

Research on Cultivating Modern Teaching and Research Teams Based on Group Dynamics Theory

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Abstract: In the context of the national medium and long-term education reform and development plan, which emphasizes the strengthening of university teaching and research team construction, this paper aims to apply the theory and methods of group dynamics to the process of cultivating teaching and research teams. It adopts literature research, exploratory research, and inductive summarization to explore the guiding role of group dynamics in the construction of modern teaching and research teams. By combining the theory of group dynamics with the practice of professional teaching and research team construction, we can gradually establish a teaching and research team that possesses both theoretical knowledge and professional skills. This has implications for the development of human resources teams in other industries.

Keywords: Group Dynamics; Teaching Team; Research Team

1. Overview of Group Dynamics Theory and Methodology

In 1945, renowned American social psychologist Kurt Lewin founded the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, marking the establishment of group dynamics as a disciplined field of study. Group dynamics focuses on the exploration of the essence of groups, aiming to uncover the intrinsic patterns and forces that shape group development. It delves into the relationships between groups and individuals, groups and other groups, as well as groups and the broader society. Additionally, group dynamics provides methods and techniques for organizing and managing groups. It places great emphasis on the necessity of democratic leadership, values the participation of group members in

decision-making processes, and recognizes the significance of fostering a cooperative atmosphere within the group.

From an academic perspective, group dynamics can be classified as part of empiricism. However, it also places significant value on theoretical contributions, emphasizing the integration of theory construction and empirical research in practice. The foundation of group dynamics lies in the concept of psychological fields. Lewin believed that individuals form a field, and their psychological experiences possess spatial properties. Thus, individuals' behaviors are determined by the field in which their psychological activities occur [1]. Psychological fields primarily consist of the interactions between individual needs and their psychological environments, and human behavior is the result of the dual interaction between the acting subject and the environment. Group dynamics views its subject of study as a complete dynamic system, highlighting the characteristics of the whole group. The various components within the group mutually influence each other through their psychological fields. In the context of a group, individuals form the group, and yet individuals are also influenced by the group. Group dynamics regards the group as an organic entity in psychology and explores the underlying dynamics of social behavior at this holistic level.

2. Analysis on the Feasibility of Applying Group Dynamics Theory to Professional Education and Scientific Research Team Building

In the realm of group dynamics research, the driving force behind group development is considered the foundation and condition for group efficacy. Group efficacy refers to the effectiveness of a group in achieving its goals and realizing its own value. Fundamental

aspects of group dynamics, such as group goals, group atmosphere, group norms, and leadership styles, all have potential influences on group efficacy. A mature group possesses the following characteristics: clear group goals, a harmonious and democratic group atmosphere, cooperative interpersonal relationships, effective group attractiveness, and influential group impact[2]. This paper argues that the construction of professional education teams in universities can be viewed as forming a group comprising all the teaching staff in a specific field. During the process of professional education, the efficacy of the group is also influenced by factors such as construction goals and team norms. The effectiveness of group efficacy directly impacts the outcomes of team building in teaching. To promote group efficacy and improve the quality of education, we aim to address the shortcomings of traditional methods in professional education at universities. By leveraging the strengths of specialized professional development and utilizing the theories and methods of group dynamics, we propose improvements from various aspects, including team cohesion, construction goals, team norms, group atmosphere, and construction strategies [3].

In documents such as the *Outline of National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)*, it is explicitly stated that the construction of teaching and research teams in higher education institutions should be strengthened. Against this backdrop, we believe that it is essential to address the reality of insufficient teaching staff in domestic universities, particularly those universities with a focus on teaching. By leveraging the theoretical foundations of group dynamics and relying on the platform of professional development, we propose the establishment of teaching and research teams from multiple aspects: team cohesion, construction goals, team norms, group atmosphere, and construction strategies.

3. Analysis of the Development Path for Teaching and Research Teams in Higher Education Institutions

3.1 Setting Scientific and Rational Goals for Team Building

According to group dynamics theory, every

group has a purpose, and the goals chosen by the group largely determine its behavior, influence, members' dependency on the group, and their attitudes and confidence. The goals of the group are closely related to the personal motivations of its members. Members who accept the group's goals exhibit the strongest sense of need and strive to work towards achieving those goals. Therefore, in order to cultivate an excellent teaching and research team, it is essential to set scientific and rational development goals. Here, three key points should be emphasized. Firstly, the team building goals must be based on the basic situation of the university and the department, highlighting the advantages of education and the characteristics of talent cultivation. Building upon the existing educational resources, the focus should be on optimizing the curriculum system and implementing teaching reforms, aiming to establish a distinctive practical teaching system. Secondly, it is crucial to clarify the essence of the teaching and research team. Our goal is not merely to cultivate a group of teachers but to create a team that possesses creativity in teaching and research. This necessitates a hierarchical, gradient, and heterogeneous structure within the teaching staff. The overall goal of the team should be subdivided into different modules according to the characteristics of team members. Consequently, the relevant teachers are consistently guided by these goals, enabling them to achieve optimal motivation and team performance. Lastly, the established development goals should be clear, actionable, and contribute to the advancement of relevant disciplines, providing high-quality human resources for teaching. These goals should serve as a reservoir of teaching personnel capable of delivering high-quality instruction in professional education.

3.2 Fostering Consensus and Building Cohesion within the Team

Fostering cohesion within a team involves combining various forces that act upon all its members and encourage their active participation in group activities. When working towards a common goal, each member is willing to share responsibilities and contribute to the team. Creating a cooperative and friendly atmosphere among members,

promoting regular interaction and communication, are crucial means to cultivate cohesion within the team.

(1) Developing positive teamwork and appropriate competition

Group dynamics suggests that the mutual influence among team members can enhance the cohesion within the group. In the process of building teaching and research teams, introducing a competitive mechanism can stimulate the enthusiasm and creativity of each team member through moderate competition. Competition serves as a driving force for our teaching team to inspire innovative thinking, improve teaching quality, enhance individual qualities, and strengthen professional skills [4]. On the other hand, cooperation and competition are complementary. Cooperation is built upon a harmonious team atmosphere and interpersonal relationships. Collaborative communication among individuals facilitates resource sharing, complementary advantages, and enhances the attractiveness of the group.

(2) Creating a democratic and harmonious atmosphere

Group dynamics posits that different leadership styles contribute to distinct group atmospheres, which in turn have varying impacts on group efficacy, member satisfaction, and overall group development. Within this context, democratic leadership style is emphasized as highly significant [5]. Therefore, as a project-oriented teacher organization, it is essential to employ a participatory decision-making process in the daily activities of teaching and research team building. Team leadership arises through democratic voting, and all decisions are reached through collaborative negotiation and discussion between leaders and other members. When assigning tasks, consideration should be given to each team member's abilities, interests, and preferences. Team leaders actively engage in team activities and maintain a psychological closeness with other team members. This cultivates a sense of psychological safety among all team members, leading to further consolidation and strengthening of team cohesion within the teaching team.

4. Formulating Practical and Effective Team Norms

Group dynamics states that the collective

influences and shapes the thoughts and actions of individual members to a considerable extent. Individuals tend to act in a manner consistent with other members of the group. The consistency between an individual's actions and those of the group is influenced by the pressure to conform. Such pressure arises when an individual experiences internal conflict upon realizing the disparity between their own views and behaviors and those of other members. Additionally, external pressure from members attempting to influence the behavior of others can also contribute to conformity. These pressures directly lead to behavioral consistency among group members, resulting in the establishment of team norms [6].

When formulating team norms and regulations within teaching and research teams, it is important to consider several aspects. Firstly, behavioral norms should be clear, reasonable, and equitable, taking into account human factors and prioritizing the well-being of individuals. This approach helps foster team cohesion, enhances the intrinsic value of team members, and positively impacts professional development and the cultivation of teaching and research teams, providing institutional support for both endeavors [7]. Secondly, the establishment of norms within teaching and research teams should involve extensive discussion and consensus among participating teachers, ensuring that the norms are collectively developed and serve as guidelines for their behavior. Thirdly, the content of the team norms should address the practical challenges encountered during team development, ensuring their necessity, relevance, and feasibility. Additionally, emphasis should be placed on providing feedback regarding the implementation of these norms. If deviations from the team norms or the goals of team building are identified, they should be promptly identified and resolved [8].

5. Creating a Stable Team Structure

When a group achieves stability in the arrangement of relationships among its members, it develops a certain level of structural coherence. The efficiency of group work, individual motivation and abilities, and the environmental context all exert significant influences on the stability of a group's

structure. In the process of building teaching and research teams, maintaining a structurally stable team is crucial for the success of such endeavors. When selecting team members, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the essence of teaching and research teams. This enables the composition of a diverse team in terms of structure, wherein each member has clear goals and assigned roles that align with the sub-divided overall objectives of the team. Furthermore, the heterogeneous and differentiated selection of personnel ensures that each member plays a distinct role within the team, while being able to reconcile their individual motivations and abilities with the overall goals and plans of the team, thereby greatly enhancing the group efficacy [9].

6. Strengthening Assessment to Promote the Development of Professional Construction

To establish a scientifically effective, fair, and just performance evaluation index system with team performance as the core, it is crucial to incorporate three levels of evaluation: school, department, and cooperation within the academic community. At the end of each semester, students should provide routine evaluations of their course teachers through the academic information system. Additionally, the heads of departments and program teams should establish a real-time teaching evaluation feedback mechanism, promptly delivering accurate feedback to the teachers involved. This practice will encourage continuous improvement and allow for the provision of material and spiritual rewards to teachers who receive outstanding evaluation feedback [10].

7. Conclusions

The construction of teaching and research teams in higher education institutions is viewed as a holistic endeavor, requiring the cooperation and unified coordination of the school, departments, society, and teachers. This paper proposed that the application of group dynamics theory and methods in the cultivation of teaching and research teams represents a novel exploration in the development of human resources in higher education. Its significance lies in the establishment of scientifically and reasonably determined construction goals, the

consolidation of consensus, the formation of team cohesion, the formulation of practical and effective team norms, the creation of a stable team structure, and the planning of innovative development paths. Through these measures, a highly competent, well-structured, and exceptionally qualified teaching and research team can gradually be formed.

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