



Discussion on Particularity of Teacher Allocation and Its Direction in Independent Institutes in China

Xiaobai Lv & Youjun Wu

Management College of Wuhan University of Science and Technology

Wuhan 430083, China

Tel: 86-27-8649-0789 E-mail: lvxiaobai@126.com

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Abstract

It has been a long time that the Ministry of Education in China requires colleges and universities allocate teachers and lecturers according to the number of student enrollment, and gives a unified standard, which is delivered after considering the double functions of teaching and scientific research and considering that teachers should assume the double tasks. Independent institutes in China have appeared in the last few years, which is a brand new organization. Although it is an integral part of China's higher education, its unitary teaching function and its character of training practice-oriented talents determine that its teacher allocation should meet the requirements of the principle of teaching. It differs obviously from traditional colleges and universities in China. This paper puts forward new trains of thought for teacher allocation in independent institutes based on empirical analysis on over ten independent institutes in Hubei Province.

Keywords: Independent institute, Teacher allocation, Particularity

Allocation of human resources is a fundamental task of human resource management in various organizations and is a core work which is concerned about the overall performance of an organization. Quality of allocation naturally becomes an issue much concerned by governors of the organization. At its initial stage of establishment, independent institutes mainly depended on their parent school --- their organizers (public high schools), which offered teachers to resolve the teacher allocation problem of independent institutes, and this played a crucial role for independent institutes to come into practical teaching in a short run. After several years' development, with popularity of popularization of higher education, with tension of parent schools' resources and with expansion of self-demand of independent institutes, the original practice of applying educational resources of parent schools becomes more and more incommensurate to requirements of practical teaching. Considering development in the future, establishing their own teaching team for independent institutes has become a necessity, so teacher allocation is becoming more and more an important and urgent task for independent institutes. This paper aims at providing some enlightenment for teacher allocation for independent institutes.

1. Conditions of students in independent institutes and analysis of their training target

Students in independent institutes are those who are from undergraduate admission of the third group in the university entrance exam. Through investigation, it is discovered that, their economic condition is generally optimistic and most of them come from towns and cities. Parents of many students not only pay a tuition more than one time higher than in public high schools, but also offer their children a cost of living higher than the general level. Most of them have received training and education in a variety of knowledge and workmanship both at school and out of school, so they are well-read and well-informed. But it is an unevadable fact that, as a whole, students of independent institutes have the lowest school performance among undergraduates in all colleges and universities. They generally have weak knowledge foundation in middle school and they show no interest in theoretical learning, so they are lacking in the learning motive.

Without exception, independent institutes determine their school running direction of training practice-oriented talents, so they attempt to strengthen students' practical operation capacity so as to achieve the goal of training practice-oriented talents. Training of practice-oriented talents needs to resolve three issues. Firstly, what kind of practice-oriented talents the society needs; secondly, whether students have the condition to become practice-oriented talents; thirdly, what kinds of teachers are demanded for training of practice-oriented talents.

2. Construction of existing teachers in independent institutes and analysis on their conditions and characteristics

Through a recent investigation on several independent institutes in Hubei (mainly Wuhan), the subject group discovers that all respondents have their own teaching team and their teaching team has quite similar age structure. Young teachers below the age of 30 account for over half of the total, those with an age of almost 60 or above 60 approximate to 20% and those from 35 to 55 account for less than 5%. The disequilibrium phenomenon among male and female teachers is also outstanding, and especially female young teachers below the age of 30 occupy a proportion of over 60% among those below 30. Obviously, it's not only a defect that age structure of teaching team in independent institutes is imbalanced, but it cannot be ignored that gender structure is also imperfect.

Due to requirements on school running assessment norm for independent institutes from the Ministry of Education, in the recent couple of years, master degree has become a "threshold" in recruitment of teachers. Therefore, people with a master degree steadily increase year by year. Young teachers with a master degree occupy a high proportion and especially in those several independent institutes investigated by the subject group, the above proportion all exceeds 50%. Increasing of the proportion of teachers with a master degree in independent institutes directly upgrades educational qualifications of teachers, which has a positive effect upon teaching. However, further analysis on knowledge structure of graduates in recent years makes it clear that, due to guide of exam subjects for graduate exam, almost all students who plan to pursue the master degree determine their learning direction in which graduate exam subjects are regarded as the primary learning goal, and learning other courses is merely restrained to "pass the test". It is rarely known that, courses in the training plan of all professions are interrelated and constitute a whole, so students cannot have a professional capacity without a comprehensive learning. Meanwhile, it is a foundation for supporting professional study during the period of pursuing a master degree. However, learning of graduate period cannot make up for disadvantages of the undergraduate period. Besides, with shortening of educational system for graduates, even if one has the consciousness to make up for his disadvantages in the knowledge structure, lacking of conditions makes it impossible. Hence, the phenomenon of "disadvantages" in the professional knowledge structure among young teachers is general.

The number of students in independent institutes in recent years grow rapidly (most of students under the newly expanded enrollment in colleges and universities in Hubei are assigned to independent institutes), their pedagogical task and burden becomes obviously heavy. Impelled by the teaching task, a large majority of teachers in independent institutes begin to teach students the moment they are recruited into the school (this phenomenon also exists in public high schools). There lacks a process of transition from the role of a student or other working staff to a teacher, which results in the fact that most teachers, especially young teachers, are lacking in necessary teaching skills and in the capacity of well digesting and completely understanding what they have learned. As for those teachers who graduate for a short time and who are responsible for teaching of professional courses, what is fatal for them is that they are lacking in experiences and capacity of professional practice, and they have no choice but to echo what the books say. It is obvious that a large majority of teachers are deficient in the capacity structure.

Likewise, affected by school running assessment norm from the Ministry of Education, and in order to attain the requirement of the assessment norm on "professional title" of teachers, independent institutes bring in a batch of master teachers at the age of 60 and above and with the title of associate professorship. Most of these master teachers are retirees from public high schools, with several years' rich teaching experiences in high schools. Students level and training objective of independent institutes are different from those in public high schools and students' interest has great discrepancy, so after being recruited by independent institutes, compared with their previous teaching in public high schools, great differences exist among these master teachers in terms of their teaching targets, teaching content and methods. Due to their working inertia, those master teachers, with or without consciousness, follow their previous teaching methods, and are accustomed to the former teaching expectation naturally out of their teaching activities. It's unlucky that teaching effect is usually far from as what is expected. Hence, both teachers and students cannot adapt to that effect. Although master teachers account for 20% -- 30% of all teachers in independent institutes, and belong to the group of "minority", they assume quite a large quantity of teaching task and especially teaching of core courses, so their influence on students' learning and their demonstration significance on young teachers cannot be ignored. Still, there exist the adjustive issues of their educational ideal, teaching method and professional knowledge among these master teachers.

3. Particularity requirements on teacher allocation in independent institutes

To discuss the issue of teacher allocation in independent institutes under the circumstance when public high schools go

towards maturity. Obviously, independent institutes are in an unadvantageous position of later-comers in the competition of human resource allocation. Then, particularity requirements on teacher allocation in independent institutes come into existence. The so-called particularity refers to supposed individuality of independent institutes that differs from that of public high schools. The particularity requirements on teacher allocation in independent institutes derive from the necessity of survival and development. Since independent institutes are late-comers, they are incapable of contesting with public high schools for excellent resources. Besides, school running direction and training objective of independent institutes are different from those in public high schools, so types of teachers allocated will also differ. Therefore, if quality and structure of teacher allocation in independent institutes are totally the same as those in public high schools, then the survival path of independent institutes will be more and more narrow, let alone its development and expansion.

Particularity requirements of teacher allocation in independent institutes, in the first place, is reflected in its response to market demand. What kind of talents independent institutes should train has been an ill-defined concept, but given the demand of the personnel market on graduates from independent institutes, employing units has located their graduates, and this positioning cannot be simply defined as practice-oriented talents. "practice-oriented talent" is a broad concept, because all other talents can be generalized as "practice-oriented talents" except for those talents in theoretical research. Hence, practice-oriented talents become a "large basket", which, from a broad sense, makes sense. However, demand of the market on practice-oriented talents is hierarchical, and the knowledge structure, competence structure, aspiration of duty assumption, social value and social demand of each hierarchy of are distinguished, and it is through screening of the market that each hierarchy of practice-oriented talents is classified.

Independent institute is a product of the market, and market orientation is the direction indicator for its survival and development. Training objective of independent institutes should be located at training professional elementary practice-oriented talents. Of course, the issue of positioning of training objective in independent institutes is not what the author is to discuss, and here the author briefly mentions it just because it is the premise of the subsequently discussed issues in the paper. Considering merely the teaching team, knowledge and competence structure of teachers directly affects students. In order to train students with practical capacity, the teaching team should first of all have appropriate knowledge and capacity. That is to say, teacher allocation in independent institutes has great market directivity, and it directs towards establishing a teaching team with knowledge structure and competence structure that suits the demand of the training objective. There exists great difficulty in satisfying demand of directivity. At first, teachers are required to adjust their knowledge structure, which should not only be based on professional knowledge of a teacher, but should refer to applicability of the knowledge in practice. In addition, teachers should respond fast to new knowledge and new technique and their speed of updating knowledge should be fast, too. That is to say, knowledge imparted to students should satisfy what students need to have the professional competence, and should be focused upon their practical demand in the future, not aimed at being profound. Then, competence of teachers should be trained.

Essentially different from public high schools, independent institutes neither have any financial support, nor have any income of social service, and all their revenue comes from students' tuition, which is used to support all their activities. According to classification of existing industries, school belongs to the tertiary industry, which provides intelligence service to the society, and is a knowledge-intensive organization. In the whole process of service, knowledge-intensive service occupies a large proportion. Hence, high-quality human resource engaged also accounts for a large proportion. Through investigation, it is discovered that, human resource cost in independent institutes accounts for 40%-50% of the total cost, among which the number of teachers accounts for 60%-70% and average income of teachers is generally higher than that of other working staff, so cost of teachers accounts for over 70% of the total human resource cost, which approximates to 30% of the total cost. In addition to human resource cost, teaching cost, students' activity cost, daily administrative cost and fixed cost, etc, which are required by the normal running of a school, there is another expense in independent institutes which doesn't exist in public high schools, namely, management fee paid to their organizer (parent school). And this expense accounts for 20%-25% of the total tuition revenue. Thereout, although tuition of independent institutes is one time higher that of public high schools, their actual running fund is not enough, especially at the initial period of its establishment. However, independent institutes are at present at the primary stage, so even if an independent institute has completed its fundamental establishment task, it still has the construction task of laboratory (training), internship installations and facilities and ancillary facilities of basic construction, which determines its tension in funds within the following three to five years. Therefore, teacher allocation in independent institutes has to take consideration its demand on cost.

Considering the demand on cost, teacher allocation in independent institutes doesn't mean going out of their way to cut down expenses, but exchange for another way to consider the problem. Through investigation, to allocate teachers according to the number of students enrolled is irrational, because teachers are directly interrelated with teaching task, so it should be more rational to allocate teachers according to the teaching task. Taking into unified consideration the teaching task and link of majors and courses as well as professional development direction of teachers in teacher allocation can take control over human resource cost on the premise of ensuring normal teaching order and quality.

Currently, the central government positively advocates establishment of a conservation-minded society and all levels of governments and institutions are also making active response, which is favorable for long-term development of the country. Establishment of conservation-minded society requires not only save of land resources, but also save of human resources, especially save of high-quality human resources occupied by teacher allocation. Although the total amount of human resources in China is abundant, there exists acute structural imbalance between surplus of the total human resources and shortage of high-quality human resources, so save of high-quality human resources is an outcome of market adjustment. In other words, undersupply of high-quality human resources requires save of resources in teacher allocation in independent institutes.

4. Direction of teacher allocation in independent institutes

Particularity requirement of teacher allocation in independent institutes determines its allocation direction. Hence, independent institutes have the teacher allocation direction of market direction and cost direction which is different from that in public schools. The so-called teacher allocation of market direction means to allocate teachers according to demand of the market on graduates to have required quality and capacity, while teacher allocation of cost direction means to allocate teachers based on saving teacher cost.

Teacher allocation of market direction is to bring human resources into the scope of teacher allocation with practical professional experiences and capacity and with deep knowledge in “situation” of professional market, and to allow the human resources to become important resources of teacher allocation. Since independent institutes are launched by parent schools and social power together, it’s inevitable that they follow some ideals and practices of parent schools in teacher allocation. At present, human resources that haven’t been attached much importance by parent schools haven’t got attention either from many independent institutes. As has mentioned previously, independent institutes differ greatly from parent schools in terms of student source quality, school running direction and training objective. The cause for parent schools’ not focusing on allocation from human resources of practical units is due to their school running direction and training objective, while the fact that independent institutes need to acquaint themselves with human resources with practical competence required by the market is also due to their school running direction and training objective. Therefore, they no longer simply follow teacher allocation ideals in parent schools, but allocate teachers according to their own developmental direction, which complies with their developmental demand.

Human resources with practical professional experiences and competence are largely stored in professional practice units, and to explore and excavate these human resources target-oriented is an approach to realizing teacher allocation of market direction. According to statistics, the number of engineers, technicians and managerial staff is growing larger and larger in China. Hence, the approach is feasible. As such, professional technicians with professional titles of non-teacher series may emerge among teachers in independent institutes.

Teacher allocation of cost direction mainly concentrates on the two factors of total number of teachers allocated and structure of teachers. As mentioned above, to allocate the total number of teachers according to the number of students enrolled is quite cursory, because this can only roughly estimate the approximate number of teachers, and this cursory allocation idea tends to cause much trouble to teaching. Key factors which determine the total number of teachers allocated should be the teaching load. The total number of allocated teachers extrapolated according to the scale of all students and the total teaching hours in the training plan and within the rated range of teaching load each week should be much precise than that based on the number of students enrolled. This is closely interrelated to accurate information of teaching activities. The total number of teachers to be allocated based on accurate calculation should completely satisfy the requirements of controlling cost and saving resources.

Control over the total number of teachers allocated is just one aspect of cost directional allocation, and it merely finishes part of cost control. In the situation when the total number of teachers allocated is unchanged, to rationalize the structure of teachers by adjusting it is another indispensable part of cost control. Because the same course can be taught by different teachers, cost of the same course taught by different teachers differs in independent institutes where the salary standard is directly interrelated to the professional title of teachers and their educational background. According to practical teaching, it’s not a fact that teachers with higher professional titles and educational background teach a course better, because here characteristic factors of a course are involved. Some courses are closely related to the social development, so its content is often changed and new knowledge and information in the course emerges in endlessly, which requires our teachers to frequently update their professional knowledge and skills. Besides, some courses per se are new courses, and they are derived directly from the current social development and demand. Obviously, capacity of master teachers with higher professional titles is not as good as that of young teachers. When courses with high demand on practical competence are concerned, educational background of teachers is not directly proportional to their teaching effect. In addition, the way to adjust teaching according to actual situation of students so as to achieve better teaching is not necessarily a “patent” of teachers with high professional titles and educational background. It is the requirement of cost directional allocation to employ teachers who can achieve better teaching according to course characteristics and requirement of teaching targets. Therefore, it can be said that, the fundamental purpose of allocating teachers based on

cost is to promote improvement of teaching by an economical means and to reduce waste of resources as far as possible. Besides, teacher allocation in independent institutes should take into consideration the dynamic requirements. Independent institute is a fast growing organization, and at the fast growing stage, allocation of its teachers is primarily to satisfy requirement of teaching on the quantity of teachers. However, when it enters the stable development stage, allocation of teachers is based on improving quality of teachers. Of course, fast development of independent institutes itself is a process of selecting the superior and eliminating the inferior, during which some independent institutes might be faced up with the destiny of being eliminated even if they haven't grown up. Although there are various reasons underlying, the ideal and measure of teacher allocation is an important one.

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