

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND JOB SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN CHENGDU

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Abstracts

This study aims to investigate the current status of professional identity and job satisfaction among teachers at private universities in Chengdu, as well as the relationship between these two constructs. A total of 421 valid samples were collected through stratified random sampling, and quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS 26.0. Results show that teachers at private universities in Chengdu have moderate-to-high levels of professional identity (mean range: 3.44–3.68) and job satisfaction (mean range: 3.41–3.54), with the highest scores in items related to professional competence experience and stable salary, and the lowest in items concerning social recognition and salary fairness. Correlation analysis reveals a strong positive correlation between professional identity and job satisfaction ($r = 0.666$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis further indicates that professional identity significantly positively predicts job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.663$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 44.6% of the variance, while demographic variables have no significant impact. These findings provide a theoretical basis and practical reference for improving the professional well-being of teachers at private universities in Chengdu.

Keywords: Private University Teachers Professional Identity Job Satisfaction Chengdu

Introduction

Against the backdrop of China's higher education reform and growing emphasis on teaching quality, private universities have become an indispensable force in advancing educational popularization and diversity (Ali & Anwar, 2021). By 2023, the number of private universities nationwide exceeded 750, accounting for over 30% of all higher education institutions, with their total enrollment reaching 9.9438 million students—16.96% of the national higher education student population. Concurrently, China's private education market has experienced sustained growth, with its total output value rising from 418 billion yuan in 2014 to 716 billion yuan in 2023, reflecting its critical role in meeting diverse societal demands for higher education. However, this rapid expansion has intensified challenges in faculty management. Compared to public universities, private institutions often face issues such as insufficient occupational stability, disparities in salary and benefits, and lower social recognition for their teachers, which directly impact educators' professional psychology and organizational behavior (Ou & Gu, 2024).

Professional identity and job satisfaction are key constructs influencing teacher well-being and institutional sustainability (Beijaard et al., 2004). Professional identity, defined as teachers' cognitive and emotional experiences regarding their professional roles, social value, and self-positioning, encompasses three core dimensions: personal experience (professional competence developed through practice), social interaction (recognition from students, colleagues, and administrators), and career development (organizational support for growth). Job satisfaction, meanwhile, refers to teachers' overall attitudes toward their work environment,



In the context of private universities, this theoretical framework gains unique relevance due to the distinct challenges faced by faculty. Ou and Gu (2024) note that private university teachers often grapple with unclear career advancement paths, limited research resources, and lower social prestige compared to their public university counterparts, which can disrupt the formation of stable professional identity. However, Professional Identity Development Theory suggests that even in such contexts, identity can be nurtured through intentional support mechanisms. For instance, Huang and Wang (2024) found that private university teachers who perceive alignment between their personal values and institutional goals—facilitated by supportive leadership and collaborative work cultures—exhibit stronger professional identity, despite structural constraints. Similarly, Moradkhani and Ebadijalal (2024) highlight that ongoing social interactions, such as mentorship programs or peer collaboration initiatives, can mitigate the negative impact of institutional vulnerabilities by reinforcing a collective sense of professional purpose. This theory thus underscores the importance of both individual agency and organizational intervention in fostering robust professional identity, offering a nuanced lens to examine how private university teachers navigate and construct their professional selves amid unique institutional pressures.

Job Satisfaction Theory, as foundational work by Locke (1976) articulates, conceptualizes job satisfaction as a positive emotional state derived from an individual's subjective evaluation of their work experiences, shaped by the alignment between personal expectations and job outcomes. This theory emphasizes the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction, which encompasses evaluations of work environment, compensation, and professional achievement—dimensions particularly relevant to university teachers. For private university faculty, the work environment includes factors such as teaching facilities, administrative efficiency, and organizational cultural support (Quesada-Puga et al., 2024), while compensation involves perceptions of salary fairness, welfare benefits, and performance reward mechanisms (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Professional achievement, meanwhile, centers on recognition of teaching effectiveness, research impact, and opportunities for career growth (Specchia et al., 2021).

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Social Interaction Theory, rooted in the work of George Herbert Mead (1934) and further developed by Blumer (1969), posits that individual identity and behavior are dynamically constructed through social interactions, where meaning is negotiated via symbolic communication, role-taking, and feedback from others. At its core, the theory emphasizes that self-perception and social roles are not fixed but emerge from ongoing exchanges—individuals interpret others' expectations, adjust their behaviors accordingly, and refine their sense of self through this reciprocal process. For university teachers, this means professional identity and job satisfaction are shaped significantly by interactions with students, colleagues, administrators, and broader social contexts. Positive feedback from students (e.g., recognition of teaching effectiveness) or collaborative relationships with peers can reinforce a sense of professional belonging, while supportive communication with administrators may enhance perceptions of organizational value.

4. Professional Identity

In the context of private universities in Chengdu, teachers' professional identity faces unique challenges due to structural factors such as insufficient occupational stability, disparities in resource allocation, and lower social recognition compared to public institutions. These challenges can lead to role ambiguity and weaken the stability of professional identity. However, positive professional identity can still be fostered through the synergy of intrinsic motivation (e.g., teaching enthusiasm) and external support mechanisms. For instance, clear



5. Job Satisfaction

Private university teachers in Chengdu exhibit unique characteristics in their job satisfaction due to the institutional context. Compared to public universities, private institutions often face pressures to balance educational quality with operational efficiency, leading to challenges such as variable compensation structures and high performance demands. These factors can impact teachers' evaluations of their work environment and salary fairness. However, research indicates that satisfaction is not solely dependent on material conditions; positive student feedback, collaborative colleague relationships, and clear career development pathways also play significant roles. For example, teachers who perceive their teaching contributions as valued by students or who have access to professional training opportunities tend to report higher satisfaction, even amid resource constraints. This underscores that job satisfaction in private universities is a multidimensional construct, influenced by both structural factors and psychological experiences of recognition and growth.

Existing research on university teachers' professional identity has highlighted its dynamic and context-dependent nature. Beijaard et al. (2004) emphasized that professional identity is shaped through interactions between personal experiences, social contexts, and organizational support, rejecting static conceptualizations. Subsequent studies have expanded this framework, with Mehdizadeh and Pourhaji (2024) noting that higher education teachers often face tensions between professional ideals and practical constraints, such as limited resources or heavy workloads, which can disrupt identity formation. In the Chinese context, Huang and Wang (2024) found that pre-service teachers' identity transformation is closely tied to meaningful experiences in educational practice, where positive student feedback or successful teaching innovations reinforce professional value. For private university teachers specifically, Ou and Gu (2024) identified unique challenges, including unclear career pathways and lower social recognition, which contribute to fragmented professional identity compared to their public university counterparts.



Research Instrument

A pre-test with 100 teachers confirmed the scale's reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.948$ for professional identity, 0.938 for job satisfaction) and validity (KMO = 0.909, Bartlett's sphericity test $p < 0.001$). Expert reviews ($n = 3$) ensured content relevance, with all items achieving an Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) value ≥ 0.80 , confirming the instrument's suitability for formal data collection.

Data collection occurred from January to July 2025, using the “Questionnaire Star” platform for online distribution and snowball sampling to expand coverage. Participants were informed of the study’s purpose, anonymity guarantees, and voluntary participation, with a screening question to ensure they were full-time teachers at Chengdu private universities. A total of 430 questionnaires were distributed, and after excluding incomplete or irrelevant responses, 421 valid datasets were obtained, meeting the required sample size for robust analysis.

SPSS 26.0 was used for quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics summarized sample demographics and variable distributions (mean, standard deviation). Reliability (Cronbach's α) and validity (KMO, Bartlett's test) analyses verified scale consistency and structural fit. Pearson correlation analysis explored the relationship between professional identity and job satisfaction, while multiple regression analysis tested the predictive effect of professional identity on job satisfaction, controlling for demographic variables to isolate its net impact. These steps systematically validated the research hypotheses and clarified the mechanisms underlying the variables.

Research Results and Discussion

1. Pre-test analysis

1.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted with 100 valid samples from teachers at private universities in Chengdu, and the demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1. In terms of gender distribution, there were 42 male teachers (42%) and 58 female teachers (58%), with a slightly higher proportion of females, which is consistent with the general situation of private universities where female teachers account for a larger share. The mean value of the gender variable was 1.58, the standard deviation was 0.496, and the skewness was -0.329, indicating a relatively balanced distribution with no significant bias.

In terms of age structure, teachers under 25 accounted for 31%, and those aged 25–34 accounted for 32%, totaling over 60%, reflecting the dominance of young teachers in the sample. The mean age was 2.48, the standard deviation was 1.41, and the skewness was 0.593, showing a slight right skew, which is in line with the trend of younger faculty in private universities due to their rapid development. Educational attainment was mainly distributed among master's degrees (37%), followed by doctoral degrees and above (31%) and bachelor's degrees (32%), with a mean of 1.99, a standard deviation of 0.798, and near-zero skewness (0.018), indicating a balanced educational structure.

Years of work experience showed that teachers with 1–3 years of experience accounted for 40%, and those with less than 1 year accounted for 28%, indicating a concentration of early-career teachers, which may be related to the high mobility of private university faculty. The distribution of university types was relatively balanced: comprehensive private universities (41%), applied private undergraduate universities (29%), and private vocational colleges (30%), with a mean of 2.01 and a standard deviation of 0.772, ensuring the representativeness of different institutional types. Overall, the pre-test sample had reasonable demographic characteristics and data distribution, laying a foundation for the formal survey.

Table 1: Pre-test Descriptive Statistical Analysis Table

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Average	median	Standard deviation	Variance	Skewness	Peak value	Minimum value	Maximum value
Gender	Male	42	42	1.58	2	2	0.496	-0.329	-1.931	1	2
	Female	58	58								
Age	Under 25	31	31	2.48	2	2	1.41	0.593	-1.031	1	5
	25-34	32	32								
	35-44	8	8								
	45-54	16	16								
	55 and above	13	13								
Educational attainment	Bachelor's degree	32	32	1.99	2	2	0.798	0.018	-1.423	1	3
	Master's degree	37	37								
	Doctorate degree and above	31	31								
Years of work experience	Less than 1 year	28	28	2.39	2	2	1.317	0.785	-0.583	1	5
	1-3 years	40	40								
	4-6 years	8	8								

1.2 Pre-test reliability analysis

Table 2: Pre-test reliability analysis table

1.3 Pre-test validity analysis

The pre-test validity analysis was conducted using the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) sampling adequacy measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis, with results presented in Table 3. The KMO value for the pre-test sample was 0.909, which far exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating a high degree of correlation among the items in the professional identity and job satisfaction scales. This suggests that the variables share common underlying factors, making them well-suited for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's sphericity test yielded an approximate chi-square value of 2351.504 with 435 degrees of freedom, and the significance level was 0.000 ($p < 0.001$), rejecting the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. This confirms the presence of significant inter-item correlations, further supporting the structural validity of the scales. Overall, the pre-test validity results demonstrate that the measurement tools effectively capture the intended constructs, providing a solid basis for proceeding with the formal survey.

Table 3: Pre-test validity analysis table

KMO and Bartlett's test		
KMO sampling adequacy measure.		
Bartlett's sphericity test		2351.504
	Approximate chi-square	435
	Degrees of freedom	.000

1.4 Pre-test correlation analysis

The pre-test correlation analysis examined the relationship between university teachers' professional identity and job satisfaction, with results presented in Table 4. The Pearson correlation coefficient between professional identity and job satisfaction was 0.696, which reached a statistically significant level at $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). This indicates a strong positive correlation between the two variables: as teachers' professional identity increases, their job satisfaction tends to rise correspondingly. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient (close to 0.7) suggests a substantial linear relationship, providing initial support for the research hypothesis that professional identity is positively associated with job satisfaction. This finding aligns with the theoretical expectation that teachers who strongly identify with their professional roles, social value, and career development are more likely to report higher satisfaction with their work environment, compensation, and professional achievements. The pre-test results thus validate the relevance of exploring this relationship in the formal study, laying the groundwork for subsequent regression analysis to examine predictive effects.

Table 4: Pre-test correlation analysis table

	Job satisfaction	Career identity
Job satisfaction	1	
Career identity	.696**	1
** At the 0.01 level (two-tailed), the correlation is significant.		

2. Analysis of reliability and validity

2.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the professional identity and job satisfaction scales using Cronbach's α coefficient, with results presented in Table 5. For the professional identity scale (items A1–A15), the corrected item-total correlations ranged from 0.670 (A15) to 0.767 (A11), all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.5, indicating strong correlations between individual items and the total score of the scale. The Cronbach's α coefficient based on standardized items for the entire professional identity scale was 0.950, and removing any single item resulted in α values ranging from 0.945 to 0.947, which are slightly lower than the overall α . This suggests that all items contribute positively to the scale's internal consistency, with no redundant or weak items that would improve reliability if removed.

For the job satisfaction scale (items B1–B15), the corrected item-total correlations ranged from 0.618 (B14) to 0.738 (B6), also meeting the 0.5 criterion. The standardized Cronbach's α coefficient for the job satisfaction scale was 0.939, and removing any item yielded α values between 0.934 and 0.936, confirming that each item enhances the scale's consistency. Notably, even the item with the lowest corrected correlation (B14: 0.618) still contributes meaningfully, as its removal does not substantially increase the overall α .

The overall reliability of the combined questionnaire (30 items) was 0.961, reflecting excellent internal consistency across both constructs. These results demonstrate that the scales used in this study are highly reliable, with strong inter-item coherence. Such high reliability ensures that the measurements of professional identity and job satisfaction are stable and consistent, providing a solid foundation for subsequent analyses of their relationship. The robustness of the scales also validates the adaptation of mature theoretical frameworks to the context of private universities in Chengdu, ensuring that the data collected accurately reflects teachers' psychological experiences.

Table 5: Summary of Reliability Analysis

Item	Correlation between revised items and total score	Cronbach's alpha after item deletion	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items
A1	0.752	0.946	0.950
A2	0.74	0.946	
A3	0.706	0.946	
A4	0.696	0.947	
A5	0.717	0.946	
A6	0.75	0.945	
A7	0.752	0.945	
A8	0.741	0.946	
A9	0.757	0.945	
A10	0.744	0.946	
A11	0.767	0.945	
A12	0.713	0.946	
A13	0.703	0.946	
A14	0.716	0.946	
A15	0.67	0.947	
B1	0.653	0.936	0.939
B2	0.693	0.935	
B3	0.641	0.936	
B4	0.684	0.935	
B5	0.693	0.935	
B6	0.738	0.934	
B7	0.715	0.934	
B8	0.703	0.934	
B9	0.734	0.934	
B10	0.691	0.935	

Item	Correlation between revised items and total score	Cronbach's alpha after item deletion	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items
B11	0.707	0.934	
B12	0.666	0.935	
B13	0.697	0.934	
B14	0.618	0.936	
B15	0.689	0.935	

2.2 Validity analysis

Validity analysis was conducted to assess the structural validity of the scales using the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) sampling adequacy measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity, with results presented in Table 6. The KMO value for the combined data of professional identity and job satisfaction scales was high, indicating a strong degree of common variance among items and confirming their suitability for factor analysis. Bartlett's sphericity test yielded an approximate chi-square value of 8674.574 with 435 degrees of freedom, and the significance level was 0.000 ($p < 0.001$), which rejects the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. This result demonstrates significant inter-item correlations, further validating the structural validity of the scales. Together, these findings confirm that the measurement tools effectively capture the underlying constructs of professional identity and job satisfaction, ensuring that the data collected is appropriate for exploring the relationship between the two variables in the context of private universities in Chengdu.

Table 6: Validity Analysis Table

KMO and Bartlett's test		
KMO sampling adequacy measure.		
Bartlett's sphericity test	Approximate chi-square	8674.574
	Degrees of freedom	435
	Significance	.000

3. Descriptive statistical analysis

3.1 Descriptive statistical analysis of population variables

The formal survey sample consisted of 421 full-time teachers from private universities in Chengdu, with demographic characteristics summarized in Table 7. In terms of gender distribution, there were 209 male teachers (49.6%) and 212 female teachers (50.4%), reflecting a nearly balanced gender ratio with a slight majority of females. The mean value for gender was 1.5, the standard deviation was 0.501, and the skewness was -0.014, indicating a symmetrical distribution. This aligns with the general demographic trend in private higher education institutions, where gender representation tends to be more balanced compared to some public institutions, possibly due to the diverse recruitment strategies of private universities.

Age distribution revealed a predominance of young and middle-aged teachers: 28.3% were under 25, 31.8% were aged 25–34, and the combined proportion of these two groups

exceeded 60%. Teachers aged 35–44, 45–54, and 55 and above accounted for 12.4%, 13.5%, and 14% respectively. The mean age was 2.53, the standard deviation was 1.389, and the skewness was 0.557, indicating a slight right skew. This pattern reflects the relatively young faculty structure in private universities, which is often associated with their rapid expansion and the recruitment of early-career educators to meet growing student demand.

In terms of educational attainment, teachers with a master's degree formed the largest group (44.4%), followed by those with a bachelor's degree (28.7%) and a doctoral degree or above (26.8%). The mean educational level was 1.98, close to the median (2), with a standard deviation of 0.746 and near-zero skewness (0.031), indicating a balanced distribution. This highlights the emphasis private universities place on hiring faculty with advanced degrees, aligning with their efforts to enhance academic credibility and teaching quality.

Years of work experience showed that 34.9% of teachers had 1–3 years of experience, 28% had less than 1 year, and 14.5% had over 10 years. The mean experience was 2.5, with a standard deviation of 1.385 and a skewness of 0.645, suggesting a concentration of early-career teachers, which may be linked to higher turnover rates in private institutions compared to public ones.

Finally, the distribution across university types was diverse: 40.9% from comprehensive private universities, 31.8% from applied private undergraduate universities, and 27.3% from private vocational colleges. The mean value was 1.95, with a standard deviation of 0.769, ensuring representation across different institutional orientations. Overall, the sample demographics are consistent with the characteristics of private university teachers in Chengdu, providing a representative basis for subsequent analyses.

Table 7: Demographic Variable Analysis Table

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Average	median	Standard deviation	Variance	Skewness	Peak value	Minimum value	Maximum value
Gender	Male	209	49.6	1.5	2	2	0.501	-0.014	-2.009	1	2
	Female	212	50.4								
Age	Under 25	119	28.3	2.53	2	2	1.389	0.557	-0.998	1	5
	25-34	134	31.8								
	35-44	52	12.4								
	45-54	57	13.5								
	55 and above	59	14								
Educational attainment	Bachelor's degree	121	28.7	1.98	2	2	0.746	0.031	-1.199	1	3
	Master's degree	187	44.4								
	Doctorate degree or above	113	26.8								
Years of work experience	Less than 1 year	118	28	2.5	2	2	1.385	0.645	-0.886	1	5
	1-3 years	147	34.9								
	4-6 years	46	10.9								
	7-10 years	49	11.6								
	10 years or above	61	14.5								
Type of higher education	Applied private undergraduate university	134	31.8								

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Average	median	Standard deviation	Variance	Skewness	Peak value	Minimum value	Maximum value
n institutio n	Comprehensive private university	172	40.9	1.95	2	2	0.769	0.077	-1.301	1	3
	Private vocational college/technical college	115	27.3								

3.2 Descriptive statistical analysis of items

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics for 30 items measuring professional identity (A1–A15) and job satisfaction (B1–B15) among 421 private university teachers in Chengdu. Overall, the mean scores for all items ranged from 3.41 (B6) to 3.68 (A1), all above the midpoint of 3 on the 5-point Likert scale, indicating a generally positive evaluation of both constructs.

For the professional identity scale (A1–A15), the highest mean score was observed for A1 (“Through teaching and research, I have gained extensive professional experience, strengthening my identity as an educator”) at 3.68, with a standard deviation of 1.32. This suggests that teachers derive strong professional confidence from practical experiences in teaching and research. Other high-scoring items included A4 (3.52) and A8 (3.52), which relate to utilizing professional abilities and positive interactions with administrators, respectively. In contrast, A10 (“I believe society’s recognition of university teaching influences my professional identity”) and A14 (“I am willing to pursue a long-term teaching career due to development potential”) had relatively lower means (3.44), reflecting uncertainties about external recognition and career stability—common concerns in private universities.

The job satisfaction scale (B1–B15) showed similar trends. B10 (“My salary and benefits are stable, providing long-term security”) scored highest at 3.54, indicating that basic material security is a key source of satisfaction. B12 (“I have achieved research accomplishments recognized by peers”) also scored well (3.52), highlighting the importance of professional achievement. Conversely, B6 (“My salary level is reasonable and commensurate with contributions”) had the lowest mean (3.41), with a standard deviation of 0.91, suggesting widespread dissatisfaction with salary fairness—a critical issue in private institutions where compensation often lags behind public universities.

Notably, all items exhibited negative skewness (ranging from -0.791 to -0.307), indicating that responses were concentrated toward higher scores, though individual differences existed as evidenced by standard deviations between 0.821 and 1.32. This pattern reflects that while most teachers hold positive attitudes, there is variability in perceptions—particularly regarding external recognition (A10), salary fairness (B6), and work arrangements (B4: mean 3.42). These differences may stem from institutional factors such as uneven resource allocation and inconsistent performance evaluation systems in private universities. Overall, the item-level data confirms the moderate-to-high levels of professional identity and job satisfaction observed in the sample, while identifying specific areas requiring improvement.

Table 8: Summary Table of Descriptive Statistical Data

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum		Mean	Standard deviation	Variance		Skewness	
	statistics	statistics	statistics	statistics	statistics	standard error					statistics
A1	421	1	5	3.68	0.064	1.32	1.741	-0.791	0.119	-0.522	0.237
A2	421	1	5	3.47	0.047	0.957	0.916	-0.556	0.119	-0.053	0.237
A3	421	1	5	3.45	0.047	0.966	0.934	-0.307	0.119	-0.435	0.237
A4	421	1	5	3.52	0.044	0.907	0.822	-0.431	0.119	-0.239	0.237
A5	421	1	5	3.47	0.044	0.906	0.821	-0.515	0.119	-0.09	0.237
A6	421	1	5	3.5	0.047	0.958	0.917	-0.487	0.119	-0.181	0.237
A7	421	1	5	3.46	0.047	0.967	0.935	-0.413	0.119	-0.174	0.237
A8	421	1	5	3.52	0.048	0.989	0.979	-0.525	0.119	-0.028	0.237
A9	421	1	5	3.5	0.045	0.922	0.851	-0.417	0.119	-0.272	0.237
A10	421	1	5	3.44	0.048	0.98	0.961	-0.478	0.119	-0.261	0.237
A11	421	1	5	3.51	0.051	1.041	1.084	-0.436	0.119	-0.464	0.237
A12	421	1	5	3.46	0.048	0.989	0.977	-0.486	0.119	-0.204	0.237
A13	421	1	5	3.48	0.046	0.95	0.902	-0.496	0.119	-0.038	0.237
A14	421	1	5	3.44	0.049	1.007	1.013	-0.58	0.119	0.006	0.237
A15	421	1	5	3.46	0.049	1.003	1.006	-0.484	0.119	-0.184	0.237
B1	421	1	5	3.48	0.047	0.957	0.917	-0.344	0.119	-0.35	0.237
B2	421	1	5	3.48	0.046	0.95	0.903	-0.466	0.119	-0.092	0.237
B3	421	1	5	3.48	0.049	0.999	0.998	-0.484	0.119	-0.222	0.237
B4	421	1	5	3.42	0.049	0.998	0.997	-0.486	0.119	-0.181	0.237
B5	421	1	5	3.45	0.049	1.012	1.024	-0.421	0.119	-0.302	0.237
B6	421	1	5	3.41	0.044	0.91	0.829	-0.34	0.119	-0.362	0.237
B7	421	1	5	3.45	0.046	0.949	0.901	-0.378	0.119	-0.208	0.237
B8	421	1	5	3.48	0.048	0.994	0.988	-0.396	0.119	-0.359	0.237
B9	421	1	5	3.48	0.046	0.952	0.907	-0.41	0.119	-0.262	0.237
B10	421	1	5	3.54	0.045	0.921	0.849	-0.552	0.119	0.157	0.237
B11	421	1	5	3.47	0.047	0.962	0.926	-0.482	0.119	-0.076	0.237
B12	421	1	5	3.52	0.046	0.953	0.907	-0.599	0.119	0.108	0.237
B13	421	1	5	3.46	0.047	0.962	0.925	-0.359	0.119	-0.344	0.237
B14	421	1	5	3.47	0.045	0.927	0.859	-0.46	0.119	0.039	0.237
B15	421	1	5	3.45	0.047	0.971	0.944	-0.386	0.119	-0.277	0.237

4. Correlation analysis

Table 9 presents the results of the correlation analysis between professional identity and job satisfaction among private university teachers in Chengdu. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.666, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). This indicates a strong positive linear relationship: as teachers' professional identity increases, their job satisfaction tends to rise accordingly. The magnitude of the correlation (0.666) suggests a substantial association, consistent with theoretical expectations that a strong sense of professional belonging, recognition, and career development—key components of professional identity—fosters positive attitudes toward work environment, compensation, and achievements, which collectively shape job satisfaction. This finding

reinforces the pre-test results and provides further support for exploring the predictive effect of professional identity on job satisfaction in subsequent analyses.

Table 9: Correlation Analysis Table

	Job satisfaction	Career identity
Job satisfaction	1	
Career identity	.666**	1
** At the 0.01 level (two-tailed), the correlation is significant.		

5. Regression analysis

5.1 The Impact of University Teachers' Professional Identity on Job Satisfaction

Table 10 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis investigating the effect of university teachers' professional identity on their job satisfaction, with demographic variables (gender, age, educational attainment, years of work experience, and type of higher education institution) included as control variables. The analysis reveals that professional identity has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.663$, $t = 17.888$, $p < 0.001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.614$) indicates that for each unit increase in professional identity, job satisfaction increases by 0.614 units, holding all other variables constant. The 95% confidence interval for this effect (0.547 to 0.682) does not include zero, further confirming the robustness of this relationship.

The model exhibits good overall fit, with an R^2 of 0.446, meaning that professional identity and the control variables collectively explain 44.6% of the variance in job satisfaction; the adjusted R^2 (0.438) suggests minimal overfitting. The F-statistic (55.555, $p < 0.001$) confirms the model's statistical significance. Notably, none of the control variables show significant effects: gender ($\beta = -0.003$, $p = 0.94$), age ($\beta = 0.034$, $p = 0.352$), educational attainment ($\beta = -0.023$, $p = 0.532$), years of work experience ($\beta = 0.006$, $p = 0.862$), and type of institution ($\beta = -0.020$, $p = 0.58$) all fail to reach statistical significance. This indicates that the influence of professional identity on job satisfaction is consistent across different demographic groups, emphasizing its central role in shaping teachers' work attitudes. The Durbin-Watson value (1.78) is close to 2, suggesting no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, which supports the reliability of the regression results.

Table 10: Regression Analysis Table of the Impact of University Teachers' Professional Identity on Job Satisfaction

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient Beta	t	Significance	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	20.396	2.899		7.035	0	14.697	26.095
Gender	-0.059	0.786	-0.003	-0.075	0.94	-1.604	1.486
Age	0.261	0.28	0.034	0.933	0.352	-0.289	0.811
Educational attainment	-0.327	0.523	-0.023	-0.625	0.532	-1.354	0.7
Years of work experience	0.049	0.281	0.006	0.174	0.862	-0.504	0.602

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Significance	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
Type of higher education institution	-0.281	0.507	-0.02	-0.554	0.58	-1.277	0.716
Occupational identity	0.614	0.034	0.663	17.888	0	0.547	0.682
R^2	0.446						
Adjusted R^2	0.438						
F	55.555***						
D-W value	1.78						
Dependent variable: job satisfaction							

6. Summary of Data Analysis

The data analysis results can be summarized as follows: First, the pre-test and formal survey confirmed the high reliability and validity of the professional identity and job satisfaction scales, with Cronbach's α coefficients exceeding 0.9 and significant results in KMO and Bartlett's tests, ensuring the measurement tools are scientifically sound. Second, descriptive statistical analysis showed that the sample was predominantly young and middle-aged teachers with master's degrees, and their overall professional identity and job satisfaction were at a moderate-to-high level, though there were concerns about salary fairness and social recognition. Third, correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between professional identity and job satisfaction ($r = 0.666$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, regression analysis indicated that professional identity significantly positively predicts job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.663$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 44.6% of the variance, while demographic variables had no significant impact. These findings collectively demonstrate that enhancing professional identity is critical to improving job satisfaction among private university teachers in Chengdu.

7. Discussion

Objective 1: To study the current status of professional identity and job satisfaction among teachers at private universities in Chengdu.

This study reveals that teachers at private universities in Chengdu exhibit moderate-to-high levels of professional identity and job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics show that professional identity items (A1–A15) have a mean range of 3.44–3.68, with the highest score for A1 ("I gain professional confidence from teaching and research experiences"), reflecting positive self-perception of professional competence. Job satisfaction items (B1–B15) range from 3.41–3.54, with B10 ("Stable salary and benefits") scoring highest, indicating that material security is a key satisfaction driver, while B6 ("Salary fairness") is the lowest, highlighting concerns about compensation equity. These findings align with Ou and Gu (2024), who noted that private university teachers face structural challenges but maintain positive professional attitudes. The high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.948$ for professional identity, 0.938 for job satisfaction) and validity (KMO = 0.909) of the scales confirm their suitability for this context. Unlike general studies on public university teachers (e.g., Huang & Wang, 2024), this research focuses on private institutions in Chengdu, capturing region-specific dynamics such as the balance between institutional resource constraints and teachers' intrinsic motivation, filling a gap in localized research.

Objective 2: To study the relationship between professional identity and job satisfaction among teachers at private universities in Chengdu.

The study confirms a significant positive relationship between professional identity and job satisfaction: correlation analysis shows a strong association ($r = 0.666$, $p < 0.01$), and

regression analysis indicates that professional identity is a robust predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.663$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 44.6% of the variance. This suggests that enhancing teachers' sense of professional belonging, social recognition, and career development directly improves their work attitudes. These findings align with Beijaard et al. (2004), who argued that professional identity shapes work evaluations, and extend Locke's (1976) job satisfaction theory by demonstrating that identity-related factors (e.g., personal experience, social interaction) are critical in private university contexts. Compared to Moradkhani and Ebadijalal (2024), who focused on identity fluctuations, this study quantifies the predictive strength of identity on satisfaction, showing that even amid resource limitations, a strong professional identity mitigates dissatisfaction. The non-significant impact of demographic variables further underscores that this relationship is consistent across diverse teacher groups.

Overall, this study confirms that private university teachers in Chengdu have moderate-to-high professional identity and job satisfaction, with the former significantly predicting the latter. These findings enrich understanding of the psychological mechanisms among private university faculty, highlighting that institutional efforts to strengthen professional identity—such as improving career pathways and social recognition—can effectively boost job satisfaction. Practically, these insights inform strategies for private universities in Chengdu to retain talent and enhance educational quality, supporting their role in regional higher education development.

Research Suggestions

Based on the findings that professional identity significantly predicts job satisfaction among private university teachers in Chengdu, targeted recommendations are proposed to enhance their professional well-being and institutional development. For universities, priority should be given to optimizing systems that foster professional identity. This includes establishing clear career development pathways—such as structured promotion criteria and transparent evaluation mechanisms—to address concerns about career stability, a key barrier identified in the study. Additionally, institutions should strengthen platforms for academic exchange and collaboration, such as interdisciplinary workshops and mentoring programs, to enhance teachers' sense of professional belonging through social interaction. Investing in teaching and research resources, such as laboratory facilities and research grants, can also reinforce teachers' confidence in their professional competence, directly boosting both identity and satisfaction.

For educational administrative departments, policy support is crucial to mitigate the structural challenges faced by private universities. This could involve increasing financial subsidies for private institutions to improve faculty salaries and welfare, addressing the dissatisfaction with salary fairness highlighted in the study. Administrative departments should also promote public recognition of private university teachers by showcasing their contributions to regional education and industry, thereby enhancing their social prestige—a factor closely linked to professional identity. Furthermore, developing training programs tailored to private university teachers, focusing on pedagogical innovation and research skills, can empower them to better navigate their roles, strengthening their professional identity in the long term.

For teachers themselves, proactive engagement in professional development is recommended. Participating in continuing education, industry collaborations, and teaching innovation projects can enrich personal experiences and enhance self-efficacy, key components of professional identity. Building supportive networks with colleagues and students—through



regular communication and collaborative initiatives—can also foster a sense of belonging. Additionally, reflecting on one's professional values and aligning daily work with long-term career goals can help maintain a strong sense of purpose, which in turn sustains job satisfaction amid challenges. By combining institutional support, policy advocacy, and individual initiative, the professional ecology of private university teachers can be significantly improved.

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