A STUDY ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AT SHANDONG Y UNIVERSITY IN CHINA

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Abstract: This study employed the Y University Teacher Perception of Organizational Support Questionnaire, which consisted of two parts. The first part collected basic demographic information, including gender, age, marital status, educational level, teaching experience, and academic position. The second part assessed teachers' perceptions of organizational support, which comprised three dimensions: work support, value recognition, and interest concern. The convenience sampling method selected 205 in-service teachers at Y University in Shandong Province as study participants. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and variance analysis in SPSS. The study found that university teachers' perception of organizational support was at a moderate level. Among its dimensions, work support was perceived as high, whereas value recognition and interest concern were perceived at a moderate level. Among university teachers with different demographic background variables, significant differences were found in the organizational support perceived by those with different educational levels. Finally, reflections, discussions, and suggestions were provided based on the study's findings, aiming to offer a reference for university management in formulating scientific and reasonable support policies, optimizing management decisions, and enhancing the organizational support and satisfaction of university teachers, thereby improving teaching quality.

Keywords: Organizational Support, Perception of Organizational Support, University Teachers

Introduction

For a long time, there have been endless studies on the relationship between organizations and employees. Still, they always remain at the one-dimensional level of employees' commitment to the organization. Researchers overemphasize employees' commitment to the organization and relatively ignore the organization's commitment to employees. Within this research context, social psychologist Eisenberger (1986) first proposed the concept of perceived organizational support, based on social exchange theory in social psychology. He used perceived organizational support to represent the

commitment that employees felt the organization had made to them. With the introduction of this concept, researchers and managers conducted related studies and integrated it into the practice of organizational management.

University teachers are a key component of university organizations and a special social group. They have multiple identities, such as researchers and educators, and have high social expectations. Lack of necessary organizational support will cause unhealthy teacher mobility and even affect the development of scientific research and the improvement of higher education teaching quality in my country.

Organizational support, as employees' perception that the organization cares about, values, and supports their work and personal development, has an important impact on employees' psychological state and work performance. Weisberg & Sagie (1999) believed that organizational support can effectively offset the negative impact of job burnout; Zheng & Fu (2018) provided that the organizational support that teachers get from the school's support can play a positive role in reinforcing their behavior of knowledge transfer with colleagues. For those new teachers, when they feel a high level of organizational support, they are more likely to engage in work and show pro-organizational behavior (Zou & Yin, 2017). Some studies have found that organizational support not only has a significant positive impact on employees' willingness to share knowledge (Jeung et al., 2017) but also promotes the frequency of knowledge-sharing behavior (King & Marks Jr, 2008).

The individual development of university teachers cannot be separated from the full support of university organizations. The full psychological and material support provided by university organizations to teachers can enhance teachers' emotions and trust in university organizations and enable teachers to work more actively. At the same time, university teachers can gain recognition for their abilities, promotions, or material rewards through hard work, which will also promote positive feedback between them and university organizations, which is beneficial to the development of individual university teachers and the development of the university. Especially at this stage, with the gradual implementation of the personnel system reform in colleges and universities in my country, many specific plans have been implemented one after another, and colleges and universities need to provide necessary organizational support for university teachers so that they can cope with the upcoming job changes in a relatively positive atmosphere.

Through research, it was found that there are also some problems in organizational support for teachers in Shandong universities, such as low wages, difficulties in academic position evaluation, and limited career development opportunities. These problems have led to a decline in teachers' job satisfaction, resulting in a series of problems.

In summary, it is necessary to explore the organizational support perceived by university teachers, which is helpful to understand and improve the current situation of organizational support perceived by university teachers and provides an important basis for finding effective methods and

strategies to improve teachers' organizational support. Therefore, this study takes this as the topic and takes Y University in Shandong Province, China as an example to carry out follow-up research, to strengthen organizational support, improve the working environment, and enhance teachers' job satisfaction and happiness, to build healthier and more sustainable career development environment for university teachers.

Research Objectives

According to the above research questions, the research objectives of this study mainly included: To understand the demographic distribution of Y University teachers in Shandong, China, including their gender, age, marital status, education level, teaching experience, and academic position.

(1) To assess the level of organizational support for Y University teachers.

(2) To explore the difference in organizational support among Y University teachers with varying demographic variables.

Literature Review

Research on Organizational Support

The concept of organizational support first appeared in enterprises and was mostly used in enterprises. Now it has been widely used in government departments, universities, business, and other fields. The organizational support theory and the concept of perceived organizational support were first proposed by American scholars Eisenberger & Huntington (1986) based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity. They believe that organizational support refers to employees' concern for the organization's evaluation of their work results and its concern for employees' interests.

Some scholars examined organizational support in the Chinese context. Xu et al. (2005) proposed that organizational support referred to employees' perception of whether the organization valued their contributions and cared about their well-being. Ling et al. (2006) suggested that organizational support encompassed the multi-faceted support that employees perceived the organization provides in their work. This included work support, value recognition, and interest care provided by the organization. Tang (2017) stated that organizational support referred to the degree to which teachers felt that school administrators valued and recognized their contributions to their work and the extent to which school administrators cared about teachers' interests. The main components included the support provided by school leaders, relevant policies and systems for teachers' work, concern for their interests, and recognition of their work values. Mo (2021) defined organizational support as teachers' views and perceptions that the organization values their contributions, supports their work, and cares about their well-being.

Based on previous research, Zhang et al. (2021) proposed that the prerequisite for employees to develop dependence on the organization was the organization's fulfillment of its commitments to

employees. Drawing from reinforcement theory, they argued that if the organization provided employees with resources beneficial to their work and allowed them to perceive the organization's recognition and care, employees would be more willing to remain in the organization and contribute to its success. Wei (2022) suggested that organizational support helped enhance employees' work self-efficacy—that is, the organization provided work support and rewards, which employees perceived as a sign of being valued and trusted by the organization. Luo et al. (2023) also interpreted the concept of organizational support from the perspective of organizational commitment, arguing that it represented employees' overall perception of the organization's recognition of their contributions and the benefits provided in return.

In this study, we followed the research by Ling et al. (2006) and Mo (2021) and categorized the influencing factors of organizational support into three dimensions: work support, value recognition, and interest concern. The contents of these three dimensions were explained as follows.

Research on University Teachers' Perceived Organizational Support

Lin (2019) analyzed the three dimensions and overall scores of university teachers' organizational support, revealing that organizational support among university teachers was generally at a high level. Zhao (2020) measured organizational support among young university teachers and reported a mean score of 3.474. The mean scores for the three dimensions—work support, value recognition, and interest concern—were 3.822, 3.291, and 3.224, respectively. These results indicated that while work support for young university teachers was at a high level, value recognition and interest concern remained at a moderate level. He (2022) found that work support for university teachers was at a moderate level, while value recognition and interest concern received lower scores. Similarly, Dong (2019) concluded that university teachers perceived organizational support was generally at a moderate level.

Research on the Current Status of Support for Teacher Organizations in Y Universities at Shandong Province

The study found that the score of organizational support for physical education teachers in universities in Shandong Province was at a lower level, indicating that their perceived organizational support was relatively low (Ma, 2013). The Shandong Provincial Education Department repeatedly emphasized the need to enhance organizational support for university teachers in its guidance opinions on teacher evaluation, policy documents on faculty evaluation and appointment, and performance-based wage distribution policies. The department advocated for improvements in organizational support by strengthening leadership care and support, establishing a scientific and effective evaluation mechanism, and optimizing career development pathways.

This study selected Y University in Shandong Province, which was founded in 1998. The university was approved by the Ministry of Education as a general undergraduate institution and designated as an applied undergraduate university construction unit in Shandong Province.

Additionally, it was recognized as a private undergraduate characteristic university construction unit in Shandong Province and was rated as a national model university for innovation and entrepreneurship experience.

Methodology

This study utilized an electronic questionnaire to survey teachers engaged in teaching or administrative work at Y University in Shandong Province. To ensure the representativeness and feasibility of the study, a convenience sampling method was employed to select 250 teachers from Y University in Shandong Province as the research sample. With the assistance of staff from Y University, a total of 205 questionnaires were successfully collected, achieving a response rate of 82%.

The research questionnaire was developed using the Organizational Support Scale, which was adapted by Mo (2021). Additionally, demographic background information (personal basic information) was incorporated to enhance the comprehensiveness of the survey.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part collects basic personal information and consists of 6 items, including gender, age, marital status, education level, teaching experience in higher education, and academic title. The second part was the "The Perceived Organizational Support Scale" which contains 23 items covering dimensions such as work support, value recognition, and interest concern. The scores increased sequentially from 1 to 5, with a higher score indicating a greater level of agreement with the given statement and has been verified to have good reliability and validity.

Results

Demographic Distribution of Y University Teachers

In terms of gender distribution, males accounted for 43.4% of the sample and females accounted for 56.6%. In terms of gender distribution, males accounted for 43.4% of the sample, while females accounted for 56.6%. The proportion of female participants in the survey sample was slightly higher, which was largely consistent with the overall male-female ratio of faculty and staff at Y University in Shandong Province.

The age distribution of the sample revealed that 54 participants were aged 20–29 years, accounting for 26.3%; 69 participants were aged 30–39 years, accounting for 33.7%; 55 participants were aged 40–49 years, accounting for 26.8%; and 27 participants were aged 50 and above, accounting for 13.2%.

The marital status of the survey sample was primarily concentrated among married individuals, with a total of 153 participants, accounting for 74.6%, while 52 participants were unmarried, accounting for 25.4%.

Among the survey participants, the majority held a master's degree, with 114 participants, accounting for 55.6%. This was followed by those with a bachelor's degree, totaling 70 participants

(34.1%). The number of participants with a doctorate, associate degree, or other qualifications was relatively small, with 17 participants (8.2%), 3 participants (1.39%), and 4 participants (1.9%), respectively.

Regarding the length of university teaching experience, the largest proportion of participants (75 participants, 36.6%) had 1–4 years of teaching experience. Those with 5–8 years of teaching experience totaled 36 participants (17.6%), while 29 participants (14.1%) had 9–12 years of experience. Participants with more than 12 years of teaching experience totaled 65 (31.7%).

In terms of academic positions, the number of teaching assistants, lecturers, professors or associate professors, and others was 57, 72, 46, and 30, respectively, accounting for 27.8%, 35.1%, and 14.63% each for professors/associate professors and others. The distribution of respondents was relatively balanced, with no significant differences among the four academic positions, reflecting the true composition of teachers at Y University in Shandong Province.

Level of Perceived Organizational Support Among Y University Teachers

(1)As Table 1 showed, total perceived organizational support was 3.20, with an SD of 0.94, indicating that the overall level of perceived organizational support was moderate. The data dispersion was moderate, suggesting that while there were some differences in teachers' evaluations of organizational support, most teachers had relatively similar assessments.

Table 1: The Levels of Organizational Support

Dimensions	n	M	SD	Interpretation
Work Support	205	3.54	0.89	High
Value Recognition	205	3.02	1.01	Moderate
Interest Concern	205	3.04	1.10	Moderate
Total	205	3.20	0.94	Moderate

(2) For Table 2, the independent sample t-test results for differences in each dimension between university teachers by gender revealed that the p-values for all dimensions were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant differences. This suggested that there were no significant differences in the three dimensions of work support, value recognition, and interest concern. The p-value for total perceived organizational support between university teachers of different genders was greater than 0.05, further confirming that there was no significant difference in organizational support based on gender. This result demonstrated that university teachers of different genders perceived organizational support similarly.

Table 2: Independent Sample T-test Analysis of Organizational Support by Genders

Dimensions	Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Work Support	Male	89	3.52	0.94	-.310	0.757
	Female	116	3.56	0.86		
Value Recognition	Male	89	3.03	1.00	.171	0.864
	Female	116	3.01	1.01		
Interest Concern	Male	89	2.97	1.12	-.763	0.447
	Female	116	3.09	1.09		
Total	Male	89	3.18	0.97	-.329	0.742
	Female	116	3.22	0.93		

(3) The F-values for the three dimensions (work support, value recognition, and interest concern) and total perceived organizational support were 0.153 ($p = 0.928 > 0.05$), 0.618 ($p = 0.604 > 0.05$), 0.263 ($p = 0.852 > 0.05$), and 0.153 ($p = 0.928 > 0.05$). These results indicated that the overall differences in the evaluation of work support, value recognition, interest concern, and total perceived organizational support among teachers of different age groups were not significant. This suggested that teachers of different age groups had relatively consistent evaluations of these aspects.

Table 3: ANOVA Analysis of Organizational Support by Ages

Dimensions	Age	n	M	SD	F	p
Work support	20-29 years old	71	3.6	.87	0.153	0.928
	30-39 years old	67	3.55	1.00		
	40-49 years old	46	3.51	.79		
	Over 50 years old	108	3.47	.87		
Value Recognition	20-29 years old	71	2.90	1.08	0.618	0.604
	30-39 years old	67	3.07	1.07		
	40-49 years old	46	2.99	0.97		
	Over 50 years old	108	3.20	0.76		
Interest Concern	20-29 years old	71	2.95	1.20	0.263	0.852
	30-39 years old	67	3.08	1.16		
	40-49 years old	46	3.02	0.99		
	Over 50 years old	108	3.16	1.00		
Total	20-29 years old	71	3.15	.99	0.153	0.928
	30-39 years old	67	3.23	1.03		
	40-49 years old	46	3.17	0.85		
	Over 50 years old	108	3.28	0.83		

The p-value for total perceived organizational support was greater than 0.05, confirming that age did not have a significant effect on organizational support.

(4) This result suggested that the evaluations of work support, value recognition, interest concern, and overall organizational support were relatively consistent between unmarried and married teachers. However, the SD of each dimension was large, particularly for married teachers, indicating substantial individual differences in their evaluations of these dimensions. The p-value for total perceived organizational support was greater than 0.05, confirming that marital status did not have a significant effect on organizational support.

Table 4: Independent Sample T-test Analysis of Organizational Support by Marital Status

Dimensions	Marital status	n	M	SD	t	p
Work Support	Unmarried	52	3.55	0.75	.080	0.937
	Married	153	3.54	.94		
Value Recognition	Unmarried	52	2.83	0.96	-1.547	0.123
	Married	153	3.08	1.02		
Interest Concern	Unmarried	52	2.90	1.06	-1.037	0.301
	Married	153	3.09	1.11		
Total	Unmarried	52	3.10	0.85	-.926	0.356
	Married	153	3.24	0.97		

(5) The results revealed significant differences in work support (F = 4.875, p = 0.003), value recognition (F = 6.536, p < 0.001), interest concern (F = 4.884, p = 0.003), and total perceived organizational support (F = 5.851, p = 0.001) among teachers with different education levels. The results indicated the following trend: bachelor < master, suggesting that there was a significant difference in organizational support between bachelor-level and master-level teachers at different education levels. The total organizational support p-value was less than 0.05, confirming that education level had a significant impact on organizational support.

Table 5: Post-hoc Comparison of Organizational Support by Education Levels

Organizational Support	Dimension	Post-hoc Comparison
	Work Support	Bachelor <Master
	Value Recognition	Bachelor<Master
	Interest Concern	Bachelor<Master
Total		Bachelor<Master

(6) In Table 6, the overall differences in the evaluations of teachers with varying teaching experiences in the three dimensions of work support, value recognition, and interest concern were not significant (p > .05), indicating that teachers with different teaching experiences had relatively consistent evaluations of these aspects. The p-value for total perceived organizational support was greater than 0.05, confirming that there was no significant difference in organizational support among teachers with different teaching experiences.

Table 6: ANOVA Analysis of Organizational Support by Teaching Experiences

Dimensions	Teaching Experience	n	M	SD	F	p
Work Support	1-4 years	75	3.59	0.99	0.475	0.700
	5-8 years	36	3.65	0.93		
	9-12 years	29	3.43	0.73		
	Over 12 years	65	3.49	0.82		
Value Recognition	1-4 years	75	3.03	1.16	0.918	0.433
	5-8 years	36	3.19	1.04		
	9-12 years	29	2.77	0.83		
	Over 12 years	65	3.03	0.87		
Interest Concern	1-4 years	75	3.03	1.21	0.297	0.827
	5-8 years	36	3.18	1.28		
	9-12 years	29	2.92	0.84		
	Over 12 years	65	3.03	0.97		
Total	1-4 years	75	3.22	1.07	0.548	0.650
	5-8 years	36	3.34	1.02		
	9-12 years	29	3.04	0.75		
	Over 12 years	65	3.18	0.83		

Table 7: ANOVA Analysis of Organizational Support by Academic Positions

Dimensions	Academic Position	n	M	SD	F	p
Work Support	Teaching Assistant	57	3.56	1.01	0.286	0.835
	Lecturer	72	3.55	0.89		
	Associate Profess/ Professor	46	3.45	0.86		
	Others	30	3.63	0.72		
Value Recognition	Teaching Assistant	57	2.89	1.12	0.595	0.619
	Lecturer	72	3.09	1.04		
	Associate Profess/ Professor	46	2.99	0.88		
	Others	30	3.15	0.94		
Interest Concern	Teaching Assistant	57	3.02	1.23	0.114	0.952
	Lecturer	72	3.06	1.13		
	Associate Professor/Professor	46	2.98	1.00		
	Others	30	3.12	0.95		
Total	Teaching Assistant	57	3.16	1.07	0.246	0.864
	Lecturer	72	3.23	0.96		
	Associate Professor/Professor	46	3.14	0.85		
	Others	30	3.30	0.81		

(7) As Table 7 showed, the results of the ANOVA test on the differences in organizational support among university teachers based on academic positions revealed that the p-values for all dimensions were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant differences.

Discussion

Analysis of Differences in Perceived Organizational Support Among University Teachers of Different Genders

This study conducted a questionnaire survey on in-service teachers at Y University in Shandong Province and found that there was no significant difference in total perceived organizational support among university teachers of different genders (p > 0.05). This phenomenon may have been influenced by several factors, including the concept of gender equality in organizational culture, the equalization of career development opportunities, the gender-friendliness of the working environment, and the consistency of personal career goals. Specifically, the organizational culture at Y University may have emphasized gender equality and fair treatment, ensured equal career development opportunities, fostered a gender-friendly working environment, and promoted similar career goals among teachers of different genders.

Analysis of Differences in Perceived Organizational Support Among University Teachers of Different Ages

The statistical analysis results revealed that there were no significant differences in work support, value recognition, interest concern, or total perceived organizational support based on age (p > 0.05). This indicated that at Y University in Shandong Province, age had no significant effect on each dimension or total perceived organizational support. This finding may have been influenced by the universal applicability of organizational support across all age groups. The organization's consistency in work environment, career development opportunities, and welfare benefits may have allowed teachers of different ages to perceive similar levels of support. Additionally, the attention to and satisfaction of the needs of teachers across different age groups within the organizational culture may have contributed to this result.

Analysis of Differences in Perceived Organizational Support Among University Teachers with Different Marital Status

The statistical analysis results revealed that there were no significant differences in work support, value recognition, interest concern, or total perceived organizational support (p > 0.05). This result may have been influenced by the organization's fairness and consistency in providing support, its equitable distribution of work environment, career development opportunities, and welfare benefits, as well as its attention to and satisfaction of the needs of teachers with different marital statuses. These factors may have contributed to both unmarried and married teachers experiencing similar levels of organizational support.

Analysis of Differences in Perceived Organizational Support Among University Teachers with Different Education Levels

The statistical analysis results confirmed that there were significant differences in work support ($F = 4.875$, $p = 0.003$), value recognition ($F = 6.526$, $p < 0.001$), interest concern ($F = 4.884$, $p = 0.003$), and total perceived organizational support ($F = 5.851$, $p = 0.001$) based on education level. This finding suggested that organizational support perceived by associate teachers had a significant impact on master-level teachers. It was speculated that this difference may have been influenced by career development needs, work environment adaptability, and the ability to utilize organizational resources among teachers with different education levels. Bachelor-level teachers may have been more inclined to enhance their professional competitiveness through organizational support, while master-level teachers may have prioritized academic research and personal development, resulting in a relatively lower demand for organizational support.

Analysis of Differences in Perceived Organizational Support Among University Teachers with Different Teaching Experiences

The statistical analysis results revealed that there were no significant differences in work support, value recognition, interest concern, or total perceived organizational support across teaching years ($p > 0.05$). Nevertheless, the average value for work support was slightly higher among teachers with 1–4 years of teaching experience compared to those with more years of experience. This trend may have been linked to the adaptability of new teachers to the work environment and their higher expectations for organizational support.

Analysis of Differences in Perceived Organizational Support Among University Teachers with Different Academic Positions

The statistical analysis results revealed that there were no significant differences in work support, value recognition, interest concern, or total perceived organizational support across academic positions ($p > 0.05$). This shows that at Y University in Shandong Province, academic positions have no significance. This indicated that at Y University in Shandong Province, academic positions had no significant impact on any dimension of perceived organizational support. Nevertheless, the average value recognition for teaching assistants and lecturers was slightly higher than that of professors and associate professors. This trend may have been related to the higher demand for career development and the greater expectations for organizational support among teaching assistants and lecturers.

Conclusions

 (1) The Perceived Organizational Support for Teachers at Y University Was at a Moderate Level

According to the analysis of the research results, teachers perceived organizational support was at a moderate level, with varying levels across its dimensions. Among these dimensions, the work

support dimension was relatively high, while the perceptions of the value recognition dimension and interest concern dimension were at a moderate level.

(2) Differences in Perceived Organizational Support Across Educational Levels

The research findings partially validated the hypothesis regarding differences in perceived organizational support among university teachers with different demographic variables. Among the demographic background variables, only education level showed a significant difference in perceived organizational support.

Other demographic background variables, including gender, age, marital status, teaching experience, and academic position, did not significantly affect teachers perceived organizational support.

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