

# Research on Mental Health of Foreign Language Teachers in a Private University of China

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**Abstract:** Foreign language teachers encounter a number of unique challenges, including cultural differences, language barriers and other stressors, in addition to a lack of promotion opportunities. In order to enhance their mental health and work efficiency, it is essential to examine the current state of mental health among foreign language teachers in private universities, identify the primary factors influencing their mental health and implement effective intervention measures. A questionnaire, individual interviews and a symptom self-assessment scale (SCL-90) were employed to investigate and research the mental health status and influencing factors of foreign language teachers in private universities. The aim was to explore effective intervention techniques, methods and paths, and to improve the dimension of mental health intervention system. SPSS.26.0 was used to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire survey. The study aims to provide theoretical foundations and decision-making guidance for the management departments of private universities, particularly the human resources department. This will involve the development of a scientific, reasonable and efficient qualitative and quantitative assessment and management system for college English teachers. Additionally, the study will provide reasonable suggestions for private college teachers to improve their own mental health, with the ultimate goal of improving the mental health level of private universities' foreign language teachers in China and promoting the sustainable development of education.

**Keywords:** Mental Health; Foreign Language Teachers; Private University of China.

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## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of private higher education, private colleges and universities have become an important part of China's higher education. The mental health of foreign language teachers in China's private universities has attracted much attention. However, at present, the establishment and research of the mental health intervention system for foreign language teachers in private colleges or universities in China is relatively lagging behind, and there are relatively few studies on the mental health of teachers.

Compared with public universities, private universities have many differences in education and management systems, teachers' career development planning, etc. These differences also have a great impact on teachers' mental health, especially during the epidemic. Therefore, It is great significance for stabilizing the professional foreign language teaching team to improve the mental health of foreign language teachers by establishing a mental health intervention system for foreign language teachers in private universities.

This study aims to take foreign language teachers as the research object, support the theory of psychological empowerment model and use questionnaire survey and interview research methods to explore the mental health status of young teachers, focusing on the key personality that affects their mental health status feature.

The goal of the study is to provide theoretical basis and decision-making for the management departments of private universities, especially the human resources department, to build a scientific, reasonable and efficient qualitative and quantitative assessment and management system for college English teachers and to provide reasonable suggestions for private college teachers to improve their own mental health so as to improve the mental health level of private universities' foreign language teachers in China and promote the

sustainable development of education.

In the past two decades, the research on the mental health education of teachers in private universities of China has gradually attracted attention. Professor from Shaanxi Normal University discussed the theoretical construction and empirical research on the occupational mental health of Chinese college teachers.(Yang Ruijuan ,2018) The research on the status quo and countermeasures of teachers' mental health of in private universities were conducted.(Chen Lin and Tan Shan ,2013) The researcher of Peking University focused on exploring the cross-sectional history of the changes in the mental health of Chinese university teachers, and conducted a review and analysis of the history of this field from 2001 to 2010.(Zhao Yunlong ,2014)

At the same time, some scholars have explored this issue from the perspective of discipline construction. For example, the feasibility and necessity of establishing an evaluation index system for mental health education in China's universities were explored from the perspective of evaluation.(Ma Yanxiu, Yang Zhenbin, and Li Yanze ,2013)

In order to emphasize the practical significance, many scholars have used empirical research methods to explore this field. A survey was conducted and analyzed on the mental health of teachers in private universities.(Wang Lihua, Liu Kuanhao, and Li Yueling ,2011) In addition, chose SCL-90 was chosen to do an evaluation about the mental health status of Chinese university teachers in "Health Research", so that can give more intuitive data support.(Chen Nan, Li Xiaosong and Liu Yuanyuan ,2014)A questionnaire survey was conducted on 290 teachers and applied research on the stress model and found that the job burnout of public foreign language teachers in colleges and universities is mainly caused by high effort, low return, lack of social support, low teacher professional efficacy, and lack of internal triggered by professional values.(Su Zheqian ,2022) strategies were

proposed to eliminate the phenomenon of research burnout and promote teachers' physical and mental health.(Yang Ying ,2020)

To sum up, the research and practice of the mental health intervention system for foreign language teachers in private universities not only attracts attention for its importance, but also gradually becomes a research hotspot in the academic circle. In the exploration and practice in recent years, theoretical research and empirical research complement each other, providing a solid theoretical and practical foundation for the construction of the field. However, the mental health intervention system has not yet been formed, and the methods and means of intervention still need to be perfected, which is also the significance of this study.

## **2. Research Content**

### **2.1. Analysis of the Mental Health Status of Foreign Language Teachers in Private Universities**

The mental health status of foreign language teachers in private universities is an important factor affecting their teaching effect and physical and mental health. In recent years, with the rapid development of private universities in my country, the number and proportion of foreign language teachers in private universities are also increasing year by year.(Yang Ying.,2020) However, due to the special nature of private universities and the influence of complex operating mechanisms and other factors, the psychological pressure on foreign language teachers is also increasing.

#### **2.1.1. In Terms of Work Pressure**

Due to the high quality requirements of foreign language teaching in private universities, foreign language teachers have to undertake a lot of tasks such as lesson preparation, teaching, and assessment. Examination and competition pressures are also very obvious. These factors have increased the work pressure of foreign language teachers to varying degrees.(Fu Rong, Jiang Yanping, Cheng Lizhu,2016)

#### **2.1.2. In Terms of Career Development**

Foreign language teachers in private colleges and universities have relatively few promotion opportunities, and their wages are generally low, which makes the future development space of foreign language teachers relatively limited. These factors will further aggravate the psychological burden on foreign language teachers. (Shen Xin,2012)

#### **2.1.3. In Terms of Real Needs**

Due to the relatively weak faculty of private universities, foreign language teachers also face problems such as communication difficulties, interdisciplinary subjects, and teaching methods that do not meet real needs. (Hao Yujuan,2010) These factors may also have an impact on the psychological state of foreign language teachers.

To sum up, there are certain problems in the mental health of foreign language teachers in private colleges and universities. To this end, It is necessary to take targeted measures to help foreign language teachers reduce their psychological pressure and improve work efficiency and job satisfaction. The specific measures are as follows:

Firstly, establishing mental health service institutions to provide foreign language teachers with psychological counseling and counseling services. (Zhang Chao,2008)

Secondly, strengthening teacher training, improve their teaching ability and emotional management level. (Chen

Tao,2022)

Thirdly, improving teaching conditions, improve the working environment and quality of life.

### **2.2. Analysis of Factors Affecting the Mental Health of Foreign Language Teachers in Private Universities**

The mental health of foreign language teachers in private universities is affected by many factors, including working environment, career development, and educational administrative policies.

#### **2.2.1. In Terms of Working Environment**

Foreign language teachers in private universities have high work intensity and pressure, which can easily lead to the occurrence of mental illness. (Yunyun,2019)At the same time, the lack of teaching facilities and teaching resources will also bring additional negative effects.

#### **2.2.2. In Terms of Career Development**

Foreign language teachers in private universities generally face the problem of lack of opportunities for teachers' career development, and this lack of opportunities often leads to a sense of panic and psychological imbalance that weaken teachers' careers.(Lu Aixin,2007) These problems will have a negative impact on teachers' mental health.

#### **2.2.3. In Terms of Educational Administrative Policies**

The policy control and continuous reform of teaching courses faced by foreign language teachers in private universities have also increased the pressure on teachers. (Wang Zhi, Li Xiyang, Zhang Dajun,2010)Teachers are faced with various institutional and policy restrictions when performing teaching tasks, which constantly challenges their professionalism as teachers and puts their mental health at risk.

To sum up, there are various factors affecting the mental health of foreign language teachers in private universities, and corresponding intervention methods should be adopted according to different factors to protect the physical and mental health.

## **2.3. Research Paradigm**

The study is grounded in the "Demand-Control Model and Human-based Dynamics of Mental workload." This suggests that the research will explore how demands and controls present in the job environment impact the mental workload and subsequent mental health and job satisfaction of the teachers.

Variables:

Job Satisfaction: The level of job satisfaction of the respondents is assessed based on gender, age, marital status, positional titles, average income, and years of work.

Common Mental Health: Similarly, the common mental health status of the respondents is measured along the same demographic and occupational dimensions.

Analysis: The central part of the research involves analyzing the relationship between job satisfaction (an aspect of work environment) and common mental health (an aspect of employee well-being). This analysis seeks to understand how one may influence the other.

Outcome: Based on the findings from the analysis, a "Proposed Faculty Wellness Plan for Foreign Language Teachers in the Private University in China" is to be developed. This plan aims to improve the overall well-being of the faculty by addressing identified issues relating to job

satisfaction and mental health.

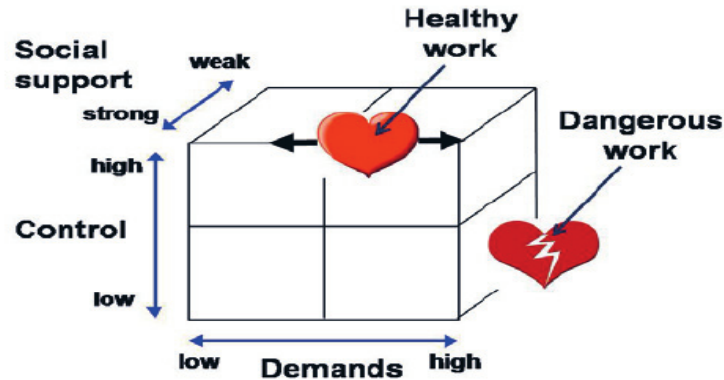


Figure 1. Demand- Control model

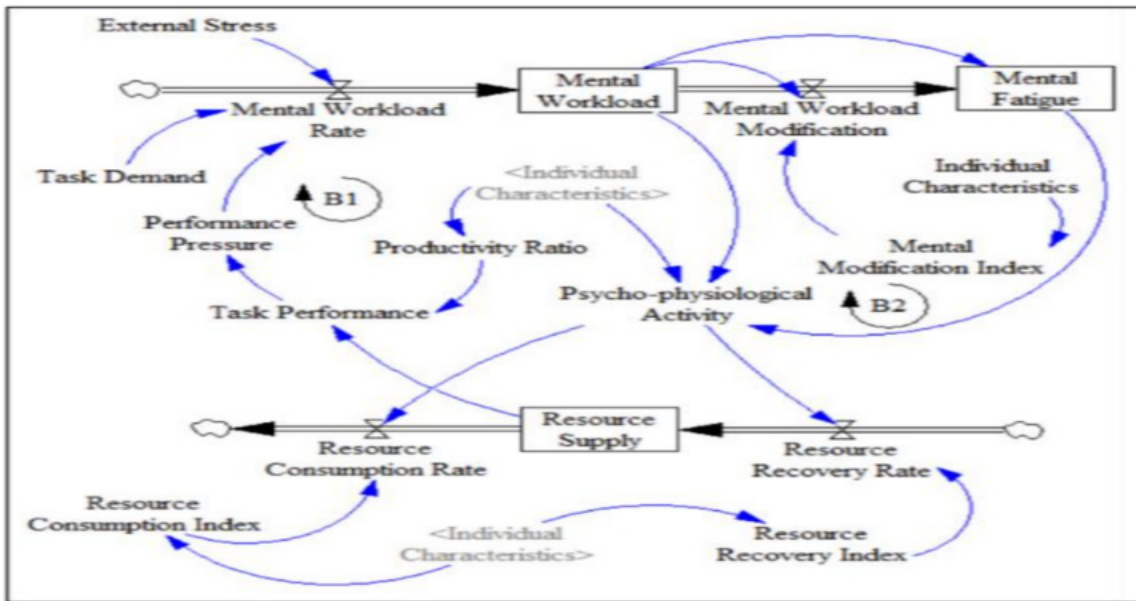


Figure 2. Human-based Dynamics of Mental workload

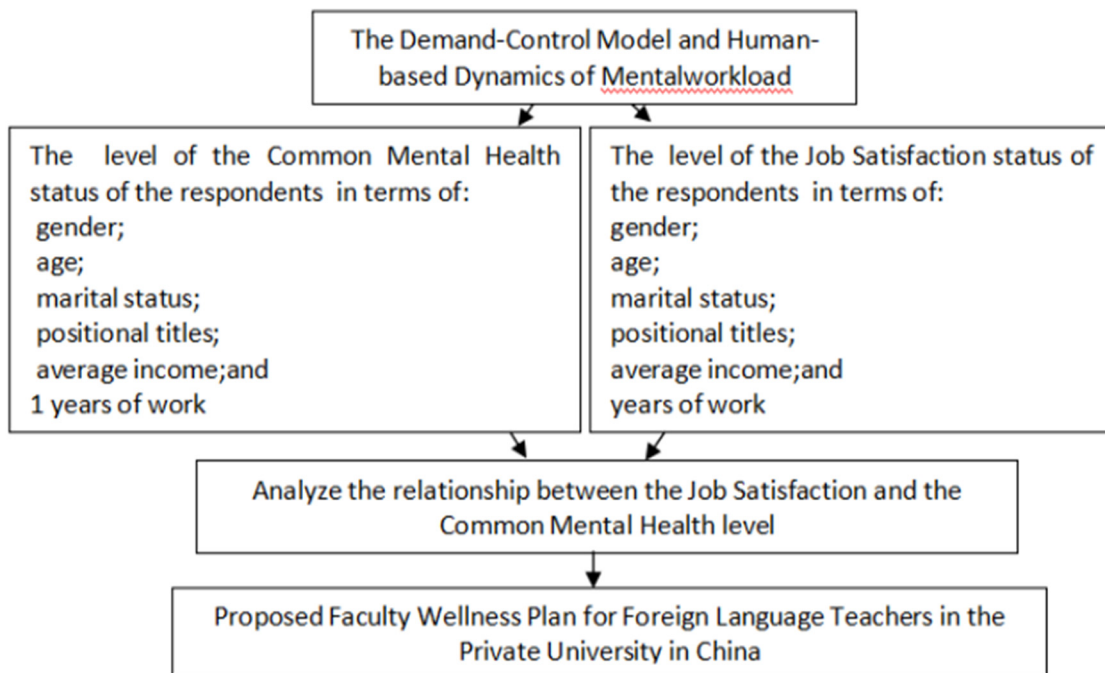


Figure 3. Research paradigm

### 3. Research Methods

#### 3.1. Study Design and Locale

This study will utilize the quantitative techniques which will be participated in by 132 foreign language teachers. This study is the quantitative, descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional research design. Utilizing validated instruments such as the DASS-21 for assessing depression, anxiety, and stress levels, and the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) for evaluating various facts of job satisfaction, this approach allows for a robust quantitative assessment. Data will be collected through electronic or paper questionnaires, ensuring a wide and efficient reach among the participants. The use of a cross-sectional design will enable the capture of a snapshot of the current mental health status and job satisfaction at a single point in time, providing a strong basis for correlational analysis. Statistical methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and possibly regression analysis, will be applied to explore relationships and predict factors influencing teachers' mental health and satisfaction levels.

#### 3.2. Data Collection

In the early stage of questionnaire distribution, questionnaires were distributed to 132 foreign language teachers. A total of 132 questionnaires were distributed, 126 valid questionnaires were recovered, and the questionnaire efficiency was 95%.

### 4. Analysis of Results

#### 4.1. Data Information

Table 1. Basic information of data

Statistical variable	Category	Number of people	Percentage/%
Gender	Male	40	30.3%
	Female	92	69.7%
Age Group	26~30	62	50.0%
	31~40	41	31.1%
	41~50	20	15.2%
	51~60	9	6.8%
Professional Title	Assistant	65	49.2%
	Lecturer	42	31.8%
	Associate Professor	15	11.4%
	Professor	10	7.6%

#### 4.2. Conclusion Multiple

Through a random sample of foreign language teachers in private colleges and universities, a research survey was conducted by means of questionnaires and scales. SCL-90 statistics found that more than one-third of the tested samples of foreign language teachers had mild problems with their mental health, which were mainly manifested in the four aspects of somatization symptoms, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, anxiety, and depression, of which obsessive-compulsive symptoms were the most obvious, with the proportion of those who suffered from mild symptoms amounting to 51.3%, followed by anxiety symptoms at 40%. The number of people with moderate mental health problems exceeded 13% in the following areas: somatization symptoms, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, anxiety and depression. The proportion of those with severe problems in somatization symptoms and anxiety was 5.2%. Overall, the mental health

problems of the sampled foreign language teachers were highlighted in somatization symptoms and anxiety, with 65% of them having different Chengdu symptoms. The above data were analyzed for significance at  $P < 0.05$ , which is statistically significant.

### 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to take the mental health of foreign language teachers in China's private universities as the research object, to explore the mental health status of foreign language teachers and the effectiveness of intervention. Through combing and analyzing the relevant literature, the research draws the following conclusions.

#### 5.1. Problems in the Mental Health of Foreign Language Teachers

There are certain problems in the mental health of foreign language teachers in private universities in China. Studies have shown that the psychological pressure of foreign language teachers mainly comes from heavy teaching tasks, increased work pressure and difficulties in personal career development. Especially during the epidemic, due to the impact of the epidemic and changes in teaching methods, the psychological pressure on foreign language teachers has further increased. In addition, we also found that some foreign language teachers lack knowledge related to mental health and have insufficient awareness of their own mental state, so it is difficult to effectively carry out psychological intervention.

#### 5.2. Mental Health Intervention

Mental health intervention has a positive effect on improving the mental state of foreign language teachers. Through the intervention of psychological intervention, the study found that the symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety of foreign language teachers have been alleviated, and the personal psychological state has undergone positive changes. In terms of the choice of intervention methods, the study suggests that psychological adjustment measures with strong pertinence and stable effects should be selected, and individualized intervention plans should be formulated in consideration of individual differences and psychological characteristics.

#### 5.3. Challenges of Mental Health Intervention

The intervention on the mental health of foreign language teachers still faces certain challenges. Among them, the pertinence of intervention strategies and the long-term stability of intervention effects are issues that need further exploration. In addition, in the implementation of psychological intervention, it is necessary to pay attention to individual differences and regular follow-up to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the intervention.

During the research process, it was also found that this system still has some limitations and deficiencies, and further in-depth exploration is still needed to formulate targeted intervention measures and explore more refined and differentiated psychological intervention programs to improve the intervention effect and meet the needs of the people. The needs of different foreign language teachers to promote the mental health of foreign language teachers.

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