

# Professional Identity and Ethics of Primary and Secondary School Teachers: An Empirical Study

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**Abstract:** Analyzes the relationship between primary and secondary school teachers' professional identity and teachers' ethics through empirical research. The research shows that the overall level of primary and secondary school teachers' professional identity and ethics is high; Demographic variables such as position, teaching stage and professional title are significant factors affecting primary and secondary school teachers' professional identity and ethics; There is a significant positive correlation between primary and secondary school professional identity and teachers' ethics. In addition to the dimension of professional values, the total score of professional identity and the other three dimensions can significantly and positively predict teachers' ethics. This paper puts forward the ways to improve teachers' ethics from four aspects: shaping teachers' professional cognition, cultivating teachers' professional emotion, enhancing teachers' professional will and standardizing teachers' professional behavior.

**Keywords:** Primary and secondary school teachers; Professional identity; Teachers' ethics; Empirical research

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## 1. Introduction

Teachers' ethics and style are the first criteria to evaluate teachers. Primary and secondary school teachers are the core force of basic education, and their moral accomplishment is related to the healthy development of students and the cultivation of future talents of the country. Teacher professional identity is the recognition of individual teachers to the profession, and it is the process of positive perception of the profession and transformation into behavior<sup>[1]</sup>. Studies have pointed out that if the professional identity of primary and secondary school teachers is constantly weakened, it may lead to teacher ethics anomie<sup>[2]</sup>. A number of studies have shown that teachers' professional identity can significantly negatively predict job burnout. Neglect of teachers' professional identity and neglect of teacher ethics education will easily cause teachers' job burnout, which may lead to the problem of teacher ethics anomia. Based on this, this study focuses on the relationship between professional identity and teacher ethics of primary and secondary school teachers, and inspires the countermeasures to improve teacher ethics of primary and secondary school teachers from the perspective of professional identity.

## 2. Research methods and objects

In this study, teachers' professional identity questionnaire and teacher ethics questionnaire were used, questionnaire survey method was adopted for investigation and research, and SPSS 23.0 was used for data processing and analysis.

The subjects of this study were principals and teachers of primary and secondary schools. A total of 300 questionnaires were sent out, and 264 were effectively received, with an effective recovery rate of 88%. Among them, there are 139 male teachers, 125 female teachers, 79 primary school teachers, 112 junior middle school teachers, 73 senior high school teachers, 184 principal teachers, 80

ordinary teachers, 43 junior title, 59 intermediate title and 162 senior teachers.

### 3. The status of teachers' professional identity and ethics

#### 3.1 Overall situation

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the questionnaire of teachers' professional identity and ethics, and the results were shown in Table 1.

Tab.1 Current status of teachers' professional identity and ethics

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Professional values	4.50	0.44	Rigorous scholarship	4.18	0.44
Professional sense of belonging	4.23	0.54	Treat students fairly	4.22	0.47
Role value	4.15	0.57	Persist in learning and development	4.02	0.52
Professional behavior tendency	4.51	0.40	Teacher-student relationship	4.04	0.53
Professional identity score	17.41	1.55	Total score of teacher ethics	16.50	1.68

Table 1 shows that the mean values of the general questionnaire of teachers' professional identity and its dimensions are high, and the mean values of the general questionnaire of teachers' professional identity and its dimensions are high, reflecting the overall high level of professional identity and teacher ethics of primary and secondary school teachers.

#### 3.2 The difference analysis of teachers' professional identity and ethics

##### 3.2.1 Position difference

Tab.2 Position difference analysis of professional identity and teacher ethics of primary and secondary school teachers (M±SD)

Variable	Position		t	Variable	Position		t
	principal (n=180)	Ordinary teacher(n=80)			principal (n=180)	Ordinary teacher(n=80)	
Professional values	4.57±0.45	4.36±0.42	3.54 **	Rigorous scholarship	4.26±0.46	4.02±0.35	4.15 **
Professional sense of belonging	4.32±0.53	4.04±0.53	3.89 **	Treat students fairly	4.27±0.49	4.13±0.42	2.16 **
Role value	4.25±0.61	3.94±0.44	4.18 **	Persist in learning and development	4.16±0.48	3.70±0.50	6.96 **
Professional behavior tendency	4.58±0.40	4.38±0.38	3.82 **	Teacher-student relationship	4.16±0.52	3.79±0.47	5.54 **
Professional identity score	17.71±1.59	16.71±1.20	5.03 **	Total score of teacher ethics	16.85±1.73	15.69±1.22	5.36 **

Note: \* means  $p<0.05$ , \*\* means  $p<0.01$ , \*\*\* means  $p<0.001$ , the same below.

Tab.3 Analysis of the differences of professional identity and ethics of primary and secondary school teachers at different teaching stages (M±SD)

Variable	teaching stages			F	Variable	teaching stages			F
	Primary school (n=79)	Junior high school (n=112)	Senior high school (n=73)			Primary school (n=79)	Junior high school (n=112)	Senior high school (n=73)	
Professional values	4.47±0.38	4.40±0.43	4.68±0.49	9.54 **	Rigorous scholarship	4.15±0.44	4.12±0.42	4.32±0.46	4.63 *
Professional sense of belonging	4.24±0.51	4.14±0.53	4.38±0.59	4.63 **	Treat students fairly	4.11±0.42	4.24±0.45	4.35±0.54	5.09 *
Role value	4.39±0.45	4.08±0.54	4.03±0.69	9.80 **	Persist in learning and development	4.07±0.45	3.91±0.53	4.15±0.58	4.80 *
Professional behavior tendency	4.41±0.39	4.50±0.40	4.66±0.38	8.02 **	Teacher-student relationship	4.10±0.43	3.98±0.53	4.10±0.63	1.74 *
Professional identity score	17.50±1.48	17.12±1.47	17.75±1.70	4.02 **	Total score of teacher ethics	16.42±1.50	16.29±1.59	16.91±1.93	3.14 *

Table 2 shows that there are significant differences in the professional identity and total score of teacher ethics of primary and secondary school teachers and their various dimensions in terms of positions ( $p<0.01$ ), which are specifically manifested as that the professional identity and total score of teacher ethics and scores of all dimensions of principals are significantly higher than that of ordinary teachers.

### 3.2.2 Teaching stage difference

Table 3 shows that the total score of professional identity and its dimensions of primary and secondary school teachers have significant differences in teaching stage ( $p<0.01$ ), and the total score of teacher ethics and its dimensions have significant differences in teaching stage ( $p<0.05$ ).

## 3.3 Correlation analysis between professional identity and ethics of primary and secondary school teachers

Tab.4 Correlation analysis of professional identity and ethics of primary and secondary school teachers

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1Professional values	1									
2Professional sense of belonging	.49**	1								
3Role value	.41**	.43**	1							
4Professional behavior tendency	.57**	.52**	.52**	1						
5Professional identity score	.76**	.79**	.78**	.81**	1					
6Rigorous scholarship	.51**	.51**	.53**	.62**	.68**	1				
7Treat students fairly	.34**	.37**	.28**	.43**	.45**	.67**	1			
8Persist in learning and development	.34**	.41**	.48**	.48**	.54**	.71**	.52**	1		
9Teacher-student relationship	.41**	.36**	.63**	.55**	.62**	.71**	.54**	.64**	1	
10Total score of teacher ethics	.46**	.50**	.56**	.61**	.67**	.89**	.79**	.85**	.85**	1

Correlation analysis shows that there is a significant positive correlation between professional identity and ethics of primary and secondary school teachers.

## 3.4 Regression analysis of professional identity and ethics of primary and secondary school teachers

Tab.5 Regression analysis of teacher professional identity and teacher ethics

Predictive variable	Dependent variable	Adjusted R square	Beta	Standard error	<i>t</i>	F
Professional identity	Teacher's ethics	.457	.678	.049	14.836***	220.102***

The regression analysis results showed that the regression equation passed the F test ( $F=220.102$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), the regression coefficient was positive, and the T-test results were significant ( $t=14.836$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), indicating that the professional identity of teachers has a significant positive effect on teacher ethics, and can positively predict teacher ethics, with a predictive power of 45.7%.

Tab.6 Regression analysis of teacher ethics from different dimensions of teacher professional identity

Predictive variable	Dependent variable	Adjusted R square	Beta	Standard error	<i>t</i>	F
Professional values	Teacher's ethics	.475	.069	.216	1.190	59.710***
Professional sense of belonging			.155	.174	2.738**	
Role value			.293	.158	5.358***	
Professional behavior tendency			.338	.257	5.466***	

The results of regression analysis showed that the regression equation passed the F test ( $F=59.710$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), the professional values dimension did not pass the test, other dimensions can enter the regression equation, and the regression coefficient is positive, the T-test result is significant ( $p<0.01$ ). These results indicate that occupational belonging, role values and occupational behavior tendency have significant positive effects on teacher ethics, and can positively predict teacher ethics, with a predictive power of 47.5%.

#### **4. Discussion and countermeasures**

This study shows that the overall level of professional identity and teacher ethics of primary and secondary school teachers is relatively high. Variables such as position, teaching stage and professional title are significant factors affecting professional identity and teacher ethics of primary and secondary school teachers, and professional identity can significantly positively predict the level of teacher ethics. At the same time, we should also see that teachers' professional identity is a dynamic process, which is gradually formed under the influence of self-factors and external dynamic factors<sup>[1]</sup>. Relevant studies point out that providing social support and consolidating professional identity are the key points for preventing and treating teacher ethics anomia<sup>[2]</sup>. To improve teachers' ethics, primary and secondary school teachers can start from strengthening their professional identity.

Therefore, on an individual level, primary and secondary school teachers can enhance their professional identity from the following four aspects: To be specific:(1) To shape the professional cognition of teachers, through education training and example guidance, make primary and secondary school teachers feel the importance of the teaching profession to the country and society from the bottom of their hearts;(2) Cultivate teachers' professional emotion, pay attention to and respect teachers' emotional labor, and establish teachers' profound emotion towards their profession<sup>[3]</sup>;(3) Strengthen teachers' professional will, firm professional belief, set up lofty professional ideal and professional values, learn pressure adjustment methods, and reasonably cope with stress response.

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