FACTORS IMPACTING PRIVATE UNIVERSITY TEACHER RETENTION ON HIGHER EDUCATION OF SHANDONG YINGCAI UNIVERSITY*

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Abstract

This study investigates key factors influencing teacher retention at Shandong Yingcai University, a private Chinese higher education institution. It examines the impact of six factors-Person-Organization Fit (POF), Supportive Work Environment (SWE), Job Satisfaction (JS), Job Embeddedness (JE), Job Security (JSE), and Work Condition(WC)-on Teacher Retention(TR).Multiple linear regression analysis of data from 228 full-time teachers revealed that all six variables significantly positively influence retention, with the model explaining 77.9% of the variance (R^2 = 0.779). Job Security (β = 0.433) and Supportive Work Environment (β = 0.41) had the strongest effects, followed by Job Satisfaction, Job Embeddedness, Work Condition, and Person-Organization Fit. A 14-week strategic intervention-including group mentoring, counseling, improved communication, professional development, and enhanced working conditions-was implemented. Post-intervention data showed significant improvements in all variables and retention. Paired sample t-tests confirmed statistically

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significant differences ($p < .01$) between pre- and post-test scores. The study concludes that a holistic strategy addressing organizational, psychological, and environmental factors is essential for improving teacher retention in private universities, offering valuable insights for administrators and policymakers.

Keywords: Person-Organization Fit, Supportive Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, Job Embeddedness, Job Security, Work Condition, Teacher Retention, Strategic Plan.

Introduction

The caliber of tertiary education is shaped by various elements, including the organizational atmosphere, student characteristics, and teaching methodologies. Teacher retention stands out as a critical factor in maintaining educational standards (Harris et al., 2019). As China's higher education sector expands and competition among institutions intensifies, the demand for inter-institutional teacher mobility has risen. Universities are increasingly adopting strategies to retain top talent to support their own development (China Science Daily, 2021). Globally, research from the University of Washington indicates that since 2020, around 19% of educators depart from their schools each year, and about 9% of them abandon the teaching field altogether (Washington STEM, 2024). The challenges of teacher turnover and shortages have emerged as pressing concerns in education. Governments worldwide are paying greater attention to these issues due to their impact on school performance, student outcomes, and overall faculty stability (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). Quality education remains a priority for educational institutions in both developed and developing nations (Rodriguez et al., 2018). However, this issue holds particular significance in developing countries, where achieving high-quality education can significantly boost economic growth and national development. The simultaneous advancement of public and private education systems is a

common strategy observed in higher education globally. Given the substantial costs associated with higher education, no single entity or social force can bear the full financial burden alone. Therefore, a diversified approach involving multiple funding sources and varied academic programs is essential to foster the co-development of public and private institutions. In China, private colleges and universities started developing later compared to their public counterparts, leading to lower educational standards and significant gaps when compared to foreign private institutions (Lu & Cao, 2019). Under China's unique social environment and policies, public universities have generally outperformed private ones. While many private institutions now boast excellent infrastructure, they still face challenges such as unstable faculty and imbalanced teaching structures. To enhance their core competitiveness, Private institutions of higher education need to focus on assembling a top-notch faculty. The frequent turnover of educators and the challenge of keeping them on board have emerged as critical problems that demand prompt attention.

Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To systematically examine the critical impact of six core factors-Person-Organization Fit, Supportive Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, Job Embeddedness, Job Security and Working Conditions-on teacher retention.

2. To assess the current levels of the aforementioned factors and teacher retention, and based on this diagnosis, to design and implement a comprehensive strategic intervention plan aimed at holistically enhancing these factors.

3. To determine the significance of differences in the levels of these factors and teacher retention between pre- and post-intervention measurements, thereby validating the efficacy of the implemented strategies.

Literature Review

Research consistently affirms the significant impact of Person-Organization (P-O) fit on key workplace outcomes. A recent study in the Central European context identified a strong positive relationship between P-O fit and employee well-being, encompassing life satisfaction, workplace contentment, and psychological health (Jaskeviciute et al., 2023). A supportive work environment is critical for educator retention. Research indicates that supportive leadership is a key predictor of job satisfaction, whereas unsupportive conditions and student-related stressors significantly contribute to teacher dissatisfaction (Sass et al., 2010). Job satisfaction is a well-established, vital determinant of teacher retention. Studies using robust methodologies like structural equation modeling confirm a strong connection between school working conditions, including workload and collaboration, and teacher job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2021). Job embeddedness has been directly linked to teacher retention. A survey of public- school educators found that teachers who feel more integrated into their school's social and professional fabric are significantly more likely to remain in their positions (Shibiti, 2019). Job security is a fundamental factor influencing teacher stability. Studies have found that a sense of security is crucial for fostering organizational commitment and overall job satisfaction among educators, with its absence leading to increased stress and burnout (Ahmed et al., 2015). The intricate relationship between working conditions and retention is well-documented. A key finding is that interpersonal dynamics within the school environment, particularly for underrepresented groups, can be a primary driver of turnover (Campoli & Conrad-Popova, 2017). Teacher retention is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors. Analyses of novice educators highlight that a combination of personal, institutional, and broader contextual elements determines their decision to remain in the profession (Van den Borre et al., 2021).

Methodology

This strategic study aims to implement an effective strategic plan in a private university in northern China. The primary objectives are to enhance teacher satisfaction, foster a positive work attitude, strengthen professional and organizational commitment, and ultimately improve teacher retention. The research design is outlined as follows.

This study adopts a cross-sectional framework and employs a combined strategy, merging both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data will be collected by distributing questionnaires through both online and offline channels. Paul (2014) highlights that a cross-sectional design involves sampling from multiple demographic groups and making comparisons, thereby enabling researchers to effectively gather the required data.

This research comprises three main phases: the pre-strategic planning phase, the strategic planning phase, and the post-strategic planning phase. The preliminary phase of strategic planning is centered on evaluating the existing conditions and determining the necessity for transformation, which lays the groundwork for developing the strategy in the following phase. The strategic planning phase involves implementing a series of measures, while the post-strategic planning phase evaluates and discusses the outcomes. Throughout the action research process, the researcher serves as an external observer of the strategic planning practices, ensuring the objectivity and impartiality of both the process and evaluation. Statistical analysis was conducted using jamovi 2.3.12 as the software tool (Figure 1).

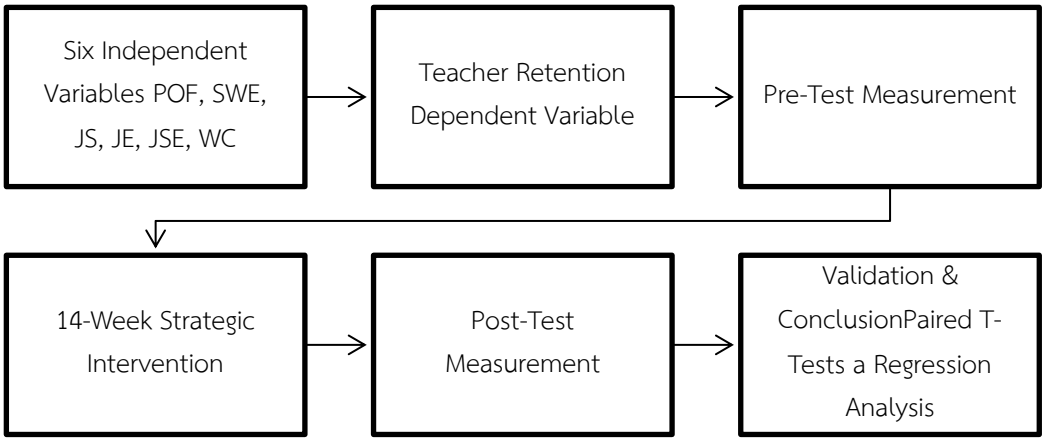

Figure 1 Research process and framework (Source: Constructed by the researcher)

Results

The data was illustrated by its frequency and percent in this part, and participants were chosen from one of the author's classes. The details were as follows:

1. Demographic Profile.

Table 1 Respondents' Profile by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Female	123	53.9	53.9	53.9
Male	105	46.1	100.00	100.00
Total	228	100.00	100.00	

According to Table 1, 228 students participated in the study. One hundred and twenty-three respondents (53.9%) were female, and one hundred

and five respondents (46.1%) were male. The results showed that female respondents represented the majority of the class.

2. Analysis of the Pre-Strategic Plan Stage

To investigate the influence of retention strategies on teacher retention, the author recruited 228 full-time teachers for the intervention. Initially, the online questionnaire tool Wenjuanxing (WJX) was employed to distribute the questionnaire. Simultaneously, 5 teachers were interviewed to gather their insights regarding the strategy plan. Among the interviewees, there were three school leaders in the field of education and two professors holding doctoral degrees. Descriptive analysis and content analysis of the interviews were conducted to elaborate on the relevant circumstances.

2.1 Descriptive Analysis of Measurement Scales Before the Strategic Plan

This study used descriptive statistics, which included means and standard deviations. The mean is used to find the average in the set of scores, and the standard deviation (SD) is used to show how far each value in a set of scores is from the mean of the sample. This study consisted of 7 constructs, which were Person-Organization fit (4 items), Supportive work environment (9 items), Job satisfaction (5 items), Job security (4 items), Job embeddedness (7 items), Work condition (4 items), and Teacher retention (6 items). Participants were required to complete the survey questionnaire, and all the items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. It contains 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Table 2 shows the details of the results.

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis of Measurement Scales Before the Strategic Plan

Constructs	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Person-organization fit		1.82	1.017
	POF1	2.57	1.41
	POF2	1.78	1.32
	POF3	1.49	1.13
	POF4	1.43	1.23
Supportive work environment		1.73	0.988
	SWE1	2.46	1.55
	SWE2	1.70	1.32
	SWE3	3.02	1.01
	SWE4	1.57	1.21
	SWE5	1.69	1.44
	SWE6	1.59	1.28
	SWE7	1.63	1.20
	SWE8	1.67	1.39
	SWE9	1.70	1.32
Job satisfaction		2.09	0.856
	JS1	2.55	1.51
	JS2	2.89	1.24
	JS3	1.82	1.36
	JS4	1.65	1.24
	JS5	1.52	1.12
Job embeddedness		1.81	1.004
	JE1	2.56	1.02
	JE2	1.79	1.29

	JE3	1.77	1.30
	JE4	1.57	1.14
	JE5	1.79	1.27
	JE6	1.67	1.22
	JE7	1.53	1.29
Job security		1.79	1.021
	JSE1	2.43	1.55
	JSE2	1.75	1.28
	JSE3	1.55	1.25
	JSE4	1.42	1.05
Work condition		1.84	1.059
	WC1	2.54	1.52
	WC2	1.76	1.31
	WC3	1.53	1.27
	WC4	1.54	1.13
Teacher retention		2.01	0.821
	TR1	2.36	0.926
	TR2	2.29	1.052
	TR3	1.21	0.944
	TR4	1.48	1.257
	TR5	2.37	1.109
	TR6	2.34	1.101

According to Table 2, the means for Person-organization fit ranged from 1.43 to 2.57, with an overall mean of 1.82 and a standard deviation of 1.017. This suggests generally low perceptions of fit, with responses showing moderate dispersion. Notably, item POF1 exhibited a relatively high standard deviation (1.41), indicating greater variability in responses. For the items measuring

Supportive work environment, the mean values ranged from 1.57 to 3.02, with an overall mean of 1.73 and standard deviation of 0.988. While most values were moderately consistent, SWE1 showed a high standard deviation (1.55), reflecting considerable variation in responses. Item SWE3 had the highest mean (3.02), suggesting a more positive perception in this specific aspect. In terms of Job satisfaction, the means varied from 1.52 to 2.89, with an overall mean of 2.09 and standard deviation of 0.856. The values were relatively concentrated, though JS1 had a higher standard deviation (1.51), indicating some divergence in opinions for this item. Regarding Job embeddedness, the mean scores ranged from 1.53 to 2.56, with a construct mean of 1.81 and standard deviation of 1.004. Most items showed moderate dispersion, except JE1, which had a lower standard deviation (1.02), suggesting more consistent responses for this item. For Job security, means fell between 1.42 and 2.43, with an overall mean of 1.79 and standard deviation of 1.021. Item JSE1 showed a relatively high standard deviation (1.55), implying varied perceptions concerning this aspect of security. In the case of Work condition, means ranged from 1.53 to 2.54, with a construct mean of 1.84 and standard deviation of 1.059. Values across items were fairly dispersed, with WC1 showing a high standard deviation (1.52), indicating differences in respondent experiences. Finally, for Teacher retention, means varied from 1.21 to 2.37, with an overall mean of 2.01 and standard deviation of 0.821. Items TR3 and TR4 had higher standard deviations (0.944 and 1.257, respectively), suggesting less consensus in these areas, while other items were more consistent.

Overall, the data indicate that perceptions were generally neutral to low across constructs, with certain items showing notable variation, highlighting areas where experiences or opinions diverge significantly.

3. Analysis of Post-Strategic Plan Stage

After the implementation of this strategic plan for 14 weeks, WJX (an online questionnaire tool) once again distributed the same questionnaire to these teachers, and selected the same teachers and university leaders from the 228 teachers for interviews to obtain their opinions on the overall strategy for retaining teachers. Descriptive analysis and interview analysis provided detailed explanations of the situation.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis of Measurement Scales After the Strategic Plan

The same participants were required to fill out a survey questionnaire, and all the items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 4.3 shows the details of the results.

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis of Measurement Scales After the Strategic Plan

Constructs	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Person-organization fit		2.79	0.965
	POF1	3.49	1.282
	POF2	2.77	1.297
	POF3	2.48	1.105
	POF4	2.43	1.220
Supportive work environment		2.81	0.930
	SWE1	3.34	1.378
	SWE2	2.69	1.289
	SWE3	2.57	1.134
	SWE4	3.50	1.080
	SWE5	2.67	1.399
	SWE6	2.57	1.241
	SWE7	2.62	1.190

	SWE8	2.64	1.338
	SWE9	2.68	1.289
Job satisfaction		3.03	0.790
	JS1	3.44	1.354
	JS2	3.77	1.058
	JS3	2.80	1.321
	JS4	2.62	1.168
	JS5	2.51	1.097
Job embeddedness		2.91	0.934
	JE1	3.41	1.394
	JE2	2.77	1.267
	JE3	2.75	1.274
	JE4	2.55	1.103
	JE5	2.79	1.273
	JE6	3.57	1.053
	JE7	2.52	1.271
Job security		2.97	0.913
	JSE1	3.33	1.393
	JSE2	2.72	1.217
	JSE3	3.44	1.050
	JSE4	2.41	1.026
Work condition		2.80	0.988
	WC1	3.40	1.336
	WC2	2.75	1.285
	WC3	2.52	1.254
	WC4	2.52	1.096
Teacher retention		2.01	0.821
	TR1	3.35	0.905

TR2	3.28	1.024
TR3	2.21	0.929
TR4	2.46	1.225
TR5	3.36	1.075
TR6	3.32	1.057

According to the table 3, the means for Person-organization fit ranged from 2.43 to 3.49, with an overall mean of 2.79 and a standard deviation of 0.965. This suggests a moderate level of perceived fit, with responses showing acceptable concentration. Notably, items POF1 and POF2 exhibited relatively high standard deviations (1.282 and 1.297, respectively), indicating greater variability in responses.

For the items measuring Supportive work environment, the mean values ranged from 2.57 to 3.50, with an overall mean of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 0.930. While most values were reasonably consistent, items such as SWE1 and SWE5 showed high standard deviations (1.378 and 1.399), reflecting considerable variation in responses. Item SWE4 had the highest mean (3.50), suggesting a more positive perception in this specific aspect. In terms of Job satisfaction, the means varied from 2.51 to 3.77, with an overall mean of 3.03 and a standard deviation of 0.790. The values were relatively concentrated, though JS1 had a higher standard deviation (1.354), indicating some divergence in opinions for this item. Regarding Job embeddedness, the mean scores ranged from 2.52 to 3.57, with a construct mean of 2.91 and a standard deviation of 0.934. Most items showed moderate dispersion, but JE1 had a relatively high standard deviation (1.394), suggesting less consensus in responses. For Job security, means fell between 2.41 and 3.44, with an overall mean of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 0.913. Item JSE1 showed a relatively high standard deviation (1.393), implying varied perceptions concerning this aspect of security. In the case of Work condition, means ranged from 2.52 to

3.40, with a construct mean of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 0.988. Values across items were fairly dispersed, with WC1 showing a high standard deviation (1.336), indicating differences in respondent experiences. Finally, for Teacher retention, means varied from 2.21 to 3.36, with an overall mean of 2.01 and a standard deviation of 0.821. Item TR4 had a higher standard deviation (1.225), suggesting less consensus in this area, while other items were more consistent.

Overall, the data indicate that perceptions were generally moderate to positive across most constructs, with certain items showing notable variation, highlighting areas where experiences or opinions diverge.

4. The Results of Paired Samples T-Test Between Pre-Strategic plan and Post-Strategic plan

This part would show the results of the paired samples t-test before and after the Strategic plan for each variable and reveal whether the plan worked or not.

Table 4 Paired Samples T-Test of Person-organization fit(POF)

Variables			Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Pair 1	Pre-POF	28	1.82	1.017	-156	227	<0.01
	Post-POF	28	2.79	0.965			

From table 4, there was a significant difference in Person-organization between pre-Strategic plan (M=1.82, SD=1.017) and post-Strategic plan (M=2.79, SD=0.965) condition; t -value=-156, p <0.01) and the mean difference was -0.97.

Table 1 Paired Samples T-Test of Supportive work enviroment(SWE)

Variables			Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Pair 1	Pre-SWE	228	1.73	0.988	-182	227	<0.01
	Post-SWE	228	2.81	0.930			

From table 5, there was a significant difference in Supportive work environment between pre-Strategic plan (M=1.73, SD=0.988) and post-Strategic plan (M=2.81, SD=0.930) condition; t -value=-182, p <0.01) and the mean difference was -1.08.

Table 2 Paired Samples T-Test of Job satisfaction (JS)

Variables			Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Pair 1	Pre-JS	228	2.09	0.856	-115	227	<0.01
	Post-JS	228	3.03	0.790			

From table 6, there was a significant difference in Job satisfaction between pre-Strategic plan (M=2.09, SD=0.856) and post-Strategic plan (M=3.03, SD=0.790) condition; t -value=-115, p <0.01) and the mean difference was -0.94.

Table 3 Paired Samples T-Test of Job embeddedness (JE)

Variables			Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Pair 1	Pre-JE	228	1.81	1.004	-164	227	<0.01
	Post-JE	228	2.91	0.934			

From table 7, there was a significant difference in Job embeddedness between pre-Strategic plan (M=1.81, SD=1.004) and post-Strategic plan (M=2.91, SD=0.934) condition; t -value=-164, p <0.01) and the mean difference was -1.1.

Table 4 Paired Samples T-Test of job security (JSE)

Variables			Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Pair 1	Pre-JSE	228	1.79	1.021	-112	227	<0.01
	Post-JSE	228	2.97	0.913			

From table 8, there was a significant difference in Competence between pre-Strategic plan (M=1.79, SD=1.021) and post-Strategic plan (M=2.97, SD=0.913) condition; t -value=-112, p <0.01) and the mean difference was -1.18.

Table 5 Paired Samples T-Test of work condition (WC)

Variables			Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Pair 1	Pre-WC	228	1.84	1.059	-124	227	<0.01
	Post-WC	228	2.80	0.988			

From table 9, there was a significant difference in Competence between pre-Strategic plan (M=1.84, SD=1.059) and post-Strategic plan (M=2.80, SD=0.988) condition; t -value=-124, p <0.01) and the mean difference was -0.96.

Table 6 Paired Samples T-Test of teacher retention (TR)

Variables			Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Pair 1	Pre-TR	228	2.01	0.821	-189	227	<0.01
	Post-TR	228	3.00	0.788			

From table 10, there was a significant difference in teacher retention between pre-Strategic plan (M=2.01, SD=0.821) and post-Strategic plan (M=3.00, SD=0.788) condition; t -value=-189, p <0.01) and the mean difference was -0.99.

Discussion

This study investigates faculty retention at Shandong Yingcai University, focusing on six key determinants: Person-Organization Fit, supportive work environment, job satisfaction, job embeddedness, job security, and working conditions. Empirical analysis confirms the significant positive effects of these variables on retention intention. Furthermore, the introduction and

implementation of Strategic Planning (SP) have been shown to amplify the influence of these factors, leading to a marked improvement in faculty retention rates. The following discussion interprets these findings within their theoretical and practical contexts, highlighting both scholarly implications and real-world applications.

First, univariate and multiple regression analyses demonstrate that all six independent variables significantly explain faculty retention, with the overall model exhibiting high goodness-of-fit (R^2 = 0.779). This indicates that these factors collectively form a core mechanism influencing faculty retention. Among them, supportive work environment (β = 0.411) and job security (β = 0.433) yielded the highest standardized regression coefficients, suggesting that organizational support and career stability are of paramount concern to faculty. These results align with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Herzberg's (2017) Two-Factor Theory. Deci and Ryan (2012) emphasize the foundational role of external safeguards and intrinsic motivation in career choices and retention. This is particularly relevant in the context of Chinese private higher education institutions, which often face high faculty turnover and relatively limited resources. Providing clear career development pathways and psychological security thus becomes crucial for retaining talent.

Second, the positive effect of Person-Organization Fit (POF) on retention (β = 0.197) indicates that value and cultural alignment profoundly influence faculty's organizational commitment. When faculty identify with the institution's mission and culture, they are more likely to develop emotional attachment and loyalty. This observation is consistent with Schneider's (1987) Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework. Private universities, especially during periods of rapid expansion, must prioritize cultural development and value communication to avoid undermining organizational identification in the pursuit of scale. The moderate-to-high coefficients of Job Embeddedness (JE) (β = 0.297) and Job Satisfaction (JS) (β = 0.353) further suggest that faculty

retention is not merely a product of rational calculation but also a cumulative outcome of affective and social bonds. High embeddedness reflects greater social capital and structural ties within the organization, which raises the threshold for departure. It is noteworthy that during the Strategic Planning (SP) phase, multidimensional interventions were implemented and their effectiveness was confirmed via subsequent regression models—both the regression coefficients of all variables and the explanatory power of the model increased. This indicates that systematic and targeted management improvements (e.g., clarifying promotion mechanisms, upgrading physical conditions, enhancing leadership support) in private universities can tangibly enhance faculty professional experience and thereby promote retention. This finding provides empirical support for the notion that "managerial action can alter organizational outcomes" and offers valuable insights for strategic human resource management in private higher education.

The multiple regression model demonstrated strong explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.779$), confirming that these variables collectively form a core mechanism affecting faculty retention intentions. Notably, Job Security and Supportive Work Environment emerged as the most influential factors. The implementation of a 14-week strategic intervention plan served as a critical test of the proposed framework. The results of the paired-sample t-tests provided robust empirical evidence, showing statistically significant improvements in all six factors and in teacher retention itself following the intervention. This not only confirms the validity of the identified factors but also demonstrates that managerial action, through a targeted and holistic strategy, can effectively enhance the professional experience of teachers and positively influence their decision to remain at the institution. Theoretically, these findings enrich the literature on teacher retention in the unique context of Chinese private higher education by integrating insights from Self-Determination Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor

Theory, and the Attraction-Selection-Attrition framework. The study underscores that retention is not merely a matter of compensation but a complex interplay of organizational support, psychological security, cultural alignment, and positive work environments. Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The sample was drawn from a single private university, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the 14-week intervention period, while effective in showing immediate improvements, may be too short to assess the long-term sustainability of these effects. Future research should involve longitudinal studies across diverse institutional and cultural contexts to validate and extend these findings.

Recommendation

Each institution must provide systematic training for teachers to assist them in designing and conducting experiential and colla Based on the empirical findings of this study, future research should be expanded in three key directions to build upon the current framework. First, the scope of inquiry should be broadened to include faculty from a wider array of private universities across different regions of China, thereby enhancing the generalizability and external validity of the results. Second, longitudinal studies are needed to track the long-term effects of strategic retention interventions over multiple years, which would allow for stronger causal inferences regarding their sustainability and impact. Furthermore, investigation into potential moderating variables is essential; future work should examine how demographic factors such as age, gender, and academic discipline, as well as external contextual factors like shifts in national policy or regional economic conditions, may influence the relationships identified in the proposed model. Such nuanced analysis will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex mechanisms underlying faculty retention.

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