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The influence of perceived organizational climate on retention intention among faculty in private colleges in Yunnan, China: The mediating role of decent work

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Abstract: Retaining faculty members has become a top priority for private colleges in China. This study, grounded in Social Exchange Theory, investigates the effect of perceived organizational climate (OC) on faculty members' intention to stay (ITS) and examines the mediating role of decent work (DW) in this link. Faculty members from four private colleges in Yunnan Province, China, participated in a structured questionnaire survey. Of the 782 distributed questionnaires, 114 were excluded for not meeting the research criteria, resulting in 668 valid responses. The findings suggest that perceived OC has a significant positive influence on faculty members' ITS. OC has a significant positive influence on DW. Additionally, DW also has a significant positive influence on ITS. Moreover, DW partially mediates the link between OC and ITS.

Keywords: *Decent work, Intention to stay, Organizational climate, Private colleges.*

1. Introduction

Faculty development is a vital strategy for private colleges in China to enhance the quality of talent cultivation and serves as a core element in advancing high-quality institutional development. The stability of the faculty workforce is vital to the sustainable growth of private higher education institutions [1]. Faculty turnover can negatively impact various aspects of university operations, and institutions generally hope that outstanding faculty members will remain long-term [2]. However, faculty attrition remains a persistent issue in private colleges, with many teachers leaving for public universities, government agencies, or foreign enterprises. Even those currently employed may be preparing to change jobs, hindering their full commitment to teaching. This situation severely undermines both instructional quality and the long-term development of private colleges [3].

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty members' intention to stay (ITS) has declined, with rising attrition rates. This trend has had negative repercussions across the global education sector [4]. Although educational institutions are increasingly aware of teacher shortages, traditional responses have primarily focused on recruiting new staff to fill vacancies [5]. However, recent studies suggest that the root cause of this crisis lies more in the failure to retain faculty than in a limited supply of qualified candidates[6].

Faculty members' ITS is a valuable metric reflecting their willingness to remain at their current institution or within the broader education sector. It is typically understood as the absence of intent to leave [7]. Therefore, predicting ITS is critical, as the intention is widely regarded as a strong psychological predictor of actual behavior [8]. For private colleges, improving faculty retention presents a more practical strategy for promoting institutional development and enhancing teaching quality [9].

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When institutions fail to align job demands with available resources, ITS may decline [10]. If teachers perceive greater benefits and opportunities outside the profession, they are more likely to leave [11]. In contrast, when they feel that their efforts and contributions are recognized and rewarded, they are more inclined to stay, continuing the reciprocal exchange relationship with the institution [12]. Against this backdrop, the present study adopts the Social Exchange Theory (SET) to examine the factors influencing ITS among faculty at private colleges.

A positive organizational climate (OC) can strengthen employees' sense of belonging and provide emotional resources to cope with workplace challenges, thereby enhancing work performance [13]. A healthy OC also helps mitigate negative outcomes, fosters long-term trust among teams, and promotes social support and a sense of affiliation [14]. In the education sector, where turnover is high, understanding the factors influencing ITS is especially crucial. Thus, the relationship between OC and ITS merits deeper investigation [15].

In addition, decent work (DW) is a growing concern for educators, as it affects their performance, behavior, and ultimately, the quality of institutional teaching [16]. While OC has been widely studied in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and healthcare (e.g., among farmers, laborers, and nurses), its role in educational research, particularly in private colleges, remains underexplored.

Addressing these gaps, this study constructs a theoretical model to evaluate the link between perceived OC and ITS among faculty members in private colleges in Yunnan, China and investigates whether DW mediates this relationship.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Influence of OC on ITS

Previous research has consistently illustrated a significant positive correlation between OC and ITS, suggesting that institutions should cultivate a friendly and healthy work environment to enhance employees' willingness to remain [17]. Key elements of OC, such as work-life balance, task clarity, team cohesion, and ethical standards, can positively influence employees' attitudes [18]. Moreover, a cooperative and supportive OC has been shown to reduce turnover intentions, reinforcing its importance in promoting ITS [19]. Consequently, OC is widely recognized as a critical factor in teacher retention [20].

Specific aspects of the educational climate, such as school leadership, teacher autonomy, institutional policies, peer relationships, student behavior, and safety conditions, have been found to significantly influence teachers' ITS [21]. Institutions that foster positive cultures, collaborative work environments, effective leadership, and sound administrative practices are more likely to retain their teaching staff [22].

For instance, a study conducted among kindergarten teachers in minority regions of China found that OC was positively associated with ITS, indicating that a supportive environment enhances teachers' willingness to stay [23]. Similar results were reported among special education teachers, where OC was a significant positive predictor of ITS [24]. Such empirical evidence supports the notion that improving OC can effectively reduce turnover intentions and increase faculty retention [25].

Accordingly, schools should implement practical strategies, such as providing emotional support and fostering a caring atmosphere, to cultivate a positive working environment and build a motivated, committed teaching team, thereby improving instructional outcomes [26]. Based on these findings, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the perceived OC among faculty at private colleges has a significantly positive effect on their ITS.

2.2. The Influence of OC on DW

OC is widely regarded as a key driver of employees' perceptions of DW, which encompasses fundamental human needs such as survival, social connectedness, and autonomy [27]. By fostering a positive OC, organizations can help employees overcome interpersonal challenges and promote equity, thereby enhancing their experience of DW [28]. Equitable compensation, work-life balance, and job

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security, often enabled by a supportive OC, can fulfill employees' expectations and directly influence their ITS [29].

A favorable OC also improves adaptability and coordination among staff, strengthening the organization's ability to sense, interpret, and restructure in response to change, ultimately enhancing its competitive advantage [30]. Enhancing OC has been shown to increase job satisfaction, improve DW perception, and promote greater work engagement and productivity, thereby supporting the implementation of more effective DW practices [29]. Conversely, core elements of DW, such as a safe work environment, fair pay, and sufficient rest, can also contribute to building a positive OC [31]. This dynamic interaction between OC and DW indicates that changes in one domain can significantly influence the other [32]. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the OC within private colleges significantly contributes to the formation of faculty members' perceptions of DW.

2.3. The Influence of DW on ITS

Research has revealed that DW is a robust predictor of employees' turnover intention. Organizations should prioritize improving DW conditions, enhancing job satisfaction, and providing greater job autonomy to increase employees' ITS [33]. When employees receive fair compensation, they tend to experience greater motivation and develop positive attitudes toward their work, thereby increasing their likelihood of remaining with the organization [34]. Offering competitive salaries and ensuring job security are particularly crucial for reducing turnover rates and maintaining DWing conditions, especially for temporary employees. These strategies not only alleviate uncertainty about career trajectories while contributing to perceptions of DW [35].

A heightened sense of DW contributes to a stronger occupational identity, lowers the intention to leave, and promotes greater ITS [36]. Higher levels of DW are associated with the greater fulfillment of personal needs, which in turn leads to increased job satisfaction, improved overall well-being, and stronger ITS [37]. Empirical studies have revealed positive correlations among DW, occupational identity, and ITS, indicating that improving DW can significantly strengthen employees' ITS [38].

When teachers perceive low levels of DW, their intention to leave increases, suggesting a negative link between DW and turnover intention. In contrast, higher perceptions of DW are linked to stronger ITS [39]. Enhancing teachers' experience of DW is an effective way to raise job engagement, satisfaction, and retention [40]. In the context of higher education, DW has been found to significantly influence ITS; a favorable DW experience increases faculty members' willingness to remain [41]. One study, using a two-factor exploratory structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, further confirmed the positive relationship between DW and ITS [42]. These findings suggest that DW is a key determinant of ITS among faculty members.

2.4. The Mediating Role of DW between OC and ITS

Teacher attrition in the education sector is largely driven by school climate and working conditions [43]. OC has been revealed to be positively related with employee engagement, and participation in training activities, in turn, is positively linked to ITS [44]. A diverse OC is negatively correlated with stereotyping, which is associated with increased anxiety and higher turnover intentions [45]. A supportive OC, characterized by meaningful incentives and structured support systems, plays a critical role in employee retention. Organizations can strengthen ITS by implementing performance-based reward systems, enhancing compensation and benefits, establishing clear incentive mechanisms, promoting participatory decision-making, and evaluating leadership behavior [46].

Creating a fair, transparent, and competitive work environment, encouraging two-way communication, supporting career development, especially for new employees, and fostering healthy interpersonal relationships can contribute to a positive workplace climate and improve ITS [47]. Therefore, OC may serve as a significant predictor of ITS among educators [48]. To minimize turnover, organizations should foster a supportive atmosphere, manage workloads effectively, increase employee autonomy, and address key retention drivers [49]. Furthermore, managerial interventions to

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improve OC and ITS may include increasing compensation, encouraging collegiality, maintaining open communication and trust between management and staff, and providing employees with greater autonomy [50].

DW is often considered a central construct in theoretical models of employee behavior and has a substantial positive effect on that behavior. A supportive OC positively moderates the link between DW and employee focus or engagement [51]. Therefore, organizations should strive to cultivate a favorable climate, enhance DW perceptions (such as fair compensation and value alignment), and thereby promote occupational stability and ITS [52].

Accordingly, it is hypothesized that DW mediates the relationship between OC and ITS. Based on the literature review and theoretical synthesis, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H_1: OC has a significant positive effect on ITS.

H_2: OC has a significant positive effect on DW.

H_3: DW has a significant positive effect on ITS.

H_4: DW mediates the relationship between OC and ITS.

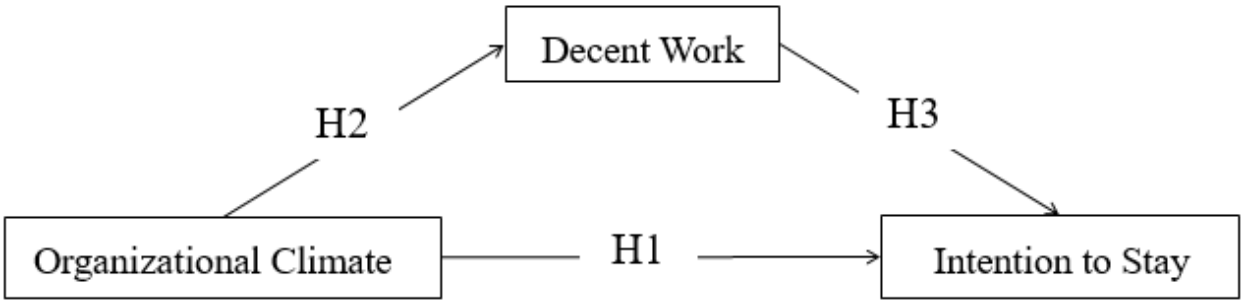

Figure 1.
Theoretical model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were faculty members from private colleges in Yunnan Province, China. Four institutions were selected using purposive sampling based on their representativeness within the context of private higher education in Yunnan. During the formal data collection phase, 782 questionnaires were distributed. After excluding responses completed in under 10 minutes or those that did not meet the inclusion criteria, 668 valid responses were retained, resulting in an effective response rate of 85.42%. The demographic and professional characteristics of the sample closely reflected those of the broader population of private college faculty in Yunnan, thereby enhancing the generalizability and representativeness of the study's findings.

3.2. Procedure

The survey was administered online using the "Wenjuanxing" platform (www.wjx.cn), a widely used tool for questionnaire distribution in China. Participants accessed the survey by scanning a QR code or clicking a web link. To ensure the relevance and validity of the data, colleagues and acquaintances at the four participating colleges assisted in distributing the survey during non-teaching hours, in offices, classrooms, and WeChat groups.

Before completing the questionnaire, all participants were presented with an informed consent form. Upon agreeing to participate, they were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and their participation's voluntary nature. Anonymity was assured, and all responses were kept firmly confidential and utilized exclusively for academic research purposes. The study respected individual

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beliefs and cultural norms, and participants retained the right to decline or withdraw at any time without penalty. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to finish.

4. Instruments

4.1. OC Scale

OC was measured utilizing the School Climate Scale developed by Sudla, et al. [53]. The instrument comprises four dimensions: Safety (6 items), Academic Environment (10 items), Collegiality (9 items), and Institutional Environment (9 items), totaling 34 items. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Higher scores indicate more positive perceptions of the school climate. The original reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) for the subscales ranged from .680 to .910.

4.2. DW Scale

DW was measured utilizing the DW Scale contracted by Duffy, et al. [54]. This scale comprises five dimensions: Safe Working Conditions (3 items), Access to Healthcare (3 items), Fair Compensation (3 items), Adequate Rest (3 items), and Alignment with Personal Values (3 items), for a total of 15 items. Four of the items were reverse-scored. Responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"), with higher scores indicating a greater perceived level of DW. The original reliability coefficient for the scale was reported as .860.

4.3. ITS Scale

ITS was assessed utilizing the ITS Scale developed by Kaya and Argon [55]. This unidimensional scale comprises of 6 items. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 indicating "strongly agree," 4 "agree," 3 "neutral," 2 "disagree," and 1 "strongly disagree." Higher scores reflect a stronger intention to remain at the current institution. The original reliability coefficient for the scale was reported as .883.

5. Results

5.1. Common Method Variance (CMV)

To assess the potential influence of CMV, Harman's single-factor test was first employed. Exploratory factor analysis extracted 10 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, which together accounted for 70.60% of the total variance. The first factor explained 34.04% of the variance, below the critical threshold of 50%, indicating that CMV is unlikely to pose a significant threat to the study's results.

To further validate this conclusion, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted by comparing a single-factor model with a multi-factor model. As revealed in Table 1, the single-factor model demonstrated a significantly poorer fit than the multi-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 12{,}403.30$, $\Delta df = 45$, $p < .001$), providing additional evidence that CMV is not a serious concern in this study.

Therefore, the data can be considered representative and are not substantially affected by common method bias.

Table 1.
Comparison of Multi-Factor and Single-Factor Models.

Model	χ2	df	χ2/df	Δχ2	Δdf	p
Single-Factor Model	14831.839	1430	10.372	12403.301	45	<.001
Multi-Factor Model	2428.538	1385	1.753			

Note: $p < .05$ indicates significance.

5.2. Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis of the OC scale indicated excellent internal consistency, with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .963. The subdimensions also demonstrated high reliability: Safety (.908), Academic Environment (.926), Collegiality (.928), and Institutional Environment (.932).

For the DW scale, the overall Cronbach's alpha was .929. The reliability coefficients for its five dimensions were as follows: Safe Working Conditions (.928), Access to Healthcare (.907), Fair Compensation (.872), Adequate Rest (.867), and Alignment with Personal Values (.913). The ITS scale likewise showed strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .922. These results confirm that all three measurement instruments exhibit high levels of reliability and internal consistency, supporting their suitability for use in this study.

5.3. CFA

5.3.1. CFA for OC

A normality test showed that the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis for all OC scale items were below 2. The Mardia coefficient was 346.565, which is below the critical threshold of p(p + 2) = 1224, indicating acceptable multivariate normality. Error variance estimates ranged from .379 to .816, standardized regression weights ranged from .699 to .879, and standard errors ranged from .031 to .049. All factor loadings were statistically significant ($p < .001$), suggesting no estimation issues.

Model fit indices indicated a good fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.555$, SRMR = .034, RMSEA = .048, GFI = .887, AGFI = .871, NFI = .917, RFI = .911, IFI = .948, TLI = .944, CFI = .948, PNFI = .852, and CN = 289, all meeting standard cutoff criteria.

Convergent validity was confirmed, with standardized factor loadings ranging from .663 to .879 ($p < .001$), composite reliability (CR) between .908 and .933, and average variance extracted (AVE) between .557 and .625. These results demonstrate strong convergent validity for the OC construct.

5.3.2. CFA for DW

For the DW scale, the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis were also below 2, and the Mardia coefficient was 127.365, below the critical value of p(p + 2) = 255, indicating no significant violations of normality. Error variance estimates ranged from .534 to 1.378; standardized regression weights ranged from .807 to .928; and standard errors ranged from .026 to .039. All estimates were statistically significant ($p < .001$), reflecting stable model estimates.

Model fit indices demonstrated excellent fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.003$, SRMR = .022, RMSEA = .039, GFI = .969, AGFI = .954, NFI = .979, RFI = .972, IFI = .989, TLI = .986, CFI = .989, PNFI = .746, and CN = 424, all meeting or exceeding accepted thresholds.

Convergent validity was strong, with standardized factor loadings ranging from .800 to .928 ($p < .001$), composite reliability (CR) values between .869 and .929, and AVE values between .688 and .813. These results provide robust evidence of convergent validity for the DW construct.

5.3.3. CFA for ITS

The ITS scale also passed the normality test, with absolute values of skewness and kurtosis for all items below 2, and a Mardia coefficient of 14.098, which is below the critical value of p(p + 2) = 48, indicating acceptable multivariate normality. Error variance estimates ranged from .423 to .723; standardized regression weights ranged from .755 to .863; standard errors ranged from .035 to .039. All estimates were statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating good measurement quality.

Model fit indices were: $\chi^2/df = 4.862$, SRMR = .020, RMSEA = .076, GFI = .977, AGFI = .947, NFI = .984, RFI = .974, IFI = .987, TLI = .979, CFI = .987, PNFI = .590, and CN = 258, indicating an acceptable to excellent model fit.

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Convergent validity was confirmed by standardized factor loadings ranging from .755 to .863 ($p <$ .001), a composite reliability (CR) of .923, and an AVE of .667. These results demonstrate strong convergent validity for the ITS construct.

5.4. Discriminant Validity Analysis

To assess discriminant validity, the square roots of the AVE for each construct and its dimensions were compared with the corresponding inter-construct correlation coefficients. Results showed that, for all constructs and dimensions, the square root of AVE exceeded the respective correlation coefficients. This satisfies the widely accepted criterion that over 75% of AVE square roots should be greater than the inter-construct correlations. These findings confirm good discriminant validity, demonstrating conceptual independence and clear distinction among the measured constructs and their dimensions.

5.5. Correlation Analysis

To assess potential multicollinearity among variables, Pearson correlation analysis was performed to investigate the relations between OC, DW, and ITS. As shown in Table 2, significant positive correlations were found: OC and DW (r = 0.494, $p <$ .001), OC and ITS (r = 0.291, $p <$ .001), and DW and ITS (r = 0.349, $p <$ .001). These results indicate that while the variables are related, the correlation coefficients remain within acceptable limits, suggesting no severe multicollinearity issues. Therefore, it is appropriate to proceed with SEM to further analyze the relationships and effects among these variables.

Table 2.
Pearson Correlation Analysis among Key Variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	OC	DW	ITS
OC	3.688	0.852	1		
DW	4.722	1.401	0.494***	1	
ITS	3.780	1.068	0.291***	0.349***	1

Note: n=668; *p<.050; **p<.010; ***p<.001.

5.6. Structural Equation Model Fit Assessment

To evaluate the goodness-of-fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data, a structural equation model (SEM) involving OC, DW, and ITS was constructed using AMOS software. The model was estimated via maximum likelihood estimation.

As shown in Table 3, the model demonstrated a satisfactory fit across multiple indices. Absolute fit indices included χ^2/df = 2.004 (below the recommended threshold of 3), SRMR = .033, and RMSEA = .039, each below the .080 cutoff. Goodness-of-fit indices were strong, with GFI = .967 and AGFI = .954, both exceeding the .900 standard. Incremental fit indices also indicated robust fit: NFI = .968, RFI = .962, IFI = .984, TLI = .981, and CFI = .984, all well above the .900 benchmark. Parsimonious fit indices PNFI = .802 and PGFI = 0.701 surpassed the acceptable threshold of .500. Additionally, the Critical N (CN) was 420, exceeding the recommended minimum of 200.

These results confirm that the proposed SEM meets conventional fit criteria and is suitable for analyzing the relationships among the key constructs and testing the hypotheses.

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Table 3.
Structural Model Fit Indices.

Fit Index	Criterion	Observed Value	Fit Status
$\chi 2$/df	<5	2.004	Acceptable
SRMR	<0.080	0.033	Acceptable
RMSEA	<0.080	0.039	Acceptable
GFI	>0.800	0.967	Acceptable
AGFI	>0.800	0.954	Acceptable
NFI	>0.900	0.968	Acceptable
RFI	>0.900	0.962	Acceptable
IFI	>0.900	0.984	Acceptable
TLI	>0.900	0.981	Acceptable
CFI	>0.900	0.984	Acceptable
PNFI	>0.500	0.802	Acceptable
PGFI	>0.500	0.701	Acceptable
CN	>200	420	Acceptable

5.7. Direct Path Analysis

SEM was used to examine the relationships among OC, DW, and ITS, as well as to test the proposed hypotheses. As shown in Table 4, the path analysis results are as follows:

The path coefficient from OC to ITS was 0.166 ($p < .010$), indicating a significant positive effect. This suggests that higher perceived OC is associated with stronger ITS among faculty members, supporting Hypothesis 1.

The path coefficient from OC to DW was 0.580 ($p < .001$), demonstrating a significant positive relationship. This implies that better perceptions of OC lead to higher perceived levels of DW, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Finally, the path coefficient from DW to ITS was 0.284 ($p < .001$), indicating that higher perceived DW significantly enhances ITS, providing empirical support for Hypothesis 3.

Table 4.
Direct Path Analysis.

Path	β	SE	C.R.
OC→ITS	0.166	0.077	3.100
OC→DW	0.580	0.091	12.535
DW→ITS	0.284	0.042	5.170

5.8. Mediation Effect Analysis

Based on the path analysis results and following the recommendations of Preacher and Hayes [56] this study employed the Bootstrap method to test the mediating role of DW in the relationship between OC and ITS. A resampling procedure with 5,000 iterations was conducted, with a 95% confidence level.

As shown in Table 5, the estimated direct effect of OC on ITS was 0.166, with a 95% confidence interval (CI) of (0.043-0.289), which does not include zero ($p < .001$), confirming a significant direct effect of OC on ITS.

For the indirect effect, the estimated mediating effect of DW on the OC-ITS relationship was 0.165, with a 95% CI of (0.101-0.244), excluding zero ($p < .001$). This indicates that DW significantly mediates the relationship, supporting Hypothesis 4.

The total effect of OC on ITS was 0.331, with a 95% CI of (0.237-0.423), also excluding zero ($p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that DW partially mediates the relationship between OC and ITS.

Table 5.
Bootstrap Mediation Effect Analysis.

Path	β	SE	95% CI(Lower)	95% CI (Upper)	P
OC→ITS (Direct)	0.166	0.063	0.043	0.289	0.009
OC→DW→ITS (Indirect)	0.165	0.036	0.101	0.244	0.000
OC→ITS (Total)	0.331	0.047	0.237	0.423	0.000

Note: $p < .05$ indicates significance.

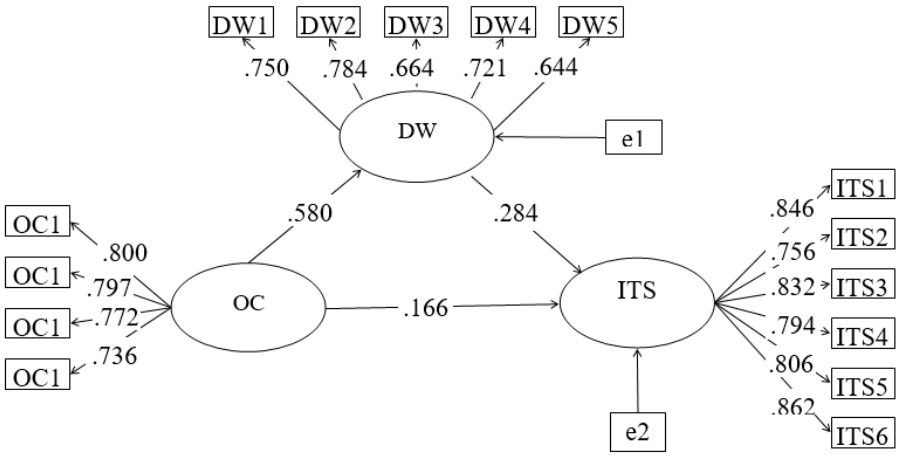

Figure 2.
SEM Analysis.

5.9. Discussion

Grounded in SET, this study examined how OC influences ITS among faculty members at private colleges, with a particular focus on the mediating role of DW. The findings supported all proposed hypotheses, contributing to both the theoretical literature on higher education management and occupational psychology in China, while also providing practical insights for faculty retention strategies in private institutions.

The results confirmed that positive perceptions of OC significantly enhance ITS among faculty members. This suggests that working in a fair, supportive, and equitable environment fosters a strong sense of belonging and responsibility, thereby increasing faculty members' likelihood of remaining with their institution. This finding aligns with previous studies [19]. In the context of private colleges, where institutional stability and welfare guarantees are often less assured than in public institutions, faculty tend to be more sensitive and responsive to OC factors such as support, fairness, and open communication.

The study also demonstrated that a favorable OC significantly improves faculty members' perceptions of DW. This indicates that supportive, inclusive, and equitable organizational environments not only shape external working conditions but also enhance internal experiences of professional dignity, value, and security. Consistent with prior research [14] these results emphasize the critical role of organizational systems and cultural atmosphere in fulfilling individuals' needs for respect and self-worth. For private institutions, cultivating a high-quality OC emerges as a key strategy for enhancing faculty members' psychological well-being.

Furthermore, DW perceptions were found to have a direct and significant positive impact on ITS. When faculty feel respected, find meaning in their work, and perceive opportunities for growth, they are more likely to remain in their current positions. This supports previous research [37] suggesting that

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DW is not merely an expression of job satisfaction but also a key psychological mechanism influencing organizational commitment and turnover behavior. Enhancing DW perceptions is thus vital for stabilizing human resources and strengthening organizational cohesion.

Notably, this study is among the first to introduce DW as a mediating variable in research on private college faculty. The results showed that DW partially mediates the relationship between OC and ITS, confirming that perceived professional dignity and respect play a vital psychological role in shaping organizational behavior [50]. This implies that OC does not directly determine faculty retention, but rather influences their perceptions of DW, which in turn shape their behavioral decisions. This mediating pathway highlights the importance of internal psychological mechanisms and suggests that institutional leaders should pay close attention to faculty members' emotional and value-based experiences.

5.10. Practical Implications

Based on the findings, private colleges seeking to improve faculty ITS should focus on optimizing OC and enhancing perceptions of DW. First, institutional leaders should implement fair and transparent management systems to ensure equity in promotion, performance evaluation, and career advancement. This approach reduces uncertainty and frustration, fostering trust in the institution.

Second, support mechanisms must be strengthened by establishing regular communication channels, psychological support services, and professional development programs. Providing opportunities for growth—such as training sessions and academic exchanges—alongside improved welfare benefits can enhance faculty members' sense of respect and value.

Third, attention should be directed toward cultivating a culture that respects individuality and encourages open expression, helping faculty develop emotional attachment and recognition, thereby increasing retention. Finally, private institutions are advised to establish routine feedback mechanisms to monitor faculty satisfaction and evaluate OC. Using these data for informed decision-making will support continuous improvement in faculty work experiences and perceptions of DW.

6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study validated the relationships among OC, DW, and ITS, it has several limitations. First, the sample was limited to private colleges in Yunnan Province, China, which may constrain the generalizability of the results. Future research should broaden the scope to include diverse regions and educational settings, such as private primary and secondary schools. Second, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences; longitudinal or experimental studies are needed to examine variable relationships over time. Third, this study examined only the mediating role of DW. Future research could incorporate additional mediators, such as organizational identification or psychological contracts, to deepen understanding. Additionally, individual factors (e.g., age, career stage) and organizational characteristics (e.g., school size, governance style) may act as moderators and warrant investigation.

Institutional Review Board Statement:

The Ethical Committee of Dhurakij Pundit University approved this study on 17 February 2025 (Ref. No. DPU_BSH 1702/2567)

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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