

Survey of Present Teachers-to-Be and Analysis of Training Strategies

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Abstract

Through questionnaire about the level of professionalism of normal universities teachers-to-be in the new era in china, with the help of SPSS-based statistical analysis of data, this article summarizes basic information on the professionalism of teachers-to-be at normal universities from three aspects, namely professional concepts and ethics, specialized knowledge and professional competence. From the perspective of the teacher qualification test and the school training for normal university students, three specific suggestions are proposed for improving the professionalism of teachers-to-be: intensifying the reform of the teacher qualification test system, deepening teachers-to-be’s understanding and recognition of teacher education policies, and improving the teachers-to-be training model.

Key words: Teachers-to-be; Current status; Training strategies

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INTRODUCTION

According to the *Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening the Development of Teachers* issued in 2012 in china, it is important to supplement teachers in

various schools and strengthen pre-service, induction and in-service training so that they can implement teaching activities according to law. The *Opinions* puts more emphasis on the strict and standard teacher admittance system and provides a direction for normal universities to train and develop normal university students (teachers-to-be). The quality of students trained by normal universities will exert an important influence on the quality of education offered by primary and secondary schools and kindergartens in the future. Students trained by normal schools will be a significant part of future teachers and have a direct impact on the level and development trends of future teachers.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education of China began to carry out the reform of the teacher qualification system and published *Interim Procedures on the Qualification Test for Primary and Middle School Teachers*. In 2015, the teacher qualification test formally carried out national examination, which is undoubtedly a challenge to teacher education since this requires normal universities to adjust their training strategies according to the requirements of related national policies and focus on improving the professionalism of normal university students as future teachers to cultivate high-quality teachers-to-be for the country.

Based on the abovementioned situation, this article investigated and studied the current situation of the training of normal university students in China, through a quantitative analysis of the findings, this article presents the current status of teachers-to-be in China, identified existing problems and discussed corresponding feasible teacher training strategies.

1. RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

1.1 Sample

In order to study the current status of teachers-to-be, a questionnaire survey was carried out among the normal university students (teachers-to-be) in china.

1.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was made on the strategies for present teacher development (normal university students) after careful literature review and in-depth discussion with experts on relevant issues. The questionnaire consisted of four parts. The first part contained the basic personal information of normal university students (teachers-to-be), including gender, hometown, university, and teacher certification in No. 1-13 questions. The second part related to the teacher-training policy and consisted of 5 questions. The third part involved teacher training measures, composed of 10 questions. The fourth part comprised 55 questions on the professional quality of teachers-to-be, including professional idea, ethics, knowledge and ability.

1.3 Survey Process

A total of 1,608 questionnaires were distributed to normal students through WJX.CN, and all of them were recovered, with the recovery rate of 100%. All data collected in the questionnaire survey was entered into the computer and statistically analyzed through SPSS24.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy

Dimension	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Questions	Mean score
Policy understanding and recognition	1,608	14.89	3.197	5	2.98
Policy understanding (questions 14-15)	1,608	5.85	1.539	2	2.93
Policy recognition (questions 16-18)	1,608	9.04	2.204	3	3.01
Valid N (list status)	1,608				

As shown by Table 1, teachers-to-be got higher scores in the understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy, approximate to the theoretical mean 3.0. This indicates that teachers-to-be understand and recognize the teacher-training policy to a certain extent. Specifically, 74.07% and 77.37% of normal students got a score of 3.0 or above in the national policy on teacher training and in the understanding of professional standards for pre-school/primary school/middle school teachers; 81.4% and 88.43% got a score of 3.0 or above in the recognition of unified teacher certification test policy reform and public-

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of professional quality of teachers-to-be

Dimension	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Questions	Mean score
Professional quality level	1,608	212.4	36.807	55	3.86
Professional idea and ethics	1,608	79.25	13.936	20	3.96
Professional knowledge	1,608	52.45	10.353	14	3.75
Professional ability	1,608	80.7	14.748	21	3.84
Valid N (list status)	1,608				

As shown by Table 2, teachers-to-be got higher scores in the professional quality level and the three dimensions than the theoretical mean 3. This indicates that they have better professional quality. The highest score in the

2. RESEARCH RESULTS

2.1 Analysis of Overall Status of Present Teachers-to-Be

2.1.1 Basic Information of Teachers-to-Be

There were 1,608 participants involved in the survey, of whom 336 were men, accounting for 20.9%, and 1,272 were women, accounting for 79.1%. More than half of them were from towns and villages, accounting for 59.9%.

Among these teachers-to-be, 67.91% were admitted by the normal university at the first choice, while the remaining 32.09% were not admitted by the normal university at the first choice; 85.95% were willing to engage in teaching, while the remaining 14.05% were not willing to engage in teaching; 25.5% had obtained the teacher certification, while the remaining 74.5% had obtained no teacher certification.

2.1.2 Understanding and Recognition of Teacher-Training Policy

See Table 1 for the scores of teachers-to-be in the understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy.

funded education policy for normal students; 55.04% got a score of 3.0 or above in the recognition of the policy that normal university students no longer enjoy the “privilege” of exemption from the test and they must take the certification test with non-normal students.

2.1.3 Overall Level of Professional Quality of Teachers-to-Be

See Table 2 for the total score of teachers-to-be in the professional quality and the scores in the other three dimensions.

dimension “professional idea and ethics” and the lowest score in the dimension “professional knowledge” indicate the belief of teachers-to-be that they do the best in the former but have weak performance in the latter.

2.1.4 Overall Status of Talent Training in Universities

See Table 3 for the scores of talent training in universities.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics of talent training in universities

Dimension	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Questions	Mean score
Overall status of talent training	1,608	31.5	5.753	10	3.15
Valid N (list status)	1,608				

According to Table 3, universities have effective talent training as indicated by the higher overall scores of overall status of talent training and the mean score higher than the theoretical mean 3.0. Specifically, 77.68% of normal school students got a score of 3.0 or above in the understanding of talent training programs of their universities; 87.44%, 89.37%, 93.41%, and 82.21% believed that the training meets the professional standards for pre-school/primary school/middle school teachers, the curriculum is in line with national policies and conducive

Table 4
T test of teacher certification

Dimension	Teacher certification	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p value
Professional quality level	With	215.47	36.887	1.957	.051
	Without	211.35	36.737		
Professional idea and ethics	With	79.98	14.082	1.226	.221
	Without	79.01	13.884		
Professional knowledge	With	53.58	9.991	2.575	.01
	Without	52.06	10.449		
Professional ability	With	81.90	14.589	1.918	.055
	Without	80.29	14.786		

According to Table 4, teachers-to-be with and without teacher certification had no significant differences in overall professional quality, so teacher certification has certain effects on the professional quality level of teachers, but not significant.

Table 5
Correlation between professional quality of teachers-to-be and their understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy

	Professional quality level	Professional idea and ethics	Professional knowledge	Professional ability
Pearson correlation coefficient	.338**	.322**	.323**	.312**
Significance (two-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N value	1,608	1,608	1,608	1,608

According to Table 5, the professional quality level of teachers-to-be was significantly correlated to their understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy, and it was the same with their professional idea and ethics, professional knowledge, and professional ability.

Table 6
Correlation between professional quality of teachers-to-be and talent training in universities

	Professional quality level	Professional idea and ethics	Professional knowledge	Professional ability
Pearson correlation coefficient	.438**	.424**	.405**	.408**
Significance (two-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N value	1608	1608	1608	1608

to future teacher growth, the education courses are rationally set, and the professional teachers are rationally allocated (3.0 and above); 78.36% had received training of basic skills (pen writing, brush pen writing, chalk writing, stick figure, and Mandarin); 56.46% believed that the educational probation/internship guidance is not managed effectively, so the normal universities should further strengthen the management of educational probation and internship.

2.2 Differences in Professional Quality of Teachers-to-Be With and Without Teacher Certification

The normal students surveyed in this research were divided into two groups. One group had obtained teacher certification, and the other group had not obtained teacher certification. The independent sample T test was employed to examine the differences in professional quality between these two groups, as shown in Table 4.

2.3 Correlation Between Professional Quality of Teachers-to-Be and Their Understanding and Recognition of Teacher-Training Policy

A correlation analysis was carried out to understand the relationship between professional quality of teachers-to-be and their understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy, as shown in Table 5.

2.4 Effects of Talent Training in Universities on Professional Quality of Teachers-to-Be

A correlation analysis was carried out to understand the relationship between professional quality of teachers-to-be and talent training in universities, as shown in Table 6.

As shown by Table 6, the professional quality level of teachers-to-be was significantly correlated to talent training in universities, and it was the same with their professional idea and ethics, professional knowledge, and professional ability.

3. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Intensify the Reform of the Teacher Qualification Test System

According to the data analysis, there were differences in professional knowledge between teachers-to-be with and without teacher certification but non-significant differences in professional idea and ethics, and professional ability. This indicates that teacher certification has significant effects on professional knowledge of teachers but non-significant effects on their professional idea and ethics, and professional ability. Therefore, the teacher certification test is easy and effective to evaluate the professional knowledge of students but difficult and ineffective to evaluate their professional idea and ethics, and professional ability. The survey of the problems identified by normal students in the teacher certification test also validated the above content. According to the survey, 72.45% of normal students believed that the teacher certification test cannot measure the morality and psychology of students, and 51.62% believed that the test cannot measure the teaching skills.

China implements the national teacher qualification test, incorporating teacher qualification into the system of laws and regulations. The newly-enacted teacher qualification test system comprehensively adjusts the contents of the test, increases its difficulty, and change the contents to be tested from sole knowledge to practical teaching skills, such as lesson preparation and trial teaching. However, the abovementioned data analysis shows that the reform needs to be further intensified and the teacher qualification test should continue to expand the exam syllabus, deepen the contents and focus on evaluating the core qualities of students. In the future, the teacher qualification test should place an emphasis on examining and assessing professional ethics, core discipline-related qualities and practical teaching skills of students. Therefore, the Chinese country needs to further strengthen the reform of the teacher certification test, improve relevant policies and reinforce the examination of professional idea and ethics, and professional ability of teachers-to-be.

According to the *Opinions* issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, it is necessary to improve the teacher certification test policy and gradually include the participation in educational courses and education and teaching practice as prerequisites to identify the education and teaching ability and issue teacher certification. Therefore, the

country should further advance the reform of the teacher qualification test system for primary and middle school teachers, revise test methods, standards and syllabus, and ask students to possess some experience in high-quality educational practice before registering for the teacher qualification test. All these raise higher requirements for the professionalism of normal university students. For example, when applying for teacher certification, students must provide the score of educational courses and the evaluation of the internship provider on professional idea and ethics, and professional ability. This will strengthen the examination of professional idea and ethics, and professional ability of teachers-to-be and pose higher requirements for their professional quality.

3.2 Strengthen Understanding and Recognition of Teacher-Training Policy

According to the analysis of survey and research data, the professional quality level of teachers-to-be was significantly correlated to the understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy. This indicates that the strengthened understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy can improve the professional quality level of teachers-to-be. However, according to the current survey data, teachers-to-be still got a low score in the understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy, only approximate to the theoretical mean 3.0. Therefore, teachers-to-be still have insufficient understanding and recognition of teacher-training policy and this undoubtedly affects their professional quality level.

First, it is necessary to deepen teachers-to-be's understanding of teacher education policies, normal university teachers should gradually raise awareness of national policies about teacher education among students and guide them to carefully read policy documents concerning teacher education and primary and secondary (kindergarten) education newly issued by the country. The schools may invite experts in related fields to give special lectures, encourage outstanding professors to set up related general optional courses and let teachers enable students to learn about the current major national education policies and regulations and future trends of national teacher education by letting the spirit and connotation of related policy documents permeate the process of teaching related specialized courses.

Second, it is necessary to strengthen teachers-to-be's recognition of teacher education policies, make them aware of the meaning and value of teacher education policies, and hence reinforce their cognition of the teaching profession to enhance their identification with the teaching profession and arouse their passion for education.

3.3 Improve Prospective Teacher Training Modes

According to the analysis of survey and research data, there was a significant correlation between the

professional quality level of teachers-to-be and the status of talent training in universities. This indicates that the training of teachers-to-be in universities has significant effects on their professional quality level. However, the current survey data shows a low score in the training of teachers-to-be in universities, only 0.15 higher than the theoretical mean. Therefore, the quality of training of teachers-to-be in universities still needs to be improved.

Normal universities should further improve the training modes for normal students and improve the quality of talent training to train qualified teachers who meet the development needs of times. *Opinions on Vigorously Promoting the Reform of Teacher Education Curriculum of the Ministry of Education* enacted by the country in 2011 raised new requirements for universities concerning courses about the training of primary school, secondary school and kindergarten teachers. Meanwhile, *Teacher Education Curriculum Standards (Trial)* issued in 2011 continued to raise specific requirements for teacher education courses in the new era. These requirements not only constitute an important basis for teacher education course design and course development, but also are a main basis for state-certified teacher qualification. The proposal of developing core qualities of Chinese students in 2016 made improving the core discipline-related qualities of normal university students become a primary goal of normal universities when carrying out the reform and teacher education. Particularly, they should strengthen education practice, increase practice credits and time, strengthen the training of basic skills of students through different channels and reinforce education probation and internship to improve the ability of teachers-to-be to meet basic education reform.

At first, normal university student training scheme should give students more options, and establish and perfect the training scheme option system in line with learning needs, hobbies and interests and personality traits of students based on the overall training scheme. Various methods should be used to encourage and guide students to make a choice on their own initiative. For instance, letting tutors guide students to choose a scheme through tutorial system, and those schools who have related resources may set up the dual tutorial system which combines “discipline tutor” and “pedagogy tutor” to offer students more pertinent instructions and teach students learn how to analyze themselves and make a scientific and reasonable choice in two dimensions- discipline and pedagogy according to their learning needs. Discipline tutor can help students make clear the core concepts in this realm and master effective methods to learn this discipline. While pedagogy tutors guide students to gain insights into the nature of a teacher’s job and further understand the requirements for the teaching profession in the new era, guide students to develop professional skills, including the basic skills of “chalkboard writing, pen

writing, calligraphy, sketching, and mandarin”, teaching design and organizing ability, self-reflection and scientific research skills, and help students get mentally prepared for engaging in the teaching profession.

Next, we should strengthen educational practice. Educational practice is a major manifestation to test the overall quality of normal university students and is an external product of the quality of earlier training. Among courses offered by universities, educational practice is a module in teacher education courses. Main practices are: first, increase the credits and hours of practice, strengthen in-class and extracurricular practice, encourage teachers to strengthen basic teaching skill training through diverse practical activities. For example, in courses like *Pedagogy*, asking students to present a teaching plan, give a lesson and conduct other practical activities by groups through in-class practice to enhance their basic teaching skills. Besides, schools may hold all kinds of skills contests for these students on a regular basis to allow them to practice and exercise. Second, it is necessary to enhance management over educational practice and probation of students, reinforce supervision over educational practice and probation, and adopt the dual tutorial system, which means on-campus teachers and tutors at off-campus internship centers jointly guide students’ internship and probation.

Furthermore, schools should readjust teacher education courses, properly adjust the knowledge system of courses including professional ethics, pedagogy, psychology and educational technology according to the requirements of the teacher qualification test, simplify course contents, and help students grasp the core contents of professional ethics, pedagogy, psychology, educational technology and other disciplines and fields; we should adjust the credit hours of each teacher education course in the principles of “step-by-step approach” and “highlighting the key points” regarding course contents, to make it accord with future teacher training goals in the new era; last, it is necessary to strengthen the training for normal university students in teaching skills, readjust the contents and structures of subject pedagogy-related courses to adapt them to the current situation of primary and secondary education, and set up courses about comprehensive quality and subject teaching skills, for example, setting up courses that develop students’ language proficiency, scientific literacy, artistic cultivation, humanistic quality and thinking skills.

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