

A Survey of Basic Current Situations of Teachers in Independent Colleges

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Abstract This paper conducts the preliminary investigation of the basic current situations of teachers in independent colleges in the sampling questionnaire survey method, and the data acquired uses Excel, and SPSS for statistics and analysis. The results of data in survey indicate that teachers independent colleges are young; they commonly have higher education; and they are under heavy workload and psychological stress. It proposes to make the independent colleges become the fertile ground for growth of teachers and scholars by deepening the construction of campus culture and precipitating the personal culture of the independent colleges; the innovation of the paper is that it conducts the questionnaire survey of the current situations of the teachers in the independent colleges and draws a conclusion from the data.

Key words Independent colleges; Teachers; Survey report; SPSS

1 Introduction

The independent colleges have not been run for a long time, and the full-time teachers have increased slowly. One part is the teachers of organizers and those recruited from outside, and the other part is the teachers of system of appointment, who are mainly the students or postgraduate students just having left universities.

The national assessment of undergraduate teaching started in 2004, and the “Assessment Index System of Undergraduate Teaching” definitely provides the ratio of teachers to pupils of general comprehensive universities should be between 18:1 and 16:1. In the overall background of university enrollment expansion in consecutive years, the students grow rapidly, by contrast, The number of the teachers in the independent colleges are few; the ratio of teachers to pupils has become the objectivity in of independent colleges. For example, the ratio in some independent colleges has actually reached 32:1.

Obviously, in such environment, the teachers in the independent colleges face heavier teaching tasks than teachers in other public institutions and work under heavier psychological pressure.

And is it really the case?

The authors conducted the questionnaire survey of the current psychological situations of teachers in about 20 independent colleges, in the cities such as Zhuhai, Conghua, Huadu, Tianjin, Qingyuan, Dalian and Shandong, in the sampling investigation method with several students from December, 2009 to 20th, June, 2010 for 7 months. The survey samples involve over 600 teachers, aging from 22 to 66.

The objectives of investigation aim to understand the current psychological situations and characteristics of the teachers in the independent colleges currently, carry out the specific analysis of data in survey, and discover the problems so as to cause thinking. It mainly adopts the anonymous survey investigation and builds the website for investigating the anonymous interviewees logging in the system. There are 18 items designed in the questionnaire contents with all multiple choices, and the survey contents cover the aspects, such as age, gender, discipline and major, education, working years, salary, professional title, plans of job hopping in short time (or not), plans of further study(or not), psychological sense of belonging in the independent colleges (or not), relationship situation with colleagues and superior-subordinate relationship, etc. with the survey scope of large, medium and small cities.

The interviewees in the questionnaire survey are 629, leading to 628 effective questionnaires. The youngest interviewee is 22, while the oldest is 68. In the effective questionnaires recycled, there are 562 interviewees aging from 22 to 35, 26 aging from 36 to 55 and 40 aging from 56 to 66, which have been shown in the Figure 1 below:

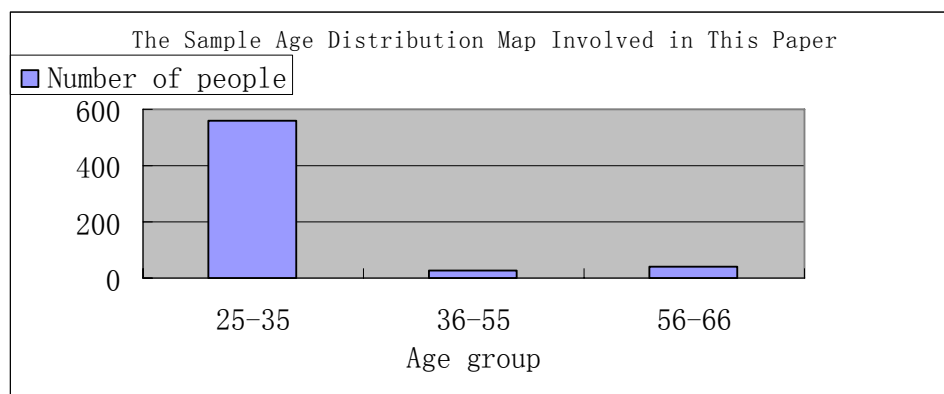


Figure 1

When arranging the survey reports, we adopt the Excel and SPSS tools for statistics and acquire a lot of statistical data; carry out the further researches on the relevant data, including the horizontal and vertical comparison analysis of data with various characteristics.

2 Analysis of Current Situation Survey

2.1 General analysis

In 628 interviewees, there are 562 teachers aging below 35, accounting for 89.5% of the overall visiting capacity. So it can be seen that the young teachers are the main sources of the teachers in the independent colleges. And there are 68 bachelors, 491 masters and 3 PhDs of them, indicating most of them with higher education. 281 are lecturers or of professional titles above, and the average working years in independent colleges are 2.8, which show that they haven't worked for a long time in the independent colleges and also the mobility of young teachers is greater.

2.2 Pressure source analysis of the young teachers

2.2.1 Pressure of teaching

Most young teachers are masters, lacking the systematic training of education teaching; when they try hard to accomplish the teaching tasks according to the requirements, they need to accept the necessary education skill training, such as Putonghua training, etc, making them feel various difficulties. Besides, the students in the independent colleges have weak learning foundations, and lack motion; not only the young teachers can not gain the expecting effects by investing more time and energy, but they do need to spend double time and energy for class management. About a half of the young teachers of the interviewees think "the reality is far from the ideal", and they show extreme helplessness in teaching.

2.2.2 Pressure of scientific research

The scientific research has always been one of the important functions in universities while the teachers in colleges are the main force for scientific researches. Currently, the independent colleges mainly focus on the teaching, and have not so many or higher requirements in scientific researches. However, the promotion of professional titles relies on the scientific results to a large extent, and the level of professional titles directly affects the income of teachers. So the teachers in the independent colleges have to be engaged in heavy teaching work and also increase the attention and energy investment in the scientific research.

In the interviewees aging below 35, 64.6% of the teachers think they can't apply for the scientific research item successfully since they are junior to others, with low professional titles and lack scientific accumulations, a half of the interviewees feel physical and mental anxiety, more depression and pressure.

Besides, analyzing from the scientific system and objectivity, the independent colleges are still young, most of them need to rely on the reputation of the maternal schools, and the brands of the independent colleges have not been solidly established. In such environment, they seem to stand alone when independently applying for or bidding for the national, provincial and municipal scientific items.

2.2.3 Pressure of further study

In the interviewees, 73.8% of the young teachers choose to update their own knowledge by further study to respond to the time of knowledge explosion and new science and technology everyday. It is

reported that, in the PhD enrollment of Suzhou University in 2006, 1010 fought over 300 PhD opportunities.^[1]

And such continual further study will make the busy working and life of young teachers much busier, making their psychological pressure heavy.

2.2.4 Influence of gender difference on pressure

In 628 survey samples, the ratio of men to women of the interviewees is generally 1:1, and we can draw a conclusion from the question analysis of their questionnaires: in the independent colleges, the female young teacher obviously feels more anxiety than male young teacher, and those who obviously feel anxiety account for 28.5% of the females, and 21% of the males; those who obviously feel anxiety in life account for 23.6% of the females and 18.3% of the males, which show that the females face more pressure than males. In the females of teachers interviewed, several of them directly expressed the pressure of adaptation-married pressure, and the crisis awareness resulted from the separation of marriage period, etc.

2.2.5 Crisis of sense of belonging

In the effective 628 samples, 78.5% of them think they lack sense of belonging when working in the independent colleges, which is greatly unexpected, of whom 70%-80% people think the workload is too large and the salary is too low. Of these people, over 30% choose further study, close to 30% choose to obtain civil service post or wait for opportunities to enter other public institutions while a small part of people choose entrepreneurship.

And then we continue the face-to-face interview, the teachers interviewed mainly raised three points of questions:

Firstly, salary problem. Most independent colleges are constructed by one or several teachers through collection of money, and they lack the support of the government; considering the operation costs, these teachers recruited may possibly face the possibility of dismissal at any time. They mainly sign the one-year to three-year contracts; their salaries in the winter and summer vacation are lower, and they can't gain salaries of 13 months like the public universities. The social insurance, housing accumulation funds and medical insurance payments in the contract period are implemented according to the enterprise nature; while the public universities implement them according to the public institutions. By contrast, the "three types of money" paid by the public universities are obviously higher than those of the independent colleges, bringing extremely huge psychological gap to most teachers in the independent colleges. Seen from this point, the relationship between teachers and independent colleges are basically temporary employment.

Secondly, national policy problem. The teachers in the independent colleges can't enjoy the equal treatment in the following aspects: national policy and recruitment system, teacher organization, calculation of working and teaching years, evaluation of professional titles and continuation education, etc., resulting in the lost of activeness of most young teachers in continuation work.

Third, problems resulted from the college management mechanism. Zhang of an independent college interviewed said: "The College uses the elimination system for management and assessment of the teachers, and the last of the comprehensive assessment of each semester will be eliminated and dismissed." The assessment elimination system involves the assessment and justification, etc., and the implement of the mechanism brings unstable factors to the teachers recruited.

Establish scientific assessment system of teachers, improve the assessment and recruitment system, use different assessment scales and methods to teachers of different disciplines and ages, figure out their advantages and disadvantages; offer some constructive viewpoints and respect the fruit of labor.^[4]

2.2.6 Current situations of the old teachers in the independent colleges

In the 628 samples, there are 40 aging from 55 to 66, most of who continue to work after retirement from public universities. Most of them are optimistic and with higher professional titles; 29 are of assistant high professional titles, account for 72.5% of them; 11 are of high professional titles, accounting for 27.5%. 87.5% of them think the workload is heavy, and most of them think the workload is heavier than that in the original units of public universities.

3 Conclusions

3.1 Sample summary

To the 628 effective samples, it is reflected that the age structure of teachers in the independent colleges is of the young type; most of the teachers are young; and the colleges lack the prime associate professors, professors and double-teacher type talents aging from 35 to 55. All parties should pay

attention to the heavy teaching, scientific research and continuation further study pressure of teachers in the independent colleges. And we do suggest offering concern, support and encouragement to them. The main reasons why the teachers lack the sense of belonging are that the stability of teachers is not strong and the working years are not long.

The paper is only limited in the 628 samples having effectively accomplished the questionnaire survey, but can't be on behalf of the overall objectivity of the independent colleges.

3.2 Suggestions

3.2.1 Precipitate the culture of the independent colleges

The independent colleges have the more flexible mechanism than the public universities, and have greater autonomy in talent introduction; the key problem is to grasp the construction of system well, and create a good policy and work environment for the teachers and staffs.

Although there are still obvious differences between the public universities and independent colleges in the policies related to the teachers, with the gradual promotion of the social recruitment system, the differences of staff use of the public universities and civil colleges will be gradually reduced. In order to retain talents, not only the colleges need to transform the environment, but also adjust the policies, improve the treatment of talents in various ways, specify the incentive mechanism, improve security system, and increase welfares of teachers^[2] according to the current market value regulars, offering the teachers sense of belonging at home. Only by this, the excellent teachers can be retained and work at ease, setting their mind at rest and with all their heart.

3.2.2 Take actions at suitable time and local circumstances

Applied-type academic core teachers are the core force of the disciplinary construction of universities and the core strength of teaching for the independent colleges to bring up advanced applied-type professional talents; excellent young teachers are the future of construction of the independent colleges. Therefore, the training of excellent young teachers should become an important task for the construction and development of the independent colleges^[2], and be adhered to for a long time.

Combine the introduction and training, and transform from the extensional to intrinsic development model^[3], which is not only conducive to the stability of teachers, but also forms the situation of letting a hundred schools of thought strive, and the construction and form of the good teaching style.

3.2.3 Emancipate the mind and innovate to use the talents

“The swift horse is common while the good judge is not” fully shows that the growth of a talent needs to be discovered by the “good judge”. Fully playing the role of oneself can lay solid foundation for the further development of the independent colleges and bring more opportunities for success for the development of personal academic life. And the college needs to find out the teachers with talent and personality with cleaner eyesight and ask them to study the fields of expertise to strive for more light spots.

In addition, the independent colleges also can try to walk the paths with their own characteristics, besides relying upon the superior resources, they can make use of the flexible mechanism to introduce richer resources, and even pass the parent institutions and advance bravely. It might not be done in one single day, but we can try it.

In a word, moderately relaxing atmosphere of universities is conducive to the growth of scholar-type teachers. When constructing the harmonious campus culture, the following aspects should be done: reduce the psychological load of teachers properly, grasp the development opportunities at present, innovate to use the talents, take actions at suitable time and local circumstances, and create the situation of letting a hundred schools of thought strive so as to welcome the more brilliant spring for the development of the independent colleges.

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