

The Influencing Factors and Optimization Paths of Young University Teachers' Professional Well-Being

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Abstract: The professional well-being of young university teachers not only directly affects their work attitude, enthusiasm and professional development, but also closely links to the overall quality of university teaching and the further development and construction of universities. This paper first explores the connotation of young university teachers' professional well-being, analyzes various factors that affect young teachers' professional well-being, and finally proposes relevant optimization paths to enhance the professional well-being of young university teachers.

1. Introduction

Young teachers in universities are a new force in the education industry, with great potential for development in both teaching and research (Chen, 2022) ^[1]. At the same time, as the main force in the construction and development of universities, young university teachers shoulder the important mission of cultivating talents, disseminating knowledge, and promoting social progress. They can provide educational resources and guidance for students, promoting students' development. Having a sense of professional well-being among young teachers in universities can motivate them to maintain a positive attitude and devote themselves wholeheartedly to educational work, which not only helps them continuously improve their teaching level, research ability and professional quality, but also enables their personal growth and development (Wang, 2023) ^[2]. Therefore, universities should attach more importance to cultivating and maintaining the professional well-being of young teachers, creating a good working environment and development opportunities for young teachers, and motivating them to contribute to the education industry.

2. Connotation of Young University Teachers' Professional Well-being

Once British scholar Elizabeth Holmes claimed that "well-being is a subjective feeling, and a sustained pleasure experience obtained when a person's need is met, potential is unleashed, and power is increased" (Holmes, 2005) ^[3]. Chinese scholar Fu, K. X. also pointed out that "well-being is a personal feeling and an ability to perceive one's own state, which is influenced by one's core values, material level and cultural environment, and is a psychological state formed by the

interaction of psychological factors such as cognition, emotion, and personality with external factors” (Fu, 2020) ^[4]. Besides, in line with Cai, L. L., “the sense of young university teachers’ professional well-being in teaching, in short, refers to the realization of their professional ideals through the actual teaching process, and how to obtain a sense of satisfaction” (Cai, 2010) ^[5]. As a matter of fact, connotation of young university teachers’ professional well-being not only covers the momentary well-being brought by satisfying their own concerns and realizing career ideals in their work, but also includes the continuous happiness experience triggered by the fulfillment of their potential and the harmonious state of their body and mind.

3. Influencing Factors of Young University Teachers’ Professional Well-being

3.1 Work Environment and Income

-Work environment: A positive and supportive work environment can provide a good academic atmosphere, cooperation opportunities, and resource support, enabling young university teachers to better carry out teaching and research work. In this environment, young university teachers can have opportunities to communicate and collaborate with peers, which is conducive to creating and sharing knowledge, and promoting personal and professional growth.

-Teaching resources: In fact, young university teachers need to use various teaching resources in the teaching process, such as textbooks, experimental equipment, multimedia technology, etc. If schools can provide sufficient and advanced teaching resources to make teaching more convenient and efficient, teachers can better implement courses, improve students’ learning outcomes, and enhance professional satisfaction.

-Income: Salary and benefits are one of the important factors for a person’s career. A reasonable income can provide basic living security and economic stability, reduce economic pressure, and improve happiness. In addition, the equivalence between appropriate compensation and personal work efforts can also enhance young university teachers’ job satisfaction and identification.

3.2 Self-development & Growth Opportunities

-Academic research support: Young university teachers usually have to conduct academic research and produce research results. If schools can provide research resources for teachers, such as research funding, experimental equipment, academic exchange platforms, etc., teachers can better carry out research work, publish papers, participate in academic conferences, enhance academic reputation and status, and thus increase career satisfaction.

-Training and development opportunities: Providing teacher training and development opportunities is an important way to help young university teachers continuously improve their professional knowledge and teaching skills. If universities can offer diverse and systematic training courses and development plans to help teachers continuously learn updated knowledge and teaching methods, improve their teaching level, teachers will feel valued and supported, and enhance professional satisfaction.

-Teaching and research resources: Providing sufficient teaching and research resources, such as library collections of books, laboratory facilities, etc., helps teachers better prepare teaching content and carry out research work. Teachers can independently choose teaching methods and research directions based on their own teaching and research interests, improving job satisfaction and happiness.

-Recognition and support for academic and professional growth: If universities can provide teachers with academic and professional recognition and support, such as promotion opportunities, professional title evaluation, project funding, etc., teachers will feel that their efforts have been

recognized, and they are full of confidence and motivation for their career development.

3.3 Work Pressure and Balance

-Relationship between health and well-being: Excessive work pressure may lead to young university teachers' physical and mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, etc. A good work balance can alleviate teachers' work pressure, maintain a good physical and mental state, and improve their sense of well-being.

-Teaching quality and satisfaction: Moderate work pressure can stimulate young university teachers' work enthusiasm and motivation, prompting them to engage in teaching work more seriously and responsibly. However, if work pressure is too high, it may lead to young teachers not being able to fully utilize their talents and potential, which can have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and reduce their sense of well-being.

-Work and personal life balance: A reasonable work balance can help young university teachers better allocate time and energy, balancing work and personal life needs. If young university teachers have enough time and space to develop their interests and hobbies, get along with family and friends, etc., they will feel more satisfied and happy.

-Sense of achievement and satisfaction: Moderate work pressure can stimulate and motivate young university teachers to better complete tasks and challenges. When young teachers successfully overcome challenges and achieve results, they can gain a sense of achievement and pride, enhance career satisfaction and happiness.

3.4 Team Cooperation and Support

-Communication and sharing: Teamwork can provide a good platform for young university teachers' communication and sharing, where teachers can exchange teaching experience, share textbooks and resources with colleagues, and learn and grow from each other. This kind of communication and sharing can help improve young university teachers' teaching ability and professional level, increase self-confidence and well-being.

-Collaboration and mutual assistance: Team collaboration encourages young university teachers to collaborate and assist each other in completing teaching tasks and research projects together. In a team, young university teachers can receive help and support from other members to face challenges and solve problems together. This mutual aid relationship and support can help reduce work pressure and increase teachers' well-being.

-Horizons and innovation: Teamwork can expose teachers to different perspectives and ideas, expanding their academic horizons. Interaction and collaboration with team members can help stimulate innovative thinking and creativity, and improve the quality of teaching and research. This academic exchange and innovation incentive can also increase teachers' professional satisfaction and well-being.

-Psychological support and emotional identification: Teamwork can provide teachers with mutual psychological support and emotional identification. In the team, teachers have the opportunity to share confusion and stress in their work, and gain understanding and support from others. This kind of support and identification helps to reduce psychological burden and improve happiness.

3.5 Recognition and Feedback

-Self-worth and satisfaction: Recognition and appreciation from schools can make young university teachers feel valued and recognized for their work and contributions, enhancing their

sense of self-worth. That is to say, when young university teachers realize that their work has been recognized for its contributions to students and the school, they will feel satisfied and happy.

-Career development and promotion opportunities: Recognition and feedback are important criteria for evaluating young university teachers' professional development and promotion. If schools can supply teachers with opportunities for promotion and career development, such as providing professional training, evaluating professional titles, etc., teachers will feel the support and attention of the school for their development, increasing career satisfaction.

-Work motivation and engagement: Recognition and feedback from schools are in a position to stimulate young university teachers' work motivation and active engagement. When young teachers are aware that their work is acknowledged by the school and receive timely feedback, they will be more serious and responsible in their teaching work, improving their job satisfaction and well-being.

-Student and Parent Recognition: The recognition and feedback from the school also includes the recognition and appreciation of students and parents towards young university teachers. When students and parents provide positive feedback on the quality and care of young university teachers' teaching, teachers will feel that their efforts are recognized and affirmed, thereby enhancing their sense of well-being.

4. Paths of Optimizing Young University Teachers' Professional Well-being

4.1 From the Perspectives of Society

4.1.1 Policy Support and Guarantee

The government and relevant education departments need to formulate and improve related policies to protect the rights and welfare of young university teachers. This includes ensuring reasonable salaries, providing stable career development opportunities, and improving the social security and welfare system for young university teachers (Cheng & Chen, 2023) ^[6]. In the meantime, the government should increase investment in higher education, expand the proportion of education funds, and scale up the budget for the salaries of young university teachers. In addition, according to market demand and the contribution of teachers, the salary level of young university teachers should be appropriately improved.

4.1.2 Social Respect and Recognition

Society should strengthen the respect and recognition for young university teachers. Raising the public awareness and understanding of the teaching profession, and enhancing society's reputation and value recognition of the teaching profession are necessary. Media, social organizations and the general public can increase the professional well-being of young university teachers by publicizing, advocating and participating in supporting the education undertakings.

4.1.3 Construction of Educational Culture

Establishing a positive and upward educational culture, and encouraging society to attach importance to and invest in higher education are also significant. Advocating for fairness and justice in higher education, paying attention to the overall development of students, and reducing utilitarian evaluation standards and competition, which will undoubtedly create a good educational environment for young university teachers.

In general, the above social support can provide a better development environment and working conditions for young university teachers, enhancing their career satisfaction and well-being. And

also, it can boost the quality of the entire higher education system and promote the healthy development of higher education.

4.2 From the Perspectives of Universities

4.2.1 Humanistic Care and Support

Schools should lay emphasis on the physical and mental health of young university teachers and furnish necessary support and care. Founding a sound mental health support system, and providing psychological counseling and counseling services, which will be conducive to helping young university teachers deal with work pressure and setbacks.

4.2.2 Providing Professional Development and Growth Opportunities

Universities should provide teachers with professional development and growth opportunities, such as participating in teacher training programs, academic exchanges, and research activities. Building an academic exchange platform for young teachers, encouraging their participation in teaching innovation and research projects, and enhancing their teaching level and academic reputation are prominent (Zhu, Liu, Cao, et. al, 2015) ^[7]. At the same time, ensuring teaching resources and environment (e.g. sufficient teaching supplies, textbooks, experimental equipment, advanced educational technology and so forth) for young university teachers is indispensable.

4.2.3 Fair Evaluation System

Setting up a fair and transparent teacher evaluation system, linking the work achievements and contributions of young university teachers with their promotion, compensation, etc. Making sure that the evaluation criteria are fair and reasonable, and offering timely recognition and motivation for young university teachers to elevate their professional motivation and satisfaction.

4.2.4. Encouraging Mutual Support and Participation in School decision-making and Management

On one hand, for young university teachers' professional well-being, encouraging mutual assistance and cooperation among teachers is essential. Schools can organize a mentorship system or teaching teams to provide assistance and guidance for young university teachers. On the other hand, universities should inspire young university teachers to participate in school decision-making and management, and provide channels for teacher representatives, in which young teachers can express their opinions and suggestions in the teacher representative conference or other relevant organizations, and engage in school development planning and policy formulation.

To sum up, through these efforts, universities can uplift the professional well-being of young teachers, heighten their sense of belonging and job satisfaction, and further improve the overall quality of education.

4.3 From the Perspectives of Teachers

4.3.1 Clear Professional Plan and Positive Work Attitude

Young university teachers first of all should possess clear professional goals and development plans, and strive to pursue personal professional growth. Meanwhile, it is momentous to plan achievable short-term and long-term goals, conduct constant learning, and continually enhance their professional and academic level. Then, cultivating a positive work attitude and mindset, and

actively getting involved into teaching, research, and academic exchange activities are needful, as a positive attitude towards teaching, attention to students, and pursuit of knowledge can bring young university teachers greater job satisfaction and sense of achievement.

4.3.2 Continuous Learning and Seek Support

For one thing, continuous learning is an important way to enhance young university teachers' sense of well-being. It is crucial to for young teachers to keep up with the latest educational concepts, teaching methods and academic foreland, participate in teacher training, academic conference and other activities, and constantly improve the teaching level and knowledge reserves. For another, creating positive cooperative relationships and communication channels with colleagues, mentors and students, and seeking their support and advice are helpful for improving one's teaching methods and educational philosophy.

4.3.4 Balance between Work and Life

Maintaining physical and mental health contributes to enhancing the professional well-being. Young university teachers should pay attention to balancing work and life, arranging time and tasks reasonably, maintaining appropriate rest and entertainment, and keeping good interpersonal relationships with family and friends. For instance, young university teachers can develop a work plan at the beginning of each week or day, and arrange the time reasonably, including teaching, research, and other work tasks. In addition to work, young university teachers also need to give themselves some time and space to cultivate their interests and hobbies. Participating in activities such as sports, reading, and traveling will be able to help to relax themselves and improve work efficiency.

4.3.5 Seeking a Sense of Value in Work

Young university teachers ought to recognize their responsibilities and influence, and realize the importance of their work to students and society. Viewing the role of a teacher as a mission to contribute to the growth of students and the development of society. This sense of value can directly fortify young university teachers' professional well-being.

Altogether, by means of continuous personal efforts and growth, young university teachers can enhance their sense of professional well-being and also contribute better to the quality of higher education.

5. Conclusion

Young teachers are the new force in teaching and research in universities, playing a crucial role in the development of universities (Ma, 2010) ^[8]. In another word, the development of young teachers and the advancement of universities are to some extent complementary. Therefore, to give more attention and care to young teachers in universities, the previous concept of only focusing on the well-being of students and neglecting the well-being of teachers should be changed, and a new perspective to understand and pay attention to the professional well-being of young teachers in universities should be put into practice. All in all, society, universities, and teachers themselves have to work together to enhance the professional well-being of young university teachers, thereby promoting the development of higher education.

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