

A Study on Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Less Economically Developed Areas

Based on an empirical survey in County S, City A, Inner Mongolia

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the current situation of teachers' job satisfaction is an important way to promote the development of education in less economically developed areas. This study used interview and questionnaire method to investigate teachers' job satisfaction in County S, City A, Inner Mongolia. The results showed that teachers' job satisfaction in the county was at a moderately low level, with low satisfaction in four dimensions, including "work difficulty and intensity", "quality of students and parents", "salary and remuneration", "working and living conditions". In contrast, satisfaction in "professional identity", "social status" and "interpersonal relationship" are higher. Based on this, some solution strategies were proposed to improve teachers' satisfaction in the region, to better motivate teachers to serve educational development goals, and promote high-quality educational development.

Keywords: teachers, job satisfaction, less economically developed regions.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the construction of a well-off society and promotion of education equity, consolidating and expanding the achievements of poverty alleviation in education have become the key links in Chinese education work. According to a Chinese proverb, "for a country to prosper, it must respect its teachers", therefore, arousing the teachers working enthusiasm can improve the quality of education. S County, located in the northwest of Erdos City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, has a remote geographical location and relatively backward economy. It withdrew from the poverty flag in July 2018. This study attempts to analyze the status of basic education teacher satisfaction in this region, the factors that affect teacher satisfaction, and put forward corresponding solutions. It aim to make most teachers stay and enjoy teaching, and revitalize the "endogenous power" of education development in economically underdeveloped areas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of "Teachers' job satisfaction", defined by Landy. F.J., as a psychological state of how satisfied the teachers are with their work content, as well as their

working conditions [1]. A majority of domestic studies explored the factors that influenced teachers' satisfaction in economically underdeveloped areas. Xiao's study pointed out four keys, such as teachers' personality characteristics, school characteristics, work environment characteristics, and regional characteristics. Among them, variables of teaching age, education level, salary, work intensity, further training and promotion, school management, teachers' origin place, and social pressure significantly affected rural teachers' job satisfaction [2]. Some studies revealed that rural teachers' job satisfaction was at a medium to low level, with lower satisfaction in salary, further training and promotion, work stress, and work environment [3]. A study focused on 27 rural elementary schools in Fujian Province and indicated three factors, including teachers' individual characteristics, psychological characteristics and work environment. The study found that the work stress variable was the main element that affected these teachers' job satisfaction [4]. In terms of comparative studies, Zhang focused on the difference on high school teachers' job satisfaction between southern and northern Jiangsu, and the results showed that teachers' job satisfaction in southern Jiangsu was surprisingly higher than in northern Jiangsu, where with more developed economy and better infrastructure. The reason for this is that although the treatment in economically

underdeveloped area is not as high as in developed areas, teacher is viewed as a more respectful and "attractive" profession [5]. Yin established a model of secondary school teachers' job satisfaction in three dimensions: educational expectations, school management and governmental guarantee. Only the cooperation of these three parties can improve teachers' job satisfaction [6].

With the gradual advancement of reform, although teachers' salaries have been significantly improved, rural teachers salaries are still low. Especially teachers' salary vary greatly between urban and rural areas. There are also many problems in the distribution of school living allowances and welfare: the performance pay system has been seriously deflated in actual operation, not really implemented; the incentive mechanism is not really applied either[7].

3. RESEARCH METHOD

In the initial survey, most of the basic education teachers in this county were interviewed, and some teachers were selected for in-depth interviews to comprehensively understand their dissatisfaction, difficulties and suggestions in work. NVivo qualitative analysis software was used to code the interview records at three levels, and the factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction were divided into 9 dimensions (Table 1).

Referring to "Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire" by Chen and Sun [2], a teacher job satisfaction questionnaire is produced. It contains three parts, the first part is the basic information, mainly to understand the demographic characteristics of the samples such as gender, age, education, and marital status. The second two parts are the overall job satisfaction and the satisfaction of each dimension,

using the Likert five-point scale, "5" indicating "very satisfied", "1" indicating "very dissatisfied". The higher the score of the sample, the higher the satisfaction with the job. In this study, 200 questionnaires were distributed by random sampling method, 182 valid questionnaires were collected, with a recovery rate of 91%.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Basic information of the subjects

The descriptive statistics showed that the number of female teachers in the teaching force was nearly two times of male teachers. Teachers' education were mostly bachelor's degree, about three-quarters of teachers were married, more than half of teachers' age were between 31-41. Besides, a majority of teachers had intermediate titles, while a few hold high-priced titles over 51 year old.

4.2 Overall teacher job satisfaction

In order to make the survey results clearer and more intuitive, "very satisfied" and "satisfied" were grouped into one category of "satisfied", "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" were divided into "dissatisfied", and the frequencies of their corresponding items were calculated respectively.

The result showed that the number of "dissatisfied" teachers(30.1%) was 5.8 percentage points higher than "satisfied" teachers, and the number of "average" teachers(45.6%) was the largest. This indicated that the overall satisfaction of basic education teachers in S County was at a medium to low level, and most teachers were not very satisfied with their work.

Table 1. Coding analysis of factors influencing teacher job satisfaction

Open coding (partial)	Spindle coding	Selective coding
"The place is too remote and there aren't enough teachers, so we teach in several different subjects", "Although there is a monthly grassroots subsidy, it's quite a big expense if weekly travel home", "In rural areas, teachers have a higher social position", "The opportunities for training and platforms for communication are fewer in this place".	Work conditions, Salary, Social position, Self-development.	The job itself
"Our dormitory is draughty in winter and overgrown in summer with mosquitoes, cockroaches and rats", "The literacy of students' parents here is generally low", "School atmosphere is relatively simple. The teachers' team is united, and the management is humanized".	Basic conditions, Relationships, Students and parents, Management	Working Environment
"Teaching is not just a job, but its sacredness lies in shaping the souls".	Professional Identity.	Work Attitude

4.3 Satisfaction of each dimension

According to Table 2, teachers' satisfaction of

"social position" and "relationships" are higher, and fewer of them are "dissatisfied". The majority of teachers believe that all staff members can work

together for one goal. However, the four dimensions of “work conditions”, “students and parents”, “salary” and “basic conditions” have the lowest satisfaction. Indicating that teachers in this area are not satisfied since the remote location and economic underdevelopment. Low literacy of students’ parents, imperfect infrastructure, and less financial support are the main reasons for their dissatisfaction.

Most noteworthy is the work attitude aspect, 34.9% of the basic education teachers have high professional identity level, with only 19.6% of them have lower level. This indicates that these teachers have an active cognitive process as well as emotional experience. Many studies have shown that teachers with higher professional identity are more motivated and have higher job satisfaction [8]. To further clarify the relationship between teachers’ professional identity and job satisfaction, this study further analysed the teachers with higher professional identity and found that 89% of them are generally satisfied with their work.(Table 3).

Table 2. Satisfaction with each dimension (%)

Aspects	Dimensions	Satisfied	General	Dissatisfied
The job itself	Work conditions	18.33	38.16	40.51
	Salary	25.12	39.33	34.55
	Social position	42.50	36.21	21.29
	Self-development	38.25	44.75	17.00
Working Environment	Basic conditions	26.75	34.24	39.01
	Relationships	44.25	38.75	17.00
	Students and parents	23.78	35.31	40.91
Work Attitude	Management	29.17	34.56	36.27
	Professional Identity	34.90	45.50	19.60

Table 3. Overall satisfaction and satisfaction in various aspects of the sample with high professional identity

Items	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Overall satisfaction	63	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.61
The job itself	63	1.00	4.00	3.12	0.58

Working Environment	63	1.00	4.00	3.06	0.63
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5. SUGGESTIONS

Due to the above results, the government should further increase investment in education, and implement the policy guidelines on improving the level of teachers’ remuneration, and actively solve the imbalance between teachers’ workload and actual performance remuneration. Besides, solving the structural shortage of teachers in targeted ways, and enriching the teaching forces in rural areas. The social should vigorously publicize the advanced deeds of typical outstanding teachers on the front line of education, and form a strong atmosphere of respect for teachers and education in the whole society. The schools should strengthen the infrastructures to provide teachers with high-quality and convenient basic conditions. They should innovate and improve the school management system, and explore on-limits promotion methods for teachers. Opening parent schools to promote their advanced educational conception is pressing, and a synergy of education between home and school should be formed. Strengthen the construction of teacher morality and cultivate an educational atmosphere of love and dedication to enhance the professional identity of teachers is necessary, which can fundamentally improving teachers’ job satisfaction.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on this research, the factors affecting teachers’ job satisfaction is further clarified. There is an inherent logical correlation between the dimensions and should be considered when seeking solutions. This research confirms that professional identity has a significant positive impact on teachers’ job satisfaction. Due to the several dimensions of teachers’ low satisfaction in this survey, it is essential to form a three-tier protection network of “government-society-school” to improve teachers’ job satisfaction.

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