

Analysis of SWOT on the Development and Internationalization of China's Vocational Education in the Context of "The Belt and Road Initiative" Strategy

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Abstract: The belt and road initiative strategy is proposed based on the stable and sustainable cooperation on economy and development between China and neighboring countries. The development of economy can affect every aspect of vocational education development. Therefore, vocational education in China must be moved toward internationalization to achieve sustainable development in the face of the implementation of the belt and road initiative strategy. The analysis data obtained through the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis method on the internationalization of China's vocational education under the background of the belt and road initiative strategy were the advantages analysis (strengths) of continuous maturity in developing of vocational education, which drives by economic development and the foreign employment and entrepreneurship guidance mechanism; the disadvantages analysis (weaknesses) of lack talent cultivation and weak branding of vocational education; analysis of support opportunities given by national policy; and threats analysis of social culture in the involved countries along the route. To further develop and expand China's vocational education under the background of the belt and road initiative strategy, some countermeasures were proposed such as improves cultivation or training of talents, to build strong branding of China vocational education, and faces cultural challenges to facilitate the international development of China vocational education.

Keywords: *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis method; the belt and road initiative; vocational education; internationalization*

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0 Introduction

The vigorous implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative strategy, the influences of China's politic and economy have continuous increasing, but the influence of vocational education has not fully keep pace with China's economy influence. In the context of the Belt and Road strategy, China's vocational education needs to undergo internationally transformation, improve the quality of vocational education, and to create a China's vocational education brand, which is recognized by the international community.

On the one hand, vocational education has been developed in China for one and a half of century,

since more than 100 years ago, Chinese learn from the advanced technologies from the west to resist the invasion of the western powers until the Belt and Road Initiative strategy in this century, China's vocational education had accumulated much of experience and skills which formed a certain framework of vocational education, but the shortcomings that existed within it have not been completed yet; on the other hand, the coupling of vocational education and economy development determines the development direction of China's vocational education which must form an international prospect and move toward internationalization under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative strategy. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of strategy thinking was made by combining overall internal and external conditions of China's vocational education and the international development of China's vocational education under the belt and road initiative strategy, opens up a new development space for the China's vocational education, and helps in constructing the strategy of the belt and road initiative.

1 SWOT analysis of international development of China's vocational education under the background of the belt and road initiative strategy

1.1 Strength analysis

1.1.1 Economic development drives the development of vocational education

The economy of countries along the route involved in the Belt and Road Initiative is generally in a period of upward. The modern educator Zhang Wei said that "there is a very close relationship in between the industry and education," that is, economic activities directly affect the development of vocational education. Therefore, the blooming economy of the countries along the route leads to relatively strong demand for vocational education. According to the study, the per capita GDP of about 75% countries along the Belt and Road is only 42.3% of the world level, and the proportion of vocational education in some countries along the Belt and Road is less than 10%^[1]. Therefore, from the perspective of the interaction between economy and education, the countries along the route of the Belt and Road Initiative have great potential in the development of both economic and vocational education. On the other hand, China's

economic aggregate ranks in second place in the world. The belt and road initiative has made China's economy more broadly developed, and also has a stronger driving force for development in vocational education. China is adhering to the strategies of "going out" and "introducing," continuously to develop and enhance themselves, especially in the aspects of high-speed rail, communications, aerospace, and others, have provided a quality preparation for China's vocational education to shape internationalization brand. In 2017, the contract value of newly signed contracting projects in China with the countries along the route has reached US\$144.3 billion, with year-on-year growth of 14.5%^[2]. Economic exchanges provide an opportunity for the development of vocational education in China and the development of vocational education in countries along the route lead by China. It is a good opportunity for vocational education in China to get hold of the international powers of voice and initiative.

1.1.2 The continuous maturity of foreign employment and entrepreneurship guidance mechanisms

In 2017, the number of college graduates in China reached nearly 8 million which break the higher record. In the face of strong domestic employment pressure, whether China can provide enough jobs has become an urgent problem to be solved. The general age of vocational college graduates in China is about 20 years old with full enthusiasm and courage as their characteristics. Therefore, we should seize these characteristics and giving them active guidance on overseas entrepreneurship and employment, by this, it is not only conducive to solving domestic employment pressure but it also beneficial to China's vocational education in moving toward internationalization. In December 2017, the Ministry of Education had pointed out that it is necessary to focus on matching the employment and entrepreneurship of graduates with the development of the belt and road initiative^[3]. While continuously strengthening the guidance of overseas employment and entrepreneurship for the graduates, externally China is continuously expanding its employment prospects in which China has created nearly 180,000 jobs in the countries along the route under the Belt and Road Initiative. This is not only benefiting the countries along the route but also provides the ease of employment and entrepreneurship for our college graduates in overseas, and this can promote China's vocational education to the international community.

1.2 Weaknesses analysis

1.2.1 Lack of internationalization talent

The most concerned talent type is language talent in the belt and road initiative^[4]. In 2017, the National Languages and Literal Policy Research Center included in the Belt and Road Initiative Language Strategy, which will become an indispensable part of the Chinese language and literal industry^[5]. According to the China Translation Association, >90% of the institutions providing English-Chinese translation services in China, English can be described as “exclusive,” while institutions offering uncommon language services and uncommon language talents are extremely less. The low matching of China on language ability building, especially the construction of uncommon languages with the Belt and Road Initiative strategy has limited the development and growth of Chinese enterprises in the local area^[6]. In terms of the quality of talents, many vocational colleges in China have the phenomenon of too focusing on skills but ignore literacy, and the professional ethics and cultivation of international vision have become weak points. According to the “quality iceberg theory,” the graduates of vocational colleges in China were lack of the “discriminatory qualities” that are not easy to be directly observed, such as professional ethics, professional attitudes, and sense of responsibility. Students lack of international perspective and lack of the cognition on the combination of the structure of era and own personal planning which then will affect the output of our talents.

1.2.2 Weakness of vocational education branding

Market and quality are the essences of the branding of vocational education. The lack of society serviceability of China’s vocational education, lack of long-term planning, and lack of brand effect have not been widely recognized by the international community. Taking international cooperation in building school as an example, the specialist projects have reached 70% in cooperation with the countries along the route, <4% of the undergraduate degree courses, and only 9 out of the 89 educational institutions in cooperation are in the board of 2016 QS World University Comprehensive List^[7]. The attraction of vocational education in China toward high-quality universities and resources is lower, which indirectly reflects the weakness of the branding of vocational education in China. Branding and recognition are mutually, only when it is considerable strength and quality, it can attract more quality cooperation

partners under the belt and road initiative strategy and thus enhance the visibility and recognition of China vocational education.

1.3 Opportunities analysis

At present, 62 vocational education teaching committees have been established at the national level, and about 1300 vocational education groups have been established nationwide to support the development of vocational education^[8]. At the same time, China has set up a “China belt and road initiative network” and the others to provide a large amount of data information and policy inquiry services to support the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. In 2015, the Ministry of Education pointed out that it is necessary to pay attention to the use of high-quality teaching resources abroad and strengthen the affiliation between outstanding local and abroad universities^[9]. In 2016, Tsinghua University and Fudan University jointly published the “China Labor Market Skills Gap Study,” pointing out that the problem of structural unemployment in the Chinese labor market has become more prominent. It is necessary to improve the vocational education system and strengthen the joint training of schools and enterprises to increase the supply of talent. In 2016, the Ministry of Education advocated that the belt and road initiative countries should focus on long-term cooperation and coordinated development on the foundation of both economics and education^[10]. In 2017, the general office of the State Council of the CPC Central Committee issued the “Several Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Communication work in between Chinese and Foreigner,” and made a new interpretation of the connotation of “Communication,” emphasizing to focus on more deeper and influential and more in-depth communication with people, and these are instructive and inspire in to communication and cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. The formulation and implementation of these policies and regulations have pointed out the correct direction for the international development of vocational education in China and have brought unprecedented opportunities for its development.

1.4 Threats analysis

The goal of cultural is the most difficult factor to measure by the specific indicators in the belt and road initiative strategy, but it reflects the “depth” of the belt and road initiative construction. The rise of the economic and trade index does not represent an increase in the

spiritual and cultural exchanges between the people of all countries. Therefore, only the mutual understanding, initiative intolerance and communication of the people of all countries can create a deep harmonious and open-minded strategy of the Belt and Road Initiative strategy. The countries along the route under the belt and road initiative have distinctive characteristics in politics, religion, and other social and cultural aspects. China and the countries along the route have a low common in culture but high cultural differences. In the short term, cultural differences pose challenges to the cultivation of talents in the aspects of cultural identity and respect, professional versatility, and intercultural communication skills in vocational education in China. First of all, the “stereotype” of a country or region will affect people’s cognition. The cognitive bias on geography and humanities affects the attitudes and behaviors of the workers. Second, cultural identity and respect will also affect the behavior and attitude of the employed. The lack of certain cultural identity and respect of workers will easily lead to the “theory of ethnic central,” which is not conducive to build harmony and friendly social atmosphere. Third, overseas employment poses a huge challenge to the job-transfer adaptability of the employees, ensuring that the employee can maximize their professional skills in different work environments, that is, the construction of universal capabilities is necessary.

2 The research on promoting the path of China’s vocational education internationalization under the background of belt and road initiative strategy

2.1 Strengthening the advantages

The belt and road initiative has brought a strong development momentum to vocational education, while the development of vocational education is also counterproductive to the economy. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the law of mutual promotion between the economic development of the Belt and Road Initiative and the vocational education in China, to develop economic and creates the brand of vocational education. In 2017, the number of China students studying abroad was 608,400, and the number of foreign students studying in China was 489,200^[11]. The “imbalance” between students studying abroad and studying in China still existed. Therefore, there are still some shortcomings in the promotion of vocational education brands in China.

In 2016, 10 provinces and cities in China have introduced talent training programs with local specialties. There are 24 universities in China have established a profession that fits the belt and road initiative, and strives to embark on the quality in the branding of China’s vocational education through the combination of production, study and research, and school-enterprise cooperation. Actively develop and construct a large number of available places in China, build a systematic study abroad education system, increase the chances of obtaining scholarships, and encourage outstanding students from countries along the route to study in China. At the same time, through the opening of the “Luban Workshop” and other workshops with meaningful Chinese traditional culture and the beauty of Chinese craftsmanship, the influence of China’s vocational education will be enhanced; and the overseas jobs created by the Belt and Road Initiative will be firmly grasped, and actively encourage graduates to go abroad to challenge themselves and the vocational education play the role of vocational education in promoting economic development.

2.2 Weakening the disadvantages

2.2.1 Increase the intensity of international talent training

In the face of a large number of talents need in the belt and road initiative, China’s vocational education may not be able to provide sufficient counterparts for supply in a short period of time. Therefore, in terms of talent training methods, the method in selecting “excellent class” can be adopted, to train a group of outstanding talents to support construction. In the training curriculum, focus on the implementation of ideological and political courses, and on the basis of ensuring the ideological and political consciousness of talents. Strengthen the cultivation of professional versatility and enhance the “discriminatory quality” of talents, including comprehensive capacity building such as internal drive and comprehensive professional attitude construction; focus on incorporating enterprise feedback indicators in the talent assessment mechanism and pay attention to patriotic dedication in school and enterprise training and humanity quality by creating of a soft environment.

2.2.2 To create a Chinese vocational education brand

To build a vocational education brand, we must focus on enhancing the marketability and quality of vocational education. In terms of marketability, first of all, should

establish a school which is running with the philosophy like starting from the market and falls into the market. Assures the “variables” in talent output and market demand. Carefully studies the laws of “variables,” and adjusts majors and courses setting according to market demand. Second, establish a third-party platform for cooperation with enterprises. Timely release the latest market information, and strengthen the connection between schools and the market and the development of circular cooperation. Third, the school and enterprise should coordinate and formulate a reasonable incentive and restraint mechanism, so as to encourage the enthusiasm of enterprises and schools to participate in each other. Ensure that the rights and interests of both parties are not infringed in principle, and reasonably regulate the cooperation between the two parties; emphasis on enhancing practical courses, allowing students to enter the first-line production base. At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the advanced concepts of enterprises in real time, let excellent employees enter the classroom and enhance the coupling of school education and market development. Fourth, we must increase our focus on social and business satisfaction and enhance the social service capabilities of vocational education.

2.3 Seize the opportunity

The implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of vocational education has laid a solid foundation for China’s economic and opened up a new path for the international development of China’s vocational education. To achieve the international development of vocational education, we must seize the opportunity to carry out international cooperation in running schools, innovate and optimize the school-running mechanism, actively coordinate the laws and regulations for the establishment of industry recognition, and improve the service capability and quality level of China’s vocational education, and to create a China vocational education brand and promote the Chinese profession to the world. While seizing the opportunity to promote China’s vocational education “going out,” we must also pay attention to the introducing of foreign high-quality university resources, attract high-quality international students, strengthen international cultural exchanges, and promote the continuous development of vocational education.

2.4 Facing the challenge

In the face of cultural challenges, whether it is for countries along the route under Belt and Road Initiative

or for other countries, adhere to cultural confidence is the primary response. Under the belt and road initiative, to create more overseas employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for vocational education graduates, we must not only strengthen cultural self-confidence but also focus on the firmness of political standpoint and only the combination of the two can lay the foundation and deepest belief.

Vocational education should pay more attention to humanistic care, set up a special emotional adjustment aid organization, provide psychological counseling and emotional management, knowledge counseling for students in school, and provide follow-up assistance to graduates in employment. Second, vocational colleges must improve the general ability building of students through the construction of campus culture and optimization of courses: Encourage students to obtain the “general management ability level certificate,” strengthen professional ability; carry out cultural and stylistic activity to improve students’ planning and communication skills; optimize the curriculum, strengthen intercultural communication education, strengthen the understanding education of the cultural of the countries along the route, and focus on the tolerance in cultural construction of other countries, and the dissemination of China’s excellent culture. Third, pay attention to creating a nice and soft social environment. Regardless of domestic and foreign development, we should create a harmony social atmosphere of pragmatic, treat others nicely, tolerance, and face the cultural challenges of the international development of vocational education in China.

3 Conclusion

The belt and road initiative is a major strategic project in China. Under this background, China’s vocational education must closely adjust to the pace of the times and open up new paths for international development. The international development of China’s vocational education has its advantages and weak points. It faces both threats and opportunities which must strengthen the economic development to drive the development of education and the advantages of foreign employment and entrepreneurship guidance mechanisms; weaken the disadvantages of talent cultivation and professional education branding; to seize the great opportunity of national policy orientation, actively respond to the challenges of social culture; continuously promote the international development of China’s vocational

education, and helps in constructing the belt and road initiative.

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