

The Research on the Mechanism of Integrated Development of Secondary Vocational Education and Higher Vocational Education

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Abstract: Secondary vocational education and higher vocational education are two different levels of vocational education in China, both of which bear the responsibility of cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents. Building an integrated training system for secondary and higher vocational education, implementing effective linkage between secondary and higher vocational education, and constructing a scientific modern vocational education system are the foundation for the sustainable development of vocational education. It is also an urgent need for comprehensive construction of a modern society and an important task for the reform and development of vocational education in the new era. In the face of the current shortcomings in vocational career planning education in secondary and higher vocational education, such as teaching objectives, curriculum content, teaching practices, and faculty, this article analyzes the significance of the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education, explores the driving mechanisms and guarantee mechanisms of integrated development, and proposes incentive mechanisms and implementation strategies.

Keywords: secondary and higher vocational education; integrated development; mechanism research

1. The Significance of Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education

The integrated education linking secondary and higher vocational education has a long history in China. In the exploration of theory and practice, its development model has shown diverse characteristics. The “matching enrollment” mode has broken the historical pattern of secondary vocational education as a “terminal education,” providing a much-needed pathway for continued development for secondary vocational students. The

“5+2” system allows for the coordinated arrangement of teaching plans for students in both secondary and higher vocational stages, which is conducive to the effectiveness of teaching and overall school operation advantages. It enables students to systematically study professional knowledge and skills, thus enhancing the quality of advanced technical talent training. The “3+2” or “3+3” mode, from the perspective of teaching stages and processes, maintains the independence of the teaching system and teaching objectives while achieving the integration of teaching resources and teaching objectives, forming a synergy of education



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and training and jointly promoting regional economic development. However, they are only partially connected and do not truly achieve the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education.

The integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education refers to a development model where secondary vocational education and higher vocational education are closely combined, interconnected, and mutually permeated. It can cultivate more high-quality technical talents with practical and innovative abilities by connecting and integrating vocational education resources at different levels, enabling them to meet the development needs of modern industries. The integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education can enhance the social status and value of vocational education. Through the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education, vocational education can become a parallel development path with higher education. Traditionally, secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools often face resource waste and duplication. However, integrated development can achieve resource sharing and complementarity, promote optimal resource allocation, maximize resource utilization efficiency, and facilitate efficient flow and sharing of educational resources. Integrated development can increase students' choices and development space. Traditionally, graduates of secondary vocational schools often have limited options, either employment or pursuing higher education. Integrated development provides more opportunities and choices. Students can choose between secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools based on their interests and abilities, better achieving their personal development goals.

2. The Theoretical Framework of Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education

The integration of secondary and higher vocational education is an important theoretical framework in the field of education, aiming to achieve a close connection and organic linkage between secondary vocational education and higher vocational education. Integration of Educational Systems: The theoretical framework of integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education emphasizes the integration

and fusion of secondary vocational education and higher vocational education. By establishing a unified curriculum, credit system, and teaching management standards, secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools are organically connected, breaking hierarchical constraints and overcoming limitations of educational levels. Curriculum Alignment and Continuity: The theoretical framework of integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education emphasizes the alignment and continuity of the curriculum. Through common vocational education foundation courses, core professional courses, and practical training internships, students' learning content in secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools has coherence and systematicness, cultivating students' comprehensive abilities and vocational literacy. Equal Educational Levels: The theoretical framework of integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education emphasizes the equality of educational levels. That is, secondary vocational education and higher vocational education are integrated in educational theory, knowledge structure, and learning methods, allowing students to obtain corresponding credits and degrees at different levels, thereby enhancing the social status of vocational education and students' development space. Practice-Oriented and Industry-Education Integration: The theoretical framework of integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education emphasizes practice-oriented and industry-education integration. Through cooperation with enterprises, construction of training bases, and school-enterprise cooperation, vocational education is closely integrated with practical work, enhancing students' vocational skills and employability. The theoretical framework of integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education provides important guidance and support for the reform and development of vocational education, promoting the improvement of the quality and level of vocational education and cultivating more high-quality vocational talents that meet social needs. Meanwhile, it also promotes the optimization of educational resource allocation and the transformation of the educational system. By integrating and fusing educational resources at different levels, resources are shared and complemented, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of educational resource utilization.

The theoretical framework of integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education also promotes the internationalization of vocational education. The theoretical and practical experiences of integrated development provide reference models and experiences for vocational education in different countries and regions, facilitating international exchanges and cooperation in vocational education.

3. Current Analysis of the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education.

The integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education is an important direction for vocational education reform in China and has made certain progress. Firstly, there is increasing policy support for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. The government has issued a series of policy documents encouraging cooperation between secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools to promote the integration of vocational education resources and innovative teaching models. For example, the “3+2” model, which implements three years of secondary vocational education followed by two years of higher vocational education, encourages alignment of educational systems and mutual recognition of credits, providing policy guarantees for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Secondly, the cooperation mechanism for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education is gradually improving. A number of demonstration schools and training bases for integrated development have been established, promoting cooperation and exchanges between secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools. Schools have signed strategic cooperation agreements to share teacher resources, training facilities, and employment resources, thereby enhancing teaching quality and cultivating students’ comprehensive abilities. Thirdly, the curriculum alignment for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education is gradually being coordinated. There is alignment and integration of curriculum settings between secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools, forming an organic chain of connection from basic courses to core professional courses. By establishing common

standards, curriculum systems, and credit management systems, consistency in curriculum quality and learning outcomes has been achieved. Fourthly, there have been innovations in the teaching staff and teaching methods for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Through teacher training and exchanges, the teaching level and professional quality of teachers have been improved to better adapt to the teaching requirements of integrated development. Meanwhile, diverse teaching methods are being explored, focusing on practical teaching and industry integration to enhance students’ practical operational capabilities and vocational literacy.

However, the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education still faces some challenges and issues. The progress of integrated development is uneven, with significant differences between regions and schools. While some regions and schools have achieved notable results in integrated development, others still face problems such as insufficient resources, curriculum misalignment, and ineffective cooperation mechanisms. The social awareness and status of vocational education remain relatively low. Due to the long-standing dominance of general education, there are biases and misunderstandings about vocational education among students, parents, and society, which hinders the advancement of integrated development and vocational education. Furthermore, integrated development needs to pay more attention to employment orientation and industry demand. The ultimate goal of vocational education is to cultivate high-quality talents that meet the needs of the job market. Therefore, integrated development should be closely integrated with industrial development and employment orientation. It is necessary to deeply understand the demands of various industries, adjust and optimize professional settings and curriculum content to cultivate talents that better meet market demands.

4. Building Mechanisms for the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education

4.1 Framework of Mechanisms for the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education.

The mechanisms for the integrated development

of secondary and higher vocational education mainly include building cooperation mechanisms, establishing evaluation mechanisms, and improving funding mechanisms. The following are elaborations: Cooperation Mechanisms: The integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education requires close cooperation and collaboration between secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools. Strengthening strategic cooperation among schools, establishing partnerships, promoting resource sharing, and jointly planning and formulating development goals and plans are essential. Simultaneously, establishing a mechanism for school collaboration, enhancing communication and coordination, and ensuring the smooth progress of the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education are necessary. Evaluation Mechanisms: To ensure the quality and effectiveness of the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education, a sound evaluation mechanism should be established. An independent evaluation agency can be set up to be responsible for evaluating and supervising the cooperation and teaching of various schools regularly, identifying problems timely, and proposing improvement measures. Evaluation results can serve as a reference for the continuous improvement and perfection of the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Funding Mechanisms: The integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education requires financial support. A mechanism jointly funded by the central and local governments should be established to increase investment in the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Furthermore, encouraging enterprises and society to provide assistance and support and establishing industry-education cooperation projects are also essential. Through diversified funding mechanisms, the sustainable development of the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education is ensured.

4.2 Driving Mechanisms for the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education

The driving mechanisms for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education mainly

include market demand-driven, policy guidance, and social support. Firstly, market demand-driven is a crucial driving force for promoting the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. With the transformation and upgrading of the economic structure and changes in talent demand, the market's demand for technical and skilled talents continues to increase. The integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education can more accurately meet market demand, cultivate high-quality vocational talents that meet industry requirements, and improve employment quality and efficiency. Secondly, policy guidance is an important driving force for promoting the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. The introduction and implementation of relevant national policies provide policy support and institutional guarantees for the development of integrated secondary and higher vocational education. Policies such as encouraging credit recognition, course coordination, and credit conversion provide policy guidance for the promotion of integrated secondary and higher vocational education, stimulating its development. Thirdly, social support is an important driving force for promoting the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Society's awareness and attention to vocational education and integrated secondary and higher vocational education are gradually increasing. Support and participation from various sectors of society, such as providing internship opportunities by enterprises and participation in curriculum setting and teaching quality assessment by industry associations, inject positive energy into the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Additionally, international cooperation and technological advancement also drive the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Exchange and cooperation with foreign higher vocational education institutions can draw on their successful experiences and advanced models to promote innovation and development in integrated secondary and higher vocational education. Technological progress and the application of information technology provide more opportunities and conditions for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education, driving innovation in teaching models and improvement.

4.3 Guarantee Mechanisms for the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education

The guarantee mechanisms for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education mainly include legal and regulatory guarantees, education quality guarantees, and talent cultivation guarantees. Firstly, legal and regulatory guarantees are essential for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. The state has introduced a series of laws and regulations, such as the “Standard for Secondary Vocational Schools” and the “Standard for Higher Vocational Schools,” which clarify the goals, requirements, and standards of integrated secondary and higher vocational education, providing legal basis and guidance for its promotion. Secondly, education quality assurance is crucial for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. A comprehensive quality assurance mechanism should be established from teaching design, teaching process to teaching effectiveness. By strengthening teacher training, improving teaching quality, and establishing a sound evaluation mechanism, the quality and effectiveness of integrated secondary and higher vocational education are ensured. Talent cultivation assurance is essential for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. The goal of integrated secondary and higher vocational education is to cultivate talents that better meet market demand. Therefore, quality assurance in talent cultivation should be strengthened. Establishing a curriculum and teaching model that integrates industry and education, enhancing the cultivation of practical and innovative abilities, improving employment capabilities and comprehensive qualities, and ensuring that students can smoothly enter the workforce and possess continuous learning ability after graduation are essential. The improvement of support mechanisms is also essential for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. The government should increase investment in the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education, establish a sound funding mechanism, and provide adequate financial support for school cooperation

and development.

4.4 Incentive Mechanisms for the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education

The incentive mechanisms for the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education mainly include policy incentives, economic incentives, and honor incentives. Policy incentives are an important means of promoting the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. The government can introduce relevant policies to support and reward the development of integrated secondary and higher vocational education. For example, providing funding incentives and policy support for integrated secondary and higher vocational education demonstration schools, training bases, and excellent projects; conducting evaluations and rankings of schools cooperating in integrated secondary and higher vocational education, and publicly recognizing and commending them can promote the positive development of integrated secondary and higher vocational education. Economic incentives are crucial for promoting the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. The government can provide corresponding financial support and subsidies to encourage cooperation between secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools. By providing project funds, equipment investment, and practice bases for cooperating schools, active participation in the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education is encouraged, promoting deeper and broader cooperation. Honor incentives are important means of promoting the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education. Through evaluations and the awarding of honorary titles, schools, teachers, and students who have made outstanding contributions to the integrated development of secondary and higher vocational education are recognized. This honor incentive can stimulate the enthusiasm and creativity of schools and teachers, promoting the further advancement of integrated secondary and higher vocational education.

5. Strategies for Implementing Mechanisms for the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education

5.1 Establishment of Vocational Education Groups

(Vocational Education “Government-Enterprise-School” Consortium). Introducing a group-operated model in vocational education, with specialization and industry connection as the bond, should be integrated into vocational education according to its own development needs. This integration facilitates effective collaboration among various vocational education entities, establishing a harmonious and modern vocational education system that achieves a win-win situation for government, enterprises, schools, and students. By adopting highly intensive educational methods, multiple entities involved in education can be attracted, and high-quality resources can be integrated. Effective communication within vocational education groups enhances operational efficiency, maximizing the overall development of the consortium’s educational capabilities.

5.2 Strengthening the “Recruitment-Training-Employment” Connection and Implementing “Integrated Operation”. As regional economies become more concentrated, employment positions are shifting from mid-range to high-end demands. Therefore, during the enrollment process, secondary and higher vocational schools should focus on serving employment needs and aligning with professions. Government, enterprises, schools, and enterprises should collaborate closely in conducting in-depth talent demand surveys, jointly carrying out enrollment, coordinating training, and closely cooperating on employment and entrepreneurship tracking investigations. Through detailed analysis of the talent requirements for various job positions, the basic knowledge and skills required for these employment positions can be determined. Accordingly, secondary and higher vocational schools should strive to balance their training objectives and levels, formulate enrollment strategies to meet future employment needs, and address the needs of students who intend to advance to higher vocational education.

5.3 Establishing a Mechanism for “Government-Enterprise-School” Collaborative Operation. Integrated operation, mainly focusing on the connection between secondary and higher vocational education, enables effective aggregation of rich resources from member units. This ensures optimal resource allocation, promotes resource sharing and complementarity among member units, and effectively leverages economies of scale to meet market competition. Vocational education

groups should ensure comprehensive coordination of human, material, and financial resources within the group, coordinating and unifying aspects such as training objectives, basic teaching facilities, teaching management, academic management, and enrollment. Meanwhile, curriculum design, professional development, internship bases, and student employment should be coordinated and aligned among member units to effectively mobilize everyone’s enthusiasm, promote healthy competition, and ultimately achieve win-win development for secondary and higher vocational schools, enterprise industries, and society.

5.4 Building Institutional Guarantees for the Integrated Development of Secondary and Higher Vocational Education. Institutional guarantees for integrated secondary and higher vocational education involve several aspects:(1). Management System: Further deepen the reform of the “centralized management” system, integrate the functions of the Ministry of Education and other departments in vocational education management, establish a coordinated management system for vocational education at all levels, and coordinate the leadership, management, and coordination of vocational education and training.(2). Organizational Structure: Establish a government-funded permanent joint mechanism or a vocational and technical education management committee to oversee the management of secondary and higher vocational education.(3). Function Strengthening: Strengthen the functions of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security in vocational skills training, coordinating the management of vocational training, enterprise employee training, rural labor transfer training, labor preparatory training, and privately-run education, among others.

Conclusion

The integration of secondary and higher vocational education is one of the important paths to promote the reform and innovation of vocational education. This article, through the study of the dynamic mechanism, guarantee mechanism, incentive mechanism, and implementation strategies of the integration of secondary and higher vocational education, analyzes the current situation and problems of this integration, and puts forward relevant countermeasures and suggestions. It is hoped that the research in this

article can provide some reference for the reform and development of the integration of secondary and higher vocational education, promote a new stage of development in this area, and make positive contributions to the cultivation of more high-quality vocational talents adapted to social needs.

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