

The Mission and Developmental Path Innovation of Vocational Education in the Process of Chinese-style Modernization

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Abstract: Chinese-style modernization, characterized by its immense population size, common prosperity for all, coordination between material and spiritual civilization, harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, and a commitment to peaceful development, cannot be advanced without the support of high-quality technical and skilled talents and the optimization and upgrading of the industrial structure. As an independent educational type operating in parallel with general education, vocational education possesses both educational and service functions. It serves as a crucial link connecting the education chain and talent chain with the industrial chain and innovation chain, undertaking a unique mission in the process of Chinese-style modernization. This paper elucidates the inherent compatibility between Chinese-style modernization and vocational education, clarifies the core mission of vocational education, analyzes the current shortcomings in the adaptation of vocational education development to Chinese-style modernization, and explores targeted innovative strategies for its developmental path. The aim is to provide theoretical reference and practical pathways for vocational education to empower the construction of Chinese-style modernization.

Keywords: Chinese-style Modernization; Vocational Education; Mission Responsibility; Path Innovation; Talent Cultivation

0. Introduction

Advancing Chinese-style modernization is the core strategic task for China's development in the new era. Its essence lies in achieving high-quality development, promoting common prosperity for all people, and modernizing the national governance system and governance capacity. Currently, China is at a critical stage of industrial transformation and upgrading and optimizing the allocation of human resources. The demand for technical and skilled talents in fields such as advanced manufacturing and modern services is increasingly urgent. This provides broad space for the development of vocational education while also presenting higher requirements.

The revised Vocational Education Law of the People's Republic of China (2022) established the typological status of vocational education, clarifying its important role in talent cultivation, industrial service, and social development. However, faced with the diverse demands of Chinese-style modernization, vocational education still suffers from issues such as an indistinct typological character, a disconnect between talent cultivation and industrial needs, and uneven regional development, which constrain the full realization of its mission effectiveness. Deeply exploring the mission of vocational education in the process of Chinese-style modernization and innovating its developmental paths hold significant theoretical and practical importance for promoting the high-quality development of vocational education and empowering the construction of Chinese-style modernization.

1. The Inherent Compatibility Between Chinese-style Modernization and Vocational Education

The core demands of Chinese-style modernization are highly compatible with the typological attributes and functional positioning of vocational education, forming a developmental pattern of "mutual empowerment and symbiotic coexistence." From the perspective of modernization for an immense population, China possesses a vast labor force. Vocational education, as a vital carrier for enhancing labor quality and promoting employment and entrepreneurship, can transform

demographic dividends into talent dividends through targeted skill cultivation, providing human capital support for modernization. Considering modernization for common prosperity for all, vocational education features inclusivity and equity. It can help disadvantaged groups enhance employability and increase income, addressing challenges related to educational equity and income disparity, thereby manifesting its value in poverty alleviation through education and social empowerment. Regarding modernization coordinating material and spiritual civilization, vocational education not only cultivates students' technical skills but also emphasizes the cultivation of professional ethics and craftsmanship spirit, achieving the coordinated advancement of skill enhancement and moral character shaping, aligning with the educational philosophy of "cultivating both virtue and skills." In the context of modernization for harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, vocational education can connect with green industries and energy conservation and environmental protection fields, cultivating green-skilled talents, promoting green industrial transformation, and contributing to ecological civilization construction.

2. The Mission of Vocational Education in the Process of Chinese-style Modernization

2.1 Cultivating High-Quality Technical and Skilled Talents to Consolidate Talent Support

The advancement of Chinese-style modernization is inseparable from the high-quality development of fields like advanced manufacturing and modern services, for which high-quality technical and skilled talents are the core support. The primary mission of vocational education is to cultivate compound talents with solid technical skills, good professional ethics, and job adaptability based on industrial needs, thereby addressing issues like "labor shortage" and "skill gap" in manufacturing. Simultaneously, focusing on emerging industries such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence, and new energy, vocational education should cultivate technical and skilled talents possessing both innovative and practical abilities, promoting technological inheritance and innovation, injecting momentum into industrial transformation and upgrading, and assisting China's transition from a manufacturing giant to a manufacturing powerhouse.

2.2 Promoting Employment and Entrepreneurship to Contribute to Common Prosperity

Common prosperity is an essential requirement of Chinese-style modernization, and employment is a crucial pathway to achieving it. Employment-oriented vocational education can enhance workers' employability and promote high-quality employment through precise alignment with job demands and personalized, targeted skill training. Furthermore, vocational education can cultivate students' entrepreneurial awareness and skills, supporting workers in starting their own businesses and broadening income channels. It can particularly assist disadvantaged groups such as rural migrant laborers, laid-off workers, and persons with disabilities in achieving skill enhancement, employment, and increased income. This helps narrow developmental gaps between urban and rural areas, regions, and groups, demonstrating the value of educational equity and social empowerment, and contributing to the realization of common prosperity.

2.3 Inheriting the Craftsmanship Spirit to Foster Spiritual Civilization

Chinese-style modernization requires the coordinated development of material and spiritual civilization. The craftsmanship spirit, embodying the pursuit of excellence, dedication to one's job, and innovative breakthroughs, is an important component of spiritual civilization construction. Vocational education bears the significant mission of inheriting the craftsmanship spirit and cultivating professional ethics. By integrating the craftsmanship spirit into the entire talent cultivation process—through practical teaching, skill competitions, and on-the-job training—it guides students to adopt a rigorous, pragmatic, and excellence-oriented professional attitude, fostering professional virtues of dedication, integrity, and friendliness. This realizes the value pursuit of "achieving success through skills and serving the nation with skills," laying a solid spiritual foundation for Chinese-style modernization.

3. Current Shortcomings in the Development of Vocational Education in the Process of Chinese-style Modernization

3.1 Indistinct Typological Characteristics and Incoherent System Articulation

Despite the clarified typological status of vocational education, some vocational colleges still adhere to the operational models of general education, prioritizing theory over practice and lacking the distinctive features and advantages of vocational education. Concurrently, articulation within the vocational education system between secondary and higher vocational education is. There is a lack of effective between curriculum systems and cultivation standards, leading to issues of repetitive teaching or. The mechanisms for integrating vocational and general education are imperfect, with narrow advancement pathways for vocational education students to transition to general education. This makes it difficult to meet individuals' diverse development needs, constraining the realization of vocational education's typological value.

3.2 Disconnect Between Talent Cultivation and Industrial Needs

Program offerings in some vocational colleges suffer from severe homogenization, with an insufficiently precise grasp of industrial upgrading and technological iteration in the process of Chinese-style modernization. The development of new programs lags behind industrial advancement, and the transformation of traditional programs is incomplete. Curriculum systems are not updated promptly, lacking teaching content that matches cutting-edge industrial technologies and the latest job standards. The integration of "post, course, competition, and certification" is not deep enough, resulting in a gap between talent cultivation and enterprise job requirements. This makes it difficult to adapt to the demands of high-quality industrial development.

3.3 Insufficient Depth of Industry-Education Integration and Imperfect Collaborative Mechanisms

Industry-education integration is a core pathway for vocational education development, but a phenomenon of "enthusiastic institutions, enterprises" persists. Enterprises show low enthusiasm for participating in vocational education due to a lack of effective incentive and constraint mechanisms. School-enterprise cooperation often remains at a superficial level, lacking stable benefit-sharing mechanisms and long-term collaborative platforms. Enterprises are not deeply involved in the entire process of talent cultivation, curriculum development, and practical teaching, causing industry-education integration to become a mere formality and hindering deep synergy between education and industry.

4. Innovative Developmental Paths for Vocational Education in the Process of Chinese-style Modernization

4.1 Strengthen Typological Positioning and Improve the Articulated and Cohesive System

Based on the typological attributes of vocational education, highlight its distinctive characteristics and move away from dependence on the operational models of general education. First, construct a complete, articulated system encompassing secondary vocational education, higher vocational education, and vocational undergraduate education. Unify standards for program establishment and curriculum systems, promote the standardized development of "secondary-higher vocational articulation" and pathways, achieving gradient enhancement of technical skills. Second, , promote course cross-selection and credit mutual recognition, broaden advancement pathways for vocational education students, and meet individuals' diverse development needs. Third, strengthen the distinctive features of vocational education provision. Focus on practical teaching, deepen the integration of "post, course, competition, and certification," and manifest the vocational and practical nature of vocational education.

4.2 Align with Industrial Needs and Innovate Talent Cultivation Models

Guided by the demands of industrial upgrading, optimize talent cultivation models to enhance the alignment between talent cultivation and industry. First, establish an industrial demand research mechanism. Collaborate with industry associations and enterprises to regularly conduct research on job demands, dynamically adjust program, and build characteristic program clusters aligned with emerging and green industries. Second, deepen curriculum system reform. Integrate cutting-edge industrial technologies and job standards into course teaching, update teaching content, implement modular and project-based teaching, and enhance students' practical and innovative abilities. Third, strengthen the cultivation of the craftsmanship spirit. Integrate it into the entire talent cultivation process to achieve the goal of "cultivating both virtue and skills, integrating work with study."

4.3 Deepen Industry-Education Integration and Build Collaborative Cultivation Mechanisms

Address the issue of "enthusiastic institutions, enterprises" to promote deep industry-education integration and establish long-term mechanisms for school-enterprise collaborative cultivation. First, strengthen government coordination. Improve incentive policies for enterprise participation in vocational education, offering support such as tax reductions and subsidies to enterprises engaged in school-enterprise cooperation. Clarify the educational responsibilities of enterprises and strengthen constraint mechanisms. Second, promote the joint establishment of industrial colleges, training bases, and master studios by schools and enterprises. Achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages, enabling enterprises to participate fully in the entire process of talent cultivation, curriculum development, practical teaching, and evaluation. Third, implement modern apprenticeship systems and new enterprise apprenticeship systems, realizing "enrollment as recruitment, entering school as entering the factory," and enhancing the job adaptability of talent cultivation.

5. Conclusion

In the process of Chinese-style modernization, vocational education, as a crucial carrier for cultivating technical and skilled talents, serving industrial upgrading, and promoting common prosperity, undertakes an irreplaceable mission. Its high-quality development is vital support for empowering the construction of Chinese-style modernization. Currently, vocational education still faces shortcomings such as indistinct typological characteristics, a disconnect between talent cultivation and industrial needs, shallow industry-education integration, and uneven regional development, which constrain the full realization of its mission effectiveness. In the future, it is necessary to base efforts on the core demands of Chinese-style modernization, strengthen the typological positioning of vocational education, innovate talent cultivation models, deepen industry-education integration, optimize resource allocation, and promote the high-quality development of vocational education. This will fully leverage its important role in talent cultivation, industrial service, and social empowerment, injecting enduring momentum into the construction of Chinese-style modernization.

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