

# Professional development, employee motivation and work commitment: Basis for human resource development plan

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## ***Abstract***

The study aimed to examine the professional development, employee motivation and work commitment among teachers in some universities in China and served as basis in developing a Human Resource Development Plan for teachers. Descriptive design was used in the study as it aimed to cast light on the present issues on professional development, employee motivation and work commitment of teachers. Data were processed to enable to describe the characteristics and behavior of the sample population in the different universities in China. There were 300 teacher respondents from selected universities in China who were selected to participate in the survey. Data were gathered using questionnaire which was self-constructed. Based on the results of the study, college teachers value their professional development and they agreed that professional growth, career opportunities, sense of accomplishment, training and mentorship are all important in their professional development. The teachers agreed that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors can motivate them in performing their teaching and other related tasks. The respondents agreed that they have work commitment toward their college and universities, students, teaching and profession. There is a significant positive correlation among professional development, employee motivation and work commitment among college teachers. A Human Resource Development Plan for Teachers was developed.

***Keywords:*** professional development, employee motivation, work commitment

## **Professional development, employee motivation and work commitment: Basis for human resource development plan**

### **1. Introduction**

Colleges and universities are places for cultivating talents, where human resources are most concentrated. The abundant human resources contained in them are characterized by knowledge, complexity, subjective initiative and mobility. How to motivate and mobilize teachers' work enthusiasm effectively and improve their work performance has become the top priority of human resources management and the key to the development of colleges and universities. At present, the reform of personnel system in colleges and universities is in full swing, with the construction of talent team as the center, the concept of innovation, and the goal of scientific, democratic and institutional growth. In the face of such opportunities and challenges, colleges and universities have to further deepen the reform of personnel system according to their own characteristics in a planned and step by step guided route, give full play to the enthusiasm and creativity of human resources, provide a platform for teachers' professional development, stimulate the development potential of teachers, so as to improve their work performance and achieve sustainable development of colleges and universities.

With the flattening of the management mode, colleges and universities have endowed teachers with more and more rights. Teachers' professional development channels and loyalty are increasingly important for the construction of college teachers. Teachers need professional training and colleges need the commitment of teachers. As a theory to measure the degree of individual identification and commitment to a specific organization, teachers' motivation and work commitment has attracted more and more attention from human resource managers. For colleges and universities, it is the psychological link between teachers and colleges. Professional development provides an opportunity for continued growth and learning for educators throughout their career. While teachers earn credentials and certification through a university, professional development is intended to hone skills and help teachers evolve in an ever-changing landscape (Geurkink-Coats & Regina, 2019).

In the United States, over \$18 billion is spent annually on teacher professional development (Martin, et al., 2019). A study revealed, among the participating countries, an average of 89% of teachers engaged in professional development. The main reason for unfulfilled demand (according to teachers) is the conflict with their work schedule, and lack of suitable development opportunities is also a significant factor. This suggests a need not just for better support for teachers to participate in professional development, but for policy makers and school leaders to ensure that the development opportunities available are effective and meet teachers' needs. Initial education provides the foundations. However, continuous teacher development provides a means for improving their quality and to retention. A lifelong learning approach to teacher development is essential considering that teaching is demanding and that expectations may evolve with time. The growing diversity of learners in schools and the increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) all demand new skills of teachers. Teachers need to remain up-to-date with the changing requirements of the modern workplace.

A lifelong learning approach requires opportunities and incentives for professional development (PD) throughout their career to refresh, develop and broaden their knowledge and understanding of teaching and to improve their skills and practices. This can encompass a whole range of activities: formal courses, seminars, conferences and workshops, online training, and mentoring and supervision (Person, 202). Gore, et al., (2017) further asserted effective PD should entail the integration of the teachers in the selection of the type of PD offered to further their professional learning. Most teachers acknowledge the need for PD for new technologies, new or updated standards, or new pedagogies, thus reflecting Guskey (2000) assertion regarding professionals, including teachers, who need to stay informed of current trends and techniques related to the field of education. Considering the link or the lack of a link between academic knowledge or reform and the classroom, If

differentiation is admirable in teaching to a variety of learning styles of students, it would appear the same logic would hold true when planning for PD opportunities for teachers. PD can be made available within institutions or through external providers, such as training institutes and higher education institutions, and can be financed individually by governments, employers and individuals, or in co-funding arrangements. Governments can set different requirements and incentives to encourage staff to engage in PD: providing funds to cover training costs, providing financial support linking training to the award of higher qualifications, and making PD a requirement for salary increases or career development (Bergmark, 2023).

Scholars are paying more and more attention to the impact of professional development on staff behavior. However, there are few studies on the professional development of teachers in Chinese universities and colleges. Therefore, further discussion on the professional development of teachers in Chinese universities and colleges is a necessity. The needs of teachers on the job ought to be planned properly. Nowadays, job design is the central focus of managers and human resource researchers. Thus, a well-designed job has what it takes in getting the interest of employees. The research on teacher motivation in China and abroad mainly focuses on the connotation and dimension of teacher motivation, motivation theory, influencing factors of motivation effect, improvement countermeasures of motivation measures, etc. They define motivation as something that can trigger the pursuit of goals and meet their own needs.

The influencing factors of the existing research on the teacher motivation effect mainly focus on three aspects, namely demographic factors, individual subjective factors and external organizational factors. Employees at the initial stage of career development pay more attention to money income, pay more attention to personal development in the middle, and pay more attention to work achievements in the stable and mature career period. Yu, et al., (2019) summarized and proposed on the basis of combing existing literature that organizational factors include two structures: external motivation and internal motivation. External motivation includes three measurement dimensions: salary motivation (salary, bonus, allowance, welfare, income equity, etc.), assessment motivation (assessment, workload, work pressure, etc.), and promotion motivation (title promotion, position promotion, post level promotion, etc.), Intrinsic motivations include three measurement dimensions: innovation motivations (to satisfy the desire for novelty and truth, to explore knowledge interests, new ideas, new theories, new methods, and to play freely), achievement motivations (to enable them to enjoy success and honor, to achieve career success, to resolve difficulties, and to promote social progress, etc.), and social motivations (trust and respect of colleagues, students, and society, professional recognition, family support, and social activities, etc.).

Organizational commitment demonstrates the level of loyalty to the institution. Because college/university teachers are mainly flexible workers facing fragmentation of their organizational or professional identity (Hennekam & Bennett, 2016) the researcher will analyze the managerial conditions underlying their work commitment which reflects the degree of an employee's attachment and his/her dedication to the organization and is currently widely recognized as a multidimensional work attitude. The data collected in this study would certainly invite reimagining on how critical it is for administrators to create a positive school climate in order to promote healthy, effective environment for teachers. It is one of the key roles administrators play in the process. The researcher aims to expand the research object of professional development as most of the research objects on professional development focus on enterprise employees, while there are few studies on Chinese college and university teachers. This study takes Chinese college and university teachers as the research object and bridge the gap by extending the research scope of professional development. This study explored the teachers' driving force for continuing their professional growth while determining what type they found inspiring.

The study aimed to examine the professional development, employee motivation and work commitment among college and university teachers in China and developed an enhanced Human Resource Development Plan. Specifically, it described the professional development in terms of: professional growth, career opportunities, sense of accomplishment, training and mentorship; determined the level of motivation in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic factors; determined the work commitment as to commitment to the college/university, commitment to

students, commitment to teaching and commitment to profession; tested the significant relationships among professional development, employee motivation and work commitment among teachers; and developed an enhanced Human Resource Development Plan for teachers.

## 2. METHODS

**Research Design** - The present study utilized descriptive research design aimed to obtain information to systematically describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. Descriptive research is aimed at casting light on current issues or problems through a process of data collection that enable describing the situation more completely than was possible without employing this method (Fox & Bayat, 2008). Descriptive studies are used to describe various phenomenon. In its popular format, descriptive research is used to describe characteristics and/or behavior of sample population. It is an effective method to get information that can be used to develop hypotheses and propose associations. The present study utilized the descriptive correlational design as described the variables and the relationships that occur between them. Descriptive correlation design is used in research studies that aim to provide static pictures of situations as well as establish the relationship between different variables (McBurney & White, 2009). In this study, descriptive correlational design provided a picture of the current state and described the relationships of professional development, employee motivation and work commitment.

**Participants of the Study** - The study involved the 300 faculty members of ten Chinese universities as respondents. Ten universities in China were used as research locale of the researcher. These respondents came from the different departments in the universities who are all teaching. They are the most qualified participants as they are concerned with their professional development, motivation and work commitment to continue their profession.

**Data Gathering Instrument** - The survey questionnaire was used as the data gathering instrument in the present study. The first part of the questionnaire assessed the professional development of teachers as to professional growth, career opportunities, sense of accomplishments, training and mentorship. The second part of the questionnaire is on employee motivation which covers the intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors. The first and second part of the survey questionnaire were self-constructed. The questions were based on literature read and from published thesis and research findings about professional development and employee motivation. The third part of the questionnaire was on work commitment which includes dimensions on commitment to school, commitment to students, commitment to teaching and commitment to profession. Questions were based on the study of Shamma (2018). The reliability results showed that the computed Cronbach's alpha for professional development (0.963), employee motivation (0.819), and work commitment (0.951) indicates a strong internal consistency of the items in the rule of thumb.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The researcher used books and electronic resources to obtain relevant information on the research topics. The two parts of the questionnaire were self-constructed, and the last part was adapted. The contents of the questionnaire were validated by experts in the field. Pilot testing was also done to test the consistency of the indicators. The researcher prepared a letter consent addressed to the HR of the ten universities so she will be allowed to conduct the data gathering. After the permission, she went to ten universities and handed the hard copies of survey questionnaire among teachers. Others used online platform in answering the questionnaire. All the hard copies and soft copies were collected, tallied and summarized. Ethical considerations were taken into account when conducting research to ensure that all information collected would be used for research purposes only and that the quality and integrity of the research has been maintained.

The researcher collected data through the use of books and electronic resources and obtained data through online questionnaires. After the questionnaire had been confirmed, relevant statistical analysis tools were used for interpretation and analysis. Letters and newsletters sought the consent of school teachers to ensure that the target respondents are prepared to answer the necessary questions covered in the study. At the same time, the

confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees were guaranteed. The interviewees' names were not asked when answering the questionnaire. The researchers also made sure that the subjects voluntarily answered the questionnaire on their own terms. Finally, it ensured that research subjects were not harmed and that their safety and security are the highest priority.

**Ethical Considerations** - Ethical considerations were considered in the conduct of the research to ensure that every piece of information collected is used only for research purposes, in order to maintain the quality and integrity of the research. The researcher sought the consent of the faculty through letters and communication to ensure that the target respondents will be prepared to answer the necessary questions covered in the study. It also ensures the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents, as they are not asked for their names when answering the questionnaire. The researchers also made sure that the respondents voluntarily answered the questionnaire if they wanted to. Finally, it ensured that none of the respondents in this study is harmed and that their safety and security is the highest priority.

**Data Analysis** - Weighted mean and rank were used to describe the professional development as to professional growth, career opportunities, sense of accomplishment, training and mentorship; determine the level of motivation in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic factors; determine the work commitment as to commitment to college/university, commitment to students, commitment to teaching and commitment to profession. The result of Shapiro-Wilk Test showed that p-values of all variables were less than 0.05 which means that the data set was not normally distributed. Therefore, Spearman rho was used to test the significant relationship as part of the non-parametric tests. All analyzes were performed using SPSS version 28.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1**

*Professional Development*

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Professional Growth	3.14	Agree	1
Career Opportunities	2.99	Agree	4
Sense of Accomplishment	2.96	Agree	5
Training	3.09	Agree	2
Mentorship	3.05	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.05	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 1 shows the professional development. The comprehensive mean value is 3.05, among which, professional growth has the highest rank of 3.14. Critical dimensions in the upward progression of teachers include professional development, career opportunities, sense of accomplishment, trainings and mentorship. Using strategies in harnessing these factors, human resource managers may improve the organization's overall climate. HRM leaders may find the results of this study useful in potentially bridging gaps in terms of strategic development and implementation of professional development plan to enable teachers' higher performance in the colleges an universities in China.

Teachers representing various years of experience provided a broad scope of information by which to identify generalities applicable to teachers in China's higher education. The study indicated the majority of teachers desire to continue their professional growth for better career path, that professional development comprised of continuous personal learning chosen by the teacher, mentoring provided by school leaders and colleagues was determined to be effective. Therefore, it is believed that teachers in the different colleges and universities in China would benefit from a professional development plan, so as to guide them to constantly develop and improve themselves and achieve professional development goals.

Macfarlane, (2020) explored Chinese schools, professional development for teachers is intended to be guaranteed through three levels of organization: national, district, and school. As with most countries, a teacher's

qualifying education and ongoing in-service training are used to ensure rigorous levels of professionalism. This is achieved at the national level. At the district level, a local educational research institution is used to provide resources for professional development, including, but not limited to, school collaboration in various forms and collective participation in local lectures. Alongside this training, a school-level professional development system is important for teachers. The school-based professional development of teachers is traditionally and culturally rooted in the school system because of China's collective culture. Cao & Li (2018) introduced the Chinese school-based professional development system in detail. In their paper, the school-based professional development system is shown to include group activities, such as research, lesson planning, observation and assessment of classrooms, and master-apprentice tutoring for new teachers. Outside of group activities, daily consultations with school colleagues are also valuable professional development tools.

**Table 2***Employee Motivation*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Intrinsic Motivators	3.11	Agree	1
Extrinsic Motivators	3.03	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.07	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 shows the survey that intrinsic motivation is more important than extrinsic motivation. It shows that teaching is a job with more important subjective cognition and needs more self-drive from employees. Practical implications of the findings indicate that it is imperative that organizations and administrators determine strategies and professional development opportunities to influence a teacher's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation positively (Johnakin -Putnam, 2018). Teachers reflected on how the following factors encouraged them to remain employed despite the numerous challenges: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, professional development, and commitment. Findings of this study will inform school leader decisions on how to best support quality teachers in the colleges and universities in China that need them the most. Subsequently, once those strategies and opportunities are determined and implemented, they may increase a teacher's self-efficacy. For example, administrators should develop opportunities to tailor professional development for teachers, which is suitable for the individual needs of the learner, enable teachers to be collaborative partners by giving them opportunity to participate in decision making and formulating policies that directly impact them.

The concept of motivation has a critical importance in ensuring a sustainable success in schools. The attitude towards the teaching profession is important in terms of its impact on the processes during the practice of the profession. The motivation status of teachers regarding their profession is closely related to their commitment to their profession (Arslantaş, 2021). In addition, the desire to gain prestige in the environment where they live and to make their families happy increases the motivation of teachers regarding the profession. Accordingly, motivation specifies the reason why people decide to do something, how long people are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue the activity. As for teacher motivation, it is defined in terms of attraction, retention and concentration as something that determines 'what attracts individuals to teaching, how long they remain in their initial teacher education courses and subsequently the teaching profession, and the extent to which they engage with their courses and the teaching profession (Oddone, 2022).

**Table 3***Work Commitment*

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Commitment to School	3.06	Agree	4
Commitment to Students	3.13	Agree	2
Commitment to Teaching	3.08	Agree	3
Commitment to Profession	3.22	Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.12	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 3 show the work commitment, with commitment to career receiving the highest score. It shows that teacher is a noble job, teachers are willing to make strict demands on themselves in order to work commitment, constantly improve themselves, abide by the code of ethics and code of conduct, through words and deeds, cultivate generation after generation of talents with noble thoughts and morals. Teachers are a key ingredient in determining the quality of education. The quality of education is directly related to the quality of teaching and learning. The table show that teachers agree that commitment to students and love for the teaching profession, are vital factors to foster quality of education in the colleges and universities in China. The progress of a country depends upon the quality of its teachers and for this reason, teaching is the noblest among all professions and the teachers are called the nation builders. Nevertheless, a teacher cannot perform his or her multifarious tasks and responsibilities unless he or she is professionally and personally up to date with recent developments. Teachers shoulder the responsibility of shaping the future of the nation, thus the future of the nation depends upon the skills and efficiency of the teachers. Teaching is not an easy task, and it demands a high degree of professional qualities and commitment which is inculcated in the teacher's personality. Scholars in the field of education all over the world have started realizing that it is not sufficient to secure enough teachers, but that the most important is securing the right type of teachers with right type of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Due to this, increased stress is being laid on the aspect of the teacher education (Mattoo & Thoker, 2015).

**Table 4***Relationships among Professional Development, Employee Motivation and Work Commitment*

Paired Variables	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Professional Development & Employee Motivation	0.811**	0.000	Highly Significant
Professional Development & Work Commitment	0.592**	0.000	Highly Significant
Employee Motivation & Work Commitment	0.639**	0.000	Highly Significant

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4 describes the relationships among professional development, employee motivation, and work commitment. As can be seen from the table, the calculated rho-value is 0.811, indicating that there is a strong positive correlation between the two, which is statistically significant. The findings show that there is a positive association between work motivation and organizational commitment (Alimohammadi, & Neyshabor, 2013). In conclusion, an organization should consider enhancing work motivation to boost the level of their employees' commitment. The calculated rho-value was 0.592, indicating a moderate positive correlation between professional development and work commitment, which was statistically significant. As much as the employees are motivated that means they automatically will increase the professional performance and support professional development (Bytyqi, 2020) meant on their behalf. On the other hand, the calculated rho-value is 0.639, indicating that there is a strong positive correlation between employee motivation and work commitment, and the correlation is statistically significant. The results of analysis show that motivation has a significant effect on organizational commitment. Committed employees become more productive and efficient and are less likely to leave the organization because such employees are willing to sacrifice for the sake of the organization's goal with a strong desire to stay. Moreover, motivated employees will provide a high commitment, feel less pressure and, thus love their work.

**Table 5***Human Resource Development Plan for Teaching Staff*

Key Result Areas	Objectives	Development Plan	Persons Involved	Success Indicator
<i>Professional Development</i>		Effective Teacher Professional Development	HR heads	Highly satisfied teachers Highly effective teachers
<i>Sense of Accomplishment</i>	Identify areas for improvement and growth,	Individual Professional Development Plan for	Supervisors	Highly engaged teachers
High value on employee satisfaction.	specific professional learning activities to address improvement and enhance employee satisfaction	Teachers outlining career goals and the steps needed to take to meet those goals. An IPDP helps you focus on professional development by creating a career "action plan" for		Improved organizational performance

		skill development and career management.		
		Learning and Development Opportunities Plan for Teachers		
Good level of job security	Provide training for job security to improve productivity.	Training and Development Plan for Job Security	HR heads Supervisors	More secured teachers More engaged teachers
	Create a sense of security so employees will feel recognized and valued as human beings and employees	Policy Development Plan for Teachers Create Regular Advancement Opportunities		Improve performance and make changes when things go off track.
	Enhance employee engagement, better employee retention and less turnover rate	Offer Meaningful Employee Recognition Increase Training Opportunities		
		Have Policies to Protect Workers in Case of Disability		
		Encourage Communication Between Workers and Management		
<i>Employee Motivation</i>		School Improvement Plan Through Teacher Decision Making	HR heads Supervisors	Teachers with high decision making skills
<i>Extrinsic Factors</i>	Provide opportunity to share perspectives, voice their ideas and tap their skills to improve team effectiveness and efficiency.	Strategic Plan to empower employees to make decisions		Strengthened decision skills
School policy to enhance teachers' motivation	Enhance in bringing effectiveness in classroom and teaching learning process. Stimulate to energize, concentrate and sustain positive behavior over a long period of time among teachers	Training Plan on Strategies for Teachers' Motivation Policy Development Plan to include Teachers' Motivation		Highly motivated teachers Highly engaged teachers
My superior has developed good communication with the staff	Enhance communication skills of teachers in the workplace	Training Plan for Effective Communication Strategies for Teachers Personal Development Plan to Improve Communication Skills in the Workplace	HR heads Supervisors	Enhanced communication skills of teachers
School motivates teacher for leadership role in school	Create and maintain an efficient, effective, and motivated team for teachers Build confidence and paves the way for future inspirational leaders.	Effective School Leadership Plan Leadership Development Plan for Teachers	HR heads Supervisors	Effective leadership style of teachers Effective leadership traits
<i>Work Commitment</i>		Training Plan on Professional Commitment in the Teaching Profession	HR heads Supervisors	Improved teachers loyalty
<i>Commitment to School</i>	Improve a higher level of commitment in teaching	Training Plan for Strategies in Promoting Values		Enhanced work commitment
Own personal values and school's values are very similar.				
Following up the administrative and organizational affairs of	Formulate guidelines on administrative and organizational affairs	A Comprehensive Guide to School-Based Management (SBM)	HR heads Supervisors	Highly engaged teachers



the school

School-Based Management  
PlansStrategic Plan to Increase  
Employee Commitment

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that the College teachers value their professional development and they agreed that professional growth, career opportunities, sense of accomplishment, training and mentorship are all important in their professional development. The teachers agreed that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors can motivate them in performing their teaching and other related tasks. The respondents agreed that they have work commitment toward their college and universities, students, and teaching profession. There is a significant positive correlation among professional development, employee motivation and work commitment among college teachers. A Human Resource Development Plan for Teachers was developed.

Colleges and universities may be concerned about the professional development of teachers, make good career planning, provide clear channels for promotion, and ensure that teachers' development is for all concerned stakeholders. Colleges and universities may provide a disciplined, free and open teaching environment in which teachers have the opportunity to participate in relevant decision-making, so as to enhance their motivation and enthusiasm. Colleges and universities may provide continuous relevant training opportunities with the ever-changing landscape in interactive, collaborative ways for teachers to improve their professional knowledge and teaching skills in order to teach well and perform other related tasks. In the future, researchers may adopt mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative research methods, to further study the relationship between professional development, employee motivation and work commitment. In addition, future researchers may invite more universities and teachers to participate in relevant surveys and conduct in-depth analysis in more dimensions such as gender and education background.

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