

# The Path of Constructing Incentive Mechanism for Community Education Teachers Based on Two-Factor Theory

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Abstract. In the current social context of building lifelong learning for all, community education has an irreplaceable role in promoting and facilitating the creation of community spiritual civilization and the improvement of lifelong education system. As the backbone of community education development, the professional ability of community education teachers determines the overall development level of community education. However, at present, community educators generally face outstanding problems such as insufficient professional protection, restricted development paths, and the lack of a perfect appraisal system and incentive mechanism, which have become the main blocking factors for the professional development of community education teachers. Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this study explores how to enhance the motivation and satisfaction of community education teachers in the field of community education by identifying and optimizing motivational and health factors to establish an effective incentive mechanism, aiming to provide theoretical and practical references for the sustainable development of community education and the improvement of education quality.

**Keywords:** Two-Factor Theory; community educators; incentive mechanism; path of construction.

#### 1 Introduction

Community education, as an important way of building a lifelong education system and realizing the lifelong learning needs of individuals, has received widespread attention worldwide. As the core force in promoting the development of community education, the role of community educators should not be underestimated. The teaching quality and work enthusiasm of community education teachers directly affect the effectiveness of educational activities and the learning motivation of community members. In August 2016, the Opinions on Further Promoting the Development of Community Education issued by the Ministry of Education and nine other departments clearly pointed out that it is necessary to vigorously improve the professionali-

zation of the team of community educators, and to give full play to the role of social work professionals in community education[1]. However, restricted by many factors such as policy support and guarantee system, community education teachers are facing various challenges such as low motivation and limited space for career development, and there are still many problems in the process of community education teachers' team building. Therefore, the current construction of an effective incentive mechanism to enhance the work motivation and satisfaction of community educators has become the key to improving the quality of community education. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, as an important theoretical framework for understanding work motivation, provides a theoretical basis for analyzing and constructing incentive mechanisms. In view of this, this study analyzes the existing problems and motivational needs of current community educators, and applies the Two-Factor Theory to the path of constructing incentive mechanisms for community educators, with a view to effectively motivating individual motives, improving the work motivation of community education teachers, and driving the enhancement of their work performance, so as to promote the development of community education.

## 2 The Two-Factor Influence Mechanism of Community Education Teachers' Incentive Management

#### 2.1 Basic Connotation of the Two-Factor Theory

The American psychologist F. Herzberg proposed the Two-Factor Theory of work motivation, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which divides the factors affecting employee attitudes into two broad categories: motivational factors and hygienic factors, which have different effects on employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Motivational factors include a sense of accomplishment, job recognition, interest in the job itself, a sense of responsibility, and the availability of opportunities for growth and advancement. According to Herzberg, these factors are directly related to the content of the job and can enhance employee job satisfaction. Employees' fulfillment in these areas enhances their motivation and incentives to work, which in turn improves work efficiency and quality. However, when these motivational factors are absent, it does not directly lead to employee dissatisfaction, but may result in a lack of motivation. Hygienic factors, on the other hand, are mainly related to policies and management, compensation and benefits, working conditions, and relationships among coworkers. These factors are more related to the work environment and background conditions and do not directly trigger job satisfaction. However, poor condition of hygienic factors can cause employee dissatisfaction and affect their mood and work attitude. Herzberg points out that the safeguarding of good hygienic factors can prevent the creation of employee dissatisfaction, but is not sufficient by itself to enhance employee satisfaction. Also he emphasized that in order to improve employee satisfaction and reduce dissatisfaction, managers need to focus on both types of factors[2]. By improving hygienic factors, the creation of dissatisfied employee attitudes can be avoided, while by increasing motivational factors, employee satisfaction and motivation can be directly enhanced. This distinction provides a clear framework to help managers identify and implement effective motivational strategies to promote employee motivation and job effectiveness. The Two-Factor Theory not only reveals the mechanisms by which motivational and hygienic factors play a role in the formation of employees' work attitudes, but also provides valuable guidance for managerial practice, emphasizing the importance of stimulating intrinsic motivation while satisfying employees' basic needs.

### 2.2 The Applicability of Two-Factor Theory in Motivational Management for Community Education Teachers

Generally speaking, the community education teacher team covers full-time community education staff, part-time staff and volunteers, while the community education staff, as the main force of China's community education teacher team, has a key leading role in promoting the specific work of community education. In this study, community education teachers mainly refer to those who take community education as their occupation, and have certain working ability and professional quality to carry out the organization, planning, implementation and teaching of community education activities for community residents, i.e., "full-time" teachers whose whole or main duty is to engage in community education management and teaching[3] 70. The specificity of their work stems not only from the diversity and complexity of the duties of community education teachers, but also from the diversity and uncertainty of the age and style of the educated people they deal with. Compared with traditional school education, community education emphasizes more on access and inclusiveness of education and aims to meet the diverse learning needs of community residents. As a result, community education teachers not only need to possess specialized educational skills, but also strong social interaction, problem-solving and innovation skills to adapt to changing educational needs and complex community environments. The special nature of this work and the high demand for community education teachers' professional knowledge, professional ability and professional quality make it more urgent to build a scientific, effective and targeted incentive mechanism.

The successful application of the Two-Factor Theory in business management demonstrates its effectiveness in stimulating employee potential and improving work efficiency. Applying the Two-Factor Theory to the field of community education implies the need to meticulously identify and understand the motivational and hygienic factors affecting community education teachers. Community education teachers' motivation to work is not only influenced by extrinsic factors, such as salary, work environment and social recognition, but also extremely dependent on intrinsic motivation, such as love of education, sense of achievement and professional identity. This fits with the core components of intrinsic motivational factors and extrinsic hygienic factors emphasized by the Two-Factor Theory. Therefore, the Two-Factor Theory can provide a powerful theoretical framework for understanding and enhancing the work motivation of community education teachers, thus guiding management organizations to take appropriate measures to establish scientific and effective motivational mechanisms. Enhancing the work motivation of community education work-

ers requires a comprehensive consideration of motivational and hygienic factors. Optimization of motivational factors can directly improve workers' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, and satisfy their sense of professional achievement and self-actualization needs. Improvements in hygienic factors, on the other hand, are designed to prevent dissatisfaction and ensure a stable work environment and foundation for workers. This bi-directional strategy is essential for designing an effective motivational mechanism for community educators.

## 3 The Reality of Community Education Teachers' Incentive Mechanisms

The construction of community education teacher incentive mechanism is of great practical significance to improve the development motivation of community education teachers and to meet the diversified development needs of teachers. However, it is undeniable that there are still many practical problems in the current incentive mechanism for community education teachers, which not only hinders the professional development of individual teachers, but also affects the overall effectiveness of community education. Recognizing and deeply analyzing these problems is the key to designing and implementing effective incentive mechanisms for community education teachers.

#### 3.1 Inadequate Remuneration Packages

In the field of community education, one of the notable problems faced by teachers is the inadequacy of salary and benefit packages; while this hygienic factor does not directly lead to increased job satisfaction, its absence can cause a strong sense of dissatisfaction, which in turn affects the motivation of employees. In a survey on the professional development of 1,156 full-time community education teachers in Shanghai, the results showed that community education teachers have more and more work assignments, and due to the relatively small number of staff on staff, resulting in full-time teachers being chronically overloaded without a corresponding increase in their salaries and benefits, as many as 40.83% of full-time teachers indicated that the support or help they most expected to receive was an improvement in the salary and benefits package[4] 27. Community education work performance and awards often cannot be linked to the performance requirements for annual appraisal of titles. In some cases, teachers in community education are paid differently for the same work as their counterparts in basic education. This disparity in pay and benefits makes them feel that their work is undervalued. While this affects their immediate job satisfaction, it also has a negative impact on their long-term career planning, leading many outstanding teachers to ultimately choose to leave the field of community education in search of more secure and better-paid job opportunities. Inadequate remuneration packages create a state of constant instability within the community education system, affecting the stability of the teaching force and the quality of teaching. As teachers are the direct influencers of educational quality, their dissatisfaction and high mobility

will be directly reflected in educational outcomes, which in turn will affect the overall effectiveness of community education. Although community education plays an important role in enhancing the quality of life of community members and promoting lifelong learning, teachers' contribution to the process without corresponding economic and social recognition will inevitably affect the morale of existing teachers and reduce the motivation of potential teachers to join community education.

#### 3.2 Inadequacy of the Performance Appraisal System

Another major problem faced by community education teachers is the inadequate performance appraisal system. Its improper design and implementation directly affects teachers' job satisfaction and motivation. In the field of community education, performance appraisal often lacks clear standards, and some districts still appraise community education teachers according to the appraisal standards of primary and secondary school districts. If the assessment mechanism of community education teachers is not sound and perfect, there will be problems such as aging and degeneration within the system[5]. The current performance appraisal in community education often relies too much on subjective judgment and lacks objective and quantitative evaluation standards. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to accurately assess teachers' performance and results, and teachers may feel unfairly treated as a result, especially when the appraisal results are associated with salary and career advancement opportunities. Although the title evaluation system for full-time teachers in community education has been implemented in Shanghai since 2013, the survey found that most teachers consider its conditions to be high and difficult, and that this single, unscientific evaluation mechanism will only increase teachers' work pressure and burnout[4] 26. Secondly, the performance appraisal system of community education often ignores teachers' personal growth and professional development needs. In many cases, the evaluation system focuses more on the achievement of short-term goals than on the planning and support of teachers' long-term career paths. This short-sightedness leads to a lack of incentives for long-term development of teachers, which in turn affects their enthusiasm for teaching and community service. In addition, the diversity and complexity of community education makes it more difficult to develop uniform and fair performance evaluation criteria. Community education teachers usually have to deal with learners of different age groups and backgrounds and conduct various forms of educational activities. This requires a performance appraisal system that can flexibly reflect teachers' performance in diverse settings, which existing systems often fail to do. A fair and transparent performance appraisal system that supports teachers' professional development is the key to improving teacher retention under the Two-Factor Theory, but this goal has not yet been realized in the current community education environment.

#### 3.3 Limited Opportunities for Career Development and Growth

Limited professional development and growth opportunities are another important issue facing community education teachers, which can be viewed as a lack of motiva-

tional factors in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Teachers in community education settings often face the challenges of unclear career growth paths and inadequate professional development support. Due to resource constraints and organizational limitations, it is difficult for community education institutions to provide teachers with systematic career development planning, regular professional training opportunities, or promotion paths. For example, the Education Bureau of Songjiang District in Shanghai only has "The 13th Five-Year Plan for Teacher Training" for primary and secondary school teachers, but no guidelines or policies for teacher training in community education, which leads to a high degree of arbitrariness in the training of community education teachers[6]. For example, the Ningbo Lifelong Education Promotion Regulations of 2014 stipulate that "the professional and technical qualification assessment of full-time teachers engaged in lifelong education shall be included in the assessment of relevant series of professional titles". However, due to the small number of title quotas delegated by the government to community colleges, it is still difficult for community education teachers to be assessed for their titles[7]. This situation makes it difficult for teachers to see their long-term development prospects in their career, thus affecting their work commitment and career satisfaction. In addition, the work of community education teachers is often highly diverse and complex, and they need to constantly adapt to new teaching methods and technologies and meet the needs of different learners. However, the lack of effective professional growth support makes it difficult for teachers to obtain the necessary skill updates and knowledge expansion, limiting their innovation and efficiency in teaching practice. It can be argued that limitations in professional development and growth opportunities not only affect the personal professional satisfaction and commitment of community education teachers, but also indirectly affect the quality and development of community education. Within the framework of the Two-Factor Theory, providing teachers with clear career growth paths and adequate professional development support is a key factor in enhancing teachers' motivation and maintaining the quality of education. However, it is clear that there are still a number of challenges and room for improvement in this area.

#### 3.4 Lack of Psychological Incentives and Identity

The lack of psychological motivation and identity poses a profound challenge to community education teachers, a problem that touches directly on the motivational factors of the Two-Factor Theory, reflecting the core influences on teachers' intrinsic motivation and professional satisfaction. At present, the legal status of community education work in China has not yet been clarified, and the existing community education policy is mainly limited to the guidance of the education administration and lacks sufficient enforcement power. Due to the lack of legally mandatory safeguards, teachers in community education have become marginalized and vulnerable in their social status, which not only affects their social status but also indirectly reduces their sense of professional pride, a feeling that weakens their intrinsic motivation and reduces their enthusiasm to devote themselves to the cause of education. Secondly, the lack of teachers' sense of personal achievement is another important manifestation of

inadequate psychological motivation. Working in an environment with limited resources and insufficient support, it is difficult for teachers to obtain immediate and visible feedback on their work achievements. This is not only about support at the material and policy level, but also about the recognition and appreciation of teachers' work effectiveness. Lack of fulfillment and identity can cause teachers to feel professional fatigue and even burnout. A survey study on burnout factors of 190 community educators shows that 82.10% of community educators believe that low social recognition of community education affects their motivation and stability of their work. causing a certain amount of physical and mental emotional anxiety[8]. The accumulation of these emotions and states is extremely unfavorable to the long-term professional development of teachers. Being in such an environment for a long time, teachers may doubt their career choices and feel that their future prospects are uncertain. It can be seen that the lack of psychological motivation and identity constitutes an important problem faced by community education teachers, which not only involves the psychological experience of teachers in their daily work, but also affects their career development and long-term commitment to education. Under the guidance of the Two-Factor Theory, understanding and focusing on the internal drive brought by this motivational factor is of great significance in constructing an effective teacher incentive mechanism and improving the quality of community education.

## 4 The Optimization Path of Community Education Teachers' Incentive Mechanism under the Perspective of Two-Factor Theory

At present, in view of the many challenges faced by community education teachers, building an effective incentive mechanism is the key to improving the quality of education and promoting community development. These challenges, ranging from insufficient remuneration and benefits to limited professional development to inherent unclear self-positioning and awkward identity, have seriously affected teachers' motivation and teaching effectiveness. Therefore, analyzing the construction of community education teachers' incentive mechanism based on the Two-Factor Theory, we should focus on improving the hygienic factors and enhancing the motivational factors, so as to effectively improve the motivation and teaching effect of community education teachers, and then enhance the quality of education and promote the development of the community.

#### 4.1 Improving the Design of a Comprehensive Remuneration Structure

In constructing an incentive mechanism for community education teachers, the design of a comprehensive remuneration structure has become a key link in the development of a sound safeguard mechanism that plays the role of a supportive hygienic factor. Comprehensive salary structures include not only basic salaries, but also cost-of-living adjustments, performance incentives, professional development subsidies and other diversified salary components to meet the needs and expectations of

different teachers. Basic salaries should be set fairly and competitively, and the various benefits of community education teachers should be effectively improved to ensure that their salary levels and the social benefits they enjoy are not lower than those of teachers in other education types, which is directly related to their basic satisfaction. At the same time, through the introduction of performance incentives, teachers who excel in teaching and community service can be encouraged and rewarded. Such positive incentives not only satisfy teachers' needs for achievement and recognition, but also stimulate their internal drive to continue to improve their performance[9]. In addition, the professional development allowance provides teachers with opportunities for continuous learning and growth, which not only directly supports their professional competence, but also reflects the importance and support given by the educational institution to the professional development of individual teachers. Through the design and implementation of a comprehensive salary structure, community education organizations are able to motivate teachers more effectively and enhance their motivation and teaching quality. In the context of the Two-Factor Theory, the design of this pay structure takes into account the hygienic factor of eliminating dissatisfaction and makes full use of the motivational factor of enhancing satisfaction, reflecting a comprehensive understanding of and support for teachers' needs.

#### 4.2 Innovating Performance Appraisal Models

Performance appraisal is an important hygienic factor in the Two-Factor Theory, and in the path of constructing community education teachers' incentive mechanism based on the Two-Factor Theory, the innovative performance appraisal model is an initiative to indirectly stimulate community education teachers' intrinsic motivation while safeguarding the hygienic factor. This model is designed to ensure that teachers' efforts and achievements are recognized through a fair, transparent and comprehensive evaluation system, while providing meaningful feedback and growth opportunities to stimulate teachers' professional enthusiasm and teaching innovation. An innovative performance appraisal model requires, first and foremost, the abandonment of traditional, one-dimensional appraisal methods in favor of a more comprehensive and diversified appraisal system. This means that evaluation should not only be based on student learning outcomes, but should also cover a wide range of aspects such as teachers' pedagogical innovation, community engagement, professional development and teamwork. In this way, teachers' all-round contributions and efforts are recognized and motivated. In the implementation process, the setting of personalized performance goals becomes a central task. Determining personalized, quantifiable, challenging and achievable goals together with teachers can not only improve teachers' sense of identification with the evaluation system, but also motivate them to achieve personal professional development and improve teaching quality. Personalized goals should be set according to teachers' professional strengths, the teaching environment and students' needs to ensure that each teacher has a clear development direction and growth path. Introduce a 360-degree feedback system that incorporates feedback from students, parents, colleagues and community members into the evaluation system to provide teachers with comprehensive evaluations from multiple perspectives. This multi-source feedback not only provides more comprehensive performance information, but also helps teachers to better understand the effectiveness and impact of their teaching so that they can self-improve on multiple levels. In addition, through regular and timely feedback, teachers are able to continuously adapt and optimize their teaching strategies and approaches to meet the changing needs of their students and communities.

#### 4.3 Building a Platform for Professional Growth and Development

The construction of a professional growth and development platform is an in-depth motivational approach for community education teachers, aiming to enhance their job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness by meeting their growth needs and career development aspirations. The construction of this platform not only focuses on solving the problem of limitation of professional development and growth opportunities faced by teachers, but also works to stimulate teachers' internal motivation and promote the realization of their long-term career plans and personal fulfillment. The design of the professional growth and development platform should be based on an in-depth understanding of individual teachers' career goals, professional skill needs, and potential growth paths. This requires effective communication between community education centers and teachers to jointly identify teachers' career points of interest, long-term career goals, as well as the support and resources they need, to ensure that the design of the platform and the resources provided are closely linked to the actual needs of teachers, and that the platform is more targeted to support teachers' career development. At the same time, the platform should provide diverse career development opportunities, such as professional skills enhancement training, academic research support, education project management experience, and leadership development programs. These opportunities can help teachers find suitable development paths at different stages of their careers, not only to enhance their current teaching and management skills, but also to lay a solid foundation for their long-term career planning. In addition, building a professional growth and development platform should also create a supportive learning and communication environment. This can be accomplished through the establishment of teacher learning communities, peer review and experience sharing sessions. In such an environment, teachers are not only able to acquire new knowledge and skills, but also to exchange ideas with their peers, learn from each other and make progress together. This culture of mutual support and cooperation not only promotes the professional growth of individual teachers, but also enhances the cohesion and sense of belonging among the team. By building a professional growth and development platform, it can effectively respond to the needs of community education teachers for professional development and growth, and provide a systematic and continuous support system. The establishment and operation of such a platform not only recognizes teachers' work and contributions, but also serves as an important way to motivate their continued commitment and innovation. Against the backdrop of the Two-Factor Theory, this strategy of focusing on motivational factors helps to enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation, increase their enthusiasm and commitment to education, and ultimately contribute to the improvement of the quality and sustainable development of community education.

#### 4.4 Deepening the Recognition of the Value of the Teaching Profession

Strengthening the professional identity of community education teachers is the basis for realizing a deepened motivational strategy and an important part of establishing an internal motivational regulation mechanism to bring into play the driving role of incentives. There is still no legislation on community education at the national level in China, which makes the identity of community education teachers ambiguous. Therefore, to strengthen the value identity of community education teachers, it is first necessary for the national government to establish a legal system to protect them. Japan has stipulated the identity of full-time community education workers (social education principals), the content of their duties, and the method of obtaining qualification certificates in its Social Education Law[10]. Therefore, it is possible to draw on foreign experience and combine it with local characteristics to formulate the Community Education Law, following the Constitution, the Education Law and other superior laws, to clarify the vocational identity and professional status of social education teachers at the legal level. On the basis of external guarantees to stimulate the professional interest of community education teachers and enhance their sense of professional sanctity and role honor, teachers can be helped to gain a deeper understanding of their important role and contribution to community education through regular seminars and training on educational philosophy, mission and values. Through such activities, teachers will be able to better recognize the social value and significance of their work, thus enhancing their sense of pride and belonging to the profession. Customized incentive schemes are also implemented to meet the needs and expectations of different teachers. This includes the provision of diverse recognition mechanisms, such as teaching excellence awards, innovative project awards and community service awards, to publicly recognize teachers' achievements and contributions, to continuously stimulate community education teachers' professional self-awareness, and to encourage them to pursue excellence and innovation.

A supportive and motivating work environment can be effectively constructed through the integrated application of the motivational and hygienic elements of the Two-Factor Theory to enhance community educators' satisfaction and teaching effectiveness. This requires not only the investment of strategies and resources at the organizational level, but also continuous evaluation and optimization to ensure that incentives are adapted to changing educational needs and expectations.

#### 5 Conclusion

This study analyzes in depth the real problems existing in the current community education teachers' incentive mechanism, and explores the path to optimize the incentive mechanism of community educators based on the Two-Factor Theory. An effective incentive mechanism not only needs to improve the social security system, play

the supporting role of hygienic factors to improve the current community education teachers' salary, welfare treatment, and build a scientific and perfect appraisal system, but also to establish an internal motivation mobilization mechanism, play the role of incentives to promote the workers' sense of achievement, professional value recognition, and improve the professional development training system to create an incentive mechanism that supports the continuous development and innovation of community education teachers. In order to achieve these goals, the joint efforts of education administrators, policy makers and community leaders are needed to ensure the effective implementation and continuous optimization of the incentive mechanism, so as to further strengthen the construction of the teaching force, provide solid intellectual support for the construction of a lifelong learning system that serves the whole population, and promote the faster and better development of the cause of community education.

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