

Research on the Development Strategies of International Exchanges and Cooperation of Zhejiang Higher Vocational Colleges under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative. Based on the review of the research status at home and abroad, it conducts research on the international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges from multiple aspects. Through the analysis of the current situation, problems such as unclear international positioning are found. By drawing on the experience of vocational education in Russia, South Korea, and Singapore and using the SWOT analysis method, appropriate goals, concepts, and development countermeasures are proposed, aiming to enhance the influence of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges on the international education stage and provide talent and intellectual support for the Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative; Zhejiang Higher Vocational Colleges; International Exchanges and Cooperation; Development Strategies.

1. Introduction

Since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed, it has been like a powerful driving force, deeply reshaping the global economic pattern and opening up broad prospects for the economic cooperation of various countries. Under this grand economic cooperation framework, international exchanges and cooperation in the education field have ushered in an unprecedented historical opportunity. With the introduction of a series of favorable policies by the state and Zhejiang Province, it has become an inevitable trend for higher education institutions to engage in international exchanges and cooperation. Zhejiang higher vocational colleges have taken advantage of the situation and actively explored the path of international education cooperation. "Silk Road Colleges" have sprung up like mushrooms, and initial achievements have been made in the process of vocational education internationalization. However, it cannot be ignored that in the process of moving towards in-depth development, many difficulties lie ahead. Problems such as confusion in international positioning and lack of international competitiveness have seriously restricted their further development. Therefore, exploring international exchange and cooperation strategies that suit the characteristics of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges is of great significance for their leapfrog development and the improvement of their comprehensive strength and has become a key issue that needs to be solved urgently.

2. Research Status at Home and Abroad

2.1. Domestic Research Status

Compared with Western developed countries, the research on the strategies of international exchanges and cooperation in vocational education in China started relatively late.

However, in recent years, with the rapid development of higher vocational education in China, the academic community has paid increasing attention to this field, and many experts and scholars have actively engaged in related research. Zhang Jiangmei keenly observed that while the Belt and Road Initiative has brought rare opportunities for international exchanges and cooperation in vocational education, it has also plunged colleges and universities into the dual difficulties of a complex international environment and limited their own strength. Based on this, she conducted an in-depth analysis from multiple levels such as government macro guidance, college self-construction, and multi-subject collaborative linkage, and put forward a series of targeted and practical optimization strategies, such as the government strengthening policy support and resource coordination, colleges optimizing internal governance structures and management processes, and promoting in-depth integration of schools, enterprises, and industries, providing systematic guidance for the internationalization of vocational education. Wei Wei et al. focused on the core issue of constructing an internationalized skilled talent training model for colleges and universities, closely following the talent needs of the Belt and Road Initiative. In terms of curriculum system design, they advocated the introduction of international advanced vocational standards and industry norms and the integration of cross-cultural elements to create curriculum modules with both professionalism and an international perspective; in the field of international project management, they emphasized the construction of a scientific and efficient management mechanism covering the whole process of project planning, implementation monitoring, and performance evaluation to ensure the efficient and orderly operation of projects; for the path of cultivating compound talents, they proposed to build a diversified practical platform, integrate on-campus training resources and off-campus international enterprise internship opportunities, and strengthen the coordinated cultivation of students' language ability, professional skills, and cross-

cultural communication ability, providing precise guidance for college talent training practice. Sun Xiaodong focused on the practice of vocational education cooperation between China and Vietnam and faced the thorny challenges such as cultural differences and language barriers. He advocated strengthening the construction of an education resource sharing mechanism to build a bridge for the exchange of vocational education resources between the two countries, covering curriculum resources, teacher training resources, and practical training facility resources; actively promoting the normalization of inter-school exchanges, carrying out teacher-student exchanges, academic seminars, and cooperative education projects to enhance mutual understanding and trust between the two sides; constructing a cultural integration and language learning support system, developing cultural comparison courses and language auxiliary textbooks, and equipping professional language teachers and cultural tutors to help students overcome cultural and language barriers, providing valuable experience for regional vocational education cooperation. Chen Haiyan deeply analyzed the current situation of international talent training in higher vocational colleges and accurately identified existing problems, such as the disconnection between training objectives and international market needs, outdated teaching methods, and low level of internationalization of teachers. Then, she proposed to closely focus on the Belt and Road Initiative to adjust and optimize the training program, accurately connect with the industrial needs of countries along the line, update curriculum content and teaching methods, and cultivate new international talents who are proficient in professional technology, familiar with international rules, and possess cross-cultural communication ability, setting the direction for the reform of talent training in higher vocational colleges. These research results have outlined a clear practical path and theoretical framework for the international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges from different dimensions and levels and have accumulated rich and valuable experience materials.

2.2. Foreign Research Status

In the field of international education research, some foreign scholars highly agree that international exchanges and cooperation are the core driving force and key path for colleges and universities to move towards internationalization. Professor Altbach of Boston College in the United States skillfully used the "center-periphery" framework in the dependency theory to conduct an in-depth comparative study of the international higher education ecosystem and jointly launched a series of academic works with Professor Jane Knight. Professor Jane Knight defined the connotation of higher education internationalization from the dual perspectives of process and organization, creatively proposed a binary system of activity strategies and organization strategies, and emphasized the solid supporting role of organization strategies for activity strategies. For example, at the activity strategy level, it is advocated that colleges and universities actively expand international academic exchange activities, transnational education project cooperation, and overseas study and internship programs for students; at the organization strategy level, it focuses on key links such as the international transformation of the internal management structure of colleges and universities, the construction of an international education quality assurance system, and the

cultivation and management of an internationalized teaching staff, providing a solid theoretical foundation for the internationalization of colleges and universities. The US government has played an active and crucial role in promoting the internationalization of education. Through a series of legislative measures, the establishment of special funds, and generous scholarship programs, it has made every effort to attract global outstanding talents to gather and enhance the international attraction and competitiveness of its education. For example, the "Higher Education Internationalization Act" was issued to ensure the standardized and orderly development of international education exchanges and cooperation from a legal perspective; the "International Education Exchange Fund" was established to fund the research and implementation of college international cooperation projects, teacher international training and academic exchange activities, and student overseas study and practice projects; a variety of scholarship programs were provided, such as the "Fulbright Scholarship" and "Global Outstanding Talent Scholarship", to attract elite students from various countries to study in the United States, injecting international vitality and innovative thinking into colleges and universities and presenting international examples and practical models for the international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges, inspiring them to innovate development strategies in combination with local realities.

3. Analysis of the Development Strategies of International Exchanges and Cooperation of Zhejiang Higher Vocational Colleges under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

3.1. Current Situation of International Exchanges and Cooperation of Zhejiang Higher Vocational Colleges: Analysis of Dilemmas and Problems

This study comprehensively analyzed the international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges in accordance with multiple dimensions of international exchange and cooperation paradigms, such as the introduction of foreign educational resources, the implementation of Chinese-foreign cooperative education projects, the international flow of teachers and students, the formulation and implementation of school internationalization policies, and the participation in the Belt and Road Initiative construction practice. Through in-depth research and analysis, it was found that currently, Zhejiang higher vocational colleges are in a difficult situation in the field of international exchanges and cooperation. Most colleges lack international strategic planning and have vague positioning. It is difficult for them to anchor a unique development coordinate in the fierce competition of the international education market, resulting in scattered resource allocation and lost development directions; the construction of majors and curriculum systems lags behind, the international recognition of advantageous and characteristic majors is low, and the curriculum framework is seriously disconnected from the international vocational standard system, unable to accurately respond to the diversified and

refined needs of the international market for high-quality technical and skilled talents; the scale of international student enrollment is significantly different from that of undergraduate colleges, the source structure of international students is single, mainly concentrated in a few neighboring countries or specific majors, and the attraction for international students is insufficient; the work of introducing intelligence is weak, the channels for introducing high-quality international educational resources are not smooth and the quantity is scarce, and it is extremely difficult to recruit high-end international talents, seriously hindering the pace of college internationalization and becoming a key shortcoming restricting their sustainable development.

3.2. Reference of Foreign Vocational Education Experience: Examples from Three Countries to Assist the Development of Zhejiang Higher Vocational Colleges

To draw on advanced international experience and wisdom, this study introduced the country cooperation degree index to accurately quantify the degree of educational interconnection between China and countries along the Belt and Road Initiative and selected typical samples of vocational education international exchanges and cooperation in Russia, South Korea, and Singapore for in-depth exploration. Russia is unique in the field of engineering vocational education. Relying on its strong industrial foundation and scientific research strength, it has constructed an education model that closely combines theoretical teaching with practical training and deeply embeds industrial needs. Its professional courses are closely connected to the cutting-edge technologies and post requirements of pillar industries such as aerospace, machinery manufacturing, and energy and chemical engineering, creating an integrated production, teaching, and research practical teaching platform. For example, the collaborative education chain of "school-enterprise co-constructed technology research and development center - on-campus training base - enterprise internship base" ensures the seamless connection between students' professional skills and industrial needs, providing a practical-oriented example for the construction of engineering majors in Zhejiang higher vocational colleges. The South Korean vocational education system focuses on strengthening students' practical ability and constructs a cooperative education mechanism of "enterprise-led, school-coordinated". Enterprises are deeply involved in the whole process of talent cultivation, from curriculum development, teaching implementation to internship training and employment guidance, customizing personalized training programs according to post skill requirements; schools actively cooperate, optimize the allocation of teaching resources, strengthen the training of teachers' practical ability, and jointly build "order-based" talent cultivation projects. For example, the Hyundai Motor Group and vocational colleges jointly carried out an automotive technology talent cultivation project to accurately cultivate technical backbones that meet the needs of enterprises, providing useful references for Zhejiang higher vocational colleges to deepen school-enterprise cooperation and improve the practicality of talent cultivation. Singapore's vocational education adheres to the school-running concept of deep integration with enterprises and forms a "teaching factory" model. Schools simulate the real production environment of enterprises to build on-campus training facilities, integrate enterprise projects, technological processes, and management norms into

teaching practice, enabling students to experience the actual workplace and accumulate practical experience on campus; enterprises provide equipment donations, technical support, and part-time teachers for schools and are deeply involved in school governance and professional construction evaluation to ensure that talent cultivation closely meets the needs of industrial upgrading. For example, Singapore Polytechnic and an electronics manufacturing enterprise cooperated to build a microelectronics technology "teaching factory", providing a successful example for Zhejiang higher vocational colleges to innovate practical training teaching models and optimize the integration mechanism of production and education. By analyzing the experience and laws of the three countries, the beneficial elements suitable for the development of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges are accurately extracted to help them optimize their international exchange and cooperation strategies and improve the quality of school running and international competitiveness.

3.3. Formulation of International Exchange Strategies for Zhejiang Higher Vocational Colleges: Breaking the Situation and Improving Based on SWOT

The formulation of development strategies for international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges closely follows the grand blueprint of the Belt and Road Initiative and the strategic guidance of the "High-Quality Development Action Plan for 'Silk Road Colleges' of the Belt and Road Initiative in Zhejiang Province (2024 - 2027)". This research anchors the goal and vision of international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges, adheres to the concepts of openness, inclusiveness, innovation, collaboration, and characteristic development, and comprehensively scans the international exchange and cooperation status of 47 colleges and universities using the SWOT analysis method. Then, it proposes a development strategy mechanism for their international exchanges and cooperation. The strategies are shown in Figure 1.

Deeply explore the internal advantages of colleges and universities. For example, some colleges have accumulated profound technical expertise and industry influence in professional fields such as intelligent manufacturing, digital economy, and marine engineering, and possess characteristic professional curriculum systems and high-quality teaching teams. Precisely identify the disadvantages, such as the shortage of internationally trained teaching staff, the lack of experience in international education management, and the narrow channels of international exchanges and cooperation. Keenly capture the external opportunities. The Belt and Road Initiative has generated a strong demand for vocational education in countries along the line, the dividends of international education cooperation policies continue to be released, and cross-border education technology innovation empowers exchanges and cooperation. Prudently assess the potential threats, such as the intensification of competition in the international education market, cultural conflicts and differences in education policies, and the impact of global economic fluctuations on education investment. Based on the results of the SWOT matrix analysis, a systematic development strategy system is constructed. In the dimension of international cooperation project management, strengthen the market research and demand analysis in the early stage of the project, accurately connect the advantageous resources

and demand pain points of both sides, optimize the project cooperation mode and operation mechanism, and establish a dynamic evaluation and risk prevention and control mechanism to ensure the stable implementation and sustainable development of the project. In terms of cultivating an internationalized teaching staff, implement the strategy of "simultaneous introduction and cultivation". Broaden the channels for introducing international talents, build an international academic exchange and training platform, improve the international teaching ability and professional quality of teachers, and create a teaching staff who are proficient in their majors, familiar with international education rules, and possess cross-cultural communication abilities. For the internationalization improvement of majors

and courses, introduce international authoritative vocational qualification certification standards and curriculum resources, promote the joint construction of majors and the joint development of courses, innovate teaching methods and evaluation systems, and promote the in-depth integration of professional courses with international cutting-edge technologies and industry standards, so as to enhance the international popularity of majors and the international recognition of courses, and comprehensively drive the international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges to enter a new stage of high-quality development, demonstrating their characteristics and strength on the international education stage.

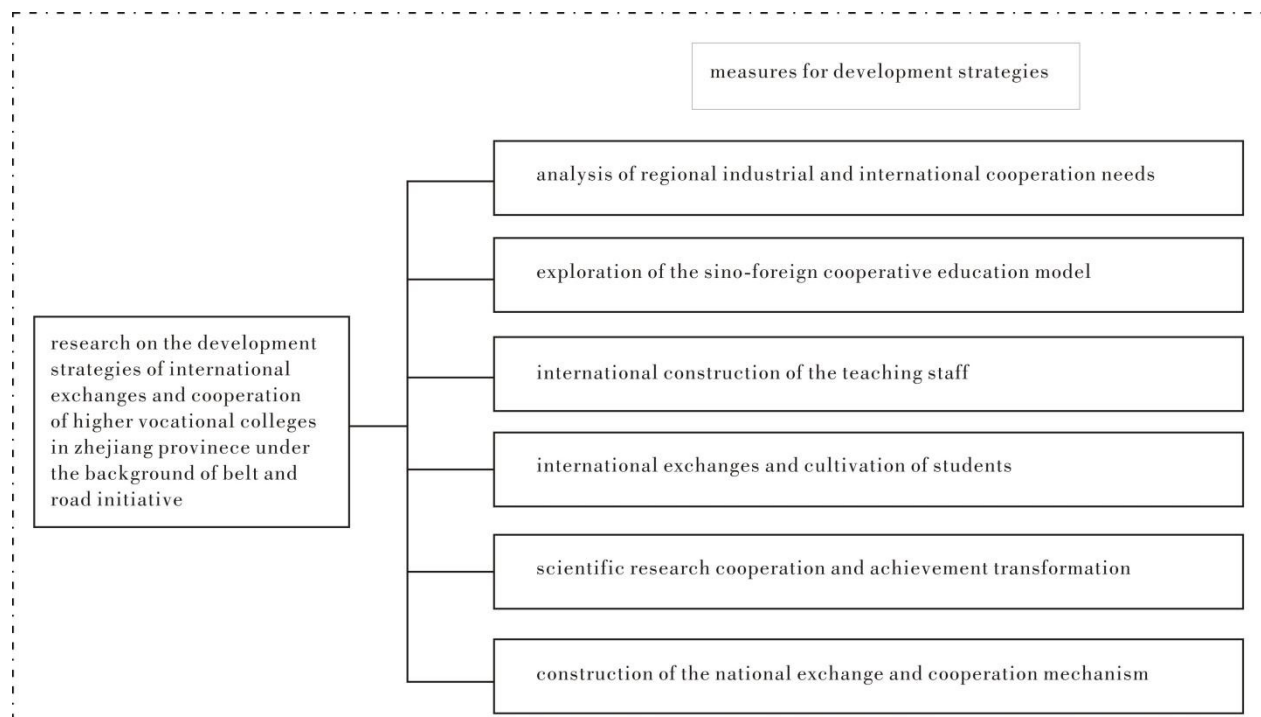


Figure 1. SWOT Strategy Architecture Diagram of International Exchanges and Cooperation of 47 Higher Vocational Colleges in Zhejiang under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

4. Conclusion

In the wave of the Belt and Road era, the international exchanges and cooperation of Zhejiang higher vocational colleges are intertwined with opportunities and challenges. Through systematically researching the current situation, carefully drawing on foreign experience, and scientifically formulating development strategies, Zhejiang higher vocational colleges are expected to reshape their international education positioning, break through the development bottleneck, comprehensively improve the quality of international education, and carefully create internationally renowned characteristic brands. This will not only help colleges and universities to stand out in the international education field and play a leading and exemplary role, but also accurately transport a large number of high-quality and internationalized professional talents for the economic and social development of countries and regions along the Belt and Road, realizing the benign interaction and coordinated development between college development and regional prosperity. Looking ahead, Zhejiang higher vocational colleges should maintain a keen strategic vision, continuously

track the forefront of international education, flexibly adjust and optimize exchange and cooperation strategies, calmly respond to the changes in the international education market, steadily enhance their international competitiveness, lead the continuous progress of vocational education internationalization, and contribute to the modernization of education in China and global education cooperation.

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