

The Impact of Teaching Duration on Teachers' Willingness to Continue in the Profession: Based on a Study of Frontline Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract: In this study, the method of mean comparison / variance analysis was used to study the influence of the teaching duration of middle school teachers on whether teachers are engaged in the industry. The data selected is CEPS database (data from 2014-2015). In recent years, as education has attracted more and more attention, all sectors of society have put forward higher requirements for the overall quality of teachers. With the development of knowledge economy, more and more demand for talent, the teacher burden is more and more heavy, the number of students also more and more, the teachers in their spare time to students correcting homework time is more and more, the appointment and title evaluation, preparing the increase of time, have brought more pressure to the teachers. In this high-pressure environment, the physical and mental development of teachers has a great adverse impact. Pressure gives people motivation to a certain extent, but too much pressure will make teachers' physical and mental development appear huge problems.

Keywords: Teaching; Teacher; Career Stress; Job Burnout.

1. Introduction

The Outline of China's Education Reform and Development clearly points out: "The hope of the country lies in education, and the revitalization of education lies in teachers. "The teacher is the hope of the country, is the people's sustenance [1]. Since the 1990s, young teachers who have joined the workforce are mostly in their thirties to forties. However, in terms of personal life, young teachers face different survival pressures than their predecessors: the housing system has been abolished, they are of marrying age, and have young children to nurture; two young people need to care for four elderly parents[2]. They are the youngest group in the teaching staff, with a more rational knowledge structure, active thinking, and a willingness to innovate [3]. Some young teachers' parents have retirement pensions or elderly insurance, which can help them shoulder some economic burdens and also look after the children in their spare time.

Although this can help them solve some life problems, they still have to endure pressures from work, such as professional title evaluations, job assessments, research project applications, academic publication, and heavy teaching loads. Additionally, many young teachers also want to pursue doctoral degrees, hoping to increase their education level and salary to alleviate some financial burdens for their families.

In terms of teaching loads, the increase in student numbers directly leads to an increase in teachers' workloads. The number of students in Beijing's regular universities grew from 285,000 in 1999 to 740,000 in 2005, an increase of 419,000 students. The numbers of undergraduates, graduates, and international students have almost doubled.

Since 2000, the individual burden on teachers has been increasing. As the number of students grows, teachers spend more time teaching and their spare time is increasingly occupied. Similarly, the number of classes they need to teach, the amount of homework they need to mark, and the

preparation time also increase correspondingly. According to a research report, an average of 33.9% of primary and secondary school teachers in China work 8 hours or more each day[4].

Elementary school teachers face significantly less work pressure than junior high and senior high school teachers, and junior high teachers face less pressure than senior high teachers but significantly more than vocational high school teachers[5].

Under pressures from life, work, and career development, both physically and mentally, teachers suffer. Excessive pressure leads to negative behavioral responses. According to a big data survey, most teachers experience varying degrees of negative effects, and the negative impact of pressure far exceeds its positive effects, most directly shown in the classroom practice. Poor teaching performance due to stress adversely affects the quality of teaching.

This paper will analyze whether teachers wish to continue in the profession as teaching durations increase.

2. Comparison of the Number of On-duty Teachers and High School Students

From Figure 1, we can see that the number of on-duty middle school teachers has been increasing year by year from 2013 to 2020, but is still far less than the number of students in regular high schools. Hence, teachers face a one-to-many situation in teaching, needing to spend more time explaining knowledge to every student. This reduces teachers' personal rest time, increases dissatisfaction with their profession due to increased work time, and reduces personal enrichment time. Knowledge understanding might rely more on existing knowledge or indirect experiences from others, which can affect teaching quality and may lead teachers to reconsider continuing in the profession.

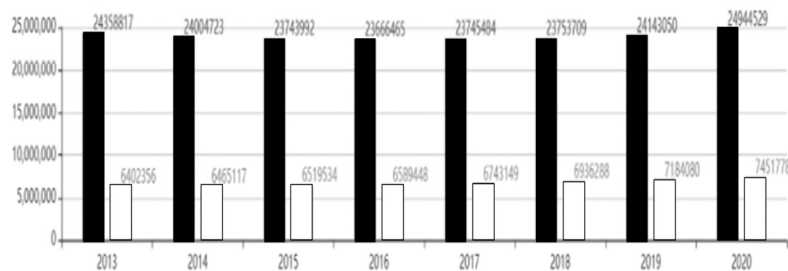


Figure 1. Comparing the number of middle school faculty members with the number of high school students

3. Teachers' Stress Coping Strategies and Sense of Teaching Efficacy

Teachers' professional stress refers to the emotional or mental tension that occurs when teachers face threatening situations or adverse events during their careers. Teachers' coping strategies for professional stress refer to the methods they adopt when facing various pressures at work, such as taking direct action, seeking support, showing helplessness, and dissatisfaction.

Teaching is considered a high-intensity, high-stress profession. Numerous studies both domestic and international have shown that high work stress can reduce work efficiency, adversely affect psychological health, and restrict professional development.

Job burnout refers to the comprehensive manifestation of excessive physical and mental consumption and energy exhaustion under work stress, mainly characterized by emotional exhaustion, feelings of detachment, and a low sense of achievement. Teachers feel weary at work, lose interest in students, show a cold attitude, perform perfunctorily, and have reduced work satisfaction[6]. Surveys show that professional burnout among primary and secondary school teachers in China is quite prominent, and it has had a significant negative impact on normal teaching, which is a considerable waste of our precious educational resources. Thus, teachers' work stress and burnout have become hot topics in teacher research.

Teachers' sense of teaching efficacy is the belief that they can have a positive impact on students' learning. General education efficacy refers to teachers' overall views on the relationship between teaching and learning and education's impact on student growth, while individual teaching efficacy refers to teachers' cognition and evaluation of their specific educational effectiveness.

Based on this, this paper analyzes from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Chinese scholars such as Yu Guoliang showed in their 1995 study that the overall teaching efficiency of teachers decreases with teaching age, but their individual teaching efficacy shows a rising trend. Studies by Xin Tao (1994) and others (1994) indicated that educational level is

the only personal characteristic variable of teachers; the higher the educational level, the higher their self-efficacy.

4. Data Processing and Result Analysis

4.1. Sample Source and Variable Definition

Table 1. The proportion of gender and age in the sample number

Gender	Number	Percentage	Age	Number	Percentage
Male	92	38%	21-35	76	32%
Female	145	62%	36-48	88	37%
Total	237	100%	49-61	73	31%
			Total	237	100%

The study uses teacher questionnaires from ten local key junior high schools, randomly selecting 791 questionnaires from grades 7 to 9. After cleaning data that was incorrectly filled or unclear, 237 questionnaires remained for analysis.

Variables defined include:

(1) Dependent variable: Willingness to continue in the teaching profession (wtchc23)

(2) Independent variable: Total weekly working hours of teachers (w2tcha07)

(3) Control variables: Gender (w2tcha01), Age (w2tcha02), Education (w2tcha03), Years of Experience (w2tcha04)

4.2. Hypothesis Proposal and Empirical Result Analysis

Research Hypotheses:

H0: Teaching duration stress significantly impacts the decision to continue in the profession.

H1: Greater teaching duration and stress correspond to a higher number of teachers leaving the profession.

Table 2. Would you choose the teaching profession again?

Your total working hours last week			
Mean	Std.	dev.	Freq.
No	49.976744	18.229344	43
Uncertain	48.369565	22.55597	138
Definitely	45.803571	16.747776	56
Total	48.054852	20.53978	237

We organize the data for mean comparison and analysis of variance:

Table 3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between groups	456.318716	2	228.159358	0.54	0.5842
Within groups	99107.9682	234	423.538326		
Total	99564.2869	236	421.882572		

Bartlett's equal-variances test: $\chi^2(2) = 7.6335$

From Table 2, it is observed: $\text{Prob} > \chi^2 = 0.022$ (heteroscedasticity)

After data analysis, we found that the results have unequal variances, so we continue to clean and analyze the data:

Table 4. Final result

wtchc23	Obs	Rank sum
No	43	5620.50
Uncertain	138	16115.00
Definitely	56	6466.50

$\chi^2(2) = 1.546$ Prob = 0.4616 $\chi^2(2)$ with ties = 1.589 Prob = 0.4518

The final analysis reveals that $p > 0.05$, indicating that the results are not significant; therefore, we accept the null hypothesis. The impact of the work hours faced by teachers on their decision to continue in the profession is not significant under different choices.

5. Summary

Using just one variable does not comprehensively show whether teachers will continue in the profession, but we can conclude from this viewpoint that the impact is not significant. Although teachers will not quit the profession based on this factor alone, the excessive pressure still causes some to give up. Therefore, it is advisable to reduce teachers' stress by adjusting teaching hours or other aspects, and providing better

pay and benefits, so teachers are still willing to stay in the profession. Of course, teachers' self-regulation abilities are also very important. Teachers can alleviate the stress felt at work by confiding in family or friends, or through any preferred activities to regulate their mood. Work is important, but one's mental and physical health is more crucial.

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