

# Research on the Governance Path Reform of Higher Vocational Colleges Based on the Integration of Production and Education

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## ABSTRACT

Accelerating industrial transformation and upgrading is a key measure for China to break through the current economic bottleneck and enhance its international competitiveness. Vocational education, especially higher vocational education, as the supplier and technical support of industrial talents, has been caught in a mixed crisis. In this situation, the integration of industry and education is widely recognized as an effective way to promote the transformation and upgrading of regional industries and build a modern vocational education system. Therefore, the author selects the visual threshold of integration of production and education, deeply analyzes the logic of modern university governance, deconstructs the mode of modern university governance, analyzes the disadvantages of the traditional governance mode of vocational education, and refines the university governance and its advanced experience in developed countries (extracting the advanced experience of university governance in developed countries), explores the reform logic and path in the modernization of vocational education governance, and puts forward the policy suggestions for the modernization of vocational college governance.

*Keywords: production-education integration, higher vocational colleges, governance path*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In May 2014, the Decision on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education pointed out that modern vocational education should follow the basic principle of "production-education integration and characteristic schooling", and "production-education integration" has received unprecedented attention. In December 2017, The General Office of the State Council issued the several opinions about deepening the integration production and education, emphasizing that "deepening the integration of production and education, promoting the organic connection between the education chain, the talent chain, the industrial chain and the innovation chain, is the current urgent requirement to promote the supply-side structural reform of human resources", in which "integration of industry and education" was explicitly proposed in the form of opinions at the national level for the first time. Since then, it has entered the stage of rapid development, which has been widely recognized as an effective way to promote the transformation and upgrading of regional industries and build a modern vocational education system. From the perspective of reality, structural unemployment, that is, unemployment caused by the change of industrial structure and

regional employment structure, and the existing labor force's knowledge, skills, ideas and regional distribution do not adapt to such changes, has increasingly become the most important type of unemployment. Under this situation, vocational education, especially higher vocational education, as the supplier and technical support of industrial talents, has been caught in both danger and opportunity. Reviewing the development course of China's vocational education, the governance path of higher vocational colleges has undergone a transition from "theocracy" to "government administration and school management", and its basic logic is to repair the incomplete integrity and certainty of social service function in vocational colleges by means of "streamlining administration, delegating power and making decisions at a near point", aiming to achieve the docking between vocational education and industrial transformation and upgrading of new needs. However, with the gradual determination of the market economy system and the gradual maturity of social development, the practical circles generally agree that the traditional governance path of vocational education has been unable to respond to the new public service demands of industrial transformation and upgrading for vocational education, and its exposed institutional defects have

increasingly become a "stumbling block" to realize the effectiveness of vocational education governance. Therefore, replacing the old with the new and reforming the management mode of vocational education have become the focus of political and academic circles.

## **II. THE LOGIC AND MODEL**

### **DECONSTRUCTION OF MODERN UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE**

#### *A. The logic of modern university governance*

University governance is different from university management. Management is a subject-object behavior logic, which takes university organization as the subject and carries out micro-management and structural integration within the organization in a relatively closed system; Governance is a subject-subject-type behavioral logic, which puts the organization into an open system for consideration. Its perspective has gone beyond the internal framework of the organization and pays more attention to the influence and change of external relations. On the whole, University governance is a set of institutional arrangements designed to achieve the goals of colleges and universities. structures, each stakeholder relations framework of colleges and universities, the goal, principle, decision-making mode in colleges and universities, power distribution rules, the main content is the efficient implementation mechanism design, through the activities of the various stakeholders pursue their own goals and achieve the overall efficiency. It builds a set of relationship framework of stakeholders in colleges and universities, and sets rules for the goals, principles, decision-making methods and power distribution of colleges and universities[1]. The main content is the mechanism design of efficiency realization, and the overall efficiency can be achieved through the activities of various stakeholders in pursuit of their own goals. The stakeholders are not limited to the organization, which makes governance break through the boundary of internal management and bring into the scope of external governance and macro governance. The difference in perspective leads to two completely different internal and external boundaries. "Governance" regards the organization as an "open system", while "management" is generally one-way and its authorization is "top-down". "Governance structure" is to make any party in the open system be restricted as well as the other party by means of system design and organization operation standard cross-directionally[2].

After experiencing such governance modes as professor governance, government centralization and board of directors trusteeship, colleges and universities have begun to move towards a new mode of stakeholder joint governance. The establishment of

partnership is an important feature of the university stakeholder model. In 1998, UNESCO stated at the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris that: Higher education itself faces enormous challenges and must make the most sweeping changes it has ever been asked to make; In order to adapt to this change and solve the problems faced, Higher education requires the active participation not only of Governments and institutions of higher learning, but of all concerned, including university students and their families, teachers, business and business, the public and private sectors of the economy, parliaments, the media, communities, professional associations and society[3]. Higher education is required to establish a wide range of partnerships with society, government, business, students, etc., which has become the theme of the policy documents on higher education issued by various countries and international organizations in recent years.

#### *B. The deconstruction of modern university governance model*

The institutional arrangement of modern colleges and universities mainly includes three types: highly centralized higher education system, relatively centralized higher education system and highly decentralized higher education system, which reflects the different degree of power density. Corresponding to the above three institutional arrangements, the governance structure of modern universities can also be divided into three types: administrative governance based on state supervision, relational governance based on insider supervision, and compound governance based on intermediary supervision.

The administrative governance model based on state supervision is suitable for the centralized higher education system. The center of governance power of colleges and universities falls on the national level. Colleges and universities accept centralized arrangement, and the government uniformly allocates educational resources. The administrative standard and official standard are prominent in the governance structure of colleges and universities. In this way, the concept of hierarchy of administrative system also permeates into the inner part of colleges and universities. The administrative power of colleges and universities is generally divided into three levels: schools, colleges and departments, which constitute a top-down power system and maintain the daily operation of colleges and universities[4]. The relational governance structure mode is mainly supervised by insiders. The supervision, decision-making and execution are all from inside universities. The board of directors, mainly composed of laymen, directly supervises and restricts the university management. In the framework of the relationship between government, universities and market, universities have obvious "potential" advantage and are in a dominant position in

this "potential" relationship. Autonomous management is also the main governance structure in universities, which is suitable for the decentralized higher education system. The premise of its establishment is the relatively perfect legal environment, the tradition of academic freedom, the role of the government, the self-organization function of the university and so on[5]. Under the mode of compound governance structure, the government intervenes the colleges and universities remotely through intermediary agencies, but pays attention to the protection of academic freedom. This governance structure is suitable for the relatively centralized higher education system, but the premise is relatively perfect legal environment, developed civil society and effective operation of the "third sector". The government under the mode of compound governance structure plays a leading role in the governance of colleges and universities, which can be called the non-complete market government. It influences the operation of colleges and universities through intermediary institutions, and takes different solutions to the governance problems of different colleges and universities according to certain market principles[6].

### **III. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND SITUATION ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL COLLEGE GOVERNANCE**

#### *A. A review of the history of Chinese university governance*

After the Revolution of 1911, exchanges between China and foreign countries were strengthened. Various western ideological trends poured into China and were accepted by Chinese intellectuals, which promoted the emergence of the new cultural movement and gave birth to the educational trends of contention between flowers, such as the educational reform trend, the national education trend, the military national education trend, the vocational education trend and the pragmatism trend. Accordingly, modern vocational education idea rises. There were three modes of management of vocational education at that time. One was a new school set up in the westernization movement by the westernization Movement, which called for the "enrichment of the country and strengthening of the army". It was sponsored by the central government or local government. The other is a missionary university founded by foreign missionaries in order to implement the strategy of "governing China with China" and strengthen the invasion of Chinese culture and education. The third kind is the private industrial school founded by some ambitious people in China out of the patriotic enthusiasm of worrying about the country and people[7].

After the founding of new China, China entered the era of planned economy. By 1978, it had gone through the foundation period, the rise and fall period and the heavy damage period. After the founding of New China in 1949, the socialist construction cause is in urgent need of tens of thousands of skilled workers who have mastered the applied technical knowledge and working skills. China's vocational education actively draws lessons from the former Soviet Union's educational model and management system, and has developed rapidly. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the changes in the political and economic systems required education to respond accordingly to meet the needs of the development of new China's construction. Under the comprehensive influence of the political and economic system and the international environmental factors, the pattern of unitary government governance was formed[9]. In education management, the vertical constraint force dominated by government power is so strong that it is in an absolute dominant position and even becomes the only force that determines the development of vocational education.

In 1978, the State Council proposed the "combination of planned economy and market economy", which initiated the reform of China's economic system. After more than 20 years of reform and opening up, profound changes have taken place in China's economic system and operating mechanism. The highly centralized planned economy, with administrative means as the main means, has gradually withdrawn from the stage of history. The basic role of the market in allocating resources under the state's macro-control has been greatly enhanced. The dominant position of the public sector was broken, and the non-public sector began to play an important role in the formation and development of the main market economy. The harmonious development of education and social economy is one of the basic laws of education development. The diversification of economic components inevitably requires the diversification of education to adapt to it. The policy of developing multi-subject school running in our country is improving day by day, which provides legal guarantee and policy basis for the diversification of higher education subjects, various forms of private education development, multi-subject cooperative school running and the reform of public university school running system. The continuous development of local economy and non-public economy and the strong support of national policies have provided good opportunities for the educational subjects' diversification. On this basis, the pluralistic co-governance model of government, enterprise, industry and society is gradually constructed.

### *B. Analysis on the present situation of Chinese higher vocational college*

If technical talents are compared to a social product, vocational education is undoubtedly the "processing plant" of this product, the government is the investor of the factory, and the industry is the direct consumer of this talent product. As a processing factory, the output of talents should follow the "invisible hand" -- the market, make self-adjustment in time, predict the industrial demand and make timely response. The government, as an investor, should provide sufficient resource investment, perfect system guarantee and good external environment for the development of vocational education, and give proper play to its supervision and evaluation function. As the demand side of talents, the industry inevitably requires the supply and demand of vocational education talents to reach the balance of time, space and structure. However, "traditional vocational education governance model has separated the triangle stable relationship of benign interaction between vocational education, industry and government" and alienated to the linear interactive path of "vocational education-government and industry". Among them, the government occupies an absolute dominant position. The government needs industrial development to provide it with sufficient financial resources to meet the demand of the effectiveness of social governance. The government also loses no time in using various incentive mechanisms and public service measures to escort the development of the industry. As a child of the government, vocational education is completely subordinate to the category of government governance and follows the policy guidance. It plays an indispensable role in providing the support of high-tech applied talents for economic and social development, thus forming an asymmetric power-responsibility principal-agent chain.

However, does the government have the "good" supply intention to "inject" talent services into the industry with vocational education? If the supply motive of the government is not good, how can we establish an effective restraint and incentive mechanism? According to the theory of public choice, "good government" may not exist universally, and the government may not run vocational education personnel training affairs according to the industrial needs when pursuing its own interests and lacking constraints. Secondly, the traditional vocational education governance model presupposes an ideal scenario a priori, that is, the government has sufficient financial capacity, efficient governance capacity and advanced management level to ensure the effective supply of vocational education talent service to industrial demand. However, this is not the case. The supply capacity of the government is different in time and space. Under the circumstance of insufficient supply capacity of the government, the traditional

supply mode of vocational education talents will be difficult to ensure the supply performance of high-tech applied talents. Finally, even if the government has good supply ability, its supply motive is good, but its coordination ability is unknown. The industrial development environment and talent demand that the government is faced with is complex, dynamic and diverse, which makes the government more ungovernable. In a word, due to the restriction of professional barriers, interference of efficiency model and internal imperfection of insufficient institutional supply, the traditional government as the central role of information transmission between vocational education and industry gradually fails, or the governance failure caused by information transmission distortion.

### **IV. THE GOVERNANCE MODEL AND ADVANCED EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITIES IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

In The United States, the governance of colleges and universities is characterized by "multiple governance". The internal governance structure of American colleges and universities is consistent. The board of directors, management department and professors are the three main bodies involved in governance[10]. Such a governance system can perform its functions with high quality and conduct effective self-management capabilities. At the same time, it can ensure neutrality in partisan politics and public debate outside the school, and maintain its unity in the face of attacks from inside and outside the school. And it can deal with a variety of related issues raised by the public, showing the true face of the university.

The British university governance system has an obvious "collegiate tradition" and retains quite autonomous characteristics[11]. The "traditional University" is a loose federation composed of many colleges. Colleges belong to the university but are not managed by the university. They are independent in running schools and have their own leading institutions, statutes, scientific research and financial systems. The government has not intervened in higher education for a long time, and its main responsibility is to formulate and negotiate university funding policies and protect the system of "college autonomy".

German university governance adheres to the three principles of college autonomy, unity of education and research, and academic freedom. The governance system keeps the separation of moral academic power and administrative power, regards the imparting of knowledge and freedom of research as the "foundation for establishing the university", takes the academic power as the leading mode, and adheres to the "professorial governance" governance mode. In Germany, the mode of "professorial governance" is a typical "heavy organization at the bottom". The

academic power is dominant, the college is a loose combination, and the influence of the college and the school is weak[12]. In the British "college autonomy" model, the management focus and power are concentrated in the college. The dean and professors of the college have the core power, and the school and departments have little influence on the university management. The "cooperative governance" model of the United States focuses on the balance and inclusiveness of the power structure at school, college and department levels.

Comparatively speaking, the power structure of American universities is more balanced and inclusive. It inherits and surpasses the governance model of German and British universities, forms the equal participation and cooperation sharing mechanism among multiple power subjects, and represents the institutional trend and historical choice of the change of university governance in western developed countries. Modern university is a typical stakeholder community organization and principal-agent relationship chain. Although each stakeholder has specific interests, they all serve the university functions such as talent training, scientific research and social service. Therefore, it is an inevitable choice for the change of modern university governance to build an inclusive governance system featuring equal participation, division of labor, cooperation and benefit sharing by multiple power subjects.

## **V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: THE GOVERNANCE MODERNIZATION OF HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGE BASED ON THE INTEGRATION OF PRODUCTION AND EDUCATION**

### *A. To seize the opportunity of innovation and reform*

Due to the increasing complexity of the current reform situation, the industrial transformation and upgrading of the demand for talent is becoming more and more urgent. Higher vocational colleges must seize the opportunity of national innovation and reform test; accelerate the modernization of higher vocational colleges' governance, so as to fully coordinate the upgrading of industrial structure. The decision of the third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee on comprehensively deepening the reform places vocational education in a very important position, and proposes to "accelerate the construction of the modern vocational education system, deepen the integration of industry and education and school-enterprise cooperation, and train high-quality laborers and skilled talents". Higher vocational colleges should play to the government policies to guide the "leverage effect", speed up the modernization of vocational education management system and management ability, strengthen the vocational education school system and

the system innovation, form social parties to participate in vocational education policy mechanism, promote the city further integration and between production and education more closely, make its own development more accord with the requirement of the regional industrial transformation and upgrading.

### *B. To establish a high-level coordination platform*

At present, the communication mechanism and joint meeting system of industry and education coordinated by the government have not been effectively established, which makes the docking between vocational education and industry lose an important platform and effective mechanism. Under this mechanism, information asymmetry is inevitable among governments, enterprises and schools, which lead to the lagging development of vocational education for industrial development, and the interaction effect is not obvious. Therefore, in order to promote the interaction between vocational education and industry to achieve good results, we must pay attention to grasp the initiative at the beginning of high-level procedures. We should get rid of the concepts of "focusing on vocational education while focusing on vocational education" and "focusing on industry while focusing on industry", and promote the deep integration of vocational education into the industrial chain to effectively serve the economic and social development. At the high-level level, a joint conference system for the development of industry and education should be established to regularly study and coordinate solutions to industrial transformation and upgrading and innovative development of vocational education, so as to build a platform for exchanges and communication at the policy level for enterprises, governments and vocational education.

### *C. To use special fiscal and taxation policies*

The cooperation between enterprises and higher vocational colleges is originally a spontaneous action of the market, but a strong atmosphere for enterprises to support and participate in vocational education needs to be formed. The government must have a clear policy orientation and actively encourage enterprises to pay attention to and support vocational education. There is also a bias against vocational education. To break this situation, it is necessary to make full use of policy leverage and mobilize the enthusiasm of enterprises to invest in vocational education. The government can introduce tax exemption policies to support enterprises cooperating with vocational colleges. In school-enterprise cooperation, both parties may enjoy preferential enterprise income tax policies for the research and development expenses incurred in the research and development of new technologies and processes. In addition, special funds and subsidies for senior technical personnel from enterprises to teach in

vocational colleges can also be set up to encourage technical personnel from enterprises to participate in vocational education. This will increase the enthusiasm of enterprises to support vocational education and provide impetus for strengthening the integration of industry and education.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Looking back on the development of vocational education in China, the governance path of higher vocational colleges has undergone a transition from "theocracy" to "government administration and school management". Due to the increasing complexity of the current reform situation, the industrial transformation and upgrading of the demand for talent is becoming more and more urgent. Higher vocational colleges should seize the opportunity of reform, the government should establish a high-level platform for overall planning, and the society should form a strong atmosphere for enterprises to support and participate in vocational education, so as to realize the modernization of higher vocational colleges' governance.

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