



The Impact of Work Stressors on Job Satisfaction in Hubei Private Universities: Mediating Effects of Job Stress and Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei, China, with a particular focus on the impact of work-related stressors (such as workload, compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate) on job satisfaction and the mediating roles of job stress and self-efficacy. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data from 420 teachers in private universities in Hubei, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed for analysis. The results indicate that workload, compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate significantly affect job stress and job satisfaction. Job stress mediates the relationship between work-related stressors and job satisfaction, and self-efficacy also mediates the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. These findings provide theoretical support and practical guidance for enhancing job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Self-Efficacy, Private Universities, Teachers.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of higher education in China, private universities have increasingly become a significant part of the educational system. However, faculty members in private universities are confronted with a variety of work-related stressors, such as heavy workloads, low compensation, difficulties in achieving work-life balance, insufficient organizational support, and an unfavorable school climate. These factors may have a negative impact on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an important indicator of teachers' professional happiness and engagement, which is crucial for teaching quality, career development, and the overall development of the university. Therefore, this study aims to explore the factors influencing job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei, China, and to examine the mediating roles of job stress and self-efficacy, in order to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for enhancing job satisfaction.

2. Problem Statement

The job satisfaction of teachers in private universities in Hubei is influenced by a variety of factors, including workload, compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate. These factors not only directly affect job satisfaction but also indirectly influence it through job stress and self-efficacy. Research indicates that heavy workloads, low compensation, difficulties in work-life balance, insufficient organizational support, and an unfavorable school climate can significantly reduce job satisfaction and increase the intention to leave among teachers (Chen, 2024; Guo et al., 2019; Khalid et al., 2012; Pan et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2020; Xuan, 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). Additionally, job stress and self-efficacy mediate the relationships between these factors and job satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2023; Schunk, 2021; Zhang et al., 2024).

Workload is one of the core factors affecting teacher satisfaction. Teachers in private universities in Hubei typically work longer hours than their counterparts in public universities, averaging an additional 12 hours per week. This not only increases stress but also reduces time available for research and personal activities, thereby lowering job satisfaction (Chen, 2024). High workloads also indirectly influence turnover intentions through increased job stress and reduced well-being (Chen, Cheng, & Chen, 2023).

Inadequate compensation is one of the main factors contributing to dissatisfaction among private university teachers. Studies show that private university teachers often receive lower salaries compared to their public university counterparts, which undermines their professional motivation and sense of fairness (Guo et al., 2019; Khalid et al., 2012; Lai & Sudprasert, 2024). Insufficient compensation not only directly affects job satisfaction but also indirectly influences it through increased job stress and reduced self-efficacy.

Work-life balance is a significant factor affecting teacher job satisfaction. Teachers in private universities in Hubei frequently report insufficient time for family responsibilities and personal well-being due to long working hours and inadequate institutional flexibility, which increases stress and burnout and reduces job satisfaction (Pan et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2022). Poor work-life balance also indirectly influences turnover intentions through increased job stress and reduced self-efficacy (Lai & Sudprasert, 2024).

Organizational support has a significant impact on teacher job satisfaction. Research indicates that organizational support not only alleviates stress but also enhances teachers' professional identity and sense of belonging, thereby reducing turnover intentions (Zhang, Li, & Huang, 2025; Wang et al., 2020). Private university teachers often report insufficient institutional support, which undermines job satisfaction and increases the risk of turnover.

School climate plays a crucial role in shaping teacher job satisfaction. Studies show that a supportive and collaborative climate enhances teacher engagement and self-efficacy, while a negative climate leads to burnout and dissatisfaction (Xuan, 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). Teachers in private universities in Hubei frequently report an unfavorable school climate, which weakens their job satisfaction and institutional loyalty.

In summary, workload, compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate are key factors affecting the job satisfaction of teachers in private universities in Hubei. These factors not only directly influence job satisfaction but also indirectly affect it through job stress and self-efficacy. Therefore, to enhance teacher job satisfaction, private universities need to take measures to reduce job stress, improve compensation, enhance work-life balance, strengthen organizational support, and create a positive school climate.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions guide the investigation:

RQ1: Do the five job characteristics—workload, compensation, work-family balance, organizational support, and school climate—significantly influence employees' job satisfaction?

RQ2: Do these five job characteristics significantly influence employees' job stress?

RQ3: Does job stress significantly affect employees' job satisfaction?

RQ4: Do the five job characteristics—workload, compensation, work-family balance, organizational support, and school climate—significantly influence employees' self-efficacy?

RQ5: Does self-efficacy significantly affect employees' job satisfaction?

RQ6: Do job stress mediate the relationships between the five job characteristics and job satisfaction?

RQ7: Do self-efficacy mediate the relationships between the five job characteristics and job satisfaction?

4. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

4.1. Relationships and Hypothesis Development

This study explores the relationships between work-related stressors, job stress, and job satisfaction, considering both direct and indirect effects through mediating variables. Teachers in private universities face significant work-related stressors, such as heavy workloads, inadequate compensation, difficulties in work-life balance, insufficient organizational support, and unfavorable school climates, which increase job stress and subsequently reduce job satisfaction and increase turnover intentions (Jiang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). To fully understand these dynamic relationships, it is essential to examine not only the direct effects of work-related stressors but also the indirect effects through mediating variables. Job stress acts as a mediating variable, transmitting the negative impacts of external stressors to job satisfaction (Guo et al., 2019). Additionally, self-efficacy serves as a psychological buffer, mitigating the adverse effects of stress on job satisfaction (Han et al., 2020).

4.1.1. Work-Related Stressors and Job Satisfaction

Work-related stressors not only increase job stress but also play a crucial role in reducing job satisfaction among university teachers. These stressors include heavy workloads, inadequate compensation, difficulties in work-life balance, insufficient organizational support, and unfavorable school climates, which typically lead to lower job satisfaction, reduced institutional commitment, and increased turnover intentions (Jiang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). According to the Job Demand-Control Model (Karasek, 1979) and the Effort-Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996), employees experience dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and alienation when job demands exceed available resources and rewards (Guo et al., 2019). Teachers in private universities often face job insecurity, lower salaries, and excessive workloads, making them particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of work-related stressors on job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2021).

4.1.2. Workload and Job Satisfaction

Among various work-related stressors, workload has the most direct and significant impact on job satisfaction. Teachers facing high teaching loads, extensive administrative responsibilities, and research expectations without sufficient institutional support typically report lower job satisfaction (Jiang et al., 2020). Excessive workload not only leads to stress and burnout but also reduces intrinsic motivation and engagement derived from work (Guo et al., 2019). Studies have found that teachers with greater autonomy over workload distribution report higher job satisfaction, while those burdened with excessive, rigidly assigned workloads are more likely to experience dissatisfaction and alienation (Toropova et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1a}: Workload is negatively related to job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.1.3. Compensation and Job Satisfaction

Compensation is a key determinant of job satisfaction, as economic rewards directly influence teachers' morale, motivation, and institutional commitment (Jiang et al., 2020). Teachers in private universities often receive lower salaries, experience delayed payments, and have minimal performance-based incentives compared to their public university counterparts, resulting in higher levels of dissatisfaction (Guo et al., 2019). The Effort-Reward

Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996) posits that employees experience emotional distress and dissatisfaction when they perceive an imbalance between their efforts and the rewards they receive (Toropova et al., 2021). This imbalance is particularly pronounced in academia, where teachers are expected to publish research, mentor students, and engage in administrative work without corresponding economic compensation (Han et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1b} Compensation is positively related to job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.1.4. Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Work-life balance is a critical factor influencing job satisfaction, as teachers must balance professional responsibilities with personal and family obligations (Jiang et al., 2020). When teaching loads, research expectations, and administrative duties encroach upon personal time, teachers experience lower job satisfaction, increased emotional exhaustion, and reduced career satisfaction (Guo et al., 2019). Work-life conflict is particularly prevalent among female teachers, who often bear greater caregiving responsibilities and face higher societal expectations (Toropova et al., 2021). Studies indicate that teachers who struggle to maintain work-life balance are more likely to be dissatisfied with their careers, leading to decreased productivity and reduced institutional commitment (Han et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1c} Work-life balance is positively related to job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.1.5. Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction

Organizational support plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction, as mentorship, administrative assistance, and professional development opportunities influence teachers' well-being and engagement (Jiang et al., 2020). Universities that fail to provide structured career development programs, research funding, or clear promotion pathways contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and a sense of career stagnation (Guo et al., 2019). The Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) suggests that when teachers feel their institutions value their contributions and invest in their development, they exhibit higher satisfaction, greater commitment, and better job performance (Toropova et al., 2021). Conversely, teachers who perceive a lack of institutional investment in their growth report lower satisfaction, higher stress, and weaker motivation (Han et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1d} Organizational support is positively related to job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.1.6. School Climate and Job Satisfaction

School climate is a foundational determinant of job satisfaction, encompassing faculty relationships, institutional culture, leadership transparency, and decision-making processes (Wang et al., 2020). A collaborative and cohesive school climate fosters teacher engagement, professional development, and institutional loyalty, whereas a bureaucratic, hierarchical, or toxic work environment leads to dissatisfaction and alienation (Guo et al., 2019). The Organizational Climate Theory (Schneider, 1975) posits that workplace culture significantly influences employee satisfaction and motivation. Institutions that promote open communication, provide faculty representation in governance, and foster academic freedom report higher teacher satisfaction and lower turnover intentions (Toropova et al., 2021). Conversely, rigid hierarchies, ineffective leadership, and exclusive decision-making processes increase teacher dissatisfaction and workplace alienation (Han et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1e} School climate is positively related to job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.2. Work-Related Stressors and Job Stress

Teachers in private universities face various work-related stressors that significantly increase job stress (Jiang et al., 2020). Unlike public universities that rely on government funding, private universities heavily depend on tuition revenue and cost-cutting measures, leading to increased job insecurity, higher workloads, and resource limitations (Guo et al., 2019). These factors contribute to chronic occupational stress, which not only affects teachers' well-being but also has adverse effects on teaching quality, research productivity, and overall institutional effectiveness (Toropova et al., 2021). According to the Job Demand-Control Model (Karasek, 1979), job stress arises when job demands (such as excessive workload, inadequate compensation, poor work-life balance, insufficient organizational support, and a stressful work environment) exceed an individual's control over work conditions (Wang et al., 2020). In the context of private universities, teachers often report a lack of autonomy, which exacerbates the negative impact of these stress factors on mental health and job satisfaction (Guo et al., 2019).

4.2.1. Workload and Job Stress

Among the various stressors affecting teachers, workload is a primary predictor of job stress. Teachers are often expected to balance teaching responsibilities, research obligations, student mentoring, and administrative tasks with limited institutional support (Wang et al., 2020). The intensification of faculty workloads in private universities, due to financial constraints that often lead to reduced staffing and increased individual workloads, further exacerbates stress levels (Guo et al., 2019). Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a direct relationship between excessive workload and job stress. Research has found that teachers with higher workloads report significantly higher stress levels, leading to emotional exhaustion and reduced job engagement (Toropova et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{2a} Workload is positively related to job stress among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.2.3. Compensation and Job Stress

Compensation is a critical factor influencing job stress, particularly in private universities where teachers' salaries are often lower than those in public universities (Jiang et al., 2020). Financial insecurity due to inadequate salaries, delayed payments, and the absence of performance-based incentives further exacerbates stress levels (Guo et al., 2019). Studies have shown that teachers experiencing financial stress report higher levels of psychological

distress. Han et al. (2020) found that low salaries and insufficient financial support contribute to increased work-related anxiety, reduced institutional loyalty, and higher turnover intentions

4.2.4. *Work-Life Balance and Job Stress*

Work-life balance is a key determinant of job stress, as teachers must balance professional responsibilities with personal and family obligations (Guo et al., 2019). Poor work-life balance increases the likelihood of chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout (Toropova et al., 2021). Studies indicate that teachers who struggle to maintain work-life balance report higher stress levels and lower job satisfaction (Han et al., 2020). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced among female teachers, who often bear greater caregiving responsibilities, exacerbating work-life conflict (Jiang et al., 2020). Institutions that fail to provide flexible work arrangements, childcare support, or parental leave policies exacerbate work-related stress (Guo et al., 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{2c} Work-life balance is negatively related to job stress among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.2.5. *Organizational Support and Job Stress*

Institutional support mechanisms play a crucial role in alleviating job stress, but private universities often lack structured faculty support systems (Jiang et al., 2020). The absence of mentorship, administrative assistance, and career development opportunities leads to increased stress levels (Toropova et al., 2021). Teachers who perceive unclear promotion pathways, insufficient research support, and a lack of recognition for their contributions report lower job satisfaction and more health issues related to job stress (Han et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{2d} Organizational support is negatively related to job stress among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.2.6. *School Climate and Job Stress*

The workplace environment—including leadership styles, faculty relationships, and overall academic culture—has a profound impact on teachers' stress levels (Wang et al., 2020). A positive school climate, characterized by collaborative governance, transparent decision-making, and faculty empowerment, can mitigate stress and enhance teacher engagement (Guo et al., 2019). Conversely, bureaucratic inefficiencies, exclusive leadership, and a lack of faculty representation exacerbate stress (Toropova et al., 2021). Studies show that teachers who report a lack of faculty governance participation and poor administrative communication experience higher stress and dissatisfaction (Han et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{2e} School climate is negatively related to job stress among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.3. *Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction*

Empirical research supports this mediating role, indicating that self-efficacy not only helps teachers manage stress but also enhances their job satisfaction. Studies show that teachers with higher self-efficacy report significantly lower stress levels when facing heavy workloads, which in turn positively influences their job satisfaction (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, self-efficacy acts as a protective factor, reducing the likelihood of stress leading to burnout and job dissatisfaction (Guo et al., 2019). Research indicates that teachers with stronger self-efficacy are more likely to engage in proactive problem-solving and maintain a sense of control in their work environment, which directly contributes to sustained job satisfaction (Jiang et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃ Self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction.

4.4. *Job Stress and Job Satisfaction*

Job stress is widely recognized as a central mechanism through which work-related stressors influence job satisfaction, particularly in high-demand work environments such as academia. Teachers in private universities often face multiple work-related stressors, including heavy workloads, inadequate compensation, work-life conflict, lack of organizational support, and an unfavorable school climate (Jiang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). These stressors do not impact job satisfaction in isolation; rather, their effects are mediated through the experience of job stress, which acts as a psychological strain that diminishes teachers' well-being and engagement (Guo et al., 2019). According to the Job Demand-Control Model (Karasek, 1979), stress arises when job demands exceed an individual's control over their work, leading to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and ultimately, reduced job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄ Job stress has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction.

4.5. *Work-Related Stressors and Self-Efficacy*

Research indicates that work-related stressors, such as heavy workloads, role conflict, time pressure, lack of organizational support, and an unfavorable school climate, are consistently associated with diminished teacher self-efficacy. Empirical studies show that higher job demands and school stressors predict lower perceptions of capability to manage instructional, classroom, and relational tasks (Betoret, 2006; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Syntheses and meta-analyses further indicate that teacher self-efficacy is inversely related to stress exposure, reinforcing the view that chronic demands erode efficacy beliefs over time (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{6a} Workload is negatively related to self-efficacy among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

H_{6b} Compensation is positively related to self-efficacy among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

H_{6c} Work-life balance is positively related to self-efficacy among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

H_{6d} Organizational support is positively related to self-efficacy among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

H_{6e} School climate is positively related to self-efficacy among teachers in private universities in Hubei.

4.6. Mediating Roles of Job Stress and Self-Efficacy

Job stress is considered a central mechanism through which work-related stressors influence job satisfaction, particularly in high-demand work environments such as academia. Teachers in private universities often face multiple work-related stressors, including heavy workloads, inadequate compensation, work-life conflict, lack of organizational support, and an unfavorable school climate. These stressors do not impact job satisfaction in isolation; rather, their effects are mediated through the experience of job stress, which acts as a psychological strain that diminishes teachers' well-being and engagement. According to the Job Demand-Control Model, stress arises when job demands exceed an individual's control over their work, leading to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and ultimately, reduced job satisfaction. Similarly, the Effort-Reward Imbalance Model suggests that when employees perceive an imbalance between their efforts and the rewards they receive, stress levels rise, further weakening job satisfaction.

4.7. Mediating Role of Job Stress between Workload and Job Satisfaction

Workload has long been identified as a major stressor in academic settings, with excessive teaching loads, research expectations, and administrative duties creating significant psychological strain. Teachers with heavy workloads often experience chronic stress, which leads to reduced job satisfaction by increasing exhaustion, diminishing motivation, and limiting opportunities for professional development. Research indicates that while high workloads alone may not always directly predict job dissatisfaction, the stress they generate does. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{7a}: Job stress mediates the relationship between workload and job satisfaction.

4.7.1. Mediating Role of Job Stress Between Compensation and Job Satisfaction

Although financial compensation is often considered a direct determinant of job satisfaction, its effects are frequently mediated by job stress, particularly in private universities where salaries are comparatively lower. Teachers who perceive inadequate compensation often experience financial stress, leading to anxiety, job dissatisfaction, and in some cases, increased turnover intentions. According to the Effort-Reward Imbalance Model, when employees perceive that their financial rewards do not adequately reflect their contributions, stress levels rise, subsequently reducing job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{7b}: Job stress mediates the relationship between compensation and job satisfaction.

4.7.2. Mediating Role of Job Stress Between Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Work-life balance is another critical factor influencing job satisfaction, but its impact is largely contingent on the level of stress faculty members experience in managing professional and personal responsibilities. Teachers who struggle to balance work and family commitments often experience heightened stress, which erodes job satisfaction by reducing psychological well-being and increasing emotional fatigue. Research suggests that institutions that implement policies promoting work-life balance, such as flexible work arrangements and family support programs, can mitigate this stress, thereby improving overall job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{7c}: Job stress mediates the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction.

4.7.3. Mediating Role of Organizational Support on Job Satisfaction

Organizational support plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction, but its impact is often mediated by levels of job stress. Teachers who perceive strong institutional support (e.g., access to professional development, mentorship programs, and research funding) experience lower stress levels, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction. Conversely, a lack of organizational support leads to greater role ambiguity, career uncertainty, and increased stress, all of which negatively impact teacher engagement and satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{7d}: Job stress mediates the relationship between organizational support and job satisfaction.

4.7.4. Mediating Role of School Climate on Job Satisfaction

The institutional climate significantly influences teachers' stress levels and job satisfaction. A positive school climate, characterized by open communication, teacher collaboration, and participatory decision-making, has been shown to reduce job stress, thereby increasing job satisfaction. Conversely, a bureaucratic and unsupportive school climate exacerbates workplace stress, leading to lower engagement and commitment. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{7e}: Job stress mediates the relationship between school climate and job satisfaction.

4.8. Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

According to Social Cognitive Theory and the Job Demands-Resources perspective, self-efficacy, as a core personal resource, translates workplace conditions into attitudinal outcomes. Research indicates that self-efficacy buffers the harmful effects of occupational stress on psychological outcomes, highlighting its role in the stress process. Therefore, work-related stressors influence job satisfaction through their impact on self-efficacy. Resources such as compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate increase satisfaction by enhancing self-efficacy, whereas workload decreases satisfaction by undermining self-efficacy.

4.8.1. Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy Between Workload and Job Satisfaction

Within the Job Demands-Resources/Social Cognitive Theory framework, workload, as a salient job demand, depletes cognitive and emotional resources, induces stress, and weakens self-efficacy through adverse physiological arousal. When self-efficacy is weakened, work motivation and persistence decline, thereby reducing job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{sa}: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between workload and job satisfaction.

4.8.2. Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy Between Compensation and Job Satisfaction

Within the Job Demands-Resources/Social Cognitive Theory perspective, compensation, as a core job resource, enhances self-efficacy through organizational evaluation (social persuasion), reduction of financial strain (resource gain), and expansion of mastery opportunities (e.g., access to materials, training). These mechanisms, in turn, promote job satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{sb}: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between compensation and job satisfaction.

4.8.3. Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy Between Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Within the Job Demands-Resources/Social Cognitive Theory perspective, work-life balance, as a contextual resource, reduces stress and facilitates successful performance experiences, thereby enhancing self-efficacy. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{sc}: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction.

4.8.4. Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy Between Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction

Within the Job Demands-Resources/Social Cognitive Theory framework, organizational support, as a contextual resource, enhances self-efficacy by providing supportive policies and leadership. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{sd}: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between organizational support and job satisfaction.

4.8.5. Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy Between School Climate and Job Satisfaction

Within the Job Demands-Resources/Social Cognitive Theory framework, school climate, as a contextual work resource, enhances self-efficacy by providing a supportive environment. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{se}: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between school climate and job satisfaction.

The research framework of this study is as follows:

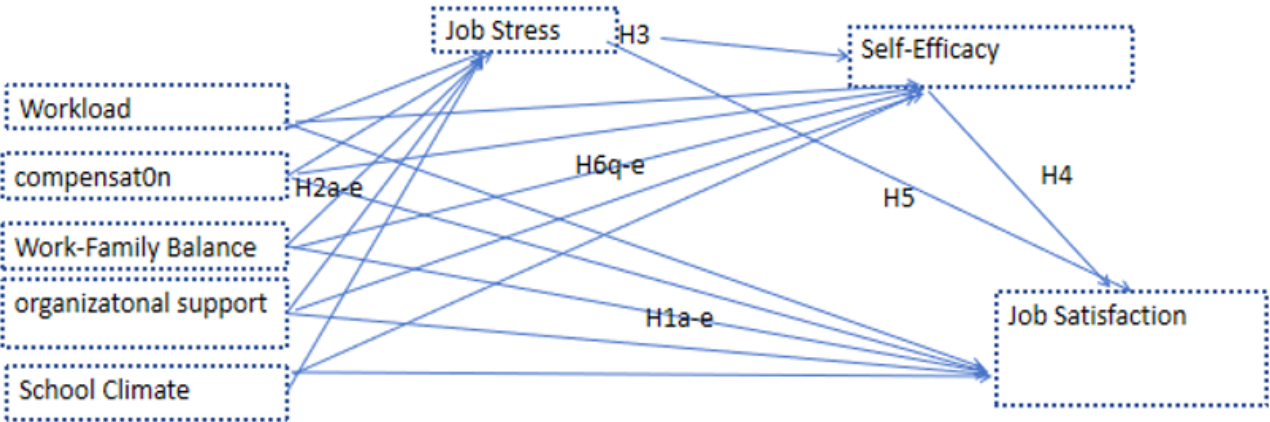


Figure 1. Research model.

5. Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing a questionnaire survey to collect data in order to examine the impact of work stressors (workload, compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate) on job satisfaction, as well as the mediating roles of job stress and self-efficacy. The study targets teachers from 44 private universities in Hubei Province, China, with a final sample size of 420 valid questionnaires obtained through stratified random sampling.

5.1. Data Collection

The questionnaire was designed based on established scales, covering variables such as work stressors, job stress, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. A pre-test was conducted to optimize the content of the questionnaire and ensure its reliability and validity. Data collection was carried out through a combination of online and offline methods, with the assistance of academic affairs offices in universities to distribute and collect the questionnaires, ensuring the representativeness of the sample and the reliability of the data.

5.2. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 22.0) and SmartPLS (Version 4) software. Initially, preliminary data screening was performed, including handling missing values, detecting outliers, and testing for normality to ensure data quality. Subsequently, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed to validate the dimensional structure of the scales, utilizing principal component analysis and varimax rotation to confirm the factor loadings and dimensional divisions of the variables.

In the assessment of the measurement model, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α and composite reliability), indicator reliability (standardized outer loadings), convergent validity (average variance extracted), and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion) were used to verify the reliability and validity of the scales. The results indicated that all scales exhibited good reliability and validity, meeting the requirements for subsequent structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis.

SEM analysis was conducted using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS software, which involved estimating path coefficients, calculating R^2 , effect size (f^2) analysis, and

predictive relevance (Q^2) assessment. Additionally, nonparametric bootstrapping (5000 resamples) was employed to test the significance of the path coefficients, ensuring the robustness of the research findings.

5.3. Mediation Effect Analysis

The mediation effect was examined using the bootstrapping method proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008), which involved calculating the specific indirect effects of the mediating variables (job stress and self-efficacy) between the independent variables (work stressors) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction) to assess the validity of the mediation model. The results demonstrated that job stress and self-efficacy both significantly mediated the relationship between work stressors and job satisfaction, with some mediating effects realized through a chain mediation path involving job stress and self-efficacy.

6. Results and Discussion

This study aims to investigate the impact of work stressors (workload, compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate) on job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei Province, China, as well as the mediating roles of job stress and self-efficacy. The study employed a questionnaire survey, with a sample size of 420 valid questionnaires, covering teachers from 44 private universities in Hubei Province. Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM) and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

6.1. Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Data Analysis

The sample characteristics revealed that male teachers accounted for 56.7%, while female teachers accounted for 43.3%. The age distribution was relatively even, covering multiple age groups from 20 to over 40 years old. In terms of educational background, over 60% of the teachers held a bachelor's degree or higher. Monthly income was widely distributed, ranging from less than 3000 yuan to over 9000 yuan. Work experience varied from 1-3 years to over 10 years, indicating diversity in career stages within the sample.

6.2. Measurement Model Assessment

The assessment of the measurement model indicated that all scales exhibited good reliability and validity. Cronbach's α values and composite reliability (CR) were both above 0.70, demonstrating strong internal consistency of the scales. Standardized outer loadings were all above 0.708, indicating good indicator reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) was above 0.50 for all scales, confirming good convergent validity. The results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion test showed good discriminant validity among the constructs.

6.3. Measurement Model Evaluation

Table 1. Foretell-Larcker criterion.						
Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	Composite Reliability	T-Statistics	Cronba chs Alpha
Workload (WO)	WO1	0.89	0.724	0.913	44.233	0.872
	WO2	0.831			42.777	
	WO3	0.866			57.593	
	WO4	0.814			30.541	
Compensation (CO)	CO1	0.844	0.69	0.917	33.167	0.887
	CO2	0.818			32.061	
	CO3	0.806			26.156	
	CO4	0.864			49.619	
	CO5	0.819			30.159	
Work–Family Balance (WB)	WB1	0.827	0.686	0.916	30.388	0.886
	WB2	0.849			47.544	
	WB3	0.843			43.236	
	WB4	0.83			44.571	
	WB5	0.79			27.314	
Organizational Support (OS)	OS1	0.717	0.665	0.908	20.008	0.872
	OS2	0.799			33.846	
	OS3	0.881			57.756	
	OS4	0.887			58.797	
	OS5	0.78			22.466	
School Climate (SC)	SC1	0.752	0.628	0.922	19.05	0.901
	SC2	0.803			27.581	
	SC3	0.814			43.824	
	SC4	0.791			37.201	
	SC5	0.823			39.416	
	SC6	0.778			27.21	
	SC7	0.782			33.958	
Job Stress (JS)	JS1	0.858	0.672	0.911	58.297	0.878
	JS2	0.789			22.736	
	JS3	0.802			24.53	
	JS4	0.829			37.406	
	JS5	0.82			32.328	

Self-Efficacy (SE)	SE1	0.843	0.674	0.912	45.907	0.879
	SE2	0.816			38.06	
	SE3	0.814			35.468	
	SE4	0.84			47.437	
	SE5	0.791			29.286	
Job Satisfaction (JSA)	JSA1	0.823	0.647	0.901	44.05	0.863
	JSA2	0.806			31.179	
	JSA3	0.766			24.658	
	JSA4	0.794			37.112	
	JSA5	0.831			38.591	

6.4. Structural Model Assessment

The assessment of the structural model revealed that work stressors significantly impact both job stress and job satisfaction. Specifically, workload has a positive effect on job stress ($\beta = 0.145$, $p < 0.01$), whereas compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate have negative effects on job stress (β values are -0.142 , -0.189 , -0.210 , and -0.209 respectively, all with $p < 0.01$). Job stress also has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.151$, $p < 0.001$).

The direct effects of work stressors on job satisfaction are also significant. Workload has a negative effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.145$, $p < 0.001$), while compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate have positive effects on job satisfaction (β values are 0.145 , 0.134 , 0.133 , and 0.121 respectively, all with $p < 0.01$).

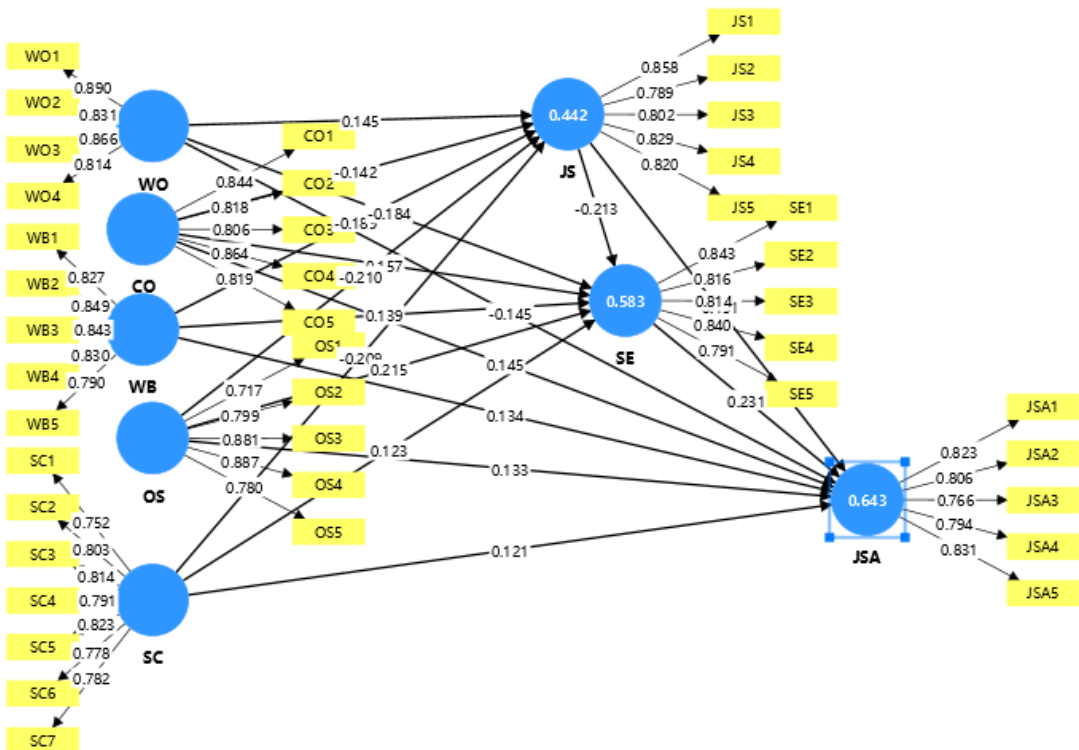


Figure 2. Research result.

6.5. Mediation Effect Analysis

The results of the mediation effect analysis indicate that job stress and self-efficacy significantly mediate the relationship between work stressors and job satisfaction. Specifically, job stress indirectly affects job satisfaction through self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.049$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, the chain mediation effect of work stressors on job satisfaction through job stress and self-efficacy is also significant. For instance, the indirect effect of compensation on job satisfaction through job stress and self-efficacy is 0.021 (95% CI $[-0.004, 0.046]$), organizational support is 0.032 (95% CI $[-0.011, 0.059]$), school climate is 0.028 (95% CI $[-0.006, 0.056]$), work-life balance is 0.032 (95% CI $[-0.010, 0.059]$), and the indirect effect of workload on job satisfaction is -0.042 (95% CI $[-0.076, -0.015]$).

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study investigates the impact of work stressors (workload, compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate) on job satisfaction among teachers in private universities in Hubei Province, China, as well as the mediating roles of job stress and self-efficacy. Data were collected using a questionnaire survey and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The following conclusions were drawn:

7.1. Research Conclusions

7.1.1. Impact of Work Stressors on Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

Workload positively affects job stress, while compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate negatively affect job stress. Job stress has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction, indicating that job stress partially mediates the relationship between work stressors and job satisfaction.

Direct Impact of Work Stressors on Job Satisfaction: Workload negatively affects job satisfaction, while compensation, work-life balance, organizational support, and school climate positively affect job satisfaction. This suggests that these work stressors influence job satisfaction both directly and indirectly through job stress.

Mediating Role of Job Stress and Self-Efficacy: Job stress and self-efficacy significantly mediate the relationship between work stressors and job satisfaction. Specifically, job stress further affects job satisfaction by reducing self-efficacy, creating a chain mediation effect. This indicates that work stressors not only directly influence job satisfaction but also indirectly affect it through teachers' psychological states (job stress and self-efficacy).

7.1.2. Theoretical Implications

This study integrates the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to provide a new theoretical framework for understanding job satisfaction among teachers in private universities. The findings support the hypothesis that work stressors influence job satisfaction through job stress and self-efficacy, enriching the existing literature on the determinants of job satisfaction. Moreover, this study reveals the mediating mechanisms of job stress and self-efficacy between work stressors and job satisfaction, offering new directions for future research.

7.1.3. Practical Implications

The practical significance of this study lies in providing specific management recommendations for university administrators. Universities should focus on managing teachers' work stressors by optimizing workload distribution, improving compensation, enhancing work-life balance, strengthening organizational support, and fostering a positive school climate to reduce job stress and enhance self-efficacy, thereby improving job satisfaction. Additionally, universities should pay attention to teachers' mental health, offering necessary psychological counseling and support to help teachers better cope with job stress and improve job satisfaction.

7.1.4. Research Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the contributions of this study in both theory and practice, several limitations exist. First, the study sample is limited to teachers in private universities in Hubei Province, potentially restricting the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the sample to include teachers from different regions and types of universities to verify the generalizability of the results. Second, the cross-sectional research design used in this study does not allow for the inference of causal relationships between variables. Future research could employ a longitudinal research design to better understand the dynamic relationships between work stressors, job stress, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Lastly, this study only examines the mediating roles of job stress and self-efficacy. Future research could further explore other potential mediating and moderating variables, such as work engagement and burnout, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms influencing job satisfaction.

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