

Research on the International Development of Higher Vocational Education under the Background of Double Circulation

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Abstract: The current international environment and the proposal of the Double Circulation strategic development pattern have given new progress, new layout and new connotation to the development of China's higher vocational education. However, facing of such difficulties as the unbalanced international development of China's higher vocational education, the insufficient localization of 'bringing in' and the insufficient influence of 'going out', it is proposed to promote the internal circulation by exploring and integrating domestic and foreign resources, promote the external circulation by linking multi-party cooperation and integrating domestic and foreign training models, and enhance dual circulation by promoting international brand effect and encouraging overseas school-running for higher vocational colleges.

1. Introduction

In October 2020, China proposed to accelerate the construction of a new development pattern of double circulation, adhere to the implementation of wider scope, wider fields and deeper opening to the outside world, promote international cooperation and realize the strategic deployment and Simulation of mutual benefit and win-win results. Facing the current international environment and the proposal of the new development pattern of double circulation strategy, China's vocational education should improve the quality of education and promote the quality of international talent training through the internal circulation of 'bringing in' and the external circulation of 'going out', so as to provide an educational foundation for China's international development.

Therefore, it is imperative for China's higher vocational education to realize internationalization and give full play to its advantages in international talent training. Promoting the international development of higher vocational education is of great significance to improve the international adaptability of higher vocational education model, promote the localized operation of Chinese enterprises, and improve the international influence of their own vocational education and the voice of international peers. However, at present, the internationalization of Higher Vocational Education in China is still in the exploratory stage, and the degree of internationalization is far from enough. Therefore, only by implementing the positive internationalization development strategy of higher vocational education and the double circulation path of 'bringing in' and 'going out', can we cultivate skilled talents with international competitiveness. In short, internationalization is the only way for China's higher vocational education to achieve connotative development in the 21st century.

2. New progress new layout and new connotation of internationalization of china' s higher vocational education under the background of double circulation

Since the education internationalization strategy was put forward, China has continuously promoted international cooperation and exploration in the introduction of high-quality educational resources, high-level international talent training and international communication, and has basically formed an all-round, multi-level and wide-ranging pattern of education opening to the

outside world.

2.1 Present the New Progress of Internationalization of Higher Education From a More Open Perspective

With the guidance of national policies, the support of government funds and the main practice of colleges and universities, the double circulation of 'bringing in' and 'going out' of international project cooperation is the main form of internationalization of Higher Vocational Education in China. To be specific, the most direct manifestation of 'bringing in' is the Sino foreign cooperative school running mode. This mode promotes the cultivation of 'foreign language + skilled' talents in skills and technology in domestic and foreign higher vocational colleges, introduces foreign high-quality teaching resources, and promotes the harmony and innovation of domestic training system and teaching mode. At present, in China, there are only 46 Sino foreign cooperative educational institutions in Higher Vocational Education and only 972 Sino foreign cooperative educational projects [1]. table 1 shows the numbers of Chinese foreign cooperatively run schools and projects in higher vocational education.

Table 1 Chinese Foreign Cooperation Schools and Projects

Province	Overseas School	Sino Foreign Project	Province	Overseas School	Sino Foreign Project
Beijing	2	31	Fujian	1	6
Shanghai	3	57	Shandong	8	105
Tianjin	2	6	Jiangxi	0	29
Chongqing	2	23	Sichuan	2	36
Jiangsu	6	184	Anhui	1	28
Zhejiang	5	81	Hebei	1	77
Guangdong	1	53	Henan	3	19
Hunan	0	33	Guizhou	1	15
Shaanxi	2	11	Gansu	0	1
Shanxi	1	23	Inner Mongolia	0	9
Heilongjiang	0	5	Xinjiang	0	10
Liaoning	1	6	Guangxi	1	13
Jilin	1	22	Yunnan	0	15
Hainan	1	19	Hubei	1	55

The manifestation of 'going out' is that Chinese higher vocational colleges set up branches or cooperative projects abroad. According to incomplete statistics, during the 13th Five Year Plan period, more than 70 higher vocational colleges has built 88 overseas education programs in different forms, covering more than 20 countries or regions in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas and Oceania, mainly concentrated in countries along the 'the Belt and Road' such as Thailand, Malaysia and Zambia [2]. Among them, the 'China Zambia vocational and Technical College', the first vocational college independently held by China, and 'Luban Workshop' opened in countries and regions along the 'the Belt and Road' build an international brand of China's vocational education.

2.2 Launch a new layout of internationalization of higher education with a more forward-looking plan

Firstly, overall layout. In April 2016, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the 'Opinions on the work of the opening-up of education in the new era'. As a programmatic document guiding the opening up of education, it clearly defined that 'opening up of education is an important part of China's reform and opening up, which should serve the overall situation of the work of the party and the state and coordinate the overall situation of domestic and international affairs', and firmly put forward the need to 'adhere to the expansion of opening up and strengthen

China's education'. In July 2016, the Ministry of Education issued the education action of promoting the joint construction of the 'the Belt and Road', which elaborated on the positioning role, purpose, cooperation principle, action framework and institutional mechanism guarantee of education in China's 'the Belt and Road' education action, and drew a blueprint for China's education to gradually move towards a world education center.

Secondly, cultural layout. 'The opinions on strengthening and improving the cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries' issued by the office of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council in December 2017. This opinion set a new direction for cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries in the new era. By innovating the high-level cultural exchange mechanism, building an international brand of cultural exchanges, strengthening the construction of comprehensive communication capacity of cultural exchanges, and participating in global governance in the field of cultural exchanges, China has further promoted the development of opening to the outside world.

Thirdly, strategic layout. 'Creating a new pattern of education opening to the outside world' was clearly identified as one of the ten strategic tasks facing education modernization in 'China's Education Modernization 2035' issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council in February 2019. In June 2020, the Ministry of education and other eight departments issued the opinions on accelerating and expanding the opening up of education in the new era, which provided policy guidance for continuing to deepen the exchanges, cooperation and connectivity between China and other countries in the field of education, continuously increasing the reform of Sino foreign cooperation in running schools, and deepening the 'the Belt and Road' education action plan. Furthermore, this opinion has made more comprehensive arrangements for the manifestations, core driving forces, specific objectives and long-term planning of education opening to the outside world. It indicates that under the background of the continuous in-depth development of globalization, China will further consolidate the foundation of education opening to the outside world, achieve the goal of high-quality connotative development, continuously improve the internationalization level of education and actively participate in the construction of global governance system.

2.3 Give new connotation to internationalization of higher education with more realistic understanding

Since 2020, China has put forward a new development pattern of double circulation. This pattern guides the development and practice of various fields in China in the future, which is of great significance. In particular, it has given new cognition and new vitality to promote the internationalization process of China's higher education and broaden the new understanding under the new situation of educational internationalization. The internationalization of education is another driving force for the development of higher education in China, including higher vocational education. In the process of promoting internationalization, we should take the international market's demand for 'foreign language + skilled' talents as the guide, take national policies as the cornerstone, take the promotion and supervision and management of local governments as the driving force, and take higher vocational colleges as the focus, under the multi-level linkage, and infiltrate the elements of internationalization into all aspects of talent training. Only in this way can we realize the improvement of talent training quality, improve the competitiveness of China's Higher Vocational Education in world education, and finally realize the grand goal of internationalization of China's higher vocational education.

Therefore, as the focus of promoting internationalization, higher vocational colleges can broaden the depth and breadth of educational internationalization and improve the quality and level of educational internationalization only by integrating internationalization into all aspects of college teaching management. Specifically, higher vocational colleges should strengthen exchanges and cooperation with international high-level education in many aspects, such as school development strategy, talent training mode, teacher structure, scientific research ability, international cultural exchanges and social services. In the end, we can achieve the effective implementation of

internationalization in building an international campus, international project budget and settlement, international enrollment reward system, overseas talent introduction and training, credit exchange system, exploring international teaching management and online teaching [3].

3. The current status of internationalization of higher vocational education

3.1 Unbalanced development of vocational education internationalization

From the data of 'top 50 international influence of Higher Vocational Colleges' published in the annual report on the quality of China's Higher Vocational Education from 2017 to 2021, it can be seen that, the regional development and the college development of internationalization of higher vocational education are both unbalanced. Firstly, about the unbalance of regional development, from the perspective of distribution area, nearly 50% of the top 50 vocational colleges with international influence are concentrated in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shandong. It can be also seen that the international influence and competitiveness of Higher Vocational Colleges in the eastern region, as well as the awareness and channels of international development, are much higher than those in other regions, and there is a large regional gap in the international development of higher vocational education. Secondly, about the unbalanced development of colleges and universities. As can be seen from the annual report on the quality of China's Higher Vocational Education in 2021, the institutions on the list are distributed in 25 provinces, of which Jiangsu Province has the most selected institutions, followed by Shandong Province, Zhejiang Province and Guangdong Province. It can be seen that colleges with a high degree of internationalization are concentrated in a few higher vocational colleges that first develop international cooperation and exchange, which shows that the development of International Colleges of vocational education is unbalanced.

3.2 The insufficient localization of 'bringing in' in internal circulation

Since 1990s, China has tried to 'bring in' the training mode of foreign countries in the process of internationalization of Vocational Education in four stages, including the German 'Dual System' piloted in the 1980s, the North American CBE course in the 1990s, the Australian 'Training Package' in the early 21st century and the 'Modern Apprenticeship' nowadays. In these four stages, by introducing the talent training and school running mode, curriculum construction standards, teaching resources and methods, teachers, etc. of foreign vocational education, we strive to localize the foreign advanced vocational education experience and achievements, which has laid a solid foundation for the international development of China's higher vocational education. It is an important way not only to cultivate international talents, but also to broaden the international vision and promote the international development.

However, in the process of 'bringing in', we also encountered the situation of the insufficient localization. Specifically, the first difficulty is the limited docking of international educational resources. At present, China's Higher Vocational Colleges 'bring in' mainly cooperate with colleges and universities at the specialized level of higher vocational education, such as community colleges, colleges of vocational technology and continuing education, colleges of Applied Arts, Sciences and technology, which limits the quality improvement of high-quality resource introduction [4]. Taking the event management (Sino Australian cooperation) major of a higher vocational college in Shanghai as an example, this Sino foreign cooperative school running project adopts the '3 + 0' mode and connects with Melbourne Polytechnic (MP) in Australia. MP recognize students' credits during higher vocational education in China. Teaching integration mainly adopts the cooperation mode of sending foreign teachers to undertake some courses. Foreign resources suffer greatly when integrating with the domestic education system, and the introduction of high-quality resources is limited. Secondly, the 'bringing in' effect of international exchanges and cooperation is not strong, especially in the post-epidemic era. Influenced by the language and learning abilities of students in higher vocational colleges, most international exchange and cooperation projects float on the surface and are not integrated into the essence. Especially affected by the global COVID-19, the number of cross-border exchanges students and teachers all over the world has dropped sharply.

Although online communication can make up for some of the problems of poor information integration, the effect of 'bringing in' has not reached the expectation.

3.3 The insufficient localization of 'going out' in external circulation

At present, sharing the successful experience of China's higher vocational education to the world is an important path for the international development of China's higher vocational education to 'go out'. Tianjin Thailand 'Luban Workshop' is the first 'going out' Chinese vocational education brand in the field of higher vocational education, and it is also an important carrier for China's higher vocational education to go international. However, to build an international brand of China's vocational education, there are still some problems in the international development of China's higher vocational education, such as the small pace of 'going out' of overseas schools, the limited 'going out' mechanism of multi-body coordination, and the obstruction of the sustainable development of 'going out' of international services.

First of all, the pace of 'going out' of overseas vocational education is not large. According to incomplete statistics, China has a total of 43 higher vocational colleges with overseas entities, accounting for only 3.02% of the total 1423 Higher Vocational Colleges in China. In terms of geographical distribution, vocational colleges with overseas branches are mainly concentrated in the eastern coastal areas with developed economy, culture and education, such as Zhejiang, Guangdong, Shandong and Jiangsu. From the perspective of partners, the partner countries of overseas campuses are mainly Thailand, Cambodia, Zambia, Malaysia and other countries along the 'the Belt and Road', including 14 overseas campuses in Thailand, 7 in Cambodia and 4 in Zambia. It can be seen that most overseas entity school running institutions are in economically underdeveloped Southeast Asian and African countries, and the pace of 'going out' of overseas school is not large.

Secondly, the multi-agent collaborative 'going out' mechanism of vocational education is limited. The main participants of 'going out' of higher vocational education are generally the government, enterprises and higher vocational colleges. However, although the 'going out' with the government as the main body can fully integrate the resources of all parties, the scale promotion is difficult. Meanwhile enterprises as the main body 'going out' have obvious advantages in industry education synergy and strong development momentum, but the mechanism of collaborative 'going out' has not been established and improved. While the 'going out' of Higher Vocational Colleges covers cultural transmission and advantageous majors, which has strong flexibility, but lacks sufficient financial support, and does not conduct in-depth research on the education system, market demand and legal framework of the importing country. At present, due to the influence of system, mechanism and other factors, the collaborative joint mechanism of government, enterprises and schools is limited [5].

4. Internationalization development path of higher vocational education under the background of double circulation

The internationalization of Higher Vocational Education in China has a long way to go. We must grasp the double circulation of 'bringing in' and 'going out', start from the current situation and difficulties, and form the internationalization development path of Higher Vocational Education in combination with the current demand for international talents

4.1 Development paths to improve internal circulation of 'bringing in'

4.1.1 Combination of top-level design and grass-roots exploration

The original meaning of top-level design refers to the design from top to bottom before building a large system, so as to ensure the compatibility, interoperability and linkage between subsystems [6]. The top-level design provides theories and methods for the internationalization of vocational education, and stipulates the practical objectives, contents and forms of grass-roots exploration. From the perspective of national long-term development strategy, the government should draft relevant laws, regulations and policy document to form the legal basis for the internationalization of

higher vocational education, so as to ensure that there are laws to follow for the 'going out' of higher vocational education. Vocational colleges are the specific implementers of China's vocational education internationalization strategy. The grass-roots exploration activities of vocational colleges are not only the specific practice of implementing the development prospect of top-level design, but also the theoretical basis and source of top-level design. The perceptual knowledge produced by Vocational Colleges in specific international practice activities reflects the image characteristics of the object and provides practical materials and theoretical sources for top-level design. While doing a good job in policy formulation and resource supply, national and local governments at all levels should encourage vocational colleges to explore specific internationalization paths suitable for their own development stage according to their own characteristics and needs, and promote the benign interaction between top-level design and basic exploration [7].

4.1.2 Integrate international resources at home and abroad

Firstly, higher vocational colleges at home and abroad should strengthen communication and cooperation and share international development standards and experience. Higher vocational colleges should constantly internalize the introduced foreign high-quality resources and talent training mode, actively explore the path of 'Introduction' with the new platform of 'Internet + Education', and improve the 'localization' conversion rate of high-quality foreign resources. Secondly, domestic higher vocational colleges should strengthen dialogue and exchange, share the advanced management concept, quality evaluation system and standards of international vocational education, share the new mode of international development of vocational education, gather excellent teaching resources at home and abroad, and realize the integration of international development resources of vocational education.

4.2. Development paths to improve external circulation of 'going out'

4.2.1 Connect the multi-party cooperation of the government, industry and schools to promote the internationalization of domestic vocational education standards going abroad

According to statistics, China's higher vocational colleges set up 188 overseas school in 2018 and 337 in 2019. Since 2012, a total of 43 vocational colleges in China have opened 48 overseas branches in different forms [8], such as the 'Luban Workshop' set up in Thailand, Indonesia and other countries by vocational colleges and enterprises from Tianjin province, and the 'China Zambia Vocational and Technical College' built by China Nonferrous Metals Industry Association in cooperation with 8 vocational colleges such as Beijing Industrial Vocational and technical college and Jilin Electronic Information Vocational and technical college. These 'going out' projects are jointly cooperated by the government, industry or enterprises and schools, integrate domestic excellent teaching resources and enterprise resources, form a brand effect, contribute China's vocational education plan and China's vocational education wisdom to the development of world vocational education, and realize the high-quality integration of domestic and International Vocational Education.

4.2.2 Combine training mode at home and abroad to promote the internationalization of vocational education and talents going abroad

Through the training mode of 'Modern Apprenticeship', China's Vocational Colleges combine the training modes at home and abroad to strengthen the matching and docking of international talent standards, carry out targeted training of international professional and technical talents, and consolidate the path of 'going out' talents in higher vocational colleges. At the same time, we will increase the introduction and training of teachers with international teaching ability, screen foreign advanced resources, online and offline education and training projects, consolidate the language and professional teaching ability of overseas teachers, reserve the talent pool of backbone teachers with international teaching qualification, and promote the international and professional development of Teachers in Higher Vocational Colleges and universities.

4.3 Development paths to improve the integration of double circulation

4.3.1 Promote the international brand effect of higher vocational education in China

By actively building a three-dimensional publicity pattern of all-round, multi-dimensional and wide channels, China's vocational education standards and development achievements are displayed and exported to the outside world, so as to expand China's voice in the field of standard setting. Based on the implementation of China's 'the Belt and Road' strategy, a talent training base based on China's vocational education standards has been established overseas. China's standards run through vocational training for foreign aid, actively promote the export of advanced experience and typical cases of vocational education standards, and create a good atmosphere for promoting foreign exchange and cooperation of vocational education.

4.3.2 Promote the new mode of overseas running of vocational education

All higher vocational colleges should constantly innovate the form of Overseas Vocational Education. Relying on Chinese funded overseas enterprises, we should develop a new overseas school running mode of 'industry first + language + skills + vocational education', and promote the international vocational education service brand with local industrial characteristics of 'going out' of serving regional enterprises. First, fully consolidate teacher resources and enrich curriculum resources to provide training bases and technical guidance for local 'going out' enterprises that urgently need to explore overseas markets. And form a joint force of 'Industry Education Alliance' and share the industrial resources of 'alliance enterprises' to promote the international and high-quality development of Vocational education. The second is to create a 'Luban Workshop' suitable for local governments, industries, enterprises and colleges, and expand in-depth cooperation with overseas colleges and universities to form an overseas school running mode integrating academic education, language teaching and modern vocational education and training.

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