

The Influence of Proactive Personality on Teachers' Professional Identity: The Moderating Effect of Person-Organization Fit

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Abstract: This research tried to explore the moderating effect of Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) in the impact of proactive personality on teachers' professional identity. The data was collected by distributing questionnaires online to teachers of two high schools in Xiangtan. The analysis results show that P-O fit has a moderating effect on proactive personality and teachers' professional identity. The positive impact of proactive personality on teachers' professional identity will be stronger when the P-O fit is high. The results also show that young or newly engaged teachers have lower professional identity. Therefore, this study suggests school administrators pay attention to the development of young teachers' professional identity and improve the fit between teachers and schools to improve the teaching quality.

Keywords: Teachers' Professional Identity; Proactive Personality; Person-Organization Fit.

1. Introduction

The professional identity is an important driving force for teachers' professional development [1]. First, if teachers can understand themselves clearly and have high level of internalization of teacher norms, the level of their work enthusiasm, and satisfaction with self-development and economy will be high [2]. In other words, a teacher with a high level of professional identity can actively engage in teaching and feel happiness and satisfaction. Besides, the professional identity of teachers also affects their self-efficacy which determines their teaching efficiency [2].

Teachers' professional identity is constantly developed and constructed [3]. And in this process, it will be influenced by personality characteristics [1, 4]. Proactive personality refers to a stable psychological tendency of individuals to influence their surrounding environment through proactive actions [5-7]. It has a significant positive impact on the teachers' professional identity [8].

According to the trait activation theory, individual perception of situation can moderate the influence of individual characteristics on behavior. Zhang and Yang's paper also mentioned that the situation will influence the benefit individuals get from proactive personality [9]. So, individual perception of the situation may also affect the influence of proactive personality on teachers' professional identity. Person-Organization Fit (P-O fit) is one of the situational factors [9] and it consists of three dimensions: supplementary fit, needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit. According to Erdogan and Bauer's research, the fit of individuals with organizations will promote the positive impact of proactive personality on occupation satisfaction [5]. Therefore, perceived P-O Fit may moderate the relationship between proactive personality and teachers' professional identity.

This study proposed the hypothesis, "perceived P-O fit has a moderating effect on proactive personality and teachers' professional identity. When the level of perceived P-O fit is high, the positive impact of proactive personality on teachers'

professional identity will be strong". The study framework of the study is shown in Figure 1.

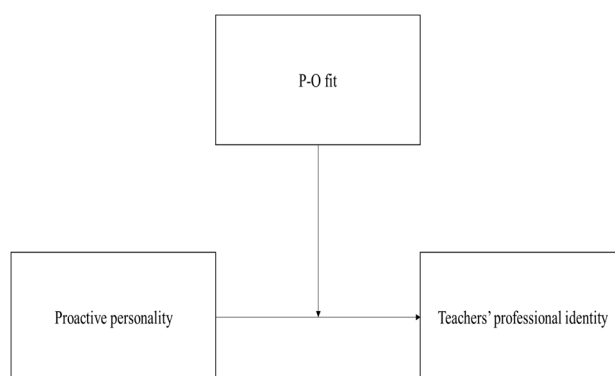


Figure 1. Study Framework

2. Research Method

2.1. Procedure and Sample

Questionnaires were distributed online to teachers of 2 high schools in Xiangtan City, Hunan Province, China. A total of 165 valid questionnaires were collected. Table 1 shows the demography characteristics of teachers participating in this research. After the data collection was completed, the questionnaire results were imported into SPSS 20.0 for data analysis.

2.2. Measures

The questionnaire consists of three scales: The Teachers' Professional Identity Scale developed by Wei [10], Proactive Personality Scale developed by Bateman and Crant and revised by Shang and Gan [11], Perceived P-O fit scale developed by Cable and Derue [12] which has three dimensions: supplementary fit, needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit. In this research, the Cronbach's α of the three scales is 0.913, 0.913 and 0.931.

Table 1. Demography Characteristics of Participants

	Classification	Number	Proportion
Gender	Male	42	25.5%
	Female	123	74.5%
Age	<25	17	10.3%
	26-30	23	13.9%
	31-40	27	16.4%
	41-50	43	26.1%
	>51	55	33.3%
Educational background	Master and above	31	18.8%
	Bachelor degree	131	79.4%
	Junior college	3	1.8%
	Below junior college	0	0%
Length of teaching	≤5 years	37	22.4%
	6-10 years	15	9.1%
	11-15years	16	9.7%
	16-20years	12	7.3%
	≥20 years	85	51.5%
Professional title	Senior and sub-senior	63	38.2%
	Middle	52	31.5%
	Associate	32	19.4%
	Junior and No-ranking	18	10.9%

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistic

The scores of 165 participants on teachers' professional identity, P-O fit, and proactive personality are shown in Table

2. The scores of each dimension of P-O fit are: supplementary fit (3.63 ± 0.77), needs-supplies fit (3.46 ± 0.85) and demands-abilities fit (3.85 ± 0.73). On the whole, the teachers' professional identity and proactive personality are at a high level, and the P-O fit is at middle level.

Table 2. Scores of Each Variable

	Min	Max	M	SD
Teachers' professional identity	2.72	5.00	4.25	.44
P-O fit	1.00	5.00	3.64	.70
Proactive personality	3.45	7.00	5.54	.81

3.2. Difference Analysis

The research analyzed the difference of the data according to the demography characteristics. First, teachers' age is taken as the basis for classification. According to the results of ANOVA, there is no significant difference in P-O fit ($P=0.329$) and proactive personality ($P=0.055$) among teachers of

different ages. And the result also shows a statistically significant difference in teachers' professional identity ($P=0.044$). After multiple comparisons of the data (as shown in Table 3), we can find that the professional identity of teachers under 25 is significantly lower than that of teachers aged 41 to 50 and over 51.

Table 3. Differences in Teachers' Professional Identity among Teachers of Different Ages

	Age	M±SD	F	P	Comparisons
Teachers' professional identity	<25(A)	4.023±0.411	2.513	0.044	A<D*;A<E**
	26-30(B)	4.152±0.471			
	31-40(C)	4.193±0.366			
	41-50(D)	4.322±0.448			
	>51(E)	4.347±0.450			

* $P<0.05$; ** $P<0.01$

Then, length of teaching is taken as the basis for classification. According to the results of ANOVA, there is no significant difference in P-O fit ($P=0.516$) and proactive personality ($P=0.576$) among teachers of different length of teaching. Besides the result shows that there is a significant

difference in teachers' professional identity ($P=0.038$). The professional identity of the teacher who teach for 6-10 years or 20 years above is significantly higher than that of the teacher whose length of teaching is 5 years and below (the results of multiple comparisons are shown in Table 4)

Table 4. Differences in Teachers' Professional Identity among Teachers of Different Length of Teaching

	Length of teaching (year)	M±SD	F	P	Comparisons
Teachers' professional identity	≤5 (A)	4.056±0.456	2.605	0.038	A<B*; A<E**
	6-10 (B)	4.333±0.424			
	11-15 (C)	4.243±0.363			
	16-20 (D)	4.315±0.358			
	>20 (E)	4.321±0.450			

*P<0.05; **P<0.01

Taking gender, educational background and professional title as the basis for classification, the result shows there is no statistically significant difference among teachers of different gender, different educational background and different professional title.

3.3. Correlation Analysis

Using correlation analysis to explore the relationships between teachers' professional identity, P-O fit, proactive personality (the results are shown in Table 5), results show that Teachers' professional identity is positively correlated with P-O fit and proactive personality (P<0.01).

Table 5. Correlation among Variables

	Teachers' professional identity	P-O fit	Proactive personality
Teachers' professional identity	1		
P-O fit	.664**	1	
Proactive personality	.496**	.609**	1

*P<0.05; **P<0.01

3.4. The Moderating Effect of P-O Fit on Proactive Personality and Teachers' Professional Identity

Multiple regression analysis and moderating effect test were conducted on the data. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression Analysis of the Moderating Effect of P-O Fit

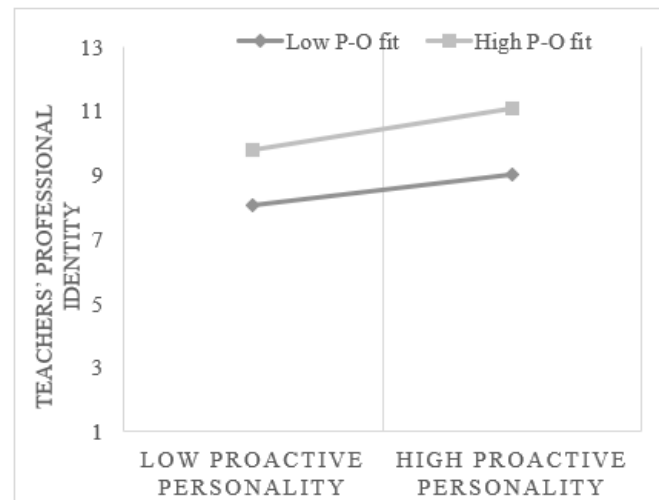
Variables	Teachers' professional identity			
	M1	M2	M3	M4
Gender	0.182*	.196**	.104	.127*
Age	0.391*	.142	.069	.068
Educational background	0.041	-.003	-.027	-.043
Length of teaching	-.004	.144	.190	.235
Professional title	.166	.108	.094*	.101
Proactive personality		.479***	.149*	.156*
P-O fit			.546***	.536**
Proactive personality × P-O fit				.149*
R ²	.097	.313	.492	.512
ΔR ²	.970	.216	.178	.020
F	3.425	12.000	21.683	20.452
ΔF	3.425	49.639	55.117	6.509

*P<0.05; **P<0.01; ***P<0.001

4. Discussion

On the whole, teachers' professional identity of the participants is at a high level, which means that they have a positive understanding of the value of the teacher profession to themselves and society. They have a serious attitude towards work and a high sense of belonging to the teacher

collective. In addition, participants also got high scores on the proactive personality, which means that they have initiative in daily life and work. As for the P-O fit, participants' perceived P-O fit is at middle level. In other words, in the subjective thoughts of teachers, their value is matched with the school culture to a certain extent. The school can provide what they want and their professional skills also meet the school's

**Figure 2.** Slope Diagram of the Moderating Effect of P-O Fit

collective. In addition, participants also got high scores on the proactive personality, which means that they have initiative in daily life and work. As for the P-O fit, participants' perceived P-O fit is at middle level. In other words, in the subjective thoughts of teachers, their value is matched with the school culture to a certain extent. The school can provide what they want and their professional skills also meet the school's

requirements.

The results show that there are significant differences in the teachers' professional identity of different ages and length of teaching. To be specific, the professional identity of teachers aged 41 to 50 and over is significantly higher than that of teachers under 25 years old. And the professional identity of teachers with 6 to 10 teaching years and over 20 years is higher than that of teachers who have just started working for less than 5 years. This analysis results are almost consistent with the results measured by related researchers. However, they didn't measure the difference in teachers' professional identity between teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience and those with 6-10 years teaching experience. According to Yang's stage development theory of primary and secondary school teachers' professional identity, the teachers who start working for less than 5 years will experience problems such as cognitive conflict and emotional anxiety. These may lead to a lower level of professional identity among teachers. With the deepening of teachers' cognition and the improvement of classroom control ability, a healthy professional identity will gradually be formed. So, the difference found in this study is reasonable.

Besides, the results also show that proactive personality and teachers' professional identity are positively correlated, which is consistent with the results measured by Huang, Zhu and Yang [8].

As for the moderating effect of P-O fit, the results support the research hypothesis. Perceived P-O fit has a moderating effect on proactive personality and teachers' professional identity. This is consistent with the viewpoint proposed by Zhang and Yang [9] and the trait activation theory. According to Erdogan and Bauer's research, the fit of individuals with work and organizations will promote the positive impact of proactive personality on job satisfaction and career satisfaction [5]. Similar results were obtained in this study. When the perceived P-O fit is high, the positive predictive effect of proactive personality on teachers' professional identity will be strong.

The conclusions of this study contribute to the literature on teacher development and provide reference for subsequent research. In terms of daily practice, the results suggest that the school administrators can improve the quality of teaching by improving the fit between teachers and schools, such as developing school culture together with teachers to improve supplementary fit, improving the treatment of teachers to enhance needs-supplies fit and training teachers according to the needs of the school to improve demands-abilities fit. In addition, the results also suggest the school administrators pay attention to young teachers or newly engaged teachers and help them solve problems like cognitive conflict and emotional anxiety, which can help young teachers build a healthy professional identity.

5. Limitation and Research Prospect

Although the study investigated teachers with various demography characteristics, the number of participants was

relatively small and the proportion of women in the participants was high. Future research should pay attention to the proportion of samples with different demography characteristics while increasing the number of samples. Moreover, the participants are all high school teachers in Xiangtan. In future research, teachers from schools in different regions and stages can be selected as participants. As for the research direction, P-O fit is just one of the situational factors. Other situational factors, like office physical environment, can also be research objects.

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