Works Cited

The Impact of Teacher's Job Stress on Life Satisfaction in Vocational Colleges: Literature Review

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Abstract

China has long been known for a highly competitive education system in which teachers usually devote enormous time and energy to their daily work, including teaching, student guidance, and class management (Ye & Zhao, 2019). Teaching has long been considered as a high-stress profession due to the tremendous pressure teachers experience in their careers (Jonsonetal., 2005; Noor and Zanuddin, 2011). For academic staff, stressors include the high pressure to publish and the additional burden placed on their shoulders by managing the balance of tasks and roles (Graca et al., 2020). The situation may be even more severe for Chinese university teachers as they seek to build more world-class universities (Zhu et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). Except for "interpersonal relationships", the average score of stress in all other dimensions (teaching, living burden, academic competition, workload, administrative affairs, and international communication) has exceeded the middle score. Administrative affairs are the most stressful (Min ,2020).

The Blue Book on Mental Health, part of China's National Mental Health Development Report (2021-2022), surveyed 21,876 teachers and found that 20.7 percent felt burned out and another 3.5 percent felt so burned out that they needed to make changes or seek help.

This paper aims to summarize the relationship between teachers' job stress and teachers' life satisfaction from three dimensions: teaching stress, scientific research pressure and administrative pressure. In this literature review, the authors use past research to justify the use of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model in studies examining teachers' job stress and life satisfaction in vocational colleges.

Keywords

Job Stress, Teaching Stress, Research Stress, Administrative Pressure, Life Satisfaction, Higher Vocational Colleges.

1.Introduction

The Deputy Director General of the Department of Vocational Education and Adult Education of the Ministry of Education introduce, by 2023, there would be 1,547 vocational colleges, an increase of 58 over the previous year, reflecting the enthusiasm of all localities to develop vocational education, enrolling 5.550,700 students, an increase of 160,900 over the previous year, and 684,600 full-time teachers, an increase of 40,900 over the previous year, or nearly 167,000 over 2018.(Source:https://www.eol.cn/news/meeting/202403/t20240301_2560966.shtm) The number of teachers in vocational colleges has increased greatly, and their job stress and life satisfaction have been widely concerned by the media and academia, but there are few studies on the satisfaction of teachers in vocational colleges.

Job stress among university and vocational college teachers has intensified, becoming a significant factor affecting their mental health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Academic competition, stringent "publish or perish" policies, and heavy teaching, research, and administrative workloads place immense pressure on educators (Miller et al., 2011). Studies in China reveal a decline in teachers' mental health and life satisfaction over the years, with the 2021 Mental Health Blue Book reporting 20.7% of teachers experiencing burnout and 3.5% requiring professional help.Vocational college teachers face unique challenges, including increasing teaching and research demands, economic stress, title promotion pressures, and societal expectations. Job stress significantly impacts teachers' physical and mental health, with 85% reporting health issues, including occupational diseases like pharyngitis. Subjective well-being has also shown a downward trend year by year (Xin et al.,2021) . Idris et al, (2011) reported that the economic implications of work-related stress on universities academic work cannot be under estimated as it could lead to lowered productivity, dissatisfaction and poor physical health.

Teachers in China's higher vocational colleges and universities face substantial job stress due to balancing teaching, research, and administrative duties. Vocational college teachers must adapt to market-driven curriculum changes, teach multiple courses, prepare lessons, engage with businesses, and contribute to competitions and curriculum development, significantly increasing their workload (Wang, 2020). University faculty experience stress from "publish or perish" policies that demand high research outputs, such as publications and patents, alongside teaching responsibilities, negatively impacting their physical and mental well-being (Miller et al., 2011). Globally, administrative tasks are a leading stress source for teachers, surpassing classroom hours (OECD, 2014). In China, administrative overload, conflicts between teaching and research, significantly affect faculty life satisfaction, highlighting the critical need for stress management and institutional support (Min, 2021).

Recognizing teachers as the foundation of education, China's 2035 education reform goals aim to enhance their happiness, sense of achievement, and societal honor. Therefore, studying job stress and life satisfaction from three perspectives: teaching stress, research stress and administrative pressure is very important to improve teachers' happiness and ensure the sustainable development of education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition

Job stress

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines job stress as "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" (NIOSH, 2008). Job stress is one of the most important workplace health risks for employees in developed and developing countries (Rehmanr et al., 2012). Job stress is a complicated biopsychosocial response and is a major concern in workplaces (Wang, Liu, Zou, Hao, & Wu, 2017). Zhang (2006) defined job stress as work-related events that result in an individual's psychological stress.

Teachers' Job stress

"Teachers' Job stress" concept was put forward by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, they think of teacher stress is a negative emotional experience, such as anger and depression, which is the cause of teachers' professional experience (Kyriacou, C., & Sutcliffe, J. ,1977). Teacher job stress refers to the unpleasant negative emotional experience of teachers that can lead to excessive physical and mental fatigue, nervous tension,

frustration, or distress due to factors, such as excessive working hours, heavy workload, and serious misconduct of students (Roeser et al., 2013). Research studies have indicated that teaching is one of the most stressful occupations (Johnson et al., 2005; Herman et al., 2020; Greenier et al., 2021).

This paper will review three subdivisions of university teachers' job stress, namely, teaching stress, research stress, and administrative stress, which are negatively correlated with their level of life satisfaction (Xu, Y., & Wang, Y. 2023).

Teaching stress

According to Blix et al (1994), teaching stress comes from the scarcity of time resources (Xu, Y., & Wang, Y. 2023). Research has shown that teaching is one of the most stressful occupations (Johnson et al., 2005; Herman et al., 2020; Greenier et al., 2021). Teaching stress is defined as a psychological process that arises when teachers perceive an imbalance between the demands of their classrooms and the resources available to meet those demands. This imbalance leads to negative consequences, including reduced teacher productivity and well-being (McCarthy, 2019). Teaching stress refers to a teacher's experience of "unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression," which result from aspects of their work as educators. It is comparable to other forms of occupational stress and impacts both individual health and organizational outcomes (Singh & Kaur, 2010).

Research stress

Research stress is also known as research burnout, a subset of emotional burnout that refers to a negative psychological response to excessive research workloads imposed on university faculty members (Miller et al., 2011). Research stress is defined as the psychological strain or tension that arises when researchers face excessive academic demands, such as the pressure to publish, secure funding, or meet tight deadlines, while having insufficient resources, including time, institutional support, or coping mechanisms. This imbalance often results in emotional exhaustion, decreased productivity, and diminished career satisfaction (Guthrie et al., 2018).

Administrative pressure

Administrative work spans a wide spectrum, from student advisory and curriculum development to committee involvement and policy implementation. Although essential to the effective functioning of academia, these tasks sometimes divert the focus of research and teaching (Noureen, S., & Asad, S. ,2024).

As defined by Soares et al. (2020), administrative tasks encompass a range of activities assigned to university faculty members with the objective of enhancing the visibility of their respective departments. These responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, outreach meetings, report writing, and other social activities that are not directly related to research and teaching (Mancebo, 2007). Administrative pressure refers to the stress or psychological strain experienced by individuals due to administrative responsibilities, processes, or expectations. This pressure often stems from managing organizational tasks, meeting deadlines, handling bureaucratic requirements, overseeing staff performance, or navigating hierarchical decision-making structures. Administrative pressure can lead to reduced efficiency, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction if not managed properly (Maslach et al. 2001).

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a concept that measures an individual's overall happiness, which is the result of an overall evaluation of life (Erdogan et al., 2012; Hart, 1999). Diener et al. (1985) indicated that positive and negative affect refer to the 'affective emotional aspects' of subjective well-being and life satisfaction refers to the 'cognitive-judgmental aspects' of subjective well-being. Life satisfaction is a cognitive assessment of a person's overall quality of life and is one of many overlapping layers of subjective well-being (Diener et al.,1985). Life satisfaction generally results in positive outcomes (Donovan & Halpern, 2002; Erdogan et al., 2012).In this study, life satisfaction mainly refers to the general life satisfaction, that is, the overall evaluation of personal life quality by teachers in vocational colleges.

2.2 Relationship Analysis

Job stress and Life satisfaction

Xu et al. (2021) explore potential mechanisms for how and when cognitive stress increases the risk of burnout and decreases life satisfaction in clinical teaching nurses. A total of 1372 teaching nurses from 8 tertiary military hospitals in China were investigated by questionnaires on stress perception, job burnout,

emotional regulation and life satisfaction. Correlation regression and hierarchical multiple regression were used for data analysis. The results show that perceived stress has direct and indirect effects on life satisfaction.

David et al.（2021）surveyed oncology professionals in the SWOG Cancer Research Network to explore the relationship between personal hope, social support, job stress, burnout, and life satisfaction. SWOG members were randomly selected to participate in an online survey, and out of 1,000 invitees, 226 responded. Job stress was associated with greater burnout but not with overall life satisfaction.

Kosasih, K., et al. (2024) adopted quantitative research methods and survey research techniques to investigate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among employees of small enterprises in Garut County, and the results showed that life satisfaction was significantly affected by job stress.

Perspective of teaching stress, the influence of job stress on teachers' life satisfaction

Xu & Wang (2023) explored the relationship between teaching stress and life satisfaction based on a survey. A survey was conducted to investigate junior teachers in universities in East China, this study adopted a quantitative research methodology, data were collected using questionnaires, 202 valid questionnaires were recovered using the snowball sampling method, and Diener et al.'s (1985) Life Satisfaction Scale was used to assess the life satisfaction of junior teachers in universities. Multiple regression analysis and structural equation modelling were used to validate the findings. The results showed that teaching stress is negatively related to life satisfaction among junior university teachers (Xu & Wang ,2023).

Efilti et al. (2024) revealed the impact of technology stress on life satisfaction. For the stated research purposes, a relational scan model was used. The study involved 342 academic participants from different universities in Kyrgyzstan and the obtained data were analyzed by t-test, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation analysis and linear regression analysis. The results showed that life satisfaction and general technology stress levels were identified as persistent and significant in the professional orientation, technology subject-oriented learning-teaching process orientation and personal technology stress sub-

dimensions. In teaching, overall technology stress has a significant impact on life satisfaction.

Perspective of research stress, the influence of job stress on teachers' life satisfaction

Lv et al. (2022) used university researchers on the job in Shandong Province (including those who did not preside over a project but actually participated in scientific research) as the research subjects, excluding those who did not participate in scientific research within one year. Stratified random sampling method was adopted, in which the universities were first divided into 4 categories (provincial and ministerial, general undergraduate, speciality and higher vocational), and multiple universities were randomly selected in each stratum, and the survey respondents were randomly selected among the sampled schools. The author investigated a total of more than 20 colleges and universities in 10 cities, including Jinan, Qingdao, Tai'an, Jining, Yantai and Weifang, and the validity rate of the questionnaire was 91.4 per cent. The results of the study show that: excessive scientific research assessment requirements and promotion title threshold, resulting in increasing scientific research pressure on researchers. Moderate stress can promote the occurrence of positive behaviours and increase the performance output of researchers, while excessive stress can reduce the sense of professional belonging and happiness, and the quality of professional life will also be seriously affected (Lv et al. ,2022).

Yao Dengwang et al. (2023) investigated and analysed 322 teachers in higher vocational colleges and universities in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Heilongjiang provinces by using the research stress, anxiety, burnout and depression measurement scales in order to explore the effects of research stress on individual teachers' depression and the mediating roles of burnout and anxiety between the two. The results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between research stress, burnout, anxiety and depression. At present, young teachers in higher vocational colleges and universities have a heavy burden of scientific research, which is mainly embodied in the pressure of output and the pressure of scientific research assessment. Under the strict assessment regulations and promotion system, teachers in higher vocational colleges are tired of applying for projects, writing and publishing academic papers, and carrying out other activities related to scientific research, which causes a

greater sense of fatigue and burden on the body and mind, and creates anxiety in the long term (Yao Dengwang et al. ,2023).

Ertaş et al. (2023) investigated the effect of journal choice on burnout and envy among academics and analysed its direct impact on job satisfaction and life satisfaction. 3000 academics worldwide were contacted and 291 usable questionnaires were collected from research scholars in different countries. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using SPSS programme and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using Smart PLS programme. The results of the study showed that publication frequency had a negative effect on life satisfaction of academics and academic promotion had a negative effect on life satisfaction of academics (Ertaş, M., Kozak, M., & Kırlar-Can, B., 2023).

Perspective of administrative pressure, the influence of job stress on teachers' life satisfaction

Xu & Wang (2023) explored the relationship between administrative pressure and life satisfaction based on a survey. A survey was conducted on junior university teachers in East China, this study adopted a quantitative research methodology, data were collected by questionnaires. The results showed that administrative pressure is negatively related to life satisfaction among junior university teachers (Xu, Y., & Wang, Y.,2023).

Ahmad et al. (2021) explored the impact of emotional exhaustion on the work engagement of academic staff in Malaysian universities. A total of 190 academic administrators from public and private universities in Malaysia participated in this study. It was a validation and cross-sectional study using quantitative methods and statistical analyses including exploratory factor analysis (EFA), demographic analysis and linear regression. The results of the analyses showed that high levels of administrative pressure were associated with increased emotional exhaustion, affecting work engagement and overall well-being (Ahmad et al. ,2021).

2.3 Theoretical framework

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model is a widely recognized framework used to understand workplace stress and employee well-being.

2.3.1 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

Developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli in 2001, the JD-R model categorizes workplace characteristics into two main types: job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs. Examples include high work pressure, emotional demands, and cognitive load. According to the JD-R model, high job demands are primarily associated with the exhaustion component of burnout, contributing to stress and fatigue (Demerouti et al., 2007). Job resources refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that help in achieving work goals, reduce job demands, or stimulate personal growth and development. Examples include autonomy, social support, and opportunities for professional development. Job resources are primarily linked to the motivational process, enhancing engagement, and reducing disengagement (Bakker et al., 2007). At the core of the JD-R Model is the fundamental premise that the interplay between job demands and resources influences the well-being and performance of employees (Hui, S., & Lee, K. J. , 2024). The JD-R model has been applied to different organizational settings, such as healthcare, education, and industry, to understand factors influencing burnout, absenteeism, and overall employee well-being. Research has also extended the model by incorporating personal resources, like self-efficacy and optimism, as important factors in moderating the relationship between job demands, resources, and work outcomes (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

According to the Job requirements - resources (JD-R) model, occupational stressors arise mainly from job demands such as workload, time pressure and role ambiguity, and lack of job resources such as social support and autonomy. These stressors may deplete teachers' psychological resources, leading to decreased social intelligence and life satisfaction. Conversely, work resources such as university support and autonomy may buffer the negative effects of stress and promote teachers' life satisfaction. The researchers note that teachers who perceive higher demands and fewer resources are at higher risk of occupational stress (Lambert et al., 2019).

2.3.2 Applying JD-R theory to the job stress

Job demands of teaching, research and administration in vocational colleges

The school is a complex environment, and job demands include several individual and school-level aspects, such as overload, role conflict, school climate and other issues (Hakanen et al., 2006; Pyhalto, Pietarinen, & Salmela-Aro, 2011). Job stress occurs when teachers' resources are exceeded (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Teachers face increasing stress due to the rising demands of teaching, research, and administration. Key stressors include the pressure to adopt new teaching practices, manage larger student populations, and balance conflicting roles between teaching and research. Studies have shown that the tension between these roles is a significant source of stress, especially regarding the need to secure external funding for research while fulfilling teaching duties. This issue has been reported across different cultures, including both Western and Chinese university contexts (Kinchin & Hay, 2007; Winefield et al., 2003; Lai et al., 2014). These challenges highlight the need for better work-life balance and support for faculty members.

Job resources of teaching, research and administration in vocational colleges

Job resources include teacher effectiveness, support from colleagues and principals, participation in decision-making, public recognition, and professional development (Sehgal, P., Nambudiri, R., & Mishra, S. ,2017). Teaching resources, including the availability of facilities and technology, provide a favourable working environment to support teachers' efforts and abilities. Teachers in different subject areas often rely on different types of teaching resources, such as books, academic articles, online platforms, and experimental equipment, when designing courses to meet the learning needs of different students (Munna, A. S., & Kalam, M. A. ,2021). Research resources of universities usually include the investment of scientific research funds, the training of scientific research professional knowledge, the investment of laboratories, the construction of scientific research infrastructure, and academic cooperation (Lv et al.2022). The administrative resources of higher vocational colleges generally include: Administrative Support and Services (Andrews & Boyne, 2014), Information Technology Resources (Serban & Malone, 2000), Infrastructure Resources (Park & Suh, 1996), Policy Development and Compliance (Corson, 1960), etc. The job stress caused by the lack of teaching, research and administrative resources leads to the decrease of teachers' life satisfaction (Xu & Wang ,2023).

Faculty roles are multifaceted, requiring teaching, research, administrative management, curriculum development, student care, and school community engagement, etc. This versatility, combined with high workloads, low status, insufficient resources, and constant changes, creates stress that negatively impacts teachers' mental health (Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Overload can make a person feel tense and frustrated, ultimately decreasing the quality of overall life (Erdogan et al., 2012; Triplett et al., 1996). Job demands and resources may arise at the teacher, student, and organizational levels. High job demands combined with inadequate resources, such as inadequate control and support, lead to adverse health outcomes and reduced job satisfaction (Dollard et al., 2007). Teaching demand, teaching and research conflict, teaching and administrative conflict and new challenges have reduced the life satisfaction of college teachers. Job resources, which are composed of teaching resources, social support and administrative support, can improve the life satisfaction of college teachers through the mediating role of job involvement (Han et al., 2020). Many studies have reached the same conclusion, and the findings support the demand-resource model of work, that is, the demand for work reduces life satisfaction and the demand for work resources increases life satisfaction. In addition, the current findings support the argument that the world of work influences life satisfaction (Lambert, E., Elechi, O., & Otu, S. ,2021)

Table 1. Empirical Review of the Application of the JD-R model

	Author (year)	Aims	Findings
Psychosocial burden and strains of pedagogues—using the job demands-resources theory to	Drüge, et al , (2021).	To examine the application of job demand-resource theory in the field of education and professionals.	Demand is positively associated with negative outcomes (burnout, general health) and negatively associated with positive outcomes (job satisfaction, life satisfaction). Resources were negatively correlated with negative outcomes

			and positively correlated with positive outcomes.
predict burnout, job satisfaction, general state of health, and life satisfaction.			
Testing the job demands-resources model in explaining life satisfaction of Nigerian correctional staff.	Lambert, E., Elechi, O., & Otu, S. (2021).	The aim was to use the job demand-resource model as a theoretical framework to examine the relationship between workplace variables and life satisfaction among correctional officers in Nigeria.	The results of this study support the job demand-resource model, that is, job demand demand reduces life satisfaction and job resource demand increases life satisfaction. In addition, the current findings support the argument that the world of work influences life satisfaction.
Work leisure conflict, job stress, life satisfaction and turnover intention of hotel workers in Accra, Ghana	Mensah, et al , (2023).	To study the effects of work-leisure conflict on job stress, life satisfaction and turnover intention of hotel employees.	According to PLS-SEM results, job stress will increase the turnover intention of hotel employees. In the Job demand-resource (JD-R) model, work-leisure conflict leads to turnover intention and increases job stress levels, thereby reducing life satisfaction of hotel employees.
Investigating the Influences of Job Demands and Job Resources on Teacher's Job Stress and Job Satisfaction: Application of Latent Moderated Structural Equation Modeling.	Yoon, I. (2023).	This study aims to explore how teachers' perceived job demands and job resources predict teachers' job stress and job satisfaction.	Job resources can relieve stress and positively impact satisfaction.
Stress and Satisfaction While Working from Home During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of Personal and Job Resources	Ukil, et al , (2024).	The work demand-resource model was applied to investigate how perceived work-from-home (WFH) stress affects work and life satisfaction, and the role of specific personal and work resources in WFH employee stress and work and life satisfaction.	Applying the theory of job demand-resource (JD-R) ,the results show that high stress caused by WFH will reduce job and life satisfaction.

3.Discussion

The literature of the last five years has focused on the impact of job stress on life satisfaction through a variety of pathways (such as work-life balance, mental health, etc.), and more extensive research has found that job stress generally significantly reduces life satisfaction, and job stress is significantly negatively correlated with life satisfaction, especially when the stress involves work role conflict or overload. This stress often leads to emotional burnout, anxiety, and decreased life satisfaction (Rodrigues et al., 2023) . Teachers are unable to find a balance between work and life due to the high demands of their profession, leading to a decline in life satisfaction (Jessica et al., 2023).

Although job stress is often seen as a negative factor, some studies have found that when stress is moderate and can be dealt with positively, it may have a positive impact on life satisfaction: the positive effects of moderate stress. Job stress has a significant impact on life satisfaction (Gurkan, 2021; Jia et al., 2020; Akgunduz et al., 2021; Larasatti, 2023; Zammitti et al., 2022; Kosasih et al., 2024). Certain moderate levels of job stress (such as time-critical but goal-oriented tasks) have been found to motivate individuals and promote the achievement of life goals, thereby increasing life satisfaction (Kosasih et al., 2024). In some highly skilled industries (such as software engineers), job stress can be a motivator for career fulfilment and life satisfaction if the workload is properly handled and the team is supported (Aires et al., 2024).

4. Conclusion

This literature review discusses the relationship between job stress and life satisfaction of teachers in higher vocational colleges from the perspective of teaching stress, research stress and administrative pressure. To mitigate these effects, administrators should reduce teacher workload, increase career development opportunities, and provide empathy-driven support. These measures allow faculty to focus more on high-quality research and teaching. The study provides valuable insights for researchers, policymakers and stakeholders, highlighting the need for practical and theoretical guidance to improve teacher well-being and ensure sustainable education.

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