






“The impact of organizational inclusion on teachers’ internal motivation for professional development in vocational colleges: The case of China”

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THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL INCLUSION ON TEACHERS' INTERNAL MOTIVATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGES: THE CASE OF CHINA

Abstract

Most of the higher vocational colleges in China are public institutions. The government prefers to enhance the intrinsic motivation of teachers' professional development through effective management. Taking the Chinese government's strong advocacy of the professional value of the "craftsman spirit" as a background, this study aims to define the constituent factors of intrinsic motivation for the career development of higher vocational college teachers. This study proposes to explore the role of inclusive management styles on the professional development of teachers in public vocational institutions in order to address the hindering effects of human-organizational relationships on the intrinsic motivation of teachers' professional development following Chinese management styles. Within three weeks, through the online questionnaire distribution platform, email, and WeChat, questionnaires were sent to teachers in colleges in Guangdong Province using the whole sampling method. A total of 546 questionnaires were distributed, of which 538 were retrieved and 521 were deemed valid for analysis. Using a structural equation model for data validation, the results indicate that inclusive leadership and inclusive climate are positive external factors that stimulate teachers' intrinsic motivation for professional development ($r = 0.496, 0.491$) and contribute to the formation of organizational inclusion ($r = 0.413$). Job satisfaction is an intrinsic self-motivating factor ($r = 0.479, 0.380, 0.451$). Organizational inclusion can mitigate interpersonal barriers and become a practical management approach to enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation for career development.

Keywords

inclusion, leadership, climate, satisfaction, engagement, commitment, innovation

JEL Classification

L31, J28

INTRODUCTION

Chinese higher education vocational colleges are organizational institutions established to nurture a substantial number of skilled personnel for various industries. The majority of higher education vocational colleges in China are public institutions. According to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2021b), public higher education vocational colleges account for 73.15% of the total number of colleges, and public colleges employ 80.22% of the total number of teachers. The government encourages teachers in higher education vocational colleges to have knowledge and skills (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2021a), thus necessitating their professional development. Innovative approaches are being actively explored in all sectors from education to manufacturing (Shao et al., 2021), and the professional development environment for teachers is more diverse. Therefore, while improving teachers' salaries and

benefits, the Chinese government has introduced the concept of “craftsman spirit” to guide teachers’ professional values and stimulate their intrinsic motivation for career development. Implementing this appears challenging, and valuable management approaches can help address these issues.

The hierarchical management style in China and the relationship between individuals and their environment may serve as reasons for teachers’ need for more proactive development. Moreover, the study defines the constituent factors of intrinsic motivation for the professional development of vocational teachers based on the “craftsman spirit” professional values (Chen et al., 2022) the Chinese government advocates. Investigating the factors that stimulate the intrinsic motivation of vocational college teachers for professional development and proposing effective management recommendations are thus crucial.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are various factors within an effective management model, including organizational structure, leadership, work environment, job content, and compensation. To address the impact of interpersonal relationships within the organizational system on teachers’ intrinsic motivation for career development, this study selects inclusive leadership and inclusive climate as the primary influencing factors for constructing the management model. The concept of “inclusiveness” aligns well with Chinese culture. In this organizational mechanism, the influence between individuals is driven by affective perceptions, promoting their positive work behaviors (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Miner & Glomb, 2010). Therefore, the study will also explore potential factors in teachers’ internal motivation for professional development due to their positive perceptions of inclusive leadership and climate. Before exploring the relationships between various factors, it is necessary to define and discuss the constituent elements of teachers’ intrinsic motivation for professional development: work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior.

1.1. Internal motivation for teachers’ professional development

The definition of teachers’ intrinsic motivation for professional development originates from the advocated professional spirit in China, known as the “craftsman spirit.” The essence of the craftsman spirit can reflect the intrinsic motivation for teachers’ professional development. The Chinese government has defined the essence of the “craftsman spirit” as dedication, commitment, and innovation (Chen, 2021), a positive

value system guiding teachers’ professional development. Thus, Tang et al. (2023), referencing Ye et al. (2018), defined the constituent factors of intrinsic motivation for the career development of vocational college teachers as work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior. Suppose teachers in vocational colleges can exhibit dedication and commitment to their work, as well as a reluctance to quickly leave their profession. In that case, it is considered beneficial for various aspects of student education quality (Bicaj & Treska, 2014) or other aspects of school development. These three factors – work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior – are examined as factors influencing teachers’ intrinsic motivation for career development, which also represent external manifestations of motivation.

Work engagement is a positive work motivation or behavior. It is characterized by involvement, dedication, enthusiasm, focus, passion, loyalty, and vigor (Schaufeli, 2013), indicating that organizational members are willing to fully invest themselves in the work or their roles. Work engagement is considered the opposite of work burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2002), and work burnout will be detrimental to teachers’ professional development. The active involvement of teachers in their work represents a transformation from motivation to behavior. Engagement in work involves psychological aspects such as enthusiasm, focus, and energy (Macey et al., 2011) and behavioral factors such as expanding one’s role and demonstrating focused work performance. Teachers in Chinese higher vocational colleges typically possess a higher level of education. They have a desire to be recognized and experience professional growth. Low work engagement may result in teachers not being ac-

knowledge (Knight et al., 2017). Thus, assisting teachers in improving their work engagement becomes crucial to their professional development.

Regarding representations of professional commitment, teachers' professional attitudes are characterized by stability, normativity, affection, recognition of the profession, and the ability to be influenced to inspire appropriate work behaviors. Professional commitment is a solid connection between an individual and their profession (Nesje, 2016; Tuan Mansor et al., 2020) and plays an essential role in one's career (Lee et al., 2000). Teachers' positive professional commitment drives their pursuit of personal growth, professional advancement, and continuous learning and improvement. They identify with their work and take on role responsibilities and obligations (Meyer et al., 1993). Teachers with a high level of professional commitment are likelier to have a strong passion for their profession and invest in their work. According to Bogler and Somech's (2004) study on teacher professional commitment, those who demonstrate higher levels of commitment to their profession and the organization tend to exhibit better performance than teachers with lower commitment. Professional commitment helps teachers cultivate a deep understanding and interest in their work domain and profession, contributing to their work quality and performance.

Innovation is a proactive work motivation or behavior exhibited by employees. Innovative behaviors tend to emerge when employees are highly engaged in their work. According to Tang et al. (2023), stable and focused work contributes to the occurrence of teachers' innovative behavior. Measuring innovation can be challenging as it involves a multistage process, with each stage requiring different activities and individual behaviors (Cingöz & Akdoğan, 2011). The fact that a technical professional demonstrates innovative motivation or behavior indicates their inclination toward innovation. Innovative behavior includes generating novel and valuable ideas as well as the ability to encourage and implement those ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994). It also encompasses actively promoting, developing, and implementing these ideas to ensure their effective realization (Zhou & George, 2001). Teachers' innovative behaviors lead to improved teaching outcomes or better service

to society, generating greater value through their actions. This is why the Chinese government encourages teacher innovation.

Based on the definition of intrinsic motivation for professional development derived from the "craftsman spirit" advocated by the Chinese government, and in light of the discussions above, work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior can be regarded as measurable factors of intrinsic motivation for teachers' professional development. In other words, when teachers' behavioral motivations exhibit these three factors, they are considered to possess intrinsic motivation for professional development.

1.2. Inclusive leadership and an inclusive climate

In Chinese culture, there is an inherent value of "inclusiveness" or "tolerance." However, influenced by Confucianism, this cultural aspect is often accompanied by a clear hierarchical relationship in management practices. The characteristics of inclusive leadership and inclusive climate may weaken this hierarchical relationship. Carmeli et al. (2010) considered inclusive leaders to have open, effective, accessible leadership style, engaging in a specific type of relational leadership that respects individualized management principles and explores the interaction between members of the leadership team. An inclusive climate is premised on respecting individuals within the organization. It integrates diverse characteristics and perspectives, eliminates biases, and achieves collective problem-solving (Nishii, 2013). Inclusive leadership and an inclusive climate together contribute to the formation of organizational inclusion (Qu & Zhao, 2018) and share similar characteristics.

In organizations, leaders often establish connections with employees through work-related events. Inclusive leadership theory suggests that when leaders prioritize employees' psychological perceptions, it can positively influence their psychological safety (Lin et al., 2022), which leads to the development of a favorable attitude among employees. This mechanism of influence is that employees will feel respected, satisfied, and secure, which may influence their judgment of their work. Hollander (2012) argued that inclusive lead-

ers are caring and work with staff. Employees who receive care from inclusive leaders are also perceived to receive organizational support (Younas et al., 2020). According to the affective events theory, when teachers feel supported, respected, and cared for by their leaders, it helps alleviate their relationship with superiors. This sense of safety and trust encourages them to focus on their work and be willing to create value.

An inclusive climate helps bridge the differences between leaders and members and between members of the organization. It is vital to create an inclusive environment, which will allow different people to be faithful to themselves, feel appreciated as integral team members, and take advantage of the benefits of their unique perspectives (Boekhorst, 2015; Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016; Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2011). Inclusive leadership is a significant determinant in the development of an inclusive climate. Leaders play a crucial role in developing organizational climate (Schein, 1983). In public organizations, Ashikali et al. (2021) validated the positive influence of inclusive leadership on an inclusive climate. Inclusive leadership and inclusive climate both share the characteristics of respect, appreciation, and support, which are positive work resources. Their effective interconnection forms organizational inclusivity, making inclusive leadership and inclusive climate function as cohesive entities.

Organizational inclusivity facilitates the establishment of an inclusive management style within an organization. It promotes equality, authenticity, support, and openness within the organization, encouraging dialogue, participation, and the integration of diverse voices and perspectives (Dobusch, 2014). This process also fosters the development of a more inclusive organizational mechanism. Organizational inclusivity ultimately cultivates harmonious relationships by encouraging interaction, sharing, and mutual empowerment among different groups (Daya, 2010; Shore et al., 2011). Organizational inclusivity further integrates the roles of inclusive leadership and inclusive climate, eliminating artificial barriers to teacher professional development. This cumulative effect may have a synergistic impact on driving teacher growth.

1.3. Job satisfaction

When employees feel respected and safe, and when the gap between them is bridged, the ultimate feedback from them is that they are satisfied with the leadership and work environment, leading to increased willingness to perform their job duties. Job satisfaction encompasses an employee's overall sentiment toward their career and job, representing a subjective assessment formed through the social exchange process between the organization and the employee. Hoppock (1935) proposed that job satisfaction describes an individual's emotional and psychological response to the work environment. Teachers engage in an interactive process with their leaders and the organization through work events.

Inclusive leadership and an inclusive work climate influence teachers' affective cognition, precisely their work attitudes, through work events (Judge et al., 2020), with inclusive characteristics contributing to positive emotional responses among teachers. The affective events theory describes that employees cognitively evaluate the organizational environment and compare it against pre-established standards such as values and needs, leading to a sense of satisfaction (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Teachers' emotions, which are present throughout their entire work process (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), significantly impact their work engagement and behaviors, with job satisfaction as a motivating factor. Job satisfaction, formed through the emotional perception of work events or the work environment, becomes an underlying factor in teachers' willingness to engage in their work and achieve job performance.

The work environment and leadership characteristics serve as external motivators that stimulate teachers' choice and maintenance of work activities, forming a sense of identity and values. Teachers' perception of their profession strongly influences their job satisfaction, and this perception is derived from both leadership and the organization they belong to (Bogler, 2001). When teachers clearly understand their needs and the environment, they make choices regarding their behavior. Judge et al. (2020) showed that satisfied staff members are more likely to become loyal advocates, ambassadors, and champions for their

organizations. Emotions' influence on job satisfaction should be constantly monitored. The increase in teachers' job satisfaction generates a desire to contribute to the team and achieve goals, motivating them to work hard, be proactive in innovation, and grow. Due to the need for external stimuli, job satisfaction is a hidden factor that motivates teachers to actively pursue professional development. Effective management can regulate external incentive mechanisms, ensuring that job satisfaction remains sustainable and stable for extended periods.

Inclusive leadership has a direct interpersonal relationship with teachers, making them susceptible to mutual influence in work events. It positively influences attitudes and behaviors, including employee proactivity, work engagement, innovative behavior, sense of belonging, and retention (Randel et al., 2018). The impact of an inclusive climate may be relatively delayed, but its characteristics align with inclusive leadership, encompassing inclusiveness, equality, and care, which also positively affect teachers. According to the affective event theory, the emotional connection between teachers and the organization is a strong psychological one (Walumbwa et al., 2018). Such a connection can bring about emotional experiences through work events or the work environment (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), making teachers willing to commit to their work and dedicate themselves to the organization, which they will see as their responsibility. The willingness to work, which arises from such emotional interactions, depends on teachers' satisfaction and recognition of the work itself and the work event or environment. This is why inclusive leadership and an inclusive climate can influence the drive for professional development through teachers' job satisfaction.

Inclusive leadership and an inclusive work climate constitute organizational inclusion, which develops and implements inclusive management practices within the organization. The leader plays a crucial role in shaping the culture and climate of the organization (Schein, 1983). Inclusive leadership creates or influences a more inclusive organizational climate, forming an inclusive climate. The impact of an inclusive climate on teachers may be indirect, but its formation is

directly related to inclusive leadership. Ashikali et al. (2021) showed that inclusive climates do not arise automatically in diverse teams, which require the support of inclusive leaders. An inclusive climate has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction (Brimhall et al., 2014). Developing an inclusive work environment is influenced by the interpersonal relationship between inclusive leadership and teachers (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). An inclusive climate also facilitates the impact of inclusive leadership on teachers' affective perception of the workplace. Therefore, the organizational inclusion created by inclusive leadership and inclusive climate will positively impact the motivation of teachers' professional development.

Leadership, organizational climate, and employees' emotions can all become work resources for employees, and work resources can lead to high or low levels of employee productivity. Work resources stimulate individual learning and development and help employees to achieve their work goals (Schaufeli et al., 2002). They encompass the tangible and intangible factors within a job, including feedback, social support, and growth opportunities, which alleviate various job demands such as workload, emotional strain, and cognitive challenges (Knight et al., 2017). This demonstrates the influence of work-related resources and personal affective triggers on employees' level of work engagement. According to self-determination theory, humans are seen as intrinsically positive entities with an inherent capacity for psychological growth and progress (Deci & Ryan, 2012). While autonomously regulated activities are extrinsically motivating, extrinsically motivating activities can also be intrinsically motivating for people in the right circumstances. Organizational inclusion, supported by self-determination theory, can act as a workplace trigger that motivates teachers to take the initiative in pursuing professional development. In turn, teachers' initiative comes from understanding the meaning and purpose of their work, having their autonomy and ownership of their work respected, and receiving explicit support and feedback (Deci et al., 2017), prompting self-motivation and effective behavior. Teachers' job satisfaction becomes an implicit motivator of the internal drive for professional development.

2. AIM AND HYPOTHESES

Following the literature review, the relationship between inclusive leadership, inclusive climate, job satisfaction, and teachers' internal motivation for professional development refers to the relationship with work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior. This study seeks to establish a research model to examine the impact of organizational inclusion on teachers' intrinsic motivation for professional development from the perspective of the person-organization relationship. The research path is: external motivational factors (inclusive leadership and inclusive work climate) influence teachers' work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behaviors through internal motivational factors (job satisfaction). The hypotheses are:

- H1: Inclusive leadership has a positive and significant impact on forming an inclusive climate.*
- H2: Inclusive leadership positively influences teachers' job satisfaction.*
- H3: An inclusive climate positively influences teachers' job satisfaction.*
- H4: An inclusive work climate facilitates the positive impact of inclusive leadership on teachers' job satisfaction.*
- H5a: Teachers' job satisfaction positively influences their work engagement.*
- H5b: Teachers' job satisfaction positively influences their professional commitment.*
- H5c: Teachers' job satisfaction positively influences their innovative behavior.*

3. METHOD

This study argues that an inclusive management model can be established to stimulate teachers' intrinsic motivation for professional development. A structural equation model (SEM) was developed based on the research hypotheses of this study, and the relationship between the latent variables was analyzed by path analysis using the analysis of covariance. Explanatory variables (inclusive leadership), intermediate variables (inclusive climate, job satisfaction), and outcome variables (work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior) were used to construct SEM, as shown in Figure 1. Data from the entire model were analyzed using statistical software – reliability and validity analysis, validation factor analysis and path analysis.

Based on data provided by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2021b), as shown in Figure 2, higher education vocational colleges in Guangdong Province, China, rank third in terms of the number of higher education vocational colleges nationwide. They also hold the top position regarding the number of top 100 institutions in terms of educational quality. As of 2021, the number of teachers in higher vocational institutions in Guangdong Province is 46,738, while the number of teachers in public institutions of vocational colleges is approximately 37,493. Among them, the number of teachers of manufacturing majors was about 3,374. According to Singh and Masuku (2014), when the confidence interval is $\pm 5\%$, and the total number of people researched is over 4,000, the minimum data collection is 364.

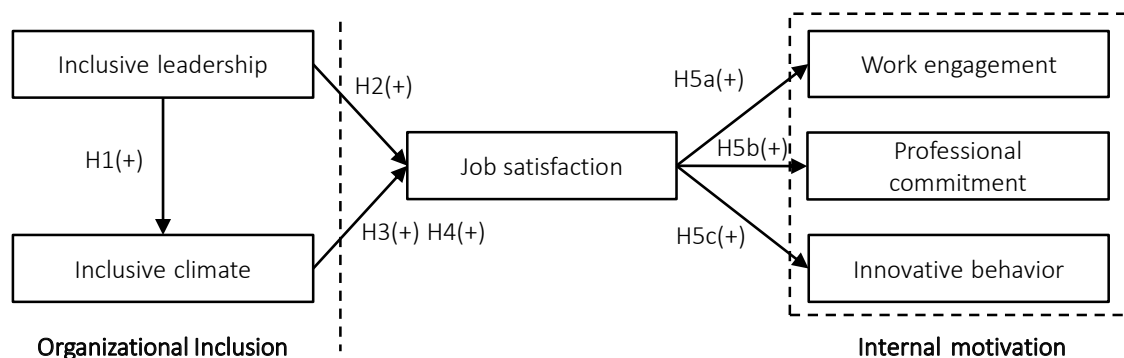


Figure 1. Hypothetical model

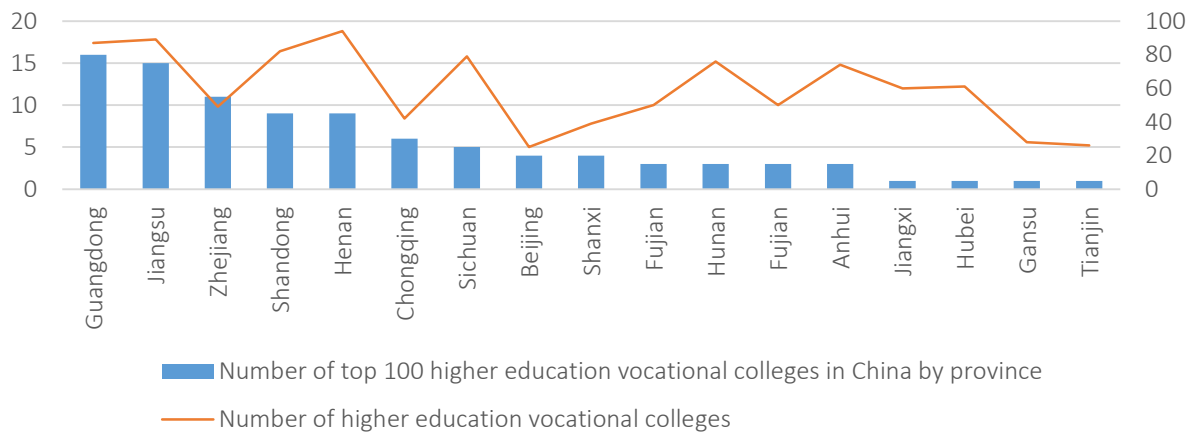


Figure 2. The number of higher education vocational colleges in selected regions of China

This study used an online questionnaire to conduct a whole-group sampling of manufacturing teachers in higher education colleges in Guangdong Province. 546 questionnaires were distributed over three weeks, and 538 questionnaires were returned, with a return rate of 98.5%; after excluding 18 invalid responses, 521 valid questionnaires remained, resulting in an overall effectiveness rate of 96.8%. Five control variables were gender, education, occupational level, years of service, and teaching grade level. A descriptive sample analysis was conducted to understand the basic profile of the respondent group (Table 1).

Table 1. Description of demographic information

Demographic	N	%
Gender (n = 521)		
Male	250	48
Female	271	52
Grade level of teaching (n = 521)		
Freshman	144	27.6
Sophomore	143	27.4
Junior	234	44.9
Years of service (n = 521)		
Within one year	175	33.6
1–3 years	161	30.9
3–5 years	101	19.4
5–10 years	34	6.5
Over a decade	50	9.6
Education level (n = 521)		
No Bachelor’s degree or below	82	15.7
Bachelor’s degree	287	55.1
Master’s degree	119	22.8
Doctoral degree	33	6.3
Occupational level (n = 521)		
Teaching assistant	199	38.2

Demographic	N	%
Lecturer	243	46.6
Associate Professor	48	9.2
Professor	31	6.0

The questionnaires in this study used a 5-point Likert scale. Measurement of inclusive leaders used a scale designed by Carmeli et al. (2010), Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.878$. The scale for measuring an inclusive climate was accepted from the investigation conducted by Ashikali et al. (2021), Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.869$. Job satisfaction was assessed using the MSQ scale (Spector, 1997), a complete overall measure of job satisfaction; the MSQ scale (short form scale) is most commonly used in teacher job satisfaction studies, Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.891$. Work engagement was derived from the reduced UWES-9 scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006), Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.880$. Meyer et al. (1993) developed the measurement scale of professional commitment, Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.948$. The widely recognized scale developed by Scott and Bruce (1994) was employed to assess innovative behavior, Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.922$.

The Harman one-factor method was employed to evaluate the potential influence of common method bias. Results indicated that the first common factor accounted for only 28.573% of the total variance across variables, below the critical threshold of 50%. These findings indicate the absence of significant standard method bias in this dataset. As seen in Table 2, the structural validity analysis of each variable displayed significance and was suitable for subsequent factor analysis.

Table 2. KMO values and Bartlett's test for each variable

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's Test	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
Inclusive leadership	0.874	2161.215	74.098
Inclusive climate	0.889	1733.607	66.476
Job satisfaction	0.920	2351.305	63.661
Work engagement	0.881	2132.259	74.115
Professional commitment	0.952	7201.936	72.541
Innovative behavior	0.922	2080.617	71.877

4. RESULTS

This study employed a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach to validate the composite reliability and average variance extracted from the variables, test discriminant validity, examine the path relationships, and investigate the mediating effect of inclusive climate.

4.1. Confirmatory factor analysis

The fit of the research model was examined based on fit indices commonly used in structural equation modeling (SEM) research. Hu and Bentler (1995) suggested that the leading indicators chosen for the model fit parameters were χ^2/df , GFI, AGFI, CFI, and RMSEA. As depicted in Table 3, the study's estimation of the overall measurement

model, applying the maximum likelihood method, was a satisfactory fit.

The Standardized Estimate in Table 4 provides insights into the strength of relationships among variables in the overall measurement model. The Standardized Estimate of the model range from 0.632 to 0.840 (Est > 0.6) (Chin, 1998), indicating a significant impact of the variables on the model. The Composite Reliabilities range from 0.719 to 0.922 (CR > 0.7), demonstrating the internal consistency of the measurement indicators. The Average Variance Extracted range from 0.511 to 0.622 (AVE > 0.5), indicating the satisfactory measurement of the constructs. Furthermore, the model exhibits suitability based on the results of the statistical significance test ($P < 0.001$).

Table 3. Fit index of a conceptual model

Model fit indices	CMIN	DF	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	RMR	IFI	TLI	CFI
Reference value			≤ 3	>0.9	>0.9	<0.08	<0.08	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Test value	169.504	137	1.237	0.967	0.954	0.021	0.029	0.993	0.991	0.993

Table 4. Parameter estimation and model fit of each variable

Variables	Dimension	Unstandardized estimates	S.E.	Z-value	p	Estimates	CR	AVE
Inclusive leadership	Open	1				0.713	0.757	0.511
	Effective	1.231	0.087	14.103	***	0.791		
	Accessibility	1.087	0.089	12.271	***	0.632		
Inclusive climate	Integration of differences	1				0.797	0.719	0.563
	Inclusion in decision making	0.978	0.076	12.873	***	0.700		
Job satisfaction	Internal satisfaction	1				0.828	0.741	0.591
	External satisfaction	0.895	0.064	13.959	***	0.704		
Work engagement	Vigor	1				0.733	0.775	0.534
	Dedicated	1.034	0.075	13.775	***	0.713		
	Absorption	1.087	0.077	14.171	***	0.746		
Professional commitment	Affective	1				0.783	0.821	0.604
	Continuance	0.984	0.059	16.665	***	0.798		
	Normative	0.966	0.060	16.002	***	0.750		

Table 4 (cont.). Parameter estimation and model fit of each variable

Variables	Dimension	Unstandardized estimates	S.E.	Z-value	p	Estimates	CR	AVE
Innovative behavior	I will actively seek to apply new technologies, processes, or methods in my work.	1				0.819	0.922	0.662
	I often come up with creative ideas or thoughts.	1	0.045	21.992	***	0.825		
	I am able to communicate with others and promote my ideas.	0.952	0.046	20.671	***	0.790		
	I will find ways to acquire the necessary resources to bring my ideas or creativity to life.	0.986	0.048	20.713	***	0.791		
	I will proactively develop appropriate plans and strategies to implement innovative ideas.	0.982	0.045	21.678	***	0.817		
	Overall, I am an innovative and creative individual.	1.021	0.045	22.553	***	0.840		

Note: *** indicates $P < 0.001$; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

4.2. Discriminant validity and correlation analyses

The significance level of the model was determined to be $p < 0.01$, indicating its statistical significance. A substantial beneficial relationship between inclusive leadership and job satisfaction ($r = 0.496$). The inclusive work environment is significantly and positively associated with job satisfaction ($r = 0.491$). Inclusive leadership and the inclusive climate demonstrate a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.413$). The correlation coefficients between job satisfaction and work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior were found to be 0.479, 0.380, and 0.451. These results indicate a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and each of the variables in the study. Job satisfaction is a fully mediating variable in the model. It is an intrinsic human affective perceptual response, so job satisfaction is

an intrinsic determinant of teachers' internal motivation for career development. Concerning Table 5, the magnitudes of the correlation coefficients between variables are all less than the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each variable, demonstrating satisfactory discriminant validity among the research variables in this study.

4.3. Structural equation path analysis

The path coefficients and their significance levels are presented in Table 6. Inclusive leadership showed a significant positive effect on inclusive climate and job satisfaction at $p < 0.05$, with standardized coefficients of 0.548 and 0.439, respectively. Inclusive climate demonstrated a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, at $p < 0.05$, with a standardized coefficient of 0.550. Furthermore, job satisfaction exhibited significant positive effects on work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior, all significant at

Table 5. Correlations and average variance extracted

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Inclusive Leadership	0.715					
2. Inclusive Climate	0.413 **	0.750				
3. Job Satisfaction	0.496 **	0.491 **	0.769			
4. Work Engagement	0.413 **	0.435 **	0.479 **	0.731		
5. Professional Commitment	0.406 **	0.407 **	0.380 **	0.377 **	0.777	
6. Innovative Behavior	0.400 **	0.466 **	0.451 **	0.393 **	0.366 **	0.814
Mean	3.589	3.642	3.599	3.559	3.637	3.616
Std. Deviation	0.852	0.892	0.882	0.907	0.898	0.998

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

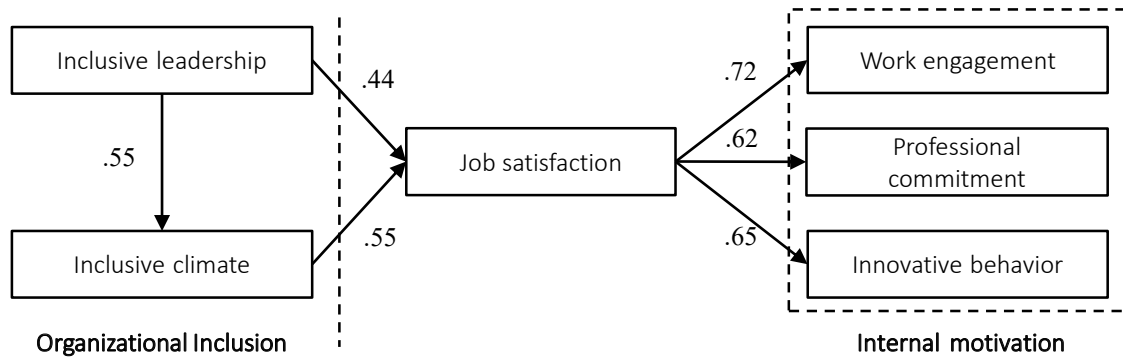


Figure 3. Path analysis

Table 6. Path coefficients for the structural model

Path	Unstd.	Std.	S.E.	p	R ²	Result
Inclusive climate ← Inclusive leadership	0.631	0.548	0.071	***	0.094	H1 is supported
Job satisfaction ← Inclusive leadership	0.466	0.439	0.066	***	0.141	H2 is supported
Job satisfaction ← Inclusive climate	0.506	0.550	0.063	***	0.118	H3 is supported
Work engagement ← Job satisfaction	0.772	0.716	0.067	***	0.090	H5a is supported
Professional commitment ← Job satisfaction	0.719	0.616	0.066	***	0.146	H5b is supported
Innovative behavior ← Job satisfaction	0.883	0.647	0.073	***	0.111	H5c is supported

Note: *** indicates P < 0.001.

p < 0.05, with standardized coefficients of 0.716, 0.616, and 0.647, respectively. These findings support hypotheses H1–H3 and H5a, H5b, and H5c. The overall model validation results can be seen in Figure 3. The findings suggest that job satisfaction is an internal motivator for teachers’ professional development, and organizational inclusion is an external motivator. The formation of organizational inclusion in organizational management depends on the influence of inclusive leadership in creating an inclusive climate, and an inclusive management style enhances the intrinsic motivation for teachers’ professional development.

ated effect of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction is [0.217, 0.411], indicating a significant mediating effect. Similarly, the 95% confidence interval for the direct effect of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction is [0.303, 0.549], indicating a significant partial mediation effect. The indirect impact value is 0.301, the direct impact value is 0.439, and the total impact value is 0.740. These results provide support for hypothesis H4. An inclusive climate enhances the effect of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction, reinforcing that organizational inclusion is an excellent external motivator.

4.4. Mediation analysis

The mediating effect was assessed using the Bootstrap procedure (Shrout & Bolger, 2002) to test for significance. According to the results in Table 7, the 95% confidence interval for the medi-

5. DISCUSSION

Any external factor of perceived motivation induces job satisfaction, and positive work motivation or behavior, such as work engagement, professional commitment, and innovation behavior,

Table 7. Bootstrap test of the mediating effect of an inclusive climate on inclusive leadership and job satisfaction

Effect	Estimated Value	Standard Error	95% CI		p	Result
			Lower limit	Upper limit		
Indirect effects	0.301	0.050	0.217	0.411	0.001	H4 is supported
Direct effects	0.439	0.063	0.303	0.549	0.001	
Total effect	0.740	0.039	0.658	0.809	0.001	

will emerge in the teacher or employee. There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and inclusive leadership (Sung, 2021), with partial mediating alternatives occurring in some research relationships (Li et al., 2020). This study supports these views and identifies job satisfaction as a self-determined implicit factor contributing to teachers' professional development. According to other studies, the traits of inclusive leadership significantly affect employees' work motivation and career development. For example, open dialogue between leaders and employees helps foster innovative behaviors and promotes employees' commitment to the organization (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2022). This study argues that, in addition to welfare compensation increasing teachers' internal motivation for professional development, organizational inclusion is an excellent motivational external factor.

The formation of organizational inclusion is critical to establishing an inclusive management model. Organizational inclusion comprises inclusive leadership and an inclusive climate, with inclusive leadership playing a creative or transformative role. The empirical results of this study support Schein's (1983) assertions regarding the pivotal significance of a leader in shaping organizational culture. Leaders who recognize the advantages of fostering an inclusive culture prioritize incorporating the role of culture in organizational policies and practices (Carmeli et al., 2010; Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Inclusive leadership will positively contribute to a more inclusive organizational climate, and the leader's style will shape the management approach. This paper demonstrates that in-

clusive leadership can create or influence an inclusive climate and build or promote organizational inclusion.

Rendering to affective event theory and self-determination theory, organizational inclusion creates an interactive relationship with teachers' internal drive for professional development through job satisfaction. Inclusive leadership stimulates innovative behavior by improving employees' psychological capital (Fang et al., 2019), and job satisfaction accumulates employees' psychological capital (Lifeng, 2007). This study argues that organizational inclusion builds teachers' psychological capital by increasing job satisfaction, stimulating work engagement, professional commitment, and innovative behavior. The notion of hierarchy in Chinese management can hinder the accumulation of psychological capital in employees, and job satisfaction becomes a critical potential driver of teachers' professional development. Given the diverse developmental environment currently, organizational inclusion can help eliminate conflicts, and a greater level of support and inclusiveness can make job satisfaction a more stable underlying factor. Therefore, other factors may moderate the mechanisms of the inclusive management model proposed in this study, which can be further argued subsequently. Teachers' intrinsic motivation ensures their commitment to continue working (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012) and influences their engagement in professional development plans within schools (Botham, 2018). This aligns with the expectations of the Chinese government regarding higher education vocational teachers and represents the significance of this study.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to stimulate intrinsic motivation for professional development among teachers in Chinese public vocational colleges by changing the relationship between individuals and organizations in traditional management practices. The external and self-determining factors that motivate teachers' professional development have been explored and confirmed through construction, data collection, and validation. From the perspective of organizational behavior, these two categories of factors are integrated to form inclusive management practices, which can change the prevalent hierarchical management style in Chinese organizations.

Another research finding highlights the significant role of inclusive leadership in fostering inclusive management practices. Chinese public vocational colleges should adopt and promote an inclusive leadership style. Job satisfaction is a relatively stable underlying factor that motivates teachers' professional

development. Practical organizational management factors can maintain high levels of job satisfaction among teachers, thereby continuously motivating their intrinsic drive for professional development. According to the definition of intrinsic motivation for teachers' professional development in this paper, when teachers' intrinsic drive for professional development is stimulated, it implies that they are willing to invest more in their work, seek career stability while desiring growth, and exhibit more innovative behaviors. These positive work motivations and behaviors are more likely to lead to more incredible job performance and teacher recognition. Consequently, they will be more engaged in organizational planning and development, which the government or organizations also desire.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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