

An analysis of rural teachers' vocational mobility intention and ways to support social stability

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Abstract

To accurately grasp the current situation of rural teachers' vocational mobility intention and its influencing factors is the premise of stabilizing rural teaching teachers. The survey shows that the rural primary and secondary school teachers in Suizhou City of Hubei province and Feicheng City of Shandong province have a strong vocational mobility intention, reaching nearly 90% and 64.5% respectively, which indicates that the rural teaching staff is still unstable. Teachers of different regions, genders, ages, and school types also have different intentions on horizontal and vertical social mobility. The income problem is the deep reason that affects the turnover intention of rural teachers. With the development of rural education, people from all walks of life pay more attention to the problem of social mobility of rural teachers, but most of them tend to be in poor areas. From the perspective of push and pull theory, this paper expounds and analyzes the social mobility willingness and its influencing factors of rural teachers in economically developed areas, draws corresponding conclusions, and puts forward suggestions for rebuilding rural educational ecology.

Keywords

Teacher, rural, mobility.

1. Introduction

A survey of rural teachers shows that rural primary and secondary school teachers in Suizhou, Hubei Province, have a strong desire for vocational mobility, with nearly 90% of them willing to change careers. Meanwhile, another study in Feicheng City, Shandong Province, showed that among the surveyed teachers, the proportion of teachers who are willing to mobile is also as high as 64.5%. These survey data all show that at present, rural primary and secondary schoolteachers in China have a strong desire for social mobility, and income is found in the survey to be an important factor affecting their choice.

For this purpose, the state has made efforts in policy and system. In July 2010, the Office of the Working Group of the Outline of the National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan issued the Outline of the National Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020), which clearly mentioned in Chapter 17 that it is necessary to strengthen the construction of teaching staff by improving their status and treatment and so on. In June 2015, The General Office of the State Council issued the Support Plan for Rural Teachers (2015-2020), which aims to build a team of teachers with good quality, dedication, and roots in rural areas through eight measures, including comprehensively improving the ideological and political quality and moral level of rural teachers, expanding the channels to

supplement rural teachers and improving the living conditions of rural teachers. It provides policy bases and guarantees for solving the problem of rural teacher mobility.

Both the government, society, and academia have always paid high attention to the problem of rural teachers' social mobility, and have also put forward and taken some measures from their perspectives, which are helpful to solve the problem of rural teachers' social mobility. It should be noted that since the social mobility of rural teachers in poor areas is significant and representative, the focus of all circles on the social mobility of rural teachers tends to be mostly in poor areas (or economically underdeveloped areas). However, there are not only rural teachers in poor areas but also rural areas in relatively developed provinces and cities. Do rural teachers in these areas have social mobility problems? If so, how is the mobility situation similar and different from that of poor areas in less economically developed provinces and cities? What are the factors affecting the social mobility of rural teachers in economically developed areas and so on. Based on the above problems, this paper attempts to expound and analyze the social mobility willingness and its influencing factors of rural teachers in economically developed areas from the perspective of push and pull theory.

2. Analysis of rural teachers' mobility willingness

Social mobility theory holds that on the basis of social stratification, social status or geographical changes occur between different classes. As a class in society, rural teacher groups will have higher demands based on basic factors or push factors and pull factors in push-pull theory, and this demand is often met by switching to another classes, resulting in the social mobility of rural teachers. Normal social mobility benefits the metabolism of the rural teaching force and provides impetus for its development. However, a high level of social mobility can seriously affect the stability of the teaching force, which in turn affects the development of teaching activities. This part of the study will analyze the mobility willingness of rural teachers from three aspects: horizontal social mobility, vertical social mobility and social mobility in the sample.

2.1. Horizontal social mobility

According to the theory of social mobility, horizontal mobility refers to transfers within the same class. In this paper, the horizontal social mobility of rural teachers refers to their choice to change schools or workplaces, which is mainly manifested in two aspects: the willingness and reasons for horizontal social mobility.

2.1.1. Willingness to flow horizontally

In the sample surveyed, 34.5% of the respondents were willing to flow at the level of social mobility, i.e. about 30% of rural teachers were willing to leave their current school. Compared with other studies on the willingness of rural teachers to flow socially, it is not difficult to find that the level of rural teachers in economically developed areas is lower than that in poor areas. Extrapolating a bit, it is the previous countermeasures to solve the problem of social mobility of rural teachers that have played a certain role in stabilizing the level mobility of rural teachers, such as solving the problem of salary income that has a greater impact on the social mobility of rural teachers in poor areas. It is understood that the government of the surveyed area has implemented "sunshine pay" for teachers in accordance with the "sunshine salary" policy for civil servants. This not only makes the salaries of rural teachers more transparent, but also stabilizes the income of rural teachers at a reasonable level. However, the problem of social mobility of rural teachers in economically developed areas still exists, and the high proportion of 34.5% willingness to migrate will still have a negative impact on the stability and the enthusiasm of work of rural teachers, which is what local education departments and academia need to continue to pay attention to.

2.1.1.1. Gender factors

Among teachers of different sexes, the level of social mobility willingness of male teachers is 32% and female is 36.2%, and both male and female teachers have a higher level of social mobility willingness, but women are slightly higher than men. Social role theory states that men and women have different expectations and demands in society, as women more inclined to stable jobs and men more likely to challenging work. The teaching profession clearly belongs to the former. According to this logic, women's willingness to move at the level should be lower than that of men, but the data show the opposite. Extrapolating a bit, this can be attributed to the following two aspects: First, for teachers, their horizontal level of social mobility is only to change schools, and after adjustment, they can continue to teach in other schools, and the risk is not high. For women with less risk-taking, horizontal mobility is an option; Second, Marxism believes that the economic base determines the superstructure. The study area is an economically developed region, so it should have a relatively enlightened social environment. It can be showed that the concept of gender equality is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, the career choice of gender differences is gradually weakening, both men and women can become the pillars of family income, and women can also give up relatively stable teaching jobs to engage in other more challenging jobs.

2.1.1.2. Age factors

Among teachers of different ages, 46.7% of teachers under 38 years of age were willing to move at the social mobility level, compared with 27.1% of those over 38 years old, and the results were same as the predictions, because young teachers have the energy and ability to take on other more challenging jobs. Among the differences, we can speculate that young rural teachers are more likely to have a willingness to generate horizontal social mobility.

2.1.2. Flow reasons

Under the premise of "four choices", each respondent chose an average of 2.7 reasons to explain the level of social mobility. Among them, the two factors of "low income" and "children's schooling" were the two factors with the highest frequency of selection, as high as 52.1%, which means that more than half of the respondents believe that income problems and children's education problems will directly affect the level of rural teachers' social mobility. The proportion of choosing the dimensions of "supporting the elderly" and "personal career development" also exceeded 30%, 31.5% and 35.9% respectively, which shows that rural teachers in economically developed areas will choose to seek better career development under the pressure of supporting the elderly. In addition, the "working environment" accounted for 25.7%, and rural teachers were more inclined to work in schools with better working conditions. The proportions of "marriage and love problems", "training problems" and "promotion problems" are not high, which shows little influence.

2.2. Vertical social mobility

2.2.1. Willingness to flow vertically

17.8% of the respondents had the intention of vertical social mobility, and 82.2% of the respondents had no willingness to move vertically. From this, we can speculate that in economically developed areas, most rural teachers are unwilling to give up the profession of teaching and choose not to "change careers". By comparing with the willingness of rural teachers to move at the horizontal level, it is not difficult to find that the willingness of vertical social mobility is significantly low, which is exactly the result in line with our predictions. Because vertical mobility means that teachers need to give up their job as teachers to "change careers", which is a risky choice. According to risk theory, people have a risk-averse nature. If there is no suitable or better job, teachers are cautious about this choice, so rural teachers will be significantly less willing to move vertically than horizontally. It is worth noting that there

still exists nearly 20% of rural teachers want to leave their teaching positions completely to change careers. This shows that the vertical loss rate of rural teachers in economically developed areas is still relatively high, and if it is not handled properly, there will still have a negative impact on education and teaching. Thus, it is necessary to explore the influencing factors of rural teachers' vertical social mobility willingness in economically developed areas.

2.2.1.1. Educational level factors

Starting from different levels of education, in the survey sample, the vertical mobility willingness of secondary school teachers was 17.1%, the willingness of primary school (including kindergarten) teachers was 18.4%, and latter was slightly higher than the former, but the difference was not significant. From this, it can be inferred that in economically developed areas, there is little difference in the vertical social mobility willingness of secondary school and primary school (including kindergarten) teachers.

2.2.1.2. Gender factor

From the perspective of gender, the vertical social mobility willingness of male teachers is 19%, and 17.1% of female teachers. Though there is little difference between male teachers and female teachers, the vertical social mobility willingness of male teachers is slightly higher than that of female teachers. Compared with the fact that the horizontal social mobility of female teachers is higher than that of male teachers, it further confirms the point made above, that is, the horizontal social mobility of teachers is less risky than vertical social mobility, and the ability of women to bear social risks is lower than that of men. For risk avoidance considerations, female teachers tend to choose lower risk horizontal social mobility, while male teachers prefer higher risk vertical social mobility.

2.2.1.3. Age factor

From the perspective of age, the willingness of teachers under 38 to move vertically was 23%, and 11.8% for those over 38, the former was significantly higher than the latter. This confirms the hypothesis in the explanation of age variables in the study design, that is, teachers under the age of 38 were born after the reform and opening up, unlike children in the past, most of them are only children or have fewer siblings and bear more family and social pressure. At the same time, they have more exposure to new things and a broader perspective, so as a relatively special group, such attributes determine that they are more willing to take risks and choose vertical social mobility for higher returns.

2.2.2. Flow reasons

Under the premise of "four choices", each respondent in the sample selected an average of 3.08 reasons for vertical social mobility. Among them, the highest proportion is "low income" at 81.9%, followed by "low welfare benefits" at 74.9%. The two can be regarded as economic factors, which shows that economic factors have a greater impact on the vertical social mobility willingness of rural teachers. The proportion of "heavy work burden" is also higher, more than 50%, followed by "low social status" with nearly 40%. The proportion of "no career development prospects" is also higher, close to 30%. In contrast, the proportion of "I don't like the teaching profession" is the lowest, only 3.5%, which shows that many rural teachers choose vertical mobility because they are forced to do so, not because they do not like the profession of teachers. At the same time, compared with the reasons for horizontal social mobility mentioned above, the highest proportion of rural teachers choosing horizontal social mobility and vertical social mobility reasons is income problems, but the disparity is that only 50% of the proportion in horizontal social mobility and as high as 80% in vertical social mobility, which shows that rural teachers who choose vertical social mobility face greater economic pressure than rural teachers who choose horizontal social mobility. In other words, among teachers who are willing to move socially, teachers with less economic pressure mostly choose horizontal

social mobility, while teachers with higher economic pressure are more likely to choose vertical social mobility.

3. Conclusion

The theory of social mobility holds that social mobility can be divided into horizontal social mobility and vertical social mobility, and the willingness and reasons for social mobility have been described and analyzed respectively. This part is an overall analysis of social mobility willingness, including both horizontal social mobility willingness and vertical social mobility willingness, which is presented in data processing as "changing careers or changing schools".

The proportion of respondents who had the willingness to move socially was 38.3%, and the proportion of those who did not have the willingness to flow was 61.7%, indicating that the willingness of rural teachers in economically developed areas to have a higher willingness to move. It should be noted that the willingness to have social mobility refers to "changing careers or changing schools", which is a collection of vertical social mobility and horizontal social mobility, then the number of people with social mobility willingness should be the sum of the two, but the proportion of 52.3% is significantly higher than 38.3%, which shows that among rural teachers with social mobility willingness, vertical social mobility and horizontal social mobility willingness are superimposed, that is, a considerable number of rural teachers have both vertical social mobility willingness and horizontal social mobility willingness, and their social mobility willingness is stronger.

The willingness to move in the sample was not much different at different levels of education, with the proportion of middle schools being 39.5%, slightly higher than that of primary schools (including kindergartens) of 37.7%. There was no significant difference between the sexes, with the proportion of men being 35.9% slightly lower than that of women (39.9%); The gap between ages is more obvious, and rural teachers under the age of 38 have a higher willingness to move socially, which is basically consistent with the situation of horizontal social mobility and vertical social mobility, the specific reasons have been explained above and will not be repeated.

Through the analysis of the study area profile and the basic situation of the sample, we can draw the following conclusions:

First, from the perspective of the economic development level of the survey area, the area belongs to the economically developed area with a high level of education development, which meets the regional selection conditions of this paper. From the sampling of the sample, the survey sample covered more than 10% of the local rural teachers, and the sampling rate was relatively high, covering kindergarten, primary school and junior high school, the sampling range is comprehensive and the data authenticity is high, which provides a reliable and effective data basis for analyzing the social mobility willingness of rural teachers in economically developed areas.

Second, from the basic situation of the sample, the sex ratio of local rural teachers is close to the national level, but the local teachers are generally higher than those of rural teachers in poor areas. (The educational qualifications of local female teachers are generally higher than those of rural female teachers in poor areas)

Third, the willingness of rural teachers in economically developed areas to move socially is lower than that in poor areas, because their economic development meets the economic needs of rural society to a certain extent. However, this does not mean that there is no problem of social mobility of rural teachers in economically developed areas, from the sample situation, rural teachers in economically developed areas still have a high willingness to move socially, which can be manifested as: close to 40% of social mobility willingness, horizontal social mobility willingness and close to 20% of vertical social mobility willingness. Among them, the

level of horizontal social mobility willingness is higher than vertical social mobility willingness, which may stems from people's instinct for risk aversion. Vertical social mobility means completely abandoning the profession of teaching and taking greater risks, while horizontal social mobility is moving between different schools and regions, and the risk is low, so in the case of social mobility, more people choose horizontal social mobility first.

Fourth, from the perspective of gender, female rural teachers are more willing to social mobility and horizontal social mobility than men, while vertical social mobility is lower than that of men. Extrapolating a bit, this is due to two reasons: first, Chinese society is still a patriarchal society, in which women's ability to resist social risks is significantly lower than that of men, so female rural teachers are more inclined to choose lower risk levels of social mobility when they have the willingness to socialize; Second, the economic foundation determines the superstructure, the social ideology in economically developed areas tends to be more modernized, the concept of gender equality is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, the difference between men and women tends to be weakened, and men and women can bear more responsibilities, which makes some female rural teachers brave to break through and choose social mobility.

Fifth, from the perspective of education level, the difference between primary and secondary school teachers in economically developed areas is not obvious, whether it is vertical social mobility or horizontal social mobility. From the perspective of age structure, the willingness of young rural teachers in economically developed areas to move socially is much higher than that of older rural teachers, which is basically consistent with the research results of others on rural teachers in poor areas.

Sixth, from the perspective of reasons, the willingness of rural teachers to socialize is basically not due to their dislike of the teaching profession, that is to say, rural teachers' choice of social mobility is an objective result, and the objective conditions cannot meet their needs, thereby promoting their social mobility. Among them, the most influential is the economic cause, but unlike the poor areas, the proportion of other development reasons chosen is more and more even, which shows that although economic factors are still an important factor affecting the social mobility of rural teachers in economically developed areas, they are not the only factor or the most important factor, and their influencing factors are diverse, especially some factors related to teacher development. In addition, although income problems are the preferred reasons for the survey sample in both vertical social mobility and horizontal social mobility, there are differences in their proportions, and the proportion of income problems in horizontal social mobility is much lower than that of vertical social mobility, which is reflected in the fact that rural teachers with less economic pressure are more likely to choose horizontal social mobility, and rural teachers with greater economic pressure are more inclined to vertical social mobility.

So it can be seen that whether in poor areas or economically developed areas, rural teachers have more or less willingness to flow. As an important part of education in our country, the government and the whole society should raise the attention to rural education and appropriately improve the treatment of rural teachers. Only when the group of "teachers" is stabilized, rural education can get better protection and development.

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