

A Study on the Work Motivation of Primary and Secondary School Teachers in China

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Abstract

Teachers are the foundation of education and the source of its development. In reality, the low sense of professional achievement and high work pressure have led to low motivation and burnout among teachers, which is particularly prominent among primary and secondary school teachers. In order to stimulate the vitality of the majority of primary and secondary school teachers and enhance their work motivation, the state has introduced a series of teacher incentive policies. In this study, 1418 teachers in primary and secondary schools were researched through questionnaires using descriptive statistical analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study found that overall teachers were more motivated to work and more organizationally motivated than individually motivated; the mean value of the former was 4.021 out of 5 and the latter was 3.837. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences between individual and organizational motivation in terms of teaching experience, highest level of education, being a classroom teacher or not, job title, administrative position, and participation in rotations. In this regard, it is important for teachers to raise their awareness of the policy, to remain true to their original intention of teaching, and to actively communicate with students, colleagues, and school leaders as a good way to increase their motivation.

Keywords

Primary and secondary school teachers; Teacher motivation; Personal initiative; Organizational activism

1. Chapter One: Background to the study

Education is the key to a hundred-year plan; teachers are the key to a great plan for education. Education is the cornerstone of a country's talent training and a national priority development strategy. The success of education is closely related to the quality of education, and high-quality education promotes the sound development of education. The quality of education has a very important role to play in the development of the teaching force, and high-quality teachers and teaching are key factors in the quality of education. Studies have shown that teacher quality is positively associated with improved student achievement, and that high-quality teachers have a more pronounced effect on the academic performance of underperforming students in particular.

In reality, the low sense of professional achievement and high work pressure have led to low motivation and burnout among teachers, which is particularly prominent among primary and secondary school teachers. For this reason, the State has introduced a series of policies to motivate primary and secondary school teachers, with the aim of improving the quality of education and teaching. In terms of the types of incentives, these include policy documents on performance pay, evaluation of titles, reduction of workload, classroom teacher positions, teacher training, and rotational exchanges. The implementation and realization of different

policies varied, and as a whole, the incentive effects of the various incentive policies were average, requiring further study and targeted recommendations for improvement.

First of all, whether it is direct incentive policies such as performance pay, title evaluation and recruitment, or indirect incentive policies such as teacher training and exchange rotation, there are certain problems in the implementation process, and there is no incentive effect or a limited incentive effect on the motivation of individual teachers. Secondly, most of the articles are based on a single policy to analyze the policy effects, however, the explanatory strength of a single policy has some limitations, so this study intends to analyze the teachers' work motivation. In addition, the concept of policy effect analysis is too vague, so this study focuses the policy effect on teachers' work motivation, which makes the purpose of the study clearer. How motivated are primary and secondary school teachers to work? The answer to this question helps to understand the current status of teachers' work motivation and to study the situation of differences in individual and organizational work motivation from both individual and organizational perspectives. Finally, differences are analyzed based on different groups of teachers.

2. Chapter Two: Review of Literature

In positive psychology, motivation refers to "an enduring, stable psychological state" that occurs in conjunction with burnout. In the beginning, work motivation was expressed by Kahn in terms of "work engagement"; Maslach & Leiter defined work motivation in terms of the three "burnout" dimensions, which include energy, involvement, and effectiveness. and effectiveness. Schaufeli & Bakker, on the other hand, argue that work motivation is differentiated from burnout and is defined by the dimensions of vigor and dedication. After conducting several in-depth interviews, Schaufelietal found that focus is also an important component of work motivation, further defining work motivation as an optimistic, fulfilling, and work-related mindset that encompasses energy, dedication, and focus. However, the above studies focus on individual affective-cognitive states and ignore individual behavioral characteristics. Work behavior is the most direct outward manifestation of an individual and is more important for both teacher self-improvement and school improvement, so it is necessary that work motivation include individual behavioral manifestations.

Work motivation is a multidimensional and comprehensive concept, including individual motivation and organizational motivation, and each dimension includes emotional attitude and behavioral performance, so this study defines work motivation as "the positive emotions and positive behaviors that an individual shows towards his/her work and his/her organization". Positive emotions include energy, dedication and focus; positive behaviours include helpfulness and willingness to contribute to the organization". Specifically, when applied to teachers as a group, teacher motivation refers to "the positive emotions and positive behaviors that teachers display in the course of their work, towards their work and towards their school".

Research on policy implementation emerged in the 1970s and the theory has gone through three phases, "top-down", "bottom-up" and "integration". The first stage, represented by Pressman and Wedavsky, pioneered the field of policy implementation and defined policy implementation as "a process of interaction between the establishment of goals and the adaptation of actions to accomplish those goals." In the second phase of research, the concept of "bottom-up" policy implementation was proposed by Sabatier, Mitter and Horn, among others. The third phase of the study focused on the development of the "network analysis model" and the "intergovernmental form of communication for policy implementation", which considers the implementation of each policy as a dynamic process and emphasizes the interaction and cooperation between people at different levels.

In the process of implementing education policies, firstly, education policies are approved through statutory procedures and then released through official channels, such as through the General Office of the State Council and the Ministry of Education. Secondly, departments such as the Provincial Department of Education and the Municipal Department of Education are responsible for communicating to the county-level education bureaus. Finally, it is up to county-level education bureaus and schools to implement the relevant policies. The implementation of policies is the only way to achieve policy goals, the process of implementing authoritative public policies and the practical phase of the policy process.

Existing studies have shown that overall teachers are not motivated to work and the effects of multiple motivational approaches are not obvious. In the existing studies, the subjects covered teachers in primary and secondary schools, higher vocational institutions and general colleges and universities. Among primary and secondary school teachers, the overall work motivation is not high. Some scholars have found through research that primary and secondary school teachers are not highly motivated, especially in their negative performance on usual school activities, and most school activities can only be promoted by a small number of key teachers. Under the background of performance pay policy, it is still difficult to improve the motivation of primary and secondary school teachers, and the incentive effect is not obvious.

Based on the current situation of teachers' low motivation, education administrations and schools have adopted diverse incentives. Incentives include, but are not limited to, grants, performance pay, group performance, housing subsidies; title evaluation, awards and prizes, and training priority. Despite the variety of approaches, the effect of truly motivating teachers is not obvious, and many scholars have explored the reasons behind this. The main reasons include external opposition and internal confrontation, the urban-rural gap, the low effectiveness of incentive performance pay, the serious formalization of appraisal methods and approaches, the high proportion of performance pay accounted for by the Gao Kao reward, and the ineffectiveness of performance pay as it relates to job titles.

By analyzing the above studies, it is found that both at home and abroad, the motivation of teachers mainly relies on policies to improve teachers' motivation, which is also the current consensus. Because teachers are dependent on the education administration system, they need to adopt more education policies to improve the status quo. Therefore, this study intends to focus on relevant education policy perspectives to further study how to enhance the work motivation of teachers in China. Relevant studies have been conducted on teachers at different levels. In 2022, education released relevant data show that China's full-time teachers reached 18,443,700 people, which accounted for the largest proportion of teachers in compulsory education, 10,571,900 people, accounting for 57.32%, so this study intends to focus on the largest group of teachers to carry out relevant research.

In general, the current situation of teachers' work motivation is worrying and needs to be further studied and improved. This study examines the work motivation of teachers in compulsory primary and secondary schools, and from the perspective of education policy, makes targeted recommendations to further improve the existing incentive policies and effectively enhance teachers' work motivation.

3. Chapter Three: Data and methodology

In this study, a total of 1,600 questionnaires were distributed and 1,449 were recovered, with a recovery rate of 90.56%; 1,418 questionnaires were valid, with a validity rate of 97.86%. Descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used in this study. Teachers' work motivation, divided into personal and organizational motivation, emotional and behavioral motivation. Personal attributes include gender, years of teaching experience, marital status, highest level of education, type of school, school tier, whether or not they are classroom

teachers, labor relations, title, administrative position, teaching load, teaching workload, and participation in rotations.

4. Chapter Four: Results of the study

Teacher motivation as the dependent variable of the article needs to be discussed thoroughly and objectively for later analysis. Therefore, this chapter intends to conduct descriptive statistical analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the variables of teachers' work motivation for the full sample data. The difference between the two types of motivation is statistically analyzed from two different perspectives: individual and organizational of teachers; and the individual characteristic variables are used as the basis for classification and analysis of variance.

1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Teachers' Work Motivation

In this study, 1418 valid questionnaires were processed and analyzed through Stata 15.0 to provide descriptive statistics on teachers' work motivation from individual and organizational perspectives respectively. Of these, Personal Behavior 4, 6, and 7 and Organizational Sentiment 2 are reverse scored and have been addressed during processing.

Overall, 1418 teachers were overall highly motivated, more organizationally motivated than individually motivated; 83.33% of the variables had a mean value of more than 3.7, with a maximum of 4.572, which represents individually motivated classroom behaviors, which shows that the teachers are very concerned about the feelings of their students and the questions they ask. The mean value of personal affective positivity is 3.950 and the maximum value is 4.24, which is the attitude of dedication of teachers. The mean value of personal behavior positivity is 3.781 and the highest value is 4.572, department teachers' classroom behavior. The mean value of Organizational Affective Positivity is 3.796 and the maximum value is 4.039, Departmental Teachers' Organizational Adaptation. The mean value of Organizational Behavioral Positivity is 4.134 and the maximum value is 4.399, Department of Teachers' Organizational Information Attention. Organizational activism was mentioned in the interviews, mainly in relation to school leadership.

Due to the large number of dependent variable variables in this study, involving 18 of them, it is too cumbersome in the process of conducting quantitative analysis. In order to make the dependent variables more representative, factor analysis was used to reduce their dimensionality, and the composite scores of teachers' individual and organizational motivation were calculated separately. In this study, Stata 15.0 was used to factor analyze the individual and organizational work motivation variables of teachers to calculate the composite score of individual teacher's work motivation (PWM) and composite score of teacher's organizational work motivation (OWM), respectively, and was used as the dependent variable of each model.

In terms of teachers' individual work motivation, firstly, the Cronbach-alpha coefficient (reliability) was solved for the nine variables of teachers' individual work motivation, and the value was 0.6851, which was less than 0.7, and did not meet the requirements of factor analysis. Through data testing, the variables Personal Behavior 6 and Personal Behavior 7 were excluded and recalculated to 0.7438, which meets the requirements. Secondly, the KMO value (validity) test was conducted and the KMO value was 0.788, indicating that the remaining 7 variables were suitable for factor analysis. In addition, 2 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted by factor analysis with a cumulative contribution of 57.98%. Finally, the factor scores were calculated and normalized to obtain a composite factor score (PWM) of individual teachers' work motivation with a range of 0-1, a mean of 0.7729 and a standard deviation of 0.1570.

In terms of the motivation of teachers to organize their work, firstly, the Cronbach-alpha coefficient was solved for the 9 variables of teachers' motivation to organize their work, and

the value was 0.8863, which is in line with the requirements of factor analysis. Secondly, the KMO value test was conducted and the KMO value was 0.921, indicating that the nine variables were suitable for factor analysis. In addition, two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted by factor analysis with a cumulative contribution of 69.82%. Finally, the factor scores were calculated and normalized to obtain a composite factor score of teachers' organizational work motivation (OWM) with a range of 0-1, a mean of 0.7551, and a standard deviation of 0.1669.

In summary, the overall questionnaire design was more reasonable and the teachers surveyed were more motivated to work, where they were more organizationally motivated than individually motivated.

2. Individual Characterization of Teachers' Work Motivation

In the literature review section, teachers' personal characteristics were found to have varying degrees of influence on teachers' motivation. This study was analyzed by ANOVA, both to validate and respond to previous studies and to provide a basis for categorization in categorical regression. In this paper, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the variables of individual and organizational work motivation of teachers as the dependent variable, in terms of gender, type of school, school level, years of teaching experience, highest level of qualification, whether or not they are classroom teachers, labor relations, title, administrative position and participation in rotations. In this case, t-tests were conducted for dichotomous variables and F-tests were conducted for multivariate variables (variables with dimensions greater than 2).

T-test analysis of teachers' motivation to work

First, t-tests were conducted on the variables of gender, type of school, school level, being a classroom teacher or not, labor relations, administrative position, and participation in rotations from both individual and organizational dimensions. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Statistical Table of T-Test Results of Teachers' Work Motivation

Dimension	Categorisation	number of people	PWM mean variance	T-value	OWM mean variance	T-value
Genders	Male	443	0.763±0.008	-1.582	0.746±0.008	-
	Female	975	0.777±0.005		0.759±0.005	1.396*
Type of school	Rural School	533	0.799±0.007	4.897* **	0.776±0.007	3.751*
	Schools above county level	885	0.757±0.005		0.742±0.006	**
Level of school	Primary school	654	0.805±0.006	7.213* **	0.793±0.006	8.020*
	Junior middle school	764	0.746±0.006		0.723±0.006	**
Teacher in charge of a class	No	830	0.767±0.005	- 1.683* **	0.745±0.006	-
	Yes	588	0.781±0.007		0.769±0.007	2.709* **
Labour relations	Unorganised	212	0.785±0.010	1.197	0.761±0.011	0.555
	Braced	1206	0.771±0.005		0.754±0.005	
Administrative duties	No	1027	0.763±0.005	- 3.707* **	0.738±0.005	-
	Yes	391	0.798±0.008		0.799±0.008	6.29** *
Participation in rotations	No	1077	0.767±0.005	- 2.706* **	0.746±0.005	-
	Yes	341	0.793±0.009		0.782±0.009	3.489* **

Differences in the variables of school type, school tier, being a classroom teacher or not, administrative position, and rotation participation were all significant at the 1% level in terms of individual and organizational teacher motivation. In terms of motivation to organize work, the difference between genders at the 10% level is significant, with female teachers' being higher.

Specifically, in terms of school category, the difference in the work motivation of teachers in schools above the county level and in township schools is significant. In particular, teachers in township schools are more motivated to work, with a mean value of individual motivation of 0.799, which is 0.042 points higher than that of schools above the county level. During the interviews, some teachers in schools above the county level reflected that the high pressure on schools and the high demands on teaching suppressed personal motivation; since there are now fewer students in the townships, teachers are under relatively less pressure and have higher personal motivation. In terms of organizational motivation, the mean value of 0.776 for township teachers is 0.034 points higher than that of schools at the county level and above, which is still a gap, but the gap has narrowed. Overall, teachers in township schools are more motivated than teachers at the county level or above, and more significantly at the individual level.

In terms of school tiers, the difference in motivation between elementary and middle school teachers is significant. Among them, elementary school teachers are more motivated to work individually, with a mean of 0.805 at the individual level, which is 0.059 points higher than that of junior high school teachers, and a mean of 0.793 at the organizational level, which is 0.07 points higher than that of junior high school teachers, which is an even bigger gap. Among the 1,418 teachers, elementary school teachers were more proactive in their work than junior high school teachers. During the interviews, junior high school teachers believed that junior high school students were in puberty, which was more difficult to manage, and faced with the pressure to advance to higher levels of education, and that their work motivation was affected by multiple factors, resulting in a lack of motivation. Overall, elementary school teachers were more motivated than middle school teachers, and more significantly so at the organizational level.

The difference in motivation between classroom and non-classroom teachers was significant in terms of whether or not they were classroom teachers. Classroom teachers are more motivated, with a mean of 0.781 at the individual level, which is 0.014 points higher than non-classroom teachers, and a mean of 0.769 at the organizational level, which is 0.024 points higher than non-classroom teachers, and the gap becomes wider. Interviews with principals revealed that the vast majority of classroom teachers are selected by principals or school leaders. They generally chose more passionate and energetic teachers to serve as classroom teachers because of their heavier workload. Overall, classroom teachers were more motivated than non-classroom teachers, and this was more pronounced at the organizational level.

The difference between the work motivation of teachers with and without positions is significant in terms of the presence or absence of administrative positions. Teachers with positions are more motivated to work, with a mean of 0.798 at the individual level, which is 0.035 higher than that of teachers without positions, and a mean of 0.799 at the organizational level, which is 0.061 higher than that of teachers without positions, with the gap between the two becoming more and more pronounced. In the course of the principal interviews, candidates for positions regarding grade leaders, school middle managers, and directors of education give preference to teachers with outstanding work performance and high motivation; and their motivation remains high after they assume leadership positions. On the whole, teachers with positions are more motivated than those without, and more so at the organizational level.

The difference in motivation between teachers with and without rotational experience is significant in terms of participation in rotations. Teachers with rotation experience were more motivated to work, with a mean of 0.793 at the individual level, which is 0.026 higher than that of teachers who did not participate in the rotation, and an even greater difference at the organizational level, with a mean of 0.782, which is 0.036 higher than that of teachers who did not participate in the rotation. The number of teachers with rotation experience is only 341, accounting for 24.05%, which is a low percentage; and in the course of the interviews, fewer

teachers had rotation experience, indicating that there is much room for improvement in the implementation of this policy. Overall, teachers with rotational experiences were more motivated to work than those without, and more significantly at the organizational level. In the interviews, many teachers said that the rotational experience showed them the disparities between different schools, especially those in remote rural areas, and that being in a rotational school gave them more self-confidence. In terms of gender and labor relations, the differences between the two in terms of teachers' salary motivation are not particularly significant; that is, the differences in work motivation are not very pronounced for either male or female teachers, with or without staffing.

As can be seen from the results of the above t-tests, the differences in individual and organizational motivation of teachers in the dimensions of school type, school level, being a classroom teacher or not, administrative position, and rotational participation are all significant.

F-Test Analysis of Teachers' Work Motivation

F-tests were conducted on teachers' work motivation in terms of the variables of age of teaching, highest educational qualification and title. Specifically, in terms of the age of teaching, the difference in the work motivation of teachers of different ages is significant at the 5% level. Teachers with more than 30 years of teaching experience were the most motivated, while those with 6-10 years of service were the least motivated, and it can be hypothesized that after 6-10 years of service, teachers are more likely to experience burnout. At the individual level, teachers with more than 30 years of teaching experience have a mean of 0.801, which is 0.061 points higher than those with 6-10 years of experience, while the mean of teachers in other teaching age groups is around 0.771. At the organizational level, the mean value for teachers with more than 30 years of teaching experience was 0.780. It can be seen that both personal and organizational motivation is highest among teachers in the higher age groups, with a score of 0.066 points higher than those who have been working for 6-10 years, and the difference between the two is even more pronounced, while the mean value for the rest of the teachers is around 0.751. Overall, teachers' motivation to work shows a trend of decreasing and then increasing as the age of teaching rises, and the difference is more significant at the organizational level.

In terms of the highest level of personal education, the difference in motivation of teachers with different levels of education is significant at the 5% level. It is clearly seen that teachers with lower qualifications are more motivated to work and teachers with higher qualifications are on the contrary less motivated to work. At the individual level, teachers with a bachelor's degree (adult higher education) have the highest work motivation, with a mean value of 0.780, which is 0.086 points higher than teachers with a master's degree; it shows a tendency of increasing and then decreasing. At the organizational level, teachers with less than a bachelor's degree were the most motivated to work, with a mean of 0.763, which is 0.080 points higher than teachers with a master's degree, with the difference narrowing slightly and showing a continuing downward trend. Overall, the differences in teachers' motivation to work were significant across academic qualifications and even more so at the individual level.

In terms of job title, the difference in work motivation of teachers with different job titles is significant at 1% level. The highest work motivation was found among teachers with title III, while the lowest was found among teachers with title II. At the individual level, teachers at level 3 have the highest mean value of work motivation at 0.838, which is 0.085 points higher than teachers at level 2. At the organizational level, teachers at level 3 have the highest mean value of work motivation at 0.794, which is 0.057 points higher than teachers at level 2. Overall, teachers' work motivation increases, then decreases, then increases again as the mean value rises with title; the difference is significant across titles and is more significant at the individual level.

From the above F-test results, it can be seen that the difference in teachers' motivation is significant in the dimensions of years of teaching experience, highest educational qualification and title.

5. Chapter Five: Conclusions and policy implications

In the analysis of the differences in individual and organizational motivation of teachers by comparing gender, years of teaching, type of school, school level, highest level of education, being a classroom teacher or not, labor relations, title, administrative position and participation in rotation, significant differences were found in the dimensions of years of teaching, type of school, school level, highest level of education, being a classroom teacher or not, title, administrative position and participation in rotation. The latter analysis proposes to conduct categorical regressions on these dimensions in order to make appropriate recommendations for different populations.

The implementation of the policy is one aspect. Teachers' own understanding of the policy, adherence to the original intention of teaching, and active communication with students, colleagues, and school leaders are also good ways to increase their motivation.

First of all, to strengthen the ideal belief in teaching, not forgetting the original intention and strengthening the sense of responsibility. Teachers are called upon to keep their original intention of teaching, actively fulfill their teaching tasks, teach their students well, teach each lesson well, and actively improve their teaching ability and professional development ability.

In the interviews, the teachers mentioned their educational sentiments, their beginnings in teaching and their sense of responsibility. "The primary one is the sentiment of education, and the other one is the friends I have come into contact with, apart from our colleagues in the school, there are many experts and master teachers within the province and even the country, whose unique growth experiences have inspired me a lot". "When the teacher does not forget the original intention, I always feel that I teach not for a certain person to teach, nor for a certain unit or a collective to teach, because I take every month is the state's salary, I teach not for others, that is, to be loyal to their own cause of education. I always feel that teaching is a positive interaction, I take the students, both students and parents, he feels that I do this teacher, with students I am more sincere, I just want to teach the students well, do not let the parents say that I put my child in your hands, and then you do not teach my child well how. "

Secondly, do a good job of communicating with students and actively explore the classroom. Actively communicate with students to get to know each student, enter the world of students, dig deep into their own classroom, improve the quality and efficiency of the classroom, and enhance personal motivation.

Last but not least, actively communicate with colleagues and cooperate to complete school affairs. Usually actively communicate with colleagues, work together to overcome the difficulties of the work, the formation of a good atmosphere of mutual help; actively cooperate with the school leadership arrangements for the completion of the task, and make their own contribution to the collective, in order to enhance the organization of the work of the positive.

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