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An Analysis of Factors in Professional growth of Young Academic Leaders in Universities

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Abstract

Professional growth of young academic leaders is the process in which young academic leaders continuously upgrade and improve themselves based on their personal experience and according to the occupational development rule to comply with the requirement of occupational development in their occupational career. Among the factors that affect the professional growth of young academic leaders, there are both objective environmental factors and subjective factors of young academic leaders, the latter of which are the critical factors.

Keywords: Factors, professional growth, young academic leaders.

INTRODUCTION

In colleges and universities, academic leaders are precious talents with a high knowledge level who provide creative labor and generally refer to those distinguished academics that make tremendous achievements in development of their own discipline in the academic team formed on the basis of these achievements. They are not only remarkable strategists and organizers, but are also talents who are able to develop a school of their own in a certain field and who are able to lead, organize and coordinate the academic team in terms of any activity they hold to make their discipline continuously innovated and developed (Morwenna Griffiths, 2000). In the disciplinary organization structure of colleges and universities, academic leaders have a decisive position and role in that they do not possess high academic attainments, but are also able to lead the academic development. Academic leaders are a particular high-end talent group and are an important part of the core competitive strength in the colleges and universities. Young academic leaders are those at an age below 40. With aggravated economic competition and scientific competition within a global scope, all the countries all over the world place education at an important strategic position of social development. It is more realized by people that improvement of education and scientific level is not possible without an excellent group of young academic leaders. Without growth of young academic leaders, there is no way to talk about academic development, let alone climbing to the scientific summit. Only when the professional level of young academic leaders is continuously improved, is it possible to create educational level with high quality and cultivate talents with high quality.

Connotation and Meaning of Professional Growth of Young Academic Leaders

Connotation of Professional Growth of Young Academic Leaders

Professional growth of young academic leaders is the process in which young academic leaders continuously upgrade and improve themselves based on their personal experience and according to the occupational development rule to comply with the requirement of occupational development in their occupational career. It is a developmental process of the profession of young academic leaders from immaturity to relative maturity, namely, a process in which the professional structure of young academic leaders is continuously updated, evolved and enriched, a process in which the young academic leaders continue their life-long learning and a process in which the occupational ideal, occupational
ethics, occupational emotion, social responsibility sense and professional level of young academic leaders are continuously mature, updated and innovated (Tschannen-Moran M et al, 1998).

**Meaning of Professional Growth of Young Academic Leaders**

First of all, the professional growth of young academic leaders is a requirement to enhance the higher education and scientific research level. Since the universities shoulder the important task of cultivating advanced professional talents and developing scientific culture, it is difficult to finish such an important historical mission without academic leaders with a high level. Considering the successful experiences in well-known universities both at home and abroad, their educational quality, academic level and social reputation mainly benefit from the advantage of a multitude of talents imbued with strength and the advantage of discipline with a high level. Therefore, it is an important factor for a university or a discipline to flourish and grow to cultivate a multitude of academic leaders with solid foundation, uncommon brilliance, imbued with the spirit of dedication and creative capacity. This is not only the requirement of a university to cultivate students and conduct scientific research, but is also the requirement for the education to face up with the modernization, the world and the future. Just because of this, it has become a top priority to cultivate cross-century young academic leaders (Fullan M, 2002). All the universities are supposed to concentration on cultivation of young scientific talents and academic leaders as an important strategic task. This is a great event which concerns whether our undertaking will have qualified successors and this is also an important topic in reform of higher education.

Then, the professional growth of young academic leaders is a need to promote development of the universities. Development of any university cannot go without development of the profession of young academic leaders. The professional quality of young academic leaders plays a decisive role in both practice of the idea of school running and improvement of the quality of education and teaching. It is an important footstone for development of the universities to enhance the competitive strength of young academic leaders and set up a team of young academic leaders with high quality. Effectively promoting professional growth of young academic leaders and make them find an appropriate position in the reform and development of teaching is an important guarantee for construction of the team of young academic leaders to be continuously strengthened and the entire quality of the teachers to be continuously enhanced.

Finally, the professional growth of young academic leaders is a need for development of young academic leaders and for them to realize the internal life value. It is proved by study of developmental psychology that the whole life of human being is in constant development and the essence of life is a process of sustainable development. Since the cycle of knowledge renewal has been diminished, the society has continuously put forward new issues to education and people have continuously enhanced their value of expectation on young academic leaders. In order for young academic leaders to develop their own undertaking, to receive respect from students and to get recognition of the society, it is necessary for them to crave constantly.

**An Analysis of Influencing Factors in Professional Growth of Young Academic Leaders**

Just as growth of general living beings is affected by both internal and external environment factors, the professional growth of young academic leaders is also affected by the individual and external environment factors of young academic leaders. Thus, only if relationship between all factors in both internal and external environment is handled in an appropriate way, can the profession of young academic leader’s growth in a both healthy and rapid way. Among the factors that affect the professional growth of young academic leaders, there are both objective environmental factors (social, school and family) and subjective factors of young academic leaders, the latter of which are the critical factors.

**Individual Factors**

Young academic leaders themselves are the master of their professional growth and take responsibility for their own professional growth. In a certain sense, it can be said that young academic leaders are the decisive factor in their professional growth. Individual factor is the most direct, primary and fundamental factor that affect professional development of young academic leaders. Professional self-development consciousness of young academic leaders, occupational value identity of young academic leaders, their achievement motivation and sense of self-efficacy are the critical factors which fundamentally affect professional development of academic leaders (Goddard et al, 2000).

In the first place, without professional self-development consciousness of young academic leaders, there is hardly either pursuit of ideal by young academic leaders or tap of self potential and rapid growth of young academic leaders is impossible. Thus, professional self-development consciousness is the footstone for professional growth of young academic leaders.

In the second place, to a large extent, “occupational identity” determines the teaching mode, growth mode and
attitude towards education of young academic leaders and further affects professional growth of young academic leaders. If young academic leaders show identity with the occupation they are engaged with and comprehend the significance of their occupation, they may have the sense of responsibility and sense of honor. At the same time, this may encourage them to ponder over such questions as what kind of quality is required to do a good job, and how to enhance the professional quality and expedite the professional growth. Hence, occupational identity of young academic leaders is the key to professional growth of young academic leaders.

In the third place, achievement motivation is a kind of internal driving force for people to pursue excellence and strain after success. If young academic leaders have strong motivation of achievement, then they may take the initiative in requesting for development. Obviously, whether young academic leaders possess strong achievement motivation directly determines whether they possess an internal driving force for self-improvement.

In the fourth place, self-efficacy sense of young academic leaders has an obvious effect upon the teaching effect. For example, young academic leaders with a high sense of self-efficacy are able to actively and positively adapt to and change the environment, attempt to overcome any difficulty, adjust and control themselves and strive for higher achievement. Stronger sense of self-efficacy helps young academic leaders not to doubt themselves just as a result of temporary failure and makes them believe, all along, that they have the ability to realize their target. Therefore, they still refuse to draw rein when they are faced up with one difficulty after another. Then, it can be said that sense of self-efficacy is the sailing boat of professional growth of young academic leaders.

External Environment Factors

Internal factors are evidence of development of things, whereas external factors are the condition of development of things. In other words, professional growth of young academic leaders is mainly determined by their individual factors, but the external environment should also not be ignored as after all, professional development of young academic leaders can be done in a certain social environment. Hence, an analysis of the influencing factors in the external environment is of extremely important significance. External environment factors mainly include social factor, school factor and family factor (Tschannen-Morana and Hoy, 2001).

First of all, social factor affects professional growth of young academic leaders. The development level of social economy and culture, knowledge and view of the whole society in education and in the position and value of young academic leaders, requirement of education reform and development on school education and young academic leaders, policy orientation of educational administrative department on cultivation and development of young academic leaders, mechanism of rewards and punishment, educational and economic system and policy laws and regulations have influences upon professional growth of young academic leaders as a social environment factor. It can be affirmed that benign economic development level, macro emphasis of the government on education, the good atmosphere of the whole society respecting teachers and emphasizing teaching, challenges and requirements proposed by reform of the new curriculum on young academic leaders and the favorable policy orientation that educational administrative department emphasizes and encourages young academic leaders in their professional development and growth will create favorable environmental space for professional development of young academic leaders.

Then, the school factor affects professional growth of young academic leaders. School is a major occasion for young academic leaders to do education and teaching work and is more a major battlefield for professional growth of young academic leaders. The natural environment, interpersonal environment, cultural environment, administration style, institutional construction and working atmosphere of the school have significant influences on professional development of young academic leaders. Whether the school creates a growth atmosphere in which everyone is dedicated, enterprising and promising, whether it formulates a plan of target and defines the requirement for cultivating young academic leaders, whether it makes young academic leaders have a clear idea about their own basic responsibility, whether it arouses and activates the self development requirement of young academic leaders and whether it sets up a stage to promote growth of young academic leaders will have a direct influence upon the professional growth level of young academic leaders.

Finally, the family factor also affects the professional growth of young academic leaders. Support of the family, cultural background of the family and the economic strength of the family also has an influence upon the professional growth of young academic leaders.

Conclusion

Professional growth of young academic leaders is a complex and systematic project and is the result of combined functions of both internal and external factors. A correct idea about the multiple factors that affect the professional growth of young academic leaders and active exploration of basic strategies that promote professional development of young academic leaders are of great significance to promote professional growth of young academic leaders and development of institutions of higher learning and to facilitate development of a new turn of higher education.
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References


