

# The Evolution, Defects and Countermeasures of Vocational Education Policy in China

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**Abstract:** Examining the course of more than 70 years of vocational education development in China, vocational education policy has led, standardized and promoted. However, the implementation of vocational education policy is faced with complex environment, and there are still defects in logic closed-loop, dynamic mechanism, coordination and unification. The construction of vocational education policy system in the new era should be structured from the aspects of vocational education oriented to society and everyone, improving the dynamic mechanism to stimulate the enthusiasm of government and enterprises, and improving the closed-loop of supervision, evaluation and feedback policies.

**Keywords:** Vocational Education Policy; the Course of Development; Policy Defects; Suggestions on Countermeasures

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## Introduction

The introduction of a policy is based on the need to regulate and guide the problems from the system level, and the effectiveness of the policy is reflected in the degree of solving the problem and the degree of meeting the realistic needs [1]. This article comprehensively examines the policy changes of vocational education in China, analyzes various problems in the implementation of vocational education policy, and optimizes vocational education policy supply to provide support for China's healthy development of vocational education.

## 1. Some important policies in the development process of vocational education in China [1-2]

From 1949 to 1979, vocational education in the era of planned economy mainly trained primary and intermediate technical personnel, which was an important part of elite education.

In the early years of the market economy after 1980, work was carried out to adjust the structure of vocational education, explore new models and improve the conditions for running schools. From the promulgation of the Decision of the CPC Central Committee on the Reform of the Educational System in 1985 to the implementation of the Vocational Education Law in 1996, vocational education has been promoted by the government, driven by external factors and developed rapidly in scale.

Entering the 21st century, the state has re-recognized vocational education and established the strategic key of vigorously developing vocational education. In 2002, The State Council held a national conference on vocational education and promulgated the Decision of The State Council on Vigorously Promoting the Reform and Development of Vocational Education. In 2005, The State Council held the second national conference on vocational education and promulgated the Decision of The State Council on Vigorously Developing Vocational Education.

Following the promulgation of the Decision of The State Council on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education in 2014 and the convening of the 19th CPC National Congress, The Party Central Committee and The State Council issued three important documents: the National Implementation Plan for Vocational Education Reform (Article 20 on Vocational Education), the Action Plan for Improving the Quality and Quality of Vocational Education (2020-2023),

and the Opinions on Promoting the High-quality Development of Modern Vocational Education. The underlying logic of these three documents is that they link up with each other and progress step by step from deepening reform to improving quality and cultivate good, and then to high-quality development. They define the framework for the reform and development of vocational education during the 14th Five-Year Plan period.

The Revised Catalogue of Vocational Education in 2021 integrates the design of the catalogue of secondary vocational, higher vocational and vocational undergraduate majors to improve the adaptability of vocational education to the industry. The Law on Vocational Education implemented in 2022 clearly states that vocational education is a type of education, that vocational education is as important as general education, and that a skilled society should be built, which greatly enhances the social appeal of vocational education.

## **2. Defects existing in China's vocational education policy**

### **2.1 The implementation of vocational education policies faces a complex environment**

The thought of official standard is deeply rooted in Chinese traditional culture. People still have deep prejudice against vocational education, and still think vocational education is low level education <sup>[2]</sup>. There are also many problems in vocational education itself, such as low career quality, lack of learning atmosphere, low technical content of teaching facilities, low level of teachers' skills, professional setting and local industrial talent structure needs are not coordinated. These have a negative impact on the implementation of vocational education policies.

### **2.2 The vocational education policy is not closed loop**

The vocational education policy of our country lacks closed loop logic and some supporting measures. First, the evaluation mechanism is not sound, the policy itself is relatively flexible, there is no quantitative indicators and clear requirements, the lack of evaluation standards and evaluation subjects. Second, the accountability mechanism has not been established, the subject of responsibility is unclear and the specific responsibility is unclear. Third, the feedback channel is not smooth. In reality, the target group does not know to whom, through which channels, whether or not to express. Fourth, because of the multi-level administrative system, the time is delayed in the policy implementation process, and the policy implementation power is gradually reduced. <sup>[3-4]</sup>

### **2.3 Vocational education policy lacks dynamic mechanism**

The problems in the implementation of vocational education policy are closely related to the lack of dynamic mechanism in vocational education policy. First, the government does not fully perform its duties on vocational education. It is often keen on formulating policies and does not allocate resources to higher-level policies unless necessary. Second, the lack of endogenous dynamic mechanism for policy implementation leads to the lack of self-interest of policy implementers, resulting in mechanical implementation of rigid policies and passive implementation of flexible policies. Third, lack of multiple executive subject external interest coordination mechanism. Vocational education involves the government, enterprises and industries, and diversified interests converge. It is difficult for vocational education policies to fully consider the interests of industrial enterprises, which will inevitably weaken the implementation effect of vocational education policies. <sup>[4-5]</sup>

## **3. Suggestions for solving problems in the implementation of vocational education policies**

To solve the problem of vocational education policy implementation, we can optimize the internal and external environment, improve the closed loop of policy logic and supporting dynamic mechanism.

### **3.1 Optimize the implementation environment of vocational education policies**

If the country wants to develop vocational education vigorously, it is necessary to improve the social status and social influence of vocational education. The Vocational Education Act provides a good macro environment. We need to do the following: First, vocational education should be for everyone, for lifelong learning, for the rural areas, focus on the whole society to cultivate students' professional ethics, vocational skills and employment and entrepreneurship ability. Second, the government should earnestly fulfill the responsibility of developing vocational education, improve the multi-channel investment mechanism, so that vocational education can meet the needs of economic and social development. Third, vocational colleges should focus on improving the quality of education and teaching, reform the personnel training mode, strengthen the "double-qualified" teachers, and improve the education quality guarantee system. Fourth, arouse the enthusiasm of industrial enterprises and attract them to participate in the education and teaching management of vocational colleges<sup>[1-2]</sup>.

### **3.2 Improve the closed-loop logic of vocational education policy**

First of all, we should strengthen the supervision of the policy implementation process, make it clear who supervises, how supervises, and how to feedback supervision opinions in a timely manner. Process supervision should be integrated in the whole cycle of policy implementation. On the one hand, difficulties and problems encountered in policy implementation should be timely understood and discovered to facilitate timely adjustment or guidance. On the other hand, we will supervise the implementation behavior of the subjects implementing policies, and deal with the problems of inaction and disorderly action in a timely manner. Second, we need to evaluate and feedback the effects of policy implementation, establish an accountability system, and clarify who evaluates, how to evaluate, and what to feedback. The evaluation and feedback of policies is an important link to ensure the achievement of policy implementation goals. It focuses on the interests, values and views of policy recipients, and feeds back the policy formulation and implementation subjects in time<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **3.3 Improve the coordination and unification mechanism of vocational education**

The dynamic mechanism of vocational education should change from "unclear power and responsibility" to "coordination and unification". First of all, a vocational education management agency should be set up at the central level to coordinate the responsibilities and relations among education departments, labor departments, planning departments and financial departments, formulate major policies and measures for vocational education, issue important policies and measures, and reduce the overlapping of functions. Secondly, administrative departments at all levels should formulate supporting policies in relevant aspects according to their own functions to ensure the detailed implementation of national laws and regulations on vocational education. Third, vocational education and general education should strengthen exchanges and communication, cooperate with each other, and make consistent policies<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **Closing Remarks**

Driven by the vocational education policy, China's vocational education has a good momentum. The modern vocational education system with Chinese characteristics has been initially constructed, and the largest vocational education in the world has been built. However, China's vocational education still has many problems and insufficient. It is necessary for the state to introduce more comprehensive, systematic and scientific vocational education policies, especially for local governments or educational administrative departments at all levels to introduce supporting vocational education policies to facilitate operation.

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