

The Influence of Current Practices and Strategies in Life and Health Education in Higher Vocational Colleges in China

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine how health and life science courses are taught together at Chinese vocational universities. Life and health education strategies are studied using an explanatory study design, a deductive research approach, and a positivist philosophical stance. Surveys administered to 280 students at Zibo Vocational College provide primary data that offers unique insights into the students' perspectives and experiences. Results highlight the importance of life and health education to the success and development of vocational college students. The research attempts to establish a causal link between life and health education methodologies and student characteristics by means of quantitative data analysis utilizing Excel and SPSS. This study helps improve vocational education in China by pointing to specific ways in which life and health courses might be incorporated into technical universities. It emphasizes the value of fostering students' happiness and helps them get ready for a competitive job market. Educational institutions who are interested in enhancing their students' quality of life and health education may find the study's methodology and conclusions useful as a point of reference.

Keywords: Higher Vocational Education, Life and Health Education, Integration, Explanatory Research, Student Perceptions.

Introduction

Since its inception in China in the early 1980s, "higher vocational education" has seen major changes (Li & Li, 2021). The "Vocational Education Law" of 1996 established its legitimacy inside the Chinese educational system, marking a pivotal step toward elevating China's emphasis on vocational training. Higher vocational education has risen to the forefront of China's educational development thanks to the government's dedication to developing it, as described in the "National Education Work Conference" of 1999.

Despite its importance in broadening students' access to medical training, higher vocational education faces persistent stigma. There seems to be a disconnect between its significance and its public profile, and this raises serious concerns. Education has a key role in enabling individuals to secure livelihoods and enhance their standard of living, therefore as China implements economic reforms, the health education framework must adapt to the evolving mode of production (Aman et al., 2022).

Higher vocational health education in China has been receiving increased attention from the country's higher education system in recent years. In order to improve vocational education in healthcare studies and foster talents that improve vocational education and societal performance, it is crucial to establish a strong vocational education system (Lin et al., 2021). China's health education system has advanced rapidly thanks to the positive impact of vocational training on students' academic outcomes.

However, due to recent reforms in the field, students who complete their high school education with a focus on vocational training now obtain non-degree diplomas (Duke-Benfield et al., 2019). Increased demand for vocational schools and the promotion of localization of vocational education were both spurred by the growth of "new health educational institutions" in the late 20th century.

Numerous educational reforms have highlighted "localism" and a strong occupational focus as essential elements of vocational education, and these features may be seen in the structure and content of health education programs (Strathdee, 2023). In China, local governments oversee vocational education programs that encourage community participation. Working in tandem with regional healthcare providers is also essential for responding to shifting conditions.

The Chinese government is committed to improving the country's educational system, and has so organized seminars across the country with the overarching theme of "learning, production, research combination, and cooperation." Goals that are "employment-oriented, service-aimed, production-learning-research integrated" were stressed in a set of guiding principles. After 2004, vocational education institutions focused on curricular and instructional reform in an effort to standardize vocational education away from subject-based curricula and give equal weight to academic and practical training (Ling et al., 2021).

The Chinese government sees investment in vocational education as a means of stimulating economic growth and providing new options for the unemployed. The nation's economy has been in jeopardy as joblessness has increased in some areas (Mills & Battisto, 2020). Inadequacies in the educational system necessitate major changes to better meet the needs of the public and the labor force.

Students in China have a hard time breaking into the workforce since they don't have the right skills for the jobs that are out there (Chacko, 2021). In order to ensure that the vocational education system maintains a high standard of quality, the government has acknowledged the significance of providing students with skills that fit with the demands of the job market. One important aspect of this strategy has been to encourage private companies to provide training for students and to establish collaborative collaborations between educational institutions and industry.

In addition, China's educational system is shifting its attention from agriculture to more urbanized subjects like economics, finance, and administration. The efforts of the government have also raised the literacy rate in China (Han et al., 2020). This trend toward vocational training is an outgrowth of a cultural and economic transition in which people increasingly recognize the importance of education as a driver of individual and national progress.

Problem Statement

Higher vocational colleges in China play a crucial role in preparing the next generation of healthcare professionals through their life and health education programmes. In addition to teaching students the ropes, these establishments must guarantee that their wards are

prepared to handle the rigours of the healthcare industry. There is an urgent need to reevaluate and improve upon present educational procedures and strategies in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's emphasis on the vital necessity of health and life education (Bao, 2020). Institutions' material distribution systems, assessment procedures, and overall educational strategies have been reevaluated in light of the sudden transition to online learning modes in response to the epidemic (Wang et al., 2020). Another thing that the change has brought to light is how important it is to have flexible and interesting instructional practises for pupils (Yang et al., 2020).

College students may be able to adopt healthier habits if health education initiatives are more widely used. However, there has been no difference in the amount that students' subjective well-being and self-efficacy have changed between the control and intervention groups, indicating that the methods currently used may not be enough to improve these areas of students' health (Yang et al., 2020). There has to be more psychological assistance for students and mental health should be a part of life and health education programmes since the epidemic has had a major influence on their mental health and quality of life (Zhang & Ma, 2020).

Higher vocational education's involvement in specialisation, especially in health education, is a moderating element that may affect learning results. A focused strategy that meets the unique requirements of healthcare education is necessary for the development of essential competences, including clinical competence and empathy (Liu, 2021). Nevertheless, the expectations of the healthcare business and the competencies that are taught in schools today are very different, and this disparity could have a negative impact on the graduates' readiness for the workforce (Liu, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented Chinese colleges with a number of problems, including as financial strains, potential health hazards to faculty and students, and the need to develop and implement efficient methods of online instruction. In order to tackle these problems, it has been suggested to implement all-encompassing solutions that include medical security, emergency research, and expert support (Wang et al., 2020). Notwithstanding these obstacles, there is room for improvement in current educational processes; for example, higher vocational institutions could benefit greatly from implementing VR technology into their curricula (Man et al., 2020).

The study's problem statement has to tackle the complex issues with life and health education as it is now implemented at China's higher vocational colleges. Recent changes and the changing demands of the healthcare industry necessitate an investigation into how well these approaches work. It is important for the statement to consider how education techniques might be adjusted to support students' mental health and help them develop the essential skills needed to become healthcare professionals. To that end, the research will look for ways to close knowledge gaps in the field, with the hope of improving healthcare education and preparing students for careers in the field.

Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of current content delivery methods in enhancing the learning outcomes in life and health education programs.
2. To investigate the correlation between assessment techniques and the effectiveness of life and health education in higher vocational colleges.
3. To assess the impact of the integration of life and health education with engagement and adaptability strategies on student satisfaction and retention rates.

4. To determine the mediating effect of specialization on the relationship between educational practices and student preparedness for the healthcare industry.

Significance of Study

The findings of this study on the impact of life and health teaching strategies and practises in China's higher vocational schools could have far-reaching implications for many groups both inside and outside of academia. Because this study intends to improve students' educational experience and results, they stand to benefit a great deal from it. The study has the potential to improve instructional tactics by examining the efficacy of current teaching approaches and evaluation procedures. These strategies could be more interactive, engaging, and learning-friendly. Students will benefit from this in a number of ways, including enhanced professional readiness, more employment opportunities, and a more comprehensive set of skills and knowledge relevant to their chosen careers in healthcare.

This research will help professors, lecturers, and teachers by revealing successful teaching methods and possible ways to improve pedagogy. Findings from this study about improved methods of instruction have the potential to improve students' academic performance, classroom engagement, and instructors' own sense of professional fulfilment. This research aims to integrate educational processes with the practical needs of the industry, which will benefit the community and the healthcare sector in particular. The findings of the study have the potential to enhance healthcare services and contribute to public health outcomes through the development of graduates who are well-trained, knowledgeable, and skillful. With the self-assurance and skills acquired via a strong vocational education, the community's workforce will be better equipped to deal with health issues, like public health crises.

Literature Review

Several universities and colleges have made significant advancements in vocational education in the 21st century. This idea has been developed as one that takes into account the current state of the market. Students of many backgrounds have benefited from this method of instruction, as it has led to more efficient administration in a variety of fields. Vocational education as a concept, then, helps students better understand and function in today's technically advanced society by focusing on the practical aspects of their employment (Zhang et al., 2023). Because of the dramatic increase in vocational sorts of occupations in the market, the authorities of universities and colleges have focused heavily on this phenomenon. Recent institutional advancements in the organization and comprehension of the many aspects of life and healthcare sector work have been identified as a crucial subject of focus. Concerns about people's health have been identified as crucial since they form the basis of people's living and working conditions. The World Health Organization's implementation and membership in the working committee that would allow effective management of areas related to health issues and others has cast important light on the working conditions of the general public. The population at large needs to gain a deeper comprehension of health issues and acquire better knowledge and abilities in this field (Xie et al., 2021). All these broad assumptions would cause problems for the community's and people's health in this setting. A proper vocational education in the health care sectors requires the following primary processes to be put in place: implementing the academic courses in overall sections, developing skilled trainers and teachers, developing better learning opportunities for students, and specializing their courses to make them interesting. In addition, he said, it's important to focus on building knowledge and abilities in areas like nursing practices,

teamwork, communication, and ethical growth. China has maintained about 260 million pupils as part of its effort to strengthen its educational system and cement its position as the world's largest. In addition, the world's 15 million educators have a responsibility to prioritize health-related vocational education (Magnusson et al., 2020).

In recent years, public health has emerged as a major global issue, and this has paved the way for rapid evolution in the years to come. The World Health Organization and other organizations have pushed for mandatory health education across all fields as a means of maintaining standards of conduct in this area. The World Health Organization (WHO) claims that a shift in working conditions is required to identify drugs that would serve as more effective preventative measures in light of the recent surge of health-related disorders (Yu et al., 2021). There has been an increase in the need for competent medical personnel due to the growing prevalence of long-term illnesses and other infectious diseases. This is not the only thing that has been a major source of worry; environmental degradation and diseases linked to smoking have also played a significant role. In this light, it has been estimated that there are currently roughly 14 healthcare professionals per 100,000 patients in China, or about one-fifth as many as there are in the USA.

The number of Chinese medical professionals has dropped significantly between 2005 and 2011, from 1,57,000 to only 147,000. To improve the overall working environment and reduce public health decline, they focused heavily on creating vocational courses relevant to the health care industries (Böckerman et al., 2018, p. 490). Better training specialists in vocational sectors who can effectively manage the newcomers in the zone and bring comprehensive development is essential if an efficient method of operation is to be established. This section on literary ideas would also shine a bright light on the many methods employed and difficulties encountered. In order to properly establish the difficulties and recommendations linked with health-related vocational training in educational institutions, it is necessary to first identify the possible issues.

To establish a basis for the growth of vocational education in China, the "Vocational Education Law of the People's Republic of China" was enacted. This law helped propel the growth of China's vocational education sector by establishing its legal standing inside the country's educational framework. The evolution of China's vocational education system has reached a new milestone. Establishing new companies, relocating personnel, and retraining current employees all rely on the slow but steady growth of a vocational education system modeled after China's (Czifusz, 2023). The increase in the number of vocational universities has been slow but steady. Internet statistics show that by 2005, there were 2,681 million students enrolled in colleges and universities worldwide, which is 5.6 times as many as there were in 1998. From 1998 to 2005, the percentage of students enrolled in this focus area at traditional schools rose by an average of 1.9 percentage points. The previous rate had been 39.8%, therefore this was an increase.

Education has undergone radical transformations in the past 50 years, with lifelong learning replacing periodic learning and the teacher center giving way to the student center. Competency-based education and research, as well as quality-focused continuing studies, are on the rise worldwide. Our country's top technical universities are raising the bar in terms of educational excellence on every front (Campbell, 2021). Among its stated goals are the enhancement of students' cultural competence and the establishment of a campus culture enclosure within the context of twenty-first century higher vocational institutions. However, new, stricter standards for credentials, abilities, and quality of workers have been established as a result of the rapid development of science and technology.

The data center, wireless network, broadcasting and office, monitoring, student management, educational administration, multimedia classrooms, and recording and broadcasting classrooms are only some of the system services that have been put into place. The student body's daily routine is improved, and a contemporary and serene environment is fostered, all thanks to the campus's information culture building. More than a hundred off-campus training venues interact smoothly with business responsibilities, and the institution includes nine basic laboratories and thirty-three specialty laboratories as part of its experimental training center. It's a huge help in the fight to raise classroom standards (Darling-Hammond & DePaoli, 2020).

The widely-accepted theory of ability-based education can be used to change higher vocational education and shift the focus away from subject-based learning. The value of postsecondary vocational education can only rise with the implementation of this reform (Berezovska et al., 2020). Based on the needs of higher vocational training goals, higher vocational education is revamping its theoretical teaching system, practical teaching system, and student-related ability training system; it is also creating vocational ability training modules, and putting more emphasis on teaching students basic practical ability and operation skills, professional technology application ability, and professional skepticism.

Training in professional technological application, professional communication, and core practical competence are all bolstered by a higher vocational education (Hanafi et al., 2022). One of the main goals of the institutions in this area is to help the local gold industry thrive. They plan to start producing people with the requisite technical skills and level of specialization in the gold industry as soon as is practical. Contributes to regional economic and social development as well as the growth of the province's gold industry through increased cooperation between schools and businesses; greater integration of production and education; closer ties between colleges and businesses; novel approaches to personnel training; higher quality training; and expanded employment opportunities. Moreover, the boundaries between universities and businesses are blurred.

Each vocational college is currently making strides to better coordinate production and instruction, advance innovative pedagogical practices like "front factory, back shop" and chain running schools, increase the quality of vocational school instruction, and promote the concentration of vocational education resources in top-tier institutions. Today, most postsecondary vocational institutions have accomplished their primary goal to "foster cooperation between industry and university and establish a win-win scenario between school and business." Ability to establish and perfect a multi-channel, multi-level, three-dimensional partnership of production and study cooperation and build a win-win system is a key factor in the efficient operation of higher vocational institutions. An Important Metric for Successfully Running a Vocational College It is fair to say that "a lack of training bases" encapsulates the most pressing problem in modern higher vocational education (Ritchie, 2020).

Students typically look for the person in charge of the group. As a practice surface, the learner uses the teacher's face. As a result, it may be difficult to get in touch with the internship site. There aren't many internships or work-study programs available at the organization. There are schools that facilitate direct student-internship unit communication. The benefits gained from an internship gradually fade over time. The well-being of the students is of paramount importance to employers when deciding whether or not to accept intern candidates. The well-being of individuals must always come first. That's why it's up to the government to enact policies that put businesses at ease enough to accept intern applications from students

(Quirk). Universities develop a training plan for students in tandem with the peculiarities of the industry and the demands of the business, creating a "seamless connection" between student enrollment and employment.

The college and the enterprise's human resources department must sign a commission agreement or formal document to analyze and implement the employment planning and training plan under the "order-based" mode of talent training. Research and the resolution of new issues in graduate employment have been focal points at many higher vocational colleges in recent years, as has the gradual exploration of the system and mechanism of "order-based" vocational education and the development of a flexible and open "order-based" talent training mode. The hiring of college grads has led to fruitful results (Buckholtz & Donald, 2022). Students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to choose for this sequential approach to learning.

Our country's vocational schools have launched an aggressive initiative to create innovative new curricula. Great course design has the potential to raise the bar for education at an institution as a whole, with the ultimate goal of creating a cadre of teachers who have a solid foundation upon which to create pedagogical excellence. The substance of exceptional courses necessitates foresight, so they can incorporate key teaching reform successes, represent the most recent advancements in the field in a timely manner, absorb advanced teaching expertise, and more (Dobryakova et al., 2023). Higher-level vocational education cannot succeed without well-trained instructors and support staff. The Ministry of Education has begun a push to further integrate technology into classroom instruction and teacher professional development. Improvements to the "quality project" in 12 areas, including college public English instruction, the 5-year undergraduate education quality evaluation, and the assessment of the level of training for higher-level vocational and technical professionals. Furthermore, higher vocational education institutions have created mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of their teaching.

Our country's vocational schools have launched an aggressive initiative to create innovative new curricula (Caneva et al., 2023). Great course design has the potential to raise the bar for education at an institution as a whole, with the ultimate goal of creating a cadre of teachers who have a solid foundation upon which to create pedagogical excellence. The substance of exceptional courses necessitates foresight, so they can incorporate key teaching reform successes, represent the most recent advancements in the field in a timely manner, absorb advanced teaching expertise, and more.

Theoretical Framework

Conversionism Theory of Education: According to the Conversionism Theory of Education, colleges and universities can improve their educational outcomes by shifting the mindsets of key players, especially teachers, to better accommodate students with a wide range of learning styles and skills. This idea highlights the need of bringing attention to the impact of instructor attitudes on student success and aligning higher education teaching and learning strategies with best practises. In order to adapt to the changing needs of higher education, it promotes the creation of cross-institutional learning communities and the use of inclusive methods in faculty development (Nkana, 2020).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT): The relevance of the instructor's inspiring interpersonal style in fostering productive student motivation is emphasised by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in educational settings. Students are more invested and do better work when they have a sense of competence, belonging, and independence, according to SDT. This theory has the

potential to guide efforts in higher education to increase student engagement through the cultivation of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom. According to Lozano-Jiménez, Huéscar, and Moreno-Murcia (2021), SDT offers a framework for comprehending how the capacity of a teacher to involve students in the learning process can greatly impact the efficacy of their instruction.

Both ideas add to our knowledge of how to maximise learning outcomes and student involvement in health and life education programmes at vocational and technical universities. The construction of a welcoming and self-reliant classroom climate, as well as the examination of current pedagogical techniques and strategies, will be shaped by these theoretical frameworks.

Conceptual Framework

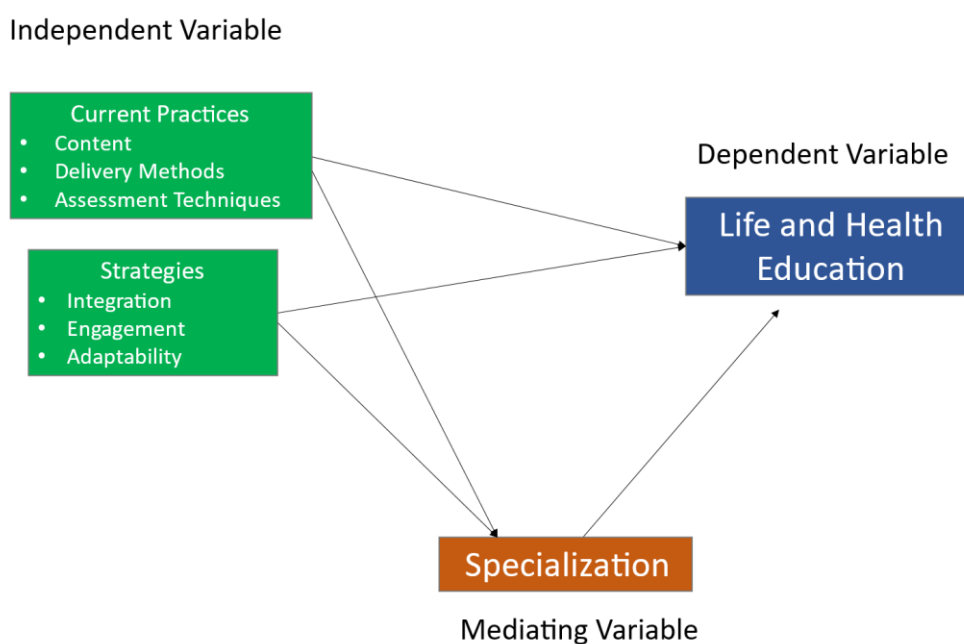


Figure 1: Conceptual framework
(Source: Self-created)

Methodology

Blending quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the research design for the study titled "The Influence of Current Practices and Strategies in Life and Health Education in Higher Vocational Colleges in China" will utilise a mixed-methods approach. This will allow for a comprehensive analysis of the educational practises and their impacts. This comprehensive approach will capture the complexities of educational settings and participants' varied experiences by allowing for an in-depth examination of the effects of present practises and tactics on learning outcomes in health and life education.

A sample of higher vocational institutions in China will have their students and teachers surveyed as part of the study's quantitative component. The purpose of these surveys is to collect information about the efficacy of various methods of instruction, evaluation, and the use of technology into health and life education programmes. To provide a comprehensive picture of life and health education in vocational colleges today, we will employ quantitative data analysis, including statistical testing, to spot trends, patterns, and correlations between teaching methods and student achievement.

Focus groups and semi-structured interviews with academics, administrators, and students will make up the qualitative portion. Life and health education effectiveness can be better understood by delving into the human experiences, perceptions, and contextual aspects. The quantitative results can be better understood with the use of qualitative analysis, which can provide light on the reasons behind the success (or failure) of specific techniques and tactics in various settings. Using this method will also make it easier to find what works and what could use some work.

By combining the two approaches, we may get a fuller picture of the topic at hand, and by triangulating our data, we can make our conclusions more solid and trustworthy. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to better understand the elements that influence the success or failure of instructional initiatives in China's higher vocational schools' life and health education programmes, and to provide practical recommendations for improving these programmes (Wang et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The expected results of this study anticipate revealing valuable insights into the effectiveness of current practices and strategies in life and health education within China's higher vocational colleges. Quantitative analysis is expected to unveil correlations between instructional methods, assessment techniques, and student outcomes, providing evidence for areas of improvement. Qualitative data, through interviews and focus groups, is anticipated to elucidate the nuances of students' and educators' experiences, offering rich contextual understanding and identifying potential barriers and facilitators to effective education delivery. Overall, it is expected that this research will yield actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of life and health education programmes in vocational colleges, thereby better equipping students for success in their future healthcare careers and contributing to advancements in public health outcomes.

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