

Current Situation and Difficulties in Chinese MTI Teachers' Sustainable Professional Development

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Abstract: Sustainable teacher development is the key to the success in the program of Master of Translation and Interpretation (MTI) but there was limited research on their current situation and needs in China. In this study 514 teachers from 32 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions across China were investigated by means of quantitative questionnaires and online interviews concerning their current situation of career development and this research presented a comprehensive description of their age, academic qualifications and professional title. Also this study expounded the current situation and difficulties in academic research, teaching, translation practice and staff training. The findings were as follows. 1: In spite of reasonable age structure, approximately 50% of them had less than three years' teaching experience in MTI. 2: There was a rise in the number of MTI teachers with doctoral degree but they found it hard to offer students professional guidance. 3: A large proportion of MTI teachers were in a slow stream of promotion in the title of professional post. 4: The proportion of the academic achievements related to translation in all the research projects and papers was small. 5: A majority of them worked as part-time translators. 6: About half of the teachers were not very satisfied with the effectiveness in their staff training program. Therefore it is suggested that more opportunities be provided for the MTI teachers to conduct translation practice in the professional sector and more researches be needed to thoroughly understand their requirement in terms of career development with a view to bridging the gap between content in the teacher training and their actual needs.

Keywords: MTI teachers; sustainable professional development; current situation and difficulties

1. Introduction

The advent of big data era in China has brought its translation sector into a period of fast development [1]. Materials to be translated between English and Chinese are increasing in both quantity and forms—in addition to traditional texts, what

needs to be translated are web pages, software, movie subtitles, online courses and video games, etc. [2]. The conventional hand-workshops style encounters difficulties in meeting current requirements of translation industry.

In the English—Chinese translation market, there has been a sharp increase in the demand of pragmatic talents who are conversant with management, translation skills and language processing technology [3]. Just bilingual competence and translation skills are not enough for a translator to gain a foothold in the sector [4]. So, Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) is offered to meet the huge demand of translation professionals in English—Chinese translation and interpretation.

Started by some top Chinese universities in 2007, those who offer degree programs in MTI have constantly growing in numbers from 15 in 2007 to 253 in 2022 [5]. Desirable accomplishments of the curriculum lie in teachers [6]. So attention to the sustainable teacher development in MTI arises in some education policy makers and researchers. For instance, some research explored the capability structures in translation teachers in MTI, professional development and teachers' roles [7-9].

Through literature review, it is found that a majority of articles qualitatively expounded the importance of MTI teachers and the capabilities they should possess from the perspective of teacher administration while descriptive empirical studies concerning their current situation and their needs are less conducted [10]. But understanding their current state and needs is the basis for MTI teacher training and their sustainable professional development. The reason is that after analysis of the causes of the problems, we might give some constructive suggestions on how to solve the issues if those hindering MTI teachers' further development are discovered by empirical studies.

This article is essentially concerned with the current situation and major problems in the sustainable development of MTI teachers in the field of English—Chinese translation and interpretation with the use of qualitative and quantitative data from questionnaires and interviews. The study is mainly designed to answer the following three questions:

1. What are the demographic features of Chinese MTI teachers?
2. What are the major problems in teaching, translation practice and academic research?

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3. How satisfied are they with the teacher training program?

2. Literature Review

2.1. MTI in China

The goal of MTI education is the cultivation of senior translation talents with sophisticated interpretation and written translation skills [11]. The MTI recipients are expected to have high competence in language use such as English and Chinese, proficient translation skills and a broad spectrum of knowledge, which enables them to be capable translators or interpreters in different specialized areas.

The application pool is often opened to those with undergraduate degrees in foreign language majors. Non-foreign language majors and the professionals with certain working experiences in translation are also welcomed to be candidates. All of them are required to attend both written and oral examinations in China [12]. There are two forms of written examinations—national unified examinations and the ones held by the top university alliances. The candidates are only allowed to take oral exams after they pass the written tests.

Once enrolled in the MTI program, the students have to be trained in terms of interpretation and written translation to develop their practical skills. The syllabus takes into consideration translation theory and pragmatic translation. To achieve the goals, various forms of teaching are adopted such as discussion, simulation of consecutive interpretation and internships. These methods are supplemented by modern educational technology and teaching resources [13]. As for the qualification of the MTI teacher who undertakes translation practice teaching, he is supposed to own extensive experiences in translation industry to guide the students to the completion of certain amounts of compulsory practical translation tasks which serve as an interactive platform of the teachers and the students [14].

As the final result of MTI program, the student's thesis is supposedly related to translation practice. The thesis can be submitted in the forms of research report of certain translation project, experiment report of machine translation and so forth [15]. Once the student successfully defends his thesis and completes the required translation tasks, he shall be conferred a MTI degree.

2.2 Differences between MTI and MT in China

Before the start of MTI, China had provided a series of theoretical courses in Master of Translation program. In terms of emphasis, the major task in Master of Translation (MT) is to tap the academic competence of graduate students. In contrast, the focus of MTI is the capacity for work in the translation sector. The following table will distinguish the differences between the two from six dimensions.

Table 1. Difference between MT and MTI

Difference	MT	MTI
cultivation method	traditional classroom teaching	seminars; simulating interpretation process; focus on case studies
curriculum	more theoretical than empirical; emphasis on academic research [16]	focus on pragmatic content and pertinence; credit system of graduation internship credits; less theoretical than MT [17]
admission requirement	academic research competence	professionalism and related work experiences are preferred
professional accreditation	theoretical classes, which is not related to the translator accreditation test	pragmatic courses related to national translator examination. The exam is divided into two categories: interpretation and translation. Interpretation can be further subdivided into consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation [18]
tutorial system	one supervisor	two supervisors
qualifications for the supervisor	mainly professorship or associate	full time professors and associate professors as well as veterans in translation industry

2.3 Sources of MTI Teachers

Compared with the teachers in the master program of linguistics, literature and TESOL, the background of MTI

teachers is more diversified. It mainly falls into three categories and each one has its own features.

In the first place, some teachers with non-translation majors participate in MTI instruction. Their understanding about translation derives from foreign language teaching in the classroom settings. In general, they lack experiences in translation [19].

In the second place, some professional translators work as part time teachers. On average, their level of teaching theories and pedagogies still remains to rise [20].

As an important source of MTI teachers, the third group is doctors of translatology. According to Hailong Li, a majority of doctoral students in translatology view university teachers as an ideal career [21]. But the focus of doctoral program in translation is academic research not teaching especially teaching translation.

In addition, compared with teachers in the first group there are a small number of full-time MTI teachers with rich translation experience in the workplace, but the academic background of some of them is not translation studies either [22].

Diverse sources of MTI teachers have prompted researchers to thinking about a series of questions related to their development: who have the capabilities to teach MTI?, what qualifications should MTI teachers have? And how can they get help to improve themselves?. Furthermore, it is found in many research papers that research on translation teacher education especially that for MTI teachers deserves to be a mature field of applied translation studies.

2.4 Four Categories Related to the Study of MTI Teachers

On the basis of definitions referred above, translation teachers including those in MTI in China are a research field that needs attention and study. Meanwhile, it is necessary to review the literature concerning the research in this area, which can promote study in this paper. So far only limited documents are related to the study of MTI teachers [23]. They fall into four categories: structure of knowledge and capability, status, training, and the relationship between their individual difference and teaching practice.

2.4.1. Structure of Knowledge and Capability of Translation Teachers

There are two major types as for the research in knowledge and ability. The first one is the requirements for the academic background to achieve certain education goals [24]. For

example, in the past decade, MTI teachers have been required to have the following qualities in the student-centered teaching mode: to arrange classroom activities and provide rich resources concerning these activities, to direct students to active participation in classroom translation, to intensify the understanding of general translation process and to provide informative resources and guidance in students internship program as a professional translator [25].

Though the discussions above are not teacher-centered, they start the exploration of the knowledge structure in MTI teachers. The other type of research, however, is teacher-centered, which means it concerns questions like what kind of knowledge or capability a MTI teacher is supposed to have. The first such concern is found in Dorothy Kelly [26]. The competence of translation teachers in MTI in her study was made up of three parts: professional translation ability, knowledge of translatology and teaching skills. In 2008, she referred to UK Higher Education Academy's Professional Standards Framework and subdivided teaching skills into areas of activity, core knowledge and professional value. Also she introduced a series of new conceptions to the qualities of MTI teachers like awareness of teaching profession and educational environment, evaluation of effectiveness and ability to work with colleagues. That introduction has deepened the understanding of the structural characteristics of translation teachers' abilities.

Likewise to explore how the pre-service training developed teachers, Li and Zhang in Taiwan proposed three types of knowledge and competences that MTI teachers should possess, namely, translation teaching, research qualities and understanding about the current translation sector [27]. This notion was based on the existing academic background of foreign language teachers. Similarly scholars in Chinese mainland also put forward such views [28].

2.4.2 Status of MTI Teachers

Knowledge about the status of MTI teachers is the premise of finding effective ways for their sustainable development [29]. According to different research purposes, there are two groups in the field: one is to gain a better understanding of the current status of teachers; the other is to serve teacher training and development [30]. The first is within the domain of typical teachers' research. For example, Wang used questionnaires to investigate 42 Taiwanese interpretation teachers, and conducted semi-structured interviews with six of them [31]. The dimensions were individual backgrounds, curriculum planning,

teaching objectives, styles and devices of interpretation teaching, methods, difficulties in their work and their needs. Their survey provided a wealth of data about teachers. Regrettably, they only viewed teachers as a perspective to examine the status of interpretation teachers and did not realize that the data could be used for the investigation of teacher training and development.

The latter is based on the understanding of the central role of the teacher in the classroom settings. The purpose is explicit: to serve the research in teacher education and sustainable growth [32]. Holding that MTI teachers' training program should have clear goals based on their needs, Kelly led a research group in 2007 to conduct an online survey of these teachers in Spain. The subjects were in-service teachers for undergraduate translation majors. Five dimensions constituted the questionnaire: educational background, practice in translation and interpretation, teacher training, teaching experiences and self-need analysis [33]. Kelly's work presented not only the recommendation that MTI teacher training be based on empirical studies but also good survey dimensions and findings for the upcoming research in other in-service translation teachers.

2.4.3 MTI Teachers' Education

Teacher education in this regard is divided into pre-service and in-service ones. PhD cultivation is known as the main form of pre-service training for MTI teachers [34]. To probe into the pedagogical development of PhD students in translation, Li and Zhang in Taiwan adopted case studies, questionnaires and interviews with nine doctoral students and two new PhD graduates [27]. By constructing the framework of pedagogical knowledge of translation teachers, he established four major dimensions, namely knowledge in translation, pedagogy, education related to translation and interpretation and the basics (research methodology, i.e.). His findings were: 1. doctoral program and training institutions paid insufficient attention to the development of teaching skills; 2. Less emphasis was laid on the performance in actual translation activities; 3. there were no courses in some universities which offered research methodology and academic writing for the PhD students in translation; 4. some students lacked a systematic understanding of the discipline. In view of a mismatch between the syllabus and students' employment aims, Li proposed that the cultivation of teaching ability be introduced to the translation PhD program. But how to actualize the notion remains to be studied. In sum,

Li's research gives us an overview of the issues in training pre-service MTI teachers.

In Chinese mainland, full consideration has been given to diversity in MTI teachers' in the past decade. Group teaching is adopted and teaching content and forms gradually become diverse, which include lectures, visiting schools rich in translation teaching experience and inviting industry associations as well as enterprises and public institutes to expound their respective requirements of translation talents. However, the current literature on MTI teachers is still limited in what should be included in the training, the reflections of the trainees and the fly-on-the-wall coverage of news, events and activities in the training program [35]. That is to say systematic research in the true sense has yet to begun.

2.4.4 Relationship between Individual Difference and Teaching Practice

Exploring the relationship between teachers' individual difference and teaching practice is a vital issue of teacher research. For instance, according to Pokorn whether the target language was the teacher's mother tongue had an effect on the teaching of non-native language translation [36]. That was a case study of four translation teachers, two of whom were native speakers of Slovenian and the other two were native English. Teaching characteristics were explored by means of classroom videos and interviews with the four teachers after school. The findings were based on the comparison and analysis of data from the following three aspects—dependence on translation tools, dependence on language intuition and the appropriateness of the target language.

Although the few published data about teachers' individual difference for reference does not address teacher learning and development, it can be rated as a preliminary attempt to the research concerning MTI teachers in that it has explored the effect of teachers' knowledge and individual background on their education practice.

Based on the review of literature, recent research on MTI teachers possesses three characteristics. (1) The research on teachers is still centered on their tasks rather than themselves [37-38]. Therefore, teachers in MTI are still not rated as an independent branch in educational research. Some key issues need to be discussed from the teacher's perspective such as the relationship between teachers and their tasks (how to teach and why to teach, i.e.), the relationship between teachers and

students (how do the students influence their lecturer's decisions, i.e.) and the one between the teachers and environment (how do social and institutional factors influence decision making in the translation classroom?). (2) Systematic research on teacher education and sustainable development in the specific field has not yet started. (3) Topics and methods are not rich enough. Some findings, which lack empirical researches, deviates from classroom teaching and translation practice.

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

Participants in this study were 514 MTI teachers in 32 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions across China. Table 2 displays the regional distribution was basically in line with the ratio of the figure for universities offering MTI programs in a specific region to the total number of universities offering such degree courses in the whole country. Also, as shown in Table 3, those teachers came from different types of universities (comprehensive, language, education, science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, liberal arts, economics, law, literature, art, sports, and others), among which comprehensive universities accounted for the largest proportion, at 38.13% with a total of 196 people .

Table 2. Geographic distribution of the participants

area	north	northeast	east	south	central	southwest	northwest	total
number of valid questionnaires	110	127	119	34	51	35	38	514
proportion of the total number of people	21.4%	24.71%	23.15%	6.62%	9.92%	6.81%	7.39%	100%
number of universities offering MTI	47	27	62	20	45	26	22	249
proportion of the total number of universities with MTI	18.88%	10.84%	24.90%	8.03%	18.07%	10.44%	8.84%	100%

programs

Table3. Types of universities the participants worked for

type	comprehensive	language	education	science, engineering, agriculture, medicine	liberal arts	economics, law	sports	other	total
number of people	196	53	79	135	21	13	2	15	514
percentage	38.13%	10.31%	15.37%	26.26%	4.09%	2.53%	0.39%	2.92%	100%

3.2 Research Tools

The main tool was a quantitative questionnaire based on a qualitative one developed earlier. The latter included personal information about MTI teachers, evaluation of current development in MTI, status and difficulties in work, development needs, future plan and so forth. In the light of the results of the qualitative questionnaire, we designed a quantitative one with a total of 26 items for large-scale surveys. The first 10 items were about the demographic information of the participants (gender, age, professional titles, education, etc.), while the last 16 items consisted of satisfaction with MTI teaching (item 11-12), satisfaction with the professional assessment system (item 20-21), participation and needs in professional translation practice and academic research (item 13-19), current situation of teachers' training (item 22-24), desire on career development needs (item 25) and self-assessment of their own ability (item 26).

For the representativeness of the participants, we adopted stratified sampling and conducted the survey by an online platform named "Wenjuanxing" (www.wjx.cn) for data collection. The job lasted four months (March, 2022-June, 2022). In the pretesting, 62 questionnaires were retrieved after checking, the whole reliability (Cronbach α) was 0.905. Likewise, the overall reliability of the formal questionnaire reached 0.939. Both figures indicated high levels of the reliability of coefficient.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Features of MTI Teachers

For a thorough comprehensive understanding of the current status of MTI teachers' professional development, the first 10 items in the questionnaire explored the demographic

information including gender, age, length of service as a teacher, professional title, academic qualifications and research interests. Among the 514 teachers investigated, males accounted for around 42.61% while the percentage of females was 57.39%. Evident difference in ratio was observed.

4.1.1 Features of Age Structure in MTI Teachers

In the aspect of age (table 4), the MTI teachers were mainly young and middle-aged. Those aged between 36 and 45 stood at 41.63% and the ones between 46 and 55 years of age shared 34.82% while the figure for the teachers under 35 years old was comparatively smaller, at 19.85%.

The above result was quite different from that of Guan and Wang. In 2012, 60% MTI teachers were 45 or above. Few of the MTI teaching staff were young and middle aged and that was especially true for those under 35 years old [39]. CHU Sheng-hua also conducted a similar study in which MTI teachers under the age of 40 took the largest share, at 49.7% [40]. Consistent with CHU's findings, this study revealed that young and middle aged MTI teachers aged between 36 and 55 were the backbone in MTI teaching staff. The age distribution was appropriate after a decade of building MTI teaching staff in that compared with the age distribution ten years ago, teachers in such age structure had more possibilities of sustainable development.

Table 4. Age distribution of MTI teachers

age group	≤35	36-45	46-55	≥56	total
number	102	214	179	19	514
percentage	19.85%	41.63%	34.82%	3.7%	100%

4.1.2 Years of Teaching in MTI

In the newly launched major, there was generally a lack of experiences in MTI teachers. Nearly half of them had less than three years' experience in MTI teaching and only 59 of them had over ten years of MTI teaching experiences, accounting for 11.48% of the total (table 5). According to Henry and Mollstedt, it is almost impossible for the beginning teacher to become an excellent one without normal instruction and training in the first three years [41]. Although most teachers had some experiences in other specializations, as beginning staff in MTI they would encounter many challenges in knowledge construction, unsustainability of capability development and professional identity for the specialty of MTI teaching. Also, the quantitative results aligned with the subsequent qualitative one that some

MTI teachers expressed concern and demand for relevant teacher training.

Table 5. Years of teaching in MTI program

length of service as a MTI teacher	0–3 years	4–6 years	7–9 years	≥10 years	total
number	234	141	80	59	514
percentage	45.53%	27.43%	15.56%	11.48%	100%

4.1.3 Educational Background Distribution

In terms of educational background in MTI teachers (table 6), those with master's degree accounted for 53.11% and the percentage of those with doctoral degree was 39.5%. Compared with the data in the study of MTI teachers conducted by Zhang Ruie [42], the figure for MTI teachers with master's degree in 2022 was smaller than that in 2012 while the proportion of those with a doctoral degree was higher than that in 2012. This shows that in recent years there has been an increase in the number of MTI teachers with doctoral degree.

Table 6. Distribution of educational background in MTI teachers

the highest degree	doctor	master	bachelor	total
number	203	273	38	514
percentage	39.5%	53.11%	7.39%	100%

From the data provided in table 7, we can discern that when the MTI teachers pursued their highest degree, only approximately one third of them chose translation studies as their research interest (34.24%). As for the rest, what really sparked their interest were linguistics, literature, education and others. This provides empirical basis for the assertions of some Chinese scholars that most MTI teachers shifted into translation teaching from their original focus areas [43].

Table 7. Distribution of research interests concerning MTI teachers' highest degrees

research interests	linguistics	literature	education	translation studies	others	total
number	157	100	23	176	58	514
percentage	30.55%	19.46%	4.47%	34.24%	11.28%	100%

For those who went through a transition to MTI teaching, their translation experiences and theoretical studies were yet to be improved. Quite often they found it hard to offer students some professional guidance. Their views on translation just lingered on the linguistic level. More explicitly, they might need

a more comprehensive understanding of the actual process of translation [44]. This is an issue demanding prompt solution for these MTI teachers.

4.1.4 Professional Titles in MTI Teachers

As can be seen from professional title distribution (table 8), there were 237 associate professors, accounting for 46.11% of the total participants and 117 lecturers, at 22.76%. The figures for professors and teaching assistants were 24.52% and 3.11% respectively. Overall, the results showed a reasonable distribution. Associate professors and lecturers were the main force in MTI teachers, which was consistent with CHU Sheng-hua's statistical results [40]. As a policy in many Chinese universities, only professors and associate professors have the qualification for course teaching in master programs. But due to the particularity in the part of practical work, lecturers, teaching assistants and even some professionals in translation and interpretation sector who have an abundance of experiences gained from practice are encouraged to be MTI teachers. This can explain lecturers and teaching assistants shared one quarter of the total participants and 3.5% of them were just part-time teachers in universities and indeed full-time pragmatic talents in translation sector.

Table 8. Distribution of professional titles in MTI teachers

professional titles	professor	associate professor	lecturer	teaching assistant	part time	total
number	126	237	117	16	18	514
proportion	24.52%	46.11%	22.76%	3.11%	3.5%	100%

By the cross analysis of professional title and age, we found that in the total of 237 associate professors, 36.29% of them or 86 of them were aged between 46 and 55 years old. In contrast, among the 117 lecturers, 58 of them were aged between 36 and 45 years old, accounting for 49.57%. This indicated that a large proportion of MTI teachers were in a slow stream of promotion in the title of professional post. In spite of a wealth of experiences in pragmatic translation field, some lecturers and teaching assistants expressed the view that they had given too much to translation practice and it was an impossible juggling act to take care of their family members, finish smoothly the teaching tasks and devote adequate time to scholarly research. In the majority of universities at all levels across China, the publication of papers in authoritative periodicals has been used

as almost the sole criterion in professional title evaluating and academic evaluation mechanism [45]. For this reason, some MTI teachers revealed that they had reached career ceilings.

4.2 Current State of MTI Teaching

Through qualitative questionnaire and literature review concerning the professional competence framework of MTI teachers, we find that teaching, academic research and translation practice are the main components of their professional lives [46]. When it comes to the types of courses, 330 teachers with the percentage of 64.2% were just engaged in translation teaching while only 91 subjects with the percentage of 17.9% only took up interpretation teaching (table 9). The other 92 subjects (17.9%) taught both courses to the students. From the data in the survey, the proportion of translation teachers was significantly larger than that of interpretation teachers. Besides the lack of real interpretation experiences for the MTI teachers, limits of teaching conditions in interpretation were partly responsible for this. Also, nearly half of the MTI teachers assumed other kind of teaching duties such as contrastive linguistics and conversely, quite a few of them shifted from other disciplines such as comparative literature to the field of interpretation and translation. Some other teachers undertook the courses in both MTI and MT. In the past two years, approximately half of the respondents have taught more than two courses in MTI program, of which 7.2% of them have delivered over four courses (table 10). The result verified the statement repetitively stressed by the respondents in the previous qualitative questionnaire that because of arduous teaching task, there was no more energy to be engaged in academic research and translation practice: "The workload is mind-boggling and it is screamingly obvious to me that I cannot afford for research" [47].

Table 9. Teaching directions of MTI teachers

direction	interpretation	translation	interpretation and translation	total
number of people	92	330	92	514
proportion	17.9%	64.2%	17.9%	100%

Table 10. Number of courses taught by MTI teachers

number of courses	1	2	3	≥4	total
number of people	262	141	74	37	514
percentage	50.97%	27.43%	14.4%	7.2%	100%

4.3 Academic Research in MTI Teachers

For the university teachers, academic achievements as the main reference to professional title assessment are an indispensable part of their career development. Therefore, the faculties' devotion to research has always been a concerned issue of the teachers [48]. When the participants were answering the question about their degree of engagement in academic research, 85.21% of the responses were that they were sometimes or often involved in academic work. Conversely about 5% of the respondents rarely or never conducted such work (table 11). This means that MTI teachers were aware of the importance of academic research in their sustainable career development. However, some teachers claimed their arduous teaching tasks hindered their engagement in academic research. Besides, in the previous qualitative questionnaire, some expressed that in terms of time and energy, they found it difficult to balance translation practice and academic research [49]. In addition to the fact that teachers' investment in teaching affected their investment in scientific research, teachers also expressed "In terms of energy and time, translation practice and academic research are mutually exclusive" [50].

Table 11. MTI teachers' engagement in academic research

engagement	often	sometimes	occasionally	rarely	never	total
number	254	184	51	21	4	514
percentage	49.42%	35.79%	9.92%	4.09%	0.78%	100%

As to the question about the proportion of the academic achievements related to translation in all of their research projects and papers, only 17.32% of them (89 teachers) claimed that their research work was completely related to translation and 31.52% of them said most of their work was within the scope of translation research (table 12). But what was worthy of our attention was 35.79% of the participants' research had little or

nothing to do with translation. In the one-on-one interviews, some teachers held that it was hard for the research articles and projects in the comparatively practical translation field to win recognition in China. For instance, "Translation practice represents a major expenditure of time and effort"[51]. Besides, compared with the papers in other fields, those in the translation sector lack theorization and profundity. Thus, such articles are not consistent with the preferences of many academic journals" [52]. It might be said that MTI teachers' translation practices were not supplementary to their academic research, which required a huge amount of time and effort if the teachers wanted to keep both translation practice and academic research moving forward. In other words, the incompatibility hindered their sustainable career development.

Table 12.The percentage of translation related academic results in their total research

percentage in research	whole	most	half	small	none	total
number	89	162	79	159	25	514
percentage in the participants	17.32%	31.52%	15.37%	30.93%	4.86%	100%

4.4 MTI Teachers' Translation Practice

In terms of translation practice, 20.23% of the participants had worked as full-time translators, out of which 18 teachers had over 10 years of experience (table 13). The pleasant phenomenon that professional translators become part of MTI teachers is related to China's educational policy that universities are encouraged to engage these professionals as MTI teachers [53]. On the other hand, no full-time translation experiences as the rest 434 MTI teachers (84.44%) had, most of them had worked as part-time translators (table 14). To be specific, 34.19% of all the 434 participants had over a decade of experience as a part-time translator and 32 teachers had over two decades of such experience. Concerning the frequency of translation practice, nearly 77.82% of the subjects said they were often or sometimes involved in translation practice, among which 32.49% of them chose "often" while the figure for "sometimes" was 45.33% (table 15). Translation practice is a key requirement of MTI teachers in China. Its national MTI education supervisory committee stipulated that the total word count in the translation practice for those in translation teaching in MTI programs

should be more than 200,000. As for the interpreting teachers, they should work as an interpreter in over 30 international conferences or negotiations. Briefly, the quantitative data showed that almost all the subjects had certain practice in translation. But according to some qualitative data, there were such barriers as “inadequate time and energy to be involved in translation practice” [54], “no access to practices in translation businesses” [55] and “limited range of encyclopedic knowledge” [56].

Table13. Working years of MTI Teachers as a full-time translator

years	≤5	6–10	11–15	16–20	≥21	total
number	59	27	9	5	4	104
percentage	56.73%	25.96%	8.65%	4.81%	3.85%	100%

Table 14. Working years of MTI teachers as part-time translator

years	≤5	6–10	11–15	16–20	≥21	total
number	181	105	83	33	32	434
percentage	41.71%	24.19%	19.13%	7.6%	7.37%	100%

Table 15. Frequency of MTI teachers’ translation practice

frequency	often	sometimes	occasionally	rare	never	total
number	167	233	87	25	2	514
percentage	32.49%	45.33%	16.93%	4.86%	0.39%	100%

4.5 MTI Teachers’ Training

Based on the previous analysis of MTI teachers’ demographic information, teaching, research, and translation practice, we found that further improvement was still needed. The consensus among many Chinese scholars was that training of MTI teachers was the key to the success in the program [57] and in the past decade, a variety of training sessions such as an access week, workshops and academic conference have been held. As for our participants, 364 teachers, who accounted for 70.82% of the total number, took the training program in MTI teaching. Concerning their satisfaction with the effectiveness among the 364 subjects, the percentage of the teachers who felt satisfied or very satisfied was 47.8%. The similar figure for those who just felt generally satisfied was at 44.78%. In contrast 7.42% of those who underwent the training programs showed their dissatisfaction (table 16).

Table 16. MTI teachers' satisfaction with the training program

degree of satisfaction	very satisfied	satisfied	generally satisfied	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
percentage	4.67%	43.13%	44.78%	4.67%	2.75%

Data proved that universities and educational administrative organizations across China attached great importance to the training of MTI teachers [58]. Naturally, most of our participants had such records. "My role as a MTI teacher was shed new light on by attending conferences related to MTI teaching and learning, observing other teachers' classes in the top universities and customers' expected service quality provided by translation companies" [59].

But nearly half of the participants were not very satisfied with the effectiveness in the training program. In the qualitative questionnaire, for instance, one teacher pointed out that the training content was not practical. "I noted down the main points of the experts' speeches at the workshop and found that they were too conceptual and theoretical" [60]. Another teacher also expressed the appeal that lesson study be adopted, which meant that collaborative research would be carried out by teachers in their teaching process [61].

5. Discussion

This study systematically explored the state of MTI teachers through a large-scale survey. According to the results, the distribution of age, educational background and professional titles were basically rational, which showed a good growth trend. First, as for age, teachers in the 35-45 age group accounted for nearly two thirds. As the main force in the MTI program, they were moving up the career ladder, which guaranteed the sustainable development of MTI. Second, as for educational background, the vast majority of MTI teachers had master's degree. Furthermore nearly 40% of them had doctoral degrees. Compared with the results of previously similar researches [42], the figure for MTI teachers holding a doctor degree was remarkably higher. But it deserved further studies whether such research-type teachers could complete effectively their tasks in the practical curriculum in MTI. At the outset, Kang and Shi proposed that those undertaking the courses in MTI should be competent in translation practice though the staff engaged in translation teaching in Chinese universities was mainly research type [62]. Third, from the perspective of research interests, only

nearly one-third of them chose translation as their focus, while the original interests of other MTI teachers were linguistics, literature and so forth. As a discipline in need of professional skills, courses in MTI inevitably posed new requirements on the teachers whose original research interests were not in translation [63]. It should be noted that a foreign language teacher was not necessarily qualified for a MTI teacher [64]. Fourth, in terms of the distribution of professional titles, the majority of MTI teachers were associate professors and lecturers. As for the rest, the figure for professors stood at approximately 25% while teaching assistants constituted a small proportion. Overall, the teaching staff in MTI had a reasonable structure in professional titles. But for some teachers, in spite of many years of work, they were still associate professors or even lecturers. This was due to the inconsistencies between the appraisal system for promotion of professional title and the competency requirement in translation practice. Thus, many MTI teachers felt hard-pressed to obtain some important academic achievements which were accordant with the standard of assessment for the promotion of professional titles in China. This in turn impaired their motivation of career development. So, how to break the career ceiling became the key to their professional development.

Teaching, academic research and translation practice are the major components of MTI teachers' professional life. First, from the angle of teaching, these teachers were burdened with heavy teaching tasks. In addition to courses in MTI, many teachers also taught other courses such as lexicology and phonology. As a result, the loads consumed most of their time and energy. Second, when it comes to academic research, academic achievement played a key role in the appraisal of the promotion of professional titles and their self development [65]. Therefore, most teachers would hold a positive attitude and be active to conduct academic research. Regrettably, heavy teaching loads and translation practice consumed much time and energy. Third, in the field of translation as a powerfully practical discipline, it was hard for MTI teachers to publish articles in the leading domestic journals or win the approval of the research projects from their superior management as the academia in China still laid stress on concepts and theories rather than researches on specific practical fields, which hindered their career development [66]. Fourth, as far as translation practice is concerned, MTI teachers were aware of its importance to teaching. All the participants in the quantitative survey had worked as translators and a few teachers even had full-time

working experiences in translation sector. Nevertheless, most of them lacked enough translation experiences. Lastly, teacher training was rated as an important access to the success in MTI education by the institutions of higher learning, researchers and MTI teachers themselves who generally felt there was room for improvement in teaching methods, translation practice, translation study and its domain knowledge. In response to the teachers' needs as well as the shortage of teaching staff caused by the rapid development of MTI programs in China, the training programs were soaring in number but just yielded not very satisfactory results to most teachers.

6. Recommendations

Through the analysis and discussions of the state of MTI teachers in China, the following recommendations are made.

1. Teaching ability is fundamental to the success of MTI in China. Facing with the relatively newly established program, its teachers generally lack adequate experiences. Besides, during their period of PhD study or master program, the original research interests for quite a number of them were not translation. To tackle the issue, the existing forms of teacher training are still needed such as an access week, classroom observation and expert lectures. But teacher training would be more effective, if some surveys might be done with the regard of their problems and specific needs [67]. Also via teacher training, on the one hand teachers' understanding could be sharpened on the principle of MTI program and even the discipline of translation. And on the other hand, their sense of mission and responsibility might be strengthened.

2. Like most foreign language teachers in China, academic achievements are a bottleneck that limits MTI teachers' sustainable career development. Accordingly, academic training is still required. Plus a friendly environment can be created to boost their research in translation and MTI program. For instance, some high-level translated materials can be rated as academic achievement or in the quantitative evaluation of academic achievements by the sector of academic research management, the research workload is advised to reduced for the teachers who take part time jobs in the translation sector. Further, it is advised to build a cooperative learning platform for the MTI teachers by the teaching-oriented teachers, practice-oriented ones and those of research type who maintain the principle of mutual respect and reciprocity [68]. Thus if all these teachers are under the better academic environment, they

are more likely to complement each other and prove to be more efficient and effective in MTI program.

3. Practical ability of MTI teachers as a whole needs prompt improvement. Besides providing more opportunities to conduct translation practice, institutions of higher learning could employ more professional translators as the teaching staff. Also, some supporting policies for them should be introduced concerning terms of employment, professional title assessment and task requirement. Notably, the criteria of assessment for them will be different from that for research type teachers.

4. Training is an effective way for teachers' sustainable growth. But there is a gap between the training content and teachers' actual needs [69]. To bridge the gap, some researches should be conducted to thoroughly understand their requirement as to career development. For those who run the program of teachers' cultivation, it is of importance to stimulate the staff interest in the discipline of translation and its teaching [70].

7. Conclusion

Through the study of the current situation of MTI teachers in China, we find that in general the staff keeps a tendency of sustainable development. But there are some barriers in academic research, translation practice and teaching. We hope that this study could be used as reference for relevant policy makers and administrators to formulate feasible line of MTI teacher development which is in accordance with teachers' current situation. The last which needs to be emphasized is that MTI teachers' development lies in not only staff training and their own efforts but also the right climate and pragmatic policies [71]. If the short-term teacher training is supplemented by sustainable support system for their professional development and effective mechanism to promote their professional identity, we are confident to boost MTI program in China to a new stage.

Author Contributions: : Conceptualization, Z.W. and N.B.; data collection and analysis, Z.W. and N.B.; writing—original draft preparation, Z.W.; writing—review and editing, N.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because original data contains personal information of the research participants. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to ZhongerWang@hotmail.com.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to thank all participants for contributing their time and effort to this study.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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