

Research on the Cultivation Path of International Talents in Higher Vocational Colleges under the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract: With the in-depth advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative, the demand for international talent is becoming increasingly urgent. As an important base for cultivating technical and skilled talents, higher vocational colleges play an irreplaceable role in serving the national strategy and facilitating the Belt and Road Initiative. Starting from the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, this article analyzes its value in cultivating international talents and points out the important role of international talents in promoting economic cooperation and cultural exchanges among countries along the Belt and Road. On this basis, combined with the current situation of cultivating international talents in higher vocational colleges, the study deeply analyzes the main existing dilemmas. This not only provides theoretical references and practical guidance for cultivating international talents in higher vocational colleges but also offers useful explorations for innovating the training model of technical and skilled talents under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords: The Belt and Road Initiative; Talent cultivation; Higher vocational colleges; International talents

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1. Overview of the background of the Belt and Road Initiative

1.1. Definition of the Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative is a major international cooperation initiative proposed by China, which stands for “the Silk Road Economic Belt” and “the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road.” Since its proposal over a decade ago, the Belt and Road Initiative has entered a stage of improving quality and efficiency from scale development. The initiative aims to promote regional cooperation and common prosperity by strengthening policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges among countries along the routes^[1]. In terms of connotation, the Belt and Road Initiative is not only a platform for economic cooperation but also an important link for cultural mutual learning

and people-to-people connectivity. Its core lies in building a new model of international cooperation for mutual benefit and win-win results through open cooperation.

1.2. The value of the Belt and Road Initiative in cultivating international talents

Firstly, the Belt and Road Initiative promotes economic cooperation and exchanges among countries along the routes. Through cultivating international talents, higher vocational colleges can provide high-quality technical and skilled talents for these countries, contributing to local economic development and industrial upgrading. Secondly, the Belt and Road Initiative emphasizes cultural diversity and mutual learning among civilizations. By cultivating international talents, higher vocational colleges can help students better understand the cultural backgrounds and business environments of different countries, and cultivate their cross-cultural adaptability and international competitiveness ^[2]. In addition, the Belt and Road Initiative promotes the international development of vocational education, providing higher vocational colleges with opportunities for educational cooperation that align with international standards. This international cooperation model not only improves the educational quality of higher vocational colleges but also provides rich resources and practical experience for cultivating international talents.

1.3. The promotional role of the Belt and Road Initiative in innovating the educational model of higher vocational colleges

With the in-depth implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, the demand for technical and skilled talents from countries along the routes is increasing. Higher vocational colleges can develop more professional courses and training programs that meet international standards according to actual needs. In addition, higher vocational colleges can take the opportunity of the Belt and Road Initiative to carry out school-enterprise cooperation with countries along the routes, promoting the integrated development of “production, education, and research”. Through cooperation with international enterprises, students can intern in a real-world international scientific research environment, accumulate practical experience, and enhance their employability. At the same time, colleges can also absorb more international educational resources, such as hiring foreign teachers, updating teaching facilities, and sharing the latest educational technologies, thus improving the overall educational level ^[3-5].

2. Dilemmas in cultivating international talents in higher vocational colleges

2.1. Vague positioning in cultivating international talents

Higher vocational colleges lack a clear positioning in the training objectives, directions, and paths of international talents, resulting in many problems during the talent-cultivation process ^[6]. Firstly, the training objectives are unclear. Higher vocational colleges fail to accurately define the connotation of “internationalization” in cultivating international talents, leading to unsatisfactory training results. Secondly, the training direction is ambiguous. Higher vocational colleges fail to clearly position the target group in cultivating international talents, making it difficult to optimize the training model, and resulting in a lack of pertinence and effectiveness in cultivating international talents.

2.2. Low international literacy of the teaching staff

Firstly, teachers generally have insufficient foreign language skills. In the countries along the Belt and Road, there are a wide variety of languages, which pose higher requirements for teachers. However, among the current

teaching staff in higher vocational colleges, the number of teachers who can proficiently master the languages of these countries is extremely limited. Secondly, teachers' cross-cultural communication skills are relatively weak. International education requires teachers not only to have language skills but also cross-cultural understanding and communication skills ^[7-9]. However, most teachers in higher vocational colleges lack an international perspective and cross-cultural experience and have insufficient understanding of the cultures, educational systems, and social customs of countries along the Belt and Road. The lack of cross-cultural capabilities makes teachers often feel overwhelmed when communicating with international partners, guiding international students, or carrying out transnational projects, thus affecting the effectiveness of international education.

2.3. Incomplete school-government-enterprise collaborative cooperation

Firstly, the school-government-enterprise collaborative cooperation mechanism is imperfect. Higher vocational colleges lack an effective communication and collaboration mechanism with the government and enterprises during the process of cultivating international talents. Secondly, the collaborative goals of schools, governments, and enterprises are inconsistent. In cultivating international talents, the goals and demands of schools, governments, and enterprises vary. Schools pay more attention to the quality and characteristics of talent cultivation, the government focuses more on policy guidance and resource allocation, and enterprises are more concerned about the practicality and matching degree of talents. This inconsistency in goals makes it difficult for schools, governments, and enterprises to form a joint force, and it is difficult to build a systematic and sustainable international talent-cultivation model. Thirdly, the school-government-enterprise collaborative cooperation lacks an international perspective ^[10-11]. Under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, cultivating international talents requires a global perspective and an open-minded approach. However, current cooperation among schools, governments, and enterprises is more limited to the domestic level, lacking an international perspective and the ability to integrate international resources.

3. Cultivation paths of international talents in higher vocational colleges under the Belt and Road Initiative

3.1. Top-level design: Clarifying the targets and objectives of cultivating international talents in higher vocational colleges

Students enrolled through Sino-foreign cooperative education programs are the main group of international talents in higher vocational colleges. By cooperating with higher vocational colleges or vocational education institutions around the world, joint courses and degree programs that meet international requirements can be established, providing students with opportunities for dual degrees and cross-cultural exchanges, enhancing their international perspective and transnational vocational skills, and cultivating compound technical talents with Chinese characteristics who can also meet the needs of the global market ^[12]. International students coming to China, especially those from the Belt and Road countries, are also an important source of international talent in higher vocational colleges. By improving their technical abilities and practical experience, they can become bridges for cultural exchanges between China and other countries and promote the internationalization of China's vocational education brand. In addition, with the advancement of overseas cooperative education projects of vocational colleges, local personnel in recipient countries of foreign-aid education are another key group of international talents in higher vocational colleges. Through vocational education brands such as Luban Workshops and Silk Road Institutes, higher vocational colleges can dispatch teachers and training experts to

provide vocational skills training and curriculum support to recipient countries. This not only helps to improve the vocational education level of recipient countries but also cultivates a group of technical talents that meet the development needs of their own countries, promoting international cooperation and talent exchanges in Chinese-characteristic vocational education.

3.2. Teaching staff construction: Building a “dual-qualified” teaching team with “international literacy + vocational skills”

To meet the needs of cultivating international talents, higher vocational colleges must build a “dual-qualified” teaching team with both an international perspective and solid vocational skills. Firstly, teachers should have strong cross-cultural communication skills and international education concepts, and be able to help students expand their international perspective and improve their cross-cultural adaptability^[13]. In addition, teachers need to continuously improve their professional skills, especially in response to the specific industrial requirements of countries along the Belt and Road, and cultivate a teaching team that can directly serve international development.

Therefore, higher vocational colleges can take the following measures. Firstly, strengthen international exchanges and cooperation for teachers. Encourage teachers to conduct academic exchanges, training, and short-term secondment in countries along the Belt and Road. By actually participating in international projects, teachers can improve their cross-cultural adaptability and international teaching experience. Secondly, introduce foreign teachers and experts to enrich the diversity of the teaching team, form a diversified teaching resource, and improve the international level of teaching. Thirdly, promote the “enterprise-college” cooperation model. Invite industry experts and enterprise technicians to participate in the teaching process, which not only improves teachers’ vocational skills but also enables them to provide students with more practical operations and an international perspective.

3.3. International communication: Strengthening the construction of international digital teaching resources

By building international digital teaching resources, schools can promote the “going global” of vocational education and the international communication of Chinese-characteristic vocational education. With the acceleration of the global digital process, the construction of international digital teaching resources has become an important means to promote the “going global” of vocational education. Higher vocational colleges should make full use of information technology to build an open and shared digital teaching resource platform, to spread Chinese-characteristic vocational education to the Belt and Road countries, and to promote Chinese vocational education to the world. Higher vocational colleges can use digital technology and online platforms to develop vocational education courses with multi-language and multi-cultural backgrounds that meet international requirements. Through transnational platforms and virtual classrooms, the limitations of time and space can be broken, allowing students in the Belt and Road countries to receive Chinese higher vocational education anytime and anywhere, and improving their professional skills and cultural understanding^[14]. International digital resources can also be optimized and shared through cooperation with well-known international educational institutions to improve the international level and teaching quality of courses. For example, in fields such as transportation and engineering technology, digital textbooks and cases can be jointly developed with vocational colleges or industry associations in countries along the Belt and Road to form a

globally competitive textbook system. The construction of digital resources can also promote the interaction and communication between Chinese and foreign teachers and students, establish transnational education communities, share educational concepts and practical experiences, and further strengthen cultural identity and technical cooperation. This not only helps to enhance the international influence of Chinese vocational education but also provides new opportunities for the “going global” of Chinese vocational education, promoting the in-depth spread of Chinese-characteristic vocational education on a global scale. Through the construction of international digital teaching resources, the internationalization process of cultivating “Made-in-China” talents can be effectively promoted, and transnational cooperation and win-win development in vocational education can be achieved.

3.4. Integration of industry and education: Relying on the international brand of vocational colleges

In the new era of vocational education development, the integration of industry and education is not only the core feature of vocational education but also a key path to promoting the cultivation of international talents. To achieve this goal, higher vocational colleges need to actively seek strong support from the government. As the leader in the integration of industry and education, the government should provide a solid institutional guarantee for cultivating international talents in higher vocational colleges by formulating relevant policies. For example, local governments can set up special funds to support higher vocational colleges to carry out in-depth cooperation with enterprises in countries along the Belt and Road and jointly build an international school-enterprise cooperation platform. Secondly, learning from successful models is another key way to promote the integration of industry and education ^[15]. The successful experiences of Luban Workshops and Overseas Silk Road Institutes not only demonstrate the high level of China’s vocational education but also prove the important role of the integration of industry and education in cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents. Therefore, higher vocational colleges in various regions should actively connect with regional advantageous industries according to their own characteristics and regional advantages and establish long-term and stable cooperative relationships with multinational enterprises. This cooperation can not only match the learning content of higher vocational students with the requirements of enterprise job capabilities but also enable students to master the core skills required for actual work through jointly building international training bases and carrying out order-based talent cultivation. At the same time, higher vocational colleges should actively implement the “bringing in” strategy and recruit international students from countries along the Belt and Road. By implementing the international talent-cultivation model of “Chinese + culture + vocational skills”, international students can not only deeply understand and master the Chinese language and culture but also receive vocational skills training and certification services. The students cultivated in this way will have the ability to spread Chinese stories, culture, experience, and technology and become goodwill ambassadors.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Belt and Road Initiative provides important opportunities and also sets higher requirements for cultivating international talents in higher vocational colleges. Higher vocational colleges need to adopt an open-minded perspective and innovative thinking to actively meet the challenges of cultivating international talents, cultivate more high-quality technical and skilled talents with an international perspective, cross-cultural

communication skills, and professional skills for the Belt and Road Initiative, and contribute to promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

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