

Role Dilemmas of the New Generation of Rural Teachers and Strategies for Relieving Them

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Abstract: *In recent years, the state has promulgated a series of policies and initiatives to encourage the new generation of rural teachers to take root in the countryside, however, as a new force in the rural teaching force, focusing on the new generation of rural teachers is not only an inevitable requirement for the construction of the rural teaching force in the new era, but also an objective requirement for the modernization of rural education. At present, the role of the new generation of rural teachers is caught in the predicament of narrowing and marginalization, the root cause is due to the single function of the rural school, the impact of social development, the teacher's own concept of the drive and other factors. A combination of external promotion and self-development is now proposed to alleviate the problem in three ways: social support and assistance, expansion and implementation of school functions, and the reshaping of teachers' self-concept.*

Keywords: *New Generation; Rural Teachers; Role Dilemma*

1. Introduction

Along with the ecological transformation of rural society and education, rural education has ushered in an important period of reform and transformation, and the "new generation" of rural teachers has been added to the rural teaching force as fresh blood, becoming the main force of rural education day by day. However, they are caught in a role dilemma. The state has introduced a series of policies to promote the development of rural teachers, but the effect is not optimistic. The role identity of the new generation of rural teachers is a deep-rooted constraint affecting the rural teachers to take root in rural education, and it is the fundamental way to help the rural teachers to get rid of the realistic dilemmas of "not being able to go down, not being able to stay, and not being able to teach well". Therefore, eliminating the influencing factors of the new generation of rural teachers' role dilemma has become a problem that needs to be solved urgently.

2. Meaning of the new generation of rural teachers

"New generation of rural teachers" is a compound noun, from the combination of "new generation" and "rural teachers", is a new pedagogical vocabulary, with a unique pedagogical connotation, to accurately grasp this concept, we need to analyze from the "new generation" and "rural teachers". To accurately grasp this concept, we need to analyze the "new generation" and "rural teachers". The term "Cenozoic" originates from geology and stands for the "Quaternary" geological era, which refers to the most recent geological period in the history of the earth.^[1] With the rise of interdisciplinary research, the term "new generation" has been applied by scholars to the field of education research to refer to the young group of teachers, whose age, origin, identity and values are quite different from those of "old teachers". The policy document "Rural Teacher Support Program (2015-2020)" officially defines "rural teachers" as those who are engaged in primary and secondary kindergarten teaching in townships, village primary schools and teaching points, and who receive living allowances for rural teachers.

The "new generation teachers" are young teachers who started teaching at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, with democratic student-oriented concepts, open teaching concepts, modern teaching skills and solid professional knowledge.^[2] Wang Chenglong defines new-generation rural teachers as young teachers born in the 1980s who teach in rural schools in townships and below.^[3] According to Zheng Xinrong, the new generation of rural teachers refers to those who teach in townships or schools below the township level, mainly the regular teachers in public schools (including "special post teachers"), and this group has obvious characteristics: (1) Born after

1980, most of them have experienced the experience of "being born in the countryside --They are the first generation of rural teachers who have left the land, the countryside, and the household; (2) they study in higher education institutions where fees and charges are harmonized; (3) the vast majority of them enter the teaching profession under the change of the teacher recruitment mechanism. (3) most of them entered the teaching position under the opportunity of the change of teacher recruitment mechanism; (4) compared with the rural teachers of the previous generations, there are significant differences in their lifestyles and cultural characteristics of urbanization.^[4] Wang Zhonghua defines the "new generation of rural teachers" as young teachers born after 1980, who have studied in colleges and universities or teacher training colleges, and have entered rural schools through the teacher recruitment system.^[5] Zhao Mengfei believes that compared with teachers born after 1980, teachers born after 1990 have greatly improved their material living conditions, scientific and technological levels, and have undergone a major change in their ideological concepts, and therefore defines "new generation rural teachers" as teachers born after 1990 who teach in rural schools at the compulsory education stage in townships and villages.^[6] Gao Xiaofang believes that the "new generation of rural teachers" is a new generation of rural teachers. According to Gao Xiaofang, "new generation" rural teachers are those who were born in the countryside between 1990 and 1999, who have grown up in the countryside, who have received urban education, who have a certain understanding of the countryside and a certain affection for it, and who are engaged in educational work in the countryside.^[7]

The other mountain's stone can polish jade (idiom); improve oneself by accepting criticism from outside. This paper synthesizes the research results of many scholars, and tries to define "new generation" rural teachers as: young teachers born after the 1980s, with pre-service higher education teaching experience, engaged in teaching and educating people in rural schools after graduation, with a certain flavor of local culture, urban cultural characteristics, and mastering the emerging educational concepts, novel teaching techniques, and more modern ways of thinking. They have a certain flavor of local culture and urban cultural characteristics, and master new educational concepts, novel teaching techniques and more modern ways of thinking. Their joining has injected an urban flavor and vitality into the rural teaching force, changed the situation of aging and feminization of rural teachers, and is the "leader" of the future reform of rural education.

3. Role Dilemma of the New Generation of Rural Teachers

In the ontological role perception, the new generation of rural teachers will often fall into the misunderstanding of narrowing the role of rural teachers, such as the auxiliary of test-taking, the carrier of knowledge, the enforcer of regulations, and the urbanite in the countryside, and at the same time, fall into the dilemma of marginal participation of the role in the community interactions, poor communication of the role in the cooperation between home and school, and the loss of the subject role in the peer collaboration.

3.1. Narrowing the Role of the New Generation of Rural Teachers

3.1.1. An assistant to the exam

It has been 23 years since June 13, 1999, when the Decision of the State Council of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Deepening Educational Reform and Comprehensively Promoting Quality Education was issued. Quality education and the successive curriculum reforms have called for a change in the concept of "points only", focusing on the all-round development of students, but education is the only way for many rural students to "get out of the mountains", so the rural schools are unable to change the status of the current exam-based education, and the rural teachers are still playing the role of test-supporting teachers. Rural teachers are still playing the role of auxiliary to the test. At present, many rural teachers still focus on the content of the examination in the teaching process, based on helping students to master more knowledge, test points, key points, etc., hoping that students can achieve good results in the examination, so we have always emphasized the comprehensive development in the examination and results before the defeat, the new generation of rural teachers as an important part of the rural teacher group, naturally, also become the auxiliaries of the test.

3.1.2. Knowledge movers

Rural teachers are carriers of knowledge. The rural school is a place where rural children and young people receive systematic education, and the rural teacher is the disseminator of cultural knowledge,

and should also be the guide for students to participate in social practice.^[8] The traditional teaching method restricts teachers and students to the fixed space of the classroom, and the teaching mainly consists of teachers transferring the knowledge in the teaching materials to students through collective lectures, which is simple and easy to operate, covers a wide range of areas and is more effective. As a result, teachers in rural areas focus mainly on improving students' cultural knowledge and neglect their responsibility to "cultivate students' ability to participate in social practice", becoming knowledge porters and pedagogues who focus on students' performance.

3.1.3. Subject role aphasia in peer collaboration

Rural teachers are the enforcers of regulations. The current school management system dictates that teachers must obey the school's management and arrangements. Rural teachers are also accustomed to working in accordance with the management rules of their rural schools. Years of teaching experience and the work culture of the teaching community make most rural teachers complete all the work assigned by the school on time and in quantity, and become unconditional implementers of the school's rules.^[9] In addition to their daily teaching duties, rural teachers are also required to undergo various inspections, participate in teaching competitions, conduct teaching research and reform, and complete various administrative tasks unrelated to teaching, making rural teachers the enforcers of the rules.

3.1.4. Urbanites in the countryside

Most of the new generation of rural teachers have experienced the development trajectory of "born in the countryside - going out to study - coming back to work in the countryside", and they are the first generation of rural teachers who have completed the process of leaving the land, the countryside and the household. The new generation of rural teachers have a sense of alienation from the countryside because they have been studying abroad for a long time, and their daily teaching work is confined to the school, and they spend most of their rest time on recreation and relaxation, or visiting friends and relatives, or improving their own quality, so few teachers are willing to go out of the walls of the school, and few of them take the initiative to take part in the rural affairs, so that their relationship with the countryside gradually evolves into a working relationship and lacks an emotional connection, which makes it difficult for them to take root in the countryside, and they always play the role of a rural It is difficult to be rooted in the countryside and always play the role of rural people.

3.2. Alienated Role of New Generation Rural Teachers

3.2.1. Marginalization of Role Participation in Community Interaction

Rural schools are very closely linked to villages. Some scholars have pointed out that the role of rural schools is not only confined to promoting the growth and development of rural students within the school, but also plays a role in political propaganda and production raids in rural society.^[10] However, at present, many teachers have purchased property in the county town and basically return to the county town on weekends and vacation time and rarely stay in the countryside. Some scholars have pointed out that more and more rural teachers are traveling between their work and life, and named them "migratory bird" teachers.^[11] The wall of the school also distinctly divides the environment of rural teachers into in-school and out-of-school, and rural teachers focus on teaching and educating people within the wall, neglecting their own relationship with the development of the rural society and their role in the revitalization of the countryside. The rural community, rural students and rural teachers have become separated from each other, and they have become a lonely group, gradually evolving into strangers in the village and marginalized people in the rural society.

3.2.2. Miscommunication of roles in home-school cooperation

Rural teachers are given more expectations in rural schools and rural families. Many families hope to change the intergenerational transmission of poverty through reading, and hope that their children can have a better future. However, in today's society, many people are forced to leave their homes to go out to work for a living, and their children become left-behind children, who are taken care of by their grandparents or other relatives, favoring nurturing rather than teaching. However, parents of students who are busy making a living often miss Parent-teacher conferences and pay less attention to WeChat group of parents messages. As parents pay little attention to that, they put all the responsibility for educating their children on the teachers, which dampens the enthusiasm of teachers for home-school liaison. Gradually, teachers will be tired of home-school communication. To a certain extent, it has led to the estrangement of the teacher-parent role relationship, which affects the construction of a harmonious home-school.

3.2.3. Aphasia of the role of the subject in peer collaboration

When new generation rural teachers join the profession, they should participate in peer collaboration more actively, and quickly adapt to the rules of school management, etc. However, the peer assistance of new generation rural teachers is not satisfactory. However, the peer assistance of the new generation of rural teachers is not satisfactory, firstly, due to the slow integration of the new generation of rural teachers' peer relationship, the communication between the new generation of teachers and other teachers is basically through the intersection of work, which can easily lead to a more detached in colleague interactions; secondly, the new generation of rural teachers need the guidance of the older generation of teachers, so there are fewer professional exchanges in the peer-to-peer collaboration, and they tend to be on the "receiving" side. Secondly, the new generation of rural teachers still need the guidance of the older generation of teachers. In all kinds of teaching demonstration classes, it is mainly the more senior teachers who comment on the lessons, and the new generation teachers hardly express their opinions. The new generation of teachers is positioned as "learners" in peer collaboration, which is not wrong, but to a certain extent, it has led to a lower degree of participation and a state of detachment.

4. The Roots of the New Generation of Rural Teachers' Role Dilemma

There are many factors that cause problems in the transformation and positioning of the role of rural teachers, both the influence of the external environment and the individual teacher's own reasons, which are the result of the joint action of internal and external factors.

4.1. Influencing factors of the new generation of rural teachers' role narrowing

The implementation of the rural revitalization strategy and the realization of the overall goal of the new generation of rural teachers need to clearly break through the role of the predicament, and the breakthrough of the crucial step is to explore the causes of the predicament, this paper tries to analyze the three aspects of the school, the society and the teachers themselves, and to follow the symptoms of the disease in order to prescribe the right medicine.

4.1.1. Single function of rural schools

Rural schools are the boosters of rural economic development, democratic governance, and rural cultural inheritance and development, while the main work of the current rural schools is to carry out education and teaching, to a certain extent, ignoring the cultural radiation function of the rural schools, ignoring the role it can play in the rural economy, politics and other fields, the function of the rural schools tends to be monotonous. There are three main reasons for the functional homogenization of rural schools: Firstly, rural schools mainly learn advanced education and teaching concepts from urban schools in terms of teaching methods, curriculum development and student training. They're trying to bridge the gap with the city schools. However, while catching up with the city schools, they gradually lost their own local characteristics and turn into a vassal of the city. Secondly, rural schools are regarded by parents as the sacred channel for their children to enter good schools, find good jobs and enter big cities. Due to the pressure exerted by society and parents on schools, rural schools put students' performance at the top of the list of school work, and transfer the pressure on rural teachers through their performance and examination results, so that teachers are unable to play more roles in the growth of students and the construction of the countryside; thirdly, the high fences and tightly-closed gates of rural schools separate teachers and students from the rural society, and rural schools have become isolated islands in the countryside, and the rural schools have become the most important part of the countryside. Third, the high walls and closed gates of rural schools separate teachers and students from the rural community, making rural schools an isolated island in the countryside,^[12] and the closure of rural schools blocks rural teachers' contact with the rural community, so that the role of rural teachers can only be confined to the single role of "educator", and it is difficult for them to transform themselves into "facilitators" of rural development.

4.1.2. Impact of social development

At present, there is still a certain gap between urban and rural economic development in China, the difference between the living and working environment of rural teachers and urban teachers is an important external driving force for rural teachers to become "rural urbanites",^[13] and the uneven development of the economy has also caused the gap between urban and rural education, and the working environment, educational resources, salary treatment and career development prospects in

cities are the main factors for the loss of rural teachers. The working environment, educational resources, salary, and career development prospects in urban areas are the main factors for the loss of rural teachers. With the development of intelligent information technology, the school is no longer the main place for the dissemination of knowledge, and the teacher is no longer the absolute possessor of knowledge,^[14] so the status of the teacher's knowledge authority has been challenged. The development and progress of the countryside has created new requirements for the education of rural society. The state hopes that rural schools will become the cradle of the country's leaders and rural teachers will become the main force for revitalizing rural education; villagers hope that rural schools will become the springboards for their children, and that rural teachers will become the boosters for their children to jump out of the farm gate; the village committees hope that rural schools will become the inheritance bases of local cultures, and that rural teachers will become the leaders of the construction of civilized countryside customs. Leaders, teachers are prone to conflicts among many social expectations and cannot fully take care of each role. Therefore, in the face of the impact of social development, rural teachers have not yet been able to complete their role transformation and role positioning.

4.1.3. Driven by teachers' own concepts

The new generation of rural teachers do not realize the deeper social responsibility of "rural teachers" and regard "rural teachers" as an ordinary profession and a job to earn a living. The new generation of rural teachers is still in the stage of "survival" teachers, in a period of role confusion, not realizing the connection between themselves and the rural society, and will not take the initiative to take up their own responsibilities in the construction of the countryside. Teachers' work characteristics determine that the teacher group is very easy to face the burnout of the intrusion, facing the reality of the work situation and the negative impact of external factors, the inner sense of disparity and burnout will be more serious. Burnout of rural teachers is an important factor that makes rural teachers unable to devote themselves to education in rural areas. Most of the new generation of rural teachers are not born and raised in the countryside, they have received systematic education and teaching training and exercise, but also personally feel the difference between the countryside and the city, they are the generation that grew up under the rich material and multi-cultural infiltration, it is difficult for them to find a sense of belonging in the countryside. The lack of a sense of belonging to the countryside is the intrinsic motivation for rural teachers to be unable to take root in the countryside and dedicate themselves to rural education, and it is also an important reason for rural teachers to evade their social responsibilities in the countryside.

4.2. Influencing factors of the new generation of rural teachers' role marginalization

4.2.1. Analysis of external reasons

On the one hand, professional development has been "de-ruralized", and the development of teachers' roles is limited. Rural teachers are social actors with both public and professional attributes, and they are responsible for promoting the development of rural education and rural revitalization. In the professional development process of the new generation of rural teachers, whether it is pre-service or post-service training or professional assessment, all show the characteristics of "de-villageization", that is, with the urban teachers to accept a set of standardized training programs, the local culture has been obliterated in the unified teacher training. This "de-rusticized" mode of professional development ignores the public attributes of rural teachers, and fails to nurture a strong sense of the countryside among rural teachers, resulting in the new generation of rural teachers facing difficulties in their role transition and role orientation, such as not understanding the rural qualities of the region they work in, the working environment, and the target audience, and not adapting to the role of rural teachers, not being able to find the right place for their work. The new generation of rural teachers are unable to adapt to the role of rural teachers, and are unable to find the role position of teachers. On the other hand, the role environment is "weakened", with insufficient emotional support for teachers. The new generation of teachers has just entered the rural education situation, facing a brand new environment and work tasks, and is in a period of professional confusion, role transition and positioning needs the support and help of the school, but the administrators are mainly concerned about the academic performance and development of the classes led by the new generation of teachers, and seldom consider the teachers' own developmental needs and confusions, and ignore the internal state of the first rural teachers.

4.2.2. Analysis of internal causes

First, poor role transition and unclear self-role awareness. Role transition occurs in the context of

social change puts forward new requirements for individual roles or changes in individual social status, whether active or passive, individual role requirements and expectations have changed, individuals need to go to change roles to adapt to the norms of the new roles, the formation of self-concept.^[15] Only when the new generation of rural teachers clearly recognize and understand the meaning of the role of rural teachers, that is, to clarify the "rural teacher who, why and what", can they consciously and normatively practice the role. The new generation of rural teachers in the process of role adaptation, is in the critical period of the old and new role transition, role awareness is relatively unstable, the role of the teacher cognition of a single and idealized rural teacher role, has not yet formed a correct role perception of rural teachers. Secondly, the role position is vague and the self-identification of the role is insufficient. If the new generation of rural teachers have a correct positioning of rural teachers' professional roles, they will be able to clarify the obligations, norms and values of rural teachers' roles, and form a positive sense of rural teachers' professional identity in their emotions and attitudes. At present, the new generation of rural teachers' positioning of the role of teachers is relatively vague, which is manifested in the externally-driven motivation of rural primary and middle school teachers, and their weak sense of belonging to the countryside; their own control ability is poor, and their role positioning is easily affected by external factors, and they are not deeply aware of the importance of the role of rural teachers in the balanced development of China's compulsory education and the revitalization of the countryside.

5. Strategies for Relieving the Role Dilemma of the New Generation of Rural Teachers

The transformation and orientation of the role of the new generation of rural teachers is mainly through the following aspects: Firstly, there is a need for external force boosting. Society and schools should provide support for the transformation and positioning of teachers' roles, so as to facilitate the new generation of teachers to complete the transformation and positioning of their roles as soon as possible. Secondly, they should develop autonomously and correctly understand the connotation of the role of rural teachers. Continuously refining the perception of the role of the new generation of rural teachers. From external expectations to subjective self-awareness, to complete the role transition and firm up the role position.

5.1. Support from society

First, the government should promote and implement relevant policies. The transformation of rural teachers' roles requires the government to formulate and improve policies that support the transformation and positioning of rural teachers' roles, and to promote the implementation of those policies. The state should resolutely promote the implementation of existing policies on rural education; supplement, improve and implement policies and guidelines for rural school reform; and formulate and implement policies to incentivize the transformation and positioning of the role of rural teachers. Second, the support of social institutions and organizations. Give full play to the strengths of various institutions and organizations in society to form a social synergy. Ultimately, it will be facilitate the transformation and positioning of the role of rural teachers. Social institutions and organizations can provide material support for the development of rural schools and the transformation and positioning of rural teachers' roles; social institutions and organizations provide learning opportunities and technical guidance for rural schools and rural teachers; the reasonable expectations of social institutions, organizations and groups for rural education and rural teachers influence the transformation of rural teachers' roles. Third, public trust and respect for rural teachers. The power of the public influences the transformation and positioning of the roles of new-generation rural teachers, so it is necessary for the public to keep their expectations of teachers within a reasonable range, respect rural teachers, form a correct understanding of rural teachers, and enhance their trust in new-generation rural teachers, believing that they have the ability to teach and educate, and are able to promote the development of rural education and contribute to the revitalization of the countryside.

5.2. Expanding and implementing school functions

On the one hand, the educational objectives of rural schools should be clarified and social responsibility should be assumed. School development should have the road of rural characteristics, open up a unique road of development; the development of rural schools should be diversified and inclusive, not to close and stick to the rural culture, but to integrate the local culture on the basis of multiculturalism; the development goals of rural schools should be consistent with the revitalization of

the countryside and the development of rural teachers, the goal of the rural school should be to revitalize the countryside education and culture as an important part of their own development goals. At the same time, they should pay attention to the professional development of rural teachers and help them realize their role transformation and orientation. Rural schools should clarify their impact on social economy and culture. Implementing the construction function of rural schools, rural teachers help farmers to take the road less traveled by teaching theoretical knowledge; implementing the cultural construction function of rural schools, rural teachers make the rural culture to be inherited and developed by integrating the rural culture in education and teaching. On the other hand, optimize the management system of rural schools. The management system of rural schools should consider the needs of the rural society. Rural school management system should not only regulate the work behavior of rural teachers, but also should regulate the behavior of rural schools; at the same time, schools should listen more to the inner voices of rural teachers when formulating management systems. It should make rural teachers from the implementation of the system into a participant in the elaboration of the system, the school's management system is more warm and humanistic.

5.3. Teachers reshape their self-concept

In order to complete the role transformation and positioning as soon as possible, the new generation of rural teachers, in addition to external support, should also continue to strengthen their own role learning, reshape their self-concept, so that their own behavioral patterns can meet the expectations of the role of the rural teacher, and make clear the role of the rural teacher's role, namely, "for the teacher", the practitioner of teaching and educating, "for the farmer", the facilitator of rural development, and "for the farmer", the facilitator of rural development. The role of the rural teacher should be clarified, namely, "for the teacher" as a practitioner of teaching and educating, and "for the farmer" as a promoter of rural development. Firstly, "as teachers", they should be practitioners of teaching and educating. First of all, the new generation of rural teachers need to enrich their educational knowledge and theory, and firmly establish the concept of lifelong learning. Secondly, the new generation of rural teachers need to always take "teaching the personnel of heaven and earth, educating the consciousness of life" as their educational philosophy, fully understand the physical and mental development characteristics of rural students, and carry out education and teaching work according to local conditions and individual differences. Once again, in the choice of teaching content, the formation of a keen sense of local culture, to realize the richness of local culture can be incorporated into the classroom teaching of educational resources, grasp the cultural lifeblood of the development of rural schools. Finally, the growth background of rural students should be taken into account, they are mostly left-behind children, teachers are almost the only important others in their socialization process, the new generation of rural teachers need. Therefore, based on the background of rural children's growth, the new generation of rural teachers need to build a democratic teacher-student relationship, change the evaluation standard of scores above all else, and show more humanistic care to rural students. Secondly, they should be the facilitators of rural development "for the sake of agriculture". New generation of rural teachers need solid theoretical knowledge. The form of rural teachers' participation in rural revitalization is not directly engaging in physical labor in the development and construction of the countryside, but guiding part of the activities in the countryside in the form of scientific research, providing intellectual support for rural revitalization. Therefore, the new generation of rural teachers need to enrich their theoretical knowledge related to scientific research. The new generation of rural teachers need to take the initiative to enter the rural society, take the initiative to integrate into the rural life, consciously participate in the community interaction, actively participate in various activities in the rural society, play their own cultural radiation, awaken the cultural consciousness of the villagers, and promote the dissemination and development of the local culture, as well as for the rooting of the rural school for the revitalization of the countryside to cultivate a solid reserve force.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores the role dilemma of the new generation of rural teachers, analyzes the root causes of the role dilemma of the new generation of rural teachers, and then constructs a green path to dissolve the role dilemma of the new generation of teachers, promotes the new generation of rural teachers' pre-existing, structural, and constructive role identities, and ultimately facilitates the new generation of rural teachers to realize the development of their natural life, the growth of their social life, and the perfecting of their spiritual life in the poetic rural ecology of education.

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