

## A Study on Faculty Development in Higher Education Institutions in Southwest China

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### Abstract

Higher vocational education develops rapidly under the impetus of economic globalization, education internationalization, and talent marketization, and its position in China's education system is also very important. Despite this, many problems still exist in the current teaching staff construction in higher vocational colleges in Southwest China, mainly displayed in the unreasonable structure of teachers, management of part-time teachers is not perfect, cultivating and training, motivation to promote mechanism is not sound. The quality of higher vocational education in Gui Zhou will be affected if we do not consider and solve these problems. Therefore, this paper tries to study teaching staff construction in higher vocational colleges in Southwest China and put forward targeted relevant strategies and suggestions to enrich the theory of current teaching staff construction in higher vocational colleges.

### Keywords

Higher vocational college; Teaching staff; Construction.

### 1. Introduction

Ministry of Education has issued the relevant documents many times, which point out the development direction and put forward the specific requirements for the construction of higher vocational colleges teachers. It is visible that teaching staff construction in higher vocational colleges gets more attention from the Ministry of Education, which requires the government, higher vocational colleges, and society to re-examine the higher vocational education and teaching staff construction in higher vocational colleges. To be effective, the construction of teachers requires schools to create a good atmosphere, such as correcting the motivation, improving the conditions and developing incentive systems, etc. On the other hand, it also requires the education authorities to take the level of teacher construction as an important indicator, include it in the assessment of the school's overall level of operation, and put it on the agenda to get the great attention of schools.

### 2. Concept Definition

#### 2.1. Higher Vocational Colleges and Universities

"Higher vocational colleges and universities are an important part of the two systems of higher education and vocational education in China, and they focus on cultivating practical, technical, and application-oriented talents. The higher vocational colleges and universities in China focus on cultivating students' practical application ability and focus on cultivating students' practical ability while learning theoretical knowledge. In recent years, colleges and universities once

became the mainstream of higher vocational colleges and universities, and the Ministry of Education then gradually introduced four-year undergraduate education in some higher vocational colleges and universities [1]. It has been found that the academic level of the faculty in China's higher vocational colleges is relatively low.

## 2.2. Teacher Team Construction

"Teacher team construction" refers to the formation of a team of teachers following the national laws and regulations and the requirements of the school's operation purpose and cultivation goals in order to achieve the purpose of cultivating qualified talents to ensure the smooth implementation of teaching work. The construction of the school's teaching staff needs to be carried out in three aspects: the number of teachers, the structure of teachers, and the quality of teachers [2].

## 3. Theoretical Basis

### 3.1. Human Resource Theory

The effective way to improve human capital is through education, which is the main way to improve the human capital of workers in the national economy through education and experience. The quality of population and human investment in knowledge plays an important role in the future development of human beings, and education is related to improving the quality of population and workers' skills [3]. Therefore, only by improving the quality of education can we provide a large quantity of quality labor force, which will contribute to the development and growth of the economy. The training goal of higher vocational education is to cultivate a large number of high-quality skilled and practical talents for the rapid development of the economy [4].

### 3.2. Motivation Theory

Motivation theory is the core theory that uses specific methods and management systems to deal with the relationship between needs, goals, motivation, and behavior. Generally speaking, human behavior motivation will decide the action goal according to their mental activity, and encouragement can promote mental activity, make people uplifted [5], driven, and strengthened. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory is widely used as a guiding theory for teacher development. Setting the direction and goals of teacher training and establishing a performance appraisal system can motivate teachers to stimulate their intrinsic potential, mobilize their enthusiasm for work and promote improving their overall quality [6]. In the performance appraisal method implemented at the present stage, the American scholar Adams proposed that when labor income and payment are positively correlated, it will promote the motivation of workers' work, and vice versa, it will reduce the motivation of workers' work [7]. The reinforcement theory of American psychologist Skinner is widely applied in the process of faculty construction, and excellent teachers are motivated by activities such as teachers' skill competitions in the form of awards and bonuses to achieve the purpose of forming good competition and improving teachers' skills and level [8], to improve the teaching quality and finally create a high-quality teaching team that can adapt to higher vocational education.

### 3.3. Fairness Theory

Equity theory believes that people are not only concerned about the final reward of individuals but also about the relative reward of comparing themselves with others. Equity theory focuses on the relationship between workers' motivation and actual labor income, and work motivation is related to the actual labor income and the perceived fairness of reward distribution. When the self perceives unfairness and injustice, the employee may take one of the six types of actions: leaving the field, distorting the perception of self, increasing his output, reducing his input,

distorting the perception of others, and choosing other reference objects, but whichever behavior the employee chooses, it is not good for the organization.

### **3.4. Teacher Professional Development Theory**

Teacher professional development theory originated in the 1960s in Europe and the United States, and it was only in the 1990s that research on teacher professional development emerged in China. The "practical theory" or "practical knowledge" of teachers is collectively referred to as the developmental theory of teacher professionalism, which is of great significance to teachers in terms of professional development [9]. Teacher specialization is generally considered to be a process in which teachers acquire professional knowledge and grow into highly qualified educators through professional organization and training, and is influenced by both their professionalism and the environment [10]. Teachers' professionalism includes long professional training, practical skills, theoretical education, and practical knowledge, which includes pedagogy, psychology, and educational psychology.

In addition, the environment also plays an important role in the professional development of teachers, such as the creation of a teacher training system, providing relevant training for teachers before and after work, various forms of further training opportunities, establishing a professional research team to improve the research ability, rationalizing the teacher selection system and creating teacher incentive mechanism [11]. In the whole process of teachers' professional development, in addition to relying on unilateral development, it also needs the combined effect of both teachers' quality and environment to promote teachers' professional development.

## **4. Current Status of Domestic and International Research**

### **4.1. Current Situation of Domestic Research**

In recent years, vocational colleges nationwide have ushered in a boom in development and, at the same time, are facing severe tests. With the further improvement of teacher evaluation mechanisms, the rapid development of higher vocational colleges and universities has aroused society's attention to teacher team construction, and its relevant research results are gradually being enriched.

Presently, the domestic research on the construction of teachers' teams in higher vocational schools mainly comes from the comparative study on the construction of teachers' teams and the construction of incentive mechanisms at home and abroad. Zhao Baofang (2006), through a comparative study on the overall teacher quality of higher vocational education at home and abroad, found that there are big differences between them and identified useful experiences that can improve the quality of teachers in higher vocational education in China [12]; Zhou Jiansong (2012) pointed out that the construction and training of teachers in higher vocational colleges must be aimed at improving teaching quality and focusing on the assessment, evaluation, and promotion mechanism improvement; Wang Li (2011) proposed in her study that the main problems in higher education institutions are not meeting the needs of teachers [13], unscientific system construction and imperfect incentive mechanism [14]. Because of the existing problems, this paper puts forward specific suggestions to improve the incentive mechanism.

### **4.2. Status of Foreign Research**

The research perspectives of scholars on the construction of higher vocational teachers in foreign countries mainly focus on the standardized access system, job promotion, strengthening teacher training, and strengthening the "dual-teacher" teacher team. Chen Hui (2002) analyzed the management of higher vocational colleges in China and introduced the current situation of community colleges and their faculty construction in the United States.

Meanwhile, she analyzed the problems in constructing faculty in vocational education in China. Ai Yongmei (1997), through a comparative analysis of the construction of higher vocational colleges' faculties in Denmark, the United States, and other countries [15], found that it has a certain reference value for the construction and development of higher vocational colleges in China [16].

Foreign scholars have researched the teacher training team of higher vocational colleges, mainly from the perspectives of general system theory, occupational science, and multiple intelligencetheory [17]. One is Marina (2020) believes that teacher training should be carried out from the perspective of humanistic science, with emphasis on professional construction and competence training, etc. Foreign scholars advocate that higher vocational colleges should focus on "service to the profession, competence, and literacy." Secondly, Fairlie (2020) thinks we should take employment as the guide, take the required knowledge, quality, and ability requirements as the target, and build the faculty of higher education institutions from the perspective of industry-university cooperation. Thirdly, the American scholar D.E. Beeby ) in the book the Quality of Education in the Developing Countries (1990), has discussed that the quality of education is the response of teachers' quality; good education depends on good teachers, and at the same time, promoting the quality of education will make progress in education [18]. This study draws on the beneficial experiences of foreign higher vocational institutions on professional development and teachers' competence training to explore the path of teacher team building in higher vocational institutions in Guizhou and to provide help for teacher team building in higher vocational institutions.

## **5. Analysis of the Problems and Reasons for The Construction of Teachers in Higher Vocational Colleges in Southwest China**

In recent years, the provincial government of Guizhou province has strongly supported the development of higher vocational education, introduced relevant policies, and increased financial investment. Higher vocational colleges and universities have made great progress in the construction of teachers. Of course, some problems cannot be ignored, mainly in the following aspects:

### **5.1. Unreasonable Structure of Teachers**

The structure of the teaching team is not good, which has become a bottleneck to the construction of the teaching team. Firstly, the proportion of young teachers is large, and the proportion of older teachers is relatively small. According to the survey on the age and education of teachers in some higher vocational institutions in Guizhou Province, it is found that the proportion of teachers under 40 years old is 67.6%. It can be seen that young and middle-aged teachers are the backbone of teaching and research in higher vocational institutions [19]. The large proportion of young and middle-aged teachers has certain advantages in optimizing the teaching staff's age structure, activating the teaching staff's vitality, and consolidating the development foundation of higher vocational education. However, the disadvantages of this group of teachers are also obvious. First of all, because of the age of the teachers, they are not very experienced and have not accumulated many skills and techniques, and the industry itself is not attractive enough in terms of welfare, but in the face of increasing social pressure and high cost of living, it is easy to cause the instability of the young teachers to leave. The second is that more fresh graduates from colleges and universities graduate directly to teach. According to statistics, among the full-time teachers in some vocational colleges in Guizhou Province, more than 75% work directly after graduation and have almost no teaching experience or business experience. Thirdly, the proportion of senior associate title or above is not high, only 25.03%. The reasons for the above situation are: Firstly, the teachers' treatment in higher vocational colleges is not attractive, and many senior technical

talents are not willing to jump to schools; secondly, due to the constraints of the personnel system, the flow from enterprises to schools is reverse flow, and the channels are not smooth, even if the channels are open, the transfer and approval procedures are quite cumbersome. Thirdly, the evaluation of teachers' titles is influenced by subjective and objective factors such as working years, job index, personal qualifications, etc., and the competition pressure is great.

## 5.2. The Management of Part-time Teachers Is Not Standardized

The Ministry of Education points out that the percentage of part-time teachers engaged in professional practice in enterprises and institutions should be greater than or equal to twenty percent of full-time teachers. Regarding the situation of part-time teachers in some higher vocational institutions in Guizhou Province, the proportion of part-time teachers is not in line with the requirements. Most higher education institutions have the same practice of appointing and managing part-time teachers, emphasizing appointment but not supervision and management. Part-time teachers have certain advantages in terms of professional skills and practical ability compared with teachers in higher education institutions. However, the shortcomings are that their theoretical knowledge is not solid, and their communication and expression are slightly inferior. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that higher education institutions do not conduct comprehensive assessments when appointing part-time teachers, and there is a one-sided emphasis on practical ability. Secondly, part-time teachers are restricted by their original jobs and cannot devote more time and energy to teaching. Thirdly, due to the influence of the management system and school funds, part-time teachers do not have pre- and post-vocational professional training after entering the school and often slowly eat the "old" knowledge and skills update.

## 5.3. Imperfect Training System

With the rapid progress of science and technology and the emergence of new knowledge and technology, the requirements for teachers will be higher, and training will be more important. Statistics found many problems in teacher training in higher vocational institutions in Guizhou Province: Firstly, the overall number of teachers in schools is insufficient, and every teacher is almost overloaded with work. In recent years, the state has introduced the expansion policy for higher vocational education, and the number of students has increased, which puts the pressure on teachers who are originally overloaded with workload even more, so teachers do not have time and energy to attend training; secondly, the practical training of teachers to enterprises and other training bases is neglected. Most teacher training is to key universities for further training, and fewer choose to train in enterprises. Of course, the reason is that the training bases to the Ministry of Education can obtain the corresponding certificate, which can be converted into credit hours and used as continuing education, which is beneficial to teachers. Another reason is that the training channels between schools and enterprises are not smooth. Thirdly, higher vocational institutions do not invest enough money in training. The cost of running higher vocational colleges is high, and the funds required for infrastructure construction are many, which to a certain extent squeeze the funds for training. The lack of funds is one of the reasons why training activities cannot be carried out normally.

## 5.4. Inadequate Incentive Promotion Mechanism

According to Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, satisfying people's needs at different levels is the main motivating factor. Therefore, to mobilize teachers' motivation, different motivation means should be adopted according to different teachers so that teachers' enthusiasm and creativity can be brought into full play to a greater extent. Although the motivation system has been introduced in each higher education institution to promote the construction of the teaching staff, the implementation effect is not very satisfactory. For example, in terms of welfare treatment, teachers are not treated as "special." The main reason is that the shortage of

school funding has affected the improvement of teachers' treatment; except for the increase of title promotion allowance, other salary items have not been improved. Faced with the rapid rise of prices, especially housing prices, many teachers feel the economic pressure multiplied, saying that they cannot afford to drive a car or raise a child, and the quality of life is not high. The workload is high, the requirements of superiors are high, the salary is low, the pay is not proportional to the reward, the teachers' motivation is frustrated, and the quality of excellence, capable, highly educated backbone teachers gradually left the teaching force.

## 6. Conclusion

Therefore, to be a teacher in higher vocational colleges, in addition to traditional professional theoretical knowledge, we should also have strong practical experience and superior technology. After combing, the common problems mainly focus on the unreasonable structure of the teacher team, the non-standard management of part-time teachers, the imperfect training system, and the imperfect incentive and promotion mechanism. Given the above problems, solutions need to be taken from government departments, higher vocational colleges, and individual teachers. Only with various conditions and good implementation can the construction of teaching staff in higher vocational colleges be better promoted to promote the comprehensive and high-quality development of higher vocational education in Guizhou Province.

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