

# A Review of Domestic Research on Professional Identity of College Students Majoring in Tourism Management

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**Abstract:** With the major victory in the prevention and control of COVID-19 in China, the tourism industry is accelerating into the stage of full recovery, the demand for tourism professionals is strong, and the shortage of talents is becoming more and more serious. However, in recent years, the employment intention of tourism management graduates in colleges and universities is not high in the industry, there is a phenomenon of “low employment rate, high turnover rate” and “some jobs can’t be filled”, the fundamental reason is that college students’ professional recognition of tourism management is not high. In recent years, there are more and more researches on professional identity in domestic academic circles. By reviewing, sorting out and evaluating the research results of various scholars, this paper puts forward some thoughts for the follow-up research direction of college students’ professional identity, and provides ideas for improving the quality of college students’ talent training for tourism management majors and solving the problem of shortage of professional talents.

**Keywords:** Tourism Management; Professional Identity; Personnel Training; College Students

## 1. Introduction

Since the new era, the tourism industry has sought progress while maintaining stability, mass tourism has been prospering, innovation in all-regional tourism has promoted, and the tourism industry has entered a stage of high-quality development. With the significant victory in the prevention and control of COVID-19 epidemic in China, the overall recovery and upward development of tourism industry is obvious, which is accelerating into the full recovery stage. The demand for

tourism professionals is strong, and the shortage of talents is becoming more and more serious. As a talent training pool, colleges and universities continue to provide high-quality talents for the tourism industry. As a very important level of tourism education at all levels in china, tourism management undergraduates are the backbone of the tourism industry. High-quality tourism undergraduate talents are an important human resource support for the future development of tourism, and highly affect the future development of tourism industry. However, from the perspective of the employment situation of undergraduate graduates majoring in tourism management in recent years, the employment intention in the industry is relatively low. Most students are not willing to choose employment in the tourism industry after completing a certain period of professional probation according to the regulations, there is a phenomenon that “good can’t do, bad don’t want to do”, “low employment rate, high turnover rate”, “some jobs can’t be filled” and “the employment rate of undergraduate students in the industry is lower than that of college students”, which makes the problem of “two skins” between tourism talent training and tourism market demand more prominent. There are many factors that affect the unwillingness of college students majoring in tourism management to work in the industry, such as low salary, strong physical labor, and low social reputation, but the basic reason is that college students’ recognition of tourism management is not high. Therefore, enhancing the professional identity of tourism management undergraduates to improve their employment intentions is a breakthrough direction to crack the current situation of talent shortage and loss in tourism.

## 2. Current Status of Professional Identity Research

In recent years, the research on professional identity has attracted more and more attention from scholars at home and abroad. No matter at the beginning or in the in-depth stage, the research time of professional identity in foreign countries is earlier than that in China, but because of the reasons of higher education and teaching system, there are more studies on occupation identity in foreign countries. Although the domestic research on professional identity started a little late, scholars have combined professional identity with student education and professional education from the actual situation, and achieved a lot of research results. Domestic academic research on professional identity mainly focuses on the meaning of professional identity, measurement dimension, influencing factors, professional identity of a specific group and the relationship between professional identity and career development. In the study of the concept of professional identity, scholars have conducted extensive research on the meaning of college students' professional identity, most of which are based on empirical research. Most scholars believe that professional identity is students' acceptance and recognition of their major and their willingness to engage in professional-related occupations. When discussing the connotation of professional identity, Panbo Qin pointed out that professional identity is the transferring process of an individual's attitude, emotion and understanding of the major he or she has studied, and finally reaches the "same" state with the major [1]. However, Cuihua Chen defined professional identity as a complex psychological process of positive cognition, emotion, behavior and will be embodied in students' professional learning process [2]. Many scholars believe that professional identity refers to students' acceptance and recognition of their major and their willingness to engage in professions related to their major [3-4]. It can be seen that scholars have the same definition of professional identity, but there are also differences. Most scholars define the meaning of professional identity according to their own research needs. At present, there is no accepted definition of professional identity.

In terms of the measurement dimensions of professional identity, domestic scholars have

basically reached a consensus that professional identity is a multi-dimensional concept, but the number and specific content of the dimensions are different according to their own research needs. There are two dimensions [5], three dimensions [3,6], four dimensions [1], five dimensions [7], six dimensions [8] and seven dimensions. For example, Kai Bai divides the discipline identity of tourism management majors into seven dimensions, including professional learning, professional awareness, career development, professional prospect, professional speculation, social prejudice and professional affiliation, through empirical research [9]. It can be seen that scholars have not yet reached an agreement on the composition of the measurement dimension of professional identity. At present, the measurement dimension constructed by scholars mainly starts from the individual self-identity and emphasizes the subjective feelings of the subjects. However, it is worth affirming that the cognition, emotion and professional behavior of the profession are the proper dimensions of professional identity and have been recognized by scholars.

Scholars have different opinions on the influencing factors of professional identity. Zhihai Hu pointed out that personality type has a certain impact on professional identity [10]. Tian Zhang analyzed and pointed out that major type, personality and grade affect college students' professional identity [11]. Domestic scholars have noted that the social attitude towards majors and its impact on professional identity also cannot be ignored. For example, Ming Li pointed out that the micro-educational environment (such as study, research and life, etc.) and the macro-social environment (such as the reputation of the corresponding industry, employment, salary and treatment, and the path to realize individual value, etc.) are the factors that affect the professional identity of graduate students [12]. Yifei Yu analyzed the influencing factors of professional identity of college students majoring in archives science and pointed out that objective factors such as gender, grade and school, and subjective factors such as teaching level and professional identity affected their professional identity [13]. Hui Kong made a comprehensive and profound analysis of the factors affecting college students' professional identity, and pointed out

that college students' own factors, major prospects, public opinion, parents' and relatives' factors, major adjustment, students' place of origin and school factors are the main factors affecting college students' professional identity [14]. Other scholars point out that the level of achievement motivation also has a certain impact on professional identity. It can be seen that the influencing factors of professional identity are different in different majors and teaching levels (higher vocational, undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral). However, in general, it can be divided into two aspects: individual level and social level. The individual level mainly includes personality, grade, gender, family, student origin, education experience, etc. The social level mainly includes professional prospects, social public opinion, influence of important others, and teaching level of teachers.

There is research on other aspects of professional identity. Scholars have conducted a large number of studies from a specific major, different teaching levels, and the relationship between professional identity and other variables. Some scholars have studied the current situation of professional identity of higher vocational students, college students, undergraduate graduates, postgraduates and doctoral students. Some scholars have carried out different degrees of research on the status quo of the professional identity of students in different majors, mainly including preschool education, special education, tourism management, social work, archives science, nursing science and other majors. Some other scholars have studied the relationship between professional identity and personality, employment, learning, professional commitment and burnout [15].

### **3. Research Status of Tourism Management Professional Identity**

At present, there are relatively few researches on professional identity of tourism management major in academic circles at home and abroad, and most of the existing research results are from domestic scholars, which indirectly indicates that the research on professional identity of tourism management major is insufficient to a certain extent. Although foreign scholars have a small amount of professional identity research in the field of tourism, but most of them are about

the tour guide and other occupations, and the professional identity research specifically for tourism management students is relatively few, which is not specific, systematic and perfect compared with other majors. The domestic academic research also mainly focuses on the meaning, measurement dimensions, influencing factors and countermeasures of professional identity.

In terms of the meaning and measurement dimensions of professional identity in tourism management, Ling Zuo pointed out that college students' identification with the major of tourism management is a dynamic process of their internal behavioral tendency and external behavioral effect towards the major they have learned, and this process is a process of the individual's positive construction of cognitive understanding, emotional acceptance and recognition of the major [16]. Kai Bai extracted seven measurement dimensions of professional identity in tourism management, developed a measurement scale, and carried out empirical research [9].

In terms of the status quo of tourism management professional identity, Lifan Yao found that the level of professional identity of students majoring in tourism management was lower than the medium level by constructing relevant models [17]. Xiaohai Hu found that the professional identity level of students majoring in tourism management with "junior college upgrade" was not high, which was the general identity level [18]. Zhihai Hu pointed out that there were significant differences in professional identity among students majoring in tourism management of different genders [10]. Hongxia Zhang paid attention to the professional identity level of students majoring in tourism management before and after professional practice, and conducted a comparative study, finding that after professional practice, professional identity level showed an overall decline compared with that before practice [19]. Taiping Liu found that gender and learning stage were significant influencing factors of students' professional identity [20]. Ying Liu took students majoring in tourism management from general or key undergraduate institutions as research objects and conducted an empirical study on their professional identity [21].

In terms of influencing factors and countermeasures of professional identity in

tourism management, Qian Dong conducted in-depth research and found that personal characteristics, teachers and teaching courses, industry factors and the mutual influence among students are the four factors that affect the professional identity of tourism management students [22]. Some scholars have studied the influencing factors of the professional identity of students majoring in tourism in higher vocational and secondary vocational colleges. Guowei Lin pointed out that the level of professional identity significantly affects the employment intention of tourism management graduates, and in addition, learning satisfaction indirectly affects the employment intention through professional identity [23]. Jinwei Wang believes that students' professional identity is closely related to their learning career and career choice, and professional identity also has a significant impact on students' future work attitude [24]. Scholars mostly put forward countermeasures and suggestions to improve tourism management professional identity from three aspects: society, tourism colleges and college students [17,20,25].

#### 4. Conclusions

At present, most of the research on the identity of tourism management major in China is aimed at college students, and a small number is aimed at graduates. At the teaching level, most of them focus on the tourism management major of secondary vocational, higher vocational or undergraduate, and there is almost no identification research on the tourism management major of other teaching levels. In addition, scholars generally recognize that professional identity is a process of dynamic change, but at present, the research on the path of professional identity change and the tracking research of professional identity of tourism management undergraduates in four years of university is almost blank. Therefore, taking the grade as the time clue, in-depth investigating into the path and rule of the dynamic change of professional identity of undergraduates majoring in tourism management, finding that the current situation, dynamic change path, influencing factors and backward effect of professional identity of undergraduates majoring in tourism management are the main research directions in the future. On this basis,

the reform of the education and training mode of undergraduate talents in tourism management is discussed, which has an important reference role in deepening teaching reform, improving teaching quality, solving the contradiction between supply and demand of talents in the tourism industry, and helping the high-quality development of tourism.

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