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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF WORK STRESS ON THE WORK PERFORMANCE OF FACULTY MEMBERS IN GUANGDONG'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract:

This study fills in important gaps in the research by looking into the complicated connections between job stress, subjective well-being, and work success among higher education teachers in Guangdong Province. In today's fast-paced and competitive workplaces (Sonnentag & Frese, 2013), job stress is a common and rising problem that affects workers in many fields. The Job Demand-Control Model is used to look at how job stress affects performance, how emotional well-being plays a role in this relationship, and how work settings in schools work. A lot of numeric data from a faculty group and a lot of statistical analysis, such as correlation, regression, and mediation modeling, are used in this mixed-methods study. This method looks at both direct and indirect relationships between variables in great detail. Job worry hurts both job performance and subjective well-being, but job performance is helped by subjective well-being. The study adds to theory, research, and real-world situations. It focuses on emotional well-being as a moving mediator to give a fuller picture of how stress affects performance. It adds to local knowledge by giving real-world information about higher education in Guangdong. This study shows how important it is for personal happiness and professional success to work together. It calls for big changes in academic settings to help faculty members grow in all areas of their lives. The results have big effects on higher education around the world and require more focus on environmentally friendly and people-centered ways of running institutions. This thesis basically lays the groundwork for more study that will help us understand these dynamics better in a wider range of academic settings. This will make sure that the well-being of faculty and the success of the school are not at odds with each other but are deeply connected.

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Introduction

In today's fast-paced and competitive workplaces (Sharma,2024), job stress is a common and rising problem that affects workers in many fields. In higher education, faculty members have been at the center of the academic community, making important contributions to the creation of knowledge, the mentoring of students, and the growth of the school (AlZakwani & Zabri, 2024). The health and productivity of teachers have been shown to be very important to the general success of schools. The main focus of this study was on work stress and how it affects the success of staff members in higher education institutions in Guangdong.

Because work stress in higher education is so complicated and has so many causes, it has needed a lot of thought. The important role faculty members play in moving society forward has made it more important to understand what causes their work stress and how that stress affects their work output (Warwas et al., 2024). A lot of study has been done on work stress, but most of it has been done in the Western world. This means that we don't fully understand how work stress affects professors in Chinese higher education, especially in Guangdong Province (Li et al., 2020).

Even though people are becoming more aware of the need to deal with work stress and improve performance, there haven't been many in-depth studies on staff members in higher education in Guangdong Province. Previous study has mostly come from Western countries, which makes it hard to know how relevant and useful it is in Chinese schools because of differences in culture and institutions. This study filled in that gap by giving information about the special problems that professors in higher education schools in Guangdong face.

Taking into account the specifics of the Chinese higher education system, this study did a good job of looking at how work stress affects the work performance of faculty members in Guangdong Province. Subjective well-being, which is getting more and more attention as an important way to deal with work stress and improve performance (Danna & Griffin, 2021; Wright & Staw, 2023), has also been looked into in this relationship.

Job stress, psychological well-being, and work success were all looked at in detail in this study, which was done in higher education institutions in Guangdong. This study gives us a better understanding of the connected parts by looking at the problems staff members face and how their emotional well-being affects their work. Additionally, it has provided useful suggestions meant to improve the work atmosphere and support the health and productivity of college professors.

Literature Review And Research Hypotheses

Work Performance

Work performance is inextricably linked to both individual and organizational development. Employees demonstrating elevated task and contextual performance may be eligible for promotions and remuneration enhancements, resulting in career progression (Sonnentag et al.,

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2021). Moreover, an organization's ability to adjust to evolving conditions and maintain competitiveness is intimately linked to the adaptive performance of its workforce (Jundt et al., 2015).

The importance of job performance is heightened at higher education institutions, as faculty performance directly impacts students' learning experiences, institutional reputation, and the progression of academic knowledge (Rothwell et al., 2019). Consequently, in the academic sphere, comprehending and augmenting teacher performance is essential for the achievement and ongoing advancement of educational institutions.

Work performance is a multidimensional construct rather than a unidimensional one, as previously stated. Understanding its multifaceted character is essential for a thorough comprehension. Work performance encompasses task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, as well as other elements such as leadership and creative performance (Sonnentag et al., 2021).

Leadership performance refers to the ability to influence and direct people in attaining organizational goals. In higher education institutions, this may encompass positions in academic leadership, curriculum development, and the mentorship of students or junior professors. Creative performance entails the generation of innovative ideas, solutions, and contributions that facilitate progress in research, pedagogy, or the academic domain at large (Zhang et al., 2020).

Work Stress

The choice of coping mechanisms can significantly influence how individuals manage work stress. Understanding which coping strategies employees utilize and whether these strategies are adaptive or maladaptive is essential for both research and practical purposes.

Work stress is of great relevance in the workplace due to its substantial impact on individuals and organizations. It affects employees' well-being, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life. In turn, these individual outcomes can have profound implications for organizations, influencing productivity, employee turnover, absenteeism, and health care costs (Hassard et al, 2019). Understanding work stress is imperative for promoting a healthy work environment and ensuring the well-being of employees.

The impact of work stress is particularly pronounced in the academic context, as observed in higher education institutions. Faculty members, like professionals in other fields, experience stress related to job demands, such as research expectations, teaching loads, and administrative responsibilities. These stressors can result in strain, leading to consequences like burnout, reduced teaching effectiveness, and lower research productivity. Given the importance of faculty members in shaping the future through education and research, addressing work stress in the academic setting becomes critical not only for the well-being of educators but also for the quality of education and the advancement of knowledge.

Work Stress

Subjective well-being is inherently connected to individual well-being, incorporating emotional and cognitive dimensions of life satisfaction and general mood. Employees exhibiting elevated levels of subjective well-being are predisposed to improved psychological

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health and enhanced overall well-being, potentially resulting in increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover rates, and diminished occurrences of burnout (Tenney et al., 2016).

Studies indicate that subjective well-being correlates positively with occupational performance (Koyuncu et al., 2021). Content and fulfilled employees are often more engaged, innovative, and driven, resulting in enhanced job performance. They exhibit greater resilience to workplace stresses, hence alleviating the adverse effects of work-related stress on performance (Boehm et al., 2018).

Subjective well-being transcends individual individuals and may profoundly affect the whole corporate atmosphere. Organizations exhibiting elevated employee subjective well-being (SWB) generally demonstrate increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and less turnover (García-Buades et al., 2020). Furthermore, cultivating a happy workplace and promoting employee well-being is consistent with corporate social responsibility and may improve an organization's reputation.

Subjective well-being can enhance professional connections. Employees with elevated subjective well-being frequently have superior interpersonal skills, as they are more inclined to feel good emotions and display resilience in confronting disagreements or challenges. Favorable interactions among colleagues foster a more healthful and collaborative workplace (Koyuncu et al., 2021).

Hypothesis Development

Work stress

The correlation between workplace stress and employee performance is intricate, defined by theoretical models and actual data that demonstrate its intricacy. Stress is typically seen as harmful to performance, as it depletes cognitive and emotional resources essential for sustaining productivity and job satisfaction. The Job Demand-Control model proposed by Karasek in 1979 asserts that excessive job demands, when not counterbalanced by sufficient control, result in increased stress levels that impair performance. The detrimental effect is frequently seen in diminished efficiency, worse job quality, and heightened absenteeism, as noted by Cooper and Marshall in 1976. The correlation between stress and performance is not exclusively detrimental. (Issahaku, 2023). Specific stress levels, referred to as "eustress," might improve performance by offering a motivating impetus that enhances attention and energy. The Yerkes-Dodson Law, established in 1908, posits an inverted-U connection indicating that mild stress enhances performance up to a certain threshold; beyond this point, performance deteriorates as stress escalates. The twofold character of stress emphasizes the necessity of comprehending its particular context and severity. (Latif et al., 2022). Stress serves as a mediator in the correlation between workplace conflict and employee performance. Empirical research, like that conducted by Liu et al. (2005), illustrates that job stress mediates the influence of work conflict on performance by transforming the emotional and psychological repercussions of conflict into performance results. Task-related conflicts can induce occupational stress that, according upon its management, either impedes or enhances performance. Likewise, relational disagreements can escalate stress levels, impairing performance by interrupting work processes and interpersonal relationships. Moderating variables significantly influence the impact of stress on performance.

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The duration of promotions across various types of institutions may differ. Liu et al. (2023) classified institutions into five categories: historically Black colleges and universities, Ivy League schools, minority-serving institutions, and both private and public entities, revealing that the kind of institution affects the assessment of academic progression. Ornstein et al. (2007) found that institutions display statistical variations across all three disciplines during the promotion to full professor; however, the kind of institution was not significant in the promotion to associate professor (Aster & Bouwma-Gearhart, 2021). Borreo (2023) found that achieving academic progress is more difficult in research universities than in non-research institutions. The institution's renown substantially affects the time required for promotion; a higher university rank is associated with a shorter average promotion duration for faculty members. This study examines the impact of possessing a PhD degree, the prestige of the awarding university, and the professor's job level on the duration of promotions for university academics in China.

H1a: Higher promotion stress is significantly negatively related to task performance in faculty members in higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. Promotion stress revolves around the anticipation and concerns related to career progression within the academic hierarchy. When faculty members experience elevated promotion stress, it is expected to significantly hinder their ability to perform tasks effectively.

H1b: Elevated job security stress is significantly negatively correlated with relational performance among faculty members in higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. Job security stress entails concerns about the stability and continuity of employment. When faculty members experience heightened job security stress, it is expected to significantly disrupt their ability to maintain positive and productive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.

Work Stress and Subjective Well-being

Research on the function of subjective well-being (SWB) in workplace environments has become more significant due to its potential influence on many outcomes, including job performance, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and organizational commitment. Numerous significant topics have arisen from prior research:

A significant amount of research has investigated the correlation between subjective well-being and work performance. Research indicates that individuals exhibiting elevated levels of subjective well-being (SWB) generally demonstrate superior job performance (Fisher & Boyle, 2020; Judge et al., 2019). This correlation is ascribed to the favorable emotions and drive linked to elevated subjective well-being (SWB). Content and fulfilled employees are more inclined to participate in their job, exhibit productivity, and display superior task and relationship performance.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is a domain in which subjective well-being (SWB) is crucial. Multiple research have indicated a robust positive correlation between subjective well-being and work satisfaction (Sin et al., 2021; De Neve & Oswald, 2012). Employees with elevated levels of subjective well-being are typically more satisfied with their professions and demonstrate heightened total life satisfaction.

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Turnover Intention and Organizational Commitment: Subjective Well-Being (SWB) has been associated with turnover intention and organizational commitment. Employees exhibiting elevated subjective well-being are less inclined to contemplate job departure and exhibit more organizational commitment (De Neve & Oswald, 2019; Soares & Mosquera ,2019). This association highlights the need of fostering subjective well-being to diminish turnover rates and strengthen organizational loyalty.

H2.1a: Higher promotion stress is significantly negatively related to positive emotions in faculty members in higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. Promotion stress, marked by concerns about career progression, opportunities, and promotions, can diminish the experience of positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, and contentment. Faculty members experiencing higher promotion stress are anticipated to exhibit significantly fewer positive emotions.

H2b: Elevated job security stress is significantly negatively correlated with overall well-being in faculty members in higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. Job security stress, fueled by anxieties about the stability and continuity of employment, may negatively impact overall well-being. Faculty members encountering heightened job security stress are expected to have lower overall well-being

Subjective Well-being and work performance

Turnover Intention and Organizational Commitment: SWB has also been linked to turnover intention and organizational commitment. Employees with higher SWB are less likely to consider leaving their jobs and demonstrate a stronger commitment to their organizations (De Neve & Oswald, 2019; Soares & Mosquera,2019). This relationship underscores the importance of promoting SWB to reduce turnover rates and enhance organizational loyalty.

The implications of SWB in the workplace are far-reaching. Understanding and promoting SWB can lead to enhanced job performance. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being and provide resources for improving SWB may benefit from a more engaged and productive workforce. Higher levels of SWB are associated with lower turnover intentions. Thus, organizations can invest in strategies to boost SWB, ultimately reducing the costs associated with recruitment and training. Employees with greater SWB tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, which, in turn, contributes to higher overall life satisfaction. Organizations that foster a positive work environment can expect a more satisfied and committed workforce.

While significant progress has been made in understanding the role of SWB in workplace settings, there remain areas where further research is needed. While research has identified the positive impact of SWB, the specific mechanisms through which SWB influences job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment require more exploration. Investigating mediating variables can offer a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships. Most of the existing research on SWB in the workplace is rooted in Western contexts. More cross-cultural studies are needed to examine whether the relationships between SWB and workplace outcomes hold across different cultural and organizational settings. Research on intervention strategies aimed at improving SWB in the workplace is an emerging field. Further studies should explore the effectiveness of interventions and their long-term impact on employee well-being and performance. Identifying moderating variables that

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influence the relationship between SWB and workplace outcomes is another avenue for future research. These variables could help tailor interventions to different employee groups.

H3.2: Higher negative emotions are significantly negatively associated with relational performance among faculty members in higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. The presence of negative emotions such as stress, frustration, or dissatisfaction can hinder interpersonal relationships and communication. Faculty members experiencing these negative emotions are expected to exhibit lower relational performance in their professional roles.

H3.3: Increased positive emotions are significantly positively related to task performance in faculty members in higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. Positive emotions, such as happiness, enthusiasm, and contentment, can act as catalysts for higher motivation, productivity, and task performance. Faculty members experiencing more positive emotions are likely to excel in their work responsibilities.

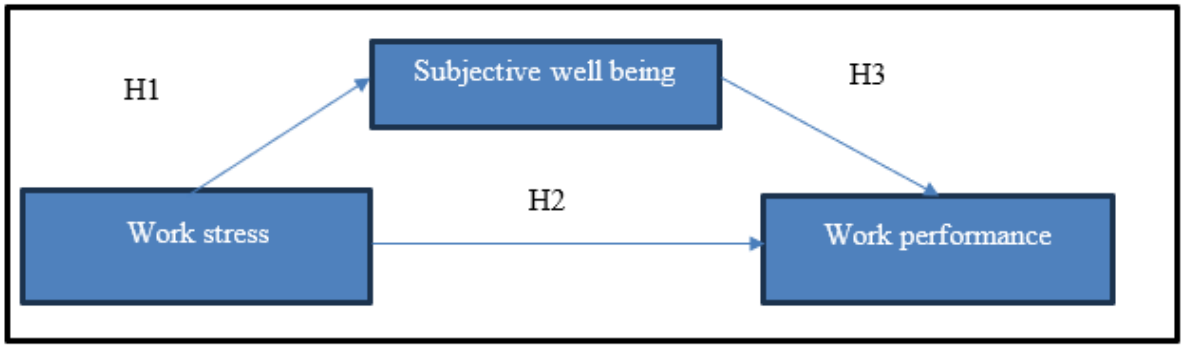

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This research utilized a positivist viewpoint. Positivism is a philosophical paradigm that emphasizes empirical observation and the scientific method for understanding phenomena (Bryman, 2016). Reality exists autonomously from the human intellect and may be methodically observed and quantified. Researchers with a positivist perspective aim to analyze and clarify phenomena using objective and visible evidence. This study employed positivism as its foundational principle, emphasizing the collection of quantitative data about quantifiable aspects of job stress, work performance, and subjective well-being among faculty members. The core belief was that the relationships among these factors could be systematically studied, measured, and statistically analyzed, hence improving understanding of the subject (Wagenaar, 2021).

Discussion

Demographic

In 2023, the Guangdong Provincial Department of Education reported over 136,700 full-time faculty members in the province's higher education institutions, reflecting a 0.58% increase from the previous year. Of this total, over 82,600 academic members were affiliated with conventional undergraduate institutions, whereas 2,100 were working at vocational schools.

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Higher vocational colleges employed around 51,100 faculty members, whilst adult higher education institutions employed about 801 faculty members. Additionally, 79.38% of faculty members across all sectors held graduate degrees or higher, reflecting a 1% increase from the previous year. The analysis included two primary software packages: SPSS 28 and AMOS 27, both esteemed for handling complex datasets and performing advanced statistical analyses. SPSS enabled preliminary data processing, including descriptive statistics, data purification, and various inferential tests, whereas AMOS was employed for advanced analysis, particularly Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The amalgamation of these tools permits a comprehensive and systematic examination of the relationships between occupational stress, subjective well-being, and work performance.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Relational Performance and Task Performance

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean
Relational Performance	380	16.00	35.00	5406.00	28.4526
Task Performance	380	24.00	50.00	7074.00	37.2316

Note: The table above presents the descriptive statistics for Relational Performance and Task Performance, two subscales of Work Performance. The N value indicates the total number of valid responses for each variable (380 respondents). The Mean is the average score, and the Standard Deviation would reflect the variability across respondents, although it is not specified here.

Task Performance is generally valued in academic assessments (including research productivity, teaching efficacy, and administrative chores), thus it's not unexpected that Task Performance scores higher than Relational Performance. The somewhat higher variability in Task Performance may reflect faculty members' various approaches to teaching and research output. Relational Performance, which encompasses teamwork and interpersonal skills, may be undervalued in formal evaluations. Faculty may grade themselves lower in this area since relational components of their work are less quantitative and not typically the focus of performance assessments.

Faculty members had modest life satisfaction, according to the mean Overall Well-being score of 21.57. The large range of ratings (8–32) suggests that some faculty members are happy with their lives, while others are not. Working-life balance, career advancement, and institutional support contribute to this difference. The standard deviation of 5.63 indicates that most faculty members assess their Overall Well-being similarly, but there are noticeable deviations on both ends of the spectrum.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Overall Well-being, Negative Emotions, and Positive Emotions

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Overall Well-being	380	8.00	32.00	4099.00	21.5737	5.62706
Negative Emotions	380	1.00	8.00	1197.00	6.3000	1.55652
Positive Emotions	380	1.00	8.00	848.77	4.4579	2.00682

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Note: In Table 4.4, the descriptive statistics for Overall Well-being, Negative Emotions, and Positive Emotions are presented. These three dimensions provide a holistic understanding of subjective well-being among faculty members. The Mean values represent the average scores, and the Standard Deviation reflects how much respondents' scores vary.

Faculty express more negative feelings than pleasant ones (mean = 6.30 and 4.46, respectively). The high mean for Negative Emotions shows that faculty members suffer moderate levels of stress, worry, and annoyance, which is consistent with the high Work Stress levels found previously. The standard deviation of 1.56 for Negative Emotions shows that while most respondents report similar emotional experiences, they still feel these emotions differently, possibly due to individual coping mechanisms, external work pressures, and personal life situations. The Positive Emotions mean of 4.46, with a standard deviation of 2.01, indicates decreased pleasure, contentment, and excitement. This shows that faculty members feel good emotions less often than negative ones. The significant standard deviation for pleasant Emotions suggests that some faculty members feel many pleasant emotions, while others report little. This may be due to academics' different sources of joy and satisfaction, which may be impacted by personal successes, peer support, or institutional acknowledgment.

The descriptive data above include faculty job stress, subjective well-being, and performance. These data show a complicated link between the three factors. Faculty report various degrees of job stress, with performance review and career development stress contributing most. Despite these hurdles, faculty members' subjective well-being is modest, with negative emotions somewhat outweighing good ones. Their low positive emotions may be due to academic stresses. Despite stress's emotional hurdles, professors report good job performance, especially in task-oriented tasks. This shows that faculty members, despite stress, thrive in teaching and research, which are typically visible and measurable. The greater task performance ratings compared to relational performance reflect a strong concentration on deliverables and output, which may compromise academic connections and collaboration.

Results provide numerous significant insights. Work stress is strongly linked to faculty members' emotional well-being, suggesting stress management may be an important intervention. Reducing stress and improving work-life balance may boost subjective well-being and job effectiveness. The mismatch between task and relational performance shows that while faculty members are strongly devoted to their professional obligations, workplace collaboration and interpersonal dynamics may be improved. This section's descriptive data is essential for hypothesis testing and regression analysis, which will examine the links between work stress, subjective well-being, and job performance. These findings imply that institutional support and tailored interventions to reduce job stress and increase well-being might improve faculty performance, benefiting both people and institutions. These findings will be reviewed in connection to academic settings and faculty development initiatives in later chapters.

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Regression Analysis of Work Stress Dimensions on Overall Subjective Well-being

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Work Stress Dimensions on Overall Subjective Well-being

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Est.	Change Stats				
					Δ R^2	Δ F	df1	df2	Sig. ΔF
1	.607[a]	.369	.365	4.94797	.369	109.819	1	188	.000
2	.652[b]	.425	.419	4.73450	.056	18.335	1	187	.000
3	.686[c]	.470	.461	4.55802	.045	15.761	1	186	.000
4	.712[d]	.506	.496	4.41062	.036	13.640	1	185	.000
5	.728[e]	.530	.518	4.31403	.024	9.376	1	184	.003
6	.763[f]	.583	.569	4.07851	.052	22.865	1	183	.000

Notes: a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Security Stress; b. Predictors: (Constant), Job Security Stress, Promotion Stress; c. Predictors: (Constant), Job Security Stress, Promotion Stress, Career Development Stress; d. Predictors: (Constant), Job Security Stress, Promotion Stress, Career Development Stress, School Organizational Stress; e. Predictors: (Constant), Job Security Stress, Promotion Stress, Career Development Stress, School Organizational Stress, Performance Evaluation Stress; f. Predictors: (Constant), Job Security Stress, Promotion Stress, Career Development Stress, School Organizational Stress, Performance Evaluation Stress, Role Responsibility Stress

In Model 1, JSS was the lone predictor, with a R^2 value of 0.369 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.365. This shows that JSS alone accounted for 36.5% of subjective well-being variance, demonstrating its key function as a stressor. The model's explained variance rose with more predictors. In Model 6, all significant factors except SOS resulted in an adjusted R^2 of 0.569. The selected job stress factors explain 56.9% of subjective well-being variance, demonstrating their combined significance.

ANOVA findings for regression models in Table 3 revealed statistical significance for all six models. The models had F-statistics from 109.819 (Model 1) to 42.555 (Model 6), with p-values below 0.001. These findings show that each model's predictors significantly explain subjective well-being variance.

Regression Model Summary for the Impact of Negative Emotions on Overall Work Performance

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Dimensions between Work Stress and Subjective Well-being

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Est.	Change Stats				
					ΔR^2	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. ΔF
1	.811a	.655	.654	7.85673	.655	8.438	1	181	.004

Notes: a. Predictors: (Constant), Negative Emotions.

The F-statistic for the change in R^2, measured at 8.438 with a significance threshold of p = 0.004, substantiates that the incorporation of NE greatly improves the predictive capability of the regression model. The standard error of the estimate, computed as 7.85673, signifies the mean deviation of observed data points from the fitted regression line. These findings underscore the model's reliability in forecasting work performance outcomes based on characteristics of subjective well-being.

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The comprehensive regression coefficients for the model are encapsulated in Table 3. The findings underscore the significant influence of Negative Emotions on total work performance prediction. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for NE was -0.211, showing a negative correlation between NE and work performance. This indicates that with each unit rise in NE, work performance ratings decline by an average of 0.211 units, assuming all other factors remain unchanged. The standardized coefficient (Beta) for NE was negative, indicating its proportional contribution to the variance in work performance.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients for Negative Emotions as a Predictor of Overall Work Performance

Model	Predictor Variables	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	t	Sig.	Collinearity Stats	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	58.654	2.434		24.102	.000		
	NE	1.081	.372	-.211	2.905	.004	1.000	1.000

Notes: a. Dependent Variable: Total Score of Work Performance.

The regression coefficients offer essential information into the strength and direction of the correlations between NE and work performance. The negative coefficient for NE signifies that increased negative emotional experiences, including stress, frustration, and anxiety, correlate with diminished overall work performance. This effect is statistically represented by the unstandardized and standardized coefficients, which measure the impact of NE while accounting for other variables.

The regression model indicates that NE is a significant predictor of job performance, whereas the omission of OWB and PE from the final model implies a more complex relationship between subjective well-being and work performance. The absence of direct impacts for OWB and PE may suggest the existence of mediating or moderating variables that affect their influence on professional success. These variables may encompass organizational support, work satisfaction, or interpersonal interactions, necessitating further examination to elucidate the intricacies of these dynamics.

The regression equation obtained from the analysis is as follows:

Work Performance (WP) = 58.654 - 0.211 × Negative Emotions (NE)

This equation delineates the correlation between NE and WP, offering a definitive statistical representation of the results. The constant term (58.654) signifies the anticipated WP score while NE is maintained at zero, whereas the coefficient for NE quantifies its adverse effect on WP.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Work Stress on Subjective Well-being (Mediator Effect)

Model	Predictor Variables	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	t	Sig.	Collinearity Stats	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	77.199	2.665		28.971	0		
	WS (Total)	-0.205	0.046	-0.316	-4.485	0	1	1

Notes: a. The dependent variable is the total score of Work Performance

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The negative effect observed in this analysis is consistent with theoretical expectations that higher levels of stress impose cognitive and emotional burdens on employees, reducing their capacity to effectively engage with work tasks. This direct effect represents the total impact of WS on WP before accounting for the potential mediating influence of SWB.

The second regression equation investigates the relationship between WS (independent variable) and SWB (mediating variable). Table 4.24 provides the results, revealing a significant negative relationship between WS and SWB. The unstandardized coefficient (B=−0.232) demonstrates the extent to which WS reduces SWB, while the standardized coefficient (β=−0.454) indicates the strong negative association between these variables. The t-value of −6.986 and a significance level ($p<0.01$) confirm that this relationship is statistically robust.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Work Stress on Subjective Well-being (Mediator Effect)

Model	Predictor Variables	Unstd. Coeff.		Std. Coeff.	t	Sig.	Collinearity Stats	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	41.912	1.929		21.725	0		
	WS (Total)	-0.232	0.033	0.454	-6.986	0	1	1

Notes: a. The dependent variable is the total score of Subjective Well-being

The regression model suggests that as WS increases, SWB decreases significantly. This inverse relationship reflects the extent to which stress detracts from an individual's perceived well-being, including their emotional balance, life satisfaction, and psychological health. The findings are consistent with existing literature suggesting that elevated stress levels negatively affect an individual's capacity to maintain positive emotions and an overall sense of well-being. This stage of the analysis establishes SWB as a potential mediating variable in the relationship between WS and WP.

The final regression equation incorporates both WS and SWB as predictors of WP. Table 4.25 presents the results, showing the effects of these variables when included simultaneously in the regression model. The unstandardized coefficient for WS (B=−0.215) reflects the direct effect of WS on WP after accounting for SWB, while the standardized coefficient (β=−0.332) highlights the continued negative influence of WS. The t-value of −4.186 and significance level ($p<0.01$) confirm that WS remains a significant predictor of WP even in the presence of SWB.

Conclusion

The analysis validated the proposed linkages outlined in the study. The substantial negative correlation between work stress and work performance confirmed Hypothesis 1 (H1), with sub-hypotheses demonstrating the particular impacts of stress dimensions, including career development stress and role responsibility stress, on task and relational performance. The pronounced negative correlation between occupational stress and subjective well-being substantiated Hypothesis 2 (H2), clarifying how different stress dimensions undermine overall well-being and emotional equilibrium among faculty members. Third, Hypothesis 3 (H3) was validated, confirming that elevated subjective well-being—marked by good emotions and general well-being—improves work performance, but negative emotions detract from relationship efficacy. Finally, the mediation analyses confirmed Hypothesis 4 (H4), indicating that subjective well-being strongly mediates the relationship between work stress and work performance, underscoring its crucial role in mitigating the negative consequences of stress.

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These findings offer detailed responses to the research questions by demonstrating the interrelation of job stress, subjective well-being, and performance. The findings further enhance the comprehension of these constructs by including contextual elements specific to faculty members in higher education institutions in Guangdong Province. By contextualising the findings within theoretical frameworks like the Job Demand-Control Model (JDCM) and modern well-being theories, the study clarifies how institutional demands, resource limitations, and emotional well-being intersect to influence teacher outcomes.

Theoretical Implication

This study's methodological rigor and creativity represent another substantial contribution. Previous research on faculty stress and performance has frequently utilized cross-sectional methods, constraining their capacity to infer causality and to elucidate dynamic interactions (Zhang et al., 2021). This study addresses these constraints by utilizing a comprehensive analytical approach that incorporates correlation analysis, regression modeling, and mediation testing. These methodologies provide a more accurate identification of links and mechanisms, consequently augmenting the validity and dependability of the findings. Furthermore, the study employs a substantial and varied sample of faculty members from higher education institutions in Guangdong Province, so confirming the generalizability of the findings within this setting. The incorporation of diverse academic levels, fields, and institutional kinds enhances the sample's representativeness and offers a comprehensive perspective on faculty experiences.

This study's findings contribute theoretically by integrating and expanding upon established frameworks, including the Job Demand-Control Model (JDCM) and Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory of pleasant emotions (2021). This research expands the classic JDCM, which focuses on the relationship between job demands and control, by integrating emotional and evaluative aspects of subjective well-being, so providing a more holistic framework for analyzing the combined effects of stress and well-being on performance. Moreover, the study's results regarding the mediating function of SWB correspond with the Broaden-and-Build Theory, which asserts that happy emotions broaden individuals' cognitive and behavioral capacities, consequently improving their performance and resilience. This research experimentally validates the theory within the framework of Chinese higher education, so enhancing its application and emphasizing its significance in comprehending teacher experiences.

Practical Implication

The considerable influence of adverse emotions on faculty well-being and performance necessitates institutional strategies that emphasize emotional support. Counseling services ought to be integrated as an essential element of faculty support systems. Policies must guarantee that these services are accessible, confidential, and manned by trained personnel who comprehend the distinctive issues of academics. Alongside individual therapy, governments ought to promote the establishment of peer support networks. These networks can offer academics a sense of community and mutual understanding, essential for alleviating stress and promoting pleasant emotions. Policies should promote the establishment of regular peer support meetings and seminars, providing chances for academics to exchange experiences and solutions.

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Recognition and reward systems are essential for fostering pleasant emotions and motivating faculty members. Policies must include procedures for recognizing faculty accomplishments, both formally and informally. Formal recognition may encompass awards, grants, and promotions, whereas informal recognition could entail public acknowledgments during departmental meetings or institutional events. Such policies must guarantee that recognition criteria are clear and inclusive, representing the varied contributions of faculty members in teaching, research, and service. Moreover, regulations ought to encourage the commemoration of milestones and accomplishments, fostering a culture of gratitude and optimism inside educational institutions.

Structural imbalances in higher education institutions frequently intensify stress and undermine faculty well-being. Policies must prioritize the eradication of these disparities through equitable resource distribution, inclusive decision-making procedures, and just treatment of all faculty members. This encompasses rectifying imbalances in workload, access to professional development opportunities, and representation in leadership roles. Policies must advocate for diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) as essential tenets of institutional governance. DEI rules must guarantee that faculty members from diverse backgrounds feel esteemed, respected, and supported in their positions. This dedication to fairness and inclusion can markedly improve faculty well-being and performance, as research demonstrates a correlation between inclusive workplaces and favorable organizational outcomes.

Limitation

The study's cross-sectional design constitutes a significant restriction. The investigation, by gathering data at a singular moment, could not determine causal linkages among the factors. Although the statistical studies indicated substantial connections, they were unable to ascertain the directionality or causality of these relationships. It is uncertain whether work-related stress results in diminished subjective well-being (SWB) and work performance, or if low SWB and work performance intensify the experience of stress. A longitudinal research approach would mitigate this constraint by facilitating the analysis of temporal correlations and causal pathways.

The study's dependence on quantitative methodology, while a positive, nevertheless constitutes a constraint in capturing the qualitative dimensions of faculty experiences. Although the numerical data offered useful insights into the extent and importance of linkages, it failed to encapsulate the subjective narratives and lived experiences of faculty members. Qualitative methods, like interviews and focus groups, could enhance quantitative findings by offering deeper and more complex insights into the challenges and coping strategies of academic professionals.

Recommendation

Future study may investigate interventions designed to improve faculty well-being and performance. Empirical investigations assessing the effectiveness of particular therapies, including mindfulness training, peer support initiatives, or organizational policy modifications, would yield significant evidence for optimal practices. These research could utilize randomized controlled trials to evaluate the direct effects of therapies on stress reduction, enhancement of well-being, and improvement of performance. These experimental approaches would enhance an evidence-based comprehension of how to effectively tackle the difficulties outlined in this study.

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Finally, subsequent studies should investigate the possible impact of interdisciplinary approaches on faculty stress and performance. By synthesizing insights from psychology, sociology, organizational behavior, and educational administration, academics could formulate more comprehensive models that address the complex nature of stress and well-being in academia. Collaborations between organizational psychologists and educational theorists may provide insights into the impact of institutional cultures on individual well-being and performance. Collaborations with public health professionals could investigate the wider effects of instructor stress on community health and student performance.

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