

Research on the Mobility Guarantee Mechanism for Primary and Secondary School Teachers under the Policy Background of “County Management and School Recruitment”

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Abstract

In order to achieve fairness in education and promote balanced distribution of educational resources, China has implemented the “county managed school recruitment” policy. As a new measure of the current reform of the teacher personnel system in compulsory education in China, the “county managed school recruitment” policy aims to achieve coordinated management and balanced allocation of urban and rural compulsory education teacher resources within the county. After two batches of reform trials and practical tests in 49 districts in 2015 and 2017, the policy reform of “county management, school recruitment” has achieved certain results. With the continuous promotion of the policy reform of “county management, school recruitment”, the problem of unsatisfactory implementation results has gradually emerged. Among them, the transfer of teachers is considered a key link in this policy, as it directly affects the optimization and combination of teacher teams at the county level, and further relates to the work progress of each teacher. Although the policy of “county management and school recruitment” has improved the previous teacher management mode through legal framework and expanded the path of teacher mobility. However, there are still many obstacles to the equal development of compulsory education in China’s basic education system. Therefore, this article systematically sorts out the problems in policy implementation by consulting relevant materials, and proposes improvement strategies for the existing problems, providing theoretical reference for improving the teacher mobility guarantee system and helping the “county managed school recruitment” policy achieve greater practical results.

Keywords

county management
school recruitment
Teacher mobility
Guarantee mechanism

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1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that we should provide satisfactory education for the people, accelerate the high-quality and balanced development of compulsory education and urban-rural integration, and optimize the allocation of regional education resources^[1]. In 2014, government departments such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance of China jointly issued the “Opinions on Promoting the Exchange and Rotation of Principals and Teachers in Compulsory Education Schools in Counties (Districts)”, which proposed to comprehensively promote the policy of “county managed school recruitment” management reform for the compulsory education teacher team^[2]. County managed school recruitment “is an innovative measure in the management system of compulsory education teachers in China in recent years. It emphasizes that teacher mobility is a key link in policy implementation, and ensuring the smooth implementation of teacher mobility is an important guarantee for achieving policy goals. However, in the implementation process, it faces many challenges, risks, and difficulties, and also exposes its shortcomings^[3]. This article analyzes the practical difficulties of the teacher rotation mechanism under the current policy framework of “county management and school recruitment” in China by consulting relevant materials, and proposes targeted optimization strategies, aiming to provide reference for subsequent theoretical research and practical exploration in this field.

2. Core concepts and related theories

2.1. Core concepts

2.1.1. “County management school recruitment”

County managed school recruitment “is a system introduced for the management of teachers in public compulsory education schools. This move aims to achieve scientific allocation of teacher resources within the county, promote high-quality and balanced development of compulsory education, and ensure the realization of educational equity. Compared with the traditional “school management and appointment” system, this system transforms the exchange and rotation of teachers from “school personnel” to “system personnel” within the

county, which is conducive to resolving the contradiction between teachers’ remote communication and local management, breaking down the institutional barrier of teachers’ “mobility but not mobility”^[4], and providing institutional guarantees for teachers’ mobility. County management “represents the regulatory responsibility of local education bureaus for education, covering a series of responsibilities from recruitment of school faculty and staff to promotion, transfer and communication, handling of interpersonal relationships, and performance evaluation, all of which are jointly undertaken by county-level education institutions and other relevant units. And ‘school recruitment’ means that the specific school has the right to hire, and its main function is to effectively utilize the teaching staff, including organizing competitive selection processes, determining specific job positions, providing career development support, assigning teaching tasks, and performing routine student management duties^[5].

The “county managed school recruitment” management system, as a new organizational framework, abandons the traditional teacher staffing management method in the past, and instead has the county committee’s staffing office periodically determine the total number of county teachers based on the education development status and school scale of the entire region. The greatest purpose and role of “county management and school recruitment” is to promote the balanced development of teachers in compulsory education in county towns and rural areas, and to promote the sustainable development of education in the entire county^[6].

2.1.2. Teacher mobility

Teacher mobility refers to the phenomenon of teachers transferring from specific job positions or professional backgrounds to other work environments or professional backgrounds, or from one region to another. Teachers are creators of teaching activities, individuals with certain professional knowledge and skills, and an indispensable element in the education process. The mobility of teachers through job rotation and exchange can provide strong support for the development and accumulation of human capital in the education system^[6]. In the education system, teacher mobility can be understood as a reconfiguration process that occurs in different school environments,

geographical locations, or industries, or in different locations within the same region. Among them, the first situation involves people with teaching qualifications deciding to become teachers, or having already worked here but choosing to resign, or giving up their association with education; The second scenario describes the situation where teachers move from one school to another or from one place to another during their work, which is called “teacher mobility”^[7].

2.1.3. Guarantee mechanism

The initial concept of the safeguard mechanism was an effective mechanism and relational system that ensures the normal operation of various parts of the machine^[8], which is based on the internal operating mode of things and their connection with the external environment^[7]. As an indispensable component of the social structure, education also possesses these three different mechanisms in its functions. In other words, we need to consider three aspects: the reward system of education, the constraint system of education, and the guarantee measures provided by education. Within this, the education security mechanism can be explained as: using security measures to achieve security functions, integrating various educational methods together to ensure their continuous operation and progress. Based on this, the derived teacher mobility protection mechanism can be summarized as: using security tools to maximize this support function, integrating various aspects of teacher mobility, thereby promoting more scientific, appropriate, and efficient teacher mobility, and ensuring educational balance and professional growth of teachers^[9].

2.1.4. Guarantee mechanism for teaching mobility of primary and secondary school teachers

From a functional perspective, we have conducted in-depth analysis of the various links and operational modes in the process of teacher mobility to ensure the efficient implementation of teacher teaching mobility. This study defines the teaching mobility guarantee system for primary and secondary school teachers as follows: in order to meet the current needs of balanced development of basic education in China, a comprehensive set of policies, laws, funding, institutional construction, cultural and environmental shaping, and other means and

strategies will be established to promote efficient teaching mobility for primary and secondary school teachers^[7].

2.2. Related theories

2.2.1. Talent mobility theory

The theory of talent mobility in foreign countries predates that in China. In the 1950s and 1960s, economists in Europe and America generally believed that human resources and material resources were equally important. In the process of economic development, the theory of talent resources should surpass that of material resources. Among these economists, Theodore Schultz was the main one who proposed that talent resources have creativity and are intangible capital. Talent resources can affect a country's economic development by creating resources. In China, human resources have always been regarded as a kind of non economic resources, which is related to the fundamental system of our country. Therefore, in terms of talent resource allocation, government intervention is often led by the government. Liang Weinian and other scholars believe that the factors affecting the flow of talents in China are complex. In addition to the subjective factors of talents, cultural background, organizational characteristics, personal ideas, social background, etc. should also be considered^[10].

According to the theoretical perspective of talent mobility, talent mobility is actually a process of adjusting and allocating human resources, and it is an indispensable part of sustainable social progress and development. The mobility among teachers, as a part of the overall talent flow, is not only a key path to promote the professional growth of teachers, but also helps to adjust the allocation of school teachers, refresh the teaching staff, and optimize the distribution of teacher resources within the region. This can not only reduce the differences in teaching quality among schools, but also promote the balanced development of education within the region. Although various measures have been adopted by relevant departments to effectively promote teacher mobility, this unreasonable and serious teacher mobility is still a problem, deviating from the original purpose of promoting teacher exchange, promoting the development of the teaching industry, and balancing the unequal gap among teachers^[9].

2.2.2. Adams' Equity Theory

In the field of psychology research in the United States, the concept of justice proposed by John S. Adams is a novel and influential conceptual system he constructed in 1965 based on his research on social comparison and cognitive biases. Adams' equity theory is a theory that discusses how to balance the contributions and returns of individuals in social comparisons, with its core idea being to study how to find a balance between individual inputs and returns.

According to Adams' equity theory, the exchange of teacher positions under the background of "county management and school recruitment" should improve the assessment and evaluation system for teacher mobility education. Scientifically establish assessment and evaluation criteria to objectively and fairly evaluate teachers. That is to say, in the evaluation of teachers, it must be objective, in line with reality, without any bias or prejudice, and cannot be judged based on one's own will. Eliminate the phenomenon of excessive or unfair scoring in the assessment of mobile teachers. Taking into account factors such as student development, teacher professional growth, and sustainable school development, corresponding assessment and evaluation indicators are set up. Through a scientific assessment and evaluation system, teachers are objectively and fairly evaluated, effectively motivating them to continuously improve their own qualities^[11].

3. There are problems with the mobility guarantee mechanism for primary and secondary school teachers under the background of "county management and school recruitment"

3.1. The national supporting guarantee system needs to be improved, and the implementation of teacher mobility policies is not in place

Although the government provides financial subsidies for the exchange of urban and rural teachers, the subsidy amount is not high due to the fact that it is mainly borne by county-level finance and local fiscal revenue is limited, which makes it less attractive to urban teachers. There are many problems in the implementation of the teacher mobility policy: inadequate supporting facilities

lead to a lack of sense of belonging among teachers; Not fully respecting the wishes of teachers, which makes them unwilling to move; The evaluation criteria are single and difficult for teachers to accept. For example, female teachers born in the 1970s and 1980s, due to the two child or three child policy, were unable to serve as class teachers during pregnancy or lactation, resulting in low scores and termination of their positions in the "county managed school recruitment" program, which affected their daily lives. The lack of unified standards for job reporting in competition can easily lead to corruption, difficulties in supervision and implementation, and the practice of "last place elimination" is contrary to the original intention of resource balance. In addition, there is no established system for job competition, professional title evaluation, and performance evaluation for mobile teachers, which has affected their enthusiasm for job rotation. These issues not only hinder the development of educational equity and resource balance, but also highlight the urgency of deepening the reform of teacher mobility policies and improving supporting guarantee measures.

3.2. Insufficient implementation by education authorities and schools, and the implementation of teacher mobility policies needs to be strengthened

The implementation of the "county managed school recruitment" system needs to maintain openness and transparency, and the process and results of recruiting new teachers and evaluating mobile teachers should be made public. However, this policy is still in the exploratory stage, and the county-level education department has not established an effective management team, making it difficult to supervise all schools. Some universities do not strictly adhere to the principles of fairness and impartiality when choosing to rotate teaching staff, and may only make decisions through meetings or internal voting, resulting in biased competition results and teacher dissatisfaction. After the implementation of "county managed school recruitment", teachers have changed from specific school employees to regional system personnel. Local education management departments are responsible for allocating resources such as determining staffing and organizing training, while schools focus on

teaching tasks. However, due to the unclear delineation of responsibilities between education administrative departments and schools, the autonomy of employment in universities has weakened. In the compulsory education stage in China, under the principal responsibility system, some principals only consider personal development rather than the education development of the entire county. They are perfunctory in meeting the requirements of superiors for job rotation and are unwilling to send out excellent teachers, which hinders the balanced development of compulsory education and the realization of educational equality.

3.3. Teachers' recognition of the "county managed school recruitment" policy needs to be improved, and supporting measures need to be further improved

Many teachers choose the education industry in search of stability, but the current exchange rotation policy breaks this stability and increases their sense of insecurity. Especially when sent to remote and disadvantaged areas, they not only face the problem of being far away from home and having limited development opportunities, but may also be unable to guarantee whether they can return to their original school, which greatly reduces their willingness to participate in exchange rotation. In addition, changes in education policies have also affected teachers' sense of identification with schools. In the past, teachers usually worked in one school until retirement, but now they have to frequently change workplaces, making it difficult for them to form a strong sense of campus belonging, and each school has only become a small part of their career. Newly recruited teachers often do not receive sufficient job support systems, coupled with unfamiliarity with the workplace environment and a sense of alienation among colleagues, resulting in low participation in school management, discomfort, and isolation. These issues work together to weaken teachers' professional identity and also affect the improvement of educational quality.

4. Research on Measures to Promote the Mobility Guarantee Mechanism of Primary and Secondary School Teachers under the Background of "County Management and School Recruitment"

4.1. Improve relevant supporting guarantee mechanisms and accelerate legislative guarantees for the mobility of primary and secondary school teachers

Although China has issued multiple policy documents on the mobility of primary and secondary school teachers, they are clearly mandatory and restrictive. Although existing laws and regulations are strong, legislation is still needed to regulate teacher mobility to ensure its orderly implementation. Researchers have pointed out that the mobility policy for primary and secondary school teachers violates the employment terms of the Teacher Law in terms of law enforcement, conflicts with the professional title evaluation system, and lacks public acceptance. Therefore, legislative protection measures are urgently needed^[12]. At the same time, in order to implement the "county management school recruitment" policy, it is necessary to establish comprehensive support and guarantee measures^[13]. Provincial finance should allocate special funds to subsidize the living expenses and transportation and accommodation costs of exchange teachers in rural and impoverished areas, and give priority to evaluating the professional and technical positions of teachers in these areas, and reward those who have made outstanding contributions; Further assistance is needed to resolve the issue of children of exchange teachers enrolling in schools. When improving the exchange system, the rotation time should be determined based on the characteristics of the education system and teaching staff, and the assessment, training, and promotion system should be improved. Teachers' responsibilities should be clarified, a scientific evaluation system should be developed, and multiple parties should be encouraged to participate in the evaluation process to promote teachers to play a greater role.

4.2. Strengthen the implementation of education administrative departments and schools, and improve the implementation mechanism of teacher mobility policies

Clear and detailed policy regulations are crucial for the practice of “county managed school recruitment”. A dedicated management team should be established to enhance monitoring of teacher mobility, and details such as employment rules, admission conditions, and processes should be clarified to prevent unfair phenomena and address issues related to the rights and management of mobile teachers. Schools should serve as a bridge for information transmission, strengthen communication with education authorities and teachers, enable both parties to fully understand the situation, and reduce obstacles to implementation. It is necessary to clarify the division of responsibilities between the county-level education bureau and schools, ensuring that schools have a certain degree of independence in operation, while retaining the power to recruit and train teachers. School leaders should take a long-term perspective on teacher rotation and recognize its positive significance for local and even county development. This not only stimulates teacher enthusiasm but also promotes educational equity. Improve the teacher recruitment and mobility system, regard teacher adjustment as a key task rather than a formality, ensure the achievement of policy goals, play a leading role, and promote the effective implementation of the “county managed school recruitment” reform plan^[14].

4.3. Enhance teachers’ sense of identification with the “county managed school recruitment” policy and improve relevant supporting guarantee mechanisms

The effectiveness of policy implementation is closely related to the recognition of the target population,

especially in the field of education, which concerns the interests and safety of teachers and students. Obtaining widespread recognition is the key to ensuring educational equity. To enhance teachers’ political identity, it is necessary to first address the difficulties they face in their daily lives and work. Communication teachers often feel lonely due to unfamiliar environments, inconvenient transportation, and family problems. School leaders should actively communicate and provide practical support to help them adapt to the new environment, thereby improving work efficiency and satisfaction. Secondly, building a harmonious and united working environment is crucial. Campus culture, as the spiritual core of a school, reflects the values of teachers and students and influences their behavior. Schools should promote the cultural construction of mutual assistance, friendship, solidarity and cooperation, so that teachers can integrate into the team, learn and share in communication, and create a positive atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

Although the implementation of “county managed school recruitment” has achieved certain results in teacher transfer, with the advancement of reform work, the problem of unsatisfactory implementation effect has also been exposed, especially in terms of teacher mobility. This article explores the main problems in the current guarantee mechanism for teacher mobility in primary and secondary schools through the review and analysis of relevant policy literature, and proposes corresponding improvement strategies. Only by assisting this system through effective operational methods can we fully tap into the potential of talent resources, enabling it to fulfill its responsibilities more effectively and further promote fairness and equality in education.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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