

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION OF X PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN ZHENGZHOU CITY, HENAN PROVINCE

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the occupational stress and job satisfaction of X primary school teachers in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, and the analysis of differences in demographic backgrounds, to explore the relationship between the two variables. Statistical research was conducted through descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, ANOVA analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis. The occupational stress and job satisfaction of primary school teachers were moderate. The occupational stress level of teachers with different demographic backgrounds was significantly different: male teachers were lower than female teachers, teachers with less than 8 years of teaching age were significantly higher than teachers with more than 16 years of teaching age, teachers with a bachelor's degree or below were considerably higher than teachers with doctor's degrees, and teachers with primary titles were significantly higher than teachers with senior titles. There were significant differences in job satisfaction of teachers from different demographic backgrounds. Male teachers' job satisfaction was higher than that of female teachers, teachers with less than 8 years of teaching age were significantly lower than those with more than 16 years of teaching age, teachers with a bachelor's degree or below were lower than doctor teachers, and teachers with primary titles were significantly lower than those with senior titles. There was a negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction among X primary school teachers in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Primary School Teachers

Introduction

Education was the foundation of a country, while teachers were the leaders and participants in education and the backbone of training and transporting talents for the country. As an indispensable part of the education industry, teachers were responsible for educating and cultivating the next generation. However, with the rapid development of society and the continuous deepening of education

reform, the professional stress on primary school teachers has gradually increased (Li et al., 2021). The education department's policy changes, the examination system reform, and the investment of education funds would directly or indirectly impact the work of primary school teachers. With the education department's continuous promotion of quality education and the increasing assessment of schools, teachers, and students, primary school teachers had to undertake more teaching and management tasks, leading to increased occupational stress (Liang, 2020). The examination system reform required primary school teachers to pay more attention to their student's exam results and cope with various evaluations and inspections, which would also increase the professional stress on teachers (Huang, 2021).

China's education system has formed a universal educational culture in the long-term examination competition, and the traditional concepts of paying attention to academic achievements and enrollment rates directly led to parents' and students' high expectations for education (Zhang, 2020). Primary school teachers not only needed to bear the responsibility of educating and cultivating students but also faced the demands and expectations of parents and students, which could bring significant psychological stress to primary school teachers. In addition, the unbalanced distribution of educational resources would also increase the work stress of primary school teachers, and problems such as a lack of teachers and insufficient teaching equipment would affect teachers' teaching quality and work enthusiasm (Liu & Chen, 2021). The professional ability of teachers was the fundamental guarantee for achieving educational goals, the comprehensive quality of the teaching staff was the essential factor affecting the quality of education, and teacher job satisfaction was an important reference indicator for improving the construction of the teaching staff. The higher the job satisfaction of teachers, the more united the teaching staff is, the higher the professional identity, and the more stable the team. Therefore, education management's general direction was to improve teachers' job satisfaction, promote team building, form a virtuous circle, and practice improving teachers' overall ability and quality.

Therefore, this study investigated the current situation of occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers. By analyzing the survey data, we aimed to understand whether there were differences in the occupational stress and job satisfaction of primary school teachers with different demographic backgrounds. We also explored the relationship between teacher occupational stress and job satisfaction, analyzed and discussed the data results, and proposed targeted suggestions to alleviate and improve job satisfaction levels.

Research Objectives

(1) To identify the current occupational stress and job satisfaction among X primary school teachers in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province.

(2) To understand the differences in occupational stress and job satisfaction among X primary school teachers in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, with different demographic backgrounds (gender,

teaching age, education qualification, and professional title).

(3) To analyze the correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction among X primary school teachers in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province.

Literature Review

Research on Occupational Stress

Ryff (1989) understood that the source of teachers' professional stress was that teachers encountered complex problems and difficulties in teaching, which led to negative emotions and poor professional status. Then, Li & Zhang (2011) believed that occupational stress directly affected teachers' physical and mental health and significantly impacted their personality, cognition, speech, and behavior. Zhou (2016) proposed that the professional stress of teachers was related to long-term daily teaching, student management, and parental communication. Wang & Jing (2019) proposed that if teachers bore too much stress in their professional behavior or endured stress for too long, their mental health level might be negatively affected. Therefore, teachers could resolve the stress they bore through self-regulation, to minimize the adverse effects of occupational stress and face work and life in a better state.

Research on the influencing factors of occupational stress. Boyle et al. (1995) also believed that with the development of social, economic, and cultural levels, the demands of the general public and school administrators for teachers were increasing. Most teachers found it difficult to quickly improve or adjust to keep up with these external changes, so they felt significant stress. This stress affected teachers' physical and mental health and hurt their teaching levels. Wu (2014) believed that there was a clear correlation between occupational stress and work intensity. The deterioration of an individual's external work environment or significant short-term fluctuations could cause considerable work and psychological burdens on employees. However, for an extended period, the majority of employees were in a suppressed state of tension and burden, which ultimately hurt their physical and mental health. Wen et al. (2017) mentioned in the research that the individual's ability level was limited, but the requirements of society and leaders were gradually increasing. The difference between the upper limits of the two could quickly bring anxiety, tension, and other stress to employees. Being under the stress of their ability dilemma for a long time would eventually lead to abnormal changes in employees' physical and mental health, ideological cognition, and behavior.

Although occupational stress would positively and negatively affect different teachers, the academic circles still focused on the adverse effects. One was the impact on physical and mental health. Excessive occupational stress among teachers might lead to physiological issues such as anorexia, insomnia, weakened immunity, fatigue, and even some organic diseases caused by emotions (Xie & He, 2022). There were more psychological issues, such as negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, tension, and an inferiority complex (Shi, 2014). Zhao & Gan (2020) believed that teachers

might be irritable, have significant emotional fluctuations, etc., and might have psychological diseases such as depression and bipolar disorder (He et al., 2019). Second, physical and mental health problems led to changes in teachers' behavior, resulting in a decline in teaching quality, work efficiency, interpersonal conflicts, poor communication with parents, and other teaching and interpersonal problems (Xu et al., 2021), and these problems would aggravate teachers' professional stress, thus forming a vicious circle. A few teachers might bid farewell to the podium, resign, or retire early (Liu & Chen, 2015).

Research on the structure and countermeasures of occupational stress. According to the literature review, firstly, the sources of occupational stress. Kyriacou (1978) found in his research on the sources, prevalence, and related manifestations of stress in teachers that it was difficult to transform stress into motivation in the teaching profession. Occupational stress could adversely affect teachers' work status and teaching ability, and he also pointed out that the primary source of stress for teachers came from themselves and their work intensity. Min (2021) thought that the overall teaching environment, system management, interpersonal relationship handling, and the strong personality characteristics of teachers or managers would all lead to teachers' stress, and only from the profession of university teachers themselves, salary, social support, and social expectations were also the sources of occupational stress. Similarly, Zhou's (2019) research conclusion showed that teachers' stress mainly came from high work intensity, unreasonable school system management, career development and promotion, social support, and social expectations. Rao et al. (2014) found that the professional stress of teachers was generally excellent, and the main stressors were scientific research stress, economic problems, professional reputation, etc. The professional development planning of individual teachers and the reform of the education system were also factors leading to teachers' professional stress. What was more serious was that most teachers thought that occupational stress had hurt their physical and mental health and behavior cognition.

Research on Job Satisfaction

Hoplock (1937) proposed that employees' subjective evaluation of work intensity from both physiological and psychological perspectives as job satisfaction, an individual's subjective perception of objective things. Song & Fu (2013) also agreed that job satisfaction was an individual's subjective feeling during the work process. Still, she also pointed out that this feeling included physiological and psychological factors and came from various aspects such as work intensity and content. Luo (2017) defined job satisfaction as the result of subjective evaluation of employees' efforts and gains in their work with a particular colleague or team as a reference, which could reflect their job satisfaction.

Shao (2020) believed that job satisfaction was the psychological feeling of employees when they realized their value and social value based on professional identity, and it was also the psychological feeling of employees to professional experience.

Research on the structure and measurement of job satisfaction. Professor Chen & Sun (1994) were the earliest scholars who studied job satisfaction in China. They measured job satisfaction from professional content, professional development stress, and work emotion.

Due to different research directions and survey dimensions, other experts and scholars had varying research results on job satisfaction. Feng (1996) divided job satisfaction into dimensions such as self-actualization, work intensity, salary and income, leadership relationship, and colleague relationship, and based on this, developed a teacher job satisfaction questionnaire.

Research on the influencing factors of job satisfaction. According to existing literature, some scholars have focused on exploring the influencing factors of job satisfaction. This study examined the factors that affected job satisfaction from internal and external perspectives. The internal factors included individual characteristics, values, and emotional perception, while the external factors included organizational leadership, management, and social support. When Zhou (2017) explored employee satisfaction, he found that employees' occupational stress was usually partially self-regulated, and some stress pairs turned into dissatisfaction with the organization, thus indirectly affecting the development of organizational production. Cristiano (2019) found that females' job satisfaction was higher than that of males under the same conditions, which was mainly due to the continuous resolution of gender contradictions. Females gradually stepped onto the stage of social production, got rid of the shackles of feudal thoughts, and were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Kevin (2020) believed individuals make career decisions based on their interests and hobbies. Therefore, if an individual's interest overlapped with their job responsibilities, it was psychological satisfaction and realization of value for the individual, and job satisfaction was correspondingly high.

External factors. Liu (2013) had different views on the factors influencing employees' job satisfaction. She thought that the objective existence of work was the reason that affected job satisfaction, including job difficulty, job objectives, and other factors. Duan & Xie (2015) believed that giving teachers enough support from society could effectively relieve teachers' work stress, reduce negative emotions in teaching work, and help individuals balance work and life, thus improving job satisfaction. Wang (2016) believed that organizational management was an essential factor affecting employee job satisfaction. Corporate management referred to the system, structure, and operational mechanism of an individual service organization, mainly including the organizational salary and reward system, personnel management system, and the behavior style of managers. Many scholars in the academic community agreed that corporate management impacted employee job satisfaction.

Research on the Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Kyriacou (1978) explored the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction and found a significant negative correlation between work stress and job satisfaction. The higher the work stress, the lower the level of job satisfaction. Chinese scholars also focused on the relationship between

individual occupational stress and job satisfaction and achieved specific research results. Ni (2003) found that the higher the occupational stress an individual experienced, the lower their job satisfaction was, and there was a close negative correlation between the two. Liu et al. (2005) took many samples and made actual measurements. The research showed that some dimensions of employees' occupational stress could significantly affect individual job satisfaction. Lu (2007) conducted a study on teacher occupational stress, which showed that the higher the occupational stress a teacher experienced, the lower their job satisfaction level. Yan & Wang (2007) explored the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction of employees by empirical research. The results showed that the higher the occupational stress of employees, the lower the job satisfaction. Subsequently, Zhang (2008) adopted the same method to explore teachers' occupational stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The survey found that when individuals faced more significant occupational stress, their job satisfaction might decrease, and their work motivation gradually decreased. It also indicated that individual occupational stress had a negative predictive effect on job satisfaction. In his research, Song (2014) found that teachers' negative emotions, such as exhaustion and emotional exhaustion in teaching work could easily lead to decreased job satisfaction.

Nie et al. (2015) explored the relationship between occupational stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention of teachers. The results showed that the stronger the occupational stress, the lower the job satisfaction of teachers, the smaller their intrinsic motivation, and the greater their turnover intention. Jiang & Zhang (2017) studied in-service employees and used stress-coping strategies as moderating variables to explore the impact of occupational stress on individual job satisfaction. The research showed a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction among in-service employees. At the same time, the study also showed that facing occupational stress with negative coping strategies could increase occupational stress and job satisfaction was directly affected. Positive coping strategies could alleviate the occupational stress of current employees. Therefore, it could be found that the organization could encourage the members to adopt positive ways to relieve stress, thus improving job satisfaction and better promoting the organization's development.

In summary, many internal and external factors lead to individual occupational stress and job satisfaction. Different teachers had different abilities to bear occupational stress, and job satisfaction also presented different results. Therefore, literature analysis based on the concept, measurement, and influencing factors of primary school teachers' occupational stress and job satisfaction was conducive to understanding the current theoretical results. At the same time, it was understood that there was still a lack of a large number of empirical research results, and many areas still need to be improved in the research and measurement methods.

Methodology

This study took X primary school teachers in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, as the parent group. This study planned to use a convenient sampling method to complete the questionnaire distribution. Questionnaires were sent to the primary school teachers during the questionnaire survey stage. According to Morgan Table, 420 teachers were selected for the questionnaire survey. According to the research of Krejcie & Morgan (1970), 195 questionnaires were sent out, and 187 valid questionnaires were recovered; the effective return rate reached 95.90%. Occupational Stress Questionnaire. Adopting the occupational stress questionnaire for primary school teachers developed by Li et al. (2011). This scale consisted of 23 questions and conducted research on teacher occupational stress from five aspects: working load stress (10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19), student academic stress (1, 5, 6, 8, 22), social and school evaluation stress (14, 15, 16, 17, 23), professional development stress (7, 9, 20, 21), student problem behavior stress (2, 3, 4). This scale shared the Cronbach's α of the original questionnaire were 0.93, 0.91, 0.93, 0.86, and 0.90, respectively. The Cronbach's α was 0.97, all greater than 0.8, indicating a high level of internal consistency in the questionnaire. The KMO of the questionnaire was 0.950, more significant than 0.9, and it was suitable for factor analysis by Bartlett's sphericity test with a significance level of 0.001. Principal component analysis was used in factor analysis, and the cumulative variance explanation rate of five common factors reached 71.698%, which indicated that the questionnaire had good validity. Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. Using the teacher job satisfaction questionnaire developed by Feng (1996). There were 26 questions in the questionnaire, which were divided into five dimensions: self-actualization (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), work intensity (8, 9, 10, 11, 12), wage income (13, 14, 15, 16, 17), leadership relationship (18, 19, 20, 21, 22), colleague relationship (23, 24, 25, 26). Cronbach's α from the original questionnaire was 0.903, and Cronbach's α for each dimension of the questionnaire was 0.93, 0.89, 0.73, 0.72, and 0.78, respectively. The coefficients of the total scale were 0.903, all higher than 0.7, indicating high internal consistency of the questionnaire. The KMO of the questionnaire was 0.845, which was greater than 0.8. Through Bartlett's sphericity test with a significance level of .001, it was suitable for factor analysis, and the cumulative variance explanation rate of five common factors was 74.662%, which indicated that the questionnaire structure fitted well and the validity of the questionnaire was good.

Results

Demographic Analysis of Questionnaire Participants

This study collected 187 valid questionnaires. Regarding gender, there were 90 male teachers, accounting for 48% of the sample size, and 97 female teachers, accounting for 52% of the sample size; Regarding teaching age, there were 54 teachers with less than 8 years of teaching age, accounting for 29% of the sample, 65 teachers with 8-16 years of teaching age, accounting for 35% of the sample, and

68 teachers with over 16 years of teaching age, accounting for 36% of the sample; Regarding education, there were 84 teachers with a bachelor's degree or below, accounting for 45% of the sample, 82 teachers with a master's degree or above, accounting for 44% of the sample, and 21 teachers with a doctor's degree. Accounting for 11% of the samples. Regarding professional titles, there were 81 primary school teachers with primary professional titles, accounting for 43% of the sample, 62 primary school teachers with intermediate professional titles, accounting for 33% of the sample, and 44 primary school teachers with senior professional titles, accounting for 24% of the sample.

Descriptive Statistics on the Levels of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

1) The overall occupational stress of primary school teachers was at a moderate level. Through in-depth analysis and statistics from different dimensions, it was concluded that the occupational stress of primary school teachers was moderate, including working load stress, student academic stress, social and school evaluation stress, professional development stress, and student problem behavior stress. Students faced the most significant academic stress and the least social and school evaluation stress. In summary, the research findings indicated that the overall level of occupational stress among primary school teachers was moderate, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Occupational Stress among Teachers (N=187)

Dimension	M	SD	Interpretation
Working load stress	3.38	0.82	Moderate
Student academic stress	3.42	0.91	Moderate
Social and school evaluation stress	2.98	0.80	Moderate
Professional development stress	3.07	0.79	Moderate
Student problem behavior stress	3.15	0.99	Moderate
Overall occupational stress	3.20	0.87	Moderate

Table 2: Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Job Satisfaction among Teachers (N=187)

Dimension	M	SD	Interpretation
Self-actualization	2.89	0.89	Moderate
Work intensity	3.08	0.99	Moderate
Wage income	2.85	0.90	Moderate
Leadership relationship	2.92	0.71	Moderate
Colleague relationship	2.83	0.85	Moderate
Overall job satisfaction	2.91	0.88	Moderate

2) The overall job satisfaction of primary school teachers was at a moderate level. Through in-depth analysis and statistics from different dimensions, it was found that the job satisfaction of primary school teachers regarding self-actualization, work intensity, wage income, leadership relationship, and colleague relationship was moderate. Among them, colleague relationship satisfaction was the lowest, and work intensity was the highest. In summary, the research findings indicated that job satisfaction among primary school teachers was moderate, as shown in Table 2.

Differences Analysis on the Levels of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction Compared with Demographic Backgrounds

To understand the differences in occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers in X Primary School in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, under different demographic backgrounds, this study used independent sample t-test and One-way ANOVA analysis methods to analyze the differences in various variables in different demographic backgrounds (gender, teaching ages, education qualification and professional title).

Correlation Analysis among Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

To understand the correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers, this study used Pearson correlation analysis to test it. There was a negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers. The overall relevant situation was shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Correlation Analysis of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Dimension	Self-actualization	Work intensity	Wage income	Leadership relationship	Colleague relationship
Working load stress	-0.592***	-0.236**	-0.528***	-0.583***	-0.576***
Student academic stress	-0.438***	-0.221**	-0.564***	-0.537***	-0.601***
Social and school evaluation stress	-0.335**	-0.245**	-0.594***	-0.451***	-0.432***
Professional development stress	-0.618***	-0.202**	-0.481***	-0.585***	-0.448***
Student problem behavior stress	-0.252**	-0.209**	-0.581***	-0.545***	-0.373**

Discussion

Current Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

The overall occupational stress of primary school teachers was moderate, mainly because with the increasingly fierce competition in basic education, the workload of primary school teachers increased, and internal management and reform were underway. It inevitably brought more significant working load stress, academic stress, problematic behavior stress, and professional development stress to teachers. The job satisfaction of X Primary School in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, was moderate as a whole, and the job satisfaction of primary school teachers needed to be improved urgently. The possible reasons for the lowest satisfaction of colleague relationships included competitive stress, insufficient cooperation, and poor communication among teachers.

Differential Analysis of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among Primary School Teachers

(1) The differences between teachers of different genders showed that the primary school teachers' occupational stress levels differed regarding teachers' gender. The occupational stress level of

male primary school teachers was lower than females, mainly related to teachers' gender advantages and their ability to resist stress and adjust. The occupational stress levels of primary school teachers with varying teaching ages differed. With the increase in teaching ages, the occupational stress level of primary school teachers had declined, mainly related to work experience. Teachers with doctor's degrees usually had a higher educational background and professional knowledge, providing them with better career development opportunities and treatment. According to the research results of Zhou (2019), teachers with a bachelor's degree or below might be relatively weak in academic background and career development, so they might face more significant career stress, such as improving their abilities and seeking better career opportunities. The occupational stress level of primary school teachers had declined with the improvement of their professional titles. Min's (2021) research conclusion mainly related to teachers' work experience and ability level. Teachers with higher professional titles had richer relative experience and higher working ability.

(2) The differences between teachers of different genders showed that the job satisfaction level of primary school teachers regarding teachers' gender showed that the job satisfaction level of male primary school teachers was generally higher than that of female primary school teachers. Female teachers might face more work tasks and family responsibilities, such as taking care of children and housework, which might affect their job satisfaction. In contrast, male teachers might have more work tasks and fewer family responsibilities so that they might be more satisfied with their job performance and achievements. As the teaching age of primary school teachers increased, their job satisfaction level improved. Teachers with a shorter teaching age might lack sufficient experience and skills and have a weaker ability to respond to job requirements and challenges, resulting in lower job satisfaction. In addition, teachers might face career planning and development problems, such as the promotion of professional titles, academic research, etc. Teachers with doctor's degrees usually had higher educational backgrounds and professional knowledge, providing them with better career development opportunities and treatment. Duan (2015) was consistent with this study. Highly educated teachers often had higher job requirements and better promotion opportunities, making adapting to educational development needs and improving their professional skills easier. Teachers with lower education qualifications might face job challenges and promotion difficulties, affecting job satisfaction. Teachers with three professional titles in primary school were usually in the primary stage of career development, and they might be more eager to be promoted to higher professional titles. Professional titles represent the level of experience and workability to a great extent, so teachers with high professional titles were bound to be more valued by leaders.

Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

The level of occupational stress among primary school teachers could have hurt their job satisfaction for various reasons. Self-actualization was negatively correlated with the dimensions of

workload stress, student academic stress, social and school evaluation stress, professional development stress, and student problem behavior stress, all of which were moderate to high. It indicated a close correlation between the need for teacher self-actualization and occupational stress.

Conclusions

1) The occupational stress of primary school teachers was moderate, with the highest academic stress on students and the lowest social and school evaluation stress. Primary school teachers had moderate job satisfaction, the lowest satisfaction with colleague relationship, and the highest work intensity.

2) There were significant differences in occupational stress among primary school teachers of different genders, with male teachers having lower occupational stress levels than female teachers. There were significant differences in occupational stress among primary school teachers of different ages. Teachers with less than 8 years of teaching age had significantly higher than those with more than 16 years of teaching age. Teachers with bachelor's degrees or below were considerably more elevated than doctors' teachers. There was a significant difference in occupational stress among primary school teachers regarding professional titles, with teachers with primary professional titles having significantly higher levels than senior professional titles.

There were significant differences in job satisfaction among primary school teachers of different genders, with male teachers having higher job satisfaction than female teachers. The job satisfaction level of primary school teachers showed significant differences regarding teaching age, with teachers under 8 years significantly lower than those with over 16 years of teaching age. The job satisfaction level of primary school teachers showed significant differences regarding teacher education qualification, with teachers with bachelor's degrees and below being significantly lower than those with doctor's degrees. The job satisfaction level of primary school teachers showed significant differences regarding professional titles, with teachers with primary professional titles having significantly lower than those with senior professional titles.

3) There was a negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction among X primary school teachers in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province.

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