

Teachers' Mental Health: Perceived Social Justice and Life Satisfaction

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Abstract : In today's China, primary and secondary teachers are living a hard life with high pressure but low payment, which results in a sense of unfair and less satisfaction of life. However, teachers' life satisfaction is a significant factor of their mental health and plays an important role in the development and progress of the society. This study was aimed to explore the effect of teachers' perception of social justice on life satisfaction. 450 primary and secondary teachers from China were measured with life satisfaction scales, social justice scales, income satisfaction scale, job satisfaction scale, pressure condition scale, and major life event scale. Results showed their pressure is significantly higher than average, while life satisfaction, job satisfaction, income satisfaction and perceived social justice are lower. Hierarchical regression analysis showed that demographic variables, i.e., gender, age, education level and marit status, and factors related to occupation, i.e., professional title, school type and working hours per day cannot predict teachers' life satisfaction. Teachers who had worked for 11-20 years had a lower life satisfaction compared to those with 1-5 years working experience. However, social status, monthly household income, income satisfaction, as well as job satisfaction were positively related to life satisfaction, whereas pressure condition was negatively related to it. After controlling for demographic factors and individual attitudes, social justice still had a positive effect on life satisfaction, among which distributive justice played a more important role than procedural justice. The suggestions on teachers' condition in China and the implications for education reform to improve teachers' mental health are discussed.

Keywords : life satisfaction, mental health, primary and secondary teachers, social justice

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