

# *Research on the Development Dilemma and Countermeasures of China's Adult Continuing Education under the Background of the "the Belt and Road" Initiative*

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**Keywords:** The Belt and Road, Adult Continuing Education, Difficulties and Countermeasures

**Abstract:** After the "the Belt and Road" initiative and construction of continuing education service was put forward, it decided that it would undertake a unique mission in this strategy and play an extensive and profound role in talent skills training and basic thrust. However, influenced by factors such as market demand, education reform, technological innovation, and industrial optimization, its development has also reached a critical point that requires innovation. With the launch and implementation of the "the Belt and Road" initiative, the connotation and extension of China's continuing education development continue to expand, and its status and role are increasingly prominent. How to seize the opportunity, give full play to the talent cultivation function of continuing education, serve the "the Belt and Road" initiative, and fulfill the new mission and new requirements proposed by the "the Belt and Road" initiative is not only an important mission entrusted to continuing education by the times, but also an important task in front of continuing education [1]. To achieve this functional effect, China's continuing education needs to further learn from and draw on the advanced experiences and practices of major developed countries in the world, combine with China's ethnic group characteristics and strategic needs, expand the international perspective of continuing education development, adhere to the balance of scale and quality, inheritance and innovation, promote the internationalization, scientificization, and standardization of China's higher continuing education, and create a Chinese characteristic continuing education brand with strong international influence, regional radiation, strategic contribution, and comprehensive benefits.

## **1. Development Goals for Adult Continuing Education**

The goals of adult education play a directional role in the entire adult education work. For a long time, the academic community in China has believed that the training goals of adult education are different from those of general higher education. In fact, adult education, general higher education, and higher vocational education have the same value orientation and macro training direction in the training goals, Development Goals of Adult Continuing Education, as shown in Figure 1 [2].

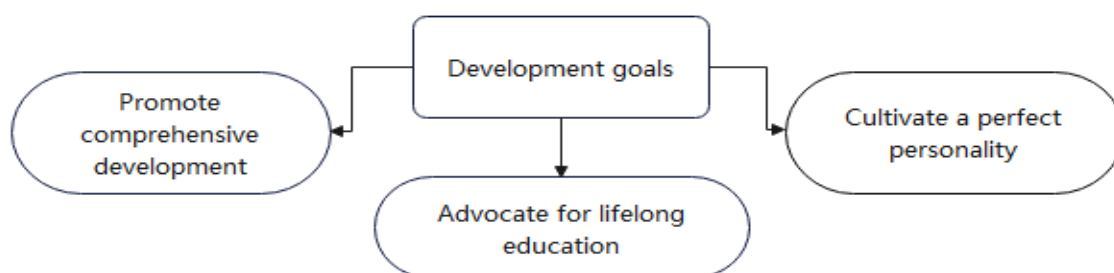


Figure 1: Development Goals of Adult Continuing Education

### 1.1 Advocate Lifelong Education and Implement Sustainable Development

The development of society requires people to continuously receive education and learn. Lifelong education not only requires the cultivation of various talents needed by the current society, but also promotes the comprehensive and harmonious development of students, and cultivates their sustainable development abilities. Higher education should achieve the unity of personal development and serving society. Higher education should focus not only on the comprehensive development of individuals themselves, but also on cultivating talents needed for social development, achieving the unity of comprehensive and harmonious development of individuals and social development [3].

### 1.2 Cultivate Individuals with a Perfect Personality and Improve Their Quality Of Life

The situation of adult students is more complex and diverse than that of students in regular higher education and higher vocational education, which determines that the training objectives of adult education are diverse and present relatively complex characteristics. However, regardless of which type of adult education, due to its adult nature, adult students have a more obvious and strong characteristic of improving their quality of life and realizing themselves compared to other higher education students, as well as the fact that adult education focuses more on lifelong education and promoting human development in terms of educational value orientation and educational objectives. This determines that in the specific direction of cultivating goals, adult education places more emphasis on helping students cultivate perfect personalities while emphasizing the cultivation of talents that meet social and professional requirements.

### 1.3 Promoting Comprehensive Development of Individuals and Enhancing Their Overall Quality

The specific requirements for the cultivation goals of adult education are to emphasize not only that students have profound strength cultivation, grasp the latest dynamics and trends in the field they are engaged in, but also to emphasize the improvement of certain professional abilities of students, such as technical ability, management ability, aesthetic ability, sustainable development ability, etc. This is particularly prominent at the current stage in China. The specific content is presented in Table 1 column format:

Table 1: Dimensions for Improving Comprehensive Quality

number	dimension
one	Skill development
two	Strengthening the cultivation of thinking ability
three	Emphasize aesthetic education

### **1.3.1 Emphasize skill development**

Adult education has shifted from a simple academic education model to a model that emphasizes both academic education and skill education. The target audience of adult education is in-service personnel who have specific work experience and job perception. The purpose of learning comes from the pressure of work, as well as the requirements for improving on-the-job skills and transforming skills during job transfers.

### **1.3.2 Strengthening the cultivation of thinking ability**

To improve the quality of adults and make them possess innovative spirit and practical ability, the first priority should be to cultivate their thinking ability. Long term academic education has constrained the thinking of adults and affected the cultivation of talents. The "cramming" and "cramming" teaching methods not only make teachers tired and students struggle, but also make adults lack interest in learning activities, do not like to think, and do not have their own unique insights; Only focusing on what the outcome is, without considering the process of how it is obtained, everything is replaced by thinking by teachers, students passively accept it, and thinking is not exercised and developed. This urgently requires teachers to change their mindset, study teaching methods, and cultivate students' thinking abilities in teaching activities.

### **1.3.3 Emphasize aesthetic education**

The aesthetic goals of adult education are reflected in the transcendence of utilitarianism, the presentation of aesthetic individuality, and the full recognition of individuality and creativity. The aesthetic goals of adult education can provide adults with a broad space for free development, enrich their spiritual life, and enable them to feel the realization of their self-worth in learning.

## **2. Challenges Brought by the "the Belt and Road" Initiative**

The development of continuing education from the perspective of the "the Belt and Road Initiative" is like a "double-edged sword". On the one hand, it can strengthen exchanges and cooperation between countries; On the other hand, it can deepen mutual understanding and communication; On the other hand, it is also accompanied by conflicts in the cultural and ideological fields, as well as negative impacts from political factors and other aspects. In addition, countries will also encounter many contradictions and problems in international competition [4].

### **2.1 Risk Testing of Cultural Infiltration**

In the process of exchanges and cooperation with countries and regions along the "the Belt and Road", due to differences in ideology, religious culture, customs and habits, it will inevitably have some impact on the development of China's continuing education. Therefore, we should increase the supervision and management of foreign-related institutions in China, and minimize the infiltration of various cultures; On the other hand, we should also strengthen our position in ideological and political, humanistic quality, moral cultivation, and other aspects, and enhance our ability to resist negative ideas.

### **2.2 Opportunities and Risks Faced by Private Continuing Education**

Due to its late start, private education cannot be compared to public education in terms of recognition and level of education. However, with the support of national policies for private

continuing education, coupled with its own advantages such as flexible educational system and market demand, it has also flourished in recent years and become a beneficial supplement to continuing education in China. The proposal of the "the Belt and Road" policy is both an opportunity and a challenge for private continuing education. The government should further encourage and support the development of private continuing education, support private education to complement domestic public institutions, cooperate with institutions along the route, enrich educational content and forms, alleviate the shortage of continuing education resources, and strengthen the local culture and educational strength of continuing education in China.

### 2.3 The Unity of Opposites between Internationalization and Localization

In the process of continuing education facing the "the Belt and Road", localization and nationalization have always been contradictory and unified, as shown in Figure 2. Localization aims to maintain the tradition and characteristics of continuing education in the country, pointing to the diversification and enrichment of continuing education models; Nationalization, on the other hand, strives to push education beyond the boundaries of politics and culture. Nationalization requires continuous education along the "the Belt and Road" to open markets and learn from each other, which tends to weaken the function of domestic continuous education and disrupt the normal development of domestic continuous education.

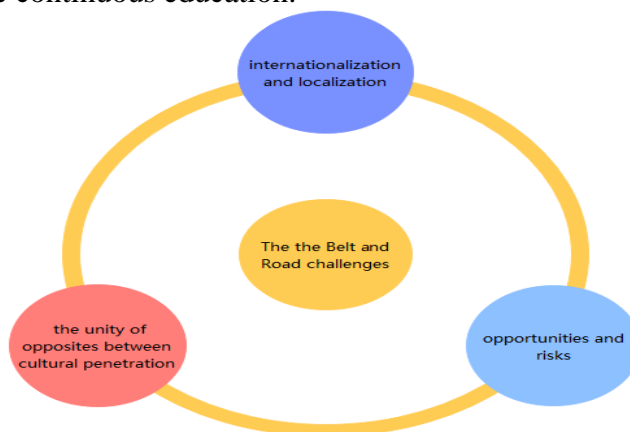


Figure 2: Challenges of the the Belt and Road Initiative

## 3. Bottleneck of Higher Continuing Education Development in the Context of "the Belt and Road"

### 3.1 There is a Big Gap between the Service Capacity of Continuing Education and the Goals of the "The Belt and Road" Initiative

At present, the overall level of higher continuing education institutions in China is relatively low, lacking basic experience in "going global", and their educational foundation is poor. The funds invested are also very limited, and the average education budget of vocational colleges is only 56% of that of ordinary undergraduate colleges. The amount of funds invested by some local governments in continuing education is also extremely limited, and the related expenses can only ensure the normal development of teaching work, without excess funds for improving teaching conditions. Schools themselves cannot meet the basic standards of national education, and there is no way to talk about international standards. In addition, due to the construction of foreign aid projects and the use of funds, continuing education institutions are greatly restricted in terms of actual construction, equipment purchase, and teacher dispatch, ultimately making it difficult for

continuing education institutions to carry out their "going global" work [5].

### 3.2 Popularization of Talent Training Models

Whether the training objectives are clear and clear, and whether the education and teaching process is organized and implemented according to these objectives, is the basis for reporting the quality of continuing education. One of the important characteristics that distinguish continuing education from general higher education is its distinct vocational job targeting. However, current continuing education teaching and management mainly imitate general higher education, implementing a subject centered teaching model, without analyzing and developing courses and teaching according to vocational positions. In terms of continuing education structure, regardless of which teaching mode, academic education is the main focus, deviating from the goal of cultivating practical, technical, and managerial talents oriented towards grassroots, production, service, and management frontlines. It basically imitates undergraduate institutions, with unclear characteristics and low quality of talents.

### 3.3 Theoretical and Practical Disconnection

From the perspective of continuing education institutions, traditional educational methods inevitably lead to repetitive training and rote memorization of exam oriented education, which is not suitable for the physical and mental characteristics of adults. In teaching, emphasis is placed on textbooks over practice, commonality over individuality, with a surplus of indoctrination and insufficient inspiration, a surplus of inheritance and insufficient innovation. It is not possible to teach adult students based on their independence, autonomy, and learning pressure, which mainly come from changes in social roles and their own graduation and development needs. There is no designed education model centered on adult students and oriented towards the future and reality, which leads to a disconnect between theory and practice in continuing education. The trained students have weak social practice and experimental abilities, as well as weak creativity and innovation awareness, thus affecting the improvement of the quality of continuing education teaching [7]. Specifically manifested as the content of the columns in Table 2.

Table 2: Specific manifestations of the disconnect between theory and practice

number	dimension
one	Lack of market evaluation mechanism
two	Lack of market competition mechanism
three	Lack of market research
four	Students have varying levels of proficiency

Continuing education still has a certain gap with market demand and is slow to respond to the market. On the one hand, the teaching content of continuing education lacks an effective market evaluation mechanism. In China's continuing education evaluation system, the formulation and implementation of the evaluation index system mainly come from relevant government departments, while the influence of social and market forces that can objectively reflect the quality and level of education is minimal. On the other hand, there is a lack of effective market competition mechanisms among continuing education institutions. Due to the fact that many continuing education institutions are affiliated with certain strong higher education institutions, other relatively independent social education institutions find it difficult to compete with them, which greatly undermines the influence of market forces in China's continuing education. Therefore, it is not surprising that continuing education is detached from the market.

In addition to the above factors, there are also many factors that cause the disconnect between

theory and practice, such as the detachment of textbooks from reality and the lack of market research; Teachers engaged in continuing education lack practical professional knowledge; Students who receive continuing education have varying levels of knowledge and fail to grasp overly specialized knowledge in textbooks.

### **3.4 The Form of Education is Relatively Single**

At present, the form of higher adult continuing education in China is single and still mainly focuses on higher degree education. Continuing education for higher education in China has only gradually developed in the past thirty years. In the 1980s and 1990s, when higher education in China was in short supply, it was inevitable and important for continuing education to focus on academic qualifications. However, in recent years, as higher education has shifted from "elite education" to "mass education", the problem of a single form of continuing education has gradually emerged.

Beyond the scope of school education, social participation in education is a fundamental characteristic of a learning society. In a learning society, the educational function is no longer unique to schools, but rather is widely and effectively expanded throughout society. The core of a learning society is learning, which means that people can conveniently access learning opportunities according to their own needs. The prerequisite for achieving this goal is to establish a comprehensive, multi-level, networked, three-dimensional, and open continuing education system. In the West, continuing education has become a networked, multicenter education system, in which schools, communities, regions, and various intermediary organizations are indispensable educational subjects, forming a complementary organic education system. In the current continuing education model in our country, schools - especially higher education institutions or institutions born from higher education institutions - have become the main, sometimes even the only channel for people to obtain continuing education opportunities. Enterprises, various social forces, and intermediary organizations should be the main body of continuing education, but currently, these entities have insufficient understanding of the importance of continuing education, coupled with their own peculiar problems, because they have not truly taken on the basic responsibilities of continuing education, but have deviated from the system of continuing education in China, resulting in a serious singularity in the education subject.

### **3.5 The Administrative Color of Educational Subjects is Strong**

A learning society emphasizes a participatory, multi subject, flexible, and open education model for all. In this education model, although the government plays an important role, its function is limited to formulating laws and regulations for continuing education, establishing a sound institutional system, promoting the healthy growth of continuing education, and providing effective funding to relevant educational subjects. In terms of specific educational methods and content, each educational subject has strong independence and a large space for independent activities. In this way, a positive interaction is established between government administrative agencies and educational subjects, which is beneficial for educational subjects to develop flexible and applicable education plans and forms based on market demand, people's different knowledge structures, and age groups. However, there still exists a strong administrative dependency relationship between the institutions or organizations responsible for continuing education in China and relevant administrative institutions. Generally speaking, in China's continuing education system, most continuing education institutions exist in the form of colleges and other branches within ordinary universities, with only a few being independent adult universities. Human rights, financial power, and decision-making power have become unattainable "moon in the water" and "flower in the

mirror" for many adult education institutions. The inevitable result of this administrative continuing education model is that it seriously restricts the initiative and innovation of educational institutions in implementing continuing education. The teaching form and content are too rigid and outdated, which in turn will naturally affect people's enthusiasm and interest in continuing education.

#### 4. Countermeasures for the Development of China's Higher Continuing Education in the Context of the "the Belt and Road" Initiative

##### 4.1 Optimizing Continuing Education Management

Generally speaking, education management refers to the purposeful and organized process of government, school, and industry managers implementing policies and regulations related to education, consciously controlling the behavior of relevant personnel and organizations, coordinating the relationships between people and resources, and continuously improving the efficiency and quality of educational work.

Guided by the principle of employment, innovate the continuing education management system with a focus on job placement. Oriented towards employment, the system aims to cultivate highly skilled professionals capable of fulfilling the construction, management, and service demands of the "Belt and Road" initiative. By leveraging the growth fostered by the "Belt and Road," this approach also facilitates the modernization and innovation of the continuing education management system catering to the "Belt and Road" context. The course cognitive practice is arranged based on the relevant courses offered, including visiting experiences, regular and irregular contact with actual positions, with the aim of recognizing professional positions, enhancing professional identity, and strengthening the direction of efforts. Students rotate at the school training base, select outstanding students for promotion positions, and enter student management positions. At the same time, excellent students enter the "the Belt and Road" related enterprises for internships, and interns enter enterprises to achieve professional docking industry needs and teaching content docking post standards, and build a school enterprise cooperation platform of "industry university research integration, school enterprise integration", as shown in Figure 3 [6].

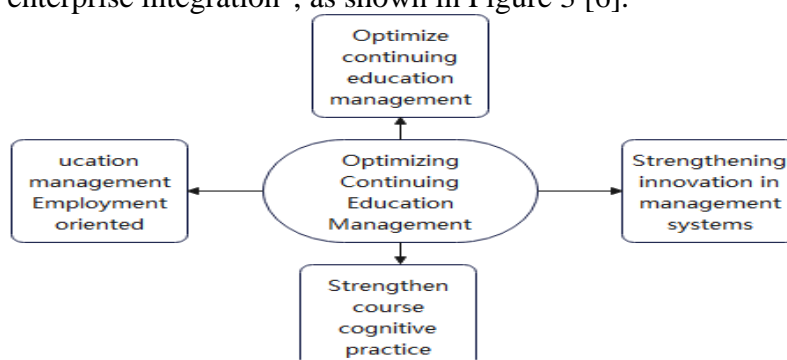


Figure 3: Optimizing Continuing Education Management

##### 4.2 Deepening International Exchange and Cooperation in Continuing Education for Higher Adults

The "the Belt and Road" initiative has brought a rare opportunity for the internationalization of China's continuing education to cultivate international talents, promote overseas education and cooperative education, and enhance the level of continuing education institutions, as well as promote cooperation and exchanges between Chinese and foreign universities. The international cooperation and exchange in continuing education have entered a period of absorption and

integration, but it has also brought a series of challenges. Cultivating the talents required by the "the Belt and Road" initiative is the core task of China's continuing education to serve the "the Belt and Road" initiative. Continuing education with international exchanges and cooperation as the main way has become an important way of learning for people to choose education [8].

We can further improve the cross-border education information communication mechanism, establish a credit mutual recognition and conversion system for continuing education along the "the Belt and Road", and achieve mutual recognition of continuing education qualifications and degrees along the "the Belt and Road". At the same time, scientific research projects along the "the Belt and Road" in international relations, economics, ethnology, management, law, literature, history, religion and other fields can be carried out. Universities actively exert the power of the network to broaden the space for sharing educational resources along the "Belt and Road". Colleges and universities can effectively link up and exchange visits with the websites of colleges and universities along the "the Belt and Road" to obtain the academic lecture content and library information materials of famous foreign universities and professors for China's continuing education, so as to realize the real integration and deep integration of China's continuing education and international continuing education is shown in Table 3 [9].

Table 3: Directions for Deepening International Exchange and Cooperation in Continuing Education

number	dimension
one	Improve the mechanism for cross-border education information communication
two	Building a diversified team of continuing education teachers
three	Carry out scientific research cooperation with countries along the the Belt and Road
four	Hold a series of large-scale exchange activities along the "the Belt and Road"
five	Widen the sharing space of educational resources along the "the Belt and Road"

#### 4.3 Improve the Top-Level Design of Industry Education and Training, Strengthen the Construction of Teaching Staff and Training Bases

The University strengthened the development of full-time and part-time teaching staff and endorsed the introduction of the chief trainer system in the profession. Training institutions under ministries and commissions should seek "full-time teachers supplemented by renowned part-time trainers" in their teaching staff. Institutions directly under the industry should adopt the model of "internal trainers led by the whole industry resource allocation". Colleges and universities are exploring the establishment of an evaluation system for educators that suits the characteristics of the industry, including the evaluation of professional titles and the post appointment system. Colleges and universities gradually implement the chief trainer system, so that respected trainers play the maximum role of model and guidance. Colleges and universities carry out systematic teacher training, strengthen the reserve of teachers, and improve the selection and management system of part-time teachers. Colleges and universities encourage leading cadres, academic authorities, pioneer models and accomplished grass-roots leaders to teach. Colleges and universities promote the sharing of high-quality educational assets within the industry, and explore ways of unified allocation and optimal use across industries [10].

#### 4.4 Strengthen the Construction of Network Systems in Continuing Education Institutions

Under the new media environment, higher education has abundant visual information resources. The information dissemination of new media has interactivity and openness, providing a broad



stage for the public. In fact, pure theoretical teaching cannot improve students' practical application ability, and it is also a blow to their learning interest. As an extension and supplement of theoretical knowledge teaching, new media technology plays an indispensable role in improving academic thinking and creativity, and expanding students' thinking space. At the same time, the abundant information resources and graphic materials under new media technology can transform theoretical knowledge into vivid teaching materials, and dynamically combine theory and technology applications to help students better understand teaching content, thereby improving the overall level of adult education [11-12].

## 5. Conclusion

Engaging in continuing education should not be complacent or closed door, but should have a long-term perspective and open education; to hold international education; we should not aim too high and seek too far, but be realistic and pragmatic and keep pace with the times. We should focus on the "the Belt and Road", expand our vision, think deeply and innovate in the "going out" and "inviting in"; It is necessary to have a broad vision, deep feelings, persistent beliefs, and firm steps. It is necessary to work hard with emotion, share the same spirit with the cause of the Party and the country, go together with the "the Belt and Road" initiative, and work together with the development of the Economic and Social Commission.

## Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the Research on the Development Strategies of Higher Adult Continuing Education in the Context of the "the Belt and Road", the general subject of 2023 of the "14th Five Year Plan" Adult Continuing Education Research Plan of the China Adult Education Association (Project No.2023-021Y);

This work was supported by the Research on the Integration Path of New Business and Industry Education in Xi'an Vocational Education in the Era of Digital Intelligence, Xi'an Social Science Planning Fund Project, (Project No.24JY05);

This work was supported by the "Research on the Training Model of New Business Applied Talents in Higher Vocational Colleges under the Background of Digital Economy Transformation", Shaanxi Institute of Education Sciences, (Project No. SGH23Y3098);

This work was supported by the "Research on the Reform of Modern Distance Education Teaching Models under the Background of Digital Economy", Shaanxi Open University Education Teaching Reform Project, (Project No.sxkd2023yb01);

This work was supported by the Research on Countermeasures for the Development of Higher Continuing Education from the Perspective of the "the Belt and Road", Scientific Research Project of Shaanxi Open University (Shaanxi Vocational College of Industry and Commerce), (Project No. 2023KY-B14);

This work was supported by the Research on Deeply Integrating Innovation Chain, Industry Chain, Capital Chain, Talent Chain in Xi'an, Xi'an Social Science Planning Fund Project, (Project No. 24GL04)

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