

A Study on the Influence of Teacher Professional Judgment on the Construction of Academic Self-concept

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Abstract: The research of Teacher Professional Judgment has attracted more and more attention in academic circles, which mainly focuses on the relationship between Teacher Professional Judgment and students' academic achievement, cognitive ability, learning motivation and examination anxiety. Furthermore, the research on the relationship between Teacher Professional Judgment and students' academic achievement has been the research focus both at home and abroad. However, Academic Self-concept, which is the main predictive factors of students' academic achievement, has captured the attention of the researchers. The study that combines Teacher Professional Judgment with Academic Self-concept intends to provide some ideas and enlightenment for future research.

Keywords: Teacher Professional Judgment; Academic Self-concept; English Majors

1. Introduction

At present, the research on Teacher Professional Judgment has not gained extensive attention of researchers, and only a few scholars have expounded this concept. In recent years, international journals have reported several studies on Teacher Professional Judgment and Academic Self-concept. However, the influence of Teacher Professional Judgment on Academic Self-concept hasn't been stated clearly.

Recently, the domestic research on teachers has attracted more and more attention in academic circles. The research mainly focuses on teachers' quality, teachers' behavior, teachers' beliefs, teachers' development and so on. Researchers' research on teachers' observable behavior has shifted from the study of teachers' observable behavior to the study of teachers' psychology. Several years ago, international journals reported several researches which were about the influence of Teacher Professional Judgment on students' cognitive ability and academic achievement^[1]. From then on, Teacher Professional Judgment is becoming a research hotspot.

The early studies of Academic Self-concept in foreign countries focused on the study of its structure and the compilation and textual research of corresponding measuring tools^[2]. After that, the research on the relationship between Academic Self-concept and academic achievement has occupied the core position for a long time. Over the past decades, researchers have extensively studied the relationship between students' Academic Self-concept and academic achievement, as a result, forming several theoretical models to explain their causal relationship, namely, self-enhancement model; skill-development model; reciprocal-effect model; development perspective^[3]. In recent years, with the determination of the causal relationship between Academic Self-concept and academic achievement, more and more researchers have begun to pay attention to the formation and development of Academic Self-concept, and the research on its influencing factors has become a new hotspot in this field.

2. Teacher Professional Judgment

Varner first put forward the concept of "teachers' judgment" in 1923, but researchers did not pay attention to it. It was not until 50 years later that researchers began to systematically conduct study on "teachers' judgment". Shavelson proposed a model of teachers' judgment and teacher decision-making, which is about a series of questions and assumptions about what kind of information teachers use in making judgments, how these information is synthesized and judged, and the factors that affect such judgments.

2.1 Definition and Type of Teacher Professional Judgment

For decades, researchers have had their own views on the definition of Teacher Professional Judgment, but they have not come to a conclusion. Kuai Chaoying pointed out that teacher's judgment refers to the process that teachers evaluate or classify students by synthesizing all aspects of information related to students in teaching situations. Reiman figured out that teacher judgment is a part of teacher disposition which should include moral judgment, ego judgment and conceptual judgment^[1]. Cheng Longyi pointed out that Teacher Professional Judgment is the professional identification, evaluation, determination and choice of students' behavior and teachers' own behavior and their relationship made by teachers on the basis of their own intelligence and a series of thinking processes in order to achieve their educational goals.

Based on the advanced theories above, it can be concluded that Teacher Professional Judgment is a kind of thinking process that teachers identify and evaluate students and students' behavior. Later, with the research of Teacher Professional Judgment gradually

deepening, researchers began to classify Teacher Professional Judgment from different angles. Hostetler pointed out that Teacher Professional Judgment consists of moral judgment, ethical judgment and pedagogical judgment^[2]. David Tripp mentioned in his book that teachers are supposed to master four fundamental professional judgment, namely practical judgment, diagnostic judgment, reflective judgment and critical judgment^[3]. Dong Hui classified Teacher Professional Judgment in “Types and Characteristics of Teacher Professional Judgment”. She pointed out that there are three types of Teacher Professional Judgment, including situational judgment, introspective judgment and diagnostic judgment, in which diagnostic judgment refers to teachers’ analysis of various elements of teaching. To sum up, there are no fixed criteria for the classification of Teacher Professional Judgment, different scholars put forward their own opinions from different research perspectives.

2.2 Domestic and Foreign Research Status

Teacher Professional Judgment is the process that teachers make decisions and choices when facing specific educational problems, which is an important part in teachers’ educational life. Nowadays, researchers both at home and abroad have been paying more and more attention on Teacher Professional Judgment. However, the research focus is slightly different between researchers at home and abroad.

From a domestic perspective, the research on Teacher Professional Judgment mainly stays at the level of theoretical discussion. Moreover, the research focuses on how to improve the accuracy of Teacher Professional Judgment. For primary and secondary school teachers, Deng Yanyan pointed out that teachers need to improve the accuracy of their judgments from four aspects, namely practical judgment, diagnostic judgment, reflective judgment and critical judgment. For kindergarten teachers, Chen Ju figured out that teachers need to create teaching key events to improve the accuracy of Teacher Professional Judgment. Based on the domestic literature, it can be demonstrated that domestic researchers seldom conduct empirical study on Teacher Professional Judgment^[4].

From a foreign perspective, researchers have conducted many relevant researches which combine Teacher Professional Judgment with different factors of students, such as students’ academic achievement, students’ cognitive ability, learning motivation, examination anxiety and so on. The researches which combine Teacher Professional Judgment with students’ academic achievement have been the research focus for a long time. However, the research subjects are mainly primary and secondary school teachers and students^[8].

In summary, based on the domestic and foreign literature, it can be concluded that the current studies on Teacher Professional Judgment seldom focus on university teachers. What’s more, the current researches that combine Teacher Professional Judgment with students ignore the influence of Teacher Professional Judgment on students’ psychology, which has a significant impact on students’ academic achievement and future development.

3. Academic Self-concept

The concept of Academic Self-concept has attracted the attention of many researchers since it has been proposed last century. Regarding the definition of Academic Self-concept, scholars give different definitions from different angles and emphases. According to the existing literature, the connotation of Academic Self-concept can be defined from three aspects--cognition, evaluation and emotion^[9].

3.1 Definition and Structure of Academic Self-concept

At the beginning, western scholars who are represented by Byrne and House defined the Academic Self-concept from a cognitive perspective. According to House, Academic Self-concept refers to students’ expectation and judgment on whether they can succeed in their academic situation and grasp a specific and definite academic task. Later, some scholars define the connotation of Academic Self-concept from the perspective of evaluation. For example, Byrne defined the Academic Self-concept which is proposed in 1984, arguing that the Academic Self-concept is the self-perception and self-evaluation of students’ academic achievement and academic ability, including the overall sense of self-worth associated with this perception^[10]. Li Ye and Tian Xuehong pointed out that Academic

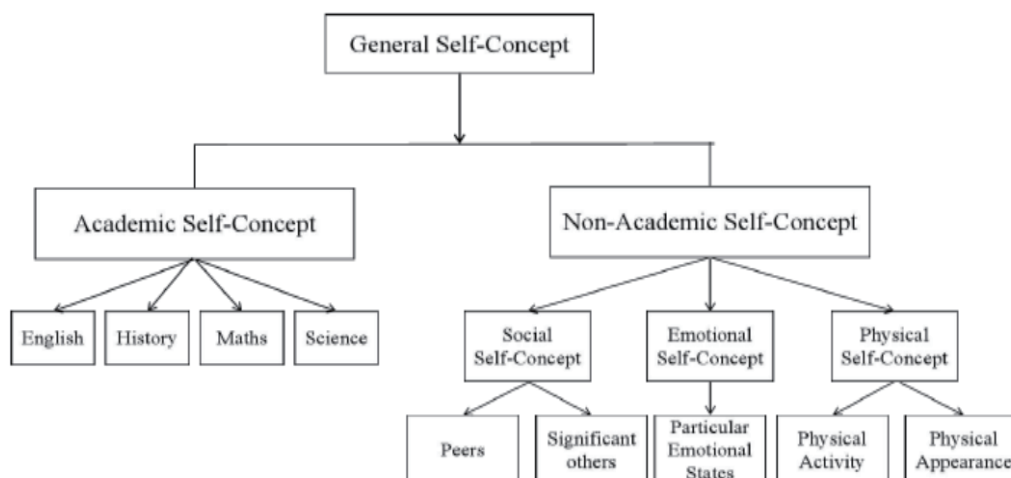


Table 2.1 Shavelson’ 1976 Structure Model

Self-concept refers to the relatively stable cognition, experience and evaluation of one’s own academic development in the academic context, including the cognition, experience and evaluation of one’s academic ability, achievement, emotion and behavior in different academic fields. Finally, scholars defined the Academic Self-concept from a emotional perspective, which is the improvement and

supplement of the definitions before. Guo Cheng believed that Academic Self-concept includes students' cognition, experience and evaluation of their academic ability, achievement, emotion and methods in different academic fields^[11].

As for the structure of Academic Self-concept, there are mainly three research models, namely Shavelson model, Song-Hattie model and Marsh/Shavelson model. Firstly, Shavelson and his colleagues proposed a multifaceted, hierarchically ordered model of Academic Self-concept. The Academic Self-concept is subdivided into the specific subject self-concept, and the non-academic self-concept is divided into social, emotional and physical self-concept. Shavelson model is the earliest multi-dimensional and multi-level model, which is the basis of the later researches on the structure of Academic Self-concept^[12].

Song and Hattie revised the Shavelson model, which divided the Academic Self-concept into class self-concept, ability self-concept and achievement self-concept. At the same time, the ability self-concept and achievement self-concept were divided into mathematics, Chinese, social research and natural science. Later, based on the empirical study, Marsh and Shavelson proposed the language self-concept and mathematics self-concept. Marsh and Shavelson revised the Shavelson model, where they replaced the Academic Self-concept with language self-concept and mathematics self-concept^[13].

Although some researchers have modified the structural model of Academic Self-concept to varying degrees, they still regard Academic Self-concept as a structure with multi-level and multi-dimensional. A large number of empirical studies have also found that Academic Self-concept is characteristic of domain specificity, which all indicate the Academic Self-concept is multi-dimensional.

3.2 Current Studies on Academic Self-concept

At present, most of the researches on Academic Self-concept are combined with academic achievement, learning burnout, learning motivation, learning procrastination and so on. It can be found from the literature and documents that the researches which combine Academic Self-concept with academic achievement have been the research focus both at home and abroad. The current study shows there are correlation and causation between Academic Self-concept and academic achievement^[14].

For one hand, domestic and foreign researchers both have conducted many studies to indicate that there is correlation between Academic Self-concept and academic achievement. Marsh H.W. and Frederic Guay have adopted multicohort-multioccasion design to conduct an empirical study which demonstrated that students' Academic Self-concept had a predicative effect on their academic achievement. Chen Weiping and Li Ye carried out empirical studies on the relationship between Academic Self-concept and academic achievement of high school students and junior high school students respectively, finding that there was a significant correlation between them. Li Yue conducted empirical study on university students, finding that the Academic Self-concept has a significant positive impact on their academic achievement. Furthermore, the studies indicated that academic achievement has a significant predictive effect on Academic Self-concept^[15].

For another, regarding to the casual relationship between Academic Self-concept, the most heated discussion is about their order of causation. Researchers have carried out extensive researches on this issue and formed several theoretical models to explain its causation, namely self-enhancement model, skill-development model, reciprocal-effect model and development perspective. The self-enhancement model thinks that the improvement of Academic Self-concept is the cause of the improvement of academic achievement. Instead, the skill-development model thinks that the improvement of Academic Self-concept is the reason of the improvement of academic achievement. The reciprocal-effect model thinks that Academic Self-concept and academic achievement influence each other at the same time. The development perspective thinks that the causation between them changes with the increase of age^[16].

According to both foreign and domestic documents, the domestic researches on Academic Self-concept started later than in western countries, and is still in a period of imitation and verification of western researches. What's more, most of the research objects are primary, middle and high school students, whereas the research on university students' Academic Self-concept and its influencing factors is rare, especially on English majors.

Students' Academic Self-concept, as a recessive existence, accompanies the whole process of students' learning and life. Its formation includes complex psychological activities, which are influenced by many factors at the same time. But in the teacher-led and student-oriented educational activities, Teacher Professional Judgment is undoubtedly an important factor in its formation and change^[17].

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

In conclusion, both Teacher Professional Judgment and students' Academic Self-concept play an important role in teaching activities. However, Teacher Professional Judgment and Academic Self-concept are recessive existences which are different from academic achievement. It is difficult for researchers to learn about the specific process of psychological changes of the subjects. The study that combines Teacher Professional Judgment with Academic Self-concept is significant both theoretically and practically.

Theoretically speaking, first of all, the research of Teacher Professional Judgment is the frontier research in the field of teacher's education, which not only enriches the theory of foreign language teaching and students' Academic Self-concept, but also has theoretical guiding significance for teacher training, development and teaching. Furthermore, the combination of Teacher Professional Judgment and students' Academic Self-concept not only enriches the perspective of Teacher Professional Judgment research, but also accords with the current research trend.

Practically speaking, this study is of great significance to teachers themselves, and it has considerably guiding significance for improving teachers' quality and accelerating the process of teachers' specialization. At the same time, it will also have a positive effect on students' self-guiding, self-expectation and self-interpretation. As students' cognition of their own learning situation, Academic Self-concept has a direct predictive effect on students' learning motivation, academic achievement, career intention and choice, and personal future vision. Therefore, whether teachers can timely guide students to construct positive Academic Self-concept has a profound impact on students' academic achievement and future development.

When it comes to the current research status of Teacher Professional Judgment and Academic Self-concept, it can be noticed that

there are still some research gaps among domestic research. Based on the domestic research status, the following three suggestions are put forward.

Firstly, the researches on Teacher Professional Judgment are seldom combined with the related concepts of psychology. Although Academic Self-concept is related to psychology, it still doesn't get rid of the shadow of study. At present, the influence of Teacher Professional Judgment on students' non-academic self-concept hasn't captured the attention of researchers which has a significant influence on students' outlook on world, life and values.

Secondly, at present, most of the researches on Academic Self-concept at home mainly focus on primary and secondary school groups, seldom on university students. Specifically speaking, researchers seldom carry out researches on Academic Self-concept which focuses on the difference of different majors.

Thirdly, most of the domestic researchers carried out empirical study on Academic Self-concept with foreign scales, which overlooked the different national conditions. Therefore, localization of the measuring scale is one of the research orientation.

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