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ABSTRACT

Self-assessment and quality accreditation is the first step in the overall educational quality accreditation activities; they demonstrate the autonomy and self-responsibility of the school in all activities from training, and providing educational services, to teaching and learning activities. The purpose of self-assessment is not only to ensure quality education and training activities but also to provide motivation to improve and improve the quality of education in the whole school and of the entire education system self-assessment and quality accreditation are also an essential basis to help vocational colleges improve their competitiveness, creating a premise for the vocational colleges' sustainable development in the future. For the system of vocational colleges, self-assessment, and quality assessment help vocational colleges realize the reality of the school in their activities over the past time; advantages that need to be further consolidated and maintained; shortcomings and limitations that need solutions to overcome and repair; thereby, contributing to improving the quality in all activities that the school has committed to implement in the goals, mission and quality policy that the vocational colleges have had. On the basis of an analysis of the current situation and problems posed in self-assessment and quality accreditation activities, the legal grounds for activities of achievement assessment and quality accreditation; practice in self-assessment and quality accreditation at vocational colleges; the State's policies on self-assessment and quality accreditation at vocational colleges; this study recommends solutions to improve self-assessment and quality accreditation activities at vocational colleges in the future.

Keywords: Policy, self-assessment of quality, self-accreditation, vocational colleges, practices and solutions

INTRODUCTION

At the Government's regular meeting in August 2016, the Government agreed to assign the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs to be the state management agency for vocational education. The Ministry of Education and Training is the state management agency for pedagogical schools (Government, 2016). According to this Resolution, from January 1, 2017, the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs will officially perform state management in the field of vocational education for 201 colleges and 303 professional secondary schools across the country.

With the role and mission of training quality human resources to meet the needs of local socio-economic development, vocational colleges always attach great importance to training quality and consider this as one of the most important factors. important to attract the attention of learners, parents, and employers; At the same time, it is the most satisfactory answer to the University's commitments to learners and society over the years.

One of the factors that confirm the training quality of vocational colleges is the self-assessment of the quality of vocational education institutions, also known as self-accreditation. Before being assigned to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs for management (from January 1, 2017, onward) periodically according to the cycle prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Training, vocational colleges all carry out self-employment work. audit and report on time as prescribed. From January 1, 2017, every year, vocational colleges conduct self-assessments according to the regulations of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs. However, this work only stops at self-assessment, and cannot perform accreditation according to the regulations of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, including the accreditation of training programs.

There are many reasons leading to the fact that many vocational colleges are not strong enough to carry out accrediting vocational education institutions; there are both objective and subjective reasons. As follows:

Regarding objective reasons: Vocational colleges have only joined the vocational education system since January 1, 2017, according to the Government's Resolution No. 76, the access to regulatory documents on accreditation. of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs is quite new, requiring more time to

research and update. Moreover, the policy of merging vocational colleges under the Scheme (Government, 2018), in which each vocational college before the merger is under the professional management of other ministries, departments, branches, etc., together; It takes time to arrange and stabilize the structure and organization and especially to review, research and issue general orientation documents of the school to ensure consistency in activities.

Regarding subjective reasons: Vocational colleges have not prepared well for accreditation; some officials and officials have not really realized the importance of accreditation and the role of this work in the enrollment and training activities of the school. Furthermore, one of the important factors for inspection activities is that facilities, equipment, classrooms, etc., cannot immediately meet the requirements set forth by the inspection. This activity takes time and requires investment from the state and the reciprocal capital of each school.

From the practice of self-assessment in vocational colleges, we see the difficulties and inadequacies in the process of self-assessment and accrediting the quality of education at schools. Within the scope of this article, we only focus on analyzing the difficulties and challenges in self-assessment and quality accreditation activities at the school; policies on self-assessment and quality accreditation activities at vocational colleges; then propose some solutions to overcome the difficulties and perfect the policy in the coming time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

System of vocational colleges

The country currently has 412 colleges, training in many fields and professions. College is a type of higher education institution in Vietnam. This is a post-secondary school, but lower than a university, called a college, college system, or college education. On October 21, 2021, the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs issued Circular No. 15/2021/TT-BLĐTBXH, effective from December 15, 2021, stipulating the College Charter, including duties and powers; organization and management of colleges; organize training activities; teachers, administrators, officials, employees and learners in colleges; finance and assets of the college; the relationship between the school and enterprises, vocational education and training institutions, educational institutions, learners' families and society; organize the implementation of the College Charter. Specifically:

The legal status of the college: The college has its own legal status, its own seal and account; Colleges are vocational education institutions with autonomy and accountability in accordance with the law. Colleges operate in accordance with the law on vocational education and the law on education.

Types of colleges: According to the law of Vietnam, there are the following types of colleges: Public colleges; Private colleges; Foreign-invested colleges.

Regulations on the organization and operation of colleges: Regulations on the organization and operation of colleges shall be promulgated by the principal according to a resolution of the school council for public colleges or by a resolution of the management council. value for private colleges on the basis of concretizing the provisions of Circular No. 15/2021/TT-BLĐTBXH effective from December 15, 2021, consistent with the characteristics of the vocational colleges, not contrary to relevant laws.

Self-assessment and quality accreditation activities

According to Official Letter No. 1075/KTKDCLGD-KĐH (2016) guiding the self-assessment of training programs: Self-assessment of training programs is the process by which educational institutions are based on the standards for assessing the quality of training programs. training issued by the Ministry of Education and Training to self-review and report on the status of quality and effectiveness of training activities, scientific research, human resources, facilities, and other related issues under the Ministry of Education and Training. training programs, serving as a basis for educational institutions to adjust their resources and implementation process in order to improve training quality and meet educational quality standards.

Meaning and purpose of self-assessment and accreditation of training quality: According to Official Letter No. 1075/KTKDCLGD-KĐH (2016) on guiding self-assessment of training programs, self-assessment of training programs; according to Circular No. 15/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH (2017) stipulating criteria and standards for accreditation of vocational education quality; Circular No: 1229/QĐ-BLĐTBXH dated August 4, 2017, on correction of Circular No. 15/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH dated June 8, 2017, of the Minister of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs regulating standards criteria, standards for accreditation of vocational education quality, self-assessment activities, and training quality accreditation have the following meanings and purposes:

It is an important step in ensuring the quality of training programs in educational institutions.

Helping educational institutions and training program-implementing units self-review, review and evaluate the current status of the training program; develop and implement action plans to improve and enhance the quality of training programs; thereby adjusting the target for the next period in a higher direction.

It is necessary for an educational institution to register for external assessment and request recognition of training program quality standards with an educational accreditation organization.

Demonstrate the autonomy and self-responsibility of the educational institution in all activities of training, scientific research, and social services according to its assigned functions and tasks, in accordance with its mission and objectives has been determined.

Regulations on the policy of self-assessment of training programs. As follows:

In the process of self-assessment of the training program, based on each standard and criterion, the educational institution must focus on doing the following:

Describe and clarify the status of the training program;

Analyze, explain, compare, contrast, and make judgments; point out strengths, shortcomings, and remedial measures;

Make an action plan to improve and improve the quality of the training program.

Self-assessment of the training program is a continuous process that requires a lot of effort and time and requires the participation of many individuals throughout the unit implementing the training program and coordinating other individuals and other units in the educational institution.

Self-assessment of training programs requires objectivity, honesty, openness, and transparency. The explanations, judgments, and conclusions made in the self-assessment process must be based on specific, clear, and reliable evidence. The self-assessment must ensure a full assessment of the criteria in the set of standards for evaluating the quality of training programs issued by the Ministry of Education and Training.

According to the provisions of Article 10 of Circular 62/2012/TT-BGDĐT, the steps to implement self-assessment activities are as follows: (i) Planning for self-assessment; (ii) Information and evidence collection. Process and analyze information and evidence obtained; (iii) Write a self-assessment report; (iv) Publish the self-assessment report within the educational institution; (v) Implementation of activities after completing the self-assessment report.

Regulations on self-assessment according to standards and criteria: This is the main part of the self-assessment report of the training program, detailing the results of the self-assessment of the training program of the educational institution, reviewing each training program's quality evaluation criteria in turn. Within each criterion, consider each criterion in turn. For each criterion, perform the following steps in turn:

Description of the school: Describe fully, in detail, honestly, and objectively the current state of operation of the unit implementing the training program in accordance with the requirements in the content of each criterion. Each statement and assessment in the description must be accompanied by evidence (Chung, 2018; Vu, 2022). The description must be short, concise, and not too detailed but must be specific, ensuring generality in order to help readers understand the relevant activities of the unit implementing the training program.

Strengths of the school: Based on the content presented in the description, the mission and goals of the educational institution, the functions, and duties of the unit implementing the training program to self-assess the quality and effectiveness of activities according to each criterion, pointing out the outstanding strengths of the training program compared to the requirements of the criteria. It is necessary to analyze and provide statements and explanations to help readers understand why such an assessment is made.

The existence of the school: On the basis of the content presented in the description, the mission, and goals of the educational institution, the functions, and duties of the unit implementing the training program, indicate the remaining problems, and inadequacies in the implementation of the activities of the training program compared with the requirements of the criteria.

School action plan: Provide a plan to continue to maintain strengths and solutions to overcome remaining areas. The plan must be specific and feasible and must indicate remedial measures, resources, completion time, and monitoring measures.

Legal Basis for Self-Assessment and Quality Assurance Activities

Decision No. 72/2007/QĐ-BGDĐT dated November 30, 2007, promulgating the Regulation on standards for assessing the quality of educational programs in primary education at the college level (Decision 72/2007).

Circular No. 23/2011/TT-BGDĐT dated June 6, 2011, promulgating Regulations on standards for assessing the quality of university-level industrial technical pedagogical education programs (Circular 23/2011);

Circular No. 49/2012/TT-BGDĐT dated 12/12/2012 promulgating Regulations on standards for assessing the quality of training programs for high school teachers at the university level (Circular 49/2012);

Pursuant to Circular No. 38/2013/TT-BGDĐT dated November 29, 2013, of the Minister of Education and Training promulgating regulations on the process and cycle of quality accreditation of training programs (training program) of universities, colleges, and professional secondary schools (Circular 38/2013);

Circular No. 33/2014/TT-BGDĐT dated October 2, 2014, promulgating the Regulation on standards for assessing the quality of nursing training programs at the university and college level (Circular 33/2014);

Circular No. 04/2016/TT-BGDĐT dated March 14, 2016, promulgating regulations on standards for assessing the quality of training programs at higher education levels (Circular 04/2016);

Circular No. 15/2017/TT-BLDTBXH dated June 8, 2017, stipulates criteria and standards for accreditation of vocational education quality (Circular 15/2017).

Circular No. 1229/QD-BLDTBXH dated August 4, 2017, on correction of Circular No. 15/2017/TT-BLDTBXH dated June 8, 2017, of the Minister of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs stipulating criteria and standards for vocational education quality accreditation (Circular 1229).

Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs. (2018). Circular No. 27/2018/TT-BLDTBXH dated December 25, 2018, stipulates the regulation on the assessment and issuance of VET quality inspector card; process, and the cycle of vocational education quality accreditation. Hanoi.

Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs. (2019). Circular No. 1229/QD-BLDTBXH dated August 4, 2017, on correction of Circular No. 15/2017/TT-BLDTBXH dated June 8, 2017, of the Minister of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs stipulating criteria and standards for vocational education quality accreditation (Circular 1229). Hanoi.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some difficulties in self-assessment and quality accreditation of vocational education institutions at vocational colleges

The number of staff with expertise in the field of vocational education accreditation of the vocational colleges is still small, even lacking:

Immediately after merging colleges in each locality in the country into vocational colleges, the schools have attached great importance to training quality accreditation. In fact, the Schools have immediately established a unit specializing in performing the task of self-assessment and accreditation of the university, which is the Department of Inspection - Testing - Quality Accreditation. The organizational structure of this unit consists of officers with expertise in the field of quality assurance.

Looking at the professional level, it can be seen that this is a highly qualified unit; in particular, all officers of the Department have a specialization in Education Measurement and Evaluation, but their deep expertise is tied to the Ministry of Education and Training. Therefore, in performing the task, it is necessary to both study the text and exchange and learn more from schools and colleagues who have a lot of experience in accrediting work. In addition, the fact that the staff in charge does not have in-depth expertise in the assigned field, so in the work of guiding the units to collect evidence and write reports, there are still many shortcomings, and the quality of reports according to standards is not high. In recent years, vocational colleges have regularly sent officials to participate in training and refresher courses on accreditation. However, the number of officers sent was not much. Moreover, the dissemination of documents on quality accreditation is still limited to vocational colleges in non-central localities.

The management of archival documents and evidence for the verification work has many limitations:

One of the factors that determine success as well as reflects objectively, accurately, honestly, and effectively supports self-assessment and quality assurance is the system of proofs. However, this is a difficult problem because of limitations in administrative management and archives.

Previously, documents, decisions, and plans of superiors and the vocational colleges were archived by year and were not classified according to the nature of work. Many directive documents of superiors are assigned directly to the implementing unit. Therefore, many documents are lost, so in the process of self-assessment, having to search again takes a lot of time and effort. Moreover, the merging of schools and moving records, books, and documents between schools to the archives have not been scientifically arranged, because the top priority is teaching and learning, so it makes it difficult to work. find and collect evidence.

The heterogeneity in perception about the role and importance of accreditation for the vocational colleges' activities:

The vocational colleges' accreditation activities are not only for reporting according to the regulations of the superior authorities, but it also contributes to building the image and brand of the university. More importantly, when being certified to meet the accreditation standards, is the most appropriate answer for the university to society and the community about the quality of training that the university has committed to in its policies and objectives quality, and mission of the university. For that reason, self-assessment and accreditation work is very important and requires unity in the awareness and consensus of the school staff, especially the leadership and management team in subordinate and subordinate units.

However, the reality shows that there is still a difference in the perception of the role, meaning, and determination to carry out accreditation of vocational education quality among some leaders, managers, and lecturers in the vocational training school. internal school. Some opinions still believe that the self-assessment and quality accreditation of the university is the main task of the Department of Inspection - Examination - Quality Accreditation. Because of that, the comment or development of documents and plans on self-assessment and quality accreditation of the university usually receive very few comments; even the annual self-assessment report of the vocational colleges.

On the other hand, the collection of evidence in the units (in charge of groups) is almost always very passive, of a coping nature, from which the finding of evidence is still sketchy. In addition, funding for self-assessment and accreditation activities of the university is still limited, although Official Letter 822 of the General Department

of vocational education has specific instructions on the content and level of expenditure for such activities. self-assessment of the quality of vocational education institutions; on that basis, the vocation colleges also based on the operating funds to collect opinions from officials and officials at the conference of officials and employees of the university to add to the Regulation on internal expenditure the level of expenditure for the school's activities to inspection action

But due to the limited funding for regular operations of the vocational colleges, moreover, it must be spent on other more urgent activities, so the level of expenditure for accreditation, especially for inviting experts, the participation of enterprises, employers, or student survey activities is still low. The level of spending for activities of writing reports and collecting evidence is also the same.

The influence of a number of objective factors on the psychology of officials and employees:

The merger of schools into one, more or less created psychological fluctuations and insecurity among the staff. Moreover, in recent years, the enrollment of vocational colleges has faced many difficulties, partly because people-founded and private universities have developed strongly with strong teaching staffs, excellent facilities, and modern, spacious, with many policies on job security to attract learners. On the other hand, universities under the public system tend to be more open in enrollment with many incentives in terms of scholarships to encourage study and diversity in learning forms. This is one of the reasons leading to the low enrollment rate of students at the vocational colleges.

Although, vocational colleges have made a lot of efforts in enrollment, and are diversifying in building programs to open new industries and professions; however, some professions and occupations currently have a very low number of learners. In addition, the common psychology of parents and students has long defaulted to graduating from high school to have to go to university, and very few choose a vocational school (Trung & Van, 2020a & 2020b; Hang & Van, 2020). The situation of excess faculty in this industry but a shortage of teachers in other majors lead to the quality of teaching being more or less affected. Moreover, when the lecturers are still worried about big issues such as the school's existence and the work, the interest in quality accreditation will be reduced (Van 2022a & 2020b).

It is from the difficulties and limitations for the vocational colleges' self-assessment and inspection activities in the near future to be effective, ensuring according to the set goals, please allow me to propose some solutions to contribute to overcoming the above problems.

Some policy restrictions

Since the transformation of the management agents from the Ministry of Education and Training to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, in order to ensure the unification of self-assessment and accreditation of vocational education institutions, the Government and The Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs has also issued many legal documents on the accrediting of vocational education, providing for a system of criteria and quality accreditation standards for each type of institution. Vocational education includes vocational education centers, vocational secondary schools, and vocational colleges; regulations on vocational training quality accreditors; stipulate the process of accrediting the quality of vocational education institutions specifically with 01 Decree (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, 2017a) and 03 Circulars (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, 2017b).

In addition, every year, the General Department of Vocational Education and Training also issues Official Official Letters guiding vocational education institutions across the country to carry out self-assessments and specific inspections of each criterion and standard in accordance with the standards. specific current regulations: Official Letter No. 1845 (2017) of the General Department of Vocational Training; Official Letter No. 23 of the General Department of Vocational Education (2018) and from 2019 until now is Official Dispatch No. 453 of the General Department of Vocational Education.

However, the policy of merging local pedagogical colleges is unreasonable. Because, before that, all pedagogical colleges carried out self-assessment and accreditation according to Circular No. 62 of the Ministry of Education and Training; therefore, in the process of self-assessment, there are many inconsistencies and similarities in the regulatory documents between the two professional management agencies.

Although, in Circular No. 15/2021/TT-BLDTBXH (2021) of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, there is a reference to the content related to "pedagogy", but it is "vocational pedagogy". Also known as vocational education pedagogy. Therefore, in the process of self-assessment, the University hardly mentions the contents of the Faculty of Pedagogy in the Self-Assessment Report even though this Faculty is still a unit of the University.

Some suggestions on solutions

First, the person who directs the self-assessment must study and grasp the documents, the implementation process, and the order of conduct; gathered the wisdom of the school's pedagogical collective, and brought into play each individual's forte capacity in improving the quality of education.

Second, it is necessary to implement and make the teaching staff and staff of the school aware of the importance and necessity of self-assessment of educational quality towards the Accreditation of Education Quality, thereby creating consensus and a high determination in the school's pedagogical collective (FICCI, 2017; Thang, 2019). This is done through organizing extensive training courses on documents for all members of the school's pedagogical team, fostering the team directly working on quality assurance.

Third, the self-assessment Council has a decisive role in implementing the self-assessment, the Council has the function of appraising and approving the self-assessment report. Therefore, participating in the self-evaluation council must be key staff of the school, understand the activities of the training institution according to the accreditation standards, and have the ability to analyze and evaluate the school's activities. The chairperson of the board must be the Principal to have the authority to conduct self-assessment.

The school established a Council to self-assess the quality of vocational education. In order for the Council to self-assess its operation synchronously and effectively, the Board of Directors needs to base on 09 criteria, 100 standards, and each assigned work, the capacity of the members to make reasonable decisions on the number of people as well as the quality of work. Establish specialized working groups, and assign work to groups based on 09 standards and 100 criteria. From there, the Council of self-evaluates, the specialized working groups develop work plans, mobilize resources to participate, and make a timetable for each specific job. Collect evidence, the evidence needs to be collected based on the standards and criteria according to the set of evaluation criteria.

Fourth, the specialized department regularly monitors and evaluates the progress and work results of the groups and reports regularly to the self-assessment Council and the Chairman of the self-evaluation Council to take measures to adjust activities. move according to the planned schedule.

Fifth, publicize standards and criteria for self-assessment; exercise the democratic rights of working groups through peer review and collection of collective opinions in the self-assessment report.

Making a self-assessment report, based on the results collected by the team members shown through evidence, the secretary writes a report, the report must be factual, properly describe the current situation, and draw points. strengths and weaknesses and propose improvement plans for each criterion. Group members discuss and finalize the group's report (Thang, 2019). When the working groups have completed the self-assessment of their own criteria, the Chairman of the self-assessment council shall hold a meeting of the groups for the groups to self-reflect and evaluate each other. After receiving the comments and corrections of the groups (Duchiep, et al., 2022). The Self-Assessment Council completes the entire report through the self-assessment Council and consults with the school's pedagogical team. From the results of the comments, continue to make adjustments to complete the report.

Sixth, every year, leaders of vocational colleges must issue all kinds of documents to manage and direct all activities of the vocational colleges. At the same time, organize quality control, and do a good job of updating and storing records according to regulations.

Seventh, the collection of evidence-based information must be fully done before the working groups can conduct the assessment. Absolutely avoid the situation that it is not until the time of self-assessment to find information to prove the past vocational colleges years. Thus, building a database on education quality accreditation is very necessary and convenient for collecting general evidence about the school. All of the above databases were built and collected over three academic years. Sort proofs by criteria, standards, and coding proofs.

Eighth, the self-assessment of schools must be public and committed to quality for the whole society. Therefore, the self-assessment must show objectivity and honesty; explanations, judgments, and conclusions should be based on specific and clear information and evidence, ensuring high reliability; cover all the criteria in each standard.

Ninth, prepare carefully and properly in terms of content and form of the self-assessment report, the list of evidence must be clear and convenient for retrieval, and the evidence boxes must be neatly arranged, with each criterion. The logistics before and during the assessment should be well prepared.

CONCLUSION

Accreditation gives vocational colleges the opportunity to systematically review their entire operations in order to align their operations to a certain standard. From the self-assessment of the quality of vocational education institutions of vocational colleges, it has shown that there is a strong and profound impact on all aspects of the work of the Colleges, changing from awareness to action. of the leadership team to the lecturers and learners. Vocational colleges have also realized the difficulties and limitations in the process of self-assessment and quality accreditation, on that basis, they have also developed a number of solutions to overcome this task to be more effective in time. next time. With the motto "For the community - serving the community", all the guiding points to the plans and actions of the vocational colleges in the coming time are not only associated with ensuring the quality of teaching and learning but also demonstrate responsibility for the commitments that the vocational colleges have built over the years.

Completing the system of the State's documents on self-assessment and quality accreditation of vocational education is a necessary job. Continue to review the State's documents on self-assessment and quality assessment. At the same time, it is necessary to organize conferences, seminars, refresher courses, and training courses on accreditation by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the General Department of Vocational Education and Training, and other specialized agencies to organize recommendations for inadequate content, there is no consensus in the work of self-assessment and inspection. From there, there is a basis for completing documents and regulations of the State to ensure consistency in all self-assessment activities.

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