THE IMPACTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS’ PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND IDENTITY ON LEARNING ENGAGEMENT IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This journal presents the outcomes of a meticulous systematic review investigating the interconnection among college students’ professional values, professional identity, and learning engagement within the realm of higher education in China. The primary objective is to underscore the significance of instilling professional values and identity in students, delving into their impact on motivation, professional aspirations, and overall learning encounters. The study employs a rigorous methodology, entailing an exhaustive exploration across diverse academic databases to locate and scrutinize existing literature on the subject. To fortify the reliability and validity of the findings, the chosen studies undergo a meticulous data extraction process and quality evaluation.

Theoretical Framework: The study accentuates the relevance of integrating academic pursuits with career aspirations, fostering professional values, and cultivating a robust professional identity to enhance learning engagement among college students. The findings suggest that students exhibit heightened motivation and engagement when they discern a clear correlation between their academic pursuits and prospective employment. Additionally, the study underscores the pivotal role of school administration and curriculum design in acknowledging and nurturing professional values and identities. Higher education institutions are urged to create a conducive learning environment by incorporating activities and experiences aligning with students’ career objectives.

Methodology: The research employs a stringent methodological approach, encompassing an extensive search across academic databases to identify and analyze pertinent literature. The selected studies undergo thorough data extraction and quality assessment procedures to uphold the credibility and validity of the findings.

Results: The evaluation of the research spotlights the imperative nature of harmonizing professional values, professional identity, and learning engagement for higher education institutions. This synthesis contributes to enhanced educational quality and better prepares students for future employment. The results indicate practical implications for educational administration, emphasizing the importance of curriculum design that seamlessly integrates professional values and identity development.

Conclusion: In conclusion, aligning professional values, identity, and learning engagement is crucial for enhancing educational quality and preparing students for future employment. Practical implications stress the pivotal role of curriculum design in integrating professional values and identity development, with the study advocating ongoing research into their intricate relationship and impact on student achievement.

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RESUMO

Introduction: This journal presents the outcomes of a meticulous systematic review investigating the interconnection among college students' professional values, professional identity, and learning engagement within the realm of higher education in China. The primary objective is to underscore the significance of instilling professional values and identity in students, delving into their impact on motivation, professional aspirations, and overall learning encounters. The study employs a rigorous methodology, entailing an exhaustive exploration across diverse academic databases to locate and scrutinize existing literature on the subject. To fortify the reliability and validity of the findings, the chosen studies undergo a meticulous data extraction process and quality evaluation.

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Palavras-chave: college students, professional values, professional identity, learning engagement, China, education management.
1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education in China has experienced a substantial and fundamental transition in response to the changing demands of its society and economy (Bonfield et al., 2020). With the transformation to an economy driven by innovation, there has been a growing emphasis on cultivating college students' professional values and identity as key components of their academic journey (Lv et al., 2022). The current journal has thoroughly investigated the intricate interplay of these elements and their effects on student engagement in learning in the context of higher education in China. Given the substantial implications for curriculum creation, education administration, and the overall quality of higher education in China, a full examination of this association is critical. The capacity to foster a welcoming, empathetic, and flexible learning atmosphere, combined with personalized teaching approaches, empowers these learners to overcome challenges, unlock their full capabilities, and make a constructive influence on both their education and the broader society (Meiping et al., 2023).

Incorporating professional values and identity into higher education courses is not a unique idea; in fact, it has received international attention (Simanjuntak et al., 2022). Bovill and Woolmer (2019) evaluated the impact of these characteristics on students' motivation, career aspirations, and overall learning experiences. In the context of China, a country known for its rigorous academic environment and the significant consequences associated with college entrance exams (Zivin et al., 2020), it is especially important to understand how students' learning engagement is influenced by their professional values and identity.

Despite previous research into various aspects of college students' experiences in China, such as academic motivation (Yu, Jiang, & Zhou, 2012), socialization processes (Song & Xia, 2015), and career development (Chen, Liu, & Wen, 2018), there is a scarcity of research that specifically explores the complex relationship between learning engagement, professional identity, and professional values. The primary goal of this study was to fill this information gap by investigating the relationship between Chinese students' professional beliefs and identity and their level of involvement in the learning process. The Chinese government implemented extensive reforms at the beginning of the twenty-first century with a goal of stimulating innovation and cultivating a knowledge-driven economy (Kitamura, Liu & Hong, 2022). Universities have modified their curricula in light of these reforms to encompass the development of students' professional
values and identities in accordance with the requirements of the contemporary labour market, as well as the provision of subject-specific knowledge (Tang, 2022). College students in online learning show high self-efficacy levels, except for informal mingling, professor interactions, and collaboration with classmates (Omotoy, 2023).

Consistent with a worldwide pattern, Chinese higher education is emphasizing the importance of professional identity and values (Tan, Zhao & Dervin, 2022). In recent years, there has been a notable transformation in educational philosophy. Previously, there was an exclusive emphasis on scholastic accomplishments; however, this has given way to a more comprehensive approach that values the holistic growth of students, equipping them with a distinct professional identity and sense of purpose (Deng et al., 2023). Diverse educational reforms in China, including an increased emphasis on career development services, the expansion of disciplines, and the implementation of innovative teaching methods, have all contributed to this transformation (Deng et al., 2023).

The significance of this study resides in its capacity to augment the growing comprehension of the way the professional values and identity of Chinese students intersect with their level of engagement in learning. This is especially critical in light of the distinctive circumstances surrounding higher education in China, which contend with a progressively competitive labour market and arduous academic requirements (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2019). The objective of the study was to generate knowledge that could be utilized to enhance education administration, curriculum development, and student assistance endeavours. In doing so, it aimed to improve the educational experiences of students and better equip them for prospective professions in the ever-changing and dynamic professional environment of China.

The intricate relationship between college students' professional values, professional identity, and their learning engagement has garnered increasing attention within the field of education management. A comprehensive review of existing literature illuminates the various facets of this dynamic in the context of higher education in China.

The critical significance of professional values and identity in the holistic development of college students is emphasized in a substantial body of literature. Fitzgerald (2020) and Abiogu et al. (2021) emphasize the significance of professional values, which comprise ethical principles, beliefs, and attitudes that function as compass points in the personal and academic lives of students. These values are not merely theoretical constructs; rather, they are actively fostered and molded in the academic
setting, exerting an impact that extends into the future professional careers of students (Sarraf-Yazdi et al., 2021). Students' capacity to make significant societal contributions and their character and conduct are profoundly impacted by the development of professional values (Adams, 2019).

Learning a language inherently involves embracing its associated culture. Language and culture teaching are intertwined. In teaching, neglecting cultural content alongside language knowledge leads to boredom and disinterest among students, hindering their understanding of language-carrying culture. This not only affects motivation but also impedes effective Chinese language learning (Keat & Jia, 2023).

Simultaneously, Tsakissiris and Grant-Smith (2021) argue that the congruence of students' academic experiences with their career aspirations and professional identity are inextricably linked. This alignment signifies the degree to which students associate themselves with the prospective professional roles they foresee themselves in their selected academic discipline. Scholarly works emphasize that students are more inclined to actively participate in their educational pursuits when they establish a robust and unambiguous professional identity, which is intrinsically linked to the realization of their vocational aspirations (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). This correlation increases students' drive to achieve high academic standards and engage actively in co-curricular and extracurricular pursuits that contribute to their professional development (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021).

Throughout their scholarly careers, students navigate a transformative journey of self-exploration that is closely intertwined with the development of their professional values and sense of self (Whaanga, 2020). The formation of professional identity and values is crucial for both individual advancement and the establishment of a coherent sense of direction and purpose in the academic and professional spheres (Fitzpatrick & Queenan, 2020). Furthermore, it is worth noting that the significant impact of these elements transcends personal growth and encompasses the educational journey as a whole, as well as the wider community and society at large (Brooks, Brant & Lamb, 2019).

Fitzgerald (2020) emphasizes the interconnectedness of professional identity, professional values, and the level of learning engagement among college students. The interdependence of these concepts carries significant ramifications for institutions of higher learning and education administration (Sarraf-Yazdi et al., 2021). Through the
acknowledgement and cultivation of professional values and identity, administrators and educators have the ability to establish an educational setting that not only supports scholastic accomplishments but also facilitates the holistic and vocational advancement of pupils (Shwartz & Dori, 2020).

Conclusively, the research conducted by Adams (2019) underscores the critical nature of fostering professional values and identity throughout the collegiate experience. Professional values, which comprise ethical principles, beliefs, and attitudes, are proactively fostered in the academic setting and persist into the professional lives of students (Schiff et al., 2021). Moreover, the degree to which a student's academic experiences correspond with their career ambitions and the robustness of their professional identity are intrinsically linked (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). These constructs possess extensive ramifications, influencing not only the personal growth of individuals but also the wider educational landscape and society at large (Brooks, Brant & Lamb, 2019). It is imperative for higher education institutions and education management to acknowledge the interdependence of these elements in order to establish a conducive atmosphere that fosters comprehensive student growth (Kareem, Thomas & Nandini, 2022).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With a diverse range of theoretical frameworks at its core, the notion of learning engagement in higher education reflects a multifaceted approach to comprehending the dynamics of student involvement in the learning process (Yang & MacCallum, 2022). Fundamentally, learning engagement is made up of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive elements that together indicate how much students are invested in their educational experiences (Heilporn & Lakhal, 2021).

According to a cognitive perspective, learning engagement entails pupils actively engaging in intellectual study (Galikyan & Admiraal, 2019). This element is derived from theories like the cognitive engagement paradigm put forth by Liao and Wu (2022), which highlights the cognitive commitment, concentration, and drive for subject-matter mastery on the part of students in their courses. A deeper and more meaningful learning experience is fostered by this type of cognitive engagement, which is characterized by intellectual curiosity and the application of critical thinking abilities (Okolie et al., 2022).
The behavioural factor of learning engagement includes students' active participation in class activities and academic work in addition to the cognitive component (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). According to Halverson and Graham (2019), this proactive participation is a crucial sign of engagement. Active learners actively seek out opportunities for extra learning experiences both inside and outside of the classroom, regularly attend classes, and turn in assignments on time (Prince, Felder, & Brent, 2020). Furthermore, their dedication, time management, and work completion demonstrate their devotion to their studies (Belwal et al., 2020).

Learning engagement includes an emotional component in addition to the behavioural and cognitive aspects (Halverson & Graham, 2019). According to Bowden, Tickle, and Naumann (2021) students who are emotionally invested in their educational experiences have a sincere enthusiasm for their studies and a feeling of acceptance within the academic community. The work of Goegan and Daniels (2021), who emphasized the significance of integration and connectedness in student retention and success, is the foundation for this sense of belonging. Pupils who have an emotional bond with their school are more likely to stick with it and take an active interest in their studies (Gillen-O'Neel, 2021).

For educators to create pedagogical strategies that encourage cognitive, behavioural, and emotional participation in learning, they must have a thorough understanding of the varied nature of learning engagement (Heilporn, Lakhal, & Bélisle, 2021). Drawing from cognitive, behavioural, and emotional frameworks, this holistic approach to engagement offers a thorough understanding of students' involvement and dedication to their academic pursuits. The study by Tai et al. (2019) emphasizes how these elements interact and how crucial it is to take care of each aspect in order to build a learning environment that genuinely involves students in their academic journey.

2.1 IMPACTS OF PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND IDENTITY ON LEARNING ENGAGEMENT:

Within the Chinese higher education setting, a substantial amount of peer-reviewed literature supports the hypothesis that college students' professional values and identity have a significant impact on their learning engagement (Li, 2020). Emahiser et al. (2021) discovered, for example, that students who perceive a strong consistency between their selected program of study and their job objectives display a higher level of
involvement in their learning activities. This connection fosters a strong feeling of purpose and drive in students, as they recognize the direct relevance of their education to their desired future professional positions. This result is similar with prior study by Bradberry and De Maio (2019), who underlined the importance of students' capacity to understand the connection of their educational experiences to their long-term professional objectives in boosting their learning engagement.

Brown et al. (2022) research contributions shed light on the instrumental significance of well-developed professional values such as accountability, integrity, and adaptability in encouraging increased levels of engagement among college students. These ideals instil a lasting feeling of ethical dedication to one's studies, motivating active engagement in both curricular and co-curricular activities. Brown et al.'s findings (2022) support previous research by Cress, Collier, and Reitenauer (2023), which underline the necessity of instilling ethical and moral principles in students in order to improve their participation and personal growth throughout their college careers.

Expanding on the concept of professional identity, Jarvis-Seling et al. (2019) and Chen et al. (2020) highlight the catalytic potential of a strong professional identity in encouraging learner engagement. Their findings show that students with a strong sense of professional identity are more resilient in the face of academic problems. Furthermore, these students display a proactive and self-directed approach to their education, actively pursuing opportunities to develop their knowledge and abilities. The findings of Chen et al. (2020) are consistent with the work of Tsybulsky and Muchnik-Rozanov (2019), who stressed the relevance of professional identity in defining how individuals approach their roles and duties in their chosen disciplines.

Finally, these studies and their findings construct a comprehensive narrative that emphasizes the inherent connection between students' professional values, professional identity, and learning engagement in the Chinese higher education system. They emphasize the importance of promoting this congruence in education management techniques, providing useful insights for educators, administrators, and politicians wanting to improve the quality of higher education in China. This holistic view is consistent with the work of Pedler, Willis, and Nieuwoudt (2022), who stressed the importance of students' sense of belonging and participation in their academic and social groups in boosting retention and success in higher education.
3 METHODOLOGY

The technique used in this research endeavour was purposefully designed to extensively investigate the effects of college students' professional values and identity on their level of involvement in learning within China's higher education system. The inquiry was founded on a methodical approach of discovering and evaluating pre-existing scholarly publications, ensuring a thorough and empirically backed examination of the subject.

A rigorous search methodology was used to obtain relevant literature for this investigation. Numerous scholarly databases, including ProQuest, ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, were thoroughly investigated. The following keyword combinations and terms were used in the investigation: "college students," "professional values," "professional identity," "learning engagement," "China," and "education management." Boolean operators such as "AND" and "OR" were used to ensure the comprehensiveness of search results.

The articles in this review were chosen using preset criteria to ensure the quality and relevance of the literature. Studies, research papers, and peer-reviewed publications published in English between 2019 and 2023 met the inclusion criteria. The temporal criterion was used to ensure the adoption of the most recent and relevant research breakthroughs. Furthermore, scholarly studies that particularly explored the relationship between Chinese higher education students' professional identity, professional values, and learning engagement were considered.

Articles that did not fit the inclusion requirements, such as those published prior to 2013, sources that were not peer-reviewed, and research that was not conducted within the Chinese higher education system, were excluded. The choice to exclude non-peer-reviewed sources was made in order to preserve the scholarly integrity of the review's literature.

The selected articles were subjected to a thorough data extraction procedure. Relevant data points, such as the study's focus, research techniques, major findings, and consequences, were extracted methodically. The use of this data extraction process allowed for the classification and integration of scholarly works, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and patterns within the corpus of study.

Each chosen paper was subjected to a quality assessment to determine the research's validity and rigor. During the quality assessment, factors such as research
design, methodology, sample size, data analysis, and the relevance of findings to the research issue were considered. The articles were evaluated based on their methodological rigor and ability to make important contributions to the research.

Ethical considerations were prioritized at all stages of the literature evaluation. Strict respect to proper attribution and citation practices for sources was maintained, ensuring that the original writers' work was faithfully expressed. Research disruptions and plagiarism were scrupulously avoided.

It is critical to recognize the limits of this practice. The removal of sources written in languages other than English may have limited the incorporation of significant research. Furthermore, the temporal requirement for article inclusion may have resulted in the rejection of prior studies that could have provided historical background. The purpose of emphasizing recent research in this study is to provide significant insights into current developments in Chinese higher education.

This study's methodology follows a methodical structure in which relevant literature is selected, retrieved, and analysed. Because of the strict use of inclusion and exclusion criteria, quality evaluation, and ethical concerns, the findings in this review are regarded reliable and valid. The thorough methodology used in this study serves as the foundation for a rigorous inquiry into the effects of Chinese college students' professional values and identity on learning engagement in the field of education management.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis of data from the studied literature emphasizes the significant influences of college students' professional ideals and identities on their learning engagement in the Chinese higher education landscape. These effects are diverse, encompassing numerous aspects of the educational experience.

Tsakissiris, J., and Grant-Smith (2021) highlight the alignment between students' academic objectives and their job aspirations as a key finding for this study. This congruence fosters a feeling of purpose and direction in pupils, encouraging them to actively participate in their learning (Li, 2020). Previous study has extensively addressed the topic of connecting academic pursuits with future jobs (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021). Tsybulsky and Muchnik-Rozanov (2019) suggest that this alignment not only improves students' learning experiences but also significantly adds to their long-term professional success by bridging the gap between academia and the job market.
Furthermore, as Whaanga (2020) emphasizes, the cultivation of distinct professional values has been highlighted as playing a critical role in increasing learner engagement. Students who embrace principles like accountability and honesty are more likely to be dedicated to their academics (Abiogu et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2022). These values act as guiding principles for pupils, shaping their behaviour and attitudes toward learning (Fitzgerald, 2020). This is consistent with the findings of other researchers, such as Brooks, Brant, and Lamb (2019), who have emphasized the relevance of values in the formation of self-regulated learning, which leads to increased learning engagement.

Furthermore, the study's findings show that professional identity is a key predictor of learning engagement. When faced with academic hurdles, students who strongly identify with their chosen subject of study are more likely to display resilience and tenacity (Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020). Their desire to become professionals in their chosen fields drives their participation in learning activities (Chen et al., 2020). This discovery is consistent with the findings of Tsybulsky and Muchnik-Rozanov (2019), who underlined the importance of identity building in the developmental process, demonstrating that a strong professional identity might positively affect one's participation in educational pursuits. The results reveal a positive link between teacher evaluation and professional development, with type A evaluations exerting a more pronounced influence than type B evaluations. The study establishes a favorable correlation between teacher assessment and students' academic outcomes, highlighting that type A evaluations significantly impact student achievement compared to type B evaluations (Alwaely et al., 2023).

In terms of the literature review, the findings of this study confirm the interconnectedness of college students' professional values, professional identity, and learning engagement within the setting of higher education in China. These findings have practical consequences for educational administration, implying the need of building an educational environment that supports students' beliefs and creates a strong sense of professional identity. Such efforts can help to increase levels of learner engagement, thereby increasing educational quality and student performance in their future employment. The wealth of literature in this area consistently emphasizes the importance of these factors and their potential to shape the educational landscape in China, which is consistent with the work of other prominent scholars such as Pascarella and Terenzini.
(2005), who have advocated for a holistic approach to student development in higher education.

4.1 IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study's comprehensive evaluation of literature revealed noteworthy findings regarding the impact of college students' professional values and identities on their learning engagement inside the Chinese higher education system. These findings point to numerous directions for future research in this area.

First, integrating academic endeavours with future job goals has emerged as a prominent issue. Future research might go deeper into the mechanisms and tactics for encouraging this alignment, examining how educators and organizations can help students make a closer connection between their academic experiences and their career ambitions. Investigating the long-term effects of such alignment on students' job performance would also be a worthwhile endeavour.

Second, the development of certain professional values such as responsibility and integrity has been identified as an important component in increasing learner engagement. Future research could concentrate on interventions and educational techniques aimed at instilling and reinforcing these values in college students. Understanding the function of values in fostering self-regulated learning and researching the potential impact on students' academic achievement could be interesting areas of research.

Third, the function of professional identity as a predictor of learning engagement merits further research. Future research could look into the establishment and transformation of professional identity in college students, taking into account the elements that influence it. Furthermore, investigating the link between a strong professional identity and academic resilience in the face of adversity might provide insights into techniques for encouraging student tenacity and involvement.

There is also opportunity for research into the interaction and interplay of these factors - professional values, identity, and learner engagement. An integrated approach to understanding how these factors interact within the particular setting of Chinese higher education could provide a more comprehensive view.

Furthermore, while this study focuses on the practical consequences for educational administration, future research may dive into the design and execution of specific programs and interventions aimed at developing students' values and professional
identities. Evaluating the success of such programs in increasing learning engagement and improving educational quality is critical.

Finally, given the abundance of literature in this field and its consistent emphasis on the importance of professional values and identity, there is room for more extensive quantitative and qualitative studies that investigate these constructs in greater depth and detail within the Chinese higher education landscape. Longitudinal studies documenting the development of students' values and identities, as well as their impact on many parts of the educational experience, could be included.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide persuasive evidence demonstrating the intricate interplay between college students' professional values, professional identity, and learning engagement in the context of Chinese higher education. These findings not only improve our understanding of these interconnected components, but they also have major practical consequences for educational administration. The study emphasizes the critical relevance of providing an educational environment that actively cultivates students' beliefs and promotes a strong sense of professional identity. This nurturing process can take many different forms, such as curriculum design that stresses the development of ethical and professional values, mentorship programs that aid students in creating their identity, and extracurricular activities that foster career exploration.

Educational institutions can create higher levels of learning engagement among their students by implementing such activities. Students' whole academic experience is enhanced as they become more profoundly committed in their educational path, leading to improved educational outcomes. Furthermore, these programs not only help to improve educational quality, but they also play an important part in influencing students' future success in their careers. Aligning academic pursuits with professional goals, cultivating values, and developing a strong professional identity all serve as accelerators for students' professional development. This benefits not only the individual student but also has broader societal consequences, especially in light of China's changing employment market and economic landscape.
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