

Research on the current situation and improvement strategies of new teachers' adaptation in rural primary schools

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This study focuses on the adaptation issues of new teachers in rural primary schools, emphasizing their importance in rural education. Through questionnaires, interviews, and case analysis, the research explores five aspects affecting adaptation: age, gender, professional competence, career cognition, and educational background. The study identifies influencing factors, including weak professional beliefs due to pre-employment cognitive gaps and post-employment reality conflicts, insufficient professional competence caused by the gap between educational theory and practice, and gender differences. Specific improvement suggestions are proposed to address these issues.

Keywords: *new teachers in rural primary schools; career adaptation; influencing factors; improvement strategies.*

According to statistics from the Ministry of Education, the number of primary school teachers under the age of 24 nationwide has reached 430000 [2, p. 156] and with a significant portion working in rural areas. Rural primary school teachers play an extremely important role in rural education, but society's attention to rural primary school teachers is far from sufficient, which negatively impacts the professional development of new rural teachers.

1. Related research on the adaptation of new teachers in rural primary schools

In recent years, domestic scholars have conducted in-depth research on the adaptation issues of new teachers in rural primary schools from various perspectives, mainly focusing on psychological adaptation, survival adaptation, cultural adaptation, interpersonal adaptation, and professional adaptation [8, p. 148–150+157]. Internationally, the New Teacher Center in the United States released standards for induction training programs in 2018, providing a framework for high-quality induction training [5, p. 119–125]. Research from Michigan State University compared the adaptation abilities of new teachers in China, New Zealand, and Switzerland, identifying two main factors influencing adaptation: internal factors and external factors [6, p. 24–31]. In terms of coping strategies, domestic scholars have proposed suggestions at the national, school, and individual teacher levels.

In this study, new teachers refer to those who have passed teacher qualification certification and have been teaching for 1-3 years, including both regular and substitute teachers [9, p. 18–20]. Considering the unique characteristics of rural areas, teachers can be categorized based on age, gender, professional competence, career cognition, and educational background. This study focuses on individual teacher characteristics, exploring the adaptation issues of different teacher groups, the causes of these issues, and proposing solutions

from the perspective of professional identity. This approach has strong relevance and practical value.

2. Research methods

This study primarily employs questionnaires, interviews, and case studies. The questionnaire was designed based on the research objectives and the characteristics of the participants. The questionnaire was distributed in D City and SPSS was used to analyze the data from the valid responses. The survey targeted new teachers in D City's primary schools, with 62 valid responses collected.

3. Research Results

3.1. Adaptation challenges of new teachers in rural primary schools

3.1.1. Limited teaching experience due to young age and short tenure

Over 90% of new teachers in D City's rural primary schools are under 35 years old and have less than three years of teaching experience. Their limited educational experience results in more adaptation challenges. A chi-square test was conducted to study the relationship between age and career adaptation. The results show a significant correlation ($p < 0.05$), as shown in the following tables:

Table 1

Age and career adaptation cross-analysis

	value	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.084a	6	.029
Likelihood Ratio	16.459	6	.011
Linear-by-Linear	5.561	1	.018
N of Valid Cases	62		

3.1.2. Gender imbalance leading to higher work pressure for female teachers

A chi-square test was conducted to study the relationship between gender and career adaptation. The results show a significant correlation ($p < 0.05$), as shown in the following tables:

Table 2

Gender and career adaptation cross-analysis

	value	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.149a	2	.046
Likelihood Ratio	6.587	2	.037
Linear-by-Linear	1.285	1	.257
N of Valid Cases	62		

3.1.3. Mismatch between education level and compensation leading to low job satisfaction

In this survey, 49 teachers held bachelor's degrees, and 8 held master's degrees. When asked about the extent to which their education level helped their work, 35.4% of teachers responded «somewhat». A chi-square test was conducted to study the relationship between education level and career adaptation. The results show no significant correlation ($p > 0.05$), as shown in the following tables:

Table 3

Education level and career adaptation cross-analysis

	value	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
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Pearson Chi-Square	5.238a	4	.264
Likelihood Ratio	4.899	4	.298
Linear-by-Linear	4.026	1	.045
N of Valid Cases	62		

3.1.4. Insufficient career cognition leading to weak professional identity

Career cognition refers to teachers' analysis and evaluation of their profession based on their knowledge, experience, and environmental factors [3, p. 30–37]. According to the survey, 64.5% of teachers chose the profession for job stability, 71% for the holidays, and only 32.3% chose it out of passion. This indicates that most new teachers lack strong professional beliefs.

3.2. Causes of adaptation challenges for new teachers in rural primary schools

3.2.1. Pre-employment cognitive gaps and post-employment reality conflicts weaken professional beliefs

Many chose teaching for its high social status, holidays, and job stability. However, after entering the profession, they faced heavy workloads, harsh living and working conditions, and distrust from school leaders and parents. The gap between expectations and reality made adaptation difficult.

3.2.2. Mismatch between high education level and compensation, along with gender imbalance, creates adaptation challenges

Improving teacher salaries is a gradual process, and rural teachers cannot achieve corresponding economic rewards in the short term. Additionally, the gender imbalance in education, with far more female than male teachers, means that more demanding tasks often fall on new female teachers [4, p. 89-94].

3.3. Improvement strategies for new teachers' adaptation in rural primary schools

3.3.1. Reshape professional beliefs and deepen career cognition

New teachers should adjust their professional perspectives, experiencing the joy and fulfillment of teaching through hands-on practice, thereby realizing their self-worth in education [1, p. 123–130]. By understanding the importance of their work for students' growth, new teachers can gain a deeper appreciation of the significance of their profession.

3.3.2. Strengthen Basic Skills and Enhance Professional Competence and Teaching Abilities

The professionalism of teaching is evident, and teachers' professional competence is a decisive factor. For new teachers in D City, rapid integration into their roles requires a focus on improving professional competence, practicing basic teaching skills, and addressing personal shortcomings [7, p. 45–48].

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Исследование текущего состояния адаптации новых учителей в сельских начальных школах и стратегий ее улучшения

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Это исследование фокусируется на вопросах адаптации новых учителей в сельских начальных школах, подчеркивая их важность в сельском образовании. С помощью анкет, интервью и анализа случаев исследование изучает пять аспектов, влияющих на адаптацию: возраст, пол, профессиональная компетентность, карьерное познание и образовательный фон. Исследование выявляет влияющие факторы, включая слабые профессиональные убеждения из-за когнитивных пробелов до трудоустройства и конфликтов реальности после трудоустройства, недостаточную профессиональную компетентность, вызванную разрывом между образовательной теорией и практикой, и гендерные различия. Предлагаются конкретные предложения по улучшению для решения этих проблем.

Ключевые слова: *новые учителя в сельских начальных школах Китая, адаптация к карьере, факторы влияния, стратегии улучшения.*

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