

# Retention Strategies and Their Influences on Mental Health Among Chinese University Staff

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**Abstract:** With the development of modern society and fierce competition, various pressures have further increased people's psychological problems. Teachers in colleges and universities, in particular, have pressure from work and life, and the school's retention policy will directly affect teachers' mental health, and then affect teachers' retention. This paper uses the method of empirical research, taking two universities in Yunnan as specific research objects, understands the relationship between teachers' retention and psychological pressure through questionnaires, and analyzes the effectiveness of the retention policy in universities. The continuous loss of high-quality talents is the current management of colleges and universities. Facing a practical problem, colleges and universities should be combined with their own actual situation to develop specific strategies to absorb and retain high-quality talents. To create an academic atmosphere which can be implemented, and at any time according to the changes in the actual needs of high-quality talents and for a high-quality talent, he is eager to be able to adjust and optimize in an advocacy academic liked islike.

**Keywords:** Retention policy; Mental health; University teachers.

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## 1. Introduction

A study on the ubiquitous mental health problems of college teachers. Due to the multiplicity of functions of higher education institutions, college teachers assume various roles. They usually not only have to engage in counseling, teaching and educating people, but also carry out scientific research, carry out experiments and write papers. Their pressure is everywhere. Through the investigation of some university teachers in Scotland, the scholar Fisher came to the conclusion that psychological stress is a feature of university teachers' professional life. Teachers magazine in the United States once conducted a questionnaire survey on teachers' mental health, and found that as many as 84% of teachers thought that teaching would cause risks to people's body and mind, and 5% of teachers thought that they would be worried about losing their jobs, resulting in psychological stress or mental illness. Japanese psychologist Nobuo Nishi also pointed out that according to many statistical reports, there are indeed many teachers leaving their jobs due to mental illness in Japan.

The standard of living has been improved a lot since China implemented opening-up and reform policy (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). People are striving for a better life. So do university faculty members and staff. They may leave campus for a better income and life. If too many excellent teachers quit their jobs, it may bring a negative influence on Chinese advanced and higher education. Chinese universities should adopt an appropriate retention policy to keep excellent staff working in university and devote themselves to Chinese education.

There are several factors influencing retention. The reasons for university staff quit their jobs due to both internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are something like staff's salary, benefits, their leaders' leading styles and working surroundings. External factors are macroeconomics, industry cycles and external job opportunities etc. Because of the tense market competition, human resources mobility is more active than that in the previous years. Many university staff also

hope to pursue better lives and income as reasons to leave universities. However, from the current research, scholars pay more attention to the effect of the retention policy itself or the rationality of the university policy, and there are relatively few studies on the relationship between the retention policy and the excellent teachers of the university. Based on this, this paper takes this as the research object to further understand the impact of university retention policy on teachers' minds, and provide references for universities to better retain talents.

## 2. Research Design

The study will also compare the incidence of psychological problems among lecturers of different genders, ages and professional titles to delineate the distribution of psychological problems among this group. This will help us understand the differences and trends in psychological problems in different populations and provide a basis for targeted interventions and support measures.

Based on various factors and college teachers' mental health and professional identity, four basic hypotheses are formed in this study. Hypothesis 1: The external environment is positively correlated with the retention intention of college teachers. Hypothesis 2: College teachers' identity awareness is negatively correlated with their mental health. Hypothesis 3: The internal management environment of colleges and universities is positively correlated with the retention intention of college teachers. Hypothesis 4: There is a positive correlation between personal career planning and teachers' mental health.

In order to deeply understand the factors affecting the retention of university lecturers, this study will use the SCL-90 total average score obtained by the survey as the dependent variable for logistic regression analysis. By studying the correlation between the independent variables in the self-made questionnaire, we will be able to identify the key factors influencing the retention of university lecturers. These factors may include work pressure, life pressure, social support and other aspects, which have an important impact on lecturers' mental health and career satisfaction.

Through this study, we will provide strong data support for the prevention and management of lecturers' mental health problems. The analysis and interpretation of the results will help to reveal the root causes of lecturers' mental health problems, and provide scientific basis for the formulation of measures to improve lecturers' working environment, provide mental health support and training, so as to promote lecturers' job satisfaction and school development.

### 3. Population and Sampling

This study adopts the method of random sampling, lecturers from three universities in Yunnan Province (including Yunnan University, Yunnan Normal University and Yunnan Agricultural University) are selected as research objects, and data are collected through online questionnaire survey. To ensure the breadth and representativeness of the sample, seven online surveys were conducted to cover different time periods and teacher groups. In addition to factors related to social identity and separation models, the mental health of college teachers may also be affected by the demographic characteristics of college teachers, such as gender, age, professional title, teaching experience, etc. Therefore, these four variables are used as control variables, among which, gender is measured by two options of men and women, age is measured by five options of 25 years old and below, 26-30 years old, 31-40 years old, 41-50 years old, and over 50 years old, education is measured by five options of college or less, junior college, bachelor's degree, master, and doctor, and working years are measured by 5 options of 3 years and below, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, and more than 15 years<sup>5</sup>; The title is measured by four options: teaching assistant, lecturer, associate professor and professor, and the influencing factors under the employee turnover model are mainly analyzed from the three perspectives of individual, organization and external environment. Select workplace flexibility, positive work environment, inadequate compensation, professional development opportunities several variables, measured using the maturity scale (Woods et al., 2015).

To determine the sample size for the study, the researcher employed the Slovin formula, which is a widely used method for calculating the minimum sample size required to estimate a statistic based on an acceptable margin of error. This formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where: n represents the sample size. N denotes the total population size. e represents the margin of error. N=300,e=0.05,during the whole investigation period, questionnaires were distributed through the China University Network and the China University Faculty Platform, and lecturers were actively invited to participate in and cooperate with our research. Thanks to the active participation of lecturers, we received a total of 150 questionnaires returned.

In the process of data screening and processing, these questionnaires were strictly examined and screened, and finally 150 valid questionnaires were determined. This high recovery rate reflects the lecturers' interest and willingness to participate in the study, as well as the importance they attach to mental health issues. We would like to thank lecturers for their support and participation, which will provide us with valuable research data to further deepen our understanding of lecturers' mental health status and influencing factors.s.

### 4. Survey Methods

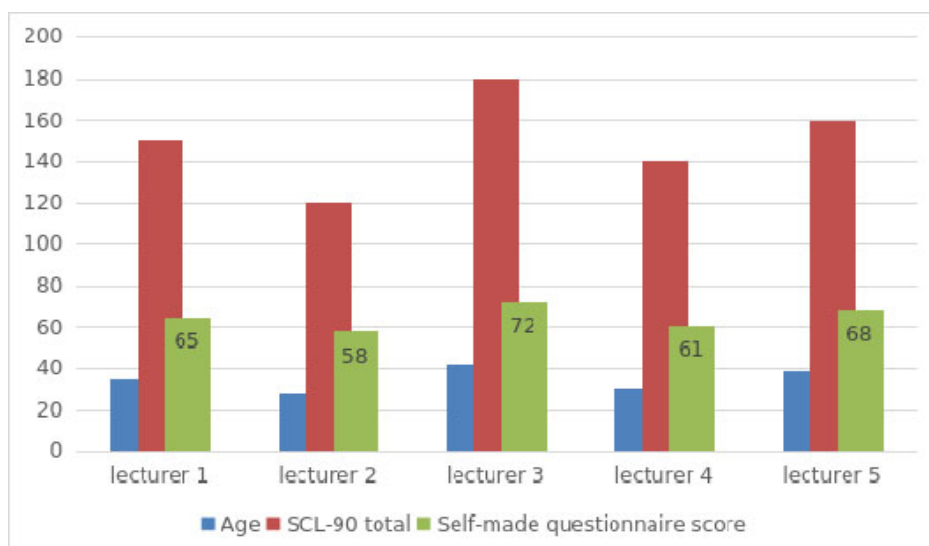
In order to facilitate lecturers to participate in the survey and collect accurate data, this study adopts the way of online survey for data collection.

Specifically, the research chooses China University Network and China University Faculty Platform as the distribution channels of online survey. These platforms have extensively covered the faculty groups of the three universities in Yunnan Province, providing a convenient mechanism for questionnaire distribution and collection.

By means of online survey, lecturers can fill in the questionnaire at their own convenient time and place, without being limited by the time and place of traditional paper survey. At the same time, online survey can also ensure the timeliness and accuracy of data, reduce the link of data entry and collation, and improve the quality and efficiency of data.

By Posting survey links on relevant platforms or sending electronic questionnaires, lecturers should be widely publicized and invited to participate in the survey. Through online survey tools, lecturers can easily access and fill out questionnaires and submit them to us for data analysis and research.

The online survey method not only improves the convenience and efficiency of the survey, but also maximizes the diversity and representativeness of the samples, so as to obtain more comprehensive and accurate research results. Figure 3-1 below shows the survey results of simulated data:



## 5. Findings

### A. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

**Table 1.** Distribution of academic qualifications and gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	54	36.0%
	Female	96	64.0%
Academic qualification	Bachelor	55	36.7%
	Master	52	34.7%
	Doctor	43	28.7%
	Total	150	100.0%

In this study, lecturers in Yunnan Province were selected as the main research samples. Among the samples collected, 54 were male and 96 were female. There were 55 people were Bachelor, 52 people were Master, 43 people were Doctor. .

The majority of the survey samples were male, accounting for 59.09%, and young teachers under the age of 30 accounted for 56.82%. According to the educational background of the samples, there are both teachers with high degrees such as doctor's degree and master's degree, and veteran teachers with college degree or below, but the proportion of teachers with high education is about 37.5%. It can be seen that with the continuous improvement of modern teaching requirements, more and more teachers have further improved their history.

The overall sample situation is identical with the actual situation of college teachers, and the appearance has strong representation. Moreover, in the subsequent validation process, it was again proved that the samples had strong validity, which met the needs of this analysis.

### B.FINDINGS OF THE RESARCH OBJECTIVE 1

The result of this study is to answer the first research question which is to know definitely the level of retention strategy practice management. To give a clear picture, descriptive analysis that involving the mean and standard deviation was carried out as in Table4.2 below. Research Question 1: What is the level of retention strategy practice management?

**Table 2.** Mean value and standard deviation of the level of retention strategy practice management

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
. Workplace flexibility	3.329	1.014	Medium level
.Positive work environment	3.193	0.956	Medium level
.Professional development opportunities	3.327	1.054	Medium level
.Adequate compensation	3.503	0.994	Medium level

The result of this study is to answer the second research question which is to know certainly the level of mental health. To give clearer picture, descriptive analysis involving mean

and standard deviation carried out as shown in Table 3.

Research Question 2: What is the level of mental health?

**Table 3.** Mean value and standard deviation of the Mental Health

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
C1.Job satisfaction	3.315	0.240	Medium level
C2.Reduced absenteeism	3.068	0.630	Medium level
C3.Low employee turnover	2.953	0.685	Low level
Mental Health	3.11	1.034	Medium level

**Table 4.** Job Satisfaction

Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
1.I am satisfied with my professional ability for doing my job.	150	2.000	3.000	2.567	0.497	3.000
2.I am satisfied with the cooperation I receive from school management team.	150	3.000	4.000	3.553	0.499	4.000
3.I think the work is interesting and I enjoy doing it.	150	3.000	4.000	3.560	0.498	4.000
4.I am very satisfied with my current salary	150	3.000	4.000	3.580	0.495	4.000

**Table 5.** Reduced absenteeism

Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
1.I am willing to work overtime for some certain work.	150	1.000	5.000	3.073	1.311	3.000
2.I don't ask for leave from my work very often.	150	1.000	5.000	3.153	1.370	3.000
3.I get paid on sick days or other leaves	150	1.000	6.000	2.967	1.407	3.000
4.My faculty set clear attendance policies with incentives.	150	1.000	5.000	3.080	1.308	3.000

**Table 6.** Low employee turnover

Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Median
1.I want to work in this university till I get retired.	150	1.000	5.000	2.927	1.347	3.000
2.I am not worried about being fired one day.	150	1.000	5.000	2.953	1.494	3.000
3.I don't want to change my job.	150	1.000	6.000	3.000	1.395	3.000
4.I am not worried about being replaced by other young colleagues.	150	1.000	5.000	2.933	1.408	3.000

The level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on academic qualifications

**Table 7.** ANOVA

	Academic qualification is (Mean±Std. Deviation)			F	p
	Bachelor (n=55)	Master (n=52)	Doctor(n=43)		
Mental health	3.25±1.20	3.47±0.96	3.56±0.87	1.232	0.295

As can be seen from the above table, one-way ANOVA is used to study the difference in the level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on academic qualifications, it can be seen from the above table: academic qualification does not show significance for mental health ( $p>0.05$ ), means there is no significant difference in the level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on academic qualifications.

In summary,  $H_01$  is accepted because academic qualification does not show significance for mental health ( $p=0.295>0.05$ ), so there is no significant difference in the level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on academic qualifications.

The level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on gender.

**Table 8.** Independent t test

	Gender (Mean±Std. Deviation)		t	p
	Female (n=54)	Male(n=96)		
Mental health	2.28±0.66	4.05±0.53	-16.821	0.000

From the above table, it can be seen that the t-test is used to study the difference in the level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on gender. Different gender showed significance for mental health ( $P<0.05$ ), which means that there is significant difference in the level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on gender. The specific analysis shows that:

In summary,  $H_02$  is failed to be accepted because different gender showed significance for mental health ( $P=0.000<0.05$ ), Different gender showed a significance of 0.01 for mental health ( $t=-16.821$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), and the specific comparison difference showed that the mean value of "female" (2.28) was significantly lower than that of "male" (4.05), so there is significant difference in the level of mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China based on gender.

The relationship between retention strategy practice management and mental health

The purpose of this section is to understand the relationship between relationship between retention strategy practice management and mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China. In this study, the relationship between the existing variables studied and observed based on the value of  $p<0.05$  was investigated.

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between retention strategy practice management and mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China?

$H_03$ : There is no significant relationship between retention strategy practice management and mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China.

The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is a value measuring the strength of the relationship between variables. Based on this study, the ( $r$ ) value explains the relationship between retention strategy practice management and mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China. The results of the Pearson Correlation analysis are displayed in Table 9.

**Table 9.**

Correlation (r)	Level
0.00 - 0.19	Very weak
0.20 - 0.39	weak
0.40 - 0.59	Medium
0.60 - 0.79	strong
0.80 - 1.00	Very strong

**Table 10. Pearson Correlation**

		mental health	Workplace flexibility	Positive work environment	Professional development opportunities	Adequate compensation
mental health	Coefficient	1				
	p value	-				
Workplace flexibility	Coefficient	0.529	1			
	p value	0.000	-			
Positive work environment	Coefficient	0.642	0.485	1		
	p value	0.000	0.000	-		
Professional development opportunities	Coefficient	0.747	0.454	0.513	1	
	p value	0.000	0.000	0.000	-	
Adequate compensation	Coefficient	0.464	0.367	0.497	0.352	1
	p value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-

**Pearson Correlation**

		Pearson Correlation	Retention strategy practice management
mental health		0.782	
	p value	0.000	
	N	150	

As can be seen from the above table, correlation analysis is used to study the correlation between retention strategy practice management and mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China, and Pearson correlation coefficients are used to represent the strength of the correlation. The correlation coefficient between retention strategy practice management and mental health was 0.782, and showed a significance of 0.01, indicating that there was a significant positive correlation between retention practice and mental health.

The specific analysis shows that: mental health and Workplace flexibility, Positive work environment, Professional development opportunities. The correlation coefficients were 0.529, 0.642, 0.747, and 0.464, respectively, and the correlation coefficients were all greater than 0, which meant that mental health and Workplace flexibility, Positive work environment, Professional development opportunities, There was a positive correlation between the four items of adequate compensation.

In summary, Ho3 is failed to be accepted because the correlation coefficients were all greater than 0, so there is significant relationship between retention strategy practice management and mental health among University staff in Yunnan Province, China.

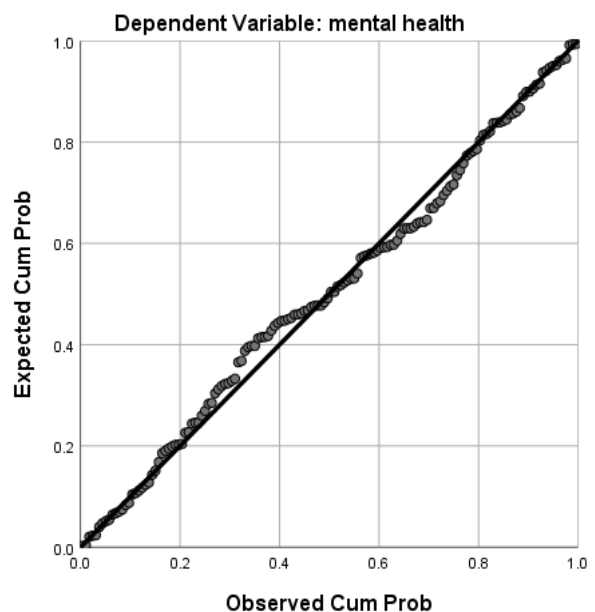
The influence of retention strategy practice management on mental health

The result of this study is to answer the fourth research question which is "Is there an influence of retention strategy practice management on mental health?". Multiple regression analysis used to answer this research question. Before multiple analysis was conducted, this study takes into account several conditions for the implementation of multiple analysis namely determine the distribution of data is normal, the existence of multicollinearity .

These assumptions can be checked by examining the plot table. According to Pallant (2005) and Hair et al. (2006)

equality of variance test and normality test as well aspects of coloniality are also carried out according to the specified method normal probability and scatter plot. To ensure and confirm the data distribution is normal and linear, the researcher refers to the graph scatter plot (residual scatter plot) and normal regression plot (normal regression plot) from the sub program, linear regression; plots' found in the program SPSS. In order to enable this multiple analysis to be carried out, the researcher needs to entering all the independent variables into the regression equation. Through this multiple regression analysis, the researcher can determine the contribution of the variance of dependent variables involved by comparing their magnitudes.

**Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual**



**Table 11.** Influence of retention strategy practice management on mental health

	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
	Coefficients		Coefficients			VIF	Tolerance
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
Constant	0.003	0.222	-	0.016	0.988	-	-
. Workplace flexibility	0.131	0.058	0.129	2.252	0.026	1.441	0.694
.Positive work environment	0.283	0.068	0.262	4.192	0.000	1.723	0.580
.Professional development opportunities	0.508	0.057	0.518	8.940	0.000	1.478	0.677
.Adequate compensation	0.108	0.058	0.104	1.861	0.065	1.377	0.726
R Square				0.671			
Adjusted R Square				0.662			
F				F (4,145)=73.970,p=0.000			
Durbin-Watson				2.135			

Dependent Variable: Mental health

## 6. Conclusion

To sum up, the continuous loss of high-quality talents is the current management of colleges and universities. Facing a practical problem, colleges and universities should be combined with their own actual situation to develop specific strategies to absorb and retain high-quality talents. To create an academic atmosphere which can be implemented, and at any time according to the changes in the actual needs of high-quality talents and for a high-quality talent, he is eager to be able to adjust and optimize in an advocacy academic liked islike.

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