

Psychological Contract between Teacher and Student Improves Teaching Process in the Network Courses of College

A Study based on the network course of *psychology* in Shaoguan University

Suqun Liao

Department of Psychology
Shaoguan University
Shaoguan, Guangdong
liaosuqun@foxmail.com

Abstract—A psychological contract is a invisible mutual beliefs, perceptions, and informal obligations between the two parties. The psychological contract between teacher and student were referred to their expectations were reached the psychological identity by communication, but this had not been reported in network course. In order to confirm the existence and possible efficacy of psychological contract in the network teaching, the study on the psychological contract in the network teaching were explored based on the Shaoguan University " *Psychology* " network curriculum. The results showed that students' learning enthusiasm were promoted by teachers performing their desired behavior, while students's learning initiative and efficiency were damaged when teacher's desired behavior were stopped. Psychological contract, a special contract form, were formed based on the emotional communication and reached an invisible agreement about rights and obligations. The results in this paper reflect psychological contract between teachers and students has a good application value in the network teaching, while the content and composition of psychological contract between the teachers and students in the network curriculum were still to be explored further.

Keywords—*psychological contract, teacher and student, teaching process, network course*

I. INTRODUCTION

A psychological contract originated from commercial organizations in 1960s, which developed by American organizational scholar Argyris. It represents the mutual beliefs, perceptions, and informal obligations between an employer and an employee. Distinguishable from the formal written contract, the psychological contract is a kind of invisible constraints and plays a role in both the incentive and constraint between employers and employees [1]. Later, Levison confirmed there was an implicit contract except written contract and defined it as the mutual expectation not documented, which might significant influence on employee attitudes and behavior and was widely used in the field of management [2]. After 1980s, the meaning, characteristics and contents of psychological contract were defined by the representative scholars such as Rousseau (1989), Robinson (1994) and Morrison (1995), which showed that psychological contract was not explicitly stated and reached a invisible agreement by ways, including awareness in the specific cultural background and environment, suggestion or communication [3-4].

Psychological contract is characterized by implicit, subjective and dynamic.

The first article on psychological contract was published in 1996 in China, so far only ten years [5]. The chinese scholar Ding Ronggui and Zhang Tiqin defined the psychological contract was a kind of expectation with no formal written contract but understood each other. Compared with the obvious text contract and oral contract, the psychological contract were conformed universal existence, not only in the business, but also in all kinds of non-profit organizations thought whose implication making it be aware easily.

Weilin Cao (2007) firstly described the definition, content and action mechanism of psychological contract between teachers and students and characteristics based on a series of empirical research during the teaching process of high school [6-7]. Psychological contract between teachers and students refers to part of their expectations is recognized psychologically by each other the identity by means of communication and came into a series of consensus about the relevant rights, obligations and agreed between the two sides of the contact protocol. As the significant difference of relationship between teacher-student and employer-employee, Cao Weilin believed that the psychological contract between teachers and students had its own special characteristics such as mutually non-economic benefic, periodic formation-performance of agreement, adjusting contents on different stage and stretches of after graduation.

Weilin Cao (2010) reported that student satisfaction was positively related to teachers' performance the degree of responsibility of psychological contract between teachers and students, which indicated that the subjects in the teaching to fulfill obligations and rights might incentive both students and teachers [8].

The online courses, as a specific course, include teacher, students and curriculum resources of network. Psychological contract between teachers and students in the network course has not been reported. Although the great difference between network teaching and traditional classroom teaching, the understanding and expectations on the role of teachers or students is similar. The psychological contract between teachers and students might exist in the network course and encourage teachers or students or both to complete the task of teaching successfully.

II. EXPERIMENT, RESEARCH AND RESULTS

In order to confirmed the existence and possible efficacy of psychological contract in the network teaching, the study on the psychological contract in the network teaching were explored based on the Shaoguan University "Psychology" network curriculum.

We assumed that the psychological contract between teachers and students in network teaching was existence. Based on their respective social role. Teachers have been given expectations including three main respects [8-9]: 1) teaching ability such as clear thinking, refining knowledge points, explain clearly, linking theory with practice. 2) Communication skills, such as expressivity, care about every students, good question-answering. 3) Academic ability such as extensive knowledge reflecting the science progress. Students have been given expectations including learning attitude, caring about others, respect, independence etc. Therefore, as both teacher and student fulfil their duties would have been improve teaching and learning. While one of them destroys psychological contract would have been disappointed the other one and reduce teaching effect.

The experimental subjects come from three classes with the same teacher, who should finish the network course of "Psychology" in one term. The experimental design was shown in Fig1. Different teacher behaviors in network course might lead to students with different learning behavior quantized by post numbers in the topic discussion and the homework finished good or bad. At the end of term, teachers' performance were scored by all students by questionnaire survey.

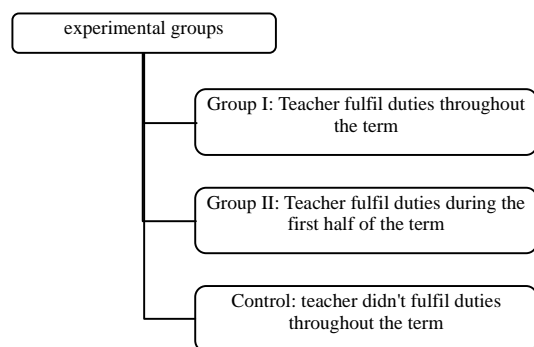


Figure 1 The three groups used in the study

Results were the following: 1) In Group 1 of teacher fulfil duties throughout the term, including keeping close the equal communication with students, answering questions as soon as possible, participating in the discussion with student and comment on the homework in time. The students in this group behavior learned with high enthusiasm, all of which finished the topic discuss in network, speeched and respondd to other students. The homework were well done by independently. 2) In Group II of eachar fulfil duties during the first half of the term and just completed the regular teaching task during remaining lesson period. In this class, the students' learning enthusiasm were highly in the first half of the term, but

significantly decreased in remaining lesson period. 3) In the control, teacher doesn't fulfil duties throughout the term but completed the regular teaching task. Students in this class showed the lowest learning enthusiasm compared with the other two groups. All the student done homework but most of them copied each other just for the regular learning task.

The postes in the topic discuss "There is psychological activity as long as there are human," (topic discuss I) of the first half of the term and the postes in the topic discuss "What kind of teacher is popular with the students" (topic discuss II) in the second half of the term were compared, shown in table I.

TABLE I. Comparisons of the Post in the Two Topic Discuss Between Groups

Group (student number)		Group I (N=36)	Group II (N=46)	Control I (N=58)
Topic discuss I	All postes	157	96	165
	postes per student	4.36	1.65	3.58
Topic discuss II	All postes	171	55	93
	postes per student	4.75	0.94	2.02

Students scored teacher's performance including three aspects: teaching attitude, communication ability and academic ability with the highest 10 points, the lowest 1 points. The results was shown in table II.

TABLE II. The Scores of the Teacher's Performance Graded by Students (Mean±Standard Deviation)

Group (student number)	Group I (N=36)	Group II (N=46)	Control (N=58)	Test of significance (P)
teaching ability	9.65±1.54	8.04±1.55	7.31±0.85	0.65
communication ability	9.72±2.01	7.79±1.91	5.70±1.34	0.31*
academic ability	9.01±1.77	7.46±1.68	5.53±1.95	0.36*

Note: P<0.5, significant difference

The results showed that the scores of teachers' teaching ability had no significant difference, which the both scores of communication skills and academic ability different significantly between the three groups, which indicated that teachers' teaching behavior consistent with the expected or no did effect students' learning enthusiasm in the network course.

III. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Psychological contract is a special contract form, has an important role in the incentive and constraint besides the invisible cohesion function. There is no obvious benefit relationship between teachers and students in college, but in the daily teaching process, teachers always have expectations for students, such as the students should obey the class rules, respect teachers and activity in class. Students also have expectations for teachers, such as preparing lessons carefully, caring about every student, respect students. The psychological contract between teachers and students will be formed if their behavior accord with their expectations. Then, teacher will be responsible for teaching and students will obey the classroom discipline and study hard. The results are similar to the study reported by Weilin Cao in class teaching [9].

One of the most obvious differences with classroom

teaching, the network curriculum is lack of face-to-face communication between teachers and students. while, in some case, virtual network environment will be benifited to the teachers-students communication for less anxiousness. Here, we conformed that teachers behavior influence d students' learning motive in network course just as that in classroom teaching. Teachers tented to fulfill duties incente student performance better and better, while If the performance of teachers' duties was worse, students would be fulfill their duties in the lower level.

One of the shortcomings in this study is that content and composition of psychological contract between the teachers and students in the network curriculum is not fully understood. Clearly the content of psychological contract is very necessary. The psychological contract content should be refined and "informed" teachers and students through various ways, which effectively promote teachers and students to perform fully the psychological contract fulfillment and realize the dual function of incentive and constraint. The detail content of the psychological contract between teachers and students in the network teaching need to be further study.

The results in this paper reflect psychological contract between teachers and students has a good application value in the network teaching. There are three suggenstions for teachers and students. Firstly, As the network teaching lack of face-face comunication, both teachers and students should improve skills and ability to perceive for the effective establish psychological contract between the teachers and students based on the close communication and transmit ideas and expectation to each other. Secondly, the teachers and students should evaluate their needs and abilities appropriately, so that they may adjusted their expectation to match with each other's height in time. Thirdly, both teachers and students should pay attention to

dynamic changes of expectations to keep a dynamic balance of expectation and maintain the psychological contract.

REFERENCES

- [1] N. Anderson and R. Schalk, "The Psychological Contract in Retrospect and Prospect," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, vol.19, Mar. 1989. pp. 637-647, Doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379
- [2] H. Levinson, "Reciprocation: The Relationship Between Man and Organization," *Journal of Administ rative Science Quarterly*, vol. 9, Feb. 1989. pp. 370-390, Doi: 10.2307/2391032
- [3] I. S. Jacobs and C. P. Bean, "Fine particles, thin films and exchange anisotropy," in *Magnetism*, vol. III, G. T. Rado and H. Suhl, Eds. New York: Academic, 1963, pp. 271-350.
- [4] D. M. Rousseau, "The 'Problem' of The Psychological Contract Considered," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*," vol.19, Mar. 1998. pp. 649-664, Doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379
- [5] Jiazhou Chen, Wenshuang L, Liluo Fang, "Content, Dimension, and Type of Psychological Contract, *Advances in Psychological Science*, vol.11, Dec. 2003 . pp. 437-445, doi:10.3969/j.issn.1671-3710.2003.04.014.
- [6] Weilin Cao and Lina Zhao, "Experimental Research on Teacher Expectancy Effect in Psychological Contract between Teachers and Students in College" vol.12, Dec. 2007 . pp. 95-98, doi:10.3969/j.issn.1003-2614.2007.12.029.
- [7] Weilin Cao, Xiaoqun Dua, Xiaotang Wang, "Empirical study of College Teacher-student Psychological Contract Responsibility," *Higher Education Exploration*, vol.6, Jun. 2007. pp. 105-109. doi:10.3969/j.issn.1673-9760.2009.02.025.
- [8] Weilin Cao, Xiaoqun Dua, Xiaotang Wang, "An Empirical Research on Responsibilities of Teacher-student Psychological Contract in Institutions of Higher Education" *Higher Education Exploration*, vol.6, Jun. 2007, pp.105-109.doi:10.3969/j.issn.1673-9760.2007.06.030.
- [9] Weilin Cao, Jing Zhang, Jiangping Guo, "Empirical Study on the Differences of the Psychological Contract's Contents Between the Teachers and Students in Three Colleges," *Higher Education Exploration*, vol.6, April. 2008, pp.116-120.doi:10.3969/j.issn.1673-9760.2008.04.028.