

# Occupational Anxiety of College Teachers in Post-epidemic Period and its Countermeasures

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## Abstract

*As a common mental disorder in the teaching occupation, anxiety has a widespread negative impact on teaching, it is also an important factor that perplexes the professional development of college teachers. This paper introduces the conclusion of the case study on teachers' anxiety from Chinese and foreign educational circles, analyzes the objective causes of occupational anxiety of college teachers from four aspects: social expectation, competition mechanism, self-growth and imbalance of mentality, to suit the remedy to the case combined with the current epidemic situation for the impact of colleges, it also discusses the path of the prevention and control system construction on the occupational anxiety from three aspects: building a good mechanism of respecting teachers and valuing education, establishing the management idea of putting people first, grasping the relevant essentials of psychological adjustment.*

**Keywords:** College Teachers; Occupational Anxiety; Reasons; Prevention and Control

## I. Concept of Anxiety and Its Negative Effects

Anxiety is a form of individual response to threatening situations, characterized by universality, helplessness and irrationality<sup>[6]</sup>, which is essentially triggered by "the individual psychology of competing for success". Research in recent years has shown that the group of teachers who are undertaking socially important duties is exposed to greater stress and even has a much higher rate of their psychological adjustment difficulties, both in occupational and life adaptation, than the general population. According to the statistics by National Education Association (NEA), 78% of teachers experience occupational stress, 37% have severe mental stress and anxiety, and 40% say they will leave early before retirement. Domestic scholars have similar results in the study of teachers' anxiety: a special survey on the mental health of college teachers conducted by Gao Yun and Zhou Ying of Guangzhou Medical University shows that college teachers have higher level of psychological symptoms, moderate subjective well-being and common psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and mental illness<sup>[3]</sup>; Cui Qien studied the intensity of occupational stress of 591 teachers in 8 colleges in Shanxi Province, and found that nearly 61.2% of college teachers are facing greater occupational stress, and 75% of them are in a sub-health state of chronic fatigue for a long time<sup>[2]</sup>. Obviously, with the rapid development of higher education in China, the occupational pressure of college teachers is increasing, and the accompanying occupational anxiety is nothing to sneeze at. High-intensity occupational anxiety will seriously restrict the normal development of teaching level of college teachers, resulting in occupational burnout to a certain extent, damaging the physical and mental health of teachers, and even affecting the healthy growth of young college students.

## II. Causes of Occupational Anxiety of College Teachers in Post-epidemic Period

As for the causes of teachers' career anxiety in the post-epidemic period, it can be analyzed from the perspectives of internal and external causes. The internal causes include their own professional attitude, disciplinary comprehensive literacy and individual development needs, while the external causes include socioeconomic changes, the imbalance of regional education development, the philosophy and conditions of running colleges, etc. To sum up, the occupational anxiety of college teachers mainly comes from the following four aspects.

1. Social expectation: Throughout the ages, the society has given high expectations to teachers that ideal teachers should have the wisdom of King Solomon, the insight of Freud, the knowledge of Einstein and the dedication of Nightingale. Teachers are the pronouns of elegance, sages and omnipotent. However, as a member of a real society, it is impossible for a teacher to pool so many excellent qualities, whereupon the formation of a large disparity between social role anticipation and the actual role of the teacher leads to suspicion and questioning of the individual value of the teachers. On the other hand, the society places more emphasis on the expected dedication and contributions by the teachers, while neglecting or omitting the rights that individual teachers should enjoy, coupled with the dissatisfaction in real life, which makes many teachers even more discouraged, so occupational anxiety arises.

2. Competition mechanism: Currently, a personnel system such as professional title evaluation and employment, performance rewards, and terminal elimination is commonly practiced in all colleges, and teacher work is evaluated by a very comprehensive and specific quantitative indicator and evaluation system, and the evaluation results will be directly linked to the evaluation and promotion of teachers, salary treatment, and title promotion, all of which make many teachers feel stressed. In particular, higher vocational teachers face multiple pressures in post-epidemic period, such as overloaded teaching tasks, standardized supervision checks, and high specifications of scientific research indicators, also the epidemic prevention and control, analyzing how to complete the knowledge output in a short time and how to help students out of the shadow of the epidemic, which inadvertently have increased their teaching anxiety and scientific research anxiety, spawned teachers' burnout and, in severe cases, will jeopardize teachers' physical and mental health. The epidemic has had a great impact on teachers both mentally and physically

3. Self- growth: Colleges and universities are a gathering area of professional talents, and the continuous introduction of high-end talents puts many on-the-job teachers under pressure who have to intensify their learning in their spare time to improve their own abilities. The rapid development of science and technology and the progress in information technology have put forward higher requirements for the professional and informational quality of college teachers, so they must continuously optimize their knowledge structure and widen their existing fields of knowledge in order to meet the development of the times and the needs of students. While the establishment of a new teacher-student relationship requires teachers to strive to update their pedagogical concepts, rethink their role orientation, and create a democratic and harmonious classroom atmosphere. The process of growth is difficult and always requires great efforts, which, when superimposed on a routine teaching task that is not easy for the teacher, often makes people feel powerless. And epidemic broke out in a relatively short period of time, but it spreaded quickly because of its high infection and multi-channel way, under the epidemic situation, everyone stayed indoors in response to the country's call, which disrupted teachers' learning plans and also aggravated teachers' teaching tasks, in the original foundation even must study the computer knowledge to realize the on-line teaching, further enhanced the requirement of teachers,, aggravated the teacher's anxiety.

4. Imbalance of mentality: Teachers have relatively closed working environment, they were even more isolated during the epidemic period. Although he returned to work during the post-epidemic period, he still had a relatively fixed working environment and interpersonal relationship. And then high work pressure makes them prone to tension. However, the limitations of interpersonal communication make it difficult to resolve negative emotions and increase the psychological burden. Studies have shown that anxiety in teachers' classes may come from many aspects: concerns about their inadequate teaching ability, disappointment about students' poor acceptance ability, and all kinds of helplessness caused by poor classroom management. Additionally, the shadows of a failed teaching situation in the past, the migration of learning anxiety carried by school days, etc. may also come at a vulnerable time. Some teachers have a high professional level, but relatively lack of mental health knowledge. When facing anxiety, they often do not know what to do, or treat it as a monster, or always try to avoid it. As a result, they become more anxious and more worried.

### III. Prevention and Control on the Occupational Anxiety of College Teachers

Life itself breeds anxiety, but anxiety is not the whole of life, but the spur and push on the way forward. There are many reasons for occupational anxiety of college teachers, including excessive expectations at the social level, strict management at the school level and improper coping at the individual level. Therefore, controlling and preventing occupational anxiety is a systematic project requiring social, school and individual actions to work together and manage together.

1. Building a good mechanism of respecting teachers and valuing education. Society should not sanctify or abstract the personality image of teachers, because teacher is only one of many social professions, each teacher has his or her own merits and demerits, joys and sorrows. All walks of life should put forward reasonable career expectations and requirements for college teachers, give them more understanding and tolerance for their career<sup>[1]</sup>, so as to form an environment conducive to their mental health. At present, college teachers are often required to have a doctor's degree, but their income is almost the same as that of middle and senior technical workers. Even if they are senior intellectuals such as professors and associate professors, their salary is still far from a web celebrity, indicating that the improvement of teachers' salary has not been reflected in the social distribution mechanism, and the specific measures of respecting teachers and respecting education need to be further implemented. To this end, various government departments should follow the document spirit of the Ministry of Education concerning the improvement of teacher salary, significantly increase their input into colleges and universities, improve the conditions of school operation, and adjust the program for the distribution of teacher salary performance, while developing policies to improve teacher housing, medical treatment and other aspects of treatment, to relieve teachers from all concerns. After the promotion of the teachers' salary is implemented, it will promote the teachers to love their own work more, devote themselves to teaching and educating, and solve the problem of the occupational anxiety prevention and control from a macro level.

2. Establishing the management idea of putting people first. Effective external support system is a reliable guarantee for teachers to release psychological pressure and alleviate occupational anxiety. Schools should create a democratic, harmonious and relaxed working atmosphere for teachers, create a good environment of humanistic care from the aspects of rules and regulations, service management and evaluation system, and implement the project of reducing teachers' burden: The Teaching Affairs Department should arrange teaching workload reasonably, avoid overloading of teachers as far as possible, provide sufficient materials and advanced equipment to teachers, so that they can concentrate on their research and teaching, and strive to improve their professional ability and information-based teaching level. The Human Resources Department should improve the assessment and evaluation mechanism of teachers, highlight the incentive and guiding role of assessment work, and avoid excessive quantitative indicator assessment, so as to reduce the psychological load and pressure of teachers, and at the same time pay attention to the affinity and acceptance of teachers' evaluation language, so that the post assessment can really become a "command stick" to stimulate the inner motivation, mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of teachers. The Mass Work Department should enrich the spiritual and cultural life of teachers for their physical and mental health, regularly carry out healthy and upward recreational activities, regularly carry out a general survey of the mental health of teachers in the school, and timely carry out psychological intervention in case of anxiety and behavior disorders. Besides, they should take care of teachers' daily life and visit them on holidays. As long as the high priority is given by school leaders and all departments work together, they will definitely open a new situation in the school's ideological and political work, and solve the problem of prevention and control of the occupational anxiety of the teachers from a meso-level.

3. Grasping the relevant essentials of psychological adjustment. It should be noted that the occupational anxiety of college teachers is a part of each teacher's career, and a reasonable response to occupational anxiety is an objective requirement for teachers to perform their duties, as well as a necessary condition for teachers' career growth. To accept occupational anxiety<sup>[5]</sup> and to smile at the success or failure can solve the main subject of prevention and control of occupational anxiety of college teachers from the micro level.

(1) Establishing reasonable career objectives. The hardest to know is oneself and the hardest to control is emotion. To achieve good career development, college teachers should first find a proper self-orientation, make a comprehensive analysis and trade-off according to their own abilities and characteristics, and determine a relatively reasonable professional goal, which is neither too far-reaching nor too delusive; they should have both an objective evaluation of themselves in reality and a full estimation of their future potential.

(2) Strengthening the professional spirit of lifelong learning<sup>[4]</sup>. Good occupational qualities are a powerful weapon for teachers to deal with anxiety and a cornerstone for them to gain confidence. In the information age, students have wide field of vision and rich knowledge reserves, and have more expectations and higher thirst for teachers. Therefore, teachers should actively seek change and innovation, try to get out of the classroom role dilemma of college teachers in the process of "Suspension of classes without suspending school", grasp the development trend of online and offline mixed teaching, expand professional learning channels, and constantly improve teaching ability and skills, and strive to become a combination of professional and doctoral teachers, double-professionally-titled teacher and create their own unique teaching style.

(3) Building a bridge for teacher-student communication. The process of teaching is the process of transferring knowledge between teachers and students in interaction, so communication ability is the basic ability that college teachers must have. In view of the fragmented situation of network learning, teachers should consciously change the role of the classroom, guide students to grasp the context of the subject, construct their own knowledge framework, and gather fragmented information into a systematic mind map; The course knowledge points should be regarded as "fuse" that leading to brainstorming, and divergent thinking should be conducted through frequent interaction between teachers and students, so as to enhance learners' sense of participation and experience, create equal and harmonious teacher-student relationship, and effectively prevent the generation of occupational anxiety.

(4) Mastering the related skills of stress response. Teachers should improve their awareness of mental health care, regularly make appropriate psychological adjustment, master the techniques and methods of emotional catharsis and adjustment under the control of epidemic situation, resolve unhealthy moods in time by changing environment, changing mood, physical exercise and relaxation training, and maintain a young and healthy professional attitude. They should also view the quality of anxiety objectively and control the process of anxiety effectively. They should not only rationally analyze the adverse factors causing anxiety, but also be good at creating a favorable environment for resolving it, not only reasonably use the sense of urgency brought by anxiety to solve practical problems, but also use the ordinary mind to check and balance excessive anxiety and get rid of negative emotions as soon as possible, so as to improve their strength and achieve anxiety breakthrough in the process of constantly overcoming themselves.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

For college teachers who have been suffering from anxiety for a long time, it is good for them to put down the mental load and start a healthy and happy life again in the Post-epidemic period. Even though a good mechanism of respecting teachers and valuing education in society and the people-oriented management atmosphere in schools provide good external conditions for teachers to prevent and control occupational anxiety, the first person responsible for coping with occupational anxiety is always the teacher himself. Establishing a reasonable career goal and being good at accepting career anxiety scenarios are the precondition for reasonable relief and cure of anxiety. Attention to mental health, striving to learn various methods and techniques for regulating emotions and coping with stress, and cultivating psychological quality to withstand pain and setbacks are the key factors for effectively preventing and regulating occupational anxiety.

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