

Teacher's professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction in Chinese University

Yan, Li 

Graduate School, Lyceum of the Philippines University – Batangas (464736602@qq.com)
He Tao College of China



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Abstract

Under the background of "double first-class" construction, the teaching staff, as the foundation of the construction of colleges and universities, determines the overall construction effect of colleges and universities. High-level teachers are the guarantee of talent cultivation, education and teaching, scientific research and competitiveness of colleges and universities. However, the improvement of teachers' quality is affected by many factors, which leads to teachers' choices that affect their overall performance when facing teaching and scientific research tasks. In view of this, this study attempts to determine the relationship between professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction in Chinese universities and colleges, and to propose ways to improve teacher quality. A total of 400 valid questionnaires were collected in this study, and SPSS 26.0 software was used for descriptive analysis, variance analysis and regression analysis. The results show that there is a positive correlation between professional ability, incentive mechanism and teacher satisfaction in Chinese universities. This means that the stronger the professional ability of teachers, the better the incentive mechanism, the higher the satisfaction of teachers, and the corresponding improvement of teacher quality. Through this research, universities may encourage and support the training and professional development of young teachers. This will help balance the age structure of the teaching force and provide more development opportunities for young teachers. As teachers themselves, they may continuously improve their level of professional ability, including teaching and academic ability, and formulate their own career plans in order to adapt to the constant changes in society. Regular teacher training programs should be established to help enhance their professional competence, while salaries and benefits should be improved to better motivate teachers.

Keywords: teacher's professional ability, incentive mechanism, career satisfaction, teacher quality improvement, Chinese university

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1. Introduction

Conant, former president of Harvard University, once said, "The honor of a university does not depend on the number of its buildings or the number of its people, but on the quality of its teachers." This shows that teachers are the main force in the construction of colleges and universities and play an indispensable role in promoting the quality of education and knowledge dissemination (Zhang, 2021). However, how to improve the quality of their education and job satisfaction has always been a concern. The purpose of this study is to deeply explore the relationship among the three key variables of college teachers' professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction, so as to reveal how to effectively improve the comprehensive quality of university teachers.

In China, the higher education system is increasingly large and complex, and university teachers need to deal with diverse tasks and challenges. They not only need to have excellent academic background and professional ability, but also need to achieve full career satisfaction with the support of the incentive mechanism. The balance and correlation between these three variables are critical to the personal and organizational success of university teachers. These variables have been extensively explored in the field of education research, but few studies have focused on how they relate to each other.

In order to better investigate and analyze the quality of university teachers, this paper adopts the questionnaire survey method and takes He Tao College in China as examples to study the professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction of university teachers. The analysis is made from the aspect of demography and the relevant theoretical knowledge is sorted out as the theoretical basis for the writing of this paper. Teachers' professional ability refers to their ability and quality in academic, research and teaching (Wang, 2019). The incentive mechanism is based on the premise of organizational goals and encourages teachers to take active actions in teaching and research through job evaluation, performance salary, professional development and participation in management, so as to stimulate teachers' academic potential to the greatest extent and promote the improvement of teachers' quality (Li, 2019). Career satisfaction refers to teachers' inner feelings about their work itself, working environment, interpersonal relationship and other factors, as well as their satisfaction with their work and career development (Zhang, 2019). Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, this paper will start from physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs.

In the respondent's school, there is a phenomenon where there exists an interplay between teacher professional ability, incentive mechanisms, and teacher satisfaction. Firstly, teacher professional ability plays a crucial role in university education. This encompasses abilities in teaching, subject knowledge, teaching methodologies, among others. Teacher professional ability directly influences the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Secondly, incentive mechanisms are significant factors affecting teacher motivation and performance. These mechanisms include salary, promotion opportunities, academic research support, etc. A well-designed incentive system can stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and creativity, fostering continuous improvement in professional competence. Lastly, teacher satisfaction reflects their contentment with the work environment and responsibilities. Teacher satisfaction is influenced by both professional ability and incentive mechanisms. When teachers' professional ability is recognized and they receive adequate incentives, they tend to be more satisfied with their work. In conclusion, there is a mutual relationship among teacher professional ability, incentive mechanisms, and teacher satisfaction. Universities can enhance teacher satisfaction and promote continuous development in educational practices by improving incentive mechanisms and fostering professional competence among teachers.

This study aims to reveal the relationship among professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction of university teachers in order to provide concrete recommendations for higher education administrators, policy makers and education researchers on how to improve teacher quality. The results of the study will help optimize teacher training, incentive mechanisms, and educational policies, thereby improving the quality of higher education, enhancing teacher job satisfaction, and ultimately benefiting students and society.

Objectives of the Study - This article delves into the teacher's professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction in Chinese university, and proposes some corresponding countermeasures based on empirical analysis. Specifically, it sought to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, highest educational attainment and length of service; to determine the professional ability in terms of academic ability, academic attitude and vocational ability; to assess the incentive mechanism as to physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization; and to identify career satisfaction of university teachers in terms of working environment, job content, compensation and welfare, evaluation and management and personal development; to test the significant differences when grouped according to profile variables; to test the significant relationship among teachers' professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction; and to propose professional development plan for Chinese university teachers.

2. Methods

Research Design - This study used descriptive design to understand, describe, interpret or validate what is in the specific situation with a particular group of people. The phenomena or circumstance being investigated was not subject to any attempts of manipulation or control by the researcher. Instead, the researcher saw it happen and took measurements of it. In quantitative descriptive research, the variables are measured by using numerical terms. Based on the objectives of the study, a descriptive quantitative design was used to collect the participants' data and then data analysis was done in order to give a description and interpretation of the teacher quality in Chinese university. Questionnaires, containing descriptive items, were used to investigate the teacher's professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction.

Participants of the study - The target participants of this study are Chinese university teachers, including administrators and full-time teachers who hold or have held administrative positions in Chinese universities. There are 865 full-time faculty members. The ideal number of respondents was determined within the 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error, and the sample calculator was used to get the number of 266 that should be sampled, and the researcher enlarged the sample size to make the survey more accurate by adding an additional 134 to the survey. So the total number of respondents in this survey was 400. The total number of the teachers are They are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in research. This study are completed under the guidance of statistics advisor of LPU Graduate School.

Instrument of the Study - The study's adapted instrument has four primary components: one section about demographics and three questionnaire instruments. In the demographic section, participants are required to give answers indicating their sex, highest education, teaching time in university, and age. According to sufficient levels of reliability and construct validity, this questionnaire was validated for use by the teachers in a specific university in China. This is a provincial key normal university with more than 60 years of history. Although it has been renamed and relocated several times, it has strong teachers and fruitful teaching results. It has been selected as the "Excellent Teacher Training Program" and has 3 doctoral programs in first-level disciplines and more than 10 provincial key disciplines. The school has more than 2830 staff members, more than 1570 full-time teachers, more than 320 people with senior titles, more than 620 people with associate senior titles, including more than 710 teachers with doctoral degrees. More than 60% of the full-time teachers in this university have associate senior titles or above. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with each item on a 4-point Likert scale (1 being "Strongly disagree" and 4 being "Strongly agree"). The original Chinese questionnaire was translated into English.

Five Chinese academics with substantial expertise researching pedagogy in higher education afterwards evaluated the items' understandability and made many recommendations. Minor adjustments were made in response to the anticipated ambiguities in certain items' meanings. The five Chinese experts then examined the items and proposed that some be deleted because of concerns with repetition and comprehension. In the final English and Chinese version used in this study, the original 39 items were reduced to 32 as a result of these changes.

The instrument is conducted among 958 teachers at a private university in China. The instrument consisted of 37 items designed to test the needs and motivations of teachers related to their work. According to the rationality of the hierarchy of needs theory, some duplicate items were reduced, so 20 items were retained for testing in the end. The original questions were translated into Chinese before being administered because Chinese is the first language of every participant. The third part of the instrument focused on survey teachers' career satisfaction. According to its original design, the respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with each item on a 4-point Likert scale (1 being "Strongly disagree" and 4 being "Strongly agree"). The original Chinese questionnaire was translated into English. The fourth part of the instrument is a questionnaire developed and validated by Wang (2019). They included five factors: 1) Working environment; 2) Job content; 3) Compensation and welfare; 4) Evaluation and management; and 5) Personal development.

The 27 competence statements that make up the final list combine formulations from numerous sources. After selecting the three questionnaires, a validation of these questionnaires was done by five experts with rich experience teachers in selected universities in China. A summary report on the validation of questionnaires was submitted to the adviser for the approval of pilot test.

Data Gathering Procedure - Since the author was in the Philippines at the time of writing, the questionnaire for this study was created, distributed, collected, and then tested online. With the help of Questionnaire Star platform, researchers made questionnaires and generated web links to fill in the questionnaires. In order to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the author first sent out a total of 400 questionnaires, and the results show that the validity of the questionnaire is qualified. The usual index for evaluating reliability is the Cronbach's alpha coefficient developed for Likert scales. The higher the coefficient, the higher the degree of internal consistency, and thus the better the reliability of the scale. The value of the reliability coefficients ranges from 0 to 1.0. The alpha values of the thirteen dimensions were 0.950, 0.931, 0.959, 0.924, 0.854, 0.841, 0.843, 0.934, 0.909, 0.937 and 0.909 respectively. The Cronbach alpha of safety needs, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization and working environment was greater than 0.80, which indicates that the scale is good. In terms of the others, the result was greater than 0.9, and all marked excellent. Accordingly, it indicates that the questionnaire has good internal consistency and is suitable for research analysis.

Data Analysis - Following data collection, the properties of each variable as well as the association between the three variables were interpreted and examined using frequency distribution, percentage distribution, weighted mean, multiple-regression, and co-variance. Weighted mean and ranking were used to determine the values of the three variables. Relationships among teacher's professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction were tested with ANOVA. Regression analysis was also applied in the statistical treatment. All collected data were processed by the tool of Statistic Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 26 statistical analysis. The analysis concentrated on determining from the questionnaire data the degree to which participants disagree or agree with the statements on motivation, the frequency of application of each motivational strategy in university teachers.

Ethical Consideration - The study obtained the informed consent of all participants, who clearly understood the nature, purpose, risks and their rights and interests of the study, and participated voluntarily. This survey protects the privacy of the participants. The researchers explicitly do not require the names of the participants in the questionnaire and will not disclose the information of the respondents under any circumstances. Researchers respect participants' rights, including the right to terminate participation, the right to refuse to answer specific

questions, and the right to access their data.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1

Summary Table on Teachers' Professional Ability

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Academic Ability	2.87	Agree	2
Academic Attitude	2.88	Agree	1
Vocational Ability	2.85	Agree	3
Composite Mean	2.87	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 was a summary of teachers' professional competencies. The statistical results showed that the participants showed positive attitudes towards academic ability, academic attitudes and vocational ability. The mean scores were in the "Agree" category, which indicated that they generally perceived themselves as having a high level of confidence and ability in these areas. Academic attitude scored 2.88, which was slightly higher than academic ability, indicated that participants had a positive academic attitude. Academic ability scored 2.87, indicated that participants perceived themselves to have a high level of competence in academic areas and confidence in educational research. Vocational ability, with a score of 2.85, also fall into the "Agree" category, indicated that participants believe they had the skills and knowledge needed to do their jobs.

The academic ability score of 2.87 indicated that participants generally perceive themselves as having high academic ability, they were confident in their academic field, due to the knowledge, skills, and academic experience they had gained over years of academic training and work. They may have earned a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree, which enhances their academic confidence. The academic attitude score of 2.88 indicated that the participants had a positive academic attitude and are enthusiastic, dedicated, and active academic practitioners, which may be due to the fact that they were passionate about their academic work, believed that it had a sense of mission and value, and at the same time, enjoyed the process of education and research, and were willing to invest their time and energy in it, and believed that academic work was a meaningful career. They also enjoyed the process of education and research, were willing to devote time and energy, and considered academic work as a meaningful career. The score of 2.85 for vocational ability indicated that the participants believed that they had vocational ability, included the skills and knowledge needed for their jobs, probably because they had gained some work experience in their vocational field, had the necessary skills to perform their jobs, and had received relevant vocational training.

In terms of external guarantee and self-improvement, Zhou et. al., (2013) believed that university teachers' professional development departments should systematize the cultivation of teaching academic competence and established a perfect pre-service and post-service cultivation system; Liu (2007) believed in constructing a new type of evaluation mechanism to promote the transformation of outcome-based evaluation to process-based evaluation; Xu (2016) believed in building a teaching academic development information platform for the development of teaching academics and drawing on advanced science and technology could boost the improvement of teachers' teaching academics' ability; Chen et. al., (2015) believed that as far as teachers were concerned, they should firmly establish the concept of teaching academics and recognized the status of teaching academics and took the initiative to apply it to their practice under the concept of "student-centeredness".

In conclusion, professional abilities could be divided into teaching, research and social service competencies, which was basically consistent with the study in this paper. As a result of her investigation, it was shown that job title affects teachers' academic career competencies. The title produced significant differences in teaching, research and social service competencies.

Table 2 presents the summary assessment on incentive mechanism. The composite mean of 2.86 denotes that respondents generally agreed on the incentive mechanism. The data showed that college faculty agreed with the

importance of meeting the need for "security, belonging, and love" with the highest score of 2.88.

Table 2

Summary Table on Incentive Mechanism

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Physiological Needs	2.84	Agree	3
Safety Needs, love and belonging	2.88	Agree	1
Esteem and self-actualization	2.87	Agree	2
Composite Mean	2.86	Agree	

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

This related to an individual's need for security, stability and social connection. This corresponded to the second and third levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Safety needs and social needs were pursued by people after satisfying their physiological needs. Higher education faculty needed to feel safe and stable in their work environments and also needed to fulfill their social needs with colleagues, students, and the academic community. The college senate had made a lot of efforts to safeguard teachers' legitimate economic, spiritual and cultural, safety, and social security rights and interests, and to build a guarantee for teachers' academic development in all aspects, so that they could devote themselves to their academics wholeheartedly (Li, 2019).

The data revealed that college teachers agreed on the importance of meeting the needs of respect and self-actualization with the second highest score of 2.87. This reflected the needs of higher education teachers seeking respect, self-esteem, personal growth and academic motivation. This correlated with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory of respect and self-actualization needs level. The need for respect referred to recognition and attention from leaders and students, higher social status, and receiving recognition and rewards. The need for self-actualization referred to the opportunity for title promotion, the opportunity to get education and training, a challenging job, and the opportunity to go abroad (Qiu, 2018). Enhancing teachers' sense of achievement helped to improve teachers' teaching performance. Colleges and universities should further enhance teachers' self-worth and sense of achievement in order to promote teachers' continuous self-motivation (Zhou et. al., 2013). Higher education teachers' cordiality and warmth and being friendly were important characteristics for carrying out effective classroom behaviors, and teachers who were good at communication learn teaching methods and teaching experiences, etc., through mutual communication among colleagues (Ryan, 1964).

The data on physiological needs showed that college teachers agreed on the importance of meeting physiological needs with a score of 2.84. This result was consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory of physiological needs level, survival needs (including physiological needs and safety needs) referred to a generous salary, good welfare benefits. In the incentive mechanism, it was crucial to ensure that the basic needs of university teachers were met because if these needs were not met, individuals would have difficulty focused on their work and academic tasks.

Table 3

Summary Table on Career Satisfaction

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Working Environment	2.88	Satisfied	2
Job Content	2.84	Satisfied	5
Compensation and Welfare	2.85	Satisfied	4
Evaluation and Management	2.89	Satisfied	1
Personal Development	2.87	Satisfied	3
Composite Mean	2.87	Satisfied	

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

Teachers' career satisfaction was assessed in the areas of work environment, job content, remuneration and benefits, assessment and management, and personal development together. Teachers were relatively satisfied with the assessment and management of the school, which was characterized by transparent and fair procedures and impartial assessment criteria, which helped to reduce uncertainty and dissatisfaction among teachers.

Effective incentives were in place to encourage teachers to achieve excellence, included opportunities for promotion, bonuses, and honors, which provided teachers with greater motivation to participate and excel in their work. Appraisal and management systems provided teachers with feedback on their performance to help them improve and grow, and such feedback was important for increasing teachers' career satisfaction.

The working environment had an important impact on the satisfaction of college teachers. Good office conditions, such as spacious and bright offices, advanced office equipment, and comfortable work chairs, helped to improve the satisfaction of college teachers. Comfortable working environment could improve working efficiency, reduce working pressure, and make teachers more willing to devote themselves to education. High-quality teaching equipment and resources were vital to teaching. If schools provided modern classrooms, laboratory equipment and library resources, teachers would be more likely to carry out efficient teaching and research work, thus increased satisfaction. Appropriate work pressure and work intensity were necessary, but excessive pressure and work intensity may reduce teacher satisfaction. Schools should ensure that workloads were distributed appropriately to avoid unnecessary stress and excessive work demands. Teachers in higher education needed to know that their job security was guaranteed. Stable terms of employment, reasonable salary packages and benefits, opportunities for career development, and protection of intellectual property rights were all part of job security. Teacher satisfaction would increase if these aspects were adequately safeguarded.

In terms of personal development, included opportunities for overseas training and exchanges, support for off-campus training and further education, and on-campus training, the opportunities provided by the university for university teachers to go abroad for training and exchanges could help to broaden their international perspectives and improved their education and research standards. Such opportunities were often considered an important career development opportunity that could stimulate teachers' motivation and work drive. Teachers were usually more satisfied and willing to continue working in their schools if they had the opportunity to go abroad for exchanges. Schools' support for teachers' participation in off-campus training and further education also meant that teachers were encouraged to continue to learn and improved their professionalism. In-school training was an effective way to improve teachers' teaching and research.

Teachers usually felt more satisfied if the wage level was relatively high and sufficient to meet their basic living needs. On the contrary, if the salary was low and cannot meet daily expenses, it would lead to a decrease in satisfaction. According to Liu (2016), the wage increased mechanism involved the future trend of teachers' remuneration. If schools provided a fair, transparent and competitive salary increase mechanism, teachers would feel fairly treated and motivated to improve their performance. On the contrary, if the mechanism was not fair or transparent, it may lead to a decrease in satisfaction. Leng (2018) suggested that health care coverage was a key benefit that concerns the health of teachers and their families. If schools provided comprehensive health insurance and wellness services, teachers could better cope with health issues, reducing their financial burden. According to Guan (2021), teachers were concerned about their living arrangements after retirement, and stable pensions, gratuities, and other retirement benefits could help to increase teachers' sense of security and ensure their quality of life in retirement.

Job content affected the satisfaction of university teachers, especially factors related to teaching autonomy, autonomy in evaluating students' performance, academic freedom, freedom in allocating research resources within the university, freedom in social service, and worked protected by intellectual property rights. Yan (2015) argued that sufficient teaching autonomy, included the choice of teaching materials, teaching methods, and course design, directly affects their teaching satisfaction. According to Cao (2021), academic freedom meant that teachers could choose their own research fields and conduct academic research without restrictions. Colleges and universities encouraged academic freedom and provided resources and supported so that teachers could better utilize their potentials, which was helpful in improving the academic standard of research.

Table 4 showed the association between teacher's professional ability and incentive mechanism. It was observed that the computed r-values indicated a very strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less

than the alpha level. This meant that there was significant relationship exists and showed that the better the teachers' ability, better was the incentive mechanism.

Table 4*Relationship Between Teachers' professional ability and Incentive Mechanism*

Academic Ability	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Physiological Needs	.896**	0.000	Highly Significant
Safety Needs, love and belonging	.918**	0.000	Highly Significant
Esteem and self-actualization	.948**	0.000	Highly Significant
Academic Attitude			
Physiological Needs	.891**	0.000	Highly Significant
Safety Needs, love and belonging	.903**	0.000	Highly Significant
Esteem and self-actualization	.929**	0.000	Highly Significant
Vocational Ability			
Physiological Needs	.902**	0.000	Highly Significant
Safety Needs, love and belonging	.912**	0.000	Highly Significant
Esteem and self-actualization	.949**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, teachers' needs were categorized into three levels. The first was physiological needs, included salary, welfare benefits, housing, and children's education to meet basic survival needs. Then there were safety needs, love and belonging, included a good working environment, harmonious interpersonal relationships, a good campus culture, and respect from leaders and students. Lastly, esteem and self-actualization, included a reasonable system, opportunities for exchange and learning that the school can provide, and career planning. Incentives may encourage teachers to participate actively in continuing education and training in order to continuously improve their education and teaching skills. This helped to expand their professional knowledge, improved the quality of education and strengthen their professional competence. Xu (2021) As teachers' professional competence increases, they were more likely to have access to various incentives. Having higher teaching and research competencies usually made them more competitive in terms of salaries, promotions and rewards. Therefore, improving professional competence was an incentive in itself that motivated teachers to continuously improve themselves (Gao, 2018).

Table 5*Relationship Between Teachers' professional ability and Career Satisfaction*

Academic Ability	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Working Environment	.906**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Content	.931**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation and Welfare	.914**	0.000	Highly Significant
Evaluation and Management	.918**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Development	.908**	0.000	Highly Significant
Academic Attitude			
Working Environment	.887**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Content	.916**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation and Welfare	.898**	0.000	Highly Significant
Evaluation and Management	.906**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Development	.895**	0.000	Highly Significant
Vocational Ability			
Working Environment	.911**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Content	.927**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation and Welfare	.912**	0.000	Highly Significant
Evaluation and Management	.925**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Development	.912**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 5 presented the association between teacher's professional ability and career satisfaction. It was observed that the computed r-values indicates a very strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This meant that there was significant relationship existed and showed that the better the

teachers' ability, the more that they were satisfied in their career. Teachers' professional competencies, included educational standards, teaching skills, academic research skills and general qualities, had a direct impact on their performance in the field of education. Higher levels of professional competence usually resulted in teachers being more confident and better equipped to meet the challenges of teaching and learning and to improve the quality of education, thereby increasing professional satisfaction. Teachers with high levels of satisfaction were more likely to invest more time and effort in improving the quality of education because they were satisfied with their work (Zhang, 2019). In conclusion, there was a mutually reinforcing relationship between the professional competence and professional satisfaction of university teachers. This relationship was important for improving the quality of education, the personal development of teachers, and the development of the education system as a whole.

Table 6

Relationship Between Incentive Mechanism and Career Satisfaction

Physiological Needs	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Working Environment	.869**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Content	.883**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation and Welfare	.888**	0.000	Highly Significant
Evaluation and Management	.891**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Development	.893**	0.000	Highly Significant
Safety Needs, love and belonging			
Working Environment	.879**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Content	.885**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation and Welfare	.898**	0.000	Highly Significant
Evaluation and Management	.893**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Development	.893**	0.000	Highly Significant
Esteem and self-actualization			
Working Environment	.913**	0.000	Highly Significant
Job Content	.928**	0.000	Highly Significant
Compensation and Welfare	.928**	0.000	Highly Significant
Evaluation and Management	.927**	0.000	Highly Significant
Personal Development	.922**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 6 displayed the association between incentive mechanism and career satisfaction. It was observed that the computed r-values indicated a very strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values were less than the alpha level. This showed that there was significant relationship exists and reveals that the better the incentive mechanism, the more that they were satisfied in their career. The salary level of college teachers was directly related to their quality of life and career satisfaction. Reasonable salary incentives could improve teachers' satisfaction and make them more motivated to put more effort in their work (Zhang, 2019). Providing promotion opportunities and promotion channels in the incentive mechanism could motivate teachers. When teachers saw that their efforts lead to promotion and career development opportunities, they were more motivated to work, which increases career satisfaction. Providing teachers with opportunities for professional development, such as attending workshops, curriculum improvement, and other training, could enhance their professional competence and career satisfaction (Dong Feng, 2012). In conclusion, teachers with high levels of satisfaction were more likely to exhibit positive work attitudes and performance because they were satisfied with their jobs and were willing to devote more time and energy to them.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The professional ability of university teachers is closely related to the following three aspects: academic ability, academic attitude and vocational ability. University teachers focus on incentive mechanism as their job security as well as effective incentive mechanism to promote their professional ability. The increase in career satisfaction helps to enhance the ability of teachers, at the same time, contributes to the overall development of the university. There are significant differences between teacher's professional ability, incentive mechanism and career satisfaction. There are significant relationships among the three variables, indicating that the better the

professional ability exhibited by the university teacher, the better the incentive mechanism, and the higher the career satisfaction. A professional development plan was proved to help Chinese university teachers to improve themselves so that Improve the quality of teachers in higher education.

Universities may encourage and support the training and professional development of young teachers. This will help balance the age structure of the teaching force and provide more development opportunities for young teachers. As teachers themselves, they may continuously improve their level of professional ability, including teaching and academic ability, and formulate their own career plans in order to adapt to the constant changes in society. Regular teacher training programs should be established to help enhance their professional competence, while salaries and benefits should be improved to better motivate teachers. The human resources departments of university may regularly formulate teacher training programs, encourage teachers to go out for study and training, enhance teachers' career satisfaction, improve teachers' treatment, emphasize teachers' social status, and give teachers a sufficient sense of career security. The professional development plan for Chinese university teachers may be presented and evaluated for implementation. Future researchers may conduct another study using the impact of the teacher's professional ability on incentive mechanism and career satisfaction.

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