

The Exploration of Teachers' Occupational Happiness

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Abstract: The prosperity of education is the prosperity of the country, and the strength of education is the strength of the country. Teachers, the main human capital of educational activities, are directly related to the quality of education and teaching. Teachers' occupational happiness, as an important indicator of the quality of education and teaching and the psychological state of individual existence, plays a very important role in the development of teachers. Therefore, it is of guiding significance to explore its essence, dilemmas, and corresponding improvement paths for the construction of a high-quality teaching force and a strong education nation.

1. Introduction

When education flourishes, the country flourishes; when education is strong, the country is strong. Teachers, as the main human capital undertaking educational activities, are closely related to the quality of education and teaching they are responsible for, which has a far-reaching impact on education. Teachers' occupational happiness, as an important indicator of the quality of education and teaching and the psychological state of individual survival, has a very important role in the development of teachers (Wang et al., 2022) [1]. Exploring its essential meaning, actual state and corresponding improvement path is of guiding significance to the construction of a high-quality teaching force and a strong education country.

2. The essential implications of teachers' occupational happiness

The word "happiness" in the New Dictionary of Modern Chinese means a satisfactory situation and life. Happiness is a subjective state of existence when the freedom of human purpose is realized. Therefore, the essence of happiness is based on the result of the combined effect of the realization of individual purpose and value (Tan, 2010) [2]. The term happiness, the earliest, can be traced back to the ancient Greek era; there are two main theoretical schools: realization theory and happiness theory. In the subsequent development, these two ideologies have given rise to two primary perspectives: objective happiness (sometimes referred to as psychological happiness) and subjective happiness. Objective happiness, also known as psychological happiness, focuses primarily on the growth and fulfillment of an individual's potential. Subjective happiness refers to the cognitive and affective assessment of an individual's total environment using personalized criteria.

Occupational happiness is the recognition and personal perception of professionals towards their

occupations, occupational value, occupational effectiveness, occupational status and future development trends (Guo et al., 2022) [3]. In most cases, occupational happiness is positively related to the social efficacy and value of an occupation. That is, the greater the social efficacy and value, the greater the sense of occupational happiness gained by engaging in the occupation.

In the integration of the above definitions, teachers' occupational happiness refers to the happiness and joy that teachers experience from their work in education. This happiness is influenced by the quality of their teaching and the state of their inner being. Teachers' occupational happiness is a multifaceted and intricate cognitive and emotional phenomenon that encompasses both material and spiritual happiness. Undoubtedly, spiritual happiness is more dominant and normalized among them.

In general, teachers' occupational happiness depends both on the degree of balance and satisfaction of teachers with all aspects of their profession as teachers and on changes in external environmental factors (Soini et al., 2010) [4]. There is no doubt that internal influences dominate.

3. The essential implications of teachers' occupational happiness

With the rapid development of society, the times have put forward higher requirements for teachers. Both internal and external environmental factors such as school and society have triggered changes in teachers' occupational happiness to a certain extent.

3.1. Alienation of individual work leads to low teachers' occupational happiness

3.1.1. Teachers' educational sentiment is low, and educational work is "materialized"

A qualified teacher, in addition to the corresponding subject knowledge, teaching knowledge, and teaching skills necessary for teachers, is also extremely critical to educational sentiment. In the day-to-day teaching work, the teacher's teaching knowledge and teaching skills in the repetition of the practice are similar to the general operating skills. It is in this tendency to "materialization" educational work that the teacher's educational sentiment gradually appears to be thin. Teachers' eyes are full of teaching tasks such as lessons, lesson planning and so on. Nevertheless, forget that the teacher's teaching is not only looking at the cold scores but also the temperature of life. Because as the object of education, students are the existence of individual life. Students in the school field of learning, not only the grades and scores of this knowledge level but also beyond the classroom school outside the growth of life. They are the future flowers of the motherland. They will grow up to be distributed in various industries and fields in order to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and succession and construction. Due to the prolonged and persistent nature of education, teachers often find themselves overwhelmed by mundane teaching tasks that deviate from their original purpose as educators. This can diminish their initial enthusiasm and passion for education, leading to a decline in their overall job satisfaction.

3.1.2. Teachers lack self-awareness of life for self-development

The vast majority of front-line teachers are "confused" by the complicated and trivial daily teaching work because they have been in the front line of teaching work for a long time. This "confusion" is a kind of self-development consciousness that is stuck. Teachers see only the complexity of the teaching task rather than the growth. They need to pay more attention to the growth of teaching students and also their professional development growth. Teachers, as the main body of educational activities, are the existence of individual beings in the task of education and teaching. After completing the primary task of teaching, most teachers neglect the humanistic part of the educational work. This difficulty has been highlighted by the widespread acceptance of the

"points-only theory." Teachers often experience professional burnout due to the disregard for their well-being and a lack of awareness about the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance. The practice of teaching has become devoid of the vitality it ought to possess. Over time, the occupational happiness of teachers gradually declines.

3.2. Alienation of school management leads to low teachers' occupational happiness

3.2.1. Dehumanization of school management and impairment of teachers' rights to teaching autonomy

Nowadays, there is a collectivization of school management in many schools, and thus, teachers are directed to task-based development. Teachers are tied to the so-called teaching task for development. Teachers in the school workplace can only be similar to the teaching machine on the production line. The management's only concern for teachers' promotion and title evaluation is the scores of their classes, which makes teachers worry about the scores and grades of their students all the time. In order to survive in the same workplace, most of the teachers chose to remain silent in their day-to-day mechanical work. They are submissive to the directions and targets given by the school management, completely ignoring their autonomy as teachers. The freedom that a teacher should have has long since disappeared. Every day, they only have to work in class to prepare lessons and do the first-line teaching and score-raising machine. In this kind of dehumanized school management, enduring a huge physical and mental fatigue, burnout is more and more serious, and the teacher's professional happiness is almost nothing left.

3.2.2. Complexity of non-teaching tasks and lack of opportunities for teacher development

In the school sector, teaching is only one profession, and there are many different sub-sectors. Some teachers are on the periphery of this field. This is because they have drastically reduced their teaching workload in order to move up the administrative ladder. In addition to this group of teachers who take the administrative route, there are other teachers who, in order to seek only the most basic survival, have to cope with a variety of complicated non-teaching tasks in addition to teaching every day. For example, they have to cope with inspections by higher authorities and administrative assessments. Under the high-pressure tasks of teaching, non-teaching and administrative development, teachers' time and energy are in a state of high indebtedness. There is no time for professional development. In such a long-term physical and mental depletion, there is no way to mention the professional happiness of teachers.

3.3. Alienation of social security support leads to teachers' low sense of professional happiness

3.3.1. Insufficient support for remuneration packages

The remuneration package, which is the material basis for teachers' survival, needs to be revised at present. Although the policy of "teachers' salaries not lower than civil servants' salaries" is being gradually implemented, a large proportion of teachers' salaries are still lower than those of civil servants with the same number of years of experience and qualifications. Only a very small number of teachers are on par with them. Therefore, the full implementation of this policy requires a gradual process. Moreover, differences in geographical location also contribute to the differences in remuneration between teachers. For example, teachers in townships, who are sandwiched between urban and rural teachers, reflect that compared with cities and counties, we do not have the same superior environment as they do; compared with the countryside, we are not as well treated as they are, and we cannot enjoy the extra allowances provided by the state (Zhao and Yi, 2022) [5]. Based

on a variety of factors resulting in insufficient remuneration and benefits for teachers, teachers feel that their efforts and rewards are different from one another. Under this strong sense of difference and unfairness, teachers' sense of occupational well-being is greatly reduced.

3.3.2. Lack of social understanding and respect

Since ancient times, people have called teachers "candles" and "spring silkworms." Whether it is the deification or dwarfing of the role of the teacher, it is society's lack of understanding of the teaching profession. To be precise, the role of teachers needs to be clarified. Teachers are a profession, not saints who are as noble as heaven and earth, nor can they only pass on knowledge through self-sacrifice, nor are they teaching machines. Teachers themselves are individuals whose value lies not only in the simple transmission of knowledge but also in educating themselves and others. In the process of teaching, we help students grow in life, but we also help them realize the value of their own lives. With the prevalence of the Internet, the arrival of the post-metaphorical era, and the emergence of the popular ChatGPT, the value of the teaching profession's most basic function of transmitting knowledge has been questioned. People seem to feel that with the abundance of data resources in the online world, teachers seem to be gradually replaced. In addition, some unofficial media reports on the internet about some teachers with bad morals have led people to generalize and reject all teachers, believing that teachers do not deserve to be respected. It is precisely because of society's incorrect understanding of and disrespect for the teaching profession that teachers' sense of honour for their profession has been greatly diminished, and their sense of occupational happiness has become even more depressed.

4. The path to enhance teachers' professional happiness

4.1. Enhancing teachers' educational sentiments and nurturing life consciousness

First, take the initiative to communicate with new and old teachers to regain the original heart of education and enhance the sense of identity of the teaching profession. Most of the new teachers who have just joined the profession are full of longing for the teaching profession, and at this time, the educational sentiment is strong, and the educational sentiment is quite rich. The old teachers who are about to retire or have retired have deep feelings about their teaching career, and their educational feelings are also full. Therefore, if teachers feel burned out in the trivial work of education, they can find opportunities to take the initiative to contact new and old teachers to seek help. In communicating with each other, teachers at different stages can produce resonance of ideas and collision of thinking. In turn, it helps teachers with a low sense of professional happiness regain the original heart of education and enhance the sense of professional happiness of teachers.

Secondly, we should think about education work, reflect on the demands of life and plan for career development. First-line teaching work is undoubtedly boring, even day after day, more monotonous. Nevertheless, in this seemingly no waves of ordinary positions and days behind the countless dreams and the breath of life surging. In education, teachers and students are unique individuals with a dynamic breath of life. It is for this reason that teachers while teaching and passing on knowledge, should also realize the difference between their profession and other types of work. Because education is for growing individuals, and because education has a lagging and long-lasting effect, the seeds that teachers irrigate in the lives of individuals will later be harvested in the future to help the germination and fruition of talents in all walks of life. In addition to this, the teacher accompanies the growth of the student and, at the same time, contributes to his or her growth. By accompanying their students in this way, they are also nurturing the growth of their own teaching life and realizing the value of their own life. Therefore, only by strengthening teachers'

sense of identity with their profession, reflecting on the unique value and significance of their work, clarifying their value of life, and teaching with heart and soul can they reap the inner joy brought by the wonderful profession of teaching. This is the professional happiness that belongs exclusively to teachers.

4.2. Enhance the humanized management of the school and simplify it

First, it will create a "people-oriented" management atmosphere to protect the rights and interests of teachers' teaching autonomy. The school is the field where teachers work. If there must be professional output, it is the symbiotic development of teachers, students and schools. School management should uphold the concept of human-centred teaching management, abandoning only the results and scores of task-oriented management. Teachers should be provided with a relaxed, cooperative, and enterprising teaching workplace, with reasonable streaming of teachers. Teachers who want to take the administrative route should be relieved of a certain amount of teaching, but only partially. Other teachers should be given more autonomy in teaching. Teachers should be given more autonomy in their teaching. Teachers should be respected to carry out their teaching according to their teaching wishes and teaching characteristics (D'Sa et al., 2023) [6].

Second, reduce the burden of non-teaching tasks and provide personalized learning and development opportunities. First of all, the school is a field of co-creation and coexistence between teachers and students, mainly a place for education and teaching. School management should develop a scientific and reasonable management system to ensure that teachers have sufficient time and energy to complete the basic teaching tasks and reduce the number of non-essential non-teaching tasks in form. This can effectively prevent teachers from experiencing burnout due to a wide range of non-teaching tasks, which in turn leads to a stronger sense of occupational happiness. Secondly, schools should also pay attention to the development of teachers of different ages and academic levels. Especially for teachers with high education levels, schools should provide them with as many personalized and differentiated learning and development opportunities as possible, such as learning in the direction of educational research, polishing teaching and researching ability, and so on. In this way, they can be encouraged to learn and develop their skills. Only in this way can teachers not be confined to the teaching level but also utilize educational research methods to delve into the mysteries of teaching behind superficial teaching. This will undoubtedly stimulate teachers' interest in education, thereby enhancing their sense of occupational happiness.

4.3. Enhancing social protection for teachers in various aspects

First, the remuneration of teachers should be raised to ensure their basic livelihood. Remuneration is the material guarantee for teachers' basic livelihood. The basic function of the teaching profession is that teachers maintain their basic survival and life through labour, and only when survival and life are not a problem will teachers have the possibility of happiness (Cao and Han, 2022) [7]. Therefore, society should effectively protect teachers' economic income, welfare benefits, and other basic material conditions. According to the relevant policies and regulations, they are taking into account the differences in geographic areas to develop a reasonable standard of remuneration for teachers and to minimize the disparity of teachers' salaries due to different geographical areas, such as urban and rural areas. In this way, the sense of unfairness in teachers' hearts will be weakened, and their sense of professional happiness will be enhanced.

Second, respect and understand the teaching profession. Society needs to take into account the development of the times, reduce the "deification" and "dwarfing" of the role of teachers, and correctly view the value of the teaching profession. The value of the teaching profession should not be viewed correctly, and teachers should not be completely denied because of some reports on the

Internet. Teachers are the purveyors of civilization in any era, and they are a key force in promoting social progress that cannot be underestimated. Society should create a good culture of respect for teachers and guide people to recognize the role and value of teachers correctly. In such a social atmosphere, teachers are understood and respected so that they can have a stronger sense of professional honour and then a higher sense of professional happiness.

5. Conclusion

Teachers' occupational happiness is a multi-dimensional and complex cognitive and emotional experience. Burnout is inevitable and normal in the process of daily teaching on the front line. However, both individual teachers and schools and society should face this dilemma with a positive attitude and seek better paths to enhance teachers' occupational happiness through the synergistic combination of individuals, schools, and society to solve this dilemma.

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