

Research of Current Situation and Problems in the Interview of Kindergarten Teacher Qualification in China

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Abstract

This research is based on the proposal that interviews of teacher qualification in china should be situational interviews and as to existing problems in current implementation procedures and examiner composition of interviews of national teacher qualification, the research proposes suggestions of emphasizing the working analysis on key events of kindergarten teachers, guaranteeing homogeneity of interview questions, developing anchoring scale, and suggesting the establishment of examiner qualification system.

Key words: Teacher qualification exam in china; Structured interview; Situational interview

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INTRODUCTION

The statistical bulletin data of national educational career development in 2012 issued by Ministry of Education displays that in current China there are 36.8576 million children in kindergartens (including attached institutions) and 1.6775 million kindergarten leaders and teachers. The student and teacher ratio is decreasing to 22:1, however, in remote and border areas as well as rural areas, there is still a large gap in professional kindergarten teachers. As the entrance examination of qualified kindergarten teachers in China, kindergarten teacher qualification examination still has a long way to go.

Interviews in teacher qualification examination is a criterion-referential test established unified examination standards by Minister of Education in People's Republic of China and organized uniformly by provincial administrative department for education. The examination places extra emphasis on professional affection, basic qualities, oral expression, strain ability on the spot of examinees as teachers, which can not only make up for information shortage in written examination of national teacher qualification examination, but also evaluate the professional qualities which can only be tested through interviews. Interview is an indispensable part in national teacher qualification examination.

1. CHARACTER ORIENTATION OF CHINESE TEACHER QUALIFICATION INTERVIEW

Structured interview refers to an interview form which is structuralize in three aspects of interview contents, procedures, and evaluation, including three aspects of contents structuralization, procedure structuralization, and evaluation structuralization. The research shows that, structural interview has higher degree of reliability and validity than nonstructural interview, which makes structural interview become the most popular personnel evaluation tool applied widely. Since 2011, Chinese teacher qualification interview has been positioned in structural interview.

Structural interview can be divided into behavior-based interview and situational interview. The supposition basis of behavior-based interview is the optimum predictive index of future behaviors is past behaviors. As a result, behavior based interviews mainly examine participators about their behaviors to catch their ability or personality. The basic theory of situational interview is goal setting theory, which refers to that the suppose the intention and imagination of future is effective predictive index

of future behaviors, which mainly catching ability and personality through imagination, association, supposition and analysis on some assumed situations by participators.

As to efficiency and utility of behavior based interview and situational interview, different scholars hold different views. For example, the researches of Campion find that, the correlation index of behavior based interview and situational interview is 0.73 ($P < 0.01$). The average amount is similar to variation amount. The degree of reliability among examiners is 0.94 and 0.97. The degree of relation between two kinds of interviews and evaluative performance is lower, with behavior based interview a little higher than situational interview but the difference is not obvious. However, there are also researches show that behavior based interview and situational interview are appropriate for selecting different employees, and it is meaningless to discuss reliability of structural interview without position levels and characters. The researches of Pulakos find that as to senior positions, the predictive index of behavior based interview is higher than situational interview, but as to employment objectives who lack relative experience, the situational interview is more applicable. At present, the examinees of national teacher qualification examination are mostly composed of non-normal graduating students or personnel without working experience in formal teaching in kindergarten and middle or elementary schools. As a result, the teacher qualification interview should be oriented as the situational interview in structural interviews.

2. THE BASIC SITUATION OF CHINESE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUALIFICATION INTERVIEW

In order to learn the basic situation of national teacher qualification interview, this research selects five interviewers who have undertaken interview for at least twice and 20 interviewees in Shanghai, Zhejiang, Hainan, and Hubei provinces by convenient sampling in the end of 2013. The outline of interview is composed of four dimensions of interview content, interview procedures, interview evaluation and examiners. The survey analysis finds that the basic situation and existing problems in current Chinese teacher qualification interview include:

2.1 The Degree of Standardization and Pertinence of Interview Content

The survey find that the current examination questions in Chinese teacher qualification interview can well manifest the testing contents and requirements of examination outline (trial implementation) (interview part) of middle and elementary school and kindergarten teacher qualification issued by examination center in normal education department in ministry of education. The questions focus on the main tasks, responsibilities,

duties, as well as knowledge, skill and ability needed for satisfying these responsibilities to generate interview questions. The sampling of interview comes from practical, real, typical and representative working behaviors and the design manifests the character based on working analysis.

As to the pertinence of the questions, examiners reflect uniformly the questions are impartial and easy. The candidates' basic qualities of teachers such as occupational understanding, psychological quality, manners, oral expression, and thinking quality as well as basic teaching skills such as teaching design, teaching implementation, and teaching evaluation can be examined through students' response and displaying. The examiners also think that interview questions cannot only testify the basic quality of applicants as teachers but also screen talents, which sufficiently display the quality of criterion referenced test.

In addition, the statement of interview questions is closer to behavior expression which has a certain degree of situationality and can reflect value orientation of profession and capacity orientation.

However, the objectives been surveyed think that in the interview examination, the testing on professional standards, basic qualities, life guidance, and environmental creation of kindergarten teachers is comparably weak, especially short of examination on national major educational laws and regulations as well as children rights convention. However, this phenomenon may results from many reasons such as whether it is appropriate for the development of interview examination contents. The research on teacher qualification interview contents must be combined with written examination contents for comprehensive researches.

2.2 The Standardization and Fairness of Interview Implementation Procedures

The survey finds that there is relatively fairness manifested in interview implementation procedure standards in each province, which in specific embodies in the following aspects: firstly, there is consistent examination process for all examinees, which refers to links like extracting questions, preparing for lessons (activities design), answering the assumed questions, trial lecture (presentation), open reply (statement), grading and so on. Secondly, in the process of examination, there is one group of examiner for recording and grading as to answers in each examination of each province. Thirdly, every student has 20 minutes for interview, according to which, all examiners are observing and executing strictly. Fourthly, the additional information except name, candidates' number, ID numbers of all participators in the examination are controlled and restrained, which avoids the strong first impression of examiners with which the interview performance may be polluted. At last, there is the same leading for each student from examiners and in

general, the examiners will not pose questions towards examinees, which reduce the disturbance generated between examiners and examinees and provides guarantee for the structuralization of interview.

The research thinks that the composition and expression of current interview questions are in need of strengthening. In the interview, due to time limit, large amount of information about examination contents, not every examinee will be questioned with the same or coessential questions. For example, some examinees take out tasks of music playing, while others take out tasks of telling children's stories. As to stories, some take out of common children's stories, while others take out infrequently telling stories. These phenomena lead to the existence of luck in qualification interview.

As to form of questions, the objectives of survey reflect that the dilemma questions are rarely found. People show different attitudes towards appropriateness of total amount of interview questions and length of time.

2.3 Interview Evaluation Tool and Basis

The research finds that there are some problems existing in current interview evaluation. Although there is evaluation guidance, it is not specific enough which is short of behavior anchoring scale as the grading scale and explanatory norm. How to evaluate as to various answers of candidates and what kind of standard should be conform to are problems in practical work of national teacher qualification interview.

As to the timing of grading, all examiners holds the view that due to the design characters of mark sheet, the grading will be made in the end of interview. The evaluative type is oriented to real evaluation, but some examiners think that the shortage of examination time may influence the normal performance and comprehensive show in the exam, and may also influence the final evaluative results of examinees.

2.4 The Rationality of Organization and Working Manner of Examiners

Examiners play a dominant role in structural interview, and they are not organized randomly, but according to certain rules and rational structure by some professional examiners. The organization principles and training performance of examiners will directly influence the stability and objectivity of criterion testing.

2.4.1 Rational Source of Examiners

The survey finds that the organization and training of Chinese kindergarten teacher qualification interview examiners team is developing in the direction of standardization and professionalization. The constitutive objectives of examiners include educational experts in higher normal institutions, core teachers in kindergarten and secondary vocational school, educational and scientific institutions at all levels, researchers in teaching and researching office which is beneficial to multi-

dimensional, comprehensive evaluation as to capability and quality, personality characters of examinees.

2.4.2 There Is Deficiency in Training of Examiners

In the process of specific organization of interviewers, there are still some shortcomings existing. For example, the selecting method of interviewers in teacher qualification interview refers to that they are selected by units before interview and formed after the checking of superior relative departments, and finally organized in the unified time. There are also some deficiencies in the aspect of training: Although each examiner should be trained before each interview, but there are few examiners who will participate in provincial level training (examiners trained tend to undertake the responsibility of chief examiner). Finally, it leads to different training methods and contents existing among examiners.

2.4.3 Harmonious Working Process of Examiners

Each interview group in each examination room of four provinces is made up of three members, of which one is chief examiner, who generally is in charge of posing questions to examinees and master the whole process of interview. The degree of consistence of evaluative results inside group is comparably higher with few phenomena of reconsideration. Although after each grading, some examiners can see the evaluative results of other examiners, but it has little influence on their independent judgment.

3. THE ANALYSIS AND SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS

Just as what is mentioned above, the efficiency of situational interview has been verified. Under the premise of determining the nature of Chinese teacher qualification interview as situational interview, we think that the problems and their solution in Chinese teacher qualification interview must emphasize on the consideration of the following problems:

3.1 The Working Analysis on Key Events of Kindergarten Teachers

The working analysis on key events of kindergarten teachers will directly influence the problem developing, behavior anchoring scale developing and researches on interview questions capacity.

Situational interview questions are structuralized typical behaviors which are representative in evaluative working. After the confirmation of competency characters, relative events experts need to design questions as to each competency character from key events having been identified (situation, character, method, behavior, result). The situational interview questions are formed by choosing the key events which can clearly represent competency characters. The closer is the distance between situational interview questions and real working situations, and the higher degree of efficiency for

interview contents and experts, the more accurately the future working performance will be predicted. There have been rich achievements and conclusion as to exploration of teachers' competency for many years. However, these achievements are targeted at the whole teachers group with the conclusion of general formula of teachers' competency. The competency characters of kindergarten teachers are in need of further researches.

In the process of teachers' professional growth, the topics of key events faced by teachers at different stages are different. Although this research finds that the degree of efficiency is high for interview questions' contents. However, as the improvement of the whole level of teachers' quality in kindergarten, the working analysis on key events of qualified new teachers must also embody the developmental characters.

3.2 The Guarantee of Homogeneity of Interview Questions

3.2.1 About the Length of Interview Time and Amount of Interview Questions

Although Li Heng and Wang Chongming think that behavior based interview needs more time than situational interview. In general, the longer the interview time, the more information of examinee will be gained. As a result, within a certain scope, the longer the interview time, the better the reliability will be; so does the efficiency. However, as to the time length of interview and amount of interview questions, there is not a definite conclusion yet, which is in need of further researching.

3.2.2 Standardization of Interview Questions

The degree of structuralization also depends on the standardization of questions posed by examiners which refer to that examiners ask the same questions to each examinee in the same sequence. If examiners can use the same language, the degree of structuralization can be better improved. In this way, although the efficiency of highly structuralized interview can be ideally kept, the practical operation is difficult. Examinees take part in the interview successively which can be difficult to guarantee the leakage of related information among examinees. However, the application of the same questions is the key for measuring the scientificity of interview design. As a result, how to overcome the practical difficulty to apply the same questions for improvement of interview efficiency is the next target to strive for.

3.2.3 The Presentation of Interview Questions

Latham indicates that the dilemma question in each interview for evaluation of examination intention is one of the characters of situational interview. However, the application ratio of dilemma question in interview is small. As a result, we think that the development of dilemma questions in interview is also the striving direction in the future.

3.3 The Development of Anchor Scale

Anchor scale is a scale which describes the degree and meaning represented by each index in the rating scale. Anchor scale can reduce the differentiation of examiners' rating and improve the structuralization of interview. Latham thinks that one of the characters of situational structuralized interview is the development of behavior anchor scale. After the development of behavior anchor scale, examiners only need to make comparison with expected scores, and make rating according to the answers of examinees. As a result, the degree of structuralization is higher for situational interview which requires less for the training of examiners. Maurer has once checked the behavior anchor scale in situational interview and the influence of expert knowledge of examiners on consistency of rating as well as rating accuracy of situational questions. It turns out to be that this kind of scale is obviously better than traditional scale and experts cannot do better than green hands in rating, which shows that this kind of behavior anchor scale can minimize the prejudice of examiners when they evaluate the reflection of examinees.

In the process of interview, examinees make an instant rating as to each question answered by examinees, and then score of each question will be added together which can endow answers with characters of research oriented evaluation with objective evaluative results and improvement of efficiency and structuralization of interview.

Li Heng and Wang Chongming think that rating in successive sequence is more appropriate in situational interview. The survey finds that examiners will make a unified rating in the end of interview. This phenomenon can be naturally removed after the development of behavior anchor scale, which means that the rating in successive sequence in situational interview can be realized naturally.

3.4 The Construction of Interviewer Qualification System

The quality of interviewers will directly influence the results of interview and selection of reserves of teachers. As a result, in the implementation process of this system, the cultivation and training in all aspects of interviewers should be strengthened, allow them understand the targets and requirements in the interview stage, achieving finally the function of interview.

In situational structuralized interview, the training of examiners is less than that in behavior structuralized interview due to its no need for development of new questions. However, the research shows that examiners having been trained with high quality will perform better in rating consistency and efficiency in situational interview. And from the perspective of theory, the homogeneity training accepted by examiners can improve the rating consistency and efficiency, further improving the structuralization of interview.

As a result, we think that interview qualification system should be established and so do corresponding managing measures. The examiners must be determined in the way of inspection, training, and examination by organization and personnel department with the confirmation of certificate issuing to qualified personnel. The management of examiners should break off the limitation of region and department and be deployed by provincial examination department for confidence and fairness.

CONCLUSION

In the process of trial implementation of Chinese teacher qualification examination system, we should make summary and reflection actively for guaranteeing in every means to give full play to this system's due effects in national promotion as to aspects like optimizing teachers team, strictly controlling of teachers entrance, expanding teachers origins, improving the social status and overall quality of teachers.

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