

A Critical Analysis of Teacher Attrition in Rural Secondary Schools in China

Yulu Du

University of Bristol, Uk, Bristol, Bs8 1qu, China

Keywords: Teacher Attrition, Rural Secondary Schools, Challenge

Abstract. In recent years, the instability of the teaching staff and the serious teacher attrition have emerged in many countries. The same thing is happening in China, more seriously, with the process of urbanization in China, rural teacher attrition has been aggravated. Since there are no new teachers to fill the vacancies timely, rural-school leaders have to face the dilemma of the lack of teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to deeply examine the reason for rural teachers attrition within the context of China from different perspectives.

1. Introduction

Teacher, as a Crucial Part of the School, Plays Crucial Roles in Promoting the Development of the School. Meanwhile, the Overall Level of Teachers Has Vital Influences on the Progress of Schools (Liu, 2007). Therefore, It Has Become a Significant Task for School Administrators to Establish a Team of Teachers with Good Professional Quality, Reasonable Structure and Relative Stability. However, in Recent Years, the Instability of the Teaching Staff and the Serious Teacher Attrition Have Emerged in Many Countries. for Example, a Survey Conducted in the Uk in 2007 Indicates That Nearly 40% of the Teachers Claim That They Were Unwilling to Continue Teaching and the Remaining 40% of Teachers Propose That They Might Leave Schools within Five Years (Peng and Zhou, 2010). Meanwhile, a Survey Conducted in Australia Also Demonstrates That More Than 30% of Teachers Leave Schools At the Beginning of Their Teaching Career (Buchanan et al., 2013). the Same Thing is Happening in China. for Example, a Longitudinal Study of Ten Primary and Secondary Schools in Chongqing Reveals That the Percentage of Teacher Attrition in These Schools is about 5%-10% Per Year (Wang, 2007). More Seriously, with the Process of Urbanization in China, Rural Teacher Attrition Has Been Aggravated (Jia and Zhang, 2017). Since There Are No New Teachers to Fill the Vacancies Timely, Rural-School Leaders Have to Face the Dilemma of the Lack of Teachers. Therefore, It is Significant to Explore and Analyse This Issue in the Context of China.

2. Literature Review

Through Analyzing Relevant Literature, This Paper Finds That Most of the Researches Mainly Explore Rural Teacher Attrition in Terms of the Current Situation Based on Theoretical and Empirical Research. for Example, through Conducting a Survey of Five Representative Primary and Secondary Schools, Zhang (2016) Discovers That the Current Number of Teachers is Seriously Decreased, Especially in Rural Areas. According to the Statistics, from 2010 to 2013, the Number of Rural Teachers in China Had Dropped from 4.7295 Million to 3.345 Million, and the Loss of Rural Teachers in the Short Three Years is as High as 30% (Wang, 2018). Meanwhile, an Increasing Number of Excellent Teachers and Backbone Teachers Tend to Enter Urban Schools from Rural Schools. Chen (2016) Further Discovers That This Trend Has Also Become More Apparent among Young Teachers through Empirical Research.

In Addition, Based on the Survey, Ye (2013) Finds That Teacher Attrition Presents Some Common Characteristics in Most of the Rural Areas, Namely, Younger and Higher Achievement. in Other Words, the Attrition of Novice Teachers is More Serious Than That of the Senior Teachers and Most of Teachers with High Academic Qualifications Are More Inclined to Leave Rural Schools Than Teachers with Low Education. Meanwhile, a Quantitative Study Carried out by

Cheng (2016) on Ten Rural Primary Schools Reconfirms the Conclusion and Further Reveals That Compared with Female Teachers, the Loss of Male Teachers is More Serious in Rural Schools. However, through Carrying out a Survey by the Ministry of Education in China, It is Found That the Number of Female Teacher Attrition is Also Gradually Increasing (Zhang and Yang, 2006). Apart from These, through an in-Depth Interview with the Managers of Some Rural Schools in the Western Region, Li (2014) Also Discovers That Teacher Attrition Has Become a Major Challenge Facing School Leaders.

3. Discussion on the Causes of Rural Teacher Attrition

Rural Teacher Attrition is One of the Main Problems Facing School Administrators. by Exploring the Main Reasons, the Administrators Can Better Solve the Difficulties. Therefore, Based on the School Manager Perspective, This Part Will Mainly Analyse the Reasons for Rural Teacher Attrition in Terms of the Model of Management, teachers' Salary, and the Professional Development of Teachers.

4. The Model of Management

School Leaders, as Mentors and Guides in Teacher Work, Play a Crucial Role in the Development of Teachers. Meanwhile, the Management Style and Concept of Them Have Vital Influences on teachers' Perception and Behaviour (Abel and Sewell, 1999). Scientific and Democratic School Management Mode is Conducive to Stimulating the Enthusiasm and Initiative of Teachers. Conversely, the Rigid and Conservative Management Method May Generate Negative Effects (Dai, 2014). through Exploring the Causes, It is Found That in Rural Schools, There Are Some Issues in the Process of Managing Teachers, Thus Resulting in Teacher Attrition (Ye, 2013).

For One Thing, Rural School Managers Lack Scientific Management Concepts and Methods (Li, 2013). According to the Survey, Peng and Zhou (2010) Discover That Most Rural Managers Are Relatively Conservative in Their Thinking, and Many Schools Still Adopt a High-Intensity Management Mode to Improve Teaching Quality by Extending Working Hours. Meanwhile, by Conducting the Quantitative Research in Four Rural Primary Schools, It is Found That about 76% of the Teachers Work More Than the Average Working Time Advocated by the Government (Wu, 2017). through Interviews with Teachers in Rural Areas, Liu (2012) Also Provides a Similar Conclusion and Further Points out That in the Process of Management, School Leaders Tend to Set Strict Indicators and Work Regulations for Teachers, Whereas the Principle of Teacher-Oriented Management Has Been Neglected.

For Another, Managers Tend to Adopt a Single Teaching Evaluation Model. with the Development of Urbanization, High-Quality Student Resources Are Continuously Flowing into Cities. However, in Order to Attract Better Students, Rural Primary and Secondary Schools Generally Emphasize the Rate of Enrollment (Zhou, 2015). According to the Survey, Bao (2006) Finds That in the Evaluation Process of Teaching, Student Achievement and the Enrolment Rate Have Become the Conditions and Standards for Managers to Evaluate the Level of teachers' Education and Teaching in Many Rural Primary and Secondary Schools (Chang and Lv, 2006). Worse Still, Managers Pay Excessive Attention to the Academic Performance of Students and the Enrollment Rate in the Process of Evaluation, and Simply Equate the Achievement of Students with the Ability of Teachers in Teaching (Dai, 2014), Thus Ignoring the Needs of Teachers, Such as the Professional Development, Which Leads to an Increasing Number of Teachers Leaving Rural Schools.

5. Teachers' Salary

In Light of the Hypothesis of Economic Man, Kelly (2004) Claims That the Majority of people's Behaviour is Driven by Economic Factors. Similarly, Teachers Will Make Choices That They Think Are Reasonable for Economic Needs. in China, Because Primary and Secondary Schools in Rural

Areas Are in Economically Backward Areas, Schools Lack Funds and Educational Resources. Compared with Urban Teachers, Rural Teachers Have Lower Salaries (Bao, 2006). Meanwhile, the Statistics in 2015 Indicates That the Salary of Primary and Secondary School Teachers in Cities is Twice as High as Those in Rural Areas, and Sometimes Even Three Times as High (Zhou, 2015). According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, people's Needs Can Be Divided into Low-Level Needs and High-Level Needs. among Them, Low-Level Needs Are the Most Basic Needs of People (Peng and Zhou, 2010). Therefore, the Salary and Welfare Benefits, as the Most Basic Material Needs of Teachers, May Be the Primary Reason for Teacher Attrition. Although Economic Income Affects teachers' Behaviour to a Certain Extent, These Factors Are All External Factors (Li, 2014). According to the Theory of Motivation, It Can Be Found That the Main Influence on teachers' Choices is Internal Motivation, Namely the Pursuit of Higher Self-Value and Professional Development (Lin, 2017). Hence, teachers' Professional Development Will Be Further Explored Below.

6. The Professional Development of Teachers

In Order to Encourage College Students to Teach in Rural Areas, the Chinese Government Carries out 'Three Support Public Policies and One Assistance' Program (Fu, 2016). with the Implementation of the Policy, Many Normal Students Have Entered Rural Primary and Secondary Schools, Which Has Indeed Injected Fresh Blood into the Development of Rural Education. However, as the Pre-Service Teacher Education and Training Cannot Really Replace the Real Teaching Environment, College Students Need Large-Scale and Long-Term Professional Training and Practical Guidance Before They Become Qualified and Excellent Teachers (Dai, 2014). the Problem is the Shortage of Educational Resources and the Shrinking of the Teaching Staff in Rural Schools, the Lack of Enough Teachers to Train and Guide Their Professional Development. Therefore, with the Continuous Conduction of the Policy, the Contradiction between 'new' Teachers and 'weak' Schools Has Gradually Become Prominent, Which Implies That Schools Cannot Meet the Need of teachers' Development in Professional Ability and Knowledge (Liu, 2012). Hence, in Order to Obtain Better Training and Improve the Professional Knowledge and Skills, Teachers in Rural Areas, Especially Novice Teachers, Choose to Schools with Richer Educational Resources, Which Leads to Rural Teacher Attrition (Zhang, 2016). In Conclusion, Rural Teacher Attrition is Caused by Multiple Factors.

7. Conclusion

Based on the Chinese Background and Relevant Literature, This Paper Explores the Challenges Facing Current Education Managers and Further Finds the Issues of Teacher Attrition in Rural Schools. According to Relevant Research, This Paper Analyzes the Cause and Finds That Various Reasons Lead to Rural Teacher Attrition, Such as Unreasonable School Management Methods and Concepts, Low Salaries, and the Lack of teachers' Professional Development. Hence, in Order to Alleviate the Current Situation, It is Necessary for School Managers to Make Positive Adjustments and Improvements in the Management Mode, teachers' Salary Level and teachers' Professional Development. in Short, School Administrators May Not Be Able to Solve the Current Problems in Time. However, It is Worth Mentioning That the Long-Term Joint Efforts of School Leaders and Managers Can Alleviate the Current Situation of Rural Teacher Attrition to a Certain Extent.

References

- [1] Abel, M. and Sewell, J. (1999). Stress and burnout in rural and urban secondary school teachers. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 92(5), pp.287-293.
- [2] Bao, C. (2006). Policies for compulsory education disparity between urban and rural Areas in China. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 1(1), pp.40-55.

- [3] Buchanan, J., Prescott, A., Schuck, S., Aubusson, P., Burke, P. and Louviere, J. (2013). Teacher retention and attrition: Views of early career teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3).
- [4] Chang, B. and Lv, G. (2006). Investigation analysis into the teacher of middle primary school runs off situation in poverty stricken area of northwest--GanSu Province is a case. *Education Science*, 22(6), pp.61-64.
- [5] Chen, Y. (2016). Study on the turnover and attrition intention of primary and secondary school teachers in county -- Based on the sampling survey of five counties in Yunnan province. YUNNAN NORMAL UNIVERSITY.
- [6] Cheng, X. (2016). The research on the problem of young teachers' recessive loss in rural primary school. GUANGXI NORMAL UNIVERSITY.
- [7] Dai, Z. (2014). Study on the loss of teachers in weak rural schools and countermeasures --from the perspective of balanced development of education. *Journal of Xiamen Radio & Television University*, (4), pp.62-67.
- [8] Fu, S. (2016). Rural primary and secondary school teachers training present situation, problem and countermeasure--Taking Tong Jing county in Sichuan province as an example. Nanchang University.
- [9] Jia, X. and Zhang, X. (2017). Attribution analysis and countermeasures of rural teacher turnover in the process of urbanization. *Continue Education Research*, (12), pp.34-36.
- [10] Kelly, S. (2004). An event history analysis of teacher attrition: Salary, teacher tracking, and socially disadvantaged schools. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 72(3), pp.195-220.
- [11] Li, Y. (2014). An institution analysis of teacher turnover in rural schools: Using G county of Jiangsu province as an example. East China Normal University.
- [12] Lin, P. (2017). Research on teacher motivation and willingness to remain in teaching profession for a long period in Western rural primary schools. Northeast Normal University.
- [13] Liu, S. (2012). The influences of school climate and teacher compensation on teachers' turnover intention in China. *Educational Psychology*, 32(5), pp.553-569.
- [14] Liu, X. (2007). The effect of teacher influence at school on first-year teacher attrition: A multilevel analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey for 1999–2000. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 13(1), pp.1-16.
- [15] Peng, L. and Zhou, X. (2010). On the loss of rural teachers in primary and secondary schools based on Maslow's Need-hierarchy Theory. *Journal of Human First Normal University*, 10(5), pp.27-31.
- [16] Wang, C. (2007). Analysis of Teacher Attrition. *Chinese Education & Society*, 40(5), pp.6-10.
- [17] Wang, C. (2018). Research on the Loss of Rural Primary School Teachers-Taking L in N city as an Example. China West Normal University.
- [18] Wu, P. (2017). A study on the loss of rural primary and middle school teachers in Mudan district of Heze City. SHANGDONG UNIVERSITY.
- [19] Ye, Y. (2013). Research on the issue of the loss of primary and secondary school teachers in rural areas--Taking Tongjiang county in Sichuan province for example. Hunan Normal University.
- [20] Zhang, C. and Yang, D. (2006). Exploration on the loss of primary and secondary school teachers in poverty-stricken rural areas. *THEORYETIC OBSERVATION*, 37(1), pp.75-76.
- [21] Zhang, Y. (2016). Research on the Problem of the Loss of Rural Primary and Middle School Teachers in the Process of Urbanization-Taking Zongyang County in Anhui Province as an example.

China West Normal University.

[22] Zhou, J. (2015). The mobility and attrition of teachers in rural schools in China: A review of literature. *Teacher Education Research*, 27(1), pp.60-67.