

QUALITY OF LECTURERS IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGES IN HANOI CITY, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

Lecturer quality is an issue that always attracts the attention of stakeholders in the education industry in many countries around the world, and Vietnam is no exception. In recent years, the strong development of science and technology has had a great impact on educational activities in general and vocational education activities in particular, as new training professions have been created, such as logistics, e-commerce, printing technology, etc., and existing industries are upgraded to meet the changing needs of society. Along with that, society's awareness of vocational education has also developed, no longer considering vocational training as only for people with poor learning ability or difficult family circumstances but as an attractive career opportunity trained at vocational education institutions—the highest level is vocational college training. Therefore, vocational colleges in Hanoi last year met or exceeded their enrollment targets. This practice is both an opportunity and a challenge for vocational colleges to improve training quality to provide the labor market with high-quality human resources. To achieve this goal, one of the top priority solutions for schools is to improve the quality of lecturers in colleges. This article aims to determine the quality criteria of vocational college lecturers and evaluate the current status of lecturer quality at vocational colleges in Hanoi city. The study conducted a survey of 157 lecturers from seven vocational colleges in Hanoi. The results show that the quality of lecturers at vocational colleges can be considered in terms of three overall aspects: physical strength, intellectual capacity, and mental force. Currently, the quality of lecturers at colleges in Hanoi still has some shortcomings. Limitations require solutions to overcome and improve in the future for the overall development of national vocational education.

Keywords: lecturer quality, lecturer quality criteria, lecturers, vocational college

INTRODUCTION

The quality of lecturers at vocational training schools plays an important role in ensuring the quality of graduates meets the requirements of employers and the labor market. Vocational colleges are the highest level of training in the vocational education system in Vietnam, so the quality of vocational college instructors needs to be given a lot of attention as well as a set of measurement standards and accreditation to be able to evaluate the current status of lecturer quality at vocational colleges. From there, solutions can be developed to help improve weak issues in the quality of vocational college lecturers.

In fact, to ensure the quality of vocational training, lecturers need to be experienced in that field of training to be able to conduct practical lectures well for students. Unlike the university education system, which mainly teaches academic theory, vocational education spends more time on practical training. Therefore, if a lecturer is a skilled worker or has worked in that field and received pedagogical training, he will be a lecturer with good professional capacity. However, at current vocational colleges, the recruited teaching staff mainly only needs to have a university degree in the right major or in a major related to the field being trained and no work experience. Compulsory conditions lead to some young pre-service lecturers not having certain basic knowledge about specific subjects in the school's training program, making it difficult for them to teach.

Issues related to the quality of incompetent lecturers will reflect the state's policies that have not been effectively implemented by lower-level management agencies and vocational colleges. According to the decision approving the planning of the network of vocational education institutions for the period 2021–2030, with a vision to 2045 of the Prime Minister, the goal is: a network of vocational education institutions capable of meeting the needs of vocationally trained human resources from developing countries with modern industries, surpassing the low average income level; training quality is among the leading in the ASEAN region; some vocational education institutions have caught up with world-advanced levels and have outstanding competitiveness in a number of training fields, industries, and professions. To achieve this goal, one of the main solutions proposed by Hanoi City is to improve the quality of teaching staff as a key activity. To ensure training quality, Hanoi will focus on improving the quality of lecturers. The city will create conditions for lecturers to be trained, update their latest knowledge, and improve their professional and foreign language skills. At the same time, the city will also strengthen management and evaluation of lecturer quality to ensure training quality.

Hanoi is the capital and economic and political center of Vietnam. Hanoi is also one of the localities with many vocational colleges, some of which are large-scale, such as Hanoi Polytechnic College of Technology, Vietnam College of Industry and Trade, Hanoi College of High Technology, etc.

Thus, vocational college lecturers need to meet certain quality requirements to meet job requirements in the current socio-economic context. This article aims to: (i) determine, analyze, and evaluate the quality criteria of vocational college lecturers; (ii) point out which criteria are the most important to teach; (iii) evaluate the current status of lecturer quality at vocational colleges; and (iii) propose solutions to improve lecturer quality at vocational colleges in Hanoi city. The article uses quantitative research methods, using both secondary and primary data to accomplish the research objectives. The next part of the article presents an overview of the research, research methods, and research results, and discusses and proposes solutions to further improve the lecturer quality at vocational colleges in Hanoi in the coming time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource quality has a relatively rich definition from many different research perspectives. During the 1960s, McGregor (1960) described the quality of human resources as a combination of attitude, consciousness, behavior, ability to work, and awareness of life values. Ouchi (1981) in the 1970s supplemented this definition with the loyalty and trust of human resources towards the organization. Hrab (2014) views the quality of human resources as people who are professional and skilled at work. Nguyen (2021) defines it as a certain state of human resources, evaluated through the criteria of physical strength, intellectual capacity, morality, and quality. The understanding of human resource quality has changed over time, reflecting the development of society, science, and technology. In the context of education, specifically vocational education, lecturers at vocational colleges need to meet factors such as qualifications, quality, and health according to the regulations of the state, management agencies at all levels, and the practical economic, social, and technological context. Therefore, it can be understood that "the quality of lecturers at vocational colleges is the combination of physical strength, intellectual capacity, and mental force that meet job requirements."

In Vietnam, there have been studies on the quality of human resources in different professions. For example, Pham (2020) affirmed that university lecturers in Vietnam need to meet basic requirements such as the following: (i) university lecturers need to have high professional qualifications and extensive knowledge in many fields; (ii) university lecturers must be able to quickly adapt to changes in all school activities; (iii) university lecturers must be good at foreign languages and information technology. Bui and Do (2021) analyze the situation of the quality of human resources and the quality of work of employees in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Vietnam. The study shows that SOE workers have higher levels of education and skills than those in private and domestic private enterprises (DOE) and foreign direct investment (FDI) firms. Thai (2023) affirms that the quality of lecturers at political schools plays an important and decisive role in training results. In recent years, the teaching staff of political schools has improved in both quantity and quality. However, the quality of the teaching staff still reveals many problems that need to be overcome. From there, the author proposes a number of solutions to improve the quality of lecturers at political schools, including: (i) cultivating and training revolutionary ethics; (ii) constantly studying and researching to improve professional capacity; (iii) improving political courage for political theory lecturers; and (iv) resolutely fighting against the plots and sabotage tactics of reactionary and hostile forces.

There have been many domestic and foreign studies carried out to develop criteria for the quality of human resources in general and the quality of lecturers in particular. Based on the synthesis of research, consultation with experts, and derived from the connotation of the concept of quality of vocational college lecturers given above, and considering the possibility of compatibility with the current socio-economic situation of Vietnam, the author has proposed Table 1—a table of quality criteria for lecturers in vocational colleges. The criteria in the three groups of physical strength, intellectual capacity, and mental force are not new groups of indicators. However, the author sets these groups of criteria to meet job requirements in the current specific context. Therefore, the detailed criteria will have updates and differences compared to previous research works when the country's socio-economic context is at different times and stages.

Table 1: Quality criteria of vocational college lecturers

No	Criteria group	Criteria	Reference source
1	Physical fitness	- Health classification	Mai (2012) Nguyen (2013)
2	Intellectual capacity	- Professional qualifications - Seniority of work - Job skill - Scientific research capacity - Ability to develop learners' professional capacity - Lifelong learning capacity	Mai (2012) Soysouvanh et al. (2013) Jafar et al. (2020) Omar et al. (2020)
3	Mental force	- Political stance, professional ethics, lifestyle - Sense of responsibility, working attitude - Attachment and dedication to the profession - Be proactive and creative in using digital tools	Mai (2012) Jafar et al. (2020) Omar et al. (2020)

Source: Compiled from author's research

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative methods were used to collect information from lecturers at vocational colleges in Hanoi. A survey questionnaire was sent to 200 lecturers at seven vocational colleges (including public and non-public vocational colleges in Hanoi). From 200 survey forms, 157 valid responses were collected (accounting for 78.5%). This result shows that the percentage of votes collected is acceptable to analyze the number of valid votes obtained after distribution of 30% to satisfy the condition (Malaney, 2002).

The questionnaire is divided into four main parts: (a) the demographic and background of the respondents; (b) questions related to physical fitness aspects; (c) questions related to intellectual capacity aspects; and (d) questions related to mental force aspects. A 5-level Likert scale was used to interpret the data for each variable. Scores are divided into: 1 represents poor level, 2 represents

average level, 3 represents fair level, 4 represents good level, and 5 represents very good level. The questionnaire was inherited and adjusted with additions from the studies of Nguyen (2013), Soysouvanh et al. (2013), Jafar et al. (2020), Omar et al. (2020).

A preliminary quantitative study was conducted on 50 respondents (who did not participate in the formal study) to test the questionnaire before the formal quantitative study. The author uses SPSS software version 20 to analyze the data. The results show that there is an observed variable "ability to develop the professional capacity of learners" (TRL7) that does not meet reliability requirements (according to Cronbach's alpha reliability test) due to the total variable correlation coefficient of 0.224 (<0.3), so this observed variable was eliminated in the official study.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Research Findings 1: Demographic Factors

The author uses descriptive analysis to analyze data, including percentages, average scores, and standard deviations. Demographic factors were asked in the survey questionnaire: type of vocational college, gender, age, seniority, and academic level. Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of the respondents' demographic data in detail for each factor.

Table 2: Data Distribution of Respondents' Demographic Background

Demographic characteristics		Quantity	Ratio %
Gender	Female	84	53.5
	Male	73	46.5
Type of vocational college	Public	87	55.41
	Outside the public	70	44.59
Age	Under 30 years old	36	22.92
	From 30 - 40 years old	76	48.41
	From 41 - 50 years old	34	21.66
	Over 50 years old	11	7.01
Academic level	Bachelor	35	22.29
	Masters	110	70.06
	Doctor	12	7.65
Seniority of work	Under 5 years	41	11.26
	From 5-10 years	59	37.58
	Over 10-15 years	34	21.66
	Over 15 years	23	14.65

Source: Compiled from author's research

Research Findings 2: How are the physical fitness criteria of lecturers at vocational colleges assessed?

SPSS software calculates the average score to indicate the physical status of vocational college lecturers in terms of health classification and level of health concern. The value of the mean score was obtained and interpreted according to a predetermined level by a 5-level Likert scale. The author builds questions for the Physical Fitness section, denoted THL, with three questions labeled THL1, THL2, and THL3, respectively. Physical fitness is a very necessary indicator in assessing the quality of lecturers in particular and the quality of human resources in all professions in general. The physical fitness of vocational college lecturers is assessed, including their health classification (health meets job requirements), methods to maintain good health, and the ability to periodically monitor and examine their health. The detailed results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Physical fitness level of lecturers at vocational colleges

No.	Item	M	SD
THL1	Physical health conditions meet job requirements.	4.05	0.735
THL2	There are methods to maintain good health.	2.63	0.948
THL3	Monitor and have regular health checks.	2.70	1.081

Source: Compiled from author's research

Research Findings 3: How are the intellectual capacity criteria of lecturers at vocational colleges assessed?

To determine the intellectual level of lecturers at vocational colleges in Hanoi city, the author has built the Intellectual Capacity (TRL) section into 8 items from TRL1 to TRL8, of which item TRL7 was excluded from the study due to violating the reliability test mentioned above. SPSS software has calculated the average value representing the items belonging to the intellectual capacity criteria in evaluating lecturer quality. This indicator includes content on professional qualifications and occupations; foreign language and computer skills; competencies in designing, organizing, and evaluating teaching; scientific research capacity; and lifelong learning capacity. Details of the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Intellectual level of lecturers at vocational colleges

No.	Item	M	SD
TRL1	Professional qualifications and profession	4.02	0.981
TRL2	Foreign language ability	3.03	1.024
TRL3	Ability to apply information technology	3.61	0.889
TRL4	Ability to design and organize teaching	3.91	0.925
TRL5	Ability to evaluate teaching results	3.74	0.872
TRL6	Scientific research capacity	2.75	1.131
TRL8	Lifelong learning capacity	3.47	1.087

Source: Compiled from author's research

Research Findings 4: How are the mental performance indicators of lecturers at vocational colleges evaluated?

The author has coded the content of mental strength indicators (TAL) into 5 items from TAL1 to TAL5 to describe the attitude, spirit, and awareness of vocational college lecturers in their work. A lecturer who has good health and ability but does not have a sense of responsibility towards work, lacks a positive working attitude, and lacks creativity will not be able to become a high-quality lecturer who brings effective results. good work results for the college. Table 5 describes in detail the evaluation results of this indicator.

Table 5: Level of dedication of lecturers at vocational colleges

No.	Item	M	SD
TAL1	Political stance	3.77	0.890
TAL2	Professional ethical qualities	4.21	0.789
TAL3	Sense of responsibility, working attitude	3.82	0.668
TAL4	Attachment and dedication to the profession	3.78	0.858
TAL5	Creativity in using digital tools	3.61	0.934

Source: Compiled from author's research

Research Findings 5: What is the best predictor among physical strength, intellectual capacity, and mental force toward determining the quality of vocational college instructors?

The following analysis was conducted to determine which of the three indicators of physical strength, intellectual capacity, and mental strength best represents the quality of lecturers at vocational colleges. The author applies multiple linear regression analysis to determine the level of contribution of indicators in building teaching quality. Because the quality of vocational college instructors is understood as all the attributes and characteristics in three aspects: physical fitness, intellectual capacity, and mental strength, Considering the level of contribution of these criteria helps researchers propose appropriate solutions to improve important

practical problems related to lecturer quality. Based on the theory of multiple regression analysis, the regression model includes physical fitness, intellectual capacity, and mental force and has the following form:

$$CL = \beta_1THL + \beta_2TRL + \beta_3TAL + \epsilon_i$$

According to the results of Table 6 and Hair et al. (2009, 2014), the standardized regression equation is determined as follows:

$$CL = 0.208THL + 0.335TRL + 0.241TAL + \epsilon$$

In there:

- CL: Quality of lecturers
- THL: Physical fitness
- TRL: Intellectual capacity
- TAL: Mental force

From there, it shows that mental capacity (TRL) is the criteria that best demonstrates the quality of lecturers at vocational colleges, followed by mental strength, and finally physical fitness.

Table 6: Regression analysis on three indicators of physical strength (THL), mental strength (TRL), and mental strength (TAL)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
THL	0.196	0.038	0.208	1.407	0.000	0.151	1.986
TRL	0.235	0.053	0.335	2.225	0.000	0.132	1.534
TAL	0.201	0.049	0.241	1.725	0.000	0.147	1.726

a. Dependent Variable: CL

Source: Compiled from author's research

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Vocational colleges with lecturers participating in the survey show that they have good physical health and meet the job requirements very well, but to maintain good physical condition by paying attention to health check-ups and regular exercise, it is still limited to a certain number of lecturers. This poses a challenge for colleges in building activities to motivate employees to maintain and improve health, ensuring the overall sustainable development of the college.

With the characteristics of a vocational college, a teaching hour does not simply convey theoretical knowledge but also includes practical and experiential activities; thus, it requires lecturers to be able to convey theory to make it easy to understand, easy to follow, easy to remember, and have the ability to organize, cover, manage, and instruct during practice hours. There are still poor assessments for professional qualifications and standards; teaching organization and management show that there is still a proportion of vocational college lecturers who need to be trained and fostered more in pedagogical skills to ensure uniform training quality in the college. "Foreign language ability" and "ability to apply information technology" are still two problems that have existed for a long time at vocational training colleges in general. The majority of lecturers have good expertise and are highly skilled in vocational training guidance for students, but foreign language ability is quite limited. This directly affects the ability to access foreign documents or joint training programs related to the profession that lecturers are teaching, thereby reducing the ability to develop both the lecturers themselves and their own development. general development of the college. In the future, vocational colleges still need to continue looking for solutions to improve the foreign language and information technology capabilities of lecturers for an increasingly strong integration future.

As for scientific research capacity, it is easy to see that this is the lowest-rated content among all the content evaluating lecturer quality. This is a problem that vocational colleges need to clearly and accurately determine the cause of so that they can come up with practical solutions to help change this situation.

"Lifelong learning capacity" represents the ability of lecturers to self-study and self-improve in both professional fields and the necessary skills to always ensure the maintenance and continuous improvement of their own capacity, contributing to the sustainable development of the college. This scale received a fairly high self-assessment from lecturers, with an average score of 3.47. However, the standard deviation of 1.087 shows that the difference in respondents' assessments is also quite large. It can be seen that lecturers evaluate their own learning capacity and, importantly, lifelong learning quite well, but if compared with the results of scientific and analytical research capacity above, there is no correlation. This will lead to wasteful use of resources and even brain drain when there is a better environment that encourages the demonstration of lecturers' abilities.

Finally, the criteria of mental strength have quite positive evaluation results, but vocational colleges still need solutions to create more motivation for lecturers, encourage creativity and innovation in work and in the training profession, and increase the spirit and desire to stick with the college. Only then will vocational colleges in Hanoi have a team of high-quality and stable lecturers, contributing to the sustainable development of the college.

Besides, to meet the cause of reforming Vietnam's education system in the face of the strong development of the 4.0 industrial revolution as well as the goals of vocational colleges, vocational colleges should implement solutions to improve the quality of lecturers. For example, the teaching staff should be trained and improve their qualifications and professional capacity through

measures such as training to improve professional qualifications and using information technology to serve the needs of the teaching staff, teaching services, applying advanced forms of teacher training, promoting scientific research, providing research-oriented training, and improving foreign language proficiency.

This research has both theoretical and practical contributions. It contributes to perfecting the theory of human resource quality and reflects the reality that the quality of lecturers at vocational colleges can be considered in terms of three overall aspects: physical strength, intellectual capacity, and mental force.

The research was conducted at a number of vocational colleges in Hanoi; however, the scope of the author's survey was limited. In the next activity, the author will expand the scope of the investigation to compare the research results.

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