

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS OF YOUNG COLLEGE TEACHERS AT A UNIVERSITY IN JINAN, CHINA

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Abstract: The occupational pressure and subjective happiness of teachers were key factors that determined the work enthusiasm, performance, and psychological state. At the same time, they played a crucial role in promoting student growth and comprehensive development and even in promoting the development of the education industry and society. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the current occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province, to understand the differences of different demographic backgrounds and to explore the relationship between them. Conduct data analysis on 328 questionnaires using SPSS and provide relevant suggestions. The results showed that the overall level of occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City was moderate. There were significant differences in occupational stress and subjective happiness among young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province in terms of gender, educational background and marital status. Correlation analysis showed that there was a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province.

Keywords: Young College Teachers, Occupational Stress, Subjective Happiness

Introduction

With the advancement of economic globalization, the competition between countries was becoming increasingly fierce. This kind of competition depends on the progress of the economy and science, and this progress is inseparable from the boost of talent. As a special place to cultivate talents, the demand for talents, especially high-level talents, was extremely strong. The cultivation of talents in colleges could not only ensure their work quality but also give them lasting motivation to promote

innovation so as to achieve the goal of higher education (Zhao & Zhang, 2018). Therefore, colleges were facing severe challenges in "stabilizing talents". How to absorb outstanding teachers and let those high-level teachers display their potential to their heart's content has become one of the key strategies for the lasting and stable development of colleges.

Since 1999, higher education in China has gradually become popular, and the demand for teachers has also surged. Many young educators have joined this ranks and shoulder the important responsibility of promoting higher education. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, as of August 2021, the number of young college teachers aged 40 and below in China has exceeded 906,000, accounting for 49.44% of all full-time college teachers (Teng, 2023). Obviously, the age of Chinese college teachers was gradually tilting towards young people, and these young teachers had become the most creative part of the university faculty, which was considered the key factor in promoting scientific research and the main force in promoting the sustainable development of universities.

On September 21, 2017, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance and the National Development and Reform Commission of China jointly published the Notice on Publishing the List of World-class Universities and First-class Discipline Construction Disciplines. The Ministry of Education clearly pointed out that the construction of "double first-class" should depend on the dynamic monitoring and management of various disciplines and should break through the shackles of occupations and avoid the "lifelong system" (Gui, 2021). Through this educational reform, colleges would also implement corresponding management system adjustments and train teachers according to the norms of globalization. However, these new demands have increased the instability of the external environment and personal occupational stress faced by college teachers. According to the survey, with the increasing work responsibilities, some teachers, especially young teachers, were under too much pressure in the workplace, which led to insomnia, memory decline and emotion problems such as depression. Even some teachers' physical injury and workplace burnout caused by illness had become very serious, which was undoubtedly a shackle and obstacle to the smooth progress of education and scientific research (Yuan, 2017). As the key pillar of the progress of colleges, the excessive occupational stress of young teachers might weaken their work enthusiasm. Therefore, it has become an urgent practical problem to explore the occupational stress of young teachers in colleges and its coping strategies.

With the deepening of positive psychology research, enhancing teachers' positive psychological factors to solve various mental health problems encountered in their careers so as to promote teachers' mental health growth has attracted wide attention from scholars all over the world (Fitch et al., 2017; Li, 2018). As one of the important factors in positive psychology, subjective happiness was also a hot topic of in-depth research by scholars worldwide. Subjective happiness was not only a positive

psychological emotion in personal life but also directly affected the quality and progress of higher education for college teachers. At the same time, improving teachers' subjective happiness has a key impact on recruiting talented people in colleges.

In addition, the mental health status of young teachers had a direct impact on the quality of education and the physical and mental development of students. It was closely related to the overall development of schools. However, in recent years, some media reports and related studies have shown that the physical and mental health problems of young college teachers were becoming increasingly serious, their job satisfaction and subjective happiness were not high, and anxiety, depression, insomnia and other physical and mental diseases frequently occur, which made teachers' occupational stress and subjective happiness become the focus of attention (Jiang & He, 2022). Some studies have revealed that teachers' subjective happiness had a key impact on evaluating their mental health and quality of life, and it was directly related to teachers' work enthusiasm, career development and quality of life. However, if the occupational stress was too high, it might cause the decline of their quality of life, which will lead to unstable emotions. At the same time, due to the increase in negative psychology and behavior, teachers' subjective happiness will decrease accordingly (Fu & Ye, 2016; Kumar, 2020). Obviously, the occupational stress of teachers was closely related to their subjective happiness, and both were key factors in evaluating their mental health and quality of life.

In summary, this study was based on the development status of higher education in China and the professional and life psychological characteristics of young college teachers. A survey was conducted on the occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, to understand the current situation and differences in occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers, and to explore the relationship mechanism between the two. Furthermore, it also put forward reasonable suggestions for different groups of young college teachers, so as to provide the empirical basis for the development of higher education. In addition, this study also provided a reference for the establishment and improvement of relevant management systems in colleges. It promoted the system reform aimed at relieving teachers' occupational stress and improving teachers' subjective happiness.

Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the current occupational stress among young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province.
- 2) To examine the current subjective happiness among young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province.
- 3) To understand the differences in occupational stress among young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, in terms of different demographic backgrounds (gender, educational and marital

status).

4) To understand the differences in subjective happiness of young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, in terms of different demographic backgrounds (gender, educational and marital status).

5) To explore the relationship between occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province.

Literature Review

Research on Occupational Stress of Teacher

It was not difficult to see that the stress generated by individuals in work situations was usually occupational stress. In psychological research, occupational stress was more inclined to be classified as a complex stress with comprehensive characteristics. In other words, when an individual perceives external stimuli, it was stimulated from physiological function, psychological emotion to the comprehensive response to specific behaviors was occupational stress. As the first researchers to reveal the connotation of teachers' occupational stress in educational circles, Kyriacou & Sutcliffe (1978) believed that when teachers were in the workplace, they might feel negative emotional experiences such as anxiety, disappointment and depression, which constitute teachers' occupational stress. Ren & Zhang (2017) proposed that occupational stress referred to the emotional response of frustration, tension, and frustration that teachers experience when they perceived that work poses a threat to their physical and mental health during the work process.

The creator of a representative two-dimensional structure of occupational stress was Cavanaugh et al. (2000). This scale divided occupational stress into two types of subscales: Challenge Stress Scale and Obstruction Stress Scale. There were 11 questions, among which the first 6 questions were for the evaluation of challenge stress, while the last 6 questions were for the evaluation of obstruction stress. Through evaluation, it was found that this evaluation scale demonstrated excellent reliability and structural validity.

By studying a large number of domestic and foreign literature, Li (2021) established a theoretical framework and conducted extensive interviews with young teachers in the form of questionnaires. After many times of arrangements and revisions, he successfully designed a questionnaire on the occupational stress of young college teachers in Jilin Province, which contained 29 questions. This study used this scale as a survey questionnaire on the occupational stress status of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province.

There were many studies on the current occupational stress in the world, and its main point of view pointed out that occupational stress would weaken personal positive emotions and lead to negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, depression and anger caused by work stress. For example,

Fisher's (2017) research findings showed that young college teachers in the UK generally face occupational stress, and the main source of stress was that teachers were unable to balance educational tasks and research work.

With regard to the impact of occupational stress on young college teachers, Mi et al. (2010) found that occupational stress has a serious impact on their physical and mental health, which might lead to an increase in their blood pressure, blood lipid and blood sugar levels. Especially for male and older teachers, the problem was more serious, while younger teachers were also showing a clear upward trend. Xi (2018) studied college teachers and found that occupational stress has had a serious impact on the mental health of college teachers, and had a significant impact on their teaching work and lifestyle. In addition, the research by Hu & Wang (2019) revealed that in special education schools, because young and middle-aged teachers play a supporting role in teaching and management, they bear heavy responsibilities, complicated work contents and heavy physical and mental load, so their occupational pressure was relatively large.

Research on Subjective Happiness of Teachers

The scholar who first proposed the meaning of subjective happiness was Diener (1984), whose research showed that subjective happiness (SWB) was a comprehensive psychological standard for evaluating an individual's quality of life and physical and mental condition. This psychological standard had both subjective and relative characteristics. Chinese scholars Huang et al. (2006) further expanded Diener's theory by dividing the connotation of subjective happiness into two levels: emotional and cognitive.

In addition, some experts view subjective happiness as a psychological experience. For example, Xing (2002) believed that happiness was actually a positive psychological experience of an individual's survival and development under the influence of various factors such as external environment, self-needs, and values. Specifically, it was like a perfect combination of satisfaction, joy, and value.

By combining the concept of subjective happiness, the study could see that subjective happiness usually has three characteristics: subjectivity, stability and integrity. In addition, it was not a specific event that determined the subjective happiness of an individual but depended on the emotional experience of the individual in the event and the cognition generated around the event.

Based on the previous happiness theory model, Joan et al. (2004) established a "five-dimensional happiness model" that included social, cognitive, physical and mental development, career, and emotional dimensions. Through practical observation, it was found that in these five-dimensional happiness models, social, cognitive, physical and mental development were closely related to emotions. Subsequently, it further subdivides the professional content into three sub-dimensions: emotional consumption, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

With the gradual deepening of the research on teachers' subjective happiness, many scholars noticed that the previous standardized evaluation methods had shortcomings in practical application. Therefore, some scholars have begun to create subjective happiness scales for the teacher community. For example, Miao (2003) created the Subjective Happiness Questionnaire (MHQ) based on early academic research, combined with theoretical frameworks and design principles. This questionnaire covered 50 sub-items and covered 9 aspects of content. This scale combined the theoretical models and evaluation indicators of subjective and psychological college teachers, which played a key role in promoting the in-depth integration of these two kinds of college teachers, creating new research approaches and directions, and expanding the research field of subjective happiness in China. This study used this scale as a survey questionnaire on the subjective happiness of young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province.

Taking the study on the relationship between age and teachers' subjective happiness as an example, Hawkes (2012) found that the age difference in teachers' subjective happiness showed an inverted U-shaped trend, in which the subjective happiness of young teachers reached the highest point, and then began to decline at the age of 45-49, until about 70 years old, the subjective happiness rose again and tended to be stable. In addition, Wu (2019), Wang et al. (2019) mentioned that the overall level of subjective happiness of teachers was not high. It was mainly because the pressure of evaluation of professional title employment led to the bottleneck of teachers' career development, and their salaries had not changed significantly for many years. Under the joint action of these two factors, teachers' subjective happiness has been declining continuously. The comparison of demographic backgrounds some extent, explained the characteristics of subjective happiness of a specific group of teachers.

Research on the Relationship Between Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness

With the increasing emphasis on positive emotions among researchers, research on the relationship between occupational stress and subjective happiness has also attracted the attention of relevant scholars. Some studies have found that occupational stress could lead to negative emotions, inhibit the generation of positive emotions, and then lead to the gradual weakening of subjective happiness. Studies have shown that there was a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and subjective happiness. In addition, occupational stress not only directly affected subjective happiness but also indirectly changed individual subjective happiness through some indirect factors, such as emotional exhaustion, psychological capital and self-efficacy.

Johnston et al. (2013) proposed that reasonable occupational stress could alleviate the adverse effects of stress on individuals and could also stimulate individual work enthusiasm and autonomy to a certain extent. However, excessive labor load and occupational pressure made employees feel anxious and physically and mentally exhausted. In the long run, it led to emotional exhaustion and ultimately reduced their subjective happiness.

Zhang (2018) conducted a study on the high-risk population of occupational stress, exploring the relationship between doctors' occupational stress, subjective happiness, and psychological capital. The results reveal that there was an interrelated relationship among these three, and psychological capital played a certain mediating role in this relationship. Jiang & He (2022) came to similar conclusions. They found that there was a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and subjective happiness and psychological capital. At the same time, there was a significant positive correlation between psychological capital and subjective happiness. In addition, psychological capital played a mediating effect in the impact of occupational stress on subjective happiness. In view of the research and analysis, they emphasized the importance of cultivating young teachers' positive mentality and paying attention to the influence of teachers' psychological capital on subjective happiness.

Methodology

This study adopted a convenient sampling method to conduct a sampling survey among young teachers at A University in Jinan. The total number of young teachers in A University was 2200. In the formal test stage, 328 questionnaires were collected by convenient sampling method. According to the standard of sample number in Morgan Table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), when the total sample number was 2200, 328 people were reasonable as sampling samples. This study used the Questionnaire on Occupational Stress of Young College Teachers compiled by Li (2021). The original scale consisted of 29 topics, including seven dimensions: career development, interpersonal relationship, workload, evaluation of professional title employment, organization and management, living security, society and self-expectation. In this study, the Subjective Happiness Questionnaire compiled by Miao (2003) was selected as the research tool. The original scale consisted of 50 items, including 9 dimensions: life satisfaction, personality growth, self-value, vitality, friendly relation, altruistic behavior, health concern, negative emotions, and positive emotions.

Results

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

A total of 328 valid questionnaires were collected in this study. According to the basic information distribution of the respondents in the questionnaires, there were 153 male teachers, accounting for 46.6%, and 175 female teachers, accounting for 53.4%. The number of female teachers participating in the test was slightly higher than that of male teachers. In terms of educational backgrounds, there were 92 teachers with bachelor's degrees, accounting for 28.0%, 162 teachers with master's degrees, accounting for 49.4%, and 74 teachers with doctoral degrees, accounting for 22.6%. Most of the teachers who participated in the test had master's degrees. In terms of marital status, there were 158 married teachers, accounting for 48.2%, and 170 unmarried teachers, accounting for 51.8%.

Current Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness of Young College Teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province

(1) The current occupational stress among young college teachers

The descriptive statistical results indicated that the overall level of occupational stress among young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province was moderate (M=3.07). The level of each dimension was also moderate, which was ranked from high to low, followed by living security (M=3.32), workload (M=3.22), society and self-expectation (M=3.16), evaluation of professional title employment (M=3.09), organizational management (M=3.09), career development (M=3.01) and interpersonal relationship (M=2.61).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Occupational Stress of Young College Teachers

Dimension	Mean	SD
Career development	3.01	0.981
Interpersonal relationship	2.61	0.887
Workload	3.22	0.952
Evaluation of professional title employment	3.09	1.081
Organization management	3.09	0.897
Living security	3.32	0.803
Society and self expectation	3.16	0.950
Overall occupational stress	3.07	0.724

(2) The current level of subjective happiness among young college teachers

The descriptive statistical results indicate that the overall level of subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province was moderate (M=3.48). The levels of personality growth (M=3.55), self-value (M=3.80), friendly relation (M=4.00), altruistic behavior (M=3.67), health concern (M=3.71), and positive emotions (M=3.59) in all dimensions were above moderate. In contrast, the levels of life satisfaction (M=3.30) and vitality (M=3.32) were above moderate. In contrast, the levels of negative emotions (M=2.38) were low.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistical on Subjective Happiness of Young College Teachers

Dimension	Mean	SD
Life satisfaction	3.30	0.768
Personality growth	3.55	0.705
Self-value	3.80	0.692
Vitality	3.32	0.806
Friendly relations	4.00	0.739
Altruistic behavior	3.67	0.683
Health concerns	3.71	0.948
Negative emotions	2.38	0.841
Positive emotions	3.59	0.881
Overall subjective happiness	3.48	0.451

Difference Analysis of Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness among Young College Teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province

Through independent sample T-test and one-way ANOVA to understand the different demographic backgrounds, the difference between occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province.

There were significant differences in occupational stress among young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, in terms of gender, educational background and marital status.

There were significant differences in the subjective happiness of young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, in terms of gender, educational and marital status.

Relationship between Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness of Young College Teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province

Through Pearson correlation analysis, this study explored the relationship between occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province.

The results of correlation analysis showed that the correlation coefficient between teachers' occupational stress and subjective happiness was -0.233, and the P was 0.000, which indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis Between Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness of Young College Teachers

	Correlation	Occupational Stress
Subjective Happiness	Correlation Coefficient	-0.233**
	<i>P value</i>	0.000

Discussion

Current Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness of Young College Teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province

According to the statistical results, the overall level of occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City was moderate, which showed that occupational stress of young college teachers was widespread, and their subjective happiness level was relatively general. This result was consistent with previous research findings (Fisher, 2017; Hu, 2020).

In terms of teachers' occupational stress, the stress degree of all dimensions was moderate standard, among which the stress level of living security was the highest, which showed that young college teachers who were in the prime of their lives were not only the main force in the development of colleges, but also the core role of their families, and they needed to bear the obligations of supporting

their parents and raising their children, as well as the debt pressure such as mortgage and car loan.

In terms of the subjective happiness of teachers, the levels of life satisfaction, vitality, and negative emotions were relatively low. It indicated that the main reasons for suppressing the improvement of subjective happiness of teachers were concentrated in their living conditions, and mental and emotional states. The reasons might be that, on the one hand, young teachers in colleges were the backbone to promote the development of colleges, and they were faced with heavy teaching and scientific research tasks and complex work nature.

Differences in Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness among Young College Teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province

According to the analysis of gender differences, there was a significant difference in the occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province. Male teachers had a higher level of occupational stress than female teachers, and their subjective happiness was lower than female teachers. First of all, influenced by traditional social concepts, males were given higher requirements in career development, society and self-expectation, while females' responsibilities were mainly in education, teaching and family emotion, which also led to differences between male and female teachers in self-evaluation standards of occupational stress and subjective happiness.

According to the analysis of educational background differences, there was a significant difference in the occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province. Teachers with a bachelor's degree had a relatively high level of occupational stress, while those with a bachelor's degree had a relatively low level of subjective happiness. Researchers who support this result include Hu & Wang (2019) and Wang et al. (2019). To analyze the reasons, first of all, with the deepening and advancement of the reform and development of higher education, in order to optimize the construction of teachers, colleges had raised the academic requirements for teachers' appointment, so most of the young teachers in colleges had reached master's degree or above. Secondly, in terms of career development, evaluation of professional title employment and further education opportunities, teachers with higher educational backgrounds were also more advantageous. In comparison, teachers with lower educational backgrounds would feel depressed and stressed due to the obstruction of self-development. Finally, in order to attract high-quality and outstanding talents, colleges provided more salary and organizational support for highly educated teachers, which not only relieved the pressure on teachers' teaching, scientific research and management but also provided rich material returns and guarantees for their lives.

According to the analysis results of marital status differences, there were significant differences between occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province. The occupational stress level of married teachers was higher than that of

unmarried teachers, but the subjective happiness was lower than that of unmarried teachers, which was basically consistent with previous research results (Abouserie, 2017; Hu et al., 2016). The reason was that unmarried teachers usually had fewer family responsibilities. They not only devoted more energy to their work but also had more time to improve themselves and accumulate their advantages in career development and evaluation of professional title employment. At the same time, unmarried teachers were free and easy in their lives. Their rich lifestyles and diverse hobbies were the main sources of their subjective happiness, which also helped them to adjust to the adverse reactions caused by occupational stress.

Correlation Between Occupational Stress and Subjective Happiness of Young College Teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province

According to the results of correlation analysis, there was a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and the subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province. The higher the occupational stress level of young college teachers, the lower their subjective happiness would be. This result was consistent with previous research findings (Johnston et al., 2013; Jiang, He, 2022).

The complex nature of work and high social expectations were the normal state of college teachers' work. However, with the increase of occupational pressure, if teachers couldn't take effective measures to adjust it, it would lead to an increasing psychological burden and negative emotions. In the long run, it would not only weaken teachers' enthusiasm and motivation but also lead to teachers' emotional instability, inferiority complex and negative living conditions, thus further reducing their subjective happiness. From the perspective of positive psychology, if young teachers in colleges had high subjective happiness, they could always maintain a good mental state in the fierce competition. At the same time, they were not afraid of difficulties and challenges in the high-load teaching and scientific research tasks. Therefore, subjective happiness lays a good psychological and emotional foundation for young teachers to actively debug occupational stress and continuously improve their ability to resist pressure.

Conclusions

(1) The overall level of occupational stress among young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province was moderate.

(2) The overall level of subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province was moderate.

(3) There were significant differences in occupational stress among young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, in terms of gender, educational background and marital status. As a result, the occupational stress level of male teachers was higher than that of female teachers, the occupational

stress level of teachers with bachelor's degrees was relatively high, and the occupational stress level of married teachers was higher than that of unmarried teachers.

(4) There were significant differences in the subjective happiness of young college teachers in Jinan, Shandong Province, in terms of gender, educational and marital status. As a result, the subjective happiness level of female teachers was higher than that of male teachers, the subjective happiness level of teachers with bachelor's degrees was relatively low, and the subjective happiness level of unmarried teachers was higher than that of married teachers.

(5) There was a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and subjective happiness of young college teachers at A University in Jinan City, Shandong Province.

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