Journal of Education, Teaching and Social Studies
ISSN 2642-2336 (Print) ISSN 2642-2328 (Online)
Vol. 8, No. 1, 2026
www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/jetss

Original Paper

Institutional Control and Defensive Reconstruction: A Study on the Time Allocation of University Faculty under the "Up-or-Out" System

Yinqi Wang

Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China

Received: February 6, 2026 Accepted: March 9, 2026 Online Published: March 17, 2026

doi:10.22158/jetss.v8n1p116 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jetss.v8n1p116

Abstract

As a key measure of personnel reform, the faculty appointment system—particularly the "Up-or-Out" policy—has influenced the professional state and time-allocation logic of teachers. Based on New Institutional-ism and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, this paper examines the economic motivation of this institutional evolution and its micro-effects through interviews with six young faculty members from different universities. The study finds that as a contractual arrangement to solve the principal-agent problem, this system has improved the efficiency of scientific output in the short term through screening mechanisms. However, in localized practice, it has generated alienation due to strong administrative logic. Through mechanisms such as temporal discipline and market logic, the system turns teachers' time from autonomous resources into passive tools," forcing them to form a defensive strategy. This presents a structural imbalance emphasizing research over teaching and short-term gains over long-term goals. Under management characterized by high demands and low resources, teachers face the deprivation of time sovereignty, falling into time poverty and professional burnout. The article proposes a shift from unidirectional screening to bidirectional empowerment. This involves optimizing long-cycle assessment to match the scientific laws, establishing a diversified system to respect individual differences, and improving systemic resource supply to break the high demand and low resource gap, thereby promoting the sustainable development of the academic ecosystem.

Keywords

Appointment System, Up-or-Out, Time Allocation, JD-R Model

1. Problem Statement and the Origins of the "Up-or-Out" System

The “Up-or-Out” system originated in the tenure system of American universities, with its early form traceable to the reform of junior faculty tenure at Harvard University in 1716. Before the 17th century, university teachers in the United States generally had no term limits; essentially, all teachers held life tenure. In 1716, Harvard reformed the tenure of junior faculty by introducing a 3-year fixed-term contract. Upon expiration, renewal was decided based on performance, without giving a reason. Subsequently, Harvard stipulated a maximum term limit of 8 years for teaching assistants while retaining life tenure for professors, marking the origin of the modern university “Up-or-Out” system. Since then, the system has gradually matured, becoming a standard component of the "tenure-track" system universally adopted by American universities.

In China, the construction of university faculty teams is a critical issue in higher education reform and a key aspect for universities seeking to enhance their reputation and influence. Consequently, universities have undertaken numerous personnel reforms to improve faculty quality, leading to the introduction of the "Up-or-Out" system from the United States. The original intention of introducing this system in Chinese universities was to break the "iron rice bowl" (guaranteed job) of the university teaching profession, introduce competition mechanisms into faculty appointment, and change the situation of status rigidity where faculty could "move up but not down, enter but not exit."

In 1993, Tsinghua University took the lead in proposing an “Up-or-Out” implementation plan and launched pilots in some departments. Subsequently, other Chinese universities carried out a series of reforms on personnel systems, experiencing the developmental stages of life tenure of position, unit ownership of talent and separation of evaluation and appointment. Currently, a faculty appointment system marked by the tenure track has formed. The “Up-or-Out” system has gradually taken shape, becoming a weed-out policy for universities to improve faculty teams and management performance.

In particular, the “Double-First Class” initiative issued by the State Council in 2015 aimed to build a certain number of world-class universities and disciplines by 2020, and ultimately build China into a world higher education power by 2050. This initiative further intensified competition among universities and established performance evaluation mechanisms related to university appointment systems. Various performance assessment and incentive policies were introduced for different tasks, such as the “3+3” assessment or six-year review cycles, to evaluate teaching, research, and social service quality. Under the “Up-or-Out” system, teachers usually need to achieve a series of tasks within the contract period, such as the number of published papers, the number of research projects, and teaching evaluation scores. The benefits brought by academic research projects have prompted universities to continuously emphasize quantitative standards for research output (e.g., paper publication level, quantity, project level). These goals are usually preset and evaluated at the end of the contract period. If teachers fail to achieve these goals, they face the risk of losing their jobs.

The common practice of “Up-or-Out” involves new teachers signing labor contracts in the form of retainer contract upon entry. Within the agreed employment term (generally two terms, each lasting

three years), those who complete the prescribed assessment indicators and pass the assessment can obtain long-term employment. Those who fail are not re-employed or are transferred to non-teaching positions.

While domestic universities borrow the design purpose from Western countries, there are significant differences in implementation. The US system is rooted in university autonomy and supportive environments, providing strong resource support. In contrast, the implementation in China presents characteristics of "administrative logic" and lacks a systematic design. Overall, the assessment orientation is divided into quantitative indicators and academic evaluation. This institutional design transforms vague output into rigid deadlines and numbers, turning external pressure into survival anxiety, forcing teachers to make time decisions that conform to the assessment within a limited window.

2. The Economic Logic: Efficiency and Distortion

The systemic change in building faculty teams in Chinese universities is essentially an economic experiment aimed at pursuing maximum efficiency with limited resources. From the perspective of macro-institutional evolution, this reform is not an isolated administrative order but the product of the combined action of administrative logic and market logic within the field of higher education.

From an economic perspective, this process represents a leap from identity management to position management. Driven by government rankings, universities compete in a "tournament" for resources. To succeed in this zero-sum game, universities must reconstruct their educational function. As the core factor of production, the faculty becomes the target of reform. Thus, the "Up-or-Out" system has been introduced as a key tool to screen high-quality human capital. Its fundamental purpose is to break guaranteed employment and build a talent flow mechanism, thereby solving the problems of resource mismatch and low efficiency.

2.1 Contract Design for the Principal-Agent Problem

Analyzing the micro-level mechanism, this evolution reflects a core problem in management theory. Under the traditional life-tenure model, due to the lack of an effective exit mechanism and high monitoring costs, the faculty group is prone to bad behavior, manifested as hitchhiker or professional burnout. To correct this mismatch of rewards, universities introduced strong incentive contracts based on the tenure track system. This design has a significant filtering function, setting a series of high-threshold performance goals as necessary conditions for retention.

From the perspective of signaling theory, the information conveyed by this system to prospective and current teachers is that only individuals with abundant human capital reserves and outstanding research capabilities would dare to accept this high-risk contract. This achieves a stratification of the labor market, improving competitive efficiency to a certain extent. This institutional arrangement did show a "catfish effect" in its early stages. As existing research points out, it broke down nepotism and seniority barriers, enabling teachers' research output to achieve a leap in magnitude in the short term and

improving the organization's return on human capital (Li, F., 2023). Li, D. et al. (2025) demonstrated the effectiveness of the Up-or-Out system in promoting agent effort and increasing principal income based on a two-stage contract design.

Previous studies on the formation of "Up-or-Out" have mainly focused on aspects such as the types of institutional evolution and the actors promoting it, reflecting an evolution driven by the combination of internal institutional demand and external institutional supply (Xu & Sun, 2024). From the demand side, teachers and university administrators exhibit strong "economic man" attributes. The Up-or-Out system aims to maintain fairness in recruitment and improve recruitment efficiency and quality, thereby serving the interests of both individual teachers and the institution. From the supply side, the government has gradually issued policy documents such as the "Trial Regulations on Higher Education Teacher Duties" and the "Opinions on Trial Implementation of Personnel Appointment Systems in Institutions," providing institutional support. On this basis, various universities have released their own reform plans for teacher appointment and job promotion, piloting "Up-or-Out" plans by combining internal job demands, established quota numbers, and performance distribution ratios. This process reflects strong macro-control characteristics and administrative logic (Ren & Liu, L., 2021).

This system can promote the formation of a fair and just competitive environment in universities, reduce teacher burnout and inefficient behaviors of "promotion without exit" brought about by life tenure. It can not only motivate teachers to improve their own abilities and output, it also improves resource utilization efficiency (Huang, W., 2020). The job promotion mechanism is further standardized, the overall quality of the faculty is improved, and the number of published papers and research projects is further increased.

2.2 Institutional Alienation Under Multiple Logic

However, with the widespread implementation and deepening of the system, the assumption of perfect rationality underlying the system's promotion does not exist in reality. The professional activities of university teachers essentially include multiple dimensions such as teaching, research, and social service. Among them, research output has the characteristics of having high marginal returns (Liu W., 2022), while teaching and educational work are often difficult to observe and have lagged returns. Under the hard constraints of “Up-or-Out”, in order to pass the assessment within the limited contract period, rational individual teachers reallocate resources, tilting time and energy excessively toward research indicators, thus leading to the typical substitution effect of declining teaching quality (Guo & Yao, Y., 2020).

More seriously, this assessment system oriented by quantitative indicators has induced the effect—when a measure becomes the sole policy target, it ceases to be a good measure. To avoid the risk of dismissal, teachers tend to choose research topics that are quick and easy with low risk, abandoning high-risk explorations with significant original value. Although this strategic behavior meets the requirements of performance assessment for a time, from a long-term perspective, it suppresses the endogenous motivation of academic innovation and causes research output to tend

toward homogenization. This can be understood as the combined effect of implementation deviation and technical deconstruction reducing institutional resilience, leading to the alienation of the appointment system (Tan & Zhu, 2025). Simultaneously, excessive management of research performance results in a situation where some teachers, despite long-term investment in research, have insufficient output, creating a "heavy bottom" result (Cai & Zhang, X., 2021).

Furthermore, institutional change has path dependence. Under the "Up-or-Out" system, the management mode of universities pursuing quantitative standards like research results is further strengthened. Efficiency and utility are overemphasized, and teachers' work ability is closely linked to research results, ignoring teaching outcomes. Evaluation standards are singular and fail to consider teachers' emotional needs, and resource allocation itself is unequal. Li, F. (2024) also pointed out that the logic of academic evaluation in universities emphasizes academic result orientation; specifically, research results serve as important criteria for university rankings. Ultimately, the competitive effect and screening path of the system are further strengthened.

Controversies between quantity orientation and quality orientation have emerged. By overemphasizing individual research ability, university teachers often prioritize research to meet promotion requirements, gradually fostering a research-oriented atmosphere. Alienation occurs not only in the practice of the system; in the process of emphasizing efficiency and benefit, the strong managerial characteristics of the Up-or-Out system also negatively impact the inherent academic and moral values of higher education (Lynch, 2015). Teachers' perceptions of and actions toward the system have turned negative. To meet assessment requirements, researchers are more likely to reduce innovative research and choose more robust, predictable topics, even if these topics are not aligned with their original interests or have lower academic significance (Tian & Jiang, S., 2022).

Further examining the labor process, we find that the expansion of academic capitalism is reshaping the survival state of teachers. Under the double squeeze of administrative power and market competition, university teachers are gradually converted into "research machines." As revealed by research, teachers face conflicts between cultural time, institutional time, and self-time. Although digital technology reduces information acquisition costs, it blurs the boundary between work and life, causing labor time to be indefinitely extended. In this high-intensity tournament competition, the relationship between peers shifts from cooperation to zero-sum games. Intense countdown pressure and peer pressure become the norm (Li, G. & Xu, G., 2021). This excessive competition not only leads to diminishing marginal utility in professional well-being but also triggers widespread burnout and health depletion (Wu, X., Wu, F., & Niu, Z., 2019; Chen, Lu, Zhou, Liao, & Li, 2025). From the perspective of human capital theory, this represents excessive depreciation of specific human capital. Although it boosts organizational performance in the short term, the negative externalities constitute significant implicit costs. Therefore, the current institutional evolution is at a critical juncture. The core challenge for institutional optimization is how to maintain incentive intensity while introducing risk-sharing mechanisms and multi-dimensional evaluation systems to correct market failures.

Current domestic literature on the "Up-or-Out" system mainly focuses on the trajectory of university appointment system reform and adaptive suggestions. Specifically, research on how the system can better adapt to the domestic environment is particularly relevant, as scholars recognize the uniqueness of China's context. Coupled with intensified competition, phenomena such as dismissal, excessive pressure, and academic burnout have become common. Understanding how to stimulate the incentive role and mitigate negative impacts has become a key direction for reform. Yan (2019) divided the reform into three stages: professional technical position appointment, post appointment, and labor contract appointment. He analyzed the characteristics and problems of each stage and pointed out the need to adjust value orientation, funding, contract management, salary distribution, and assessment systems. Xu, S. and Yu, L. (2024) elaborated on the functional alienation and resolution paths, pointing to the system's lack of emotional warmth, insufficient flexibility, and imperfect evaluation. Xu, H. (2022) further explained the problem of the single evaluation mechanism under the policy of separating evaluation and appointment. Summarizing existing research, it is evident that the functional alienation stems mainly from the neglect of teacher emotion and the imperfection of assessment mechanisms. Consequently, teachers' perceptions and behavioral responses deviate from the system's expected effects.

3. Teachers' Time Allocation Under Institutional Pressure

3.1 Literature Review on Factors Influencing Teacher Time Allocation

The concept of teacher time allocation has expanded with the development of university faculty functions. Early research equated university teachers' working time with classroom time. Later, researchers focused on teachers' working time from multiple angles, such as explicit and implicit aspects (e.g., time for grading and lesson preparation) and faculty functions (French, Allen, Miller, Kim, & Centeno, 2020). Most studies classify university teachers' working time according to their functional requirements: teaching (course instruction, preparation, organizing exams, guiding students, etc.), research (reading, writing papers, research projects, academic seminars, etc.), and service (professional consulting, reviewing journals, etc.) (Jung & Choi, 2022; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Vardi, 2009). Teachers assume different roles in different work tasks, facing conflicts between different responsibilities.

Significant differences exist based on individual characteristics. Many studies focus on gender differences. Zhu, Y. and He, G. (2014), based on survey data, found significant differences in time allocation patterns between male and female teachers. Female teachers generally have less total working time due to undertaking more housework and having longer sleep durations. In the choice between teaching and research, women tend to devote more time to teaching (Winslow, 2010). Additionally, women face more "work-family" constraints (Misra, Lundquist, & Templer, 2012). Furthermore, faculty time allocation varies across academic ranks and tenure stages. Guo and Yao (2020), based on CAP and APIKS surveys, found that professors and associate professors tend to invest

more time in research due to their richer experience and involvement in more projects (Shen, Gu, & Liu, X., 2011).

However, time allocation is also significantly influenced at the university level by institutional policies. For example, the "tenure system" influences teachers' choices of professional tasks through incentives (Link, Swann, & Bozeman, 2008). In recent years, administrators, hoping to enhance institutional reputation through publications, have introduced prescribed promotion standards and deadlines to motivate teachers to invest more time in research. Consequently, the incentive function has been transformed into the performance management logic of "Up-or-Out." Academic appointments increasingly emphasize quantitative standards under managerialism, affecting teacher behavior through pressure transmission. Thus, under intensified competitive pressure, negative behaviors such as professional burnout and reduced teaching time have emerged (Yan, 2018).

According to the Job Demands-Resources theory, teacher work engagement is related to supportive resources provided by the school and the social environment. Environmental pressure that "values research over teaching" leads to reduced time and emotional investment by teachers (Guo, J., Tang, & Lü, 2022; Liu, Z., 2013). Individual teachers perceive the incentives and pressures brought by the institutional environment and adjust their working time allocation accordingly. For instance, ranking pressure and administrative pressure (Leišytė, Enders, & De Boer, 2010) may force teachers to invest more time in research. Yan (2018) emphasizes that teachers' behavioral responses to the system manifest in two aspects: first, rational action for survival under institutional arrangements, such as investing in research time to meet higher performance indicators; second, flexible adjustment under rational coping, such as passive time investment to satisfy teachers' own ultimate pleasure and positive perception.

Under the discipline of the "Up-or-Out" system, teacher time allocation exhibits dual characteristics of passive adaptation and structural imbalance. The allocation of time to professional tasks is, to some extent, a behavioral choice made to adapt to the system. New Institutional-ism emphasizes that institutional operation is a system formed by the interaction of its internal elements. This perspective provides an important framework for analyzing the alienation of time allocation. The system constructs a set of academic professional norms centered on performative through the synergy of appointment mechanisms, assessment, incentives, and promotion paths. Specifically, the Up-or-Out system requires new teachers to complete specific assessment indicators within the agreed term, such as publishing a certain number of core journal papers, obtaining research projects, and undertaking teaching loads. This system emphasizes academic performative, aiming to optimize faculty structure but also creating a high-competition environment. New Institutional-ism also highlights the perception and action of individuals in response to their context under conditions of rational choice. The behavioral choices regarding time allocation thus exhibit rational adjustment. Teachers need to maximize research output within a limited time to pass the assessment. This pressure transmission mechanism profoundly reshapes the logic of time allocation (Zhang, W. & Zhang, M., 2020). From the perspective of New

Institutional-ism, teacher behavior is not only the result of institutional constraints but also active adaptation to the institutional environment.

3.2 Realistic: Behavioral Choices Under Institutional Pressure

This study conducted semi-structured interviews with six early-career teachers from different levels and types of universities between January and February 2026. The interviewees include teachers from universities in the East, provincial key universities, and institutions in the Central and Western regions, providing good representativeness. The interviews revolved around themes such as entry experiences, term assessment requirements, teaching and research tasks, institutional support, cooperative behavior, and career planning. All names and affiliations have been anonymized.

Table 1. Basic Information of Interviewees

ID	Gender	Region	Degree	Title	University Type	Interview Date
A1	Male	East	PhD	Lecturer	Provincial University	2026.1.21
A2	Female	Northeast	PhD	Assoc. Prof.	MOE Directly Administered (211)	2026.2.3
A3	Male	East	PhD	Assoc. Prof.	"Double First-Class" Univ.	2026.2.3
A4	Female	West	PhD	Lecturer	Provincial University	2026.2.5
A5	Male	West	PhD	Lecturer	Provincial University	2026.2.5
A6	Male	South	PhD	Lecturer	"Double First-Class" Univ. (985)	2026.1.23

The interviews show that while the forms of youth teacher appointment systems implemented by different universities vary, they are essentially prioritized by efficiency under economic logic. Viewed from Principal-Agent theory, all universities attempt to solve information asymmetry and monitoring cost problems through contract design, transforming teachers' academic labor into quantifiable and performance indicators. In practice, this institutional design has reshaped teachers' time allocation behavior through time limit settings, rigid constraints of quantitative indicators, property rights definitions, structural differences in resource supply, and the forced intervention of administrative logic.

3.2.1 Temporal Discipline: Setting Term Nodes and Teachers' Time Anxiety

Time is a core dimension of institutional design. From term length and assessment nodes to promotion deadlines, time parameters constitute the most direct tool of discipline. Contracts typically operate on a three-year or six-year cycle, establishing clear promotion milestones. Teachers must meet relevant conditions before these deadlines. Therefore, from the moment they are enrolled in the Up-or-Out system, teachers begin a countdown in their career trajectory. When indicator conditions are excessive, time anxiety becomes existential pressure. Consequently, teachers passively adjust their time management, mainly by continuously extending labor time. The diversification of task requirements

leads to multi-directional allocation, and the need to meet strict time limits compresses daily rest time into labor time, creating a vicious cycle.

Universities where the interviewees work generally adopt a "3+3" model (two terms, each lasting three years):

> "It's an employment contract, signed for 6 years straight. The task is an agreement every three years. Like I mentioned, 264 workload hours per year. Then there are project requirements, research and publication requirements, requirements for guiding students or competitions, and requirements for winning teaching awards yourself, that sort of thing." (A1)
>
> " At that time, there was no talk of 'Up-or-Out', but there was a six-year '3+3' assessment period because I joined right during the reform window. Now they use a full tenure-track system. I'm actually still on the old track." (A2)
>
> "But the 985 and 211 universities in Jiangsu implemented the '3+3' Up-or-Out quite early. Like back in 2019, they were already strictly enforcing it. It means within the first three-year term, you must reach the associate professor standard. By the second three-year term, you absolutely must be appointed as an associate professor. And the score for appointment... because there are many tracks, it refers to getting the formal establishment appointment." (A3)
>
> "But there is a term during the assessment, meaning what your assessment tasks look like within three years, although this assessment term policy was only released two or three years ago." (A5)
>
> "For assessment, it's a contract: 3 articles in 3 years. Two contracts mean 6 articles." (A6)

Although appointment forms differ, the institutional design generally presents a common characteristic of three-year cycles, gradually aligning with "Up-or-Out." The clarification of time limits directly determines survival pressure. Teachers must complete tasks within a limited window, forcing their time allocation to be framed by the assessment period.

In other words, the time structure of the term has become a tool of institutional discipline. The direct consequence of failing the term assessment is often demotion or dismissal, further increasing the intensity of the system's temporal discipline.

> "If you fail to complete one, your assessment might be basic qualified. If it's basic qualified... say you were an associate professor, they might hire you as a lecturer and sign a one-year contract to observe you again. If you still don't finish, you're fired directly."(A1)

Although formally a six-year contract, in practice, there is a risk of non-renewal at the interim stage:

> "If you are directly unqualified—maybe you failed two or three items in the three-year assessment—you won't be renewed. Even though the contract is for 6 years, they won't sign with you for the fourth year." (A1)

With the compression of the establishment (bianzhi) system, the elimination risk for non-establishment teachers has further expanded: "If you don't meet the standards in various aspects, you are fired directly, because there is no bianzhi to begin with." (A2)

Some universities have formed strict and frequent assessment cycle public announcements. These announcements heighten the stark contrast between passing and failing: "My university announces a batch every quarter, every three months. So, four times a year. It's directly divided into qualified and unqualified for the first term assessment. If unqualified, you're fired and you leave immediately." (A3)

uniquely, professors at some universities also participate in the term assessment elimination system, facing punitive measures for failure: "Because professors have term assessments, if the assessment in the year before the term ends is unqualified, they will be demoted to associate professor. Strictly speaking, demotion must be carried out." (A3)

This high-frequency, public assessment mechanism extends time pressure to the entire process of reaching standards. Teachers' time anxiety is continuously activated, and time allocation is forced into a "countdown" mode. As A1 stated: "Our current employment method feels just like a corporate job, like a labor contract. You get assessed every three years before signing. And giving only three years of space is actually very short. Including getting projects and publishing articles... sometimes the publication cycle alone takes two years, especially for Chinese publications, which is normal. So I feel, rather than this employment system, it would be better to give me 6 years, let me have a relatively long time to do research and teaching preparation." When the natural cycle of research output mismatches the assessment cycle set by the system, teachers can only adopt strategic behaviors within the limited time window to ensure the completion of quantitative indicators before the deadline.

3.2.2 Dual Logic: Deprivation of Time Autonomy Under Market and Administrative Logic

The alienation of teachers stems from the combined effects of administrative and market logics, leading to increased pressure—time pressure, competitive pressure, and health pressure. Under administrative logic, the "Up-or-Out" system requires individual promotion goals to be combined with organizational development goals (e.g., papers must list the university as affiliation) (Ren & Liu, L., 2024). Under market logic, the value of academic labor is manifested as "quality and quantity of papers first." University teachers labor as "knowledge workers" and "research machines" (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Worthington & Hodgson, 2005). Cultural time, institutional time, interaction time, and self-time conflict. Information technology blurs the boundary between life and work, creating "countdown pressure" (Li, Y., 2023). Furthermore, "promotion within tenure" standards intensify competition among peers. Excessive work demands reduce job well-being (Hu, Y. & Zhao, P., 2024) and may cause burnout and turnover intention (Metin Camgoz et al., 2016).

(1) Market Logic: Research-Oriented Time Skew and Crowding Out of Teaching Time Under Quantitative Assessment

Existing literature mainly discusses teacher behavior under the Up-or-Out system from the perspectives of research output, career development, and stress/burnout. It is evident that teachers invest more time in research, and research performance (quantity and quality of publications) is positively motivated (Nie, Guo, H., & Zhou, R., 2023; Yang, Cai, & Li, 2024; Ren, Y., & Zhao, 2020). However, young university teachers under direct assessment are more significantly constrained by institutional

evaluation standards (Huang, L. & Fan, 2015). Employment contracts increasingly feature quantitative indicators, transforming teachers' time labor into calculable performance units. While this improves human capital screening efficiency, it also enhances time pressure. Interview data shows young teachers sharing assessment requirements regarding teaching and research in their contracts:

Teaching assessment requirements mainly revolve around workload hours, using time compliance as a baseline condition, supplemented by quality requirements like teaching competition awards. The basic workload requirement is already high:

> "I compared notes... for example, also at a provincial university, a good friend of mine just busted his back to get promoted to associate professor. As a lecturer, he had to teach over 250 hours a year. That's a fourfold difference compared to others."(A1)

As titles rise, workload requirements increase:

> "Our teaching tasks have always been heavy. When young teachers first come, the workload is about 330 hours. Now it's dropped to 264 hours. One course is equivalent to 32 workload units. Associate professors have higher requirements... their workload is larger, about 330 hours." (A1)
>
> "To be appointed associate professor within two years, each secondary unit has prescribed workload hours for new teachers. For example, in our college, the requirement is to reach 288 hours within two years. This is relatively high for the whole school because our college currently undertakes the teaching tasks for Category X courses for the entire university." (A5)

Teaching also has quality requirements, with contracts stipulating objective indicators like teaching awards and student evaluations.

> "Winning teaching awards yourself... like the annual school teaching competition, teaching excellence awards based on student evaluation rankings, and teaching innovation awards." (A1)

Rigid teaching workload requirements present a clear characteristic of crowding out research time: "There's no time for research, or very rarely. Like us associate professors, we need 180 hours a year. Honestly, I think it's already very difficult. In a way, it's equivalent to three times the teaching load at my previous unit. It should be less." (A3)

Regarding research assessment, there is a universal characteristic of emphasizing both quantity and quality, with quality requirements being even stricter. This mainly manifests as requirements for project levels, first-author papers, and journal rankings, constituting the main source of assessment pressure for teachers.

> "The condition to settle as an associate professor within two years requires one CSSCI or SCI paper with this university as the first affiliation, plus participation in the top three of a municipal-level project." (A5)
>
> "For young teachers coming in here, they require two national-level projects within 6 years."

The interviewee mentioned that some teachers failed assessments due to failing to meet project level standards, reflecting the strictness of results recognition at the college level:

> "We have an associate professor who was assessed last year. He was the head of a sub-project for a major national project. During the assessment, he thought that would count as one national project. But the college didn't recognize it, and ended up giving him a 'basic qualified' rating." (A1)

Research assessment is directly linked to points, reinforcing its quantitative nature. "For research requirements, they calculate 'work points.' The minimum annual research score is 8 points. Projects are the big ones; a National Education Planning Office project is 120 points. But it's divided over each year. The total is 120, and we basically complete it over three years, so that's 40 points a year." (A2) Research requirements also increase over time: "You need a project at the Ministry of Education Humanities level or above, and then three articles. But for the three articles, for colleagues signing later contracts, they basically need to be C-journals (CSSCI) or main journals, or SSCI Q3 or above. It's actually been raised." (A2)

It is not just the black-and-white contract regulations; subsequent title evaluation requirements invisibly increase the degree of competition.

> "Regarding the standard for associate professor here... First, you must have 1 national project, then you must have 2 SSCI papers, and you must have 3 C-journal papers as first or sole author. Of course, teaching, education reform projects, teaching competitions—these are also mandatory. Since 2018 or 2019, CUMT has truly become 'Five-Only' [obsessed with five metrics]: projects, papers, awards, reform projects, and you must have teaching competitions." (A3)

> "But if it's Up-or-Out, you still have to get promoted, it's not just a regular assessment issue. Now in our faculty, without a national-level project, you basically can't go up, even if you meet the basic conditions. Because in the last two years, the number of approved projects has been good, and young people basically all have national projects, so it's truly strictly competitive." (A2)

Result recognition and teacher grading are even advanced to the doctoral period. This design internalizes academic competitive pressure ahead of time. "For new teacher recruitment... there's a basic requirement: first look at the publication quantity during your PhD with your doctoral unit as the first affiliation. They divide talent into three tiers. The first tier is four or more CSSCI or SCI papers, plus at least top-three participation in a provincial/ministerial level project. Next is three CSSCI or SCI papers—of course, as first author—that's the second tier. Then two or fewer... just normal PhD who got their diploma and degree, that's the third tier." (A5)

Additionally, all 6 interviewed teachers emphasized strict "First Author Recognition." "The school only recognizes first author. They have a tradition: unless it's a paper where a Northeast Normal University student is first author and you guided them, that can count. Otherwise, they only look at the first author. And because they now encourage publishing in SSCI, for that, corresponding author and first author both work." (A2) "For us, it's like this: the first author's unit must be this school." (A1) "During title evaluation, the article result must have you as the first author. Corresponding author doesn't seem to count. It's nice to have, icing on the cake, but generally reviews require you as first author and the first

unit to be yourself and Northwest Normal University." (A4) This requires young university teachers to strive for research dominance and clarify property rights in cooperation, inevitably emphasizing result-oriented time allocation when choosing research behaviors.

From the interview data, it is evident that quantitative assessment has become a universal feature of university appointment systems. The contradiction between rigid teaching hour requirements and the efficiency emphasis on research results plagues teachers' time choices. Under market logic, resource allocation also tilts toward research, forcing time allocation to submit to the efficiency goal of research output. "Before becoming a teacher, I thought teaching was a great thing... but after becoming a teacher, mostly, like in our applied research university, there is a research orientation. In many aspects, like resource allocation, it favors research projects and publications. So invisibly, you must have achievements in this area to establish yourself here. So time actually tilts more toward research." (A1)

But working time is limited, so teachers can only squeeze research time out of life time. "So sometimes when time allocation is framed, you only have 24 hours, so you have to move time from other places—move it from leisure time, family life time to do research. In big cities, there is another problem: commuting. For example, my workplace is far from where I live... a round trip is over two hours. So commuting is a big problem too." (A1)

Especially since research does not yield immediate rewards, this efficiency logic produces a significant substitution effect in teachers' time allocation. Universities, by tacitly permitting or even reinforcing this research-oriented effect in institutional design, essentially prioritize allocating teachers' limited time resources to research output that best boosts organizational rankings. When the marginal return on research significantly exceeds teaching investment, teachers inevitably reallocate time to the research field. Consequently, young teachers express a desire to extend research assessment cycles: "At least for research, don't test every 3 years, test every 6 years. The contracts are 6 years, why add two work agreements in between? These two work agreements require two national projects. For young teachers... didn't one of our teachers only get a project in the final year? You hope they finish in one or two years and then apply again, and have another in the third year? It's impossible. Because research has an output cycle... Teachers often say we are like farmers. If we don't plant and hoe now, there will be no output next year. We have to plant every year. It has a cycle, not immediate results like a daily task. Unlike teaching, where I finish the task by attending class. After writing a paper, there is a publication cycle." (A1)

(2) Administrative Logic: Mandatory Deprivation of Time Allocation Autonomy by Institutional Management

Administrative logic features power concentration and non-negotiable rules. Assessment indicators often reflect leadership will, ignoring teacher needs.

> "It is said that requirements in our college are particularly high because of our dean. Actually, it was okay when we first came. Later, the dean changed. The school gave him a very high salary package, so the targets given to him were also very heavy. It's said his annual salary is about 3

million. So the appointment system was played by him into something that feels like whipping us forward." (A1)

"The indicator setting of the appointment system should, I think, be discussed or negotiated by the teachers together, rather than being a kind of orientation by leaders or how they set it... It seems we have become people who help leaders complete these indicators." (A1)

Under the guidance of administrative logic, the mandatory crowding out by administrative affairs is also prevalent among new teachers.

"You have to teach, and sometimes there are administrative affairs, often meetings. I served as deputy department head before, so time was squeezed. I often had to run around for meetings. In the end, there was no time left every day to do research." (A1)

"In our whole university, only one or two colleges don't require new teachers to sit in the office (maintain office hours). From what I know, most colleges require office hours. They treat this year as a probation period. Because jobs are indeed hard to find these two years, everyone tacitly accepts this arranged year of administrative time. I feel this administrative time occupies our research significantly. Although you go to sit in the office for a day, actually, specifically for the party affairs I do, there is a lot of temporary work. And I think administrative thinking and research thinking are different; it occupies a lot of your time. Basically, you are very tired when you get home, and have no time to do research because there are various things the next day. You have to sit in the office from Monday to Friday, and even assist with some statistical work, working overtime. Basically, in the first year, there is no time to read literature. You are always in the office with a lot of things... so I think the pressure of administrative work is relatively high." (A4)

The adaptation process to administrative affairs also brings considerable pressure to young teachers:

"For me, a teacher who graduated from another school, the biggest pressure is administrative pressure, because you have to do it for a whole year. The things are very trivial... Like me doing this organizer role, I'm the only full-time teacher, no one guides me... So I think this institutional arrangement puts a lot of pressure on us." (A4)

A4’s colleague, A5, also observed the severe crowding out of teachers' time by administrative affairs from the side:

"They feel the overall workload is still quite large. And because proposal defenses are often arranged on weekends or holidays, they often work overtime. Because of some urgent workloads, A4 also often works overtime at night or on weekends." (A5)

Under administrative logic, institutional arrangements present obvious mandatory characteristics. This leads to the mandatory occupation of teachers' time allocation autonomy. Research time that should be freely allocated risks being occupied, and the difficulty of meeting term task standards increases accordingly. However, if the school can provide relatively flexible institutional assessment arrangements, it will significantly alleviate the plight and time pressure of young teachers.

> "In terms of personnel and assessment systems, it's not like the previous school demanding papers, projects, awards, reform topics, and competitions as mandatory options. It's a five-year first term, not three years, in the form of a point system. The implication is, if you are good at writing papers, you just publish papers every day. As long as you accumulate 900 points in five years, it's OK. The standard is 200 points for a national project, 200 for a provincial/ministerial award, 150 for a C-journal paper, 200 for JCR/SSCI Q1. For example, if someone is good at teaching, they can win teaching awards or invest in reform projects. You can also use projects to offset assessment requirements. So I think its flexibility and inclusiveness are stronger. I've been here for 1 year and 3 months, and I've already completed 1300 points, classifying as excellent for the first term. So I've finished five years' worth of work. I think this gives talent space to perform. So now I'm not panicked or rushed; I can leisurely do the things I want to do." (A3)

When freedom of time investment is respected, and teachers can allocate time according to their own career path choices, they are granted more time sovereignty. Time sovereignty implies expanded autonomy in academic exploration, which is beneficial for teachers' professional development.

3. Structural Stratification: Differences in Resource Supply Affect Time Utilization Efficiency

While assessment requirements are becoming stricter, resource supply shows significant differentiation. In some universities, lack of resource supply limits teachers' perceived growth, leading to an imbalance between effort and return. Some universities only provide initial research start-up funds: "the school gives new teachers a sum of research start-up fees... Aside from that, you have to rely on yourself." (A6) Support for project applications is often formalized: "The college or school has no support. It's nothing more than inviting experts to help us polish the proposal... There is nothing else." (A1)

There is also low efficiency in cultivation caused by low levels of student resources. "That's also very difficult. After all, the students' grades are what they are. Many of them don't do research anyway. Their ability plus willingness are not that strong. It's hard for me to lead students. I let them write English papers, S-journal papers, etc., but I can't push them (get them to move). Current students can't be pushed." (A1)

Furthermore, the lack of resource support for research directions relevant to the teacher leads to developmental confusion and consumptive time investment.

> "So after working for 4 years, I'm a bit lost, not knowing which college is better to go to. Leaders want me to stay in this college, but my students and my own research direction have no corresponding support here. These past few years have actually been quite torturous. In short, after so many years, I feel very exhausted. Currently, without a team, my students and I are working hard on our own, which is actually quite tiring. We need to do front-line field surveys. It might take four or five months to get a tiny bit of results, and the probability of failure is high. If I do it myself, it takes three or four months to get a little data, far from producing results. Then organizing and writing takes another half year to a year." (A6)

Conversely, in universities with ample resource supply, giving relevant supportive resources to young teachers during the term expands their academic autonomy and improves efficiency in meeting standards. Time pressure is reduced accordingly, and teachers' initiative for academic exploration is incentive.

"We joined a team led by our dean. There are about 13 people, with two associate professors as backbones and two full professors as leaders. The rest are all young PhD. Everyone is actually quite supportive of each other. Because we have another form called team assessment. For example, if I really can't complete it in three years, the team will share points with you." (A3) The team mode guides teachers to integrate into the discipline quickly, provides interdisciplinary cooperation opportunities, and offers team resources to buffer pressure when individuals encounter assessment difficulties. The institutional safety net enhances teachers' psychological security.

Some universities and colleges have even detailed teacher professional cultivation:

> "In terms of research... including the university's research management department, the vice president in charge, and the vice deans of various colleges in charge of business, they give systematic policy lectures and explanations. They also invite, for example, young teachers with good research results to share their achievements. Also, regarding project declaration experience, they invite experts from our school who participate in national project reviews to give us special tutoring on research project declaration forms. Additionally, combining with the annual declaration of various national research projects, the college will conduct topic selection guidance. For example, we might apply for projects in March this year, so we already held a project declaration guidance lecture before New Year's Day. Now they have asked us to submit our declaration forms. And yesterday we just held the first round of argumentation, where teachers in the college who have applied for major national projects in the past five years—and received support—gave us opinions and suggestions. Then we teachers applying also gave each other revision opinions. Following last year's process, it is expected that before our project application, we may conduct at least four to five rounds of argumentation and guidance." (A5)

This targeted, intensive time investment mode significantly improves the success rate of the faculty's project applications. "This year's teacher applications... are relatively high. As far as I know, young teachers who joined before last year can get at least a provincial-level project when settling their position in two years. That is, at the lowest level, everyone can get a topic. Above that, basically, they can all get them too." (A5)

Some teachers believe from a psychological perspective that this supportive policy provides psychological security. "I think the current policy seems supportive and beneficial to everyone, providing psychological security. Because as long as you actively complete this process and work hard in this direction, it counts as an assessment for you, and they don't deduct your money. I think it is a positive promotion for everyone." (A4)

Besides encouraging institutional design, salary incentives, as the most common and efficient method, play a significant role in alleviating teacher pressure and stimulating initiative.

> "In addition to that, there is another thing. If you publish a high-level paper this year, at least at the CSSCI level or above, it will be calculated in the allowance calculation next year. In addition, there are research achievement rewards. Separate from the allowance, the college will have special funds to reward research achievements, including your project declarations. For example, if you win a Ministry of Education Humanities and Social Sciences Youth Project in 2026, the college will also have a special reward at the end of this year or the beginning of next year." (A5)
>
> "There are supportive measures... For example, Ningbo University actually focuses on encouragement... Its encouragement is shown, for instance, in the first term assessment. Before 2023, lecturers needed to accumulate 300 points. A C-journal paper is 150 points. You publish two C-journal papers, and three years are easily settled. If you can get 500 points, there is a reward of 100,000 yuan for excellent assessment. Then if you are an associate professor, 900 points is qualified, 1200 points is excellent, with a 200,000 yuan reward for excellence." (A3)

This transparent pricing method combined with incentive measures enables teachers to form stable expectations for their career development. The sense of gain at the instrumental rationality level is significantly enhanced, reducing the dampening of enthusiasm by term assessment restrictions. Naturally, they can focus their energy on what they truly want to do. "I think this gives talent space to perform. So now I'm not panicked or rushed; I can leisurely do the things I want to do." (A3)

From the above comparison, differences in resource supply not only affect time utilization efficiency but also profoundly shape professional psychological state. In resource-poor environments, teachers fall into a survival mode where time is fragmented and transactional. In resource-rich environments, teachers obtain institutional time protection and can concentrate on high-value activities, forming a virtuous cycle. This confirms the core assertion of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model: when the system imposes high-intensity work demands, corresponding resource support is necessary; otherwise, teachers fall into an impairment path, with declining professional well-being and academic creativity.

4. Mechanism Deconstruction: An Analysis Based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

To reveal the micro-mechanism of institutional influence on teacher behavior, this paper uses the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. This model posits that the work environment contains two paths: "impairing job demands" and "motivating job resources." The interplay between them determines teachers' time allocation and survival strategies. The qualitative analysis shows that time allocation is influenced by two factors: "job demands" (assessment indicators, term limits, administrative affairs) and "job resources" (team support, training, salary). This chapter applies this model to analyze the mechanisms behind institutional logic and behavioral responses.

As a typical demand, the "Up-or-Out" system intensifies competitiveness. Strict deadlines create constant pressure, forcing teachers to focus on quantifiable indicators. Excessive pressure negatively impacts health and efficiency (Bao, W. & Wang, J., 2012). Specifically, the "promotion or dismissal" constraint forces teachers to extend labor time. Guo and Yao (2020) show that total working hours are rising, which is essentially a "time defense" against pressure. Ren and Liu (2021) explain that high demands negatively impact intrinsic drive. Additionally, the "research bias" exacerbates role conflicts, triggering burnout and unbalanced time allocation (Niu, F. & Zhang, Z., 2017). Harsh survival pressure forces teachers into "time anxiety" and fragmented allocation. Interviewees repeatedly stated they "have no time for research" and desired longer terms.

However, the impact of the institutional environment is not unilaterally suppressive; reasonable supportive resources can buffer time pressure. Yet, current "Up-or-Out" designs generally suffer from a structural shortfall characterized by "high demands and low resources." The support path in the JD-R model reveals the regulating role of resource supply on teacher behavior, including school resources, salary, training, job autonomy, and peer support. University teachers' work effort is externally motivated by treatment and benefits, satisfying their need for feedback. More promotion opportunities motivate greater effort and efficiency (Teng, Yu, H., Jiang, Y., Yang, Y., 2018). Psychological needs are closely related to intrinsic motivation. Factors such as psychological safety (Li, A., Wang, X., Xiong, G., Li, B., 2015; Dollard & Bakker, 2010), job security, prosocial motivation (Shin & Hur, 2021), and school/colleague support (Liang, 2020) are repeatedly emphasized. Stronger perceptions of security and recognition increase investment and performance. Additionally, organizational commitment affects dedication. Temporary employees, who show lower commitment due to insecurity, are particularly influenced (Hur, 2022). Interview data confirm that systematic training and incentives improve efficiency and autonomy.

Therefore, under the interaction of job demands and resources, the alienation of teacher time allocation can be alleviated through adjustments in institutional management. When job demands are too high and resource supply is insufficient, teachers tend to adopt time defense strategies: compressing teaching time to guarantee research output, abandoning cooperation to guarantee independent output, and choosing short-term, fast-paced projects to guarantee short-term compliance. While this strategy meets assessment requirements numerically, it sacrifices long-term academic accumulation and teaching quality. A1's description is telling: "Time actually tilts more toward research." Conversely, when job resources are sufficient, job demands of the same intensity can be effectively buffered, allowing teachers to allocate time more calmly. After receiving team support and benefiting from a flexible point system, A3 could "leisurely do the things I want to do," returning time from being a "tool of discipline" to an "autonomously controlled resource." Thus, it is necessary to determine reasonable teaching hours to alleviate the negative effects of an excessive emphasis on research (Li, Y., 2016), and institutional systems must coordinate the relationship between teaching and research systematically. The interview

data imply that we must break the prevalent "high demand-low resource" structural shortfall and establish a dynamic balance mechanism between job demands and job resources.

5. Conclusion and Policy Suggestions

5.1 Research Conclusion

Based on new-institutional theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, this study analyzed the evolutionary logic of the appointment system and its effect on teachers' time allocation through in-depth interviews with six young university teachers. The main findings are as follows:

Driven by efficiency logic, the "Up-or-Out" system reshapes teachers' time allocation behavior through multiple mechanisms, forming a "defensive reconstruction" strategy for time management. As a contract design to solve the principal-agent problem, the system improves research output efficiency in the short term through screening. However, in localized practice, alienation occurs due to excessively strong administrative logic. The study finds that through mechanisms such as temporal discipline, market and administrative logic, and differences in resource supply, the system alienates teachers' time from autonomously controlled academic resources into passive assessment tools. The logic of teachers' time allocation shifts from academic interest orientation to assessment coping orientation, presenting a systemic imbalance favoring research over teaching.

The alienation of teacher time allocation stems from the structural shortfall of "high demands-low resources"; the imbalance between job demands and job resources is the root of the system's negative effects. Using the JD-R model analysis, it is found that universities currently have a pervasive tendency to unilaterally reinforce job demands while neglecting job resource supply. In the dimension of job demands, assessment requirements constitute a high-intensity, high-pressure work environment, forcing teachers to continuously extend labor time, falling into the trap of "time poverty." In the dimension of job resources, the supply of supportive resources such as team support, systematic training, salary incentives, and psychological safety shows significant structural stratification. Teachers in resource-poor universities (e.g., A1, A6) fall into a low-efficiency mode of "fighting alone," while teachers in resource-rich universities (e.g., A3, A5) obtain "time protection." This stratification confirms the JD-R model's assertion: when job demands significantly exceed job resources, teachers inevitably fall into an impairment path, shifting time allocation from creative investment to survival coping.

The dynamic balance between job demands and job resources is the core goal of institutional optimization, and its realization depends on systemic institutional design. The JD-R model reveals that the effect of a system is not determined unilaterally by itself but by the configuration combination of job demands and job resources. When universities unilaterally reinforce demands while neglecting resources, the system inevitably leads to alienation; when universities systematically configure resources while imposing demands, the system may move toward a virtuous cycle. A4’s experience of

"psychological security" and the high project application success rate at A5's university both validate the institutional effect of dynamic balance.

5.2 Policy Suggestions

Optimize time evaluation dimensions and establish classified, stratified long-cycle assessment mechanisms. For teachers with different disciplinary attributes and career development stages, "one-size-fits-all" quantitative evaluation should be broken. Assessment cycles should be allocated combining research output cycles. It is suggested that universities extend the assessment cycle for young teachers in basic disciplines from 3 years to 5-6 years, giving them time to accumulate high-quality results. For teachers joining in the second half of the year, the first term can be appropriately extended to increase assessment flexibility. Simultaneously, drawing on the point system experience of A3's university, establish multi-dimensional evaluation weights, allowing teachers to choose the focus of time investment based on their own strengths and interests.

Streamline administrative affairs and non-academic burdens to protect young teachers' time investment. A4's experience of "sitting in the office for a year" reveals the severe crowding out of research time by administrative affairs. It is suggested that universities re-examine the rationality of the "office hours" system for new teachers, compressing it into short-term rotation to ensure young teachers have sufficient research start-up time. For all teachers, universities should systematically sort out non-academic affairs such as various meetings, inspections, and evaluations, establish a negative list, and clarify matters that must not occupy teachers' research time. Additionally, the commuting time issue mentioned by A1 deserves attention; universities can reduce teachers' time loss through flexible working systems and remote work support.

Strengthen institutional resource supply and build a systemic research support system. Establish a systemic support mechanism covering the entire process of research project declaration: organizing expert demonstration in the topic selection stage, providing multiple rounds of tutoring in the proposal writing stage, and matching research funds and team support after approval. Universities can also support academic leaders in forming academic teams with reasonable structures and complementary advantages, granting teams greater autonomy in fund use, personnel recruitment, and resource allocation, and exploring performance evaluation systems combining team assessment with individual assessment.

Establish negotiation mechanisms and feedback channels for institutional formulation. A4's mention of psychological security suggests that institutional design should pay attention to teachers' emotional needs. A1 pointed out that "indicator setting... should be discussed or negotiated by the teachers together." A3 emphasized that institutional design should "form a network structure, with a reasonable dialogue and negotiation mechanism between upper and lower levels." When formulating or revising term assessment systems, universities can establish normalized teacher participation mechanisms, listening extensively to front-line teachers' opinions through faculty congresses, academic committees, and young teacher symposiums. Institutional documents should be open and transparent, avoiding

randomness based on people or timing. For assessment disputes, smooth appeal channels should be established. A special assessment dispute handling committee should be set up, absorbing teacher representatives to ensure the fairness and justice of the assessment process. Only when teachers feel they are co-builders of the system rather than mere objects of discipline can their organizational commitment and professional identity be truly established.

In summary, the optimization direction of the "Up-or-Out" system needs to systematically improve the supply of job resources while maintaining necessary incentive intensity, moving the system from purely screening to empowering. Only when a dynamic balance is achieved between job demands and job resources can teachers' time return to being an autonomously controlled academic resource, enabling the sustainable development of the academic ecosystem. This is also the direction that future university personnel system reforms need to continuously explore.

References

Albert N. Link, Christopher A. Swann, & Barry Bozeman. (2007). A time allocation study of university faculty. *Economics of Education Review*, *27*(4), 363-374. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2007.04.002

Bao, W., & Wang, J. (2012). Pressure in the ivory tower: An empirical study on occupational stress and academic output of faculty in Chinese universities. *Peking University Education Review*, *10*(01), 124-138. https://doi.org/10.19355/j.cnki.1671-9468.2012.01.010

Cai, L., & Zhang, X. (2021). Research on "heavy bottom" in university research performance management and its governance. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, (07), 31-37. https://doi.org/10.13236/j.cnki.jshe.2021.07.005

Guo, H., & Yao, Y. (2020). Ten-year changes in the relationship between teaching and research work of faculty in research universities: Based on CAP and APIKS surveys. *China Higher Education Research*, (02), 77-84. https://doi.org/10.16298/j.cnki.1004-3667.2020.02.14

Guo, J., Tang, Z., & Lv, S. (2022). What factors influence the teaching devotion of university teachers in China: A hierarchical linear model analysis based on individual and environmental variables. *Research in Educational Development*, *42*(09), 57-70. https://doi.org/10.14121/j.cnki.1008-3855.2022.09.008

Hu, Y., & Zhao, P. (2024). How teaching and research working time affect university teachers' subjective well-being. *Beijing Social Sciences*, (08), 115-128. https://doi.org/10.13262/j.bjsshkxy.bjshkx.240810

Huang, L., & Fan, Z. (2015). The impact of "Up-or-Out" on teacher professional development and countermeasures. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, (06), 72-76. https://doi.org/10.13236/j.cnki.jshe.2015.06.021

Huang, W. (2020). An analysis of the pros and cons of the "Up-or-Out" institutional arrangement for university teachers. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, (6), 89-96.

https://doi.org/10.13236/j.cnki.jshe.2020.06.015

Hur Hyunkang. (2019). Job security matters: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the relationship between job security and work attitudes. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 1-31. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2019.3

Jerry A. Jacobs & Sarah E. Winslow. (2004). The academic life course, time pressures and gender inequality. *Community, Work & Family*, *7*(2), 143-161. https://doi.org/10.1080/1366880042000245443.

Jung Jung Kyu, & Choi Jae Young. (2022). Choice and allocation characteristics of faculty time in Korea: effects of tenure, research performance, and external shock. *Scientometrics*, *127*(5), 21-23. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11192-022-04320-X

Kimberly A. French, Tammy D. Allen, Michelle Hughes Miller, Eun Sook Kim, & Grisselle Centeno. (2020). Faculty time allocation in relation to work-family balance, job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 120. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2020.103443

Leišytė, L., Enders, J., & De Boer, H. (2010). *Mediating problem choice: academic researchers' responses to changes in their institutional environment*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199590193.003.0009

Li, A., Wang, X., Xiong, G., et al. (2015). A "double-pathway model" of work affecting employees' well-being: A perspective from the Job Demands-Resources Model. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, *47*(05), 624-636. https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=

Li, D., Ding, T., Wang, H., et al. (2025). Two-stage contract design considering the up-or-out policy. *Soft Science*, *39*(07), 135-144. https://doi.org/10.13956/j.ss.1001-8409.2025.07.17

Li, F. (2023). Implementation status of the "Pre-tenure-Long-term Tenure System" in colleges and universities and its impact on faculty research output. *Heilongjiang Researches on Higher Education*, *41*(11), 80-88. https://doi.org/10.19903/j.cnki.cn23-1074/g.2023.11.022

Li, G., & Xu, G. (2021). Research on the incentive mechanism of university talent programs from the perspective of tournament theory. *Journal of Henan Normal University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), *48*(02), 143-149. https://doi.org/10.16366/j.cnki.1000-2359.2021.02.19

Li, Y. (2016). An investigation of teaching time investment of faculty in research universities and its basis. *Fudan Education Forum*, *14*(04), 36-42. https://doi.org/10.13397/j.cnki.fef.2016.04.007

Li, Y. (2023). The birth of "Green Peppers": A study on the time anxiety of young university teachers. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, (09), 96-103. https://doi.org/10.13236/j.cnki.jshe.2023.09.012

Liang, W. (2020). Job demands, job resources, and teachers' job satisfaction: An empirical study based on TALIS Shanghai data. *Educational Research*, *41*(10), 102-115. https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=iMwhGHIyCLb_FcnACCvwTjN9LKHdGFOc-ZSX_FtG5Uqc6N2Yu2ktciUtFXfkUuO7lQM_gUgQ0PzxrSOs69bafb-ujVKNWRnOFdiIdSDHxsch3CliIpZ4M7MU-l-f4M_wukVm3uS-FbAcf0xuUFok-_4Yo1rReNJMDVtIIsF6uVstGhMk7awujw==

&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS

Liu, W. (2022). Why quantitative research evaluation prevails in colleges and universities: A perspective based on "numbers" as a governance medium. *University Education Science*, (04), 102-109. https://link.cnki.net/urlid/43.1398.G4.20220628.1330.007

Liu, Z. (2013). Theory, current status, and strategies of university teachers' teaching devotion. *China Higher Education Research*, (08), 14-19. https://doi.org/10.16298/j.cnki.1004-3667.2013.08.005

Lynch, K. (2015). Control by numbers: New managerialism and ranking in higher education. *Critical Studies in Education*, *56*(2), 190-207. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2014.949811

Maureen F. Dollard, & Arnold B. Bakker. (2010). Psychosocial safety climate as a precursor to conducive work environments, psychological health problems, and employee engagement. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *83*(3), 579-599. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317909X470690

Metin Camgoz, S., Tayfur Ekmekci, O., Bayhan Karapinar, P. et al. Job Insecurity and Turnover Intentions: Gender Differences and the Mediating Role of Work Engagement. *Sex Roles*, *75*, 583-598 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-016-0595-0

Misra, J., Lundquist, J. H., & Templer, A. (2012). Gender, work time, and care responsibilities among faculty. *Sociological Forum*, *27*(2), 300-323. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1573-7861.2012.01319.x

Nie, Y., Guo, H., & Zhou, R. (2023). The impact of the "Pre-tenure-Tenure" system on faculty research performance from the perspective of scientific and technological innovation. *Forum on Science and Technology in China*, (10), 158-166. https://doi.org/10.13580/j.cnki.fstc.2023.10.013

Niu, F., & Zhang, Z. (2017). Choice of teaching and research preferences of university teachers and their influencing factors: Based on the "Academic Profession in Transition - Mainland China" survey. *Modern Education Management*, (08), 53-58. https://doi.org/10.16697/j.cnki.xdjygl.2017.08.009

Ren, M., & Liu, L. (2021). "Sleepless in academia": Administrative logic and time pressure on young university teachers. *China Youth Study*, (8), 14-21. https://doi.org/10.19633/j.cnki.11-2579/d.2021.0110.

Ren, Y., Yu, Q., & Zhao, Y. (2020). Mechanism and effectiveness analysis of the impact of "Pre-tenure-Tenure System" on university research output. *Journal of National Academy of Education Administration*, (04), 41-52. https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=iMwhGHIyCLb0KQAb5cjhEUAZZk0FUrPj6j6x9JyyVdAkSFnOYbLI-xdc21xneGeSmH1V31vCIDelDxGaXEw8AsCnw-P7yk-bqGX0G1Vnlp88B-_vRmsXFDHY-e3UIMhbxiAUSvmKVIcZYmQSn3KO0JSWzs9jnrkWPXMvWLw24InSsdo9XerDBw==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS

Shen, H., Gu, Z., & Liu, Q. (2011). An empirical study on factors influencing university teachers' working time. *Journal of Higher Education*, *32*(9), 55-63. https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=iMwhGHIyCLbyamCbaB-E9rgEptc-U0N4ZSuHLW

r9UJ6Sd3ZZ9iDoVbXr4EWT5vov4iCjfU_QA1usJ4stinYvYHrvvP9WTdOajNtGLVBqcoKAJn3Orr_bQwtRTypJxG41AVMuW_O8FX-TiU7mUH6n9dEXnQaFcIUj-URFRGLQ6F5N3m0H1Wbljg==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS

Shin, Y., & Hur, W. M. (2021). When do job-insecure employees keep performing well? The buffering roles of help and prosocial motivation in the relationship between job insecurity, work engagement, and job performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *36*(4), 659-678. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-020-09694-4

Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state, and higher education*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Tan, T., & Zhu, H. (2025). Logical framework, realistic obstruction, and implementation path of resilient governance of scientific research innovation ecology in universities. *Journal of Southwest University* (Social Sciences Edition), *51*(06), 245-254. https://doi.org/10.13718/j.cnki.xdsk.2025.06.022

Teng, Q., Yu, H., Jiang, Y., et al. (2018). Research on university teacher incentive structure model and group differences in incentive effects. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University* (Social Sciences), *19*(05), 41-51. https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=iMwhGHIyCLacYticlPAalO0CQ9qrvSi8yqisJwUGEup1qxf45_79bR7U08Y5sE_u-jqFpWCdg0M7zUIDgQbBrPzxNNDMEwUOGroxe29KW3xN8a220aWsSmFR8TU5vRfM3c52xsLDHQoXI07u5tRtL7TnWPs4MMXIdjKxxyGZDyeYEEfoA5HVRw==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS

Tian, X., & Jiang, S. (2022). Why anxious: A survey research on occupational anxiety of young university teachers—Based on the background of "Up-or-Out" policy. *Higher Education Exploration*, (03), 39-44. https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=iMwhGHIyCLbsf96lWWVWDSxQ2E9Lfml0ytaFzc-qxHU4RvqqiR52FwwUIgJle_S4gtEGyFng_ohmHcpC60sTR4vW-qNkmp52d7F7cLpnfEjfcIuWW_xK0oImDFZeAYNAN7akucaA58cCxMZyQAZO6narCecZ37PACGJAZM35VcfVvtvTRTkFCg==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS

Vardi, I. (2009). The impacts of different types of workload allocation models on academic satisfaction and working life. *Higher Education*, *57*, 499-508. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-008-9159-8

Winslow, S. (2010). Gender inequality and time allocations among academic faculty. *Gender & Society*, *24*(6), 769-793. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243210386728

Worthington, F., & Hodgson, J. (2005). Academic labour and the politics of quality in higher education: A critical evaluation of the conditions of possibility of resistance. *Critical Quarterly*, *47*(1-2), 96-110. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0011-1562.2005.00617.x

Wu, X., Wu, F., & Niu, Z. (2019). Institutional identity and survival choices of "female young faculty" in universities under the academic "tournament" system: A case study of a "female young faculty". *Teacher Education Research*, *31*(06), 64-69. https://doi.org/10.13445/j.cnki.t.e.r.2019.06.010

Xinyu Chen, Qing Lu, Fang Zhou, Muli Hu, Na Yao, Yi Zhang, & Fei Qiu. (2025). Effect of job insecurity on anxiety among university young teachers: Chain mediating roles of perceived stress and insomnia. Zhong nan da xue xue bao. Yi xue ban = Journal of Central South University. *Medical sciences*, *50*(4), 706-713. https://doi.org/10.11817/J.ISSN.1672-7347.2025.250133

Xu, H. (2022). What is the real "Up-or-Out": Dilemma and reflection on the "Up-or-Out" system in universities under the policy of separation of evaluation and appointment. *Inner Mongolia Social Sciences*, *43*(05), 183-189. https://doi.org/10.14137/j.cnki.issn1003-5281.2022.05.024

Xu, S., & Yu, L. (2024). The misused "Up-or-Out": Functional alienation, backlash effects, and dissolution paths. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, (09), 37-44. https://doi.org/10.13236/j.cnki.jshe.2024.09.005

Xu, X., & Sun, M. (2024). Institutional logic, practical maladies, and localization adjustment of the "Up-or-Out" appointment system in colleges and universities. *Heilongjiang Researches on Higher Education*, *42*(7), 36-42. https://doi.org/10.19903/j.cnki.cn23-1074/g.2024.07.004.

Yan, G. (2018a). Analysis of undergraduate teaching devotion and its influencing factors among faculty in high-level universities. *China Higher Education Research*, (11), 22-27. https://doi.org/10.16298/j.cnki.1004-3667.2018.11.05.

Yan, G. (2018b). Competitive pressure in academia and its effects. *Education Science Abstract*, *37*(2), 1-3. https://doi.org/10.16298/j.cnki.1004-3667.2018.06.03.

Yan, G. (2019). The trajectory, problems, and future direction of university teacher appointment system reform. *China Higher Education Research*, (10), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.16298/j.cnki.1004-3667.2019.10.01

Yang, X., Cai, X. L., & Li, T. S. (2024). Does the tenure track influence academic research? An empirical study of faculty members in China. *Studies in Higher Education*, *49*(3), 476-492. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2238767

Zhang, W., & Zhang, M. (2020). The academic career dilemma of young university teachers and the path of institutional reform in the context of the appointment system: A neoinstitutionalist perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, *14*(04), 52-60. https://doi.org/10.13316/j.cnki.jhem.20200706.007

Zhu, Y., & He, G. (2014). Gender differences in university teachers' work and research time and the analysis of mediating effects: Based on the national survey of scientific and technological workers. *Science and Society*, *4*(3), 86-100. https://doi.org/10.19524/j.cnki.10-1009/g3.2014.03.014.