A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE TEACHERS' SALARY LEVEL ON JOB PERFORMANCE AT HECHI COLLEGE, CHINA

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Abstract: The development of colleges and universities relies heavily on the dedicated efforts of every teacher, and the salary level is the basic factor affecting teachers 'efforts, which is finally manifested as the impact on teachers' work performance. This paper focuses on the teachers of Hechi University, aiming to illustrate the influence of the salary level of Hechi University on work performance under the intermediary effect of organizational fairness. The main theories employed in the study include the comprehensive salary incentive theory, Lawler gap model theory, AMO theory, as well as the demand level theory, etc. Quantitative analysis was the methodology adopted and first-hand data were obtained from questionnaires. Through the research, the following findings are obtained: First, there is a discernible correlation between salary level and job performance, indicating that a higher salary level positively enhances the work performance of teachers in Hechi University. Second, the sense of organizational fairness, as a mediator variable, has a positive correlation impact on work performance. Third, the salary level of teachers in Hechi University affects the work performance, and this effect is amplified through organizational fairness.

Keywords: College Teachers, Salary Level, Organizational Fairness, Work Performance

Introduction

The progress of a nation depends on the development of higher education, and likewise, the personal growth of its citizens hinges on higher education. After decades of development, China has built up one of the world's largest higher education systems. According to the latest data released by China's Ministry of Education, there were 3,072 universities in China by the first half of 2023, and 10.145 million people were enrolled in ordinary and professional institutions in 2022. On the one hand, the development of higher education in China fuels the expansion of Hechi University faculty, and on the other hand, it depends on the great contribution made by the faculty of Hechi University.

The significance of Hechi University teachers for the advancement of higher education cannot be overstated. However, in recent years, a concerning trend of high-quality educators migrating to foreign institutions has emerged, highlighting potential shortcomings in the attraction and retention of

faculty within Chinese colleges and universities. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the salary structures for teachers at Hechi University, where the issues are most acutely reflected.

As employees of Hechi University, teachers have the same expectations for salary as ordinary workers. The salary level directly affects the work enthusiasm and attitude, and ultimately, the work performance of these educators. Their work performance, in turn, shapes the quality of student cultivation and the overall development of the school. The poor work performance of teachers in some universities has led to a decline in teaching quality and scientific research achievements in universities, drawing widespread attention. In recent years, a growing number of scholars have begun to develop deeper examination into the influence of teachers' salary level on job performance.

According to He et al. (2021), the salary plays a pivotal role in influencing the work dedication and resignation intentions of college teachers, so it is necessary to pay keen attention to the salary design of college teachers. To improve the work efficiency of faculty members at Hechi University, it is imperative to optimize the salary level design. Furthermore, elucidating the explicit correlation between salary levels and work performance among Hechi University teachers is of great value in facilitating a scientific approach to salary level design in universities.

Research Objectives

1) To investigate the correlation between teachers' salary level and job performance in Hechi University.
2) To probe into the intermediary effect of organizational fairness between teachers' salary level and job performance at Hechi University.
3) To explore the role of organizational fairness in mediating the teachers' salary level and work performance at Hechi University.

Literature Review

Incentive Effect of College Teachers' Salary

From the perspective of colleges and universities, the design and implementation of salary incentives are inevitably aimed at exerting a certain effect on individuals. The academic circle believes that the main effect of implementing salary incentive for college teachers lies in the satisfaction effect of individual needs, the performance effect of individual job responsibilities, the effect of individual post loyalty, and the effect of individual play of creative work potential. In a study conducted by Bao (2020), which focuses on young teachers in general colleges and universities, it is proposed that salary incentives targeted at university teachers can promote their willingness to fulfill their job responsibilities. Furthermore, continuous and attractive salary incentives can enhance their loyalty to their posts, enabling university teachers to spontaneously form a recognition of their job

responsibilities and willingness to contribute. Wang et al. (2023) proposed that the salary incentive can directly meet the various material and non-material needs of individuals, and the satisfaction of these needs will make those being incentivized place greater importance on and cherish the conditions that lead to their salary incentives, thereby further strengthening their ability to cope with challenges in the workplace and under job pressure. This ultimately enhances their job competency.

Salary Level and Satisfaction of College Teachers

Salary level is an important indicator to evaluate the salary system, and a crucial factor affecting college teacher's satisfaction with the salary system. The salary level of college teachers is correlated with salary satisfaction, which in return affects their behavior. Li and Hu (2023) pointed out that the reform of university teachers' salary is an important part of China's higher education system reform. Through empirical analysis, they proposed that the salary level of university teachers in China is relatively low, and there is a high degree of misalignment between the expected salary and actual salary. Salary level has a higher impact on teachers' salary satisfaction than salary structure, and the former will directly affect the college teachers' salary satisfaction. Aldahdouh et al. (2023) discussed the issues of faculty training and salary in colleges and universities and proposed that training can improve teacher's professional capabilities to better meet the development needs of higher education while reasonable salary level will increase teachers' enthusiasm to engage in their positions and promote their output.

Literature Related to the Work Performance of College Teachers

In the study of university teachers, the discussion of their work performance has also attracted the attention of some scholars. When discussing the work performance of university teachers, the main research contents include analyzing the factors affecting their work performance, discussing the action mechanism of different factors, analyzing the evaluation method of the work performance, and proposing solutions to improve their work performance. Guo (2021) proposed that salary will affect the performance of university teachers, mainly manifesting in the fact that salary structure impacts teachers' needs, sense of belonging, and professional accomplishment, which further affect their work performance. Therefore, universities need to focus on the construction of teachers' salary system to enhance teachers' satisfaction with their salary level, ultimately promoting their work performance.

Zhang & Guo (2023) proposed that in order to enhance the work performance of the new generation of university faculty, it is necessary to select teachers with positive work values, improve the organizational environment of colleges and universities, and continue to improve the salary incentive as the core of teacher incentive mechanism. This will enhance their organizational identity and professional identity, ultimately promoting the continuous improvement of work performance among the new generation of teachers.

Based on the above literature review, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

1) The higher salary level that teachers in Hechi University can obtain, the higher their job performance will be

2) The higher sense of organizational fairness given to teachers by universities, the higher their work performance will be

3) Organizational fairness is the bridge between the salary level of teachers in Hechi University and their work performance

Methodology

This study discusses the influence of salary level on work performance among teachers in Hechi University. A quantitative research method is employed to test the hypotheses proposed in this paper. The research subjects are teachers from Hechi University.

A total of 500 teachers from Hechi University were selected for this study, and the above samples were determined using sampling statistical formulas. Since there are 815 teachers in total at Hechi University, approximately 60% of the schoolteachers are selected as sampled, which is sufficient to meet the needs of the research.

The random sampling mode was adopted when selecting the sample of teachers from Hechi University to ensure the fairness in sample selection and reduce selection bias. That is, 500 teachers were randomly selected from the the total population of 815 teachers of Hechi University and subjected to independent sample unit analysis.

The questionnaire data were obtained by distributing the questionnaire to the interviewed teachers, who completed it, and the staff collated the responses. The main purpose of the questionnaire design is to gather information on the respondents' salary level, organizational fairness perception and work performance, so as to provide data support for the subsequent hypothesis testing.

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 391 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective recovery rate of 78.20%. The commonly used data processing software SPSS was used to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and to analyze the questionnaire information, providing the basis for subsequent studies.

Descriptive statistical methods were used to summarize and generalize the overall basic information of the sample. Subsequently, correlation analysis and regression analysis were conducted on the scale data provided by the respondents to test the rationality of the hypothesis. For example, descriptive statistical analysis was employed to introduce the basic information of salary level scale, organizational fairness scale and work performance scale. Hypothesis testing was conducted on the relationship between salary level and work performance, the relationship between organizational fairness and work performance, as well as the empirical analysis of the intermediary effect of organizational fairness.

Results

1) Relationship Between Salary Level and Job Performance

According to the correlation calculation, the P-value for the test between salary and job performance is 0.000, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.437. Meanwhile, there is a positive correlation between the two at a significant level of 0.001. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a specific co-directional change between salary level and job performance, indicating that a higher salary level can promote the improvement of job performance among teachers at Hechi University.

Table 1: Statistics on the Correlation between Work Performance and Salary Level

Evaluation Content	Correlation	Salary	Job Performance	P -value
Salary	Pearson Correlation	1	0.437	0.000
	Significance (two-tailed)		0.001	
	N	55	55	
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.437	1	0.000
	Significance (two-tailed)	0.001		
	N	55	55	

2) Relationship Between Organizational Fairness and Work Performance

Further calculations of the relationship between organizational fairness and work performance yield the results are shown in Table 2: the P-values for the correlation tests between interactive fairness, distributional fairness, procedural fairness and work performance are all less than 0.01; meanwhile, the Pearson correlations are all positive. Therefore, there is also a positive correlation between the aforementioned elements of organizational fairness and work performance, and they change in the same direction. Consequently, if colleges and universities can ensure a higher interactive fairness, reasonable distributional fairness and procedural fairness in management with teachers, it will play a positive role in promoting the improvement of teachers' work performance. In other words, the higher the above three types of fairness, the higher the teachers' work performance will be.

Table 2: Statistics on the Correlation Between Work Performance and Organizational Fairness

Indicator	Distributional Fairness	Procedural Fairness	Interactive Fairness	Job Performance
Distributional Fairness	1.000			
Procedural Fairness	0.419**	1.000		
Interactive Fairness	0.803**	0.744**	1.000	
Job Performance	0.596**	0.649**	0.698**	1.000

Note: **stands for P < 0.01

3) Empirical Analysis of the Intermediary Effect of Organizational Fairness

Assuming that X is the independent variable that affects the dependent variable Y and the mediator variable is set as M, for the existence of M as a mediator variable is that X needs to influence Y through the action of M. Assuming that all variables are centralized (mean is zero) and the relationship between variables is described as follows:

$$Y = cX + e_1 \text{ Formula (1)}$$

$$M = aX + e_2 \text{ Formula (2)}$$

$$Y = C^1 X + bM + e_3 \text{ Formula (3)}$$

The conditions for M to be established are as follows: When the regression coefficient C value is 0, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant correlation between X and Y. The intermediary effect is considered established when the following conditions are met there must be a significant relationship between X and M; there must be a significant relationship between Y and M; the correlation between X and Y is relatively weak without the inclusion of M, but becomes stronger after the inclusion of M.

To test Hypothesis 3, hierarchical regression analysis was performed using SPSS 24.0, with variables X, Y, and M entered. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Intermediary Effect of Organizational Fairness

Variables that explain the target	Organizational Fairness			Job Performance
	Distributional Fairness	Procedural Fairness	Interactive Fairness	
Salary	0.437	0.226	-0.184	-0.103
Organizational Fairness				0.438
$\triangle R^2$	0.329	0.215	0.031	0.329
Adjusted $\triangle R^2$	0.311	0.195	0.054	0.436
$\triangle F$	28.51**	14.996**	2.401	29.483**

Note: **stands for $P < 0.01$

According to the data in Table 3, it can be seen that: firstly, there is a high degree of R-squared between procedural fairness and distributional fairness, and both are significant; secondly, the mediating role of fairness on job performance is prominent, and job performance is significantly improved after the introduction of fairness elements (such as distributional fairness). To sum up, the salary level of teachers in Hechi University affects job performance, and at the same time, the effect is amplified through organizational fairness. That is, the salary level of teachers in Hechi University affects job performance through organizational fairness. The higher the salary level and organizational fairness, the higher the corresponding job performance of teachers, and vice versa, which will lead to low job performance of teachers.

Discussion

At present, the main problems related to the teachers' salary level and organizational fairness of Hechi University are as follows:

(1) There are comparative disadvantages in the content of the salary structure

In practice, the salary structure of teachers in Hechi University still has some comparative disadvantages when compared to other institutions in the region. For example, compared with the staff of some government units, large enterprises and financial related units in the region, the salary structure of teachers in Hechi University has certain comparative disadvantages.

(2) Insufficient fairness in internal salary distribution. In colleges and universities

In practice, Hechi University allocates a relatively larger proportion of salary to administrative teachers and provides various forms of higher salary incentives to them. This has led to a significant salary gap between non-administrative and administrative teachers within the school.

(3) The absolute value of the salary increase does not meet the expectations of Hechi University.

The salary increase is of great significance for improving the salary and treatment of teachers in Hechi University and improving the comparative advantage and satisfaction of salary. There are two key variables in salary increases for university teachers: quality and quantity. Here quality means the absolute value of salary increase, while quantity indicates the frequency of salary increase. Combined with the questionnaire data, it can be seen that there are still some deficiencies in the quality of salary increases for college teachers, which have not met the expected requirements of teachers. This, in turn, affects the role of salary in promoting work performance. In other words, the absolute value of salary increases does not meet teachers' expectations.

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