



Research on the Professional Development and Health Support Mechanism for Teachers in Private Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Longevity

Chen Yaru

Polus International College, Chengdu City, China

624229010@qq.com

Abstract. Against the background of population aging and the Healthy China initiative, longevity is shifting from life extension to healthy longevity and high-quality living. Compared with traditional approaches centered on medical care and elderly services, the integration of culture, tourism and sports offers a sustainable mechanism for active aging by promoting physical activity, psychological well-being, social interaction, cultural identity and supportive environments. Based on active aging, health promotion, social support and cultural identity theories, this paper employs literature analysis and theoretical interpretation to construct an analytical framework of “culture–tourism–sports integration, multidimensional mechanisms, and improved healthy longevity and quality of life.” The study finds that such integration facilitates the transition of older adults from passive care to active health management, from single-service dependence to diversified participation, and from basic survival security to quality-of-life improvement through five mechanisms: physical health promotion, psychological well-being enhancement, social participation expansion, cultural identity reinforcement and environmental optimization. However, major challenges remain, including mismatched supply and demand, inadequate age-friendly design, fragmented interdepartmental coordination, limited digital empowerment and insufficient utilization of ethnic cultural resources. Accordingly, this paper proposes developing age-friendly products, improving multi-actor governance, activating ethnic cultural resources, building intelligent service platforms, and strengthening community-based participation and health communication. These findings broaden the interdisciplinary study of longevity and provide references for age-friendly society construction, Healthy China implementation and the high-quality development of culture, tourism and sports in ethnic regions.

Keywords: Private vocational colleges, Teacher professional development, Health support mechanism, Career longevity, Mechanism model.

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Teachers' professional development is core to improving educational quality and promoting social progress. Against the backdrop of global population aging and booming lifelong learning, teachers' career longevity has become a key issue in educational governance. Research focus has shifted from teachers' short-term competence improvement to long-term career motivation, physical and mental health, and professional commitment maintenance.

This issue is particularly prominent in private vocational colleges. Different from public educational institutions, private vocational colleges face intense market competition, tight resource constraints and unstable governance systems. Their teachers generally bear heavier teaching and administrative workloads, with limited promotion channels and insufficient institutional protection, leading to high work stress, weakened occupational identity and high turnover risks. Currently, teacher mental health and work-life balance have become prominent challenges. Existing studies mainly focus on teachers' professional ability improvement and institutional incentive mechanisms, while ignoring health support and sustainable development mechanisms throughout teachers' career lifecycle. Accordingly, constructing a systematic career longevity support mechanism for teachers in private vocational colleges is of important theoretical value and practical urgency.

1.2 Theoretical Gap

Traditional teacher development research centers on professional competence, teaching effectiveness and external incentives. However, the growing workload and performance pressure in private vocational colleges have exacerbated teacher burnout, hindering career continuity and shortening professional lifespan. Existing development models overemphasize ability growth and institutional incentives, while neglecting teachers' psychological pressure, occupational health and work-life balance. In addition, most relevant studies target public schools and public higher education institutions, with insufficient exploration of private vocational colleges, which have unique governance structures, financing modes and teacher management systems. From a longevity perspective, teacher development is a long-term process integrating professional growth, health maintenance, organizational support and career commitment. This study constructs a targeted teacher development and health support mechanism, filling the research gap in this field.

1.3 Contribution of the Study

This study makes four core contributions to existing literature. First, it introduces the longevity perspective into teacher development research, shifting the research focus from short-term performance improvement to long-term career sustainability, and emphasizing the dynamic balance between teachers' lifelong professional growth and health maintenance. Second, it innovatively proposes a three-dimensional coupling mechanism model integrating career development support, health support and organizational guarantee, breaking the limitation of traditional single-dimensional research and integrating growth-driven and stability-regulating functions with institutional moderation. Third, it combines theoretical analysis with preliminary empirical verification, using survey data to confirm the correlation between the three dimensions and teachers' career longevity intention. Fourth, it focuses on the under-researched group of private vocational college teachers, revealing how institutional constraints, career bottlenecks and psychological pressure jointly affect their career sustainability, and providing practical institutional design guidance for teacher team construction in private vocational colleges.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Teacher Career Lifecycle Theory

Teacher career lifecycle theory holds that teachers' professional development presents staged characteristics, with distinct challenges and needs in different career stages [9]. New teachers mainly face adaptation pressure and the need to build professional identity; mid-career teachers accumulate rich teaching experience and participate in curriculum reform and educational management; senior teachers are prone to job burnout and health problems, while possessing valuable mentoring experience [1], [7]. The theory clarifies that teacher career support must be adjusted dynamically according to staged characteristics [9]. From the longevity perspective, sustainable teacher development requires not only skill training, but also systematic protection of professional identity, mental health and institutional recognition throughout the career lifecycle [3], [5], [8].

2.2 Health Promotion Theory

Originating from public health, health promotion theory focuses on the coordinated development of individual physical, psychological and social well-being through environmental optimization and ability improvement [10]. Applied in education, it provides theoretical support for teacher occupational health protection [5]. At the individual level, it covers stress management, emotional regulation and self-health care; at the organizational level, it includes reasonable workload arrangement, psychological counseling services and supportive working environment construction; at the environmental level, it aims to build an educational ecology conducive to teachers'

work-life balance [6], [7]. This theory lays the foundation for constructing the teacher health support mechanism in this study [10].

2.3 Longevity Perspective in Human Resource Management

Perspective in Human Resource Management The longevity perspective in human resource management focuses on long-term occupational sustainability and full-life-cycle institutional support [8]. Teacher career longevity is not merely the extension of working years, but the continuous maintenance of positive professional identity, work motivation, psychological stability and development potential [1]. Long-term career planning provides teachers with continuous growth opportunities, mental health support relieves job burnout, and organizational guarantees enhance teachers' sense of security and belonging, jointly realizing the extension of high-quality career lifespan [5], [6].

2.4 Integration of Theories

This study integrates the above three theories to build a systematic teacher career development and health support model. The model takes individual growth, organizational support and institutional environment as interactive elements, covering professional ability improvement, mental health maintenance, career lifespan extension and institutional guarantee. It provides a complete theoretical basis for analyzing the practical dilemmas of private vocational college teachers and constructing a targeted three-dimensional coupling mechanism [2], [4].

3 Challenges Faced by Teachers in Private Vocational Colleges

3.1 Institutional Constraints under Private Governance

Private vocational colleges operate under market-oriented logic relying on tuition income, with stricter performance assessment and higher operational pressure than public institutions. Teachers undertake heavy teaching tasks plus additional work such as enrollment, student management and institutional assessment. Meanwhile, private colleges lack sound staffing security, standardized title promotion systems and sufficient research resources, leading to uncertain career development paths and intensified professional anxiety. In addition, centralized governance results in insufficient management transparency and teachers' right to speak, weakening their organizational belonging and professional identity and increasing turnover willingness.

3.2 Career Bottlenecks and Developmental Imbalance

Private vocational college teachers face single development paths and limited promotion resources. Dominated by application-oriented teaching, the colleges lack sufficient scientific research resources and diversified development platforms. The title evaluation mechanism is highly competitive with slow promotion speed, leading to widespread mid-career plateau. Besides, teacher development paths are monotonous,

lacking channels for curriculum development, enterprise cooperation and educational management. Fragmented short-term training fails to provide phased and individualized growth planning, resulting in structural imbalance in professional development, and further triggering career burnout and declining professional meaning in the middle and later career stages.

3.3 Psychological Stress and Burnout Risk

Dual pressure from performance assessment and market operation brings continuous psychological burden to private vocational college teachers. Multiple assessment indicators including teaching quality, student employment and scientific research tasks cause serious role conflict. Intensive work blurs the boundary between work and life, leading to long-term working state after class. The lack of effective organizational psychological support makes teachers prone to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Long-term unrelieved stress induces job burnout, damaging mental health and restricting long-term career development.

3.4 Structural Interaction of Risk Factors

Institutional constraints, career bottlenecks and psychological risks form a mutually reinforcing risk cycle. Unstable institutional governance aggravates career anxiety; stagnant development reduces professional identity; continuous psychological stress weakens occupational commitment. Without systematic support mechanisms, teachers' career sustainability will keep declining. Thus, it is essential to build a coupled system of career development support, health support and organizational guarantee to resolve the risk cycle.

4 Methodology and Preliminary Empirical Verification

4.1 Sample and Data Collection

This study adopts purposive sampling, selecting teachers from three private vocational colleges in Southwest China with typical private governance and market-oriented operation characteristics. A total of 78 valid questionnaires were collected, covering teachers with 1–5 years, 6–10 years and more than 10 years of teaching experience to ensure sample diversity.

4.2 Operational Definitions and Measurement

Four core variables are set in this study: Career Development Support (CD) covers promotion, training and career planning support; Health Support (HS) includes psychological counseling, stress relief and work-life balance protection; Organizational Guarantee (OG) involves institutional fairness, salary incentive and governance participation; Career Longevity Intention (CL) refers to teachers' long-term occupational commitment and retention willingness. All items adopt a 5-point Likert

scale. The Cronbach's alpha values of all variables exceed 0.80, indicating good scale reliability.

4.3 Data Analysis and Results

Correlation analysis results show that CD, HS and OG are all significantly positively correlated with CL at the $p < 0.01$ level. Specifically, the correlation coefficient of CD and CL is 0.66, HS and CL is 0.61, and OG and CL is 0.64. The preliminary empirical results verify the rationality of the three-dimensional mechanism model constructed in this study.

5 Mechanism Construction under the Longevity Perspective

5.1 Conceptual Foundation of the Dual-Support Coupling Model

Teacher career longevity refers to the dynamic equilibrium of continuous development ability, psychological stability and professional investment throughout the career lifecycle, rather than simple extension of working years. This study constructs a three-dimensional coupling model: career development support acts as the growth-driven core, health support serves as the stability-regulating foundation, and organizational guarantee functions as the institutional moderating condition. The three dimensions present dynamic coupling rather than simple superposition. Lack of health support leads to high-growth and high-burnout dilemma; lack of development space results in stable but stagnant career; absence of organizational guarantee makes dual-support mechanisms lose institutional foundation.

5.2 Career Development Support Mechanism (Growth-Driven Dimension)

This mechanism realizes staged and diversified teacher growth. First, build stage-layered support: help new teachers adapt to teaching and build professional identity, provide mid-career teachers with promotion and capability improvement platforms, and support senior teachers in experience inheritance and role transformation. Second, expand diversified development paths: build parallel growth channels for teaching, management, curriculum development and enterprise cooperation to avoid role solidification. Third, establish continuous capability renewal mechanisms: integrate digital teaching, industry practice and curriculum innovation training to adapt to industrial upgrading and vocational education reform.

5.3 Health Support Mechanism (Stability-Regulating Dimension)

This mechanism inhibits job burnout and maintains teachers' psychological stability. It includes three core systems: regular mental health assessment and professional counseling services to intervene emotional problems dynamically; flexible work arrangement and dynamic workload adjustment to balance work and life; building a positive organizational care culture through peer support and professional dignity protection, reducing chronic stress accumulation and improving job satisfaction.

5.4 Organizational Safeguard Mechanism (Institutional Moderating Dimension)

Organizational guarantee optimizes and amplifies the effect of dual-support mechanisms. It mainly includes institutional fairness with transparent promotion and performance evaluation systems; optimized incentive structures with reasonable salary growth and long-term service rewards; and smooth governance participation channels to ensure teachers' right of speech and feedback. Sound organizational guarantees can strengthen the effectiveness of career development and health support, while inadequate institutional construction will lead to disjointed support effects.

5.5 Model Operation Logic

Market pressure, career bottlenecks and psychological burnout constitute external risk constraints on private vocational college teachers' career longevity. The dual-support system of career development and health support forms the internal core driving force, while organizational guarantee acts as the institutional moderator. The dynamic coupling of external risks, internal dual support and institutional guarantees determines teachers' long-term career sustainability. This systematic model breaks through single-factor research and clarifies that teacher career longevity is a comprehensive governance result of growth motivation, psychological stability and institutional guarantee.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study expands the theoretical boundary of teacher development research. It innovatively applies the longevity perspective to teacher career research, covering the full career lifecycle. The three-dimensional coupling model integrates professional development and mental health research, and adds institutional moderation variables, constructing a more systematic theoretical framework for explaining teacher career sustainability, and making up for the research deficiency targeting private vocational college teachers.

6.2 Practical Implications

For private vocational colleges, this study provides clear institutional design ideas. First, formulate staged and diversified career development plans to break career stagnation. Second, build a full-coverage health support system to normalize psychological intervention and work-life balance management. Third, optimize institutional guarantee systems, improve assessment, promotion and incentive mechanisms, and expand teachers' governance participation channels, so as to enhance teachers' sense of acquisition and retention willingness.

6.3 Research Limitations and Future Prospects

This study has some limitations: the empirical sample is limited in scale and region, and only correlation analysis is carried out without causal effect verification. Future research can expand the sample scope, adopt structural equation modeling and longitudinal tracking data to test causal relationships, optimize the measurement scale, and combine qualitative interviews to further refine the teacher career longevity mechanism.

6.4 Conclusion

From the longevity perspective, this study systematically analyzes the career development dilemmas of private vocational college teachers, and constructs a three-dimensional coupling mechanism model of career development support, health support and organizational guarantee. Preliminary empirical results confirm that the three dimensions jointly and positively affect teachers' career longevity intention. The study proves that teachers' long-term career sustainability relies on the coordinated development of professional growth, health protection and institutional optimization. It provides theoretical reference and practical guidance for promoting high-quality and sustainable development of the teacher team in private vocational colleges.

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