Research on the Problems and Countermeasures of Vocational Education School Enterprise Cooperation from the Perspective of Network Governance

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Abstract: Currently, vocational education in China is at an important turning point of improving quality and excellence, and building a modern vocational education system is an urgent task facing vocational education. At present, there are still problems in vocational education in terms of school-enterprise cooperation, such as insufficient embedding and sustainability of cooperation, insufficient motivation for cooperation entities to participate, lack of government governance mechanisms, and lack of industry supervision and quality evaluation. The cooperative entities between schools and enterprises usually have characteristics of diversity and heterogeneity, and also involve relevant cooperative entities in interest distribution, gaming, coordination, and balance. This provides the following reference for the network governance of vocational education school-enterprise cooperation: firstly, play the leading and governance functions of the government, optimize the network governance structure, and establish a long-term operating mechanism; the second is to strengthen goal orientation, pay attention to the development needs of all parties, and stimulate the motivation of subject participation; the third is to improve the quality supervision and performance evaluation system, establish and improve a diversified organizational structure, and ensure the quality of school-enterprise cooperation.

1. Preface

The newly revised Vocational Education Law of the People's Republic of China in 2022 proposes: “Based on the industrial layout and development needs, measures should be taken to vigorously develop emerging majors required by advanced manufacturing and other industries, and support the construction of high-level vocational schools and majors.” How to cultivate high-quality skilled talents with a more international perspective and stronger vocational skills in the practice of vocational education, it is a major issue that China's vocational education school-enterprise cooperation is inevitably facing at present. Network governance theory emphasizes that multiple subjects in the governance process should strengthen communication and trust to jointly achieve the governance goals. [1] This is very suitable for analyzing the relationship between the various subjects in vocational education school-enterprise cooperation. Therefore, this paper analyzes the application of network governance theory in school-enterprise cooperation in order to provide reference for improving the level of school-enterprise cooperation in China.

2. The Realistic Dilemma in School Enterprise Cooperation

Although there is a theoretical mutual benefit and win-win relationship between school-enterprise cooperation, that is, in the process of school-enterprise cooperation, on the one hand, it can better ensure the quality of personnel training in higher vocational colleges and universities and help graduates' employment; on the other hand, it is beneficial to cultivate the vocational and technical talents that are really needed by the enterprises, and to cut the cost of personnel training. However, in the actual cooperation process, due to the cooperation system mechanism is not straightened out, the interests of all parties are difficult to weigh, relatively independent of the school and the enterprise are more concerned about how to maximize their own benefits in the cooperation. As a result of the game of interests between schools and enterprises, the current school-enterprise cooperation is characterized by the lack of embeddedness and continuity, the lack of motivation for the participation of cooperative subjects, and the lack of supervision and evaluation of the quality of cooperation.
2.1. Insufficient embedding and sustainability of cooperation

The embeddedness of current vocational education school enterprise cooperation is not high, manifested in that school enterprise cooperation is often limited to shallow cooperation such as factory visits and practical training, and fails to carry out effective and in-depth cooperation from aspects such as student cultivation and industrial development, which also affects the stability and sustainability of school enterprise cooperation. Vocational colleges are often the leaders of school enterprise cooperation, and industry organizations and enterprises are supporters of school enterprise cooperation. However, in this cooperation network, the only government department capable of integrating these relatively independent units has not played its role. At the same time, due to the incomplete system of school enterprise cooperation, the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of all parties involved in school enterprise cooperation are not clear enough, which greatly restricts the sustainability of school enterprise cooperation.\(^3\)

2.2. Insufficient motivation for cooperative entities to participate

As one of the main bodies of school enterprise cooperation, the utilization of enterprise technology output and talent incubation functions is of great significance in providing social and technological human resources. However, in the actual cooperation process, the "fireplace phenomenon" that the school actively participates in docking and the enterprise often passively treats is more obvious.\(^3\) The reason for the lack of motivation for enterprises to participate as cooperative entities is that to a certain extent, they neglect the interests of enterprises as collaborators in the process of school enterprise cooperation, resulting in the inability of enterprises to obtain positive expected benefits and insufficient participation motivation.

In the network structure of school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education, firstly, due to the existence of school-enterprise cooperation subjects with different interests of their own, resulting in differences or even conflicts between the cooperation subjects on the goals of school-enterprise cooperation; secondly, due to the lagging concept of the cooperation subjects leading to difficulties in coordinating the goals of cooperation, resulting in the lack of endogenous motivation of the cooperation subjects. First of all, on the goal of school-enterprise cooperation, there are differences in the cooperation goal of school-enterprise cooperation subjects caused by focusing on institutions and neglecting the interests of enterprises. Secondly, enterprises ignore vocational education and focus on business alone, vocational colleges and universities think that school-enterprise cooperation is only a supplement to traditional teaching methods, while local government departments lag behind in management concepts, failing to build a cooperation platform for enterprises and vocational colleges and universities and supervise the process and quality of school-enterprise cooperation.

2.3. Lack of cooperation quality supervision and evaluation

From the perspective of network governance, the subjects involved in quality supervision and evaluation of school enterprise cooperation include the government, both parties involved in school enterprise cooperation, and industry organizations. However, in terms of the current status of cooperation, there are the following problems in the government's supervision and evaluation. Firstly, the evaluation criteria are single, often adopting the 3E principles of efficiency, economy, and effectiveness for a single network entity, lacking an examination of the overall operational efficiency and stability of the network. Secondly, it is difficult to evaluate the performance of school enterprise cooperation. Currently, there is a lack of evaluation for school enterprise cooperation projects or unilateral evaluation by vocational colleges or enterprises. As vocational colleges and enterprises are direct stakeholders in school enterprise cooperation, the fairness and scientificity of quality supervision and evaluation are difficult to convince the public.\(^6\) The quality supervision and external evaluation functions of industry organizations with strong professionalism and independence have not been fully utilized.

3. Analysis of the Causes of Difficulties in School Enterprise Cooperation from the Perspective of Network Governance

Essentially, as a governance mechanism in the public domain, network governance is seen as a complex operational system guided by goals, structured by architecture, with mechanisms as the core, and performance as the outcome.\(^5\) Network governance is a public management behavior oriented towards establishing goals. In the process of cooperation between vocational education schools and enterprises, multiple entities have different interests and demands, and even conflicts exist. Moreover, due to the imperfect institutional mechanisms, there are many problems such as low vitality and insufficient sustainability of cooperative organizations. The details are as follows:

3.1. The rigid network structure of school enterprise cooperation leads to insufficient embedding and sustainability of cooperation

The structure of vocational education school enterprise cooperation network not only has problems with the network itself, but also has problems with overall coordination and system linkage.\(^6\) Firstly, in the school enterprise cooperation network, vocational colleges are in a relatively traditional hierarchical management system, lacking autonomy in financial and administrative power, which weakens their initiative in school enterprise cooperation.
cooperation and makes it difficult for them to actively adapt to the needs of the enterprise industry.

In the school enterprise cooperation network, the government serves as the master of key resources, but due to the lack of its role and function in vocational education school enterprise cooperation, it has not played a positive role in setting goals for school enterprise cooperation, formulating policies and regulations, and other aspects, limiting the enthusiasm and initiative of other entities in cooperation.

3.2. Different interests and demands of school enterprise cooperation entities lead to insufficient participation motivation

In the process of school enterprise cooperation, the government mainly pursues public interests such as social stability and fiscal taxation as its goals, industries and enterprises aim to obtain profits and resources, vocational colleges aim for student employment and professional development, and students aim for academic employment. Germany's "dual system" is a model for school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education around the world, but only at the macro level to realize the integration of education and industrial systems, but the two sides did not reach an agreement on the ways and means of personnel training.[7]

In the network structure of vocational education school enterprise cooperation, firstly, due to the different interests and demands of the school enterprise cooperation subjects, there are differences or even conflicts among the cooperation subjects regarding the goals of school enterprise cooperation; Secondly, due to the lagging concept of the cooperative subject, it is difficult to coordinate the cooperation objectives, resulting in insufficient endogenous motivation of the cooperative subject.

3.3. Inadequate cooperation mechanism between schools and enterprises leads to a lack of quality supervision and evaluation

The governance mechanism of school enterprise cooperation network is a system design and rule constraint that improves the operational performance of the school enterprise cooperation network structure and ensures the smooth operation of the school enterprise cooperation network. Currently, the inadequate governance mechanism of the school enterprise cooperation network is an important reason for limiting the improvement of the level of school enterprise cooperation.

The inadequate coordination mechanism has led to a lack of quality supervision. In the school enterprise cooperation network, the government's participation in the coordination of school enterprise cooperation is insufficient, and the government plays a role of "matchmaking", lacking continuity in quality supervision and performance evaluation for the follow-up of school enterprise cooperation.

4. Solving the Dilemma of School Enterprise Cooperation from the Perspective of Network Governance

4.1. Improve the network structure of vocational education school enterprise cooperation and enhance the embedding degree of cooperation

To establish a sound governance system for vocational education school enterprise cooperation network, firstly, it is necessary to establish multi-dimensional organizational guarantees in government departments, strengthen communication and cooperation within government departments, and play a coordinating role. The second is to establish specialized institutions for school enterprise cooperation, strengthen organizational construction, and promote the smooth development of cooperation projects. The third is to establish a multi-party joint meeting system, where all parties fully express their opinions and suggestions, conduct consultations on the different demands of each participating entity, and explore the depth of cooperation. The fourth is to strengthen the leading role of the government in school enterprise cooperation, coordinate and plan the operating rules and systems of the school enterprise cooperation network, standardize the behavior of school enterprise cooperation subjects, establish behavioral norms and standards, and enhance the sustainability of cooperation.

4.2. Strengthen goal orientation and stimulate motivation for all parties to participate

Network governance needs to be goal oriented. In school enterprise cooperation, establishing a common goal pursuit among all participating entities plays a crucial role in unleashing the subjective initiative of each entity and achieving maximum synergy. One is to strengthen publicity and education on the ideological understanding of school enterprise cooperation subjects, unify the ideological understanding of all parties, and enhance the enthusiasm and initiative of cooperation subjects. The second is to reasonably allocate educational resources to achieve multiple synergistic effects, continuously optimize the allocation of network governance resources and the effective combination of their respective resources, improve the output level of vocational education, and stimulate the participation motivation of all parties.

4.3. Improve the quality supervision and evaluation system to ensure the quality of school enterprise cooperation

In February 2019, the State Council issued a notice on the issuance of the National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan, which clearly stated the need to optimize vocational education training evaluation organizations, indicating that China is actively exploring a vocational education training evaluation system. However, based on the successful experience of domestic and foreign school enterprise cooperation models, the
improvement of the quality of school enterprise cooperation often relies on an external evaluation system with clear responsibilities, layer by layer supervision, and sufficient feedback. At the same time, it is necessary to establish a complete vocational education evaluation system. Under the guidance of the government's "meta governance" role, industry organizations serve as the main external supervision and evaluation agencies to jointly supervise and evaluate the quality of school enterprise cooperation. Based on feedback, the practice of school enterprise cooperation is continuously optimized to improve the quality of vocational education.

5. Conclusion
At present, the problems faced by school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education are mainly reflected in the low participation of school-enterprise cooperation subjects, the lack of policy relevance, the backward governance mechanism, and the lagging evaluation function. From the perspective of network governance, this paper proposes solutions such as optimizing the governance structure, strengthening the goal orientation, and improving the supervision and evaluation system. It is expected that the establishment of modern vocational education system will be re-examined through the perspective shift, so as to improve the level of school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education.

References