valuable insights for educational administrators and policymakers. Firstly, educational managers should adopt more nuanced management strategies based on gender differences among teachers. Given that female teachers respond more strongly to perceived organizational support, administrators can offer more career development opportunities, psychological support, and a better working environment to enhance their commitment levels. For male teachers, managers should pay attention to their unique support needs and implement customized incentive measures to strengthen their commitment. Secondly, policymakers can design gender-sensitive policies based on the findings to promote equal development among teachers of different genders, thereby optimizing the stability of the teaching workforce and the quality of education. Therefore, adopting gender-sensitive management strategies and policies is of significant practical importance in improving teacher commitment and enhancing the educational environment.

Conclusion

This study explored the moderating role of gender in the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment. The key findings indicate that the levels of teacher commitment and perceived organizational support among teachers in private universities in Qingdao are moderate, and there is a significant positive correlation between the two. At the same time, gender plays a moderating role in this relationship, with female teachers being more sensitive to perceived organizational support compared to male teachers. Specifically, female teachers exhibit higher levels of teacher commitment when perceiving organizational support, whereas male teachers' responses are relatively weaker. These findings further confirm the impact of gender differences on the relationship between teacher commitment and perceived organizational support, consistent with previous research on gender.

Although this study provides important empirical support for the role of gender in the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher commitment, there are some limitations. Firstly, the study focuses solely on private universities in Qingdao, which

means the results may not be broadly applicable to other regions or types of schools. Secondly, the study did not explore gender differences in various educational stages (e.g., primary education and secondary education) or within different cultural contexts. Future research could further refine the analysis of gender differences in diverse educational settings and explore the multidimensional impacts of gender on teacher commitment. Additionally, future studies may consider introducing more mediating and moderating variables, such as teachers' job satisfaction and burnout, to enrich the theoretical framework of teacher commitment and provide more comprehensive guidance for educational management.

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