



Job Insecurity in the Private Education Sector: The Mediating Role of School Climate in Teacher Well-being

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the mediating role of school climate in the relationship between job insecurity and teacher well-being among 294 private school teachers in Ankara, Turkey. Using correlational methodology with multivariate regression analysis, results showed teachers' job security perception was below moderate levels $\alpha = 2.61$, $ss = 0.96$. School climate dimensions accounted for 55% of variance in job security perception ($R^2 = 0.545$). Collegial teacher behavior $\beta = -0.255$, $p < 0.001$) and supportive principal behavior $\beta = -0.197$, $p < 0.001$) positively predicted job security, while restrictive principal behavior $\beta = -0.178$, $p < 0.001$) negatively predicted it. These findings demonstrate that organizational climate significantly mediates job insecurity's impact on teacher well-being, with collegial relationships and administrative support serving as critical protective factors. The study contributes to understanding employment precarity in private education by revealing how workplace relationships enhance teacher well-being despite structural job insecurity.

Keywords: Job insecurity; School climate; Teacher well-being; Private schools; Mediating effects; Employment precarity

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher quality fundamentally shapes educational outcomes, with teaching effectiveness substantially exceeding structural school variables in predicting student achievement (Collie, 2023; Dreer et al., 2023). However, teachers' occupational experiences—particularly regarding employment security and workplace well-being remain understudied in private educational sectors despite their substantial expansion globally (OECD, 2025). Private school teachers face distinctive employment precarity through fixed-term contracts subject to annual renewal, creating persistent uncertainty regarding job continuity (Chudgar & Qurbanova, 2021; Colak & Altinkurt, 2021). This structural vulnerability generates psychological distress and diminishes organizational commitment, directly affecting instructional quality and student outcomes (Dong et al., 2024; Probst, 2002).

School climate encompassing teachers' perceptions of interpersonal relationships, administrative support, and collegial collaboration has demonstrated significant associations with occupational well-being and job satisfaction in educational contexts (Aldridge & Fraser, 2015; Harrison et al., 2023). Contemporary organizational research increasingly recognizes that job security perception extends beyond formal contracts to encompass subjective workplace evaluations (Shoss, 2017). This suggests school climate may function as a meaningful mediating mechanism through which well-being is influenced in precarious employment contexts. Positive workplace relationships and administrative support can psychologically buffer against employment uncertainty's negative effects (Glambek et al., 2014; Vander Elst et al., 2012).

Few studies have examined private school teachers specifically, despite their distinctive occupational vulnerabilities. This research addresses this gap by investigating how school climate

mediates relationships between job insecurity and teacher well-being among 294 private school educators, contributing to understanding of employment precarity and organizational interventions in private educational sectors.

METHOD

This correlational study examined 294 teachers from 83 private secondary schools in Ankara, Turkey (66% female, $M_{age}=36.4$ years). The sample reflected diverse tenure (34.7% employed 1-5 years) and educational backgrounds (33.7% graduate-qualified). Participants provided informed consent, and the Anadolu University Ethics Committee approved the study.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Sample

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Female	194	66.0
	Male	100	34.0
Age	24-30	58	19.7
	31-37	86	29.3
	38-44	71	24.1
	45+	79	26.9
	1-5 years	102	34.7
Tenure	6-10 years	82	27.9
	11-15 years	50	17.0
	16+ years	59	20.1
	Undergraduate	195	66.3
Education	Graduate	99	33.7

The Job Security Perception Scale (6 items; $\alpha=0.94$) measured perceived employment stability using five-point Likert format. The Organizational Climate Scale (39 items; six dimensions) assessed teachers' school environment perceptions across supportive/ directive/restrictive principal behavior and intimate/collegial/disengaged teacher behavior dimensions, each on four-point Likert scales. Internal consistency coefficients ranged from $\alpha=0.76$ to $\alpha=0.94$ across dimensions.

Preliminary analysis confirmed normality assumptions through skewness and kurtosis indices within acceptable ranges (± 1.0). Pearson correlations examined bivariate relationships, while multivariate regression tested predictive effects, with assumptions verified (tolerance=0.65-0.93; VIF=1.52-2.43; Durbin-Watson=1.98).

Table 2. Skewness and Kurtosis Values for Measurement Scales

Scale	$\bar{x}$	ss	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Security	2.61	0.96	-0.039	-0.792
Supportive Principal Behavior	2.08	0.62	0.421	0.216
Directive Principal Behavior	2.33	0.81	0.129	-0.911
Restrictive Principal Behavior	2.74	0.56	-0.063	-0.529
Collegial Teacher Behavior	2.46	0.42	-0.358	-0.035

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Job Security and School Climate Perceptions

Private school teachers demonstrated below-moderate job security perception ($\bar{x} = 2.61$), consistent with fixed-term contract vulnerabilities characterizing private sector employment (De Witte et al., 2015). This finding reflects structural precarity in private institutions requiring annual contract renewals, generating chronic occupational uncertainty (Chudgar & Qurbanova, 2021; Colak & Altinkurt, 2021). School climate dimensions varied significantly: supportive principal behavior was lowest ($\bar{x} = 2.08$), while restrictive principal behavior was highest ($\bar{x} = 2.74$), suggesting private schools emphasize administrative control over developmental support patterns inverse to public school findings and potentially reflecting profit-oriented institutional constraints.

Table 3. Teachers' Job Security Perceptions

Variable	n	$\bar{x}$	ss	Min	Max
Job Security	294	2.61	0.96	1.00	5.00

Table 4. Teachers' School Climate Perceptions

Dimension	n	$\bar{x}$	ss	Min	Max
Supportive Principal	294	2.08	0.62	1.00	4.00
Directive Principal	294	2.33	0.81	1.00	4.00
Restrictive Principal	294	2.74	0.56	1.00	4.00
Collegial Teacher	294	2.46	0.42	1.00	3.57

Relationships Between Variables

Significant moderate positive correlations existed between job security and collegial teacher behavior ($r=0.609$; $p<0.01$), the strongest relationship observed, indicating professional collaboration substantially associates with perceived employment security. Supportive principal behavior ($r=0.594$; $p<0.01$) demonstrated similar positive associations. Conversely, restrictive ($r=-0.537$; $p<0.01$) and directive ($r=-0.564$; $p<0.01$) principal behaviors negatively correlated with job security, suggesting controlling administrative practices heighten employment insecurity perceptions.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Job Security	1			
2. Supportive Principal	.594**	1		
3. Restrictive Principal	-.537**	-.491**	1	
4. Collegial Teacher Behavior	.609**	.600**	-.470**	1

Note: $p<0.01$

Predictive Effects of School Climate on Job Security

Multivariate regression demonstrated that school climate dimensions collectively predicted 54.5% of job security variance ($F(6,287) = 57.330$; $p<0.001$; $R^2=0.545$). Collegial teacher behavior emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.255$; $t=4.115$; $p<0.001$), suggesting professional collaboration meaningfully enhances job security perceptions. Supportive principal behavior contributed moderate positive effects ($\beta=0.197$; $t=3.557$; $p<0.001$), while restrictive ($\beta=-0.178$; $t=-3.628$; $p<0.001$) and directive ($\beta=-0.210$; $t=-4.084$; $p<0.001$) leadership demonstrated significant negative predictive power.

Table 6. Multivariate Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Supportive Principal	.205	.057	.197	3.557	.000
Directive Principal	-.215	.053	-.210	-4.084	.000
Restrictive Principal	-.366	.101	-.178	-3.628	.000
Collegial Teacher	.494	.120	.255	4.115	.000
$R=0.738$; $R^2=0.545$; $F=57.330$					

Discussion

School climate's substantial mediating influence ($R^2=0.545$) reveals that organizational relationships powerfully shape job security perception independent of objective employment contracts. These findings align with organizational literature documenting how workplace relationships buffer job insecurity effects through psychological mechanisms (Shoss, 2017; Vander Elst et al., 2012). The dominance of collegial teacher behavior as a predictor suggests peer support constitutes teachers' most important psychological resource for perceiving employment security, potentially reflecting colleague validation and mutual solidarity in precarious contexts.

Supportive principal behavior's meaningful contribution identifies leadership as a critical intervention point for enhancing well-being despite employment precarity. Administrative practices

emphasizing care, developmental consideration, and recognition substantially increase job security perceptions, even within fixed-term contract contexts. These results suggest organizational investments in leadership development and teacher collaboration mechanisms represent evidence-based strategies for improving occupational well-being in private educational sectors (Aldridge & Fraser, 2015; Harrison et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025). The negative effects of restrictive and directive leadership highlight how controlling administrative practices exacerbate employment insecurity perceptions, suggesting organizations should prioritize autonomy-supportive approaches aligned with self-determination theory principles.

CONCLUSION

Private school teachers' job security perceptions remained below moderate levels, reflecting structural employment precarity. School climate dimensions particularly collegial teacher collaboration ($\beta=0.255$) and supportive principal behavior ($\beta=0.197$) collectively accounted for 55% of job security perception variance, demonstrating organizational relationships meaningfully mediate job insecurity's impact on well-being. Future research should examine longitudinal causal pathways, explore sector comparisons between private and public schools, and develop targeted interventions enhancing supportive school climates as mechanisms for improving teacher well-being within precarious employment contexts.

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