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The Influence of Transformational Leadership, Work-Life Balance, and Perceived Organizational Support on the Performance of Novice Teachers with the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in High Schools of Shenzhen City, China

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Abstract: In the dynamic educational landscape of Shenzhen, China, the performance of novice teachers is influenced by various professional and personal factors. This study examines the impact of transformational leadership, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support on the performance of novice high school teachers, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 400 novice teachers across 36 high schools using structured questionnaires and analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis. The findings reveal that transformational leadership, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support positively affect novice teacher performance, with job satisfaction significantly mediating these relationships. This research highlights the critical importance of supportive leadership, balanced work-life policies, and robust organizational support in enhancing novice teacher performance and job satisfaction, offering valuable insights for educational policymakers and leaders in Shenzhen.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Work-life Balance, Perceived Organizational Support, Performance of Novice Teachers

1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving educational landscape, the performance of teachers, particularly those in the early stages of their careers, is a cornerstone in determining the quality and effectiveness of learning environments (Tantawy, 2020). Across the globe, education systems are increasingly recognizing the complexity of factors that influence teacher performance, extending beyond traditional pedagogical skills to encompass a broader spectrum of professional and personal dynamics. Shenzhen, a city known for its rapid development and innovation, mirrors this global trend and provides a unique context to explore these dynamics within its high school education system.

Transformational leadership has gained significant attention in educational discourse, recognized for its potential to inspire and elevate teaching practices (Erdel & Takkaç, 2020). This leadership style, characterized by attributes such as intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation, is increasingly seen as pivotal in nurturing an environment where teachers, especially those at the beginning of their careers, can thrive. Emphasizing individual consideration and idealized

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influence within school administration has become a focal point in understanding how leadership impacts teacher performance.

Concurrently, there is growing acknowledgment of the importance of work-life balance in the teaching profession (Al-Alawi et al., 2021). The ability of teachers to effectively balance their professional and personal lives—managing time, involvement, and satisfaction in both spheres—is now understood as crucial to their overall well-being and professional efficacy. This balance, or lack thereof, can significantly impact teachers' ability to bring innovation and commitment to their roles.

Perceived organizational support (POS), encompassing elements such as supervisor support, fairness in organizational practices, and the quality of rewards and working conditions, also plays a vital role in shaping teacher experiences and attitudes (Hall, 2022). In a profession characterized by high demands and complex challenges, the extent to which teachers feel supported by their organization can influence their commitment, communication skills, and ability to foster a positive learning environment.

Job satisfaction emerges as a pivotal force amidst these factors. Teachers' perceptions of their professional growth, decision-making autonomy, and promotion prospects can significantly influence their overall job satisfaction, which in turn impacts their performance. Satisfaction in the workplace is not just about the immediate emotional state but also about how it fuels professional actions such as classroom management, innovative teaching methods, and student development.

Despite the recognized importance of transformational leadership, work-life balance, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction in influencing teacher performance, several challenges persist in Shenzhen's high schools. Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating followers to exceed their expectations and capabilities, often leading to improved performance and job satisfaction (Eliophotou et al., 2021). However, in the high schools of Shenzhen, there might be a fundamental misunderstanding or lack of awareness about what transformational leadership entails (Liu et al., 2021). This lack of understanding can lead to ineffective implementation, where school leaders may believe they are practicing transformational leadership but are engaging in either laissez-faire or transactional leadership styles (Zhu, 2021).

Moreover, the effectiveness of transformational leadership can be heavily influenced by cultural contexts (Lasrado & Kassem, 2021). In Chinese educational settings, traditional Confucian values such as hierarchy, respect for authority, and collective harmony may clash with the individual empowerment and risk-taking encouraged by transformational leadership (Kang et al., 2020). Teachers and administrators accustomed to a more directive or authoritative style may find it challenging to adapt to or accept a leadership style that emphasizes innovation and individual initiative (Cheng & Chang, 2023).

Another significant issue is the inadequate training and development opportunities for school leaders in Shenzhen to effectively adopt and implement transformational leadership practices (Li, 2022). Without proper training, school leaders may not have the skills necessary to inspire, challenge, and develop their teachers (Shengnan & Hallinger, 2021), particularly those who are new to the profession. This lack of training can lead to a gap between the expectations set by educational reforms and the practical realities within the schools.

Furthermore, resistance to change among staff can hinder the adoption of transformational leadership in schools (Litz & Blaik-Hourani, 2020). Veteran teachers and administrators may be set in their ways or skeptical of new approaches to leadership (Ding et al., 2022). This resistance can be especially pronounced in a high-pressure educational environment like Shenzhen, where academic performance and results are highly prioritized. Overcoming this inertia requires substantial effort from leaders to demonstrate the benefits of transformational leadership (Li & Liu, 2022).

Additionally, novice teachers in Shenzhen often face unusually long working hours that extend beyond the typical school day (Chan, 2021). These hours can include additional responsibilities such as lesson planning, grading, and extracurricular activities (Jenkins, 2022). The extensive time commitment required from these teachers can significantly

disrupt their ability to maintain a healthy balance between their professional responsibilities and personal life (Tang et al., 2022). This imbalance can lead to stress and a decrease in job satisfaction, ultimately affecting their performance and well-being.

In the Chinese educational context, a strong cultural emphasis on academic success places significant pressure on teachers to deliver high-performing students (Yan & Li, 2023). This cultural expectation can lead novice teachers to prioritize work over personal life to meet these high standards (Tang et al., 2023). Furthermore, institutional policies may not adequately support work-life balance, as schools might expect teachers to be available for students and parents beyond regular school hours without adequate compensation or time-off policies (Lu et al., 2020).

Perceived organizational support in Shenzhen's schools involves multiple dimensions. The support from supervisors, fairness of organizational practices, and quality of rewards and working conditions are central to how teachers perceive their professional environment. In a city known for its high standards and innovation, the expectations and support systems within educational institutions are critical factors that shape teacher experiences. Without robust mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of leadership styles and adequate resources to support teachers, addressing these issues becomes challenging (Shi et al., 2020).

In summary, this research aims to analyze the interrelationships between transformational leadership, work-life balance, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction, exploring how these elements collectively contribute to shaping the performance of novice teachers in Shenzhen. By doing so, it seeks to offer insights and recommendations that can enhance the effectiveness of teachers and, consequently, the quality of education in one of China's most dynamic cities.

Based on research background and identified problems outlined above, the study proposes the research objectives as follows:

(1) To examine the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of novice teachers in high schools of Shenzhen city, China.
(2) To analyze the relationship between work-life balance and the performance of novice teachers in high schools of Shenzhen city, China.
(3) To explore the relationship between perceived organizational support and the performance of novice teachers in high schools of Shenzhen city, China.
(4) To investigate the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership, work-life balance, perceived organizational support (independent variables) and the performance of novice teachers (dependent variable) in high schools of Shenzhen city, China.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transformational Leadership and Performance of Novice Teachers

This section seeks to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and performance of novice teachers.

Marlina & Suriansyah (2019), Normianti et al. (2019), and Rahmi et al. (2019) underscore the pivotal role of transformational leadership in fostering an environment conducive to the professional growth and enhanced performance of teachers through slightly different lenses. Marlina & Suriansyah (2019) highlight the significance of inspirational motivation and idealized influence, asserting that leaders who embody these qualities can set powerful examples, thereby cultivating a culture of excellence and commitment. This, they argue, directly translates into more effective teaching practices and a significantly enhanced learning experience for students. On the other hand, Normianti et al. (2019) emphasize the critical role of intellectual stimulation and personalized support in empowering educators. By challenging the status quo and encouraging creative problem-solving, transformational leaders bolster a teacher's self-efficacy, leading to the adoption of innovative pedagogical methods and a more dynamic classroom environment. Similarly, Rahmi

et al. (2019) focus on the capacity of transformational leadership to address challenges in high-need schools, particularly concerning teacher retention and performance. They suggest that a forward-thinking and empathetic leadership approach can create a supportive environment that not only retains talent but also propels teachers to new heights of instructional effectiveness. Despite these different focal points, all studies converge on the notion that transformational leadership positively impacts the morale, job satisfaction, and performance of teachers, thereby laying a foundation for sustained academic success.

These studies illustrate the multifaceted nature of transformational leadership and its overarching positive effect on teacher performance, highlighting the necessity of a balanced approach that incorporates inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and personalized support to foster a culture of excellence and continuous improvement within educational institutions.

2.2 Work-Life Balance and Performance of Novice Teachers

This section aims to explore the intricate relationship between work-life balance and teacher performance by many scholars in the past few years.

The significance of work-life balance in enhancing teacher performance is documented in recent scholarly research. Tamunomiebi & Oyibo (2020) underscore the pivotal role that a balanced lifestyle plays in nurturing creativity and a dynamic teaching environment, positing that teachers who manage their personal and professional lives well tend to employ innovative teaching methods and sustain high energy levels, which beneficially affects the learning atmosphere. This idea is echoed by Abdirahman et al. (2020), who emphasize the influence of work-life equilibrium on collaborative teaching practices; they argue that well-balanced teachers are more likely to engage in cooperative efforts with peers, promoting a culture of knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving that enhances educational quality. Similarly, Babatunde et al. (2020) link balanced lifestyles directly with improved teacher performance metrics, such as job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness, suggesting that personal fulfillment significantly enhances professional dedication and innovation in teaching.

These studies suggest that while all researchers agree on the positive impact of work-life balance, the scope and perceived primary benefits can differ, reflecting varied emphases on individual versus communal advantages in educational settings. Such nuances are crucial for educational policy makers and institution leaders who aim to implement strategies that support teachers' well-being and effectiveness, highlighting the need for a multifaceted approach to fostering work-life balance within academic environments.

2.3 Perceived Organizational Support and Performance of Novice Teachers

This section aims to explore and synthesize the findings from various studies that investigate how the support perceived by teachers from their organizations affects their teaching performance.

Recent studies by Ishfaq et al. (2023), Coll & Mignonac (2023), and Gunawan et al. (2023) converge on the finding that perceived organizational support significantly enhances the performance of novice teachers. Ishfaq et al. (2023) emphasize that support from educational institutions bolsters job satisfaction and fosters the adoption of innovative teaching strategies, which not only improves student learning but also contributes to a dynamic educational environment. In contrast, Coll & Mignonac (2023) extend this understanding by highlighting that such support encompasses not only material resources but also emotional and professional backing, crucial for sustaining teacher engagement and promoting a culture of lifelong learning. They argue that a holistic approach to support, addressing professional, emotional, and personal needs, is essential for cultivating educational excellence. Differently, Gunawan et al. (2023) focus on the psychological benefits of organizational support, noting that it enhances teachers' sense of belonging and self-efficacy, which in turn improves their pedagogical skills and adaptability. This study underscores the necessity for administrative practices that not only recognize but actively meet the diverse needs of teachers, fostering an environment where they

feel valued and are encouraged to innovate. While these studies affirm the positive impact of perceived support on teacher performance, they each shed light on different facets of how this support functions, from enhancing job satisfaction and innovative teaching methods to promoting a continuous professional growth and a strong psychological foundation, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which support translates into improved educational outcomes.

2.4 Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

This section aims to review the intricate relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction by different scholars in the past few years.

Winasis et al. (2020), Hussain et al. (2021), and Allozi et al. (2022) highlight the significant positive impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction, though each emphasizes different facets of this leadership style. Winasis et al. (2020) focus on the intellectual stimulation aspect, arguing that leaders who encourage innovative thinking and problem-solving create a work environment that enhances employee satisfaction by making daily tasks more intriguing and fostering a sense of personal growth. In contrast, Hussain et al. (2021) emphasize the emotional and motivational aspects of transformational leadership, such as providing a compelling vision and personalized attention, which they argue creates an enriching work environment that not only boosts job satisfaction but also aligns employees' personal goals with the organization's vision. Meanwhile, Allozi et al. (2022) concentrate on the role of creativity and innovation in transformational leadership, suggesting that by promoting a culture that values creative input, leaders can enhance employee satisfaction through a strong sense of accomplishment and personal investment in their work. These perspectives underscore the multifaceted nature of transformational leadership and its versatile impact on organizational dynamics and employee morale.

2.5 Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

This section aims to explore the findings from various studies that have examined the direct influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction by different scholars in the past few years.

Research across multiple studies shows that work-life balance significantly influences job satisfaction. Arief et al. (2021) highlighted employees with a perceived good balance experience higher satisfaction, emphasizing the role of organizational policies such as flexible working hours and remote work opportunities in fostering this balance. Similarly, Alfatihah et al. (2021) report that employees who manage their professional and personal lives well display greater job contentment, pointing to the effectiveness of interventions like wellness programs and time management workshops in enhancing work-life dynamics. Kasbuntoro et al. (2020) also support these findings by underscoring the importance of supportive leadership and flexible work policies, which empower employees to better integrate their professional and personal lives, thereby increasing job satisfaction. Each study presents a slightly different perspective on the mechanisms that link work-life balance to job satisfaction, suggesting a layered and multifaceted approach that combines organizational policies, individual capabilities, and leadership styles to optimize employee well-being and productivity.

2.6 Perceived Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction

This section aims to review the intricate relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction by different scholars in the past few years.

These studies conducted by Li et al. (2020), Lubis & Nurhayati (2020), and Abid et al. (2021) emphasize the significant positive impact of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction, although they explore this relationship through slightly different lenses. Li et al. (2020) highlighted the psychological underpinnings, noting that employees who sense support from their organization tend to feel a stronger connection and belonging, which boosts their job satisfaction. This suggests that emotional and psychological acknowledgments from the organization are crucial for employees to feel

integrated and valued. In a similar vein, Lubis & Nurhayati (2020) surveyed employees across various sectors and underscored not only the enhancement of job satisfaction but also the bolstering of commitment to the organization. This dual benefit points to a deeper, loyalty-based relationship between employee satisfaction and organizational support, suggesting that support extends beyond immediate job satisfaction to foster long-term loyalty and engagement. Abid et al. (2021) focus on the direct effects of perceived support, reinforcing the notion that employees' recognition of supportive practices is essential for fostering a healthy and productive work environment. Their findings indicate that the mere awareness of available support can create a positive feedback loop, enhancing job satisfaction. Although these studies affirm the positive correlation between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, they also imply that the depth and acknowledgment of this support can vary in its influence on employee attitudes and behavior. Thus, while the core finding across these studies is consistent, the mechanisms by which organizational support is perceived and its broader implications on employee engagement and loyalty offer grounds for further exploration and nuanced understanding in organizational development strategies.

2.7 Job Satisfaction and Performance of Novice Teachers

This section aims to explore the multifaceted ways in which job satisfaction influences teacher performance by different scholars in the past few years.

Nuryanti et al. (2024) discovered a significant correlation between job satisfaction and teacher performance, noting that teachers who are content with their jobs exhibit higher levels of innovation and creativity. This connection is echoed in the observations of Suhendro & Saragih (2021), who highlighted that job satisfaction is not only crucial in retaining talented educators but also in motivating teachers to excel in their duties. These studies suggest that a positive work environment is key to fostering such satisfaction, which in turn enhances teacher adaptability and effectiveness. Further supporting this view, Okolocha et al. (2021) presented evidence linking teacher job satisfaction with higher student grades, thereby providing a direct association between teacher well-being and student academic success. These studies argue that teacher job satisfaction is a cornerstone for educational quality, advocating for policies that prioritize the well-being of educators to facilitate innovative and effective teaching practices. While these studies recognize the importance of job satisfaction, Nuryanti et al. (2024) focus more on the innovative outcomes of teacher contentment, Suhendro & Saragih (2021) emphasize the role of satisfaction in teacher motivation and retention, and Okolocha et al. (2021) highlight the tangible benefits to student performance, suggesting slightly different facets of how job satisfaction impacts the educational ecosystem. These studies point to a broader understanding that while job satisfaction is universally beneficial, the specific outcomes can vary, underscoring the need for tailored approaches in addressing teacher needs to optimize educational effectiveness.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative research method to investigate the influence of transformational leadership, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support on novice teachers' performance in Shenzhen, mediated by job satisfaction. Quantitative research is characterized by structured data collection techniques and numerical data to quantify attitudes, opinions, and behaviors (Mohajan, 2020). This method provides reliable results that can be generalized across populations (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). The choice of a quantitative approach is driven by the need for objectivity, efficiency in handling large volumes of data, and the ability to use statistical tools to test hypotheses and examine variable relationships (Cortina, 2020). Quantitative methods allow for precise measurement of how variables influence each other, offering quantifiable evidence of trends, patterns, and correlations (Skinner, 2020). This study’s approach aligns with established educational research protocols and enhances the reliability and validity of the findings.

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The research population comprises novice teachers within their first three years of teaching in high schools across Shenzhen, China. Shenzhen has nine administrative districts: Futian, Luohu, Nanshan, Yantian, Bao'an, Longgang, Longhua, Pingshan, and Guangming. The study includes four high schools from each district, totaling 36 high schools, ensuring broad representation. As of the end of 2023, these schools employ 3,128 novice teachers, all within their first three years of teaching. To determine the appropriate sample size, Slovin's formula was applied, yielding a necessary sample size of 361 to achieve a 95% confidence level. However, to account for potential incomplete responses, the sample size was increased to 400. This method ensures statistical significance and supports the reliability of the research findings.

3.3 Sampling

The sampling strategy is designed to represent the population of novice teachers across various high schools in Shenzhen. The sampling frame consists of 36 high schools selected from the nine administrative districts. The study employs a stratified random sampling technique, dividing the population into subgroups based on district, with equal representation of high schools from each district. Within each school, novice teachers are randomly selected, ensuring minimal sampling bias and enhancing the generalizability of the study findings. The collaboration with human resources departments facilitates access to eligible novice teachers, and random sampling within each stratum ensures equal chances of participation. This methodical approach enhances the validity and reliability of the study.

3.4 Research Instrument

Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two main sections. The first section gathers demographic information, providing context for the analysis. The second section focuses on measuring transformational leadership, work-life balance, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and novice teacher performance using a Likert-5 scale. The questionnaire is based on validated instruments in educational research, adapted to this study's context. Prior to administration, a pilot test with a small group of novice teachers ensures clarity, relevance, and reliability. Feedback from the pilot test refines the questionnaire, ensuring it captures the study's latent variables effectively and is sensitive to the high school context in Shenzhen.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

Quantitative analysis involves a multi-step process to examine relationships among the study variables. Preliminary screening ensures data accuracy, addressing missing values and outliers. Descriptive statistics provide an overview of sample characteristics and distribution of responses. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) validates the measurement models, assessing fit through factor loadings, construct reliability, and goodness-of-fit indices. Path analysis, a component of structural equation modeling (SEM), tests relationships between variables, estimating path coefficients and assessing model fit using indices such as Chi-square, RMSEA, CFI, and TLI. This rigorous analytical approach ensures robust, empirical evidence to support the study's findings.

4. Findings and Discussion

The study adopted SEM path analysis to verify the relationship among five research variables, which consists of transformational leadership (TL), work-life balance (WLB), perceived organizational support (POS), job satisfaction (JS) and performance of novice teachers (PNT) in High Schools of Shenzhen City, China. The SEM path analysis results are presented in figure 1.

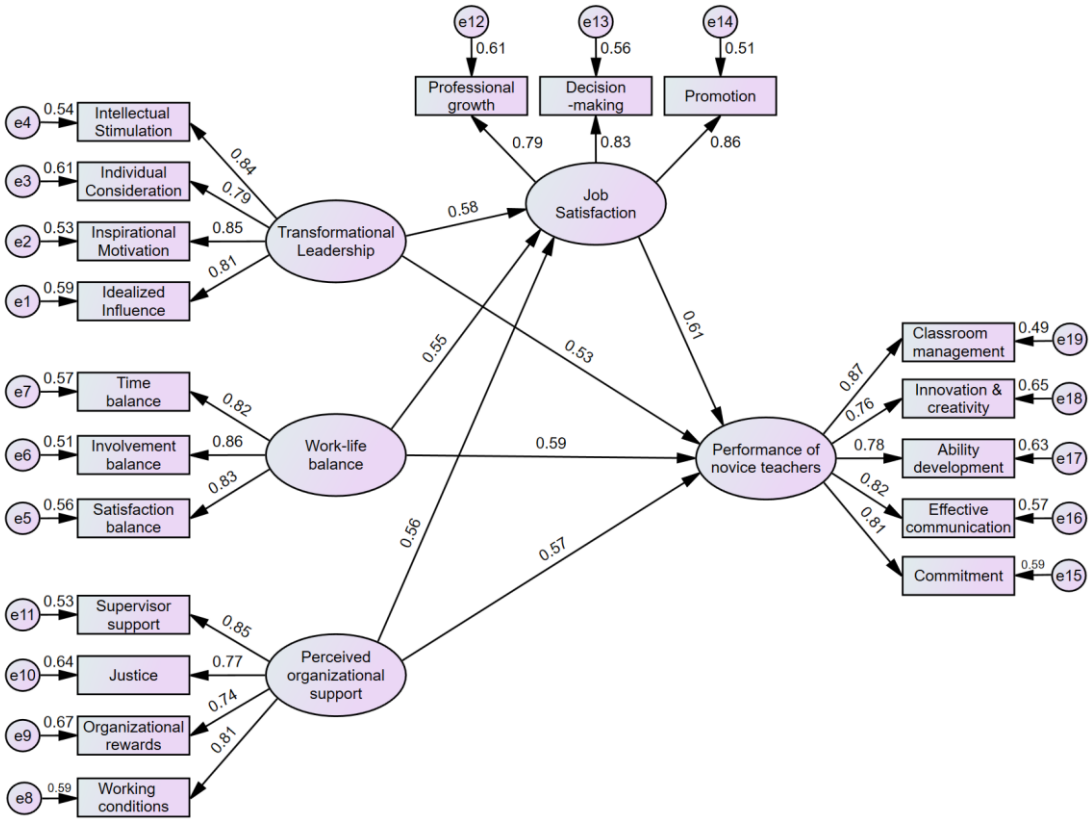


Figure 1: Path analysis of research framework

The study also employed bootstrap method to check the mediating effect of job satisfaction between transformational leadership and performance of novice teachers, the mediating effect of job satisfaction between work-life balance and performance of novice teachers as well as the mediating effect of job satisfaction between perceived organizational support and performance of novice teachers. The mediating effect analysis results of job satisfaction are presented in the following **Table 1**.

Table 1: Mediating effect analysis results

Standard effect	Path	Effect coefficient	95% confidence interval		S.E.	P-value	Results
			Lower	Upper			
Total effect	TL --->PNT	0.877	0.826	0.928	0.026	***	Mediating
Direct effect	TL --->PNT	0.528	0.483	0.573	0.023	***	effect
Indirect effect	TL-->JS---> PNT	0.349	0.306	0.392	0.022	***	
Total effect	WLB --->PNT	0.919	0.872	0.966	0.024	***	Mediating
Direct effect	WLB --->PNT	0.586	0.541	0.631	0.023	***	effect
Indirect effect	WLB--->JS--->PNT	0.333	0.292	0.374	0.021	***	
Total effect	POS --->PNT	0.907	0.854	0.960	0.027	***	Mediating
Direct effect	POS --->PNT	0.571	0.522	0.620	0.025	***	effect
Indirect effect	POS--->JS--->PNT	0.336	0.293	0.379	0.022	***	

The study can conclude with the following major findings through the analysis results of SEM path analysis and mediating effect analysis.

(1) Transformational Leadership and Performance of Novice Teachers

The findings of this study underscore the significant positive impact of transformational leadership on the performance of novice teachers in high schools in Shenzhen. The analysis reveals that attributes of transformational leadership, such as inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, play a crucial role in enhancing teacher performance. Novice teachers under transformational leaders reported higher levels of enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication to their teaching practices. This is consistent with the findings of Marlina & Suriansyah (2019), who highlighted the importance of idealized influence and inspirational motivation in fostering a culture of excellence. The ability of transformational leaders to provide individualized support and encourage innovative problem-solving appears to empower novice teachers, enabling them to adopt more effective and engaging pedagogical methods.

(2) Work-Life Balance and Performance of Novice Teachers

The study also finds a positive correlation between work-life balance and the performance of novice teachers. Teachers who managed to achieve a balanced lifestyle reported higher levels of job satisfaction and effectiveness in their teaching roles. This aligns with the research of Tamunomiebi & Oyibo (2020), who found that a balanced lifestyle nurtures creativity and dynamism in the teaching environment. Novice teachers with a good work-life balance were more likely to engage in collaborative practices with peers and innovate in their teaching methods. These findings suggest that educational institutions should prioritize policies that support work-life balance to enhance teacher performance, such as flexible working hours and wellness programs.

(3) Perceived Organizational Support and Performance of Novice Teachers

Perceived organizational support (POS) emerged as another significant factor influencing the performance of novice teachers. The study reveals that teachers who perceive higher levels of support from their organizations exhibit better performance outcomes. This is in line with the studies of Ishfaq et al. (2023) and Coll & Mignonac (2023), which highlighted the importance of material, emotional, and professional backing in sustaining teacher engagement and promoting a culture of lifelong learning. The findings suggest that when teachers feel valued and supported, they are more motivated to adopt innovative teaching strategies and create dynamic educational environments.

(4) Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Transformational leadership also positively impacts job satisfaction among novice teachers. Leaders who practice transformational leadership foster an environment of intellectual stimulation, personalized support, and inspirational motivation, which significantly enhances job satisfaction. This supports the research by Winasis et al. (2020), which emphasizes the role of intellectual stimulation in creating an engaging and satisfying work environment. The ability of transformational leaders to align organizational goals with personal aspirations of teachers enhances their sense of achievement and fulfillment, thereby increasing job satisfaction.

(5) Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction was found to be robust, with teachers who achieved a balanced lifestyle reporting higher levels of job satisfaction. Studies by Arief et al. (2021) and Alfatihah et al. (2021) support this finding, indicating that organizational policies promoting flexible work arrangements and wellness programs significantly enhance job satisfaction. Novice teachers who can manage their professional and personal lives effectively are more content and motivated, which translates into better performance in their teaching roles.

(6) Perceived Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction

Perceived organizational support significantly enhances job satisfaction among novice teachers. The findings reveal that teachers who feel supported by their organizations, both emotionally and professionally, report higher levels of job satisfaction. This is consistent with the studies of Li et al. (2020) and Lubis & Nurhayati (2020), which highlighted the importance of emotional and psychological support in fostering a strong sense of belonging and job contentment. The awareness of supportive practices within the organization creates a positive feedback loop, enhancing job satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

(7) Job Satisfaction and Performance of Novice Teachers

The study confirms a positive relationship between job satisfaction and the performance of novice teachers. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs exhibit higher levels of innovation, creativity, and effectiveness in their teaching practices. This finding aligns with the research of Nuryanti et al. (2024), which linked job satisfaction with improved teacher performance and student outcomes. A positive work environment that fosters job satisfaction is crucial for retaining talented educators and motivating them to excel in their roles.

(8) Job Satisfaction as a Mediator

The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance was also explored. The findings suggest that job satisfaction significantly mediates this relationship, indicating that transformational leadership indirectly influences teacher performance through its impact on job satisfaction. This supports the research by Hussain et al. (2021), which highlighted the emotional and motivational aspects of transformational leadership in enhancing job satisfaction.

Similarly, job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and teacher performance. Teachers who achieve a good work-life balance experience higher job satisfaction, which in turn enhances their performance. This finding is consistent with the research by Kasbuntoro et al. (2020), which emphasized the importance of supportive leadership and flexible work policies in fostering job satisfaction and improving performance.

Besides, job satisfaction also mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and teacher performance. Teachers who perceive high levels of organizational support report higher job satisfaction, which translates into better performance. This supports the studies by Abid et al. (2021), which highlighted the direct effects of perceived support on job satisfaction and the subsequent impact on employee performance.

5. Conclusion

This study offers comprehensive insights into the multifaceted factors influencing the performance of novice teachers in Shenzhen's high schools, emphasizing the critical roles of transformational leadership, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support. The findings reveal that transformational leadership, characterized by inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, significantly enhances novice teachers' performance by fostering a supportive and innovative work environment. Similarly, a well-maintained work-life balance emerges as crucial, positively correlating with both job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness. This underscores the importance of policies promoting flexible work arrangements and wellness programs to sustain high energy levels and creativity among teachers. Moreover, perceived organizational support plays a vital role in shaping teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Teachers who feel valued and supported by their organizations are more motivated and effective in their roles. The mediating role of job satisfaction is particularly noteworthy, as it amplifies the positive effects of transformational leadership, work-life balance, and perceived organizational support on teacher performance. Teachers who experience higher job satisfaction demonstrate increased innovation, creativity, and commitment, leading to better educational outcomes. These findings collectively highlight the necessity for educational institutions in Shenzhen to adopt holistic approaches that integrate supportive leadership, balanced work-life policies, and robust organizational support to enhance teacher performance and job satisfaction. This study's insights can guide policymakers and educational leaders in creating nurturing environments that not only retain novice teachers but also empower them to excel, ultimately improving the quality of education in one of China's most dynamic cities.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest

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