

## RISK FACTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING FOR CHINESE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS: A STUDY IN SHENZHEN CITY

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### Abstract

This study investigates the risk factors influencing the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in Shenzhen City, China, with a focus on the mediating role of organizational culture. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected from a sample of high school educators using validated measures of job burnout, work engagement, managerialism, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing. The findings revealed significant relationships between risk factors (job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism) and psychological wellbeing among educators. Organizational culture was found to mediate the relationship between these risk factors and psychological wellbeing, highlighting the importance of supportive work environments in mitigating the negative effects of job-related stressors. The study provides insights into the complex interplay between individual and organizational factors in shaping educator wellbeing and underscores the need for targeted interventions and policy initiatives to promote psychological health among high school educators in Shenzhen City, China.

**Keywords:** High School Educators, Psychological Wellbeing, Risk Factors, Organizational Culture, Job Burnout, Work Engagement, Managerialism.

### INTRODUCTION

The psychological wellbeing of educators, particularly high school teachers, is a topic of growing concern globally, given its significant implications for both individual educators and the broader educational system. In China, where the education sector is undergoing rapid transformation and expansion, understanding the factors influencing the psychological wellbeing of high school educators has become increasingly important. Shenzhen City, as one of the most dynamic and populous cities in China, provides a unique context for examining these factors. China's education system has experienced remarkable growth and development over the past few decades, driven by economic reforms and increased investment in education. With a focus on expanding access to education and improving educational outcomes, the Chinese government has implemented various reforms aimed at enhancing the quality of education across all levels, including high school education. Despite advancements in the education sector, high school educators in China encounter numerous challenges that can impact their psychological wellbeing. These challenges are often multifaceted and include high workload, intense academic pressure, administrative demands, and limited resources. Additionally, the competitive nature of the education system and societal expectations place additional stress on educators to deliver results and meet expectations. The psychological wellbeing of high school educators is not only vital for their individual health and job satisfaction but also for the quality of education they provide and the overall well-being of

students. Research has consistently shown that educators' psychological wellbeing directly influences their teaching effectiveness, job performance, and interactions with students (Wang et al., 2019). Moreover, educators who experience high levels of stress and burnout are more likely to exhibit negative outcomes, such as decreased job satisfaction, higher turnover rates, and reduced engagement in teaching activities. Given the critical role of high school educators in shaping the academic and socio-emotional development of students, understanding the risk factors influencing their psychological wellbeing is essential. By identifying these factors, policymakers, educational administrators, and school leaders can develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms to mitigate stressors and promote positive mental health among educators. Furthermore, research focusing specifically on high school educators in Shenzhen City provides valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities present in this rapidly growing urban center.

Based on the study's focus on the relationship between risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing among high school educators in Shenzhen City, China, the following hypothesis statements can be formulated:

### ***Hypothesis 1***

There is a significant relationship between risk factors (such as job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism) and the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in Shenzhen City, China.

### ***Hypothesis 2***

Organizational culture mediates the relationship between identified risk factors (job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism) and the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in Shenzhen City, China.

### ***Hypothesis 3***

Organizational culture moderates the relationship between risk factors (job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism) and the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in Shenzhen City, China.

These hypotheses aim to explore the interplay between risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing, providing insights into the mechanisms through which organizational factors influence educators' psychological health in the context of high schools in Shenzhen City.

## **CHALLENGES FACING CHINESE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS**

High school educators in China encounter various challenges in their professional roles, which can significantly impact their psychological wellbeing and overall job satisfaction. Three key challenges faced by Chinese high school educators include job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism, each of which presents unique stressors and obstacles in their daily work. Job burnout among Chinese high school educators is a prevalent and concerning issue that has garnered increasing attention in recent years. Job burnout is characterized by emotional

exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, resulting from chronic work-related stressors and demands (Maslach et al., 2001). Research indicates that high workload, administrative pressures, and a lack of autonomy contribute to job burnout among educators in China (Zhang et al., 2018).

Educators often face heavy teaching loads, extensive administrative tasks, and pressure to meet academic expectations, leading to feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment (Wang et al., 2019). As a result, job burnout can have detrimental effects on educators' psychological wellbeing, job satisfaction, and professional efficacy.

Work engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, and enthusiastic state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). While work engagement represents the opposite of burnout, Chinese high school educators may struggle to maintain high levels of engagement due to various factors. Work-related stress, organizational culture, and job demands can diminish educators' enthusiasm and passion for teaching, leading to reduced levels of engagement and motivation (Guo et al., 2020). Additionally, limited support systems, inadequate resources, and challenging working conditions may further impede educators' ability to fully engage in their work and foster positive learning environments for students.

Managerialism refers to the trend towards adopting managerial practices and principles in educational institutions, often at the expense of academic autonomy, professional judgment, and teacher morale (Brehony, 1992). In the context of Chinese high schools, managerialism manifests in top-down decision-making, standardized assessments, and rigid bureaucratic procedures that prioritize administrative efficiency over educational quality (Brown, 2004).

Educators may experience feelings of frustration, disempowerment, and alienation as they contend with bureaucratic red tape, rigid curricular requirements, and standardized testing regimes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Moreover, the emphasis on performance metrics and accountability measures can exacerbate job stress and diminish educators' sense of professional autonomy and agency.

In conclusion, Chinese high school educators face significant challenges related to job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism, which can have detrimental effects on their psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes providing adequate support systems, promoting a positive work environment, and advocating for policies that prioritize educator autonomy and wellbeing.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING**

Promoting the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in China requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both individual and systemic factors. While educators face numerous challenges in their professional roles, there are also opportunities for enhancing their psychological wellbeing through various interventions and initiatives. This section explores three key opportunities for promoting psychological wellbeing among high school

educators: promoting a positive school culture, implementing supportive policies, and providing professional development opportunities.

### **a) Promoting a Positive School Culture**

A positive school culture characterized by trust, collaboration, and support can significantly impact the psychological wellbeing of educators (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Creating a supportive and inclusive environment where educators feel valued, respected, and empowered can help mitigate job stress and burnout. Schools can foster a positive culture by promoting open communication, recognizing educators' contributions, and fostering a sense of community and belonging (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Moreover, initiatives such as peer support programs, mentoring, and team-building activities can strengthen social connections and provide emotional support for educators facing challenges (Brown, 2004).

### **b) Implementing Supportive Policies**

Educational policies play a crucial role in shaping the work environment and conditions for educators. Implementing supportive policies that prioritize educator wellbeing can help alleviate stressors and promote a healthier work-life balance. For example, flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting or flexible scheduling, can provide educators with greater autonomy and control over their work (Brown & Wang, 2019). Additionally, policies that address workload management, classroom resources, and professional development opportunities can enhance job satisfaction and reduce burnout (Zhang et al., 2018). Furthermore, policies that promote mental health awareness and provide access to counseling and support services can help educators cope with stress and seek assistance when needed (Guo et al., 2020).

### **c) Providing Professional Development Opportunities**

Investing in professional development opportunities for educators is essential for enhancing their skills, knowledge, and job satisfaction. Professional development programs that focus on stress management, resilience-building, and effective teaching strategies can help educators cope with job-related stressors and improve their psychological wellbeing (Wang & Guan, 2019). Furthermore, opportunities for career advancement, mentorship, and leadership training can empower educators and increase their sense of fulfillment and engagement in their roles (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Additionally, ongoing support and coaching from experienced educators or instructional leaders can provide valuable guidance and encouragement for educators navigating challenges in their profession (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990).

Promoting the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in China requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that addresses both individual and systemic factors. By fostering a positive school culture, implementing supportive policies, and providing professional development opportunities, educational institutions can create environments that support educator wellbeing and enhance overall job satisfaction and effectiveness.

## FINDINGS

The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the relationship between risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing among high school educators in Shenzhen City, China. Through quantitative analysis of survey data, the study aimed to investigate the mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between identified risk factors and psychological wellbeing, as outlined in the research objectives and hypotheses.

### *Hypothesis 1*

The first hypothesis posited that risk factors influencing the psychological wellbeing of high school educators would have a significant effect. The analysis of survey data revealed that various risk factors, including job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism, significantly impacted educators' psychological wellbeing. Specifically, educators who reported higher levels of job burnout and perceived managerialism within their school environment also reported lower levels of psychological wellbeing (Brown, 2004; Guo et al., 2020).

### *Hypothesis 2*

The second hypothesis suggested that organizational culture would mediate the relationship between identified risk factors and psychological wellbeing. The results of the mediation analysis supported this hypothesis, indicating that organizational culture played a significant mediating role in the relationship between risk factors and psychological wellbeing among high school educators. Specifically, a positive organizational culture characterized by supportive leadership, collaborative relationships, and a focus on teacher wellbeing buffered the negative impact of risk factors on educators' psychological wellbeing (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

### *Hypothesis 3*

The third hypothesis proposed that organizational culture would moderate the relationship between risk factors and psychological wellbeing. The findings provided partial support for this hypothesis, indicating that while organizational culture did not directly moderate the relationship between risk factors and psychological wellbeing, it influenced the strength and direction of this relationship. Specifically, educators in schools with a positive organizational culture reported higher levels of psychological wellbeing, even in the presence of significant risk factors such as job burnout and managerialism (Wang & Guan, 2019; Zhang et al., 2018).

Overall, the findings highlight the complex interplay between risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing among high school educators in Shenzhen City, China. The results underscore the importance of addressing both individual and systemic factors in promoting educator wellbeing and creating supportive school environments. By fostering positive organizational cultures characterized by trust, collaboration, and support, educational institutions can mitigate the negative impact of risk factors and enhance the psychological wellbeing of educators, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more effective teaching workforce.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, we aimed to explore the relationship between risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing among high school educators in Shenzhen City, China. Through quantitative analysis of survey data, we investigated how risk factors such as job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism influence educators' psychological wellbeing, and the mediating and moderating role of organizational culture in this relationship. Our findings provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics shaping the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in Shenzhen City. Firstly, we found significant relationships between risk factors and psychological wellbeing, highlighting the detrimental impact of job burnout, work engagement, and managerialism on educators' mental health. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the prevalence of job-related stress and burnout among educators (Guo et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Secondly, our results supported the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between risk factors and psychological wellbeing. Positive organizational cultures characterized by supportive leadership, collaborative relationships, and a focus on teacher wellbeing were found to buffer the negative effects of risk factors on educators' psychological health (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Wang & Guan, 2019).

This underscores the importance of fostering positive work environments that prioritize educator wellbeing and support their professional growth and development. Furthermore, while organizational culture did not directly moderate the relationship between risk factors and psychological wellbeing, it influenced the strength and direction of this relationship. Educators in schools with positive organizational cultures reported higher levels of psychological wellbeing, even in the presence of significant risk factors (Zhang et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of creating supportive school environments that promote collaboration, trust, and effective communication among educators. In conclusion, our study contributes to the growing body of literature on educator wellbeing by highlighting the importance of addressing both individual and systemic factors in promoting psychological health among high school educators. By understanding the interplay between risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing, educational institutions can implement targeted interventions and policies to support educator wellbeing and create healthier work environments. Moving forward, further research is needed to explore additional factors that may influence educator wellbeing, such as social support networks, job resources, and coping strategies. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term effects of organizational interventions on educator wellbeing and job satisfaction. In summary, our study emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to promoting educator wellbeing, one that recognizes the interconnectedness of individual and organizational factors and prioritizes the creation of supportive work environments that foster positive mental health outcomes for high school educators in Shenzhen City, China.



## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study hold both theoretical and practical implications for understanding and improving the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in Shenzhen City, China.

### *Theoretical Implications*

#### **a) Contribution to the Understanding of Educator Wellbeing**

By examining the interplay between risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of educator wellbeing. It underscores the importance of considering both individual and organizational factors in shaping educators' mental health outcomes (Guo et al., 2020).

#### **b) Validation of Organizational Culture Framework**

The findings support the theoretical framework of organizational culture as a crucial determinant of educator wellbeing. The study confirms previous research highlighting the mediating and moderating role of organizational culture in the relationship between risk factors and psychological health (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Wang & Guan, 2019).

### *Practical Implications*

#### **a) Development of Supportive Organizational Practices**

Educational institutions can use the findings to develop and implement supportive organizational practices that promote educator wellbeing. Strategies such as providing professional development opportunities, fostering collaborative relationships, and enhancing communication channels can contribute to creating positive work environments (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

#### **b) Targeted Intervention Programs**

The identification of specific risk factors influencing educator wellbeing allows for the development of targeted intervention programs. Schools can implement stress management workshops, mental health awareness campaigns, and peer support networks to address job-related stress and burnout among educators (Zhang et al., 2018).

### *Limitations*

#### **a) Cross-Sectional Design**

The study utilized a cross-sectional design, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine the long-term effects of organizational interventions on educator wellbeing.

#### **b) Sampling Bias**

The study relied on convenience sampling, which may introduce sampling bias and limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could utilize random sampling techniques to ensure a more representative sample of high school educators.

### **c) Self-Report Measures**

The use of self-report measures for assessing risk factors and psychological wellbeing may be susceptible to response bias. Future research could incorporate multiple methods of data collection, such as interviews and observational measures, to enhance the validity of the findings.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing the psychological wellbeing of high school educators in Shenzhen City, China. By addressing both theoretical and practical implications, the findings contribute to the ongoing efforts to support educator wellbeing and create healthier work environments in educational settings.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future research endeavors aimed at enhancing the understanding of psychological wellbeing among high school educators in Shenzhen City, China, can explore several avenues to contribute to national and academic purposes.

### **a) Longitudinal Studies**

Conducting longitudinal studies would provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of educator wellbeing over time. Longitudinal research designs allow for the examination of changes in risk factors, organizational culture, and psychological wellbeing among educators, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing educator mental health outcomes (Zhang et al., 2018).

### **b) Comparative Studies**

Comparative studies comparing educator wellbeing across different regions within China or across different countries could shed light on the cultural and contextual factors influencing psychological health outcomes among educators. Comparative research could explore variations in organizational practices, educational policies, and societal norms that may impact educator wellbeing (Guo et al., 2020).

### **c) Qualitative Inquiry**

Qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, and case studies could provide deeper insights into the subjective experiences of high school educators and the contextual factors influencing their psychological wellbeing. Qualitative inquiry allows for the exploration of nuanced perspectives and the identification of unique challenges and opportunities faced by educators in different school settings (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

### **d) Intervention Studies**

Future research could focus on developing and evaluating the effectiveness of intervention programs aimed at promoting educator wellbeing. Intervention studies could assess the impact of stress management workshops, mindfulness training, and organizational support initiatives on reducing job burnout and enhancing psychological wellbeing among high school educators (Wang & Guan, 2019).



## e) Policy Analysis

Examining the role of educational policies and institutional practices in shaping educator wellbeing is essential for informing policy development and organizational reform efforts. Policy analysis studies could investigate the impact of government policies, school leadership practices, and organizational structures on educator job satisfaction, retention rates, and overall mental health outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). By pursuing these avenues for future research, scholars can contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of educator wellbeing and inform evidence-based practices and policies aimed at supporting the psychological health and professional fulfillment of high school educators in Shenzhen City, China, and beyond.

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