

Factors Influencing the Job Performance of Private Vocational High School Teachers of Liaocheng City, China

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the influential factors of Teachers' job performance in private vocational schools in Liaocheng City, Shandong Province, China, thereby providing empirical evidence and in-depth understanding for improving teachers' job performance and teaching quality. This study combines quantitative questionnaire surveys and qualitative interviews. Firstly, this study will select 207 teachers from 8 private vocational high schools in Liaocheng through stratified sampling for quantitative research, and analyze the correlation between variables through ANOVA and Pearson correlation. On this basis, this study will select 16 teachers through purposive sampling for in-depth interviews and analyze the results through thematic analysis. Guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this study will reveal whether there is a significant correlation between teachers' job performance and motivation factors or hygiene factors in private vocational schools in Liaocheng, China.

Keywords: Hygiene Factors; Influential Factors; Job Performance; Motivation Factors; Private Vocational High Schools.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In recent years, vocational education has been playing an increasingly important role in cultivating diverse talents and imparting technical skills [1]. As a key part of China's talent cultivation plan, the Chinese government has been vigorously promoting the development of vocational schools in recent years [2]. Especially under the impetus of the government and the influence of market demand, many private vocational schools have emerged in the field of education in China to meet different market demands [3]. A report released by the Chinese Ministry of Education [4] indicates that nearly one third of the vocational secondary schools (about 2073 schools) in 2022 were privately operated. Based on this ratio, the operation and development of private vocational schools have a direct contribution to the overall performance of vocational schools in China. However, the operation performance of a school is directly influenced by the job performance of its teachers, as the job performance of teachers directly affects the teaching quality [5], thereby influencing students' academic performance [6], the school's culture and reputation [7], and even the operational effectiveness of the school [8]. From this perspective, the performance of private vocational schools is also inseparably linked to the job performance of their teachers. Therefore, it makes sense to explore the factors that influence the job performance of teachers in these schools, so as to help them better fulfill their duties.

In the fields of organizational behavior and human resource management, Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides a classic and influential framework for understanding employees' work motivation, satisfaction, and performance. This theory categorizes the factors affecting employees into motivators and hygiene factors: the former can motivate employees' performance while the latter, if improperly handled, may lead to negative consequences [9]. This study applies this theoretical framework to the context of private vocational colleges in China, empirically testing the

impact of a series of motivation factors and hygiene factors on the job performance of teachers in private vocational high schools in Liaocheng.

1.2. Research Aim, Objectives and Hypotheses

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the factors that impact the teachers' job performance of private vocational high schools in Liaocheng, Shandong province, China.

Under this research aim, there are several specific research objectives:

- ✓ To figure out the demographic information of teachers working private vocational high schools in Liaocheng;
- ✓ To explore whether teachers' job performance differs from each other due to varying demographic profile;
- ✓ To find out whether motivators and hygiene factors are correlated with teachers' job performance in private vocational high schools.

Based on above research objectives, this study proposes two hypotheses:

H1: Teachers' job performance shows no difference in terms of different demographic profile;

H2: Motivators are significantly and positively correlated with teachers' job performance in private vocational high schools.

H3: Hygiene factors are also significantly correlated with teachers' job performance in private vocational high schools.

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factors Theory aims to explain the relationship between employees' satisfaction at work and their

job performance [10]. The theory holds that there are two types of factors in an organization, namely satisfiers (also known as motivators) and dissatisfiers (also called hygiene factors): the former is highly related to the work itself, including personal cognition, personal growth, promotion, etc.; the latter is closely related to the work context, such as working conditions, workplace interpersonal relationships,

etc. [9]. When the motivators make employees feel satisfied, they will have strong enthusiasm and job satisfaction; when these hygiene factors are not satisfied, they may have negative impacts [11, 12]. Therefore, organizations should strive to improve satisfaction and job performance by meeting employees' motivators, and improve hygiene factors to avoid employees' dissatisfaction [12].

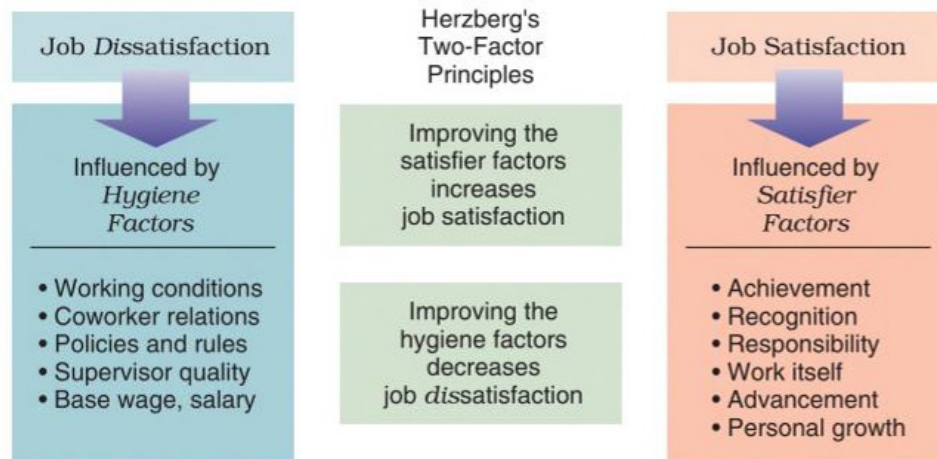


Figure 1. Herzberg's Two-Factors Theory Framework [12]

2.2. Factors Influencing Teacher's Performance

2.2.1. Motivation Factors

Existing literature reveals that a teacher's job performance is influenced by: 1) attitude towards the student; 2) self-efficacy belief (work engagement); 3) individual competence; 4) autonomy; and 5) promotion opportunity.

Firstly, the teacher's attitude towards students and the teacher-student interaction are among the important factors influencing a teacher's job performance. A good teacher-student relationship enables vocational school teachers to maintain a high level of job satisfaction and performance [13]. When teachers believe that they can meet the students' needs during the teaching process and promote their growth - for example, when teachers use an emotionally rich and interesting teaching method to help students improve their grades [14] - teachers will experience a sense of achievement, which will enhance their job satisfaction and workplace well-being [13, 15]. Moreover, O'Shea [16] argues that teacher-student interaction is an important source of teachers' positive and negative emotions. When teachers have a good attitude towards students or have a positive emotional experience during the interaction with students, they are more likely to have higher job satisfaction and better job performance [17].

From the perspective of self-efficacy, the self-efficacy beliefs of vocational high school teachers can directly affect their work performance [18, 19]. From the perspective of self-determination theory, self-efficacy can enhance teachers' work motivation, thereby improving their job performance, including the improved teaching quality, innovative teaching methods, and efficient classroom management [20].

Moreover, teachers may inevitably encounter various challenges during their work, and higher self-efficacy beliefs can help them better cope with challenges and difficulties, thereby continuously improving their teaching practice [21]. Udemba [22] believes that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and teacher performance, but this

correlation is weak and at a low level; however, there is a moderate and significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. In the view of Puspitasari et al. [23], it is the job satisfaction that mediates the influence of self-efficacy on teachers' job performance.

Thirdly, individual competence is also an important factor influencing the job satisfaction of teachers in vocational schools [24]. In particular, the professional competence of teachers, coupled with their motivations, affects their job performance [25], such as, the improvement of teaching quality [26]. Specifically, the enhancement of individual professional competence can increase professional identity, thereby maintaining work enthusiasm and improving job performance [27]. The professional competence of teachers are at the core of their intrinsic motivation, and other individual competence are also closely related to work motivation [28]. This motivator encourages teachers to perform well in the workplace [29].

Fourthly, the performance of teachers is also influenced by autonomy. Firstly, from a general perspective, autonomy can affect teachers' job satisfaction, positive work load perception, and stronger intention to stay [30, 31]. Higher levels of autonomy, such as decision-making power in teaching, can increase teachers' teaching engagement and role management ability, thereby improving their job performance without being affected by workload [32]. In contrast, restricted autonomy will damage teachers' morale and work motivation, and increase their sense of powerlessness and frustration; as a result, teachers' innovation ability is impaired, and the turnover rate increases [33]. As Ebersold et al. [34] stated, autonomy, as a basic psychological need, can enhance need satisfaction and reduce need frustration; and satisfaction mediates teachers' positive emotions; frustration mediates teachers' negative emotions; these emotions affect teachers' job performance.

Finally, promotion opportunities have an impact on teachers' job performance. As one of the important components of the motivator [35], promotion opportunity can

bring teachers a sense of satisfaction [35], achievement, or even responsibility [36], thereby stimulating their enthusiasm, work motivation, and job performance [35]. For teachers, promotion opportunities have a synergistic effect with other factors such as salary and participation in management, or even working conditions, to jointly influence teachers' job performance [37]. More promotion opportunities can effectively motivate teachers to extend their working hours and improve their work efficiency [38]. On the contrary, fewer promotion opportunities will damage teachers' enthusiasm [36].

2.2.2.2. Hygiene Factors

By reviewing existing literature, this study finds that a teacher's job performance is also influenced by some hygiene factors, including 1) working conditions; 2) workload; 3) regulation and rules; 4) well-being and benefits; and 5) leadership relationship.

Firstly, the existing literature regarding the impact of working conditions on teachers' performance is contradictory. Some studies suggest that working conditions are not significantly correlated with the job performance of teachers working in vocational high schools; However, they do acknowledge the existence of good working conditions helps teachers maintain a good working state [39]. Other studies suggest that there is a significant positive correlation between working conditions and teachers' performance [40]. Working conditions can affect a teacher's ability to fulfill their duties, and thereby influence their performance [41]. Working conditions affect teachers' job performance by influencing their work motivation [42, 43].

Secondly, workload has a positive but not significant impact on teachers' performance, and this effect is mainly mediated through satisfaction [44]. That is to say, workload does not determine teachers' performance directly, but it does affect their satisfaction: excessive workload, such as tasks beyond one's capabilities or long working hours, can lead to negative emotions [45, 46], burnout or physical and mental exhaustion [47], and a decline in sense of achievement [47]. These negative effects can affect the quality of teachers' teaching, such as the efficiency and effectiveness of classroom management [48].

Thirdly, regulations and rules have a positive correlation with teachers' job performance [49; 50]. Their impact is both positive and negative. Positively, regulations and rules create a sense of equality [49]; they enhance teachers' autonomy within the system, thereby increasing their sense of control [51]; even regulations and rules can create a deterrent effect - teachers strive to work hard to avoid being dismissed [52]. On the negative side, rigid regulations and rules can lead to a sense of frustration, a decline in creative ability, and dissatisfaction [49; 53]. However, it is worth noting that many scholars have recognized that regulations and rules do not play a decisive role; their impact on job performance is very limited compared to motivators [51; 52].

Regarding the impact of well-being and benefits, many scholars believe that there is a significant positive correlation between them and teachers' job performance [54]. Whether in financial or non-financial forms, well-being and benefits can enhance teachers' satisfaction and motivate them to perform better, but this motivating effect is very limited [54]. Zikanga et al. [55] believe that the income guarantee plan can significantly affect teachers' job performance, and bonuses positively influence teachers' job performance by

significantly improving their job satisfaction. The research of Onyekwelu [56] also supports this, stating that compensation benefits can significantly affect their job performance by improving teachers' satisfaction and work engagement; moreover, he also believes that compensation benefits can effectively reduce economic pressure to enhance their teaching concentration. From Maslow's hierarchy of needs, rewards can meet teachers' basic needs, thereby increasing their job satisfaction; especially additional benefits can significantly affect job performance [57]. The lack of well-being and benefits will weaken teachers' overall satisfaction, and increases their turnover rate [57]. However, some scholars believe that the impact of well-being and benefits is very limited. They have no significant moderating effect on development and work performance; the same is true for work engagement and job performance [58].

Finally, the positive impact of the leadership relationship on teachers' job performance has been supported by numerous studies, and these studies almost unanimously agree that the influence of the leadership relationship is mediated through other factors. Limon [59] believes that the leadership relationship, especially the empowerment-type leadership that brings support and decentralization, will positively affect teachers' job performance, but this influence is mainly mediated through organizational loyalty. In addition, the support within the leadership relationship can enhance teachers' job satisfaction [60], thereby indirectly influencing job performance such as teaching practices [61]. Lee et al. [62] based on the self-determination theory, believe that the leadership relationship can meet the psychological needs in terms of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and connect leaders and teachers closely, thereby influencing teachers' work behavior and organizational commitment; in this process, the satisfaction of psychological needs serves as the mediator. In addition, the leadership relationship can also affect teachers' work engagement and positive emotional states through the interaction between leaders and teachers, thereby influencing job performance [63].

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Method

This study will employ a mixed research method, which combines quantitative research (specifically, questionnaire surveys) and qualitative research (specifically, interviews). This is because quantitative research enables researchers to collect data from a large population and analyze it through quantified data, thereby helping to verify hypotheses and obtain relevant generalizable trends [64]. However, qualitative research can make up for the limitations of quantitative research in terms of research depth, and obtain rich and in-depth data [65].

3.2. Target Community and Sampling Strategy

In both quantitative and qualitative research, the target community is the teachers working in private vocational high schools in Liaocheng City, Shandong Province, China. From the rankings of 13 private vocational high schools in the local area, the researcher will select four ones on the top and the other four school ranked at the bottom. The names of the selected schools, the number of teachers, and the proposed sample size for the quantitative research are shown in the following chart:

University	Teacher's Population	Minimum Desired Sample Size
Liaocheng Modern Transportation Vocational Secondary School	85	40
Liaocheng Jiangbei Sports School	50	23
Liaocheng Light Industry Vocational Secondary School	60	28
Liaocheng Hanwen Secondary Vocational School	40	19
Liaocheng Mingyuan Technical School	60	28
Liaocheng North Technical School	56	26
Liaocheng Chunrun Technical School	52	24
Shenxian Zhuoda Technical School	42	20
TOTAL	445	207

Figure 2. The proposed sample size for the quantitative research

The specific target community and related standards are specified in the table:

Table 1. The specific target community and related standards are specified

Target Community and Criteria	
Gender	No limitation
Age	No limitation
Workplace	Private vocational high school, Liaocheng, China
Years of service	3 years or more
Type of work	Full-time teacher
Stage of work	Regular teachers instead of probationary teachers
Position	No limitation

For the questionnaire survey, the target community is consistent with that of quantitative research. The sample size is approximately 16 people.

As for the sampling strategy, this study proposes to use stratified sampling for the quantitative questionnaire survey. This sampling strategy ensures that each stratum is represented in the sample, enhancing the representativeness of the sample while reducing sampling errors [66, 67].

For the qualitative interviews, the researchers will adopt the purposive sampling strategy. This is because the purpose of the interviews is to obtain rich and diverse data and information in order to deeply understand a certain phenomenon. Therefore, through purposive sampling, a more comprehensive sample can be obtained [68]. The researchers will select two teachers from each of the eight schools for the interviews.

3.3. Distribution and Data Collection

As for the quantitative questionnaire survey, the study recruits participants by distributing questionnaire survey in those schools. For the qualitative interview, this study seeks to recruit participants by distributing leaflets to explain purpose and the duration of the interview, the use of the data, the rights of the participants, and the contact information of the researchers. On this basis, the research will encourage teachers to participate voluntarily. The research will select 16 interviews with rich information.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire survey will be analyzed using SPSS. While the data obtained through interviews will be analyzed through thematic analysis.

4. Conclusion

In summary, this study aims to explore the factors that influence the job performance of private vocational high school teachers in Liaocheng, China. Using Herzberg's Two-Factors Theory as a framework, this study reviews the existing literature and identifies five motivating factors and five hygiene factors that are closely related to the teachers' job performance. Based on this, this study combined quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews for the research. Finally, this study will conduct data analysis using SPSS and thematic analysis methods, to verify the hypotheses of this study.

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