

# Discussion on Methods of International Trade in Education Services in the Context of Free Trade Zone Construction

Lingyan Meng

Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris(UPSI), Malaysia

---

**Abstract:** Free trade zones are undertaking critical educational and historical missions, whose strategic orientation is to explore a new mode of economic cooperation and cultural communication between landlocked countries and those who are participated in Belt and Road Initiative. However, education opening level to the outside world is low, and the scale of educational service business is small. The establishment of free trade zones and the development of education services trade show a relationship of connection, aggregation and interdependence. To develop the education service industry, it is necessary to coordinate with other service industries, and promote the export of education services by improving its quality and efficiency. Taking the University Alliance of the Silk Road as the breakthrough point, promoting mutual recognition of academic values of member universities, we need to implement a quality monitoring system in line with international standards, and promote greater openness of regional education to enhance exchanges.

**Key words:** Free Trade Zone (FTZ); trade in education services; Belt and Road initiative

---

## 1. Introduction

As an important part of the service industry, education service has been listed in the 13th Five-year Development Plan for China's service industry, becoming one of the top 24 developing fields. In recent years, China has made great progress in educational services, but there are huge differences between educational services and education. The Ministry of Education will focus on promoting the integration of enterprises with vocational schools and universities during the period of 13th Five-year Development Plan, starting with deepening the reform of education and teaching and improving the service capacity of scientific and technological innovation. It provides an experimental legislative policy platform and decision-making ideas for solving some legal and practical problems in the opening of educational services and the development of educational service trade in China.

## 2. Impact of Free Trade Zones on Education Services

After China's accession to the WTO, China's education service industry has entered a period of rapid development. Educational services are mainly in the form of oversea education. Although the number of international students, including foreign and Chinese students, has increased significantly, there are still problems in the education service business.

### 2.1 Long-time trade deficit in education services

Educational service's form is unique, especially for the international students, and China's service scope belongs to the low end of global study abroad market.

## 2.2 Low academic proportion of international students in China

The home countries of international students in China are quite localized, with small proportion of high-level international students. Most students studying in China are from Asian and African countries, while small numbers of students are from places like Europe and America who have advanced education systems and resources.

## 2.3 Obvious difference in educational services income

The average annual expenditure of Chinese students in Europe and America is between 500,000 and 700,000 yuan, while that of foreign students in China is between 50,000 and 120,000 yuan. It can be seen that China's overall competitiveness is relatively weak, although its higher education service maintains a good trend. Therefore, China must further enhance its international attraction, improve the quality of educational services and support the development of trade in educational services.

# **3. Analysis of Methods of International Educational Service Trade under Free Trade Zone**

## 3.1 Enhance international exchanges and cooperation

### 3.1.1 Build teaching teams

We can implement the "Haipei" program and cooperate with foreign training institutions to carry out teacher training, and further strengthen the construction of teachers. The program is divided into two parts. The first is the professional teacher training program, which requires to choose front-line professional teachers to go to foreign cooperative colleges for training to learn their various educational concepts and teaching models, and broaden their international horizons. The second is to manage the personnel training project: select the administrative department of education and relevant school management personnel for vocational training, focusing on school-running mode, school-running philosophy, cooperation intention and employment adjustment.

### 3.1.2 Build Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools and broadening the channels for schools

We need to encourage national first-class universities to actively explore Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools. Chinese schools are responsible for enrolling students, conducting pre-school training, including pre-school training in language and skills, and then studying in cooperative international colleges. After graduation, they need to pass the exam and obtain diplomas from two schools.

### 3.1.3 Export education based on the Belt and Road Initiative

It is necessary to formulate, encourage and guide relevant support measures for international cooperation, introduce foreign advanced vocational education concepts and high-end training models, and improve the training quality of full-time educators. By relying on international cooperation and exchange to build the initiative, we need to guide the province's high-quality vocational education resources, and promote the training of relevant high-quality talents.

## 3.2 Further clarify the position and responsibilities of the government in education services

Under the background of market economy, the government must assume the roles of funder of public education service, legislator of education service trade, executor of education service laws and regulations, etc. In the process of promoting the healthy development of education service trade, it is necessary to clarify the respective positions and roles of the government and the market. The role of the government should be limited to legislation and protection of rights and interests. There is no obligation to formulate educational service quality standards, procedures and measures to protect students' rights and interests, and they are not allowed to participate in specific educational service business activities. Education providers must insist on independent operation, bear the profits and losses, risks and other issues themselves,

and meet the needs of the international market to provide education services. Based on this, we should abide by and promote the perfection of the legal system of educational services, and earnestly and actively perform legal duties. In that case, government functions can play a powerful role of guarantee and supervision.

### 3.3 Improve the quality of education and teaching, and cultivate talents that meet the needs of the market

#### 3.3.1 The establishment of vocational teaching secondary vocational committee

The education committee is an expert organization for research, consultation, guidance, service and quality monitoring of secondary vocational education in the province led by the Education Department, carrying out secondary vocational education and guiding the education and teaching of secondary vocational schools, implementing the evaluation, research and guidance of the professional construction in secondary vocational schools, assisting the provincial Department of Education to inspect and supervise the educational reform of schools in various regions.

#### 3.4 Establish a tracking system for secondary vocational graduates in the whole province

We need to help graduates do a good job in career planning and study adaptation, and know how to transition from students to "professional" roles in the simplest way with the lowest cost. At the same time, through the statistical analysis of the relevant graduate data, it gives feedback and guidance to the curriculum and reasonable enrollment regulations of specialized secondary vocational schools. All secondary vocational schools are required to publish a white paper on teaching quality in schools every year, and regularly publish a white paper on improving vocational education at the provincial level.

#### 3.4.1 Promote the construction of modern vocational education system, and build FTZs to train technical and skilled personnel

According to the requirements of national development, vocational education and enterprises are interdependent, and majors must be combined with industries. Culture and quality education should develop in a coordinated way. Before and after employment, they should actively participate in the exchange of memories in various education and teaching. Education service is the link between top-down secondary, advanced vocational and applied undergraduates with skill level, structure and career simulation.

We need to strengthen professional relations, course content, teaching process, passing, vocational education and industry skill recruitment departments, professional standards, production processes, training qualification certificates, especially advanced professional skills to create a perfect relationship between vocational education and lifelong learning. By developing a comprehensive vocational education system for trade, intermediate, higher education, undergraduate and postgraduate students, the district supports the diversification of vocational skills and academic levels required by the industry. In view of the demand for skills in FTZs, a number of laws on economy, management, technology and international competence have been incorporated on the basis of continuing education mode to maintain professional skills and academic personnel training in public education.

#### 3.4.2 Further reform in educational service trade management system

After the accession to WTO, China has greatly reduced administrative examination and approval items and cancelled or modified legal acts that do not conform to WTO rules and requirements, but the management system that meets the marketing needs of educational services has not yet been formed. There are still obstacles to the healthy development of education service industry. What's more, the market subject status, property rights protection mechanism, service quality management system, investor rights protection system, consumer protection and assistance mechanism of educational service institutions have not yet been established, which are based on market supply and demand (market-oriented). The pattern and management mechanism of resource allocation separation have not yet been established. Schools engaged in

foreign-related educational services should be independent legal entities and market entities, and be responsible for the investment and quality of educational services. China should establish a third-party education service quality evaluation system independent of the government, establish scientific, objective, fair and reasonable service quality standards and rules of procedure, and develop an independent and self-disciplined quality education service team.

3.4.3 Closely connection between inland FTZs and universities to achieve a win-win situation for talent supply and demand

The deepening development of FTZs will inevitably lead to the formation of industrial clusters and the growth of talent demand. College training is an important way to train talents. Colleges and universities in remote areas needs meet the demand and train talents for FTZs, by relying on key disciplines. In addition, the introduction of FTZs in colleges and universities has promoted the integration of production and education in colleges and universities, allowing more enterprises entering global market and strengthening school-enterprise cooperation. Inland FTZs should form an alliance with business schools gradually, and cultivate international talents with professional qualities on the basis of the order of foreign students and internal academic training mode.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The integration of China's new economic normal puts forward new requirements for the integration of production and education in FTZs. Recently in FTZs, enterprises in education service fields are actively cooperating with local industries to support thousands of families. We need to improve the quality of personnel training of higher education service providers in FTZ. The strategies of supporting local companies promoting globally and introducing foreign enterprises into China's market will gradually improve the Sino-foreign cooperative education system, enrich the free business public service resource system, and improve the efficiency as well as effectiveness of technical services through school-enterprise cooperation, social learning, resource construction and big data analysis to personalize and perfect social services more than ever. It is also necessary to make more scientific decisions, such as encourage vocational education to join the international market and improve its international competitiveness, creating high-quality talents. After all, technical talents for economic and social development is a critical human resource for FTZs' construction.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

#### **References**

- [1] Chen S. (2007). Gradustes' Employment Situation in Middle Vocational Schools of Shanghai and Its Countermeasures. *Research in Educational Development*, (21):64–67.
- [2] Yan P. (2016). Analysis of the Current Situation of Employment Quality of Secondary Vocational Graduates and Countermeasures (in Chinese). *Education*, 2(12):293.