



# A study on the Influence in Childcare Teachers' Emotional Labor and Job Stress on Turnover and Job Changes Intention

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## Abstract:

**Background:** This study aimed to investigate how emotional labor and job stress affect nursery school teachers' turnover and turnover intention. A total of 271 nursery school teachers working in City D were surveyed from December 4 to December 15, 2024 using a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0 to determine the correlation and influence of emotional labor and job stress on turnover and turnover intention.

**Materials and Methods:** The study utilized a structured questionnaire to assess the relationship between emotional labor and job stress on turnover and turnover intention among nursery school teachers. Emotional labor was analyzed using sub-variables such as surface behavior and internal behavior. The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 26.0 for data interpretation.

**Results:** First, among the sub-variables of emotional labor of nursery school teachers, surface behavior was significantly and positively related to turnover intention, and the higher the teachers' job stress, the higher the turnover and turnover intention. Second, among the sub-variables of emotional labor of nursery school teachers, internal behavior was highly influential on turnover intention, and the job stress of nursery school teachers had a significant effect on turnover and turnover intention.

**Conclusion:** These results suggest that effective management and support of child care teachers' emotional labor and job stress are needed to prevent child care teachers' turnover and turnover intention.

**Keywords:** childcare teacher, emotional labor, job stress, turnover intention, Job changes Intention.

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## I. Introduction

According to Statistics Korea<sup>1</sup>, in 2023, 48.2% of all married couple households be two-parent households, and 51.5% of households with the youngest child under the age of 6 will be two-parent households. This increase in dual-earner households means infants and toddlers will spend more time relying on early childhood institutions. Therefore, social responsibility for improving the quality of childcare services is being emphasized. As society's responsibility for the care of infants and young children is emphasized, the importance of teachers as the main providers of childcare services and as a key resource for determining the quality of childcare continues to be emphasized.

However, according to the Ministry of Health and Welfare<sup>2</sup>, as of August 2023, the number of childcare teachers decreased by 15,674 compared to 2022, and by 24,366 compared to 2018. In addition, according to the 2021 National Childcare Survey<sup>3</sup>, 72.6% of children in 2020 had a childcare teacher who resigned during the year, an increase of 5.3 percentage points from 2018. These figures indicate a very high turnover rate in the childcare sector.

Turnover and job transfers are important for teachers, whether they are leaving their current daycare or moving to another job. However, for infants and toddlers, it means changing caregivers on a daily basis. Frequent teacher turnover can damage infants and young children's emotional attachment to their teachers



and cause them emotional, such as tension, anxiety, and<sup>4</sup>. turnover can also have a negative impact on the of colleagues<sup>5</sup>, contribute to a in the quality of care, and negatively parents' and satisfaction levels with their children<sup>6,7</sup>. Therefore, there a need for strategies to prevent and manage teacher turnover in child care centers, not only for the growth and development of infants and toddlers, but also for the development of parental trust, the performance of coworkers, and the smooth operation of child care centers. Turnover may be the last step before actual turnover behavior and is a significant factor influencing actual turnover behavior, as teachers go through several stages to develop turnover intention, including examining the opportunity cost of leaving and exploring alternatives<sup>8,9</sup>. The higher a teacher's turnover intentions, the likely they are to actually leave 4. Therefore, reducing teacher turnover intentions be a way to not only provide stable child care environments for infants and toddlers, but also to improve the quality of child care services.

Child care teachers' turnover intentions can be predicted by a variety of factors. In particular, teachers' perceptions of on-site Emotional labor experienced in child care has also been discussed as a predictor of turnover intentions. Emotional labor is a type of work that requires the constant production of certain emotional states, such as laughter and kindness, regardless of one's own emotional state, and is related to the core competencies of child care jobs<sup>10</sup>. Child care workers experience wide range of emotions as they interact with infants and toddlers, parents, directors, and coworkers in the course of their work. Child care profession aims to develop the whole person of infants and young children through engagement and respect. Teachers have formal and informal interactions with young children to achieve educational goals. Their emotions and behaviors influence the emotions and behaviors of the children. Especially for nursery teachers, whose caring role is emphasized for young infants and toddlers, emotions are an even more important factor to consider in order to communicate with infants and toddlers in a friendly way<sup>11,12</sup>. In addition, the small size of childcare and the nature of the workforce, which is mostly composed of women, the interaction between the director and coworkers affect emotions. Excessive expectations, unreasonable demands, and aggressive parental attitudes can lead to job stress beyond the normal level of emotional labor coping. Teachers engage in emotional to escape from perceived job<sup>13,14</sup> and in this process, they emotional as they the between and inward emotions. The emotional stress caused by this self-induced emotional labor has been reported to influence turnover intentions<sup>15</sup>.

We categorized child care workers' emotional labor into external and internal behaviors and examined how these variables affect turnover. In a study by Jeong, Sunmi<sup>15</sup> and Park, Dassel<sup>16</sup>, who examined the effects on intentions, they found that the more often teachers exhibited surface behaviors, the higher their turnover intentions, and the more often they exhibited intrinsic behaviors, the lower their turnover intentions. On the other hand, Kim<sup>17</sup> found that only surface behaviors were related to turnover intentions, and internal behaviors had no effect on turnover intentions. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze and understand how the sub-factors of emotional labor affect the turnover intention of child care teachers in order to more specifically analyze and explore the factors that affect the turnover and turnover intention of child care teachers.

Childcare workers are responsible for the direct interaction with infants and toddlers in childcare, as well as the They experience significant workload and stress as they juggle multiple responsibilities, including relationships, daycare work, and educational activities<sup>18</sup>. In addition, repeated and sustained exposure to the emotional pressures of maintaining close interpersonal relationships at work can lead to emotional exhaustion<sup>19</sup>. This stress can lead to avoidance, interruption, or mechanical responses to interpersonal activities at work, including with infants and young children<sup>15</sup>. These negative interpersonal reactions are likely to intensify over time and have been reported to strengthen turnover intentions to leave the profession or transfer to another child care center<sup>20,21</sup>. Thus, teachers' emotions are closely related to job stress, which may turnover is necessary to validate this effect.

According to the 2021 National Child Care Survey, long hours were the top reason for child care teacher resignations, Excessive workloads, low pay for the amount of work they do, no breaks, and violations of childcare workers' rights 3. These findings haven't changed much from a decade ago. Most studies on teacher job stress report that low compensation relative to workload, excessive working hours, and low social recognition of the job create intense job stress for childcare workers, and that the cumulative effects of this stress lead to increased intentions to leave the profession and seek other employment. In addition, the relationship with parents, relationships with coworkers, and lack of leadership from the director are also contributing factors to teachers' job stress<sup>22</sup>. Three months later, the same of job stress for teachers have been repeated over and over again. We need to find out why. It also be meaningful to examine how the stress experienced by teachers affects their turnover intentions, which play an important role in determining the quality of childcare services.

Child care worker turnover includes not only leaving the child care center where they work and moving to another early childhood organization, but also moving to a job outside of teaching<sup>23</sup>. Previous studies that have analyzed turnover intentions of child care workers separately have found that the factors that influence turnover may differ<sup>24,25</sup>. Yang's<sup>25</sup> study on the effects of professional supportive environment in childcare centers on turnover and turnover intentions of childcare teachers found that relationships with teachers and directors, autonomy and decision-making, and expectations of teachers and infants were important variables for turnover intentions. Obviously, the idea or decision to leave an organization is different from the idea or decision to change jobs. However, of the literature explores factors that influence turnover intentions without distinguishing between turnover intentions of child care teachers and turnover intentions of child care workers. Even when turnover intentions are analyzed separately, they are either unable to identify relevant variables<sup>26</sup> or are limited to studies that analyze the effects of job stress and personal efficacy<sup>25,27</sup>. Therefore, in order to find more practical ways to manage teachers' turnover intentions in childcare settings, it is necessary to analyze and understand the factors that affect teachers' turnover intentions and turnover intentions. Therefore, this study examined the effects of emotional labor and job stress on turnover and turnover intentions of childcare teachers.

This study aims to verify the impact of emotional labor and job factors on childcare teachers' turnover intentions and interventions reduce turnover intentions.

To accomplish the research objectives, the research questions are as follows.

First, what is the relationship between emotional labor, job stress, and turnover intentions among child care workers?

Second, what is the impact of emotional labor and job stress on turnover and turnover intentions among child care workers?

## II. Research Methods

### 1. Research subjects

The participants of this study consisted of a total of 271 childcare teachers working at daycare centers in Daejeon City. The reason for selecting childcare teachers from daycare centers in Daejeon as the study subjects was based on the findings reported

during the "Policy Discussion on the Status of Emotional Labor of Childcare Teachers" held in August 2022. The discussion revealed that childcare teachers in Daejeon were experiencing severe emotional labor, with one out of three teachers considering resignation. The sampling method employed for participant selection was convenience sampling. Data collection was conducted by obtaining prior consent from the daycare centers regarding the survey, followed by a combination of on-site visits and an online survey using the Naver Form website. Out of 300 distributed surveys, 280 were collected, resulting in a response rate of 93%. Among the returned surveys, nine were excluded due to inconsistent responses and significant missing data. Ultimately, 271 surveys were used for analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 90%. The general characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 1.

**Table no 1** General Characteristics of Study Subject (N= 271)

	Variable	n	B		Variable	n	B
Age	20s	92	33.9	Types of childcare center	Public	68	25.1
	30s	81	29.9		Private	116	42.8
	over 40s	98	36.2		Work place	87	32.1
Education	College	116	42.8	Career term	Under 5 years	94	34.7
	University	103	38.0		5 years-under 10years	90	33.2
	Over master degree	52	19.2		Over 10 years	87	32.1
Marital status	Single	126	46.5	Class	0 - 2 years old	145	53.5
Marital status	Married	145	53.5		3- 5 years old	126	46.5

### 2. Research tools

#### 1) Emotional Labor Measurement Tool

To measure the emotional labor of child care teachers, we used a scale adapted from the work of Grandey<sup>28</sup>, Grandey, Fisk, and Steiner<sup>29</sup>, and Kruml and Geddes<sup>30</sup>, and modified by Hwang<sup>31</sup>. The Child Care Worker Emotional Labor Scale consists of 10 items, including 6 items on surface behaviors (hiding one's true feelings in the heart and expressing them as desirable feelings required by the organization: acting, lack of authenticity) and 4 items on internal behaviors (consciously suppressing, modifying, and identifying with one's feelings in order to externally express desirable behaviors required to achieve organizational goals). Each item was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (①: Not at all true ↔ ⑤: Very true), with higher scores on the scale from 1 to 5 indicating higher perceptions of surface and internal behaviors. The *Cronbach's α* of the emotional labor sub-variable, surface behavior, was .753, and the *Cronbach's α* of the intrapersonal behavior sub-variable was .753. The *Cronbach's α* for the items measuring internal behaviors was found to be .823, indicating high internal consistency among the items. Additionally, the total 10 items used to measure childcare teachers' emotional labor showed a *Cronbach's α* of .811, demonstrating strong reliability and internal consistency of the evaluation tool. With high internal consistency.

#### 2) Job measurement tool

To measure the job stress of nursery school teachers, the job stress scale of D'Arienzo, Morraco, and Krajewski<sup>32</sup> was used as the scale used in the study of Shin, Hye-Young<sup>33</sup> and Im, Sun<sup>34</sup>. Based on the in the work situation at the institution nursery school teacher stress consisted of 23 in four 10 related to lack of and administrative support from the, 5 related to work overload, 5 related to relationships with, and 3 related relationships with Each item was measured using a Likert scale (①: Not at all true ⑤: Very true), with higher scores indicating higher job stress. When examining the item composition of the job stress scale subscales and the reliability of the Child Care Workers' Job Stress Questionnaire, we found that the internal consistency of the scale was .911 for lack of leadership and administrative support, .683 for work overload, .862 for relationships with coworkers, and .873 for relationships with parents. The *Cronbach's α* for measuring child care workers' job had a high internal of .931.

#### 3) Turnover and turnover intention measurement tools

To measure the turnover intention and turnover intention of childcare teachers, we used the scale of Lee Myung-hwan<sup>36</sup>, which was adapted from Allen and Meyer's<sup>35</sup> scale to the context of childcare teachers. The scale consisted of eight items, four items for turnover intention, which refers to moving to the same job, and four items for turnover intention, which refers to moving to a

different job. Each item was answered on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from very much not\* Higher scores indicate higher turnover intention among childcare teachers. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  the internal consistency index of each sub-variable of turnover intention, is .942 ~ .951 respectively, showing relatively high reliability. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the 4-item turnover intention of nursery teachers was .942, and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the 4-item turnover intention was .951. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of all eight items to measure turnover intentions of childcare teachers was .947, showing high internal consistency.

**3. Research Procedures**

A preliminary survey was conducted from November 27, 2024 to November 29, 2024 to identify the appropriateness of the research tool and problems. In the preliminary survey, 10 teachers from public daycare centers and 15 teachers from private daycare centers, which are not included in this study, participated. The preliminary results confirmed that the questionnaire designed for this study had no difficulty in emotional labor, job, intention, and turnover of childcare teachers. Based on the preliminary results, the questionnaire was validated for content validity by two

professors majoring in early childhood education and three early childhood education experts.

Data collection for this study was conducted between December 4 and December 15, 2024. The purpose and method of the survey were explained to the selected nursery teachers via mobile and landline to confirm their willingness to participate. Through this process, an online survey using the Naver Form website was conducted and collected from only those teachers who expressed their willingness to participate in the survey.

**4. Analyze your data**

The data were analyzed using the SPSS WIN version 26.0 statistical program. Frequency analysis and percentages were conducted to identify the general characteristics of the research subjects, and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) were calculated to verify the reliability between the items of the measurement tool. Pearson's correlation was examine the correlation between emotional labor, job stress, and turnover intention of nursery school teachers, and multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of labor and job on turnover of nursery school

**III. Findings**

**1. Correlation between emotional labor, job stress, and intentions among childcare workers**

**Table no 2** Correlation between emotional labor, job stress, and job change intention among childcare teachers

(N= 271)

Variables		Turnover Intentions	Former Intent
Emotional labor	Surface behavior	.163	.199
	Introspective behavior	-.076	-.100
	Emotional Labor All	.043	.047
Job stress	Lack of principal leadership and administrative support	.714***	.583***
	Workload overload	.566***	.488***
	Relationships with coworkers	.559***	.506***
	Relationship with parents	.522***	.525***
	Job Stress Overall	.718***	.648***

\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

When the correlation between total emotional labor and turnover intention and turnover intention of nursery school teachers was analyzed, it was found that there was no significant correlation between total emotional labor and turnover and turnover intention of nursery school teachers. Among the sub-factors of emotional labor, the correlation of surface behavior with turnover intention ( $r=.199, p < .001$ ) greater than the correlation with turnover intention ( $r=.163, p < .001$ ). These results that only surface behavior among the sub-factors of emotional labor has a significant correlation with turnover and turnover intention, and other factors not significantly related.

Correlates overall job and turnover intentions among child care teachers The results showed a correlation with turnover intention ( $r=.718, p < .001$ ) and a correlation with turnover intention ( $r=.648, p < .001$ ), which was analyzed as a significant static

correlation.

Analyzing the correlations between the job stress sub factors and turnover intentions of child care w teachers, we found that lack of and administrative support from the was associated with turnover ( $r=.714, p < .001$ ) than turnover intention ( $r=.583, p < .001$ ). Work overload was also found to be more highly correlated with turnover intention ( $r=.566, p < .001$ ) than turnover intention ( $r=.488, p < .001$ ). Relationships with coworkers were also more highly correlated with turnover intention ( $r=.559, p < .001$ ) than turnover intention ( $r=.506, p < .001$ ). Relationships with parents were found to be more highly correlated with turnover intention ( $r=.525, p < .001$ ) than turnover intention ( $r=.522, p < .001$ ). Each of the job stress factors positively with turnover intention and turnover intention, which means that as the job of teachers , the turnover intention of is likely to improve as well.

2. The impact of emotional labor and job stress on turnover and turnover intentions among childcare workers

Table no 3 Influence emotional labor sub factor and job stress sub factor on turnover and job change among childcare teachers (N=271)

Division	Factor	Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention				Dependent Variable: Job Change Intention			
				$\beta$	<i>t</i>	No standardization		$\beta$	<i>t</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>			<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>		
(Constant)		-.088	.436			.085	.521		.162
Emotional Labor	Surface Behavior	-.037	.100	-.017	-.373	.170	.120	.075	1.421
	Introspective Behavior	-.089	.085	-.047	-1.056	-.226	.101	-.113	-2.231*
Job Stress	Lack of Leadership and Administrative Support	.913	.108	.477	8.437***	.589	.129	.295	4.551***
	Overloaded	.208	.079	.139	2.627**	.183	.095	.117	1.933
	Collegiality	.218	.069	.167	3.172**	.217	.082	.159	2.646**
	Parent relationships	.141	.060	.124	2.369*	.249	.071	.210	3.94**
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>				.569				.446	
<b>F</b>				60.294***				35.413***	

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

When examining the impact of emotional labor and job stress-related factors on turnover, the regression model was found to explain 58.9% of the total variance ( $R^2 = .589$ ). The estimated regression equation was statistically significant ( $F = 60.294$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Among the sub-factors of emotional labor, none significantly influenced childcare teachers' turnover intention. However, among the sub-factors of job stress, lack of leadership and administrative support from the director ( $\beta = .477$ ,  $p < .001$ ), relationships with coworkers ( $\beta = .167$ ,  $p < .01$ ), work overload ( $\beta = .139$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and relationships with parents ( $\beta = .124$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were found to significantly impact turnover intention in descending order.

Regarding the effects of emotional labor and job stress-related factors on career shift intention, the regression model explained 44.6% of the total variance ( $R^2 = .446$ ). The estimated regression equation was statistically significant ( $F = 35.413$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Among emotional labor-related factors, only internal behavior ( $\beta = -.113$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly influenced childcare teachers' career shift intention, indicating that an increase in internal behavior by one unit decreases career shift intention by -.226 units. Among the job stress sub-factors, lack of leadership and administrative support from the director ( $\beta = .295$ ,  $p < .001$ ), relationships with parents ( $\beta = .210$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and relationships with coworkers ( $\beta = .159$ ,  $p < .01$ ) significantly impacted career shift intention in descending order.

In conclusion, internal behavior within emotional labor

significantly affects career shift intention, while job stress sub-factors such as lack of leadership and administrative support from the director, relationships with coworkers, work overload, and relationships with parents influence turnover intention in childcare teachers. Moreover, career shift intention was positively and significantly impacted by lack of leadership and administrative support from the director, relationships with parents, and relationships with coworkers in descending order.

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

This study the relationship between emotional labor, stress, and turnover intentions of childcare teachers the of labor and job stress on and turnover childcare The findings of this study are discussed as follows. First, surface behaviors during emotional labor significantly and positively related to turnover and turnover intentions, meaning that the more surface behaviors nursery teachers, the more likely they are to have turnover and This suggests that the more frequent use of surface internal behaviors during emotional labor can either increase or decrease turnover and turnover intentions. The more a child care worker displays fake emotions that lack authenticity to the feelings they are expressing, the more likely they are to turnover and want to change jobs. On the other hand, the more they engage in authentic internal behaviors that indicate that they actually feel the emotions they are expressing, the less they want to leave. These results different from Yang's<sup>37</sup> study,

which found the effect of emotional labor on turnover intention among childcare teachers, but partially consistent with Seo's<sup>38</sup> results, which showed a significant correlation in the sub-factor, surface behavior. This shows that surface behavior is an important factor in explaining the relationship between emotional labor and turnover intention. In order to reduce turnover intention among nursery teachers, it is necessary to improve the basic working environment to reduce the intensity of surface behavior, which is a negative form of emotional labor, and increase the intensity of internal behavior. In addition, the emotional labor of nursery school teachers It will require a shift in the perception of management.

Next, there was a very strong correlation between job stress and intentions of childcare teachers, which means that the higher the job stress of childcare teachers, the higher the turnover intentions are likely to be. These results are consistent with Bae's<sup>39</sup> study of the effect of job stress on turnover intentions among nursery school teachers, which found a strong positive correlation between turnover intentions and job stress, and with Baek's<sup>40</sup> study that higher job stress among nursery school teachers is associated with higher turnover intentions. Teachers were more likely to think about leaving changing jobs when they experienced stress, especially from the of leadership administrative support from the director. In addition, work, relationships with coworkers, and relationships with parents increased their intention to leave according to the degree of stress they experienced. On the other hand, the intention to change jobs varied according to the that teachers experienced, with relationships with parents, relationships with coworkers, and work overload being the most common. In other words, thought about changing jobs when they felt that they leadership and support from the director, but under the same, work-related increased their intention to leave current center and to an organization with a better working, and relationship-related stress increased their to another job. As such, it can be said that various stresses of childcare teachers are the primary factors that cause them to choose to leave and change jobs, so it is necessary to improve the working environment to reduce the stress of childcare teachers and to support policy measures to change the treatment and social perception of childcare teachers.

Second, child care workers' emotional labor itself has a direct effect on child care workers' turnover and turnover intentions. Although it did not have a directional effect, the internal behavior of emotional labor was found to be a factor that directly influenced the turnover intention of child care workers. In other words, when child care workers think about leaving the teaching profession and moving to another profession, emotional labor is a significant factor. As emotional labor is inevitable while performing the tasks of a nursery school teacher, efforts be made to reduce burnout caused by the internal behaviors of nursery school teachers during emotional labor. To this end, it necessary to provide policy support for various objective and professional self-reflection training and empathy enhancement programs to be designated as compulsory education to enable teachers to act inwardly rather than outwardly during the emotional labor required in their work. Next, job stress among nursery school teachers was found to have a significant effect on turnover and job change intentions. These findings are consistent with Shin's<sup>41</sup> study, which found a positive relationship between job stress and turnover intention. The of job stress, it can be seen that director

and administrative support, coworker, work, and parental relationships, in that order, influence the turnover of child care teachers. Lack of director leadership and administrative support, parental relationships, and coworker relationships, in that order, had a significant positive effect on teachers' turnover intentions. In particular, lack of director leadership and administrative support had the strongest effect on turnover and turnover intentions, which was consistent with Shin's<sup>41</sup> findings. In addition, work overload had a direct on teachers' turnover, their intention to change jobs. if have a heavy workload, they are more likely to consider jobs to other

However, it can be seen that they do not want to leave the profession for that reason. Therefore, in order to effectively manage job stress to reduce teacher turnover, it is necessary to improve childcare policies, such as increasing the number of aides, to manage the workload of teachers at an appropriate level, and to actively strengthen the leadership of the director to improve the leadership of teachers.

This study was based on self-reported data collected from childcare workers in a specific region, so there are limitations in applying the results to the entire childcare workforce. However, it is important to note that the study examined the relationship between emotional labor, job stress, and turnover intentions of childcare teachers and found that the relationship between the two variables was significant. In particular, job stress was found to have a significant effect on turnover and turnover intentions, which be an important resource for developing countermeasures to reduce turnover and turnover intentions. The significance of this study is it provides a basis for child care policy makers and child care organization operators to determine policy priorities for preventing and managing child care teacher turnover and turnover.

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