

Implementation Deviation and Correction of the Kindergarten Teacher Qualification System in China

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Received 16 September 2014; accepted 24 November 2014

Published online 26 December 2014

Abstract

Deviancies such as perfunctoriness, addition, defect and substitution exist in the aspect of kindergarten teacher qualification system in China during its implementation. Implementation deviation of the system stands in the way of achieving institutional objectives, which are certainly a breach of normal institutional order. In the ways of establishing professional group for the recognition of qualifications, perfecting supervision and accountability mechanism, enhancing the operability of kindergarten teacher qualification system and so forth, the effective implementation of kindergarten teacher qualification system in China will then be guaranteed.

Key words: Kindergarten teacher qualification system in China; Implementation deviation; Correction

Yang, C. C., & Liu, Y. Y. (2014). Implementation Deviation and Correction of the Kindergarten Teacher Qualification System in China. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 10(6), 230-234. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/5852> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/5852>

INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten teacher qualification system is a legal occupational licensing system implemented by the country to kindergarten teachers. The implementation of kindergarten teacher qualification system is a reflection of managing education by law for China to normalize, scientize and legalize the kindergarten teacher

qualification, which is of great importance to promote kindergarten teachers' specialization, as well as improve its social and economic status. However, due to that face that the kindergarten teacher qualification in China is currently imperfect, a series of problems have been exposed in the implementation process, which are "fail to ensure that every single student of normal university or college meets the standard of teacher qualification" (Sun & Feng, 2008), "the recognition of kindergarten teacher qualification is short of scientificity, so it is difficult to conduct substantive examination on its professional competence" (Hong, 2011) and so forth. All these problems are closely related to the phenomena of various implementation deviations existing in the implementation process of kindergarten teacher qualification system in China to some extent. The cognition and correction of these phenomena of deviations are of great practical significance to the promotion related to the construction of kindergarten teacher qualification system in China.

1. IMPLEMENTATION DEVIATIONS EXIST IN THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUALIFICATION SYSTEM IN CHINA

The so-called institutional deviations refer to "the disparity caused by the differences between institutional text and institutional implementation during concrete operations, or the watered-down institutional effect conducted by institutional text in practice." (Hua, 2008). Institutional implementation deviation, on the other hand, refers to the deformation of system caused by the departure as well as contortion to the institution, the outcome of which fails to reach the intended target, or even deviate from it. Thus, the system fails to reach a successful realization, or even comes to nothing in some cases. Generally speaking, the phenomena of institutional deviation during the implementation of kindergarten teacher qualification

system in China mainly manifest as: executive perfunctoriness, executive addition, executive defect, executive substitution as well as mechanical execution.

1.1 Executive Perfunctoriness of System

Executive perfunctoriness of system means that “during the implementation process of system, local governments only conduct eyewashes to cover the lack of real operation, focusing on impractical or non-operability executive measures such as publicity of the system.” (Li, 2008) Healthy psychological trait of teacher is an important content of teachers’ education, as well as the essential criteria of teacher. Chinese *Measures for the Implementation of “Teacher Qualification Regulations”* stipulates clearly that the person who applies for recognition of teacher qualification shall “have a good physical fitness as well as a healthy psychological trait”. Nevertheless, in the actual process of recognition related to kindergarten teacher qualification, physical fitness of the applicant is always the one and only one characteristic that the needs to be inspected. Applicants only need to submit their health certificates issued by hospitals above the county level and they are hereby eligible to apply. Even if there is an inspection for psychological health, the content of the inspection can only be the subjective judgments from the interviewers to the applicants in accordance with their facial expressions or language performances during the interviews. That is to say, there is no specialized inspection for testing applicants’ psychological health. This current method of inspection is of great subjective randomness, which is difficult to ensure the psychological quality of the applicant.

Besides, there is also a great flaw in the inspection of teacher’s professional ethics, which has always been assessed and judged by the ideological and moral evaluation of relevant departments. In many cases, the ideological and moral evaluation given by relevant departments is perfunctory due to the lack of in-depth knowledge of the applicant, so it is unable to reflect the truth. All of these situations are perfunctory in the system, which lowers the professional entry barriers of kindergarten teacher, and not conducive for the selection of professional and talented persons.

1.2 Executive Addition of System

Regulations related to kindergarten teacher qualification system in China is rough and ambiguous, which greatly enable local administrative department for education to “treat them with gloves” (Li, 2001) during the implementation, inappropriate contents might be added, and thus the seriousness of the implementation will be affected. In accordance with the stipulations of *Teacher Qualification Regulations*, ladder system has been adopted in China to recognize teacher’s qualification. Namely, senior high school teacher qualification will be recognized by prefecture-level administrative department

for education, while junior high school and primary school as well as kindergarten by county-level administrative department for education. Therefore, the training and examination between pedagogy and psychology become fragmented, being lacking in a single standard. Some local administrative departments for education even regard these situations as great chances for them to create income. They accumulate wealth by unfair means in the name of training and examination, which leads to the case that

almost all the training institutions will delimit examination scope for the trainees before the test, which shares a surprisingly high hit rate. In this condition, the authority and standardability of teacher qualification examination system, as well as its filtration capability, has been largely decreased. (Wu, 2010)

Due to the fact that the generation pathway of teacher qualification system is not from bottom to top, but from top to bottom, local administrative departments for education can always find “rational” reason for their additional policies, which makes the regulating objects, scopes, strength and target of teacher qualification system go beyond the original requirements, having a negative effect on the achievement of its goals.

1.3 Executive Defect of System

Executive defect of system mainly refers to that

when local governments at all levels serve as institutional executive bodies to implement relevant central system, the content and spirit of the system have been accepted or rejected all at will in accordance with the interests of specific areas. They choose the profitable part to carry out, and ignore the non-profitable one. Therefore, the content of relevant central system is then fragmentary and fails to be put into practice completely. (Li, 2008)

Teacher qualification system works as an integral function, the effect of which will be badly influenced if we conduct implementation selectively. At present, the direct recognition of teacher qualification for graduates from normal universities or colleges in China is a typical “executive defect of system”. Due to the fact that the current level as well as operational quality of normal universities or colleges is uneven, the quality of their normal students remains open to question. Also, the cognition of normal students is mainly based on their correlated curriculums, educational practices, mandarin level as well as medical examination, which is lacking in tests or examinations for practical teaching ability. Thanks to that, some of the normal students are not intellectual or qualified enough to undertake the due obligations of education.

Executive defect of system also exists in the recognition of kindergarten teacher qualification for non-normal personnel. In accordance with the relevant stipulations of kindergarten teacher qualification regulations, if a non-normal person wants to apply for the recognition of kindergarten teacher qualification, he or she shall study the additional courses of pedagogy, psychology and so forth as required. However, “the

current written examination of kindergarten teacher qualification includes only pedagogy and psychology, or pedagogy and educational psychology, or pedagogy and psychology (educational psychology) plus educational laws and regulations". (Sun & Feng, 2008) All of these methods of examination are of no profession and no pertinence for examinee who wants to obtain kindergarten teacher qualification. Early childhood education has its unique and own particularity. Except for the basic knowledge of pedagogy and psychology, kindergarten teachers should also master the professional knowledge such as children development and domain knowledge, as well as the professional abilities such as health care, nursery and education. What's more, in regard of that the subjects, the standard, together with the outline of examination are unifiedly established by administrative departments for education, the discrimination between the contents of kindergarten teacher qualification examination and those of primary and middle school is inconspicuous, which fails to reflect the particularity of early childhood education, as well as the profession of examinee. In addition, when it comes to comprehensively practical ability, now there is no relevant stipulation for the situation of practice and internship related to non-normal applicants in the kindergarten teacher qualification system in China, which leads to the result that the educational and teaching ability of the applicant cannot be seen completely in their minute trial lectures.

1.4 Executive Substitution of System

Executive substitution of system refers to the phenomenon of "people can always find a way to cope with the government policies", which is heatedly debated by the public and media. The ambiguity of teacher qualification system as well as the discretion of institutional execution might make local administrative departments for education reinterpret the system according to their own intentions, replacing the original and superior policies with their self-ordained regulations to form a new local policy, which leads to the change of objects as well as regulating scope, thus becomes obstacles for the realization of its goal. For instance, Article 19 of the *Teacher Qualification Regulations* stipulates that "people who commit falsification or fraud to obtain teaching qualification; or person who are of misbehavior, insult, making a very bad impression, will be dismissed by administrative departments for education in people's governments above the county level." In actual execution, however, people who commit the above situations will be in disciplinary sanction or transfer to another unit at most, which lead to the result that such disqualified personnel still stays in teaching bodies, having a negative influence on the image of teacher groups.

Besides, according to relevant stipulations of the teacher qualification regulations, the form for kindergarten teacher qualification examination in China is "written

examination plus interview", which is to say that the applicants shall take the written examination as well as the interview to demonstrate his or her specialized knowledge and professional ability. The process of teacher qualification "access" is actually the process of improving the professional competence of the examinees as well. By making preparations for examination and taking tests, examinees' theoretical capacity as well as practical ability will be enhanced to a certain extent indeed. Furthermore, on account that the content and standard of the kindergarten teacher qualification, including the written examination, interview and trial lecture, are closed-door materials, the examination will be the sole and only channel for examinees to learn about the specific circumstances. Still, actually, in order to save costs and facilitate operations, the examination form has been modified as "written examination plus additional interview" by local executors. It thusly means that only in the way of passing the written examination can the examinees be eligible to go for the interview and vice versa. Because of the ambiguity of examination standard, applicants, who fail the written examination in previous time, might pass the written examination this time but fail the interview, which leads to the result of repeating the test over and over again. Repeating taking the examination, nevertheless, is a waste of examination cost for examinees, going against the professional development of examinees, as well as being inimical to the improvement of the overall quality related to kindergarten teaching bodies and its reserves.

2. DANGER OF IMPLEMENTATION DEVIATION OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

Implementation is the most direct and important stage to the realization of institutional goals, which fundamentally determine whether the system can be fulfilled or not, as well as degree and scope of its realization. American policy scientist Allison claims that: "During the process of achieving institutional goal, the function of project determination accounts for only 10%, the remaining 90% function depends on effective execution." (Ding, 1991) The implementation deviations of kindergarten teacher qualification system not only affect the realization of institutional goal, but also a breach of normal institutional order.

2.1 Stand in the Way of Realization Related to the Institutional Goal

Various implementation deviations to the original institutional goal of kindergarten teacher qualification system definitely hinder the realization of institutional goal. The kindergarten teacher qualification system is suggested for the kindergarten teacher access. Due to the differences between different regions' actual situations, institutional goal is allowed to be flexible, adjustment measures to local

conditions and time. However, during the implementation, this system has been widely changed, departing from the original goal, being lacking in stability and definition, which increase the uncertainty as well as the risk during the implementation, and narrows the target groups. Hence, the degree of understand, cognition and acceptance level of the applicants who apply for kindergarten teacher qualification lead to the result that its system cannot be fully realized, or even becomes unachievable. If the institutional goal is unachievable, sunk cost might then be generated, which limits the function and effect of numbered institutional resources, and results in serious waste of these institutional resources.

2.2 Breach of Normal Institutional Order

Stable institutional orders are the premise and foundation for the effective implementation of policies. Under normal circumstances, policies in various areas, such as politics, economy, society and culture, are interacted and mutual, which form a complete institutional organic system. Only in the way of maintaining the consecutiveness and consecutiveness of policy implementation, can the assorted coordination as well as dynamic equilibrium within policies in various areas be preserved; thusly the overall effectiveness of policy system is able to be performed furthest. (Almond & Powell, 1987)

The implementation deviations of kindergarten teacher qualification system not only hinders the realization of its original goal, but also generate an alien code of conduct, which is beyond institutional norm. Necessarily, this code of conduct will surely damage the normal institutional orders, contort the institutional function and its positive orientation, as well as weaken the positive function of institutional system, presenting the potential danger of twisting current institutional environment. Once this code of conduct is in stabilization or equilibrium, harmful effects will be brought to the institutional reform as well as the formation and implementation of the following institution; another point, mutual disjunctions between each policy might be caused, which might result in the forfeiture of the integral function related to the institutional system. Blind spots of the institutional regulation and grey zone will be easily given rise, which will certainly trigger a series of degenerations such as institutional speculate, being harm to the social justice.

3. CORRECTION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION DEVIATIONS OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

There are many reasons of the above implementation deviations, including the over focus on the formation and implementation of kindergarten teacher qualification system; the internal flaws and defects of the system; the short of a supervisory mechanism for the execution of

system; the quality problems of institutional executors and so on. In allusion to the above problems and reasons, this paper proposes the following corrections.

3.1 Establish Professional Group for Recognition of Qualification

In accordance with Chinese *Measures for the Implementation of "Teacher Qualification Regulations"*, administrative departments for education in local people's governments above the county level (or entrusted institution of higher learning) are the qualification accreditation institutes, handling teacher qualification application according to law. Due to the fact that institutions of higher learning's recognition of teacher qualification is subject to the authorization from local administrative departments for education, in actual operation, colleges and universities are often regarded as training institutions for the cognition of teacher qualification, therefore, administrative departments for education will then be the sole and only institution for the cognition of teacher qualification, which leads to the result that the enforcement right of kindergarten teacher qualification in China is only grasped by administrative departments for education, being short of the participation from professional group. As a consequence, technicality as well as profession is the shortcoming of the process of kindergarten teacher qualification. Moreover, as the sole and only institution for the cognition of kindergarten teacher qualification, administrative department for education is apt to be in the status of sluggishness when there is an uncompetitive environment for them, hence conducting implementation deviations. From the above reasons, it is necessary to establish third-party professional groups for the cognition of teacher qualification, which is independent from administrative department for education. That is to say, there shall be a kindergarten teacher credentials committee, which is made up of authoritative early childhood education theorists and veteran kindergarten teachers on the front, to form and stipulate the relevant business of the cognition of kindergarten teacher qualification, such as the content as well as the procedures. Administrative department for education has only the right to make suggestions for the credentials committee, but no decision-making power. By doing so, the function of administrative department for education is able to be changed, and the objectivity as well as just related to the recognition of kindergarten teacher qualification can be ensured, its professional level will thusly be improved as well.

3.2 Establish Sound Supervision and Accountability Mechanism

During the implementation of institution, there might be some unexpected results or difficulties, sometimes even the environment is high changeable. As for policy, no matter how it is made, the supervision or the assessment during its implementation process is of great importance. (Hughes, 2007)

In fact, the executor of kindergarten teacher qualification is also the maker, the implementer and the judge of its system. The lack of supervisory mechanism as well as accountability system has a strong impact on the execution efficiency of kindergarten teacher qualification system. In consequence, there shall be an effective supervision and accountability mechanism during the implementation process of kindergarten teacher qualification system. To start with, supervision feed-back system should be set up; supervision system on legislation, judiciary, social opinion, as well as internal administration system and special supervision system should be perfected to ensure the arrival and intelligent use of the resources required by the institutional implementation. The problems happen in the process of the institutional implementation shall be fed effectively back in time to ensure the full implementation of system. Secondly, responsibility assigning mechanism shall be established to guarantee that the correspondence of the executive bodies' authority and responsibility, making sure that the system is executed within the framework of laws and regulations completely. Thus, subjectivity and arbitrary during the process of execution will be decreased to prevent implementation deviations, which are caused by executive bodies to pursue unreasonable profit.

3.3 Operability of Improvement on Kindergarten Teacher Qualification System in China

The reasonability of the kindergarten teacher qualification system itself is the premise and key of its effective implementation. The kindergarten teacher qualification system has the negative features such as "imperfect access system, low operability of judging standards, incomplete qualification certificate system, which are needed to be carried on researches continually." (Zhang, 2008) For instance, the enforcement regulation of teacher qualification system in some areas merely stipulates that applicants shall be tested by interview, written examination, trial lecture and other methods, but no specific regulation about the content and standard of the test, only stipulating "alternative" in the regulations. This situation not only leads to the missing of the guided function related to the qualification examination standards, but also leaves a large "flexible" space for institutional execution, leading to implementation deviations easily. American public policy scholar James-E-Anderson points out that "administrative machineries are often operated under a broad and equivocal decree, which gives them more spaces to decide what to do and what to abandon. (Qian, 2001). Therefore, the leeway of kindergarten teacher qualification system shall be mastered in a reasonable range. According to the actual situation in China, in accordance with the kindergarten teacher qualification standard, a more professional, instructive and operable kindergarten teacher qualification system should be

made, supporting the execution of kindergarten teacher qualification system with the system itself.

CONCLUSION

In a word, teacher qualification system plays the roles as catalyst and platform. The catalyst refers to that the recognition of teacher qualification should stimulate the applicants' capacity and potential. The platform refers to that the recognition should provide full legal time, ways and approaches to the applicants. The existing kindergarten teacher qualification system in China must successfully play the roles as catalyst and platform and fully exploit its own functions, so that the implementation and management of the system will be more standardized.

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