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Comparative Study of In-service Teacher Education between China and Germany

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Abstract

This paper aims to point out the insufficiencies of in-service teacher education in China and Germany, and correspondingly provide suggestions for enhancing teacher's quality and quantity effectively to fit the higher requirements of school education. In this study, in-service teacher education in China and Germany are discussed through a qualitative analysis. This paper resolves the following issues through the comparison of in-service teacher education between China and Germany: (1) Exploration of similarities and differences of the institutions, aims, and modes of in-service education of the two countries. (2) Analysis of the educational management measures between the two countries; finding the advantages of these measures to improve the teachers' quality and quantity. These measures include systems of admission, appointment, treatment, and assessment. (3) Point out the problems of teacher education in China and Germany, and correspondingly give some suggestions to improve on inadequacies. This paper fulfills an identified need to improve new teachers' professional development through transforming previous studies with teaching experience in real educational situations.

Keywords: in-service teacher education, training objectives, training modes and institutions, educational management measures, China, Germany.



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Introduction

Both China and Germany attach great importance to improving the quality of education and training excellent teachers within their respective education reforms. Both countries also regard the teacher's role in the educational activities. Although the geographical distances between China and Germany are great, with continual deepening of union between the two countries, as well as widespread use of modern information technologies, the two countries enable not only political, economic, and cultural cooperation, but also within the field of education. Through this study, which provides an in-depth comparison and understanding of in-service teacher education similarities and differences of the two countries, we can successfully promote close educational association and cooperation.

With the continuous world development, as well as rapid socio-economic development of China and Germany, a series of major changes in education have occurred. These changes to teacher education also exert a major influence on new and improved higher level requirements for both primary and secondary school teachers.

Through learning and comparison of the two countries' in-service teacher education, we can better understand their respective merits in order that both countries' teachers can better adapt to the developing modern world.

In-service teacher education in China

Current situation of in-service teacher education in China

In 2010, the Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China carried out a "National Teacher Training Program" for the training of Primary and Secondary school teachers. This National Teacher Training Program included two parts: *Demonstration project for primary and secondary school teachers training in China*, and *Training Project for primary and secondary school teachers in central and western rural areas of China*.

From 2010 to 2012, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance provide an annual allocation of 50 million RMB (5 million Euros) funding for the *Demonstration project for primary and secondary school teachers training in China*. The project trained 30,000 primary and secondary school teachers through the teacher education institution, and trained 900,000 teachers through remote training. In 2010, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance provided 500 million RMB (50 million Euros) to support the *Training Project for primary and secondary school teachers in central and western rural areas of China*. Through full-time teacher training and remote teacher training, the government trained many of the primary and secondary school teachers of rural areas in central and western China.

Training objectives, Modes and Institutions of in-service teacher education in China

Training objectives of in-service teacher education in China

In 2011, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China "*Suggestion on effectively enhancing primary and secondary school teachers training*" provided that: The training objectives of in-service teacher education in China are to enhance teachers' moral level, improve the teaching quality of teachers, increase the teachers' quantity, and for the realization of educational modernization.

Training Institutions and Modes of in-service teacher education in China

The training institutions of in-service teacher education in China include the Provincial teacher training institutions, Municipal teacher training schools, and the Radio and television teachers college (Qian, 2001). These in-service teacher training institutions form an important part of the teacher education system in China. They are responsible for the delivery of in-service teacher training at all levels (Zhang, 2002). One example is the Beijing Institute of Education, which was established in 1953 in Beijing, and is mainly responsible for in-service teacher education for Beijing. In addition, the Higher Normal School and Normal Universities also undertake in-service teacher training in order to improve teachers' learning of educational theory and quality of practice (Gu & Tan, 2004).

With the deepening of China's education reform, in-service teacher education has made great progress (Huang, 2003). There are numerous modes of in-service teacher education in China. This paper will outline the Professional Teacher Education Institution training mode, the School-based training mode, the Remote training mode, and the Teachers Lecture Group training mode, as follows:

- Professional Teacher Education Institution training mode

Professional teacher education institutions mainly refer to universities, education colleges or education institutions (Chen, 2002). These institutions are based on the common teachers' problems of the region and local educational administrative department requirements to determine the training plan, content, and assessment. The contents of the training focus on the improvement of teachers' professional knowledge. These institutions are appropriate for comprehensive and academic in-service teacher education.

- School-based training mode

School-based training mode refers to the school that the teacher is serving in as the in-service teacher education base. Teachers are able to participate in the in-service teacher training so long as they are employed at that school; which makes the training mode convenient for most teachers. The individual schools create their own training plans and organize training activities according to the teachers' needs and the school development plans. The school principal is in charge of the training management and its assessment. The trainers include experienced school teachers from the school, as well as excellent teachers from other schools.

The advantages of the school-based training mode are as follows: (1) In accordance with the school and teachers' special needs and practical issues, the training can be designed with content flexibly; (2) Through the exchange of experience between teachers, the training can enhance the teachers' professional level; (3) As the schools are the organizers, they can adjust the teachers' team construction through the teacher training effect; and (4) This mode can also resolve funding shortages and conflicts between the teachers' job and their training needs (Ministry of Education, 2001).

- Remote training mode

Modern information technology, such as computers and computing networks provide convenient conditions for remote in-service training of teacher education. In China, teachers can obtain a lot of useful information from educational research websites, satellite television broadcasting and other media all across the country for their in-service teacher training

needs. Whether in urban or rural areas, teachers can access high-quality educational resources, for real-time personalized training.

Remote training mode includes real-time and non-real-time teaching, answering questions and a self-test system. Through the Internet, teachers can receive training anytime and anywhere. In China, the Remote training mode is normally combined with the Professional Teacher Education Institution training mode in order to enhance the training effect (Ministry of Education, 2001).

- Teachers Lecture Group training mode

The Teachers Lecture Group mode refers to the government organization of in-service teacher training experts who are able to give lectures in order to train primary and secondary school teachers. The experts have access to the necessary teaching reference materials, audio-visual materials, multimedia courseware and other teaching equipment applicable for primary and secondary school teaching training. This mode is particularly suitable for China's rural and remote areas.

This mode increases interconnectivity of urban and rural areas; the developed areas with the developing. It can communicate advanced teaching ideas, experiences and research results to rural schools. It also helps to reduce rural teachers' time and effort, reducing the costs of in-service teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2001).

In addition, with China's education reforms, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China are able to send the best teachers overseas to receive their in-service teacher training, enhancing the teachers' communication with different countries.

Teacher Treatment System and Assessment System in China

Material Benefits and Remuneration of teachers in China

There are numerous laws about the material benefits and remuneration of teachers in China. The following are examples from the Education Law of the People's Republic of China:

The teachers' average salary shall not be lower or shall be higher than that of State public servants and shall be gradually raised. (Article 25, Education Law of the People's Republic of China, 1995)

Local people's governments at various levels and the departments concerned under the State Council shall give priority and preferential treatment to the construction, renting and sale of houses for teachers in urban areas. People's governments at the county and township levels shall provide conveniences for primary and secondary school teachers in rural areas in solving housing problems. (Article 28, Education Law of the People's Republic of China, 1995)

Teachers shall enjoy equal treatment in medical care as the State public servants in the localities. They shall be given regular health check-ups and shall enjoy recuperation holidays arranged in the light of local conditions. Medical institutions shall provide conveniences in medical care for teachers in the localities. (Article 29, Education Law of the People's Republic of China, 1995)

Working time and holidays of teachers in China

In China, the teachers' working hours in school are mainly centered around class teaching and other responsibilities. And the periods in which teachers are required to spend in each class are normally 45 minutes long.

Teachers' holidays include national holidays and school holidays. In China, September 10th of each year is designated as Teachers' Day (Chen, 2001).

Assessment and promotion of teachers in China

According to the Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China, the law has the following express provisions:

Assessment results shall be the basis for teachers' appointment and pay rise as well as rewards and punishments.

Schools or other institutions of education shall conduct assessment of teachers' political awareness and ideological level, professional competence, attitude toward work and their performances. The administrative departments of education shall guide and supervise the assessment work for teachers.

Assessment shall be conducted in an objective, fair and accurate manner and in the process of assessment; opinions from teachers themselves, their colleagues and students shall be taken into full consideration. (Articles 22-24, Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China, 1994)

Dismissal of teachers in China

Those who have been deprived of political rights or subjected to fixed-term imprisonment or even more severe punishment for intentional crime shall not be allowed to obtain qualifications for teachers; and those who have already obtained qualifications for teachers shall forfeit such qualifications. (Article 14, Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China, 1994)

Teachers involved in any of the following circumstances shall be given administrative sanctions or dismissed by their schools, other institutions of education or administrative departments of education:

(1) Intentionally not accomplishing educational and teaching tasks and thus causing losses to educational and teaching work; (2) Imposing corporal punishments on students and refusing to mend their way after being criticized; (3) Having improper conduct and insulting students, thus making very bad impressions. Teachers who are involved in any of the circumstances specified in item (2) or (3) of the preceding paragraph, if the circumstances are serious enough to constitute a crime, shall be investigated for criminal responsibility according to the law. (Article 37, Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China, 1994)

Retirement and pensions of teachers in China

After retirement or quitting work, teachers shall enjoy the material benefits prescribed by the State. Local people's governments at or above the county level may appropriately raise the ratio of pensions for the retired primary and

secondary school teachers who have long been engaged in education and teaching. (Article 30, Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China, 1994).

In-service teacher education in Germany

Current situation of In-service teacher education in Germany

After the educational reform of Germany (Federalism reform I) in 2006, individual states are in charge of the employment, remuneration and pensions of civil servants. The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of each state is in charge of the in-service teacher education, because it is the highest school supervisory authority and most teachers' employer.

The most of the states of Germany have laws and regulations regarding the provision of in-service teacher education. They also have some provisions about applications for, and the admission and release of teachers, in addition to provisions about the organization of in-service teacher education (KMK, 2011).

Training objectives, modes and institutions of in-service teacher education in Germany

Training objectives of in-service teacher education in Germany

In Germany, the objectives of in-service teacher education or training are to maintain and extend teachers' professional competence levels. According to the recommendations of an expert commission in 1999, the provisions for the deployment of teachers are to aim at a gradual development of professional competence. Furthermore, a system of support for teachers was to be established, including measures of in-service training.

In-service teacher education courses can deepen and extend the in-service teachers' knowledge and skills in the fields of educational theory, psychology, didactics and subject-related studies. It can help teachers to meet the current requirements of their teaching career and to fulfil their educational mission in primary and secondary schools.

In Germany, the training contents of in-service teacher education are related to school subjects, types of school or educational goals. The training contents of in-service teacher education include: general and school pedagogy, subject-related didactics, courses dealing with current issues and introductions to new education trends (KMK, 2011).

Training modes and institutions of in-service teacher education in Germany

As the in-service teacher education aims in Germany are to maintain and extend the professional competence of teachers, and to help them to meet the current requirements of their teaching career and to fulfil the educational mission of their school, the modes and institutions of such training are considered very important.

The in-service teacher education courses are provided by different course programs. These programs are normally published by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, in-service teacher education institutions or other organizers of in-service teacher education. The courses are usually provided centrally, or at regional or local level for different teacher groups, according to the different school types or levels and different teaching qualifications. Normally, the teachers need to apply to attend courses, and cannot be within their lesson times.

In Germany, the application for attending in-service teacher education varies from state to state, but normally it is between two ways: teachers can apply directly to the organizer of

in-service teacher education, or the applications are made on their behalf by the principal and the school supervisory authority.

In some states, participant selection can be through the school supervisory authority, or the teachers staff council. If the school supervisory authority selects the candidates, the teachers are released them from their teaching duties in order to attend. In some states, the central in-service training institution can select candidates according to their own criteria (KMK, 2011).

- Professional Teacher Education Institution training mode

The state-run in-service teacher education institutes were established in order to organize in-service teacher education at a central level. These central in-service teacher education institutions may have different names such as State Academy or Academic Institute. In-service training courses at central locations usually last for two-and-a half to five days.

In each German state, in-service teacher education at the regional level is administered differently by the institutes for in-service teacher education and the middle-level and lower-level school supervisory authorities. The lower-level school supervisory authorities are in charge of the organization of in-service teacher education at local level. Regional courses are organized as a one-day session or a series of full-day or afternoon and evening sessions once or several times a week.

Universities and higher education institutions also provide courses for in-service teacher education, including a final examination. In-service training course mode can also be through seminars, study groups, conferences, and colloquia (KMK, 2011).

- School-based training model

The school-based in-service teacher education is carried out by schools for their own teaching staff. This mode of in-service teacher education is organized by each school, and in cooperation with the various in-service education institutions. They are also advised by the school supervisory authorities.

In some states, the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs need to know information about the content and dates of such training courses held within schools. Most courses offered through this mode are usually seminars held in the afternoons or evenings (KMK, 2011).

- Remote training mode

The remote in-service training mode in Germany is almost as same as in China.

Teacher Treatment System and Assessment System in Germany

Teachers are civil servants in Germany, and their remuneration is dependent on the general economic and financial situation in Germany and on their duties as a civil servant.

After the education reform of Germany (Federalism reform I) in 2006, responsibility for the careers and pensions of school teachers transferred to the individual states, most of which have legislative competence.

Provisions on the teacher treatment system and evaluation system, include salaries and pensions' provisions and are contained within the civil servants' remuneration acts and civil

servants' pension's acts of the states , and also in the Federal Remuneration Act and the Federal Pensions Act (KMK, 2011).

Material Benefits and Remuneration of teachers in Germany

After the 2006 federalism reform (Federalism reform I), the states are in charge of the public schools' teacher classification. The remuneration of teachers with civil servant status includes a basic salary, family allowance and other allowances. The basic salary depends on the salary group and the salary grade. Teachers are classified as higher or senior service, with classification dependent on their studies, training, and preparatory service. The salary grade is based on the age of the teacher, as well as training and other measures. Family allowance depends on the salary group and the teacher's family circumstances. The allowances also depend on the other extra responsibilities. Sometimes the remuneration also includes an annual special payment, paid either monthly or annually (KMK, 2011).

Working time and holidays of teachers in Germany

In Germany, the teachers' working hours in school include class teaching time and other responsibilities. The periods which teachers are required to spend in class normally last for 45 minutes, but can vary for different school types, and also from state to state. Teachers' holidays are according to general civil service regulations, and annual leave is taken during the school holidays (KMK, 2011).

Teacher's Transfer, Replacement and Supporting measures in Germany

Teacher's Transfer measures in Germany

In Germany, teachers with civil servant status can choose to apply for transfer to another school, or if there are professional reasons. The transfer depends on the consistency of the teachers' duties and their position. As civil servants, teachers must accept a transfer, and if teachers want to work in other state, they must get the consent of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Teacher's Replacement measures in Germany

If the teachers are absent temporarily, the principal relies on existing teaching staff. According to the general civil service regulations, teachers have the obligation to temporarily perform such additional work. Normally there is no financial compensation, except where teachers are required to spend more than three additional periods per month in class; and compensation is regulated for civil servants by the Federation. If teachers are absent in the long term, such as maternity leave or sick leave extending to several months, these teachers are replaced by temporary contract teachers.

Teacher's supporting measures in Germany

When teachers have problems with their colleagues or pupils, they can seek help from the principal, the staff council of the school, the parents' council, or the school supervisory authorities. They also can get support from the resident school psychologist (KMK, 2011).

Assessment and promotion of teachers in Germany

After performance assessment, teachers can be promoted. The Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs provides assessment guidelines for teachers working in public schools. The guidelines detail the reasons, time and who is responsible for the teacher assessments. An assessment depends on a performance report from the principal, observation of lessons,

knowledge of subject, teaching record, and professional conduct etc. The assessment provides an overall conclusion on the teachers' performance, and suggestions on their future career.

Teacher promotions are dependent on the teacher's aptitude, qualifications and record of achievement, rather than length of service. When the teachers exhibit they have more value than the lower salary group teachers, they can be promoted to more senior positions. Teachers who want promotion to a higher scale or salary group must have a change in their responsibilities or position. Teachers can also apply for the position of principal or the staff position that has the responsibility for the school's supervision (KMK, 2011).

Dismissal of teachers in Germany

Teachers are civil servants, so unless they want to voluntarily resign, dismissal can only occur in the following situations: (1) if they lose German citizenship, or that of another member state of the European Union; (2) if they refuse to swear the oath of office prescribed by law; or (3) if they are subjected to a fixed-term imprisonment. In addition, during the probationary period, if teachers do not prove themselves or do wrong that prevents them from becoming a permanent civil servant, they would be dismissed.

Retirement and Pensions of teachers in Germany

In Germany, normally the teacher's retirement age is 65 years old, but in some cases, if they are not fit to teach, they can retire from age 60. The Civil Servants' Pensions Act has the provisions for teachers with a civil servant status (Ye, 2000). In 2006, even though the federalism reform transferred responsibility for the pensions of state civil servants to the individual states, the Federal Pensions Act still applies in the majority of states. According to the law, teachers with a civil servant status who have worked for at least five years are entitled to a pension. The pension depends on their basic salary, the family allowance and the pensionable allowances which the teacher gets at the end of his/her service.

Problems and Suggestions of In-service Teacher Education in China and Germany

Problems and Suggestions of In-service Teacher Education in China

In China, teachers' assessments depend on the teachers' professional competence, attitude toward teaching work and their performance. Assessments are normally given by the schools or other institutions of education (Huang, 2009).

According to the definition stated by Stufflebeam about the assessment, it refers to "the process of delineating, obtaining, and applying descriptive and judgmental information concerning the worth and merit of some program's goals, design, implementation, and impacts in order to promote improvement, serve needs of accountability, and foster understanding" (Stufflebeam, 1982, pp. 131-168).

An assessment should be considered as an appraisal from different aspects, including viewpoints of the teachers' colleagues, students and their parents, and those who have different interests in the assessment – sometimes they all have the different views and demands of the teachers (Galluzzo & Craig, 1990). A teachers' assessment from such diverse aspects will therefore more likely be an objective appraisal.

Problems and Suggestions of In-service Teacher Education in Germany

In Germany, after completion of the probationary period, teachers who have proved their suitability and aptitude are appointed as permanent civil servants. However, a permanent position for teachers is not the end of the story in terms of their innovation and lifelong learning throughout their career.

Emphasis placed on the idea of lifelong learning

Because permanent positions for teachers are not sufficient for their innovation and career learning, in a lifelong learning society, teachers should have the motivation and responsibility for their own learning aims (Niemi, 2002). It also depends on the teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and values and the self-concept as a learner in the lifelong learning process (Niemi, 2002).

Those teachers holding permanent civil servant positions may progress up the career ladder. For example, civil servant teachers should attend certain test or examination of State or Federation every 3-5 years; a requirement to hold their position. Additionally, their students' performances and other assessments from schools and other education administrations can also be considered as part of the conditions for maintaining their permanent civil servant status.

Attaching importance to the effect and environment of In-service teacher education

In Germany, attendance of in-service teacher training courses has no effect on teachers' assessments, their material benefits or remuneration. The basic salary of teachers depends on their salary group and salary grade. Normally, teachers move up to the next salary grade every three to four years. If salaries have no connection with in-service teacher education, the teachers' motivation and commitment may not be fully involved galvanized, and therefore the aims of in-service teacher training may not be fulfilled (Gu & Liang, 1998).

In-service teacher education provides a channel for teachers to improve their professional knowledge and teaching techniques. If satisfied with the training, they will acquire updated knowledge and skills more quickly; for example, if they are trained at the schools where they serve, they will feel more comfortable and satisfied. At the same time, the teachers can also impact and benefit their students and their school (Nir & Bogler, 2008).

Attendance of in-service teacher training courses should be connected to teachers' assessments. The performances and attitude of teachers also should be considered as key factors directly related to teachers' remuneration. In this way, teachers will attach more importance to the in-service teacher education, and be motivated to attend and persist over the long term to improve their teaching professionalism.

Notes

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