

Overseas Students' Recruitment and Cultivation in Jiangsu Higher Vocational Colleges under "Belt and Road" Initiative

Huang Xian

Jiangsu Maritime Institute, Nanjing

Abstract: *Based on their own privileged specialty advantages, Jiangsu Higher Vocational Colleges recruit overseas students from countries along the Belt and Road. Currently, the majority of the overseas students follow the "Chinese plus vocational skills" cultivation pattern. The professional teaching standards and course output standards are the basic means for Jiangsu higher vocational colleges to achieve their right of speech in the field of vocational teaching. The cultivation of overseas students in Jiangsu higher vocational colleges is now well on the way. However, still some problems exist such as a low exploration of specialty's internationalization, unrationality of overseas students' management system, lack of overseas students' education guarantee. Based on the above mentioned problems, the concerned higher vocational colleges should, in the process of recruitment, intensify the survey and research work of origin countries, research on the quality of source of students, and make pointed references in the matching of source of students' demands with the potential employment market, rationally allocate high-quality educational resources, establish scientific management system and build a whole process quality control management system.*

Keywords: Belt and Road Jiangsu Higher Vocational Colleges Overseas Students Recruitment and Cultivation International Educational Resources Whole-process Quality Control System.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2013, President Xi Jinping brought up the initiative of jointly building Silk Road Economic Zone and 21st Maritime Silk Road. Correspondingly, educational opening-up increases its scale, a number of policies like Opinions on the Educational Opening-up to the Outside World in a New Era, Chinese Educational Modernization 2035, and Promotion on the joint building of Belt and Road Educational Actions were promulgated densely. Jiangsu higher vocational colleges actively respond to the national call and the new tendency of international cooperation, in particular the "Double High-level Plan(high level in both vocational colleges and professional building) listed "improving the internationalization level" into the "ten major tasks " of higher vocational colleges, Jiangsu higher vocational colleges actively participated into the building of "Belt and Road", vigorously carry out overseas students' recruitment and cultivation. Statistics show that the number of overseas student in Jiangsu Province ranks only second to that in Beijing and Shanghai. Anyway, the overseas students' recruitment and cultivation is a new thing and still exists in its exploration period. The author of this paper means to analyze the current situation of overseas students' recruitment and cultivation in Jiangsu higher vocational colleges and provides a trial investigation into the problems existed and possible countermeasures.

2. SITUATION ANALYSIS AND EXISTING PROBLEMS

The period between 2011 and 2019 witnessed a rapid increase of the scale of overseas students in China, in particular, that in Jiangsu Province. Statistics shows that the overall number of overseas students coming to Jiangsu Province reached 32228 in 2016, second only to that in Beijing and Shanghai, a year-on-year growth rate of 20.9% compared with 2015. The 3 years of Covid-19 pandemic caused a slower rate of the number of recruited students. However, since 2022, the recruitment of overseas students has picked up its rapid growth once again.

In terms of the origin country of the overseas students, Asia remains a major source even though there are many different other origin countries. In recent years, the number of students from Kazakhstan, Palestine, Bangladesh, and Thailand climbed fast and the scale of "Belt and Road" country students keeps increasing.

In terms of student quality, it cannot be mentioned in the same breath in different colleges. Generally speaking, overseas students coming to China are mainly for non-academic education, college diploma and undergraduate diploma. Varied colleges also have varied recruitment channels which lead to the varied differences of student

quality. Take Nanjing Audit University for example, due to the fact there is a requirement for students' English level and college entrance examination achievement, together with Nanjing Audit University's professional resources and other international cooperation platforms, its recruited students have fairly high quality, with powerful academic competence and scientific research capacity, and a fairly optimistic career development after graduation. Take Jiangsu Maritime Institute (JMI) for another instance, in particular in the Covid-19 pandemic period, JMI had only onefold recruitment channel, the recruited students were restricted to Bangladesh students only. Such a situation changed greatly after the pandemic. Currently, there are students from ten countries or studying in JMI. All in all, the major overseas students' recruitment channels are mainly the college website and the English version of Studying in Jiangsu website, plus some intermediary agents and students' 'advertising from mouth to mouth'. The lack of propaganda intensity is a big problem. Even though students' quality in Jiangsu colleges are higher than that in many other provinces in China, compared with the colleges in Europe and other developed regions, there is still a long way to go.

As far as overseas students' cultivation is concerned, language communication remains a bulging barrier in overseas students' education and management. There is a high demand towards teachers' English capacity and professional level. Other problems like underequipment in overseas students' management team and uneven quality, incomplete cultivation system also appear one by one. Only a professional, standard and attractive curriculum to overseas students is the core competitive force in the development of overseas students' education. Nowadays, varied colleges in Jiangsu Province, based on their privileged professions, are competing in the recruitment of overseas students; they are also carrying out cooperation project with similar overseas colleges to jointly cultivate overseas students in different patterns.

Colleges like Jiangsu Maritime Institute and Jiangsu Shipping Vocational and Technical College mainly recruit students from Belt and Road countries, with the majority in professions like Maritime Technology, Marine Engineering Technology, Electrical Automation Technology, etc. Nanjing Polytechnic of Information Technology, based on professions like communication technology, Electronical Informational Engineering, by means of the undertaken "Talent Program" from Jiangsu Province, carries out overseas students' recruitment and cultivation to Southeast Asia and Central Asian countries and regions. Even though different colleges recruit overseas students to their privileged majors, in the real student cultivation process, varied problems appear. These overseas students, on the one hand, for the most part, are not good at communicating in English. Only one year even half a year's learning of Chinese can not empower them to be able to understand Chinese teachers' professional courses. On the other hand, Chinese professional teachers mainly teach students in Chinese, the majority of the colleges are in lack of a professional team in overseas students' teaching. They are also in lack of advanced international education concept, teaching methods, management models and appraisal methods. In terms of learning resources, even MOOC and other teaching platforms are abundant in high-quality course resources, open, shared and universal, there are little overseas students who can acquire professional knowledge in English by themselves. Therefore, no matter student quality, professional teachers, management teams, or teaching resources, there is still a long way to the fine internationalization standard for domestic colleges. All these factors restrict the improvement of overseas students' cultivation quality, and the improvement of high vocational colleges' internationalization standard.

3. COUNTERMEASURES IN THE RECRUITMENT AND CULTIVATION OF OVERSEAS STUDENTS IN COLLEGES

Aiming at the problems occurred in the recruitment and cultivation of overseas students in Jiangsu colleges, there is an urgent need to intensify colleges' survey and research on the source countries, exploit corresponding specialties, focusing on high-level international education resources, build up the educational ability and international horizon of professional teachers, establish a professional team to manage overseas students, forge a whole-process quality management system.

Intensify the research work on overseas students' origin countries, Increase publicity for enrollment, broaden recruitment channels, increase enrolled students' quality from the source.

Increase the intensity of Chinese learning, improve overseas students' adaptability in Chinese, and improve their learning efficiency. At present, "Chinese plus vocational skill" pattern is the most prevalent one in the cultivation of overseas students. Jiangsu higher vocational colleges may take full advantage of their privileged majors, with the help of fine Chinese traditional culture, featuring the vocational education, actively promote the efficient combination of Chinese and vocational skills. It is also recommended that the overseas students management team to assimilate overseas students' learning, life and appraisal with those of Chinese students, arrange more activities

to match overseas students with Chinese students so as to improve their communication ability in Chinese and ability in learning professional knowledge.

Intensify the major's internationalization degree. Major development is different from major setup. Major development is more initiative and dynamic. The features of "endemicity" and "occupational" decide that higher vocational education should serve the development of local economy and society, should timely, according to the social changes, adjust and exploit corresponding majors. Therefore, higher vocational colleges should pay attention to the national economic and social development of overseas students' origin countries, timely adjust overseas students' majors and curriculums. In the long run, only by actively doing enough research work on overseas students' origin countries, can higher vocational colleges fully exploit corresponding majors, and cultivate useful talents to serve the national economic and social development and eventually guarantee the sustainable development of higher vocational colleges.

Intensify the construction of high-quality international education resources. High-quality international education resources include imported foreign educational resources as well as self-established resources serving international education. These are the basis upon which the cultivation of overseas students exist and develop, and should be exploited and accumulated continuously. First and foremost, in terms of human resources, higher vocational colleges should introduce advanced foreign education concept, teaching pattern, management model and appraisal methods. Through the cooperation with high-quality foreign colleges, they can cultivate their own teaching faculties in international education and therefore build up their own professional international teaching faculties and management team. In terms of learning resources, higher vocational colleges may purchase some high-quality online courses, build up their own curriculum resources, and establish an open, sharing, and universal English curriculum sources on the basis of present MOOC and other resources platforms.

Intensify overseas students' education and day-to-day management. At present, most Jiangsu higher vocational colleges adopt a common management pattern on overseas students, that is, to assign a special department to especially responsible for the management of overseas students. In the initial stage of overseas students coming to China, such a management pattern is highly efficient since the scale of overseas students is small and they come from a few countries. However, along with the increase of students scale and number of origin countries, such a pattern can seldom suit to the development and lead to the fact that overseas students are away from concerned warning systems, unfit for the overseas students' communication, lacking mutual activities with Chinese students. What's more, there is seldom a standard graduation requirement for overseas students. In most cases, they can successfully graduate when time is due. One can imagine the graduates' quality. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the management and graduation requirements of overseas students should keep at the same level with those of Chinese students to guarantee the quality of overseas students' cultivation quality.

Standardize overseas students' professional teaching level and curriculum output level. The cultivation of overseas students is a newly-merging thing, challenging and difficult. However, every coin has two sides. The cultivation of overseas students is both a challenge and an opportunity. Jiangsu higher vocational colleges may take it as an opportunity, build up their own professional teaching criteria and curriculum output criteria through the cultivation of overseas students. Through renovating schooling concept, reshaping teaching systems, building up management procedure, intensifying quality supervision, reinforcing the theoretical and systematic research of vocational teaching patterns as well as enhancing the output of varied criteria, Jiangsu higher vocational colleges may well enhance and strengthen their international right of speech in terms of international education.

To conclude, "Belt and Road" strategy is a significant opportunity to develop Chinese overseas student education. Each higher vocational college should take this opportunity, base on the privileged majors, vigorously develop overseas student education, improve its quality and increase its efficiency. Today, overseas student education is well on the way, each college should consider the quality construction of overseas student education as an indispensable part of school's quality management so as to realize the transition of quantity education to quality education of overseas students. Stay true to the mission, serve to the original intention, each higher vocational college can verily make their contributions to the jointly building Silk Road Economic Zone and 21st Maritime Silk Road.

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