



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



A few thoughts on the transition period of pension insurance reform on the personnel management work of universities in China

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International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2024, 12(02), 843–847

Publication history: Received on 10 June 2024; revised on 15 July 2024; accepted on 18 July 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2024.12.2.1319>

Abstract

Pension insurance, as one of the basic social security, is directly related to the personal interests of university staff, and is widely concerned by the staff. In the institutional merging pension insurance background, the insurance system changes to the college personnel management work has brought great impact and challenges. This paper discusses the challenges faced by the personnel management of universities in the context of the reform of pension insurance for institutions and puts forward corresponding optimization strategies to enhance the effectiveness of personnel management, thereby safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of teaching staff and promoting the benign development of universities.

Keywords: Institutions; Universities; Personnel Management; Pension Insurance

1. Introduction

Since October 2014, according to the Decision of the State Council on the Reform of the Pension Insurance System for the Staff of Organizations and Institutions, the non-contributory pension system has officially quit the arena of history. [1] China's pension security system began to reform from a "dual-track system" to a merging system. **Error! Reference source not found.** Universities, as special institutions, are unique in the gathering of talent and knowledge. The reform of the pension insurance system will have a key impact on the personnel management system. **Error! Reference source not found.** This paper discusses the challenges faced by the personnel management of universities in endowment insurance system reform for institutions and puts forward corresponding optimization strategies to enhance the effectiveness of personnel management, thereby safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of teaching staff and promoting the sound development of universities.

2. Analysis

2.1. Development history and current status of the university pension insurance system

The State Council legally established the retirement pension system for institutions in 1978 with the Interim Measures on the Resettlement of Old, Weak, Sick, and Disabled Cadres. Individual employees were not liable for future pension risks. [4] China's Social Insurance Law, which went into effect in 2011, officially created the country's basic pension insurance program and specified that the State Council will create a separate pension insurance program specifically for institutional employees. [5] Universities publicly established a pension security model combining social orchestration and personal accounts in 2014, after the State Council's stated call for reform of the institutional staff pension insurance system.

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In particular, the public institution pension insurance system reform strongly emphasizes employee mobility, sustainability of development, and fairness of treatment. The primary goal of the reform is to make necessary adjustments to the current retirement security system and progressively create an independent pension insurance system with numerous reliable financing sources, multilevel protection, and socialized administration services. To guarantee a seamless transition, the reform employs a strategy that guarantees the following: the treatment of retired employees is unaffected; new employees can take advantage of fair retirement benefits; and employees who joined the workforce before and following the reform can also ensure a seamless transition and that their standard of care is not diminished. [5]

From the perspective of the historical development of the reform of the university retirement pension system, the pension-related policies of universities have been gradually transformed from relying on the comprehensive protection of the State and units to a multi-level protection and socialized pension insurance system. In the process of change, the pension treatment of university staff has gradually realized the balance of rights and obligations, i.e. the longer the number of years of contributions and the higher the amount of contributions, the more generous the retirement treatment enjoyed accordingly. Since the launch of the reform in October 2014, more than nine years have passed since then. At present, most universities in the Beijing area have completed the registration of participants and the collection of pension insurance funds, which marks the full establishment of the basic system of pension insurance for universities.

2.2. Impact of the pension reform on the Personnel Management System of higher education institution

Before the reform of the pension insurance system, the personnel management of universities had formed a set sound system, with clear provisions in many aspects such as personnel recruitment, job promotion, welfare treatment, etc., which has been maturely operated for many years, and has provided a stable and reliable environment for the career development of university staff. However, with the gradual deepening of the reform of the pension insurance system, the personnel system of universities will face profound changes, the impact of which will spread to all dimensions of personnel management, posing a serious challenge to the personnel system of universities.

2.3. Impact on the System of Personnel Placement

Attracting, educating, utilizing, and retaining talents are the core contents of the Personnel Management System of universities. The reform of the pension insurance system for institutions of higher education has brought about an impact on the above aspects, which is specifically manifested in the following:

First, the lack of stable expectations will significantly reduce the attractiveness of universities to talent. The high stability and security of the profession are the core attributes of universities that are indispensable for attracting a large number of talented people. Before the reform of the university retirement system to ensure that the retirement benefits of teachers and their positions, titles, and positions are closely related to the teachers in the service will be able to predict the future level of retirement benefits. [3] The system was a good way to predict the level of future retirement benefits while teachers were still in the profession. This predictability, controllability, and stability not only enhanced teachers' satisfaction during their working lives but also provided them with a solid guarantee for their future lives. When shifting to the uncertain corporate pension model, the risk of brain drain from universities increases dramatically. In addition to the unpredictable trend of change in the level of benefits, the talents also have greater doubts about whether the reform objectives can be achieved smoothly. [3] The risk of brain drain from universities has increased dramatically. As a result, the number of high-level talents choosing to work in universities will face the risk of a significant decrease once the high stability advantage of universities no longer exists.

Second, with the pension insurance reform, universities are faced with the challenge of dramatically increasing employment costs, forcing them to improve employment efficiency to maintain financial stability. After the reform, universities not only need to bear the burden of new pension insurance and occupational pension contributions, [3] but they also need to cope with additional expenditures on salary increases and other aspects, resulting in a sharp rise in employment costs. This has brought great challenges to the financial pressure on universities and forced them to review the employment mechanism and take effective measures to improve the efficiency of employment. Therefore, universities urgently need to solve a series of problems related to personnel management, such as clarifying job responsibilities, refining job responsibilities, and streamlining the teaching staff.

Thirdly, the shackles of talent mobility have been broken, which to a certain extent has exacerbated the risk of brain drain from universities. Prior to the reform, universities and enterprises implemented different retirement pension systems, resulting in the risk of loss of benefits when personnel moved between the two. If a university staff member moves to an enterprise, his or her years of work in the university are usually only considered as payment years, and his or her personal account pension accumulation will not be counted. Although this "mobility barrier" restricts the free

movement of talent to a certain extent, it provides stability for universities and can effectively prevent the excessive loss of high-level talent.

Admittedly, with the merger of the pension insurance system, the mobility barriers between enterprises and institutions have been broken, and the mobility of talents has become freer, which, on the one hand, helps universities to attract and recruit excellent talents from the industry and enterprises, and alleviate the shortage of full-time teachers. [6] On the other hand, the staff of universities can choose to leave universities more flexibly and develop in other enterprises, which intensifies the competitive situation of universities in the talent market. universities need to make efforts to improve their competitiveness through other aspects to attract and retain excellent talents in order to maintain and improve their academic and scientific research level.

2.4. Implications for preparation management

Most universities use establishment management, mainly within the establishment, but will recruit a small number of non-staff personnel when there is a shortage of staff. The positions of non-staff personnel are widely distributed among full-time teachers, administrative management, teaching support or logistics, etc. Although equal pay for equal work has been implemented, and the proportion of individual and unit pension insurance contributions is the same, there is still a difference in pension treatment. Taking central universities as an example: firstly, the pension insurance affairs of staff members are managed by the Pension Insurance Management Center of State Organs, while the pension insurance of non-staff members is handled by local agencies. In addition, after the reform of the pension insurance system, staff members are also required to participate in the occupational pension plan, while non-staff members are not included in the system. The difference in treatment between the two is not only reflected in the period of service but will also continue after retirement, which is not conducive to social equity and will increase the mobility of non-staff personnel.

3. Conclusions and suggestions

Although the reform of the pension insurance system of institutions of higher education has brought great challenges to the Personnel Management System of universities, it has also played a key role in promoting the personnel system of universities to more efficient management of transformational change. To realize the high-quality and high-level development of higher education, universities must accelerate the reform of personnel management work and continuously improve the content of personnel management to adapt to new situations and requirements.

3.1. Balancing the rights and obligations of personnel and opening up promotion channels for non-staff personnel

Nowadays, staff employment in universities is no longer confined to establishment management, which means that how to revitalize existing human resources has become an urgent priority for universities to consider. One of the keys is how to incentivize staff inside and outside the establishment, and how to balance their entitlements in terms of pension insurance and other relevant aspects.

In addition to material incentives, universities should formulate targeted welfare programs, such as on-the-job training, supplemental medical care, and other programs according to the different positions and career stages of the faculty members, and at the same time give incentives to the faculty members from time to time to stimulate their work motivation and achieve the effect of retaining talents. Such a welfare program not only enhances the job satisfaction of faculty and staff but also strengthens their sense of belonging and loyalty to the university.

For non-staff personnel, universities can consider opening up multi-level career paths for them, solving the corresponding development problems in salary management, job promotion, and title evaluation, and gradually establishing an enterprise annuity system. This will help to narrow the gap between the staff inside and outside the establishment in the retirement treatment, enhance the sense of identity, happiness, and sense of belonging of the non-staff personnel, stabilize the teaching staff team, and mobilize the staff's enthusiasm for work.

3.2. Optimizing the mechanism for recruiting candidates and improving their attractiveness

Before the reform, universities relied mainly on the high stability of development to attract talents. However, after the reform, as this expectation of stability is broken, the talent introduction mechanism of universities has ushered in new challenges. Universities urgently need to improve the selection mechanism, broaden the selection channel, and absorb highly sophisticated talents in various fields in a more flexible and diversified way and channel.

For the high-precision talents in the industry, universities can adopt flexible introduction, team introduction, special professors, and other ways to strengthen the top-level design of talent work and intensify the strength of talent echelon construction. For the introduction of specialized talents, it is necessary to enhance the communication and cooperation between schools and enterprises through school-enterprise cooperation and industry-teaching fusion, so as to introduce specialized and technical talents into the faculty of universities. In addition, we should improve the postdoctoral management system and mechanism, optimize the recruitment method, improve the salary and treatment, improve the management mechanism, stimulate the vitality of postdoctoral scientific research, incorporate the construction of postdoctoral team into the overall planning of the talent team construction of universities, and insist on the combination of cultivation and introduction while attracting talents.

Universities can make use of their advantages to optimize the selection mechanism by taking multiple measures in terms of both software and hardware. In terms of hardware, they can raise the level of remuneration packages for key positions and adopt a flexible and more incentive-based remuneration system to attract high-level talents. First, the establishment of a performance pay remuneration system linked to work performance and matching the category of talents. On the basis of further standardizing school allowances, improve the performance pay system, including basic performance pay and incentive performance pay. The allocation of basic performance pay emphasizes the position and responsibility, and is tilted to the first-line teaching staff. The incentive performance pay allocation is based on the secondary units, and consideration is given to retaining the autonomy of the teaching and research units in the incentive performance allocation, and giving full play to the subjective initiative of the research units; the second is to innovate the pay incentive mechanism. Improve the year-end incentive performance system and "special contribution award" performance incentive system in universities, break the egalitarian distribution method, and highlight the incentive role of performance. Through flexible and diverse forms of remuneration, such as an annual salary system and agreement salary, the task standards and corresponding remuneration levels in line with the characteristics of the research field of the talents are formulated in a targeted manner, so as to realize an accurate match between the task and the remuneration.

On the software side, the attractiveness of selected positions can be enhanced through measures such as evaluation of professional titles, academic vacations, visiting scholars, resigning entrepreneurship, and the establishment of project research teams, to achieve the effect of attracting and retaining talents.

3.3. Optimization of internal organizational structure and improved utilization of available resources

Through the innovation of the personnel system, universities are gradually realizing the transformation from traditional personnel management to modern human resources management and development. In the process of this transformation, universities are focusing on refining job responsibilities, clarifying the direction of teachers' development, improving the efficiency of hiring, and saving the cost of hiring to some extent.

First of all, universities should strengthen the refinement of job responsibilities to ensure that every employee clearly understands his or her job responsibilities and closely integrates them with the development goals of universities. At the same time, focusing on the development needs of teachers, constructing a support service system, deepening the reform of talent training mechanism, providing teachers with a clearer career promotion path, and motivating them to actively engage in teaching and scientific research work.

Secondly, universities are actively strengthening relevant training for their staff to enhance the professionalism of their management faculty. Through targeted training and learning, university staff will be better adapted to the needs of university management, and work efficiency and service quality will be enhanced.

In addition, universities should combine the actual positions of teaching staff with a separate assessment, and implement a full-coverage assessment scope and a more open and fair assessment method. Such an assessment mechanism is not only able to objectively assess the performance of the staff, but also able to motivate staff to be proactive and promote the enhancement of work efficiency.

Finally, the corresponding quantitative accountability system will be sound and perfect, the unified implementation of standardized management, to ensure that the personnel system is rigidly enforced, to achieve the maximum use of existing school resources, and to create more value with limited resources. Through these reforms and innovative initiatives, universities will be able to better adapt to the development needs of the times and promote the sustainable development and progress of schools.

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