

**THE MOTIVATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN  
CHINA**

BY

HAIPING WANG

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of

Master's of Arts

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## ABSTRACT

Teachers' motivation is a "hot topic" in Western research literature. Generally speaking, researches in North America suggest that a significant number of teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs and many are not motivated to work with pupils. Researchers focused on motivation of people suggest that both extrinsic and intrinsic factors have effects on teachers' motivation. However, the degree to which extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can explain the behavior of teachers in developing countries, such as The People's Republic of China, is largely unknown. The purpose of this thesis is to explore, along the line of the Western research literature, whether or not both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation affect teachers' satisfaction in China.

In-depth interviews based on semi-structured questionnaires were used as the major research method. Three sets of variables were identified based on the existing research studies and China's specific situation. The survey was conducted between August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Sixteen teachers were selected from four schools, two public and two private.

The conclusion is that teachers in China seem to be more dissatisfied with their jobs than teachers in North America. In fact, 62% of the teachers reported that they were dissatisfied and would like to have another job if given the chance. In addition, teachers in private schools seem to be more dissatisfied than their counterparts in public schools, and policy implications to give equal chance to public and private school teachers are given at the end of the conclusion.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

For decades, the North American literature has discussed teachers' motivation. The topic has been approached from different angles and by various disciplines, including psychology, education, and sociology. Generally speaking, research in North America suggests that a significant number of teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs and that many are not motivated to work with pupils. In the U.S.A., the National Education Association, for example, reported that 25 percent of the teachers responding to a questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction (Mertler 2001).

Though researches have used different methods to conduct their studies, they share a focus on identifying the factors that contribute to teachers' job shifts, decreased motivation, and job dissatisfaction. Classical motivational theories (e.g., Herzberg 1966; Hoppock 1935; Maslow 1943; McClelland 1955; McGregor 1985; Vroom 1964) and recent studies (e.g. Ashton and Webb 1986; Bastick 2000; Dworkin 1987; Lortie 1975; Scott, Cox, and Dinham 1999; Webb and Sherman 1989) focused on motivation of people and suggested that both extrinsic and intrinsic factors affect teachers. The North American research literature, in fact, suggests that intrinsic factors are more important than extrinsic factors in accounting for teachers' satisfaction (Herzberg 1966; Webb and Sherman 1989). However, the degree to which extrinsic and intrinsic motivation applies to teachers in developing countries, such as The People's Republic of China (PRC), is largely unknown. As a consequence,



the purpose of this study is to explore, along the lines of the Western research literature, whether or not both extrinsic and intrinsic factors generally affect the satisfaction of teachers in China, and, more particularly, to teachers in both public and private schools.

### *Teachers in China*

Before 1976, China was a socialist country featuring a central planned economic system. Prior to the reforms that took place in the late 1970s, neither free labor markets nor private schools existed. Instead, the central government assigned young people to jobs. As well, teachers were assigned to positions in specific public schools. Citizens did not have many choices in their lives. But, under the government policy of "equality," everybody received similar economic rewards and welfare benefits. However, workers were not motivated to be productive, and as a result, this system has been criticized. Developing ways to motivate workers, specifically teachers, and to ensure their job satisfaction has become an important concern in China (He and Zhang 1996; Qu 1996; Qu 1997; Smith 2000).

The recent economic and political reforms have created a more market oriented structure, increasing opportunities for Chinese citizens. Individuals enjoy more freedom to make choices, especially regarding education and occupations, and are experiencing greater social mobility. The industrial and service sectors have diversified, changing from solely state-owned and managed to a mixture of state-owned and private enterprises. The latter include a number of joint ventures,

foreign investments, and privately-run institutions (Davis and Vogel 1990). One result of China's economic transformation is that individuals, including teachers, now have greater opportunities to choose their own jobs. For example, a number of private schools have recently emerged. For the first time since 1949, teachers have had the chance to decide where to teach. Some teachers chose to remain in public schools while others chose to teach in private schools. Are those teachers who moved to private schools satisfied with their new jobs? Are they more or less satisfied than teachers in public schools? And why?

According to traditional Chinese values, education is crucial because it provides the opportunity for achievement. There is an old saying in Meng Zi: "Everybody could be Yao and Shun". Thousands of years ago, Yao and Shun were the first and second Emperors of China and were regarded as the sage representatives of wisdom. The saying means that no matter who you are, what your social status is, or what your family background is, you can accomplish great things by being educated. In the past, Chinese people recognized the importance of education and respected teachers. This view did not change much until the Cultural Revolution in 1966. In the following decade, of the nine groups of people condemned by the central government, teachers and intellectuals ranked lowest among the pariah groups. From that time on, intellectuals have had another name: "the stinky ninth category." However, I am not going to explore the reasons why intellectuals, including teachers, were labeled as the lowest of the social groups. What I am concerned about here is the impact on teaching as a profession. Ever since the 1960s, teaching has been viewed as an unfavorable

career. Teachers' salaries were lower than those of other workers and their benefits were less than average. Teaching became so ill thought of that parents refused to allow their children to become teachers, and more and more teachers began working in other professions.

Teachers' status improved, however, when the central government started to emphasize the importance of technology, science, and education in the late 1980s. In 1993, the Teacher Law, which states that teachers' salaries should not be lower than those of civil servants, was implemented and the rights of teachers were secured. Two indicators show that teachers' lives improved considerably. Specifically, their salaries increased and their housing improved. In the second half of the 1990s, all civil servants' salaries increased quickly in China. Thus, teachers' salaries increased greatly compared to what they received before 1993. In fact, by 2003, middle schools teachers' average annual income was 13,293 Yuan, 12 times higher than it was in 1985 (XinHua News, 2004). Moreover, during the ten years from 1993 to 2003, teachers' living area increased from an average of 13 to 23 square meters. This increase is greater than for people in other professions and it is above the national average (XinHua News, 2004). To describe the changing social status of teaching, I borrow the title of the article published in the XinHua News: "Yesterday's stinky ninth smells good today".

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### ***Public Education***

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Ministry of Education was established in the same year. The Chinese government identified workers and peasants as the most important classes in society. The Ministry of Education announced that the task of education was to serve the development of the country and that education must be accessible to workers and peasants. The building of a new education system in China was based on the Soviet model, but preserved some traditional Chinese elements. In the following year, the first middle schools and universities were opened. Like other workers in the public sector, teachers and school staff began to receive welfare entitlements such as medical insurance. In 1952, the Ministry of Education issued "The Direction of Transferring Private Primary and Private Middle School," and in the following four years, the ownership of all private schools was transferred to the administration of the central government.

In 1958, the Chinese educational revolution began. The goal of education was to serve the development of the proletariat. Consequently, education was combined with labor and production. The government transformed some schools to half-labor and half-study schools. During the 1960s, the Cultural Revolution took place. Most schools began to experiment with new forms of education on their own and the established education system, school organization, and regulations from 1949 were destroyed. Mao Zedong, the chairman of PRC, said that students could learn the most from peasants and workers, and intellectuals and students should go to the countryside to be "re-educated" by peasants, especially by poor peasants. Thus, during the 10

years of the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976, more than 16,000,000 students left school to work and be educated in the countryside. Not until 1977, after the Gang of Four lost power, did the policy of educating students in schools resume.

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping made an important speech addressing the importance of science and technology for the development of China. He pointed out that education was crucial to assisting in the advancement of science and technology. In the following decades, the government, as well as the public, paid more attention to education than ever before. In fact, numerous regulations designed to enhance the growth of education were issued. Schools began to use textbooks from foreign countries, teachers became beneficiaries of welfare programs after the Teacher Law was proclaimed in 1993, and the option of private education began to emerge once again.

Public schools in China are administered by the government. Specifically, a public school is directly administered by a District Commission of Education, under the indirect guidance of the Provincial Commissions of Education, both of which are supervised by the National Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education is in charge of promulgating education law, regulations, and statutes, planning national budgets, setting guidelines for nation-wide examinations, and for the recruiting teachers and students. Provincial and District Commissions of Education make and execute local policies according to the laws and regulations outlined by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, every public school is closely supervised by the Ministry. The government sets tuition fees, teachers' salaries, teachers' assessments and

rankings, the students' curriculum, and even the schools' sanitary conditions. In 1998, the central government's power was decentralized and transferred to the provincial and district governments. For example, prior to 1998, the assignment of principals to schools was determined by the National Ministry of Education, but in the last six years this has been done by provincial governments. However, this process has not been followed by the reemerging private educational institutions.

### *Private Schools*

Schools established by private individuals appeared very early in the history of China. In fact, more than two thousand years ago Confucius opened a private school. From that time till the revolution in 1949, private schools were an important component of the Chinese educational system. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, state policy forced private schools to close.

Following the founding of PRC, the development of private schools can be divided roughly into four stages (Zhang 2001). Between 1952 and 1956, China promoted a planned economy modeled on that of the Soviet Union and implemented a policy of unified state management of education. Some private schools were shut down and others were transferred to the public sector (Zhang 2001). From 1957 to 1966, a few private schools emerged because of the relative loosening of political control by the central government. However, all private schools were shut down again during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, between 1966 and 1976.

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, however, some private schools have

reemerged. The Third Plenary Session of the Party's Eleventh Central Committee, held in 1978, launched a more open policy within a socialist market economy. This policy's overall impact on education was significant. The first sign of the impact was observed in November 1982, in The Report about the Amendments of the Constitution, which stated that the development of education should be supported by "two legs": one being public institutions, and the other being societal forces. "Societal forces" was not well defined, but recently the concept has come to be understood as non-governmental, or private (Cai 1997). In 1985, the central government's decision to reform the education system more explicitly affirmed the idea that local governments would encourage and guide enterprises and individuals to open and administer private schools. At the beginning of this period, most of the emerging private schools were training centers for teaching the knowledge and skills needed in the job market. In fact, English and other foreign languages were the focus of many of these schools (Kwong 1997). Most of these training centers rented classrooms from public schools and provided short term training courses usually during the evenings and on weekends.

Although the constitution and several regulations stated that the development of private schools would be encouraged, this was not what actually happened. Generally, the expansion of private schools remained static from about 1986 to 1991. The reason was that the concept of a market economy was under intense discussion and there were differences in opinions among the political elites. Thus, the elites hesitated to establish institutions and businesses in the private sector (Kwong 1997). At the same

time, local governments were not actively encouraged to develop private schools (Cheng 1994). These factors limited the development of private schools. Until 1991, private middle schools and primary schools numbered just 1199 in the entire country (Cheng 1994).

However, in 1992, Deng Xiaoping brought about a renaissance in the development of private schools in China. At a national science conference, he pointed out that education was not the business of the educational departments alone, but that it must have the support of industry and the professions (Cheng 1994). Consequently, private schools emerged across the country. The development of new private schools broke with the 1980s trend that focused on vocational training centers and English language education. Currently, nongovernmental schools have expanded to include preschools, elementary schools, secondary schools, and even post-secondary institutions (Cai 1997). At present, there are more than 60,000 private schools in China.

The deepening reform of the economic system, the increasing need for education, and the state's advocacy of education established by societal forces were the three main factors contributing to the increase in the number of private schools (He and Zhang 1997). Since 1993, the number of private schools increased rapidly in large part due to a new regulation released by the Ministry of Education. It stated, "The state adopts a policy of active encouragement, vigorous support, correct guidance, and enhanced management toward the lawful establishment of schools by social groups and individual citizens" (Lai 1996). At the same time, the rapid growth of private



schools caused various problems, including poor quality and ineffective management (He and Zhang 1996; Qu 1996; Qu 1997; Smith 2000). At the end of 2002, the Promoting Private Education Law was put into force. It covered the organization of private schools, the rights and obligations of teachers and students, school assets and financial management, administration and supervision, and school closures. In 2004, a more detailed and practical regulation—the Statute to Implement the Promoting Private Education Law—was issued.

The organization of public and private schools differs. As discussed in this introduction, public schools are administered by the central and local governments, while private schools are owned and managed by individuals or private corporations. Thus, the recruitment of students, student fee, the hiring and firing of teachers, teachers' salary and benefits, school management, and the assignment of principals are all determined by each private school's board of directors of the private schools.

### ***The Thesis***

Two research questions are addressed in this thesis. First, do extrinsic and intrinsic factors motivate teachers in China? Second, are there differences in the motivation of teachers in Chinese public and private schools? The next chapter, Chapter 2, reviews the Western literature on teachers' motivation in a more detailed way; both classic and modern studies are introduced. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, the sample of schools, the selection of teachers, and the procedure of data collection that were used. Chapter 4 and 5 report the data, and Chapter 4

examines whether or not extrinsic and intrinsic factors identified in the literature can be applied to teachers in China. Chapter 5 compares the differences and similarities in the motivation of public and private school teachers. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the study with a discussion of its implication.

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## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature on general theories of motivation, and more specifically, teachers' motivation. Both classical studies, dating from the 1930s, and more recent research focusing on teachers' motivation are considered. All the factors that examined in both classical studies and recent research can be divided into two categories: extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors. My own study follows along the line of this division too.

#### *Classical Theories*

Like other social science students, I am particularly interested in a core question that scholars and researchers have long devoted themselves to answering: Why do certain individuals or groups of people act in some particular way? When scholars ask this question, they are asking about motivation.

Motivation is, in fact, one of the key areas in social psychology. Explaining the actions of individuals involves two different "why" questions (Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey 1962: 68). First, scholars ask why individuals choose one action instead of another. Concurrently, this question means that scholars are asking why people reject particular actions. The second question concerns why people persist in their chosen action, even when they confront critical challenges and obstacles.

The answers to these two questions provide a definition of motivation.

Bredemeier and Bredemeier's (1978) classification of all human behaviors overcomes the basic problem of distinguishing between what people want and what they do not want. They have creatively classified the motives and behaviors of people into four manageable categories: to Obtain, Dispose of, Retain (hold on to), and Contain certain things. In short, people are always CORDing (Containing, Obtaining, Retaining, and Disposing) things. Individuals take different actions according to their motivation. Positive motives lead them *toward* attractive objects and negative motives lead them *away from* unattractive objects.

Motivational analysis most contends with hedonism and utilitarianism (Vroom 1964). Underlying this analysis, we can assume one thing about the general human condition: human beings are profit maximizers. This concept explains the nature of motivation: human beings are driven towards desirable outcome because they will feel happy. As a result, maybe not at the moment, but ultimately the outcome they are motivated to achieve will please them. The aim of the research is "to discover and then reinforce the kinds of things that make people happier—to discover and then diminish the kinds of things that make people unhappy" (Herzberg 1967). The study of motivation is important because it is the study of human happiness, a worthwhile goal.

Abraham Maslow (1954) is among the early scholars who were interested in the study of motivation. Between 1939 and 1943, he carried out his investigations into human behavior. Maslow suggested that there are five sets of goals that are basic human needs. These include biological requirements, such as food and shelter, safety,

love, esteem, and self-fulfillment. Maslow arranged these needs according to level of importance. When people are satisfied on one level, they progress to the next level of need. Individuals are motivated to be satisfied on different levels of basic needs.

Maslow does not state it explicitly, but there is clearly a division between these levels.

On the first two levels—the biological and safety requirements—are the needs that can be satisfied by extrinsic factors. These factors include things obtained from outside the individual, such as food, drink, safe community, and so on. In contrast, on the top three levels are the needs that can only be satisfied intrinsically. Love, esteem, and self-fulfillment are the things that one can feel, but can never hold.

Abraham Maslow (1954) is referred to as the forefather of motivational research. However, in teachers' motivation literature, Maslow is surprisingly seldom mentioned. The lack of reference does not mean that Maslow's theory is not useful in teachers' motivation analysis. Teachers' motivation research is often divided into dichotomous categories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Maslow's (1954) distinction has become the main form of the literature. Intrinsic motivation describes the teachers' subject feelings about their job, including whether or not they are satisfied with their job no matter what its characteristics are, whether or not they feel they have achieved a lot even when the tasks are simple, and whether or not they are interested in the job they are doing. Even when they do similar jobs, different individuals might have different feelings about their work.

The extrinsic factors, in turn, refer to the objective aspects of the job. The extrinsic aspects include such things as the collegial relationships teachers have with

their peers, their working conditions, their payment, their safety, and their working conditions. Dividing the motivational factors into intrinsic and extrinsic factors is very useful and our discussion will follow this line of thinking. Rarely are people satisfied with both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their jobs. Most of the time, individuals will feel good about some aspects and bad about others. Taking teachers as a case in point, teaching in China is often a low-paid job. But at the same time, the relationships teachers have with their peers may be satisfactory. Consequently, public school teachers often remain at a school for a long time because they feel fairly happy working with their colleagues.

When workers are highly committed and motivated, work can be a source of satisfaction. Douglas McGregor's (1985) theory summarizes two possible views of workers' motivation. He called the assumptions "theory X" and "theory Y," a distinction that gained worldwide fame in a number of academic fields.

Theory X represents the assumptions associated with managing workers who are motivated by lower level needs. McGregor (1985) assumes that human beings have an inherent dislike of work. The major assumptions in theory X are that the average human prefers to be directed, dislikes responsibility, is unambiguous, and desires security above everything; Further, the average human seeks financial rewards from work more than the opportunity to fulfill him- or her-self.

In contrast, theory Y states that the average human being often seek responsibility and needs to be involved with managerial decision-making in order to become motivated. Theory Y represents the assumptions associated with workers motivated

by higher level needs in Maslow's hierarchy. First, the expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest. Second, if a job is satisfying, then the result will be commitment to the organization; and third, the average human learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility and self-fulfillment.

McGregor's (1985) theory of X and Y implies a practical purpose in improving workers' motivation and productivity. However, inherent within these two theories is Abraham Maslow's (1954) proposition of five levels of needs. In addition, McGregor (1985) divides his levels of needs into two categories: a lower level and a higher level that relates directly with extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, which is a major concern in this study of teachers' motivation in public and private schools in China.

Frederick Herzberg (1966) focused on a practical use of theory. He said that "the direct or implied promise of increased productivity and profits that can be attained if the advice tendered by social scientists is followed." He contributed to the study of motivation and job attitudes a dual-factor motivation theory: hygiene and motivation factors. Herzberg (1966) argues that, on one hand, humans have a lower level of need, similar to that of an animal, to avoid pain while, on the other hand, they have higher needs, unlike animals, to grow psychologically.

By interviewing hundreds of engineers and accountants, Herzberg concludes that there are two factors affecting the attitudes people have toward their jobs: hygiene and motivation factors. The hygiene factors include: the company, its policies and its administration, the kind of supervision that people receive while on the job, working

conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, and security. These factors describe the relationship humans have toward the environment in which they work. The motivation factors describe people's relationship to what they do. These factors are achievement, recognition, growth, advancement, and interest in the job. Frederick Herzberg does not only distinguish extrinsic from intrinsic factors, which he terms hygiene, and motivation factors, but he suggests that extrinsic factors often lead to the dissatisfaction, while intrinsic factors often lead to satisfaction.

Over the last twenty years, social scientists have concluded that some people have an intense need to achieve, while others do not. David C. McClelland (1955), in fact, has been fascinated by this generalization which has led him to believe that the need for achievement is a distinct human motive distinguishable from other needs. More importantly, the "achievement motive," as he called it, can be isolated and assessed. McClelland's (1955) research has special meaning for the study of teachers' motivation. It leads to the concern about the impact of individual differences on people's motivation. Individual teacher's demographic characteristics are believed to have substantial influence on their job choice. Various scholars have demonstrated that gender, age, race, marital status, number of children, and family background are closely related to teachers' motivation. However, teachers' own need for achievement, though important, has rarely been considered in the research. Consequently, McClelland's (1955) research adds an important dimension to understanding and explaining teachers' motivation. However, McClelland (1955) cares too much about the achievement needs. What his analysis lacks is the inclusion of other intrinsic



factors and any extrinsic factors.

Vroom (1964) summarized much of the classical research on work motivation and used it as the basis for his expectancy theory of motivation. His major proposition is that an individual's motivation to act, if measured as a dependent variable, is influenced by two independent variables. The first is one's subjective probability or expectation that particular behavior will lead to a particular outcome. The second variable is the valence of the outcome. The short definition of the first factor is expectancy and the second is valence, which is defined as the value or importance that a person places on specific rewards. Vroom (1964) states that the most significant factors contributing to motivation to work are: 1) High pay; 2) Substantial promotional opportunities; 3) Participative supervision; 4) Varied duties; and 5) High degree of control over the work.

The expectancy theory assumes that behavior results from a conscious decision making process based on subjective understanding of the probability of success or failure. This theory helps to explain individual differences, tries to measure the strength of individual preferences, and assumes the behavior is rational and can be predicted. Vroom (1964), however, did not specifically analyze teachers' motivation. But, the factors that he identified can be applied to understanding the motivation of teachers in their teaching careers. This understanding is developed in the next section.

### ***Classical Studies on Teachers' Motivation***

There are a large number of empirical investigations into teachers' motivations

and occupational choice. In a summary of this literature, Webb and Sherman (1989: 198) distinguished between primary motivations and secondary motivations. Primary motivations describe a variety of reasons that teachers enter the teaching profession and include three major motives: 1) The desire to work with young people; 2) An interest in a subject; and 3) The value of education to society.

The National Education Association (NEA) in the U.S.A. showed that around 70% of teachers are consistently motivated by working with young people. In fact, these three primary motivational factors noted above are not economic-oriented but people-oriented. More importantly, these factors all belong to the category of intrinsic motives rather than the category of extrinsic motives. This might have something to do with the nature of teaching: it is a public service profession. People who choose to teach seem to be driven by “idealism” and care more about serving society than about making money or serving themselves. It seems that in service-oriented organizations, such as schools and hospitals, staff members do not fit into the narrow confines of the “profit maximizers” assumption. In addition, further evidence shows that teaching is a low-paying profession (Lortie 1975: 35) without much social clout. However, people oriented and economic oriented motives are relative concepts. Considering the class origin of teachers, the largest number of teachers has middle-class or lower-class origins (Lortie 1975; Webb and Sherman 1989: 193). As a white-collar, middle class job, teaching offers much more for the teachers whose fathers are farmers and skilled workers. This relates directly to secondary motives for teachers at work, specifically, secondary motivations introduce the factors explaining why teachers remain in the

profession. Four major factors have been identified: 1) Long summer vacations; 2) Job security; 3) Need for second income in family; and 4) Financial rewards. In fact, these four factors are the ones most frequently provided by teachers. Ashton and Webb (1986) specifically say that work conditions often explain why teachers remain teachers: good working conditions help them build effective relations with their colleagues and with their students.

It is surprising to see that the secondary motivation for teachers to remain in the teaching profession is related to extrinsic factors. The explanation for this lies in the fact that many teachers experience dramatic dissatisfaction and disappointment as soon as they begin to teach (Webb and Sherman 1989: 206). Teachers become less confident in their sense of teaching efficacy, which means that they are uncertain about the extent to which they believe they can affect students' learning (Ashton and Webb 1986; Lortie 1975; Webb and Sherman 1989). In addition, children often do not follow their teachers' instructions. Consequently, teachers often feel depersonalization and think their work is meaningless. In addition, teachers are not sure about their rights, duties, and responsibilities which cause role ambiguity and role conflict (Dworkin 1987). These realities, which are usually not expected by new teachers, frustrate them and make them less idealistic. Thus, it is easy to understand why many teachers turn their attention to extrinsic rather than intrinsic rewards in seeking satisfaction. It is easy to see why extrinsic rewards motivate them more than intrinsic ones.

The analysis of teachers' secondary motivation is extremely meaningful to my

study. The central problem with which I am concerned is: When it comes to deciding whether to remain in public schools or switch to working in private schools, why do teachers make different choices? Are extrinsic factors more important in motivating teachers to leave public school? Or, are intrinsic factors as important for their occupational changes? We will explore these questions later.

While we are asking why some people remain in teaching, we are also asking another question: Why do others leave? There is little literature on teachers' shifting job from public schools to private schools. However, Dworkin (1987) has investigated teachers' motivations for leaving teaching. His subjects are the teachers who were abandoning teaching for other professions. Even so, his analysis sheds a great deal of light on the answer to the question of why teachers move from teaching in public schools to teaching in private schools.

A number of studies show that teachers are three times more likely to quit than people in many other professions (Dworkin 1987). Many other authors also noticed this phenomena and labeled it with different terms: teachers' dissatisfaction (Webb and Sherman, 1989: 202), teachers' burnout (Dworkin 1987), teachers' motivation crisis (Ashton and Webb 1986), and "status panic" (Jencks 1972).

Dworkin (1987) analyzed teachers' burn out and turnover rate. His study began in 1977 as a report on the impact of faculty desegregation upon staff morale and student achievement around the city of Houston. He presents several reasons for the growing shortage of teachers and their high turnover rate from the 1950s until the 1980s. First, college educated women, the most important population from which

teachers were recruited, were experiencing an explosion in career alternatives that provided more financial and psychological rewards than teaching. Second, the demand for teaching was beginning to escalate. The baby-boom generation generally waited to have children until their careers were established and they often limited their family size, creating a "baby bust" generation. This small generation is the one that would provide the pool of students for future teachers. Finally, various social forces in the urban environment accelerated the turnover rate of teachers. These forces included low payment, problematic security, and the lack of recognition.

Dworkin (1987) spent much energy on clarifying the concept of alienation, which he believed to be one of the major reasons for teachers' burn out. He borrowed Seeman's (1975) explanation of alienation, which is described as being represented by feeling of meaninglessness, powerlessness, and self-estrangement. In explaining why some teachers never leave the profession, Dworkin (1987) notes that where blocked career mobility exists, workers tend to emphasize social relations over other factors as a basis for continuing their role relationships. In the teaching profession, which is characterized by low levels of vertical mobility, idealism, such as seeing one's work as a calling or as a valuable job for society, might be an important factor in accounting for the continued motivation and behavior of teachers.

Four sets of constructs were measured as accounting for teachers' quitting. They are: actor traits which represent demographic aspects of the actors; commitment which describes the investments people make in their jobs, such as years of training and teaching, the position held in school, and so on; the satisfaction teachers have,

which involve intrinsic factors; and the building characteristics, which represent different aspects of the work setting that selectively attract or repel teachers.

Various authors have demonstrated that individual demographic differences have a great impact on the occupational choice of people. Dworkin (1987) takes both intrinsic and extrinsic factors into account. The fourth factor which he identifies as "building characteristics" is what I discussed as "extrinsic factors" in the previous sections. What Dworkin (1987) contributes to the measurement of motivation to work and occupational choice is that he brings in some new factors in his third construct, the investments people makes in their jobs. It is hypothesized that the more one invested in one's career, the more committed one will be to the job. Another merit of this work is that it can be easily operationalized and objectively measured, and this increases the external validity of his study.

Ashton and Webb (1986) analyzed teachers' sense of efficacy. Their study began in 1979 and was funded by The National Institution of Education in the U.S.A. In analyzing teachers' sense of efficacy, they found that teachers who experienced a reduction in purchasing power began questioning their worth to society. The feeling of isolation and powerlessness decreased teachers' motivation to teach. Other factors depriving teachers of their motivations are also mentioned: First, failure of teacher salaries to keep pace with inflation in the U.S.A. The starting salaries of new teachers were lower than the starting salaries of their peers entering other fields. When they looked forward to increased payment, they found that there were scant economic rewards for their years of service. Second, the lack of a career ladder was also a major

concern to them. Webb and Sherman (1989: 202) say that in contrast to other jobs which have a *vertical* pattern of mobility, the pattern of mobility in teaching is *horizontal*, or using Lortie's (1975: 98) term, teaching is an *unstaged* career, which means that there are seldom promotional opportunity. Ashton and Webb (1989) say that after years of excellent performance, one is "promoted" from a new teacher to an experienced teacher, and that is the only promotion. In addition, the lack of promotional opportunity is a direct factor causing teachers' leaving the profession. "The irony is that to get ahead in teaching you must leave it" (Lortie 1975: 34). This means that if a teacher performs well, he or she will move out of the classroom and become a school administrator. Finally, Lortie (1987) notes that teachers have lost public confidence. Teachers' status is being eroded by the public's declining faith in education and in their confidence in the competence of many teachers. Neither the public, nor the media, nor the school administrators recognize teachers' accomplishments. Like Dworkin (1987), Ashton and Webb (1986) also note that this loss of public confidence leads directly to the teachers' feeling of alienation, particularly to their powerlessness and uncertainty.

In essence, previous theory and research about teachers' motivation have been concerned with three major factors influencing their motivation and occupational choice: demographic traits, intrinsic factors relating to their inner feelings about the job, and extrinsic factors relating to the objective characteristics of the work itself. More recent research has picked up on these factors as well

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### ***Modern Studies on Teachers' Motivation***

The theory and method of studying motivation has changed over the decades. Theoretically, researchers have followed the direction of classical motivational theories along the lines of extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Recent research, however, has taken a different perspective. First, researchers in Asia, Australia, South- and Central-America, and the U.K., have begun to examine teachers and their motivation. Thus, more research has been conducted in developing countries. Second, more comparative studies have been conducted. Third, a number of studies have not only focused on extrinsic and intrinsic motives, but they have focused on the meaning that extrinsic and intrinsic rewards have for teachers.

The method used to conduct the research has also changed dramatically. In the early days, most motivational studies were conducted by psychologists. The reason for this dominance is that motivation was believed to be an important psychological variable describing individual emotions and personality that would predict the teachers' behaviour. As more sociologists began to pay attention to motivation using larger samples, and specifically, cross-national samples, they began conducting research in less developed countries.

Specifically, Bastick (2000) replicated a study to assess teachers' motivation in Jamaica. The main purpose of his study was to contrast the result, by gender, with specific motivations that researchers had found for teachers in other parts of the world. In our study, we are not particularly interested in the impact of gender differences but the instruments that Bastick (2000) used to conduct his survey has practical



implications for our research. He used a three factor model that can be easily replicated for the assessment of teachers' motivation in China. The three factors are extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, and altruistic motivation. His model was tested on 1444 teacher trainees who represented a large sample of in- and pre-service teacher trainees.

Typical altruistic questionnaire items were:

1. I can make a worthwhile contribution to the social development of others;
  2. I can make a worthwhile contribution to the academic development of others;
- and
3. I love children.

Typical intrinsic reasons included:

4. It is the profession I have always wanted, and
5. I see it as a life-long career.

Typical extrinsic reasons were:

6. Teaching is the profession with the most holidays;
7. Fees for teachers' college and training are affordable;
8. I will have enough time to earn extra money;
9. It allows me to be a manager;
10. It offers job security;
11. The salary will be adequate to meet my demands; and
12. Teachers enjoy good status in the society as a whole.

Where Bastick's (2000) study differed from the classical studies is in his

conclusion of altruistic motivation as contributing to teachers' satisfaction. Thus, he extended the dual-factor (intrinsic/ extrinsic) model to a tri-factor (altruistic/ intrinsic/ extrinsic) model. However, a closer examination of his conceptualization illustrates that the altruistic reasons emphasize the inner and subjective feelings which are, in fact, intrinsic rewards. Thus, for teachers both altruistic and intrinsic reasons bring about a more psychologically positive feeling toward their job rather than more objective satisfaction. Therefore, altruistic reasons can be categorized as intrinsic reasons.

Catherine Scott, Sue Cox, and Steve Dinham (1999) carried out a comparative study of 609 English teachers and their Australian counterparts regarding teachers' occupational motivation, satisfaction, and health. In their study, teachers' most important reason for choosing teaching as a profession was "always having wanted to teach." They also scored highest on "working with and for people." Overall, the result replicated Herzberg's (1966) study that teachers' sources of satisfaction were found to be closely associated with "intrinsic" rewards, while dissatisfaction was closely related to "extrinsic" rewards.

Scott, Cox, and Dinham's (1999) research is important for the following reasons. First, they situated the study in the context of educational change in recent decades. Both Australia and U.K. have experienced a centralized reform in the education systems. For example, national curriculum was put into force in both countries. Great debate on the contradiction between central power and market forces were evident in developing the national curricula. Teacher's roles changed as a result. In contrast, the

Chinese system of education has experienced a decentralized process since the reformation in late 1970s. Although the direction of educational reformation in Australia and U.K. is not identical to China's, Scott, Cox, and Dinham's (1999) study is helpful because it focuses on the effect the changing situation has on teachers' motivation, satisfaction, and behavior. Second, they conducted a cross-national study comparing teachers' motivation in Australia and the U.K. Most of the classical and recent research on teachers' motivation has, on the contrary, been conducted in North America. Thus, a study in other countries enriches the research on teachers as a whole and tests the generalizability of the extrinsic-intrinsic distinction. Third, rather than viewing teachers as one group, sub-groups of teachers were taken into account. Not all teachers behave the same way, which is not surprising. Scott, Cox, and Dinham (1999) concluded that teachers occupying different positions in schools differ in overall motivation. In addition, teachers from different types of schools, such as primary and secondary schools, have different levels of job satisfaction and motivation. In this detailed fashion, they explored the difference among sub-group of teachers. New variables were introduced, such as occupational position and types of schools. In this study, a self-report questionnaire with open-ended questions were used. The instrument contained several sections:

Demographic factors: age, sex, years of service, years at present school, current position, qualifications, first language, type of school in which currently teaching were also included in the study.

Orientation to teaching included: entering teaching and items about their preparedness

to teach, such as:

1. I always wanted to become a teacher;
2. Teaching was not my first choice of career;
3. I thought that teaching would fit in well with family commitments;
4. I was attracted to teaching because of the hours and holidays;
5. I became a teacher because of a lack of other options;
6. I was attracted to teaching because of the salary;
7. There was pressure from my family to become a teacher;
8. I had a realistic view of teaching before I began my training; and
9. My training adequately prepared me for teaching

The data regarding study teachers' motivation and satisfaction used in research conducted by Craig Mertler (2001) were collected during the fall of 2000. Responses were received from 969 elementary, middle, and high school teachers. One section of the survey asked the teachers about their motivation and job satisfaction. The questions were as follows:

1. What is your overall level of satisfaction with your job as a teacher?
2. If you had the opportunity to start over in a new career, would you choose to become a teacher?
3. Generally speaking, do you believe that the teachers with whom you work are motivated?
4. How many teachers that you know or work with, would you classify as unmotivated?

The respondents consisted primarily of female teachers (80%). And the vast majority were Caucasian (92%), the average age ranged from 41 to 45 years, and the average years of teaching experience was between 11 to 15 years. The result was that 77% of the teachers indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs as teachers. Surprisingly, only about 37% of the teachers indicated that, if given the opportunity to select a career again, they would not choose to become teachers.

This study was descriptive rather than explanatory, and, the reasons for the teachers' (dis)satisfaction were not analyzed particularly. What Mertler (2001) contributed was the difference among sub-groups of teachers. He focused on demographic traits that have not been emphasized in some of the recent literature.

In summary, there is no doubt that demographic traits count for considerable variance in the motivation of teachers. What is more, the division of intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors is logical, clear, and insightful. However, the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic factors is not complete. These two principle factors, while crucial, have not been included in all the previous studies. To have a better understanding of the motivation of teachers in China, a new framework integrating an immediate setting of individual motivation and social change over times presented later.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods used in conducting the research. The major method is qualitative, including in-depth interviews and participant observations. A semi-structured questionnaire, a quantitative method, was also used to guide the interviews and observations. Besides, the methods that were used, the sampling, the variables, and the procedures used in this study are also discussed.

#### *Research Methods*

Quantitative and qualitative methods are two general research approaches for the social sciences. Dabbs (1982: 32) attempts to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative methods when he argues that quantity is basically an amount of something while quality is the nature of something. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to study the motivation of teachers, but the latter has not been employed extensively. Quantitative orientations are often given more attention because of the tendency to regard science as being related to numbers and precision (Berg 2004). Thus, the structured questionnaires have become the primary method of studying the motivation of teachers. However, there are several problems associated with the use of questionnaires (Maehr and Meyer 1997). Using questionnaires does not allow us to put a rich explanation into our understanding of teachers' choice-making processes. In addition, quantitative studies lead researchers to pay more attention to individual differences rather than focusing on broader social

differences, such as those between teachers in private and public schools.

The method I used bridges the gap between quantitative and qualitative methods. Most qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, do not require structured questionnaires. A structured questionnaire is most often used in quantitative research to collect numerical information from large samples of subjects. A questionnaire is structured when questions are prepared in advance, while most of the questions in an unstructured questionnaire are open-ended. These questions not only aim at collecting simple numerical data, but more importantly, to gathering information to help understand and explain teachers' thoughts and behaviour. The use of semi-structured questionnaires falls between the pure quantitative and pure qualitative methods. Such studies are being increasingly used in education because researchers not only care about the breadth but also the depth of their understanding. Using semi-structured questions, researchers are able to obtain more information crucial to respondents' motivation and behaviour that may not be discovered by using close-ended questions.

The motivation of teachers is a social psychological concept, and using semi-structured interviews to understand them is an appropriate method for this study. Direct questions can be used to collect objective data, such as age, gender, years of teaching, etc. However, direct questions often exclude meaningful expressions, including naturally emerging languages and more importantly, the different meanings individuals assign to their experience (Berg 2004). Semi-structured interviews are often more flexible because they allow the researcher to cut into conversations at appropriate times to ask subjects to clarify their ideas and opinions. The wording of

questions used by researchers in semi-structured interviews is often flexible, the questions may be adjusted, and interviewers can add or delete probes to different respondents (Berg 2004). Often, this flexibility helps researchers obtain richer and more contextualized information (Li 2001). As an exploratory study, this research uses semi-structured interviews that allows the researcher to develop appropriate hypotheses and conclusions.

### *Sample*

The teachers for this study were selected from four schools in Beijing, a city of 15 million people and the capital of the PRC. There are fifteen districts in Beijing, eight of which are urban districts and have similar populations. Different districts adopt different educational policies derived from the national education policy. Thus, the teachers in the schools located in the same district have similar teaching policies and procedures. In addition, the type of school that teachers work at is also important. The schools selected for this study are expected to be the same type, either primary or middle schools, and both public and private.

The sample contains four schools, two private and the other two public. One of the private schools was a primary school and the other was a middle school. Similarly, one of the public schools was a primary school and the other was a middle school. Thus, comparisons will be made not only between public and private school teachers, but also between primary and middle school teachers.



Sixteen teachers were selected from the four schools. The method of selecting the teacher was a snow-ball method. The first teacher I interviewed from the public school system was a male teacher who had been teaching for more than 30 years. He teaches Chinese language and arts, recognized as one of the best teachers in the school, and had the ranking of senior-class teacher. After interviewing him, he introduced me to other teachers to me and I asked them to participate in the study. Eight teachers from the two public schools and 8 teachers from the two private schools were included. Among them, 6 teachers were from primary schools and 10 were from middle schools. Table 1 presents the sample of teachers by the type of school they work in and whether or not they taught at the primary or middle school level.

In addition, all sixteen teachers are categorized into three age groups: young, middle-aged, and older. Young teachers are between 23 and 35, middle-aged teachers are between 36 and 45, and older teachers are 46 and older. It would be ideal that the number of female and male teachers, as well as the number of young and old teachers, was balanced. However, I could not strictly control teachers' gender and ages. There are 7 young teachers, 5 middle-aged teachers, and 4 older teachers. There are also 10 female teachers and 6 male teachers in the sample. Table 2 presents the selected teachers by age and gender.

Table 1: Sample of Teachers from Public and Private Schools

	<i>Public Schools</i>	<i>Private Schools</i>	<i>Total</i>
Primary School Teachers	3	3	6
Middle School Teachers	5	5	10
Total	8	8	16

Table 2: Age and Gender of the Teachers

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Young</i>	<i>Middle-aged</i>	<i>Older</i>	
Males	3	1	2	6
Females	4	4	2	10
Total	7	5	4	16

Obviously, the sample is a limitation of this study, and the conclusions may not be generalizable to the population of teachers in all of the public and private schools in Beijing let alone in China. However, as noted previously, the thesis is an exploratory study using qualitative methods to examine the teachers' motivation in these four public and private schools.

### ***The Four Schools***

The public middle school, located in Haidian District of Beijing, was founded in 1950 and has a 50-year history. The school has changed its name five times and its location four times. In 1978, this school was called the "key school" in HaiDian district. Key schools are entitled by the local governments and they have better teachers and better students. In students' and parents' opinions, once students are enrolled in a key school, they receive better education than if they enrolled in an average school. As a result, their chances of progressing on to a university is much higher. In 1994, the principal of the school established an affiliated school in the same district. In 2003, that school was called an "Exemplar School," which ranked higher than a "key school". Currently, the school has 41 classes, and about 2300 students, with more than 150 teachers. There are six grades in the school ranging from junior first to senior three. Besides better teachers and better students, most key schools have excellent physical facilities. In this public middle school, for example, the laboratory

building is newly built, the multimedia classroom is equipped with TVs, VCRs, and projectors, and the school library has more than 60,000 books. The playground is also better than those at most middle schools. The above-average quality of the facilities makes this school comparable to the facilities at many private schools.

The public primary school, located in the northwest of HaiDian District in Beijing, was founded around 1950. Before 1950, the school was mainly for children of the elites. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the school became a public primary school, and the building has not changed much because it is protected as a Chinese cultural relic. Thus, the buildings are old. Although new computers are installed in the classrooms, teachers are still not very satisfied with their teaching conditions. There are 11 classes in the school, more than 500 students, and 40 teachers. Three teachers were selected from this school to be interviewed.

The private school was founded in 1993, a collaborated project between the local government and a private company. People's government of HaiDian district provided the land while a private company provided all the initial capital and operating cost. Thus, the owner of the private company automatically became the principal of the school and in fact, he manages the school. The school includes a primary school, a junior high, and a middle school. The school has 52 classes and about 1800 students. One of the major differences between the public and this private school is that this is a boarding school. Students not only study in the school, but also live there. The physical teaching condition and equipments, like most other private schools, are very good. The playground and the teaching building for senior high school students are

very impressive in comparison with those in the public schools in this district. There are, for example, an online library, audio and video teaching classroom, piano room, and a fully equipped gymnasium.

The other private primary school chosen was founded in 1999. The department of Education in HaiDian District gave permission to establish the school because of the lack of high quality foreign language schools in Beijing. Thus, the academic focus of the school is on foreign language teaching, especially English. The school includes a primary school, a junior high, and a senior high school, particularly, the International School for English and foreign culture education. The student number is more than 300, and the number of teacher is more than 30. Again, like most other private schools, this primary school is a boarding school. The buildings have been recently built and they are very beautiful with European architecture. The equipment in the school is new. Three teachers from this school were interviewed.

### *Variables*

Three sets of variables were identified from the existing studies and China's specific situation. First, demographic traits are the first set of variables that I measured. In order to operationalize these variables, information on the teachers' ages, marital statuses, education backgrounds, and years teaching in school were collected.

Second, extrinsic motivation variables were collected. Herzberg has done a classic analysis of extrinsic factors (what he called hygiene factors), which have been discussed in an earlier chapter. His classification of extrinsic factors is used to

measure the external aspects of teachers' motivation. Questions directly related to teachers' satisfaction about their workload were asked, such as how many lessons they taught per week, whether they were expected to teach extra lessons, or whether they were expected to do extra work besides teaching. Interpersonal relationships were an important factor and teachers were asked about their relationships with colleagues, students, and parents. Other variables, such as working conditions, salary, and stability of the job, were also measured.

Aside from the variables used by Herzberg (1966), a few new variables were included because of China's special situation. Welfare entitlements are extremely important motivators for people in China. Before the economic reforms (Davis and Vogel 1990), people favored jobs in the public sector because they provided "from-the-cradle-to-the-grave" welfare entitlements, including housing, medical care, unemployment insurance, free education for their children, and pensions. Policies regarding welfare entitlements changed dramatically after 1978. Consequently, this variable was included to measure changing attitudes toward teaching in public and private schools in China.

Another variable that was not included in the western literature is the ranking of teachers. Unlike education in North America, there is a ranking of teachers in China's public education system are ranked. All teachers are evaluated, ranked, and given different titles. Thus, teaching in public schools in China is very hierarchical compared with teaching in schools in North America. Ranking and titles are very important for Chinese teachers' job satisfaction. Thus, relevant questions regarding

the ranking system and the evaluation of teachers were included.

The third set of variables measured intrinsic factors. Webb and Sherman's (1989: 198) primary motivation, Hoppock's (1935) analysis of teachers' satisfaction, and McClelland's (1985) achievement need contribute to the third set of variables. These variables include interest in the job, the contribution the job makes to society, and the teachers' feelings of success. Questions relating to these variables were modified, such as, "Is there a moment that you feel best being a teacher?" Several general questions were also asked to measure teachers' overall satisfaction and motivation: What is the most satisfying aspect of teaching? What is the most unsatisfactory aspect of teaching? Given the chance to choose a career again, would you choose teaching as your career? Table 3 presents descriptive data for each of the sixteen teachers

### *The Study*

The survey began on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and lasted until September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004. During this period, four tasks went into completing the study. The first step was to do a pre-test; the second step was contacting teachers; the third step was interviewing the teachers; and the final step was typing the data into a personal computer for later analysis.

In the first week of the survey, I interviewed teachers I had known previously. Four teachers were interviewed, two of them from public schools and two from private schools. These four interviews were used as a pretest. As a result of these interviews,

Table 3: Descriptive Data of the Teachers

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Physical Conditions</i>	<i>Salary (Yuan/Per Month)</i>	<i>Workload</i>	<i>Welfare Entitlement</i>	<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Satisfaction About Ranking</i>
Public 1	Male	23	Dissatisfied	1200	Light	Ambivalent	Second Level	Satisfied
Public 2	Male	24	Dissatisfied	1400	Heavy	Ambivalent	Second Level	Dissatisfied
Public 3	Female	39	Ambivalent	1500	Heavy	Ambivalent	First Level	Dissatisfied
Public 4	Female	41	Ambivalent	3000	Heavy	Dissatisfied	Senior Level	Dissatisfied
Public 5	Female	33	Ambivalent	3000	Heavy	Dissatisfied	First Level	Dissatisfied
Public 6	Male	28	Ambivalent	2500	Heavy	Dissatisfied	Second Level	Dissatisfied
Public 7	Female	31	Ambivalent	2000	Light	Dissatisfied	First Level	Dissatisfied
Public 8	Male	57	Satisfied	6000	Light	Dissatisfied	Senior Level	Satisfied
Private 1	Female	27	Satisfied	2000	Heavy	Dissatisfied	Senior Level	Satisfied
Private 2	Female	26	Satisfied	2000	Heavy	Dissatisfied	First Level	Dissatisfied
Private 3	Female	26	Satisfied	2000	Light	Dissatisfied	First Level	Dissatisfied
Private 4	Male	41	Satisfied	3000	Heavy	Ambivalent	First Level	Dissatisfied
Private 5	Female	48	Satisfied	3600	Light	Satisfied	Senior Level	Ambivalent
Private 6	Male	48	Satisfied	3000	Light	Satisfied	First Level	Dissatisfied
Private 7	Female	38	Satisfied	3000	Light	Satisfied	First Level	Dissatisfied
Private 8	Female	37	Ambivalent	2500	Light	Dissatisfied	First Level	Dissatisfied



some questions were deleted, others were added, and others were modified. Thus, the questionnaire was improved to cater to the situations the teachers experience, using the words and expressions familiar to them. These four teachers' answers and responses were not included in the thesis. In addition, these teachers introduced their friends and colleagues to me. They provided me with information such as name, gender, age, and schools where the teachers worked, and, most importantly, their telephone numbers.

The second step was to contact the teachers. Their friends who were interviewed in the pretest told them something about the research and about me. Consequently, it was much easier for me to gain access to these subjects. Most teachers agreed to participate in the survey when I phoned them and made an appointment. After several interviews, it seemed that most teachers talked about teaching much more freely and expressed more opinions about the school and education system when interviewed in their homes instead of in public places. Thus, I decided that all teachers would be interviewed in their own homes.

The third step was to interview the teachers. Two different sets of questions were developed for teachers from public and private schools respectively. I brought a paper copy of the questionnaire to each interview. Before the interview, I told the subject about the purpose and method of the survey. Interviewees were told that they had the right not to answer questions they did not want to and that the data collected would be kept confidential. Also, the author asked if she could use a tape-recorder to record the

conversation. Surprisingly, most of the teachers did not agree with using a tape-recorder. In this situation, I asked questions and took notes to record their answers.

The fourth step was to organize the data collected and to record it in a personal computer. Usually, I organized and typed the notes on the same day that the interviews were conducted. At these times, important information was highlighted, and if the interview was conducted in the school at which the teacher was teaching, then observations were also recorded. Besides recording observations and conversations with the teachers, I also collected regulations from the public and private schools in China. Specifically, I collected written documents on the history, size, grades, teachers, students, and the organization of the four schools.

### *Limitations of the Study*

Limited by both time and resources, the sample of teachers in this study is fairly small. In other words, the 20 teachers selected cannot be considered representative of the population of teachers in public and private schools in China. The conclusions of this study, as a result, may not be generalizable to the teacher population in China. Moreover, the selected schools are located in the same district in Beijing, allowing for easier comparison among the four schools. They are all governed by the same educational policy implemented by the Education Commission of HaiDian District. The schools cannot be considered representative of all schools in the district, let alone the city, or the country. School regulations and school cultures may vary greatly from

district to district in Beijing, and from one city to another in the country.

Another sampling problem encountered in this study is that of interviewer bias as I was the sole interviewer for this study. Subjects' answers can be possibly influenced by the interviewer's personal characteristics, such as my age, gender, and personality. This problem becomes more serious when the method is in-depth interviewing based on a semi-structured questionnaire rather than by the use of structured questionnaire. However, during the interviews, the open questions were only part of the answers provided by the teachers. When teachers answered the questions, I asked supplemental questions, such as "Can you say more about what you just mentioned?" or "This point is interesting, can you think of any other similar experiences?" These questions assisted me in further exploring the teachers' answers so as to acquire more relevant, and more detailed information from them. The teachers spent considerable time answering the supplemental questions. Nevertheless, these questions may have introduced bias because they suggest the points which I thought would be significant to this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### TEACHERS' MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION IN CHINA

The two research questions that I proposed in the introductory chapter are: First, do teachers in China respond to extrinsic and intrinsic factors? Second, are there differences in the motivation of teachers in public and private schools? I divided my analysis into two parts to answer each of these questions. In this chapter I answer the first question, and in the next chapter, Chapter 5, I answer the second question. As public schools are more numerous in China, the teachers' motivation described in this chapter reflects the general situation. Differences between public and private schools are then highlighted in the next chapter.

#### *Teachers Satisfaction*

According to Dworkin (1987), teachers are more likely to quit their profession compared to people in other professions. He argues that the number of teachers who leave their job and those who report that they are likely to quit are crucial indicators of teachers' motivation and satisfaction with work. An appropriate survey question has already been used by Merlter (2001) to assess teachers' inclination for quitting. The question is: "If given the opportunity to select a career again, would you choose to become a teacher?"

The eight teachers working in public schools in China were asked this question.

The proportion of teachers reporting that they would not become a teacher again is even higher than in the American study where about 37% said they would not become teachers (Mertler 2001). Five out of eight, or 62%, of the Chinese teachers said that they would choose another career. In addition, two teachers were not certain which career they would choose if they had the opportunity to choose again. These figures mean that only one out of eight, that is about 12% of the teachers, were willing to say that they would definitely choose to teach again. Overall, this finding shows that Chinese teachers seem to be highly dissatisfied with their jobs.

There is some evidence that some private school teachers in China have left their jobs in public school for jobs in private schools. Thus, job satisfaction must be analyzed to determine if teaching in private schools is more or less satisfying or dissatisfying than teaching in public schools. Eight teachers from private schools were asked the following question: "If you had the opportunity to select, would you choose to go back to public school to be a teacher?" Interestingly, five out of the eight teachers reported that they would go back to teach in public schools and only two of the eight (25%) teachers said that they would remain in private schools. One teacher was not certain what she would choose to do if she was given the opportunity.

About 62% of public school teachers would not choose teaching as their career while about 62% of private school teachers would move back to public school teaching. The differences between public and private school teachers will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but generally teachers from both public and private schools in China do not seem to be satisfied with their jobs. What are their

reasons for being dissatisfied with their teaching jobs? Extrinsic and intrinsic factors have been suggested as sources of teachers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction and they are examined next.

### ***Extrinsic Factors***

Ashton and Webb (1986), Dworkin (1987), Herzberg (1966), Vroom (1964), Webb and Sherman (1989) identified extrinsic factors as being important influences on teachers' motivation and satisfaction. Extrinsic factors are defined as the objective aspects of jobs, such as working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, security, promotional opportunities and vacation time. Herzberg (1966) suggests that, at least in North America, these extrinsic factors are strongly related to teachers' dissatisfaction, as compared with intrinsic factors, such as interests in working with youth, achievement in teaching, and recognition from the public. In this section, I will examine the effects of these extrinsic factors on teachers' job satisfaction in China.

### **Physical Working Conditions**

As illustrated in Table 4, half of the teachers (50%) told me that the buildings and equipment for teaching and working were new, and that they were satisfied with the physical facilities. Six out of sixteen (37%) of the teachers reported that the equipment was fair, not too bad but not too good compared with the equipment in other schools. Finally, two out of sixteen (13%) teachers complained about the equipment in their schools.

Table 4: Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Working Conditions

	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>
Number of Teachers	8	6	2
Percentage	50%	37%	13%

Teacher Public 5 is a 33 year old, female teacher. She complained about the equipment, saying that there was a gap between the course requirements and the equipment that the school provided to teach those courses. Specifically, this teacher said:

Now the school asks teachers to use high-tech and multimedia equipment to teach. The curriculum that you prepare for teaching should be in digital version, as opposed to the hand-written version that we used before. Teachers are required to download useful materials to affiliate teaching from the website. However, there is only one computer in the office and there are ten teachers occupying the office. Then who is the one to use the computer? Also, the internet that this computer is connected with is local LAN net, which means you can only hook up to the school website. Thus, if you want to browse the web for downloading materials you need for teaching, you will have to go home and use your own computer or go to public computer rooms.

However, not all the teachers are complaining about school equipment. In many cases, the teachers' office equipment may be unsatisfactory, but the equipment that they use in their classrooms is often highly advanced. Teacher Public 8 is a male teacher who is in his late fifties. He has taught in this public middle school for years, and he has witnessed the changes in public schools. He said:

Things changed a lot in recent years. Nowadays there is a TV set in every classroom in our school. These changes help teaching and learning. Our school



has passed the evaluation conducted by Education Commission and we received the title of 'Exemplar School'. Administration of Education will fund schools like ours, and a new "Science and Technology Building" will be built. The evaluation is like a card game and our school is the winner, again.

School teachers felt responsible for their students, and they tried their best to advance their students' learning. Therefore, good equipment for teaching makes many teachers feel satisfied with their jobs. However, a distinction must be made between the equipments in the teachers' offices and the equipment in the classrooms. From the evidence, I conclude that the equipment in the classroom is better than the equipment in teachers' offices. Thus, the teachers' satisfaction should be divided into satisfaction with office equipment and satisfaction with classroom equipment. Teachers feel more satisfied with the latter than with the former.

### Interpersonal Relations

Herzberg (1966) included interpersonal relations as an extrinsic factor having an impact on teachers' motivation. Ashton and Webb (1986), Lortie (1975), and Webb and Sherman (1989) analyzed the concept of "efficacy" and concluded that students' motivation and performances were closely related to their teachers' motivation. In this study, nine out of sixteen teachers (50%) feel satisfied when their students achieve academically. Furthermore, two teachers (11%) feel very satisfied because they love their students and have built strong relations with them. Table 5 illustrates the findings when teachers were asked what was the best part of teaching.

Table 5: Teachers' Areas of Greatest Satisfaction

	<i>Holidays</i>	<i>Students' Achievement</i>	<i>Good Relationship With Students</i>	<i>Do Not Feel Great At All Being a Teacher</i>
Number of Teachers	5	7	2	2
Percentage	31%	43%	12%	12%

Teacher Private 2 is a female, primary school teacher. She has had similar experiences as two other teachers teaching in the same primary school, teachers Private 1 and Private 3. They all taught at a public primary school before they were teaching in this school. Thus, these teachers have experienced teaching at both public and private schools. Teacher Private 2 described vividly the response when she told her public school students that she was leaving them to teach in a private school:

The students are so lovely and I will never forget when I told them that I was going to leave. All the students in my class cried. One of the boys sitting in the front row stood up and asked me, "Miss Lee, where are you going? Are you coming back as our teacher again?" I was so moved by them, my little kids.

Teacher Private 3 was also moved by her students. She said:

Once I took them out for a field trip. A boy took out his bottle of water and was about to take a drink when he saw me standing not far from him. Then he came over and asked me, "Do you feel thirsty? You can drink mine". They are just so cute.

Some teachers teaching in private schools also enjoy a good relationship with their students. Teacher Private 6 is a 48 year old male teacher who teaches at a private middle school. When asked about his relationship with this students, he described his "happiest moment":

When I was teaching Grade 8, the whole class of students celebrated my birthday for me. I did not realize it at all, and when I was about to leave for home after the class, one of the students asked me to go back to the classroom.

When I stepped into the classroom I was completely astonished. The kids had prepared 40 big candles for me, lit, and sparkling. In the middle of the classroom, there was a huge two-layer birthday cake, with two beautiful bouquets alongside. On the blackboard, they wrote "Teacher, Thank You for Your Hard Work." They spent nearly 1000 Yuan on these gifts for me. And some of the students even asked their parents to help them to prepare this birthday party. Otherwise they themselves were not able to bring the cakes and bouquets to school. I felt so happy that day. I love my students.

Interpersonal relationship between teachers and students are, of course, very important for both teachers and students. However, there are interpersonal relationships other than teacher-student relationships that need to be examined. These other relations are teacher-teacher and teacher-parent relationships.

Teacher-teacher relationships are nuanced and interesting, especially when compared with teacher-teacher relationships in North America. A major value in North America is individuality (Webb and Sherman 1989), and teachers tend to care about their own teaching. What to teach and how to teach is highly personalized and communication among teachers about teaching content and skills rarely occurs. However, in China, teachers and schools are not independent organizations. Schools are more like branches of a bureaucracy in which principals and teachers perform tasks of teaching set by the Ministry of Education. In contrast to individuality among teachers in North America, teachers in China belong to a collective community working toward the same goal with shared teaching methods and skills.

In China, teachers are grouped in teaching and research groups according to the subjects that they teach. Thus, there is a "Chinese teaching and research group", a "Math teaching and research group", and other disciplinary groups in every school. Each group has a leader who is the most qualified in the subject. The leader is normally the highest ranked in the teachers' hierarchy and is called the "Senior Teacher" or the "Special-class Teacher." More than half of the teachers said that they got together regularly to discuss teaching methods and to solve difficulties they had in teaching their courses. The teaching and research groups are important for them because they enhance their relationships and help them improve their teaching skills. Teaching and research groups are not spontaneously organized groups. Rather, they are part of the education system governed by the Education Department. Thus, not only the groups in one school get together regularly, but the groups from different schools meet at least once a month. Not surprisingly, teachers are highly satisfied with their teaching and research groups. Teacher Public 1 was teaching at a public primary school. He has only been teaching for a few years and he said he benefits greatly from the teaching and research group he belongs to:

We always share our experience and communicate with other teachers in our school. In our school, we also hold competitions for teachers to improve their teaching skills and make their courses easier for students to accept and understand. This is a very good opportunity for teachers to communicate with each other. This is very good.

Although Chinese schools are collective communities, teachers are also

individuals, but not to the same degree as in the North America. Thus, teacher-teacher relationships are not always smooth. Teaching at the same school as Public 1, teacher Public 2 has a different opinion about relationships among teachers:

Nowadays, competition is everywhere. Everyone is trying to get the best out of their students, and there are competitions between teachers, too. There are so many teachers in one school and you have to deal with each of them.

Teacher-parent relationships are another type of interpersonal relationships. Traditionally, education has been valued as a fundamental element in the life course for all people. Thus, teachers enjoy great respect in Chinese society and the authority of teachers is not often challenged. Teacher Private 6 said that maintaining a good relationship with students' parents was very important for him. He said, "When I was accepted by the students' parents, I felt I would never achieve more as a teacher." Most teachers expressed that their students' parents were easy to cope with and they had few problems maintaining good relationships with them. Teachers are generally satisfied with their relationship with the parents.

### Salary and Workload

Ashton and Webb (1986), Dworkin (1987), Herzberg (1966), Vroom (1964), Web and Sherman (1989) all referred to salary as one of the most important external factors motivating people either to continue to teach or to leave teaching. In Dworkin's study, low pay is the reason most teachers reported for leaving the profession. Similarly, Vroom concluded that high pay is a significant factor contributing to the motivation of

Table 6: The Most Dissatisfying Aspect of Being a Teacher

	<i>Salaries</i>	<i>Workloads</i>	<i>Interpersonal Relationships</i>	<i>Working Conditions</i>	<i>School Management</i>	<i>Nothing</i>
Number of Teachers	5	6	2	1	1	1
Percentage	31%	38%	12%	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%

teachers to work harder. Salary is no less important to Chinese teachers. When asked what was the most dissatisfying aspect of their jobs, five of the sixteen teachers (31%) said that they were not satisfied with their salaries. The average income per capita in Beijing is 1000 RMB per month. In comparison, teachers' salary is more than three times (3200 RMB) higher. Nevertheless, when asked what was the most dissatisfying aspect of being teachers, 31% complained about their salaries.

Teachers in Beijing earn a much higher salary than workers in other professions, so why are they dissatisfied with their incomes? The relationship between salary and workload, illustrated in Table 6, may partly explain this phenomenon. Although 31% of teachers are dissatisfied with their salary, this is not what they are most dissatisfied with. More teachers, about 38%, are unhappy with their workload. Observations of and conversations with the teachers demonstrate that these two variables are closely related and that the heavy workload is one of the most important reasons for the teachers' dissatisfaction with their salaries. Many teachers say that their working loads are too heavy for the salaries they receive. One of the youngest teachers, teacher Public 6, was born in 1978. He teaches in a public middle school and complained about the teachers' workload in the following words:

I just need more holidays and vacations. In the week, I look forward most to Saturday and Sunday. You know, being a teacher is exhausting. Theoretically speaking, we work 8 hours a day, just as everyone else. However, is it true? Not at all! On weekdays we get up at 6:00 am, and around 7:00 am we arrive at school. There is an individual study period before the class begins. However, it is



not study by oneself, rather, it is study with other teachers. In addition, students need to be supervised all the time, and we do that when they arrive. In the afternoon, around 4:00 we are allowed to go back home. But, can you take a rest after school? No, you have assignments to deal with, and you also have to prepare for teaching the next day. Around 11:00 pm I might be able to go to bed, and sometimes I have to stay up later to finish the work. You can calculate, do we work 8 hours per day? No, we work 12 or 14 or even longer per day. What do we get from that? Less than 3000 Yuan per month! You can ask my classmates who graduated with me in the same year, do they work such long hours? No they do not, but some of them earn 3 or 4 times more than me.

Similarly, some private school teachers complained about the heavy workload, too.

Teacher Private 2 said:

Private school students are living in the dorms inside the schools. Thus, we do everything for the students. For example, we have to make sure that the sanitary situation in students' dorm is good. When the dorms are not tidy, we have to clean them up for the students. We must resolve problems like quarrelling and fighting among the students. In the first year that I taught here, I also lived on campus, as the students did. From the second year on I chose to go back and forth between home and school everyday, even though my apartment was far from school and I had to spend considerable time on the way. But, this is a smart choice. As long as you were on campus you had to take responsibility for the children, right?

Two other observations show that many teachers are extremely dissatisfied with their heavy workloads. First, when asked what are the greatest moments they have being a school teacher, 5 out of 16 (31%) expressed that they particularly liked holidays. When the workload is too heavy, it is natural to feel good about holidays. Second, all 16 teachers are required to teach extra lessons outside their regular schedules. Another teacher complained that teaching extra lessons is not an option, but is imposed by the principals: "You can't make your own choice. You have to do it as long as you are a teacher in this school."

In Table 7, Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teaching Extra Lessons, one can easily read the teachers' responses. Not a single teacher is satisfied with teaching extra lessons. The proportion of dissatisfied and strongly dissatisfied teachers is almost 70% of all teachers. Again, the reason for teachers' dissatisfaction about teaching extra lessons is that the payment for these lessons is too small. One of the teachers said: "We often teach extra lessons after class in the afternoon, or make up classes on Saturdays and Sundays. What we do doesn't pay off at all. We get so little for so much work."

Surprisingly, the Western literature has not mentioned the interaction of factors influencing teachers' satisfaction. If we look at one parameter, it may seem surprising that teachers in China are so unhappy compared with other people who make less money. However, it is much clearer when we also examine their attitudes toward their workload. Teachers feel dissatisfied because their income does not

Table 7: Teachers' Attitudes towards Teaching Extra Lessons

	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Strongly Dissatisfied</i>	<i>No Response</i>
Number of Teachers	0	4	6	5	1
Percentage	--	25%	38%	31%	6%

adequately reflect the work they actually do.

### Stability and Welfare Entitlement

This section examines welfare entitlements, which are very important for Chinese teachers, and which are different from those in the West. There are two components of welfare entitlements in China. First, teachers have welfare entitlement as social insurance, which is provided partly by the government, partly by the school, and partly by themselves. This social insurance includes pension, medical care, and subsidies for housing, and allowances for transportation. The first component of welfare entitlement differs between public schools and private schools. I will discuss this difference in the next chapter. Second, the other component of welfare entitlement is the allowances given to teachers by their schools on special occasions, such as on Teachers' Day, New Year's Day, and the traditional Spring Festival. However, this allowance takes different forms and the value varies from school to school. Some schools give teacher money, and others give them groceries. When asked about welfare entitlement, most teachers asked the author to clarify whether it meant social insurance or the teachers' allowances.

Table 8 shows that 38% of teachers are not satisfied, 18% are strongly dissatisfied, and only 19% of teachers are satisfied with their welfare entitlements. Those who are dissatisfied are mostly unhappy with the second component of the entitlement, the allowances given out on special occasions that vary from school to school. The government allows schools to set the teachers' allowances, and some schools cut off

Table 8: Teachers' Satisfaction with Welfare Entitlements

	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Strongly Dissatisfied</i>
Number of Teachers	3	4	6	3
Percentage	19%	25%	38%	18%

or reduce on the allowances for their teachers. Most of the dissatisfied teachers are teaching in school where allowances have been cut off.

### Promotional Opportunities

As noted in Chapter 2, Dan Lortie (1975) identified teaching as an *unstaged* career, which means that the structure of teaching is horizontal as opposed to the vertical structure of many other professions, such as business management. Ashton and Webb (1986) continued to use Lortie's term and they further concluded that the lack of a vertical career ladder explained the lack of teachers' motivation. However, in China's public schools, teaching is staged and vertical, and the career is bureaucratically hierarchical. Teachers are assessed and ranked officially. More importantly, teachers have opinions about the vertical structure of teachers' assessment and ranking systems. Official assessment for evaluating teachers' ability is strictly executed, which creates a vertical hierarchy in the profession. A teacher can become a second-level, first-level, senior-level, or a special-class teacher. It is difficult to get a higher ranking and only very experienced teachers with advanced teaching skills may become senior-level and special-class teachers. The higher title means higher salaries and higher social status.

New teachers are always second-level teachers, and after a probation period of normally one year, they are eligible to become first-level teachers. If they pass the assessment, first-level teachers may become senior-level teachers after working at that level for about five years. Theoretically, after teaching for about 6 years, a teacher

Table 9: The Teachers' Titles.

<i>Teaches' Titles</i>	<i>Second Level</i>	<i>First Level</i>	<i>Senior Level</i>	<i>Total</i>
Primary School	2	3	1	6
Middle School	1	6	3	10
Total	3	9	4	16
Percentage	19%	56%	25%	100%

should have attained the rank of a senior-level teacher. However, a teacher's eligibility does not mean that he or she will receive the title. One teacher who has taught for more than 25 years is still a first-level teacher. Obviously, this is a cause for dissatisfaction.

As illustrated in Table 9, while 9 out of 16 teachers (56%) are first level teachers, only 3 (19%) are senior-level teachers and there is not one special-class teacher in the sample. There are two reasons for teachers' dissatisfaction with their rank. First, there is great competition to obtain promotions. More importantly, most teachers report that the competitive evaluation procedures are not fair and they are dissatisfied with them. The procedures include teachers' self reports about their teaching, the number of papers they published relating to teaching methods or teaching skills, and the evaluations they receive from colleagues and principals. In most schools, the evaluation process is confidential, and the result of evaluation is announced by the principal. Thus, sometimes teachers who have a close relationship with the principal have been rewarded with higher certifications. Teacher Public 3 is a 39-year-old female teacher, is still a first-level teacher. She reported that:

In school, you have to watch your mouth. You can't say bad things about people, about anybody, because you do not know if they have a close relationship with the leaders in the school. If yes, you will have bad luck. Sometimes it is so unfair, but you cannot say anything about it, you know. There is one teacher that all of us know is not good. His teaching skill is so poor that the students cannot even understand what he is talking about. Nevertheless, he is getting a higher ranking.



Everybody knows what is going on but everybody keeps quiet. If you are not a school leaders' relative, you get closer to the leaders. You can bribe them, or behave like a slave. I cannot do that, so I am still a first-level teacher.

Many teachers have talked about similar situations in their teaching careers. Their experiences may not be exactly the same, but they all said that it is not about how to be a good teacher, but rather about how to please their leaders.

Some teachers report that the evaluation process is fair and objective and that they are satisfied with their ranking. The fairness of the process may depend on the school or on the system, private or public. Teacher Public 8, a senior-level teacher who has been teaching in a public middle school for his whole life said:

It is relatively fair actually. Most teachers need recognized teaching skills to get the title, like me. I don't know how to please the leaders in the school. You know what, the leaders need two kinds of teachers working for them. One is the kind that most other teachers complain about; these teachers know how to make leaders happy; the other kind are those that are working hard and can improve students' achievement, like me. I am a hard working teacher and I don't know how to maintain good relationship with the school leaders, but I still get what I deserve. I have been a senior teacher for many years, and I know that the school needs me.

Another reason for teachers' dissatisfaction is structural. Beijing Education Commissions sets quotas for different levels of teachers in each school. For example, there cannot be more than 60% of them at the senior-level in any one school. Should

this quota be reached in a school, there will be no more first-level teachers selected as senior level teachers unless one or more senior teachers die, retire, or move to other schools. Thus, the competition for promotion is fierce. Key schools in Beijing are expected to have more senior-level teachers than ordinary schools, but it is even more difficult for a teacher in a key school to get a higher ranking than a teacher in an ordinary school. When interviewed, teachers expressed their dissatisfaction about this structural limitation. Teacher Public 5, a 33 years old and first-level teacher, was strongly dissatisfied with this structural limitation. She said:

I don't know why the Commissions set the quota for teachers in each school. A teachers' prospect should not be limited only because there are already too many good teachers. Teachers' evaluations should be based on their teaching skills instead of numbers. It is known that teachers who work in a key school will have better pay and better opportunities than teachers who work in an ordinary school. However, some teachers change their job from a key school to an ordinary school. You don't have to be surprised; many of my colleagues do this. And you know the reason is that it is much easier to get a senior-level title in an ordinary school. It is ridiculous, don't you think so?

In both primary and middle schools, first-level teachers are in the majority. Nine out of sixteen teachers (56%) are first-level teachers. Among these nine first-level teachers, 8 are not satisfied with their level. Those who have stayed in one level for a long time, in fact, are especially unhappy with the mechanics of advancement.

### *Intrinsic Factors*

Intrinsic factors not only influence teachers' motivation, but they are also viewed as being more important than extrinsic ones. Herzberg (1966), for example, explained how intrinsic factors are more important than extrinsic ones in influencing job satisfaction. When asked about job satisfaction, the subjects usually referred to intrinsic factors, such as recognition, achievement in the job, and working with young people, as being most important to them. Webb and Sherman's (1989) distinction between primary and secondary motivation testified to Herzberg's conclusion. In their survey, the three reasons teachers most often gave for their decision to enter teaching were: willingness to work with young people, interest in the subject, and the values that teachers contribute to the society.

However, in this study, only two of the sixteen teachers (12%) identified intrinsic factors as the most satisfying aspects of teaching, as illustrated in Table 10. All the others (88%), reported that the most satisfying aspects of teaching were the extrinsic aspects, such as job security, holidays, working conditions, etc.

The difference between the Western and the Chinese situation is enormous. In the West, new teachers' idyllic images of teaching are often shattered upon entering the profession. The students sometimes disobey the teachers' instructions, and teaching is not as creative as they thought. Thus, there is a difference between young teachers and teachers who have been in the profession for years: most young teachers are still motivated by the intrinsic aspect of teaching while the older ones recognize the reality of teaching and are motivated by the extrinsic aspects. Thus, it is easy to

Table 10: The Most Satisfying Aspect of Being a School Teacher in Beijing

Aspects of Teachers Satisfaction	Little Pressure	Job Security	Holidays and Vacations	Working with Young People	Teaching and Living Conditions	No Particular Aspect
Number of Teachers	2	2	2	2	4	4
Percentage of Teachers	12%	12%	12%	12%	26%	26%

explain the distinction between new teachers' motivation and experienced teachers' motivation. This explanation, however, does not apply to China where young teachers care as much about extrinsic factors, such as holidays and salaries, as do older teachers.

Some scholars regard recognition by other, the public, and the media as "public confidence" (Ashton and Webb 1986). Recognition is very important to the Chinese teachers. One teacher revealed that his best moment is when his teaching is appreciated by the parents. Teachers' feelings of recognition come from two major sources. First, recognition comes from other people, mainly from students' parents, and second, recognition comes from the systematically assessment process and from the ranking and title teachers receive after they are evaluated. As previously discussed, many teachers are not satisfied with the unfairness of the current assessment procedure. Generally, teachers with private schools are less recognized by parents and have fewer chances for being rewarded than teachers in the public system. For this reason, I now examine the differences between teachers in the public and private schools.

## CHAPTER 5

### DIFFERENCES IN TEACHERS' MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

In the last chapter, I examined the factors influencing teachers' motivation in China. In this chapter, I will answer the second question: Are there any differences between teachers in public schools and teachers in private schools as to their motivation and job satisfaction? I will follow the framework of the analysis used in the previous chapter in discussing similarities and differences between the public and private school teachers.

#### *Extrinsic Factors*

##### Physical Working Conditions

Table 11 shows the public and private school teachers' satisfaction with their physical working conditions. Among the 16 teachers, half of them (50%) told the author that the buildings and equipment for teaching are new and that they are satisfied with them. Interestingly, among these 8 teachers who are satisfied with their working conditions, 7 of them work in private schools.

Table 11: Public and Private School Teachers' Attitudes Toward Their Working Conditions

	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>
Public School	1	5	2
Percentage	13%	62%	25%
Private School	7	1	0
Percentage	87%	13%	--

The large difference between public and private school teachers' satisfaction with their working conditions is not surprising. Most private schools in China, including the ones I studied, emerged during the 1990s. The buildings and teaching equipment in these private schools are, as a result, much newer than those in many public schools. In addition, because most private schools provide an environment for studying and also for living, both teachers and students enjoy better surroundings than those in the public schools.

Table 12 compares the structures of buildings in public and private schools. The classroom buildings, laboratory buildings, playgrounds, and dining rooms of the public and private schools differ in size and quality. For example, I saw fewer than 35 students studying in a spacious, well-equipped room in one of the private schools, while in a public school, I saw more than 50 students packed into one small classroom. There is often air conditioning in teachers' offices in private schools while teachers in public schools have only a fan in their office and they suffer from Beijing's unbearably hot weather during summers. Teacher Private 7 taught in a public school for a few years and then is now teaching in a private middle school. She said:

The greatest differences between public and private schools are the school environments and working conditions. The private schools have better equipment. If the public school can improve its environment and working conditions as in private schools, it would lead to a huge improvement in the public school's



Table 12: A Comparison of the Buildings and Equipment in Public and Private Schools

[illegible]

teaching. The dining rooms in public and private schools are very different. In private schools, teachers enjoy free breakfast and lunch, and teachers are highly satisfied with this service. It is so great to have some place to have breakfast and lunch. While I was a public school teacher, I had to prepare my own breakfast. Sometimes when I was in a hurry I would catch the bus to school without having eaten. At noon, all the teachers have to buy their own food. However, in this private school, breakfast and lunch are free and the meals are much better than those in public schools.

Teacher Private 6 commented on the food services provided in the private school he teaches. He said he enjoyed the services very much:

In private school, meals are free. It is a kind of buffet and you can have whatever you like to eat. This is a big difference from public school. And the meals are really good. You can even have seafood, shrimp, crab, and so on.

Most private schools also have a gymnasium. Students can register to use the gymnasium and so can teachers. Private schools look after many other things besides teaching. For example, many schools have an arts building and a swimming pool facilities that are rarely found in public schools.

One of the biggest differences between teaching in public and private schools is the living quarters which are provided by the schools. For public school teachers, accommodation is part of social welfare. Before 1984, workers in the public sector were given free accommodation. However, since 1984, instead of providing living

quarters for workers, the government gives them money so they can buy or rent an apartment. Currently, few people working in the public sector are eligible to receive apartments from the Chinese government.

Normally, teachers in both private and public schools have a two-hour break at noon. Private schools provide teachers with a place to rest during this break. Public school teachers, however, must spend these two hours in the teachers' office, which makes them feel bored and exhausted, and they complain that there is nowhere for them to rest. Public school teachers are not satisfied with the school service, while private school teachers are quite satisfied with the services they receive.

### Interpersonal relationships

Three interpersonal relationships in public and private schools are analyzed in this chapter: teacher-teacher relationships, teacher-student relationships, and teacher-parent relationships. The teacher-teacher relationships are much simpler but less personal in private schools than in public schools. There are three reasons to explain this phenomenon. First, private school teachers are more mobile and this makes it more difficult for them to establish strong and lasting friendships with other teachers. Both public and private schools sign contracts with teachers, but, because of the tradition of the "iron rice bowl" in the public sectors, teachers in public schools are rarely fired and they develop a strong feeling of belonging to the school. In other words, teachers expect to remain in public school teaching for a long time. Teaching

in private school is, however, quite different. These teachers are contract workers, which means that they can choose to stay or leave. Teacher Private 2, a young female teacher who has taught at private school but chose to return to public school teaching, said:

I left the private school and went back to the public school without any hesitation.

The school building is new and the equipment is advanced, then why leave?

They are not mine and I don't feel like I am part of the school. I enjoy teaching in public schools more because it is more humane.

Teacher Private 5 is an administrator in the private middle school, and is in charge of recruiting teachers, so she is familiar with the mobility of teachers in private schools. She said:

This year there are a lot of personnel changes in our school. There are more than 50 new teachers coming in. I don't have to explain any more, because if there are no teachers leaving our school, then we don't have to recruit so many new people. I have been teaching in this school for only two years. Six colleagues came with me from a public school. Right now there are just two of us still teaching in this school. Thus, you can tell the movement of teachers in private school. It is very different from teaching in public schools. It is not that easy to establish friendship between teachers.

In contrast to the mobility of teachers in private schools, teachers in public schools enjoy a more stable environment. When one becomes a public school teacher, one is unlikely to move to other professions or even to other schools. A middle-aged,

female public school teacher said:

Some of my colleagues have shifted their job to private schools. Most of them complain about teaching at private schools. I enjoy teaching at this public school because I like a job with stability. I have never considered leaving to teach at a private school.

The private school policy, in fact, separates teachers from each other, whereas teachers in public school are much more open with each other. The mature and established public education system guarantees that teachers with the same status receive similar, if not equal, salaries. In other words, there are no secrets among public school teachers about their salaries and teachers with higher ranking are paid more. However, the salaries of teachers in private schools differ and it is the principals who decide who is paid more than other teachers. Most private schools have a policy that teachers should not reveal their salaries to other teachers:

There is a rule in our school that we can't talk about each others' salaries. There might be some teachers who are good friends talking about this. But most of us remain silent about how much we make. It is understandable why the system is not as open as public schools. Private school's management is like a family-owned enterprise. One of the principal's relative might be teaching in this private school and he/ she may earn the most per month, even if he/she is not the best teacher. Other teachers will complain about this if they know the truth. Thus, keeping your mouth shut is important in private schools.

Unlike teachers in private schools, teachers in public schools are more open with

their salaries. It is worth noting that in Chinese culture, notions of privacy differ from those in North American culture. In North America, one's income is often a very private issue and talking about one's salary may be considered offensive. However, most Chinese people do not consider one's income a private matter. Thus, for most Chinese people, it is appropriate to talk about one's income publicly. When I conducted interviews, some public school teachers showed me the receipt for their monthly pay when I asked questions about salaries. It is easy to understand why the privacy policy is used to prevent teachers from talking about their salaries with each other.

In addition, the lack of teaching and research groups in private schools prevents regular communication between teachers. As mentioned above, the teaching and research groups are an important part of public schools. They not only promote teaching skills but also enhance personal relationships among teachers. Teachers in private schools do not have access to such organizations and, as a result, they have fewer chances to learn from each other. Most private school teachers are not satisfied with the lack of teaching and research groups and they complained about the coldness of their professional relationships. Instead of having access to formal teachers' groups, teachers in private schools had to develop informal groups. Teacher Private 7, a male teacher who has worked at the private middle school for years, was dissatisfied with the lack of teaching and research groups in the schools. However, he said there are other ways for teachers to communicate with each other:

It depends on teachers' characteristics and personalities. Take myself for example,

I communicate with other teachers. I have been teaching in this private school for 7 years, and I like to share my teaching and classroom managing experiences with some of the young teachers. They like to talk with me about teaching skills. They call me “big brother”. I am open and they like to communicate with me, too.

The second type of interpersonal relationship is between teachers and students. Teachers care very much about their students and their academic improvement in public schools. In private schools, however, teacher-student relationships are different. Although most teachers report that they have good relationships with their students and that the students like them, some teachers said that their students were not the same as the students in public schools. A young female teacher, Private 1 expressed her opinions about her relationships with students in private school, as follows:

The students’ parents have a lot of money, and they can send their kids to study at much more expensive private schools. Those kids were born into rich families, and their parents gave them a lot of money which a normal family could not afford. That is why I feel less responsibility towards these kids. I care more about the kids growing up in average or low income families. Students at this school have their attitudes. Students in private schools are different from the ones in public schools.

Similarly, teacher Private 8 thinks that private school students are different from students in public schools, and it is the latter who are easy to cope with. He said:

Being a private school teacher is much more difficult than being a public school

teacher. You know why? On one hand, teachers in private schools need to care more about managing students than teachers in public schools; on the other hand, private school students are different from public school students. The quality of private school students is much lower than the students in public schools. It is easy to explain this if you think over what kind of student is studying in private schools: the ones whose performances are too poor to be admitted to public schools and the ones whose parents have a lot of money to afford the expenses and tuition fees. Being a teacher in a private school, I have to make the relatively good students better; I must make sure that the “bad” students are improving themselves. There are just too many bad students and they are not easy to cope with.

In contrast, teachers in public schools feel much better about their relationships with students. Teacher Public 8 has been teaching Chinese for years in the public middle school. When I asked him about his relationships with the students, he proudly showed me the results of his evaluations over the last three years. He said:

Talking about relationships with students, I am surprised. For many years, we have had an “Evaluation Form” for the students to complete at the end of each semester. It is a form for students to evaluate our teaching skills, our relationship with students, and our teaching attitudes. Students provide feedbacks using this form. For the last three years, I had the highest scores of all the teachers in the school. Once students gave my “Teaching Ability” the full score, which is 100. I taught 2 classes, 102 students, in that semester, and if any of them gave me a



score lower than 100, I would not get the final average of 100 for my "Teaching Ability". The items included are on: teaching attitude, teaching ability, organizing teaching, caring for students' development, and answering students' questions. I got no score below. I know that the students like me and accept me. I am very satisfied with my relationships with the students.

Thus, teachers were more satisfied with the teacher-student relationship in public schools than in private schools.

The third type of relationship is the teacher-parent relationships. Again, teacher-parent relationships in private schools are different from those in public schools. Traditionally, teachers gain respect from the public, including parents. However, in private schools, parents pay much more for their children to go to school so they believe that they have the right to complain about the school and the teachers. Consequently, the teachers feel that they receive less respect from parents and they are, therefore, often dissatisfied with their relationship with parents.

Once in the class I told the students that studying is not easy and it requires hard work. The next day one of the students' parents went to the school to protest. He said that he has a different opinion and studying does not necessarily have to be difficult. Is there something wrong with me or there is something wrong with him?

Teachers are rarely challenged in public schools and so it is not surprising that they feel less dissatisfaction with their relationships with the students' parents.

## Salaries

The median salary of public school teachers is the same as the median salary of private school teachers, which is 3000 Yuan per month in 2004. However, similar salaries do not necessarily mean the same level of teachers' satisfaction with their pay. Five private school teachers reported that their low salaries are the most unsatisfying aspect of their jobs. When salaries are similar, why are private school teachers more likely to be dissatisfied with it than public school teachers?

I borrow the term *income profile* from Lortie (1975) to answer this question. Income profile represents the changing salaries people receive during their lives. Two aspects of this idea need to be clarified. This concept regards income as a continuum. The first aspect of an individual's salary changes within this continuum. Individuals are compared within their own income continuum. One may earn more or less money than before. Second, an individual's profile is compared with the salaries of other teachers. Most of the time, people with the same occupations make such comparisons, and their satisfaction depends on the results of these comparisons. If an individual earns more than they previously earned, he or she will be more satisfied. As well, if an individual earns more than those who have the same job, he or she would be more satisfied.

After clarifying *income profile*, the term can be used to explain the different satisfaction levels of teachers. Even when teachers' earnings are similar, those working in public schools are generally more satisfied than those working in private schools. First, if compared within the individual income profile, public school teachers earn

much more than private school teachers with similar experiences. In order to improve education and teachers' benefits, the National Ministry of Education decided that the teachers' salary should not be less than the salaries of equally educated civil servants. Civil servants' salary in China is, in fact, quite high. Thus, within their own profiles, teachers in public schools are more satisfied with their salaries. Teacher Private 7 is a female teacher, who, around 1997, was among the first wave of public teachers who chose to shift their jobs to private school. She compared the salaries earned by public school and private school teachers:

You know that teachers' salary in public school has increased very fast. When I was in a public school teaching in 1997, I earned between 700 and 800 Yuan per month. Now teachers in public school, especially those at key schools, earn much more. Most of them earn about 3000 Yuan per month, some earn even more. It is four times higher than what I earned several years ago. If I were a public school teacher right now, I would be very satisfied with my salary.

Second when compared with teachers' salary in private schools, teachers in public schools are more satisfied. Teacher Private 7 said, for example, said:

In 1997, when I quit my job in a public school to teach in a private school, it was worth it even though I lost all my entitlements provided by the public school. At that time, a teacher teaching in a private school earned more than 4000 Yuan per month. In 1997, 4000 Yuan was a huge amount of money, 5 times more than what I would get in a public school. However, private schools competition was fierce and a lot of private schools could not support such high salaries, and the

national economy is not growing as fast now as it was in the 1990s. Thus, at present, teachers in private schools earned less and less. When I first taught in 1997, I earned 4800 Yuan. When I left the job in 2001, I earned only 3400 Yuan per month. And, in 2001, public school teachers earned a similar amount as teachers in private schools, plus they have welfare entitlements provided by the government and schools.” With the increase in salary, teachers in public schools felt as satisfied as teachers in private schools.

Teacher Private 4 teaches at the same school as teacher Private 7, and he pointed out the impact of salaries on teachers’ motivation:

Several years ago, many public school teachers quit their jobs and moved into private schools for more money. Then things changed. Today many private school teachers are returning to public schools. The motivation is still money.

In our survey, 6 of 8 private school teachers said they would like to go back to public school if given the chance, probably because they would make more money. In essence, teachers in public schools generally feel more satisfied with their salaries than teachers in private schools.

### Workload

It is interesting to note that public school teachers teaching fewer classes per week than private school teachers, yet they feel more dissatisfied with their workload. Most private school teachers teach about 14 hours a week, while public school

teachers teach about 12 hours a week. However, 4 out of 5 teachers (80%) in private schools reported that their workload is not heavy while 3 out of 5 (60%) teachers in public school said that their work load is heavy. Public school teachers feel much more dissatisfied with their workload than do teachers in private schools.

There are two possible reasons for this inconsistency. First, the teachers interviewed in public and private schools teach different grades. Most teachers in both private and public schools teach graduating classes, but, the teachers in public school are teaching senior 3 classes while these in private schools are teaching junior 3 classes. As a result, teachers in public school experienced more pressure to have their students perform well on the final examination. Second, as I have noted, the teachers in private school have lighter workloads than teachers in public schools. Two teachers in private school reported that the most satisfying aspect of their teaching was the feeling that they had much less pressure. This is not surprising. The focus of private schools differs from that of public schools. Public schools focus on teaching, which means whether or not the students have learned what they have been taught and how well they perform on the examination are important. However, in private schools in Beijing, teachers emphasize managing and supervising students' daily life. Most private schools are boarding schools. Students spend their days and nights in the schools. And teachers act as both teachers and parents. It is the teachers' responsibility not only to teach, but also to take care of students' safety, clothing, and food. Private school teachers complain about their extra duties. One teacher said, "I am a school teacher; I am not a kindergarten teacher." Generally speaking, private school teachers

are more satisfied with their teaching work load than public school teachers, but they are quite dissatisfied with the extra work they have to do.

### Welfare Entitlement

Based on the data I gathered and as shown in Table 13, only three out of sixteen teachers (19%) are satisfied with their welfare entitlements. As explained earlier, there are two aspects of welfare entitlement. First, welfare entitlement is the social insurance provided partly by the government, partly by the school, and partly by the teachers themselves. This social insurance includes pension, medical care, housing subsidy, and transportation allowances. Second, the other component of welfare entitlement is the allowance given to teachers by the school on special occasions.

None of the public school teachers are completely satisfied with their welfare entitlements. Most are not satisfied with the second component of the welfare entitlement, the extra allowances. As I have pointed out before, schools cut off some of these allowances. Among 8 teachers in private schools, only three

Table 13: Teachers' Satisfaction With Welfare Entitlements

	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied Strongly</i>
Public Schools	0	3	5	0
Percentage	--	38%	62%	--
Private School	3	1	1	3
Percentage	37%	13%	13%	37%

teachers are satisfied with their entitlements. The other 5 teachers are not satisfied because they do not receive medical insurance, employment insurance, or living quarter allowances. Teachers in public schools, however, do not express unhappiness about the insurance component of their welfare entitlement, because they all receive a complete package. The other three teachers teaching in the private schools are satisfied with their insurance, because they are among the few who receive welfare entitlements. But, as I have said already, there is no universal policy for welfare entitlement for teachers in private schools. To attract excellent teachers from public school, some private schools have had to provide insurance for the teachers, but not all teachers receive it. There are teachers whose teaching skills are recognized and rewarded, and there are others who are receiving insurance only because they have close relationships with the principals. The conclusion is clear, public school teachers are not satisfied with their allowances, while private school teachers are not satisfied with their insurance.

### Promotional Opportunities

According to the data collected, public and private school teachers have very different satisfaction levels regarding most extrinsic factors related to their jobs. Nevertheless, it seems that all teachers share similar views on their opportunities for promotion. As illustrated in Table 14, in both public and private schools, 6 out of 8 teachers (75%) are not satisfied with their promotion opportunities. It



Table 14: Teachers' Satisfaction with Promotional Opportunities

	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>
Public Schools	2	0	6
Percentage	25%	--	75%
Private Schools	1	1	6
Percentage	13%	13%	75%

seems that teachers in both public and private schools finally reach some agreement on this aspect of their jobs. However, the reasons for teachers' dissatisfaction differ between public and private schools. In the last section, I pointed out that the unstaged structure of the teaching profession described in the Western literature cannot be applied to the Chinese situation. Public schools in China are highly hierarchical, but teachers are still not satisfied with their promotional opportunities. This may be because the opportunities are not equally available to everyone in the system, and because there is a structural limitation which limits to their opportunities. Teachers in private schools are not satisfied, either, but for different reasons. A 41-year old male with 19 years of experience (teacher Private 4) said:

The assessment of teachers and teachers' ranking system are highly unreasonable. You ask me why? Because the Ministry of Education treats public and private school unequally. Last year, the National Ministry of Education issued a law to promote the development of private schools. Thus, the government should support private schools and teachers from private schools. One of these supports is to give equal opportunity to teachers in private schools as those in public schools. Otherwise it is not "promotion" but "demotion". However, in private schools, teachers have little chance to get involved in the assessment system. The District Education Department does not provide a quota to private schools for teachers to be assessed. That is why many teachers who moved from public schools to private schools would like to move back to public schools again.

Thus, the private school teachers' dissatisfaction is different from the public

school teachers' dissatisfaction. While public school teachers complain about the inequities in the promotion procedures, at least they have opportunities to be promoted, while private school teachers do not even have the opportunity to be promoted. At first, the teachers enjoyed their high payment, but later, they began to realize the problem of not receiving pensions, insurance, and opportunities for promotions. In addition, at present public school teachers earn as much as private school teachers. Teacher Private 8 expressed that even though she would like to go back and teach at a public school, there are many barriers preventing her from doing so. She said:

I have been teaching at this private school for six or seven years, but I would like to go back to the public school where I once worked. Now, the teachers there earn a higher salary than I do. Some teachers have gone back already. However, it is not easy. You know that private schools are not focusing on teaching and learning, but on managing and providing services to students. Thus, the teachers here do not care so much about teaching methods and teaching skills, and I am left behind. I don't think that I have the ability to be a good teacher in public schools even if I had the opportunity to return.

All the difficulties that teachers in private schools confront make them unhappier with their job than teachers in public schools. Thus, it seems that public school teachers' overall satisfaction with their teaching is higher than that of private school teachers. In essence, the extrinsic factors differ for public and private school teachers in China. Now, what about the differences between these two types of teachers when

it comes to intrinsic factors?

### ***Intrinsic Factors***

#### Working with Youth

Only two teachers mentioned they are motivated to work with youth, and this was the only intrinsic factor they mentioned. Fourteen out of sixteen teachers referred to extrinsic factors as the most satisfying aspect of teaching, and surprisingly, the two who valued working with children were both public school teachers. One of the explanations is that private school teachers care more about extrinsic factors in their jobs, especially salary, and that is why they left their jobs in public schools for private schools. One of the teachers' answers is typical and direct: "I'd like to make more money." Unlike their counterparts in North America, working with youth and other intrinsic factors are not very important for Chinese teachers. Rather, extrinsic factors, such as salary, promotional opportunity, and welfare entitlements, are much more important for teachers' satisfaction in China.

#### Recognition

Unlike public school teachers, private teachers rarely receive recognition from students' parents as do public school teachers, and they are very unhappy with this lack of recognition. When asked what was the most difficult interpersonal relationship

to deal with, Teacher Private 3, a young female teacher, said:

The relationship with students' parents is not easy. Parents here are rich so they send their children to this more expensive private school. However, rich parents are not necessarily well-educated. In the public school where I taught before, the parents remained silent even if the students have bad attitudes towards the teachers. Parents recognize the teachers' ability and respected them. The teacher-parent relationship is complicated in private school. The students' parents spend a lot of money, and they think they have the right to speak out critically when things go wrong. But most of the time they don't know right from wrong because they do not know anything about education. As long as their children have something negative to say about their teachers, then the parents seem to go to school to complain.

The teacher-parent relationship is a kind of "servant-master" relationship, as one of the teachers said. In addition to the problem of respect, private school teachers do not receive much public recognition through the assessment system. They have little or no chance to be assessed and to have their salaries increased. And they express their unhappiness about the lack of career ladders, as I have pointed out in the last chapter. Lortie (1975) insightfully says that teaching is an unstaged career in North America, it is also an unstaged careers for private school teachers in China, but not for public school teachers. Generally speaking, unlike Western teachers, for whom intrinsic factors are crucial motivators in teaching, Chinese teachers care much less about intrinsic factors and much more about extrinsic factors.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

I address two questions in this thesis. First, what are Chinese teachers' motivations to teach? Second, are there any differences between public and private school teachers' motivations? I conducted in-depth interviews with 16 teachers from 4 schools in Beijing--two private and two public schools. Semi-structured interviews were used as the major method to conduct the research. The questionnaires were designed for the Chinese situation and they were translated into Chinese. Three sets of variables, demographic, extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors, were measured.

#### *Discussion of the Findings*

Several extrinsic factors have been examined in detail. Herzberg (1966) included interpersonal relations as an extrinsic factor impacting upon teachers' motivation. As for teacher-student relationships, Ashton and Webb (1986), Lortie (1975), and Webb and Sherman (1989) analyzed the concept of "efficacy" and concluded that students' motivation and performance was closely related to their teachers' motivation. In this study, 9 out of 16 (56%) teachers feel satisfied when their students achieved academically. Chinese teachers, in fact, seem to be motivated by their students as much as do their counterparts in North America. As for teacher-teacher relationships, Chinese teachers are much different from those in the West. Webb and Sherman (1989) analyzed the mainstream culture and values in North America before they examined

teachers' motivation. Individualism and freedom are identified as the hallmarks of North American culture and values. Thus, the teachers' style and their organization of teaching are individualized. In contrast, Chinese public schools are collective communities. As a result of the existence of the teaching and research groups, most public school teachers have many opportunities to communicate with each other. Generally, public school teachers are satisfied with teacher-teacher relationships. Private school teachers, however, are less satisfied with their interpersonal relationships. They report greater difficulty than public school teachers in coping with students and parents.

Ashton and Webb (1986), Dworkin (1987), Herzberg (1966), Vroom (1964), and Webb and Sherman (1989) all referred to salary as one of the most important external factors motivating teachers either to remain or leave teaching. In Dworkin's (1987) study, low pay is the reason most teachers reported for leaving the profession. Similarly, Vroom (1964) says that high pay is a significant factor contributing to the motivation of teachers to work. In this study, approximately 5 out of 16 teachers (31%) are unhappy with their pay. Furthermore, all these five teachers are all from private schools. Lortie's (1975) concept, *income profile*, helps to capture and analyze the different satisfaction levels of Chinese teachers. It is not surprising that private school teachers feel unhappy about their salary. What is different from situation in the West is that the interaction of heavy workload and relatively low pay leads teachers to be dissatisfied with their salaries. An even higher proportion of teachers, 38%, reported dissatisfaction with their workload and the work pressure they experience. Teachers in

public schools said that they are under great pressure to finish the teaching task. Teachers in private schools were also unhappy about the extra work they are expected to do. Teachers in both public and private schools were dissatisfied about the extra lessons they had to teach.

Abraham Maslow (1954) identifies biological requirements as the most basic human needs, and Herzberg (1966) suggests that a person's working condition is one of the extrinsic factors that influences his or her motivation. In this study, half of the teachers are not satisfied with their working conditions, and all these teachers are public school teachers. Physical working conditions and living environments in private schools are, in fact, much better than those in public schools. Even teachers who dislike teaching in private schools admit that their working conditions are much better than those of teachers who work in public schools.

Lortie (1975) identified teaching as an *unstaged* career, which means that the structure of teaching is horizontal. Ashton and Webb (1986) continue to use Lortie's term and conclude that the lack of a vertical career ladder explains, to a great degree, the lack of teachers' motivation. Chinese teaching structure in public schools, in contrast, is highly vertical. However, 12 of the 16 teachers said that the opportunities for promotion are not satisfactory. Public school teachers complained about the unfairness of the process, while private school teachers were very unhappy about the lack of opportunities for promotion. They hoped that the government would help to narrow the gap between public and private schools by establishing assessment and promotion opportunities in private schools.



The extrinsic aspect of teaching most unsatisfactory for teachers is their welfare entitlements. Most of the previous studies did not examine welfare entitlements as one of the extrinsic factors when examining teachers' motivation. One of the contributions of this study is that it shows that this variable has an impact on teacher motivation. As demonstrated, 80% of teachers from both public and private schools are unhappy about their entitlement. One of the reasons for their dissatisfaction of teachers is that the government allows schools to set their own standard for entitlements, and, as a result, most schools have cut down on the entitlements that teachers can receive. Private school teachers are dissatisfied because they seldom receive any entitlements, benefits they see as being very important to their personal lives.

One of the major differences between the satisfaction of teachers in China and those in North America is that the former care very little about the intrinsic factors of teaching. In the Western literature, intrinsic factors not only influence teachers' motivation, but they are often viewed as being more important than extrinsic ones. Herzberg (1966) explained how intrinsic factors are more important than extrinsic ones in influencing job satisfaction and Webb and Sherman's (1989) identify differences between teachers' primary and secondary motivation. In this study, only two teachers mentioned working with students as being the most satisfying part of their jobs. Does it mean that teachers do not care about "fulfillment" but instead, care about "success"? Success is regarded as earning more money, having higher social status, and gaining more power. Extrinsic factors represent the teachers' success, while fulfillment represents the happiness teachers derived from within themselves.

Intrinsic factors are indicators of fulfillment. Extrinsic factors become major sources of satisfaction for Chinese teachers.

New variables are introduced and analyzed in this study to examine Chinese teachers' motivation. Previous studies (Ashton and Webb 1986; Herzberg 1966; McGregor 1985; Vroom 1964; Webb and Sherman 1989) focus on salaries as the major bulk of financial rewards for motivating workers. Most of the previous researchers failed to recognize the importance of the role welfare entitlements played in teachers' motivation. As demonstrated, welfare entitlements are very important for the teachers in the study. This variable should also be considered as one of the extrinsic factors in any further research on teachers' motivation, either in developed or developing countries. Another variable that has not been discussed in previous research is the ranking and titles of teachers. This variable is introduced into the study in order to recognize the unique vertical teaching structure found in Chinese public schools. The ranking of teachers as a variable may not be applicable to research in North America, where teaching structure is rather horizontal, or unstaged (Lortie 1975; Webb and Sherman 1989). However, this is a significant indicator of teachers' motivation in the countries where teaching is vertically organized rather than horizontally organized. Furthermore, introducing the idea of a vertical teaching structure and the ranking and assessment of teachers may have policy implication regarding the motivation of teachers in North America. Perhaps it is time to recognize that some teachers are better than others and they should be rewarded for their skill and performance.

A new approach for analyzing data is used in this study. Previous studies (Ashton and Webb 1986; Lortie 1975; Webb and Sherman 1989) focus on interactions between demographic factors of the subjects and their motivation. Demographic data, such as gender, age, education, and family background, are analyzed as variables directly relating to extrinsic and intrinsic motives. However, few researchers have analyzed the interactions among specific extrinsic and intrinsic factors themselves. This issue has been neglected since the beginning of motivation research in the 1960s. In this study, however, it is demonstrated that extrinsic factors, such as salary and workload, are interrelated variables, both of which seem to effect teachers' motivation to work. Future researchers may wish to consider this finding in analyzing the motivation of teachers in other countries, both developed and underdeveloped.

From a methodological perspective, a new paradigm of research method, mixed methods (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004), was used for this study. Mixed research methods bridge qualitative and quantitative methods and have been rarely used in studies on teachers' motivation. Semi-structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, participant observations, and secondary document analysis are all major components of mixed methods. These strategies not only contribute to this exploratory study, but more importantly, they bring about a new paradigm for future scholars to consider in educational research.

Applying extrinsic and intrinsic motivation from the Western literature to a developing country, like China, helps to critically review the Western theories of teachers' motivation and to enrich them. Maslow (1954), McGregor (1985), Herzberg

(1966) and Webb and Sherman (1989) present their theories of extrinsic and intrinsic factors in similar ways. Generally, intrinsic factors are recognized as being more important in motivating workers and are at a higher level of human needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954), which specifies of five basic human needs, from the lowest biological requirement to the highest self-fulfillment, and McGregor's theory (1985) together suggest that workers are motivated not only by financial reward but, more importantly, by the need for higher psychological growth. Herzberg (1966) explicitly concludes that intrinsic factors are the most crucial sources of human satisfaction. Webb and Sherman (1989), in turn, identify intrinsic factors as being primary motivators for teachers and extrinsic factors as secondary. However, in this study, I found the opposite. In China, the teachers seem to be motivated much more by extrinsic factors than by intrinsic factors. When asked what is the most satisfying aspect of teaching, 14 out of 16 teachers (88%) mentioned extrinsic factors, such as salary, workload, and welfare entitlements. As such, the Western findings are not generalizable to teachers in China. Probably because Western people and Chinese people have different views of what are the most important aspects of their work. In other words, they have different values. Bredemeier and Bredemeier's (1978) classified the motives and the behavior of people into four manageable categories: to obtain, dispose of, retain (hold on to), and contain certain things. In short, people are always CORDing (Containing, Obtaining, Retaining, and Disposing) things individuals act according to their motivations. These include both positive motives which lead them *towards* the attractive objects and negative motives which lead them

*away from* unattractive objects. Both classical and modern studies on motivation have focused on “positive” and “negative” motives as described by Bredemeier and Bredemeier (1978). From this study, it seems that “attractive” and “unattractive” objects should be defined for the people based on their culture and values. What is attractive to a group of subjects in China may be very unattractive to another group in another country. Here, not only the demographic information about individuals and groups, but the particular cultural values should be taken into account. Thus, this thesis may render the theories of motivation applicable to more cultures and may also help theories to become more universal.

Even though I have applied the extrinsic and intrinsic factors of teachers’ motivation identified in the literature to the situation in China, this does not mean that China’s situation can be explained entirely by using a Western framework. When I analyzed the data, I found that the two factors cannot fully explain the motivation of teachers. Specifically, teachers’ interpersonal relationships are not identical in public and private schools. This should be examined according to traditional Chinese educational values. The analyses presented in this study showed that private school teachers are less satisfied with their relationships with parents than are public school teachers. According to traditional Chinese values, public school teachers are the representatives of knowledge and wisdom and their authority is not generally challenged, neither by students nor by their parents. There is an old Chinese saying, “Once he becomes your teacher, you should treat him as your father for your whole life.” In the patriarchal society of China, the father ranks highest in the family and

everyone should listen to him. The saying shows the importance of the teachers' position. Parents pay a lot of money to send their children to private schools. And, as a result, these parents believe that they have the right to complain. Thus, it is not surprising that teachers who taught in public school before moving to teach at private school feel unhappy about their relationships with parents. After all, they are not used to being challenged by parents. Instead, they are accustomed to being held in very high regard by parents.

To explain teachers' dissatisfaction with promotional their opportunities, we must look at the Chinese bureaucracy. Public education is controlled by the central government, and it sets the curriculum and schedules, examinations and evaluations to rank the quality of schools and teachers. There is considerable competition in the Chinese education system. Key schools and exemplar schools are ranked higher than average schools and receive more funding and greater support from the government. Similarly, higher ranked teachers earn more money and enjoy higher status than other teachers. In the face of these competitive policies, education is no longer about preserving and disseminating knowledge, but about getting credit, higher status, and more money. The ends outweigh the means, and those ranked higher get more. Thus, it is easy to understand why private school teachers to be included in the ranking system of which public school teachers are part. Otherwise, private school teachers have little chance to make as much money as public school teachers.

Welfare entitlements are another example of the differences between teachers in public and private schools. The situation in China is different from the situation in the

West because in China, not every citizen or employee is covered by insurance or receives a state pension. In China, only those who are employed in the public sector receive these benefits. Thus, employees in the private sector and farmers in rural areas have no entitlements. Moreover, private school teachers do not have entitlement, and of course, they complain about it.

Although the extrinsic and intrinsic factors can be applied to China's case to some extent, they cannot fully explain the teachers' dissatisfaction. To understand the Chinese situation, one must have a certain understanding of Chinese history. The unique character of China's socialist economy and the nascent capitalism, simultaneously, familiar and strange, provides the background to what is happening in China. The fabric of Chinese social, political, and economic history has to be factored into the implications of this study. To merely apply the Western literature is not adequate as the Chinese situation is unique. The framework provided by the Western literature is limited and cannot fully explain situations in Chinese education.

### ***Implication***

At present, the development of private schools is a "hot topic" in China. People and scholars who object to further development of private education point out the problems inherent in private schools. One of the most serious issues is that owners of private schools make money by investing in education rather than by providing educational service. Thus, the critics argue that the development of education is not encouraged. Other people, however, maintain that private education should be

encouraged and believe, in fact, that these schools serve the public interest.

The reasons are as follows: Education is especially important for the economic and technological development of The People's Republic of China. There is no doubt that expanding education across the nation would increase the general knowledge level. However, education resources are in short supply. For decades the Chinese central and local governments have tried to fund public schools, but the money spent on public schools became a burden on the governments. Even as the enrollment rate increases (for example, post-secondary enrollment rate is expected to increase from 9% to 15% within the next ten years, which means 7 million more Chinese students will enter college and universities), the money the government spends on public education is never enough to meet all the needs. Meanwhile, a great number of resources are needed to establish new schools. More and more individuals and companies are putting their money into building private schools. The establishment of these private schools relieves the pressure on public education and provides more usable resources for students who would like to further their studies. Thus, perhaps, as long as private schools are able to provide high quality education, it does not matter whether the owners make money or not. In addition, the entrepreneurs investing in private education are being rewarded and encouraged. Nevertheless, private schools that provide poor quality education should be shut down by the government. An accountable system for evaluating both private and public schools must be established.

Tuition fees and living expenses at private schools are above the average person's



ability to afford. Thus, it is not surprising that Chinese people equate private schools with elite education. If a major function of education is to equalize people's opportunities, education cannot be only available to rich people. Instead, education needs to be available to everyone. The truth is that not all owners establish private schools and not all private schools are elite schools. Furthermore, there are private schools that have been established to meet the needs of poor people. If these private schools did not exist, the poor could not even afford to send their children to public schools. To help poor children, governments, both national and local, should give full support to these private schools.

One of the ways to assist in the development of private schools in Beijing is to secure teachers' rights and benefits. It is easy to say that teachers in Beijing, either in public or in private schools, are dissatisfied with their jobs. However, teachers' job satisfaction can be enhanced in a number of ways. The first way is to guarantee a full package of welfare entitlements to private school teachers. Public school teachers enjoy a comparatively complete package of welfare entitlements. Private schools do not provide welfare entitlement, which makes teaching in such schools fairly difficult. The lack of welfare entitlements in private schools reveals the inequity between public school and private school teachers. Teachers in private schools complained about this inequality, and improvement in this area requires the cooperation of the national government, the local governments, and the schools. Second, as 31% of teachers were dissatisfied with their pay, an increase in salary would make them happier. Teachers are the most important asset of a school, and it is their devotion of

time and expertise that leads to a high quality education for students. Thus, teachers make a great contribution to the whole society. Increasing teachers' salaries requires greater government funding. Third, teachers in private schools should have an equal opportunity to be promoted as teachers are in public schools. Both the 2003 law and the 2004 statutes declared that private school teachers should be treated as being equal to teachers in public schools. However, the reality sometimes is different from the ideal. Private school teachers are highly dissatisfied with the lack of equal opportunities to be promoted and ranked as teachers are in public schools. The Ministry of Education and the local Education Department should address this problem and make promotional opportunities accessible to both public and private school teachers.

While the government need not fully fund private schools, it can create a healthier and more competitive environment to enhance the development of private education. For example, the government should emphasize its supervisory function for private schools. Teachers' ability to influence the learning of students should be assessed to ensure that private schools provide an education equal to that provided in public schools.

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## **Appendix A: Questionnaire to the Subjects in the Research Study**

Two sets of questions were developed for interviewing teachers from public and private schools respectively. All the questions, listed below, have been developed from the literature. The questions were translated into Chinese, and consequently some of the terms were modified.

1. When were you born?
2. Where were you born?
3. Have you married?
4. What is your education level?
5. What year did you begin to work? How long have you been working in this school?
6. Which subject are you teaching? Which grades are you teaching?
7. Are you party member?
8. How many lessons do you have to teach every week? How many students are there in one class? How do you feel about the workload? Are you satisfied with the workload?
9. What is your month salary? Are you satisfied with that?
10. What about your welfare entitlement? what are they? are you satisfied?
11. Do you have to teach extra lessons? Do you get paid? Are you satisfied with the payment?
12. Is your working condition satisfying?
13. What is your title as a teacher? How long did it take you to get this title? Are

you satisfied with what you have got by now? why? Do you think the mechanism of the teachers' assessment system reasonable?

14. Do you think teaching is a stable job? Are you satisfied with the stability?

15. Is there any communication among teachers? Are there competitions going on?

Do you feel satisfied with teacher-teacher relationship?

16. Is teacher-student relationship satisfactory? What about teacher-parent relationship? Are you satisfied with both of them?

17. Is your students good compared to students in other class? Do you think they like you?

18. When do you feel best being a teacher?

19. When do you feel you have achieved most as a teacher?

20. Generally speaking, what is the most satisfying aspect of teaching? What is the most dissatisfying aspect of teaching?

21. Given the chance to choose your career again, would you like to choose teaching as your career?

Several questions have been modified for teachers from private schools. Those are:

13. How long have you been a contract teacher with this private school? What was your teacher's title in the previous public school before you are teaching in this private school? ...

20. Generally speaking, what is the most satisfying aspect of teaching as a private



school teacher? What is the most dissatisfying aspect of teaching?

21. Given the chance to choose again, would you like to remain in this private school or you would like to go back to public school teaching?