

Research on Influencing Factors and Improvement Paths of Faculty Stability in Private Colleges and Universities Under the New Situation

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Abstract: With the popularization of higher education and the continuous advancement of the strategy of building a powerful country through education, private colleges and universities have entered a critical stage of high-quality development. As the core school-running resource of private colleges and universities, the stability of faculty affects the quality of school education and the construction of disciplines. However, the problem of teacher turnover commonly exists in private colleges and universities at the present stage, which directly hinders the improvement of schools' core competitiveness. On this basis, combined with the current new development situation, this paper comprehensively analyzes the current situation of faculty stability in colleges and universities, and conducts an in-depth exploration of targeted ways to stabilize faculty in light of the school-running characteristics of private colleges and universities, so as to provide support for private colleges and universities to optimize faculty construction.

Keywords: New situation; Private colleges and universities; Faculty; Stability

Online publication: September 10, 2026

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of building a powerful country through education, private colleges and universities serve as an important component of China's higher education. They shoulder the important responsibility of cultivating application-oriented talents and serving regional development, and also act as an important force driving the substantial progress of higher education. The faculty is the foundation of university operation, and the stability of faculty is closely linked to the development of universities. Compared with public colleges and universities, private colleges and universities rely more on social forces for school operation with obvious market-oriented characteristics; their faculty management modes are flexible yet their guarantee mechanisms need to be improved. Therefore, private colleges and universities need to strengthen faculty construction and

establish scientific and long-term faculty stability mechanisms to guarantee the stability of teaching staff.

2. Current situation of faculty stability in private colleges and universities under the new situation

2.1. High faculty mobility and insufficient personnel stability

At present, high turnover of teaching staff has become a prominent development problem for private colleges and universities. The teaching groups of private colleges and universities are mainly composed of young new graduates and rehired retired teachers, with a shortage of backbones and discipline leaders in middle age, leading to a fault in talent teams. Young teachers mostly regard private colleges and universities as a transitional stage in their careers. After accumulating teaching and research experience, they will switch to public colleges and universities or enterprises and institutions directly. Due to limited development space and salary gaps, backbone teachers also lead schools to stay in a perpetual recruitment state, making it hard to stabilize the teaching staff^[1,2].

2.2. Unbalanced faculty structure and insufficient reserve of core talents

From the perspective of teachers' age distribution, the age gap of faculty in private colleges and universities is large, presenting a polarized pattern. There are relatively many young teachers under 30 years old and rehired teachers over 50 years old, while middle-aged backbones aged 30 to 45 with rich teaching experience and research capabilities are insufficient. In terms of professional title structure, teachers with junior professional titles account for a large proportion, and there is a shortage of teachers with associate senior titles or above as well as dual-qualified teachers; discipline leaders and specialty directors are scarce^[3]. From the perspective of educational background, teachers with master's degrees or below constitute the main body, and the reserve of highly educated research talents is insufficient. Such structural imbalance has become a key issue and prevents the formation of core competitiveness.

2.3. Deviated professional concepts and insufficient work enthusiasm

Influenced by cognitive concepts and school-running systems, teachers in private colleges and universities generally suffer from low professional identity and weak sense of belonging. Compared with teachers in public colleges and universities, private teachers face a big gap in social recognition, establishment guarantee and professional title promotion, and there are also fixed stereotypes against them. At the same time, the performance appraisal of private colleges and universities is overly utilitarian, bringing heavy work pressure to teachers with mismatched efforts and rewards, which will directly lead to teacher turnover^[4].

3. Core influencing factors of faculty stability in private colleges and universities under the new situation

3.1. Inadequate salary and social security benefits

Salary and welfare serve as the basic core factor affecting faculty stability. Private colleges and universities bear all school-running costs without special financial funds. Compared with public colleges and universities, their overall salary levels are relatively low and salary growth mechanisms are imperfect. Most private colleges and universities adopt a single salary structure mainly consisting of basic wages and class-hour fees, with low quotas for performance bonuses, research subsidies and exclusive benefits, and salary adjustments

lag^[5]. Meanwhile, some private colleges pay social insurance on a low base, and their welfare systems are incomplete, which creates a huge gap with the sound security systems of public universities.

3.2. Narrow career development channels

Career development space is the key for teachers to stay in their posts for a long time. Against the background of the new era, teachers pay more attention to personal growth and career promotion. Nevertheless, many private colleges and universities have imperfect career development systems and narrow growth channels. First, it is relatively difficult to get professional title promotions. Private colleges have limited quotas and harsh review standards without special policy support. Compared with public colleges, teachers here spend longer on title promotion with lower pass rates^[6]. Second, research development is restricted. Private colleges invest less in scientific research and lack sufficient academic exchange, project application and paper publication resources. Young teachers cannot obtain professional guidance and research support to improve their research capabilities. Third, training systems are deficient. Most private colleges focus more on talent recruitment rather than systematic teacher training, leaving teachers with insufficient opportunities for on-the-job further education and advanced studies, so their professional competence cannot be upgraded.

3.3. Heavy work pressure

Private colleges are market-oriented and take enrollment scale and school-running benefits as core assessment standards, bringing heavy pressure to teachers. On the one hand, teaching tasks are arduous. The student-teacher ratio of private colleges is relatively high, and each teacher undertakes far more class hours than those in public universities. Besides daily teaching, they also take charge of lesson preparation, invigilation and student management covering various work areas. On the other hand, performance appraisal is overly utilitarian. School assessment relies excessively on quantified indicators such as class hours, student attendance and enrollment performance, ignoring factors like teaching quality and educational effects, which increases assessment pressure and easily triggers teachers' occupational burnout^[7].

3.4. Intensified industry competition under the new situation

The competition in higher education has become fiercer under the new situation. On the one hand, public colleges keep optimizing faculty guarantee mechanisms, expanding the scale of talent recruitment, and enriching research resources to absorb outstanding backbone and young teachers continuously. On the other hand, driven by vocational education reform, social training institutions have developed rapidly, and various educational entities and enterprises offer high salaries to recruit education practitioners, providing more job options for university teachers. Faced with multi-layer talent competition, private colleges are restricted by their own shortcomings and fail to guarantee the stability of faculty structure^[8].

4. Improvement paths for faculty stability in private colleges and universities under the new situation

4.1. Optimize salary and security mechanisms to consolidate material foundation for talent retention

The premise of retaining talents lies in sound salary and welfare guarantee mechanisms. Private colleges shall formulate scientific and reasonable salary mechanisms combined with industrial development trends, school-

running benefits, and the post value of teachers. First, optimize the salary structure, break the single wage mode, and increase rewards for teaching achievements and research outputs to ensure more pay for more work and stimulate teachers' work enthusiasm. Second, build a dynamic salary growth mechanism, adjust teachers' wages appropriately every year in light of regional price levels, industrial salary standards and school benefits to narrow the salary gap with public universities ^[9]. Third, improve the social security system, pay full five social insurances and one housing fund in accordance with standards, and add occupational annuities and housing subsidies to raise teachers' welfare levels. Fourth, establish differentiated incentive systems, and formulate targeted incentive policies for young teachers, backbone teachers and dual-qualified teachers to offer support to outstanding talents.

4.2. Build diversified development platforms to smooth teachers' career growth system

To address the unsmooth career development of teachers, schools shall establish complete hierarchical mechanisms and build development platforms for teachers at different stages. First, optimize professional title and post promotion mechanisms. Schools shall take the initiative to communicate with local education authorities, strive for title review quotas, detail evaluation rules, abandon the paper-only standard, and place more stress on practical teaching and educational achievements to provide a fair promotion channel for teachers. Second, improve regular teacher training mechanisms. Form targeted training programs for young teachers, backbone teachers and dual-qualified teachers in response to the demand for cultivating application-oriented talents under the new situation. Provide pre-job training and teaching ability intensive courses for young teachers to strengthen their professional teaching and student management capabilities; arrange regular enterprise secondments and frontier industry advanced studies for backbone and dual-qualified teachers to help them keep up with new industrial technologies and core standards and upgrade practical teaching abilities. Meanwhile, carry out regular teaching and research activities and create a sound atmosphere of learning through competitions ^[10]. Finally, increase investment in research resources, set up school-level special research funds to offer financial support for teachers' paper publication, patent application and achievement transformation. Build school-enterprise joint research platforms and fully integrate industrial resources to guide teachers to form research teams and realize personal growth through professional development.

4.3. Optimize campus management mode and create a sound working atmosphere for education

Humanized management modes and comfortable working environments are the key to stabilizing faculty. Private colleges need to transform utilitarian and administrative management concepts, optimize management systems and assessment mechanisms. On the one hand, adjust the current performance appraisal system, abandon the single assessment mode centered on class hours and student scores, and build a comprehensive evaluation mechanism that balances teaching quality and research innovation. More attention shall be paid to teachers' devotion and contributions in teaching to ease their occupational burnout. On the other hand, cut redundant work tasks, allocate teaching staff rationally and optimize the student-teacher ratio to reduce teachers' burden such as enrollment promotion and trivial administrative work, allowing them to focus on teaching and research. At the same time, strengthen campus humanistic care, build a regular system of teacher talks and assistance, pay attention to teachers' work pressure, smooth communication channels between teachers as well as superiors and subordinates, encourage teachers to participate in major decisions on school teaching reform and institutional formulation, safeguard teachers' right to speak and enhance their sense of

belonging^[11].

4.4. Strengthen the construction of professional identity and eliminate social cognitive bias

Teachers can stick to their posts only with a strong professional identity to devote themselves to work. Schools, society and teachers need to coordinate jointly to boost professional identity. At the school level, strengthen the construction of teachers' morality and conduct lectures and educational activities to affirm teachers' educational value and create a positive campus atmosphere^[12]. Meanwhile, strictly implement national policies on private education, guarantee equal legitimate rights of private teachers as public teachers, and ensure their rights in training, research, promotion and evaluation to boost professional confidence. At the social level, make full use of new media, campus publicity and school-enterprise cooperation to publicize the educational achievements and faculty construction results of private colleges, fully demonstrate teachers' professional capabilities, eliminate social prejudices against private schools and teachers, and raise their social recognition and professional status. From individual teachers' perspective, guide them to abandon the passive mentality of temporary employment and form long-term career development concepts. They shall formulate sound career plans combined with their own professional strengths and school development directions, improve professional literacy and form an internal driving force for career development^[13].

4.5. Leverage policy dividends of the industry to enhance talent competitiveness

Faced with fierce talent competition, private colleges shall take the initiative to seize national education reform policies and opportunities of high-quality education development to build differentiated talent competitive advantages. First, connect with the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Private Education Promotion Law*, apply to the government for special supporting funds, leverage policy dividends to improve supporting facilities and optimize faculty guarantee mechanisms for the upgrading of teaching and research platforms^[14]. Second, based on the school's application-oriented school-running orientation and regional industrial demands, create high-quality featured courses and educational brands with linkage effects to attract talents by unique school-running characteristics and development prospects. In addition, build a long-term talent retention mechanism and formulate targeted subsidy policies for core backbones and high-level talents to form a complete faculty system and guarantee faculty stability^[15].

5. Conclusion

In summary, the construction of a powerful education country and standardized reform of private education have driven the substantial development of private colleges and universities in the new era. Nevertheless, private colleges suffer from high teacher turnover and unbalanced faculty structure, which undermine faculty stability and restrict the improvement of school-running quality. To solve the problem of teacher loss, colleges shall abandon the traditional school-running concept of prioritizing enrollment and benefits while neglecting faculty, adhere to a people-oriented faculty construction system, and comprehensively improve teachers' working environment and professional sense of belonging. It is believed that colleges still need to keep adapting to the development trend of higher education and the pattern of talent competition in the future, build a professional teaching team with reasonable structure, excellent quality and stable efficiency, and provide support for the development of private higher education in China.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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