The Analysis of the Influence of Post Appointment System on the Performance of Faculty Members in Higher Learning Institutions

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Keywords: Higher learning institutions, Post appointment system, Faculty members' performance, Influence.

Abstract. The development of higher learning institutions is inseparable from the support given by the teams of professional faculty members. In the time of knowledge explosion, for the purpose of realizing their leap-forward development, higher learning institutions should take the post appointment system as the approach to a breakthrough and make an in-depth analysis of the composite influence of the post appointment on faculty members' output performance, behavior performance as well as their ability and quality by discussing the deficiencies and problems in aspects including post setup, appointment process and assessment from the perspective of system before building the competitive and incentive mechanism of posts featuring the survival of the fittest. All of these are expected to able to promote the overall upgrading of the level of the faculty members on the part of higher learning institutions and facilitate their leap-forward development.

Introduction

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The Concept of Post Appointment System and Analysis of Its Characteristics

By post appointment system, it refers to a faculty employment policy that under the principle featuring equality and voluntariness and in the light of the post demand of schools, departments like administrative department for education make a scientific arrangement of the posts of faculty members so as to recruit high-caliber talents by signing employment contracts with them. Judging from the implementation of the post appointment system in higher learning institutions in China, the following distinct characteristics can be found.

Overall market-based situation has come into being. In the process of setting up posts and recruiting faculty members, higher learning institutions keep the whole market in mind in terms of both recruitment standards and in recruitment fields, thus displaying openness. Those who meet the conditions required by the posts in higher learning institutions can take the written exam and interview in a fair way before entering the workforce of higher learning institutions through benign competition. Such post appointment system is helpful to increasing the competitiveness of human resource in higher learning institutions and fitting in with the development requirements of market in a better way.

Post management is realized. The implementation of post appointment system requires that in accordance with the number, structure and hierarchy of posts in higher learning institutions, efforts are made to carry out the setup of posts including professional skills, management and the work done
by handymen, which is helpful to optimizing the hierarchical structure of posts, promoting post management to the part and parcel of personnel management on the part of higher learning institutions and breaking through the boundary between leaders and staff, thus deepening the reform of personnel management system in higher learning institutions.

Contractual relationship is forged. The implementation of post appointment system has highlighted the contractual relationship of equality and resource between higher learning institutions and faculty members, thus effectively solving the aforementioned dilemma.

Professional development is facilitated. The implementation of post appointment system has changed the traditional four-tier professional structure including professional titles such as full professor, associate professor, lecturer and teaching assistant and has further divided the former professional rung into thirteen hierarchies, greatly enhancing the motive force of professional development on the part of faculty members [1].

**The Influence of Post Appointment System on the Performance of College Faculty Members**

The influence of post appointment system on the performance of college faculty members is mainly manifested in the following three aspects including output performance, behavior performance as well as ability and quality.

**The Influence on the Output Performance of Faculty Members**

Post appointment system emphasizes the fair competition based on market, which is not only beneficial to higher learning institutions but also extremely valuable to faculty members. The system attaches great importance to the flexible and scientific nature in terms of making use of personnel, thus providing a channel for recruiting talents on a selective basis, further enhancing faculty members’ enthusiasm for their professional development. The implementation of post appointment system has gradually weakened the requirement of the titles of technical posts and paid more attention to the assessment of academic and scientific achievements, which is helpful to facilitating the continuous output of faculty members’ academic and scientific research achievements and accelerate their development in specialty quality and academic and scientific research ability. On the other hand, the implementation of post appointment system has also the propensity featuring quick success because it attaches excessive importance to short-term explicit benefit and neglects the accumulation in ideology and culture, resulting in the rapid increase of the load of teaching and scientific research on the part of faculty members and inducing the occurrence of a series of unstable factors.

**The Influence on the Behavior Performance of Faculty Members**

The implementation of post appointment system is characterized by emphasizing benign competition for the purpose of stimulating the work initiative of faculty members and giving full play to their potential. However, the sense of instability has also been caused in many aspects. On the one hand, post appointment system demonstrates fairness and equality and puts stress on the principle of giving priority to efficiency. Since it no longer pays attention to seniority, it is beneficial to encouraging the enthusiasm for work on the part of young faculty members in a better way. By keeping on giving full play to their ability and strength, they can display their own value, which is also helpful to urging old professors with high seniority to continue to maintain their high diligence in work. At the same time, post appointment system incorporates many indexes such as teaching, academic activities and scientific research into quantitative assessment, which is conducive to enhancing faculty members’ understanding of posts and grades to guide them to set higher work objectives to obtain more generous remuneration. On the other hand, since post appointment system is excessively short-sighted, it can cause some faculty members to breed utilitarian thought and weaken their professional ethics featuring selfless dedication. Moreover, due to the pressure imposed by the competition for posts, many old faculty members with seniority and rich experience are no longer
willing to help young faculty members, which will surely influence the construction of the teaching staff and are not beneficial to carrying on the positive spirit of higher learning institutions.

The Influence on the Ability and Quality of Faculty Members

Post appointment system attaches importance to the scientific assessment mechanism used for selecting desired talents. If things continue this way for a long period of time, it is conducive to upgrading the overall quality of the teaching staff, forming a benign competition among faculty members so as to facilitate the steady improvement of the composite quality on the part of faculty members. On the one hand, post appointment system has prompted the reform of the personnel management in higher learning institutions, ensuring that those who have been employed meet the demand of posts. On the other hand, post appointment system poses a huge challenge to middle-aged and aged faculty members. Many of them, due to their relatively low level of education background, the aging of their knowledge structure and the incomplete mastery of new knowledge, can find themselves at a competitive disadvantage to young faculty members with high academic qualifications. Such powerful pressure of competition will lead them to produce the sense of instability which can reduce the will of teamwork and mutual help among faculty members as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt reasonable measures to gradually get rid of the negative influence caused by post appointment system and avoid the tendency of losing the superiority of the system [2].

The Existing Problems of Post Appointment System

The Setup of Posts Fails to Embody the Strategy of Discipline Construction

The setup of posts is based on the understanding of them. Only by fully understanding post requirements and choosing those who meet the demand of posts can the high match between men and posts can be realized. However, currently, most of higher learning institutions have failed to embody the strategy of discipline construction in the setup of posts, leading to the phenomenon that the match between men and posts becomes a mere formality and loses the fundamental purpose. At present, many higher learning institutions have set up posts in accordance with the designated proportion of the number of qualifications including the titles of lecturers, associate professors and professors. As long as a faculty member succeeds in satisfying the requirement on the strength of qualification, he or she can at least be employed at a post with the lowest grade and those who have not obtain their qualifications are unable to be employed at the posts with higher grades, which has undoubtedly inhibited the inflow of outstanding talents from the market. In addition, although the post appointment system in many higher learning institutions has embodied the principle of competing for posts, this only refers to the phenomenon that more preferable talents are selected from the current size of human resources, thus leading to the fact that the so-called “preferable talents” are not always qualified for shoudering the responsibilities of the posts with the second or third grade. In addition, imbalance exists in the development of disciplines. If the requirements of post appointment system are followed, the posts with the second or third grade will be occupied by a small number of disciplines, which is not conducive to constructing new disciplines and stimulating the vitality of the teaching staff.

The Appointment Process Fails to Embody the Professional Requirements of Posts

Many higher learning institutions have failed to make analysis of posts in the early stage of appointment and conduct a systematic research by combining the development demand of different disciplines. Instead, they only carry out the selection of talents by way of uniform and simple appointment conditions, leading to the fact that the selected talents are unable to adapt themselves to the demand of posts in a good way. As a result, faculty members’ enthusiasm for work has been greatly dampened and the development of their academic research has influenced. Besides, some
higher learning institutions excessively favor the faculty members with seniority and rigidly specify the number of years in terms of qualification during the process of applying for competing for posts, which has shut the door on numerous young faculty members and failed to really demonstrate the purpose of employing qualified talents according to the requirements of posts. Naturally, the basic principle featuring fair competition has not been fully embodied [3].

The Assessment Fails to Attain the "Survival of the Fittest"

At present, many higher learning institutions have set up their mechanisms in the form of yearly assessment and appointment period assessment. This is conducive to strengthening personnel management and increasing the self-efficiency on the part of faculty members. However, there are problems in many aspects. On the one hand, the design of the main body concerning the assessment is not scientific. Academic research is of a certain periodicity, which cannot be manifested in a short time but it should be also constructed on the basis of yearly assessment. On the other hand, the setup of assessment is not very reasonable. As the basic evidence concerning the further appointment, non-reappointment and change of appointment, the result of assessment indicates whether a faculty member can continue to engage in teaching. Therefore, sufficient emphasis must be laid on it. However, a large number of higher learning institutions focus their assessment on aspects such as class hours, students’ assessment of teaching, achievements in scientific research and the number of articles that have been published. There is little assessment about faculty members’ work ability, attitude and teaching effect, let alone quantitative assessment. This has resulted in the fact that many faculty members throw their energy into the aspects such as publishing articles and conducting scientific research tasks, which is not helpful to cultivating excellent talents and boosting discipline construction [4].

The Analysis of the Countermeasures on Optimizing the Post Appointment System in Higher Learning Institutions

Scientifically Analyze Posts to Guarantee the Standardization of the System

Before the setup of posts, application-oriented higher learning institutions which pay equal attention to teaching and scientific research should scientifically analyze post requirements and comprehensively consider the development demand among multiple disciplines to make overall planning of disciplinary development. On the one hand, higher learning institutions should make clear the requirements and responsibilities of each and every post so as to provide the basis for scientifically setting up posts and further dividing them. That is to say, the setup of posts should be adjusted according to the levels of posts and the key emphases in work in different periods of time so as to reflect different development requirements between the leadership, professors and ordinary faculty members of disciplines. On the other hand, higher learning institutions should deepen the assessment system of qualifications to guarantee its feasibility. By delegating the right to evaluate qualifications to the institution at a lower level, improving regulations concerning professional titles and formulating the system of assessment and approval, efforts are made to construct a standard verification procedure to ensure the seriousness and scientific nature of qualification assessment. In a word, the selected faculty members should be characterized by putting equal stress on ideological quality and professional ability, giving consideration to teaching practice and scientific research quality and having both qualification of education background and work results.

Standardize Appointment Process to Enhance Market Openness

On the one hand, higher learning institutions should lay stress on normalizing appointment process so as to succeed in making posts open to the market. Only in this way can they attract high-caliber talents of teaching and scientific research, select excellent talents that satisfy post requirements and facilitate the steady upgrading of the team of college faculty members and their level of teaching and research. At the same time, higher learning institutions should bring in the awareness of competition in the
process of competing for posts, give full play to the advantage of market mechanism and comprehensively stimulate the enthusiasm for work on the part of faculty members so as to instill infinite vitality into teaching and research work and disciplinary construction. On the other hand, in the process of specific appointment, higher learning institutions should adhere to the basic principle featuring openess and fairness so as to help excellent talents to be employed and promoted in a timely manner. Meanwhile, higher learning institutions should comprehensively implement teachers’ post appointment system by strictly setting up posts and specifying responsibilities and tenure of appointment. Efforts are made to safeguard the rights and interests of both sides in competition and merit-based mechanism. Moreover, higher learning institutions should construct a limited “life-long” mechanism by abolishing the lifelong tenure of professorship and associate professorship so as to comprehensively carry out competition and selection.

**Construct Assessment System to Strengthen the Binding Force of Assessment**

On the one hand, higher learning institutions should follow specialty development directions and school-running characteristics and perfect the system of performance assessment so as to form the assessment indexes based on faculty members’ performance and post requirements at various levels, which involves multiple factors such as knowledge structure and professional techniques. Efforts are made to prompt the shift of performance assessment from process-based management to objective-based management. On the other hand, higher learning institutions should construct their two-term assessment system including mid-to late term assessment systems. Through the assessment of faculty members’ teaching and research work, the assessment is intended to give play to its guidance function. The assessment system should be focused on the disparities among disciplines. By way of seeking for the assessment standards of different disciplines and faculty members of different specialties, the comprehensiveness of the assessment should be emphasized. For example, stress should be put on the assessment of the professional level of teaching research and moral quality on the part of faculty members. At the same time, the assessment system should take into consideration the unexpected situations beyond the standards by organizing expert panels to have discussions and make appropriate alterations so as to increase the flexibility of the assessment and encourage faculty member to keep on making innovation and realizing development. In addition, higher learning institutions should pay attention to the adjustment of performance management by summarizing the problems arising from the implementation of post appointment system at regular intervals or in a non-scheduled way according to different problems from different stages, gradually adjusting the assessment system and pacifying negative emotions so as to satisfy the performance management objectives.

**Establish Dismissal System and Improve Exit Mechanism**

The allotted time of college post appointment should be required to take the form featuring the organic combination of regular appointment and lifelong appointment by using the exit mechanism in the US for reference. That is to say, the lifelong appointment system is targeted at the candidates with the titles of senior professional posts while the mode of regular appointment is directed at the majority of faculty members, which is conducive to attracting excellent talents, stabilizing the teaching staff and upgrading the level of faculty members as a whole. At the same time, higher learning institutions should gradually perfect the social security system including health care, housing and provision for the aged. Only in this way can the non-reappointment exit mechanism be implemented in a smooth way. From the perspective of market, higher learning institutions should intensify the degree of freedom about the mobile exit mechanism. By taking advantage of the support of policy, efforts are made to optimize the behavior of talent market to make the non-reappointment exit mechanism give full play to its positive effect and boost the sustainable development on the part of higher learning institutions [5].

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Summary

In a nutshell, as the important part of college administrative management, the management of teaching staff is vital not only to the level of scientific research and school-running quality of higher learning institutions but also to their stability and long-term development. For this purpose, higher learning institutions should take post appointment system as the starting point, deepen the reform of teaching personnel system and motivate the “de-administration” reform of their internal administrative management so as to fit in with the requirements of the reform of higher education system and facilitate the sound and steady development of higher learning institutions.

References


