An exploratory study of organizational culture and the personal experiences of TEFL instructors in Chinese

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Abstract

There are four areas in which this study will help improve education in China. Students' success is proportional to their teachers' enthusiasm, which in turn affects students' sense of competence, pride, and optimism about their own educational futures (Day, 2005). Teachers have a deep understanding of their subjects, and they foster an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and contributing to class discussions (Day, 2005). Dinham and Scott's (1996) research on teacher happiness, motivation, and health found that two major sources of satisfaction were the success of their students and their own professional development. Student motivation, teacher motivation, curriculum design, and curriculum implementation were all determined to have a high degree of association by Atkinson (2010). Language teachers, according to Bernaus and Gardner (2008), can use motivating strategies to boost their students' skill development, classroom cooperation, and overall atmosphere. It has been shown via studies such as the one done by Filak and Sheldon in 2008 that the level of autonomy granted to teachers has a direct impact on student motivation.

The study is an empirical investigation of a well-known but under-researched phenomenon: the lack of intrinsic desire among Chinese academics to educate (Lu, 2004). The purpose of this study is to contribute new data to the growing body of literature on the subject of lecturer motivation in China.

As a third reason for the study's significance, educational administration must implement regulations that provide the most conducive environment for work. The energy and interest of teachers are vital to a successful classroom. These results might inform policymakers in China on the question of whether or not academics should have more autonomy in their professional lives.

Since the study's driving theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), will be implemented in a cultural context distinct from the one in which it was first conceived, it also has theoretical value. It was developed in the United States and has had widespread application in studies of cultural differences (Chirkov, Ryan, &

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Willness, 2005; Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Leone, Usunov, & Kornazheva, 2001). However, the cultural assumptions behind the theory aren't necessarily applicable to the situation in China. Buddhism, which has been widely practised in China for over a thousand years, and Confucianism, which was introduced to China from India during the Tang Dynasty, are two examples of the tacit principles that have had a profound effect on Chinese history and culture (Lu, 2001). To create their own unique perspectives on life and work, contemporary Chinese culture has merged the three major philosophical traditions with Western ideas. Since this study focused on the cultural features of SDT, we now have a better grasp on them.

Keyword: Motivation Factors, Self-Determination Theory, Contemporary Issues

INTRODUCTION

During China's fast transition from a primarily agricultural culture to a contemporary globalized economy, the phrase "Education requires modernization and modernization needs education" (Ross, 1991, p.67) highlights the problem that the country faces. Since the Third Conference of China's Eleventh Central Committee in 1979 when education was first accorded high value, globalization and the advent of the Information Age, both driven by internationalization, have expedited the process (Yong & Campbell, 1995). Improving the country's economy through producing items for export is critical in the modernization process. China's education system must raise students' knowledge and abilities to worldwide levels if the country is to grow economically and successfully respond to globalization's influences (Ross, 1992). As a result, education and the economy have grown intimately intertwined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' work is complicated, and they do it in environments that are at once demanding (in terms of knowledge, classroom management, and teaching abilities) and emotionally and intellectually taxing. This is widely accepted. Teachers (Day, 2005, p. 13). Everywhere teachers work, they are confronted by competing demands. "On one hand, there is a growing recognition of teamwork and cooperation's importance to economics, lifelong learning, and society; on the other, there is an increase in students' alienation from formal schooling, increasing emphasis on competition and material values, and growing inequality, deepeni (Day, 2005, p. 473). It's possible that university professors face comparable challenges.

There are more worldwide networks and exchanges of language and technology, ideas, information and financial dealings than ever before in the 21st century, despite the fact that higher education institutions have their own unique features (Marginson, 2006). Cooperation, rivalry, and change structural relationships in higher education (Altbach, 2000). The professoriate has changed as well, with greater diversity and increased vulnerability as a result of the rise in part-time and sessional appointments, according to Lee (2008). Changes in academic administration have also occurred, with administrators becoming more professional

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as a result of the rise in part-time and sessional appointments (i.e., both teaching and research performance).

In response to these shifts, universities and colleges had to make major modifications to their rules and procedures. As a consequence of the changing nature of the labour market and demands for new skills, colleges have implemented more flexible study programmes that may fulfil the market's practical requirements (Lee, 2008). These adjustments necessitate academics to be more flexible when it comes to creating new programmes (Dai, 2001).

Second, university hiring practises have shifted throughout the years. A growing number of part-time, temporary and contract employment have replaced the once-omnipresent permanent and tenured posts (Altbach, 2000). Because of this, employees may feel less secure in their jobs as a result of the casualization of the workforce (Wu, 2008).

To put it another way, academics are becoming professional managers who see universities as companies to be managed (Day, 2005). Universities are changing their management practises, which has enhanced the authority of these executives. Additionally, as colleges compete for students from around the world, they are placing less emphasis on institutions that serve the needs of the local community (Lee, 2008). Many professors regard these shifts in institutional culture as a challenge to the long-standing traditions of academic labour (Lu, 2004).

Fourth, as a result of globalisation and the requirement for greater linkages inside and across academic institutions, university student and staff exchange programmes have grown in popularity (Lee, 2008). Basic social structures inside and around universities get disembedded from their national context as cross-border movements of people, information and resources become more intense (Beerkens, 2004, p. 24). Teachers who have spent their entire careers working in previous environments may feel completely out of place in this new one. Last but not least, a professional academic's existence is marked by ongoing evaluation of his or her teaching and research output (Altbach, 2000). Higher education performance evaluations used to be solely based on teaching, but this has since changed, with professors now being evaluated on both their teaching and research abilities. Due to the dual focus of this evaluation, academic personnel have been under more stress than ever before (Yu, 2005).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As previously said, China is going through a fast modernization era. This strategy necessitates China's communication and commercial integration with the rest of the world. The importance of the English language and the need for fluency in the language have both grown as a result of globalisation. English instructors and the teaching of English have both suffered greatly as a result of the country's recent economic changes. Chinese education reform and development were outlined during the Fourth National Education Conference in July 2010, with short-term and long-term goals. The goal is to improve education quality in order to create a contemporary educational system and a strong society (Han, 2010).

Policies have been put in place with two major goals in mind: improving the teaching abilities of lecturers and advancing educational reform. In other words, individuals like as professors and administrators must adapt their teaching and management styles. However, the management system must be reformed from the viewpoint of the institutions if educational changes are to be implemented.

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OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To examine the perception of the academics regarding the organizational culture within the Chinese Universities.

Research Questions

- How do academics perceive the organizational culture within the universities in China?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using a mixed method collective explanatory case study, the researchers collected quantitative and qualitative data to answer the study's research questions (Berg, 2001). Positivist ideas regarding the connections between measurable variables have historically defined quantitative data utilisation in research. Researchers follow this methodological approach when hypothesising connections between variables that are both independent and dependent on one another. High-quality experimental or quasi-experimental research enable this by demonstrating how statistically generalizable experimental data is for the theoretical framework under consideration.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Mixed methods collective explanatory case study design was utilised to try to explain or theorise about the relationships among motivation, culture and experiences. The case study drew on the theoretical frameworks of motivational research and organisational culture to analyse participant behaviours and beliefs and sought to explain these behaviours within the SDT framework and the structure of organisational culture.

The study included a pilot study to develop and assess Chinese versions of the five research measures (questionnaires) as well as the semi-structured interview schedules. The main study used a sequential design in two phases. In Phase 1, quantitative data were collected by means of the five questionnaires to provide a general picture of motivational attributes of TEFL academics working in a Chinese university. The data from these questionnaires were used to answer research sub-questions 1, 2 and 3: What types of motivation do TEFL lecturers appear to have? How do academics perceive the organisational culture of the universities in China? What experiences do TEFL lecturers perceive as affecting their work practices?

In Phase 2, qualitative data were collected through two rounds of interviews to refine and explain previous findings in relation to motivation and organisational culture. The first round of interviews explored participants experiences that contributed to their motivation, while the second round of interviews was on their perceptions of the organisational culture of the institution. The data in Phase 2 addressed the third sub-question: What experiences do TEFL lecturers perceive as affecting their work practices?

DATA ANALYSIS

Throughout the entirety of this investigation, the two most important methods for gathering data were participation in an online survey and two distinct focus groups. A total of 230 people took part in the survey, 170 of whom were Chinese and 90 of whom were not Chinese. The

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survey was conducted online. In one of the focus groups, there were a total of five Chinese participants, but in the other group, there were a total of five participants who were not Chinese.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

The replies that the participants gave on each and every one of the measures were scored, then put into a spreadsheet created in Microsoft, and then imported into a data file created in SPSS 16.0. Visual examination was performed on the data file to look for any data that was missing or any items that were unusual. Data were reviewed by many people to ensure there were no mistakes made during input. The scores on the spreadsheets were presented in the form of raw scores for the several types of organisational culture, as well as the measures of motivation (WTMST-T), wellbeing (SVS), and objectives (AI) (OCAI). On the scale that measures basic psychological needs satisfaction at work, the scores for Questions 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, 16, 18, 19, and 20 were computed backwards (BPNS-W).

After that, descriptive analyses were carried out to determine the mean, standard deviation, and the degree to which each variable followed a normal distribution. This information was important in order to select which variables could be included with confidence in the principal analyses that addressed the study's research goals.

We performed an analysis to determine the reliability of the five questionnaires by looking at their internal consistency. It is important to point out that the reliability estimates of three of the WTMST-T subscales, namely External Regulation, Introjected Regulation, and Internal Regulation,

A lack of motivation, on the other hand, was unacceptable. These Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.15 to 0.46 respectively (see Table 6.1). Internal consistency of the other four questions (SVS, AI, BPNS-W, and OCAI) and the overall scale of these four questionnaires were good, with coefficients ranging between the ranges of.63 to.92 (see Table 5.2).

DATA ANALYSES

This is the study issue that will be looked into: "How do academics perceive the organisational culture of the institutions in China?" analysis of variance (ANOVA), as well as descriptive statistics, were used to address the issue. This study was conducted with the intention of determining the organisational culture types that were most prominent in the eyes of the TEFL professors working at the two research locations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the offered circumstances are indicative of the unique development of China's higher education system at a period of global transition. There is a risk that today's discussions may have a negative impact on workers' spirits and drive. Professors are under a lot of pressure from their students, administration, and the systems by which they are appointed, promoted, and evaluated. Professors' workloads are exacerbated by a number of factors, including their salaries, the availability of classroom materials, the prospects for professional progress, and the quality of their working environments. Because of a number of factors, China's higher education system is in a bind. It is essential, as the expectations placed on English professors grow, to investigate their motivations for entering the field.

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Several factors, including the wants of the students and the passion of the instructors, influence the level of interest that professors have in their profession. One study found "a substantial connection" between teachers' dedication and their students' and colleagues' enthusiasm for learning. (Day, 2005, pp. 62–63) Day continued by stating that a variety of factors, including but not limited to, student behaviour, collegial and administrative support, resource constraints, parental obligations, national education regulations, and the lecturers' own professional histories and career phases, could either increase or decrease the lecturers' job motivation (p. 63). Because of this, a teacher's inspiration could be stoked by their own life and work experiences. Based on studies of factors including organisational culture and individual experiences that affect the motivation of Chinese teachers of English as a foreign language, it is clear that these factors play a significant role. This includes achieving one's goals, feeling well, and satisfying the three fundamental psychological demands of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present investigation has two drawbacks. For starters, it's important to consider how broad the findings of the study may be. Researchers used a mixed-methods case study to examine the relationship between teachers' desire to work at TEFL institutions in Chinese universities and organisational culture. SDT and CVF theoretical ideas were used in this study to explore a phenomenon: the connections presented in the current investigation. The findings corroborated these theories. Not all Chinese universities can use the conclusions of this study. Northern University, as previously mentioned, has its own unique structure and set of challenges.

Secondly, circumstances beyond of the researchers' control may have limited the study, such as not interviewing the same groups of lecturers twice. Participants (with the exception of F and I) in the second round of interviews may be different from those in the first round of interviews since the subject of organisational culture's effect on lecturers' motivation will be raised in the first round of interviews. Because of the varied times, locations, and instructors, this may affect the outcomes of the interviews.

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