

Factors Influencing the Job Performance of Private Vocational High School Teachers of Liaocheng City, China

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Abstract: This cross-sectional study aims to describe factors influencing the work performance of private secondary vocational schools in Liaocheng City, Shandong Province, China. Employing purposive random sampling, this study selects participants from the eight (8) identified schools. A survey questionnaire will be used to gather data needed to describe the study's variables: participants' demographic profile, perceptions of their individual characteristics, organization practices, working environment, and job performance. The difference across the demographic profiles of the participants will be tested using ANOVA, while the relationship between the variables will be tested using Pearson correlation.

Keywords: Secondary Vocational Schools; Job Performance; Individual Factors; Organizational Factors

1. Introduction

The overall performance of an organization primarily depends on the performance of its employees. Therefore, it is necessary for the management to monitor employees' job performance to ensure that they are within the organization's standards and that they contribute to the organization's total performance. Job performance is described as the combined worth to an organization of the range of actions that an employee offers, both directly and indirectly, towards organizational objectives ^[1]. In the field of education, the education quality is influenced by teachers' performance (Kanya, 2011). Moreover, teachers' performance was identified as a factor that significantly influences school's effectiveness (Siagian & Artha, 2023) and students' academic performances (Blazar, 2016; Bonney et al., 2015; Kamayubonyel & Mutarutinya, 2023;). Therefore, in order to uplift the education quality or school's effectiveness, it is necessary to begin with improving teachers' performance. However, similar to other fields, before introducing a professional development program that aimed to improve employees' performance, it is essential to determine first their immediate needs, which can be done through performance management.

Furthermore, a notable characteristic of private vocational secondary schools in China is that their student body tends to exhibit lower academic performance, compared to those who are in regular secondary schools ^[2]. This can be attributed to the strict requirements and high standards for admission of public secondary schools, forcing students with lower academic performance to choose private vocational schools. This actually presents a more challenging teaching environment for teachers in the private vocational schools. As of writing, lesser attention is given to the job performance of the private secondary vocational school teachers, and that more studies in the context of regular and public high schools were implemented. Given the unique characteristics of the private Chinese vocational secondary schools offer a compelling avenue for further investigation and study. This study attempts to describe the factors that influence job performance of private secondary vocational school teachers of Shandong City, China.

2. Study Objectives

2.1 General Objective

This study aims to describe the factors influencing the job performance of private secondary

vocational school teachers in Shandong Province, China.

2.2 Specific Objectives

Guided by the primary goal of the study, it seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

Describe the participants' demographic profile in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, and years of service;

Describe participants' perceptions of their individual characteristics, organization practices, and working environment;

Describe participants' job performance;

Determine whether a significant difference exists in participants' job performance across their demographic profile;

Determine whether a significant relationship exists between individual characteristics, organization practices, working environment, and job performance.

2.3 Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant difference in participants' job performance across their demographic profile (age, sex, educational attainment, and years of service).

HO2: There is no significant relationship between individual characteristics, organization practices, working environment, and job performance.

3. Review of Related Literature

3.1 Private Vocational School in China

According to the research, the high school structure in China's education system is mainly divided into 2 major systems and 2 different types. This includes state-owned high schools and private high schools; followed by regular high schools and vocational high schools. For better conduct further analysis, one should understand the status of Chinese private vocational high school operations and faculty resources.

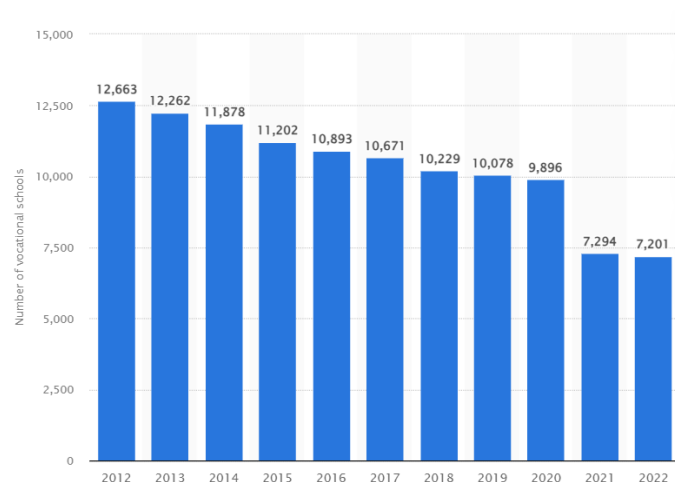


Figure 1 Number of Secondary Vocational Schools in China from 2012 to 2022 ^[3]

Compared to regular high schools or private high schools, private secondary vocational school currently operates 2073 different schools in China, which is 28.79% (7,201) of total secondary vocational high schools ^[4]. There are 20.63%, or 2,762,400 students with less desirable learning outcomes or who are seeking to receive more practical working skills are learning at the vocational high school in 2021 ^[5]. Also, only 718,300 educators are working at the vocational high school, which leads to an 18.65:1 student-educator ratio, and only 56.18% of educators meet the qualification of school ^[5]. (As show in figure 1)

There are many different reasons why this study chose secondary vocational schools, but the special status of vocational high schools in China can help researchers better explore the work performance evaluation of teachers who are different from those in traditional high schools. In other words, teachers may face more teaching challenges in secondary vocational schools and how to solve the learning difficulties of students with poor learning abilities.

Data show that in 2022, only 50% of more than 15 million junior high school candidates will be able to enter regular high schools after taking the high school entrance examination. Most of the other students will have to enter vocational high schools to complete more professional vocational training^[6]. In China, the emergence of vocational high schools is to help students with poor learning abilities find a job more easily after graduation at the age of 18, thereby helping students find basic jobs more easily in specific industries by cultivating blue-collar or basic skills^[6]. On the contrary, as Ling^[2] mentioned, in China, most children with poor family conditions and weak students' learning abilities have to choose to enter vocational schools, and a certain stereotype has been formed, that is, entering vocational schools School means a visible lack of competitiveness in career and a high probability of being at the bottom of society. At the same time, both Ling^[2] and Tang et al.^[7] believe that vocational schools lack high-quality teaching resources and study environments, which will bring uncertain challenges and dilemmas to educators.

Therefore, the introduction about vocational schools can help people better understand the diverse variables that teachers may face in their work performance, and explore whether some stereotypes about schools will be broken by studying private secondary vocational schools.

3.2 Professional Standards for Teachers in Private Secondary Vocational School

Different from ordinary higher education teacher qualifications, teachers who are working in secondary vocational schools need to possess some different teaching and professional qualifications. According to the relevant regulations of the Ministry of Education of China, whether it is a public or private secondary vocational school, the recruitment of teachers requires three qualifications: (1) academic qualifications, (2) passing the assessment of the teacher qualification certificate, and the relevant secondary vocational school Teacher qualification assessment, and (3) teachers in specific majors and teachers with work experience^[8-10].

Generally speaking, the academic requirements for teachers working in secondary vocational schools are weaker than those in regular high schools or universities, but the teaching methods tend to focus on practical content.

3.3 Importance of Teacher's Job Performance

Either for the teacher working in secondary vocational schools or other types of schools/universities, their job performance plays a decisive role in the quality of teaching. To some extent, the definition of the teacher's job performance is quite comprehensive, because it indicates all the key components that motivated the educator to achieve the work objectives in the position. For instance, Baluyos et al.^[11], Johan et al. (2018), Gallant and Riley^[12], and Lazarides et al.^[13] once argued that the job performance of the teacher will directly reflect on the aspects such as teaching quality, relationship building, classroom management, academic achievement, student engagement, career or professional development, etc. Taking teaching quality and student engagement as an example, Xiao and Wilkins's^[14] research on Chinese education showed that if teachers can show high job performance, students will also show positive results in their perception of teaching quality and learning satisfaction. And feedback relevant attitudes and cognitions to the teacher through written or oral means, thereby further improving the teacher's job performance. Not only that, Minghui et al.'s^[15] research on Chinese special education teachers found that teachers' overall work performance depends on multiple aspects of support, and will be more intuitively reflected in work attitude and work efficiency. At the same time, research on schools in None-Chinese areas has also shown similar results, that is, teachers' job performance will also be displayed in a variety of ways, and lower job performance will directly lead to negative feedback from students, students' parents, and even schools^[16]. Therefore, teachers' job performance can be regarded as a key measure to evaluate the success of teachers, and the factors that may affect job performance need to be further introduced in the next sub-chapter.

3.4 Factors Influencing Teacher's Performance

Based on research, factors influencing teacher's performance are mainly reflected in three aspects,

namely individual factors, organizational factors, and environmental factors, respectively. The reason why these three factors play a decisive role is that in most school work scenarios, personal factors play an internal driving role, organizational factors are the cultural and influencing factors that shape the overall work environment, and environmental factors can be regarded as key variables that affect individual job satisfaction and work performance at the external and macro levels.

3.4.1 Individual Factors

According to research, personal factors mainly affect a teacher's performance in four aspects, namely (1) individual competence, (2) individual beliefs or self-efficacy, (3) anti-pressure ability, and (4) attitude towards the student.

First of all, personal ability is a comprehensive description, including the teacher's overall academic ability, such as understanding of teaching materials, management ability of students, and whether he has strong time management ability, etc. ^[17]. As Hakim ^[17] stated teachers' abilities are very important for measuring job performance because teachers with stronger abilities will achieve work goals more smoothly and thus show satisfactory work performance. On the contrary, some teachers' less-than-ideal personal working abilities may become obstacles in teaching. For example, lack of communication skills will deteriorate the teacher-student relationship, or lack of in-depth understanding of teaching materials will prevent students from achieving better performance, etc. ^[17].

Secondly, Both Malinen and Savolainen ^[18] and Aldridge and Fraser ^[19] believe that individual beliefs are also important individual factors when discussing job performance. First, high levels of self-efficacy are associated with greater motivation and effort to achieve goals. Teachers with strong self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to set challenging teaching goals, persist in the face of obstacles, and invest energy in improving their teaching practices ^[18]. More specifically, teachers encounter various challenges and frustrations in their profession, such as student difficulties, classroom management issues, and workload demands all need to be resolved ^[19]. Therefore, teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy can better cope with these challenges, perform their work better, and face challenges with a positive attitude.

3.4.2 Organizational Factors

Organizational influence are the second major aspects that impact on the job performance of the educator, and this including 6 different factors as (1) wellbeing and benefits, (2) workload, (3) vocational perspective, (4) work and life balance, (5) leadership relationship, and (6) colleague relations.

First of all, Sudibjo and Sutarji ^[20] pointed out that the ultimate standard to improve teachers' job performance and job satisfaction is to provide more welfare benefits. This includes but is not limited to, the overall salary scale, additional benefits, insurance, paid vacation, etc. At the same time, Hwang et al. ^[21] also systematically evaluate how to improve teachers' work performance by improving well-being and prove that both financial and non-financial rewards can effectively help teachers engage in daily work better. Secondly, the workload of teachers also determines the overall work performance, Zang et al. ^[22] studied that a high workload will further damage the working attitude and patience of Chinese teachers when facing students. If the workload does not put more pressure on the teacher, then the teacher can be more organized to face the challenges of work and teaching tasks. For both third and fourth points, Wang et al. ^[23] found that job promotion opportunities and whether to live on campus would affect teachers' job performance. First, limited job advancement affects educators' long-term job expectations. Secondly, if teachers live on campus for a long time, their work-life balance will be affected, which will affect their work performance. Moreover, the balance between life and work will also be reflected in more aspects, such as whether to work overtime, whether the daily workload will affect the normal rest, using personal time to solve the problems of students or students' parents, and giving students extra lessons on weekends and other school arrangements will further affect the work performance ^[23].

3.4.3 Environmental Factors

Different from the diverse personal and school factors, environmental factors are mainly reflected in two aspects, including (1) working conditions, and (2) relevant policies.

First of all, according to the research of Torpova et al. (2021), the work environment can be divided into several aspects, including but not limited to Classroom size, equipment, resources, etc. One can easily imagine schools with a good teaching environment and campus culture usually give teachers more confidence to complete their daily tasks. Adequate teaching materials, technology, supplies, and facilities can improve teaching effectiveness. Conversely, a lack of resources may impede course delivery and limit student participation. In addition, schools, education departments, and governments' salary regulations and related staff ratios for teachers will also affect overall work performance ^[24]. For example,

the Chinese government currently stipulates that the teacher-student ratio in secondary vocational schools is 1:20 ^[25]. If it is stipulated that a teacher needs to teach more students, the overall work performance will decline.

3.5 Research Gap

Through the analysis of the above content, two major research gaps can be identified: (1) there is a scarcity of studies focusing on Chinese secondary vocational schools, particularly private ones; and (2) research on the work performance of Chinese school teachers, especially those in secondary vocational schools, is lacking. Therefore, this study aims to address these research gaps and assess whether these known variables and influencing factors still affect educators in private vocational schools through questionnaire surveys. Specifically, the study seeks to shed light on teachers' experiences in secondary vocational schools, where expectations may be relatively low due to students' weaker abilities.

In addition to addressing the research gaps, the rationale of this study is can be attributed to two major reasons: (1) the Chinese government has a large investment in vocational education schools, therefore the examination of key factors that impact job performance can help both educational institutions and the government understand the educator's task motivation, and (2) the uniqueness of the secondary vocational school results to teachers' challenges, and this study can help the relevant stakeholders understand the factors influencing the job performance of the teacher in the secondary vocational school.

First, based on the research from Ministry of Education in China, the government's investment in vocational schools reached 1.87 billion RMB in 2019, and the employment rate of students who graduated from secondary vocational schools reached 95% (Ministry of Education, 2019). Not only that, the Ministry of Education has set 230 professional teaching standards for secondary vocational schools, which shows that although the standards for teachers working in secondary vocational schools are less than the 410 standards for vocational colleges (Ministry of Education, 2019), but still need to have strong teaching abilities. Therefore, in this context, research on secondary vocational schools can help schools and countries better understand whether the current teacher job performance will be affected by specific factors under such a large investment. Thus, the conclusions of this study can be further used to help schools improve their internal or external environment and to help the state and the Ministry of Education formulate more reasonable rules and regulations.

The second research motivation is that the currently a lack of progress in the field of private secondary vocational school teachers, and there are more studies on public high schools. In this way, there is a large difference, because private secondary vocational schools are more inclined to cultivate students' vocational skills, and the overall teaching environment is more challenging ^[2]. Public high schools are regarded as better schools compare to private vocational schools among Chinese students ^[26]. At the same time, there are few studies on private vocational high schools in current academic journals, much less to say the job performance of educators. Therefore, the author hopes to reveal more relevant research results through this study.

4. Methods

4.1 Study Design

Considering that the study will collect data from multiple schools at a single point in time, the study will employ cross-sectional research design. Wang and Chen (2020) described cross-sectional study as observational study that examines data collected from a population at a single point in time to describe an emerging pattern. This study will use survey questionnaire to collect data. The data collected will be used to describe describe the participants' demographic profile, perceptions of their individual characteristics, organization practices, working environment, and job performance. Furthermore, the relationship between variables will be tested.

4.2 Study Participants

4.2.1 Sample size and Sampling Method

The target participants of this study are teachers of the private secondary vocational schools in Liaocheng City, Shandong Province, China. The city has a total of thirteen (13) private secondary vocational schools. Guided by the official list of the Chinese Ministry of Education, this study will select

participants from the top 4 and the bottom 4 schools on this list. Table 1 shows the teacher's population in each school and the minimum desired sample size recommended by Raosoft Calculator.

Table 1 Recommended Sample Size Utilizing Raosoft Calculator

University	Teacher's Population	Minimum Desired Sample Size
Liaocheng Modern Transportation Vocational Secondary School	85	40
Liaocheng Jiangbei Sports School	50	23
Liaocheng Light Industry Vocational Secondary School	60	28
Liaocheng Hanwen Secondary Vocational School	40	19
Liaocheng Mingyuan Technical School	60	28
Liaocheng North Technical School	56	26
Liaocheng Chunrun Technical School	52	24
Shenxian Zhuoda Technical School	42	20
TOTAL	445	207

4.2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To fully describe the factors influencing the secondary vocational school teachers' work performance, this study will screen participants based on the following inclusion criteria:

(1) The participant is currently employed as a teacher in one of the identified private secondary vocational schools of Shandong province, China;

(2) The participant has rendered atleast three (3) years of service;

(3) The participant is willing to partake in the study;

However, despite meeting all the inclusion criteria, a participant may still be disqualified from the study if they fulfill one or more of the exclusion criterion listed below:

(1) The participant is working as a part-time teacher;

(2) The participant is on probationary status;

4.3 Research Instruments

To describe the different factors affecting the secondary vocational school teachers' work performance, the author developed a questionnaire consisting items on individual factor, organizational factor, and environmental factor. The items included in the questionnaire were consolidated from previous studies. To ensure validity of the items in the questionnaire, the author will conduct qualitative content validation by asking experts to evaluate the appropriateness of the items included. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaire will be tested after implementing a pilot test.

On the other hand, to describe the participants' work performance, this study will employ the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire developed by Koopmans and colleagues (2015). The questionnaire is divided into three subscales: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behavior, with each subscale demonstrating reliability coefficients of 0.931, 0.904, and 0.834, respectively.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

4.4.1 Conflict of Interests

It is hereby decalred that the author has no any connection with any institution with financial and non-fianncial interest in this paper.

4.4.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

This study will be implemented in accordance with the rules and regulations of the university and the country in ensuring the full protection of the privacy of the participants and the confidentiality of their data. The provisions of the Data Privacy Law on safeguarding both the participants and their data will be strictly adhered.

First, the anonymity of the participants will be protected through the use of code names. Second, collected data will be processed using a private computer that is only accessible by the author. Data will be saved in a local storage and will be routinely snyched in a cloud storage, which are both stricted. Data in the cloud storage may only be accessed by the author. In case the University Ethics Review Committee

needs to validate the data, access will be provided in the cloud storage. Lastly, the cloud storage containing the research data will be permanently cleared sixty (60) days after the study's completion. Prior to the deletion of the research data, the respondents may email the author if they want to access their data. However, access to data of other respondents will remain restricted.

4.4.3 Recruitment Process

The participants of this study will be private secondary vocational schools in Shandong province, China. Therefore, the first step to consider

The first step of the recruitment process is the identification of the Universities offering Broadcasting and Hosting course in Fujian Province by checking the official list issued by the Ministry of Education. Next is to gather data on the student population of the Broadcasting and Hosting program of each university by accessing their official websites. The third step is to coordinate with the College of Communication of each university to identify research participants. The fourth step is the distribution of the Informed Consent Form to the identified students.

4.4.4 Informed Consent Process

To guarantee that participants are informed about the nature of the study and their participation, the author will ask them to sign informed consent form. Please see appendix for the Informed Consent Form.

4.4.5 Risks, Inconveniences, and Benefits

There are no hazards, negative effects, or difficulties associated with the participants' involvement. However, they will utilize their own time to participate, which may take ten to fifteen minutes. Additionally, the questionnaire item may cause them to remember traumatic teaching-related experiences. A research assistant will be available during the collection of data, ensuring that participants will be given appropriate assistance.

On the other hand, the results of this study may offer useful information to secondary vocational schools in order to better understand the variables affecting instructors' productivity at work. To show their thanks, the author will hold an online raffle via the WeChat app. Thirty to fifty RMB worth of e-money certificates are among the fifty raffle prizes.

4.4.6 Withdrawal or Termination of Study Participation

The participants can decide to withdraw from the study if unanticipated events occur during the study that will prevent him from participating or could affect the findings. The participant may inform the author regarding the termination of his participation to the study through email. Even if the participant terminates his participation to the study, his data and his identity will remain protected.

5. Statistical Analysis of Data

Table 2 Type of Data and Corresponding Statistical Treatment

Study Objectives	Data	Type of Data	Grouped by/In Relation to	Statistical Treatment
describe the participants' demographic profile in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, and years of service;	Demographic Profile	Continuous (Interval)	N/A	Descriptive Statistics (Frequency, Percentage, Mean)
describe participants' perceptions of their individual characteristics, organization practices, and working environment;	Individual Factors, Organizational Factors, Environmental Factors	Continuous (Interval)	N/A	Descriptive Statistics (Frequency, Percentage, Mean)
describe participants' job performance;	Job Performance	Continuous (Interval)	N/A	Descriptive Statistics (Frequency, Percentage, Mean)
determine whether a significant difference exists in participants' job performance across their demographic profile;	Job Performance	Continuous (Interval)	Demographic Profile	ANOVA
determine whether a significant relationship exists between individual characteristics, organization practices, working environment, and job performance	Job Performance		Individual Factors, Organizational Factors, Environmental Factors	Pearson Correlation

The data that will be used by this study will be collected through survey questionnaire. The study will employ statistical software to store, organize, and interpret the gathered research data. The study will use

descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean) to describe the participants' demographic profile, perceptions of their individual characteristics, organization practices, working environment, and job performance. Furthermore, to determine whether there is a significant difference in participants' job performance across their demographic profile, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be employed. Lastly, to determine if there is a significant relationship exists between individual characteristics, organization practices, working environment, and job performance, the Pearson Correlation will be employed. The type of data and statistical treatment to be used is shown in Table 2 .

6. Conclusion

This study underscores that the job performance of private vocational high school teachers in Liaocheng City is shaped by a combination of individual, organizational, and environmental factors. Teachers' competence, self-efficacy, and resilience interact with institutional practices such as workload, welfare, and leadership, while broader conditions like policies and resources further influence performance. Addressing these factors holistically is essential to enhancing teaching quality and student outcomes. The findings highlight the importance of targeted support and policy interventions to strengthen vocational education, ensuring that teachers are empowered to perform effectively in challenging educational contexts.

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