

THE PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF TEACHER IN PRIVATE HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGE IN CHINA

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Abstract

Under the background of China's private higher vocational education transitioning from scale expansion to quality improvement, this paper focuses on the increasingly prominent issues of low professional achievement and high turnover rates among teachers. From two dimensions—the direct influence of the characteristics and status of private higher vocational colleges (including conflicts between profitability and public welfare, management contradictions, and resource marginalization) and the negative impact of multiple evaluation stakeholders in the teaching quality assessment system—the paper deeply reveals the causes and influencing factors of the low professional achievement of teachers. Specific countermeasures are proposed, including balancing profitability and public welfare, optimizing management models, increasing resource investment, and establishing a diversified scientific teaching quality evaluation system, providing theoretical and practical support for private higher vocational colleges and society.

Keywords: Professional Achievement, Private Higher Vocational College, Teaching Quality Evaluation System

Background and Significance

According to statistics from China's Ministry of Education, the number of private colleges in China showed continuous growth from 2000 to 2020. However, after 2022, the trend of large-scale expansion of private higher education slowed. Private higher vocational colleges in China are currently at a critical transition stage from scale expansion to quality improvement. Enhancing teachers' sense of professional achievement and establishing a stable teacher workforce are undoubtedly crucial factors for the sustainable and high-quality development of these institutions.

The Seven-Party Education Research Institute of Xi'an International Affairs College disclosed in the report "Investigation and Analysis of the Current Development Status of Private Higher Education in China" (2019) that, over the past five years, 37.78% of private college teachers had an annual turnover rate below 10%, 24.44% had a turnover rate between 10% and 20%, and 24.44% had a rate between 20% and 30%, with 13.33% having a rate above 30%. Other scholars have conducted a study on the professional happiness of 20 teachers from private higher vocational colleges in China (from 14 private colleges in 6 provinces across the country). The results show that the professional happiness of the 20 teachers is at a lower-middle level (Cheng Hongyan et al., 2023).

The sense of professional achievement among teachers in private higher vocational colleges remains generally low (Luo Li et al., 2021). Teachers often face high levels of job burnout and emotional exhaustion, demonstrating a significant tendency to leave their positions, which adversely affects talent cultivation and institutional development (Gui Peng, 2023).

Against this backdrop, addressing the urgent issue of improving teachers' sense of professional achievement to guide their development in harmony with high-quality educational advancement has become a pressing task for private higher vocational colleges.

Basic connotation

President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the need for "greater gains for the people" in the governance of the country. The concept of "sense of gain" has become a prominent term in Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. It frequently appears in government documents, media narratives, and public discussions. Various sectors have launched studies and discussions on this concept.

A sense of gain refers to a real sense of satisfaction and accomplishment obtained after individuals' interests are maintained and realized, covering economic, political, cultural, educational, medical, environmental, and security aspects. It is a prerequisite for happiness, belonging, and security, reflecting the dignity and status of workers and embodying social fairness and justice (Tian Xuming, 2018).

Professional achievement refers to what individuals obtain through professional activities, including recognition, anticipation, honor, and a sense of accomplishment.

The professional achievement of teachers in private higher vocational colleges is manifested in their sense of need, value, satisfaction, and accomplishment during work. It serves as a practical need to enhance students' sense of gain, an intrinsic motivation affecting professional development, and a key driving force in supporting educational reform and development.

Cause analysis and influencing factors

China's private higher vocational colleges differ from public colleges, which rely on national fiscal allocations. Although the law stipulates that private education is a public welfare undertaking, in practice, many private colleges struggle to balance educational public welfare and investment returns. With the increasingly prominent conflict between public welfare and profitability, the sense of professional achievement of teachers in private higher vocational colleges lags significantly behind that of public college teachers.

Direct Influence of the Characteristics and Status of Private Higher Vocational Colleges

Conflict between Profitability and Public Welfare: Private colleges essentially possess corporate attributes, with investors often seeking maximum profits (Hou Ronghua, 2020). Consequently, market-oriented and utilitarian educational philosophies emerge, leading to insufficient investment in teachers' professional development and welfare, making teachers feel undervalued.

Contradictions in Administrative and Market-Oriented Management Models: Management in private colleges is often led by investors who excessively intervene in teaching and academic research, limiting teachers' teaching autonomy and academic freedom. Additionally, teacher performance is directly tied to enrollment targets and student employment rates, deviating from the essence of education and exacerbating professional alienation.

Marginalization in Resource Allocation: Compared to public colleges, government resources and policies tend to favor public institutions. Teachers in private colleges often face difficulties in accessing equal training and research resources (Luo Li et al., 2021), and they encounter limitations in title evaluation and career development, directly affecting their sense of identity.

Negative Impact of Multiple Evaluation Stakeholders in Teaching Quality Assessment

Social Evaluation Dimension: Society often evaluates schools based on "student employment rates" and "student salary levels," ignoring the differentiated value of private

vocational education in skills cultivation and industry integration. This single quantitative standard undermines teachers' sense of need, value, satisfaction, and accomplishment.

Parental Evaluation Dimension: Parents generally perceive private higher vocational colleges as a "last resort" for education, leading to skepticism about teaching quality and exacerbating teachers' professional frustration.

Employer Dimension: Enterprises demand "highly skilled and versatile" talents. However, due to outdated equipment and curriculum delays, teachers in private higher vocational colleges face difficulties in aligning with cutting-edge industry technologies (Zhang Shuai et al., 2024). This disconnection undermines teachers' teaching effectiveness and sense of accomplishment.

Student Dimension: Students in private higher vocational colleges generally exhibit characteristics such as "low entrance scores and low learning motivation." Their low classroom engagement creates a "high input-low return" psychological dilemma, reducing teachers' sense of professional recognition.

Teacher Self-Evaluation Dimension: Under administrative pressure, social prejudice, and resource scarcity, teachers often experience a sense of powerlessness and even fall into job burnout.

Specific countermeasures

Looking at the relevant research on teachers' sense of professional achievement at home and abroad, the existing research mainly analyzes the existing problems and influencing factors from the perspective of the connotation of professional sense of achievement, and lacks systematic research on the mechanism of the internal influencing factors of teachers' sense of professional achievement. Therefore, this paper analyzes specific improvement strategies from two dimensions: the direct impact of the characteristics and current situation of China's private higher vocational colleges, and the negative impact of multiple subjects in the teaching quality evaluation system.

Balancing Profitability and Public Welfare: The Ministry of Education in China has issued regulations such as "Provisions on the Management of Private Higher Education Institutions" to guide investors in private higher vocational colleges to adopt appropriate educational philosophies. However, existing laws still need specific definitions and strict supervision of "non-profit" operations, and clear provisions are required to protect the legitimate rights of teachers in "for-profit" private colleges (Cheng Hongyan et al., 2023).

Optimizing Management Models: Private colleges should strive to achieve stakeholder governance by improving the corporate governance structure and establishing a modern university system involving boards, administrative leadership, academic autonomy, and democratic management. Teacher performance evaluation should prioritize teaching quality, teaching innovation, and student development rather than enrollment or employment rates.

Increasing Resource Investment: The government should increase support for private colleges and ensure equitable resource distribution. Establishing a system aligned with public colleges for title evaluation can promote career development for teachers. Private colleges should also build "dual-teacher" training systems and work with enterprises to provide teachers with more teaching resources and practice opportunities, enhancing their teaching and research abilities.

Establishing a Diversified and Scientific Teaching Quality Evaluation System:

Correcting Social Evaluation Orientation: The government and industry organizations should develop more inclusive evaluation criteria to highlight the differentiated value of private higher vocational colleges (Mei Xiongjie et al., 2023).

Strengthening Home-School Communication: Private colleges should establish regular communication mechanisms with parents to showcase the teaching capabilities and faculty development outcomes.

Enhancing School-Enterprise Cooperation: Implement "enterprise mentors in the classroom + teacher practice in enterprises" to enable teachers to better guide students and improve teaching effectiveness.

Improving Teacher Training and Evaluation: Strengthen teacher training systems and evaluation incentives based on the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) concept.

Building a Positive Campus Culture: Foster a collaborative working environment to enhance teachers' sense of belonging and respect.

Discussion

Based on the two dimensions of the direct impact of the characteristics and current situation of China's private higher vocational colleges, and the negative impact of multiple subjects in the teaching quality evaluation system, this paper analyzes the internal influencing factors and action mechanisms on teachers' sense of professional gain, and deeply reveals the reasons and influencing factors for the low sense of professional gain of teachers in China's private higher vocational colleges. It provides effective and implementable improvement strategies such as balancing profit and public welfare, optimizing management, increasing resource input and improving the evaluation system, awakening teachers' identity transformation cognition, activating the baton role of the teacher evaluation system, fully guiding teachers to improve their teaching ability, and effectively improving teachers' sense of professional gain through autonomous circulation. It also provides theoretical value and practical basis for private higher vocational colleges and society, and promotes high-quality development of talent training and education and teaching.

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