

## Confusion of Secretary Science Major's Setup and Teaching Contents in China High Schools

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**Keywords:** Secretary science, Chinese language and literature department, Curriculum; guanxi, Hidden rules.

**Abstract.** Secretary is ubiquitous and plays critical role in contemporary China. However, many famous high schools are reluctant to set up secretary science major, and there are many disputes about the teaching content of secretary science major. This paper set out to investigate such problems. The research is based on the analysis of secretary's historical development of secretary and current condition in China, and the requirement of secretary's position in practice. Results showed that the secretary science major is necessary to be instituted in Chinese language and literature department. On the other hand, because of the huge need of secretaries in society, it is urgent to set up secretary science major in more high schools. As for the teaching content, secretary science is not only about the simple description of secretary concept and the introduction of secretary's routine works. On the contrary, it contains rich cultural and social meanings, which will induce many significant researches.

### Introduction

Secretary is an extremely important and ubiquitous position in China society (Li W, Pye L W. 1992). Secretaries take part in all kinds of political activities in history and contemporary times of China. Many journals specialized on the secretary vocation, works and position, such as *mishu* (Secretary) and *mishuzhiyou* (Companion to Secretary), with many famous people publishing the articles in those journals. Since the secretary position is so important and ubiquitous, the secretary science was set up in high schools in 1980s. From 1980s until 2014, the high schools in China amounted to more than 100 (Li Yushuan, Cai Junwei. 2014). Nevertheless, many secretary science majors are instituted in Chinese department, although secretary science seems more like the one major of management science (Li Li. 2013), and, on the other hand, many famous high schools, such as the schools belonged to 211 and 985 projects, do not want to institute the secretary science major (Yang Jianyu. 2012). The society's and high schools' appreciations of secretary position and secretary science education become contrast.

Although such problems existed for many years, there is no research addresses on this problem. It can be found that the problem can be defined as the contradiction between the reality and the ivory tower teaching.

This paper set out to analyze the problems. These papers structured as three sections. First, an introduction of the secretary's vocation and function is entailed. In this section, this paper addresses on the appearance of secretary vocation and the secretary's function in China history and contemporary times. It is necessary to analyze the cultural guanxi background in China. Guanxi culture is one unique interpersonal relationship culture of China. The guanxi between the secretary and his or her boss is critical for secretary's function and vocation. In the second section, the paper analyzes the setup and teaching content of secretary science in China high schools. Through analysis on the teaching content and setup of secretary science, the relationship between the secretary positions and secretary science teaching become easy to be understood. The third section discusses on the cause of existence and importance of secretary science in high school from the cultural and political perspectives.

### Secretary Vocation and Function in China History and Contemporary Times

Secretary vocation has long history in China. In China, secretary's origin was accompanied with the

appearance of kingdom. When the king had some ideas, he appointed some staff to draft and keep the documents. On the basis, the secretary, as a vocation and governmental position, appeared (Yang Jianyu. 1987). It can conclude that the secretary vocation in the beginning had relation with document draft and document process. The Xia dynasty, which was around the time between 21<sup>st</sup> century BC and 16<sup>th</sup> century BC, is the time when secretary appeared (Yang Jianyu. 1987).

From Xia dynasty until Zhou dynasty, secretary position in government was about the draft, document processing, getting the information about the folk complaint or prediction (Zhou Zhijun. 2013). In Qin Dynasty, which is the first empire in China history, Secretary institution in central government became more complicate, being classified into Chengxiangfu (Office of the Counselor-in-Chief) and Yushifu (Office of Censor). Before Qin dynasty and in Qin dynasty, the secretary position was not powerful.

However, after Qin dynasty, the secretary institution in government became more important and powerful. In the royal activities, the secretary institution became the group most intimate with the emperor, therefore, they had more power than any other institutions in government. The power of secretary institution was so powerful, that, sometimes, it threatened the royal power. So in some dynasties, some emperors weaken the secretary institution power intentionally. In the end of Qing dynasty, the private secretary appeared. They were hired by the officials for document processing, legal activities, financial matters and others.

One important feature of secretary position in ancient China is that it was bounded with the royal power. Besides, the secretary position was also related with the government, for even in the late Qing dynasty, the private secretary of the officials had the intimate relationship with the governmental activities. So it can conclude that, traditionally, the secretary in China has much to do with the political activities in the public impression.

In modern and contemporary China, the secretary position can be classified into three kinds: government secretary, enterprise secretary and private secretary. The government secretary and enterprise secretary comprise the main body of the secretary group in China, and on the contrary, the private secretary is a relative smaller group, for only some extremely wealthy people can hire the private secretary (Zhou Zhijun. 2003). In the enterprises which have secretary, the national enterprise compose the most. Therefore, it can conclude that the secretary position in modern and contemporary China is mainly about the public activities.

In ancient, modern and contemporary China, the secretary position is mainly about the governmental activities. That is distinguished from the secretary position in the western world. The secretary in the western main service the enterprise, which includes many private enterprise, in the guidance of market economy (Duan Qianwen.1994). In contemporary China, the secretary position is in the guidance of planned economy. In addition to the difference between the western world and China secretary positions, the secretary science educations in the western world and China are also different. In China, the secretary science education focuses on the theories, and on the contrary, the western secretary science education focuses on practice in the purpose to serve the enterprise (Duan Qianwen. 1994). The differences between the secretary science educations are caused by the differences of secretary position's purposes.

In the secretary activities in China, there are one special interpersonal relationship, guanxi, is mentioned frequently. Guanxi refers to the long existing reciprocal interpersonal relationship (Shi Y L. 2010). In many aspects of society, guanxi plays critical role, for example, guanxi is important for the enterprise to protect the enterprise interests since the law has long been absent from protect the enterprise activities and interests (Shi Y L. 2010). Some researchers point out that guanxi is one kind of bad connection in China, for example, Ying believes that guanxi is associated with corruption, fraud, unfair competition, favoritism, and involves in business and organized crime (Ying, F. 2002). However, as a kind of cultural phenomenon, guanxi embedded in China Confucian tradition, and exerts profound influence on daily life, economic activities and others, for centuries and in contemporary times, or even it can be deemed as the lifeblood of economic activities (Zhang Y, Zhang Z. 2006). Secretary vocation is influenced by guanxi inevitably.

Secretary should cope with guanxi prudentially and skillfully. In some sense, secretary position in

China is like the power hub, which connects with the leaders, different subordinates, individuals and groups. In this condition, as a vocation need to communicate with the different individuals and groups, guanxi is more important for secretary vocation than many other vocations, therefore, secretary should understand the guanxi thoroughly. In 1983, one book as the teaching material, *Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader*(Wang Huaizhi, Guo Zheng. 2012), was extremely favored by the students in Liberation Army of Xi'an Institution of Politics, because this book focuses on guanxi around the secretary. Although such teaching materials was abolished as the teaching material, it is still popular in China netizens and downloaded frequently, because this book addresses honestly on the guanxi in secretary's work.

### **The Setup and Teaching Content of Secretary Science Major in China High Schools**

In the background of the huge need of secretaries in society, the secretary science major develops slowly. Secretary science major was setup in 1980s, which was in response to the ubiquity of secretary position in China. There were more than 30 million secretary positions in China until 2011, however, among those secretaries were more than 95% graduated from other majors in high schools (Li Yushuan, Cai Junwei. 2014). Until now, the schools in China which set up the secretary science amount to more than one hundred, among which are many famous universities. Although the need of secretaries in society is urgent, the development of secretary science major in China high schools is slow (Li Yushuan, Cai Junwei. 2014). Many high schools are reluctant to setup the secretary science major, because they believe the secretary science major is not specialized, or not enough to be theoretical. After 1990s, many vocational schools set up the secretary science major, but some famous universities cancelled secretary science major.

What is more serious is that the understandings of secretary science are different in different high schools. Some researchers believe that secretary science belongs to management science, but not the Chinese department. However, most of the secretary science majors are set up in Chinese department (Xie Shiyang. 2011). As many teachers are not specialized in secretary science before, the shortage of secretary science teachers is obvious. Among the teachers of secretary science, many teachers are from Chinese department, in which the teachers taught literary or linguistic course previously. So, in face of secretary science teaching, the opinions differ from each other obviously. The main teaching content in secretary science major is still about Chinese literary and linguistic courses, with only a few courses teaching about secretary theory and practice. That means that the secretary science major in China high schools is far from mature. Owing to the confusion about secretary science major's courses, few teachers are willing to teach secretary science courses in high schools.

In specific teaching process in secretary science course, complaints arise from both the teachers and students. Secretary science is one corral course in secretary science major, but the teaching content of secretary science course is boring and dull for teachers and students. The teaching content of secretary science is so simple in the part of the practical techniques that the students can master the content only through reading book. This part teaches the students about practical techniques in secretary routine works, such as arranging the meetings, processing documents and accommodating the visitors and others. When the teachers teach those contents in classroom, the students find such contents are too simple to be learnt in classroom. However, according to the curriculum requirement, the teachers must finish the teaching of such content in classroom. Therefore, the teachers feel upset and the students feel bored. Another part of the secretary science course teaching content is about the theories, which is also dull in that those content is not practical in the future secretary practice. Most of the teaching materials of secretary science course are of no difference from each other, which results in dull and boring. It is evident that when the unique teaching materials *Adviser and Assistant: the Art of Serving the Leader* appeared in classroom, the students feverishly appreciated (Han Ruihui. 2016).

It can conclude that the setup and teaching content of secretary science are both disputed, therefore secretary science seems a troublesome major in high schools. However, due to the need of secretaries in society, the secretary science major still exists, and for many years, the teaching

content and condition of being setup in Chinese department do not change. Therefore, it can hypothesize that there are some reasons for the condition.

### **The Reasons for Secretary Science Setup and Teaching Content**

The teachers of secretary science major are most come from Chinese department and most high schools setup secretary science major in Chinese department, but, in the first glance, secretary science belongs to management science.

It should notice the historic development and current condition of secretary science in China. In history, secretary first appeared in royal court to draft the orders of the emperor. In the historic development, secretary vocation is bounded with governmental official matters. Most of the secretary position in contemporary China is still related with the governmental affairs and the national enterprises, or in other words, the secretary position is mostly about the public power or resources. So it can conclude that the secretary position in China history and current times are not changed much. That is different from the secretary position in the western world. Most of the secretary positions in the western countries are about the economic activities in private companies, and it is guided by the market economy. So the requirements of secretary positions in China and the western countries are different.

The historic development and current condition of secretary position decide that the understanding of Chinese culture, literature and language is critical to secretary works. In ancient China, the works of secretary was mainly about draft, so mastery of literary techniques was important. In later Qing dynasty, some officials had the private secretaries, but those private secretaries were most of the ones who did not pass the national examination for official career. Those people manipulated the Chinese language and literature skillfully in their works. For most of the works of secretary, their language and literature skills are important, because, for the bosses they served, those skills are critical to their promotion and treatment. Besides, the Chinese language and literature canons contains rich Chinese culture knowledge, which was critical to the career of the secretaries and the bosses they served, for some social rules were included in such culture knowledge. Therefore, China secretary position has one tradition that emphasizes the language and literature skills.

Current secretary position still has such tradition. Firstly, most of the works of secretary position require the secretary should master Chinese language and literature skills, for most of the works still about the draft. Although some courses in secretary science focuses on the draft, such as Gongwen xiezu (*Document Writing*) and Xiezu (*Writing*), those courses are not enough for the secretary works, so the secretary science major students should learn the knowledge in Chinese Department courses, such as Chinese Ancient Literature, Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature, Ancient Mandarin Language and Modern Mandarin Language. Secondly, social rules, which include the hidden rules are critical to the secretary career. In Chinese department, the students can also learn rich Chinese culture, in which the social rules are contained. The students can also get some information about the hidden rules from those courses. Hidden rules, one kind of rules that prevail in China society, are critical to the career of secretaries, as this paper mentioned above. Although the hidden rules should be rid of in any society, however, the hidden rules has existed for thousands of years especially in China society, and influence many aspects in society. It is necessary to let the students learn some information about hidden rules. Of course, hidden rules in China society became less in recent years, as the market economy prevailed.

Therefore, the secretary science major in high school exists for so long time and develops continuedly, because the huge need of secretaries in society. According to the requirements of secretary vocation, it is more suitable to be setup in Chinese department, but not belongs to the management science. The courses in Chinese Department meet with the secretary positions more satisfactorily, because the Chinese Department courses provide not only Chinese language and literature knowledge, but also the information of Chinese culture and social rules. *Secretary Science* is only one course in secretary science major, which does not satisfy the students and teachers, although it is one coral course in secretary science major. However, most other courses of secretary

science major, especially the Chinese language and literature courses, provide the useful knowledge for the students' future career.

## Conclusion

This paper set out to investigate the dispute about the secretary science major's setup and teaching contents. It has shown that the setup in Chinese Language and Literature Department is suitable for the secretary science in the condition of the unique secretary historic department and current secretary condition in China. The teaching content of secretary science major is mainly about the Chinese language and literature, because, in the practical works of secretary, the knowledge of Chinese language, literature and culture is critical. Although, in the guidance of market economy in current times of China, the reliance of secretary on some special social rules has been changed slowly, the secretary should notice and be cautious about such rules constantly in his or her career, so the teaching contents of secretary science major, which is set up in Chinese Language and Literature Department, meet such need. Therefore, secretary science is not only about the secretary concept and secretary's routine works. On the contrary, it contains rich cultural and social meanings, which will induce more significant researches. Therefore, more universities should set up the secretary science major. The findings of this study have provided a deeper insight into the secretary science major in China high schools.

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