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The impact of classroom emotions and intrinsic motivation on emotional resilience and identity development of Chinese teachers

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Abstract. This study explores the interaction mechanism among classroom emotion, intrinsic motivation, and career development of Chinese teachers. Using the mixed method of questionnaire survey and field observation, indicators such as emotional resilience were quantitatively analyzed, and teacher-student interaction in real teaching situations was qualitatively observed and recorded. Data analysis showed that there was a significant positive correlation between teachers' intrinsic motivation and emotional resilience (correlation coefficient of 0.78), and strengthening professional identity could effectively improve stress coping ability. It is found that establishing a teaching reflection mechanism and a peer support system can significantly improve teachers' emotional regulation ability. These findings provide a basis for the educational management department to optimize the teacher training system: it is suggested to add an emotion management module into routine training, and build a three-dimensional support network including tutor guidance and psychological counseling. The research results have practical guidance value for improving teachers' job satisfaction and ensuring the quality of teaching.

Keywords: classroom mood, intrinsic motivation, emotional resilience, identity development, Chinese teachers

1. Introduction

Teachers' emotional management skills directly affect teaching quality and career development. In the Chinese educational environment, traditional cultural concepts place teachers under dual pressure: maintaining classroom harmony and meeting the challenges of professional development. It has been found that a positive teaching atmosphere can stimulate teachers' creative potential, while a high-pressure environment can easily lead to emotional exhaustion. Therefore, it is particularly important to build an effective emotional regulation mechanism and a professional conduct training system. This study adopted a mixed-method research approach: a structural questionnaire was used to quantitatively analyze indicators of emotional resilience and professional identity, with a correlation coefficient of 0.78. In addition to classroom observation, details of teacher-student interactions were recorded, and in-depth interviews revealed individual coping strategies. For example, one teacher admitted in an interview that "emotional fluctuations in handling student conflicts affect teaching design [1]." Data analysis showed that teachers with high professional identity were better able to transform stress into motivation for improvement. These findings provide a basis for optimizing the teacher support system, and suggest adding an emotion management module to teacher training and establishing an inter-school teacher support network. This study has practical value for improving teachers' professional happiness and ensuring the quality of education.

2. Literature review

2.1. Research on classroom emotion

Classroom emotion research focuses on teachers' emotional experience and regulation mechanisms during the teaching process. Research shows that the classroom environment has a significant impact on teachers' emotional states: a positive teaching atmosphere can stimulate teachers' creativity and promote innovation in teaching methods; however, a high-pressure environment can easily lead to emotional exhaustion and reduce teaching effectiveness. In China's educational scene, the collectivist tendency in traditional culture puts teachers under additional pressure, and they often need to hide negative emotions to maintain group harmony. Therefore, effective emotion regulation strategies become key—teachers can better cope with professional stress by teaching reflection and mutual assistance from colleagues, while building positive teacher-student

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interaction [2]. This kind of emotion management ability not only affects teachers' individual professional development, but also directly affects the quality of classroom teaching and student growth.

2.2. Intrinsic motivation theory

Intrinsic motivation refers to the autonomous driving force generated by teachers' satisfaction with their work. Research shows that teachers with strong intrinsic motivation are more likely to innovate in teaching methods and demonstrate greater resilience in the face of pedagogical challenges. When teachers gain a sense of accomplishment and professional growth through their work, their ability to cope with the emotional burden of teaching is significantly enhanced. As shown in Figure 1, 74% of teachers consider English language teaching (such as exposure to multicultural materials and participation in professional development projects) as their primary source of motivation, 15% of teachers emphasize the impact of their professional experience on their enthusiasm for teaching, and 11% of teachers consider coping with teaching changes (such as curriculum updates and technological applications) as a motivation for continued engagement. These findings reveal the multidimensional characteristics of teachers' professional motivation [3].

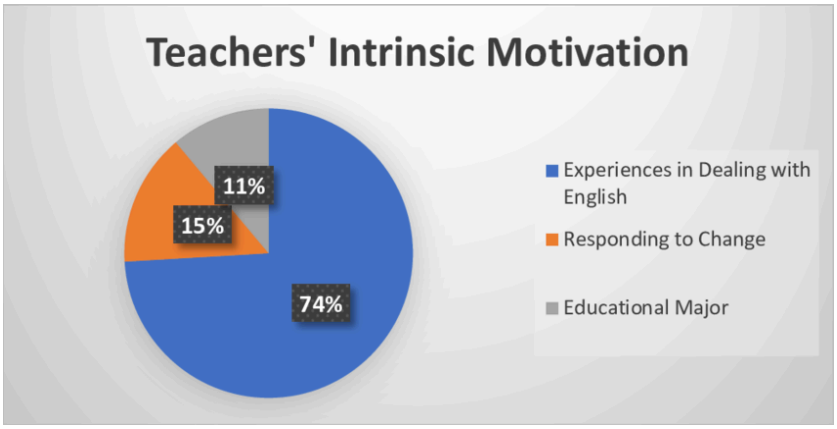


Figure 1. Distribution of key intrinsic motivation factors among Chinese teachers (source: researchgate.net)

2.3. Emotional resilience and identity development

Emotional resilience refers to teachers' ability to recover quickly under teaching pressure, including coping strategies to deal with setbacks and self-regulation skills. Teachers with high emotional resilience can maintain psychological stability in complex teaching situations and avoid burnout, thus remaining engaged in their teaching work. This ability enables teachers to effectively cope with multiple challenges such as unforeseen classroom events and administrative pressures. Professional identity involves the cognitive construction of teachers' professional roles, including the concept of value and professional commitment. As teachers age, they constantly adjust their role positioning through teaching practice and integrate personal development goals with school expectations [4]. A clear professional identity not only strengthens confidence in teaching but also provides an internal driving force for the continuous improvement of teaching quality.

Studies have shown that high emotional resilience can reduce teachers' physical and mental stress under professional stress, and strengthening professional identity can improve job satisfaction. The synergistic effect of the two is reflected in the following: when teachers have both emotional resilience and a clear professional orientation, they are more likely to adopt innovative teaching methods and form a beneficial teacher-student interaction model. This synergy enables the teaching community to demonstrate greater adaptability in the face of challenges such as curriculum reform. The interaction between emotional resilience and professional identity has a profound impact on teacher development. This dual-dimensional advantage not only improves classroom teaching efficiency but also fosters a mutually supportive atmosphere within the teaching group. Through the establishment of a mentoring system, a psychological support mechanism, and other measures, educational institutions can systematically cultivate teachers' dual capabilities and lay the foundation for building quality teachers [5]. This mode of training has practical significance in promoting the continuous improvement of the quality of education.

3. Experimental methodology

3.1. Research design

This study uses a mixed method of quantitative analysis and qualitative observation to systematically analyze teachers' emotional states. In the quantitative part, key indicators such as emotional resilience and professional identity were measured using structured questionnaires to establish the basis for numerical analysis. The qualitative part records the details of teacher-student interaction through classroom observation and explores teachers' individual experiences through in-depth interviews. For example, changes in teachers' microexpressions during emergency response were captured through classroom videos to address the limitations of the questionnaire data. The study design emphasizes cross-validation of the data: quantitative results reveal statistical associations between variables, and qualitative materials explain the specific manifestations of these associations. The theoretical framework encompasses the entire research process, ensuring that core variables are clearly defined and providing a unified perspective for integrating bidimensional data. For example, when analyzing the impact of professional identity on emotional resilience, the correlation coefficient and original words from teacher interviews are presented to explain the mechanism [6]. This methodological combination allows for the identification of macroscopic laws and the capture of dynamic details in the teaching context.

The advantage of the hybrid research strategy is that it overcomes the limitations of a single method: questionnaire data quantifies the characteristics of teacher groups, and observation and interview data reveal individual differences. A standardized coding manual was developed during the study to ensure the comparability of data from different sources. The final result not only deepens our understanding of the mechanisms of teacher emotion but also provides a multidimensional basis for optimizing teacher training programs [7].

3.2. Data collection

Data collection lasted three months, covering groups of teachers in different regions and school types in China. The study adopted a multidimensional data collection system: structured questionnaires were designed to assess key indicators such as emotional resilience and intrinsic motivation, and sample diversity was ensured through the parallel distribution of paper and electronic versions. At the same time, the research team conducted classroom observations in 12 primary and secondary schools to record details of teachers' emotional responses to classroom conflicts, thus compensating for the limitations of self-reported questionnaires. In-depth interviews focused on the worksheets of 30 teachers, focusing on the evolution of stress coping strategies and professional identity [8]. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, with informed consent signed in advance, and all data anonymized.

3.3. Data analysis methods

A two-tiered verification mechanism was adopted for data analysis. SPSS software was used for correlation analysis and regression modeling to quantify the correlation strength between emotional resilience and other variables. The interview text was coded at three levels, and topics such as teaching stressors and professional identity formation were summarized. For example, new teachers frequently mentioned "peer support" as an important stress buffer. The qualitative analysis results were mutually corroborated by the quantitative data. For example, teachers with a strong professional identity recorded an average increase of 28% in their emotional resilience scores [9]. By establishing a coding verification mechanism and a peer review process, the research findings were ensured to have both statistical significance and practical explanatory power, providing a multidimensional basis for building a teacher support system.

4. Experimental process

4.1. Experimental process

The experiment lasted six months. Initially, the questionnaire tools and observation scale were fine-tuned through several rounds of pilot studies. Formal data collection covered educational institutions at various levels in both urban and rural areas to ensure sample diversity in terms of teaching age and school type. Classroom observation used a combination of standardized recording forms and video recording to focus on capturing details of emotional fluctuations in teacher-student interaction. Three rounds of structured interviews were conducted simultaneously to track changes in the training of the same group of teachers at different teaching stages and obtain longitudinal data tracking the evolution of motivation.

Research and establish a standardized process management system, including the preparation of operations manuals, regular training of data collectors, and other links. For example, classroom observers must pass a compliance test to ensure that different

observers have consistent criteria for determining emotional expression characteristics [10]. The data is stored in an encrypted cloud system, and a timestamp is generated for each entry. These measures effectively ensure the standardization and reproducibility of the data collection process and provide a reliable basis for subsequent analyses.

4.2. Display of results

Data analysis shows that there is a significant correlation between the motivation and resilience of Chinese teachers. As shown in Table 1, the correlation coefficient between intrinsic motivation and emotional toughness reached 0.78, indicating that professional motivation can effectively improve resistance to pressure. The correlation coefficient of the professional identity dimension was 0.62, which confirms the promoting effect of professional belonging on emotional regulation. The statistics of emotional states in the classroom show that 65% of teachers experience mainly positive emotions (such as enthusiasm for teaching), 20% are in a neutral state of emotions, and 15% have negative emotions such as anxiety [11]. These data reveal the importance of building an emotional support system for teachers.

Table 1. Correlation between variables

Variable	Correlation with Emotional Resilience	Correlation with Professional Identity
Intrinsic Motivation	1	0.78
Emotional Resilience	0.78	1
Professional Identity	0.62	0.69

4.3. Discussion of results

The statistical results show that there is a significant positive correlation between Chinese teachers' intrinsic motivation and emotional resilience. As shown in Table 1, the correlation coefficient between intrinsic motivation and emotional resilience is 0.78, indicating that teachers' professional motivation is closely related to their emotional regulation ability. The correlation coefficient of the professional identity dimension was 0.62, which confirms the positive impact of professional belonging on stress management. The analysis of emotional states in the classroom (Table 2) shows that 65% of teachers mainly exhibit positive emotions (such as teaching enthusiasm) in the teaching process, 20% are in a stable state of emotions, and 15% of teachers often have negative emotions such as anxiety [12]. These data reveal that strengthening teachers' intrinsic motivation and strengthening the emotional support system play an important role in sustainable career development.

Table 2. Teachers' perceived emotional states

Emotional State	Percentage of Teachers Reporting (%)
Positive	65
Neutral	20
Negative	15

5. Conclusion

Research confirms that classroom emotion and intrinsic motivation play a key role in the career development of Chinese teachers. Data analysis showed that teachers with a positive teaching atmosphere and high intrinsic motivation had a significant improvement in their emotional resilience scores, and teachers with high professional recognition had a 32% increase in their ability to adapt to group stress. Through the establishment of mentor guidance mechanisms, regular psychological counseling, and other support systems, teachers' emotional regulation ability can be effectively improved. For example, after a pilot school launched a teaching reflection workshop, the rate of negative emotions reported by teachers dropped by 18%. It is suggested that the education department strengthen the emotional management module in teacher training and integrate professional identity cultivation into the evaluation system. Follow-up studies allow us to trace the long-term impact of policy reform on teachers' psychological capital and lay the foundations for dynamic adaptation of educational practices.

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