

# Study on the Issues and Optimizing Paths of Higher Vocational Colleges in Serving the Rural Talent Revitalization

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**Abstract:** Promoting rural vitalization on all fronts is a major proposition related to the modernization of rural agriculture in China. The important problem that needs to be solved urgently is who serve the rural talent revitalization and how to promote the rural talent revitalization. Higher vocational education is one of the important subjects to serve rural talent revitalization. As the supplier of higher vocational education, higher vocational colleges shoulder the functions of serving economic and social development, meeting the national demand for technical talents, providing talent support for the revitalization of the countryside, science and education, and the mission of serving rural talent revitalization. At present, there are many practical problems and challenges for higher vocational colleges on serving the rural talent revitalization. Therefore, they must effectively promote the rural talent revitalization by strengthening the leadership mechanism, optimizing the construction of the system, and deepening the reform of education and other optimized paths.

**Keywords:** Higher Vocational Colleges; Rural Talent Revitalization; Issues; Optimizing Paths

## 1. Introduction

The current comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization is a major proposition of the times in relation to the modernization of rural agriculture in China. The important issue that urgently needs to be addressed in the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas is who will serve rural revitalization and how to promote rural talent revitalization. Some scholars put forward a number of viewpoints that vocational education is an important support for rural revitalization, which playing a significant roles in driving role in the course

of rural talent revitalization [1]. Higher vocational education is an important hand in the implementation of the strategy of rural revitalization. Vocational education is an important lever for implementing the rural revitalization strategy [2]. As one of the main forces of education, especially vocational education, vocational colleges play a significant role in the rural revitalization strategy [3]. Higher vocational colleges have obvious advantages in the education of novel vocational peasants and the construction of rural specialized talent teams [4]. However, the motivation and level of higher vocational colleges in serving the strategy of rural revitalization are constrained and limited by external factors such as urban-rural dual structure, social prejudice against farmers and uneven allocation of resources, as well as internal factors such as lagging behind in the concept of higher vocational colleges, backwardness in internal governance, and incomplete professional settings [5], which make higher vocational education face some practical problems and challenges in serving the revitalization of rural talents.

## 2. Overview of Rural Talent Revitalization

### 2.1 Rural Talents

Rural talents are an important part of rural human resources. It is also the most active and animated element in the process of agricultural production and life, and the mainstay of value creation in the rural arena. The quality and quantity of rural talents are directly related to the development of rural social productivity. Rural talents in the new era are not only different from traditional country people and rural people, nor are they different from urban talents in the process of urbanization. They are also a new form of human resources with certain characteristics that adapt to the demand of the strategy of rural revitalization.

Compared with modern urban talents, new-age

rural talents need to have the "three rural" qualities of understanding agriculture, loving the countryside and loving farmers. Rural talents do not only need to have scientific and cultural knowledge, professional and technical skills of building the countryside, serving the countryside and governing the countryside, but also need to have the ideals and beliefs of loving the countryside, loving farmers and voluntarily rooting themselves in the countryside for ages. Most important of all, they need to have the spirit of entrepreneurship that keeps pace with the times, perseveres and explores and forges ahead.

Compared with the traditional rural people who are "born and raised in the countryside", the new-age rural talented persons are "four new" builders with new knowledge, new technology, new thinking and new abilities. They are familiar with the local conditions and people of rural areas. They are able to make use of modern science and technology, information, techniques, organizations, culture and other resources in a comprehensive manner, in line with the epoch development and the demands of the national society. They can lead a new direction of rural advancement, and blaze new trails in a new form of rural development, and create a model of rural advancement. The new-age rural talented person is an indispensable source of motivation for the sustainable development of the countryside.

## 2.2 Classification of Rural Talents

Qualification, specialization and skills are the new trends of rural human resource development in the new era. According to the Opinions on Accelerating the Revitalization of Rural Talents issued in February 2021, the current rural talents are mainly divided into five categories, which are rural agricultural and scientific talents on agricultural production, rural management, rural secondary and tertiary industry development, rural public service, and rural governance.

Agricultural production and management talents are farmers with high quality, rural practical talents, family farm operators, farmers' co-operative leaders. Rural secondary and tertiary industry development talents are rural entrepreneurship and innovation leaders, rural e-commerce talented persons, rural artisans, migrant workers labour export and so

on. Rural public service talents are rural teachers, rural health talents, rural culture, tourism and sports talents, rural planning and construction talents. Rural governance talents refer to township government talents, village organization leaders, college students in the countryside, selected students serving in villages, college student village officials, rural social work talented persons, rural business management talents, rural legal talents, etc. Agricultural and rural scientific and technological talented persons include agricultural and rural high-tech leaders, agricultural and rural scientific and technological innovation talented persons, agricultural and rural scientific, technological promotion talents, and scientific and technological specialists.

## 2.3 Rural Talent Revitalization

Rural talent revitalization is a human resource management strategy in the background of the "rural revitalization" strategy, which is oriented to the mismatch between the demand and supply of talented persons in rural areas. Aiming at promoting the sustainable development of China's modern agriculture, rural talent revitalization makes use of diversified methods such as policy orientation, market leverage, education and training, etc., to promote the flow of a certain quantity and quality of new human resources back to the rural areas. The rural talent revitalization meets the real needs of strategic development in the process of national moderation, and aims to develop a coordinated approach to the problem of the mismatch between urban and rural development in China.

The mismatch between the supply of and demand of rural human resources is a major problem that needs to be urgently resolved in the execution of the current rural revitalization strategy, with the external manifestations of a massive loss of rural population and a serious shortage of rural human resources intertwined with the problem of agricultural ageing. Since the beginning of this century, China's rural areas have seen a significant decline in the working population. The relative shortage of rural human resources has directly affected and constrained the development process of rural agricultural modernization. Data from the National Bureau of Data and Statistics (NBS) show that the national agricultural labour force

was about 795.63 million in 2000, and this population figure has shrunk to about 285.84 million in 2020, a decline of about 35 per cent, a reduction of nearly two-thirds. In May, 2023, the Institute of Rural Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), the Department of Rural Sociology-Economic Surveys of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and the Social Science Literature Publishing House (SSPP) released the *The Rural Green Paper: Analysis and Forecast of China's Rural Economic Situation (2022~2023)* indicated that the rural population continued to decrease in 2022, down by 7.31 million people from the previous year. At the end of 2022, the resident population in rural areas was 491.04 million people; and the ratio of rural population in the total population dropped to 34.8% (the urbanization rate was 65.2%), a decrease of 0.5 percentage points compared to last year. In the interim, the reduction in the total population in rural areas is accompanied by a decrease in the agricultural labour force and a clear trend towards agricultural ageing. the ratio of the agricultural labour force to the core agricultural workforce aged 65 and over in China in 2020 will be around 70 per cent, underscoring the reality that the agricultural population is predominantly made up of older people.

The theory of agricultural development factors holds that the sustainable development of rural areas requires the joint support of a variety of factors, like human, financial, material resources and information. Human resources are the foundational elements of rural agricultural development. For the strategy of promoting rural vitalization on all fronts, it is the key to break the bottleneck constraints of talented persons. It is necessary to guide the flow of more factors, for instance, capital, technology, and talents to agriculture and rural areas, and to achieve industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, and ecological revitalization and organizational revitalization, in which the talent is the first factor of production.

### **3. Theoretical Basis for Higher Vocational Colleges Serving the Rural Talent Revitalization**

#### **3.1 Functional Attributes**

As a social subsystem that brings together

scarce resources such as talent, information and technology, higher education institutions have the functional attribute of serving the economy and society. According to American sociologist Parsons, "A school is such an institution through which individual human beings are trained to behave in roles that are motivationally and technically appropriate for adults." In his book *The Economic Value of Education*, Schultz suggests that "Education is a collective activity with a specific purpose. One of the functions of a country's educational system is that it should meet the need for people with higher intellectual skills who will 'play a key role' in future economic development." [6]

#### **3.2 Mission of the Age**

With the goal of serving regional economic and social development, higher vocational colleges shoulder the mission of promoting rural talent revitalization.

As participants and actors in the strategy of "comprehensively promoting rural revitalization" in the new era, higher occupation colleges should uphold the concept of serving the society, combine the cultivation of education with the goal of cultivating diversified and applied talents, and empower the revitalization of rural talents, industrial revitalization and cultural revitalization, so as to promote the construction of a "green, rich and beautiful countryside". The strategy of rural revitalization is an important part of the modernization of the national governance capacity and governance system in the new era, and the rural talent revitalization is a key part of the comprehensive rural revitalization. Government organizations, market entities, social organizations, higher education institutions, enterprises and institutions are all the main actors of the rural revitalization strategy. The *Opinions on Accelerating the Revitalization of Rural Talents* issued by the state in 2021 clearly put forward that it is necessary for giving full play to the role of all kinds of main actors in the cultivation of rural talents to meet the demands of all kinds of rural talented persons.

#### **3.3 Essential Function**

As important suppliers of higher vocational education, higher vocational colleges play an essential function of meeting the national

demand for technical talented persons, which provide technical talents to support the revitalization of the countryside and the growth of agriculture through science and education in the execution of the strategy of promoting rural vitalization on all fronts.

Under the goal of common prosperity, vocational education is able to act on the elements of workers through knowledge transfer and professional skills training, to increase their vocational knowledge, to improve their vocational quality and ability, because of its specific human capital investment function. As Experts pointed out that the emancipation of the working class also requires doctors, engineers, chemists, agronomists and other specialists, and it is necessary to be in charge of the whole of the social production, and what is needed here is not just loud words, but solid knowledge. "

Through a steady stream of skilled human resources for the evolution of regional society, Higher vocational colleges meet the growing demand of skilled personnel in modern society, and propel the realization of the organic combination of modern science and technology and modern production and service processes. They improve labour productivity, and propel the benign growth of the economy and society. In the Economic Manuscripts 1857-1858, Experts proposed the viewpoint that in the act of reproduction itself, not only do the objective conditions change ..... but also the producer, who refines new qualities, develops and transforms himself through production, creating new forces and new ideas, creating new ways of interacting, new needs and new languages."

#### **4. Issues of Higher Vocational Colleges in Serving the Rural Talents Revitalization**

In recent years, occupation colleges have shown a good momentum in serving the revitalization of rural talents. However, in the reform practice of vocational colleges in supporting the revitalization of rural talents, there are still the following problems that need to be addressed.

Firstly, The key leading role of organizational leadership in serving the revitalization of rural talents in higher vocational education is not fully utilized. Some higher vocational colleges are lack of the courage to assume responsibility and take the initiative to act.

There are some bad phenomenons, such as looking forward and backward, hesitation and the laying down of the mind of "not seeking to make achievements, but avoiding faults", and so on.

Secondly, there is a relative lack of relevant policies and systems regarding the service of higher occupation colleges for rural revitalization in the new age. Institutional construction is indispensable for the solid promotion of rural revitalization. At present, there are only a few policies and systems on how higher vocational education should effectively promote rural revitalization in the new era, especially in the area of talent revitalization, which directly affects the inputs of human, financial and material resources of higher vocational education for rural revitalization, as well as the strength of the corresponding educational reforms and innovations.

Thirdly, as a single subject serving the revitalization of rural talents, higher vocational colleges are weak and lack of revitalization. The rural talent is a key element in the growth of agricultural modernization in the new age. The cultivation of rural talents is a long-lasting human capital investment process, and the education of rural talents requires the joint participation of multiple social subjects, such as the government, the society, colleges and universities, and families. If the universities is the only unique subject to promote comprehensive rural revitalisation, the effect is short-term and limited. At the same time, the employment of rural talents is also a long-term process of human resources development and management, which is difficult for higher education institutions to follow up continuously. Therefore, it is necessary for the state to use policy guidance, market incentives, social public opinion and publicity, as well as family education to make rural talents persons be fully utilized.

Fourthly, due to the traditional thinking of focusing on urban talent cultivation and focusing on rural talent cultivation still exists, some occupation colleges lack initiative and enthusiasm in serving the revitalization of rural talents through reform and innovation. At present, the talent training programme of higher vocational colleges is still mainly serving the integration of industry and education in the development of urban

industrialization. In addition to some agricultural colleges and universities with agriculture-related professions and rural industry docking efficiently, many other higher occupation colleges and universities do not open the depth of the docking due to their respective professional positioning and rural industry, which result in the cultivation of talents mismatching with the development of the rural development.

### **5. Optimizing Paths of Higher Vocational Colleges in Serving the Rural Talent Revitalization**

In view of the problems that exist in the process of revitalization of higher vocational colleges and universities to serve rural talents, some countermeasures and suggestions are put forward.

The first one is strengthening organizational leadership on the work of rural revitalization, and strengthening the leading role of organization building in the revitalization of rural talents in the service of higher vocational education. organizational leadership is the key and fundamental guarantee for the execution of the rural revitalization strategy. The breakthrough of the problem of rural talent revitalization is the continuous deepening of the weakening of the organizational leadership in talent cultivation. Higher vocational colleges should take the construction of organizations as a hand, which play the role of exemplary organizational members, co-ordinate resources, and take the initiative, and promote actively and efficiently the promotion rural talent revitalization.

Secondly, based on the strategic development of promoting rural vitalization on all fronts and the needs of economic and social rapid growth of different regions, the state and localities should gradually formulate some policy guidelines and guiding opinions on the service of higher occupation education for rural revitalization with the determination of the needs of realistic development in different regions, phases and levels, and form the corresponding systems and laws and regulations, so as to make the higher occupation colleges able to promote the revitalization of the countryside in a targeted way, especially the revitalization of the countryside talents.

Thirdly, the revitalization of rural talents is a

huge systematic project that requires the joint efforts including the government, society, universities, families and other multifaceted subjects, and the pooling of the combined strengths of multifaceted advantageous resources to jointly promote it. The government should playing the leading role. It should unite universities, society, families and other diversified organizational forces, and clarify the rights and responsibilities, integrate resources, and scientifically build a set of human resources development and management of standardized processes, and explore systematically the laws of the new era of rural talent construction by the ways of policy guidance, market leverage, project promotion, education and training, public opinion propaganda and others, in order to promote jointly the revitalization of rural talent.

Finally, higher vocational colleges must take the initiative to satisfy for the demand of the country's modernization, and change the philosophy and objectives of running schools, and enhance the sense of service. Based on the professional characteristics of the university, higher occupation colleges should maintain to propel higher occupation education personnel training mode reform and innovation, and deepen the linkage between personnel training and the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries in urban and rural areas, and strive to cultivate the diversified talents urgently needed by the national society - urban talent persons, rural talent persons, composite talent persons, and practical talent persons.

### **6. Conclusion**

The rural talent revitalisation is the key to stressing the efforts to comprehensively push forward rural vitalization, which needs to gather the strength of multiple subjects and jointly promote from the aspects of organisational construction, system construction and educational reform. Under the background of stressing the efforts to comprehensively push forward rural vitalization, as an important force to serve the rural strategy, higher vocational colleges should deepen the reforms of the school-running system, mechanism and personnel training mode to enhance the relevance of personnel training in higher occupation colleges, and enhance the

appropriateness of talent cultivation in higher vocational colleges, and advance quality and equity in education, which are based on China's actual conditions, social conditions and people's conditions, starting from the current structural mismatch between the supply and demand of rural talents, with the goal of highly matching the supply of occupation education with the demand of economic and social development.

### Acknowledgments

This paper is supported by 2022 Hubei Higher Education institute: Study on the Coordinated Development of Talent Cultivation in Higher Vocational Colleges and Rural Talent Revitalisation (No. 2022XD113).

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