

A STUDY ON TEACHERS' OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING AT X SCHOOL IN JIAOZUO CITY, HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

Zhihao Zhang ^{1*}

I-Hua Chen ²

¹ Master Candidate in Educational Administration, Stamford International University of Thailand

² Lecturer, Stamford International University of Thailand, aholchen@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author, E-mail: 1290037159@qq.com

Abstract: This study aimed to explore the current status of teachers' occupational well-being and investigate the differences among teachers with different demographic backgrounds. Employing a questionnaire-based approach, the study surveyed a sample of 259 in-service teachers from X School in Jiaozuo City, China, using the teachers' occupational well-being scale as the primary research tool. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent sample *t*-tests, and one-way ANOVA. The findings indicate that, overall, teachers' occupational well-being was satisfactory. However, significant differences in occupational well-being were observed among teachers of different ages, marital statuses, educational backgrounds, and professional identities. Additionally, gender and teaching subject were found to have a significant impact on teachers' occupational well-being. Based on these findings and the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, practical applications, and policy implications are proposed, addressing the roles of teachers, schools, and society in promoting teachers' occupational well-being.

Keywords: Teachers' occupational well-being, Demographic differences, Questionnaire survey

Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in the foundation of a country and serve as a driving force for social progress. Their occupational well-being is not only linked to personal development and work quality but also to the stability and advancement of society as a whole (Sook, 2019). As society evolves and the education industry undergoes constant changes, teachers face increasing work pressure and challenges. Consequently, investigating teachers' occupational well-being and exploring the differences that arise under varying demographic backgrounds is of great importance for improving teachers' quality of work and life, as well as promoting the development of education.

Teachers' occupational well-being serves as a key driving force for creative work. Every word and action of a teacher subtly influences their students, and only teachers who experience well-being

can cultivate a happy next generation. Thus, teachers' occupational well-being has a profound impact on the development of the education (Sharona, 2021). Well-being is a subjective feeling that refers to the state and experience of satisfying one's needs. Occupational well-being, in turn, refers to workers' satisfaction with their profession and current life and work status (Liu, 2023).

Teachers' occupational well-being is an important factor in measuring their psychological state and quality of life, as it can affect work enthusiasm, career development, and overall well-being. Teachers who experience a lack of well-being may not provide adequate care for their students. Furthermore, there are differences in teachers' occupational well-being under different demographic backgrounds. Therefore, understanding the current status of teachers' occupational well-being and the differences that arise under various demographic backgrounds is necessary to alleviate the occupational pressure on teachers and enhance their overall well-being.

Research Objectives

- (1) To identify the current status of teachers' occupational well-being.
- (2) To explore the differences in teachers' occupational well-being with different demographic backgrounds (age, gender, marital status, educational background, whether to be a class teacher or not, and teaching subjects).

Literature Review

Research on the Concept of Teachers' Occupational Well-being

Teacher's occupational well-being has been a subordinate concept of well-being and a hot research field in educational management in recent years. Galbraith (1958) first proposed the concept of "quality of life" and gradually extended it to subjective quality of life research, eventually developing into the study of "subjective well-being", laying the foundation for the study of well-being. Diener (1984) systematically reviewed relevant research on subjective well-being, stating that subjective well-being included two parts: life satisfaction and emotional experience.

Wright et al. (2004) believed that occupational well-being was an individual's positive and negative emotional experiences and cognitive status toward work-related affairs. Scholars have also explored and guided the basic principles and directions of research, such as Decancq (2017) proposed that occupational well-being has five basic principles: focusing on personal well-being. Multiple comprehensive indicator evaluations. Paid attention to social effects and construct comprehensive social indicators and to the physical and mental health situation. They paid attention to individual fairness.

Ning (2020) believed that teachers' occupational well-being referred to the continuous joyful experience of teachers fully utilizing educational wisdom in educational and teaching work, receiving positive teaching evaluation feedback and social support in the process, feeling the value brought by

the teaching profession, freely realizing educational ideals, fully unleashing potential, and achieving occupational growth and development. Song (2021) constructed the concept of "teaching well-being", which referred to teachers' ability to handle relevant affairs in educational work during the teaching process and obtain a happy experience.

Research on the Factors Influencing Teachers' Occupational Well-being

In terms of demographic backgrounds, some scholars from Western countries have explored the differences in teachers' occupational well-being with different demographic backgrounds. In terms of gender and teaching experience, most researchers have empirically concluded that women have a higher level of occupational well-being than men, and teachers with more extended teaching experience were happier. For example, Fisher (2012) conducted a survey on occupational well-being of primary school teachers from a gender perspective, and the results showed that men have lower levels of well-being compared to women, while teachers with shorter teaching experience have lower levels of well-being compared to teachers with more extended teaching experience. It was concluded that gender and teaching experience were significant factors affecting teachers' occupational well-being.

Many external factors affect teachers' occupational well-being, and some scholars have emphasized the importance of social relationships and research support. Borja (2012) pointed out that social expectations and support have a significant impact on the acquisition of teacher well-being, and it was necessary to combine the practical understanding of the social environment and socio-cultural expectations of teacher roles. In terms of salary and benefits, the academic community generally believed that teachers with good economic conditions have better teaching performance and occupational well-being. For example, Elizabeth (2016) investigated the impact of teachers' financial status on students' classroom performance in the study. She found that teachers' salary level was in direct proportion to students' positive classroom performance, and teachers with better economic conditions were happier.

Athanasios (2021) surveyed over 300 teachers in Greece and found that salary, benefits, and promotion opportunities have a more significant impact on the well-being of teachers compared to work status and management structure. Sajad (2021) found through research that the relationship between statistical variables such as marital status, age, educational background and teacher well-being was not significant. Still, there was a significant relationship between factors such as economic stability, security, and balance of income and expenditure and teacher well-being. Some scholars have emphasized the influence of evaluation systems, policy environment and other factors on teachers' occupational well-being.

For example, Webb (2019) found that teachers' work was inseparable from the evaluation system in schools, and a reasonable and effective evaluation system plays a vital role in the promotion of teachers' occupational well-being. Bullough (2022) explored teachers' occupational well-being using

the life process theory as the research foundation and found that external influences and policy changes could have an impact on teachers' occupational well-being.

Regarding demographic backgrounds in China, some researchers believed that differences in teaching subjects, gender, and whether or not one served as a class teacher significantly impact teachers' occupational well-being. For example, Cao et al. (2019) found in a survey of the well-being of primary school teachers in Shijiazhuang that among all subject teachers, class teachers and Chinese language teachers have relatively poor occupational well-being. Zhang et al. (2020) also believed that teachers' occupational well-being was mainly influenced by demographic backgrounds such as gender, age, occupational title, location, income level, and marital status. Liu (2021) found differences in teachers' occupational well-being in factors such as gender, age, marital status, occupational title, income, and whether to be a class teacher or not. Some researchers have also refuted some of the claims of the scholars mentioned above through empirical analysis. For example, Li (2022) found in a survey that there were no significant differences in demographic backgrounds such as gender, age, and teaching experience among primary school teachers in Tianjin. The main factors affecting teachers' occupational well-being were internal and external factors such as interpersonal relationships, work environment, physical and mental health, and work emotions.

Shi (2018) explored the relationship between occupational burnout and occupational well-being. He believed that if the individual needs, physical and mental health, social support, and personal value pursuit of teachers were not met, it would lead to occupational burnout and damage occupational well-being. Zhou (2019) believed that internal and external factors affecting rural teachers' well-being include four aspects: subjective experience, spiritual satisfaction, public understanding and material needs. Li (2021) surveyed the occupational well-being of rural primary school teachers with rural revitalization as the research background and found that four factors, including teachers themselves, work, interpersonal relationships, and society, affect occupational well-being.

Research on the Measuring Teachers' Occupational Well-being

Western scholars have constructed scale models for measuring occupational well-being levels from different perspectives, using psychological theories related to well-being as a reference. Early scholars used positive and negative emotions as important indicators to explore the individual's experience of occupational well-being. For example, Bradburn (1969) developed an emotional balance scale that included two dimensions of positive and negative emotions to understand an individual's emotional and emotional state. Some studies have also used indicators of occupational burnout to reverse validate the level of well-being. For example, Munn (1996) used job burnout, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intention as indicators to determine the level of occupational well-being among employees, measuring the level of occupational well-being.

Ryan (2011) also proposed the self-determination theory, which provided a unique

interpretation of psychological well-being and emphasized self-actualization's importance. The researcher believed that the three basic psychological needs related to self-actualization, including autonomy, relational needs, and recognition needs, were the key factors affecting individual well-being.

Some authors of master's and doctoral theses have compiled relevant research and conducted a survey on the occupational well-being of Chinese teachers using self-designed questionnaires. For example, Qiao (2012) constructed a primary school teachers' occupational well-being scale model that included four dimensions: job attraction, job recognition, emotional support, and achievement display. Han (2018) conducted a literature analysis and combined interviews to develop a questionnaire on the occupational well-being of primary and secondary school teachers, which included eight dimensions: career motivation, work enthusiasm, work emotion, achievement, relationship with students, relationship with colleagues, relationship with leaders, and physical health. Lei (2019) adjusted and compiled the questionnaire based on previous research and ultimately developed a teacher well-being questionnaire that included four dimensions: career motivation, school management, self-realization, and social support.

Based on the research objectives, this study ultimately decided to use the teachers' occupational Happiness Scale developed by Liu (2023) for the study's research. The specific dimensions included educational and teaching effectiveness, job emotional experience, occupational environment support, and job satisfaction.

Research on the Pathways to Enhance Teachers' Occupational Well-being

At the individual level of teachers, some scholars advocate for cultivating, guiding, and enhancing the psychological, emotional, and work abilities of individual teachers from the perspective of internal characteristics in order to suppress the possibility of unhappy experiences. Vesely (2017) conducted a study on the relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' occupational well-being and found that through certain emotional intelligence training, teachers could improve psychological resilience and ability to handle pressure and changing environments, thereby positively impacting the improvement of teachers' psychological well-being. Maja (2017) pointed out from the perspective of self-coordination theory that the self-coordination of teachers had a substantial regulatory effect on work pressure. It could improve the individual psychological ability of teachers, alleviate negative emotions, stimulate the generation of positive emotions, and thereby enhance the experience of occupational well-being. Matern (2019) investigated the impact of self-management on teacher well-being and found that teachers could reduce emotional and emotional loss, improve job satisfaction, and thus enhance occupational well-being through self-management methods such as reasonable time planning. Jason (2021) studied the relationship between self-education of teachers and well-being. He suggested that teacher perception could be enhanced by increasing educational autonomy, improving critical and reflective abilities, and teaching skills, thereby enhancing occupational well-being.

This study provided a conceptual basis, a reference for the dimensions and indicators of scale development, and a scientific empirical research process for the study of teachers' occupational well-being. Therefore, existing research has laid a solid research foundation for this study. Researchers have classified and summarized research questions, content, and methods, providing references and guidance for conducting research.

Methodology

The survey respondents for this study were in-service teachers from X School in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province, with a total of 302 in-service teachers were at X School in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province. In the formal survey stage, the convenience sampling method was adopted. According to the principle of convenience, questionnaires were distributed to the teachers of X School in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province, through WeChat workgroups, and collected and organized within the specified time. According to Jia's (2021) statement in the book "Statistics", the empirical analysis's total adequate sample size was more significant than 100 or at least 5 times the number of items, and 302 questionnaires were distributed. After sorting and screening the problem questionnaires, 259 valid questionnaires were determined, and the effective return rate reached 70%. Only when the above meets the standards could subsequent statistical analysis be conducted.

The study selected the mature scale developed by previous researchers, adopted Liu's (2023) Teachers' Occupational Well-being Scale. The scale was divided into four dimensions and 25 questions. The reliability statistics of various dimensions of the questionnaire showed that Cronbach's α was 0.8876, "Job emotional experience" Cronbach's α was 0.8702, indicating Cronbach's α of occupational environment support was 0.8769, which was Cronbach's α of job satisfaction was 0.7409. The KMO value of this pre-survey questionnaire was 0.925, and the common factors among variables were sufficient, with $p < 0.01$. The explanatory rate of the extracted four common factors for the total variance of the project was 61.166%, which was greater than 50%, thus, the reliability and validity were at a good level.

Results

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

In this questionnaire survey, there were 259 samples of the subjects, 53 male teachers, accounting for 33.3%, and 106 female teachers, accounting for 66.7%. The gender ratio was similar to the overall proportion. 43 people were under 30 years old, accounting for 27.0%, 60 people were between 31 and 40 years old, accounting for 37.7%; 50 people were between 41 and 50 years old, accounting for 31.4%, and 6 people were between 51 and 60 years old, accounting for 3.8%, which meets the age ratio of school teachers. 40 were married, accounting for 25.2%, and 119 were unmarried,

accounting for 74.8%. There were more young teachers. 97 individuals with a bachelor's degree or below, accounting for 61.0%, 41 individuals with a bachelor's degree, accounting for 25.8%, and 21 individuals with a master's degree, accounting for 13.2%. The proportion of highly educated teachers was not high. 123 class teachers, accounting for 77.4%, and 36 non-class teachers, accounting for 22.6%. The proportion of class teachers was relatively high. 19 individuals were extra-language, accounting for 11.9%, 58 individuals in liberal arts comprehensive, accounting for 36.5%, 10 individuals in comprehensive science, accounting for 6.3%, 17 individuals in Music, Sports, Art , accounting for 10.7%, and 55 individuals in other subjects, accounting for 34.6%. Teachers in science and engineering and other subjects accounted for a relatively large proportion.

Descriptive Statistics on the Levels of Teachers' Occupational Well-being

The overall mean of teachers' occupational well-being was 3.32 points, and the educational and teaching effectiveness and occupational environment support were also higher than the theoretical median of 3. However, the emotional experience and job satisfaction at work were lower than the theoretical median of 3. Overall, the surveyed teachers have relatively good occupational well-being, but poor job emotional experience and low job satisfaction were essential reasons for lowering occupational well-being. The overall status are shown in Table 4.2:

Table 1: Overall Level of Teachers' Occupational Well-being ($N=259$)

Dimension	M	SD
Educational and teaching effectiveness	3.92	0.68
Job emotional experience	2.65	0.85
Occupational environment support	3.73	0.80
Job satisfaction	2.72	0.98
Overall occupational well-being	3.32	0.66

Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being under Different Demographic Backgrounds

There were some significant differences in demographic backgrounds of teachers' occupational well-being. Teachers of different ages, marital statuses, educational backgrounds, and identities had significant differences in occupational well-being. Teachers of different genders and teaching subjects had insignificant differences in occupational well-being.

1) Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being of Different Ages

There were differences in the variable of occupational well-being among teachers at different ages, $F=2.916, p=0.033$.

2) Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being of Different Marital Statuses

Teachers with different marital statuses have differences in occupational well-being, $t=6.302$,

$p < 0.001$.

3) Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being of Different Educational Backgrounds

There were differences in the variable of occupational well-being among teachers with different educational backgrounds, $F=8.012$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 2: Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being by Ages ($N=259$)

Dimension	(1) Under 30 years old		(2) 31-40 years old		(3) 41-50 years old		(4) 51-60 years old		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	LSD
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Educational and teaching effectiveness	4.03	0.58	3.91	0.66	4.08	0.73	4.35	0.65	4.866	<0.001	2<1,2<3 2<4,2<5
Job emotional experience	2.92	0.87	2.58	0.82	2.68	0.90	2.63	1.16	0.701	0.552	-
Occupational environment support	3.90	0.84	3.67	0.80	3.88	0.83	4.02	0.74	2.634	0.048	2<1,2<3 2<4,2<5
Job satisfaction	3.37	0.95	2.55	0.97	2.83	1.01	3.26	1.14	5.761	<0.001	3<1,3<2 3<4,3<5
Overall occupational well-being	3.57	0.59	3.26	0.64	3.44	0.66	3.58	0.78	2.916	0.033	2<1,2<3 2<4,2<5

Table 3: Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being by Marital Status ($N=259$)

Dimension	Married		Unmarried		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD		
Educational and teaching effectiveness	3.65	0.53	3.85	0.64	2.453	0.014
Job emotional experience	2.35	0.48	3.01	0.74	5.156	<0.001
Occupational environment support	3.25	0.43	3.66	0.82	4.450	0.035
Job satisfaction	2.32	0.66	3.17	0.88	5.533	<0.001
Overall occupational well-being	2.98	0.22	3.44	0.62	6.302	<0.001

Table 4: Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being by Educational Background ($N=259$)

Dimension	(1) Below bachelor's degree (97)		(2) Bachelor's degree (41)		(3) Graduate degree (21)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	LSD
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Educational and teaching effectiveness	3.92	0.67	4.05	0.71	3.74	0.72	3.943	0.002	3<1 3<2
Job emotional experience	2.62	0.86	2.85	0.88	2.37	0.68	6.701	<0.001	3<1 3<2
Occupational environment support	3.73	0.81	3.81	0.83	3.52	0.72	2.635	0.003	3<1 3<2
Job satisfaction	2.66	0.97	2.97	1.08	2.43	0.79	6.294	<0.001	3<1 3<2
Overall occupational well-being	3.30	0.63	3.47	0.66	3.05	0.56	8.012	<0.001	3<1 3<2

4) Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being Whether to Be a Class Teacher or Not

Teachers under different class teacher identities have differences in occupational well-being, $t=-3.155, p=0.002$.

Table 5: Comparison of Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being Whether They Were Class Teachers or Not ($N=259$)

Dimension	Class teacher (123)		Non-class teacher (36)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD		
Educational and teaching effectiveness	2.61	0.92	2.82	1.04	-2.282	0.022
Job emotional experience	2.53	0.82	2.73	0.87	-2.578	0.011
Occupational environment support	3.85	0.67	4.02	0.68	-2.626	0.008
Job satisfaction	3.64	0.82	3.77	0.82	-1.743	0.082
Overall occupational well-being	3.22	0.62	3.41	0.65	-3.155	0.002

Discussion

Overall of Teachers' Occupational Well-being

This study found that the overall teachers' occupational well-being was good. Research and analysis found that although the measurement results of teachers' occupational well-being level were generally higher than the theoretical median of 3, job emotional experience and job satisfaction were lower than the theoretical median. It was mainly due to the combined influence of external and internal factors.

Differences in Teachers' Occupational Well-being under Different Demographic Backgrounds

(1) Discussion on *t*-test differences with gender as a demographic background

There was no difference in teachers' occupational well-being of different genders, but there were differences in the dimension of "job emotional experience", which was consistent with Tang (2019), Wei (2019), and Li (2022). Research has shown that female teachers have significantly higher job emotional experiences than male teachers.

(2) Discussion on ANOVA differences with age as demographic background

There were differences in teachers' occupational well-being of different ages, which was consistent with the research results of Zhang & Jin (2020), Athanasios (2021), Li (2022), and others. It was mainly because young teachers aged 31 to 40 were in a golden period of career development. Compared with new teachers who have just entered the industry, the researcher has rich educational and teaching experience and has sufficient energy and adaptability compared to middle-aged and elderly teachers.

(3) Discussion on *t*-test differences using marital status as a demographic background

Teachers with different marital statuses have differences in occupational well-being, which was consistent with the research findings of Bin (2019), Yu (2021), Pretsch (2022), and others. Through LSD post hoc testing, it was found that married teachers without children scored significantly lower than unmarried teachers and married teachers with children in terms of job emotional experience and job satisfaction.

(4) Discussion on ANOVA differences with teaching subjects as a demographic background

There was no difference in teachers' occupational well-being under different teaching subjects. However, there was a difference in job satisfaction, which was consistent with the research results of Han (2018), Lei (2019), Bullough (2022) and others. Through the LSD *post-t* test, it was found that the scores of part-time teachers in main and auxiliary subjects were significantly lower than those of full-time teachers in auxiliary subjects such as sound, sports, and aesthetics and full-time teachers in main subjects. It was mainly because the primary subject teachers have many class hours, heavy teaching tasks, and high parental attention to teaching quality.

(5) Discussion on *t*-test differences with class teachers as demographic background

Teachers with different class teacher identities have differences in occupational well-being. It was consistent with the research results of Sun (2018), Xiao (2021), Susan (2022), and others. It was mainly because non-class teachers scored significantly higher than class teachers in terms of overall occupational well-being, job satisfaction, job emotional experience, and educational and teaching effectiveness. Based on practical analysis, in schools, compared to ordinary teachers, class teachers not only have an inherent role as teachers but also need to play the role of the parent of the class the researcher manages, acting as coordinators between the school, parents, and students

(6) Discussion on ANOVA differences with an educational background as the demographic background

The teachers' occupational well-being showed a trend of first increasing and then decreasing with the increase in educational background, which was consistent with the research results of Zhou (2019), Li (2021), Yu & Li (2022). It was mainly because teachers with lower educational backgrounds might receive different rewards for doing the same thing in school due to educational limitations.

Conclusions

1) The overall level of teachers' occupational well-being at X School in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province, was good. However, the mean score in the dimensions of "job emotional experience" and "job satisfaction" was below 3 points, below the moderate level.

2) There was no difference in teachers' occupational well-being of different genders. However, there were differences in the dimension of "job emotional experience." Female teachers have a higher job emotional experience than male teachers.

3) There were differences in teachers' occupational well-being of different ages, and teachers aged 31 to 40 have the lowest occupational well-being. There were differences among teachers in the three dimensions of "educational and teaching effectiveness", "occupational environment support", and "job satisfaction", and teachers aged 31 to 40 have the lowest scores in all dimensions.

4) There were differences in job well-being among teachers in different marital statuses. Unmarried teachers have greater job well-being than married teachers, and in all dimensions of "educational and teaching effectiveness", "emotional experience at work", "occupational environment support," and "job satisfaction", unmarried teachers' scores were higher than married teachers.

5) Teachers with different educational backgrounds have differences in occupational well-being. Bachelor's degree teachers have a higher occupational well-being than those below or above a bachelor's degree. In all dimensions of "educational and teaching effectiveness," "job emotional experience," "occupational environment support," and "job satisfaction," bachelor's degree teachers score higher than those below or above bachelor's degree.

6) There were differences in teachers' occupational well-being under different class teacher identities. Teachers who were not class teachers have a higher occupational well-being than those who were class teachers. Moreover, in all dimensions of "educational and teaching effectiveness", "job emotional experience", "occupational environment support", and "job satisfaction", teachers who were not class teachers had higher scores than those who were class teachers.

7) There was no difference in teachers' occupational well-being who taught different teaching subjects. Still, in the dimension of job satisfaction, teachers of music, sports, and art scored higher than the main subject teachers.

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