

Discrimination Among the International and Local School Teachers

Hanxi Hu

Shanghai YK Pao School, Shanghai, China

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Abstract: As we all know, a stable salary management system is the most powerful tool to attract, retain and motivate talents as well as sustain life. With the rapid development and outburst of the international school industry, the outstanding managers and teachers of these international schools have become the main talents focused by the industry. At the same time, the salaries of the educators and economic benefits of international schools are also concerned by the same industry. At present, salaries of teachers in and out of the international education industry are often higher than those of the middle schools. Fewer international schools can achieve equal pay for equal work. This essay will focus on the salary of teachers in international schools, and deeply reveal the causes and solutions of the most authentic salary contempt chain in the industry.

1. Introduction

In China, International schools are commonly found in developed cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, yet they are not viewed as known leaders in the field of education around the world. As a student in one of the most famous international schools in Shanghai, one serious problem that strongly reflects the inequality around the world of education – the unfair treatment and different salaries between Chinese and international teachers. The problem of treating different a country's teachers better does exist and shows the hidden racial discrimination implicitly. It can be partly justified or defended by knowing the difficult situation international teachers face when they leave their home country to come and teach in China. China is home to over 900 international schools (mostly British and North American) and a few dodgy institutions that are infamous for hiring inexperienced and hapless foreigners. One comes across a greater variety of subject teaching when they teach in international schools, varying from English to music, art, literature, the sciences and even PE. Priority in hiring is usually given if one has already experienced teaching in international schools and has subject specialization – along with a teaching degree – and even more so if the person has previously worked with the same curriculum. Now, all this doesn't mean chances of scoring a job are nil, but it does mean general teaching experience needs to be extensive and one needs to show a willingness to undergo training.

2. Reasons Why There is a Discrimination Among Teaching in the International Schools

The unfairness Chinese teacher's face in international school is severe and hard to change. There is a transparent bias between Chinese and international teachers in international schools located in China. According to one of the Chinese teachers who used to teach me, Chinese teachers' salaries in international schools were about 20,000 RMB per month. According to the South China Morning Post, the average salary for international teachers is 50,000 RMB per month. We should not ignore this important issue. It is sad to know that, local teachers always get much lower salaries, while foreign teachers get more economic benefits.

Salary differences are common, and only a few international schools in Beijing and Shanghai will implement "equal pay for equal work". Most Chinese teachers at Beijing Shanghai International School may be paid half or even one third of what their foreign counterparts earn. Others have certain gaps in their children's enrollment, commercial insurance, air ticket reimbursement and housing subsidies. There are many reasons, among which the first one must be

the relationship between supply and demand in the market, the second one is the imperfection of the teaching assessment mechanism, and the other one is that international schools put the reality that foreign teachers have left their hometown into consideration.

2.1. The Relationship Between Supply and Demand in the Market

In the preface of *A Brief History of American Race*, Luo Yonghao wrote: “Many Chinese people (including those who have received higher education) are oblivious to the fact that they are actually racists.” In fact, not only particularly in China, but Asia as a whole has a similar phenomenon. We talk about not worshipping foreign things and only admiring foreign countries to become like them, but constantly fill our lives and faces with various European and American products, and constantly grab wealth from the information asymmetry of “making foreign things serve China”. We commented on the poverty and war in Africa and the Middle East on TV, and when we saw the compatriots of ethnic minorities in the street, we would subconsciously tighten our pockets. For all provinces and a few regions in China, we still have stereotypes and regional discrimination. For more unfamiliar foreign countries, this labeling and symbolization is even more inevitable.

The more economically underdeveloped areas are, the more serious ones this kind of implicit racial discrimination is in consumers' minds, and it is superimposed with the long-standing "face culture", which makes how many white foreign teachers become the only criterion for ordinary people to judge whether they belong to the famous international educational institutions [1].

By the same token, the diplomas and returnee status of famous universities in Europe and America are also the intangible assets of these international universities. After all, a teacher who graduated from an Ivy League school will make parents and students who are anxious about their children studying in the United States feel more at ease. The same ideology is looked for, a person who has studied at Harvard, they are always considered to be more superior than a person who came out from Harbin Buddhist College. China charges the world's most expensive international school tuition fees, it's about 36,400 USD a year. Public schools are free in China, China has a nine-year compulsory education. External professional development opportunities for international school teachers can be quite limited or highly expensive because international schools are spread far and wide, with some schools are very isolated. Much professional development occurs internally, either by a visiting trainer or led by one of the staff members. The international diversity of the staff means that best practice from many different countries can be shared and incorporated.

2.2. Imperfection of the Training System

This simple phenomenon can be extended to the racial bias and discrimination in China. Chinese parents believe their children can learn English-based courses better if their teachers are native English speakers. It turns out that this concept is not always true. According to *Teach English in China*, ‘China's strict education system and widespread respect for teachers encourages behavior that most in the West can only dream of’ [2]. Though it is debatable topic, it is undeniable that school provides unfair treatments and conditions to Chinese teachers. The Chinese education system needs to change not only the rules but also the bias they have on local teachers. There are countless comparisons of the Chinese education system vs. the U.S. education system, but often overlooked is the students' opinions—specifically, what Chinese students have to say about the difference between Chinese and foreign teachers teaching in China. Many TESOL-trained/ TEFL certified teachers have found a home teaching in China, and the demand for these foreign teachers remains high as many Chinese students set their sights on American universities for undergraduate degrees. These job opportunities are not limited to teaching English in China or ESL (English as a second language) teaching jobs, but include AP-level subject courses such as U.S. and World History, Physics, Calculus, etc.

The national customs in East Asia give too much meaning to English education, but the social and cultural problems /will not be solved only by education. Giving a certain “endorsement fee” to skin color and diploma stakeholder of famous schools is an inevitable choice for international school administrators in the general environment in today's era.

In line with the trend of consumption and lifestyle upgrading, in recent years, a large amount of

traditional industrial capital has crossed into the international education field, resulting in a spurt of growth in the number of international schools nationwide. Whether in manufacturing or real estate, the traditional industry is effective in enrollment and marketing, but it is easy to be dissatisfied with education in the recruitment of teaching managers and the examination of teaching staff in the later period.

In the field of international education, compound management talents who “know education, understand international education demands and understand market management” have been in short supply. Many middle and senior managers in schools are either from public schools, they are not clear about the qualifications, educational background and teaching level of foreign teachers when recruiting them. After coming to the school, they are even more afraid to manage them, and they are only satisfied with the “publicity effect” for foreign teachers without seeing their working proficiency, expecting teachers to independently solve the problems of cooperation between Chinese and foreign teachers. Some school administrators are born in enterprises or training institutions, and there is no problem in market operation and recruitment, but they do not grasp the long-term daily teaching links of school education in place, and it is difficult to make adjustments and standardized assessments for preparing lessons, lectures, after-school interactions, joint teaching and research between China and foreign countries [3]. As a result, it is impossible to identify the quality of the teachers’ work from the process and prevent it from being delayed. Instead, they can only reward and punish the extensive results-oriented performance afterwards, which intensifies the contradictions and problems between teachers and employers.

Although international schools do not need to establish multi-link recruitment process, multi-level listening and evaluation system and strict teacher title evaluation systems like public schools, they should at least define the model of talent and the criteria of consideration for recruitment and promotion.

After considering the market factors such as skin color, nationality and prestigious schools, the entry barriers for different posts and multiple starting salary levels for the same post are formulated according to more objective indicators such as teacher's education, work experience, performance of trial lectures and qualification certification.

After joining the post, international teachers should regularly listen to and evaluate courses within disciplines, listen to a disciplines, conduct joint teaching and research between Chinese and foreign teachers, check the situation of preparing lessons and correcting homework, make a survey of students’ random conversations, and check all teaching quality with reports and indicators, and form a system and record data. Teachers’ salaries should be promoted or lowered by level of results according to the assessment results of the past year.

In the early stage of teaching assessment, it is best for the school leaders to take the lead in person, while in the later stage, the middle school-level principals can take spot checks. Teachers’ democratic life meetings should also be established, so that Chinese and foreign teachers can make suggestions on teaching-related affairs and deepen teamwork and understanding of school management. Internationalized school principals give attention to market, operation and teaching, and their workload far exceeds that of public principals. If they are too busy to do or encounter people and things that are inconvenient to manage, they can entrust a third-party teaching inspector to form a teaching quality report.

The most important thing in teaching assessment is to break the stereotype of talents. For example, we can't think that foreign teachers must do their duty, and foreign teachers' classrooms must be more active and innovative than Chinese middle schools’ classrooms. Local Chinese middle schools must do things solidly but the problem is that they lack innovation, and all things must be spoken with practical results and academic feelings. Once, a foreign teacher was asked to make an appointment one week in advance from the perspective of cultural differences. As a result, when he met a leader, he gave the class a taste of his culture. Without a leader, he played English songs to the students in the whole class, which was euphemistically called practicing listening. Teaching assessment in international schools involves the reconciliation of many factors, such as culture, teaching philosophy, evaluation system, world outlook, etc. However, only a perfect

assessment mechanism can make the salary system well-founded, eliminate the estrangement and resentment of teachers' team invisibly, and unite people's hearts to ensure teaching quality.

2.3. Humanistic Care

Foreign teachers are treated better due to their difficulties of living in foreign countries. Imagine you go to an unfamiliar new country and teach there for three to five years. You have no permanent residence and no idea how to live there or communicate with the local people. Schools offering abundant help, high salaries, and a welfare system can significantly reduce the pressure one faces in city [4]. There is an ancient Chinese phrase “the scarcest is the most precious.” It is understandable that parents want their children to have the more “natural” English-speaking teachers.

Chinese teachers face inequitable conditions, yet it can be understood that international teachers are treated better because they have more difficulties living abroad. It is Chinese teachers' rights to be treated equitably and we should all care about the gap between international and Chinese teachers since things happening now in international school show unfairness explicitly.

3. Establishing a Personal Training System to Solve This Problem

Another reason for the contempt of salary chain is the attitude of international schools towards teaching talents. Behind this attitude, there are not only business logistics and strategies of impetuous pursuit of speed, but also the imperfection of teaching system and personnel training system.

When talking about the curriculum system, many international schools will come up with a large set of courses and examination arrangements in Britain and the United States, as well as a large number of original textbooks, or they will just put forward a series of conceptual integration education concepts and quality development courses. But when it is really implemented in daily teaching, facing a group of Chinese middle schools and foreign teachers who don't understand Chinese learning conditions, schools often throw the landing of courses and ideas to teachers for free play in the name of respecting teachers' working ethnicity. Both Chinese and foreign teachers, many teachers who have worked in China's international schools for many years, their daily teaching methods and curriculum design are entirely derived from their constant exploration and trial and error on the podium. The process of exploration often depends on one's own experience and experience.

In some bilingual Chinese-teaching schools, teachers' collective memory of the exam-oriented education in the college entrance examination has naturally turned the international curriculum into the “foreign college entrance examination”. However, in some foreign-oriented schools, the new teachers' ignorance of the basics of Chinese children has caused a great waste of teaching time. Some international education administrators are keen on new teaching methods and publicity gimmicks, which makes teachers' teaching design difficult to be coherent, and they are exhausted for various student activities, so they have no time to meditate. Lack of lonely support, on the one hand, has to face all kinds of problem students, on the other hand, it has to face the performance requirements of “result-oriented” leadership, which makes many international teachers physically and mentally exhausted. When the teaching enthusiasm is gradually exhausted, many teachers find that their hard work for many years is just repeated work at the same level, and they can do nothing if their ability is insufficient and their salary is not increased.

Teachers' growing pains are actually the process that international schools pay for but students and parents are involved in paying the bills. It will be the key to the stable and long-term development of the teaching team in an international school, whether teachers can be trained directionally according to local conditions and the overall quality of the teaching team, whether the new teachers can be dynamically divided into courses and the teaching objectives and requirements can be gradually improved according to the results of teaching assessment, and whether the trinity of school leaders, middle-level teachers and old teachers can help and guide the new teachers.

Regular teaching reflection and sharing, teaching research and training inside and outside the school will also increase teachers' sense of identity and confidence in the school. If the school's

teaching performance evaluation system and personnel training system are healthy, sending outstanding teachers to participate in off-campus teaching and research training will not only lead to brain drain, but may also bring back more outstanding talents because of the exchange of personal experiences.

4. Conclusion

New things are always rough, but it is because of roughness that they have vitality. Internationalized schools and international education are still new concepts for our country, and there is still a lot of room to explore in talent training, teaching management and salary system based on them. The emergence and development of related problems reflect the long journey of our society from single to pluralistic and from closed to open. Accelerating this process may be the dream and initial intention of our international education practitioners. In a country of one billion people, like China, education funding is obviously spread thin, which means public schools lack the glitz of private schools. Classes are larger (25-40 students, in some cases), teaching equipment is basic and the curriculum is standardized. Some of China's most prestigious private schools charge exorbitant amounts and it shows in the kind of facilities and amenities they offer. We're talking state of the art high-tech equipment, loads of space, sport fields and much smaller classes (usually about 15-25 students). The curriculum can also differ and can be unique to a specific school. Due to the green field sites required to build these schools, expect your high-end private school to be on the periphery of your chosen city.

Teaching in private schools in China is certainly appealing and something most foreign teachers aim to do. However, not all that glitters is gold. Yes, private schools do offer the highest salaries but the financial rewards do come with a price. Parents pay a premium to send their kids to private schools and their demands on teachers can be high. When it comes to deciding between public VS private school teaching in China, it's worth looking at the picture as a whole, rather than a sum of all its detailed parts. Yes, you will generally be paid more to teach in a private school yet public schooling can be an incredible door into the more traditional side of Chinese culture.

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