

Study on the Career Development of Young Teachers in Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: The quality of the teaching staff is crucial to the development of vocational education. Skilled and knowledgeable teachers can provide students with specialized technical knowledge and practical skills. In addition to teaching, teachers also act as mentors in providing guidance and support in all areas to students. However, the development of young teachers faces many problems, such as unclear career plans and a lack of attention to operational skills. This paper analyzes the research findings of past scholars and uses a questionnaire to analyze the problems faced by young teachers in their career development. Based on this, this paper puts forward some targeted suggestions, which can provide guidelines for the career development of young teachers.

Keywords: Young teachers; Vocational college; Career planning; Vocational education

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1. Introduction

Vocational education refers to the training and education designed to prepare individuals for specific jobs, trades, or careers. This type of education equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge required for entry-level jobs or advanced careers in specific fields. Vocational education plays a crucial role in the economic, social, and personal development of individuals and society as a whole^[1]. Vocational education helps bridge the skills gap in the job market. Many industries face a shortage of skilled workers, and vocational education can provide individuals with the specific skills and training needed to fill these gaps. This not only benefits the employers, but also creates opportunities for individuals who may have previously struggled to find employment due to lack of qualifications or experience^[2].

The quality of teaching staff is crucial to the development of vocational education. Skilled and knowledgeable teachers play a significant role in preparing students for the workforce, imparting practical skills and technical knowledge, and facilitating hands-on learning experiences^[3]. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, vocational education teachers serve as mentors and role models in providing guidance and support to students as they navigate their career paths. They also keep up with industry trends and developments to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date. Ultimately, the role of teaching staff in vocational education is significant, as they are the key to students' success^[4,5].

Attention should be paid to the career planning and development of young teachers, especially those who have just entered the profession. They shoulder the important mission of cultivating skilled talents for the country, and directly determine the future of a school ^[6]. However, the related studies of scholars are relatively lacking and not systematic enough. First of all, this paper describes the research findings of past scholars. Secondly, we conduct a questionnaire survey on new teachers (within 3 years) and analyze the problems they faced. Lastly, this paper gives specific suggestions on promoting the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges. The results of this paper can provide guidelines for the career planning and development of young teachers.

2. Research status

Agasisti ^[7] investigated the impact of teaching staff on students' academic achievement. The findings suggested that teaching staff have a significant impact on students' academic achievement. He argued that the quality of teaching staff should be prioritized in educational policy. Deng ^[8] and Cui ^[9] analyzed the importance of school-enterprise cooperation for teachers' career development. Cui ^[9] also argued that joint training of "double-qualified teacher" can serve as a bridge between schools and enterprises. Guo ^[10] analyzed the career development of young teachers and pointed out their general lack of practical teaching skills. He suggested that universities should provide opportunities for young teachers to study in enterprises. Peng ^[11] argued that a high-level teacher team is an important guarantee for the development of higher education institutions. Previously, scholars have explored the career planning and development of teachers in vocational institutions from different dimensions. However, data analysis for a specific profession is lacking. Many scholars' studies are too broad and their recommendations are not relevant. In this paper, we conducted a related research work using a questionnaire survey, and data analysis on 16 new teachers of mechanical, automotive, and aviation majors at Beijing Polytechnic. Four targeted recommendations were made, taking into account their professional characteristics. These recommendations can provide guidelines for the career planning of these teachers as well as teachers from other vocational institutions.

3. Questionnaire survey and analysis

3.1. Questionnaire investigation

Based on the study results of past scholars, we set up a questionnaire for investigation. The subjects were 16 young teachers, all of whom had been employed within three years. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions. The survey questions were as follows:

Q1: To what extent do you believe that having clear career goals is important for young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q2: To what extent do you believe that seeking out mentorship or guidance from experienced teachers or industry professionals is important for the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q3: To what extent do you believe that participating in skills competitions or professional development opportunities is important for the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q4: To what extent do you believe that the establishment of a more effective incentive mechanism is important for the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q5: To what extent do you believe that school-enterprise cooperation is important for the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q6: To what extent do you believe that the guidance of visiting professors is important for the career

development of young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q7: To what extent do you believe that guiding students to participate in skills competitions is important for the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q8: To what extent do you believe that encouraging young teachers to go to enterprises to learn new technologies or crafts is important for their career development?

Q9: To what extent do you believe that providing more resources and opportunities for professional development is important for the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges?

Q10: To what extent do you believe that addressing the challenges faced by young teachers, such as limited teaching experience and low morale, is important for their career development?

The options are as follows: very important, important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important. In addition to these multiple-choice questions, there is a comment section for “What help do you need from the university to advance your career?”

3.2. Analysis

We collated the data from the above questionnaire and the results are shown in **Table 1**. Overall, the young teachers were very concerned about their career planning.

Table 1. Data statistics of questionnaire survey (original data)

Results of investigation and analysis					
Question	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
Q1	13	2	1	0	0
Q2	11	3	1	1	0
Q3	12	2	2	0	0
Q4	16	0	0	0	0
Q5	8	3	2	1	2
Q6	11	2	1	1	1
Q7	13	3	0	0	0
Q8	5	3	4	2	2
Q9	16	0	0	0	0
Q10	9	3	1	1	2

All 16 young teachers selected “very important” for Q4 and Q9. These results indicated that incentives the young teachers were focused on incentives in their career development. They want their efforts to be recognized by the school and efforts are a reflection of their motivation at work. The young teachers also generally felt that the existing hardware facilities in the school did not meet their teaching and research needs. This is reflected in Q9 and the comment section in the questionnaire. The wisdom of educational leaders is reflected in the methods to improve target funding and hardware to support the development of young teachers. It should be noted that Q5 and Q8 had the lowest selection for “very important”. Young teachers lack work experience and have not yet realized the importance of school-enterprise cooperation. Vocational education is different from general education in that the goal is to train skilled people. Teachers are required to pay extra attention to the techniques and technologies of industrial production lines so that they can train excellent talents for enterprises more

effectively. Several teachers who opposed Q8 argued that they are too busy to learn technology in companies. However, they also recognized the need for corporate learning. The two teachers who opposed Q10 expressed their opinion that the challenges faced by young teachers should be taken seriously. They have encountered challenges in their work that the school cannot overcome due to regulations, which causes them to choose “not at all important” without hesitation. The opposition of Q10 further validates the importance of system standardization in Q4 and Q9.

In short, young teachers are highly concerned about their career development and planning, this can be seen in their willingness in answering all the questions. The results of the questionnaire reflect their professional development needs and concerns. They focus on the incentives, resources and opportunities offered for their career development and planning.

4. Targeted suggestions

Young teachers play a crucial role in vocational colleges. They bring fresh ideas, energy, and enthusiasm to the classroom, which can inspire and motivate students. Additionally, young teachers can serve as role models for students, and demonstrate that a career in education is rewarding and fulfilling. In order to promote the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges, we provide the following suggestions.

4.1. Establishing incentive mechanism

The establishment of a more effective incentive mechanism can help young teachers grow in vocational colleges. An effective incentive mechanism can provide young teachers with the motivation and recognition they need to improve their teaching skills and knowledge. This can include salary increments, performance bonuses, and opportunities for professional development and advancement. By rewarding young teachers for their hard work and dedication, the school can boost their morale and job satisfaction, which can lead to improved teaching quality and student performance. Furthermore, an effective incentive mechanism can also foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, encouraging young teachers to take on new challenges and pursue new ideas to enhance the teaching and learning experience. The establishment of a more effective incentive mechanism can be a valuable tool for young teachers in vocational colleges, helping them to grow and improve their teaching skills, and provide students with a high-quality education.

4.2. Providing targeted training and coaching

Targeted training can be extremely helpful for the growth of young teachers in vocational colleges. Vocational colleges typically require teachers to have strong academic backgrounds and practical experiences in their respective fields. Young teachers who have just entered the workforce may not have developed the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach their students. Targeted training can help these teachers to excel in their roles through gaining the necessary skills and knowledge. This training can be tailored to their specific needs, such as classroom management, curriculum development, and instructional design. By providing targeted training to young teachers, vocational colleges can ensure that their students receive high-quality education and are prepared for success in their careers. Additionally, it can help young teachers to feel more confident and prepared in their roles, thus leading to higher job satisfaction and retention rates.

4.3. Enhancing school-enterprise cooperation

School-enterprise cooperation can be helpful to the development of young teachers in vocational colleges. By establishing partnerships with enterprises, vocational colleges can provide young teachers with opportunities

to gain practical experiences in the industry. The practical experiences can enhance their teaching skills and knowledge. These experiences can also help young teachers to understand the latest trends and developments in the industry, which can then be incorporated into their teaching. Furthermore, school-enterprise cooperation can also provide young teachers with access to industry experts and mentors, who can offer guidance and support as they develop their skills and knowledge. School-enterprise cooperation can also provide vocational colleges with valuable resources including access to industry-standard equipment and facilities, as well as opportunities for joint research and development projects. Overall, school-enterprise cooperation can be a valuable tool for the development of young teachers in vocational colleges, providing them with practical experiences, industry insights, and access to resources and mentorship that can enhance their teaching skills and knowledge.

4.4. Guiding students to participate in skills competitions

Guiding students to participate in skills competitions can be helpful for the development of young teachers in vocational colleges. By guiding students to participate in these competitions, young teachers can prepare their students for the workforce and improve their confidence. Preparing students for skills competitions can also help young teachers to enhance their own teaching skills and knowledge. By working with students to develop their skills and techniques, young teachers can gain a deeper understanding of the application of professional knowledge and improve their own teaching techniques. Additionally, skills competitions can also provide young teachers with opportunities to network with industry professionals and other educators, which can help to expand their knowledge and expertise. Thus, guiding students to participate in skills competitions can be a valuable tool for the development of young teachers in vocational colleges, providing them with opportunities to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge.

5. Results

Teachers play a crucial role in the development of vocational education as they are responsible for imparting practical knowledge and skills to students. Vocational education is designed to provide students with hands-on training and job-specific skills that will help them succeed in their chosen careers. In order to do this effectively, teachers must have the expertise and experience necessary to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to excel in their chosen field. In addition to teaching practical skills, teachers also play a critical role in mentoring and guiding students towards successful careers. Young teachers lack proficient teaching skills and profound professional knowledge. Education leaders need to pay special attention to providing them with a better environment for growth. Formulating effective incentive system, strengthening training, emphasizing school-enterprise cooperation, and other policies have positive effects on the development of young teachers.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of past scholars' study results, this paper studied the career development of young teachers in vocational colleges. We used questionnaire survey to analyze the career development of young teachers. Based on the results, some targeted suggestions are provided. This study can act as a guideline for the career development of young teachers and the development of talent management system in vocational colleges.

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Author contributions

F.P. and Q.Z. clarified the content of the manuscript and completed the first draft. S.W. made several specific suggestions and revised the format of the article.

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