



Psychological Distress and Intention to Quit. The moderating role of Compensation among teachers in Second-cycle Institutions in Cape Coast, Ghana

Doreen Agyeiwaa Owusu^a Nicodemus Osei Owusu^{a*} Samuel Opoku^a Isaac Kosi^a Mark Bigool^a

^a University of Cape Coast, Ghana

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*Corresponding Author: nowusu@ucc.edu.gh

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Samuel Opoku, Nicodemus Osei Owusu, Isaac Kosi,
Mark Bigool



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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the link between psychological distress's dimensions and the intention to quit with the moderating role of the compensation system among teachers in Second Cycle Institutions in Cape Coast Metropolis, Central Region of Ghana. The study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey and explanatory research design. Using a sample of 167 responses from teachers, a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to analyse the relationships among the variables. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between the various dimensions (emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and physiological) of psychological distress and teachers' intention to quit. The study also found out that compensation plays a full moderating role in the relationship between psychological distress and the intention to quit. It was therefore recommended that management of Second Cycle Institutions in Cape Coast Metropolis should have a better system of compensation put in place to motivate teachers to remain in the profession.

Introduction

In Ghana, since 2016, the implementation of educational policy reforms, like Free Senior High School (SHS) programme, has led to a significant increase in student enrollment at Second Cycle Institutions throughout the country (Takyi et al., 2021; Tamanja & Pajibo, 2019). This rise in the numbers of students has subsequently placed additional demands on teachers, particularly those working on the Cape Coast Metropolis. The Cape Coast Metropolis is known for its concentration of high-performing (Category A) Senior High Schools as classified by the Ghana Education Service. As a result, teachers within this region are compelled to cope with larger class sizes and more administrative duties (Blatchford & Russell, 2019), thereby causing heightened levels of pressure (Owusu, 2021). Consequently, the mounting pressure can evolve into feelings of frustration, as they perceive themselves as inadequately equipped to manage and

align with the demands of their job, intensifying their intention to quit (Baquero, 2023). Working schedules for teaching activities show that these teachers work in the morning, afternoon, and evening, demonstrating that they work at various times of the day (Owusu, 2021). Thus, with such heavy workload coupled with the poor working environment, these teachers can suffer from psychological distress, which increases their intention to quit (Peele & Wolf, 2020).

However, according to Dousin et al. (2021), compensation can have a significant impact on either minimising or maximising employees' intention to quit when faced with psychological distress at the workplace. Thus, compensation can play a moderating role in the relationship between psychological distress and teachers' intention to quit. Theoretically, the relationships among the constructs in this study are grounded in two complementary frameworks: the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the Social Exchange Theory (SET) by Blau (1964). The JDR theory explains the transmission process between psychological distress and intention to quit by suggesting that when employees face excessive job demands without adequate resources, they experience psychological strain that depletes their energy and resilience. This strain, if prolonged, increases the likelihood of withdrawal behaviours such as turnover intentions. In contrast, the Social Exchange Theory provides an intuitive explanation of how compensation moderates this relationship. According to SET, employment relationships are governed by reciprocal exchanges; when employees perceive fair and adequate compensation, they feel valued and are more likely to reciprocate with commitment and reduced intention to quit. Conversely, inadequate compensation weakens this reciprocal bond, amplifying the negative effects of psychological distress on turnover intention. Therefore, while the JDR theory describes how job stressors lead to employees' desire to leave, SET clarifies how compensation can either buffer or intensify this effect by shaping employees' perceptions of fairness and obligation.

In the case of Ghana, the absence of good compensation system has led to high turnover in the teaching profession and this has been a challenge causing crisis in schools (Owusu, 2022). Indeed, every year, it is estimated that around 157,000 teachers leave the teaching profession (Boateng, 2019). These elevated rates of turnovers place considerable financial strain on educational institutions, as they must bear the costs associated with recruiting, hiring, and training new instructors. The idea here is that teacher psychological distress has become a major issue in Ghana particularly those in Second-cycle institutions in Cape Coast Metropolis (Acheampong et al., 2019).

However, while a lot of studies (Ahmad et al., 2021; Owusu, 2021; Baquero, 2023) have been done on the subject matter, little is known about the roles that compensation (CPP) plays as moderator in the relationship between psychological distress (PD) and Intention to quit (ITQ). Besides, in terms of methodology, most studies (Hossain et al., 2022; Saputro et al., 2020; Ahmad et al., 2021) conducted so far only used simple regression to explain the relationship between psychological distress and intention to quit without considering the various dimensions of psychological distress. By using simple linear regression, the extent of the influence of the various dimensions of psychological distress on intention to quit was ignored, as regression primarily estimates direct relationships between observed variables without accounting for measurement errors. In contrast, the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach provides more efficient and robust estimates because it simultaneously assesses both measurement and structural models. This enables a more accurate estimation of complex, multidimensional relationships among latent constructs. PLS-SEM is particularly advantageous in studies with smaller sample sizes, non-normal data, and multiple mediating or moderating effects, as it maximizes the explained variance of the dependent variables while minimizing estimation bias. Consequently, this approach addresses the literature and knowledge gaps on the effects of psychological distress on intention to quit in Ghana's public educational sector by providing more reliable and comprehensive insights than traditional regression models. It is against this background that this study is conducted with the aim of examining the moderating effects of compensation on the relationship between psychological distress and intention to quit among Cape Coast second-cycle teachers is lacking.

By achieving the study's objectives, this research will offer deeper insights into variables affecting teacher retention and supports the development of educational policy that will help not only to reduce intentions to quit but also manage psychological distress in Second Cycle Institutions in Cape Coast Metropolis. The theoretical significance lies in the study's potential to deepen understanding of the elements impacting teacher job satisfaction and retention, providing a foundation for future research within the Ghanaian context.

Literature Review

Theoretical framework

Job Demands–Resources (JDR) Theory

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory as propounded by [Demerouti et al., \(2001\)](#), posits that every work context can be considered by employing two categories of job characteristics: job demands and job resources ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#); [Demerouti & Bakker, 2023](#)). [Demerouti et al., \(2001\)](#) describe job demands as those aspects of the job that demands continuous physical and/or psychological effort (e.g., work pressure, cognitive demands) and relate to physiological and/or psychological costs. The authors further maintain that job resources such as social support, task significance, and opportunities for growth are all aspects of the job that are functional in attaining work goals, lessening job demands and the related physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth, learning, and development ([Demerouti et al., 2001](#)).

According to [Demerouti and Bakker \(2023\)](#), the core of job demands is that they consume energy because demands must be addressed, while the crux of job resources is that they produce motivation and helps safeguard the effects of job demands on employee well-being and performance ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#)). From the perspectives of [Demerouti and Bakker \(2023\)](#), in the motivational process, job resources have the potential to either function as intrinsic motivators by nurturing employee's growth, learning and development, or as extrinsic motivators by easing the attainment of work goals.

In the context of this study, JDR theory can be explained that continuing job demands of teachers use up their cognitive and physical resources, and may, as a result drain both physical and emotional energy. Such endless exhaustion, which is a central component of burnout, will require individual teachers to continually invest high effort to solve their job demands. In so doing, with their energetic resources being reduced and threatened, demotivation and demoralisation set in in their own operations, and this can trigger their psychological distress, giving rise to their intention to quit ([Bon & Shire, 2022](#)).

The Social Exchange Theory (SET)

According to [Blau \(1964\)](#) "Social exchange ... refers to voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others." (p. 91). The idea here is that such social exchange involves the principle that one person does another a favor, however, whereas there is an overall anticipation of some future return, its precise nature is certainly not known. Nonetheless, a critical part of social exchange theory is the assumption of a "norm of reciprocity", which suggests the sense of compulsion an individual has toward another being that offers something of high significance. In essence, the norm of reciprocity demands individuals to pay back quid pro quo any assistance offered to them ([Riggs & Rantz, 2001](#)). The social exchange theory therefore posits that individuals structure their relationships and interactions on the premise of resource exchange, gauging the consequences of these interactions by weighing the costs and benefits involved ([Boateng et al., 2019](#)).

In the context of this study, the SET underpins not only the relationship between compensation and teachers' intention to quit but also the moderating role in the relationship between psychological distress and intention to quit. From employment perspective, compensation can be construed as a mutual exchange of resources among the employer and the employee and when employees like teachers see the handsome rewards from employer, they intend will reciprocate by being loyal irrespective of the pressure at work ([Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020](#)).

Conceptual review and hypotheses development

Psychological distress

Psychological distress can be seen as a non-specific psychological state characterised by feelings of depressed mood or anxiety (Kessler et al., 2002). In essence, it refers to a condition of emotional anguish, encompassing signs of depression such as waning interest, sorrow, and despair, as well as manifestations of anxiety like unease and heightened tension (Brossard & Chandler, 2022). These indications might also intertwine with bodily indications like sleeplessness, migraines, and diminished energy, which can differ among various cultures (Zhang, 2020). Suksasilp and Garfinkel (2022) suggest that psychological distress can present itself in different ways, affecting individuals across various dimensions. These dimensions include emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological aspects of distress.

Emotional Dimension involves the experience of negative emotions and the inability to cope with them effectively (Connolly-Zubot et al., 2020). Common emotional responses to distress may include feelings of sadness, anxiety, fear, anger, guilt, shame, loneliness, or hopelessness (Connolly-Zubot et al., 2020). Emotional distress can be overwhelming and may impact on a person's ability to experience positive emotions as well. On other hand, Cognitive dimension of psychological distress encompasses thought patterns and cognitive processes that contribute to distress (Hayes & Hofmann, 2021). Individuals experiencing distress might have negative thinking patterns and may also have distorted beliefs about themselves, others, or the world, leading to self-criticism, self-blame, or a pessimistic outlook. In the case of Behavioral dimension, it refers to changes in a person's actions and behaviors in response to their emotional state (Hayes & Hofmann, 2021). Someone in distress may exhibit behaviors such as social withdrawal, avoidance of certain situations or people, reduced motivation to engage in daily activities, procrastination, increased substance use, self-harming behaviors, or changes in eating and sleeping patterns (Menec et al., 2020). Lastly, Physiological dimension of psychological distress can have physical manifestations due to the mind-body connection (Mace et al., 2021). Persistent stress and emotional turmoil can lead to physiological symptoms, such as migraines, tiredness, heightened heart rate, raised blood pressure, and a weakened immune system. These dimensions are interconnected and can reinforce each other.

Intention to quit

Intention to quit relates to an employee's desire or possibility of leaving their present work willingly within a certain time frame (Liu & Raghuram, 2022). This means intention to quit pertains to the extent to which an employee plans to leave an organization and a stronger feeling of withdrawal intentions which typically results in an increased likelihood that the employee will leave (Steel & Ovalle, 1984). Thus, employee intention to quit pertains to an employee's deliberation or inclination to depart from their existing employment position. Some aspects that lead to an employee's intention to quit are treatment from leadership and management, lack of career development and growth opportunities, work-life balance, proper compensation and benefits among others (Chen et al., 2023).

Compensation

According to Delery et al. (2000), compensation is the sum of all the benefits employees are receiving from the organization against their services. The idea here is that compensation stands as the remuneration approved to an employee in return for their contributions or services rendered to an institution. These contributions cover their time, expertise, skills, capabilities, and dedication to the company or an institution (Didit & Nikmah, 2020). From the perspectives of Alhmoud and Rjoub (2019) compensation can be in the form of an employee's benefits like financial (salary, pension, insurance or bonuses) or non-financial benefits (extra vacation, free travel, free medical or children's education).

Thus, from above, it can be said that compensation can be seen as two types of rewards or incentives extrinsic (financial benefits) and intrinsic (non-financial benefits) used by organizations to motivate and reward their employees for their contributions and performance (Georgiana-Florina et al., 2022). However, for most employees, monetary (extrinsic) considerations such as wages and salaries

usually constitute a substantial share of their earnings, accompanied by benefits that offer financial stability. When financial stability is achieved, extrinsic compensation is likely to improve people's emotional coping, allowing them to aim for effective and functional methods to manage stress and continue to work (Baquero, 2023). On the other hand, intrinsic compensation which refers to the internal or psychological rewards that employees acquire from their work, are innate to the job itself and are frequently linked to the contentment of personal and emotional desires (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). Against this background, it is fair to say that employee compensation can be critical because it occupies an essential place within the employment dynamic, exercising an influence on both employees and employers alike. In addition, both types of compensation approaches (extrinsic and intrinsic) have a vital role to play in attracting, retaining, and engaging talented individuals within an institution while at the same time they can minimise or enhance employees' intention to quit (Park & Johnson, 2019).

Hypotheses development

The relationship between employee's psychological distress and intention to quit

Psychological distress often plays a significant role in shaping employees' intentions to leave their jobs through job dissatisfaction (Aliane et al., 2023). This happens because when employees experience high levels of distress, they often feel drained, both mentally and emotionally making them dissatisfied with the work. With time, this dissatisfaction grows, leading employees to view their current role as incompatible with their personal and professional needs (Xue et al., 2022; Ross, 2017). This distress generates a negative perception of their work milieu, thereby reducing employees' ability to be involved in their work, nurturing withdrawal and displeasure which make them see their current job as untenable or damaging to their entire well-being and eventually influence their decision to leave (Giao et al., 2020; Aliane et al., 2023). Indeed, the cumulative effect of stress-induced emotions, such as frustration and hopelessness make it difficult for affected employees to sustain their engagement and commitment to their roles (Afshar et al., 2022). Thus, with employees facing challenging work environment, their sense of belonging and trust within the institution is undermined (Schein & Schein, 2018). These affect their whole operative capacities which ultimately foster the desire from the employees to quit through job alteration and or resignation (Molino et al., 2019; Khairy et al., 2023). Thus, the first hypothesis of this study can be stated as:

H1: There is a positive significant relationship between employees' psychological distress and the intention to quit

Compensation and employee intention to quit.

According to Mitra, Israel and Sharma (2023) compensation is one of the decisive factors which an employee ponders over while planning to either stay or leave the organization. This implies that if companies must work towards motivating their employees to remain with the organisation, one of the best ways to ensure this is to have sufficient compensation system for employees. Failure to compensate their employees sufficiently for their hard work causes employees' intention to quit (Berber & Gasic, 2023; Lotta, 2012). Lotta (2012) concurred by alluding that when employees are motivated through better remuneration, they become more productive, more efficient as well as more willing to work towards attainment of organisational goals. Similarly, Bibi et al. (2017) added that compensation was one of the major reasons to stay or leave the organisation since the employees found compensation as the most attractive feature and remained attracted to better salaries. Alamelu et al. (2015) opined that while compensation could increase employee commitment and build a strong sense of loyalty, the absence of effective reward system can, at the same time, demotivate employees leading to higher desire to quit. This is echoed by Silaban and Syah (2018), who argued that unsatisfactory compensation can be a reason for high turnover intention. Those employees who are not happy with the compensation they receive in return for their services are likely to quit their job (Oh & Kim, 2019; Lyons & Bandura, 2019). Based on the argument above, the second hypothesis of this study is stated as:

H2. Compensation has a significant negative relationship with employees' intention to quit.

The moderating role of Compensation on the nexus between psychological distress and Intention to quit

To attain and retain productive and skillful employees in today's competitive market and workplace, organizations must initiate practices that can help reduce psychological distress by offering their employees better both financial and non-financial rewards. According to Syahreza et al. (2017) while compensation is not among the top influential factors for employees' turnover, it can play a critical role in increasing retention since with satisfactory compensation, employees will feel that the organisation is caring about their needs. In this sense, the higher the effective rewards are offered to employees, the higher the sense of satisfaction of employees which minimizes the level of employee desire to move to another organisation. Thus, compensation can act as a moderator in the association between psychological distress and intention to quit, signifying that the effect of psychological distress on employees' intention to quit might be stronger or weaker depending on the level of compensation (Zychlinski et al., 2020). Higher levels of psychological distress might be less likely to lead to employees' strong intention to quit seeking a new job even if they're experiencing distress if only, they feel sufficiently compensated. This means effective compensation can buffer the negative effects of psychological distress on employees' intentions to leave (Ramlah et al., 2021). Thus, the third hypothesis of this study can be stated as:

H3: Employee compensation moderates the relationship between psychological distress and employees' Intention to quit.

Conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual framework represented in figure one demonstrates the relationship among the three main constructs of the study. The independent variable is the psychological distress with the four dimensions (*Emotional, Cognitive, Behavioral, and Physiological*), and the dependent variable is the intention to quit, while the relationship between these two constructs is moderated by compensation.

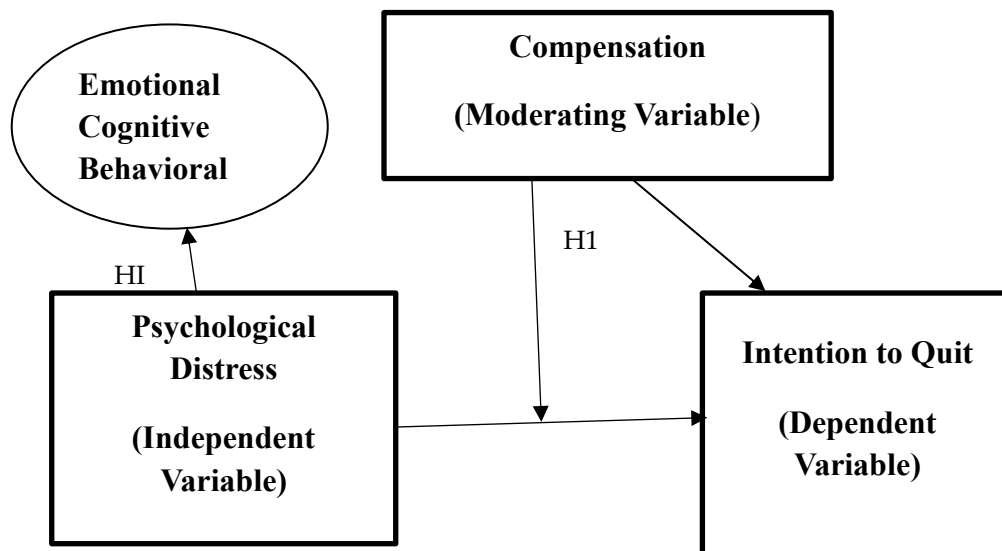


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for psychological distress, intention to quit and compensation.

Source: Authors Construct 2023

Methodology

In this study an explanatory research design with quantitative method was employed. The study's philosophy was post-positivism which acknowledges the complexity of reality and human experiences, urging researchers to explore various perspectives and factors influencing phenomena (Scott et al., 2017; Creswell, 2014). Cross-sectional study was conducted, where data was examined at a specific point in time and participants were chosen based on specific variables (Koob et al., 2021). This design aligns well with the clearly defined research questions, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the influence of PD (independent variable) on ITQ (dependent variable), reducing errors, and enhancing the understanding of the concepts under study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Study area

The study area was Cape Coast Metropolis, the Central regional capital in Ghana. The second-cycle institutions in this capital were chosen because Cape coast schools are the highly ranked Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana in terms of teaching excellence and students' performance (Owusu, 2021).

Study population

The respondents of the study comprised 317 teachers, from diverse Second-cycle institutions, their involvement facilitated the analysis of the connection between PD and ITQ.

Table 1: Study Population

No	Name of School	Number of Staff
1	Wesley Girls Senior High, Cape Coast	41
2	University Practice Senior High School	31
3	Aggrey Memorial SHS	30
4	St. Augustine's College	40
5	Mfantsipim School	33
6	Adisadel College	35
7	Ghana National College	27
8	Cape Coast Technical Institute	23
9	Efutu Senior High School	22
10	Holy Child School	35
Total		317

Sample size and sampling procedure

For this study, although the population was 317, based on [Krejcie and Morgan's \(1970\)](#) sample size table, the sample size involved selecting 169 teachers from second-cycle institutions in Cape Coast. However, to compensate for potential losses, the researchers opted to choose a sample size of 200. Also, a simple random sampling method was used in this study.

Measurement of instruments

Psychological Distress and its dimensions used Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), developed by Kessler et al., in 2003. The scale consisted of five questions each on emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological dimension, each with a seven-level response ranging from 1=Least level of agreement...7=Highest level of agreement ([Ledochowski et al., 2012](#)).

In the case of Intention to quit, the turnover intention scale (TIS-6) which is a six-item scale adapted by Roodt in 2004 was used ([Bothma & Roodt \(2013\)](#)). The scale consisted of five questions each with a seven-point scale, ranging from 1=Least level of agreement...7=Highest level of agreement ([Ugwu et al., 2020](#)). The ITQ asked respondents how often they contemplate quitting their jobs.

Lastly, with compensation, the PayScale instrument which was specifically designed for assessing compensation ([Muguongo et al., 2015](#)) was used. The PayScale consisted of ten questions each with a seven-point scale, ranging from 1=Least level of agreement...7=Highest level of agreement ([Kuchеров & Manokhina, 2017](#)).

Ethical consideration

To ensure ethical compliance, this research study followed the ethical guidelines set by the University of Cape Coast (UCC). Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of UCC (UCCIRB/CHLS/2023/54), and permission was sought from the institutions where questionnaire respondents were employed.

Data analysis

The demographic traits of the participants were analysed using descriptive statistics, which included frequencies and percentages. To fulfill the study's objectives, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilized. This approach well-suited this research as it combined the strengths of various commonly employed multivariate techniques, including discriminant analysis, canonical correlation, regression analysis, and factor analysis ([Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004](#)). The Smart PLS software was employed to perform structural equation modeling, in line with the study's hypotheses, in the context of conducting data analysis.

Results

The presentation of findings and analysis is structured to correspond with the specific research objectives outlined in this study.

Assessment of Measurement Models for the Study

The measurement models employed in the research starts with an examination of the loadings of indicators. The assessment of the measurement model includes several facets: indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability (also referred to as composite reliability), convergent validity (assessed through average variance extracted or AVE), and discriminant validity (evaluated using the Fornell-Lacker and HTMT methods). The research team employed a dependable Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique to generate indicators for evaluating the measurement model. The outcomes of these assessments are depicted in the following tables.

Assessing indicator loadings

Table 2 illustrates that certain indicators have been excluded when compared to the indicators in Figure 2. To enhance the overall model's reliability, all indicators with loadings below the suggested threshold of 0.6, as advised by [Hair et al. \(2019\)](#), were omitted. Out of the 25 indicators in total used to measure various latent variables, 8 indicators were removed due to their failure to meet the criteria for indicator reliability. The table displays the loadings of the items.

Table 2: Indicator loadings

	EPD	CPD	BPD	PPD	ITQ
EPD2	0.826				
EPD4	0.860				
EPD5	0.882				
CPD1		0.901			
CPD2		0.878			
CPD4		0.814			
CPD5		0.889			
BPD2			0.893		
BPD3			0.902		
BPD5			0.857		
PPD1				0.810	
PPD3				0.914	
PPD4				0.901	
PPD5				0.938	
ITQ2					0.896
ITQ3					0.819
ITQ4					0.908

Source: Field survey (2022)

According to the data in Table 3, all 14 indicators measuring psychological distress exhibited loadings surpassing 0.8. The lowest loading value observed was 0.810, while the highest reached 0.938. These results signify that the retained indicators are indeed dependable. Likewise, when considering intention to quit, the lowest indicator loading was 0.819, with the highest being 0.908. It is evident that the indicators employed to gauge latent variables in this study are highly reliable, consistently exceeding the 0.8 threshold.

Assessing internal consistency reliability

Composite reliability was utilised to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs. As per [Rossiter \(2002\)](#), composite reliability is considered a more suitable indicator of internal consistency in comparison to Cronbach's alpha. The results presented in Table 3 affirm that all the latent variables under examination in this study display robust reliability, as evidenced by their loadings exceeding the established 0.8 threshold set by [Bagozzi and Yi \(1988\)](#). Notably, the physiological dimension achieved the highest composite reliability score of 0.940, followed closely by the cognitive dimension at 0.926. Additionally, the behavioral component, paired with the subsequent dimension, exhibited a composite reliability coefficient of 0.915. On the other hand, the emotional component displayed the lowest composite reliability score of 0.892 among the dimensions. These findings show that the model demonstrates strong internal consistency reliability. Table 3 also provides outcomes related to convergent validity.

Table 3: Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EPD	0.823	0.855	0.892	0.734
CPD	0.895	0.932	0.926	0.759
BPD	0.861	0.862	0.915	0.782
PPD	0.914	0.920	0.940	0.796

Source: Field survey (2023)

Assessing convergent validity

Convergent validity assessment in this study involved calculating the average variance extracted (AVE). Convergent validity refers to the level to which a measurement instrument relates positively with other measures assessing the same underlying concept, as outlined by [Hair et al. \(2017\)](#). An AVE value of at least 0.50 indicates that, on usual, the construct accounts for more than 50% of the variance observed in its indicators. Equally, an AVE value below 0.50 suggests that, on average, there is a greater proportion of variance remaining in the items' error than what can be attributed to the construct.

The results obtained from the analysis in Table 3 confirm that all constructs exhibit an AVE value surpassing the 0.5 threshold. Notably, the physiological dimension holds the highest level of significance, while the emotional dimension is considered to have the least. This implies that the constructs within this model have the capacity to explain over 50% of the variability observed in their respective indicators. Furthermore, the measurement model was conducted as an evaluation of discriminant validity.

Assessing discriminant validity

Establishing discriminant validity involves demonstrating that a particular construct is distinct and includes elements not accounted for by other constructs within the theoretical framework, as suggested by [MacKinnon \(2008\)](#). In this study, we employed both the Fornell-Lacker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) to confirm discriminant validity. The Fornell-Larcker criterion, as introduced by [Fornell and Larcker \(1981\)](#), entails associating the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values with the connections between latent variables. According to [Hair et al. \(2013\)](#), it is essential for the square root of the AVE for each construct to be more than its maximum connection with any other construct.

The outcomes presented in Table 4 clearly demonstrate that the square root of each variable exhibits considerably higher values than their respective connections with other constructs examined in the study. This signifies that each construct is distinct, and there are no two constructs that encompass the same phenomena.

Table 4: Fornell-Lacker criterion

	BPD	CPD	EPD	ITQ	PPD
BPD	0.884				
CPD	-0.122	0.871			
EPD	-0.116	0.529	0.857		
ITQ	0.807	0.097	-0.117	0.875	
PPD	-0.221	-0.206	0.867	0.777	0.892

Source: Field survey (2023)

The Fornell-Larcker criterion proves to be less effective, especially in situations where the indicator loadings of the constructs being examined exhibit minimal variation, as seen in the case of employee performance in this study (e.g., all indicator loadings ranging from 0.60 to 0.80). According to Voorhees et al. (2016), the Fornell-Larcker criterion's ability to identify issues related to discriminant validity is more effective when there is greater variability in the indicator loadings. However, it's important to note that the criterion's capacity to assess overall discriminant validity remains limited. To address this, Henseler et al. (2015) propose evaluating the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations as a potential solution. Henseler et al. (2015) argue that a latent construct is considered to possess discriminant validity if its HTMT ratio is less than 0.850. The HTMT values presented in Table 5 indicate a significant departure from the 0.850 threshold.

Table 5: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	BPD	CPD	EPD	ITQ	PPD
BPD					
CPD	0.143				
EPD	0.133	0.618			
ITQ	0.391	0.115	0.140		
PPD	0.789	0.228	0.243	0.689	

Source: Field survey (2023)

Objective one

The first primary aim of this study was to explore how psychological distress (emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological dimensions), influences the intention to quit among teachers in second-cycle institutions. The path model illustrated in Figure 2 demonstrates four direct pathways, each originating from a different dimension of psychological distress to intention to quit. This path model addresses the first research question. The direct effects revealed that psychological distress and intention to quit collectively explained 67.8 percent of the variability observed in teachers.

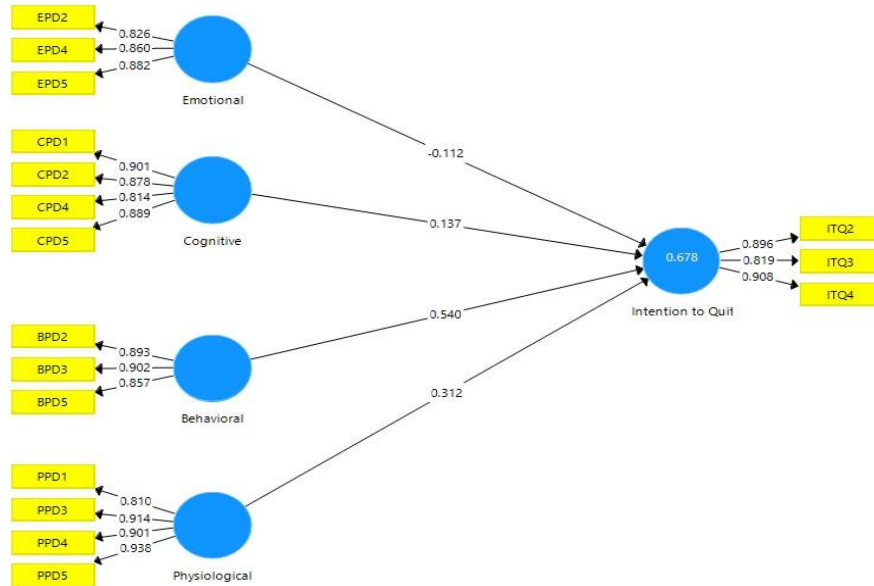


Figure 2: Outer and inner model results

Source: Field survey (2023)

The first research objective was formulated to determine whether there is a relationship between psychological distress and intention to quit and the outcome is shown in Table 6

Table 6: Structural model results for research question one

	Path	T Statistics	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	P-Value	f ²
ITQ			0.678	0.665	0.499		
EPD	-0.112	4.867				0.019	0.510
CPD	0.137	2.997				0.038	0.811
BPD	0.540	3.893				0.000	0.219
PPD	0.312	2.254				0.025	0.701

Source: Field survey (2023)

According to the data in Table 6, it can deduce that psychological distress had a substantial impact, with a coefficient of determination of 0.678, explaining 67.8 percent of the variation in intention to quit. Regarding its predictive accuracy, the results suggest that the model exhibits a moderate level of predictive relevance concerning the endogenous variable, scoring 0.499. This suggests that the exogenous variable performs reasonably well in foreseeing the endogenous variable. The results related to effect size affirm that psychological distress indeed influences the endogenous variable, namely, intention to quit.

Table 7: H1a: Emotional dimension has a significant positive effect on intention to quit among second-cycle institution teachers

	Path	T Statistics	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	P-Value	f ²
ITQ			0.678	0.665	0.499		
EPD	-0.112	4.867				0.019	0.510

Following the path analysis, the outcomes of the PLS-SEM unveiled a noteworthy influence of the emotional dimension on the intention to quit ($\beta = -0.112$, $p > 0.019$; see Table 7, Figure 2). These results validate the hypothesis proposing a positive influence of the emotional dimension on the intention to quit. The findings align with the hypothesis, indicating that the intention to quit serves as a stimulant for the emotional dimension among teachers in second-cycle institutions.

The next hypothesis was formulated to determine whether there is a relationship between cognitive dimension and intention to quit and the result is demonstrated in Table 8

Table 8: H1b: Cognitive dimension has a significant positive effect on intention to quit among second-cycle institution teachers.

	Path	T Statistics	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	P-Value	f ²
ITQ			0.678	0.665	0.499		
CPD	0.137	2.997				0.038	0.811

As determined from the path analysis, the outcomes of the PLS-SEM indicated a notable influence of the cognitive dimension on the intention to quit ($\beta = 0.137$, $p > 0.038$). These findings corroborate the hypothesis proposing a positive impact of the cognitive dimension on the intention to quit. This result is supported by [Cicek et al. \(2021\)](#) study whose results indicated that both the cognitive and affective aspects of cynicism significantly influenced turnover intention.

The other hypothesis was formulated to determine whether there is a relationship between behavioral dimension and intention to quit. The outcome is shown in table 9

Table 9:H1c: Behavioral dimension has significant positive relationship with intention to quit

	Path	T Statistics	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	P-Value	f ²
ITQ			0.678	0.665	0.499		
BPD	0.540	3.893				0.000	0.219

The results, as depicted in Figure 2 and detailed in Table 9, revealed a path coefficient of 0.540 with a p-value of 0.000. Importantly, this path coefficient aligned with the initial hypothesis, providing support for the notion that the behavioral dimension is indeed linked to the intention to quit. This conclusion resonates with the findings of [Mérida-López et al. \(2020\)](#), underscoring the significance of social support, work engagement, and emotional intelligence in comprehending teachers' intentions to leave the profession.

The final hypothesis of the first objective sought to assess the influence of physiological dimension on intention to quit. The result is shown in table 10.

Table 10: H1d: Physiological dimension has a significant positive impact on intention to quit

	Path	T Statistics	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	P-Value	f ²
ITQ			0.678	0.665	0.499		
PPD	0.312	2.254				0.025	0.701

The outcomes attained from path estimation in the PLS-SEM reveal that the physiological dimension of the network had a significant impact on the intention to quit ($\beta = 0.312$, $p > 0.025$; Table 10, Figure 2). This supports the hypothesis that there exists a relationship between the physiological dimension and the intention to quit.

Overall, the summary of the decisions with respect to objective one is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Summary of objective 1

Objective One	Beta	t-value	P-value	Decision
EPD-ITQ	-0.112	4.867	0.000	Supported
CPD-ITQ	0.137	2.997	0.038	Supported
BPD-ITQ	0.540	3.893	0.000	Supported
PPD-ITQ	0.312	2.254	0.025	Supported

Source: Field survey (2023)

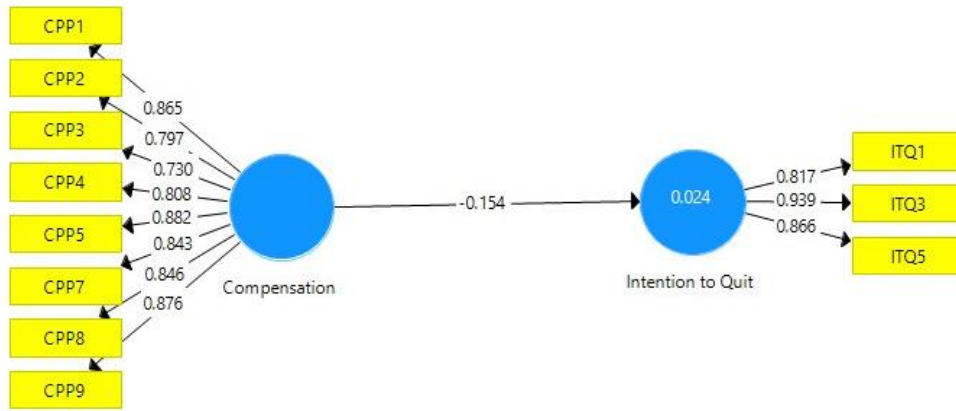
The outcomes show a significant and substantial effect of psychological distress on the intention to quit, as evident from the magnitude of its path coefficient. This observation finds support in the research conducted by [Owusu \(2021\)](#), who examined the connection between occupational stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in cape coast metropolis, Ghana. The study revealed a positive and significant relationship between psychological distress and the intention to quit. This discovery was further corroborated by a related study conducted by Perryman and [Calvert](#)

(2020) on teachers, where more than half of the participants reported significant stress and contemplated leaving the teaching profession. Furthermore, the findings of Hossain et al. (2022) also align with the notion of a positive relationship between psychological distress and the intention to quit among teachers. This study, focusing on secondary school teachers in Dhaka city, identified demographic factors such as extra teaching assignments, teaching experience, school type, working hours, and gender as contributors to teacher burnout, ultimately leading to teachers leaving their jobs.

Objective two

The second objective is to assess the effect of compensation on intention to quit. The objective was evaluated within the comprehensive model, symbolizing the direct path originating from compensation to intention to quit. The results are shown in figure 3 and table 12

Figure 3: Objective II



Thus, the objective was;

The effect of compensation on intention to quit among teachers in second-cycle institution in Cape Coast Metropolis.

Table 12: Structural model results for objective two

	Path	T Statistics	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	P-Value	f ²
ITQ			0.024	0.014	-0.001		
CPP	-0.154	2.956				0.034	0.024

Source: Field survey (2023)

Based on the path analysis conducted, the outcomes of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis revealed a statistically significant and positive connection between compensation and the intention to quit ($\beta = -0.154$, $p < 0.034$). These findings imply that the level of compensation received by instructors in second-cycle educational institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis holds a substantial influence on their inclination to resign from their positions. It's worth noting that the effect size for the relationship between compensation (0.024) and the intention to resign is relatively small.

However, the study's results also indicate a significant impact (2.956) of compensation on the intention to quit, as assessed by the criteria established by Hair et al. (2014). Hence, considering the path and significance of the relationship between compensation and the intention to quit, this study provides

support for the idea that adequate compensation positively affects the intention to quit. It could be argued that the implementation of a fair compensation system within educational institutions can foster healthy competition among teachers, potentially leading to improvements in student academic achievement. Conversely, insufficient remuneration may have negative consequences, potentially resulting in lower academic performance among students.

This finding is supported by the study of Cudjoe (2016) concerning the connection between compensation practices and employees' proclivity to quit at Cape Coast Polytechnic. Cudjoe's research revealed significant associations between various components of compensation, including salary, incentives, allowances, and fringe benefits, and employees' inclination to voluntarily leave their positions. It was established that the methods of remuneration had a noteworthy impact on employees' intentions to resign from their current roles. Furthermore, Mbeah's study in 2021 examined the relationship between compensation, job satisfaction, and employees' intentions to leave. The results indicated that employees generally expressed satisfaction with their compensation packages, which, paradoxically, led to an increase in their intentions to quit their jobs. Additionally, the study found that providing incentives, training, and allowances to employees proved to be more effective in rewarding them compared to salary and fringe benefits. It concluded that non-monetary compensation had a more pronounced effect.

Objective Three

The objective three of the study could be seen as the ultimate objective, strategically formulated to fulfill the overarching goal of the study. This final objective aimed to investigate the moderating role of compensation in the relationship between psychological distress and the intention to quit among teachers in second-cycle institutions located in Cape Coast Metropolis. Consequently, the study posited that compensation acts as a moderator, influencing the connection between psychological distress and the intention to quit. The rationale behind introducing compensation into this equation stemmed from the desire to understand how it might alter both the direction and strength of the link between psychological distress (PD) and the intention to quit (ITQ). Prior to conducting the analysis, the measurement model underwent rigorous evaluation to ensure it met the recommended criteria for indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

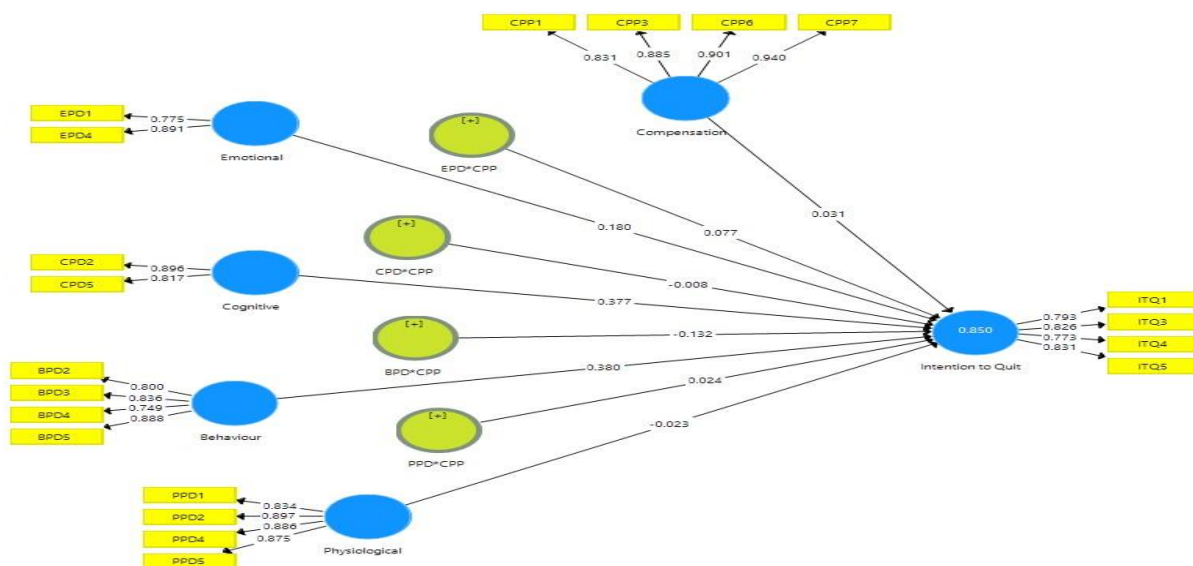


Figure 4: Evaluation of item loadings for Objective Three
Source: Field Data (2023)

Loadings on the indicators of compensation on psychological distress (emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological) and intention to quit constructs as depicted in Figure 4 which show that the items retained for each of the constructs were good and appropriate for the measurement model

Table 13: Construct Reliability, Validity and Discriminant Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance
EPD*CPP	0.893	1.000	0.763	0.823
EPD	0.765	0.716	0.821	0.697
CPD*CPP	0.908	1.000	0.704	0.616
CPD	0.745	0.764	0.847	0.735
BPD*CPP	0.934	1.000	0.731	0.619
BPD	0.836	0.846	0.891	0.672
PPD*CPP	0.950	1.000	0.856	0.531
PPD	0.898	0.923	0.928	0.762
ITQ	0.820	0.826	0.881	0.649
CPP	0.913	0.942	0.938	0.792

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 14: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	BPD* CPP	BPD	CPD* CPP	CPD	CPP	EPD* CPP	EPD	ITQ	PPD *CP P	PPD
BPD*CP P										
BPD	0.158									
CPD*CP P	0.789	0.109								
CPD	0.128	0.159	0.131							
CPP	0.135	0.157	0.092	0.176						
EPD*CP P	0.011	0.151	0.568	0.123	0.060					
EPD	0.185	0.183	0.126	0.264	0.203	0.169				
ITQ	0.143	0.161	0.107	0.152	0.155	0.106	0.156			
PPD*CP P	0.303	0.119	0.342	0.136	0.244	0.145	0.156	0.118		
PPD	0.126	0.211	0.122	0.277	0.188	0.153	0.180	0.208	0.206	

Table 15: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BPD*CP P	BPD	CPD*C PP	CPD	CPP	EPD*CP P	EPD	ITQ	PPD* CPP	PPD
BPD*CPP	0.443									
BPD	-0.224	0.820								
CPD*CP P	0.166	-0.195	0.407							
CPD	-0.143	0.859	-0.136	0.857						
CPP	-0.049	0.122	-0.049	0.092	0.890					
EPD*CPP	0.094	0.119	-0.354	0.025	-0.006	0.572				
EPD	-0.112	0.839	-0.118	0.769	0.119	0.172	0.835			
ITQ	-0.273	0.889	-0.195	0.855	0.135	0.150	0.835	0.806		
PPD*CPP	0.242	-0.160	0.212	-0.244	-0.083	0.090	-0.083	-	0.559	
								0.173		
PPD	-0.126	0.183	-0.111	0.222	0.013	0.114	0.133	0.180	-	0.873
									0.007	

Furthermore, the study assessed the constructs' internal consistency reliability using measures such as Composite Alpha (CA), Rho_A, and Composite Reliability (CR). These measures are crucial for ensuring the reliability of the constructs. Upon close examination of the CA values, it was evident that they exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Similarly, the Rho_A and CR scores also surpassed the established cutoff points (>0.708 ; see Table 13). Additionally, it was observed that the study met the minimum requirement of a 50 percent score for Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to achieve convergent validity or mutual relationships between the constructs. This was confirmed by the AVE values for organizational politics, workplace incivility, and employee resilience, all of which exceeded the 0.50 threshold (refer to Table 9). Importantly, the analysis revealed that issues related to discriminant validity were not present ($HTMT < 0.85$; see Table 14). Following the assessment of the measurement model, the researcher proceeded to adopt the structural model to analyze the study's objective, with summarized results presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Structural Model Results for Research Objective Three

	Beta (R)	T- Statistics	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²	P-value	F ²
EPD*CPP ->ITQ	0.077	2.581				0.007	0.028
EPD ->ITQ	0.180	2.103				0.036	0.058
CPD*CPP ->ITQ	-0.008	0.071				0.944	0.000
CPD ->ITQ	0.377	3.815				0.000	0.209
BPD*CPP ->ITQ	-0.132	0.984				0.326	0.090
BPD ->ITQ	0.380	3.851				0.000	0.161
PPD*CPP ->ITQ	0.024	3.429				0.023	0.004
PPD ->ITQ	-0.023	0.544				0.587	0.003
ITQ ->ITQ			0.850	0.835	0.513		
CPP ->ITQ	0.031	0.724				0.039	0.096

Source: Field survey (2023)

Interpretations

Direct effects of Psychological Distress on Intention to Quit

The results demonstrate that cognitive psychological distress (CPD) and behavioral psychological distress (BPD) have significant and substantial direct effects on intention to quit. Specifically, CPD has a beta value of 0.377 ($t = 3.815$, $p = 0.000$), and BPD has a beta of 0.380 ($t = 3.851$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that higher levels of mental overload and maladaptive behaviors are associated with stronger intentions to leave the organization. These are the most influential predictors in the model, with large effect sizes ($F^2 = 0.209$ and 0.161 respectively), suggesting that addressing cognitive and behavioral strain is critical in reducing employee attrition.

Emotional psychological distress (EPD) also has a statistically significant direct relationship with intention to quit ($\beta = 0.180$, $t = 2.103$, $p = 0.036$), although its effect is weaker compared to CPD and BPD. This indicates that emotional turmoil or negative affect at work moderately contributes to turnover intentions.

In contrast, physiological psychological distress (PPD) shows a non-significant direct effect on intention to quit ($\beta = -0.023$, $t = 0.544$, $p = 0.587$), suggesting that physical symptoms of stress alone may not significantly influence an employee's decision to leave unless other psychological domains are concurrently affected.

Direct Effect of Compensation (CPP) on Intention to Quit

In terms of compensation (CPP), the result showed a statistically significant direct effect on intention to quit ($\beta = 0.031$, $t = 0.724$, $p = 0.039$, $F^2 = 0.096$), though the beta value remains small. This finding implies that while compensation alone does not exert a strong influence, it is still a meaningful factor when considering retention strategies, likely representing employees' perceptions of fairness and reward adequacy.

Moderation Effects of Compensation

The moderation effects of compensation on the relationship between psychological distress and intention to quit reveal nuanced insights into how monetary rewards interact with various dimensions of employee well-being. The analysis indicates that compensation significantly moderates the relationship between emotional psychological distress (EPD) and intention to quit. The interaction term ($EPD \times CPP \rightarrow ITQ$) yields a beta value of 0.077 with a t-statistic of 2.581 and a p-value of 0.007, suggesting a statistically significant effect. This means that as compensation increases, the impact of emotional distress on an employee's decision to quit also becomes more pronounced. In other words, even when employees are emotionally strained, generous compensation might not suffice to retain them and may in fact draw more attention to the emotional toll of the job, amplifying their desire to leave.

On the contrary, the moderation effect of compensation on the relationship between cognitive psychological distress (CPD) and intention to quit is statistically insignificant. The interaction term ($CPD \times CPP \rightarrow ITQ$) reports a beta value of -0.008 with a t-statistic of 0.071 and a p-value of 0.944, indicating that compensation does not significantly influence the way cognitive distress impacts turnover intentions. This implies that when employees experience mental overload such as difficulty concentrating, decision fatigue, or persistent worry, financial incentives alone are insufficient to prevent them from contemplating exit. These findings suggest that mental health support and workload adjustments may be more effective interventions than salary increases in such cases.

Similarly, the interaction between behavioral psychological distress (BPD) and compensation on intention to quit also proves to be statistically non-significant, with a beta of -0.132, a t-statistic of 0.984, and a p-value of 0.326. While the negative beta may imply a potential buffering role of compensation, meaning that better pay might slightly reduce the influence of behavioral issues such as withdrawal, aggression, or irritability, the effect is not strong enough to be conclusive. This indicates that behavioral distress likely stems from deeper interpersonal or environmental factors that compensation alone cannot mitigate.

In contrast, the interaction between physiological psychological distress (PPD) and compensation yields a statistically significant, though modest, effect on intention to quit. The interaction term (PPD $\times$ CPP $\rightarrow$ ITQ) presents a beta value of 0.024, a t-statistic of 3.429, and a p-value of 0.023. This suggests that when employees are physically strained, experiencing fatigue, headaches, or other stress-induced bodily symptoms, increased compensation may paradoxically heighten their intent to leave. This could be interpreted as employees viewing financial rewards as inadequate compensation for deteriorating health, thereby reinforcing their decision to quit in pursuit of a healthier work-life balance.

As such, while compensation does have some moderating effects, particularly with emotional and physiological distress, its influence is limited and context dependent. The findings emphasize the importance of adopting a holistic approach to employee retention, where financial incentives are complemented by emotional support, cognitive load management, and wellness interventions.

Implications

Theoretical implications

This study has the potential to make substantial contributions to the present body of knowledge in the context of Africa and for that matter Ghana in educational institutions. Similarly, this study can be a springboard in future researchers about this issue of the moderating effect of compensation on intention to quit among teachers in second cycle institutions. To this end, from theoretical perspective, this study's findings affirm the theories underpinning this study. For example, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory elucidates the correlation between dimensions of psychological distress (Bon & Shire, 2022). Emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological dimensions can stem from the depletion of essential resources crucial for one's well-being. In the case of teachers, it can be said that if a teacher grapples with excessive work demands without sufficient support, this depletion of resources can lead to distress.

Additionally, distress may arise due to lack of necessary resources like autonomy or social support within their work environment. As per the COR theory, the intent to leave a job emerges when individuals perceive an ongoing or potential loss of resources. Teachers might contemplate leaving if they sense a decline in valued resources such as job security or respect, seeking to conserve remaining resources or find better opportunities elsewhere. Moreover, individuals may consider quitting if they believe departing could lead to gaining resources in a different setting. For instance, teachers facing resource deficits in their current job may seek positions with better provisions elsewhere.

Thus, in the context of teachers in second-cycle institutions, the COR theory suggests that psychological distress might surface due to resource depletion or an inadequacy of critical resources within their professional environment. Intentions to quit could be triggered by the perceived ongoing or potential loss of resources within their current job or the belief that leaving could result in gaining resources elsewhere. Understanding these dynamics through the COR theory guides interventions to alleviate distress and reduce intentions to quit among teachers. Providing support systems, autonomy, fair compensation, and opportunities for skill development minimizes distress and the likelihood of teachers intending to quit in the Cape Coast Metropolis's second-cycle institutions.

Besides the COR theory, the findings also affirmed the second theory employed in the study. From the standpoint of the Social Exchange Theory, the finding relating to, particularly the second objective, explained how compensation and intention to quit are inversely related. According to the social exchange theory, individuals shape and manage their relationships and interactions based on the exchange of resources. They assess the outcomes of these interactions by weighing the costs and benefits associated with them, suggesting that a just and fair compensation system strengthens the social exchange between employees and employers (Boateng et al., 2019). The higher the compensation towards employees, the less probability of them leaving the organisation since they will be more loyal to the organisation as a means of paying back the rewards given to them. In essence, equitable compensation typically enhances dedication and diminishes the desire to leave by promoting a feeling of mutual give-and-take and contentment.

Conversely, if there's a perceived mismatch between the effort exerted and the compensation received, or if alternative options seem more enticing, employees may lean towards considering leaving their current position. This aligns with the theory's emphasis on evaluating the costs and benefits in social interactions. Understanding this connection assists organisations in devising compensation plans that match employees' perceptions of fairness. This approach aids in curbing intentions to quit by fostering favorable relationships built on mutual exchange.

Practical implications

In a practical sense, the study findings demonstrate that there is a higher probability of teachers in second cycle institutions in the metropolitan assembly of Cape Coast, Ghana having intentions to quit because of psychological distress. Indeed, the study highlights psychological distress as a significant predictor of teachers' intention to quit. However, with effective compensation, the tendency of these teachers leaving the profession can be minimized. This implies that the top management for ministry of education needs to improve and revise the human resources strategies regarding the compensation system to make the teachers feel supported to handle their job problems. Thus, once the teacher have good perceptions on the kind of support that the ministry has for them in terms of career advancement through training and financial support, their intention to quit can significantly be reduced. This suggests that the policymakers of the Ministry of Education must pay more attention to the arrangement of activities that may help in building better future for the front-line employees like teachers. However, in providing such compensation system, there should be equality and equality. This means these arrangements must take into consideration the need to drive the ministry's human resources policies and strategies to be more concentrated on applying justice and equality among the teachers in the areas like performance appraisal, salary increases, bonuses, sick leaves, and rewards and recognition. Once employees like teachers have perceptions that they are all treated fairly and equally well when it comes to compensation, their intention to quit the profession will be diminished.

In essence, the teachers' intention to quit is greatly contingent on the compensation system put in place for them. Implicitly, a proper compensation system will improve the level of satisfaction among the teachers through increasing the level of their willingness and desire to give higher efforts and maximum contributions to the job by showing appreciation. This means by rewarding them appropriately with the right compensation policies and strategies, the ministry will be able to retain them and prevent them from leaving the ministry. In the case of psychological distress, there is the need for structured workshops to enhance teachers' well-being for a conducive working environment, fostering positive relationships between school authorities and teachers, and providing equal opportunities to showcase talents.

Conclusions

The study explored the link between psychological distress and the intention to quit among teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis's Second Cycle Institutions, emphasizing compensation's moderating role. It achieved three objectives thus, revealing that psychological distress significantly influences teachers' intention to quit, linking compensation to reduced quitting likelihood through social exchange theory, and identifying the motivating factors both intrinsic and extrinsic by which compensation impacts teachers' intentions. The findings underscore the importance of fair and attractive compensation packages in mitigating the influence of psychological distress on the intention to quit. Adequate compensation was shown to enhance job satisfaction, loyalty, and positively impacted student performance. This study contributes valuable insights for fostering teacher commitment and reducing turnover in educational settings.

Study limitations

Like all studies, this study is without limitations. In the first place, the study only relied on teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis and as such had used the data from this study area. This means that the findings of this study are primarily applicable to this jurisdiction due to its exclusive emphasis on second-cycle

teachers. Moreover, the utilization of cross-sectional design and closed-ended scale statements limited the extent of information that participants were able to provide concerning the major variables of the study. Furthermore, the study exclusively utilized quantitative methodologies and this provided the respondents with a limited chance to explain themselves in detail.

Suggestions for further research

Being a quantitative study, which focuses on only one specific metropolitan assembly, there is the need for further studies covering the all the second cycle institutions in all the metropolis within Ghana to gain a broader view of how teachers in other second-cycle institutions respond to these variables in their respective settings. Thus, conducting a more extensive investigation on how psychological distress influences the intention to quit while considering the role of compensation would enhance the applicability of the study's findings across different educational settings in Ghana. Furthermore, using closed-ended questionnaires alone in this study limited respondents' view on the subject matter which did not help in answering the question of why certain issues happen. There is therefore the need for future researchers to use mixed method approach to get a wider view on why teachers in second-cycle institutions respond to the relationships among the variables used in this study in their respective settings.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no known financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. The research was conducted independently, and the findings presented are solely those of the authors.

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ORCID ID

Doreen Agyeiwaa Owusu: [0009-0003-9656-0394](#)

Nicodemus Osei Owusu: [0000-0002-2028-0308](#)

Samuel Opoku: [0009-0007-7049-1959](#)

Isaac Kosi: [0000-0002-0326-2685](#)

Mark Bigool: [0000-0003-2596-0131](#)

Contribution of Authors

Doreen Agyeiwaa Owusu – Conceptualisation of the research idea and development of the study objectives.

Nicodemus Osei Owusu– Conceptualisation and theoretical framework development.

Samuel Opoku– Data conceptualisation, research methodology design, statistical analysis, interpretation of results and discussions of results.

Mr. Isaac Kosi – Led the discussions and synthesis of results in relation to existing literature.

Dr. Mark Bigool – Editorial review, proofreading, and refinement of the final manuscript.

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