

Sharing Professional Viewpoint:

Effective Management of Support Policies for Rural Teachers in China

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1. Opening

At present, there exists a significant mismatch between the quantity and quality of rural teachers and the educational demands of underdeveloped areas in China (Shi, 2022; Kong & Feng, 2024). As regional development disparities widen, the upgrading of rural education standards has become an urgent challenge requiring continuous exploration. The management of supportive policies for rural teachers serves as a crucial mechanism to bridge the gap between educational equity and resource allocation inefficiency, thereby promoting balanced social development. This approach has received increasing attention from policymakers, educational administrators, and academic researchers. Strengthening the rural teacher workforce is not only a fundamental task for compulsory education but also plays a vital role in rural revitalization efforts. However, the Chinese government's current policy implementations often exhibit systematic flaws, particularly (i) inadequate incentive mechanisms, (ii) uneven distribution of resources, and (iii) insufficient professional development opportunities (Shi & Tian, 2018; Kong & Feng, 2024). Consequently, it becomes imperative to reassess the policy's value in addressing these challenges. To the author of this paper, the governments could apply human capital theory to enhance efficiency in the management of policy implementation in three dimensions: (i) refining performance evaluation systems, (ii) establishing differential compensation standards across regions, and (iii) creating specialized supervisory agencies for rural education development (Shi, 2022; Fan, 2023; Liu & Huang, 2024).

2. Rural Teacher Support

Currently, the implementation status of rural teacher support for teachers in China has required strong coordination in resource allocation, of incentive mechanisms, and clear-cut career development paths. According to Southwest Ethnic Education and Psychology Research Center (2018), the policy synergy evaluation system can help enhance the professional attractiveness of rural teachers through institutional innovation, promote educational equity with balanced professional development of urban and rural education, and create educational equity for rural teachers. It is important that the current policy implementation difficulties should be diagnosed and evaluated for its effectiveness of policy periodically from time to time.

China's Rural Teacher Support Plans in Various Regions (2016-2018) covers rural teachers in 31 provinces by the types of policy tools and collaborative actions. Typical regions with policy innovations can be seen in *the county management and school recruitment reform* in Sichuan Province (Nong, 2021) and the differentiated subsidy system in Zhejiang Province as a replicable experience (Liu & Huang, 2024).

3. Policy Evolution and System Innovation

The support policies for rural teachers in China have gone through an evolutionary logic from "relief-based poverty alleviation" to "precision support," forming a supplementary mechanism centered on the "special post plan" and "public funded normal students," as well as a retention mechanism centered on "title tilt" and "salary promotion" (Fan, 2023). Research has pointed out that the policy system is gradually transitioning from singularity to comprehensiveness, emphasizing the three-dimensional goals of "being able to leave, being able to stay, and being taught well," and optimizing resource allocation through systems, as practiced in unified urban-rural staffing and job rotation and exchange (Hu, 2023). However, the fragmentation and implementation deviation of policy tools still constrain the effectiveness of the management system, such as the mismatch between standard setting and actual needs, and the contradiction between incentive policies and teacher self-development (Yang, 2024).

In terms of policy implementation effectiveness and practical difficulties, the treatment of rural teachers has significantly improved, with an average monthly subsidy of 1,000 yuan for rural teachers in Changde City and an optimized educational structure (with a bachelor's degree rate of 85.93%). In addition, hardware facilities have been improved, and the coverage rate of multimedia classrooms has exceeded 90% (Southwest Ethnic Education and Psychology Research Center, 2018).

As for structural difficulties, Shi (2022) reported the imbalance of resource supply: the proportion of rural teachers teaching across disciplines reached 44.88%, with 70.23% of them teaching more than 13 classes per week, and their professional development time was squeezed. Kong & Feng (2024) investigated the lack of occupational attractiveness: some teachers lack endogenous development motivation due to weak identity recognition and high occupational burnout. This issue was dealt with in the study by Liu & Huang (2024) who examined the lack of policy coordination: the lack of dynamic connection between policies, such as financial security, professional title evaluation and employment, and training support, resulting in *increased benefits but still high turnover rates*.

4. Teacher Professional Development System

China's teacher professional development system primarily supports *knowledge and ability enhancement*. Teaching skills have been improved through specialized training programs, as guided by the "National Training Program." There are identified problems,

particularly training content being disconnected from local realities and low utilization of digital resources (Nong, 2024). Secondly, innovative incentive mechanisms appear in the form of differentiated subsidies, as shown in a township work subsidy of 200 yuan and a district subsidy of 300 yuan in Hunan Province, and tilted professional title evaluation and appointment--eliminating paper requirements. However, there has been a tension between external incentives and teachers' willingness for self-development, and some teachers still face the dilemma of being "developed" (Kang, Lv & Tian, 2024). In addition, cultural identity reconstruction emphasizes the cultivation of local sentiment and enhances teachers' sense of belonging through participation in rural governance and the development of school-based curriculum, but the practical path is still unclear (Shi & Tian, 2018).

5. Closing on Possible Solutions

As for career path optimization, institutions need to adjust staffing standards and practically promote the national reform of *county management and school recruitment* for teacher mobility (Xiao, 2024). Technological empowerment is of vital importance in building a digital learning platform for rural teachers to achieve cross regional sharing of high-quality resources (Yang & Li, 2024). The localization of career paths can be geared toward integration of teachers' knowledge structure with-local culture, as demonstrated in the library of local education (Zhao, Yao & Zhang, 2023). Optimistically and realistically, all these possible solutions are expected to help execute and accelerate effective management for China's support plans for rural teachers in various regions in the years to come.

6. The Author

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