

## TREND OF RESEARCH ON JOB BURNOUT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT

With the intensification of competition in college education, college teachers are facing increasing work pressure and a gradual decrease in the level of job satisfaction, which in turn affects their identification with the school and their sense of identity with the teaching profession. The professional characteristics of college teachers determine the diversity and complexity of their work tasks, not only need to undertake teaching and scientific research tasks, but also need to perform administrative management, social services and other duties. With the continuous changes in the academic evaluation system, the assessment pressure, scientific research performance requirements and title promotion competition among college teachers are becoming increasingly fierce, which makes some teachers in a long-term high-intensity working condition, physical and mental health is affected, and even lead to burnout, which in turn affects the quality of teaching and scientific research output.

Burnout not only negatively affects the physical and mental health of individual teachers, but also reduces the overall quality of university education and academic research. Therefore, how to effectively alleviate teacher burnout and improve teacher job satisfaction has become an important issue for higher education administrators and researchers. Studies have shown that social support, remuneration, organisational management mode, career development opportunities, academic freedom, teacher-student relationship and other factors affect the burnout level and job satisfaction of university teachers. Therefore, university administrators should take corresponding measures, such as optimising teachers' career development paths, improving the working environment, reducing unnecessary administrative burdens, enhancing teachers' sense of participation in school management, and improving the transparency of management so that teachers can fully perceive the support of the university.

By systematically sorting out the research results on job satisfaction and burnout of college teachers at home and abroad, this paper explores the key factors affecting burnout of college teachers and analyses the limitations and future development trends of the existing studies, with a view to providing a theoretical background and practical references for the subsequent studies. At the same time, this paper also provides a scientific basis for university administrators to formulate more effective teacher management and support policies, which will ultimately enhance the occupational well-being of university teachers and promote the overall improvement of the quality of university education.

**Keywords:** University Teachers, Job Burnout, Job Satisfaction

### INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is an important research topic in the field of organisational behaviour and psychology, reflecting the subjective evaluation and feelings of employees on their work environment, tasks, compensation and other factors, which has a far-reaching impact on their work performance, organisational loyalty and psychological health. In the field of education, the job satisfaction of university teachers is particularly critical, as it directly affects the quality of teaching, academic research and student

development. The concept of job satisfaction can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century, and gradually developed with the development of industrial psychology. Locke (1969) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive affective state of an employee towards his or her job or work experience, emphasising a combination of cognitive appraisal and affective response to the job itself and related factors such as pay, promotion opportunities, work environment, etc. Judge, Zhang and Glerum (2020) further proposed a multidimensional composition of job satisfaction, including satisfaction with various aspects of the job itself, the work environment, remuneration, promotion opportunities and co-worker relationships, which are interrelated and together constitute overall satisfaction. In recent years, studies have gradually focused on the interaction between job satisfaction and other psychological variables. Wang et al. (2022) found that job satisfaction has a mediating role in alleviating burnout and improving job performance. Pan Ling and Zhang Xiaoying (2024) showed that burnout has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction, and that professional identity plays a mediating role in it. Through a survey of primary and secondary school teachers in Zhejiang Province, Ji Chengjun et al. (2023) found that burnout indirectly weakened job satisfaction by decreasing work engagement and increasing work pressure. In terms of measurement tools, the Minnesota Satisfaction Scale (MSQ) and the Job Description Index method (JDI) are widely used abroad, while domestic scholars such as Zhang Keyong (2003) and Feng Bolin (1996) revised the measurement tools based on the classic scale to meet the Chinese national conditions. Research on job satisfaction has evolved from unidimensional to multidimensional, and commonly used questionnaires include the JSS, JDI, and MSQ scales, which provide an important basis for educational administrators to formulate policies and interventions.

Job Burnout is a combination of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that occurs in individuals under long-term work stress. Freudenberger (1974) first proposed the concept of burnout, describing the physiological and behavioural manifestations of employees, such as tiredness, headaches, insomnia, and behavioural changes such as irritability and sensitivity. Schaufeli and Enzmann (2020) further developed the study by proposing the Job Demand-Resource Model (JD-RM), which emphasized that the imbalance between high job demand and low resource supply is the main cause of burnout. Psychological problems such as depression and anxiety are highly correlated, and its influencing factors include workload, emotional demands, and insufficient personal resources. In the field of education, Zhou Shilong and Li Quansheng (2024) found that job content richness and challenge alleviate burnout through motivational factors; Meng Fan and Li Xin (2024) found that occupational identity plays a mediating role in decreasing burnout from the two-factor theory; Zhang Yue (2024) demonstrated that job satisfaction has a significant negative effect on burnout; and Wang Haili (2024) emphasised the moderating role of social support, and high social support can effectively alleviate burnout. In addition, Jia Pengyuan et al. (2024) took nurses in primary hospitals as their subjects and found that psychological resilience reduces burnout by enhancing job satisfaction. In terms of measurement tools, Maslach's Burnout Questionnaire (MBI) is widely used abroad, and its education industry version, the MBI-ES, is cross-culturally consistent; domestic scholars such as Li Yongxin (2003), Wang Guoxiang (2004), and Xu Fuming (2005) revised the measurement tool based on the MBI to apply to Chinese teachers. These studies provide an important basis for understanding the causes of burnout and intervention.

Job satisfaction and burnout among college teachers are influenced by multiple factors that can be broadly categorised as content and environmental factors. Content factors are similar to motivational factors in the two-factor theory, while environmental factors are more inclined to health factors. Research has shown that the factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction and burnout can be categorised into four main groups: social, school, professional and personal factors. Social factors belong to the macro level, including economic development, political measures, government protection, industry environment and cultural atmosphere. Although these factors are more difficult to change, they have a profound impact on teachers' job satisfaction and burnout. For example, the contradiction between society's high expectations of teachers and mismatched salary levels poses a great challenge to improving teachers' job satisfaction and alleviating burnout. As an organisation with direct contact between teachers and students, the school environment, organisational structure, organisational perceptions, material resource inputs and organisational support have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction and burnout. Schools can improve these factors to increase teachers' job satisfaction and reduce their burnout. Teachers are more likely to perceive the facilitating role of school organisations, but the hindering role is more influential. From a professional point of view, the teaching profession is special in that it requires teachers not only to teach but also to educate people. The vitality and variability of the objects taught, as well as

the long-lasting and long-term nature of teaching activities, make the study of teacher burnout particularly important. Many scholars have conducted research on the impact of work resources on teacher burnout. Individual factors, especially teachers' personality traits, influence their job satisfaction and burnout from individual roots. These deep-rooted influences are generally difficult to change.

Spector (2022), in his book *Job satisfaction: from assessment to intervention*, systematically summarised the assessment methods and intervention strategies for job satisfaction, stating that an accurate assessment of employees' job satisfaction is a prerequisite for the development of effective interventions. Andreas' (2022) study found that employees with high job satisfaction perform better. Feng Bolin (1996) analysed the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers and its influencing factors in Beijing, and found that teachers' job satisfaction was significantly affected by leadership behaviour, social reference, examination pressure and personal background factors, and designed a teacher job satisfaction scale, which proposed five elements constituting teachers' job satisfaction: self-actualisation, work intensity, salary income, leadership relationship and colleague relationship. Domestic and international studies have shown that job satisfaction is affected by a variety of factors, including burnout, role pressure, self-efficacy and work environment. Cultural background, industry characteristics and occupation type have an important moderating effect on the research results. Domestic studies focus on empirical analyses of specific occupational groups, while foreign studies pay more attention to the validation of theoretical models and cross-cultural comparisons. These studies not only expand the theoretical connotation of job satisfaction, but also provide a multidimensional intervention path to improve teachers' occupational well-being.

## OBJECTIVE

23. To sort out the definitions, measurement tools and influencing factors of job satisfaction and burnout, to analyse their relationship and internal mechanisms, and to explore their interactions.
24. To summarise the interventions such as optimising the working environment and enhancing psychological support, to assess their effectiveness and applicability, and to provide practical guidance for university administrators.
25. To predict the future research direction, including the deepening of the study, the innovation of measurement methods and the promotion of localisation, so as to provide theoretical basis and practical reference for the subsequent research.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the literature review method to systematically sort out the research results on job satisfaction and burnout of college teachers at home and abroad. The specific steps are as follows:

### ***Sub-Section 1 Literature search***

Through CNKI, Web of Science, PubMed and other databases, we searched for literature related to job satisfaction and burnout of college teachers. The keywords include 'college teachers', 'job satisfaction', 'burnout', 'influencing factors', 'interventions', 'job satisfaction', 'burnout', 'job satisfaction', 'burnout', 'burnout', and 'interventions'. 'intervention measures', etc., to ensure the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the literature.

### ***Sub-Section 2 Theoretical framework construction***

Based on Hoppock's job satisfaction theory and Maslach's burnout theory, the theoretical model of job satisfaction and burnout of college teachers is constructed, and the definitions, measurement tools and their interrelationships are clarified.

### ***Sub-Section 3 Analysis of Influencing Factors***

Summary of interventions: summarise the interventions proposed in the current study and explore their effectiveness.

### ***Sub-Section 4 Summary of interventions***

To summarise the interventions proposed in the current study, such as increasing teachers' salary level, optimising the working environment, enhancing psychological support, etc., and to assess the effectiveness of these interventions and their applicability. At the same time, to explore the implementation effects of different interventions in different contexts.

### ***Sub-Section 5 Trend speculation***

Based on the existing research, the future development trend of the research on job satisfaction and burnout among college teachers is speculated. This includes the deepening of research (e.g., longitudinal studies), the enhancement of applicability (e.g., evaluation of the effects of interventions), the innovation of measurement methods (e.g., big data analysis), and the advancement of localised research (e.g., the construction of theoretical models and measurement tools applicable to China's educational environment).

## RESULTS

Current research at home and abroad focuses on how to effectively intervene in college teachers' burnout and improve their job satisfaction. Studies have shown that burnout and job satisfaction of college teachers are affected by various factors, including social support, salary, career development, organisational management, psychological adjustment, etc. However, there are no systematic interventions that are universally applicable and effective for all educators. It is found that foreign scholars mainly start from the occurrence stage of burnout and divide effective interventions into two categories: one is the preventive measures before burnout occurs, and the other is the curbing measures after burnout occurs. At the same time, scholars also intervene from the perspective of influencing factors, based on the individual level and the environmental level, in an attempt to build a comprehensive intervention system.

### 1. Preventive measures for burnout

Before burnout occurs, taking effective preventive measures is crucial to reducing its probability of occurrence. Many studies have shown that college teachers' burnout often originates from the long-term accumulation of occupational stress, so how to reduce occupational stress, improve occupational identity, and provide a positive career development path is the key to intervention. Foreign scholars have emphasised the cultivation and support mechanisms in the early stages of teachers' careers, such as providing career development training, guiding teachers in career planning, and improving teachers' psychological resilience and emotion management skills. Some studies have shown that measures such as Mindfulness Training, emotion management courses and career awareness education can effectively help teachers adjust their expectations and enhance their self-efficacy, thus reducing the occurrence of burnout.

From the perspective of the social environment, the government and educational management agencies can take more active policy measures, such as optimising the salary structure of university teachers, improving the social status of teachers, and reducing administrative burdens. In addition, a more scientific and reasonable teacher appraisal system should be promoted to avoid a single quantitative assessment overly affecting teachers' professional identity and job satisfaction. Society should weaken excessive expectations of teachers and avoid overly placing moral responsibilities on them, so that they can focus more on their own teaching and research work.

### 2. Measures to curb burnout

For college teachers who have already experienced burnout, how to carry out effective intervention and regulation is one of the focuses of current research. Overseas scholars have proposed that burnout can be curbed from the individual level and the organisational level for dual intervention. At the individual level, teachers need to enhance their self-regulation ability, including cultivating a positive career mindset, improving time management ability, and enhancing stress coping strategies. Research has shown that psychological interventions such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), meditation training, and Positive Mindfulness Stress Reduction Training (MBSR) can effectively alleviate teacher burnout. In addition, encouraging teachers to develop personal hobbies, enhancing social support networks, and maintaining work-life balance are also important ways to reduce burnout.

At the organisational level, school administrators should strengthen the teacher support system to ensure that teachers have access to adequate career development opportunities and resource support. For example, providing flexible work arrangements and reducing unnecessary administrative matters so that teachers can focus more on teaching and research; establishing teacher psychological counselling centres and providing professional psychological counselling services to help teachers better cope with work pressure; and optimising the teacher evaluation system so that teachers can have access to career advancement opportunities in a fair and just environment. Many studies have shown that organisational support plays an important role in reducing teacher burnout and enhancing teacher job satisfaction.

Teachers who can feel the recognition and support of their organisations will experience a significant reduction in their burnout, as well as an increase in their job satisfaction and performance levels.

### 3. Domestic Research Progress and Intervention Measures

In recent years, domestic scholars have also put forward a series of interventions for the burnout and job satisfaction problems of college teachers. For example, studies have shown that by improving the salary level of college teachers and providing reasonable welfare benefits, it can effectively improve their career satisfaction and reduce burnout. At the same time, establishing a correct professional cognition and respecting teachers' legitimate professional needs are also important strategies to alleviate burnout. Domestic studies also emphasise that university management should closely focus on the core concept of 'people-oriented', enhance teachers' sense of belonging to the organisation, reduce ineffective administrative interventions, and enable teachers to focus on their own academic development.

In addition, some colleges and universities in China have begun to explore a more flexible appointment and assessment system and promote the process of academic professionalism in order to reduce teachers' burnout due to the pressure of assessment. For example, some universities have established a multi-channel teacher training system, including online and offline combination of professional development courses, interdisciplinary exchange seminars, and professional growth workshops, in order to help teachers improve their professionalism and at the same time alleviate their career pressure.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

**The Development Trend of Job Satisfaction and Burnout of College Teachers** The problem of burnout of college teachers is becoming more and more obvious and serious, so its research is becoming more and more applied and wider in scope, and its development trend and direction are becoming more and more close to the applicability. The following development trends are summarised from previous studies.

1. The research should be deepened, refined and specific. The research on job satisfaction and teacher burnout should develop in a deeper direction. At present, the research on measures to cope with teacher burnout and how to improve teachers' job satisfaction is not systematic and comprehensive enough, and there is still a lot of room for research. Most of the existing studies are still in the form of cross-sectional studies, mostly using descriptive and correlation analyses, with no way to make causal judgements, so future research should encourage scholars to use longitudinal studies on the same group of teachers. Previous studies have shown that many variables have statistically significant correlations with teacher burnout, but their effects on burnout are limited or minimal. Future research should focus on variables that have a significant impact and analyse how interventions ultimately moderated teachers' burnout levels, thus allowing for more in-depth research.

2. Enhancing the applicability of research With the continuous development of economy, society and culture, the causes of teachers' low job satisfaction and burnout are becoming more and more complex, and future research should focus on proposing practical interventions and evaluating the effects of these interventions. It helps to improve teachers' sense of well-being and their emotional exhaustion. It is necessary to further evaluate the causal effect of "inquiry-based stress reduction" on reducing teacher burnout.

3. Innovative Measurement Methods Objective measurement using big data analysis and endogenous research, as well as the introduction of quantitative research methods to develop more targeted survey scales. Currently, most of the research data are obtained through anonymous self-reporting by groups of teachers, and other data collection channels should be broadened in the future to improve the credibility of the research results.

4. Multi-perspective, interdisciplinary and empirical Empirical research is a general trend to build a diversified research paradigm with multiple perspectives. Drawing on the research methods and theoretical frameworks of other disciplines, they explored new research topics, enriched the research content, and broadened the research dimensions of job satisfaction and burnout among college teachers.

5. In-depth localised research Rooted in the background of the domestic education industry, the research norms on job satisfaction and burnout of Chinese teachers are constructed, and the research on job satisfaction and burnout of Chinese vocational teachers is strengthened in a targeted way. Since the research on job burnout and job satisfaction started earlier in foreign countries, domestic scholars have borrowed and followed the classical theories and related measurement tools and evaluation models from abroad, but environmental factors have affected their applicability. Although domestic scholars have

established models and scales applicable to the study of teacher burnout and job satisfaction in China on the basis of the research results of previous researchers and in combination with China's unique educational environment, the localisation research is still in progress. Although domestic scholars have also established models and scales applicable to the study of teacher burnout and job satisfaction in China on the basis of the research results of previous researchers and in combination with the unique context of China's educational environment, the localisation research is still in progress.

Although a large number of studies have been conducted to explore the influencing factors and intervention strategies of burnout and job satisfaction among college teachers, there is still an overall lack of systematic, in-depth and localised research. In the future, further optimisation in terms of research methods, interventions and theoretical innovations is needed to promote the professional well-being of college teachers and provide stronger support for the development of higher education.

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