

A Research on the Vocational Education of China and ASEAN Countries

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Abstract: In the new era, China has put forward the vision of building a strategic cooperative partnership with ASEAN countries, which enlightens a new development trend for the cooperation between China and ASEAN countries. Of course, this development scenario has tightened the relationship between China and ASEAN countries, laid a solid foundation for the position trend and valuable opportunities for the cooperation on vocational education. On the one hand, since the two parties are complementary in many aspects, they can stimulate the internal drive in the cooperation and development of vocational education. On the other hand, there are some uncertain challenges in this process comparatively, all of which will have a far-reaching influence on the cooperation between both sides. Moreover, it's difficult to judge exactly whether these influences are positive or negative. Therefore, it's necessary to explore the optimization strategy of vocational education between China and ASEAN countries starting from the background of the "Belt and Road Initiative".

Keywords: China; ASEAN; Cooperation on vocational education

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In late 2021, the joint exhibition on vocational education of China and ASEAN countries was opened in Nanning, China. Themed on "Skills Service a Good Life", this exhibition focuses on the enlightening function of vocational education to modern agricultural business and manufacturing, modern service, national culture inheritance, rural revitalization, intending to more effectively enhance the community of shared future mechanism and cooperation path between China and ASEAN countries. In today's society, the economic cooperation between China and ASEAN countries has become more closely connected, which provides more possibilities for the vocational education of both sides and opens a broader space. However, though there are opportunities and results, we should not ignore the challenges ahead.

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1. Analysis of the Advantages of Cooperation on Vocational Education

The vocational education cooperation between China and ASEAN countries generally means the all-factor cooperation activities in vocational education resources conducted by China and ASEAN countries jointly, covering all aspects involved in education, such as students, teachers, information, courses, and practical training, thus it is relatively bidirectional and mutual. The main purpose of cooperation between the two parties is to effectively enhance the vocational education strength of each side by building and sharing vocational education resources, so as to cultivate talents to meet the skill needs of each country.

(1) The cooperation on vocational education between China and ASEAN countries is one part of the implementation of the strategic cooperative partnership

At the 21st Leaders' Meeting of China and ASEAN Countries, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang put forward the guidelines for the alignment of "ASEAN Vision 2025" based on promoting the Belt and Road, hoping to better promote in-depth cooperation between China and ASEAN countries. In the process of cooperation between China and ASEAN countries, the educational exchange has always been one of the crucial parts, which has also been integrated into the "Vision 2030" system of cooperation between China and ASEAN countries. Moreover, the "Five-Year Action Plan of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation" (2018-2022) also elaborates on the training content of the vocational education of the two countries with relatively clear illustration, and effectively puts forwards the policy of setting up education training centers and education bases within each country. Generally speaking, this proves that vocational education is also a priority in building a close cooperation between China and ASEAN countries.

(2) The vocational education cooperation between China and ASEAN countries is a key bridge to connect people of each country

Entering the new era, China and ASEAN countries have built communication channels and platforms for vocational education on borders in the form of vocational education joint exhibitions, set up overseas institutions such as "Ruban Workshop", so as to advance exchange and cultural communication between teachers and students of different schools. Through the cooperation activities of vocational education, both the scale and the number of projects are expanded. The vocational education quality of both sides is improved continuously, the cooperation between enterprises and cultural understanding and mutual trust between countries are also facilitated, and the channel of people-to-people communication is formed.

(3) Cooperating in vocational education between China and ASEAN countries is an important way to promote the development of vocational education

At present, many ASEAN countries have advocated the development of

vocational education to enrich workers' vocational skills through the support of policies. For example, in the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy (2017-2015), the Cambodian government proposed to improve the comprehensive abilities and vocational skills of workers, promote good work attitudes and work ethics, improve productivity, and cultivate awareness and ability of lifelong employment, so as to strengthen the level of the labor force and human resources. In addition, China is also in the critical stage of transitioning from "made in China" to "intelligently made in China", and is in the urgent need of talents with technical skills. It's necessary to actively promote cooperation to build a regional vocational education community, which can improve the quality of education and meet the needs of further development.

2. The Optimization Strategies for the Vocational Education Cooperation between China and ASEAN Countries

Today, China and ASEAN countries are carrying forward increasingly close economic and trade exchanges. According to the data report released by China Customs in mid-July 2020, the total value of China's trade in goods was 14.24 trillion Yuan in the first half of the year, which registers a decrease of 3.2% year-on-year. The imports and exports of ASEAN countries stood at about 2.09 trillion yuan, which represents a year-on-year increase of about 5.6%, accounting for about 14.7% of China's total foreign trade value. As the largest trading partner of ASEAN countries for more than ten years consecutively, China's total import and export value has bucked the trend in the face of the epidemic expansion since 2020. It can be predicted that more frequent economic and trade exchanges of quality inspection between China and ASEAN countries will be conducted in the coming years, and the cooperation in vocational education will naturally be on a deeper level. Therefore, it is necessary to start with making stricter standards, promoting coordination and industry-education collaboration to comprehensively enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation, while hoping to promote the comprehensive implementation of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

(1) Making stricter standards: trying to realize the mutual recognition of educational qualifications between China and ASEAN countries

Recent years have witnessed the rapid development trend of China's vocational education and a certain achievement. The talent training level of vocational education has also been recognized by ASEAN countries, and China has a strong aspiration to cooperate with various countries. However, the development of and there are gaps to be made up. Therefore, making a mutual and multilateral recognition system of qualifications can better promote the vocational education cooperation between China and ASEAN countries. At the opening ceremony of the

“Joint Exhibition and Forum on Vocational Education Between China and ASEAN Countries” in 2015, Lu Xin, then vice minister of the Ministry of Education, once indicated that mutual recognition systems of “courses, credits, academic levels and qualifications” should be implemented, then to build an open and interchangeable educational cooperation framework.

In terms of the macro level, it is necessary to make use of the Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF) of ASEAN countries and the training standards of different levels of talents in China to promote and build the vocational education cooperation framework between China and ASEAN countries, so as to provide a reference for the mutual recognition of qualifications and good cooperation between vocational colleges. Meanwhile, some vocational colleges in China have achieved in-depth cooperation with ASEAN countries. For example, Wuxi Vocational College of Commerce and Technology and Sihanouk Ville Business School have jointly made enrollment decisions for majors of business administration and logistics management. Guangxi College of Industrial Technology has set up courses such as sugarcane production, sugar production technology, machinery manufacturing technology and electrical automation technology, and has obtained opportunities to cooperate with some universities in Thailand.

As for the micro level, it is urgent to take the communication and cooperation between colleges and universities as the basis for development, and rely on the basic units of industries and professional fields to launch the framework of mutual recognition between China and ASEAN countries in majors, courses, and standards of vocational education, which will be conducive to promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

(2) Promoting coordinated development: creating new educational cooperation models between China and ASEAN countries

First of all, exploring the mechanism of developing sub-regional cooperation in vocational education. The relatively loose internal structure of ASEAN countries makes it difficult for China to achieve consensus when considering to conduct cooperation with them. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen sub-regional cooperation. Taking Yunnan Minzu University as an example, the university provides backup talents for the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, explores a new path of sub-regional cooperation in vocational education, and builds a vocational education base of “six in one”.

Second, the vocational education cooperation carried out by provinces near borders, such as Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan, is taken as a “channel” to explore the mechanism of cooperation between the vocational education colleges in the mainland and various ASEAN countries. These vocational education colleges and universities in border provinces have organized extensive cooperation with ASEAN

countries, and also gained great achievements. In seeking further development, it's suggested to better play first-mover advantages of the vocational colleges in border provinces, fully mobilize the enthusiasm of the vocational colleges of our country to carry forward transnational cooperation, broaden the scope of partner schools, and expand professional areas of effective cooperation.

Finally, exploring the mechanism to improve the information sharing and communication mechanism of intercollegiate cooperation in vocational education institutions. Now, the communication on vocational education is conducive to the exchange of information, however, there is still a large space to promote international cooperation in vocational education, thus to better implement those methods in different institutions and different majors. Realistically, some vocational colleges in ASEAN countries lack understanding of the development of vocational education in China, thus they can't determine their cooperative partners. This is also a problem that is disturbing many vocational education institutions in China. Therefore, the cooperation needs of colleges and universities need to be more accurately positioned, and the platform of vocational education institutions in China and ASEAN countries should be built to refine the professional needs and facilitate cooperation and communication between schools.

(3) Realizing the synergy of industry and education: improving the two-way flow mechanism between China and ASEAN countries

First of all, the government is suggested to try to construct an information sharing system in the mode of university-enterprise cooperation, create a collaboration mode between universities and enterprises, encourage the "Going Global" to realize information sharing and release laws, regulations, and policies of ASEAN countries, corresponding career development information, talent demand and the reality of vocational education, all of which can help to eliminate the obstacles of asymmetric information between domestic and overseas schools and enterprises.

Second, some vocational colleges and enterprises that adopted the guideline of "Going Global" will build closer ties with mature chambers of commerce and industrial parks in ASEAN countries, so as to facilitate good cooperation between enterprises and vocational colleges. For example, countries such as Singapore and Malaysia among ASEAN countries have a large number of Chinese communities, therefore, they are suggested to contact to Chinese alliances and organizations to create positive platforms for enterprises and vocational colleges to "go global".

Finally, ASEAN countries with close school-enterprise cooperation and relatively perfect conditions are suggested to start overseas vocational education groups. For example, they can refer to the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation model of Yunnan Minzu University to explore the development mechanism of cooperative

organizations in which different countries, enterprises, and colleges participate. Last but not least, the coordinated development of industry and education can promote international cooperation in vocational education and effectively improve the cooperation effect.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, the cooperation in vocational education is being strengthened, and so is cooperation in vocational education, which has been proved to be positive in promoting cultural and people-to-people exchanges between countries. The vocational education schools in China should actively carry forward the cooperation concept of mutually beneficial and win-win and common development, act as the participants and facilitators to promote the friendship and mutual trust relationship between China and ASEAN countries, sustain the healthy development of the solid infrastructure of the community of China and ASEAN of a shared future and make people in each country to trust and respect each other.

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