

# Leadership Virtues, Professional Self-Esteem, and Teaching Management of Chinese University Professors: Basis for Professional Development Plan

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**Abstract:** This study used a descriptive-quantitative research method as it describes the profile of Chinese university professors in terms of age, gender, and educational background. It also described the leadership virtues in terms of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice; professional self-esteem in terms of career choice and adaptability, career satisfaction and values, career impact and fulfillment, and career competence and evaluation; and teaching management in terms of teaching management and evaluation, the area of teaching and research activities, and the area of collective lesson planning activities. Diversity leadership training and instructional management training are provided to meet the needs of different groups of faculty and staff of different gender, age, and education levels. Individualized professional development plans are based on the personal characteristics and needs of professors, particularly in the areas of leadership, teaching management, and career satisfaction. To address the relationship among leadership virtues, professional self-esteem, and teaching management, long-term, in-depth research is encouraged to better understand the dynamics between them. Based on the results, this paper recommends the implementation of the proposed professional development plan.

**Keywords:** Leadership virtues; Professional self-esteem; Teaching management

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## 1. Introduction

The leadership virtues and professional self-esteem of professors, as the backbone of the higher education field, have a profound impact on teaching management. Firstly, professors' leadership virtues are reflected in their unique insights into knowledge and passionate pursuit of scholarship. He argued that they are not only transmitters of disciplinary knowledge but also mentors who guide students in exploring the depth of their ideas<sup>[1]</sup>. Leadership virtues inspire students to pursue excellence and foster academic innovation and independent thinking.

On the other hand, professors' professional self-esteem is an important cornerstone of a good teaching management system. They treat education professionally and actively participate in academic research and

teaching reform. Qi pointed out that professional self-esteem pushes professors to continuously improve their education and provide higher-quality teaching services for students<sup>[2]</sup>. At the same time, professors, guided by their professional self-esteem, establish a good teacher's dignity, provide students with attentive guidance, and cultivate their all-round development. Hu and Song also pointed out that professors' leadership virtues and professional self-esteem injected strong positive energy into higher education, promoting the prosperity of academic research and the improvement of students' comprehensive quality<sup>[3]</sup>. This impact is not only reflected in the classroom but also has far-reaching effects on the academic community and society, making a positive contribution to the cultivation of internationally competitive talents. In a word, teaching management is a systematic work, which needs to start from many aspects and coordinate all aspects in order to realize the goal of teaching.

For the professional self-esteem of Chinese university professors, there is a need for an in-depth examination of their self-perception and sense of self-worth in the face of educational challenges and pressures. Fassino and Amianto stated that understanding their pride in their profession of education, their sense of responsibility, and their pursuit of teaching quality is instructive for the establishment of a healthier teaching management system<sup>[4]</sup>.

The performance of leadership virtues of Chinese university professors in higher education and their impact on teaching management, as well as the current status of professional self-esteem of the university professors' group and its impact on teaching management, have not yet been fully explored and understood. Therefore, it is of great theoretical significance and practical value to study the relationship between leadership virtues, professional self-esteem, and teaching management of Chinese university professors.

Diz-Otero *et al.* argued that professional self-esteem is an important factor in shaping professors' individual qualities and attitudes toward teaching<sup>[5]</sup>, and plays an indispensable role in building a positive instructional management environment and improving the quality of education. Fostering and strengthening professors' professional self-esteem can contribute to more productive instructional management practices and provide students with a richer academic experience.

There is a relative lack of in-depth research that investigates the association among leadership virtues, professional self-esteem, and teaching management. This study can enrich the theoretical system in the field of education management, and can also provide useful reference and inspiration for actual teaching management in universities in China that can promote a more scientific, rational, and humanized development in the field of education.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Leadership virtues

Leadership virtues are good character and moral qualities and corresponding behavioral manifestations demonstrated in the leadership process. According to He, leadership virtues are an attitude of responsibility and respect for others that reflects the moral character, charisma, and values of the leader<sup>[1]</sup>. In the field of education, leadership virtues include, but are not limited to, the qualities of mission, responsibility, compassion, integrity, honesty, and the principles of fairness and impartiality possessed by professors. This study will focus on the role and influence of leadership virtues on the teaching management of professors in Chinese universities.

The exemplary effect of leadership virtues can have a positive impact on the university professor community. Firstly, leadership virtues have a role model effect, which can mobilize teachers and students and promote a positive teaching and learning environment. Secondly, Qi argued that leadership virtues can enhance the influence and appeal of teachers and improve the overall quality and reputation of the educational field<sup>[2]</sup>. In addition, leadership virtues can promote cooperation and communication among teachers and form an atmosphere of teamwork, which is conducive to jointly solving problems and challenges in teaching and learning management.

Huang showed that by clarifying the definition and manifestation of leadership virtues, analyzing its theoretical foundation and current research status, as well as its specific impact and evaluation criteria in the field of higher education, we can provide theoretical support for enhancing university professors' knowledge and practice of leadership virtues, and further improving teaching management quality by providing theoretical and practical support <sup>[6]</sup>. Meanwhile, this study will also verify the impact of leadership virtues and professional self-esteem on teaching management through empirical research methods, providing specific data and statistical analysis support for the cultivation and teaching management practice of college professors. Through the in-depth exploration of this study, it is expected to further enhance the practical effects of leadership virtues and professional self-esteem on teaching management and contribute to the improvement of college professors' teaching management ability and level.

According to Qian <sup>[7]</sup>, justice and fairness are other important elements of leadership virtues. Professors should treat every student and employee fairly and impartially. Fair behavior can win the respect of students and colleagues and establish a harmonious working environment.

In addition, Ying <sup>[8]</sup> argued that caring for others is also one of the components of professorial leadership virtues. Professors should care about the growth and development of students and staff, pay attention to their emotional needs, stimulate their motivation and potential, help them solve problems, and motivate them to make personal and team progress.

The application of leadership virtue theory in the field of higher education can make university professors become role models and guides for students and promote their overall development. At the same time, Wang and Sun found that leadership virtues have a great impact on university professors <sup>[9]</sup>, which can enhance the teaching effect and influence of professors. Evaluating the leadership virtues of university professors requires comprehensive consideration of their teaching and management abilities, personal qualities, interpersonal and communication skills, and other indicators. These research results will provide an important reference for enhancing the awareness of leadership virtues and professional self-esteem of university professors to further improve the quality of teaching and management.

In summary, the evaluation criteria for evaluating the leadership virtues of university professors should include positive professional conduct, excellent professionalism, and good interpersonal communication and cooperation skills. In the specific evaluation, it is necessary to formulate corresponding standards according to different disciplines and schools to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of the evaluation. For university professors, the continuous enhancement of leadership virtues will help to improve teaching management skills and further enhance teaching quality.

## **2.2. Professional self-esteem**

Professional self-esteem refers to the extent to which an individual recognizes and respects his or her value and status in an occupational role. Specifically, professional self-esteem is the degree to which an individual recognizes his or her own occupational competence and professional accomplishments as well as a sense of value and pride in his or her occupational field. The definition of professional self-esteem can be parsed in multiple dimensions.

Zhang <sup>[10]</sup> showed that professional self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation and attitude towards the occupation he or she is engaged in and is the degree of recognition and satisfaction of the individual with his or her occupational role. There are many factors affecting professional self-esteem, which will be explored in detail in this section from three aspects: individual characteristics, external environment, and career development.

First of all, individual characteristics are one of the key factors affecting professional self-esteem. Individual factors such as personality traits, self-esteem, and self-identity can have a positive or negative impact on

professional self-esteem.

Secondly, the external environment is also an important factor affecting professional self-esteem. The external environment includes social and cultural background, organizational culture, and work environment. Socio-cultural background characteristics refer to the influence of different cultural backgrounds in different countries, regions, industries, etc. on professional self-esteem. In an organizational culture that values career development and employee value, individuals tend to have higher identification with their careers and professional self-esteem; whereas in an organization that lacks career development opportunities and individual support, individuals tend to have lower professional self-esteem. The work environment includes aspects of job content, working conditions, and relationships with coworkers. Challenging and fulfilling job content and positive coworker relationships tend to promote individuals' identity and self-esteem in their careers.

Lastly, career development is also an important factor in professional self-esteem. Career development includes an individual's performance in terms of opportunities for advancement in their career, career development planning, and career success. Individuals with good career development opportunities and success tend to have higher self-esteem about their careers. In contrast, individuals who lack career advancement opportunities and career success tend to exhibit relatively low professional self-esteem about their careers.

In addition, individual professors should also focus on self-improvement and development. Gao's <sup>[11]</sup> study showed that professors should continuously improve their level of professional knowledge and skills in teaching and research, and endeavor to achieve academic breakthroughs and innovations to enhance their academic achievements and influence. Through continuous learning and self-improvement, professors can enhance their professional self-esteem and improve their teaching quality and academic status.

To summarize, enhancing professors' professional self-esteem requires the joint efforts of many parties. Schools and society should strengthen the support and recognition of professors, establish good evaluation mechanisms and communication channels, and promote professors' professional development and sense of achievement. Individual professors should also continue to improve themselves, pursue academic breakthroughs and innovations, and enhance their academic ability and influence. Through the comprehensive implementation of the above measures, it is expected to effectively enhance the professional self-esteem of professors in Chinese universities and promote the continuous improvement of teaching management and quality.

### **2.3. Teaching management**

Teaching management refers to the process of organizing, coordinating, and regulating teaching activities in the process of education and teaching through various means and methods with the aim of improving teaching quality and students' learning outcomes. According to Gao <sup>[11]</sup>, teaching management has a broader meaning, which includes not only curriculum setting, teaching organization, and teaching evaluation, but also the coordination of teacher-student relationships, teaching resource allocation, and the construction of school systems. The purpose of teaching management is to achieve effective teaching and realize educational goals

Firstly, teaching management includes curriculum setting. Tang and Pan <sup>[12]</sup> showed that teaching managers need to formulate and adjust the curriculum plan according to the school's development goals and educational and teaching needs to ensure that the curriculum content matches students' learning needs, which should meet the requirements of subject knowledge as well as cultivate students' comprehensive ability and innovative thinking ability.

Secondly, Ma argued that teaching management involves teaching organization <sup>[13]</sup>. Teaching managers need to rationally arrange teaching time and teaching methods according to the teaching content and the specific conditions of students, so as to ensure a positive teaching environment and the smooth progress of the teaching

process. At the same time, teaching managers need to work closely with teachers to jointly formulate teaching plans and teaching objectives, as well as teaching evaluation standards, so as to improve teaching quality and effectiveness.

Lastly, Zhang argued that teaching management also involves the allocation of instructional resources and the construction of school systems. Teaching managers need to ensure the reasonable allocation and use of teaching resources, including human resources, material resources, and teaching facilities, in order to provide good education and teaching conditions. At the same time, teaching managers also need to establish and improve the internal management system of the school, clarify the authority, responsibility, and process of teaching management, and ensure scientific and standardized teaching management.

In addition, Yuan <sup>[14]</sup> argued that the objectives of teaching management should also focus on the development of students' personalities and the cultivation of creativity. Personality development refers to the gradual formation and perfection of students' personality traits and interests in learning and life. Teaching management should provide students with diversified learning opportunities and a nurturing environment, stimulate students' innovative thinking and learning motivation, and maximize students' strengths and potential.

Therefore, the objectives of teaching management should be determined according to the purpose of education and teaching and the characteristics of the school. According to Xu <sup>[15]</sup>, the objectives of teaching management are to focus on students, to improve the teaching quality and student development, and to comprehensively promote the overall improvement of students' academic level, ideology and morality, personality development, and artistic cultivation.

In summary, leadership virtues have an important impact on teaching management. By mobilizing teachers' enthusiasm, improving teachers' teaching levels, promoting teaching innovation, and creating a positive teaching environment, leadership virtues can effectively improve the quality of teaching management. Therefore, in the training of university professors and the practice of teaching management, attention should be paid to the cultivation of leadership virtues and the improvement of the professional self-esteem level of leaders in order to promote the sustainable development of teaching management.

### **3. Recommendations**

Coordinating the relationship between the leadership virtue, professional self-esteem, and teaching management of Chinese university professors is an important topic to improve the overall education quality and the personal career development of professors. Some specific strategies and approaches are described as follows.

#### **3.1. Strengthening the cultivation of leadership virtues**

Specialized leadership training courses covering educational management, team leadership, communication skills, etc., are offered to help professors improve their leadership skills. Professors with rich management experience are invited to share their successful experience and leadership experience to promote experience exchange and learning. To formulate and publicize the moral code of university leaders, emphasizing the leadership virtues of integrity, justice, and responsibility is imperative. By setting a strong example of an exemplary professor, we can inspire other faculty members to demonstrate admirable qualities and effective leadership in their own roles.

#### **3.2. Improving professors' professional self-esteem**

It is necessary to establish a fair and impartial performance evaluation system and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of professors' teaching, research, service, and other aspects, ensuring that their efforts are duly recognized. Various awards will be set up to commend and reward professors who have outstanding performance

in teaching and scientific research, so as to improve their professional self-esteem. Career planning guidance is provided to help professors clarify career development direction and goals. We should also support professors to participate in academic exchanges and training at home and abroad to continuously improve their professional level and academic influence.

### **3.3. Optimizing teaching management**

We need to optimize the organizational structure of teaching management, clarify the responsibilities and authority of managers at all levels, and improve management efficiency. The introduction of an information management system can improve scientific and efficient teaching management, which makes it convenient for professors and students to obtain relevant information in time. In the decision-making process of teaching management, the opinions and suggestions of professors are obtained to enhance their sense of participation and responsibility. Clear communication channels are established to timely understand the challenges and needs of professors in teaching management, and provide necessary support and help.

### **3.4. Specific strategies to coordinate the relationship between leadership virtues, professional self-esteem, and teaching management**

#### **3.4.1. Comprehensive assessment and incentive mechanism**

In the performance appraisal of professors, the three aspects of leadership virtues, professional self-esteem, and teaching management should be considered comprehensively, and the evaluation of a single index should be avoided. A diversified incentive mechanism should be established, including both material rewards and spiritual rewards, such as awarding honorary titles and providing academic support.

#### **3.4.2. Multi-party cooperation and support**

It is important to promote the cooperation of the teaching administration, teacher development center, psychological counseling center, and other departments to jointly support the leadership improvement and career development of professors. External experts and resources are brought in to provide a broader learning and development platform to help professors make overall progress in leadership virtues, professional self-esteem, and teaching management.

#### **3.4.3. Cultural construction**

We should build a campus culture that respects teachers, values education, enhances integrity and ability, promotes teachers' leadership virtues, improves professional self-esteem, and optimizes teaching management. Collaboration and trust among professors can be enhanced through team-building activities to promote mutual growth.

### **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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