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Current Status and Correlations of Organizational Support, Psychological Capital, and Work Engagement among Vocational College Teachers

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Abstract

Abstract: Objective To investigate the current status and relationships among organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement among teachers in vocational colleges, providing a reference for faculty reform in vocational institutions. Methods From September to December 2023, using convenience sampling, 282 teachers from 5 vocational colleges in our province were surveyed using a general information questionnaire, the Perceived Organizational Support Scale, the Psychological Capital Scale, and the Work Engagement Scale. Results The scores for perceived organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement were (3.36 ± 0.39) , (4.10 ± 0.49) , and (3.52 ± 0.54) , respectively. All three variables were positively correlated ($r=0.943$, $r=0.884$, $r=0.898$, $P<0.01$). Organizational support and psychological capital had direct positive effects on teachers' work engagement, and psychological capital partially mediated the relationship between organizational support and work engagement (accounting for 18.05%). Conclusion Organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement among vocational college teachers were all at moderate levels, with both psychological capital and organizational support exerting positive effects on work engagement. Therefore, vocational colleges should further strengthen organizational support and investment in psychological capital for teachers, enhance their sense of professional value and mission, and promote continuous improvement in vocational education teaching quality.

Full Text

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Abstract

Objective: To investigate the current status and relationships among organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement among vocational college teachers, providing a reference for faculty reform initiatives in vocational institutions. **Methods:** From September to December 2023, we conducted a survey of 282 teachers from five vocational colleges in Sichuan Province using convenience sampling. Data were collected using a general information questionnaire, the Perceived Organizational Support Scale, the Psychological Capital Scale, and the Work Engagement Scale. **Results:** The mean scores were 3.36 ± 0.39 for organizational support, 4.10 ± 0.49 for psychological capital, and 3.52 ± 0.54 for work engagement. All three variables were positively correlated ($r=0.943$, $r=0.884$, $r=0.898$, $P<0.01$). Organizational support and psychological capital had direct positive effects on work engagement, with psychological capital partially mediating the relationship between organizational support and work engagement (accounting for 18.05% of the total effect). **Conclusion:** Organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement among vocational college teachers are all at moderate levels, with both psychological capital and organizational support exerting positive effects on work engagement. Therefore, vocational colleges should strengthen organizational support and investment in psychological capital to enhance teachers' sense of professional value and mission, thereby continuously improving the quality of vocational education.

Keywords: vocational colleges; teachers; psychological capital; organizational support; work engagement; correlation

In recent years, national policy documents have repeatedly emphasized the importance of developing vocational education at a higher level. The teaching faculty represents the primary resource for developing vocational education and constitutes a critical force and foundational work for supporting vocational education reform in the new era [1]. How to stimulate vocational college teachers' sense of professional value and improve their work enthusiasm has become a key issue in faculty reform. Work engagement refers to a positive and fulfilling state of mind in which an individual integrates with their work role within an organization, representing an important indicator of intrinsic motivation [2]. Perceived

organizational support reflects an organization's recognition of employee contributions, value identification, and concern for employee welfare, and has been proven to effectively enhance intrinsic motivation and promote more vigorous and efficient work performance [3]. Psychological capital represents relatively stable and positive psychological energy in individuals and is a factor related to excellent work attitudes and performance. Research indicates that psychological capital can effectively promote work engagement and improve individual work performance and creativity [4]. These findings demonstrate that organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement are closely related; however, few studies have explored the current status and correlations among these three variables among vocational college teachers. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how organizational support and psychological capital influence work engagement among vocational college teachers, providing theoretical references for faculty reform initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher motivation and promoting higher-quality development of vocational education.

Data Sources and Methods

Study Population and Sampling

From September to December 2023, we used convenience sampling to select full-time teachers from five vocational colleges in Sichuan Province as study participants. Inclusion criteria were: (1) currently employed with a valid college teaching certificate; (2) engaged in teaching at a vocational college for at least one year; and (3) informed consent and willingness to participate. Exclusion criteria were: (1) absence from work due to business trips, maternity leave, or training; and (2) unwillingness to participate.

Survey Methods

This cross-sectional study employed convenience sampling to select target institutions. After obtaining consent from relevant institutional leaders, we used a random number table to randomly select current teachers from each institution. Surveys were administered through two methods: Wenjuanxing (an online survey platform) and on-site distribution. After obtaining informed consent, we used standardized instructions to explain the survey purpose, completion methods, and precautions. Teachers completed the questionnaires anonymously and submitted them independently. Completed questionnaires were collected on-site and verified by two researchers; any missing or incorrect items were corrected immediately. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, yielding 282 valid questionnaires (94% validity rate).

Survey Instruments

General Information Questionnaire: Designed based on literature review and practical considerations, including age, gender, marital status, education level, teaching experience, professional title, employment status, and income.

Perceived Organizational Support Scale: Based on the work of Ling Wenquan et al. (2006) [5], Eisenberger et al. (1986) [6], and Zhao Qiang (2014) [7]. This scale comprises 22 items across three dimensions: work support, value recognition, and concern for interests. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1-5), scores range from 22 to 110, with higher scores indicating stronger perceived organizational support. The scale's Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.941 [8].

Work Engagement Scale: Developed by Schaufeli et al. [9] and revised in Chinese by Zhang Yiwen et al. [10]. This scale includes 17 items across three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Using a 7-point Likert scale (1-7), scores range from 17 to 119, with higher scores indicating higher work engagement. The scale's Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.949 [8].

Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24): Developed by Luthans et al. [11] and translated into Chinese by Li Chaoping et al. [12]. This questionnaire contains 24 items across four dimensions: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. Using a 6-point Likert scale (1-6), scores range from 24 to 144, with higher scores indicating higher psychological capital. The questionnaire's Cronbach's α coefficient is 0.900.

Statistical Methods

Data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Categorical data were described using frequencies and percentages. Normally distributed continuous data were described using mean \pm standard deviation ($\bar{x} \pm s$) and compared between groups using t-tests or ANOVA. Pearson correlation analysis was used for correlation analysis, multiple linear regression for influencing factor analysis, and the Process macro with bootstrap method for mediation effect analysis. The significance level was set at $\alpha=0.05$.

Results

General Characteristics of Participants

Among the 282 vocational college teachers, 109 were male and 173 were female. The average age was 32.36 ± 6.24 years. There were 172 married and 110 unmarried teachers; 117 were permanent staff and 165 were contract staff. A total of 265 teachers held a bachelor's degree or higher, and 199 held intermediate professional titles or above. Teaching experience distribution was: 1-5 years (98 teachers), 6-10 years (85), 11-15 years (70), and over 16 years (29). The majority (126 teachers) reported monthly income between 3000-5000 RMB. Details are shown in Table 1.

Current Status of Organizational Support, Psychological Capital, and Work Engagement

The results showed that vocational college teachers' mean scores were 3.36 ± 0.39 for organizational support, 4.10 ± 0.49 for psychological capital, and 3.52 ± 0.54

for work engagement. Scores for all dimensions are shown in Table 2 .

Correlation Analysis

Organizational support, psychological capital, and all their dimensions were positively correlated with work engagement and its dimensions ($r=0.943$, $r=0.884$, $P<0.01$). Organizational support and all its dimensions were positively correlated with psychological capital and all its dimensions ($r=0.898$, $P<0.01$). Details are shown in Table 3 .

Comparison of Scores Among Teachers with Different Characteristics

Univariate analysis revealed statistically significant differences in organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement scores based on age, marital status, employment status, education level, professional title, teaching experience, and income ($P<0.05$). Details are shown in Table 4 .

Mediating Effect of Psychological Capital

We used the Process macro and bootstrap method (5,000 resamples) to test the mediating effect. If the 95% confidence interval did not include 0, the mediating effect was considered significant. The results showed that coefficients a , b , c , and c' were all significant ($P<0.001$), indicating that psychological capital played a partial mediating role. The mediating effect value was 0.1703, accounting for 18.05% of the total effect. Details are shown in Table 5 , Table 6 , and Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

Discussion

Current Status of Organizational Support, Psychological Capital, and Work Engagement

This survey revealed that mean scores for organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement among vocational college teachers ranged from 3.28 to 4.23 across all dimensions, indicating moderate-to-high levels, consistent with findings from Xiang Caixia and Zheng Yuwei [2,13]. Among organizational support dimensions, work support scored highest, followed by value recognition and concern for interests, suggesting that vocational college administrators should further enhance value recognition for teachers and increase support for their interests to meet professional development needs and strengthen organizational belonging. Psychological capital and all its dimensions scored above 4.0, with self-efficacy ranking highest, followed by resilience, hope, and optimism. This indicates that vocational college teachers have high confidence in their work, can adjust their psychological and emotional states positively when facing setbacks, and are willing to persevere and dedicate themselves to vocational education, demonstrating good psychological resilience. Among work engagement dimensions, dedication scored highest, followed by absorption and vigor,

corresponding closely with the specific manifestations of psychological capital. This suggests that vocational college teachers generally have good work status and professional dedication, actively participating in their work, though they may experience fatigue and decreased vigor when facing work pressure or new challenges, leading to potential burnout. Therefore, administrators should create a positive work atmosphere to help teachers develop positive psychological states for better work engagement.

Furthermore, analysis of influencing factors showed that age, marital status, employment status, education level, professional title, teaching experience, and income all affected organizational support, psychological capital, and work engagement. Younger, unmarried teachers with junior titles, less teaching experience, and lower income may face new environments and educational types when entering vocational colleges. While they have high expectations and pursuits for career planning, they also encounter more new challenges and pressures, leading to fatigue and confusion, consistent with research on teacher career cycle psychological development [14]. Due to limited life and teaching experience, they often need to expend more energy, reducing their psychological resilience and negatively affecting work engagement [15]. In contrast, teachers with longer teaching experience can flexibly handle various challenges in teaching, and with improved professional titles and income, they gain higher professional value and achievement. This helps them feel organizational recognition and support for their work, and as backbone teachers, they maintain more positive work status [16].

Therefore, vocational college administrators should scientifically optimize stratified and categorized management of the teaching faculty. Based on the characteristics and individual needs of novice teachers, backbone teachers, and expert teachers at different career stages, administrators should optimize resource allocation, provide effective physical and mental support, guide teachers to adjust their psychological states properly, and foster internal motivation, enabling them to contribute to vocational education development with more positive and energetic work status.

Positive Predictive Effects of Organizational Support and Psychological Capital on Work Engagement

The results showed that organizational support, psychological capital, and all their dimensions were positively correlated with work engagement and its dimensions, and organizational support had a direct positive effect on work engagement, consistent with findings from Duan Xiaojian and Yang Yang [17-18]. In this study, organizational support's direct effect on vocational college teachers' work engagement accounted for 81.95% of the total effect, indicating that teachers' work status is significantly influenced by organizational support. As a positive management resource, when organizations respect and support teachers' career planning and values, care for and meet their interest needs, and help solve work difficulties, teachers directly feel organizational belonging and

identification, leading to more positive and enthusiastic work engagement [19]. Psychological capital belongs to the positive psychology domain; higher psychological capital indicates stronger psychological states and resilience. Therefore, when facing increasingly challenging vocational education work, teachers can adjust their psychological states according to actual work conditions, increase work motivation, improve efficiency [20], and promote work engagement.

Indirect Effect of Organizational Support on Work Engagement Through Psychological Capital

This study found that in addition to its direct effect, organizational support also indirectly affects work engagement through psychological capital, demonstrating psychological capital's important positive role in the relationship between organizational support and work engagement. As an external driving factor, organizational support meets teachers' value and interest needs, driving them to engage actively in work. Simultaneously, it can effectively stimulate teachers' sense of professional value and mission, helping them maintain vitality, responsibility, and focus on education. This positive psychological resource can effectively balance the energy consumed in busy work, maintain physical and mental equilibrium, reduce burnout, and sustain work engagement [21-22]. These findings suggest that vocational college administrators should recognize the close relationship among these three variables and take effective measures to improve organizational support levels. By emphasizing spiritual guidance and support, empowering teachers, strengthening cultural construction, establishing incentive mechanisms, and conducting psychological training, administrators can promote positive psychological adjustment and form lasting internal motivation to enhance sustained work engagement.

Both organizational support and psychological capital are positive predictors of vocational college teachers' work engagement, with psychological capital playing a partial mediating role between organizational support and work engagement. However, due to time and resource constraints, this study only sampled vocational college teachers in Sichuan Province. Future research should conduct multi-center, large-sample surveys using stratified sampling and mixed methods to provide more comprehensive and objective theoretical foundations for vocational college faculty reform.

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