Due to the Phenomenon of "The Form Which is Struggle to Fill", Try to Deeply Explore the Unsustainability Factors Who are Related to the Human Resource Management of Private Colleges Under Business Operations—Taking TK College as an Example From a Micro Perspective

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Abstract: China's domestic private higher education institutions, particularly vocational education institutions, face challenges such as a shortage of teachers, unstable working conditions for teachers, and high personnel mobility. Previous studies have mainly focused on macro-level factors like economic, university, environmental, and government-related support policies. However, this study takes a novel approach by closely examining the daily work content of an in-service teacher in an enterprise private university over the course of a year. The findings reveal that behind the issues of "one form is difficult to fill out" and "dual use of one post" faced by the teacher, there exist complex micro-factors and human resources management problems. These issues warrant further investigation. Therefore, the authors propose a data-driven solution guided by management principles, which holds significant reference value for addressing these challenges in private university management and ensuring sustainability.

1. Introduction

In 2021, the Ministry of Education and six other departments issued the "Opinions on Strengthening the Reform of the Construction of University Teacher Teams in the New Era" [1]. These opinions clarify how to improve the modern university teacher management system and provide direction for strategic formulation and human resource management in universities [2]. The opinions highlight the importance of effectively ensuring the treatment of college teachers in order to attract first-class talents. Additionally, they urge the management team to overcome the limitations of focusing solely on academic papers, titles, scholarly qualifications, and awards (Ministry of Education of the PRC, 2021). This study is supported by these fundamental directions.

In addition, it is important to clarify the similarities and differences between the management of university teachers and enterprise personnel. While these two areas share some similarities in theory, it is crucial to note that academic transmission factor plays a significant role in the internal management of universities, setting them apart from traditional organization management (Jiaqi, 2022). However, our investigation reveals that some private colleges tend to blur these two concepts and intentionally overshadow the irreplaceability of full-time faculty. They adopt a "dual use of one post" approach, where teachers in private universities not only have teaching responsibilities but also passively take on the role of "salesman" to recruit students when there are no classes. Even sometimes guested as an administrative personnel who has to complete basic reports [3]. What's more jaw-dropping is teachers even shoulder the responsibility of nanny, need to take care of students' daily life. This practice essentially utilizes multiple roles without increasing salary levels, resulting in cost-saving measures. However, such an approach may lead to dissatisfaction and negative emotions among teachers, which can be detrimental to the long-term sustainability of the school and the stability of

teaching quality. Therefore, it is very necessary to try to find a sustainable model that is truly suitable for the management of current university teachers. It is imperative to identify a sustainable mode that is truly suitable for the current management of university teachers.

2. Factors Affecting Unsustainability

In this study, we will examine three major aspects and provide analysis with relevant examples. Additionally, input from four participants was collected, including one data provider and three in-service teachers, over a period of 16 months [4]. Our approach combines management ideology and theory to propose potential solutions.

2.1 The Optimization of the Salary Structure

This could better divide into two parts: The first part consists of the basic salary, class fees, invigilation fees, and other common components. Since timely payment is all it takes to meet the needs of teachers, we will not discuss it further. The issue lies in the second part, which includes perks and performance bonuses in addition to the base salary. These perks include meal allowances, commuting allowances, performance bonuses, and academic grants (Youhua, 2006). Originally, these additional benefits were established to motivate lecturers in the long term, and enhance their happiness and satisfaction, so as to improve work efficiency. However, due to a lack of supervision, many organizations misuse this system by "locking" the bonus [5]. To unlock this bonus, teachers are required to fulfill certain extra academic milestones or complete unreasonable work requirements.

Take TK College as an example, which uses a traditional salary structure consisting of salary, performance bonus and living stipend. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this performance bonus contains three parts, and the actual amount of payment needs to refer to the corresponding proportion, which is linked to 13, 17 and 19 requests, a total of 49 specific indicators. But only two of the indicators are related to daily teaching (Figure 1). That is teachers need to spend a lot of time in areas unrelated to teaching, which goes against the concept of rigorous scholarship in college. As a result, the effective hook of performance appraisal is not ideal, and the incentive is greatly reduced (Wei & Lin, 2013). Besides, this measure will not only destroy the rationality of the salary system to a certain extent, but also discourage teachers' work enthusiasm (although there is no relevant research to prove the authenticity of this view, but through years of communication with college teachers, we have reasons to believe teachers are more sensitive to fairness and ration-

ality than the average). Eventually lead to the loss of HR, in the long run it is highly likely to become an unsustainable factor in the development of the organization.
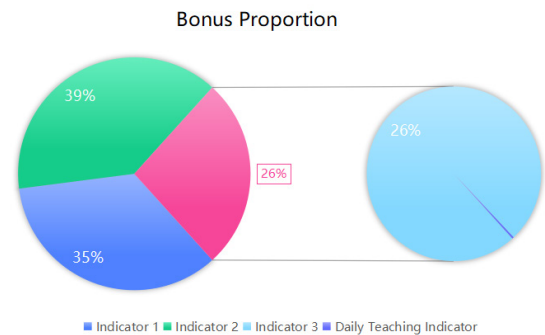

Figure 1. The proportion of daily teaching related content in performance bonus index.

Implementation Plan

The management should deeply optimize the performance evaluation index by dividing the valuation standard into two parts. One is the standard for academic-teachers, and another is the standard for teaching-teachers. Academic teachers usually refer to those senior teachers with excellent academic ability, rich teaching experience and solid teaching skills, and possess enough resources and time to complete relevant research and thesis [6]. Teaching teachers, on the other hand, normally refer to the junior teachers who have just entered the teaching position. They lack of lecture experience and insufficient teaching capacity, so they need to put a lot more energy into lesson preparation, textbooks advance reading and slides preparation, so their academic research focus will be inevitably cut down, resulting in insufficient academic momentum. In view of this situation, the management can allow teachers to choose the appropriate appraisal standards according to their own conditions, which not only avoids the unreasonable appraisal, but also relives the actual work pressure of teachers. Meanwhile, the specific implementation measures have led to the following second point, the reform of the teacher evaluation system.

2.2 Reform of Teacher Evaluation System

About this, we have to mention the "titled" talents, that is, the so-called "four young talents" (Young Thousand Talents Plan, Young Top talents, Young Yangtze River scholars and National Outstanding Young Science Fund winners). "Titled" talent is not easy to find, more difficult to obtain (Hua & Huiyuan, 2018). This poses a significant challenge for "junior" private universities as they struggle to attract and retain talented individuals due to limited resources. Moreover, the school's market com-

petitiveness is adversely affected without these talents. Consequently, private universities are compelled to incur substantial expenses in hiring such talents, only to lose them once their contracts expire. Over time, this low "cost performance" trade will pose a significant challenge to the stability and development of the school. In response, many private colleges and universities have started focusing on improving academic indicators for teachers who show academic potential. However, such decisions are often made unilaterally by the management, leaving teachers with limited power to voice their opinions and forcing them to passively accept these changes [7]. As a consequence, teachers not only struggle to maintain their focus on teaching activities, but also experience excessive psychological pressure, leading to negative emotions such as burnout. Consequently, the outcome of these decisions often results in "loud slogans, hopeless implementation", failing to effectively incentivize and fulfill the purpose of talent development.

Some newly established private undergraduate colleges are required to pass the triennial evaluation, which includes specific requirements for the academic achievements. Consequently, the responsibility of fulfilling this requirement falls on the teachers. While it is understandable for the management to prioritize maximizing organizational value, the issue arises from their lack of knowledge and judgment in the academic field. The management fell into the trap of rational decision making (Stephen & Mary, 1984), mistakenly perceives the academic pressure faced by teachers as a simple task, equating it to checking a box in decision-making processes. However, they fail to recognize that achieving academic achievements is a time-consuming and uncertain process. Moreover, teachers are highly sensitive to time, as their daily teaching work demands significant time investment. Therefore, this kind of decision-making conflicts with the reality, posing severe challenges to the organization's sustainability. It is clear that reforming this "sub-health" evaluation system is necessary. So how should we build a healthy university management ecosystem?

Implementation Plan

To address this issue, the college management office should shift their mindset away from rational decision-making and instead adopt evidence-based management (Stephen & Mary, 1984). It is crucial to recognize that not all teachers are scholars, and their primary responsibilities is to convey knowledge. Rather than solely focusing on academic achievements, teachers should be provided with a supportive and conducive environment

for competence growth. Additionally, a scientific program should be developed to support and incentivize teachers' academic pursuit, taking into account the specific needs of the institution. This approach will not only foster talent development but also enhance teachers' happiness, potentially leading to increased employee loyalty which would significantly reduce brain drain.

The specific methods are as follows:

a. To ensure a comprehensive and scientific evaluation of teachers' work performance, it is important for schools to establish clear and fair assessment standards.

b. An open and fair assessment process should be put in place to create a conducive environment for teachers to conduct assessments.

c. It is crucial for schools to effectively utilize assessment results by linking them to teachers' salary, promotion, training, and other incentives. This will serve as a motivation for teachers to enhance their work quality and professional literacy.

2.3 To Optimize the Teacher Development Platform

It is important to first clarify the concept of an excellent platform. In this context, an outstanding platform refers to a stable working environment that can be easily accessed with minimal opportunity cost. College as the foundation for teachers' daily work, the attributes of a platform are self-evident. If teachers in a school can deliver stable and sustainable educational value to students and the school at a low opportunity cost, then the school can be considered as a healthy and promising platform. Therefore, the overall health of the school's management ecosystem plays a significant role in determining the working conditions and motivation of teachers. Enhancing the school's administrative functions and implementing an effective supervision system can have a positive impact on the platform's performance.

Based on our collected data, the concept of repetitive work was frequently highlighted. This concept refers to 'the form which is struggling to fill' and the 'dual use of one post', as mentioned earlier. Our statistics indicate that Teacher A completed a total of 229 forms during the school year from March 2022 to July 2023. Out of these, 183 forms were administrative in nature, while 46 forms were related to teaching (Figure 2). Therefore, the administrative workload was 3.26 times higher than the teaching workload. However, it is important to note that the efficiency of teachers in completing administrative tasks is generally lower compared to their efficiency in completing teaching-related tasks.
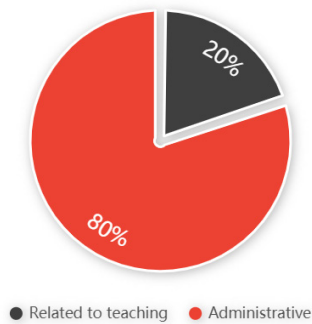
Figure 2. Pie chart of teaching and administrative documents in one school year.

Then how did this happen? This can be attributed to two main reasons we believe.

1) Insufficient administrative staff, excluding counsellors, is a pressing issue. For instance, at Teacher A's college, there are 17 teachers and only 1 full-time teaching administrative staff resulting in a staff ratio of 1:0.058. This ratio falls significantly below the recommended 1:1.5-2 outlined in the "Primary and Secondary School Teacher Staffing Standards" issued by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education of the PRC, n.d.). Consequently, the administrative staff are burdened with an overwhelming workload. Assuming an 8-hour workday, each teacher member required a minimum of 0.5 hours of administrative demand, the administrative workload of 17 teachers is 8.5 hours. Plus its regular tasks, administrator will face a heavy workload that exceeds the standard eight hours. As a result, it has to work overtime in order to complete its workload [8]. If this administrator chooses not to work overtime, these tasks will fall on teachers, highly likely leading to their dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction is not only directed towards the administrative staff, but also takes shape in "the form which is struggling to fill" and the "dual use of one post". The enforcement of overtime work can create disharmony among staffs and contribute to a negative work cycle. This cycle poses a significant challenge to effective HR management and, if not addressed promptly, can spread throughout the organization like cancer, ultimately impacting the overall health of the school management ecosystem.

2) The administrative data system has a significant flaw, namely, the excessive repetition of form content. In particular, the repetition rate of certain contents, such as student name, student ID number, gender, institute, major, class, and grade, reached an astonishing 31.6%. This means that each time a teacher fills out a form contents 20 sections, approximately 6-7 items are repeated from

the others. Taking into account the 229 forms filled out by teacher A in one school year, it can be calculated that these repetitive contents were filled out a total of 1,446.52 times, averaging 8.5 times per day (considering the average annual work of university teachers is about 170 days). Although this number may seem small, it might easily contribute to teacher burnout (Figure 3). Studies have shown that when teachers perceive their work as lacking value or meaning, they are more likely to lose enthusiasm and motivation (Freudenberger, 1974). Over time, this accumulation of negative emotions can adversely affect the mental health of teachers and ultimately impact the quality of teaching. Therefore, improving the administrative data system is crucial in order to prevent this hidden risk. The school management bears a significant responsibility in addressing this issue. It's time for that to change.
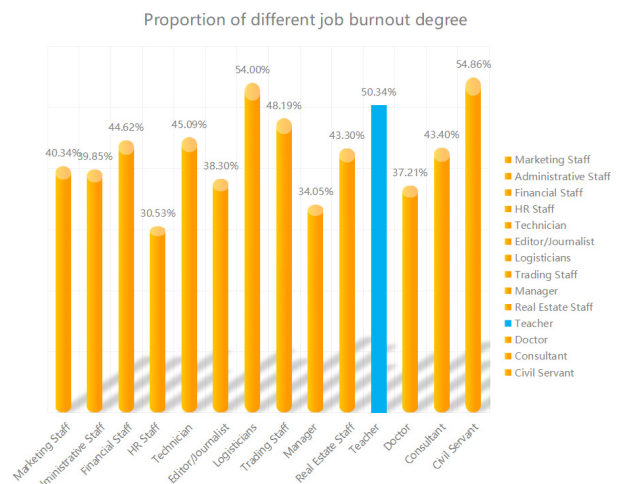

Figure 3. According to the China Burnout Index Survey Report released by the China human resources development network, teachers ranked third in the burnout index of 15 industries, just below civil servants and logistics employees.

Data source: www.ChinaHRD.net.

Implementation Plan

1) Application of tools and technologies: Utilize modern scientific and technological tools, such as artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing, to enhance the efficiency of teaching administration and alleviate the burden of repetitive tasks. For instance, by employing artificial intelligence technology, tasks like automated homework correction and student information management can be accomplished, thereby significantly reducing the workload on the teaching staff.

2) Establishment of an effective team cooperation mechanism: By forming interdisciplinary teams, teachers

can share teaching resources and collaborate with one another, minimizing the occurrence of redundant work. For instance, teachers within a team can collaboratively develop teaching plans and create textbooks, thereby preventing resource wastage and duplication of efforts.

3) Training and education: Offer comprehensive training and education courses to empower teachers with more effective teaching methods and strategies. This will enable them to handle teaching materials and information more efficiently. By doing so, teachers can leverage their knowledge and skills to enhance work efficiency and quality, even when faced with repetitive tasks.

4) Self-regulation and emotional management: It is crucial for teachers to acquire self-regulation and emotional management skills to effectively deal with the pressure and negative impact of repetitive work. For instance, engaging in physical exercise and cultivating personal hobbies can help regulate work stress and personal emotions.

3. Conclusions

Overall, repetitive work has a significant impact on teachers, leading to increased work burden, reduced efficiency and quality, and potential negative effects on their physical and mental health. However, there are ways to mitigate these issues. By implementing modern tools and technologies, establishing effective teamwork mechanisms, providing relevant training and education courses, and promoting self-regulation and emotional management, we can effectively minimize the negative impact of repetitive work on teachers. It is crucial for administrators of future private colleges and universities to acknowledge the importance of this problem and take proactive measures to optimize the teaching platform, ensuring a healthy and sustainable working environment for teachers and teaching assistants [4].

Upon careful examination and analysis of the work responsibilities of private teachers, it becomes evident that several issues exist. The extensive amount of repetitive tasks, such as correcting homework, conducting textbook research, and preparing administrative reports, consume a significant amount of teachers' time and distract them from the core essence of teaching. Furthermore, repetitive work itself hinders innovation and fails to stimulate the creativity of college teachers, which is an essential teaching ability. It is important to note that while this study does have certain limitations, such as the lack of universality in the research subjects, resulting in limited reference value, it also highlights the distinct characteristics of this study. Researchers have the opportunity to continuously gather firsthand data at the micro level and utilize this data to explain and analyze practical issues in macro management, as well as propose feasible solutions. This study aims to address management problems at the decision-making level with limited resources and investigation costs, and the outcomes have been positive, making it a valuable endeavor.

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