

Career Development of University Lecturers: Basis for a Professional Development Plan

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Abstract: This study aims to enhance the career development of university lecturers in Shandong Province's colleges and universities. Utilizing a comprehensive survey and quantitative analysis, data were collected from 110 young university lecturers to assess their career development across four stages and identify influencing factors. The results indicate positive evaluations across all stages, highlighting adequate training, support, and satisfaction in career development. The study concludes with strategic recommendations for improving the professional development and employment status of university lecturers.

Keywords: Career Development; University Lecturers; Higher Education

Introduction

Career development is a lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions toward a personally evolving future (Ceric & CCCD, 2019).^[1] Since the founding of new China, education has been highly valued, with the 2010-2020 reform outline emphasizing teachers' fundamental role in talent training and university competition. University lecturers play a crucial role in promoting academic growth, enhancing students' intellectual and comprehensive quality, and ensuring their overall development^[2]. This paper analyzes the current professional situation of university lecturers, offering development suggestions, addressing challenges, and providing pathways to enhance academic education..

1. Research Design

A comprehensive survey questionnaire with closed-ended questions was developed to assess aspects of young university lecturers' career development, allowing for consistent and quantifiable data collection. A random sampling technique selected a representative sample of young university lecturers under 45 years old actively engaged in teaching, following SOPs for random sampling. Participants completed the survey electronically or in print, coordinated with the University Departments for efficient data collection and procedural compliance.

1.1 Respondents

This study employed quantitative research methods to investigate the career development trajectories and scientific research activities of 110 young university lecturers from Shandong Normal University, Shandong Normal University, Shandong University of Technology, and Ocean University of China. Using proportional stratified random sampling, the sample accurately represents the population's diversity.

1.2 Research Instrument

The first part consisted the profile of the respondents which includes age, sex, marital status, employment status, position, and length of service. The second part involved the career development of university lecturers during Pre-service education stage.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1 Profile of the respondents

The survey reveals diverse demographics among university lecturers. Age distribution shows that teachers aged 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 each account for 35.7%, indicating a majority with extensive work experience. Teachers aged 21 to 30 and 51 to 60 each make up 14.3%, with none aged 61 or above. Gender distribution highlights a significant female majority at 64.3%, compared to 35.7% male. Marital status shows that 78.6% are married, 14.3% are single, and 7.1% are legally separated, with no divorced teachers. Educational qualifications vary, with 42.9% holding master's or doctoral degrees and 21.4% having bachelor's degrees, some having completed partial doctoral coursework. Most teachers have over six years of teaching experience, with 28.6% having 6 to 10 years and 21.4% having 16 to 20 years of experience. Specializations are diverse, with mathematics and Chinese studies each comprising 28.6% of the population.

2.2 A description of the current employment status of university lecturers

2.2.1 Pre-service education stage

Table 1 shows the pre-service stage of employment of university lecturers.

Table 1 Pre-service education stage

Indicators	Weighted Mean
1. I received adequate training and information about the employment situation of college and university lecturers during my pre-service education.	3.39
2. The introduction to the career of college and university lecturers during my pre-service education was comprehensive.	3.43
3. During my pre-service education, I had exposure to the actual work experience or internship opportunities of college and university lecturers.	3.31
4. I feel that my pre-service education prepared me adequately for employment.	3.40
5. I received guidance and support for developing essential soft skills and professional qualities required for a career as a university lecturers during my pre-service education.	3.35
General Weighted Mean	3.37

Legend: 3.25-4.00 –Always; 2.50-3.24 –Often; 1.75-2.49 –Rarely; 1.00-1.74- Never

2.2.2 Induction training stage

Table 2 shows the induction training stage of employment of university lecturers.

Table 2 Induction training stage

Indicators	Weighted Mean
1. I received specialized induction training when I first began my career as a university lecturers.	3.34
2. The induction training covered the challenges that university lecturers may face in their actual work.	3.34
3. I received good guidance and support during the induction training to adapt to the role of a university lecturers.	3.43
4. During the induction training, I felt that I had enough opportunities to build a professional network and connections.	3.35
5. I received feedback and assessment of my performance as a university lecturers during my induction training.	3.44
General Weighted Mean	3.38

Legend: 3.25-4.00 –Always; 2.50-3.24 –Often; 1.75-2.49 –Rarely; 1.00-1.74- Never

2.2.3 Competence development stage

Table 3 shows the competence development stage of employment of university lecturers.

Table 3 Competence development stage

Indicators	Weighted Mean
1. Throughout my career as a university lecturers, I continuously enhance my professional competence.	3.45
2. I have ample opportunities to participate in training, workshops, or further courses to enhance my teaching skills.	3.34
3. The college provides adequate resources and support to facilitate my professional development.	3.38
4. I can share some successful experiences or challenges in competence development.	3.38
5. I have access to a mentor or experienced colleague who provides guidance and support in my competence development as a university lecturers.	3.41
General Weighted Mean	3.38

Legend: 3.25-4.00 –Always; 2.50-3.24 –Often; 1.75-2.49 –Rarely; 1.00-1.74- Never

2.2.4 Teacher career development stage

Table 4 shows the career development stage of employment of university lecturers.

Table 4 Teacher career development stage

Indicators	Weighted Mean
1. In my career as a college and university physical education teacher, I have opportunities for promotion or leadership positions.	3.33
2. The university provides effective pathways for advancing my career.	3.36
3. I am satisfied with my career development opportunities and prospects.	3.35
4. I have some expectations or suggestions for the future of the university lecturers profession.	3.46
5. I have received recognition and appreciation for my contributions and achievements in my career as a university lecturers.	3.36
General Weighted Mean	3.39

Legend: 3.25-4.00 –Always; 2.50-3.24 –Often; 1.75-2.49 –Rarely; 1.00-1.74- Never

2.3 A description of the current employment status of university lecturers

The analysis of the four stages of employment for university lecturers shows consistently positive evaluations across all stages. In the pre-service education stage, teachers felt adequately prepared for their roles, with comprehensive training and exposure to practical experiences (general weighted mean: 3.37). During the induction training stage, teachers received specialized support and opportunities for networking and feedback (general weighted mean: 3.38). Throughout their careers, they continually enhanced their professional competence through available resources and mentorship (general weighted mean: 3.38). Lastly, in the career development stage, teachers reported satisfaction with career advancement opportunities and recognition of their contributions (general weighted mean: 3.39).

3. On the development of an improved plan to enhance the career development of university lecturers in Shandong Province's colleges and universities

The Action Recommendation for "Career development of Education Teachers: Basis for professional Development Plan" is a strategic framework designed to provide effective employment development plans for university lecturers in Shandong Province^[3]. They align with research focused on the employment situation of university lecturers in Shandong Province and aim to improve the quality of education and the employment status of teachers.

Table 5 Professional Development Plan for university lecturers in Shandong Province

Key Areas	Action Plan		Timeline	Resources Needed	Expected Outcome
	Objectives	Activities			
Current Employment Status					
Preservice education stage					
The key area for addressing the employment situation of university lecturers in Shandong Province is to improve their prospects during the preservice education stage.	Enhance Preservice Education Curriculum Facilitate Practical Experience Strengthen Industry Connections	Curriculum Enhancement Practical Teaching Placements Industry Workshops and Seminars	Curriculum enhancement and development of practical teaching placement programs.	Partnerships with local schools for practical teaching placements. Funding for workshops, seminars, and resources.	Improved Curriculum Relevance Enhanced Practical Skills Stronger Industry Ties
Induction stage					
Teacher Support for New Hires	To provide comprehensive support to newly hired university lecturers in Shandong Province during their induction stage.	Conduct orientation sessions and workshops for new teachers. Assign experienced mentors to guide and support new hires.	Continuous access to resources and training opportunities.	Trainers and facilitators for orientation sessions. Experienced teachers willing to serve as mentors. Access to educational resources and materials.	Improved retention of new teachers. A supportive community of educators. Higher job satisfaction among university lecturers
Competency building stage					
university lecturers in Shandong Province need targeted competency development during this stage to enhance their employability and teaching effectiveness.	Enhance Pedagogical Skills Boost Subject Knowledge Foster Soft Skills	Pedagogical Skills Enhancement Subject Knowledge Enhancement Soft Skills Development	Continuous professional development throughout the teacher's career.	Educational experts, trainers, subject-specific resources, training facilities, and ongoing support.	Well-rounded and highly competent university lecturers prepared to excel in their careers.
Teacher employment development stage					
The action plan addresses the employment situation of university lecturers in Shandong Province, focusing on their career development stage.	To enhance the career development of university lecturers in Shandong Province.	Promote innovative teaching methods and curriculum design. Assess the effectiveness of the action plan.	Develop the teacher training program and mentorship initiatives.	Funding for training materials and workshops. Experienced mentors to guide new teachers.	Enhanced career development and job satisfaction among university lecturers.

4. Conclusions

The study on the career development of university lecturers in Shandong Province reveals positive evaluations across four stages: Pre-service Education, Induction Training, Competence Development, and Career Development. The findings highlight the adequacy of training,

support, and career satisfaction. Despite diverse demographics, lecturers report comprehensive preparation, effective induction support, continuous professional competence enhancement, and satisfaction with career advancement opportunities. Strategic recommendations emphasize enhancing pre-service curricula, induction support, competency development, and career advancement pathways. Implementing these recommendations can significantly improve the professional development and employment status of university lecturers, ultimately enhancing the quality of higher education in Shandong Province.

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