

A Comparative Study of Hiring Practices of Postsecondary Education Faculty between the Two Sides of the Taiwan Straits

Abstract

The two sides of the Taiwan Straits (hereinafter known as the two sides or China and Taiwan) have been separate due to historical issues. According to the system theory, the two sides naturally generate unique cultural and social systems. Faculty hiring at postsecondary education institutions is a fair representation of their social systems. It is therefore very meaningful to analyze the similarities, differences and characteristics of the two sides' postsecondary education faculty hiring practices.

This study aimed to analyze how different social systems influenced the formation of the two sides' postsecondary education faculty hiring practices. The relationships between faculty hiring and the social system, and between faculty hiring and government civil servants were emphasized. Faculty satisfaction of hiring practices and perception of their social status on the two sides were also respectively explored.

Research methods such as observation, comparative approach, historical approach, induction, deduction, and systemic approach were utilized. Questionnaire surveys were completed even during the recent outbreak of SARS across the Taiwan Straits. The findings of the surveys were included in the analysis. Many current faculty hiring rules and regulations of the two sides were compared and contrasted in the process of research in order to understand their similarities and differences, and strengths and weaknesses. Research conclusions were then presented, followed by some suggestions.

The research conclusions are summarized as follows:

1. Faculty hiring practices of postsecondary education institutions of the two sides were legitimized.
2. Faculty hiring practices of the two sides have their own characteristics due to different environments.
3. Faculty at postsecondary education institutions of the two sides enjoy high social status, and this relates to their hiring policies.
4. On the two sides, faculty qualifications have different requirements; faculty certification is processed either before or after hiring; faculty certification

has different approaches.

5. Faculty hiring processes on the two sides have academic committee involvement but in this regard, the powers of academic committees are not entirely equal.
6. The nature and function of faculty hiring limits of the two sides are similar. However the legal effects they generate are not completely the same.
7. Approaches for faculty promotion on the two sides are similar, but the degrees of difficulty in getting promoted are different.
8. Although the nature and function of faculty evaluation schemes on the two sides are almost the same, their practices are different.

Based upon the above research conclusions, this study offers some suggestions to the authorities that govern faculty hiring and postsecondary education institutions on the two sides of the Taiwan Straits, and to fellow citizens in Taiwan who plan to do research on China issues. The suggestions proposed in this study are listed respectively:

1. For China and Taiwan government authorities:
 - 1.1 China and Taiwan governments should be open-minded and learn from each other in order to pursue progress.
 - 1.2 Legitimization of faculty hiring practices still has to continue.
 - 1.3 Keeping up with the international community and minimization of the impact of unfavorable domestic factors.
 - 1.4 Respect for academics, and avoidance of public and political interference.
2. For postsecondary education institutions in China and Taiwan:
 - 2.1 Despite different faculty hiring characteristics, individual institutions need to continue to pursue their own characteristics and recruit quality faculties for the purpose of promoting academic excellence.
 - 2.2 Faculty hiring should be academically orientated not politically orientated.
 - 2.3 Enhancement of the academic committee function in the hiring process.
 - 2.4 Faculty promotion should be based upon strict review.
3. For fellow citizens in Taiwan who plan to do research on China issues:
 - 3.1 Research methods may have limitations.
 - 3.2 Quality and quantity when collecting data should be confirmed.
 - 3.3 Interpersonal relationship networks should be built up and enhanced.

Key words: postsecondary institution, faculty hiring practices, system theory