

# Research on Local Internationalization of Higher Vocational Education: Literature Review and Research Perspectives

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**Abstract:** With the acceleration of globalization, the education sector has also undergone significant changes. The technological advancements, economic development, political influences, and cultural exchanges brought about by globalization have had a profound impact on educational planning. This paper aims to explore the effects of globalization on the internationalization of education systems, teaching methods, the distribution of educational resources, and the mobility of students and teachers, analyzing the challenges and opportunities these changes present. Through a literature review, this paper systematically studies the transformations in the internationalization of education in the context of globalization. The research finds that localized internationalization promotes the sharing of educational resources and diversifies educational opportunities but also exacerbates the uneven distribution of educational resources and creates conflicts between cultural homogenization and educational localization. The paper argues that localized internationalization will become the main pathway for the internationalization of vocational education. Government departments should play an active role in policy response, promoting the diversified development of vocational education and providing practical guidance for the localized internationalization reform of vocational education in China.

**Keywords:** Internationalization in the field, internationalization, globalization, post-epidemic, cross-cultural

## 1. Introduction

At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the pace of globalization has accelerated significantly, from scientific and technological progress, economic development, political influence, to cultural exchanges have played a far-reaching impact, this change is more of a test for the field of education, as well as an opportunity (Reimers, 2020). Globalization is the process of cross-border economic, cultural, political and technological exchanges and integration, and this process has had a profound impact on the education systems of various countries. In the late 1990s, with the popularization of the Internet and the development of information technology, the internationalization of education has become an important trend, and the well-known Bologna Process launched in 1999 is a typical example, which aims to promote the European higher education system's compatibility and comparability, with national education systems becoming more open and inclusive as a result (Souto-Otero, 2020).

Internationalization differs from globalization in that globalization emphasizes global interconnections and integration processes, while internationalization focuses more on how specific education systems and institutions can improve their quality and competitiveness through cooperation with international partners, standardization, and cross-border exchanges. Therefore, the focus of this paper is on “internationalization”, which is not only a trend of education development, but also an important means to improve the quality and competitiveness of education (Ferguson, 2021).

As a global cultural and educational promotion institution, the Confucius Institute, since its foundation in 2004, has successfully promoted educational exchanges and cooperation between China and the world, opening a new chapter in the internationalization of education. The success of Confucius Institutes lies not only in its global promotion of Chinese language and culture, but also in the fact that it provides a brand-new model and idea for international educational exchanges (Gil, 2022). In the context of globalization, the necessity of internationalization of higher vocational education is mainly reflected in (Dang, 2024). Firstly, the goal of higher vocational education is to cultivate talents with international vision and cross-cultural communication ability to meet the demand of market internationalization. Secondly, through internationalization, higher vocational colleges and universities can introduce advanced educational concepts and teaching methods in joint institutions to improve the quality and competitiveness of education internationally. Thirdly,

internationalization helps to promote educational equity and improve the utilization efficiency of educational resources through international cooperation and exchanges, resource sharing and experience sharing.

Based on this, the literature review in this paper aims to systematically sort out and analyze the existing research results of in situ internationalization of higher vocational education, reveal the main directions and hot issues of the current research, discover the shortcomings and gaps in the research, and provide directions and suggestions for future research. In order to achieve the above research objectives, this paper will address the following issues in the study:

- 1) What are the key factors affecting the internationalization of higher vocational education in the field?
- 2) How does local internationalization affect the quality and competitiveness of higher vocational education?
- 3) What are the specific manifestations and realization paths of local internationalization of higher vocational education?

Through the above research, it will provide academic value of great significance to higher vocational education from both the practical and academic levels. In practice, this study can provide theoretical guidance for the internationalization practice of higher vocational education and accelerate the pace of international competitiveness enhancement of higher vocational education. In the academic aspect, this study can enrich and improve the theoretical system of in situ internationalization of higher vocational education, fill the current research gaps, and promote further research in this field. Higher vocational education (referred to as higher vocational education) is an important part of China's education system, which mainly cultivates application-oriented talents with practical skills and professional knowledge. In the process of higher vocational education, teachers tend to favor the combination of theory and practice and emphasize the development of students' vocational ability (Chen & Pastore, 2024). The following will analyze the characteristics of higher vocational education and the connotation of internationalization of education, so as to put forward the thinking on the internationalization of higher vocational education.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Characteristics of Higher Vocational Education

The development of China's higher vocational education can be traced back to the 1980's. In the early 1980's, China began to explore the reform of vocational education in order to meet the needs of economic reform and opening up. In the 1990's, with the rapid development of the economy. The demand for highly skilled personnel in China also grew, and the higher vocational education was gradually paid attention to. The promulgation of 'Vocational Education Law of the Republic of China' in 1996 provided legal guarantee for the development of China's higher vocational education. Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the implementation of the 'National Medium-and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)' has led to further standardization and enhancement of higher vocational education (Zhao & Selvaratnam, 2024). By 2022, the revision of the 'Law of the People's Republic of China on Vocational Education', higher vocational education has shown a trend of more diversified, systematic and high-quality development, laying a more solid foundation for the cultivation of high-skilled talents adapted to the needs of modernization (Zeng, 2024).

At present, China's higher vocational education has formed a relatively perfect system, covering a number of industrial fields, and has cultivated a large number of technical and skilled talents for various industries (Wang et al., 2024). Higher vocational education has made remarkable achievements in improving the quality of talent training, employment rate and social recognition (Fan et al., 2024). The higher vocational education systems of developed Western countries such as Germany, Switzerland and Australia already strongly practice-oriented and highly industry-related (Rizwan & Sohail, 2024). Germany's "dual system" is a household name, which is characterized by joint training between enterprises and schools and provides students with the opportunity to learn in a real work environment (Dörpinghaus et al., 2024). In Switzerland, the highly flexible vocational training system enables students to gain a wealth of practical experience during their studies (Cattaneo, 2024). Australia's TAFE (Technical and Further Education) system, on the other hand, emphasizes the combination of technical education and vocational training, offering a diverse range of courses and training programs to meet the needs of different students and industries (Omar & Kamaruzaman, 2024).

In contrast, China's higher vocational education has made remarkable progress in many areas, but there are still some shortcomings (Wang & Guo, 2018). The strength of China's higher vocational education lies in its wide coverage and rapid scale expansion, which has trained a large number of technical and skilled talents for various industries (Han et al., 2023). However, compared with the international advanced level, China's higher vocational education still has room for improvement in the design of practical teaching, the depth of school-enterprise cooperation, the flexibility of the curriculum, and the overall cultivation of students' professionalism (Jing et al., 2022).

### 2.2 Connotation of Internationalization of Education

The internationalization of education originated from the wave of globalization at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (De Wit & Altbach, 2020). With the progress of science and technology and the rapid development of transportation, the links between countries around the world have become increasingly close, and education has gradually become internationalized (Mittelmeier & Yang, 2022). In the early days, internationalization of education was mainly reflected in the cross-border study of students and international exchange of teachers (Bamberger et al., 2019). With the passage of time, the form and content of internationalization of education became richer and more diversified (De Wit & Merckx,

2023). At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the popularization of the Internet and the rapid development of information technology brought newer opportunities for the internationalization of education, transnational educational cooperation and exchanges became more and more frequent, and internationalized curricula and bilingual teaching were gradually promoted, so the internationalization of education entered a brand-new stage of development (Zapp & Lerch, 2020).

Among the more advanced approaches to the internationalization of education, Germany's "dual system" of vocational education has produced a large number of internationally competitive highly skilled personnel through international cooperation, international student exchanges, internationalization of faculty, international accreditation and standards, and cooperation with international enterprises (Schmees & Smith, 2024). Higher education institutions in the United States have focused on promoting internationalization of education through cooperative education, student exchange programs and MOOCs (Veerasingam, 2021). The UK's Erasmus + program has also become an important driving force for the internationalization of education in Europe with its extensive student and teacher exchange programs (Erasmus, 2023). These advanced practices not only improve the quality of education, but also promote cultural exchange and international understanding (Tsang & Yuan, 2021).

The internationalization of education is a process of continuous evolution and development, and current advanced practices provide useful reference for the internationalization of Chinese education (Li & Xue, 2022). The internationalization of Chinese education is of great significance, and the internationalization of higher vocational education is the key to cultivating high-quality and internationalized skilled talents (He et al., 2020). By promoting the internationalization of higher vocational education, the quality and international competitiveness of China's vocational education can be further improved, providing strong talent support for economic and social development (Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia & Pilz, 2022).

### **2.3 Reflections on the Internationalization of Higher Vocational Education**

With the continuous advancement of globalization and the increasing popularity of international cooperative education, many higher vocational colleges and universities at home and abroad have cooperated with internationally renowned colleges and educational institutions to run joint degree programs and cooperative training programs (Sciedu Press, 2022). These cooperative programs not only improve the internationalization of students, but also promote educational exchanges and cooperation among different countries and regions (Žalėnienė & Pereira, 2021). Meanwhile, transnational teacher-student exchanges and cooperation have been increasing, and higher vocational colleges and universities in various countries have promoted the development of internationalized education through teacher-student exchange programs (Zhou et al., 2020). Students study and do internships abroad in the form of exchange programs to enhance their international outlook and practical abilities. Teachers, on the other hand, improve their teaching and research abilities through international training and exchanges (Rokhman, 2022).

Internationalization has also been contemplated in teaching reform. Higher vocational colleges have actively introduced international curriculum standards and teaching materials, and have even participated in the formulation of international standards, adopting bilingual teaching or teaching in full English to ensure that students master cutting-edge international knowledge and skills (Nägele et al., 2021). Curriculums have been brought into line with international standards, and courses with an international outlook have been introduced to enhance the international competitiveness of students (Aliexieieva et al., 2023). Internationalization of higher vocational education is a process of continuous development and evolution, and different countries have accumulated rich experiences and lessons in their practices of internationalization of higher vocational education, and these empirical evidences provide valuable lessons for us to think about the internationalization of higher vocational education in China (Kassberg & Dornberger, 2022).

Australia's TAFE system has promoted the internationalization of higher vocational education through international cooperation and transnational educational exchanges (Hodge et al., 2022). The TAFE system focuses on curriculum diversity and flexibility, and is able to provide customized education and training programs according to the needs of different students and industries (Fenton-Smith & Gurney, 2024). Through cooperation with Asian, European and other countries and regions, Australia not only improves its own education quality, but also promotes the development of vocational education in cooperative countries (Ziguras et al., 2024). Based on the empirical research, the internationalization of China's higher vocational education can be further deepened and promoted by strengthening internationalized school-enterprise cooperation, flexible curriculum, international cooperative education, internationalized level of teachers and improving the internationalized assessment and certification system as a way to further deepen the reform and promote the process (Wu, 2021).

## **3. Theoretical Framework for Local Internationalization**

Local internationalization is an emerging field in the study of internationalization of education in recent years, which emphasizes the realization of internationalized education goals in local environments, maintaining local cultural and educational characteristics while incorporating internationalized elements (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021). It originated from the rapid development of globalization, the increasing demand for internationalization of higher education, and the limitations of traditional internationalization approaches (Aydinli & Mathews, 2020). At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some colleges and universities began to try internationalized education in local

environments, and gradually formed the preliminary practice of local internationalization (Tight, 2019). In the early 2000s, Jos Beelen and Elspeth Jones formally put forward this concept and systematically elaborated its connotation and ways of realizing it.

### 3.1 Connotation of Local Internationalization

As the internationalization of education accelerated in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars began to focus on how to achieve internationalized education goals in local settings (Ghani et al., 2022). Initial studies focused on international student and teacher mobility, but it was soon realized that one could not rely solely on the limited idea of transnational mobility without comprehensively enhancing overall internationalization (Tight, 2022). The concept of local internationalization was born out of the reality of the development of higher education in the West (Alsharari, 2019). In 1999, Nilsson (2003) first introduced the concept. According to him, local internationalization refers to all activities related to international affairs in the field of education, except for transnational mobility of students, and the purpose of this concept is to enable more students to be relieved of the burden of economic, life or language, and to have the opportunity to enhance more international concepts and cross-border cultures during their school years. Nilsson's local internationalization covers two levels, the first is that it breaks the boundaries of time and space in education; the second is that it highlights the universality of international education (Alexiadou & Rönnerberg, 2021).

Subsequently, the concept of 'local internationalization' has been perpetuated, and its interpretation has been crystallized by Paige et al. (2003), who suggests that the purpose of local internationalization is to assist students who, for a variety of reasons, are temporarily unable to afford to participate in a study abroad program, by providing them with international and intercultural learning opportunities that are consistent with the international learning scenario, intercultural learning opportunities. After many scholars have provided multi-dimensional explanations of the concept of 'local internationalization'. Mestenhauser (2003) proposed a more explicit operational model. He pointed out that this is not just another learning program but rather an integrated and systematic system of international education concepts and practices. This means that educators implementing 'local internationalization' do not need to establish a separate program, but only need to make full use of existing resources and integrate them (Chakraborty, 2020).

### 3.2 Current Status of Overseas Research on Local Internationalization

In 1989, the European Association for International Education (EAIE) was established, which leads the international exchange of higher education in the European region and provides a platform for internationalization-related studies, exchanges, strategic cooperation. (Dafouz et al., 2019). EAIE has been instrumental in promoting the internationalization of the local community in Europe, and even in the later stages of spreading to the rest of the world (Jones et al., 2021).

The timeline of the development of internationalization of higher education in Europe, it is evident that local internationalization represents a new stage in historical development, and emerging and inevitable trend (Brooks, 2019). Before the mid-1980s, in most European countries, the internationalization of higher education was a marginal phenomenon with low levels of activity, mainly reflected in the mobility of students and scholars (Jones & Reiffenrath, 2018). In the mid-1980s to 1990s, the model changed. Against the backdrop of the legislative passage of the Single European Act (Buckner, 2019), the internationalization of higher education became more organized, and the scale of mobility expanded compared to previous levels. Starting in 1995, mobility was no longer the entirety of internationalization programs. Educators gradually shifted their focus to the internationalization of curriculum and teaching (Altbach & De Wit, 2018). At the end of the 20th century, the 'Bologna Process' initiated a new phase of the internationalization of European higher education, leading to a systematic reform of the degree structure in Europe (Zahavi & Friedman, 2020). This gradually laid the foundation for the concept of local internationalization. In the early 21st century, the European Association for International Education (EAIE) released the practical characteristics of the new local internationalization (Chies et al., 2018).

With the support of the association, local internationalization has been implemented through various measures such as launching internationalization projects, developing internationalized curricula, designing international activities, providing professional training for faculty and staff, and strengthening community engagement (Takayama et al., 2016). These practices have spread from Europe to countries like Canada, Australia, and South Africa (Kwiek, 2017). Under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the internationalization of higher education worldwide has become more diverse, and the dominant position of Western countries is quietly changing. In its place is the rise of internationalization in Southeast Asian countries, where nations like China, India, Japan, and Singapore have begun attracting a significant number of international students previously headed to the UK and the US (Tran & Marginson, 2018). Malaysia occupies an important position in the internationalization of global higher education, enhancing its level of internationalization through research and implementation of Local Internationalization (Ota, 2018).

Malaysian institutions encourage domestic private universities to collaborate with prestigious schools in Europe and the United States through "curriculum transfer" programs (Mustapha et al., 2021). This involves bringing top global universities to Malaysia to establish branch campuses, integrating high-quality foreign educational resources while infusing local educational culture (Munusamy & Hashim, 2019). This approach not only meets the needs of local students but also attracts a considerable number of international students from abroad (Da Wan & Abdullah, 2021). The ultimate

goal of implementing Local Internationalization in Malaysia is to achieve cultural integration (Ghasemy et al., 2021). The country is characterized by a diverse multicultural society that combines Malay, Chinese, Indian, and various indigenous ethnic groups. Through the exchange between local and international students, Malaysia has facilitated cultural interaction and integration.

Local Internationalization in Malaysia has received strong support and mechanisms from the government, establishing it as a key focus area in the country's higher education system (Qiang & AbdRahim, 2024). The country has enhanced the attractiveness of Local Internationalization starting from urban services, providing students with convenient and comfortable accommodations, shopping, tourism, and other services (Lo & Da Wan, 2021). Curriculum transfer is the main approach at the teaching level, with Malaysia offering three major curriculum systems: "Dual Degree Programs," "Credit Transfer Programs," and "Distance Education Programs," all of which lead to internationally recognized degree certificates. The implementation of Local Internationalization has significantly enhanced Malaysia's educational competitiveness on the international stage. By directly introducing world-class universities to operate locally, Malaysia has significantly enhanced the level of its higher education, meeting the demands of the local labor market and reducing talent drain. As a result, Malaysia has become a hub for international education in Asia (Dumanig & Symaco, 2020). As of 2020, there were 13 world-class universities from six countries—Australia, China, France, Ireland, Singapore, and the United Kingdom—operating in Malaysia.

### 3.3 Current Status of Domestic Research on Local Internationalization

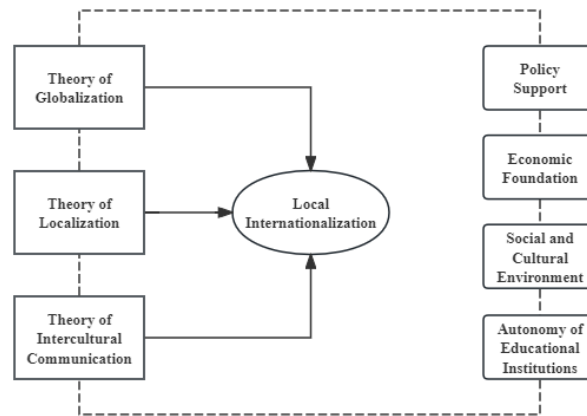
From the basic research on local internationalization of higher education in abroad, it is easy to see that successful models are based on strong policy support at the governmental level, not only in terms of education policy, but also in terms of food, clothing, housing, and transportation, to build up the city or the country as a place that can satisfy the survival needs of the internationalized student population in the field (Ramaswamy et al., 2021). Since the beginning of the 21st century, China has gradually issued a number of policies on the internationalization of higher vocational education. The 2010 Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) proposes "to cultivate a large number of internationalized talents with an international outlook, a good understanding of international rules, and the ability to participate in international affairs and international competition" (Ministry of Education (PRC), 2010). In 2014, the State Council issued the Decision on Accelerating the Development of Modernized Vocational Education, emphasizing the need for vocational institutions to strengthen international exchanges and cooperation (State Council (PRC), 2014). In 2015, the Ministry of Education issued the Action Plan for the Innovative Development of Higher Vocational Education (2015 - 2018), which proposes to strengthen the international influence of China's higher vocational education by 2018 (Ministry of Education (PRC), 2015). In 2016, the State Council issued Several Opinions on Doing a Good Job of Opening Up Education to the World in the New Era, which mentioned "continuously improving the quality of China's education, the country's soft power and international influence" (State Council (PRC), 2016).

In 2019, the State Council issued the Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform, stating that it is necessary to "build a vocational education standard system that covers most industry sectors and has an internationally advanced level"; followed by the Opinions on the Implementation of the Plan for the Construction of High-Level Higher Vocational Schools and Specialties with Chinese Characteristics, jointly issued by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, which puts "Enhance the level of internationalization" as one of the 10 reform and development tasks (State Council (PRC), 2019). The Action Plan for Improving the Quality and Excellence of Vocational Education (2020 - 2023) issued by the Ministry of Education in 2020 lists the "Implementation of Vocational Education Service for International Capacity Building Cooperation" as one of the ten key tasks (Ministry of Education (PRC), 2020). In 2021, the State Council issued the Opinions on Promoting the High-Quality Development of Modernized Vocational Education, which further put forward the distinctive policy of "building a brand of vocational education with Chinese characteristics" (State Council (PRC), 2021).

Li (2024) proposed to "build the brand of 'Study in China' on Hainan's venture to build an international education and innovation island", explore the "school +" mode of school running, and utilize the policy advantages of the central government to encourage the establishment of branches of domestic famous universities and research institutions. Research institutions in Hainan to set up branches of the policy advantages of Lingshui Lian International Education Innovation Pilot Zone, Sanya Yazhou Bay Science and Technology City, Haikou Guilinyang Education Park, Boao Pilot Zone as the focus of the construction of Shanghai Jiaotong University, Southern University of Science and Technology, Zhejiang University and other more than a dozen of famous domestic school branch projects, to facilitate the cooperation of these universities with the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Singapore and other countries, to create the "Study in Hainan" brand. This initiative has undoubtedly accelerated the process of local internationalization of higher education in China, which can stay at the undergraduate level or above, and may be incomplete for the promotion of research on local internationalization of higher education.

### 3.4 Theoretical Framework of Local Internationalization

Through the analysis of the current situation and the combing of the literature, it is easy to see that the evolution of the concept of local internationalization revolves around the theory of globalization, the theory of localization and the theory of intercultural communication. The theoretical framework of the study is shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1:** Theoretical framework of local internationalization

Globalization refers to the process of interaction and integration among people, companies and governments around the world (Eriksen, 2020). The term globalization first appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, replacing the earlier French word for modernization, and developed its current meaning in the second half of the 20th century, becoming prevalent in the 1990s to describe the unprecedented international connectivity between the world (Stolyarova et al., 2020). The increase in global interaction has led to the growth of international trade and the exchange of ideas, beliefs and cultures (Islam et al., 2019). It is primarily an economic process of social and culturally relevant interaction and integration (Figge et al., 2016). Education, acting as a catalyst for globalization changes, poses many challenges for universities and teachers, while preparing new generations to adapt to a rapidly shrinking world (Smith, 2018). The internationalization of education in the context of globalization raises awareness of other cultures, enhances transnational cooperation, reduces discrimination, and spreads technology and innovation, while local internationalization is a double whammy (Keohane & Nye, 2020).

Local internationalization, of course, cannot be separated from the theory of localization, and the core difference between it and traditional internationalization lies in the educational environment in which internationalization is achieved locally (Jiménez-Crespo, 2020). Localization of education is more than just the direct translation of educational content from one language to another (Zhao & Watterston, 2021). It requires a deep understanding of the culture, values, and educational expectations of the target audience (Rawashdeh et al., 2021). This meticulous process ensures that all learning materials, whether text, multimedia, or digital interfaces, resonate with the local audience and are aligned with regional educational standards (Onyema et al., 2020). The ultimate goal of localization is to create an inclusive and engaging learning environment that promotes understanding and retention for all students (Prideaux, 2018). Although local internationalization does not require going abroad, it still requires exposure to different educational materials from different countries around the world with different cultural backgrounds, which is bound to pose certain challenges (Klyukanov, 2020). Intercultural communication theory examines the interaction between people from different cultures and social groups. It involves understanding cultural similarities and differences and developing intercultural competence, that is, the ability to communicate effectively in a cross-cultural environment (Iswandari & Ardi, 2022).

### 4. Paths to the Realization of Local Internationalization of Higher Vocational Education

Combining theoretical research and empirical evidence, the path of implementing in local internationalization of higher vocational education can focus on five aspects: educational policy and system construction, international cooperation and exchange, curriculum and teaching reform, resources and infrastructure, and, social and corporate cooperation, as shown in Fig. 2.

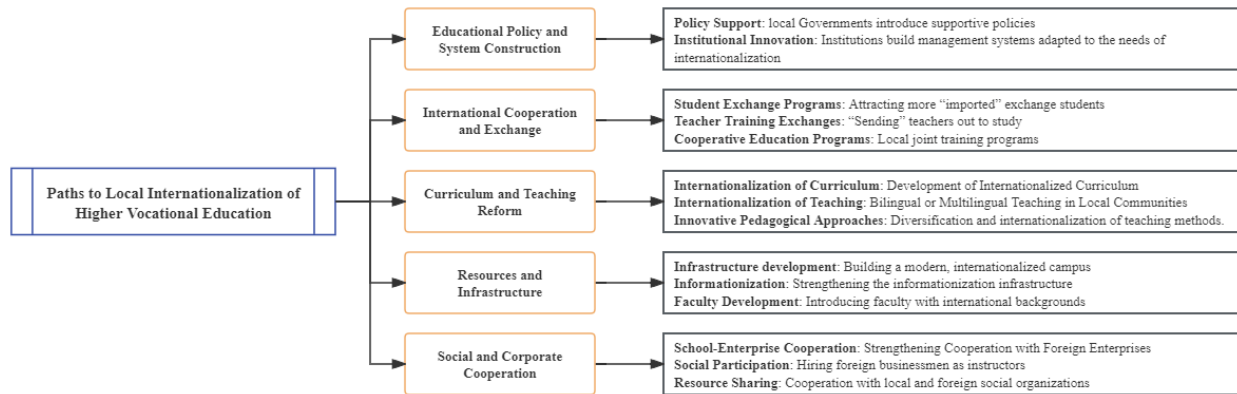


Fig. 2: Path to local internationalization of higher vocational education

### 4.1 Educational Policy and System Construction

The support and guidance of government policies play a crucial role in the implementation of local internationalization of higher vocational education. The government should introduce relevant policies to clarify the strategic objectives, development paths and implementation rules of local internationalization (Admasu et al., 2021). These policies not only provide financial support, but can also encourage institutions to bring in foreign quality educational resources and faculty through tax breaks and accreditation measures. Special funds can also be set up at the local level to finance cooperative projects and student exchange programs between institutions and international educational institutions (Hsieh, 2020). And, government departments are also obliged to strengthen the evaluation and supervision of institutions' internationalization efforts to ensure that policies are put into practice and goals are achieved, so as to form a virtuous circle of internationalization development environment (Zheng & Kapoor, 2020).

In addition to policy support, the institutions themselves also need to have a sound and innovative system as a guarantee for implementation. Higher vocational colleges need to reform and innovate the existing education system according to the needs of local internationalization, and fully consider how to organically integrate with China's education culture while introducing foreign education culture (Leask & De Gayardon, 2021). In the existing internationalization programs, most of them are realized in the form of mutual recognition of credits and reform of the curriculum system. We can still promote the development of bilingual pedagogy and more internationalized courses, not only for the students in the program, but also for our students, which will help to improve the international atmosphere of the campus (Guo et al., 2021).

### 4.2 International Cooperation and Exchange

In general, it is undoubtedly the quickest and most important way to carry out cooperative education programs with overseas institutions. By cooperating with foreign universities or educational institutions, or even industrial enterprises, higher vocational colleges can improve the quality of education and international competitiveness by carrying out joint training programs (Knight, 2018). At present, there are many program models such as "double diploma" program, "3+1" model or "2+2" model, which enables students to complete the domestic curriculum and then go to the foreign partner institutions for further study. After completing the domestic courses, the students will go to the foreign partner institutions for further study and finally obtain the academic certificates of both institutions (Take & Shoraku, 2017). Local internationalization, on the other hand, should be explored on the basis of these modes to obtain academic certificates from foreign institutions through the "1" or "2" modes of teaching within and outside the country. In addition to academic education, higher vocational colleges can cooperate with foreign vocational education institutions to jointly develop vocational skills certification courses for students to obtain internationally recognized vocational qualifications without leaving the country, so as to enhance the competitiveness of students in the international labor market (Knight & De Wit, 2018). In addition, the cultivation of teachers is also the key to the implementation of the path. Higher vocational colleges and universities should invite outstanding teachers from abroad to give lectures through teacher exchange programs, and send their own teachers abroad for exchanges and training, so as to enhance the internationalized teaching level and scientific research ability of their own teachers (Jiani, 2016).

### 4.3 Curriculum and Teaching Reform

In the reform of curriculum and teaching, internationalized curriculum can undoubtedly enhance students' professionalism and international outlook, and the introduction of internationalized curriculum is the most direct approach to internationalization in the field (Fragouli, 2020). At present, some higher vocational colleges in China have already introduced the curriculum standards of internationally renowned institutions and associations, so that students are directly



exposed to international cutting-edge industry knowledge and skills in the learning process (Urban et al., 2017). There are also some colleges that develop joint courses with overseas colleges and universities in the process of joint Chinese-foreign education, so that students have the opportunity to study part of the course content of foreign colleges and universities in China, which not only meets the students' demand for internationalized education, but also improves the quality of teaching and the international reputation of the school (Wang, 2019).

At the same time, the language of instruction also plays an auxiliary role and can improve students' intercultural communication ability (Sundberg & Wahlström, 2017). Some of China's higher vocational colleges and universities have opened bilingual courses, and in some of the specialized courses, they are taught jointly by Chinese and foreign teachers, and the contents of the courses cover basic knowledge and industry knowledge at home and abroad (Gleeson et al., 2020). Students not only learn specialized knowledge in the classroom, but also improve their foreign language listening and speaking skills through interaction with foreign teachers. In addition, experts and students from different countries can be invited to participate by organizing various forms of cross-cultural activities, such as international cultural festivals and cross-cultural exchange workshops (Adibi et al., 2018). These activities expose students to different cultural backgrounds in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere and develop their cross-cultural understanding and adaptability (Buckner & Stein, 2019).

#### **4.4 Resource and Infrastructure**

Financial input and resource allocation can undoubtedly provide escort for the local internationalization infrastructure of higher vocational education (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021). Higher vocational colleges and universities can invest funds to improve teaching facilities and introduce advanced internationalized teaching resources through government planning, school-enterprise cooperation or self-financing (Abdelkafi et al., 2018). For example, modernized teaching buildings, laboratories and practical training bases, etc., and cooperation with foreign-funded enterprises to introduce advanced teaching equipment and technology to upgrade the hardware level.

When the infrastructure reaches fulfillment, information technology also needs to be fostered and supported at the same time, and the basis for improving teaching quality and management level (Moshtari & Safarpour, 2023). Higher vocational colleges and universities can establish advanced campus networks and digital learning platforms, introduce internationally renowned online course platforms, and provide students with the world's top online courses (Gessler et al., 2021). In addition, institutions can make use of big data and artificial intelligence technology to implement personalized teaching, promote the construction of international "smart classrooms", and use interactive whiteboards, projection and VR technology to create an immersive international teaching environment (Lee & Kuzhabekova, 2019).

#### **4.5 Social and Corporate Cooperation**

Higher vocational colleges can actively establish in-depth cooperative relationships with various types of enterprises, including both local enterprises with international business, as well as multinational and international organizations, and can work with enterprises to formulate talent training programs, curriculum standards, and regularly require enterprise experts to come to the school to give lectures to know, to ensure that the content of the curriculum closely follow the industry development trend (Röigas et al., 2017). At the same time, we can send outstanding students to study abroad to broaden their horizons and deepen their knowledge of the industry (Pan et al., 2019).

Under the cooperation, enterprises will provide institutions with a wealth of international internship and employment opportunities (Sánchez-Barrioluengo et al., 2019). Students can choose to do internships in local multinational companies or overseas through the University-Enterprise Partnership Program. Such an arrangement not only broadens the employment channels for students, but also greatly enhances the international competitiveness of the profession and the institution, giving them an edge in the globalized workplace environment (Mok et al., 2018).

### **5. Conclusion**

Research on the local internationalization of higher vocational education would cover a number of potential areas that deserve to be explored in depth. First, the research could focus on how to further optimize the international curriculum, especially the balance between global adaptation and localization of curriculum content. Second, it could explore strategies for differentiating the allocation of resources among higher vocational institutions in different regions in order to achieve more effective resource integration and utilization. In addition, the study can be extended to the long-term impact of internationalized education on students' career development, including the development of cross-cultural skills and adaptation to the international job market. These areas not only contribute to an in-depth understanding of the current status of in local internationalization of higher vocational education, but can also provide valuable references for future educational policies and practices.

In order to advance research on the internationalization of higher education in the field, it is suggested that future research directions should include the following areas: 1) Carry out large-scale empirical research to collect and analyze the specific problems and successful experiences encountered by different higher vocational colleges in the local internationalization, so as to form research conclusions with general applicability; 2) to explore the application of novel technologies in the local internationalization of higher vocational education and to assess their impact on the quality of



teaching and the student experience; 3) focus on the comparison of teaching strategies and effects in different cultural contexts, and study how to implement effective teaching methods in a multicultural environment; 4) it is proposed to establish a transnational education cooperation platform to promote cooperation among international educational institutions, enterprises and academics, and to share best practices and research results, so as to jointly promote the development of internationalization of higher vocational education.

## 5.1 Innovations and Limitations of the Study

The innovations of this study are in the following three parts. Firstly, this study highlights the special advantage of local access to internationalized education, where students can gain access to internationalized curricula and practical experience without having to leave the country, which greatly reduces the cost of learning while providing greater assistance in navigating language and cultural barriers. Secondly, this study examines how international curricula and teaching standards can be effectively introduced into the local educational environment, ensuring the global adaptability and local relevance of educational content through flexible curricula and localized adjustments. Finally, this study also focuses on the use of information technology in achieving local internationalized education, especially how to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and the internationalized experience of students through digital platforms and virtual communication technologies.

Despite some innovations in current research, several limitations remain. Firstly, the scope of the study focuses mainly on specific cases and regions, possibly in order to be able to fully cover the general situation in different contexts. Secondly, due to the lack of practice cases over a long period of time, the long-term effects and deep-rooted impacts of local internationalization are still insufficiently explored. Finally, while information technology and business collaboration have been proposed as important means of promoting local internationalization, their actual effectiveness in different educational settings may vary.

## 5.2 Future Outlook

With the advancement of globalization and the continuous development of educational technology, higher vocational institutions will adopt the blended teaching mode to effectively combine international and local courses. This model will not only enhance the quality of education, but also provide students with a more flexible and personalized learning experience. In the future, higher vocational education will also pay more attention to the cultivation of cross-cultural competence, and the school will work closely with international enterprises and educational institutions to promote cross-border internships and project cooperation, so as to provide students with a wider range of international perspectives and practical opportunities. The application of digital and intelligent technologies will further deepen the internationalization of higher education, and virtual reality, artificial intelligence and online learning platforms will enable students to access global educational resources and practical experiences in local environments.

The issue of matching the internationalization of curricula and teaching content with local needs may become a major challenge for the local internationalization of higher vocational education in the future. It is recommended that when designing internationalized curricula, higher vocational colleges and universities should strengthen their cooperation with industries and enterprises to ensure that the contents of the curricula are in line with international standards and also meet the actual needs of the local market. The internationalization training and quality improvement of the teaching force also face challenges. Strategies to address this problem include organizing regular international exchanges and training activities, improving teachers' international teaching skills and bringing in teachers and experts with international experience. The updating and maintenance of technology brought about by the rapid development of information technology is also a challenge. Higher vocational institutions can ensure the stable operation and effective application of information technology by establishing technical support teams and updating maintenance programs. Through these solution strategies, the implementation of local internationalization of higher vocational education will be smoother and the future development will be more of potential.

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