

A CONCEPTUAL PAPER: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON CHALLENGES OF HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN JIANGXI, CHINA

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Abstract – The vocational education has been a constant factor that can develop the educational stance and the excellence of the students. Feeding the students with practical knowledge and helping them develop hard skills are the main practices in the vocational training. Devoid of such an attitude negligence and inactive steps towards fostering the vocational section of the education industry is mainly seen which can develop a significant problem for the companies. Teachers play a very important role in the development of vocational education. Teachers' teaching ability, personal qualities, and information technology competence affect the teaching process and teaching quality, and this influences the development of vocational education. This article highlights the challenges that teachers in vocational education meet. Studying the challenges faced by teachers in higher vocational education is needed before providing guidance to enhance teachers' professional competence. With targeted training and support, teachers can better meet the challenges and deliver quality education and teaching. In addition, the study reveals the real problems and needs that exist in the field of higher vocational education. Studying these challenges can help educational institutions to develop appropriate reforms and policies to promote the development and innovation of higher vocational education. In conclusion, the study of the challenges faced by teachers in higher vocational education is of great importance in improving the quality of education and promoting teachers' development.

Key words: Higher Vocational Education, Teachers' Challenges, Quality of Education and Teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, teachers in higher vocational colleges have great differences in ability. For example, in terms of practical ability of professional accomplishment, the skills and knowledge of the existing professional teachers are not updated in time and cannot keep pace with the new knowledge and new skills in the industry. The students taught by such teachers can only master some old knowledge, which is inconsistent with the goal of vocational personnel training (Omar, Zahar & Rashid 2021).

The development of higher vocational education in China is found to embody an international trend observed

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in vocational that values skilled workers and skills. Interestingly, this is opposite in various ways to the Confucian traditions that were followed in the domain of Chinese education.

As per the report published by Global Times (2022), China has made significant efforts to ramp up the development of the country's higher vocational education system, which is already the largest in the world. Currently, China has an estimated 11,300 schools specializing in vocational education with over 30 million students (Global Times 2022).

Currently, the development of vocational education in Jiangxi province has been leaping to a new level, which has a considerable scale and a certain quality. After entering the new century, vocational education in Jiangxi province has maintained a rapid growth trend and achieved a major breakthrough in scale. According to the unified deployment and requirements of the Jiangxi provincial party committee and provincial government, from the beginning of 2008, the Jiangxi province education work conference on the province's education job, including vocational education, has made the deployment schedule.

In order to further improve vocational education employment goals, it put forward the development of vocational education should adhere to the "Three footholds, three connections and three grasps" basic thought. Three foothold means that based on the province, based on industrial parks and based on pillar industries to develop vocational education. "Three connections" means the connections between schools and enterprises, the correspondence between majors and markets, and the dialogue between principals and factory directors. "Three grasps", that is, focus on the docking mechanism, focus on the establishment of vocational education group, teaching quality, teacher team, basic ability and other aspects of the construction (Zhong 2020).

The attention of the provincial party committee and provincial government and preferential policies provide unique and favourable conditions for the establishment of vocational education groups in Jiangxi province. The basic thinking of the competent authorities for vocational education has determined the good development momentum of vocational education collectivization in Jiangxi Province in the future. It is also the objective requirement to adapt to the complex and changeable international and domestic economic environment and the economic development of Jiangxi Province.

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II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The professional development of teachers in China is faced with tremendous challenges, particularly in terms of the allocation, style, and concept of educational resources (Cybal-Michalska et al., 2021). Apart from this, another challenge that teachers are currently facing within the domain of vocational education is a possible mismatch between the teaching practices and applied teaching theories related to knowledge and skills. Meanwhile, some other issues identified include the low quality of the skills acquired owing to the increased commercialization in the teacher education industry, less chance of teachers-students collaboration owing to limited incentives, and lack of in-house training for teachers and other relevant resources (Das, 2019). This further implies that the mismatches are primarily in the different expectations between the college supervisors and schools and the challenges that are faced when it comes to the application of the theories learned from past working experiences.

The educational background of the vocational teachers in China and Malaysia includes technology and engineering, with specific credentials and qualifications such as a bachelor's degree and master's degree or even diplomas (Ismail et al., 2018). This results in a discrepancy in teachers' competencies due to the differences in working experience. Additionally, it continues to be a stark lack of industrial experience among teachers in China (Teng, Ma, Pahlevansharif & Turner 2019). The students taught by such teachers can only master some old knowledge, which is inconsistent with the goal of vocational personnel training (Omar, Zahar & Rashid 2021)

The negative emotions and the issues related to the lack of the development and the issues related to complex psychological approaches of the Chinese teachers are the primary issues that is faced by the universities (Chen, Lee & Dong 2020). It is noted that the lack of the adopting new means and addressing the student needs are the most viable issues that is observed in the rural education of China which is a significant problem for the development of the educational environment. The lack of perpetration and the content clearance to the students is another major fault that is seen from the side of the teachers which is major issue that is seen among the teachers of China (Lan & Lam 2020). As a result, the loss of the development and unaddressed areas to promote the stark improvement is the major problem that is found from the side of the vocational institutions in China.

The curriculum is also considered as the primary problem that is seen in the case of the higher vocational education. It is further noted that the problems related to the narrowing curriculum and binding the students into a specific curriculum hampers the free learning of the students eminently. As noted by Shimizu et al. (2020), the interdependence on the teachers and analyzing the complex concepts is the main issues which can be seen in the vocational education. The concepts concentrating on the practical knowledge without the application of the theories related to the subjects are the primary problem that is seen in the case of the mentioned area of education. Therefore, inappropriate curriculum is considered as the

major issue, which is faced from the side of the teachers in higher vocational education.

On the other hand, the lack of the students is a major issue that is seen from the side of the teachers to get enough motivation for the development. As per the argument of Hermanto and Srimulyani (2021), there is a low concentration of students in vocational classes in china as compared to regular universities taking professional course. As a result, the issues related to the strategies are the primary problem that is faced by the teacher sin teaching the courses on vocational industries as well.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is found that with the rapid reduction and shortages of workers with specific market skills and labour, there is an immediate need for the government to focus on specialized learning and training programs. The programs or training must be either in the form of work-related courses or experience that emphasize specific demanded skills (Han, Hu & Huang, 2022). These indicators will also help educators know about the best courses vocational schools should provide. In addition, the courses are also required to encourage creativity and innovative ideas among the students and promote the development of quality performances of the employees.

Nie et al. (2018) argued that to integrate vocational training into the existing academic institutions, the government must increase the number of vocational institutions. The key targets of these institutions are the school dropouts, and thus these training programs allow them to complete their education with meaningful learning.

In addition, governments also must put additional resources into this industry to meet the growing demands. Fundings or financial resources should centre on increasing these skills-based courses and purchasing facilities. It helps to minimize rote learning (Pilz & Wiemann, 2021). To ensure and maintain the educational standards that meet the rapidly changing trends and market patterns within the economies, business and politics must coordinate. It will ensure the development of a well-integrated education system that promotes professionalism.

It is found that vocational education and training in China is categorized into three levels such as secondary, senior secondary and tertiary.

The vocational training provided by the government is conducted in "junior vocational schools". It mainly targets the peasants, training workers and employees in the other industry with basic professional skills and knowledge. Han, Hu & Huang (2022) stated that junior vocational training could be defined as technical and vocational education after primary education. It is one of the significant aspects of the compulsory education of 9 years.

Agustina, Kristiawan & Tobari (2021), have stated that the participation of teachers in vocational education and training means encouraging them to make the right decisions and autonomy within the "teaching-learning process". In this context, it can be stated that the participation of the teachers refers to the ability to

influence and develop symbolic and material change. It is found that the learning planning undertaken by the teachers is about preparing lesson plans, syllabus, teaching materials and other learning techniques and tools. Martin et al. (2019), have analyzed that learning is facilitated when the teachers have adequate access and if they can participate in the training activities and problem-handling. They aim to ensure improvement in the vocational learning and training programs with the right guidance or instructions, both informally and formally.

Teachers play a significant role in the entire process of vocational education and training programs. They share positive participation and decision-making perceptions regarding curricular, instructional, and industry-specific topics. According to the view of Alea et al. (2020), the participation of teachers in the process of vocational training is inextricably connected with the attempt to help the students to learn without critiquing their attempts. The positive and effective interactions between the teachers and students in vocational education boost motivation among the students to learn practical knowledge.

Besides, it also helps the teachers to improve their skills and expertise in certain fields of work. Vocational teachers tend to bring their expertise and work experiences into the laboratory, classrooms or workshops to instruct the students (Martin et al., 2019). They work with high and medium school students or young students who attend technical schools or communities.

Teachers must be competent enough to tackle the stress of managing students. Managing the students is not an easy task. The teachers require additional skills to manage the bunch of students well and provide them with the best quality of education. The teachers must communicate well with the students and interact engagingly so that the students are comfortable attending the classes (Melnyk et al., 2019). Vocational training is not just important from the perspectives of the students but also important for the teachers as well. Proper training helps teachers to be more skilful in student management. It helps the teachers to be more skilful in building good relationships with the students, which is a driving factor in imparting adequate practical knowledge to the students.

Teachers need to develop themselves for their professional growth. Through various training programs, the teachers develop their skill sets, making them better teachers. This is necessary for securing better roles in imparting vocational training to the students. Through training, teachers learn essential skill sets which make them more professional (Brevik et al., 2019). The training is also useful in developing the teachers in their personal lives, which brings a higher level of job satisfaction. Through various training programs, teachers acquire certain skill sets, which increase their chances of getting better job roles as teaching professionals in higher educational institutes. This increases their job satisfaction, and they can also pass on the skills to the students for their development. Hence, training is important for teachers.

The training provided to the teachers makes them successful leaders in the education sector. It is of utmost importance for teachers to become successful leaders to impart the right value of education to the students and help them turn into professionals. Teachers are the leaders in

the education sector, and their leadership abilities get polished only after they complete certain training programs (Raupovna, 2019). The leadership skills learned through the training programs make them capable of managing the students' emotions and motivating them to succeed despite tough real-life challenges. The teacher motivates the students, acts like a mentor and shows the students the path to success. Hence the training program is effective for the teachers to increase their competence in their teaching professional lives.

Governmental assistance to promote growth is also considered an effective process that can assist in developing vocational training. As per the argument of Owen (2021), it is noted that the use of an effective system like the integration of the government-baked agencies and student deployment to assert the promotion can also be a functional development of education. A unique method like backing the promotional strategies through financial aid can also be supported by the Chinese government, which can also assist in the development. The process of relaxing human rights, like the right to education and the effective involvement of the curriculum, can also be done through the help of governmental assistance.

The newspaper coverage and imminent processes like the inclusion of the constitutional policies can be included to gain effective dominance in vocational leadership and preach its important name among the students. As opined by Anwar (2019), student interest is mainly dependent on the faculty and infrastructural process provided by the companies. Therefore, the need for effective strategies that can assure the development and degree coverage is considered the most eminent process for the side of the companies to gain efficacy as well. As a result, promotion through effective development is considered the main factor that can be done through the help of the government that can manage the efficiency and accurate results for the social stands and integrate the students' concentration in the vocational colleges.

Vocational institutions, both colleges and universities, are required to incorporate advanced technologies to remain competitive in the market (Malik, 2018). In the present era, technology has become an integral aspect of most of the learning experiences of students. Therefore, educational institutions must provide advanced technologies that provide benefits in vocational teaching and learning in terms of economic, scientific, information, technology, global awareness, and multicultural literature (Donald, Ashleigh & Baruch, 2018).

In addition, it will also help to promote incentive thinking and develop effective communication in terms of civic responsibility and personal and social responsibility. In addition, the students are required to be drawn to those institutions or organizations so that they can keep up with the rapid changes in technology (Selwyn, 2019). It is important to note that the use of updated and advanced technologies and equipment will help to improve the learning and teaching experiences from the perspectives of both teachers and students and maximize productivity.

IV. METHOD

The researcher plans to apply an explanatory research design to achieve a concrete outcome against the problem that does exist in the primary qualitative data. As per the argument of Benitez, Henseler, Castillo and Schubert (2020), the use of the explanatory research can assure the development through proving causal relationship between the variables used in the research. Apart from that the hypothesis testing related to the challenges of teachers, the mitigating strategies will be evaluated in this research.

A quantitative and a qualitative data collection method will be used. The primary data collection method mainly focuses on the objectives of the research. Along with that, it has been seen that primary qualitative data collection methods are observed to deal with the existing complexity of the research that has a tendency to enhance the expected outcome of the study. Survey will be conducted to obtain the quantitative data which describes the challenges of teachers in higher vocational education. Data will then undergo descriptive data analysis.

For interview purposes, 15 open-ended questions will be asked to the teachers to measure the impact of vocational training to eradicate the technical gap and emerge development of skills in teachers. Open-ended questions are questions that cannot be simply answered with yes or no but have to provide a supporting statement in favor whereas the closed-ended question can be answered with simple yes or no (Weller et al. 2018). The teachers are expected to elaborate their claims with supporting statements, which helped to address the major problems that created barriers to delivering a good teaching service to the students in various educational institutions in China.

In the present research, thematic analysis will be performed for illustrating and evaluating the data gathered from the interview of the teachers from different age groups, subject specializations, and working experience. The thematic analysis technique is effective and useful for providing in-depth, in-series, and accurate information along with the proper demonstration and justification of the research data component through which the research questions are aligned and met properly. In order to meet the purpose of the research, the respective data analysis technique does involve several analysis stages which include transformation, modeling, and cleaning of data so that useful information can be received (Lowe, Norris, Farris & Babbage, 2018).

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