Research on the High-Quality Employment Pathways for Graduates of Local Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

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Abstract: In the context of improving the quality and excellence of vocational education and deepening industry-education integration, local vocational colleges, as the core carriers for cultivating technical and skilled talents, have graduates whose high-quality employment is not only crucial for the survival and development of the institutions themselves but also holds significant importance for serving local industrial upgrading and alleviating structural employment contradictions. Currently, industry-education integration in local vocational colleges still faces issues such as an inadequate collaborative mechanism, disconnection between talent cultivation and industrial needs, insufficient effectiveness of practical teaching, and an imperfect employment service system. These problems lead to difficulties including low employment quality, poor job matching, and limited career development prospects for graduates. Based on the core connotation of industry-education integration and considering the characteristics of local vocational colleges and the current employment situation of graduates, this paper analyzes the intrinsic relationship between industry-education integration and high-quality graduate employment, explores the key factors restricting their deep integration, and finally proposes specific pathways to promote high-quality employment for graduates of local vocational colleges from five dimensions: reform of talent cultivation models, improvement of industry-ducation collaborative mechanisms, strengthening of practical teaching, enhancement of employment services, and optimization of policy guarantees. The aim is to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for local vocational colleges to deepen industry-education integration and improve their employment work.

Keywords: Industry-education integration; Local vocational colleges; Graduates; High-quality employment; Pathway research

0. Introduction

As China's economy enters a stage of high-quality development, with continuous optimization and upgrading of the industrial structure, the demand for technical and skilled talents has become increasingly urgent. This is especially true during the transformation and upgrading of local industries, which urgently require a large number of high-quality technical and skilled talents with practical capabilities and a good fit for job requirements. Local vocational colleges, adhering to the purpose of serving local economic and social development, focus on cultivating talents for regional industrial needs. They serve as an important bridge connecting education and industry. The employment quality of their graduates directly reflects the effectiveness of vocational education and also impacts the stability and suitability of the local industrial talent supply.

1. Definition of Related Concepts and Intrinsic Relationships

1.1 Definition of Core Concepts

Industry-education integration refers to the deep integration and collaborative development of industry and education. It breaks down the barriers between the education and industrial systems, achieves co-construction, sharing of resources, and complementary advantages, integrates industrial needs into the entire process of talent cultivation, cultivates high-quality talents adapted to industrial development, and simultaneously uses talent cultivation to drive industrial upgrading, forming a virtuous cycle of "industry-education collaboration, an educational ecosystem, and

employment linkage." Compared with school-enterprise cooperation, industry-education integration emphasizes deeper collaboration, covering multiple levels such as talent cultivation, technological R&D, employment, and entrepreneurship, rather than being merely cooperative practical teaching.

1.2 Intrinsic Relationship between Industry-Education Integration and High-Quality Graduate Employment

Industry-education integration and high-quality graduate employment are mutually reinforcing and dialectically unified. Industry-education integration provides the core guarantee for high-quality graduate employment. Through industry-education integration, institutions can precisely align with local industrial needs, optimize talent cultivation programs, integrate enterprise job standards into the curriculum system, strengthen practical teaching, enhance graduates' practical abilities and job matching, helping them quickly adapt to positions and improve their employment competitiveness. Simultaneously, institutions establish in-depth cooperation with enterprises. Enterprises directly participate in talent cultivation, providing graduates with resources such as internships, training, job positions, and career guidance, thereby broadening employment channels and improving employment quality.

2. Current Employment Status and Problems of Graduates from Local Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

2.1 Overall Employment Status of Graduates

In recent years, driven by national vocational education policies, the employment rate of graduates from local vocational colleges has remained above 90%, making significant contributions to local employment. However, there are still many shortcomings in employment quality: First, job matching is relatively low. Some graduates' jobs are not closely related to their majors, making it difficult to utilize their professional skills, leading to limited career development space. Second, salary levels are not high. Initial salaries are lower than those of graduates from regular undergraduate institutions and grow slowly, affecting employment satisfaction. Third, career development is unstable. Some graduates engage in temporary or entry-level positions, lacking comprehensive training and promotion channels. Fourth, employment satisfaction is not high. Influenced by factors such as job matching, salary, and career development, job changes are frequent.

2.2 Core Employment Problems of Graduates from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

First, the collaborative education mechanism between industry and education is not sound, leading to a disconnect between talent cultivation and industrial needs. Most institutions' industry-education integration remains superficial, with the prominent phenomenon of"enthusiastic schools but cold enterprises." Enterprises passively accept student internships, lacking motivation to participate in the entire talent cultivation process. Second, the effectiveness of practical teaching is insufficient, resulting in weak practical abilities among graduates. The practical teaching model is single, mostly relying on on-campus simulated training, while off-campus internships are often perfunctory, lacking frontline practical training in enterprises. Internship instructors are mostly college teachers who lack frontline enterprise work experience, resulting in poor guidance. Some institutions emphasize theory over practice, neglecting the cultivation of students' practical abilities. Third, the employment service system is imperfect, lacking employment services that connect with industry-education integration. Employment services are not closely linked with industry-education integration. Institutions lack employment linkage mechanisms with enterprises, making it difficult to precisely align with enterprise needs and provide graduates with accurate job recommendations. Furthermore, there is a lack of employment guidance during internships, leading to a disconnect between internships and employment.

3. Constraints on High-Quality Employment for Graduates of Local Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

3.1 Inadequate Policy Guarantee Mechanisms, Lack of Institutional Support for Industry-Education Integration

Although the state has issued multiple policies to promote industry-education integration, local implementation is inadequate, lacking sound guarantee mechanisms: Local government support is insufficient, lacking targeted financial subsidies and tax incentives. The high cost of participation for enterprises leads to low enthusiasm. There is a lack of a sound evaluation mechanism for industry-education integration. There are no effective incentives for enterprises based on their participation outcomes. Evaluation of institutions focuses on employment rates while neglecting employment quality and industrial adaptability, reducing the motivation for institutions and enterprises to advance integration. Relevant laws and regulations are incomplete. The rights and obligations of institutions and enterprises are not clearly defined, making disputes difficult to resolve effectively, affecting the stability and sustainability of integration.

3.2 Unclear Institutional Orientation, Lack of Targeted Industry-Education Integration

Some local vocational colleges have vague positioning, lacking in-depth research on local industries. They blindly follow trends in setting up majors, neglecting regional and applied characteristics, leading to a lack of targeted industry-education integration: Major offerings are disconnected from the local industrial structure. Traditional majors are repetitively set up, while majors for emerging industries are insufficient, causing an imbalance in graduate supply and demand. Talent cultivation objectives are unclear, copying models from undergraduate institutions, emphasizing theory over practice, resulting in graduates with weak practical abilities who struggle to meet enterprise job requirements. There is a lack of long-term planning for industry-education integration, insufficient promotion efforts, and a lack of deep cooperation with enterprises, making it difficult to establish stable collaborative education mechanisms.

3.3 Insufficient Motivation for Enterprise Participation, Lack of Interest-Driven Industry-Education Collaboration

Enterprises, as important entities in industry-education integration, have their participation enthusiasm directly affecting integration outcomes. However, current motivation is insufficient, primarily due to a lack of interest drivers: Enterprise participation requires significant investment of human, material, and financial resources, increasing operational costs. Without targeted local government support, enterprises find it difficult to obtain corresponding returns. The short-term benefits of participation are not obvious. Graduates often cannot create substantial value during internships, and some do not stay with the partner enterprises after internships, making it hard for enterprises to recoup their investments, further reducing participation willingness. Some enterprises have an inadequate understanding of integration, viewing it as a “burden” and overlooking its long-term value for talent reserves and technological R&D, leading to weak initiative.

4. Pathways to Achieve High-Quality Employment for Graduates of Local Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

4.1 Deepen Reform of Talent Cultivation Models to Achieve Precise Alignment of Industry-Education Needs

Reforming talent cultivation models is the core of promoting industry-education integration and enhancing employment quality. Local vocational colleges need to base their work on local industrial needs, precisely define talent cultivation objectives, conduct in-depth research on industrial development status and job requirements, combine with industrial upgrading directions, clarify talent cultivation specifications and requirements, and cultivate technical and skilled talents

with practical abilities, innovative capabilities, and professional 素养. They should optimize the curriculum system, promote the deep integration of course content with enterprise job standards and industrial technical norms, remove outdated content, add content related to emerging industries and cutting-edge technologies, incorporate real enterprise projects and job cases, and achieve the integration of "post, course, competition, and certification." They should innovate "school-enterprise collaboration, work-study integration" teaching models, increase practical teaching hours, implement project-based, case-based, and scenario-based teaching to enhance students' practical and innovative abilities.

4.2 Improve Industry-Education Collaborative Mechanisms to Stimulate Cooperation Motivation for Both Sides

A sound collaborative mechanism is the guarantee for the deep development of industry-education integration. Based on the interests of both schools and enterprises, it is necessary to establish co-construction and co-management mechanisms. Promote the co-construction of industry colleges and training bases by institutions and local key leading enterprises, achieving joint management, joint development of training plans, joint curriculum development, joint teaching implementation, and joint evaluation of outcomes, sharing industry-education resources. Improve incentive mechanisms for enterprise participation. Promote local governments to introduce supportive policies such as financial subsidies, tax incentives, and professional title preferences to reduce participation costs and increase returns for enterprises. Institutions should provide services like technological R&D and employee training for enterprises to achieve mutual benefit and win-win outcomes. Establish an evaluation mechanism for industry-education integration. Incorporate enterprise participation effectiveness, graduate employment quality, and job matching into the evaluation system, recognize outstanding enterprises and institutions, and promote the sustainable and healthy development of integration.

4.3 Strengthen Practical Teaching to Enhance Graduates' Practical Abilities

Practical teaching is key to enhancing graduates' practical abilities and job matching. Institutions need to construct a practical teaching system of "on-campus training + enterprise internship + practical application exercises." Strengthen the construction of on-campus training bases, increase equipment investment, simulate real enterprise job environments, introduce real enterprise production projects, and improve students' on-campus practical abilities. Deepen off-campus internship cooperation, establish stable internship bases with enterprises, implement "post internship" models, allowing students to engage in frontline practical training in enterprises, familiarize themselves with job processes and technical standards, and provide guidance jointly by "dual-qualified" teachers (possessing both teaching credentials and industry experience) and enterprise technical backbone staff. Improve the practical teaching assessment system. Incorporate internship performance, practical skills, and project outcomes into assessments, focusing on evaluating practical abilities and professionalism and comprehensive competencies, thereby motivating students to enhance their practical capabilities.

5. Conclusion

Industry-education integration is the core pathway for local vocational colleges to cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents and promote high-quality graduate employment. It is also an important measure to serve local industrial upgrading and alleviate structural employment contradictions. Currently, industry-education integration in local vocational colleges still faces problems such as an imperfect collaborative mechanism and a disconnect between talent cultivation and industrial needs, constraining high-quality graduate employment. To overcome these difficulties, it is necessary to form an industry-education integration education pattern of "institution-led, enterprise-participated, government-promoted, and society-supported." This research still has limitations, such as insufficient targeted research on different regions and majors. Follow-up studies can combine specific regional and major contexts to further explore

the connecting pathways between industry-education integration and high-quality graduate employment, providing more targeted references for the reform of employment work in local vocational colleges, promoting the high-quality development of vocational education, and helping graduates achieve high-quality employment.

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