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Research on Strategies for Building the Professional Competence of Teaching Administrators in Universities in the New Era

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Abstract: As higher education enters a critical phase of high-quality development and connotative construction in the new era, the digital transformation of education, the implementation of the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, and the advancement of modernized educational governance have set brand-new standards for the professional competence of university teaching administrators. As core actors responsible for teaching operation, quality control, and the implementation of teaching reforms in universities, the professionalization of teaching administrators directly determines the quality of talent cultivation and the core competitiveness of university schooling. At present, teaching administration teams in domestic universities generally face practical challenges, including outdated professional philosophies, unbalanced competence structures, insufficient digital literacy, incomplete training systems, and inadequate incentive mechanisms. Based on the reform context of higher education in the new era, this paper defines the core dimensions of professional competence for teaching administrators, systematically analyzes the dilemmas in team development, and proposes systematic and actionable capacity-building strategies from five distinct perspectives: philosophy reshaping, tiered training, institutional improvement, digital empowerment, and career support. By addressing these critical gaps, this research aims to cultivate a highly professional, career-oriented, and interdisciplinary team of teaching administrators. Furthermore, it provides essential theoretical references and practical pathways for improving the overall quality and efficiency of university educational governance, thereby advancing the sustainable and connotative development of higher education globally.

Keywords: higher education; educational governance; professional competence; teaching administration; capacity building

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1. Introduction

The goal of "accelerating the development of a strong education system and providing education that satisfies the people" has established a clear direction for the advancement of higher education in the new era [1]. With the implementation of initiatives such as the Double First-Class Initiative, the development of emerging engineering and liberal arts disciplines, curriculum-based ideological and political education, credit system reform, and smart campus construction, universities have undergone significant transformations in educational models, teaching methods, and governance systems. These changes highlight the inadequacy of traditional transactional and experience-based teaching administration models in meeting the demands of modern higher education. As universities strive to adapt to these evolving requirements, the need for innovative and efficient administrative approaches becomes increasingly evident.

University teaching administration plays a pivotal role in connecting teaching decision-making, faculty instruction, and student training, encompassing the entire process of talent cultivation. Teaching administrators are essential contributors to maintaining teaching order, driving educational improvements, monitoring teaching

quality, and providing services to both teachers and students. However, compared to the systematic development of full-time faculty teams, universities have historically prioritized teaching and research over administrative development. This mindset has led to the perception of teaching administration roles as auxiliary positions, often accompanied by limited training opportunities, insufficient incentives, and restricted career advancement. Consequently, the professionalization of teaching administration teams remains underdeveloped, posing challenges to the enhancement of teaching quality and the effective implementation of educational advancements within universities.

In the context of digital education and modernized governance, teaching administration has evolved from basic transactional tasks to a multifaceted role that includes refined governance, data-driven analysis, and innovative educational practices. Recognizing this shift, this paper aims to address the critical issue of building professional competence among university teaching administrators [2, 3]. It seeks to define the core competencies required for these roles, analyze the practical challenges faced by administrators, and propose a comprehensive and systematic approach to capacity building. By doing so, the paper provides actionable strategies for universities to develop high-quality professional teaching administration teams, thereby supporting the advancement of higher education and fostering sustainable growth in the academic sector.

2. Connotation of Core Professional Competence for University Teaching Administrators in the New Era

Teaching administration in universities in the new era represents a multifaceted evolution that integrates professionalism, service orientation, innovativeness, and technical expertise. This approach transcends the traditional transactional nature of administrative work, emphasizing a dynamic and holistic framework. By aligning with contemporary higher education policies and practical demands, the core professional competence system for teaching administrators encompasses five interrelated dimensions. These dimensions are designed to ensure adaptability, foster continuous improvement, and enhance the overall effectiveness of educational management [4, 5]. Such a system not only addresses operational efficiency but also promotes strategic thinking and proactive engagement in academic environments.

2.1. Policy Research and Reform Implementation Competence

Accurate interpretation of policies and the effective implementation of administrative measures are essential competencies for teaching administrators. In the context of higher education, policies are frequently updated and encompass a wide range of initiatives aimed at addressing the evolving demands of the educational landscape. Key areas include fostering virtue through education, integrating holistic approaches to student development, ensuring teaching quality, managing credit systems, and embedding ideological and political education within curricula. Teaching administrators play a pivotal role in translating these broad policy directives into actionable and institution-specific measures [6, 7]. To achieve this, they must possess a thorough understanding of relevant national and local guidelines, institutional frameworks, and operational rules. This expertise enables them to align macro-level policies with the unique characteristics of their institutions, including disciplinary strengths and talent cultivation goals. By doing so, administrators help prevent superficial or misaligned policy execution, ensuring that teaching practices remain standardized, compliant, and responsive to contemporary educational priorities. Such efforts contribute to the sustainable development of higher education institutions.

2.2. Refined Teaching Governance and Quality Control Competence

Quality control is a fundamental aspect of teaching administration, serving as the backbone for ensuring the effectiveness and reliability of educational processes. Modern teaching governance encompasses a comprehensive range of responsibilities that extend well beyond traditional administrative tasks such as class scheduling, student status management, and grade entry. It involves a holistic approach to managing the entire

teaching lifecycle, including the development and refinement of academic specialties, curriculum design and oversight, practical teaching methodologies, and the cultivation of constructive teaching and study habits. Additionally, it incorporates mechanisms for teaching supervision, systematic quality evaluation, and the implementation of corrective measures to address identified deficiencies [8]. Administrators are required to possess advanced competencies in coordinating diverse teaching resources, standardizing operational procedures, and proactively identifying potential risks within the teaching framework. They must also be adept at responding to emergencies, utilizing continuous quality monitoring systems to detect operational weaknesses, and applying targeted solutions to optimize administrative practices. Ultimately, the goal is to establish a robust, closed-loop teaching quality assurance system that ensures the consistent delivery of high-quality education and upholds the foundational standards of talent cultivation.

2.3. Digital Governance and Intelligent Application Competence

Digital education has emerged as a pivotal aspect of higher education transformation in the modern era, positioning digital literacy as a fundamental skill for teaching administrators [9, 10]. The integration of advanced tools such as smart academic affairs systems, student learning big data platforms, online teaching platforms, and digital quality monitoring systems has propelled teaching administration into a sophisticated, data-centric paradigm. To adapt effectively, administrators are required to move beyond traditional operational frameworks and develop proficiency in utilizing digital management tools. This includes acquiring capabilities in teaching data analysis, student learning performance evaluation, teaching trend forecasting, and the strategic coordination of digital resources. By harnessing the potential of big data technologies, administrators can extract actionable insights from teaching data, thereby supporting critical initiatives such as curriculum refinement, specialty alignment, pedagogical innovation, and the development of forward-thinking talent cultivation models. This transition signifies a fundamental shift from reliance on "experience-based management" to a more precise and evidence-driven approach, ensuring that educational governance aligns with the demands of a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

2.4. Coordination and Educational Service Competence

Teaching administration involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including faculty members, students, secondary schools, and functional departments. Effective communication, coordination, and service-oriented education are essential competencies for administrators. Strong organizational skills are required to ensure seamless alignment of teaching activities across departments, efficient allocation of diverse teaching resources, and resolution of operational challenges in a constructive manner. Administrators should embrace the philosophy of "education through administration and service" by moving away from rigid bureaucratic approaches. They must focus on addressing the specific needs of faculty and students, providing proactive support to overcome teaching-related challenges, and enhancing the overall teaching service experience. By fostering a supportive and well-integrated teaching environment, administrators can contribute to the development of a harmonious and efficient educational ecosystem that prioritizes growth and collaboration.

2.5. Innovative Practice and Educational Research Competence

The ongoing evolution of teaching methodologies has introduced innovative talent cultivation models, including personalized training, interdisciplinary education, and the integration of industry with education. These advancements demand a higher level of administrative adaptability and creativity. Administrators are required to develop innovative thinking skills to dismantle outdated management structures, optimize administrative processes, and implement forward-thinking service models that align with contemporary educational frameworks. Furthermore, they must cultivate foundational educational research skills to analyze and refine their administrative practices. By systematically reflecting on workplace challenges, conducting case studies, engaging in

research projects, and producing academic writings, administrators can identify effective management patterns. This research-driven approach not only enhances administrative efficiency but also facilitates a professional shift from merely executing tasks to proactively driving innovation, thereby contributing to the modernization and effectiveness of educational administration.

3. Practical Dilemmas in Building Professional Competence for University Teaching Administrators

Many universities face significant challenges in establishing comprehensive mechanisms for the development of teaching administration teams [2, 11]. A common issue is the tendency to prioritize immediate utilization of personnel over their systematic training, as well as focusing on transactional tasks rather than fostering professional growth. This approach often results in a mismatch between the evolving demands of higher education and the preparedness of administrative teams. Consequently, the pace of professional competence development within these teams frequently lags behind the broader advancements in academic practices and institutional needs. These challenges manifest in four key dilemmas, which will be explored in detail to highlight their implications for the effective functioning of university teaching administration systems.

3.1. Biased Professional Philosophies and Weak Professional Identity

From an institutional perspective, there is a tendency among some university management teams to undervalue the professional significance of teaching administration. This role is often misclassified as auxiliary transactional administrative work, which leads to its exclusion from broader institutional strategies for professional talent development. Consequently, teaching administration teams frequently lack access to systematic development frameworks, adequate resource allocation, and supportive policies that could enhance their professional growth. On an individual level, many administrators harbor misconceptions about their roles, perceiving their responsibilities as limited to routine, transactional tasks. This narrow view often results in a lack of engagement with broader educational objectives, innovation, or improvement initiatives. Their work is frequently characterized by passive responses and mechanical execution, which, when combined with repetitive high-pressure tasks, diminishes their sense of professional achievement. This environment fosters low professional belonging, widespread occupational burnout, and insufficient intrinsic motivation to pursue active learning or skill enhancement.

3.2. Unbalanced Competence Structures and Prominent Core Weaknesses

Structural imbalance in competence is a pervasive issue within teaching administration teams, manifesting in several critical areas. Firstly, the capacity for effective policy implementation remains insufficient. Many administrators possess only rudimentary operational knowledge and lack a comprehensive understanding of contemporary higher education concepts. This limitation hinders their ability to tailor and advance institution-specific teaching strategies, often resulting in superficial or symbolic policy execution rather than meaningful progress. Secondly, digital proficiency among staff is notably inadequate when compared to the demands of modern educational environments. While most personnel can perform basic system operations, they frequently lack advanced skills in areas such as big data analysis, digital governance, and the maintenance of intelligent platforms, which are essential for the development of smart education systems. Lastly, innovation and research capabilities are significantly underdeveloped. Administrators are often preoccupied with routine tasks, leaving little opportunity for reflective analysis or research. This focus on daily operations perpetuates rigid management practices, stifling opportunities for innovation and the enhancement of operational efficiency [12, 13].

3.3. Incomplete Training Systems and Low Training Effectiveness

Regularized targeted training systems form the core guarantee for competence improvement, yet university training programs for teaching administrators exhibit significant deficiencies that hinder their effectiveness. Firstly, the lack of systematic planning in training programs is a critical issue. Many sessions are conducted as ad-hoc policy briefings, which fail to provide a structured, long-term developmental framework. This absence of tiered training programs, encompassing pre-job induction, on-the-job advancement, and backbone talent cultivation, leaves participants without a clear progression path. Secondly, the content of these training programs is often overly homogenized, focusing primarily on basic operational workflows. This narrow focus neglects the inclusion of specialized modules that address essential areas such as digital skills, quality control, educational research methodologies, and advanced communication techniques, which are crucial for bridging core competency gaps. Thirdly, the training formats employed are predominantly monotonous, relying heavily on passive, lecture-based learning conducted offline. This approach lacks diversity and fails to incorporate practical drills, case reviews, external exchange visits, or mentorship programs, which are essential for fostering hands-on experience and contextual understanding. The disconnect between theoretical instruction and practical application significantly diminishes the overall effectiveness of these training initiatives, leaving participants ill-equipped to meet the evolving demands of their roles.

3.4. Deficient Incentive Mechanisms and Narrow Career Development Pathways

Inadequate institutional safeguards represent a significant bottleneck that restricts the professionalization of administrative teams in educational institutions. Current performance evaluation systems are heavily skewed toward measuring transactional workload and completion efficiency, often neglecting more nuanced and impactful indicators such as management innovation, quality enhancement, research contributions, and the quality of teacher-student service interactions. This narrow focus results in an incomplete assessment of the professional value and contributions of administrative roles [14, 15]. Furthermore, the allocation of institutional resources disproportionately favors teaching and research positions, leaving administrative roles with limited opportunities for career advancement and specialized recognition. The promotion pathways for these roles are often narrow and challenging, with minimal rewards that fail to align with the level of effort and expertise required. This imbalance contributes to high turnover rates and poor team stability, ultimately leading to a significant brain drain that undermines the development of sustainable and professional administrative teams.

4. Optimized Strategies for Building Professional Competence of University Teaching Administrators in the New Era

Addressing the challenges previously outlined and in alignment with the evolving demands of higher education, this paper proposes a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing the professional competence of university teaching administrators. The framework is structured around five interconnected dimensions: philosophical grounding, targeted training programs, integration of digital tools, institutional support mechanisms, and strategic career development pathways. By focusing on these areas, the framework seeks to systematically strengthen the skills, adaptability, and overall professionalization of teaching administration teams, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet the complex requirements of modern academic environments.

4.1. Reshape Professional Philosophies and Strengthen Education-Oriented Awareness

Philosophical renewal is a foundational requirement for enhancing institutional capacity [16]. University management must move beyond outdated perspectives, acknowledging the professional significance and educational impact of teaching administration. This recognition should lead to the integration of teaching administration team development into broader institutional talent strategies, ensuring synchronized planning, resource distribution, and performance evaluation alongside faculty and research teams. Regular vocational literacy seminars should be organized to help

administrators shift from transactional approaches to a modern professional philosophy centered on "education through administration, service, and innovation." These seminars aim to deepen administrators' understanding of the pivotal role teaching administration plays in talent cultivation and institutional advancement. Additionally, platforms for sharing exemplary teaching administration practices should be established to foster professional identity, a sense of belonging, and accountability among administrators. Such initiatives can inspire intrinsic motivation for continuous learning and performance improvement, ultimately contributing to the overall development of educational institutions in a structured and forward-looking manner.

4.2. Establish a Tiered Training System to Precisely Address Competence Gaps

A tiered, categorized, and regularized professional training system shall be developed based on varying job responsibilities and competency deficiencies. First, gradient training should be implemented to address the specific needs of administrators at different career stages. Newly recruited administrators will undergo systematic pre-job training that encompasses foundational operations, policy norms, and job responsibilities, ensuring they acquire the essential qualifications required for their roles. Mid-career administrators, who often serve as the backbone of administrative operations, will participate in specialized training programs focusing on digital governance, quality control, and cross-departmental coordination, thereby enhancing their ability to perform core job functions effectively. Senior administrative supervisors, on the other hand, will engage in advanced programs designed to strengthen their decision-making and leadership capabilities through policy research, strategic coordination, and innovative management techniques. Second, training formats must be diversified through a hybrid model that integrates theoretical lectures, hands-on practice, case seminars, external study tours, and mentorship pairings. This approach ensures that learning is both practical and adaptable to real-world challenges. For instance, group discussions can be used to analyze typical university teaching administration challenges, while visits to high-performing peer institutions can provide valuable insights into advanced management practices [17]. Third, an online learning resource platform should be established to integrate policy documents, digital skill tutorials, research cases, and administrative practice courses. This platform will offer round-the-clock access to self-study materials, fostering sustained lifelong improvement and enabling administrators to continuously refine their skills and adapt to evolving professional demands.

4.3. Deepen Digital Empowerment to Foster Smart Administration Capabilities

Digital competence training shall be prioritized to align with the ongoing digital transformation of education, ensuring that administrators are equipped with the necessary skills to meet modern demands. This involves the implementation of specialized and regular training programs, alongside comprehensive skill assessments, focusing on areas such as the maintenance of smart academic affairs systems, statistical analysis of teaching-related big data, administration of online teaching platforms, and digital quality monitoring. These initiatives aim to enhance administrators' proficiency in digital operations. Furthermore, the digital transformation of administrative workflows shall be actively promoted, encouraging administrators to utilize advanced big data platforms for tasks such as analyzing student learning patterns, predicting potential teaching risks, and evaluating teaching effectiveness. This shift from traditional experience-based decision-making to data-driven approaches is expected to significantly improve administrative efficiency and accuracy. Additionally, administrators shall be motivated to explore innovative digital solutions by optimizing online service workflows and developing advanced digital service platforms, thereby fostering greater intelligence and precision in teaching administration processes.

4.4. Improve Institutional Mechanisms and Refine Assessment & Incentive Systems

Sound long-term institutional mechanisms serve as essential safeguards for fostering capacity building within organizations. To achieve this, it is crucial to establish a

diversified and comprehensive performance evaluation system that moves beyond traditional workload-based assessments. A multi-dimensional framework should be adopted, integrating both quantitative and qualitative indicators. This framework would encompass process and outcome evaluations, operational performance metrics, and innovative research achievements. Additionally, it should include assessments of policy implementation effectiveness, teaching quality, feedback from both teachers and students, administrative innovations, and research outputs. Such a holistic approach ensures a more accurate measurement of administrators' professional competencies and their contributions to organizational goals. Furthermore, positive incentive mechanisms must be optimized by directly linking assessment outcomes to tangible benefits such as salary adjustments, merit-based recognition, and opportunities for career advancement. Establishing special awards for excellence in teaching administration can further motivate employees and recognize innovation. To address career progression challenges, dedicated professional title evaluation and advancement tracks for teaching administrators should be developed, thereby alleviating career bottlenecks [18]. Lastly, introducing a fault tolerance and error correction mechanism is essential to encourage bold administrative initiatives. By tolerating reasonable setbacks, this approach can unlock the innovative potential of teams and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

4.5. Boost Research and Innovation to Advance Team Career Professionalization

Research should be utilized as a strategic tool to enhance administrative efficiency and facilitate the evolution of teams from performing transactional tasks to becoming innovative, research-driven professionals. Universities can play a pivotal role by encouraging teaching administrators to engage in practice-based research that focuses on areas such as teaching methodologies, quality assurance, digital management systems, and service optimization. To support this, institutions may initiate specialized research projects aimed at addressing practical challenges within teaching administration. Additionally, regular academic activities such as research salons, paper-sharing forums, and case study evaluations can be organized to help administrators systematically analyze their work experiences, identify patterns in management practices, and develop solutions to operational issues. Establishing cross-institutional platforms for academic exchange and collaborative research can further expand administrators' academic perspectives and enhance their capacity for educational research. The insights gained from these research efforts should be integrated back into administrative practices, fostering a cycle of continuous improvement in both individual professional development and institutional efficiency [9].

5. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of high-quality development in higher education, the professionalization of teaching administrators is a crucial foundation for improving university governance capacity, optimizing educational management processes, and enhancing the overall quality of talent cultivation. At present, the development of teaching administration teams in universities remains constrained by several persistent challenges, including relatively outdated professional concepts, uneven competence structures, insufficiently systematic training mechanisms, limited digital literacy in some positions, and inadequate long-term institutional support. These factors collectively restrict the improvement of management effectiveness, coordination efficiency, and the sustained implementation of educational innovation in universities. To address these issues, universities should adopt updated professional concepts, establish tiered and categorized training systems, strengthen digital empowerment in administrative practice, improve institutional guarantee mechanisms, and encourage research-oriented professional development. Through these coordinated efforts, universities can gradually build a teaching administration team characterized by professional competence, clear career development pathways, interdisciplinary knowledge, service awareness, and adaptive innovation capacity. Such a team will better support standardized, refined, and

efficient educational management, strengthen the operational foundation of talent cultivation, and provide stable administrative support for the high-quality and sustainable development of higher education.

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