Research on the Vocational College Education Serving Community Education Based on the Double Triple Helix Theory

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Abstract. There is a high degree of compatibility between vocational education and community education in terms of the connotation and function of lifelong education and universal learning. Promoting the improvement of the lifelong education system and the implementation of universal learning are the common demands of vocational education and community education. Exploring the transfer of the relationship between universities, enterprises, and governments in the “double triple helix model” to the relationship between vocational colleges, enterprises, governments, and communities, and exploring its unique operating rules, enriching and developing innovative models of community education in vocational colleges, in order to find a path suitable for the coordinated development of the two.

Keywords: Vocational College Education; Community Education; Double Triple Helix Theory.

1. Introduction

Community education, as an important component of the modern education system, plays an important role in promoting educational equity, enhancing national quality, providing community services, and optimizing community governance. It is a fundamental way and carrier for the deepening development and implementation of lifelong learning and the concept of a learning society. The main significance of the research is to study the innovative practical path of vocational colleges serving community education based on the double triple helix theory, ultimately achieving a high degree of integration between vocational education and community education, and building solid human and intellectual support for the national goals of “lifelong learning” and “learning society” in China.

2. The History of Community Education Development

2.1 The Community Education in Developed Countries

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Community research originated in Western Europe, such as Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark, and then has since been obtained in the United States development. Danish educator Gromwell founded the world’s first “mass higher education college” in 1844, which became the embryonic form of future Nordic community education. German scholar Ferdinand Toenies published the book Community and Society in 1887. From then on, research on community construction and community theory began [1]. Since 1957, the United Nations has also advocated community development plans in developed countries, exploring solutions to a series of social progress issues related to industrialization, urbanization, and modernization through community development. In community development plans, community education is an important aspect. In 1960, the United Nations published Community Development and Economic Development, which stated that community development is an educational process.

2.1.2 The Forms of Community Education in Developed Countries

There are currently three popular forms of community education development in the world, namely Nordic community education represented by popular education, American community
education represented by community colleges, and East Asian community education represented by community schools and civic centers, including China, Japan, and South Korea [2]. The most prominent feature of Nordic community education is its independent, self-help, and autonomous popular education model. Its organizational form can be roughly divided into two categories: The first type is public schools, which mainly provide general cultural education, higher education, and vocational education for adults, with the aim of helping adults improve their professional abilities and cultural level, and safeguarding the right of every citizen to learn and develop, thus reflecting the characteristics of educational equity; The second type is study groups, which do not have a unified and fixed learning mode. They can be self-study by the public, or they can form study groups, clubs or associations and conduct learning through seminars or other activities. The United States has a highly distinctive and comprehensive system of community education. It is through the establishment of a developed community college system, while carrying out two-year short term formal higher education, it also undertakes some regional community education activities. The development process of community colleges in the United States has always been guided by pragmatic educational ideas, while aligning with the labor market in curriculum design, management system, and individual educational needs of community residents, and striving to respond to the practical needs of the times for social development from an educational perspective. Japan is the first country in Asia to develop community education, with the representative community education facility being the Citizen's Hall. The concept of community education in Japan is reflected in educating the public and improving the quality and upbringing of citizens. The educational content includes youth community education, in-service adult education, and interest education for the elderly [3].

2.2 The History of Community Education in China

China has been introducing and developing community education since the 1980s. The community education policy has roughly gone through the initial stage, exploration stage, development stage, and improvement stage [4]. After nearly 40 years of development, especially in the past 10 years, China has made certain achievements in formulating and improving community education policies. From 2013 to 2015, the Ministry of Education released several policies containing important community education policies and opinions on the construction of learning cities. In 2016, the Ministry of Education and other nine departments issued the Opinions on Further Promoting the Development of Community Education, which became a milestone in the development process of community education policies in China. In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the Comprehensive Reform Plan for National Open Universities, which pointed out the need to expand community education. In 2021, the Ministry of Education issued the Opinions on Strengthening the Work of the National Education System’s Care for the Next Generation Work Committee in the New Era, which pointed out the need to open up a community battlefield. In addition, China’s community education policy also emphasizes the continuous construction of community education experimental zones. In 2008, 33 national community education experimental zones were confirmed, and in 2013, a list of 45 national community education experimental zones was confirmed. As an important carrier for implementing lifelong learning for all, community education is increasingly valued by the country, governments at all levels, and relevant units.

3. The Expansion of Vocational College Education in Community

Developed countries around the world are promoting the integration of higher education and community education in various ways. Nordic community education pays special attention to the integration of public schools and communities, applying the rich resources of public schools to the community, and providing diverse forms of community education and lifelong education for the people in the community. As the most widely accessible vocational education institution in Germany, various higher vocational education institutions in Germany mainly focus on community
service functions such as compensatory education, continuing education, vocational skills education, upgrading education, and job transfer training. Community education in the United States mainly serves through community colleges. Its functions are rich, including five major functions: university transfer education, vocational education, general education, compensatory education, and community service [5]. Canadian community colleges are the main venues for community education and cultural activities, allowing community residents to receive various types of education nearby. It has always adhered to a market-oriented approach, emphasizing the connection between colleges, industry, commerce, and communities. Its functions include academic education, vocational education, continuing education, and community education. On the one hand, Canadian community colleges have cultivated a large number of applied talents for society; On the other hand, it has improved the overall quality and education level of the people, and therefore has received widespread support from all sectors of society. TAFE College in Australia is a product of the close integration of vocational education and community education in Australia. As a flexible and comprehensive vocational education and training system, it is the largest component of the Australian education system. In the 1950s, Japan began implementing the community-based operation model of vocational education. The Japanese government has identified the Citizen’s Hall as a carrier of professional community through the release of the document On the Establishment and Operation of Citizen’s Hall [6]. Residents can not only enhance their practical work abilities, but also cultivate their sentiments and enrich their spiritual world by learning cultural knowledge through citizen museums.

In China, The Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform issued by the State Council in February 2019 clearly requires higher vocational colleges to strengthen their services for community education and lifelong learning; In March of the same year, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance issued the Opinions on Implementing the Plan for the Construction of High level Vocational Colleges and Majors with Chinese Characteristics, which further clarified that vocational colleges should expand community education and serve lifelong learning. In September 2020, the Ministry of Education and other departments issued the Action Plan for Improving the Quality and Excellence of Vocational Education (2020-2023), which identified “improving the institutional system for serving lifelong learning for all” as a key task, encouraged vocational colleges to actively serve community education, and required vocational schools to establish exemplary continuing education bases, community education demonstration bases, etc., to be interconnected and shared with other continuing education institutions, and to form a development synergy that serves lifelong learning for all. Faced with such a new era of community education construction, vocational colleges have entered a new stage from “great potential” to “great potential”.

4. Introduction to the Double Triple Helix Theory

The Triple Helix Theory originated in the 1990s from American sociologist Henry Etzkowitz and Dutch scholar Robert Reddsorf, who proposed an innovative theory to further elucidate the dialectical relationship between interdependence and interactive development among universities, businesses, and governments [7]. The triple helix theory consists of universities, enterprises, and governments, forming a cohesive and blending trend through the intersection and overlap of the three, thereby forming a trend of coordinated development and a source of mutual promotion. In 2000, Chinese scholars first recognized the theory of triple helix, but it was not until 2005 that Chinese scholars began in-depth research on the theory, and the number of research literature rapidly increased. From the initial introduction of the three-helix theory model, to the construction of the four-helix theory model, N-helix theory model, and double triple helix theory model, and then to the application of the three-helix theory model to research in various fields such as entrepreneurship education, government industry academia cooperation, regional economy, and talent cultivation [8]. The “double” in the “double triple helix” structure refers to the internal and
external spiral structures, with vocational colleges, enterprises, governments, and communities in the external organizational structure as the external spiral, and people with core development capabilities in the internal organizational structure: quality, knowledge, and ability as the internal spiral. Communities have become an important practice site for “lifelong learning” and “learning society” in China. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the transfer of the relationship between universities, enterprises, and government in the “double triple helix model” to the relationship between vocational colleges, enterprises, governments, and communities. Furthermore, exploring its unique operating rules, enriching and developing innovative models of community education in vocational colleges, in order to find a path suitable for the coordinated development of the two.

5. Research on Vocational Colleges Serving Community Education Based on the Double Triple Helix Theory

This research is guided by the double triple helix theory and applied to the relationship between universities, enterprises, governments, and communities, providing new guidance for exploring innovative paths in community services in vocational colleges.

5.1 Research on the Connection of Vocational College Education and Community Education

Community education is a relatively unique and rooted form of education in the community, with significant characteristics such as professionalism, humanities, mass, regional, and practicality. Its main goal is to serve lifelong learning for people, community development, and building a learning society. The characteristics of community education coincide with those of vocational colleges, and the two have a high degree of connection in the connotation and function of lifelong education and universal learning, which can effectively promote and implement the improvement of the lifelong education system. The on campus and off campus training bases of vocational colleges can not only serve the realization of the goal of cultivating high-quality skilled talents in colleges, but also meet the learning needs of community residents for academic and skill improvement; The function of community education continues to extend, and the thirst for professional talents also provides opportunities for teaching, social practice, and skill learning for teachers and students in vocational colleges, which is conducive to the cultivation of teachers and students in vocational colleges. The connections of vocational college education and community education are as following: 1. Integrating the “locality” of vocational colleges with the “regional” of community education; 2. The “comprehensiveness” of vocational colleges will further expand the curriculum resources of community education; 3. High quality teachers in vocational colleges are the guarantee of community education quality; 4. The “excellent resources” of vocational colleges are a strong support for community education; 5. The common demand for high-quality development of both “external demand” and “domestic demand”.

5.2 Propose a Vocational College and Community Talent Cultivation Based on the Double Triple Helix Theory

Both higher vocational education and community education are closely focused on talent cultivation. The inner triple helix is an organic combination of knowledge, ability, and literacy. In the goal of talent cultivation, knowledge, ability, and literacy are closely connected and indispensable, while also having internal connections and interactions. The spiral upward relationship of their intersection and overlap is the driving force for individual growth and success. The cross cutting and mutually reinforcing relationship of knowledge, ability, and literacy constitutes a triple helix relationship in talent cultivation. Vocational colleges, enterprises, governments, and communities respectively represent the main body of knowledge innovation, technological innovation, policy innovation, and practical venues, forming the external triple helix of talent cultivation. In the external triple helix, vocational colleges, enterprises, and governments all play a role in the community, promoting the deep integration of higher vocational education and
community education, optimizing talent cultivation, and promoting the formation of a learning society.

5.3 Propose an Innovative Path for Vocational Colleges Serving Community Education Based on the Double Triple Helix Theory

Using the Double Triple Helix Theory - with the cultivation of talents (knowledge, abilities, and literacy) as the inner triple helix and the external environment (vocational colleges, enterprises, governments, communities) as the outer triple helix, we aim to achieve the integration and interaction between various entities from the perspectives of strategic collaboration, organizational collaboration, management collaboration, and cultural collaboration. With teams, platforms, and systems as the link, we explore the “Double Triple Helix” model of social services in vocational colleges.

6. Summary

The triple helix theory provides a new theoretical research paradigm for studying the relationship between universities, enterprises, and governments. The aim of this project is to propose a double triple helix model for sustainable development that corresponds to the triple helix, breaking away from the traditional triple helix theory that solely emphasizes external entities, and constructing a coordinated development double triple helix system where the inner triple helix and the outer triple helix coexist. The external spiral serves as the support and the internal spiral serves as the bond. The external spiral and internal spiral are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, promoting the sharing and interaction of educational elements and innovative resources among universities, enterprises, governments, and communities, and providing innovative guidance for vocational colleges to better serve community education.

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References