

## **A Pilot Study on English Teachers' Job Satisfaction in a University in China**

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### **Abstract**

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The research intends to study what conditions keep the college English teachers in a university in China happy with their work, and whether the English teachers' job satisfaction derives from the realization of their material or spiritual ambition and which one weights more than the other. The questionnaire is designed and distributed through a network of English teachers at Jiaxing University, who differ in their gender, age groups, teaching positions and length of teaching. It also aims to study how the job satisfaction is affected by the factors to achieve a deeper insight into the study.

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**Keywords:** job satisfaction; spiritual; material; English teachers; a university in China

### **Background**

"I like my job, not because it is a well-paid post-in fact it is not-but mainly because it provides me a wealthy supply of wit and inspiration and makes me feel a sense of achievement," says one of the teachers in the English department at Jiaxing University when asked about his opinion on job satisfaction. The statement represents the real thinking of most teachers in higher education institutions in China.

Teachers' job satisfaction, which describes how content teachers are with their job on both material and spiritual aspects, is of cardinal importance to their teaching quality and productivity, and consequently exerts a great impact on students' self-esteem (Perk, 1977). Feng (1996) conducted a research on the main elements effecting teachers' job satisfaction, suggesting that self-realization, salaries, intensity of labor and interpersonal relationship with colleagues are five dimensions to measure teachers' job satisfaction, among which self-realization and salaries are regarded as two main factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction and their working positiveness.

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Today the issue of teachers' job satisfaction has drawn much attention from society and come up in heated discussion. In a recent on-line poll about teachers' job satisfaction conducted by China Education and Research Network (CERNET, 2007), 157 teachers from different regions took part in the voting. Among them, 59.94% voted for "extremely dissatisfied" when asked about their opinions on their job satisfaction while only 7% considered their job "satisfied" or "very satisfied". In another survey conducted by People's Website, only 12.4% among over 30,000 teachers voted for "satisfied with the current remuneration and welfare", while about 50% of the voters were dissatisfied with it. In addition, in China, the current era of educational reforms aims to bring about a shift toward more student-centered teaching and learning, a greater emphasis on critical thinking and the application of skills, and the establishment of a more democratic classroom environment (MOE, 2002). In colleges and universities, teachers are evaluated by students, colleagues, and administrators based on moral standing, instructional capability, and professional achievements, including research and publications. The implementation of these reforms will likely require greater levels of teacher initiative and innovation, making teacher commitment and motivation increasingly important. Disengaged teachers are unlikely to inspire student engagement or, consequently, student achievement.

Chinese people usually regard work as the most glorious thing in the world. In their opinion, work brings not only material but spiritual wealth. The research carried out a survey to study the opinions of college English teachers in a university in China on job satisfaction and to address this by examining the factors leading to satisfaction among the college English teachers serving in a university in China, and to find out whether their job satisfaction derives from the realization of spiritual ambition or the material one.

I begin with the introduction to some viewpoints on the teacher's job satisfaction. Then I provide a brief overview of the data and methods used in the study, followed by analyses of the teacher satisfaction in the context of Jiaying University, Zhejiang Province, China, in particular.

Considering implications of the main results, I will further research on understanding their overall sense of satisfaction with their job.

## Literature Review

The term satisfaction refers to “a fulfillment of a need or want, the quality or state of being satisfied, a source or means of enjoyment” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008). Job satisfaction could also be defined as the sense of fulfillment and pride felt by people who enjoy their work and perceive that they are doing it well. Teacher job satisfaction was described by Dinham and Scott (1997:363) as an indicator of the degree of need fulfillment or positive connection experienced by an individual to an institution. They continued by noting that job satisfaction was a “dynamic construct” which basically paralleled to how a person felt about their job. Batten (2002:106) indicated that teachers’ job satisfaction was a potential gauge of “whether individuals were affectively connected to an institution, compliant with directives, or choose to leave the work environment”. Berns (2005) describes satisfaction as a reaction when our brains are both challenged and experience uniqueness. Berns went up to describe the importance of keeping employees challenged while providing new opportunities to keep them interested in doing their job. Teacher job satisfaction has not received the same attention that business and industry has given to employee productivity and job motivation.

Edwin A. Locke’s Range of Affect Theory (1976) is arguably the most famous job satisfaction model. According to Locke, when a person values a particular facet of a job, his satisfaction is more greatly impacted both positively and negatively, compared to one who does not value that facet. Hackman & Oldham (1976) reports that there are five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) which impact three critical psychological states, influencing job satisfaction. Judge, Locke and Durham (1997) asserts that higher levels of self-esteem and general self-efficacy lead to higher work satisfaction. Perrachione, Rosser and Peterson (2008) conducts a study to understand the internal and external needs of teachers.

Shann (1998) observed that teacher satisfaction was a pivotal link in executing reform and that teacher satisfaction not only influenced job performance but also student performance.

Shan continues commenting on that teacher satisfaction was “a predictor of teacher retention, a determinant of teacher commitment, and, in turn, a contributor to school effectiveness”.

Low teaching satisfaction is expected to correlate with the outcomes of work stress, that is, psychological distress and low self-esteem. (Ho & Au, 2006). Bingham (1996) made a similar observation and suggested that teachers' satisfaction, perceptions of their work environment, and their attitudes could potentially affect teachers' personal wellbeing. Holdaway (1978) and Borg et al. (1991) found that females were more satisfied with the profession overall than males. Galloway et al. (1985) suggest that differences between levels of satisfaction could be accounted for by whether or not the head had a teaching responsibility. Some academicians tried to explore the contributing factors of job satisfaction in university settings such as; job accountability, perceived identification, professional progression, work pleasure and enjoying the sense of empowerment (Hansen et al., 1987; Terpstra and Honoree 2004). Majority of the college teachers are found less satisfied with their job, while the reasons of satisfaction can be traced in the study of Rocca and Kostanski (2001). Rosenholtz (1985) suggests that teachers are more satisfied if their job provides opportunities for personal and professional advancement. Study of literature shows that little academic attention has been paid to the implications related to job satisfaction of college English teachers. So what constitutes the major factors of college teachers in China universities becomes the research question of the paper.

### **Research Objectives**

The study aims at finding out about the opinions of the teachers in English Department at Jiaxing University on whether their job satisfaction derives from the material ambition or/and the spiritual one. The research intends to answer the following two questions:

1. Does the college English teachers' job satisfaction derive from their material ambition or/and the spiritual one?
2. How is the major source of English teachers' job satisfaction affected by teachers' characteristics in terms of the gender, age, position and the length of teaching and etc.?

### **Data and Methods**

Our questionnaire was designed from two angles: spiritual ambition and financial ambition. Spiritual ambition referred to teacher's realization of their teaching plans, teachers' popularity among students, and teachers' self-development.

The answer of the research questions are found in teachers' attitudes towards these two ambitions. The teachers' personal factors were taken into account such as gender, age, position and length of teaching. The influence of these factors on teachers' attitudes are discussed respectively.

Data for this study come from a survey of college English teachers in Jiaying University. The research employs the questionnaire as the research method lies in two points. Firstly, a questionnaire can provide us with comparatively objective responses. Secondly, a questionnaire is a quick and convenient method to acquire the particular information. The questionnaires were distributed to 10 teachers in the English Department at Jiaying University in January 2012. The questionnaires were retrieved immediately after the respondents completed. Luckily, 100% questionnaires were returned.

The analyses were carried out by working out the proportion of each chosen option, through which respondents' preference would be shown obviously. The data collected were compared according to the teachers' different situation. The study was completed based on the analysis.

## **Results**

Table 1 contains all the results of questions but those of Question 5 and Question 7. The result from Question 5 is demonstrated in Sub-table of Table 1 and Question 7 is an open-ended question. The tables were designed separately in order to have a clear view of what we have obtained through our investigation.

**Table 1: Overall Review**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>options</b>	<b>o.</b>
(a) Whether respondents are satisfied with their remuneration and welfare package	A. Very satisfied	
	B. Satisfied	
	C. Somewhat satisfied	
	D. Dissatisfied	
	E. Totally dissatisfied	
(b) Whether respondents have realized their ambition for teaching	A. Totally agree	
	B. Agree	
	C. No idea	
	D. Disagree	
	E. Totally disagree	
(a) Whether respondents will accept a job with higher remuneration and better welfare at the cost of their teaching position	A. Yes	
	B. No	
(b) The reason for accepting the job	A. Attracted by the high remuneration	
	B. Interested in the job itself job.	
Whether respondents will appreciate a chance for personal development despite a big drop in income or stay in the current position	A. Study abroad for personal development	
	B. Stay in the current position	
Which respondents preferred when first starting their teaching	A. A job with low income but great	
	B. A job with high income but few chances for career development	
When respondents will obtain the greatest sense of achievement	A. Get promoted	
	B. Publish essays on academic journals	
	C. Receive the monthly remuneration	
	D. Carry out the teaching plan successfully	
	E. Get popular among students	
	F. Get the welfare package improved	
	G. Others	

When asked if they are satisfied with the remuneration and welfare package offered to them, more than half of the respondents (60%) choose negative responses; while only one of the ten respondents (10%) does not think he or she has realized the ambition for teaching and half of them (50%) give fairly positive answers to this question.

Most of the respondents (80%) will not give up their teaching position for a job with higher remuneration and better welfare; the two who will are either attracted by the high remuneration or interested in the job itself. In another case, when facing the choice of studying abroad or staying in the current teaching position, 80% of the respondents prefer the latter. Question 4 focuses on the original attitude towards employment of the respondents. 7 of them (70%) choose a job with low income but great opportunities for career development when they first started their teaching career. As can be seen in Table 1, publishing essays in academic journals ranks the top list which can bring the respondents a sense of achievement, followed by carrying out the teaching plan successfully and gaining popular among students. However, only 1 of them thinks receiving the monthly remuneration gives him/her the greatest sense of achievement.

#### **Sub-Table of Table 1 - Question 5: The Purpose for Conducting Academic Research**

<b>Options</b>	1	2	3	4	5
A. Get promoted	3	2	0	3	2
B. Apply knowledge into practice	2	1	4	1	2
C. Realize personal development	1	5	3	1	0
D. Get bonus	1	1	1	3	4
E. Obtain a sense of achievement	3	1	2	2	2

For Question 5, the respondents are required to put the options in the order of importance about the purpose for conducting academic research. The sub-table of Table 1 reflects a general phenomenon that the realization of personal development is the primary purpose for carrying out academic research. And obtaining a sense of achievement and applying knowledge into practice are also two important elements compared with getting promotion or bonus.

For Question 7, the 3 most common advantages of being a teacher from the perspective of teachers are flexibility of time, stability of the job and the comfortable relationship between colleagues and students.

On the other hand, they consider low income and poor welfare package, heavy workload, occupational diseases and the unreasonable promotion system as the weaknesses of the job.

In this investigation, the respondents are divided into two groups according to their gender. Below is a table telling the different results from the questionnaires between males and females.

**Table 2 for Gender**

Questions	Options	Male	Female
(a) Whether respondents are satisfied with their remuneration and welfare package	A. Very satisfied		0
	B. Satisfied		0
	C. Somewhat satisfied		3
	D. Dissatisfied		2
	E. Totally dissatisfied		0
(b) Whether respondents have realized their ambition for teaching	A. Totally agree		0
	B. Agree		2
	C. No idea		2
	D. Disagree		1
	E. Totally disagree		0
(a). Whether respondents accept a job with higher remuneration and better welfare at the cost of their teaching position	A. Yes		1
	(b). The reason for accepting the job	A. Attracted by the high remuneration	0
		B. Interest in the job itself	1
	B. No		4
Whether respondents will appreciate a chance for personal development despite a big drop in income or stay in the current position	A. Study abroad for personal development		1
	B. Study in the current position		4
Which respondents preferred when first starting their teaching career	A. A job with low income but great chances for career development		4
	B. A job with high income but few chances for career development		1
When respondents will obtain the greatest sense of achievement	A. Get promoted		0
	B. Publish essays on a academic journals		3
	C. Receive the monthly remuneration		1
	D. Carry out the teaching plan successfully		2
	E. Get popular among students		3
	F. Get the welfare package improved		1
	G. Others		0

**Sub-table of Table 2 – Question 5: The Purpose for Conducting Academic Research**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A.</b> Get promoted	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>B.</b> Apply knowledge into practice	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>C.</b> Realize personal development	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>D.</b> Get bonus	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>E.</b> Obtain a sense of achievement	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

Male teachers and female teachers have quite different opinions about their purpose for conducting academic research. For male teachers, applying knowledge, realizing personal development and getting promotion serve as three major reasons for their academic research; however. But for female teachers, obtaining a sense of achievement is the most crucial factor to carry out research and getting promotion, as well as realizing personal development, is in the upper part of their list for doing academic research.

Looking at Table 2 for Gender. For most questions there is no big difference existing between the choices of male teachers and female teachers. The most significant disparity lies in the degree of satisfaction with their remuneration and welfare package. 4 of the 5 male teachers (80%) give negative answers to this question, while only 2 of the 5 female teachers (40%) do so. Seen from the results of Question 6, female teachers are keener on the relationship between teachers and students as this option ranks the highest along with the publication of essays.

**Table 3 for Age Group**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>25-35</b>	<b>36-50</b>	<b>Above 50</b>
(a)Whether respondents are satisfied with their remuneration and welfare package	A. Very satisfied	0	0	0
	B. Satisfied	0	0	0
	C. Somewhat satisfied	2	2	0
	D. Dissatisfied	0	3	1
	E. Totally dissatisfied	0	1	1
(b)Whether respondents have realized their ambition for teaching	A. Totally agree	0		0
	B. Agree	0	4	1
	C. No idea	1	2	1
	D. Disagree	1	0	0
	E. Totally disagree	0	0	0
(a)Whether respondents will accept a job with higher remuneration and remuneration better welfare at the cost of their teaching position	A. Yes	0	1	1
	B. No	2	5	1
(b) The reason for accepting	A. Attracted by the high remuneration	0	1	1
	B. Interested the job itself	0	0	0
Whether respondents will appreciate a chance for personal development despite a big drop in income or stay in the current position	A. Study abroad for personal development	1	1	0
	B. Stay in the current position	1	5	2
Which respondents preferred when first starting their teaching career	A. A job with low income but great chances for career development	2	3	0
	B. A job with high income but few chances for career development	0	3	2
When respondents will obtain the greatest sense of achievement	A. Get promoted	0	2	0
	B. Publish essays on academic journals	2	3	0
	C. Receive the monthly remuneration	1	0	0
	D. Carry out the teaching plan successfully	0	3	1
	E. Get popular among students	0	3	2
	F. Get the welfare package improved	1	0	1
	G. Others	0	1	0

**Sub-Table of Table 3 — Question 5: The Purpose For Conducting Academic Research**

Options	25-35	36-50	Above 50
A. Get promoted	1	2	2
B. Apply knowledge into practice	0	1	0
C. Realize personal development	1	2	2
D. Get bonus	0	0	0
E. Obtain a sense of achievement	1	2	0

The data in Table 3 reflect that the teachers in different age groups hold various opinions on the source of their job satisfaction, while quite a few of them still share the same views. The first question including (a) and (b) intends to investigate the teachers' current attitude towards their income and teaching cause. And the teachers whose ages range from 25-35 are somewhat satisfied with their income but not with their teaching result; on the contrary, nearly all the teachers in the other 2 age groups show their dissatisfaction with their income while they acknowledge themselves in their teaching performance. Then the second and the third question reveal no major differences in their opinions despite their different age groups. In the fourth question, there appears a "half-half situation". Both the younger teachers express they would pursue a job with low income but great chances for self-development, while both the senior teachers make the opposite choice. As for the middle-aged teachers, half would choose a job with high remuneration but limited room for development, and half not. Then the rank question presents a complicated situation: the younger teachers give their priority to personal development and sense of achievement; most of the middle-aged teachers take promotion as the most important factor and bonus the least; and the elder teachers regard promotion as their last choice and prefer to realize their personal development. The last question reflects that the younger teachers feel a sense of achievement when they receive remuneration and get their essays published. And most middle-aged teachers feel achieved when they get promoted and popular and carry out the teachers feel achieved and the elder teachers are similar in this respect.

**Table 4 for Position**

Questions	Option	Lecturer	Associated Professor	Professor	
(a) Whether respondents are satisfied with their remuneration and welfare package	A. Very satisfied	0	0	0	
	B. Satisfied	0	0	0	
	C. Somewhat Satisfied	2	2	0	
	D. Dissatisfied	1	3	0	
	E. Totally dissatisfied	1	0	1	
(b) Whether respondents have realized their ambition for teaching	A. Totally	0	0	0	
	B. Agree	3	4	1	
	C. No idea	1	1	0	
	D. Disagree	0	0	0	
	E. Totally disagree	0	0	0	
(a) Whether respondents accept a job with higher remuneration and better welfare at the cost of their teaching position	A. Yes				
	(b).The reason for accepting the job	A. Attracted by the high remuneration	1	0	0
		B. Interested in the job itself	0	1	0
B. No		3	4	1	
Whether respondents will appreciate a chance for personal development despite a big drop in income or stay in the current position	A. Study abroad for personal development	1	1	0	
	B. Stay in the current position	3	4	1	
Which respondents preferred when first starting their teaching career	A. A job with low income but great chances for career development	3	3	1	
	B. A job with high income but few chances for career development	1	2	3	
When respondents will obtain the greatest sense of achievement	A. Get promoted	0	2	0	
	B. Publish essays on academic journals	2	3	1	
	C. Receive the monthly remuneration	1	0	0	
	D. Carry out the teaching plan successfully	2	2	0	
	E. Get popular among students	1	3	1	
	F. Get the welfare package improved	2	0	0	
	G. Others	1	0	0	

### Sub-Table of Table 4-Question 5: The Purpose for Conducting Academic Research

Options	Lecturers	Associated Professors	Professors
	1	2	2
A. Get promoted	0	1	0
B. Apply knowledge into practice	1	1	0
C. Realize personal development	1	1	1
D. Get bonus	1	1	0
E. Obtain a sense of achievement	1	1	0

Table 4 and its sub-table show the different opinions of teachers in different positions on whether their job satisfaction derives from the realization of spiritual or material ambition.

For the lecturers, 50% of them think their remuneration somewhat satisfied, and others think it dissatisfied. For the associated professor and professor, most of them do not think their job is a well-paid one.

As for the realization of teaching ambition, 80% of the respondents think they have realized it. Among them, 50% are associated professors. The rest 20% have no idea about it. 80% of the respondents will not change their job for a highly paid one due to their love for teaching career. When asked about further study abroad, 80% think they will still stay in the current position, only 1 lecturer and 1 associated professor choose to study abroad despite a big drop in the income. When asked about which kind of jobs they used to prefer, 70% choose to take a job with low remuneration but plenty of room for self-development. The rest 30% take the opposite point of view. As for the question when they feel a sense of achievement, over 50% of them say when they obtain the greatest sense of achievement by publishing essays on academic journals. Getting popular among students and carrying out the teaching plan successfully ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sub-table shows different opinions of teachers in different positions on what is the most important factor for them to conduct academic research.

Among the 5 options, most respondents choose "sense of achievement" and "personal development" as the purpose of academic research, and "applying academic knowledge into practice" ranks. However, 60% of the associated professors give their priority to "getting promotion" as their purpose for conducting academic research.

**Table 5 for Length of Teaching**

Questions	Options	5-10 yrs	11-20 yrs	20+ yrs	
(a) Whether respondents are satisfied with their remuneration and welfare package	A. Very satisfied	0	0	0	
	B. Satisfied	0	0	0	
	C. Somewhat satisfied	2	2	1	
	D. Dissatisfied	1	0	3	
	E. Totally dissatisfied	0	1	0	
(b) Whether respondents have realized their ambition for teaching	A. Totally agree	0	0	0	
	B. Agree	1	2	2	
	C. No idea	1	1	2	
	D. Disagree	1	0	0	
	E. Totally disagree	0	0	0	
(a) Whether respondents will accept a job with higher remuneration and better welfare at the cost of their teaching position	A. Yes	1	0	1	
	(b). The reason for accepting the job	A. Attracted by the high remuneration	0	0	1
		B. Interested in the job itself	1	0	0
B. No	2	3	3		
Whether respondents will appreciate a chance for personal development despite a big drop in income or stay in the current position	A. Study abroad for personal development	1	1	0	
	B. Stay in the current position	2	2	4	
Which respondents preferred when first starting their teaching career	A. A job with low income but great chances for career development	3	1	3	
	B. A job with high income but few chances for career development	0	2	1	
When respondents will obtain the greatest sense of achievement	A. Get promoted	0	1	1	
	B. Publish essays on academic journals	2	1	2	
	C. Receive the monthly remuneration	1	0	0	

D. carryout the teaching plan successfully	0	2	2
E. Get popular among students	1	1	3
F. Get the welfare package improved	0	0	1
G. Others	0	0	0

### Sub-Table of Table 5- Question 5: The Purpose for Conducting Academic Research

Options	5-10 years					11-20 years					More than 20 years	
	1	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5	1	2	
A. Get promotion	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	
B. Apply knowledge into practice	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	
C. Realize personal development	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	
. Get bonus	0	0		1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	
D. Obtain a sense of achievement	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	

As shown in Table 5, the teachers with longer period time of teaching are less satisfied with the remuneration but more satisfied with their teaching performance. As for Question 2 does not show strong influence on teachers' attitude, and most of them choose to stay in the current position due to the pleasure they draw from the current job. If teachers were given another chance to start their teaching career, teachers with eleven to twenty years of teaching experience tend to choose a school offering high income but limited room for promotion or career development, while teachers with 5-10 years' or more than twenty years' teaching experience remuneration more attention to their personal development. When teachers are asked about the source of their achievement, almost all of them give the priority to the spiritual aspects.

Sub-table of Table5 shows us teachers' purpose for conducting academic research. Teachers with 5-10 years' teaching experience concern more about the sense of achievement and their personal development when conducting academic research.

Teachers with 11-20 years' teaching experience conduct academic research mainly for the purpose of the practice of their own knowledge and the sense of achievement from the research. Teachers with more than 20 years' teaching experience tend to regard academic research as a step towards promotion or certain titles, but they also want to achieve self-development through the process of conducting academic research.

## **Discussion**

This study shows that teachers in the English Department at Jiaxing University hold quite similar views towards the sources of job satisfaction. From their perspective, job satisfaction in most cases derives from the realization of spiritual ambitions rather than the fulfillment of material ambitions; however, most of the respondents are quite dissatisfied with their remuneration and the welfare package the university offers, as 60% of them give negative answer to Question 1. Apart from this major finding, there are also several sub-findings which can be detected from the data in the results part.

Most of the teachers love their "teaching position, for they will not give up their career of teaching for the sake of a job with higher remuneration and better welfare package in an enterprise. Despite their dissatisfaction with their income, they still want to be a teacher, partially because they feel they have realized their ambition for teaching till now. From a holistic perspective, their job satisfaction mostly comes from what they have achieved in teaching, not what they have got financially.

In another presumption, most teachers appreciate the stability of the teaching position as they prefer staying in the current position to studying abroad for personal development. We assume that two reasons are behind their choice. The first one is that they love their job; the second one is that they fear they would experience a big drop in their income as stated in Question 3. Since most of them have already complained about their remuneration and welfare package, they will certainly not expect to sacrifice their income for personal development. In this case, I can conclude that although spiritually they are satisfied, they still anticipate high remuneration which could match their devotion.

When the teachers in the English Department at Jiaxing University first started their teaching career, most of them (80%) valued personal or career development, which reflects that they attached great importance to their career advancement instead of material requirement. Moreover, the results of Question 5 and Question 6 also support the major finding of our research. Spiritual ambitions serve as the most important purposes for teachers' conducting academic research. They do that not for bonus or promotion, but for the realization of their personal development, for obtaining a sense of achievement and for the application of academic knowledge into practice. All of these three reasons demonstrate their anticipation in spirit from their job. The same situation can be applied to how they obtain the greatest sense of achievement. The publication of achievement.

According to the responses we have gathered for Question 7, teachers in the English Department appreciate the flexibility of time, the stability of the teaching job and the good relationship they have with students, which are the major advantages of being a teacher. However, poor financial conditions and heavy workload are most teachers' complaints about this job.

All of these sub-findings direct towards the major finding that the realization of spiritual ambition is greatly valued by our respondents and they feel satisfied with their teaching position though they still have complaints about their financial conditions when being a teacher at Jiaxing University.

In terms of gender, male teachers and female teachers have little disparity in their views towards job satisfaction. However, comparing the data in Table 2, we find that male teachers have greater material ambitions than female teachers, which might have something to do with the males' characters of being more ambitious.

Then in terms of age group, the teachers in different age groups also hold various opinions on their current job state and the source of their job satisfaction. The first question aims at investigating the teachers' attitude towards their current income and teaching performance. As shown in the result, the younger teachers do not have as high a demand for income as those middle-aged and elder teachers, and both the young teachers do not feel satisfied with their teaching performance.

Such results indicate that the younger teachers, when at the primary stage of their teaching career, do not remunerate much attention to their material reward, but the spiritual result. On the contrary, the relatively elder teachers focus more on the material side, perhaps due to the fact that they are the backbone of their family and have to support it. Similarly, question 4 also shows the same trend that the elder teacher attach greater importance to the high remuneration, while the younger teachers the self-development. Based on these two questions, it seems that the spiritual side weights more to the younger teachers' job satisfaction than to the elder ones'. However, as for the purpose of conducting the academic research, both the younger and elder teachers regard the realization of self-development as their primary motivation, while the middle-aged teachers take the promotion as the most important factor urging them to do the research. Thus we can see those middle-aged teachers who are in the summit of their teaching career badly need a title to prove their teaching capability by doing the research, which to some extent reflect that the middle-aged teachers' job satisfaction mainly derives from their realization of spiritual ambition-to get promotion.

In the last question, the younger teachers feel a sense of achievement when they get their essays published, and so do most middle-aged and elder teachers plus when they get promoted and popular and carry out the teaching plan successfully. What is more, nearly none of them chooses the occasion when they receive the monthly remuneration. Thus it is evident that spiritual ambition count much more than the material one to the teachers' job satisfaction regardless of their different age groups.

In terms of position, according to table 4 and its sub-table, lecturers are more satisfied with their remuneration and welfare, while the experienced teachers, such as associated professors and professors, tend to be dissatisfied with their current income. As for their ambition for their teaching career, most associate professors think they have realized it, which shows their confidence in their teaching ability and academic achievement.

80% of the respondents choose to stay in the current position and refuse to take a highly-paid job, among which 50% are associated professors and professors, which reflects that although they are dissatisfied with their current income, their love for their teaching career is deeply rooted in their mind as years go by.

When given a chance for further study at the cost of a big drop in income, 60% associated professors choose to stay in the current position, which indicates that most of them still take finance as an indispensable factor when they are planning their future life. However, when asked which job they used to prefer when they first started their teaching career, 75% of the lecturers and 60% of the associated professors choose the job with low remuneration but bigger room for self-improvement, which reflects that although teachers attach great importance into finance, they remuneration more attention to their self-development.

In terms of length of teaching, generally speaking, length of teaching does not exert great influence on teachers' attitude towards their job. Although the school fails to provide teachers with satisfying remuneration and welfare package, teachers are still willing to stay in the current position. The reason why they do so lies in two points. The first one is their love for the job, and the second one is that teachers' teaching ambition will be gradually realized as they continue their teaching career. It is easy to predict that the longer the time people stay in one position, the less enthusiasm they will have and the more achievement in the job they may get. Those with 11-20 years' teaching experience are just in the developing period of their career, so they are more likely to suffer from the frustration in job. When they are given another chance to start their teaching career, they show preference in the school with higher remuneration. However, influenced by the teaching enthusiasm and the achievement, teachers with 5-10 years' and more than 20 years' teaching experience tend to choose the school which is beneficial to their self development, regardless of the low income. But it cannot be denied that all of our respondents obtain greater sense of achievement from the spiritual aspects than the material ones. To sum up, no matter how long our respondents stay in the current position, they derive more satisfaction from spiritual ambition than from material ambition.

## **Limitations**

The study is a first attempt at understanding the job satisfaction of college English teachers in China, and there is a need for much further research. Most valuable will be follow-up interviews with the satisfied as well as with the unsatisfied. While there is much ongoing investigation of secondary school teacher satisfaction in the Chinese literature, there has been far less investigation of college English teachers.

A better understanding of ways to support college English teachers could help promote access to quality English education for Chinese university students.

First of all, some of the options are equivocal. We should make further revisions to the options such as "I have no idea" or "others, and add specific details to avoid receiving vague answers and to make sure that all the retrieved information are effective. Second, some of the questions need to be explored and extended so that more information could be obtained. Considering the shortage of time, we just spent two evenings to design the questionnaire and then hurriedly sent it out on the third day. Thus, limited information could be drawn from the simply designed questions. For example, in Q3, we may ask a new question after option B "study abroad" so that we could find out about more details about teachers' opinions on further study.

## Conclusion

Theoretically, this pilot study confirms that job satisfaction mostly derives from the realization of spiritual ambitions rather than the fulfillment of material ambitions for teachers in the English Department at Jiaying University. More specifically, teachers value their teaching outcomes more than their remuneration and welfare package. As long as they can realize their teaching objectives, carry out their teaching plans successfully and get along well with students, they feel satisfied with their job. However, they do not get much financial feedback though they have devoted themselves to their teaching career. It would be better if the university's authority can think of a way to enhance teachers' income and improve their welfare package. If provided with better financial support, teachers will be more devoted into this job, thus cultivating more talents with their knowledge and wisdom.

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