STRATEGIC PLAN INTERVENTION TO IDENTIFY KEY FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION AT ZHANJIANG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, CHINA

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Abstract

This study explored the influence of leadership style (participative, supportive, and directive leadership style, self-efficacy, and compensation structure on the job satisfaction of full-time teachers in 10 secondary schools of Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology. The study used the Index of Objective Consistency to test the scale validity and conducted a Pilot Test (n=30) through Cronbach's alpha coefficient to evaluate the reliability. Subsequently, 80 valid questionnaires were collected, and multiple linear regression analysis verified the significant relationship between variables. Then, 30 teachers were randomly selected for a 32-week strategic plan, and the degree of change of variables before and after the strategic plan was analyzed by paired sample t-test. The analysis showed that participative, supportive, and directive leadership styles, self-efficacy, and compensation structure all positively and significantly affected teachers' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Self-Efficacy, Compensation Structure, Job Satisfaction, Strategic Plan

Introduction

With the rapid development of Chinese higher education, the status and role of private higher education are increasingly prominent. Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology is a very influential private university; its teachers' stability and development directly affect the university's teaching quality and long-term development. As an important indicator to measure the working status of teachers, predict teachers' behavior, and affect teaching quality and school development, teachers' job satisfaction has received more and more attention and research in recent years. As a private university, Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology, under the background of fierce market competition and uneven distribution of educational resources, it is particularly important to effectively improve teachers' job satisfaction, optimize human resource allocation, and then stabilize the teaching staff and improve the quality of education and teaching. However, more in-depth, and detailed research is still needed on the factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction in private universities, especially in private undergraduate universities in specific regions such as Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology. This study aims to strengthen this aspect of research. Through in-depth investigation and analysis of the teachers' group in Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology.

Literature Review

1. Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

The study of job satisfaction began in the 1930s, focusing on the comfort, achievement, and happiness experienced by individuals at work. Evans (1997) mainly expounded on the matching degree between personal job needs and their actual work value, represented by positive attitudes and happy moods. Satisfaction increases when job characteristics fit employee needs, bring fun and recognition, and meet high-level needs (Muhammad & Akhter, 2010). Job satisfaction is also associated with positive emotions brought by performance evaluation; teachers will feel higher happiness, especially when they perform well and achieve significant results (Hendrawijaya et al., 2020). It can be understood as a positive emotional evaluation of the job and its experience, affected by the gap between actual and expected returns (Amoo, 2018).

2. Participative Leadership Style

The concept of participative leadership was first proposed by the German psychologist Lewin. After being developed by many scholars, this concept has gradually become one of the popular leadership styles. Among them, the path objective theory proposed by R. House et al. emphasizes that subordinates were encouraged to achieve organizational goals and enhance their job satisfaction through various leadership styles such as directive, supportive, participative, and achievement orientation, and the specific methods were adjusted according to the different characteristics of subordinates (Fang, 2019). In the

practice of participative leadership, leaders not only consult the team's opinions and discuss the problems encountered in the work but also integrate the team's ideas into the decision to be executed (House & Mitchell, 1974). Thus, a hypothesis is indicated:

H1: Participative leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction

3. Supportive Leadership Style

R. House proposed a supportive leadership style in the Path-Goal Theory (Sokmen et al., 2015). Supportive leadership behavior refers to the behaviors that meet the needs and preferences of subordinates (House, 1996; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004, 2006), such as creating a friendly working environment, providing psychological support, focusing on employee welfare (Fabac et al., 2022; House, 1996) and encouraging employees to achieve outstanding results (Fabac et al., 2022). Supportive leaders actively solve the difficulties of subordinates and cooperate and communicate with them honestly, openly, and fairly (Elsaied, 2019; Schmid et al., 2017; Schmidt et al., 2018). Thus, a hypothesis is indicated:

H2: Supportive leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction

4. Directive Leadership Style

House and Mitchell (1974) interpreted directive leadership as a leader role in the path-goal theory, where they were responsible for clearly explaining the goals, steps, deadlines, and work rules of various tasks to team members. This leadership style focuses on goal setting, process supervision, and behavior control to ensure the team follows a predetermined track (Euwema et al., 2007). Under directive leadership, leaders convey detailed instructions and video methodologies for achieving goals and closely monitor team dynamics to accelerate decision-making and improve collaboration efficiency (Zheng et al., 2021). The key functions of directive leadership are to set the team's direction, guide the members' path of action, assign tasks reasonably, clarify operational norms, and supervise the execution process to ensure the effective implementation of team goals (Derue et al., 2010). Thus, a hypothesis is indicated:

H3: Directive leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction

5. Self-Efficacy

According to the framework of social learning theory, individuals' self-efficacy is formed through direct and indirect experiences and mainly comes from four pillars: personal success experiences, observing others' success examples, verbal persuasion, and physical fitness (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy can be understood as an individual's confidence level in planning and implementing the necessary steps to achieve a goal (Bargsted et al., 2019) or as an individual's confidence in their ability to successfully complete a specific action. When individuals are convinced, they can complete a task, they will show higher confidence in performing similar tasks (Ismayilova & Klassen, 2019). Thus, a hypothesis is indicated:

H4: Self-efficacy has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction

6. Compensation Structure

Compensation is the overall reflection of all cash and non-cash compensation given to employees by employers. It profoundly impacts employees' job satisfaction and organizational loyalty and can be divided into internal and external, monetary, and non-monetary, and direct and indirect benefits (Ashraf, 2020). According to the research of Ismail et al. (2009), the design of the compensation system includes two core elements: one is compensation structure, which refers to the proportion of compensation allocation set for different positions, skill differences, and performance within the same organization; the other is compensation level, which involves such things as the average amount of salary, covering base salary, salary adjustment, various benefits, subsidies, and other additional rewards. Thus, a hypothesis is indicated:

H5: Compensation structure has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

Research Framework

In this study, we have cited and adopted three key theoretical models, which are from the research results of Al-Sada et al. (2017), Demir (2020), and Ashraf (2020). The theoretical frameworks proposed by these three scholars provide a solid theoretical basis for us to understand and construct the core concepts and relationships of the research problem. They are supported and reflected in the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1.

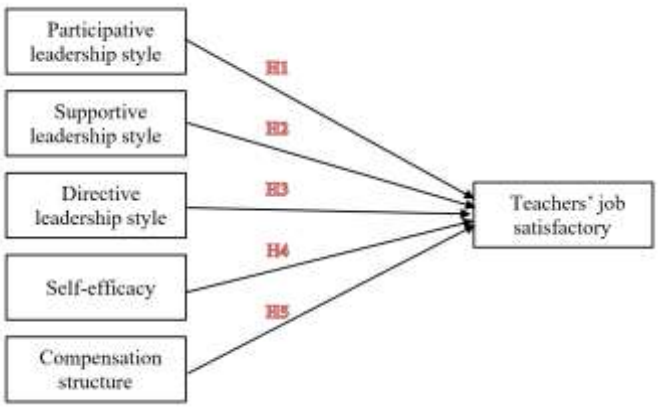

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

The hypotheses of the research variables based on the conceptual framework are;

H1: Participative leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H2: Supportive leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H3: Directive leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H4: Self-efficacy has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

H5: Compensation structure has a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The research process was divided into four different stages. The first stage was to verify the significant impact of independent variables on dependent variables. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 80 teachers selected proportionally from 10 secondary colleges of Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology, and the data were collected using the five-level Likert scale. Subsequently, the multivariate linear regression analysis was conducted using Jamovi software to determine the significance when the p-value <0.05.

Research Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

1. Research Population

This study targets the teaching staff of ten different secondary schools under the full-time undergraduate education system of Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology. The ten secondary schools are Economics and Finance, Management, Accounting, Foreign Languages, Fine Arts and Design, Music and Dance, Architectural Engineering, Intelligent Manufacturing, Education, Culture, and Media.

2. Sample size

Hair et al. (2010) pointed out that a sample size between 30 and 500 is generally considered sufficient for most research projects. Referring to the existing data, this study selected six variables to perform multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis. The sample size was 80 people proportionally selected from the ten secondary schools in Table 1. In the initial diagnostic stage of the study, we used 15 samples for the reliability test. When entering the strategic planning stage, we randomly selected 30 teachers as participants in the strategic planning implementation process.

3. Sampling Procedures

The first sampling was a pilot survey and pilot test sampling to verify the scale's reliability. The researchers randomly selected 30 respondents for the questionnaire survey and gave feedback on the pilot and pilot test results to verify the scale's reliability.

The second sampling was survey sampling to verify the significant impact of independent variables on dependent variables. The researchers selected 80 full-time teachers from 10 secondary colleges of Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology in proportion to conduct a questionnaire survey.

The third sampling was the selection of interview objects in the diagnostic stage before the strategic plan. Fifteen teachers were selected from the interviewees for an interview to understand their understanding of the definition of each variable, the current level of job satisfaction, and the areas expected to improve teachers' job satisfaction.

The fourth sampling was the selection of people involved in the strategic plan. Thirty teachers were randomly selected from the interviewees to participate in the strategic plan.

Research Instruments

1. Design of Questionnaire

Macdonald and Maclntyre (1997) in terms of compensation structure, directive leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, participative leadership style, self-efficacy, and supportive leadership style. This practice helps improve the scales' credibility and lays the foundation for their reliability and validity. All scales were subjected to IOC tests.

2. Components of Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on collecting background information of the interviewees, including gender, age, secondary college, teaching age, professional title, and selection of “Outstanding Talents Plan” and other demographic indicators. This part of the content can help researchers compare and analyze according to individual characteristics and explore the correlation between their attitudes, tendencies, and other relevant variables. The second part consists of a series of exploratory questions, including five items of participative leadership style, four items of supportive leadership style and four items of directive leadership style (Harris et al., 2001).

3. IOC Results

This study used Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) to evaluate the scale's validity. The researchers invited three university professors, two of whom had PhD degrees, to test the scale. If the item could effectively measure the variable, it was scored "+1"; if it was uncertain whether the item could measure the variable, it was scored "0"; if the item could not measure the variable, it was scored "-1". The three experts completed the IOC test carefully, and the two sides exchanged opinions on the areas in doubt.

4. Pilot survey and Pilot test results

The researcher randomly selected 30 students and issued questionnaires for pilot surveys and tests. Then, the internal consistency reliability test of Cronbach's Alpha was conducted on the collected data. Items with an alpha coefficient of 0.60 or above are generally considered reliable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The reliability test results for each item are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Pilot Test Result

Variables	No. of Items	Sources	Cronbach's Alpha	Strength of Association
Participative Leadership Style	4	Harris et al. (2001)	0.971	Excellent
Supportive Leadership Style	4	Harris et al. (2001)	0.960	Excellent
Directive Leadership Style	4	Harris et al. (2001)	0.935	Excellent
Self-Efficacy	9	Schmitz and Schwarzer (2000)	0.949	Excellent
Compensation Structure	9	Tessema and Soeters (2006)	0.937	Excellent
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	9	Schmitz and Schwarzer (2000)	0.951	Excellent

Results and Discussion

1. Demographic Information

The demographic information of the 80 teachers interviewed and the 30 teachers involved in the strategic plan is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Demographic Profile

Entire Research Population (n=80)		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	27	33.75%
	Female	53	66.25%
How Old	＜30	13	16.25%
	30-40	36	45.00%
	40-50	25	31.25%
	＞50	6	7.50%
Teaching years	＜5	19	23.75%
	5-10	24	30.00%
	10-15	19	23.75%
	＞15	18	22.50%

Table 2 (Continue)

IDI Participants (n=30)		Frequency	Percent
Title	Teaching assistant	17	21.25%
	Lecturer	46	57.50%
	Associate professor	15	18.75%
	Professor	2	2.5%
Talent Support Program	Excellent Professor	1	1.25%
	Excellent Associate Professor	10	12.50%
	Excellent Lecturer	22	27.50%
	Excellent Master	0	0%
	None of above	47	58.75%
Gender	Male	5	16.7%
	Female	25	83.3%
Age group	Under 30 years old	1	3.3%
	Between 31 and 40 years old	15	50.0%
	Between 41 and 50 years old	12	40.0%
	Over 50 years old	2	6.7%
professional title	lecturer	18	60.0%
	associate professor	10	33.3%
	professor	2	6.7%
Outstanding Talent Support Program	Outstanding Lecturer	12	40.0%
	Outstanding Associate Professor	3	10.0%
	Outstanding Professor	0	0.00%
	not selected	15	50.0%

2. Results of multiple linear regression

The statistical analysis of the gathered data was executed using the Jamovi software, where a multiple linear regression analysis was carried out, as shown in Table 3. This analysis revealed an R-squared value of 0.797, signifying that the independent variables collectively account for approximately 79.7% of the variation in the dependent variable. Upon conducting a coefficient analysis with a significance level set at $P < 0.05$, it was ascertained that each of

the five independent variables – inclusive of participative leadership style, supportive leadership style, directive leadership style, self-efficacy, and compensation structure – exerted statistically significant influences (at $P < 0.05$) on the connection between teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 3 The multiple linear regression of five independent variables on the teacher's job Satisfaction

Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta value	t-value	P-value	VIF	R^2
Participative Leadership Style	0.244	3.13*	0.003	2.212	0.797
Supportive Leadership Style	0.213	2.99*	0.004	1.857	
Directive Leadership Style	0.162	2.13*	0.037	2.11	
Self-Efficacy	0.192	2.56*	0.012	2.057	
Compensation Structure	0.584	8.57*	<.001	1.696	

Note: p-value <0.05*

In essence, the findings from this study support Hypotheses 1 through 5, affirming that the adoption of a participative leadership approach, a supportive leadership approach, a directive leadership style, higher levels of self-efficacy among teachers, and a well-structured compensation system indeed have significant and positive impacts on their overall job satisfaction. Therefore, the researcher uses hypotheses 6 to 11 to implement the strategic plan.

H6 There is a significant mean difference in participative leadership style between the current and expected situation stages.

H7 There is a significant mean difference in supportive leadership style between the current situation and expected situation stages.

H8 There is a significant mean difference in directive leadership style between the current situation and expected situation stages.

H9 There is a significant mean difference in self-efficacy between the current situation and the expect-situation stages.

H10 There is a significant mean difference in compensation structure between the current and expected situation stages.

H11 There is a significant mean difference in teachers' job satisfaction between current-situation and expected-situation stages.

3. Strategic Plan Stage

The entire strategic plan will start from April 2023 to November 2023, lasting for 32 weeks. See Figure 2 for the main activities of each link. Before implementing the strategic plan, the researchers randomly selected 15 teachers to conduct interviews to understand their understanding of variables, current job satisfaction levels, and areas they expect to improve to improve job satisfaction. Qualitative methods will analyze the information collected at this stage. Subsequently, the researchers randomly selected 30 teachers to participate in the strategic plan and promoted this stage through individual consultation, team coaching, practice, and feedback.

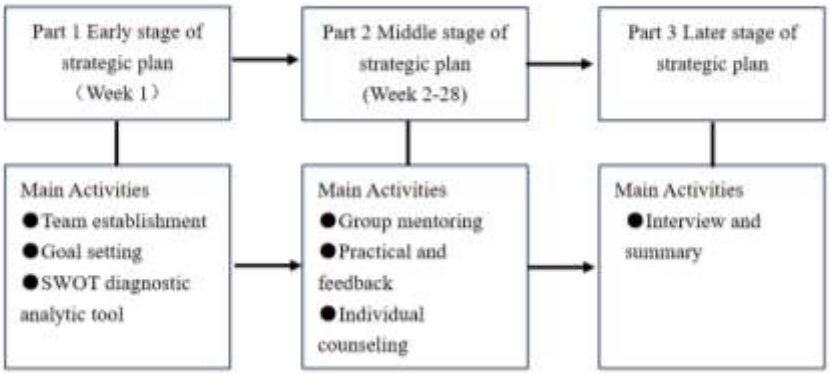

Figure 2 Strategic Plan Stage

4. Results Comparison between Current Situation and Expect Situation

The researchers conducted a paired sample t-test analysis on the six variables in this study to determine whether the teachers' job satisfaction and its impacting factors changed before and after the strategic plan.

Table 4 lists the results of the paired sample t-test of the six variables.

Variables	Mean	SD	P-value	Sig.
Participative Leadership Style				
Current Situation	4.47	0.669	-6.48	< .001
Expected Situation	3.38	0.809		
Supportive Leadership Style				
Current Situation	4.42	0.726	-13.36	< .001
Expected Situation	1.67	0.747		

Table 4 (Continue)

Variables	Mean	SD	P-value	Sig.
Directive Leadership Style				
Current Situation	4.52	0.666	-5.2	< .001
Expected Situation	3.73	0.594		
Self-Efficacy				
Current Situation	4.00	0.772	-3.24	< .001
Expected Situation	3.46	0.602		
Compensation Structure				
Current Situation	3.68	0.733	-8.68	< .001
Expected Situation	2.42	0.460		
Teachers' Job Satisfaction				
Current Situation	4.19	0.692	-11.62	< .001
Expected Situation	2.87	0.190		

The results of the paired sample t-test are analyzed as follows:

There was a significant increase in participative leadership style at the expect-situation stage (M=4.47, SD=0.669) than the current situation stage (M=3.38, SD=0.809); t-value =-6.48 $p < 0.01$. The mean difference was 1.09. Thus, Hypothesis 6 posits a significant difference in participative leadership style between the current situation and expect-situation stages, supported by the P-value being less than 0.001.

There was a significant increase in supportive leadership style at the expect-situation stage (M=4.42, SD=0.726) than the current situation stage (M=1.67, SD=0.747); t-value =-13.36 $p < 0.01$. The mean difference was 2.75. Thus, Hypothesis 7 posits a significant difference in supportive leadership style between the current situation and the expect-situation stages, supported by the P-value being less than 0.001.

There was a significant increase in directive leadership style at the expect-situation stage (M=4.52, SD=0.666) than the current situation stage (M=3.73, SD=0.594); t-value =-5.2 $p < 0.01$. The mean difference was 0.79. Thus, Hypothesis 8 posits a significant difference in directive leadership style between the current situation and expect-situation stages, supported by the P-value being less than 0.001.

There was a significant increase in self-efficacy at the expect-situation stage (M=4.00, SD=0.772) than at the current situation stage (M=3.46, SD=0.602); t-value =-3.24, $p = 0.03$. The

mean difference was 0.54. Thus, Hypothesis 9 posits a significant difference in self-efficacy between the current-situation and expected-situation stages , supported by the P-value of 0.003.

There was a significant increase in compensation structure at the expect-situation stage (M=3.68, SD=0.733) than the current situation stage (M=2.42, SD=0.460); t-value =-8.68 p < 0.01. The mean difference was 1.26. Thus, Hypothesis 10 posits a significant difference in compensation structure between the current situation and the expect-situation stages , supported by the P-value being less than 0.001.

There was a significant increase in teachers' job satisfaction at the expect-situation stage (M=4.19, SD=0.692) than the current situation stage (M=2.87, SD=0.190); t-value =-11.62 p < 0.01. The mean difference was 1.39. Thus, Hypothesis 11 posits a significant difference in teachers' job satisfaction between the current situation the current situation and the expect-situation stages, supported by the P-value being less than 0.001.

The six variables have significant average differences between the pre and post-strategic planning stages.

Conclusions, Recommendations, Limitations and Future Research

1. Conclusions

This study explores the influence of participative, supportive, and directive leadership styles, self-efficacy, and compensation structure on teachers' job satisfaction through qualitative and quantitative methods. It evaluates the current level using strategic planning methods. Firstly, with the help of SWOT analysis, various factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction are systematically evaluated, including school culture, leadership style, workload, salary and welfare, career development opportunities, and other internal and external conditions, in order to find room for improvement and develop strategies to improve satisfaction. The study found that participative, supportive, and directive leadership styles, self-efficacy, and compensation structure all significantly positively impact teachers' job satisfaction. By sending questionnaires to the teachers from 10 secondary schools and adopting multiple linear regression analysis, the R-square value is 0.797, indicating that the above independent variables can explain 79.7% of the variance of the dependent variable. After verifying the hypothesis, the researchers develop a strategic plan through interviews and group mentoring activities so that teachers understand the key influencing factors and through individual counseling to promote teachers to clarify their vision, enhance self-efficacy, adjust their cognition of the compensation structure, and improve job satisfaction. The whole process focuses on practice and feedback to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and solve practical problems. After implementing the strategic plan, a comparative study was conducted on 30 teachers.

2. Recommendations

In the current education system, teachers' job satisfaction is a core indicator for evaluating educational institutions' management effectiveness, the teachers' strength, and the quality of education. Therefore, this study focuses on the influence of participative, supportive, and directive leadership styles, self-efficacy, and compensation structure on teachers' satisfaction and puts forward five improvement suggestions for private universities.

Participative leadership should be implemented. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in decision-making, such as managing decisions, curriculum design, teaching reform, and campus culture construction. Seminars should also be held regularly to listen to teachers' opinions, which makes teachers feel self-value.

More supportive leadership should be provided. Leaders should increase their concern and support for teachers' development, such as optimizing the teaching environment, conducting regular psychological counseling and professional training, establishing a mentoring system to help teachers inherit experience, and ensuring that teachers can get timely help when they are in trouble.

Guide teachers in need. As leaders of teacher professional development, they can guide and motivate teachers by organizing regular teaching observations and public seminars, providing suggestions for teaching improvement, and recognizing outstanding teaching achievements.

3. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study has obtained some important insights into teachers' job satisfaction and its related influencing factors, some limitations and deficiencies remain, which provide the possibility of expansion for future deepening research.

First of all, the sample size needs to be expanded. The current study uses Zhanjiang University of Science and Technology teachers as the research subject. Although this kind of focused study helps to have a deep insight into a specific group, the wide applicability of the research results is limited by the singleness of the sample source. Therefore, in the follow-up study, it is suggested that the sample coverage be expanded to include teachers from different regions and schools of different types to enhance the universal significance of the research conclusions.

In addition, the implementation period of the strategic plan needs to be considered. In the current study, the implementation span of the strategic plan is 32 weeks, from April 2023 to November of the same year. However, considering that the operation of universities often follows the law of the school year, future studies can consider extending the implementation period of the strategic plan to a complete school year or even cross-school years and conducting long-term tracking observations. Such extended research will help to explore more deeply the long-term effects of various factors on teachers' job satisfaction and more accurately evaluate the lasting stability and effectiveness of the strategic plan.

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