

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND THEIR JOB SATISFACTION IN A SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, KUNMING, CHINA

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards administrative support and their job satisfaction in a secondary vocational school, Kunming, China. 83 full-time teachers from the selected school were surveyed in this research. The researcher used Mean and Standard Deviation to analysis the teachers' perceptions toward the level of administrative support the perceived and their job satisfaction. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to test the relationship between the two variables. The result of this study showed that teachers in the target school perceived high level of administrative support, also, teachers' perceptions toward job satisfaction in this school regarded as moderate. Pearson correlation tested that that there was a relationship between teachers' perception toward administrative support and their job satisfaction. Teachers in the target school perceived. The teachers in this school feel most satisfied with the instrumental support that provide from the principal and feel more satisfied with intrinsic aspect of their work.

Keywords: Teachers' Perception; Administrative Support; Job Satisfaction

Introduction

Teachers have been highly respected in China since the ancient time. The profession of teacher is a huge group in China. Due to the growing population

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in China and the continuous prosperity of basic education, higher education and vocational education, the profession of teachers has always required a large number of people. As the position of schoolteachers continues increased, many educational managers devoted to research how to select the most qualified teachers, improve the teachers' working conditions and retain the excellent teachers in the school.

Darling-Hammond (2002) pointed out that high turnover rate of teacher usually wasted the financial and human resources of schools, as the schools have to continually recruit new teachers and train them to ensure that student's learning won't be affected by the teacher's attrition. According to Darling-Hammond (2002), the main issue causes for the teachers to leave the school included the unsatisfied working conditions, lack of administrative support, low salary, lack of mentoring supports and teacher preparation. When the school principal provides effective administrative support to teachers, the principal-teacher relationship could be improved, and teachers will feel that they are caring about. Furthermore, support from the principal can reduce teachers' working stress and help them better coping with anxiety. As Johnson and Birkeland (2003) mentioned, the administrators' support for teachers has been identified as a main factor that influences teacher's job satisfaction. Teachers especially those new ones who build a good relationship and get kind supports from the administrators are more willing to stay in their profession longer.

Despite the government's constant emphasis on the importance of the status of vocational education, it is in a state of paralysis, and the situation of vocational education has deteriorated since the late 1990s, those health vocational schools established in the 1950s are very difficult to recruit new student now. Kunming is the capital city of Yunnan Province, it was listed as a new first-tier city in 2019, but the educational resource is relatively limited for the past decades, and the development of vocational education is late compared to other capital city in China. The teacher and student's overall quality of vocational schools in Kunming still need to be improved.

The researcher did a preliminary study with the selected secondary vocational school, from the results of the preliminary study, teachers in this school perceived that their leaders have supported them in some aspects, but they still

not very satisfied of the administrative support. The school provided teachers with advanced teaching equipment and hardware facilities, and also paid attention to the development of teachers' professional skills. However, some teachers mentioned when the researcher interviewed them that they think the principal concerned less about the teachers' work stress and psychological and physiological conditions, the participant teachers in the preliminary study also reported that some of the administrative support they think are crucial for their work, but they never perceived from the principal.

Research Objectives:

There were three objectives in this research:

1. To determine the level of teachers' perceptions towards administrative support in a secondary vocational school, Kunming, China.
2. To determine the level of teachers' job satisfaction in a secondary vocational school, Kunming, China.
3. To identify the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards administrative support and teachers' job satisfaction in a secondary vocational school, Kunming, China.

Literature Review

Administrative Support

Borman & Dowling (2008) believed administrative support is the effectiveness of the school in helping teachers in dealing with teaching approaches, improving curriculum, student discipline and adapting to the school environment. Similarly, Blasé and Kirby (2009) supported that administrative support is responsibility of the school principal of providing basic teaching materials, reducing external disturbances during teaching time, paying tuition for professional meetings, and assisting teachers in dealing with student discipline issues. Later, Boyd (2011) further defined administrative support as the level and willingness, in which principals and other school leaders to help the teacher improve their teaching and make them work more easily.

Blasé and Kirby (2009) discussed that the role of principal as (1) recognize and praise the teacher's professional achievement that meet school's goal; (2) support the teacher to participant in school's wide decision making process; (3) communicate with the teacher about principal's expectations of student's

performance; (4) grant professional autonomy regarding curriculum and instruction to teachers exhibiting professional readiness; (5) support teaching relevant equipment and materials to the teacher; (6) prevent the teacher's instructional time from being interrupt; (7) contact with parents and assist to manage student's discipline; (8) consistently evaluate and give feedback to the individual and help with professional development; and (9) exercise authority as necessary and when justifiable in ethical terms.

House (1981) divided social support into four dimensions:

Emotional Support:

Littrell (1994) cited that emotional support can be regarded as the most important indicator for evaluating the level of job satisfaction of the teacher. Offering empathy, love, caring and trust is the way that administrator provide emotional support to the staff (House, 1981). Teachers are being encouraged and performance more motivated at their work while the principal showing interests to teacher's instruction, maintaining open communication with the teacher, trusting the teacher as a professional educator, and taking into consideration of the teacher's opinions (Choi, 2017). According to Bozonelos (2008), other factors relate to emotional support including organizational climates, work awareness, collaboration, and support from colleagues.

Appraisal Support:

Appraisal support is to provide regular and ongoing assessment and feedback to the personnel. DiPaola (2012) believed that appraisal support involves transfer the information about people's performance and evaluation. Principal ought to tell the teacher how they performance is, provide constructive feedback, affirmation, and encouragement for the work of the teacher. Johnson & Birkeland (2003) stated that when the teacher believes that the principal is honest and attentive, this indicates that the appraisal support from the principal is effective.

Information Support:

Teachers should know the basic facts about their job, without information support from the principal it cannot be achieved (Choi, 2017). Littrell (1994) suggested that information support can help performance better in classroom practice and instructional skills. IT is the role of principal to provide information about effective teaching methodologies, future work direction,

instructional plan, and effective guidance to the teacher.

Instrumental Support:

Instrument support is different from other kind of support, it emphasizes the direct help to the personnel. Principals who use instrument support pay less attention to the emotional needs of teachers but more to how to help teachers complete the specific task. DiPaola (2012) stated that instrument support in the school include rational time schedule, instructional material, space and budget for teaching practices and classroom discipline management.

Job Satisfaction

Vroom (1964) defined job satisfaction as the individual's positive emotional feelings towards their role of the work. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a joyful or positive felling about one's work experience. Job satisfaction is not only an important factor in promoting personal well-being, but also helps to improve organizational efficiency (Gruneberg, 1979).

Lawler (1983) agreed that satisfaction includes work attitudes. Individuals have a range of attitudes toward job characteristics, including responsibilities, supervision, salary, and colleagues. The result is seen as an emotional attitude or orientation to the job, which determines satisfaction. Chelladurai (1999) cited that job satisfaction is a pleasant emotional state that individual's work situations meet a person's needs, values and expectations.

Hagedom (2000) noted the teachers and students have close relationship in any kind of educational institution, student's achievements are directly influenced by the quality of teacher's lecturing, and the level of satisfaction that teacher's feel about their job, could be a vital factor that determine their teaching. Tickle (2008) suggested that a positive university environment can improve teachers' job satisfaction and achieve positive student achievement. Therefore, teacher job satisfaction is more likely to achieve school efficiency. In addition, job satisfaction has always been a popular area of research, particularly in relation to organizational factors (Tickle, 2008).

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory was distributed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959, it also known as the two-factor theory. According to Herzberg (1959), the two factors of work are motivation factors and hygiene factors. Herzberg

himself has conducted a research in 1959 which is to ask 200 engineers and accountants to describe their work experience that they felt awfully bad or particularly good in their work, and to analysis their feelings based on these experiences. Through the analysis of the collected data, it was found that motivation factors always have correlation with the good feelings; meanwhile the bad feelings are related to hygiene factors.

In this theory, Herzberg (1968) discusses employees' attitudes towards job satisfaction and job creation. Herzberg (1968) defined two types of individuals in this theory: motivator (intrinsic satisfaction) and hygiene (extrinsic satisfaction). He noted that satisfied people describe themselves based on their relationship with their colleagues' behavior, and general working conditions. Satisfiers tend to work with their principal and other colleagues to promote career development. Instead, dissatisfied people define themselves based on the context of a particular situation and how people behave in that situation. They pay highly attention to work safety, company policies, compensation and personal achievements. In both categories, workers will eventually be dissatisfied with the workplace if appropriate conditions are not met. If psychological growth is achieved, satisfaction will arise.

Hygiene Factors:

Herzberg found that people were dissatisfied with the harsh working environments, which are *hygiene*. Hygiene factors are not part of the work, but it always surrounds the work, which is considered to be an external factor in work, it includes supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, payment, and policies of the organization, administrative practices, benefits and job security.

Motivation Factors:

Achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, growth, interest in the job and work itself are considered to be the source of incentives, which are also considered being the internal factors in the work itself, Herzberg termed those factors as *motivators*.

Conceptual Framework

This study was investigated the level of teachers' perceptions towards administrative support and their job satisfaction, and also to determine the

relationship between administrative support and teacher's job satisfaction in a secondary vocational school, Kunming, China.

The administrative support and the teacher's job satisfaction were the two main variables of this study. Since House's (1981) the Social Support Framework and Herzberg's (1959) motivation– Hygiene Theory were used as the theoretical foundations, the subscales from both theories under two major variables were also put into the conceptual framework, as below Figure 1 shows.

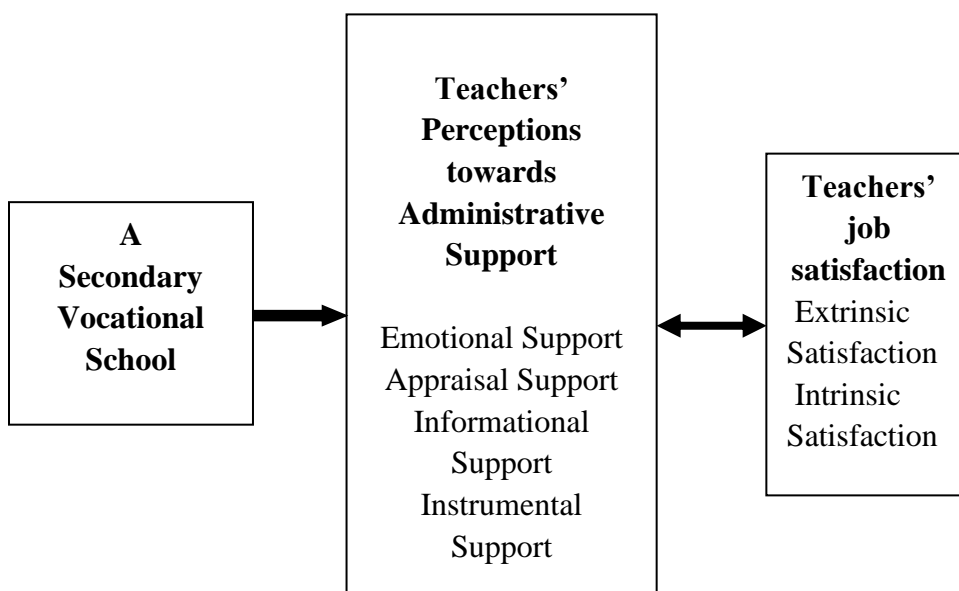


Figure1. Conceptual Framework of This Study

Research Method

This research was mainly a quantitative research, but at the beginning stage of study, the researcher also used the qualitative methods to study the problem. The researcher did an interview to investigate whether the principal in the selected secondary school provide emotional, appraisal, informational and instructional support to the teacher firstly, and used the interview results to support and continue the quantitative research. The preliminary interview has nine questions, which were selected based on Littrell's (1992) Principal Support Questionnaire.

The questionnaire has been divided into three parts:

Part 1 was the demographic data of the participant, where, the researcher utilized three questions: age, gender and the length of working of participants.

Part 2: Administrative support questionnaire with 28 questions. The researcher has uses Littrell's (1992) principal support questionnaire in part 2. This questionnaire was to survey the level of administrative support with 28 questions. In this questionnaire, the administrative support has four components, emotional support, appraisal support, informational support and instrument support.

Part 3: Teacher's job satisfaction, it was to survey the level of teachers' job satisfaction. In part 3 the researcher adopted Xueying's (2015) Teacher's Job Satisfaction questionnaire, which has two dimensions: Intrinsic Satisfaction and Extrinsic Satisfaction.

Findings

Research Objective One

Table 1 shows the Means and Standard of teachers' perceptions on four dimensions of Administrative Support. The overall scored was 3.57, interpretation was high level in general. Among them, the mean of Emotional Support (3.45) scored the lowest, and regarded as moderate level, while, the mean of Instrumental Support (3.68) scored the highest, regarded as high level.

Table 1: *Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher's Perceptions towards Administrative Support (N=74)*

Administrative Support	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Emotional Support	3.45	0.64	Moderate
Appraisal Support	3.62	0.73	High
Informational Support	3.56	0.72	High
Instrumental Support	3.68	0.70	High
Overall	3.57	0.64	High

Research Objective Two

Table 2 indicated that the Means and Standard of teachers' perceptions on two dimensions of Job Satisfaction. The overall scored was 3.16, which indicated a moderate level of interpretation in general. The mean of Intrinsic Satisfaction scored 3.43, and regarded as moderate level, meanwhile, the mean of Extrinsic Satisfaction scored 2.90, which regarded as moderate level.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Perceptions towards Their Job Satisfaction (N=74)

Job Satisfaction	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Intrinsic Satisfaction	3.43	0.44	Moderate
Extrinsic Satisfaction	2.90	0.63	Moderate
Overall	3.16	0.51	Moderate

Research Objective Three

Table 3 analyzed the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards Administrative Support and their Job Satisfaction. Pearson Correlation showed that $r = .494$, Sig. (2-tailed) was $.000$, which was less than $.05$. That is, the results showed that there was a positive correlation between Administrative Support and Teachers' Job Satisfaction. Thus, the research hypothesis was accepted, which means there was a significant relationship between teachers' perception towards administrative support and their job satisfaction in a secondary vocational school, Kunming, China.

Table 3 Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Teachers' Perceptions towards Administrative Support and Their Job Satisfaction

		Job Satisfaction
Administrative Support	Pearson Correlation	.494**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

Hicks (2011) put forward that allocates teaching material, space, service, labor, money and time as the essential of instructional support. In this study, teachers regarded the highest attitude towards the instructional support the received in the selected vocational school, "provides material, space and resource needs" this option got the highest scored among the whole options of administrative support questionnaire. Just as the introduction of this target school at previous chapter, administrators in this school actively provide the advanced education resources for the teachers and students.

Littrell (1992) suggested that teachers need principals provide more planning time, help them to solve the parents' problems and allocate sufficient material and education resources. As the effective principals, one should assemble the

goal of a school, make structure, and coordinate the teaching program, encourage collaboration of all the staff, solve the teachers' problems and develop positive school climate (Valesky & Hirth, 1992).

Meanwhile, teachers' perceptions towards appraisal support regarded as high in this study, which can reflect that the principal is continually evaluate the teachers' performance and provide feedback to the teacher in some degree. According to Johnson & Birkeland (2003), appraisal support always involves the evaluation from others and self-evaluation, individuals can identify their performance whether reach the average through the evaluation outcomes. Thus, one of the essential roles of principal is to conduct regular evaluation and provide constructional feedback to the teacher, the feedback can be periodical formal written report plus oral conferences. What's more, Hicks (2011). stated that that appraisal sometimes can cause stress and negative feeling for teachers, but it will eventually benefit in improving teaching strategies and provide opportunities for teachers to exercise themselves to become professionals.

Similarly, the statistics result showed that the teachers' perceptions towards informational support in the selected school also regarded as high level. DiPaola (2012) concluded that principal provide informational support by making directions, giving suggestions, and offering information to help teachers solving their personal and professional problems. Bozonelos (2008) believed that teachers can accept new knowledge, exercise new instructional approaches and stress coping skills and through the information provided by the principal, it is meaningful and worthwhile for the individual's growth. Moreover, Littrell (1992) suggested that to help the teacher to better control and management their classroom, the principal should encourage teachers to experiment new approaches in their instructions.

However, the study of this research found that teachers received the least emotional support and well-being cared in the target school according to the result. House (1981) highlighted the significance of emotional support among the four types of administrative support, strong emotional support involves a positive interaction between peoples. Blasé (1986) believed that emotional support creates a more democratic, friendly, and less-stressed working atmosphere, it is helpful to reduce the teachers' occupation stress. Peck (2002)

noted that teachers will be motivated and more satisfied with their work when they feel that they are cared about.

Littrell (1992) agreed that teachers wish their dean or program director to get more involved with their program and student, it is helpful for establishing teachers' job confidence. More importantly, as the teachers are closely related to the students' achievement, to consider the teachers' ideas in the constructional process benefits to improve the whole curriculum. Therefore, principals in this school should care more about teachers psychological and well-being, the principal who performs easy to approach and actively care for teachers can better retain and keep his/her employees.

Teachers showed only moderate positive towards their intrinsic job satisfaction in the selected school. The most obvious is that teachers were highly agreed that they keep busy all the time when they work in the target school, but they scored the lowest on their job can provide a steady employment. Teachers were not regarded their work as a stable one could be one of the reasons that teachers not satisfied with their job. Respondents' perceptions towards extrinsic satisfaction mean scores regarded as moderate as well. Respondents showed the most positive attitude on the praise they get when they finished a job, but the lowest agreement with their pay and amount of work. For overall, teachers' intrinsic satisfaction was higher than their extrinsic satisfaction.

Tobias (2017) conducted a study and he found that teachers were satisfied the most to the nature of teaching profession. Teachers were proud of their work, enjoyed what they achieved in their instruction and students' performance. Darling-Hammond (2001) believed that in the teaching profession, the nature of work creates more satisfaction than other kind of profession.

Students' behavior closely related to teachers' job satisfaction. Weiss (1999) found that students' classroom discipline problem is highly affect the new teachers' satisfaction who work within one year. Tickle (2008) pointed out that both working conditions and students' lower performance on discipline are the cause of teachers' dissatisfaction. Beaugez (2012) discussed that higher salary often has been view as a factor that can increase teachers' job satisfaction, but in fact, it usually be a weak element when measuring teachers' satisfaction.

Higher salary can increase teachers' commitment and reduce their attrition. Principal should not ignore that improve teachers' payment and other benefit is important to keep good teachers in the school and promote their job satisfaction.

The statistic result identified that there is a moderate positive relationship between teachers' perceptions towards administrative support and their job satisfaction. Backer (2005) reported that the teacher's negative attitude towards job satisfaction is closely related to the lower level of administrative support, teachers are more likely to leave their teaching profession when inadequate administrative issues cannot be solved. Krueger (2000) listed that ineffective support, lack of job secure, educational policy and structure, high teacher-student rate, bigger classroom, inadequate allocate of teaching resource and material and invalid communication and such administrative issues are harmful affect teachers' job satisfaction.

McElroy (2004) indicated that teachers' job satisfaction is closely related to their relationship with their principal. Teachers reported higher level of job satisfaction when their administrators more willing to share information with them, maintain a channel for communication and show concern to teachers' needs and interests. Thus, the principal in the selected vocational school should comprehend that in what aspects that teachers need their personal attention and support and improve their ability to support their teachers with more effectiveness. It will contribute to improve teachers' retention and job satisfaction.

The level of administrative support and teachers' job satisfaction will show different in other level and kind of school, this study only research the issues in a secondary vocational school, the results and findings of the study can be used for reference, but there are still some shortcomings and incomplete areas.

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