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Identification and Explanation of Organizational Health Dimensions and Components among Middle School Teachers in Tehran

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Organizational health within schools significantly influences teacher well-being, professional efficacy, and student outcomes. This study aimed to identify and explain the dimensions and components of organizational health among middle school teachers in Tehran, focusing on how individual, organizational, and environmental factors contribute to the overall health of educational institutions.

Methodology: Adopting a qualitative research design, this study engaged 26 middle school teachers from Tehran through semi-structured interviews. The participants were selected purposively to ensure a diverse representation of experiences and viewpoints. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached, and thematic analysis was employed to identify and analyze the emerging themes related to organizational health.

Findings: The study revealed that individual factors such as motivation, professional development, and job satisfaction; organizational factors including leadership, communication, and organizational culture; and environmental factors like policy influence and community engagement are critical to the organizational health of schools. These factors together create a comprehensive framework affecting the overall effectiveness and well-being of educational settings.

Conclusion: The findings underscore the importance of addressing both the internal and external components of organizational health in schools. A holistic approach that considers individual, organizational, and environmental factors is essential for fostering a positive educational environment, supporting teacher well-being, and enhancing student achievement. The study provides valuable insights for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners aiming to improve the organizational health of schools.

Keywords: Organizational Health, Middle School Teachers, Educational Leadership, Teacher Well-being, School Culture, Environmental Factors, Tehran.

1. Introduction

The significance of organizational health within educational settings has increasingly garnered attention from researchers, educational leaders, and policymakers, particularly in the context of the complex challenges faced by teachers and schools today. Organizational health, defined as the organization's capacity to function effectively, adapt, maintain itself over time, and provide a fulfilling work environment for its members, is critical for ensuring high levels of teacher performance and student achievement (Ofem, 2023; Shen et al., 2022; Yilmaz & Kaya, 2022).

The relevance of organizational health in educational settings cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts teachers' psychological well-being, efficacy beliefs, and their ability to cope with work-related stressors (Capone et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2023). Moreover, the organizational health of schools has been linked to critical outcomes such as student achievement and teacher commitment (Hayat et al., 2015; Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Sadat Mousavi & Ebrahimi, 2024; Zweeris et al., 2023). As such, understanding the factors that contribute to or detract from organizational health is crucial for developing strategies to enhance the educational environment for both teachers and students.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for resilient and supportive organizational conditions has become even more pronounced, underscoring the role of school organizational health in fostering teacher psychological resilience and mitigating stress (Fu et al., 2023). This challenging period has highlighted the adaptability and support systems within schools as pivotal elements of organizational health that can significantly impact teachers' well-being and effectiveness.

The impact of organizational justice, encompassing fairness in decision-making processes and equitable treatment of staff, on creating a positive school climate and fostering trust among teachers is also well-documented (DiPaola & Guy, 2009; Novitasari et al., 2020; Ramezani & Najjari, 2022; Shen et al., 2022). Such an environment is conducive to professional growth, collaboration, and a shared commitment to the school's vision and goals. Conversely, a lack of organizational justice can lead to diminished teacher morale, commitment, and, ultimately, student outcomes.

Furthermore, the association between teachers' spiritual health, psychological well-being, and their organizational commitment highlights the importance of addressing the holistic needs of educators (Heidari et al., 2022). Schools

that prioritize the spiritual and psychological well-being of their staff not only enhance individual teacher satisfaction but also contribute to a more robust and committed teaching force.

Research has consistently shown that leadership and the prevailing organizational culture within schools play a critical role in shaping organizational health (Kuyubaşoğlu et al., 2022; Paclit et al., 2022). Leadership styles that empower teachers and promote a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration are essential for fostering a healthy organizational environment. Additionally, the integration of instructional leadership and organizational health practices has been found to significantly influence the overall effectiveness and climate of schools (Parlar & Cansoy, 2017).

Therefore, our study aims to delve into the organizational health dimensions and components specific to middle school teachers in Tehran, providing valuable insights into the factors that contribute to a supportive and effective educational environment. By focusing on the perspectives and experiences of teachers, this research seeks to identify actionable strategies that can enhance organizational health and, by extension, improve educational outcomes for students. The findings of this study have the potential to inform policy and practice, offering a roadmap for developing healthier, more resilient, and supportive school organizations in Iran and beyond.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

A qualitative research design was selected to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomena of organizational health within the educational setting of Tehran's middle schools. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of teachers' perspectives and experiences, enabling the identification of nuanced and context-specific dimensions of organizational health.

The participants consisted of a purposive sample of middle school teachers from various schools across Tehran. The sampling strategy aimed to ensure a diverse representation of experiences and viewpoints regarding organizational health. Participants were selected based on their willingness to share their experiences and their involvement in teaching activities at the middle school level.

Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without

any consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation in the study.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Semi-Structured Interview

Data were collected exclusively through semi-structured interviews, which were designed to prompt detailed discussions and reflections on organizational health dimensions and components. The interview guide included open-ended questions that covered various aspects of organizational culture, leadership, communication, support systems, and the overall work environment. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in the conversation, enabling participants to share their insights and experiences freely while ensuring that all relevant topics were covered.

Interviews were conducted until theoretical saturation was achieved, meaning that no new themes or insights were emerging from the data, indicating that the collected data were sufficient to understand the phenomena under study comprehensively.

2.3. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns

(themes) within the data. This involved a careful and systematic process of data coding, theme development, and theme refinement. The analysis was iterative, moving back and forth between the dataset and the emerging analysis to ensure a thorough and accurate representation of the data.

3. Findings and Results

The study comprised a total of 26 middle school teachers from various schools across Tehran, ensuring a broad representation of experiences and perspectives regarding organizational health. Among the participants, 15 (57.7%) were female, and 11 (42.3%) were male, reflecting a diverse gender distribution. The age of the participants ranged from 28 to 55 years, with a median age of 41 years, indicating a wide range of teaching experiences. In terms of teaching experience, the majority, 18 participants (69.2%), had over 10 years of experience, highlighting a high level of professional expertise within the group. The remaining 8 participants (30.8%) had between 5 to 10 years of teaching experience, contributing fresh perspectives alongside seasoned insights. The distribution of academic qualifications revealed that 12 teachers (46.2%) held a Master's degree, 13 (50%) possessed a Bachelor's degree, and 1 (3.8%) had attained a doctoral degree, showcasing a high level of educational attainment among the participants.

Table 1

The Results of Qualitative Analysis

Categories	Subcategories	Concepts
Individual	Motivation	Intrinsic motivation, Extrinsic motivation, Recognition
	Professional Development	Training opportunities, Skill development, Career progression
	Work-Life Balance	Flexible working hours, Leave policies, Workload management
	Stress Management	Coping strategies, Support systems, Workload pressure
	Job Satisfaction	Employee engagement, Recognition, Achievement
Organizational	Leadership	Leadership styles, Decision-making, Empowerment
	Communication	Feedback mechanisms, Information flow, Interdepartmental communication
	Team Dynamics	Collaboration, Conflict resolution, Group cohesion
	Organizational Culture	Values, Norms, Employee involvement
	Resource Allocation	Budget distribution, Material resources, Human resources
Environmental	Performance Evaluation	Criteria, Feedback, Career impact
	Policy Influence	Legislation, Educational policies, Funding
	Community Engagement	Parent associations, Local businesses, Media relations
	Physical Infrastructure	Facility conditions, Safety, Accessibility
	Technological Infrastructure	Digital tools, Software systems, Internet access

In examining the organizational health dimensions and components among middle school teachers in Tehran, our analysis delineated three primary thematic categories: Individual, Organizational, and Environmental. Within these

categories, we identified subthemes and corresponding concepts that emerged from the data:

3.1. Individual Factors

Motivation: Teachers' motivation was found to be multifaceted, encompassing intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and recognition. One teacher remarked, "Feeling recognized for my hard work motivates me deeply, beyond any external rewards."

Professional Development: The opportunities for training, skill development, and career progression were highlighted as crucial. "Continuous professional development not only enhances my skills but also my confidence in delivering quality education," shared another participant.

Work-Life Balance: Flexible working hours, leave policies, and workload management were emphasized as vital for a healthy work-life balance. A respondent noted, "Being able to manage my work and personal life effectively reduces my stress and increases my job satisfaction."

Stress Management: Coping strategies, support systems, and workload pressure were identified as key aspects of stress management. "Having a strong support system at work helps me navigate through stressful periods," a teacher mentioned.

Job Satisfaction: This subtheme was associated with employee engagement, recognition, and a sense of achievement. "When I see the impact of my work on students' learning, I feel a profound sense of satisfaction," remarked a participant.

3.2. Organizational Factors

Leadership: Leadership styles, decision-making processes, and empowerment were critical in shaping the organizational health. "Effective leadership that empowers teachers can significantly enhance the school's organizational health," one teacher observed.

Communication: The importance of feedback mechanisms, information flow, and interdepartmental communication was underscored. "Open and effective communication within the school creates a positive working environment," noted another teacher.

Team Dynamics: Collaboration, conflict resolution, and group cohesion were identified as essential for positive team dynamics. "A cohesive team that collaborates well can overcome any challenge," a participant stated.

Organizational Culture: Values, norms, and employee involvement in decision-making processes were crucial elements. "A strong and positive organizational culture is the backbone of a healthy working environment," shared a respondent.

Resource Allocation: The distribution of budget, material, and human resources was highlighted. "Appropriate resource allocation is key to our ability to deliver quality education," remarked a teacher.

Performance Evaluation: Criteria for evaluation, feedback mechanisms, and the impact on career progression were emphasized. "Fair and constructive performance evaluation motivates me to improve my teaching practices," a participant mentioned.

3.3. Environmental Factors

Policy Influence: Legislation, educational policies, and funding were seen as significant external factors. "National education policies and funding directly impact our school's operations and resources," one teacher pointed out.

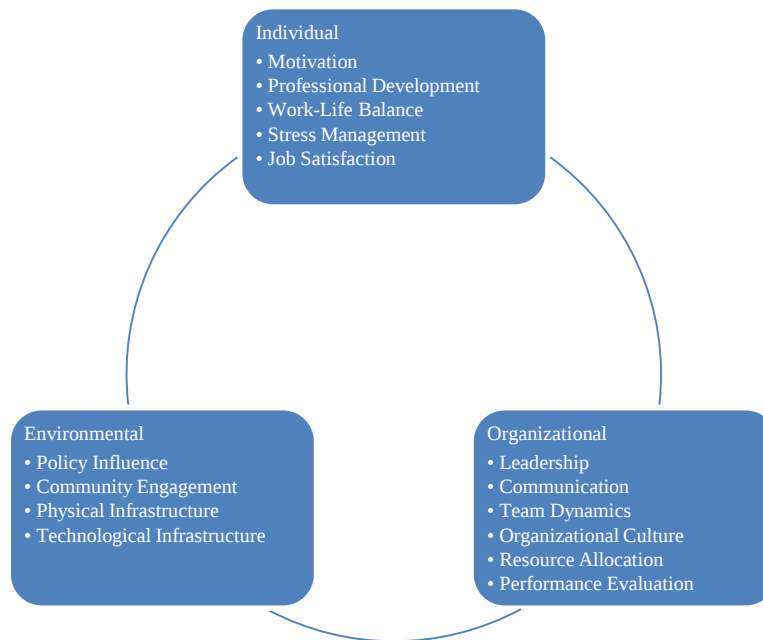
Community Engagement: The role of parent associations, local businesses, and media relations was highlighted. "Engagement with the community brings valuable resources and support to our school," noted another participant.

Physical Infrastructure: Conditions of facilities, safety, and accessibility were deemed important. "The physical state of the school significantly affects both teaching and learning conditions," a respondent observed.

Technological Infrastructure: The availability and quality of digital tools, software systems, and internet access were critical. "In today's educational landscape, robust technological infrastructure is indispensable," shared a teacher.

Figure 1

Thematic Model of the Study



4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to identify and explain the dimensions and components of organizational health among middle school teachers in Tehran, focusing on individual, organizational, and environmental factors. Our findings revealed that individual factors, such as motivation, professional development, work-life balance, stress management, and job satisfaction, play a crucial role in influencing organizational health. At the organizational level, leadership, communication, team dynamics, organizational culture, resource allocation, and performance evaluation emerged as key components. Additionally, environmental factors, including policy influence, community engagement, physical and technological infrastructure, significantly impact the organizational health within the educational settings of Tehran's middle schools.

Our study's identification of individual factors such as motivation, professional development, and job satisfaction as critical components of organizational health resonates with the findings of Capone, Joshanloo, and Park (2019), who highlighted the impact of work-related variables on teachers' mental health and efficacy beliefs (Capone et al., 2019). Similar to their conclusions, our research underscores the importance of addressing individual-level factors to enhance organizational health, thereby suggesting that interventions aimed at improving motivational aspects and

professional development opportunities could significantly contribute to teachers' overall well-being and job satisfaction.

The organizational factors identified, including leadership, communication, and organizational culture, align with the research by DiPaola and Guy (2009), which emphasized the impact of organizational justice on the school climate and trust (DiPaola & Guy, 2009). Furthermore, our findings concerning the positive effects of supportive leadership and effective communication on organizational health echo the work of Parlar and Cansoy (2017), who examined the relationship between instructional leadership and organizational health (Parlar & Cansoy, 2017). This concordance reinforces the notion that leadership styles and organizational culture play a pivotal role in fostering a healthy work environment for educators.

Regarding environmental factors, our study found that policy influence and community engagement are crucial for organizational health. This finding is supported by the research of Henderson et al. (2005), who documented the link between organizational health and student achievement, suggesting that external factors such as educational policies and community support significantly influence the educational ecosystem's overall health (Henderson et al., 2005). These results highlight the interconnectedness of schools with their broader external environment and the need

for supportive policies and active community engagement to enhance organizational health.

The emphasis on individual factors in our study suggests that the personal well-being of teachers is a cornerstone of organizational health. This finding underlines the necessity of creating an environment that not only recognizes but actively supports the individual needs of teachers, from professional development to mental health support, especially in challenging times as indicated by Fu et al. (2023) during the COVID-19 pandemic (Fu et al., 2023).

In discussing organizational factors, our results highlight the critical role of leadership in shaping the school's organizational health. Leaders who adopt empowering and participative leadership styles can foster an atmosphere of trust and respect, which is conducive to teacher satisfaction and commitment, as shown by Nong, Ye, and Hong (2022). Additionally, the emphasis on effective communication and a positive organizational culture found in our study is crucial for building a cohesive and supportive school environment, aligning with findings by Mehta, Atkins, and Frazier (2013) regarding the organizational health of urban elementary schools (Mehta et al., 2013; Nong et al., 2022).

Lastly, the impact of environmental factors on organizational health underscores the need for schools to not operate in isolation but as part of a broader ecosystem. Policies that support education, funding allocations, and community involvement are essential for sustaining a healthy organizational environment, as suggested by our findings and supported by the work of Paclit, Castricones, and Vadil (2022). This implies that policy makers and educational leaders should consider the broader socio-political and economic context in their efforts to improve school organizational health (Paclit et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the study underscores the multifaceted nature of organizational health, highlighting the interplay between individual, organizational, and environmental factors. It reinforces the importance of a holistic approach to enhancing the educational environment, which not only supports the well-being and professional development of teachers but also promotes a positive, supportive, and effective educational ecosystem. The insights gleaned from this study offer valuable perspectives for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners, aiming to foster organizational health in schools, thereby contributing to improved educational outcomes.

This study, while providing significant insights, is not without its limitations. The research focused solely on middle school teachers in Tehran, which may limit the

generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts or regions. Moreover, the qualitative nature of the study, relying on semi-structured interviews, means that the findings are based on the perceptions and experiences of a select group of teachers, which might not capture the full spectrum of factors influencing organizational health in schools.

Future research should aim to extend the findings of this study by exploring organizational health in different educational settings and regions, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. Comparative studies between different educational levels and cultural contexts could offer deeper insights into the universal and context-specific components of organizational health. Additionally, longitudinal studies could help in understanding how organizational health evolves over time and in response to specific interventions.

The findings of this study have practical implications for educational leaders and policymakers. Schools should prioritize strategies that enhance motivational aspects, provide opportunities for professional development, and ensure a healthy work-life balance for teachers. Leadership practices that promote open communication, participative decision-making, and a positive organizational culture are essential. Additionally, engaging with the broader community and advocating for supportive educational policies can further strengthen the organizational health of schools. Implementing these strategies requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved in the educational process, aiming to create a supportive, effective, and resilient educational environment for both teachers and students.

Authors' Contributions

In this study, the authors collectively were responsible for data collection, analysis, and manuscript writing.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

No conflict of interest was reported.

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Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles such as confidentiality and voluntary participation.

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