
A Review of the Impact of “Group-Based” Educational Assistance in East-West Cooperation on Secondary Vocational Education and Teaching in Western China

Fen Wang*

Tianjin Vocational and Technical Education Center School, Hanzhong 724300, Shaanxi, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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Abstract: The “group-based” educational assistance in the collaboration between the Eastern and Western regions is an important strategic innovation for the country to promote balanced regional educational development. This article aims to review the multi-dimensional impact of this model on the teaching of secondary vocational education in the western region by systematically sorting out relevant academic literature and policy texts. Research has found that the “Group-based” assistance has achieved remarkable results in innovating the teaching concepts and methods of secondary vocational schools in the Western region, optimizing the curriculum and resource system, enhancing the professional capabilities of teachers, and improving the practical training teaching conditions through means such as concept input, resource connection, and team embedding. At the same time, it has also greatly improved the teaching quality and level of secondary vocational schools in the Western region. However, it has also exposed deep-seated challenges such as insufficient sustainability of assistance effects, conflicts in cultural adaptability, and inadequate stimulation of endogenous motivation. Future research should go beyond the summary of experience and shift towards empirical exploration of the mechanism of action, the construction of a long-term evaluation system, and the exploration of digital empowerment paths, in order to promote the in-depth transformation of the assistance model from “blood transfusion” to “blood production”.

Keywords: East-West collaboration; Group-based assistance; Educational assistance; Secondary vocational education; Teaching influence

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1. Introduction

Under the background of common prosperity, educational balance is a core issue. Vocational education in the western regions of our country, especially secondary vocational education, constrained by historical, economic and geographical conditions, has long faced challenges in terms of teaching quality, resource supply and connotative development^[1]. To solve this problem, under the framework of the East-West poverty alleviation cooperation (which later changed to East-West cooperation), the state innovatively introduced a “group-based” educational assistance model. Different from the traditional and scattered “point-to-point” teaching support, this model emphasizes systematic targeted support through a complete structure of “management team + professional teachers”, aiming to achieve the radiation effect of “helping one

school and influencing a large area”^[2].

In recent years, with the extensive practice of “group-based” assistance in secondary vocational schools in the western region, the academic and policy circles have increasingly paid attention to its effectiveness and problems. Existing research has discussed from multiple perspectives, but there is still a lack of systematic literature review and integrated analysis of the influencing mechanisms. This article aims to conduct a systematic review of the existing literature and answer the following core questions: What specific impacts has the “group-based” educational assistance had on the teaching fields of secondary vocational schools in the Western region? What is its mechanism of action? What practical predicaments are you facing? This will provide references for optimizing assistance policies and deepening related academic research.

2. Research significance

This article sorts out the Marxist theories of cooperative learning, synergy, and educational equity and their development, which is conducive to the application of the educational equity theory in practice. selecting a secondary vocational school in the Western region was selected as the investigation object, from the perspective of the assisted secondary vocational school, This paper under the theoretical framework of educational equity summarizes suggestions of promoting the quality of secondary vocational education and teaching from aspects such as innovating the teaching concepts and methods of secondary vocational education in the Western region, optimizing the curriculum and resource system, enhancing the professional capabilities of teachers, and improving the practical training teaching conditions to provide, providing a new perspective for the research on “group-based” educational assistance.

In practice, the “group-based” assistance work for educational talents is an important measure to implement educational equity. For secondary vocational education in the western region, the “group-based” assistance work has not been carried out for long. How to effectively promote the development of secondary vocational education and teaching in the Western region through the targeted assistance of secondary vocational schools. In the construction of secondary vocational schools, teaching quality is the core issue. As long as we break through the “bottleneck” links that restrict the development of secondary vocational education in the Western region, continuously the educational standards and quality of the assisted schools would be improved, and the economic development of the Western region would be better driven. The research in this article can be referred to by relevant management and research personnel, and thus has certain practical significance.

3. Research status

3.1. Conception

3.1.1. “Cluster-style” educational assistance

The initial concept of “cluster-style” educational assistance originated from the talent aid to Xizang program. It refers to the means of concentrating efforts to select high-quality educational talents from the mainland to aid Xizang, driving and training local teachers, strengthening the construction of the teaching staff in Xizang, improving the educational and teaching management level of schools in Xizang, and achieving the connotative development of the overall education in Xizang^[3]. In the “Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council on Winning the Battle Against Poverty” adopted on November 25, 2015, the strategy of promoting poverty alleviation through the development of education was clearly put forward. This decision highlights the significance of education in providing quality and fair educational opportunities, especially for children in poor and ethnic minority areas. Education is regarded as the key to breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty. During the same period, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with four other ministries and commissions, issued the “Implementation Plan for ‘Cluster-style’ Education Talent Assistance to Xizang”. This plan marks the birth of the “cluster-style” education assistance model, which represents

an innovation to the traditional decentralized education assistance approach to Xizang. This new assistance model focuses on the transformation from simple resource delivery to in-depth capacity building. It represents a major innovation in the work model and implementation path of educational assistance to Xizang, changing the single assistance model into a collective and collaborative assistance model. Through this model, educational assistance to Xizang is no longer confined to individual actions but, through teamwork, forms a more effective and collaborative working approach, thereby enhancing the efficiency and quality of educational support.

The “cluster-style” educational assistance explored in this research refers to its application in the educational assistance of secondary vocational education in the western region under this background. Talents from the Eastern region are dispatched to the poverty-stricken areas in the West as assistance teams, and they cooperate with local resources to provide assistance to the education and teaching of secondary vocational schools in the West. Specifically, the assistance team plays a leading role in the “cluster-style” assistance process, helping secondary vocational schools in the Western region improve their educational management and teaching standards.

3.1.2. Secondary vocational education in Western China

Western secondary vocational schools are institutions that implement secondary vocational education in the western part of China. They are located in the Western and Northwestern parts of the country. Due to historical and geographical reasons, their economy and education are relatively backward. It mainly enrolls junior high school graduates and the academic system lasts for three years. These schools offer vocational education at the high school stage, aiming to cultivate a large number of skilled talents and high-quality workers. Secondary vocational schools provide targeted education on vocational knowledge and skills based on the requirements of job positions. At present, secondary vocational schools in China are classified into four categories: secondary specialized schools, technical schools, vocational senior high schools and adult secondary vocational schools.

The subject of this study is a secondary vocational school in the Northwest that has received assistance. It represents the current situation and development trend of secondary vocational education in the Western part of our country. Through research, we can gain a deep understanding of the development status of secondary vocational education in the Western part of our country and its role in economic development.

3.2. Research on “group-based” educational assistance

The “Group-based” educational assistance has been implemented in China since 2015. This research is a localized study in our country. Currently, there are relatively few studies on it, but some scholars have explored it from aspects such as education and healthcare. Xu and Wu (2020) hold that this form of assistance plays a positive role in the stable poverty alleviation of poverty-stricken areas, the cultivation of livelihood capabilities and the stimulation of internal motivation, and it is the fundamental strategy to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty ^[4]. Peng (2019) analyzed the “Group-based” educational assistance to Xinjiang and pointed out that it has achieved remarkable results in improving the level of educational management, teachers’ teaching ability and students’ academic performance ^[5]. Yu *et al.* (2020) found through research that not only did the “group-based” educational assistance improve the weak subjects and moral education quality of students in poverty-stricken areas, but also had a positive impact on the teaching and research capabilities of local teachers, thereby changing the overall educational landscape of poverty-stricken areas ^[6]. Research by Zhang *et al.* (2019) indicates that by integrating the methods of quality-oriented education in Shanghai with those in the Xizang region and building an online distance education platform, the quality of local teachers and students can be effectively enhanced ^[7]. Yang *et al.* (2020) further pointed out that “group-based” educational assistance is an important method of improving the teaching quality in ethnic poverty-stricken areas in the western region and also an important means to stabilize poverty alleviation through education ^[8].

In conclusion, the “group-based” educational assistance, as an innovative model for promoting educational equity, has demonstrated its unique advantages and potential in multiple fields such as education, and plays a significant role in

enhancing the educational level in poverty-stricken areas.

3.3. Research on “group-based” education assistance for secondary vocational education in Western China

Overall, there are relatively few studies on the “group-based” assistance and secondary vocational education in the western regions. It mainly falls into two categories. The first category is the research on vocational education’s targeted assistance to Xinjiang. Hu (2019) mentioned that Anhui Province has been implementing the “group-based” assistance project for education in Pishan County since 2016. Through continuous support and joint efforts, the teaching and management levels of the aided schools will be systematically and comprehensively improved^[9]. Peng and Wang (2022) conducted a study on the long-term mechanism of vocational education assistance to Xinjiang from the perspective of synergy effects, taking Jiangsu Province’s targeted support for vocational education in Yili Prefecture, Xinjiang as an example. In light of the actual development of vocational education in Yili Prefecture, Xinjiang, Jiangsu Province has scientifically planned, precisely implemented policies and coordinated the construction of a long-term mechanism for targeted vocational education assistance to Xinjiang.

Through important measures such as strengthening the cultivation of a teaching staff that emphasizes both “blood transfusion” and “blood production”, the rapid development of vocational education in Yili has been promoted, providing a typical example for vocational education’s targeted assistance to Xinjiang^[10]. Chu and Chen (2022), taking Yili Silk Road Vocational College (in preparation) as an example, carried out “cluster-style” vocational education research on the Practice Model of Aiding Xinjiang. The aid team from Yili Silk Road Vocational College in Xinjiang aims to promote ethnic unity and strengthen the Chinese nation taking the sense of community as the central task, the team has built a collective goal awareness, fully exerting the “grouped” effect and achieving success through carrying out assistance tasks such as standard system construction, professional development, collaborative innovation, talent cultivation, and resource sharing, the organization has been established a “cluster-style” vocational education assistance model for Xinjiang has been established, which is goal-oriented, task-driven and focuses on practical results^[11].

The second category is the “Group-based” assistance of educational poverty alleviation projects. Zhang *et al.* (2022) took the “Spark Program” of vocational education in Hangzhou as an example, conducting a study on the model innovation and practice of “Group + Skills”: Targeted poverty alleviation in vocational education. This paper expounds the practical value of vocational education assistance, distills the “group-based” precise assistance model, and helps the poor population “establish themselves through skills and get rid of poverty” through skill-based poverty alleviation. Not only has it improved the skill teaching level of vocational education, also achieved grassroots innovation in the precise poverty alleviation model of vocational education^[12].

4. Literature review

By comparing the theoretical research on educational assistance in China, it is found that academic research in China is in line with the government process and has formed effective and unique methods in practice. The “group-based” educational assistance in China is a localized and innovative research. Although the current research on this model is still insufficient, especially the research on the “group-based” assistance in vocational education is scarce, it provides a certain research space for the discussion of this article. The “group-based” educational assistance, as an innovative educational policy with Chinese characteristics, has had a systematic and profound impact on secondary vocational education teaching in the Western region. Its value lies in providing a “systematic solution” rather than scattered support. It successfully upgraded the “hardware” and “software” of teaching in secondary vocational schools in the Western region in a short period of time, and activated the engine of teaching reform. However, the key to its long-term success lies in whether it can achieve a paradigm shift from “external implantation” to “internal generation”. In the future, the practice of assistance and academic research should pay more attention to cultural integration, subject activation and institutional construction, and focus on

cultivating the self-development and self-innovation “blood-making” capacity of secondary vocational schools in the Western region. We ultimately achieve the coordinated progress and truly balance development of vocational education in the east and west^[13,14].

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