

The Relationship between Instructor' Organization Identity and Career Adaptability at Henan S College in China

Jichuan Li ^{1*} and Tzu-Shan Cheng ²

¹ Master of Educational Administration, Stamford International University, Thailand

² Assistant Professor, Stamford International University, Thailand

* Corresponding author: 1035831482@qq.com

Abstract: This study investigated the current status and relationship between instructors' organization identity and career adaptability at Henan S College in China. Adopting a quantitative research design, the study distributed questionnaires using standardized scales to instructors at the college. A total of 385 questionnaires were distributed, and 385 valid questionnaires were recovered, representing a valid response rate of 100%. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and correlation analysis. The results showed that instructors' overall levels of organization identity and career adaptability were moderate. Further difference analyses revealed that only professional titles exerted a significant effect on both variables, whereas gender, age, teaching experience, educational background, and subject demonstrated no significant differences. Correlation analysis indicated that organization identity was significantly and positively correlated with career adaptability, and positive relationships also existed among all their respective dimensions. Based on these findings, the study concluded that enhancing instructors' organization identity through strengthened organizational support and improved career development mechanisms could effectively promote their career adaptability. This study suggested that strengthening organizational support and communication, implementing title-based tiered faculty development strategies, and improving systematic career support mechanisms can effectively foster a positive interplay between instructors' organizational identity and career adaptability to facilitate their sustainable career development.

Keywords: Organization identity, Career Adaptability, College Instructors.

1. Introduction

With the advancement of economic globalization and the knowledge-based economy, higher education systems are facing intensified international competition, prompting universities to enhance educational quality through reforms, improved instructor competencies, and optimized management (Oliveira et al., 2024). In this context, instructors' organization identity and career adaptability have become critical factors influencing their work engagement, teaching effectiveness, and career development. Organization identity, referring to instructors' emotional, cognitive, and value-based identification with their institutions (Ma, 2024), can strengthen professional responsibility and motivation, whereas weak identification may reduce job satisfaction and career stability (Rinck & Taylor, 2025). Meanwhile, career adaptability—encompassing self-regulation, problem-solving,

and lifelong learning abilities—enables instructors to respond effectively to evolving educational environments and technological changes (Farmer, 2025). Therefore, both organization identity and career adaptability play a vital role in supporting instructors' professional growth and enhancing institutional competitiveness.

With the rapid expansion of higher education and deepening reforms in China, university instructors have become central to improving educational quality and driving institutional development (Xin & Espinosa, 2022). Government policies have continuously promoted faculty development through reforms in evaluation systems, professional title assessment, and performance management, while also raising expectations for instructors to adapt to changing roles and work environments (Lin, 2024). In this context, organization identity has become essential for enhancing work motivation, job

satisfaction, and institutional cohesion (Jia & Deng, 2025). At the same time, career adaptability, including the ability to respond to teaching reforms, research demands, and technological changes, has emerged as a critical competency, especially for younger instructors facing role transition and career pressure. Therefore, strengthening organization identity and career adaptability is crucial for stabilizing faculty teams and supporting the sustainable development of universities.

In recent years, the scale of higher education in Henan Province has continued to expand, accompanied by ongoing reforms aimed at improving educational quality and serving regional development. As a local vocational institution, Henan S College has actively promoted teaching reform, faculty development, and talent cultivation to align with these goals. However, intensified institutional competition and evolving performance evaluation systems have placed higher professional demands on instructors, requiring them to continuously adjust their roles and enhance their competencies. In this context, organization identity, reflected in instructors' recognition of institutional goals and values, and career adaptability have become critical factors influencing their work motivation, professional development, and institutional cohesion. Therefore, examining the relationship between organization identity and career adaptability among instructors at Henan S College not only reflects the realities of faculty development in local universities but also provides practical insights for improving faculty management and supporting sustainable institutional growth.

Research Objectives

- 1) To describe the demographic characteristics of instructors at Henan S College, including gender, age, teaching experience, educational background, profession, and subject.
- 2) To investigate the current status of organization identity among instructors at Henan S College.
- 3) To investigate the current status of career adaptability among instructors at Henan S College.
- 4) To analyze significant differences in

organization identity among instructors at Henan S College, China, across different demographic variables.

5) To analyze significant differences in career adaptability among instructors at Henan S College, China, across different demographic variables.

6) To explore the correlation between organization identity and career adaptability among instructors at Henan S College.

Research Hypotheses

H1: There are significant differences in organizational identity among instructors across different demographic variables.

H1-1: There are significant differences in organizational identity among instructors of different genders.

H1-2: There are significant differences in organizational identity among instructors of different ages.

H1-3: There are significant differences in organizational identity among instructors with different teaching experience.

H1-4: There are significant differences in organizational identity among instructors with different educational background.

H1-5: There are significant differences in organizational identity among instructors with different profession.

H1-6: There are significant differences in organizational identity among instructors in different subject.

H2: There are significant differences in career adaptability among instructors across different demographic variables.

H2-1: There are significant differences in career adaptability among instructors of different genders.

H2-2: There are significant differences in career adaptability among instructors of different ages.

H2-3: There are significant differences in career adaptability among instructors with different teaching experience.

H2-4: There are significant differences in career adaptability among instructors with different educational background.

H2-5: There are significant differences in

basis for analyzing instructors' organization identity and its relationship with career adaptability.

Instructors' Career Adaptability

Instructors' career adaptability refers to their ability to proactively adjust career plans and behaviors in response to changing work environments, institutional demands, and professional tasks (Even-Zahav et al., 2022). It includes capacities such as self-regulation, problem-solving, and continuous learning, enabling instructors to effectively manage teaching, research, and organizational responsibilities (Oppi & Eisenschmidt, 2022). Career adaptability is both dynamic and developmental, evolving across career stages and improving through experience and professional training. It is commonly reflected in four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, which help instructors cope with change and maintain stable career development (Ma & Mohd Kosnin, 2024).

Studies show that career adaptability is a key resource for coping with professional challenges and is closely related to job performance, job satisfaction, and work engagement (Parsons et al., 2016). It is influenced by individual factors such as self-efficacy, organizational factors such as leadership and culture, and external factors such as policy environment (Coetzee et al., 2020). Instructors with higher adaptability demonstrate stronger resilience, flexibility, and initiative, especially in responding to teaching reforms and research demands. Career adaptability is also positively associated with organization identity, and the two jointly influence instructors' professional development. However, research on this topic, particularly in vocational colleges, remains limited and requires further empirical exploration (Yang, 2024).

The measurement of career adaptability is mainly based on standardized scales such as the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale, which typically includes four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Sibunruang et al., 2015). These dimensions assess instructors' future planning, self-regulation, exploratory behavior,

and self-efficacy in professional contexts. Some studies adapt this framework by incorporating cooperation to better reflect instructors' roles in teamwork and institutional activities (King, 2016). Data are usually collected through Likert-scale questionnaires and tested for reliability and validity.

Relationship Between Instructors' Organization identity and Career Adaptability

Research indicates that instructors' organization identity is positively related to career adaptability. Instructors who strongly identify with their institutions tend to show greater motivation, psychological stability, and flexibility in responding to teaching, research, and organizational changes (LeBlanc & Lyons, 2022). This identification enhances their ability to regulate behavior, engage in professional activities, and cope with work pressure, thereby improving career adaptability (Cardoso et al., 2022). Studies in Henan Province also confirm this positive relationship, although existing research is limited in scope and mainly based on cross-sectional surveys. Further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms and contextual differences to better support instructors' professional development (Zhang et al., 2021).

2. Materials and Methods

This study targeted 385 full-time instructors at Henan S College and adopted a census approach to examine their organization identity and career adaptability. Data were collected through an anonymous online questionnaire distributed via Wenjuan Xing, with 162 valid responses obtained. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: demographic information, organization identity (17 items across support, sense of belonging, and communication), and career adaptability (24 items across concern, control, curiosity, and confidence), all measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

The scales demonstrated high reliability and validity. The overall Cronbach's alpha for organization identity was 0.94, with subdimensions ranging from 0.80 to 0.94, while the career adaptability scale showed an overall

reliability of 0.96, with subdimensions ranging from 0.85 to 0.91, indicating strong internal consistency. Construct validity was supported through factor analysis, with organization identity explaining 72.1% of total variance and acceptable model fit indices for career adaptability after adjustment. Data analysis included descriptive statistics to assess overall levels and demographic characteristics, independent-samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA to examine group differences, and Pearson correlation analysis to explore the relationship between organization identity and career adaptability. This methodology ensured reliable measurement and robust analysis of instructors' professional and psychological characteristics.

3. Results

The demographic distribution of the sample, with 385 valid questionnaires collected, ensuring sufficient data for analysis. The gender distribution was balanced, with 49.6% male and 50.4% female instructors. Age groups were also evenly distributed, with 35.3% aged 24–35, 31.7% aged 36–45, and 33.0% aged 46 or above. Teaching experience showed a relatively even spread, with the largest group (28.6%) having 11–15 years, followed by 24.4% with 16 years or more, indicating representation of both experienced and early-career instructors.

In terms of educational background and professional title, the sample remained balanced across categories, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as professors, associate professors, lecturers, and teaching assistants. Subject disciplines were also diverse, covering science, arts, humanities, and other fields with relatively small differences in proportion. The sample demonstrated strong diversity and balanced structure across key demographic variables, enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the study's findings.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants

Variables	Group	n	%
Gender	Male	191	49.6
	Female	194	50.4
Age	Aged 24-35	136	35.3

	Aged 36-45	122	31.7
	≥ Aged 46	127	33.0
Teaching Experience	≤ 5 Years	89	23.1
	6-10 Years	92	23.9
	11-15 Years	110	28.6
	≥ 16 Years	94	24.4
Education Background	Bachelor	100	26.0
	Master	101	26.2
	Doctor	97	25.2
	Other	87	22.6
Position	Assistant	87	22.6
	Lecturer	100	26.0
	Associate Professor	91	23.6
	Professor	107	27.8
Subject	Humanities	84	21.8
	Science	106	27.5
	Art Disciplines	90	23.4
	Other	105	27.3
Total		385	100

1) Regarding organization identity, instructors reported a moderate level ($M = 3.19$), with similar levels across the three dimensions of support, sense of belonging, and communication. This suggested that instructors had developed a basic level of organizational identification, but room remained for improvement.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Instructors' Organizational Identity

Dimension	n	M	SD	Interpretation
Support	385	3.21	.42	Moderate
Sense of Belonging	385	3.20	.50	Moderate
Communication	385	3.18	.45	Moderate
Organization Identity	385	3.19	.37	Moderate

2) For career adaptability, instructors also showed a moderate level ($M = 3.18$), with balanced performance across concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Slightly higher scores in curiosity and control reflected instructors' capacity for career exploration and self-regulation, while their career planning awareness and self-confidence required further development.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Instructors' Career Adaptability

Dimension	n	M	SD	Interpretation
Concern	385	3.16	.51	Moderate
Control	385	3.18	.53	Moderate
Curiosity	385	3.20	.54	Moderate
Confidence	385	3.18	.52	Moderate

Overall Career Adaptability	385	3.18	.44	Moderate
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3) In the difference analysis, all demographic variables showed no significant differences in organization identity. Therefore, these variables showed no significant differences, implying that personal characteristics exerted little influence on instructors' organization identity.

4) In the difference analysis, only the demographic variable of position showed a significant difference in career adaptability. Instructors holding the position of associate professor showed higher career adaptability than those in other positions. Other variables showed no significant differences, implying that personal characteristics exerted little influence on instructors' career adaptability.

5) Results demonstrated strong and significant positive correlations between all subdimensions and overall levels of instructors' organizational identity and career adaptability with good internal structural consistency across variables. Organizational support exerted the strongest correlation with career adaptability, while curiosity and control were the most closely related career adaptability dimensions. These findings indicate that higher organizational identity contributes to improved instructors' career adaptability, providing solid empirical evidence for future mechanism exploration.

4. Discussion

Instructors at Henan S College showed a moderate level of organization identity, with similar scores across support, sense of belonging, and communication, none reaching a high level. Support scored relatively higher, indicating that instructors perceived basic institutional and resource support, while sense of belonging remained moderate and communication was the lowest, reflecting insufficient interaction and feedback mechanisms. According to prior studies, organization identity depends not only on support but also on emotional connection and communication quality (Even-Zahav et al., 2022). Therefore, although a foundation exists, improvements are needed in emotional bonding and communication.

Instructors demonstrated a moderate level of career adaptability, with balanced but not high scores across concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Curiosity scored highest, indicating openness to learning and exploration, while concern scored lowest, suggesting limited career planning awareness. Control and confidence were moderate, showing basic self-regulation and self-efficacy. Career adaptability theory emphasizes these psychological resources in coping with change (Fang, 2023), and the findings suggest that instructors possess foundational adaptability but still need improvement, particularly in future planning and confidence.

No significant differences in organization identity were found across gender, age, teaching experience, education, title, or subject ($p > 0.05$), indicating that demographic factors had limited influence. Organization identity, as a context-dependent psychological construct, is shaped more by institutional environment and culture (Salinas & Garrido, 2022). The relatively unified management and cultural atmosphere at Henan S College contributed to consistent perceptions across groups. This suggests that enhancing organization identity should focus on institutional factors such as communication and support systems rather than demographic differences.

Professional title was the only variable showing significant differences in career adaptability, particularly in concern, curiosity, and total adaptability ($p < 0.05$), while other demographic factors were not significant. Associate professors scored lower than assistants, lecturers, and professors, likely due to greater promotion pressure and role demands at this career stage (Cardoso et al., 2022). Early-career instructors showed stronger motivation to adapt, while senior professors maintained stable adaptability through experience. This indicates that career adaptability is more closely related to career stage than demographic background (Zhang et al., 2021).

A significant positive correlation was found between organization identity and career adaptability ($r = .785$, $p < 0.01$), with all subdimensions positively related. Support showed the strongest association, followed by Communication and Sense of Belonging, while

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Authors' Biography:



The researcher currently studies in MED Program, Graduate School, Stamford International University. His research focuses mainly on areas such as school management, educational human resource management, educational leadership, educational informatization and digital management.