

Impetus, Policies and Education Law of School-Enterprise Cooperation in Vocational Education in China

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Abstract

Vocational education school-enterprise cooperation is a cooperative activity between vocational colleges and enterprises to improve the quality and efficiency of vocational school education or vocational training in terms of joint training, cooperative research, building institutions together and sharing resources. With the joint efforts of relevant stakeholders such as governments at all levels, various types of schools and enterprises, the system and mechanism of vocational education school-enterprise cooperation in China have made continuous breakthroughs and innovations. However, the effect of vocational education school-enterprise cooperation needs to be further improved. This paper analyzes the impetus of school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education in China and introduces the policy and legal system of school-enterprise cooperation. Suggestions for implementing school-enterprise cooperation are given. The analysis shows that there is uncertainty about the costs, benefits and risks of enterprises' participation in school-enterprise cooperation. It should start from strengthening the system of school-enterprise cooperation.

Keywords

Vocational Education; School-Enterprise Cooperation; Interest Analysis; Education Law.

1. Introduction

Vocational education school-enterprise cooperation is a cooperative activity between vocational colleges and enterprises to improve the quality and efficiency of vocational school education or vocational training in terms of joint training, cooperative research, building institutions together and sharing resources.[1]

At present, with the joint efforts of relevant stakeholders such as governments at all levels, schools and enterprises, the system and mechanism of school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education in China have made breakthroughs and innovations, the capacity of vocational colleges and universities to serve industrial enterprises has been enhanced, the enthusiasm of industrial enterprises to participate in vocational education has been increasing, and the attractiveness of vocational education has been enhanced[2,3]. Cooperation between schools and enterprises has brought many new developments and changes: the employment rate of vocational colleges, professional matching rate, graduates' salary and employers' satisfaction have steadily increased, which has to a certain extent alleviated the problem of "difficult employment of college students"; the participation of industry enterprises in vocational education has been strengthened. Nowadays, school-enterprise cooperation, as an important mode of vocational education, has become the core of modern vocational education system and plays an irreplaceable role in improving the quality of vocational education and promoting the sustainable development of vocational education.

However, we must also be soberly aware that the overall effect of vocational education school-enterprise cooperation is not ideal and the effect needs to be further improved[4]. The level of regional economic development in China varies greatly, and the degree of attention paid to

vocational education varies from place to place, so the overall cooperation between vocational education schools and enterprises is still in the middle and intermediate stage. For some vocational colleges and enterprises, only a few contracts have been signed or students from vocational colleges have been accepted to supplement the labor shortage during the peak production season. The enthusiasm of enterprises to participate in modern vocational education is not high. Some forms of participation are easy to internalize, while others are easy to externalize. When enterprises are faced with projects where the benefits of participation are easy to internalize, such as staff training and skills appraisal, which are practically related to the quality improvement and technology accumulation of existing employees, their willingness to participate can be easily transformed into realistic participation actions. However, when companies are faced with projects where the benefits of participation are uncertain and easy to externalize, such as student internships and teacher training, their willingness to participate decreases.

After the implementation of school-enterprise cooperation between vocational colleges and enterprises, vocational colleges have not been significantly improved in terms of talent training quality, and the role in enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises is average, and even a lot of school-enterprise cooperation is in vain, which can also show that some vocational education school-enterprise cooperation is somehow ineffective at this stage in China.

This paper analyzes the dynamics of school-enterprise cooperation in Chinese vocational education and introduces the policy and legal system of school-enterprise cooperation. Suggestions for implementing school-enterprise cooperation are given.

2. Impetus

Interest is the root of human behavior motivation. Whether we can provide enough interest incentives for the subjects of industry-education integration and coordinate the interest relationship between different subjects directly determines the size of the motivation of industry-education integration in applied universities from the source[5].

2.1. Analysis of the Government's Interests

The government represents people's interests and pays attention to public opinion. Paying attention to public opinion and managing the economy and society are the important reasons for the government to promote applied colleges and universities to deepen the integration of education and industry. It can be said that the direct reason for the government to promote the transformation of local general undergraduate colleges and universities into applied ones is to solve the problem of difficult employment of college students and economic transformation. In recent years, the problem of disconnection between the supply of talents in higher education and the demand for talents in the labor market has been prominent, with great social repercussions, which has drawn the key attention of the government[6]. To ensure the sustained and stable development of national economy, it is necessary to change the mode of economic development, adjust the economic structure, accelerate the optimization and upgrading of industries, adhere to the innovation-driven development strategy, and promote the comprehensive reform in the field of education.

2.2. Analysis of the Enterprise's Interests

Extensive cooperation between higher education institutions and enterprises in talent cultivation, scientific research and social services can achieve complementary advantages and mutual benefits. Enterprises are at an advantage in the possession of resources such as capital, sites, information and social capital, while higher education institutions have advantages in knowledge and technology innovation, human capital and social services. Cooperation between enterprises and higher education institutions is not only beneficial for enterprises to obtain

resources such as human capital, original knowledge technology and social services from colleges and universities, thus bringing benefits such as product innovation, labor supply and consultation to enterprises, but also beneficial for colleges and universities to obtain resources such as funds for school operation, internship practice sites and production practice experience from enterprises, thus broadening the funding sources of colleges and universities and improving the quality of talents training. Cooperation between enterprises and higher education institutions is the common demand for survival and development of enterprises and higher education institutions, as well as the core force of economic development in the era of knowledge economy, because science and technology is the first productive force, and cooperation between schools and enterprises can precisely realize the virtuous cycle of scientific and technological innovation and technology transformation.

The costs of enterprises' participation in vocational education include: information search and decision costs for enterprises to find vocational colleges, direct or indirect costs paid by enterprises to cooperative students, direct or indirect costs paid by enterprises to trainers, wear and tear costs of sites, equipment and materials provided by enterprises, and costs invested by enterprises to develop cooperative technologies or products

The benefits of enterprises' participation in vocational education include: short-term benefits from cooperative students' on-the-job internship, long-term benefits from enterprises' investment in human capital, long-term market benefits from enterprises' participation in school operation, benefits from enterprises' use of school resources, and benefits from enterprises' reimbursement of government policies.

The risk elements of enterprises' participation in vocational education are: the risk of enterprises' decision to participate in vocational education before cooperation, the risk of students' personal safety during cooperation, the risk of material loss or reputation damage during cooperation, and the risk of talent and technology loss after cooperation.

The costs, benefits and risks of participating in vocational education can vary from company to company, and the amount of costs, benefits and risks incurred can also vary.

2.3. Analysis of Teachers' Interests

University teachers are high-level intellectuals, and it is their duty and pursuit to disseminate and innovate knowledge and improve their spirituality, so they pay more attention to the satisfaction of spiritual needs such as knowledge seeking and moral cultivation. At the same time, teachers are the guides of teaching, and the object of their teaching is the students, who are the most in touch with them in their work. From the viewpoint of "economic human", teachers, like employees in other industries, pursue basic material needs and hope to achieve self-fulfillment, gain leadership recognition and promotion, as well as fulfill their responsibilities. In addition, since teachers in applied colleges and universities have limited income, they place more importance on the satisfaction of material needs and the realization of their personal interests.

Although, in the long run, teachers are closely related to students and schools, and teachers' deepening the integration of industry and education is conducive to improving the quality of talent cultivation, promoting students' employment, and enhancing the market competitiveness of applied colleges and universities, thus increasing their own welfare - including gaining respect, stable jobs, promotion positions, and salary increases. However, in the short term, deepening the integration of industry and education in applied colleges and universities increases teachers' costs and reduces their motivation to integrate industry and education.

2.4. Analysis of Students' Interests

The main purpose of deepening the integration of industry and education in applied colleges and universities is to promote the development of students and the development of local economy and society through school changes, and students are the main beneficiary subject of the integration of industry and education[7]. However, at present, students are in a passive position in the integration of production and education in colleges and universities. The deepening of the integration of industry and education in colleges and universities cannot significantly improve the employment level of students in the short term. Students also have opportunistic tendency and have the side of opposing to the deepening of the integration of industry and education in applied colleges and universities.

3. Policy

3.1. 1978-1998

In May 1983, four ministries and commissions, including the Ministry of Education, proposed the policy that vocational education in China should be "run by the state and by business departments, factories, mines, enterprises and institutions, and collective economic units", and that vocational secondary schools run by general high schools could be run by education departments in conjunction with other business departments and enterprises and institutions on the premise that their affiliation remained unchanged. In 1987, the General Office of the State Council forwarded to the State Education Commission and other departments the "Report on the National Conference on Vocational and Technical Education", which summarized this form of vocational education run by government departments and state-owned enterprises as the policy proposition of "let's do it". It is pointed out that "economic departments and enterprises should, in particular, according to the advantages and conditions of their respective industries, vigorously run secondary schools and technical schools, actively support vocational secondary schools and various types of vocational and technical training, and develop joint education between enterprises and between schools and enterprises", and require counterpart enterprises to "actively accept and arrange". In 1991, the State Council's "Decision on Vigorously Developing Vocational Education" again encouraged all kinds of vocational schools to actively develop school-run industries and production practice bases from the central level. In 1987, the "dual system" pilot project was implemented, in which schools were responsible for basic education and enterprises for vocational training. Under the continuous guidance of the central policy, the graded division of labor between industry departments and state-owned enterprises to run schools independently, as well as the joint operation of education administrative departments and industry enterprises, became the basic form of running secondary vocational schools in this period.

3.2. 1998-2010

The Decision on Vigorously Promoting the Reform and Development of Vocational Education (2002), the Opinions on Further Playing the Role of Industries and Enterprises in Vocational Education and Training (2002), and the Decision on Vigorously Developing Vocational Education (2005) reiterate the importance of relying on industries and enterprises to develop vocational education and emphasize Establishing a diversified pattern of running vocational education which is "government-led, relying on enterprises and giving full play to the role of industries". The "Opinions on the Overall Improvement of Teaching Quality of Higher Vocational Education" emphasizes "engineering integration" as an important entry point for the reform of higher vocational education personnel training mode, and explores new initiatives of school-enterprise cooperation such as construction of on-campus production training bases and reform of off-campus top-down internship mode. In 2006, "Opinions on

Further Strengthening Highly Skilled Talents" established "establishing school-enterprise cooperation system for cultivating highly skilled talents" as a national strategy.

3.3. 2010-Present

The National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) [8] established the basic goal of forming a modern vocational education system by 2020, clearly requiring "promoting the institutionalization of school-enterprise cooperation" and "encouraging industry organizations and enterprises to organize vocational schools". "In 2014, the State Council proposed for the first time in the Decision on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education to "give play to the important role of enterprises in running schools", which elevates enterprises from being the participants and helpers of vocational education to being the main participants who enjoy the main rights and responsibilities of running schools from the national strategic level. In the same year, the "Modern Vocational Education" was issued. In the same year, the "Modern Vocational Education System Construction Plan (2014-2020)[9]" has "basically established the system of industry-education integration and school-enterprise cooperation" and "basically formed the mechanism of accumulating and innovating technical skills jointly promoted by industry enterprises and vocational colleges". In 2017, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Industry and Education", which clearly reiterated the strategic policy of "strengthening the important role of enterprises". 2019 The National Implementation Plan for Vocational Education Reform, promulgated by the State Council, lists "promoting the integration of industry and education in school-enterprise 'dual' education" as the central task of China's vocational education in the future. Guided by the above-mentioned programmatic documents, national policies in this period continue to support and guide vocational schools to take the initiative to work closely with industry and enterprises, while placing more emphasis on the dual subject status of schools and enterprises, the synergistic governance effectiveness of multiple participants, especially industry systems and leading enterprises, and the exploration of paths to transform regional legislative practices, sectoral policies and grassroots innovations into basic national systems. In addition, the project has shown a more colorful practice pattern.

4. Education Law

At present, the legal system of vocational education in China, with the Vocational Education Law as the main body and various departmental regulations and local laws as the supporting system, has taken initial shape. From the aspect of vocational education school-enterprise cooperation, China has introduced a series of legal systems to support school-enterprise cooperation, and they are in the process of continuous improvement and development[10]. Firstly, the legal system of school-enterprise cooperation has been gradually concretized. The legal system of school-enterprise cooperation has gradually changed from the initial macro guidance to the formulation of specific guidelines for school operation, student internship, vocational qualification certificate system, etc., and clearly regulate the content and form of school-enterprise cooperation from various aspects. Second, the preferential and incentive measures for enterprises to participate in school-enterprise cooperation are gradually clarified. From the initial formulation of school-enterprise cooperation policies, the state has further developed into a series of incentives and preferential measures for enterprises participating in school-enterprise cooperation to encourage them to participate in vocational education.

The existing legal system of school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education in China has several major problems in the following areas.

There is no legal system guarantee for vocational education school-enterprise cooperation mode. At present, there are various forms of vocational education school-enterprise

cooperation, such as order-based, joint school-enterprise, alternate engineering, school-enterprise shareholding cooperation, and industry-academia cooperation, etc. All of them are different forms of school-enterprise cooperation based on the developed countries and according to the actual situation of each local area in China. The legal system should clarify the space of power and the limit of interests of enterprise subjects; restrain the occurrence of opportunistic behavior, reduce the potential costs of enterprise participation due to uncertainty and transaction frequency; and provide authoritative solutions to the "unexpected" events in enterprise participation.

The legal system should clarify the space of rights and responsibilities of enterprise participation in human capital property rights, firstly, to prevent the occurrence of infringement in enterprise participation; secondly, to help enhance the accuracy and rigidity of human capital property rights transactions in order to protect and restrain the behavior of all parties involved and reduce the impact of uncertainty of transactions on enterprises; thirdly, to be able to enhance the power of human capital owners in negotiations while reducing the initiative of human capital, the irregularities brought about by heterogeneous transaction characteristics.

The fundamental issues of school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education are poorly defined. China has stipulated in the basic law that vocational education includes both school education and vocational training, but from the perspective of the whole legislative system, the laws involving vocational training are still categorized in the field of adult education, which are managed by different administrative departments, and the laws on vocational training are multi-disciplinary, lacking uniformity and standardization, and each industry and department has its own regulations on industrial employee training. Therefore, in the vocational education legislation, the connotation of vocational education should be clearly defined conceptually.

5. Recommendation

Promoting school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education should build a complete legal system of school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education. Since vocational education involves many sectors, industries and subjects, and the actual situation of vocational education varies from region to region due to the disparity of economic development, the Vocational Education Law can never be fully promoted and effectively implemented by a single law. Only a perfect legal system is the premise and foundation for the legalization of vocational education.

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