

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND TURNOVER TENDENCY AT PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZHENGZHOU CITY, HENAN PROVINCE

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Abstract: This study used a questionnaire survey to explore the relationship between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province. The study subjects were teachers from three private primary schools. The research results showed that teachers' professional identity at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province was high. The turnover tendency of teachers was moderate. There were significant differences in teachers' professional identity in gender, age and whether they served as class teachers. There were significant differences in the turnover tendency of teachers in terms of gender, age, whether to serve as a class teacher or not, and marital status. There was a significant negative correlation between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province. Finally, based on the research results, some suggestions were put forward to strengthen the professional training of teachers, optimize the construction of teachers' teams, improve teachers' welfare benefits, improve the management and promotion mechanism, enhance teachers' professional identity, and reduce the turnover tendency.

Keywords: Private Primary School, Professional Identity, Turnover Tendency

Introduction

In the education process, teachers assume a crucial responsibility: impart knowledge and guide students' minds and character (Liu, 2021). The work of teachers was complex and continuous because of the particularity of education itself and the particularity of the object of education. Especially in primary school, teachers must pay more attention to students' moral character building, personality development and emotional cultivation (Gao & Sheng, 2020). Teachers in private primary schools faced more prominent challenges because they needed to deal with students of different levels and backgrounds in their teaching and help them lay a solid learning foundation. It meant that teachers need

to be proficient in subject knowledge and teaching skills, and have excellent emotional management ability and care awareness for students. In this process, teachers should pay more energy and continuously urge and motivate students to help them build self-confidence, develop self-discipline and study habits (Ma, 2019). In addition, parents tend to put more attention and expectations into their children's learning process at the primary stage, which might put extra pressure on primary school teachers. Parents place too high or unrealistic expectations on their children's academic performance, growth and development, which could put more pressure on teachers. At the same time, schools and society might also have different forms of expectations on primary school teachers, increasing the work pressure on teachers. Suppose primary school teachers could not effectively cope with these pressures and adjust their work attitudes and emotions on time. In that case, it might lead to negative emotions such as tiredness and frustration among teachers, in which case they might gradually lose their enthusiasm for their work in education and might eventually tend to quit.

In recent years, teacher turnover incidents have frequently aroused widespread concern in society. A primary school teacher sent students' scores to parents, which led to parents' dissatisfaction, and even appealed to the Education Bureau to report the teacher's behavior, resulting in teachers' psychological pressure and choosing to quit. Individual teachers might also suffer from great work pressure due to excessive teaching work arrangements, tedious work after class and unable to consider their personal lives, and eventually tend to quit (Wu, et al., 2020). In addition, some teachers in the probation period chose to quite due to factors such as the urban environment, work pressure and salary (Deng, 2022). The severity of teacher turnover has become a common phenomenon in the local area and a common problem faced by the entire education industry (Du & Wang, 2020).

These teacher turnover incidents aroused wide concern in society, and related topics such as "teacher pressure" and "teacher turnover" have become frequent topics in People's Daily life. These events caused a hot discussion in society but also caused a high degree of attention in the education circle. Public opinion's evaluation and recognition of the teacher profession continuously influences educators' views and recognition of their profession. At the same time, it profoundly impacted the development of teachers' careers, which needed attention and consideration (Li, 2021).

The research points out that educators' recognition of the teaching profession was closely related to their tendency to quit their current work unit. Educators with high recognition tend to understand and evaluate of their profession correctly. On the contrary, educators with low recognition were more likely to have a turnover tendency (Huang, et al., 2021). The increase in turnover tendency might affect teachers' work concentration and eventually lead to turnover behavior. The turnover of teachers would not only lead to a shortage of teachers and increase the work burden of other teachers (Li, 2020) but also affect the stability of students' performance, thus negatively affecting the quality of education (Deng, 2022). The proportion of teacher turnover in China has been increasing yearly,

becoming the focus of widespread public concern.

To sum up, this study focused on the research perspective, took teachers in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province as the research object, and explored the relationship between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency. Through the investigation of the current status of primary school teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency, the statistical analysis of the data leads to the research results. Explore the relationship between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency, analyze and discuss the research results, and finally put forward targeted suggestions to improve teachers' professional identity to reduce the turnover tendency of primary school teachers.

Research Objectives

1) To understand the current status of teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province.

2) To analyze the differences of teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools at private primary schools in Zhengzhou City, Henan province in different demographic backgrounds (gender, age, whether to serve as a class teacher, marital status).

3) To explore the relationship between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province.

Literature Review

Research on the Definition of Professional Identity

Through literature review, this study understood that professional identity was generated under the premise of self-concept, which mainly included self-awareness, control and experience. Assen & Koops et al. (2018) believed that professional identity was an idea that was constantly evolving, constructed and flourishing in the development process. Based on this concept, individuals could combine their hobbies, skills, ideas and recognized career direction. Moreover, this concept could evolve with the communication process with the external environment (Lan, 2017). According to Jie & Yuan et al. (2014), identifying a career field could be a personal choice for individuals to explore certain philosophical issues with the career they want to engage in in the future or the career they are currently engaged in. Therefore, it was emphasized that professional identity was a self-identity process in which individuals interact with the social environment, constantly develop and change in these theories, and focus on exploring the internal factors that affected the formation of certain states (Chang, 2016).

Abell (2000) believed that career identity had multiple dimensions, and historical, social, rational and cultural factors could all affect one's career identity. Korthagen & Tigchelaar (2004) deftly defined professional identity structurally. Professional identity comprised unconscious needs, images, emotions, values, role models, experiences, and behavioral tendencies that influence external beliefs,

abilities, and behavioral levels. Chinese scholars have also done relevant research on professional identity. Xiang & Zhang et al. (2019) proposed that teachers' professional identity consists of three key characteristics: first, teachers recognized themselves as teachers and were aware of their professional identity; Secondly, teachers truly accepted the profession of teachers in their hearts, which was reflected in their internal identification and acceptance of their job roles; Finally, teachers had a positive perception and evaluation of all aspects of the teaching profession, including the recognition of education, care for students, and the pursuit of professional development.

Babanoglu (2019) proposed that teachers' professional identity was affected by teachers' teaching age and age. After teachers reach a certain teaching age or age, they would gradually lose their dedication, and their professional quality showed a downward trend, indicating that teachers' professional identity tended to fluctuate under the influence of individual factors. Day & Kington et al. (2013) confirmed through research that the level of teachers' ability was closely related to the level of their professional identity. That is, the better the educational background and professional ability of teachers, the higher the level of their professional identity. In their research, Dan & Qiao (2019) pointed out that school management style and atmosphere, the perceived status of leaders, and the teacher-student relationship would all impact professional identity. In addition, in the aspect of society, it was found that the continuous educational policies introduced by the country would affect the professional identity of teachers, which might be because the new policies would put forward some requirements on teachers in terms of education and teaching, which would prompt them to change their teaching methods, and then affect their career expectations.

In the research on the factors affecting teachers' professional identity, Chinese scholars usually divide it into two aspects: individual reasons and environmental reasons. The individual reasons of teachers mainly include factors such as gender, age and personality characteristics, while the environmental reasons mainly include factors such as family, school and society. Zhang (2021) studied the factors affecting teachers' professional identity, mainly including differences in gender, professional title and school type, and the results showed that gender factors could directly affect teachers' professional identity level, among which the level of female teachers' professional identity was significantly higher than that of male teachers. Gao (2021) conducted research and analysis on the professional identity of primary school teachers from six aspects, including occupational motivation, professional emotion, professional expectation, professional status, self-image and self-evaluation, through the method of questionnaire, and proposed effective strategies from the aspects of professional autonomy, building professional community and improving training effectiveness.

Research on Turnover Tendency

According to Steel & Ovalle (1984), turnover tendency was defined as the tendency of an individual employee to transfer out of their position or workplace due to consideration of work content

and their interests. In the study of Fan (1978), turnover tendency was defined as the psychological tendency of an individual employee to leave their job and find another job. Wu & Zhi (2020) pointed out that individual employees had a certain turnover tendency when they found better employment opportunities, or the current position was unsuitable for their development. The employees with turnover tendency were more urgent to quit.

Similarly, the psychological tendency of teachers to leave their jobs due to some or some factors in their work was called the turnover tendency of teachers. Teachers with turnover tendency might leave the education system and choose other occupations. According to Zheng (2019), the turnover tendency was the psychological preference of employees to leave their posts or the company.

In recent years, the research on the influencing factors of employee turnover tendency has still attracted much attention, but in China, the research was still in the initial stage. Huang & Zhu (2020) proposed that teachers' turnover tendency was significantly correlated with organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and organizational commitment negatively impacted teachers' turnover tendency. Malzeyem (2020) also made an in-depth exploration and summary of the factors affecting the turnover tendency of employees and concluded that the demographic backgrounds, individual characteristics, work attitude and external economy of employees could significantly affect the generation of their turnover tendency. In his research, Zheng (2019) found that the degree of matching between individuals and organizations was the main factor determining whether employees had a turnover tendency. In addition, the study also proposed that promotion opportunities would directly affect the generation of employees' turnover tendency. Whether an employee would consider leaving a job largely depended on their fit with the organization and perceived promotion opportunities.

The job embedment would impact the turnover tendency of new-generation employees (Li, 2020). Hu & Xu et al. (2022) pointed out that in-work embedment had a greater impact on turnover tendency, while out-of-work embedment had a less significant impact on turnover tendency. Luan & Wan (2018) took migrant workers as research samples. They conducted an in-depth exploration on the internal correlation between job embeddedness and the turnover tendency of migrant workers. The results showed that the degree of job embeddedness could negatively predict the turnover tendency of an individual. That is, the higher the degree of job embeddedness, the less turnover tendency of an individual. At the same time, the degree of job embeddedness of individuals in different regions, genders and generations had different degrees of influence on the turnover tendency.

Yang & Chen (2020) believed job embeddedness was inversely proportional to turnover tendency. Ye (2019) found that with the rise of the start-up trend of employee turnover, more and more enterprises realized that the relationship between employees and organizations was crucial to employee motivation and talent retention. Enterprises strive to retain employees with outstanding performance and good salaries to reduce turnover.

Research on the Relationship between Professional Identity and Turnover Tendency

Regarding the influence of professional identity on turnover, Setyanto (2021) found that teachers with strong professional identity could reduce the turnover tendency. And teachers with a strong professional identity could reduce their dissatisfaction with bad conditions. The research shows that teachers' job burnout was affected by their professional identity perception, and the increase in professional identity would reduce job burnout to a certain extent. Teachers' professional identity had a significant positive impact on job satisfaction and a negative impact on turnover tendency (Chen & Yang, 2017). In the case study of kindergarten teachers' turnover, the study verified the impact of professional identity on turnover, and the turnover tendency would be further strengthened with the decrease in professional identity (Yang, 2016).

By sorting out the existing relevant materials, it could be found that relatively many studies have been conducted on the teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency, which cover different fields such as kindergarten to universities. Through the questionnaire survey of teachers, most studies showed that a higher level of professional identity would reduce the occurrence of teacher turnover tendency. Professional identity not only covered the professional attributes and professional roles of teachers but also included identifying the working environment, organizational culture and all aspects of educational work. When teachers' recognition of these aspects was satisfied, their willingness to quit or change jobs would be reduced. In studying the relationship model of professional identity affecting turnover tendency, scholars also introduced mediating variables such as job satisfaction, job happiness and job burnout (Wang, 2014; Yang 2016).

However, there were differences in the studies of some scholars. In the study on the relationship between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency, it was found that although teachers maintain their professional identity, various pressures from schools would cause them to have a certain degree of job burnout and even exacerbate their tendency to change schools (Zhao, 2020). Such differences had important implications for this study. Therefore, this study took private primary school teachers in Zhengzhou, Henan Province as the research object, conducted an in-depth exploration of the relationship between their professional identity and turnover tendency, made statistical analysis and discussion on the survey data, and finally put forward targeted suggestions to help primary school teachers improve their professional identity and reduce their turnover tendency.

Methodology

This research focused on the relationship between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. Through investigation and interviews, teachers in Yuhua Experimental Primary School, Best Foreign Language Primary School and Zhengdong Primary School of Henan Experimental School with relatively distinctive

characteristics were selected as the subjects of this research. In the formal investigation stage, the school liaison staff sent questionnaires to the teachers of Yuhua Experimental Primary School, Best Foreign Language Primary School and Zhengdong Primary School of Henan Experimental School.

There were 610 teachers in the three schools, and it was reasonable to send 236 questionnaires according to the sample size standard of Morgan Table research proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). After the questionnaire screening and removal of invalid questionnaires, 218 valid questionnaires were finally recovered, and the effective return rate reached 92.37%.

Based on the relevant research on professional identity, the questionnaire on teachers' professional identity compiled by Wei & Song et al. (2013) was finally adopted in this study. The questionnaire consists of 18 items, and teachers' professional identity from four dimensions: role value, professional value, professional behavior tendency and professional belonging. To test the adaptability of the scale and the survey, the reliability test of the questionnaire was carried out in this study. The results showed that the Cronbach's α of each dimension was between 0.754 and 0.822, and the overall Cronbach's α of the questionnaire was 0.878, both higher than 0.7. In general, the questionnaire had good reliability. In this study, factor analysis of SPSS statistical analysis software was used to test the validity of the questionnaire. The results showed that the KMO value was 0.700, and the p-values of the Bartlett sphericity test were all less than 0.001, reaching a significant level, indicating that the questionnaire was suitable for factor analysis. Through exploratory factor analysis, the results showed that four common factors were extracted from the questionnaire of professional identity, and the cumulative interpretation rate of the four common factors was 65.037% after rotation by the maximum variance method, indicating that the questionnaire had good validity.

And this study finally adopted the teacher turnover tendency questionnaire compiled by Cheng (2018) to investigate the turnover tendency of teachers from three aspects, namely, tendency to change school, tendency to transfer school and tendency to leave school. The questionnaire contains 9 questions. To test the adaptability of the scale and the survey, the reliability test of the questionnaire was carried out in this study. The results showed that the Cronbach's α of each dimension of the questionnaire was between 0.742 and 0.789, and the Cronbach's α as a whole was 0.801, both higher than 0.7. In general, the questionnaire had good reliability. In this study, factor analysis of SPSS statistical analysis software was used to test the validity of the questionnaire. The results showed that the KMO value was 0.718, and the Bartlett sphericity test results showed $p < 0.001$, reaching a significant level, indicating that the questionnaire was suitable for factor analysis. Through exploratory factor analysis, the results showed that three common factors were extracted from the turnover tendency questionnaire, and the cumulative interpretation rate of the three common factors was 64.038% after rotation by the maximum variance method, indicating that the questionnaire had good validity.

Results

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

This study investigated teachers in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, and 218 valid questionnaires were finally collected and sorted out. The demographic backgrounds of the survey mainly included gender, age, whether they served as class teachers or not, and marital status. In terms of gender, there were 107 male teachers, accounting for 49.1% of the sample, and 111 female teachers, accounting for 50.9% of the sample. In terms of age, there were 60 teachers under the age of 25-35, accounting for 27.5% of the sample, 118 teachers under the age of 35-45, accounting for 54.1% of the sample, and 40 teachers 45 years old and above, accounting for 18.4% of the sample; In terms of whether or not they served as class teachers, 76 teachers served as class teachers, accounting for 34.9% of the sample, and 142 teachers did not serve as class teachers, accounting for 65.1% of the sample; In terms of marital status, 136 were married teachers, accounting for 62.4% of the sample, 40 were unmarried teachers, accounting for 18.3% of the sample, and 42 were divorced or widowed teachers, accounting for 19.3%.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

(1) This study used descriptive statistical analysis to investigate the current status of teachers' professional identity in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. The results showed that the overall score of the primary school teachers' professional identity was 3.855, which was high. The scores of the four dimensions of role values, professional values, professional behavior tendency and professional belonging were 3.767, 3.804, 3.988 and 3.879, in which the score of professional behavior tendency was the highest, followed by professional belonging and professional values. At last, the score of role values was the lowest.

Table 1: Overall Level of Professional Identity of Primary School Teachers (N=218)

Dimension	Mean	SD
Role values	3.767	0.582
Professional values	3.804	0.660
Professional behavior tendency	3.988	0.541
Professional belonging	3.879	0.703
Overall professional identity	3.855	0.439

(2) This study used descriptive statistical analysis to investigate the turnover tendency of teachers' professional identity in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. The results showed that primary school teachers' overall score of turnover tendency was 2.931, which was in the middle level. The scores of the three dimensions of turnover tendency, the tendency to transfer school and the tendency to leave school, were 3.028, 2.869 and 2.898, respectively. Among them, the score of turnover tendency was the highest, followed by the tendency to leave school, and the final

score of tendency to transfer school was relatively the lowest.

Table 2: Overall Level of Turnover Tendency of Primary School Teachers (N=218)

Dimension	Mean	SD
Tendency to change school	3.028	1.002
Tendency to transfer school	2.869	0.760
Tendency to leave school	2.898	0.984
Overall turnover tendency	2.931	0.629

Differential Analysis of Professional Identity and the Turnover Tendency among Different Demographic Backgrounds

Teachers' professional identity at private primary schools in Zhengzhou City, Henan province, had significant differences in gender, age, and whether they served as class teachers. There were significant differences in the turnover tendency of teachers in terms of gender, age, whether they serve as class teachers or not, and marital status.

Correlation Analysis of Professional Identity and the Turnover Tendency

This study used Pearson correlation analysis to explore the correlation between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province. The results showed that the correlation coefficient r between the overall teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency was -0.289 , reaching a significant level, indicating a significant negative correlation between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. The overall correlation coefficient between the dimensions of professional identity and the turnover tendency was between -0.159 and -0.290 , reaching a significant level. The overall correlation coefficient between turnover tendency and professional identity was between -0.175 and -0.252 , reaching a significant level. In general, there was a significant negative correlation between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis Between Teachers' Professional Identity and Turnover Tendency at Private Primary Schools

	Correlation	Turnover Tendency
Professional Identity	Correlation Coefficient	-0.289^{**}
	P value	0.000

Discussion

Current Status of Teachers' Professional Identity and Turnover Tendency

The results of this study showed that the professional identity of teachers in the three private primary schools in Zhengzhou City, Henan province was high. This result was consistent with the previous research results (Duan, 2019). In this study, the results were analyzed. It was closely related

to the overall development process of China's current society and education. In recent years, the state had vigorously called for "rejuvenating the country through science and education," education had gradually risen to the national strategy, relevant departments had gradually increased the importance of teachers, and the guarantee of teachers' salaries had gradually improved. As the foundation of basic education, primary school teachers have received unprecedented attention in recent years, and the status of teachers has gradually improved, so the sense of identity of their profession might also be affected.

This study's results showed teacher turnover tendency in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou City, Henan province was moderate. This result was consistent with the results of previous studies (Zheng, 2019). Among them, the tendency to change schools was the highest, indicating that the current primary school teachers had the most serious tendency to leave the school and teach in another school, which might be caused by teachers' dissatisfaction with the organizational environment of the school. Secondly, the primary school teachers' tendency to leave their posts was also prominent, and the last was the tendency to transfer, which indicates that the current primary school teachers' tendency to leave their posts was higher than the tendency to transfer. Nearly 30 percent of teachers said they plan to leave their current jobs in the second year, which challenges the teaching force's continuity. Teacher turnover was a pervasive and inevitable problem, not only in China but also globally.

Difference in Professional Identity and Turnover Tendency among Different Demographic Backgrounds

The results of this study showed that there were significant gender differences in the professional identity of teachers in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province. This result was consistent with previous studies results (Pu, 2021). The specific difference was that the professional identity of male teachers was significantly higher than female teachers. Based on the analysis in this study, compared with females, males were more inclined to pursue career success in real society. They might assume more responsibilities and have more investment and identification in the teaching profession.

The results of this study showed significant gender differences in the turnover tendency of teachers in the three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province. This result was consistent with the results of previous studies (Li, 2020). The difference was that female teachers' turnover tendency was significantly higher than male teachers. According to the analysis in this study, female teachers usually bear more family responsibilities, including taking care of children and family members, in addition to taking on the responsibilities of teachers. They might be more likely to have a turnover tendency due to family reasons to balance work and family life better.

The results of this study showed significant age differences in teachers' professional identity in the three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province. This result was consistent with

previous studies results (Pu, 2021). The specific difference was that the professional identity of teachers 45 years old and above was significantly higher than that of teachers aged 25-35 and below. According to the analysis in this study, most teachers under the age of 25-35 were new teachers, and their positioning and cognition of teacher roles were not mature. Their understanding of the meaning and value connotation of teacher work was relatively insufficient, so the level of teachers' professional identity was relatively low.

The results of this study showed significant differences in teachers' turnover tendency in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province in terms of age. This result was consistent with previous studies' results (Ye, 2019). The specific difference was that the turnover tendency of teachers 35-45 years old was significantly higher than that of teachers 25-35. According to the analysis in this study, teachers under the age of 35-45 had gradually improved their teaching experience and skills through a period of teaching work. However, most teachers in this age group had to bear the pressure from their families. When they were under the dual pressure of work and family, and the reality differed from the ideal, they would inevitably feel a sense of loss. Some teachers wanted to change their job position or work environment while they were still young, which had another impact, leading to turnover.

Relationship between Teachers' Professional Identity and Turnover Tendency

This study's results showed a significant negative correlation between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency in three private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan province. This result was consistent with the previous research results (Yang, 2016; Zhao, 2020). This study discussed this result. This study proposed that individuals had a strong professional identity in the work process, which could reduce the tendency to leave the team. In addition, it was also proposed in the study that teachers' professional identity was significantly correlated with turnover tendency. It could be seen that in real life, we could predict the turnover tendency of teachers through professional identity, which helps to intervene in the turnover behavior of teachers in advance to a certain extent, to promote the stability of teachers. Teachers' professional identity was the response of individual behavior input to the teacher profession's social value, social status, and career development after they had a certain person. When teachers understand the profession, work content, and working environment, their professional values will be more recognized, encouraging teachers to devote more time and energy to teaching work. They would not have the idea of quitting.

Conclusions

- 1) The teachers' professional identity at private primary schools in Zhengzhou was high. The turnover tendency of teachers was moderate.
- 2) Teachers' professional identity at private primary schools in Zhengzhou City, Henan

province, had significant differences in gender, age, and whether they served as class teachers. There were significant differences in the turnover tendency of teachers in terms of gender, age, whether they serve as class teachers or not, and marital status.

3) There was a significant negative correlation between teachers' professional identity and turnover tendency at private primary schools in Zhengzhou, Henan Province.

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