

Enlightenment of Taiwan's Vocational Education on the Mainland

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ABSTRACT: With cross-strait policies getting warmer and the mainland's higher vocational education developing rapidly, communications and cooperation across Taiwan Straits now enter into a prosperous stage. Therefore, it is of great significance for mainland China to analyze and adsorb Taiwan's vocational education advantages. Taiwan's advantages in vocational education cover various dimensions, such as establishment of modern vocational education system, construction of a "flyover" for human development, improvement of the vocational education's policy supporting system, strengthening of vocational education's attraction, establishment of a long-term mechanism, legally promotion of effective enterprise-college cooperation, establishment of scientific evaluation system of skilled talents, strict implementation of vocational certificates system, boosting of vocational colleges' humanistic quality education, and promotion of "rural enterprise training" to improve rural vocational education's benefits.

KEYWORD: vocational education system; talent evaluation system

1 INTRODUCTION

The communications and cooperation about vocational education across Taiwan Straits is an important part of all cross-strait educational communications and exchanges, and there are always close exchanges about it. After 2008, with cross-strait policies' getting warmer and mainland's higher vocational education developing rapidly, communications and cooperation about vocational education enter into a prosperous stage with a promising development trend. It is a great opportunity to strengthen cross-strait cooperation, draw on beneficial experience from each other, profoundly solve problems at policy and mechanism levels and constantly boost deep interaction on vocational education between Taiwan and the mainland.

2 TAIWAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Started in 1950s, Taiwan vocational education, however, gained rapid development after 1960s. With tens of years of development, now Taiwan's higher vocational education has formed a relatively reasonable structural system and has been developing together with regular higher education,

constituting an important education channel for youth to enter a higher school. Taiwan vocational education covers two levels: university of technology and science and technical college and vocational school. In terms of length of schooling, university of technology and science and technical college are divided into two parts of undergraduate school and graduate institute. The undergraduate schools include four-year schools and two-year schools and fall into regular classes and on-job classes. Two-year schools enroll vocational school graduates while four-year schools enroll professional high school graduates, both of whom are rewarded with bachelor's degree. Graduate institutes have master's classes and doctor's classes, students of which are relatively rewarded with master's degree and doctor's degree. Vocational schools are divided into two-year system and five-year system according to length of schooling. Two-year schools, enrolling professional high school graduates, have daytime classed and evening classes, and evening classes fall into regular classes and on-job classes. Five-year vocational schools enroll junior high school graduates, and there are only daytime classes. At present, Taiwan has formed a higher vocational education system with principal parts of vocational schools, technical colleges and universities of technology and science. According to statistics, by the end of 2011, there were totally 91 higher

vocational education colleges and school, 18 of which were state-run while 73 privately-run.

In recent years, in order to adapt to changes in industrial structures, technological progresses and students' long-term development demands, Taiwan vocational colleges and schools have made tremendous changes in course setting and teaching content. Most schools' professional theoretical teachings return to "clustering system", in which teaching returns from theoretical knowledge needed by one industry to fundamental theoretical knowledge needed by platforms of wider profession clusters. Therefore, though many teaching departments only have one professional teaching plan, there are many courses for students to choose so that they can make choices according to their interests. Many schools have plenty of practical training equipment, and students can receive experimental and practical equipment operating training under professional teachers' guidance once they make applications. In this case, the equipment's use ratio is high and students have many practicing opportunities. Taiwan technical vocational colleges encourage students to gain certificates and some schools directly teach according to certificate testing requirements, especially for five-year schooling students graduated from middle schools. Referring to enterprises' recruitment demands, some majors' students are required to obtain several certificates. Many schools already have or try to establish their own testing offices and provide in-school students and society with occupational qualification testing services. Because five-year schooling students receive professional skills for a longer time and have more skilled technologies, they are more favorable to enterprises compared with two-year schooling students. Taiwan technical vocational colleges and students work hard to offer learning and development platforms to students. Besides encouraging students to learn across majors and curriculum and allowing students to change majors, it offers four-year schooling education that helps to realize schooling system jointing with undergraduate universities so that students can enter learning at bachelor and master stages, which removes obstacles in talent development channel and satisfy students' demand for learning to the most degree.

3 TAIWAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S ENLIGHTENMENT ON THE MAINLAND

Taiwan vocational education's development advantages have important reference significance for the mainland to deepen vocational education reform. From the perspective of research results, now Taiwan's vocational education shows six obvious characteristics:

3.1 *Establishing modern vocational education system and constructing a "flyover" for human development:*

As for the current situation of establishing modern vocational education system, although we have gained some achievements in vocational education reform, such as establishing "direct train system" for secondary and higher vocational education and "mutual recognition of credits system" between vocational education and regular education and so on, our modern vocational education system is not improved compared with Taiwan. Problems are mainly reflected in the following aspects: firstly, there are few graduates from secondary vocational schools can enter schools at higher level and the proportion is very low; secondly, effective linkage of courses are not realized for students to enter higher schools in most majors; thirdly, high vocational education is still professional college-oriented, which can not adapt to the requirement of popularization of higher education. It must be pointed out that we should avoid some problems that Taiwan encountered when drawing on its successful experience of vocational education system. For example, after all technical and vocational schools turned into universities of technology and science, the amount of Taiwan's universities increased from 20 to more than 160. All undergraduate parts want to set master and doctor classes, which led to flooding of degrees.

3.2 *Improving the vocational education's policy supporting system and strengthening vocational education's attraction:*

At first, it is necessary to change people's concept of vocational education to strengthen vocational education's attraction; secondly, strengthening vocational education's attraction requires to increase vocational education's input-output benefits. On one hand, the government reduces or removes students' fee of receiving vocational education; on the other hand, schools must keep improving talent training quality. This two aspects' joint effects will definitely produce huge attraction to grass-root families.

3.3 *Establishing a long-term mechanism and legally promoting effective enterprise-college cooperation:*

From the perspective of Taiwan's experience of promoting school-enterprise cooperation, the government's promoting and guidance play a key role. Therefore, for the mainland, to establish a long-term mechanism of school-enterprise cooperation, local governments should change from designers of vocational education into boosters that boost enterprises to positively take part in vocational

education, and the promoting means include policy encouragement and legal restrictions and so on.

3.4 *Scientifically establishing evaluation system of skilled talents and strictly implementing the system of vocational certificates.*

Referring to what Taiwan did, we should positively exploit diverse evaluation systems of highly skilled talents, gradually improve implementation methods of socialized occupational qualification testing, enterprise skilled talent evaluations, college and school occupational qualification certifications and special skill assessments and further breakthrough limitations of age, qualification, status and proportion to accelerate to establish a occupational skill-leading and working performance-focusing highly skilled talent evaluation system that attaches importance to professional ethics and knowledge standards, which is beneficial to promoting highly skilled talents' rapid growth and training and absorbing more qualified people grow into enter skilled talents.

3.5 *Promoting "rural enterprise training" to improve rural vocational education's benefits.*

Because of industrial transformation, Taiwan's agricultural policy transforms from paying attention to production-oriented technological innovations to the integration of consumers' demand-oriented agricultural production activities' value chain. Thus, the cultivation of agricultural talents transforms from production technology talents to comprehensive agricultural talents that focus on consumer orientation. At present, the mainland's agricultural vocational education mostly still stays at the idea of "cultivating operating workers for city factories". Now, Chinese farmers are experiencing a process of "self-professionalization" with agricultural "industrialization". However, the new change of the issue of agriculture, farmer of rural area does not mean that the goal of vocational education in rural areas is "conveying labors to city factories", but building "new city life" for farmer themselves.

3.6 *Energetically boosting vocational colleges' humanistic quality education*

Taiwan's vocational schools and colleges have always given quality education in all teachings. They stick to giving education on politeness, righteousness, the sense of shame and honesty, and China's traditional virtues are well recognized. It is no doubt that vocational education is not the place for "producing tools" but for "educating people", so we cannot ignore humanistic quality education. In recent years, many higher vocational colleges and schools represented by Shenzhen Polytechnic have noticed this problem and have activated vocational education's power of "educating with culture" by expanding majors and recombining course reforms. It is an extremely important task to energetically promote vocational schools' humanistic quality education at the time that the mainland's vocational education upgrades in new ages.

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