

A Case Study of Teachers' Identity in Chinese Online Shadow Education Institutions

MA Yiran

Department of English Language and Literature, Northeastern University, China

Email: YiranMa139@hotmail.com

Received: 22 Jan 2022,

Received in revised form: 10 Mar 2022,

Accepted: 20 Mar 2022,

Available online: 31 Mar 2022

©2022 The Author(s). Published by AI

Publication. This is an open access article

under the CC BY license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords—digital transformation, online education, shadow education, teacher identity, teacher education

Abstract—Dating back to 2021, thanks to information and communications technology (ICT), most educational institutions have accumulated the experience of sustainable operation under the coronavirus pandemic. In particular, K-12 shadow education has quickly responded to the digital transformation of online teaching scenes to continue teaching plans and realized a compelling connection between online and offline courses. Even when facing a crisis again in the future, it would be possible for students are to deal with it calmly by continuing to utilize the online platform and technical tools built by educational informatization in this pandemic. However, it is also notable that although online shadow education has embraced its peak development and the rapid penetration of the sinking market under the catalysis of the coronavirus pandemic, it has also exposed many defects of itself. For instance, the improvement of online interaction for ideal teaching effects, and the guarantee of stable transmission of the platform, are still the directions that online shadow education urgently needs to explore and constantly polish. Therefore, this research, paying attention to the status quo and influencing factors of online teacher identity, will facilitate ICT teacher education, boost teaching quality, enhance evaluative standards for selecting online shadow education, and provide more guarantee for students and parents. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews and case analysis of two teachers in online shadow educational institutions, this paper analyzes the current situation and influencing factors of online shadow education teachers' identity from the macro, meso, and micro dimensions, in terms of four significant levels of vocational identity, professional identity, environmental identity, and personal identity. The findings of this study would empower online teachers' professionalism and career development for post-pandemic shadow education, which will also facilitate the students' engagement in distance private schooling at the same time.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Background

In 2021, according to the Ministry of Education of China, the newly established Supervision Department of After-school Education and Training is mainly responsible

for the management of after-school education and training for primary and middle school students (including kindergarten children), including the supervision of teachers in training institutions.

Table.1: Top 7 regulatory trends in the online shadow education industry in the first half of 2021

Time	Institution	Content
1.28	the Ministry of Education and other five departments	Vigorously strengthen the construction and application of online education and teaching resources in primary and secondary schools
3.4-3.11	the National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference	Governance of off-campus training institutions
4.1	the Ministry of Education	Vigorously promote the scientific connection between kindergartens and primary schools
4.12	the Ministry of Education	Strengthen the operation management of compulsory education schools
5.19	Beijing Market Supervision Administration	Tips on key contents of advertising in the education and training industry
5.21	Central and National Commission for Deepening Reform	Further reduce the burden of homework and after-school training at the stage of compulsory education
6.15	the Ministry of Education	The Supervision Department of After-school Education and Training was established

Table 1. as above illustrates the top 7 regulatory trends in the online shadow education industry in the first half of 2021. It can be found that the newly established Supervision Department of After-school Education and Training is mainly responsible for the management of after-school education and training for primary and middle school students (including kindergarten children), including the supervision of teachers in training institutions.

Therefore, taking the policy background into consideration, the focus on teachers in online education institutions cannot only stay in “qualification examination” or just “strengthening supervision”, in order to realize the need of transforming from “vigorous development” to “orderly development”, and facilitate the shadow education to reach the essence of “education”.

1.2 Research Status

In terms of the word frequency analysis of core journals on the theme of “online education” in recent five years, this study finds that there is a lack of attention to “teachers”. Moreover, via the word frequency analysis of core journals with the theme of “teacher identity” in recent five years, it can also find that there is insufficient attention to “teachers in online education institutions”.

In conclusion, both on the policy level and research level, there is a lack of attention to the identity of teachers in online education institutions, let alone the limited research about the proposed confusion about online teachers’ identity of “lecturer” or a “class-seller” in online shadow education institutions. Therefore, the research question of this research is proposed, which aims to

explore the current situation and influencing factors of teachers' identity in online education institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW: DEFINITION OF CORE CONCEPTS

2.1 Online Shadow Education and Online Teachers

Shadow education is a term to describe private schooling in informal education institutions or private tutoring in off-campus training institutions. It is a common phenomenon that private supplementary tutoring is considered as shadow education (Bray & Silova, 2006).

The progress of Internet information technology has greatly promoted the development of online education. In 2012, MOOC technology set off a climax of online education, and China’s online education expanded rapidly. 2013 was known as the first year of China’s online education, and the online education industry entered the “Warring States era” When the arrival of COVID-19 in 2020, almost all formal schools in China were forced to switch to online education from offline education. The requirement of “ceasing teaching and learning without stopping” made online education once again stand in the spotlight. Consequently, with the popularity of online education, online teachers are constantly mentioned.

Online teachers refer to full-time teachers specializing in curriculum development, online teaching design, online learning organization and guidance, learning support services, etc. in various social institutions (Zhang and Zhu, 2016). Therefore, the online teachers defined in this paper are mainly distributed in institutions with full-time online teaching, such as New Oriental Education & Technology Group, TAL Education Group and so on. Teachers who are part-time and temporarily engaged in online education in full-time primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities are not among the online teachers referred to in this study, because they do not take online teaching as their occupation, but only take online education as a temporary teaching means.

Notably, online education is increasingly becoming a facilitator in daily teaching and learning. In the process of using online education mode to teach, we should develop strengths and avoid weaknesses, promote teachers to use advanced technology and curriculum design, give full play to their flexible and changeable advantages, increase online teaching interaction and participation, improve teaching quality and reduce students’ negative emotions by enhancing online teachers’ identity and professional skills. There is a need to give full play to the support advantages and institutional advantages of relevant departments, provide relevant policy support for online teachers to

improve their identity, enrich online education resources, promote the sharing of high-quality educational resources, and promote equal development of education. This dynamic way of education and training combines the flexibility, adaptability, and convenience of technology to create a highly inclusive learning experience.

2.2 Teacher Identity Recognition

Varghese (2011) and other scholars have proposed that identity represents “the way we understand ourselves and the self-image we present to others”. Varghese (2005) and other scholars have proposed that identity in practice refers to the operationalization of identity through specific practice. Identity in discourse reveals that “identity is constructed, maintained and negotiated largely through language and discourse”.

At present, in the process of studying how teachers work, learn and develop, teacher identity has aroused widespread interest. This trend can be clearly observed in the number of papers on Teacher Identity in SSCI journals in the past 20 years.

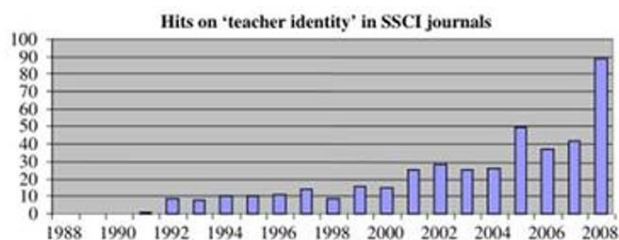


Fig. 1: Number of hits on 'teacher identity' in the social sciences citation index 1988-2008

Source: The Fig. 1 as above is quoted from Sanne f. akkerman and paulien C. Meijer(2010). A dialogical approach to conceptualizing teacher identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), pp. 308-319.

Beijaard et al. (2004), on the basis of reviewing the research on the relationship between teacher identity and teacher education, believes that the literature often lacks a clear definition of identity. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) believe that defining teacher identity is one of the main challenges in understanding this concept and how it affects teachers' learning and work. Nevertheless, multiple scholars have their own distinctive definitions of teacher identity. Dolloff (2004) believes that teacher identity can be defined as how a person absorbs subject knowledge and evolves teaching skills, beliefs and emotional responses to students, teaching and learning with a person's professional identity. Bouij (2004) believes that teacher identity can be formed through the process of socialization into the internal culture, but it requires individuals to be

aware that they want to enter the culture of the group (Austin et al. 2012; Isbell 2008; Paul 1998). Some scholars still believe that teachers can help students realize and develop their teacher identity, just like developing their acting identity (Campbell 1999; Conkling 2003; Paul 1998). Through practice, feedback, revision and retrial, students can develop the effectiveness and identity of teaching (Conkling 2003). Although scholars have different definitions of teacher identity, we can see several recurring characteristics of teacher identity, the most common of which is that teacher identity has diversity, discontinuity and sociality.

Firstly, the concept of diversity of teacher identity has been widely recognized in the recent study of teacher identity. Beijaard (2000) describes teacher identity as three sub-identities: teacher as a subject matter expert, pedagogical expert, and diagnostic expert. More generally, Beijaard (2004) concludes from his literature review that teacher identity consists of sub-identities related to different situations and relationships of teachers. Gu (2007) distinguishes “three dimensions of teacher identity”, which are professional identity, status identity and personal identity. Secondly, with regard to discontinuity, teacher identity is described as a fluid change from one moment to another and from one context to another. Beijaard et al. (2004) point out that teacher identity is a continuous process of interpreting and reinterpreting experience. Therefore, they believe that identity can be regarded as the answer to a recurring question: “Who am I now?”. Similarly, Rodgers and Scott (2008) believe that identity is “changing” and “unstable”. Gee (1990) believes that professional identity is “a personal narrative of his or her core identity as a teacher (never fully formed or always potentially changed)” (Sutherland et al., 2010).

When it comes to the social nature of identity, teacher education also gives different versions. For example, Flores and Day (2006) report that there is a strong interaction between the personal experience of new teachers and the environmental impact of the workplace in shaping and reshaping the identity of these teachers. Similarly, Rodgers and Scott (2008) propose that identity is formed in relationships with others. Alsup (2006) emphasizes that identity is formed in social and communicative contexts and has important social reasons. Cohen (2010) discusses how teachers negotiate identity in collaborative communication and believes that colleagues are the key actors in the formation of teachers' identity. Palmer (1998) points out that “Identity is the interaction of internal and external forces that make me become myself”.

2.3 Identity

Identity contains a person's various beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge and abilities. Identity itself has no meaning, but the identity has meaning as long as it determines how people understand and change the world. Identity is generally divided into two categories, including self-identity and social identity. (Farrell 2000; Brown & McNamara, 2011)

(i) Self-identity: that is, personal identity, which refers to the individual's perception of living conditions, social expectations, working conditions, past experience, realistic situation, future hope, and other aspects, which is the feeling of pursuing self-unity and continuity, which reflects the subject's reflection, identification and pursuit of oneself, and shows the dimension of self-construction in identity, emphasizing the individual's active "identification" of their identity.

(ii) Social identity: refers to an individual's sense of belonging and perception of values (Ngoc, 1998) to the group to which he/she belongs and the identity of this group, that is, the self-concept of an individual as a member of a group. This reflects the dimension of institutional expectation in identity, which is similar to "identity" in the Chinese environment or the "role" assigned by society.

China's definition of identity mainly adopts the western view that identity is the symbol or unique quality of a person or group. Identity includes not only the determination of individual characteristics and attributes, but also the identification of the relationship between individuals and groups (Qu 2007; Li 2009). In general, the understanding of identity gradually changes from psychological process to environmental and social process, that is, it conceptualizes identity as a process of continuous emergence and formation, and believes that it has mobility, dynamics, contradiction, change and contingency.

2.4 Teacher identity

Different scholars at home and abroad define the connotation of teachers' identity from different angles. For instance, teachers' identity is the unity of individual self and social self (Li 2009). Teachers' identity can be understood from the perspective of "teachers' identity as institutionalized interests and the overlapping identity of teachers' legal identity and social identity (Qu 2007). Teachers' identity is constructed by individual teachers through negotiation in the interaction with others, society and system (Ye 2014).

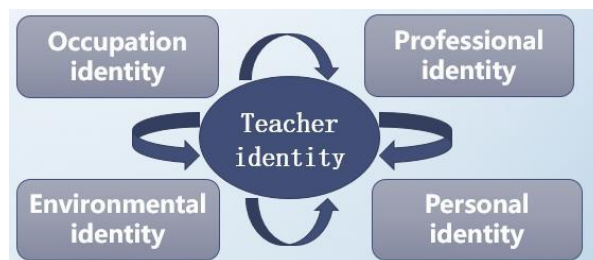


Fig. 2: Categories of teacher identity

Source: Author

Based on the multiple characteristics of teachers' identity and the views of scholars at home and abroad, this study believes that teachers' identity is how they view their value as teachers, including professional identity, occupational identity, environmental identity and personal identity (Figure 2).

III. INFLUENCING FACTORS OF TEACHER IDENTITY

According to the existing research results of domestic researchers in China, teachers' identity changes over time under the influence of a series of factors. Existing studies have categorized the influencing factors of teachers' identity into three levels: macro, meso and micro (Figure 3.).



Fig. 3: Categories of influencing factors of teacher identity

Source: Author

First of all, from the macro level, based on the research of domestic scholars, the existing policies, education system and curriculum reform are the main influencing factors of teachers' identity. For example, curriculum reform is a complex systematic project. The ideal change at the policy level and the change understood by teachers at the personal level, and the expectation of change at the may not be consistent with teachers' personal educational beliefs, which makes teachers' professional identity face crises and challenges (Zhang & Lin, 2008).

From the meso level, domestic scholars believe that the school organizational culture in the school environment,

teachers' interpersonal relationships in the school and teachers' professional training are the main influencing factors of teachers' identity. The market environment outside the school and teachers' socio-economic position are also important factors affecting teachers' identity. In addition, some scholars also mentioned other influencing factors such as China's historical and cultural traditions, mass culture and media factors. For example, too narrow professional development of teachers obscures teachers' social and public responsibilities and makes teachers become bystanders and outsiders in public life (Wang 2011). Market intervention, mass culture and demonized reports about teachers in the media make teachers fall into self-doubt (Yan 2006). The expectation of society for the role of teachers is further transformed into the administrative discourse of the education system. The pressure of social public opinion and social evaluation will lead to the emergence of teacher identity crisis (Tian & Feng 2015). Besides, foreign scholars have found that the contact with students and staff development programs usually strengthen the identity of teachers, while the general environment of higher education is usually considered to be a restrictive factor. The direct work environment can be either positive or negative. (Thea van Lankveld, Judith Schoonenboom, Monique Volman, Gerda Croiset & Jos Beishuizen, 2017).

From the micro-level, the conclusions of domestic researchers cover the influencing factors such as teachers' gender, teaching years, teaching discipline, whether to hold the position of manager in the school, teachers' professional knowledge and practical ability, teachers' emotion, teachers' educational philosophy and so on (Ye 2014). For example, compared to teachers with lower academic qualifications, teachers with higher academic qualifications are more satisfied with the current working environment and income, and also think that the teaching occupation can realize their own value. Language, numeracy and foreign language teachers tend to think that the teaching profession can realize their own value (Li 2009). Teaching ability determines whether teachers have the right to speak in the implementation of curriculum reform, and mastering the right to speak, which promotes the formation of a positive identity (Feng & Ma 2006). Positive emotional experience can help teachers establish a stable personal identity, so as to promote the implementation of curriculum reform (Hou 2020). For the teachers whose main work is teaching, they show a more harmonious identity, while in the face of non-teaching work, teachers show a maladjusted identity. Teachers who have experienced successful events at work and have good memories show more harmonious identity, while teachers who have experienced embarrassing events at work show

maladjusted identity (MA 2020). Foreign studies have shown that emotion (Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Van Veen & Sleepers, 2006; Zembylas, 2003), work and life experience in a specific context (Flores & day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sachs, 2005), and the choice of teaching discipline will also affect identity, because different disciplines may tend to have their own special teaching culture (Barty, 2004; Pennington, 2002; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, Johnson, 2005). The influence of the school environment, class size, colleagues and school administrators will all have an impact on the formation of the identity of teachers. Similarly, the initial emotion brought to the context and the emotion generated by the environment will also affect teachers' identity.

In the domestic scholars' research in China, most of the research on the influencing factors of teachers' identity focuses on rural teachers and English teachers, and the number of research involving online education teachers is less.

After narrowing the research focus to online education, there is less research on the influencing factors of teachers' identity in this education sector. Some researchers have studied the influencing factors of teachers' identity in distance education and shadow education, and come to the conclusion that they include the fuzziness of teachers' professional attributes, the enhancement of teachers' role diversity, teachers' work motivation and teachers' achievements. However, the influencing factors, including teaching content and teachers' personal experience, are less comprehensive on the whole.

IV. RESEARCH METHOD

4.1 Research sample

Table.2: Overview of the two interviewees, Source: Author

Research object	Gender	Age	Subject	Years of teaching	Institution
Teacher S	female	30 years old	Senior One politics	6 years	X firm
Teacher G	female	21 years old	High school mathematics	Two and a half years	Z firm

Table 2 above shows an overview of the two interviewees. This study's two interviewees are selected by convenience sampling, who are full-time online teachers from the X online shadow education institution, which is one of the largest extracurricular counseling and shadow education institutions for K-12 education in China.

4.2 Research procedure

This study utilizes semi-structured in-depth interviews to fully understand the current situation and key events of

the two interviewees about their choice of being full-time online teachers in educational institutions, also including the changes of skills and emotional attitudes, and plan B or further insights according to the situation.

Firstly, the two online teachers were interviewed and the recording were transcribed in time. After qualitative situational analysis and generic analysis of the interview data, this paper presents the current status of the identity of online teacher S and teacher G, and extracts the influencing factors of teachers' identity in terms of the macro, meso and micro dimensions based on the text content.

4.3 Data analysis method

This study mainly uses generic analysis and situational analysis. The basis of generic analysis is comparison, and the corresponding genera are set by using similar comparison, dissimilar comparison, horizontal comparison, and vertical comparison. Data with the same attributes fall into the same category, which can highlight their differences. Situational analysis is to put the data in the natural environment of the research sample and write an interview divided into situational fragments.

V. RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Current status of online teacher identity

This study draws on the dimensions of teacher identity constructed by content analysis, combined with the results of online teacher interviews, and summarizes the following dimensions and categories according to the interview results of the two teachers in Table 3, which includes:

- (i) Professional identity: professional values, professional concept identity, career development identity, career goal identification
- (ii) Occupational identity: teaching belief, teaching competence
- (iii) Identity identification: work input, professional behavior tendency
- (iv) Situational identity: recognition of online teaching methods, sense of organizational support, teacher-parent interaction, online education governance identity, corporate and communicate with public schools

Table.3: Dimensions and categories of online teacher identity, Source: Author

Dimension	Category	Key narrative of the interview
Professional identity	Professional values	<p>I want to be a teacher, mainly related to my grandfather, who is a teacher himself, and then led me to become a teacher.</p> <p>My primary school teacher also inspired me a lot from my learning experience. At that time, she gave me great encouragement and made me determined to be a teacher because teachers could help many people.</p> <p>At that time, it was also an accidental choice on the Internet. I didn't specifically choose any online organization. In fact, before joining the X shadow education institution, I didn't think I would be an online teacher at all. I started my career in the winter vacation (January 2019). I came across online recruitment by chance. Meanwhile, I was quite qualified, so I wanted to have a try. Also, full-time online teachers in shadow education institutions don't have to go out to work elsewhere to be a teacher.</p>
	Professional concept identity	<p>The reason why I chose this job was that there was no need to commute every day, and the time was relatively free. Later, I also considered changing my job, but for a new job, I needed to punch in and punch out, so I didn't change it yet.</p>
		<p>At the beginning of working at this institution, I didn't take too much into consideration. Because there was great competitive pressure in the organization, I just wanted to try it for a semester first. If I perform well in teaching, I still want to be a teacher in a formal public school, not an institution, because as far as I know, the treatment of shadow education institutional teachers is far inferior to that of formal public school teachers.</p> <p>I regard my roles at the X institution as teachers and students' friends, which is very different from the positioning of traditional teachers in the formal public school. In school, where teachers' role are only about teaching instead of emphasizing being friends with students.</p> <p>Even though there are great differences of teachers between shadow education institutions and formal public schools. I strongly believe that I can realize my value in online teaching and share my experience with others.</p>
		<p>Maybe I will always be a teacher. So far, I am still very interested in being a teacher, but</p> <p>I think the job of online teachers are not so stable. If there is an opportunity for promotion, I don't think I have any space for improvement at present. In contrast, there are some teachers in Tsinghua University and Peking University in my organization, and they still have a large space for improvement, because they will be upgraded to "Grade A" teachers in the institution.</p>
	Career development identity	<p>In the first year in my online teaching job, almost half of the teachers who started this job with me have left. And the X institution has selection rules and dismissal</p>

		systems. In fact, these rules are not so reasonable, because if part-time teachers have no contract protection, they will suffer from the losses by themselves. In addition, because we have direct contact with not only students but also consultants or head teachers. They all belong to sales, so some teachers will be disrupted from time to time by them.
	Career goal identification	<p>Before I became an online teacher, I thought it would be better to talk about knowledge in class, but after I joined the job, I found that I was "naïve". Because I have taught high school students online in the past two years, I have to communicate with them actively in class. Once in class, a girl came to class crying, and she told me about her family's conflicts for more than half an hour in class and asked me to help her solve her family problems.</p> <p>Like public school teachers, we all need to prepare lessons, give lectures, and distribute handouts. The difference between online shadow education institutions and formal public schools is the teaching method and the teacher evaluation rubrics. But I have also seen the offline teachers' teaching in formal public schools, and I think we are still in charge of the mission of sales compared to them.</p>
Occupational identity	Teaching belief	<p>I still want to be like my primary school teacher, because in my impression, she is particularly gentle and generous. Although she only taught us one year, that experience was quite impressive. In primary school, she treated us as equals, rather than teaching us from her position as an adult like other teachers.</p> <p>So I am going to keep up with her now. Because sometimes my temper is still relatively impatient. I am slow to do questions for students, or when they can't do a problem, I will be very angry and want to lose my temper.</p> <p>Most of the time, I will control myself and talk to them in a calm manner, but</p>

		<p>sometimes my voice will be a little louder unconsciously.</p> <p>Although I didn't feel anything at that time, I will watch these class recording videos after classes, and I would regret losing my temper.</p>
	Teaching competence	<p>I think my ability is relatively medium because sometimes institutions will have some assessment ratings. One is that during the exam, I will do questions, and then know my level by doing questions. This is part of it.</p> <p>The second part is to give a lecture to students. If the context of the lecture is clear, he will evaluate the excellence. The level is medium, good, and then very poor. Generally speaking, I will be in medium or good. In this case, most of them are in this way.</p> <p>First of all, my teaching method is more humorous. In this way, it makes it easier for students to accept me or the content of his lecture.</p> <p>Secondly, I will prepare lessons before each class. In this way, I will first understand the general context of this problem, and then the students can understand it when I speak.</p>
identity	Work input	I work online and usually take on the role of teaching. I sometimes take part in designing courseware, because the organization will give standard courseware.
identification		<p>However, some courseware is inconsistent with the content of my course. In this case, I will create some of my own courseware to instruct.</p> <p>Our institution has no teaching and research activities, but it will regularly share some excellent video courses for us teachers to watch.</p>
	Professional behavior tendency	<p>When it comes to the relationship between me and my students, I think I and them are not only the relationship between teachers and students but more like friends. For example, if my students have anything unhappy, they will often tell me. I will see if I can help him solve it.</p>

Situational identity	Recognition of online teaching methods	<p>First of all, let me talk about the disadvantages of online teaching. The first one is whether the students depend entirely on themselves with self-disciplinary attitudes during the online classes. We can't supervise the students' cheat or other improper behaviors, because if they take their mobile phones to research the questions and get the answers, or uses other methods to answer the question, then I can't tell the real outcomes of my instruction and their learning achievements.</p> <p>Also, we didn't have any eye contact with students in online classes. If students think something else instead of taking classes attentively, I wasn't particularly clear, because what I saw him was that he was staring at the screen.</p> <p>When it comes to the advantages of online teaching, I may be more relaxed because I don't know what students are doing. I think students should be in class all the time, so I won't care about other influencing factors in the class effect. If I am offline, I may know what students are doing, and then talk to the students for maintaining class order instead of focusing on the teaching content.</p>	Online education governance identity	<p>For the problem that some shadow education institutions are governed, I think this is mainly because the shadow education institutions will spread some untrue reports to parents because of commercial needs and profit orientation, but this is not so much related to teachers' responsibility and work. Including some exaggerated statements in the advertisement of shadow education institutions, such as how long it will take to improve how many points. These words can only be said by Sales Department of the shadow education institutions.</p> <p>And the main reason why I want to change my career is because of some class scheduling problems. Our organization is mainly composed of three groups: head teachers, consultants and teachers for teaching.</p> <p>The head teacher is responsible for training the sales staff. They always arrange classes disorderly and shirk their responsibilities when there are problems. Some head teachers' behavior and chat records are improper, but the students' parents don't know about the real conditions of their strong sales intentions.</p>
	Sense of organizational support	<p>There is a conversion rate for personnel assignment in the X institution. When it is lower than a standard percentage, the "unqualified" teachers will be interviewed and dismissed after two interviews, which will also have some</p>		<p>The responsibility classification in shadow education institutions is not obvious, so the management is chaotic.</p>
	Teacher-parent interaction	<p>impact on course scheduling, such as suspension of classes.</p> <p>I think different students' parents must have different recognition about our positioning and shadow education institutions. Some students' parents regard me as a teacher, tell me about the students' conditions, and then ask me about how to facilitate their children to perform better.</p> <p>But some students' parents don't regard me as a teacher. They think they spend money, and then we teachers should accompany them and their children 24 hours. Their children even treat the teacher as a "nanny". In fact, I am worried about talking to these students' parents, because some parents are really not sensible.</p>		<p>Cooperate and communicate with public schools</p> <p>I will pay attention to students' learning progress, but I don't study as thoroughly as formal public school teachers. I don't think public schools and online shadow education institutions will cooperate well, because public schools and online shadow institutions have little in common, and there is no communication between these two education sectors.</p> <p>The most important difference between public schools and online shadow education institutions is the organizational structure. Generally speaking, online shadow education institutions recognize money rather than emotion. In contrast, in public schools, if students study hard, the teachers will be more willing to offer students more care and extra support, so teachers will naturally teach students more knowledge, but the online shadow education institutions will not. The second difference is that my online shadow education institution is only a one-to-one mode of teaching, while public school is a one-to-many class pattern. When the teaching mode is one-to-one, it is hard to make sure that every student is on the same progress. In this case, there is no qualified cooperation between formal public schools and online shadow education institutions.</p>

5.2 Influencing factors of online teacher identity

As shown in Table 4, this study divides the influencing factors of the two online teachers' identities into three levels:

- (i) Macroscopic level: national policy and education system, curriculum reform;

- (ii) Intermediate level: teacher professional training, market environment, interpersonal relationship, work environment, mass culture and media factors;
- (iii) Microscopic level: personal background, personal development plan, teaching ability, personal rights, discipline background, educational concept

The detailed results about the two teachers' perspectives on their identities' influencing factor are illustrated in Table 4.

Table.4: Categories of the influencing factors of online teacher identity, Source: Author

Influencing Factor	Specific Categories	Key Narrative of the Interview
Macroscopic perspective	Market environment	<p>I think the job of online teachers are not so stable. If there is an opportunity for promotion, I don't think I have any space for improvement at present. In contrast, there are some teachers in Tsinghua University and Peking University in my organization, and they still have a large space for improvement, because they will be upgraded to "Grade A" teachers in the institution.</p> <p>In the first year in my online teaching job, almost half of the teachers who started this job with me have left. And the X institution has selection rules and dismissal systems. In fact, these rules are not so reasonable, because if part-time teachers have no contract protection, they will suffer from the losses by themselves. In addition, because we have direct contact with not only students but also consultants or head teachers. They all belong to sales, so some teachers will be disrupted from time to time by them.</p>
	National policy and management	<p>For the problem that some shadow education institutions are governed, I think this is mainly because the shadow education institutions will spread some untrue reports to parents because of commercial needs and profit orientation, but this is not so much related to teachers' responsibility and work. Including some exaggerated statements in the advertisement of shadow education institutions, such as how long it will take to improve how many points. These words can only be said by Sales Department of the shadow education institutions.</p>
	Teacher professional training	<p>Our institution has no teaching and research activities, but it will regularly share some excellent video courses for us teachers to watch.</p>
Intermediate perspective	Teacher educational resources	<p>When it comes to teacher education in my online shadow education institution, there are voluntary-attendance lectures for teacher training, and it doesn't matter if the teachers don't attend the training. If teachers are willing to attend these lectures, they will gain some rewards like "Rainbow Coins" so that they can exchange rainbow coins for various items.</p>
	The work content of online education teachers	<p>I work online and usually take on the role of teaching. I sometimes take part in designing courseware, because the organization will give standard courseware, but some courseware is inconsistent with the content of my course. In this case, I will create some of my own courseware to instruct.</p>

	Organization and team of work	<p>Our institution has no teaching and research activities, but it will regularly share some excellent video courses for us teachers to watch.</p>
	Relationship with parents	<p>I think different students' parents must have different recognition about our positioning and shadow education institutions. Some students' parents regard me as a teacher, tell me about the students' conditions, and then ask me about how to facilitate their children to perform better.</p> <p>But some students' parents don't regard me as a teacher, and then I should accompany them and their children 24 hours. as a "nanny".</p>
	The educational philosophy of online shadow education institutions	<p>Online shadow education institutions recognize money rather than emotion, and profits are the most important for such institutions.</p>
Microcosmic perspective	Personal growth and development	<p>Personal growth: I want to be a teacher, mainly related to my grandfather, who is a teacher himself, and then led me to become a teacher.</p> <p>Personal development: my primary school teacher also touched me a lot from my learning experience. At that time, she gave me great encouragement. Once we didn't separate in the morning and afternoon. We could go home at noon. Because we didn't do well in the exam, we were kept at noon. She patiently advised me and gave me food. This makes me decide to be a teacher because I can help many people.</p>
	Personal values	<p>In primary school, she treated us as equals, rather than teaching us from her position as an adult like other teachers.</p>

In detail, the current status of two online teachers' identity is as follows:

As shown in Table 5, teacher S graduated from a non-normal world-class university in China with a bachelor's degree. Before gaining the teaching job in a shadow education institution, teacher S' preset teaching value was quite ideal, and believed online shadow education institutions can provide her with better personal development and promotion opportunities, thus, she chose to teach in X online education institution having long enjoyed a good reputation. After joining the X institution, teacher S found that the institution emphasizing the education philosophy of diligent and serious teaching and focusing on cultivating students with heart and soul, which deepened the positive identity experience of teachers, promoted teachers to actively participate in various teacher training provided by the organization, and independently developed teaching guidance materials while cooperating with the teaching and research team. Moreover, online teachers in the shadow education institution also communicate closely with the school at all times to obtain the key points of teaching and examination in public schools. Because teacher S' career goal is always to help students improve their grades and train talents at the same time, she has been widely recognized by students' parents. On the view of online teaching, she believes that online teaching can not only expand the influence of education,

but also provide students with better and more convenient learning resources.

*Table.5: Influencing factors of online teacher S' identity,
Source: Author*

Influence factor	Specific category	Specific performance	
macroscopic	National policy and education system	Policies are reasonable and unqualified institutions are rectified	
	Curriculum reform	No particularly big impact	
intermediate perspective	Teacher professional training	The organization pays attention to education and training, has lectures and provides teachers with learning resources	
	Market environment	Course resources are unevenly distributed, and online teaching is the need of the market	
	Interpersonal relationship	Teacher-student relationship	Get along well with students
		Parents	Parents agree and will communicate the learning situation
		Influence of others	My own high school teacher, who is responsible for the classroom, cares for the students and has the feelings of a teacher
	Work environment	Institutional system	The concept of institutional education is to have a good class and recognize its concept
		Class size	From dozens to hundreds
	Mass culture and media factors	Online education has great influence and provides more resources for students	
microscopic	personal background	Not a normal major, self-study pedagogy and other courses have teaching resources and are responsible for teaching posts	
	Personal development plan	There is better room for growth, improvement and personal development	
	Teaching ability	Teaching materials are mainly developed, focusing on teaching and research activities	
	Personal rights	The teaching profession is relatively great, full-time teachers have a high sense of professional experience	
	Discipline background	Undergraduate economics is highly related to high school politics	
	Educational concept	I found that I like teaching through voluntary teaching	

As shown in Table 6, teacher G was chosen as the interviewee because she is in a special stage of new entry, and her teacher identity is still in the process of development, which is quite worth exploring.

In this case, she was interviewed three times before and after. Finally, the interview text was analyzed and summarized as follows:

Teacher G is graduated with a bachelor's degree from a normal university in China, and she wants to be a gentle and generous teacher under the influence of "important others" in her childhood. Motivated by her need for

earning a living, she came across this online shadow education institution with relatively free time and space and a better salary.

Before working in online shadow education, she thought she could only instruct knowledge, but after taking the job, she found that she still needed to prepare lessons, design lectures and even sales, and online shadow education institutions only recognize money rather than emotion. What bothers her most may be the improper management within the organization and the communication with parents. There are three kinds of people in the organization: head teachers, consultants and teachers for teaching work. The head teacher always arranges classes disorderly, and shirks the responsibility when there is a problem, while the parents do not know anything about improper conditions and the institution's commercial aims of selling courses for-profits orientation. Once there is a problem and seek for the relevant teacher, some parents will also regard the online teachers as "nannies" and want them to take care of their children 24 hours per day.

In the process of online teaching, teacher G thinks her teaching method is humorous and active, and she always fully prepares lessons. She has received good feedback in institutional assessment and student rating, and she still agrees with her professional identity.

Besides, from all aspects, teacher G thinks that being an online teacher can realize certain self-worth, but there is little opportunity for improvement for herself, and there will be the risk of resignation. Therefore, her next step is to stop working as an online teacher and turn to public schools.

*Table.6: Influencing factors of online teacher G' identity,
Source: Author*

Influence factor	Specific category	Specific performance
Macroscopic	National policy and education system	Protect students' and parents' rights. The organization has spread false information, but it has little to do with the teacher's words.
	Curriculum reform	No particularly big impact
	Teacher professional training	There is training at the time of teachers' entry. Provide certain teaching resources but not compulsory learning. There will be extra rewards for teacher training.
	Market environment	Time is relatively free. The salary is slightly better than that of public schools.

intermediate perspective	Interpersonal relationship	Teacher-student relationship	Talk with students closely in class and even solve family problems
			Get along well with students. Students like class style and regard teachers as friends.
		Parents	Some parents regard teachers as professional instructors, and are willing to share their children's academic performance.
			Timely feedback with students and parents (record form)
		Influence of others	The salesperson arranged classes randomly and shirked the responsibility to the teacher
			Parents and supervisors often conduct spot checks in class
	Work environment	Institutional system	High competitive pressure
			The organization has obvious profitability
			The reward and punishment system is unreasonable, mainly based on parents' opinions
		Class size	one-on-one teaching
	Mass culture and media factors		Do not recognize online institutional education and teachers
Microscopic	Personal background		undergraduate normal students; part time job has no teaching and research activities
	Personal development trend		Part time teachers have no chance for promotion and want to go to public schools after graduation
	Teaching ability		Medium ability. The organization has assessment and rating. Most of the subject knowledge, no educational knowledge. Humorous lectures are more easily accepted by students. Prepare lessons in advance
	Personal right		Part time teachers. Disturbed by sales staff such as consultants or head teachers.
	Discipline background		Because of the reform policy, he changed from primary school mathematics to high school mathematics. Math was better in high school.
	Educational concept		Can realize their own value, share their experience with others and help more people. Teach students as equals.

Table.7: Comparison of the two online teachers' identity on the macroscopic level, Source: Author

dimension	influence factor	Teacher S	Teacher G
macroscopic	Institutional identity	I always like the educational belief of X institution, that is, teachers should focus on designing excellent classes, and then help students improve their grades.	Z institution has some "selection" systems, which are not so reasonable. There is a conversion rate in the organization. When it is lower than what percentage, teachers will be interviewed and dismissed after two interviews, which will also have some impact on course scheduling, such as suspension of classes.
	Identify with institutional concept vs. question institutional system	Because the curriculum of public schools is different from that of other shadowing education institutions, and the focus of the content will be different, we need to communicate with public schools.	I don't think public schools and institutions will cooperate well, because schools and this online institution have much in common, and there is no communication between institutional online teachers and public schools' teachers.
	Cooperation with schools		
	Online institutional governance identity	I think the national management policy is very reasonable. Some institutions are more profitable. It is also good for students to eliminate them.	Institutions generally recognize money rather than educational beliefs. Some teachers have been transformed into salespeople. They always arrange classes disorderly and shirk their responsibilities when there are problems.

On the intermediate level, as shown in Table 8, the differences are online teachers' relationships with the students and the students' parents and different amount of teacher training.

Table.8: Comparison of the two online teachers' identity on the intermediate level, Source: Author

dimension	influence factor	Teacher S	Teacher G
intermediate perspective	Relationship with students and parents	The students' parents communicate with me in private, mainly about children's education and further development. The relationship is very harmonious.	Some parents really don't regard you as a teacher. They think that if they spend money, teachers should accompany their children for 24 hours. But I have a good relationship with my students, which is more like friends.
	Parents' respect vs. Parents' disrespect		
	Work team	We have teams in every discipline. Teaching and research activities are However, I have designed some materials and some questions used before the exam.	Some generally carried out by full-time teachers, while part-time teachers do not involve this content.
	Emphasis on teacher training vs. lack of teacher training	This online education institution paid special attention to education and training. There were various lectures, and then there were special teachers to instruct us for training.	Our institution has no teaching and research activities, but it will regularly play some excellent video courses for us to watch.
	Teacher training		

On the microscopic level, as shown in Table 9, the main differences are personal career planning, and society's recognition of online teachers. For instance, for teacher S, there are much space for growth opportunities in her institution, while for teacher G, there are limited opportunities for promotion or self-improvement. Also, for teacher S, the online teachers in online shadow education should commit to cultivating talents, while for teacher G, online teachers in shadow education institutions should also take the responsibility of selling courses as "salesman".

VI. DISCUSSION: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TWO TEACHERS' IDENTITY

In terms of the interview result, this study finds that there are great differences between the two interviewees regarding influencing factors of online teacher identity.

On the macroscopic level, as shown in Table 7, the differences are institutional identity and online institutional governance identity, focusing on online teachers' perception of identity in online institutions, and online teachers' recognition of online institutional management. For instance, teacher S agrees with her institution's educational concept, but teacher G questions her institution's educational idea.

Table.9: Comparison of the two online teachers' identity on the microscopic level, Source: Author

dimension	influence factor	Teacher S	Teacher G
microscopic	Personal career planning	I didn't make any headway in my year or two in public school. But the online education institution - just like the X institution I chose - has a large brand. It can give me some opportunities at my age for promotion.	In fact, before joining Z institution, I didn't think I would be an online teacher. After graduation, I hope to be a high school teacher in a public school. I have been in Z institution for nearly three years. At present, there is no chance for me to be promoted.
	Recognition of online teachers	I think the goal of online education must also be talent training. In addition, it is whether it can improve performance, because parents in high school still care about their children's academic performance.	More vs. Limited growth opportunities The most important idea is that institutions generally recognize money rather than educational belief. Some teachers have been transformed into salespeople, exaggerating to publicize "how many points to improve in a few days".
	Recognition of teaching ability	I studied economics in college. In fact, it has a lot to do with politics in high school.	Talent cultivation vs. course Sales I think my teaching ability is still above average. My way of teaching is more humorous.

By analyzing and comparing the interview results of teacher S and teacher G, it can be found that teacher S has a high sense of online teacher identity, while teacher G does not have a high sense of online teacher identity although she loves the teaching profession.

Thus, what factors cause their different degrees of identity? By analyzing the interview content, this study summarizes six influencing factors from the macro, meso, and micro levels.

At the macro level, the two teachers have different personal career plans and the positioning of online teachers. Teacher S gave up her job in a public school and chose an online education institution because she believed that the institution could bring her growth opportunities and opportunities for promotion, while teacher G aims to become a public school teacher, so being an online teacher in X institution are just a way to practice and earn some living expenses. Teacher S believes that the goal of online education is talent training and recognizing their own values, while teacher G believes that institutions generally recognize money rather than emotion.

At the meso level, the relationship between the two teachers and students is very good, but their relationship with the students' parents is different. Teacher S gets along well with the students' parents, while teacher G thinks that parents just spend money to treat the teacher as a "nanny". In terms of teacher training, they also have different experiences. Teacher S has received various training provided by her institution, while teacher G has not participated in relevant training activities.

At the micro-level, there are significant differences in their sense of identity with institutions. Teacher S agrees with the concept of institutional education because she feels that the concept of education in institution X is that teachers should carefully prepare lessons to help students improve their grades. In contrast, teacher G questioned some systems of her institution, such as the "selection"

system. The institution has performance appraisals for online teachers and is dismissed after being criticized twice. Finally, with regard to the state's strengthening governance of online institutions, both teachers pointed out some chaos existing in current online shadow education institutions. For example, some institutions are highly profitable, and the head teacher has become a salesperson. It can be seen from the interview that the profitability of the two teachers' institutions is also an important factor affecting their identity.

Summing up the above interview results, this study finds that online shadow education presents the following characteristics:

First of all, the online teacher group presents the characteristics of young, highly educated, diversified majors, high mobility, wide sources, famous teachers and low degree of standardized teachers. This group characteristic maximizes the interests of after-school training institutions, parents and tutors in the education market.

Secondly, the identity of online teachers will change according to the different subjects they face, and will also show different perceived states of identity in the face of the same subject. Through the dialogue with out-of-school training institutions, parents, students and online teachers construct the multiple identities of company employees, service providers, lecture counselors, and laborers respectively.

Thirdly, online teacher identity presents the characteristics of temporary, unstable, contradictory, and dynamic.

Fourthly, influenced by individual factors, after-school training institutions, other subjects, and social environment, online teachers will respond adaptively to the environment, and their identity will also show alienation in the construction process.

In conclusion, the influencing factors of online teacher identity include the factors as follows:

Micro factors: (1) individual characteristics (2) adult rationality (3) a sense of professional achievement (4) a sense of professional belonging (5) a sense of occupational safety.

Meso factors: (1) business values, organizational culture, working environment, and organizational support of off-campus training institutions (2) interaction with family, friends, parents, students, other employees of the organization, and informal organizations.

Macro factors: (1) the economic environment including the level of wage income, the prospect of online shadow education, and the demand for extracurricular counseling

(2) the cultural environment including personalized employment concept and business thought of interest exchange (3) the policy environment including the shadow education that regulates governance and the online education that encourages development.

Based on the above research findings, this study further analyzes the impact of online teacher identity, provides countermeasures and suggestions for out of school training institutions to carry out teacher management and government management departments to carry out shadow education governance, and also has reference value for the related research of online shadow education and tutoring teachers in the future.

VII. DEFICIENCY AND PROSPECT

There are several deficiencies in this study. First, due to the short project cycle, this study only conducted a case study on two online teachers, with smaller sample size, more variables and limited representativeness. Second, due to the difficulty of qualitative research, the interview results of this study are not deep enough, and there are still many places to be excavated.

Besides, this study reveals the current situation and influencing factors of the identity of two types of online teachers through two typical cases. Future studies are hoped to expand the sample size on the basis of this theoretical framework to further verify the research conclusions.

Last but not the least, this study only focuses on the status of identity. In the future, researchers can further explore the construction process of online teacher identity.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Based on the review of existing studies, this study obtains a theoretical framework to analyze the current situation and influencing factors of online teacher identity, and makes a case study of teacher S and teacher G via semi-structural in-depth interview.

Through generic analysis and situational analysis of the interview results, this study describes the current status of online teachers' identity from four dimensions: occupation identity, professional identity, environmental identity, personal identity.

Based on the analysis and comparison of the current status of online teacher identity of teacher S and teacher G, this study summarizes the factors affecting their identity from the macro, intermediate and micro dimensions, and finds that six factors, such as personal career planning, positioning of online teachers and relationship with

students' parents, are important reasons for the obvious differences in their identity.

With the attention and improvement of the status quo and influencing factors of online teachers' identity in Chinese online shadow education institutions, the online shadow education quality of the online shadow education industry is expected to be further improved in the future to inject new vitality into China's shadow education industry.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alsop, J. (2006). Teacher identity discourses. *Negotiating Personal and Professional Spaces*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [2] Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(2), 175e189.
- [3] Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 20, 107e128.
- [4] Beijaard, D., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J. (2000). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: an exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, 749e764.
- [5] Bray, M., & Silova, I. (2006). The private tutoring phenomenon: International patterns and perspectives (I. Silova, V. Budiene & M. Bray, Eds.). *Education in a Hidden Market Place: Monitoring of Private Tutoring* (pp. 27-40). New York: Open Society Institute.
- [6] Cohen, J. L. (2010). Getting recognized: teachers negotiating professional identities as learners through talk. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 473e481.
- [7] Feng Xia, Ma Ying (2006). Investigation and Reflection on the current situation of the implementation of the new curriculum of basic education. *Education and Occupation*, (36): 121-122.
- [8] Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: a multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22, 219e232.
- [9] Gee, J. (1990). Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses. Philadelphia: Falmer. Palmer, P. (1998). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. New York: Jossey Bass.
- [10] Hougos (2020). Research on the influencing factors of teachers' personal identity in Curriculum Reform. *Modernization of Education*, 7 (12): 77-79.
- [11] Li Maosen (2009). Analysis on Influencing Factors of teachers' identity. *Research on Educational Development*, 29 (06): 44-47.
- [12] Li Zhuangcheng (2019). Investigation and Analysis on the current situation of rural primary and secondary school teachers' professional identity. *Journal of Hebei Normal University (EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE EDITION)*, (8): 86-90.
- [13] Rodgers, C. R., & Scott, K. H. (2008). The development of the personal self and professional identity in learning to

- teach. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (pp. 732e755). New York: Routledge.
- [14] Rong Zhongkui (2019). Theoretical interpretation of the construction of teachers' identity. *Educational Research*, 40 (12): 135-144.
- [15] Rong Zhongkui (2020). Utopian imagination and imaginary Utopia: the realistic dilemma of the construction of teacher' identity. *Boundary Educational Science* (06), 47-52 doi: CNKI: SUN:JYKO.0.2020-06-008.
- [16] Sutherland, L., Howard, S., & Markauskaite, L. (2010). Professional identity creation: examining the development of beginning preservice teachers' understanding of their work as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 455e465.
- [17] Tao Jiajun (2004). Introduction to Identity. *Foreign Literature* (02), 37-44 doi:10.16430/j.cnki.fl.2004.02.011.
- [18] Tian Meng, Feng Jianxin (2015). A review of the research on Teachers' identity in China. *Teacher Education Forum*, 28 (11): 47-50.
- [19] Varghese, M., Morgan, B., Johnston, B., & Johnson, K. (2005). Theorizing language teacher identity: Three perspectives and beyond. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 4(1), 21-44.
- [20] Wang Dong, Yao Hong & Bian Yayu (2021). Analysis on the current situation and trend of domestic teacher identity research: visual analysis based on Cite Space. *Journal of Chengdu Normal University* (02), 18-26 doi: CNKI: SUN:SJXB.0.2021-02-003.
- [21] Wang Yanming (2011). Teacher identity: crisis, reason and appeal. *Education Guide*, (3).
- [22] Wang Ying (2008). Comment on the research of identity and identity construction. *Journal of Henan Normal University (PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES Edition)* (01), 50-53 doi: 10.16366/j.cnki.1000-2359.2008.01.041.
- [23] Yan Guangcai (2006). The institutional and cultural roots of teacher identity and its current crisis. *Journal of Beijing Normal University (SOCIAL SCIENCES EDITION)*, (4).
- [24] Ye Juyan (2014). Influencing factors of rural teachers' identity and its policy enlightenment. *Research on Teacher Education* (06), 86-92+85. doi: 10.13445/j.cnki.t.e.r.2014.06.015.
- [25] Zembylas, M. (2014). The place of emotion in teacher reflection: Elias, Foucault, and emotional reflexivity. *Power and Education*, 6(2), 210-222.
- [26] Zhang Shuang, Lin Zhizhong (2008). Crisis and reconstruction of teachers' professional identity in Curriculum Reform. *Research on Educational Development*, (02): 41-44.
- [27] Zhang Ya, Zhu Zhiyong (2016). Research on online teachers' role identity and professional development: Taking young teachers of China Open University as an example. *China Youth Research*, (05): 74-79 + 32.
- [28] Zhou Meixiu, Zhang Shousong (2017). The identity crisis of distance education teachers and its reconstruction. *China Adult Education*, (03): 15-19.