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POLICY EVOLUTION OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN CHINESE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY CIRCLE ANALYSIS

Abstract

The reform of education personnel management policies has been carried out progressively to ensure the achievement of educational goals. A systematic analysis of the personnel management policy circle, including policy design, content, and implementation, is crucial to improving the accuracy and effectiveness of such policies. Through a comprehensive review of policy evolution, this study aims to systematize the design and content of policies on personnel management in educational institutions in China. It was determined that personnel management is increasingly concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of goal achievement, policy design, system reform, and mixed-used management methods. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 420 respondents in 25 preschool institutions in five cities of Henan province in China. A total of 362 questionnaires were deemed valid out of 397 retrieved, including 24 from principals and 338 from teachers. The statistical analysis results identified the problems in policy implementation, including the laxly enforced teacher qualification system, inadequate teacher professional development, poorly implemented training policies, unattractive salaries and benefits, and the undesirable assessment system. For example, 5.89% of the respondents still need teaching qualification certificates. Only 1.1% of the respondents had senior titles. 2.76% of the respondents are still paid less than the minimum standard. In response to the situation, this study suggests effective countermeasures for educational administrative authorities and institutions. The findings could provide a reference for further optimization and development of personnel management policies.

Keywords

personnel system, policy reform, education quality,
management process, professional development, China

JEL Classification

M12, I25, J24

INTRODUCTION

An educational institution is a system that achieves the co-development of schools, teachers, and students. Its success depends on establishing a working environment that is conducive to the productivity of staff (Alabi, 2000; Al Mamun & Hasan, 2017). Policies always impact teaching more than staff (Duke & Canady, 1991). Thus, personnel management policies and rules dominantly affect educational institutions' teaching quality. Specifically, the quality of teaching depends on the quality of teachers, and the quality of teachers depends on a range of personnel management policies that affect teacher professional development, such as recruitment, selection, and compensation. With changes in the educational environment and the object of work, educational institutions must continuously innovate personnel management systems to mobilize the enthusiasm and creativity of staff (Lao, 2015). Therefore, paying attention to the evolution and development of personnel management policies in educational institutions is necessary.

Since the beginning of China's education reform in 1985, educational institutions' management systems and relevant policies have improved. However, there are still many difficulties in designing and implementing personnel management policies in educational institutions. They include restrictions on traditional authorized strength management (Diao & Wang, 2019), limited economic incentives (Wu, 2019), and inadequate teacher assessment and evaluation mechanisms (Dong et al., 2017), which have plagued the construction of teacher troops. Many researchers have proposed countermeasures for improvement in response to these, such as introducing a performance-first human resource management model (Yan, 2022), implementing a personnel agency system to enhance the vitality of the teaching force (Zhang, 2020), reforming the salary distribution system (Liu, 2010), and innovating the teacher appraisal system (Wu, 2017). However, previous research focuses on the fragmented study of the subprocess of personnel management in educational institutions and lacks specialized and complete process research on the policies. Therefore, it is vital to study the policy circle of personnel management in educational institutions, including policy design, content, and implementation.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the scope of personnel and authorized strength management, the objects of personnel management in educational institutions generally include teaching staff, management staff, teaching auxiliary staff, and logistic support staff (Kang, 2010; Wang, 2011). Some higher education institutions also have specialized scientific research personnel. This study focuses on the largest group, teachers, as the main object. Based on the management process, the main content of personnel management in educational institutions includes primarily the selection and recruitment process, training and promotion, and evaluation and remuneration (Guo & Cao, 2011).

All movements in progressive societies have been a movement from identity to contract (Maine, 1961). Establishing a series of teacher selection systems to enrich the teaching staff is a movement from identity to contract. The process of selection and recruitment mainly involves the teacher qualification system, teacher employment system, and teacher professional title system. The establishment and implementation of these systems clarified the development and management of teacher identity.

1.1. Teacher qualification system

In 1995, China's Education Law was promulgated, which stipulated that the teacher qualification system is China's legal teacher professional licensing system (MoE, 1995a). Furthermore, the Teacher Law (MoE, 1993) and the Teacher Qualification

Regulations (MoE, 1995b) further brought professional qualifications, rights and obligations of teachers, responsibilities and training, and appointment management into the legal system. This not only improves the professional standard of teachers but also preserves the sanctity of the professional tradition of teachers and its status in modern society to gradually attract more outstanding talents to choose the teaching profession (Zong, 2020).

1.2. Teacher employment system

In 2002, the Opinions on the Trial Implementation of the Personnel Employment System in Public Institutions issued by the Ministry of Personnel (MoP, 2002) specified a series of crucial issues in the employment of teachers, such as personnel employment procedures and content of employment contracts. This document has completely changed the administrative appointment management method that has been followed for decades and has empowered the recruited personnel to move (Luo, 2014). Furthermore, in 2005, the Public Institution Employment Contract (Model) was issued (MoP, 2005), which marked that the teacher employment system had concrete employment contract terms and content and effectively safeguarded the legitimate rights and interests of institutions and employees.

The management of teaching staff in Chinese educational institutions mainly adopts the method of authorized strength management, which is a way for the state to check the number of teaching staff according to the number of students (Li et al.,

2022). According to the stipulated teacher-student ratio, educational institutions are overstaffed (Li, 2021). However, due to various reasons, such as the flow of teachers caused by the unbalanced development of regions, many institutions are seriously understaffed (Xu & Xu, 2020; Wang & Tang, 2021). Besides, posts are the foothold of the teacher employment system and represent the actual needs of educational institutions. Therefore, the Ministry of Personnel issued the Trial Measures for the Management of Post-Setup in Institutions to implement a post-management system (MoP, 2006). In 2007, the Ministry of Personnel and the Ministry of Education jointly issued the Guided Opinions on the Management of Post-Setup in Higher Education (MoP & MoE, 2007), which proposed the general post grades.

1.3. Teacher professional title system

In 1986, the State Council issued the Provisions on the Implementation of the Employment System for Professional and Technical Titles (SC, 1986). For the first time, it put forward the concept of the professional title system. It also clarified the requirements for setting up professional and technical positions, the corresponding duties and conditions of holding the position, and the salary standard. As a result, teachers' professional titles have the structure ratio of the high, middle, and junior positions, which is the basis for determining teachers' wages and benefits (Wang et al., 2021). The professional titles in educational institutions at all levels are listed in Table 1.

Excellent teachers are crucial to achieving organizational goals (Wang & Yan, 2022). However, teacher professional development is long-term, complex, and staged. Teacher training is a meaningful way to improve teachers' overall quality

and personal professionalism (Wu, 2022; Guo et al., 2022). The Teacher Law stipulates that it is the right and duty of primary and secondary school teachers to participate in training. In 2011, the Opinions on Vigorously Strengthening the Training of Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools (MoE, 2011) clarified the overall goals for training, such as pre-service training, in-service training, key teacher training, and special training of head teachers.

Pre-service training is significant for new teachers to integrate into the team more quickly and perform their duties well (Gu & Zheng, 2015). The Opinion on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of the Construction of the Teacher Troop in the New Era (SC, 2018) clearly stated that the pre-service training of new teachers at all levels of schools should be strengthened. The Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Construction of Teachers' Morality and Style in the New Era, issued in 2019, stipulated that special education content on teacher ethics and style should be implemented in pre-service training (MoE, 2019). Specifically, the pre-service training is clearly defined for teachers in educational institutions at different levels, such as the Notice on Launching and Implementing the National Training Demonstration Project for Newly Recruited Teachers in Higher Education (MoE, 2016a) and New Teacher Orientation Guidance (MoE, 2020).

As for the evaluation approaches, the Interim Regulations on the Evaluation of Staff in Public Institutions (MoP, 1995) generally assess teachers on morality, ability, diligence, performance, integrity, and learning. However, it is difficult to operate in practice due to the broad content, vague indicators, and unclear classification (Tian, 2010). For the application of the evaluation results, the per-

Table 1. List of professional titles of teachers

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the Teacher Law of China (MoE, 1993).

Educational institution	Professional title				
	Senior title		Intermediate title	Junior title	
	Senior	Deputy senior		Assistant	Member
Teachers of colleges and universities	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Assistant	–
Secondary professional school teachers	Senior lecturer	(Deputy) senior lecturer	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Instructor
Teachers of primary and secondary schools (including preschool)	Senior teacher	(Deputy) senior teacher	First-grade teachers	Second-grade teachers	Third-grade teachers

formance evaluation of college teachers in China is more focused on the evaluation of rewards and punishments while ignoring the evaluation of development (Lin, 2021).

In 2016, the Guiding Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Assessment and Evaluation System for College Teachers (MoE, 2016b) stipulated that the evaluation contents cover teacher ethics assessment, education and teaching performance, scientific research evaluation, social service assessment, and teacher professional development. Unlike higher education institutions, the main content of the evaluation in the compulsory education stage is teachers' performance of their statutory duties, as well as their performance in fulfilling the post-duties and work tasks prescribed by the school (Xiong, 2010). The performance evaluation results are the primary basis for allocating performance pay, qualification recognition, appointment, promotion, training, recognition, and reward.

A scientific salary system is a crucial incentive for teaching staff (Hu & Yuan, 2021). The current salary structure of teaching staff in educational institutions includes post salary, grade salary, performance salary, and various allowances and subsidies. For this post, salary and grade salary belongs to the basic salary. The standard is unified across the country (Table 2). The performance salary is divided into basic performance and reward performance. Faculty and staff who complete their post-responsibilities and pass the evaluation can obtain full basic performance. Reward performance is based on the results of the evaluation.

In summary, the design of personnel management policies in Chinese educational institutions is always closely related to the values pursued by the times. The conflict between different values is always manifested by the degree of the concrete

implementation of the policy. Therefore, the theoretical design and concrete practice of personnel management policies should be mutually consistent and reinforcing. However, the review of previous studies reveals that personnel management policies are constantly being improved and developed, but many problems still need to be solved. Thus, it is necessary to study and analyze the complete policy circle to identify the inconsistencies between theory and practice, thereby taking measures to get it back on track.

The aim of the study is to comprehensively analyze the policy circle (design, content, and implementation) of personnel management in educational institutions with mixed methods of textual analysis and empirical investigation to systematize the government policies on personnel management and identify the problems in the policy implementation in practice.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study conducted a systematic review of the policy design and content of personnel management in educational institutions through textual and content analysis. Then, the policy implementation difficulties were explored by adopting a questionnaire survey to provide a reference for further policy optimization.

A questionnaire on the current state and dynamics of personnel management in educational institutions was compiled, and a pilot test was conducted. The reliability and validity tests performed on the questionnaire proved that it was reliable and the research data were suitable for information extraction and analysis.

Due to research and space constraints, this study conducted the questionnaire survey only in pri-

Table 2. Standard salary in public institutions in 2019 (in Chinese yuan)

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the data on the official website of China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

Title	Level	Amount	Level	Amount	Level	Amount
Senior	1	6665	2	5157	3	4558
	4	3915	–	–	–	–
Deputy senior	5	3405	6	3005	7	2773
Intermediate	8	2440	9	2174	10	2007
Primary	11	1819	12	1797	13	1675

mary institutions. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed to 25 preschools in five cities of Henan province in China, of which 362 questionnaires were returned valid. The finalized sample includes 24 principals and 338 teachers. The characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 3. SPSS 22.0 was adopted to record and analyze the data collected, mainly using descriptive statistical analysis methods, frequency statistical analysis, and cross-chi-square analysis.

Table 3. Characteristics of the respondents

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Variable	Category	Respondents	Proportion (%)
Current position	Principal	24	6.63
	Teacher	338	93.37
Teaching experience	< 1 year	77	21.27
	1-3 years	136	37.57
	4-6 years	55	15.19
	7-10 years	36	9.94
	11-20 years	38	10.50
	21-30 years	17	4.70
	> 30 years	3	0.83
Professional title	Senior teacher	4	1.10
	First-grade teacher	20	5.52
	Second-grade teacher	56	15.47
	Third-grade teacher	6	1.66
Monthly salary income (Chinese yuan)	Not yet graded	276	76.24
	< 1600	10	2.76
	1600-3000	242	66.85
	3001-4500	71	19.61
	4501-6000	21	5.80
Education level at entry	> 5500	18	4.97
	Junior high school	4	1.10
	Primary normal school	72	19.89
	Junior college	121	33.43
	Undergraduate	163	45.03
Current highest education level	Postgraduate	2	0.55
	Primary normal school	32	8.84
	Junior college	114	31.49
	Undergraduate	208	57.46
Location of educational institution	Postgraduate	8	2.21
	City	200	55.25
	County and town	85	23.48
Total	Rural	77	21.27
		362	100.0

3. RESULTS

3.1. Analytical results of the policy development

The literature review and textual analysis revealed that the personnel management policies of Chinese educational institutions have made significant progress and have shown the following trends in development.

First, personnel management increasingly emphasizes the efficiency and effectiveness of goal achievement in educational institutions. In traditional personnel management, achieving organizational goals is the only ultimate goal of all management activities. However, with the rise of the human resource management concept, managers are increasingly valued for efficiency as well as the quality of achieving organizational goals.

Taking teacher recruitment as an example, educational institutions are more likely to adopt flexible and efficient recruitment methods than the traditional one that strictly follows established procedures. As for the recruitment time, the previous method of organizing recruitment during the summer vacation has been changed, especially for Ph.D. graduates and other high-level talents. A year-round appointment recruitment method is generally implemented, which has improved the efficiency of talent introduction. Regarding the qualifications of candidates, graduate institutions, overseas study experience, and scientific achievements are no longer considered restrictive conditions in recruitment. Candidates who have completed the doctoral studies but have yet to obtain the academic certificate are permitted to sign a contract of intent and enter the job in advance. Besides, the recruitment methods are more diverse. Remote online interviews are also being adopted to make work more efficient and convenient. Candidates with a doctor's degree and other high-level talents will be directly interviewed, exempting from the written test (Figure 1).

In terms of teacher assessment, many educational institutions have been exploring effective evaluation approach reforms to exert the positive influence of evaluation in personnel management and have taken several specific measures (Table 4).

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the information on the official website of China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

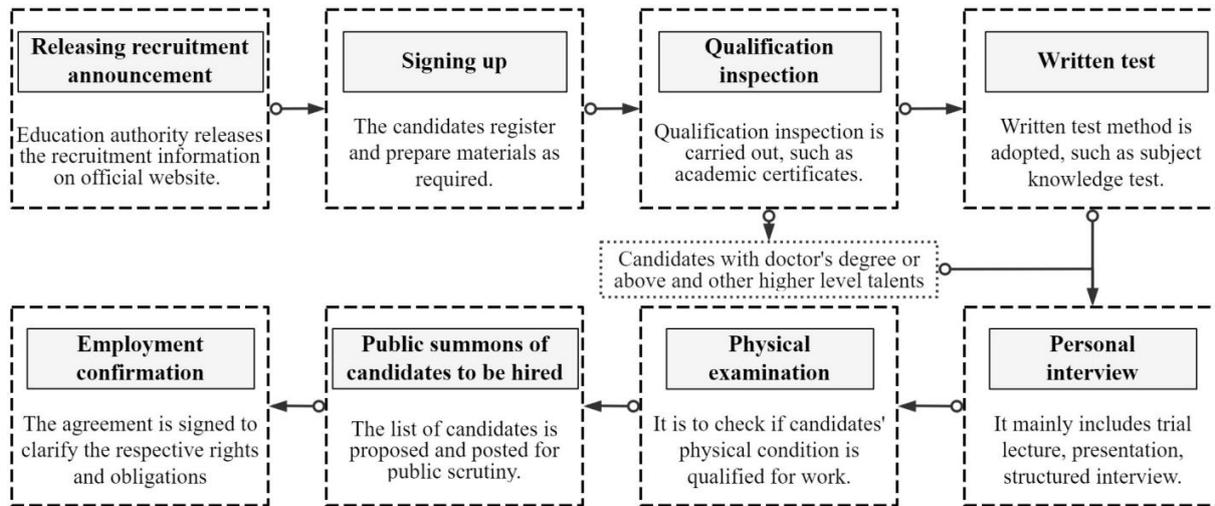


Figure 1. Selection process of teaching staff

Second, personnel management is becoming more concerned with policy design and system reform. The traditional authorized strength management system is considered the dominant factor limiting the scientific development of educational institutions. To remove the constraints, China has been actively exploring the system of a specified number of personnel in educational institutions since 2020, attempting to solve this problem from the top-down policy design. Unlike the original authorized strength management, the system of a specified number of personnel is more stable, autonomous, flexible, and practical, inspiring the teachers' vitality.

Besides, to improve the quality of teachers, China's in-service teacher training has been supported by a series of policies, which has experienced three development stages that include the education compensation stage, transition stage toward continuous education, and continuous education overall promotion stage (Qu & Gong, 2019). The relevant policies at each stage are shown in Figure 2.

In the 1850s, many unqualified teachers entered the teaching team due to the lag in the development of teacher education. Therefore, for an extended period, the policy theme of in-service education for teachers in China was education compensation

Table 4. Reform practices of assessment and evaluation system

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Dimensions	Specific practice	Examples of educational institutions
Teacher ethics evaluation	Building a multi-participated teacher morality evaluation system	Tsinghua University, Tianjin University
	Establishing the academic integrity system	China University of Political Science and Law
Education and teaching performance evaluation	Increase the proportion of teaching performance allowance	Northeast Normal University, North China Electric Power University
	Using 360-degree evaluation method in teaching quality evaluation	Universities in Jiangsu and Henan
Scientific research evaluation	Implementing an evaluation system for representative achievements	Fudan University
	Replacing administrative evaluation and quantitative evaluation with peer evaluation and qualitative evaluation	Renmin University of China
Teacher professional development evaluation	Establishing a "five-year stepped" talent training model	Central South University
	Implementing the "rise or leave" mode	Sun Yat-sen University, Beijing Jiaotong University
Social service evaluation	Establishing incentive and restraint mechanisms by considering the achievement transformation	Some universities in Hunan Province
	Paying more attention to achievement transformation, technology promotion, and social services	Some universities in Jiangsu Province

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the information on the official website of China's Ministry of Education.

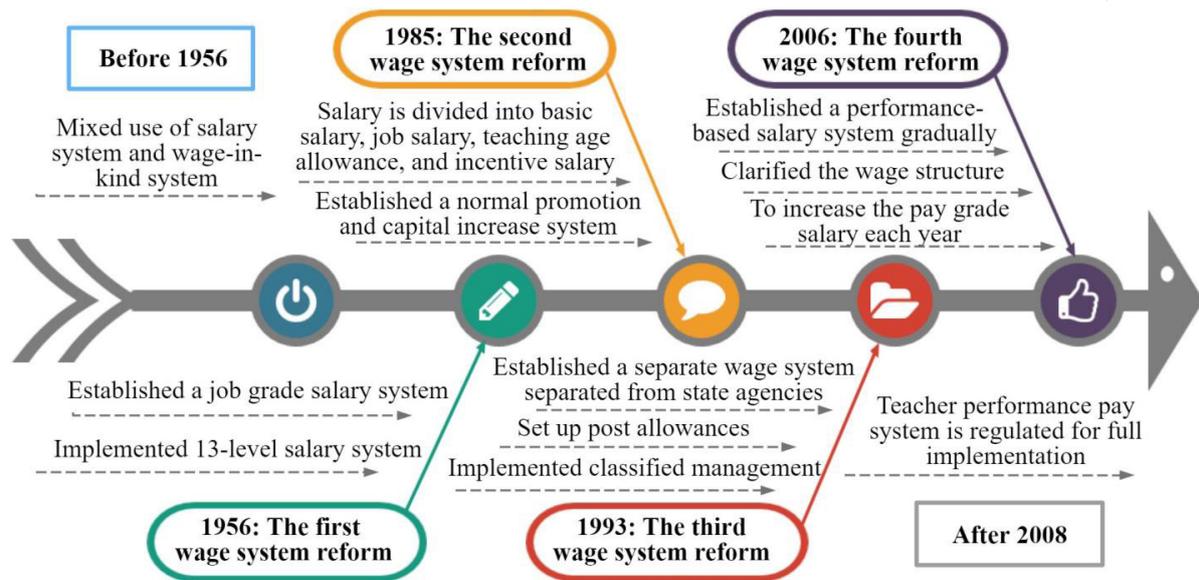


Figure 2. Development stages of continuous education and related policies

training, helping unqualified teachers meet the educational standards required through training (Cheng, 2022). In the middle and late 1890s, in-service training policy further proposed the task of continuous education besides education compensation. Thus, it provided in-service training for qualified teachers to further improve the overall quality of teachers and train a group of backbone teachers (Chen & Gao, 2016). In the 21st century, the in-service training policy mainly points to comprehensively promoting continuous education. The training model has also shifted to a targeted categorization approach, such as new teacher training, backbone teacher training, and rural special post-teacher training (Fu & Cui, 2016).

Additionally, the performance salary system is also an external manifestation of system reform, which took four times of reforms on the teachers' salary system to get the result (Figure 3). In general, determining salaries based on teachers' positions and seniority generally lacks incentives for young teachers who undertook major work tasks before 2006 (Dong, 2008). The purpose of implementing a performance-based salary is to abandon the previous fixed-wage distribution model, achieving higher pay for more work to improve teachers' enthusiasm and motivation (Zhang & Tong, 2021).

Third, the mix of personnel management methods is becoming more frequently used. Generally,

personnel management methods cover economic, organizational, and sociological and psychological methods. The relationship among personnel management methods is inseparable and organically connected. When these methods are combined, the maximum effectiveness and quality of the personnel management system are achieved. Furthermore, the systematic method of use allows the object of improvement to be viewed from all sides, which helps to avoid errors and misjudgments in personnel management.

The college talent recruitment plan reflects the organic combination of a variety of personnel management methods. Currently, colleges and universities generally have clear standards for introducing highly educated and high-level talents. Table 5 lists the talent introduction plans of universities at different levels in Henan Province of China. The prestigious universities (level 1) generally have a better organizational guarantee and a more favorable platform for teacher development, so the economic conditions and social support provided are lower than those of the general universities (level 4).

All universities have specified the criteria for different levels of economic benefits, such as settling-in allowance, research start-up funds, housing allowance, talent subsidies, and professional title appointment. In addition, some universities

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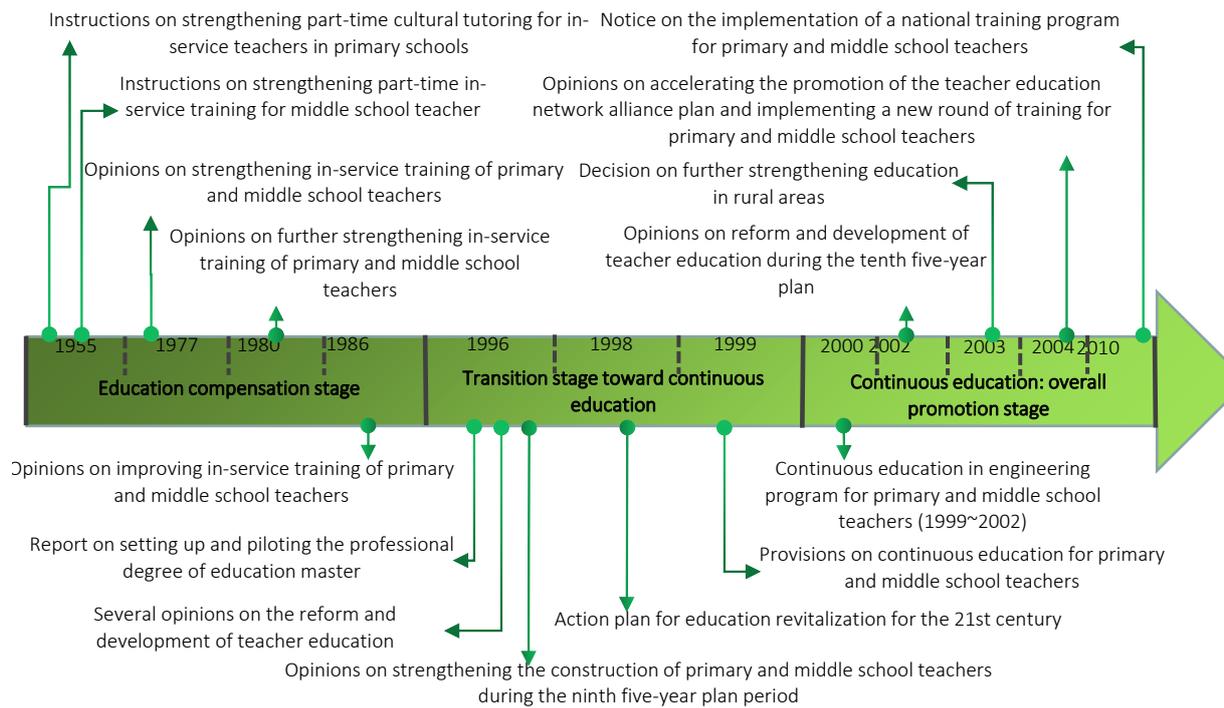


Figure 3. Wage system reforms

have provided preferential policies such as housing allowance, offering their spouses jobs, and arranging for their children to study in affiliated schools to attract outstanding talents through social and psychological methods.

In addition, the organizational method is also mixed-used in this talent program. Universities have formulated an assessment mechanism for newly introduced talents, clearly stipulating the responsibilities and tasks of different

Table 5. Salary plan in different universities to recruit Ph.D. graduates in Henan province (thousands of Chinese yuan)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Institution	Henan normal university (Level 1)			North China university of water resources and hydropower (Level 2)		Henan institute of science and technology (Level 3)			Shangqiu normal university (Level 4)
	A	B	Ordinary	Excellent	Ordinary	A	B	C	—
Ph.D. Category	A	B	Ordinary	Excellent	Ordinary	A	B	C	—
Settling-in allowance	250-300	230-250	200	—	—	800	400-600	200-250	300
Research start-up funds	Engineering: 100; Science: 80; Liberal arts: 50			Engineering: 100; Others: 50		Natural science: 100-300; Humanities and social sciences: 60-150			Science and engineering: 150; Others: 100
Professional title appointment	To be appointed one level higher than the original title for five years			To be appointed one level higher than the original title for three years		To be appointed one level higher than the original title for five years			To be appointed one level higher than the original title for three years
Housing allowance	—			Housing subsidy: 154; Purchase subsidy: 100; Providing a preferential house in 5 years		Housing allowance: 28.8			Housing subsidy: 36; Purchase subsidy: 300
Other subsidies	2-4 per month			30 per year for five years		—			5 per month
Spouse placement	—			Personnel agency post		Personnel agency post; Contract post			Personnel agency post

types of talents during their employment period. Therefore, not everyone can get all the economic benefits. The money will be distributed in batches based on the staged assessment of the completion of scientific tasks, avoiding the increase of talent introduction cost due to the staff leaving after the one-time payment.

In addition, a mix of personnel management methods is used in principal and teacher rotation systems. The imbalance of regional development has led to a greater concentration of high-quality teacher resources in developed cities or regions, which could be more conducive to the balanced development of national education (Shan et al., 2022). To optimize the rural teacher troops and the quality of education, China has taken the lead in implementing a rotational teaching system for principals and teachers in compulsory education institutions within China's counties (districts), intending to promote it on a larger scale (Chen & Fan, 2022; Wang & Zheng, 2016).

On the one hand, the specific requirements for rotation are stipulated in the policy formulation. On the other hand, each institution has formulated various incentives and preferential measures to motivate principals and teachers who rotate and exchange, including in the establishment approval, approval, posting, job (title) promotion, employment management, performance assessment, training, or merit recognition (Table 6).

3.2. Survey results of representative institutions

Regarding the education level, all respondents' current highest education level was at primary normal school and above, which met the requirements of the Chinese Ministry of Education for teachers' education level. The proportion of undergraduates is the highest, 57.46%, while the proportion of postgraduates is the least, 2.21%. It is noteworthy that there are still four people who graduated from high school when they first entered the workforce. When comparing the education levels of the respondents at entry, it can be seen that the general education level has improved, fully reflecting the design of China's education compensation policy (Figure 4).

A teaching certificate is one of the mandatory requirements for entry into the teaching profession. Since primary and secondary school is the educational level above preschool, candidates with primary and secondary school teaching qualifications also meet the requirements at the preschool level according to the regulations. Therefore, teacher candidates can hold several different levels of teaching qualifications at the same time. The survey results obtained through multiple choice questions showed that the popularity rate of preschool teaching certificates reached 71.55%, and the popularity rate of primary and secondary school teaching certificates reached 29.56%, as shown in Table 7. However, it is necessary to note that 5.89% of the respondents still do not have any

Table 6. Exchange status of primary and secondary school teachers in different regions

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the information on the official website of China's Ministry of Education.

Regions	Specific situations	Management method and effect
Counties (cities and districts) of Shandong province	A total of 180,000 principals and teachers exchanged posts in five years	Guided the return of students; Realized the professional growth of teachers; The satisfaction rate of education consumers with the improvement effect of teaching quality reached 100%
Miyun district of Beijing	A total of 2,730 principals and teachers exchanged posts from 2005 to 2018	Achieved the improvement of enrollment rates and student achievement; Made up for the shortcomings of backward education in rural areas
60% of counties (cities, districts) in Jiangxi province	623 principals and 5416 teachers exchanged posts in 2014	Developed policies to give priority to rotating teachers in merit pay distribution and title promotion; The number of rural teachers has been optimized
Partial counties (cities, districts) in Anhui province	A total of 35,273 principals and teachers exchanged posts in 2015	Set up work subsidies in towns (townships) and living subsidies in remote and backward areas; Provided teachers turnover rooms or dormitories

Source: Authors' elaboration.

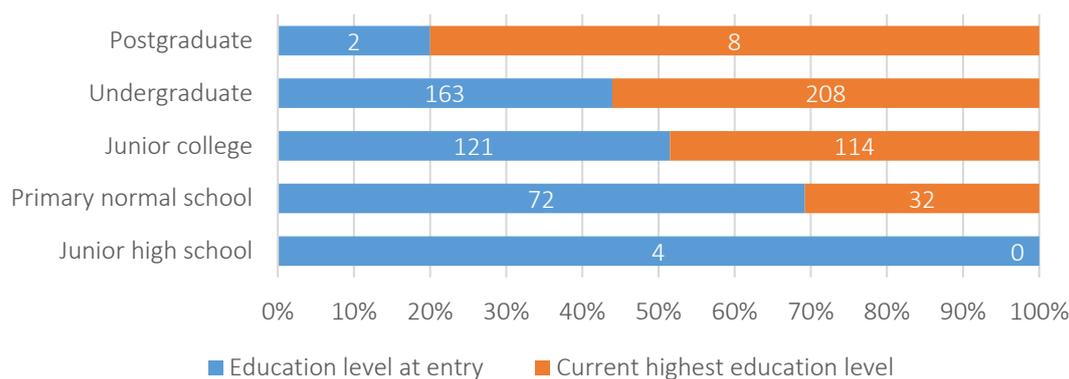


Figure 4. Comparison between the education level at entry and the current highest education level

Table 7. Possession of teacher qualification among respondents

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Categories	Response		Popularity rate (n = 362)
	n	Response rate	
Preschool teacher qualification certification	259	48.59%	71.55%
Nursery governess qualification certification	137	25.70%	37.85%
Other teacher qualification certification	107	20.08%	29.56%
None	30	5.63%	8.29%
Total	533		147.25%

Note: The goodness of fit: $\chi^2 = 203.244$, $p = 0.000$.

teaching qualifications, which means that there are still some people in the existing teaching force who do not meet the requirements.

Promoting professional titles is an essential external expression of teacher professional development. The survey found that 276 out of all respondents, representing 76.24%, had yet to be graded. Among the respondents with titles, the highest percentage of second-level teachers was 15.47% and only four people, or 1.1%, had senior titles. The cross-chi-square analysis showed that the different teaching years showed significant differences for the professional titles ($p = 0.000^{**}$). All teachers with less than one year of teaching experience were not ranked. As the teaching experience increased, the proportion of teachers with specific titles increased (Figure 5).

Pre-service and in-service training is the powerful means of improving the quality of teachers' human capital. Based on the survey, 194 out of 338 teachers reported that they had not participated in any form of professional training or further study in the past year, representing 57.4%. Six of the 24 principals indicated that they had not attended

specific pre-service training before assuming the leadership. Three principals reported not participating in any management skills training during their tenure. This means that although training is comprehensive in policy development, it is significantly compromised in terms of implementation.

A scientific and logical salary system helps to provide economic incentives. For example, the Teachers' Law stipulates that teachers' salaries must be at least the average salary of local civil servants. However, the survey results show that there is still a particular gap between the current teacher's salary and the national standard. Moreover, the Henan provincial government has set a minimum salary standard of 1,600 Chinese yuan per month in 2022. However, the survey found that 2.76% of the respondents are still paid less than the minimum standard. In total, 69.61% of the respondents' monthly salary is less than 3,000 Chinese yuan.

Different regions show significant differences relative to salary levels ($p = 0.000^{**}$). The salary of teachers in rural areas is significantly lower than in urban areas, as shown in Table 8. In other words,

Source: Authors' elaboration.

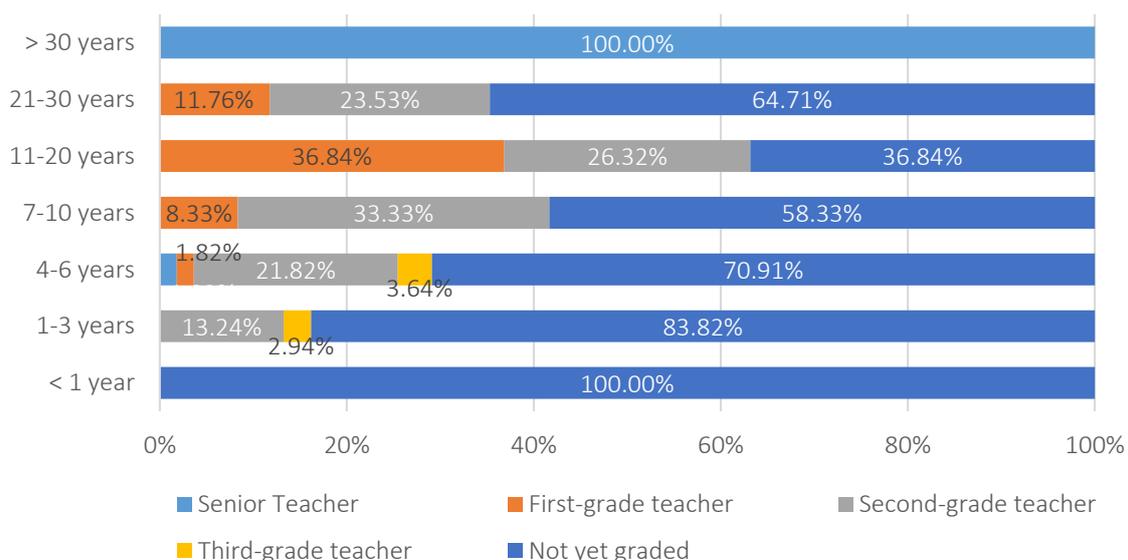


Figure 5. Cross chi-square analysis of teaching experience and professional titles

although the state has given more support to rural educational institutions at the policy level, it still fails to achieve balanced development between urban and rural areas.

As for the guaranteed welfare benefits, the five insurance and one fund refer to several critical protection benefits given to workers by employers, including pension insurance, medical insurance, unemployment insurance, work injury insurance, maternity insurance, and housing fund. Among the respondents, the rate of pension and medical insurance is 56.8% and 57.99%, respectively, while housing funds show the lowest rate, 28.7%. It is particularly noteworthy that the percentage of respondents who do not receive guaranteed benefits is 35.8%. Moreover, 57.1% of respondents considered the lack of benefits to be one of the main factors affecting their work.

Additionally, teacher ethics is one of the most valued virtues in China. The relevant regulations also

provide a one-vote veto system, that is, direct dismissal, for teachers who fail to meet moral standards. In the survey, 0.59% of the respondents gave a negative answer to the question on teacher ethics. Furthermore, 26.04% of teachers argue that the inadequate teacher performance evaluation system is one of the significant problems in institutions.

4. DISCUSSION

Ideally, educational institutions could adopt a scientific approach guided by personnel management policies to achieve organizational goals while meeting the material needs of teachers and the spiritual needs of self-development. However, this study found that there are still many problems of policy implementation in practice in educational institutions that need to be effectively addressed.

Regarding teacher recruitment, some of the respondents still do not have any teaching qualifica-

Table 8. Cross chi-square analysis between the region and salary income

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Location	Monthly salary income (Chinese yuan)					χ ²	p
	< 1600	1,600-3,000	3,101-4,500	4,501-6,000	> 6000		
City	20.00%	48.35%	66.20%	90.48%	83.33%	57.062	0.000**
County and town	20.00%	28.10%	21.13%	0.00%	0.00%		
Rural area	60.00%	23.55%	12.67%	9.52%	16.67%		
Total	10 (2.76%)	242 (66.85%)	71 (19.61%)	21 (5.80%)	18 (4.97%)	362	

Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01.

tions, which means that people who do not meet the teacher requirements are entering the existing teaching force. This is contrary to the requirement in the teacher qualification system. However, the phenomenon is common in preschool institutions. For example, a survey of 3,326 rural public preschool teachers in eight cities in western China showed that 13.68% of teachers did not have a teaching certificate (Li, 2019). The main reason is that the number of preschool teachers is seriously insufficient, leading to preschool institutions lowering their entry standards to meet daily teaching needs (Xu, 2017).

Regarding professional development, the results show that teachers with more teaching experience have a higher level of professional titles, which is consistent with Berliner's theory (Hu & Zhang, 2018). Besides, 76.24% of respondents have no professional title. Another survey sampled 505 full-time preschool teachers from 32 urban preschools in three provinces in China and showed that 43.17% of teachers do not have professional titles (Wang & Yang, 2022). The imperfect evaluation system of professional titles is the main reason for this problem. Most local educational administrative departments still need to set up a particular evaluation system of professional titles for preschool teachers. However, they usually include it in the title evaluation system of primary school teachers, which leads to low enthusiasm of teachers to participate in title evaluation.

As for teacher training, although there is a comprehensive and systematic design for it at the national and regional levels, it must be improved in implementing specific policies. Both principals and teachers have not been able to attend professional training with the frequency required by the relevant policies. The in-service training of preschool teachers is basically in a state of "no planning, no funds, no opportunities" (Pang et al., 2013). Additionally, compared with backbone teachers in preschools, ordinary teachers have fewer opportu-

nities to participate in training, which is also one of the reasons for this result.

Regarding salary and benefits, some of the teachers surveyed receive salaries that still need to meet the standards set by the state. However, it is stipulated that teachers' salaries should be at least the average salary level of local civil servants. Teachers' salaries in rural areas are significantly lower than those in urban areas. In addition, the social security system teachers are supposed to have is not fully implemented. One extensive survey shows that rural preschool teachers in most areas of China have no social security benefits (Yu & Liang, 2008). These have seriously affected the enthusiasm of teachers' work and the team's stability, but also one of the dominant reasons for the shortage of preschool teachers. To meet the demand for education development for the number of teachers, the government and institutions have to relax the qualification requirements for teachers, which results in a vicious circle of continuous salary reductions (Xia, 2022).

It should be acknowledged that due to research limitations, this study mainly reviewed the evolution of personnel management policies and then investigated the implementation of policies in primary institutions. In future studies, the scope of the survey respondents could be expanded to educational institutions at other educational levels. Future research could also focus on the personnel system reform, especially the design and promotion of a specified number of personnel in second-class public welfare units (higher education institutions and preschools), which could effectively promote the quality development of educational institutions. It is worth noting that the influence of educational administrators' behavior in personnel management reform of educational institutions is crucial (Semenets-Orlova et al., 2019). Thus, the research on the personnel managerial competence of heads of educational institutions also needs to be considered.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to systematically analyze the policy circle of personnel management in educational institutions, including policy design, content, and implementation, by adopting a mixed method of literature analysis and empirical survey to identify the problems in the policy development process and the future trends.

It was found that the personnel management policies of Chinese educational institutions have made significant progress and have shown new trends. The personnel management of educational institutions increasingly emphasizes the efficiency and effectiveness of goal achievement, as well as policy design and system reform. In addition, the mix of personnel management methods is becoming more frequently used. The questionnaire survey results show that the policies' implementation is generally consistent with the requirements and contents of the policies, but there are still problems in practice. The teacher qualification system needs to be strengthened. The rate of relevant teaching qualification certificates has just reached 71.55%, while 5.89% still need such certificates.

Further, teacher professional development needs to be promoted. Only 1.1% of the respondents had senior titles, while 76.24% still need to be graded. 57.4% of the teachers and 25% of the principals do not have the opportunities to participate in the various pieces of training required by relevant policies. Moreover, teachers' salaries and benefits need to be further improved. 2.76% of the respondents are still paid less than the minimum standard of their areas. 35.8% of the respondents do not have any guaranteed benefits. Besides, the appraisal and evaluation system needs to be further developed. 26.04% of teachers reported that the inadequate teacher performance evaluation system is one of the significant problems in institutions.

In response to the problems, this study attempts to make the following recommendations for educational institutions and educational administrative authorities. First, educational institutions should strengthen the qualification examination of teacher candidates at the time of admission, explore the implementation of scientific assessment mechanisms, and use the results scientifically and reasonably. Educational administrative authorities should focus on incentives for teachers' professional development, strengthen planning and supervision of teacher training, and improve teachers' salaries and guaranteed welfare benefits. In addition, it is necessary to seriously pursue responsibility for educational institutions that do not or do not fully implement policies related to personnel management.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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