

Professional Managers and Rural Social Integration in the Context of Rural Revitalization: Dilemmas and Countermeasures

Yunqi Feng, Tingting Li*, Zixuan Qin

School of Economics and Management, Dalian University of Science and Technology, Dalian 116000, Liaoning, China

*Corresponding author: Tingting Li, ltt19900521@dlust.edu.cn

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: In the process of promoting the rural revitalization strategy, rural professional managers are crucial to the development of rural industries, and their integration with rural society affects rural revitalization. This study explores the development of rural professional managers through 355 valid questionnaires. It is found that the gender participation of the team is more balanced, but there is a large proportion of middle-aged, low-educated, and experienced people. They face problems such as low salary, low satisfaction, and insufficient interaction with villagers, and are also constrained by the shortage of talents, insufficient policy support, and imperfect remuneration and incentive mechanisms. For this reason, the introduction of talent training should be strengthened, the policy support system should be improved, and institutional innovation should be promoted to facilitate integration and the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

Keywords: Rural revitalization; Rural professional managers; Rural social integration

Online publication: April 3, 2025

1. Introduction

By 2023, the China Central Government's No.1 Document delineated pivotal objectives for the comprehensive advancement of rural revitalization, underscoring the significance of intensified endeavors in promoting digital rural development^[1]. The integrated development of the rural industry requires the cooperation and division of labor among multiple subjects, the effective docking of multiple elements, the integration of multiple types of resources, and the sharing of information on multiple platforms, and it is a systematic project. However, China's rural areas have long been in a state of development without governance, and this situation must change^[2]. With the promotion of the rural revitalization strategy, the role of rural professional managers has become increasingly important as key promoters of rural industrial development. The study found that external rural professional managers mainly face the dilemma of four dimensions: institutional integration, resource integration, economic

integration, and cultural integration^[3]. This constitutes a major obstacle to its effectiveness.

2. Development status of rural professional managers in the context of rural revitalization

2.1. Basic information

In this study, a total of 355 questionnaires were collected, and after excluding 0 invalid questionnaires, 355 valid questionnaires remained, with an effective rate of 100%, and the output results are shown in **Table 1**.

The gender distribution of rural professional managers is balanced, with women accounting for 54.1% and men 45.9%. The 31–45 age group, making up 76.3%, is the main force, while the 18–30 age group has a low participation rate of 7.3%. 68.7% have a high school education or below, indicating the overall educational level needs improvement. Those with 3–5 years of experience account for 64.8%, showing some stability, but there are not enough long-term practitioners as those with less than 1 year account for 8.2% and those with more than 5 years only 12.4%. In summary, the proportion of middle-aged, low-educated, and experienced people is large, and the team structure needs optimization and overall quality upgrade.

Table 1. Descriptive statistical analysis of the survey sample

Demographic variables	Categorization	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	163	45.9%
	Female	192	54.1%
Age	18–30 years	26	7.3%
	31–45 years	271	76.3%
	46–60 years	38	10.7%
	60 years and over	20	5.6%
Educational background	High school and below	244	68.7%
	Junior college	41	11.5%
	Undergraduate	47	13.2%
	Master's degree or above	23	6.5%
Working experience	Less than 1 year	29	8.2%
	1–3 years	52	14.6%
	3–5 years	230	64.8%
	More than 5 years	44	12.4%

2.2. Correlation analysis between job satisfaction and monthly income

Table 2 shows that the Spearman's correlation coefficient is 0.543, indicating a moderate positive relationship between job satisfaction and monthly income. The P -value of $0.007 < 0.01$, close to zero and much lower than the common significance level, clearly demonstrates a strong positive correlation between the monthly income range and job satisfaction among rural managers. In other words, as monthly income rises, the job satisfaction of rural managers also increases.

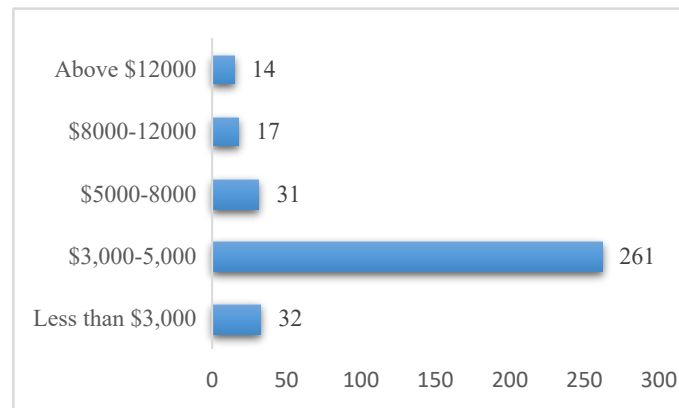
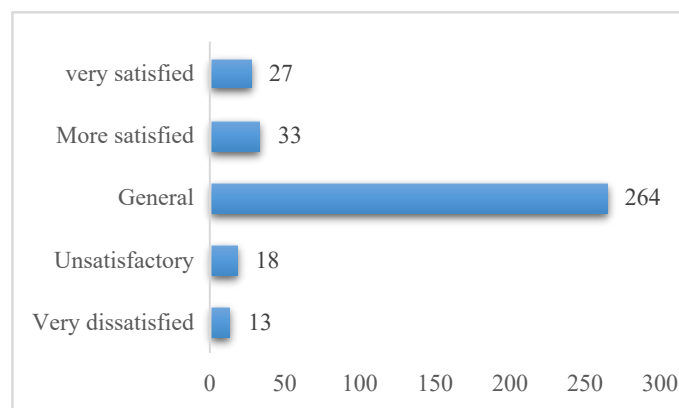
Table 2. Correlation analysis between job satisfaction and monthly income

	Variant	Job satisfaction	Monthly income range
		1	.543**
Spearman's rho	Job satisfaction		0.007
		355	355
	Monthly income range	.543**	1
		0.007	
		355	355

Note: **The correlation is significant at a confidence level (two-test) of 0.01

Among the surveyed rural professional managers, **Figure 1** shows that about 73% have a monthly salary of 3,000–5,000 yuan, indicating a relatively low salary level. **Figure 2** reveals that around 74% report an average job satisfaction, reflecting a lack of work experience and professional fulfillment.

This low-satisfaction and low-salary situation not only hinders rural professional managers' personal development but also thwarts rural revitalization. It dampens their enthusiasm, limits professional growth, and heightens talent-loss risks. As crucial for rural revitalization, their unstable employment seriously impacts rural industry, resource integration, and governance modernization, slowing rural revitalization's overall pace.

**Figure 1.** Manager monthly income range**Figure 2.** Managers' satisfaction with their current jobs

2.3. Correlation analysis between years of working experience and villagers' awareness level

As **Table 3** shows, the Spearman's correlation coefficient is 0.667, indicating a moderate positive correlation between working years and villagers' awareness. The P -value of $0.002 < 0.01$, close to zero and much lower than the common significance level, implies a strong positive correlation between the tenure of village managers and villagers' awareness of them.

Statistical data reveal that the average tenure of village professional managers is relatively short. Limited by this, they cannot fully build deep familiarity with villagers during interaction and communication, which in turn leads to their insufficient understanding of local rural culture.

Table 3. Correlation analysis table between years of working experience and villagers' awareness level

	Variant	Working experience	Level of awareness among villagers
		1	.667**
Spearman's rho	Working experience		0.002
		355	355
	Level of awareness among villagers	.667**	1
		0.002	.
		355	355

Note: **The correlation is significant at a confidence level (two-test) of 0.01

2.4. Multiple linear regression model

From the linear regression **Table 4**, the F value is 2.330 corresponding to the significance value less than 0.05, so this linear regression model is good. The monthly income range and job satisfaction variable t value is positive, corresponding to a significance value of 0.037 less than 0.05. In this model monthly income range significantly and positively affects the level of satisfaction with the job of rural managers. R-square value is 0.283, and the monthly income range explains 28.3% of the dependent variable satisfaction with the current job. Finally, the regression model is constructed as $\text{satisfaction with current job} = 0.102 * \text{Monthly income range} + 2.743$.

Table 4. Linear regression analysis table of independent variables on job satisfaction

Model	Non-standardized coefficient	Standardized factor		Significance	Covariance statistic	
	B	Trial version	t	Sig.	Tolerances	VIF
(Constant)	2.743		19.736	0		
Monthly income range	0.102	0.111	2.09	0.037	0.998	1.002
Low level of villagers' awareness of professional managers	-0.131	-0.086	-1.623	0.105	0.999	1.001
R ²			0.283			
(math.) F-value			2.330			

Note: a. Dependent variable: Satisfaction with the current job

3. Dilemmas facing the development of rural professional managers in the context of rural revitalization

3.1. Shortage of talent

In the context of unbalanced urban-rural development, significant disparities have long persisted between urban and rural residents in social public services like employment, education, social security, healthcare, and social infrastructure such as transportation. The city exerts a strong siphoning effect on the rural population, causing a large number of rural elite labor forces to leave, and the structural problems of the rural population's aging and low quality are becoming more and more prominent^[4].

Figure 3 indicates that in the educational structure of rural professional managers, high-school and below education accounts for 69%, reflecting a relatively low overall educational level. This may limit their ability to absorb new knowledge and management concepts. College education is 12%, bachelor's degree 13%, and master's degree and above 6%, showing a scarcity of highly-educated talents, in line with villages' talent-attraction difficulties.

Figure 4 shows that the 31–45-year-old age group, accounting for 76%, is the main force among rural professional managers. They have rich experience and energy, beneficial for rural development, but also suggest an aging trend in the team.

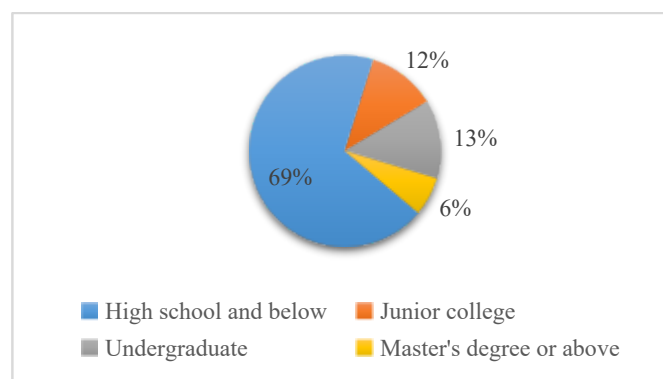


Figure 3. Educational background of managers

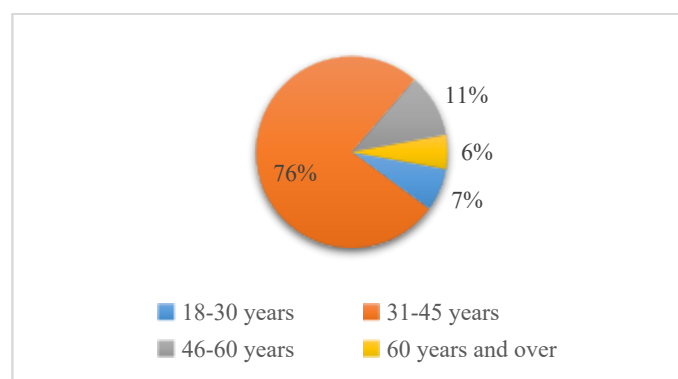


Figure 4. Age distribution of rural professional managers

3.2. Insufficient policy support

During the development of rural professional managers, the absence of specialized policy support obscures their development path. Current policies mainly target overall rural-industry development, with fewer supportive

measures for the specific group of professional managers. For instance, there are no unified standards for professional qualifications and practice norms, leading to varying competency levels of rural professional managers in the market. Meanwhile, the issue of unclear rights and responsibilities is prominent, and the boundaries of responsibilities among government departments, village collectives, and professional managers need to be clarified. In project promotion, overlapping management or management vacuums often occur, reducing decision-making and implementation efficiency.

3.3. Inadequate remuneration and incentive mechanisms

Low pay undermines the stability and attractiveness of rural professional managers. Compared to urban counterparts, they face harsher working conditions and lower salaries, hampering rural talent-attraction (**Figure 5**). Moreover, the lack of effective incentives, mainly short-term material rewards without long-term ones like equity incentives, fails to fully motivate them. This causes managers to focus on short-term gains at the expense of long-term rural industry development. Thus, establishing a reasonable salary system, raising pay levels, and creating a diversified long-term incentive mechanism are crucial to boosting their motivation and creativity.

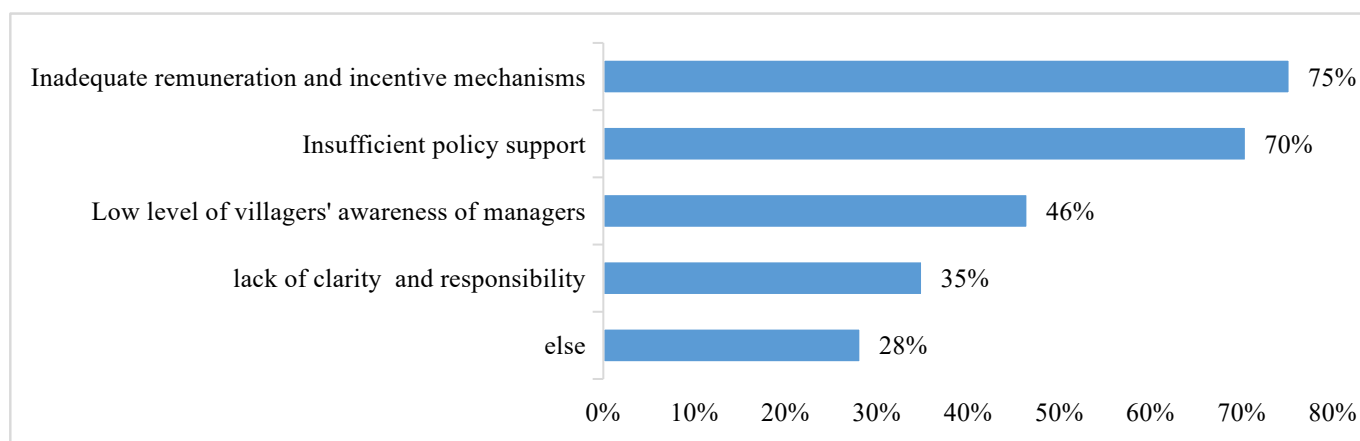


Figure 5. Difficulties encountered in the work of rural professional managers

4. Policy recommendations to promote rural professional managers and rural social integration

4.1. Strengthening the cultivation and introduction of talents

With the proposal of a rural revitalization strategy, the demand for talents in rural development is increasing, the countryside needs a large number of cultured, technologically savvy, managerial, good management, and rural-loving practical talents ^[5]. Set up a talent exchange and cooperation platform to draw outstanding urban talents to rural areas. Meanwhile, optimize the talent-training mechanism by regularly organizing on-the-job training to update professional managers' knowledge structures, enabling them to adapt to evolving market demands and industrial development trends. It is also essential to strengthen rural talent training and introduction to improve the competitiveness and innovation capability of rural industries ^[6].

4.2. Improving the policy support system

The government plays an active role in encouraging and guiding enterprises and individuals to participate in

the development of rural industries through policies, regulations, financial support, and the optimization of the business environment ^[7]. To improve the policy support system, the government should act multi-dimensionally. In policy-making, introduce preferential policies like tax cuts and subsidies to encourage participation. Strengthen regulation by improving laws to protect rights and standardize behavior. In finance, guide institutions to offer low-interest loans and micro-credit. Optimize the business environment by simplifying approvals and lowering access thresholds to attract social resources for rural development.

4.3. Promoting institutional innovation

Establishment of a mechanism for entry and exit from the industry. In terms of entry, qualification standards covering management ability, agricultural knowledge, professional ethics, and other dimensions will be formulated, and certification and assessment will be carried out by professional organizations to ensure the quality of practitioners. When exiting, based on clear specifications, the performance does not meet the standards, violators of the timely withdrawal, to protect the vitality of the industry and standardization. At the same time, strengthen the resource integration system innovation. Build a resource-sharing platform, break the barriers to the circulation of factors, promote the optimal allocation of land, capital, technology, and other resources, guide rural professional managers to participate in resource integration and synergistic development, and help rural industrial upgrading and revitalization through institutional innovation.

5. Conclusion

This paper, through questionnaires and data analysis, studies rural professional managers and their integration into rural society during rural revitalization. The current rural professional manager team has a balanced gender ratio but is mainly middle-aged with low education. Their low salaries, which greatly influence job satisfaction, impede both personal development and rural revitalization. Also, short working years lead to limited interaction with villagers and poor understanding of rural culture. Facing dilemmas such as talent shortages, insufficient policy support, and an imperfect salary-incentive mechanism, the paper proposes solutions including strengthening talent cultivation and introduction, building exchange platforms and improving training; enhancing the policy support system in policy, regulations, and finance aspects; and promoting institutional innovation by setting up a reasonable entry-exit mechanism and strengthening resource-integration systems to boost their integration into rural society and rural revitalization.

Funding

2025 College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Plan Project "Rural CEOs to Help the Internet of Things Forestry Carbon Research on Innovation and Agricultural Development of Sink Models"

2024 College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Plan Project "Innovation and development of the forestry carbon sink mode of the Internet of Things under the domain" (Project number: 202413207008)

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Luo G, Yang Y, Wang L, 2023, Driving Rural Industry Revitalization in the Digital Economy Era: Exploring Strategies and Pathways in China. *Plos One*, 18(9): e0292241.
- [2] Xiang HX, Zhai BL, Yang Y, 2024, The Realization Logic of Rural Revitalization: Coupled Coordination Analysis of Development and Governance. *Plos One*, 19(6): e0305593.
- [3] Zeng Y, Ma Y, Li X, 2024, Settle Down in an Unfamiliar Village. *Youth Studies*, 2024(4): 42–55 + 95.
- [4] Tang LX, 2021, Practical Exploration of Talent Demand and Solutions under the Rural Revitalization Strategy. *Guizhou Social Sciences*, 2021(1): 161–168.
- [5] Wei HK, 2018, Talent: The Most Critical and Dynamic Factor in Rural Revitalization. *Rural Work Communications*, 2018(9): 45.
- [6] Yue A, Nekmat E, Beta AR, 2019, Digital Literacy Through Digital Citizenship: Online Civic Participation and Public Opinion. *Evaluation of Youth Minorities in Southeast Asia*, 2019(7): 100–114.
- [7] Luo G, Yang Y, Wang L, 2023, Driving Rural Industry Revitalization in the Digital Economy Era: Exploring Strategies and Pathways in China. *Plos One*, 18(9): e0292241.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.