

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE GOVERNANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BETWEEN CHINA AND GERMANY

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Abstract. This article explores the governance structures of vocational education systems in two countries with fundamentally different political and administrative models—China and Germany. The purpose of the study is to analyze how these systems are shaped by national governance traditions and to identify the institutional characteristics that influence the development of vocational education. The methodological basis of the study includes a comparative approach supported by qualitative research methods. The analysis is structured around three main dimensions: the legal system governing vocational education, the structure of the education system, and the configuration of administrative management. By applying methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization, the study draws meaningful comparisons between the two country, while identifying patterns and differences that are essential for cross-national learning. The findings of the study reveal that Germany's vocational education governance is characterized by a decentralized, legally codified structure that grants significant autonomy to regional authorities and industry bodies. The system is underpinned by collaborative arrangements between educational institutions and enterprises, ensuring a strong alignment between training programs and labor market needs. By contrast, China's vocational education system is governed through a centralized administrative model, where policy design and implementation are directed by national-level authorities. Recent reforms have elevated vocational education to a status equal to general education and introduced new mechanisms to encourage school-enterprise collaboration and expand access to higher-level vocational programs. While both countries aim to integrate vocational education into broader development strategies, their methods reflect different priorities and institutional logics. The German model emphasizes systemic continuity and shared governance, whereas the Chinese model highlights strategic planning and centralized policy leadership. These contrasting approaches offer valuable insights into the interplay between education systems and national governance structures.

Keywords: vocational education; dual system; governance; China; Germany; education reform; public administration; legal framework; decentralization; school-enterprise cooperation.

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Introduction. Germany's "dual system" vocational education system is world-famous and has become a model for the development of vocational education in various countries. In contrast, although China's vocational education started later, it is building a modern vocational education system with Chinese characteristics, which is gradually taking shape. So what is the difference between the modern vocational education system with Chinese characteristics and the German "dual system" vocational education system? What does "with Chinese characteristics" mean? What is the role and function of the Chinese and German governments in this system? These are the main questions of this paper.

Literature review. The governance of vocational education systems in China and Germany reflects distinct developmental trajectories rooted in their respective political structures, historical legacies, and socio-economic demands. Recent literature highlights both the structural complexity and reform trajectories in each country, underscoring a comparative lens as a useful analytical approach for understanding institutional strengths and challenges in vocational education governance.

In the Chinese context, recent legislative efforts have played a central role in redefining vocational education. Liu (2023) underscores the importance of legal innovation, particularly the revisions in China's *Vocational Education Law*, as instrumental in establishing a more comprehensive and standardized framework for managing vocational institutions. Yu (2022) echoes this view by examining the long-anticipated revision of the law after 26 years, noting significant shifts in the legal status of vocational education and its alignment with national development priorities. These legal reforms have been coupled with administrative strategies, including the creation of the Inter-Ministerial Joint Conference on Vocational Education, a cross-sectoral governance mechanism designed to coordinate policy implementation across key ministries (Xie, 2018). This move is consistent with broader trends in Chinese governance that emphasize centralized leadership and coordination under the authority of the Communist Party, as analyzed by the Qiushi Theory Network (2019, 2021).

Moreover, the Ministry of Education's (2018) *Measures for Promoting School-Enterprise Cooperation* illustrate the government's intent to integrate vocational schools more closely with industry needs. Such policies aim to bridge the gap between education and employment by promoting practical training models. The role of platforms like the Joint Conference of Presidents of National Higher Vocational Schools is also significant, offering institutional leaders a forum for consultation, policy experimentation, and cross-regional dialogue (Modern Higher Vocational and Technical Education Network, 2021). These developments reflect a broader governmental commitment to making vocational education a pillar of human capital development, as also highlighted by Hao (2023) and Xinhua News Agency (2021) in discussions on public policy goals and educational planning.

In contrast, Germany's vocational education system is characterized by its "dual system," which combines enterprise-based training with classroom instruction and operates through a decentralized governance model. Liu and Qi (2017) provide a comprehensive overview of Germany's system, emphasizing its historical development, legal frameworks, and the institutional cooperation between federal

agencies, states (Länder), and industry associations. According to Xu and Mi (2011), the German model is rooted in a tradition of strong corporate involvement and shared responsibility between government and industry stakeholders. This arrangement allows for dynamic responsiveness to labor market needs while maintaining rigorous national standards.

The German system's effectiveness is partially attributed to the participatory roles of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), the Federal-State Education Planning Committee, and the Joint Conference of Ministers of Culture and Education. These entities coordinate curriculum standards, certification requirements, and quality assurance processes across regions, creating a robust system that is both flexible and accountable. The comparative advantage of Germany's model lies in its ability to embed vocational education within the larger economic ecosystem, ensuring that training outcomes are tightly aligned with labor market demands.

While China's vocational education governance has made strides toward central coordination and legal formalization, it continues to evolve toward greater integration with market needs and institutional collaboration. Germany, on the other hand, offers a mature model grounded in decentralization and corporatist coordination, with implications for policy transfer and mutual learning. Both systems provide valuable insights for countries seeking to improve the effectiveness, adaptability, and social legitimacy of vocational education in a rapidly changing global economy.

Aims. The purpose of the article is to identify the prerequisites and outline the main characteristics of public administration of vocational education development in China and Germany.

Methodology. This study adopts a qualitative comparative research design to analyze the governance systems of vocational education in China and Germany. The research is grounded in general scientific methods, including analysis and synthesis, abstraction, and systematic generalization. The primary aim is to identify the institutional structures, legal foundations, and policy mechanisms that define how vocational education is managed and developed in each country.

A comparative method serves as the core approach, enabling the authors to systematically examine the similarities and differences between the two governance models. This method is particularly suitable for understanding how differing political systems—China's centralized unitary structure versus Germany's decentralized federalism—affect the planning, implementation, and reform of vocational education. The analysis is structured around three key dimensions: the legal framework, the education system, and the administrative management system. These dimensions were selected to provide a multi-layered view of governance, capturing not only formal legislation but also institutional arrangements and operational practices.

Data sources include national laws, government policy documents, scholarly literature, and official publications from relevant ministries and agencies. Key documents analyzed include China's *Vocational Education Law* (2022 revision), the German *Vocational Education Act* (BBiG), and supporting regulations such as China's *Measures for Promoting School-Enterprise Cooperation* and Germany's *Chamber of Commerce and Industry Act*. In addition, reports and commentaries from authoritative

organizations like the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and Germany's Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) provided empirical grounding for the institutional analysis.

The authors also incorporate secondary sources including peer-reviewed articles and expert commentaries that discuss legislative evolution, policy implementation, and administrative reforms. These were selected from both Chinese and international academic journals, government portals, and institutional databases. This multi-source data triangulation enhances the validity and credibility of the comparative analysis.

By juxtaposing the Chinese and German cases, the study aims not only to highlight structural differences but also to explore how governance models influence policy outcomes in vocational education. Ultimately, the research seeks to contribute to the discourse on international policy learning by identifying best practices and transferable elements suitable for educational modernization in various national contexts.

Results. Vocational education plays a crucial role in the development of skilled labor and the modernization of national economies. Both Germany and China have established legal systems that provide frameworks for vocational education, but they reflect differing historical, political, and institutional contexts (Table 1).

Table 1. The legal systems of vocational education in China and Germany

Aspect	Germany	China
Legal Foundation	Basic Law and Vocational Education Act (BBiG)	Vocational Education Law (2022 revised)
Governance Structure	Decentralized; federal states have educational sovereignty	Centralized; led by State Council and Ministry of Education
Main Governing Bodies	Industry associations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, guilds)	Central and local governments
Role of Industry	Central; industry bodies manage training content, assessment, and certification	Supportive; enterprises encouraged to cooperate with schools
Type of System	Dual system (enterprise + vocational school)	School-based with increasing emphasis on enterprise cooperation
Enterprise Participation Regulation	Detailed in BBiG, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Act, and other sectoral laws	Encouraged through tax relief policies and cooperation measures
Vocational Education Levels	Focus on secondary level with regulated apprenticeship training	Integrated system: secondary, specialized, and undergraduate vocational education
Supporting Legal Documents	Vocational Education Ordinance, Training Act, Youth Labor Protection Act, Basic Law for Enterprises	Measures for Promoting School-Enterprise Cooperation, Tax Relief Measures, Provincial regulations
Curriculum and Standards	Defined by Framework Teaching Plan and enterprise-based vocational training regulations	Defined by the Ministry of Education; local governments implement based on national guidelines
Reform Orientation	Industry-driven adaptation and quality assurance	Government-driven modernization and equality of vocational and general education
Local Autonomy	High; federal states and local chambers have legislative and administrative powers	Moderate; local governments can adapt implementation but within a national framework

Source: systematized by the author

The legal system of "dual system" in Germany. The legal system of vocational education in Germany is very comprehensive. The supreme law of vocational education is the Basic Law, followed by the Vocational Education Act (BBiG). The

Basic Law gives people the basic right to participate in vocational education and stipulates that each federal state enjoys the sovereignty of culture and education. The Vocational Education Act (BBiG) emphasizes that the guild organizations of various industries constitute the competent institutions of vocational education, including the craftsmen's associations, the Federation of Industry and Commerce, the Agricultural Associations, the lawyers' associations, the economic auditors' associations, the associations of tax consultants, and the doctors' associations, etc (Xu. & Mi., 2011), and also promulgates the regulations on education and vocational education for enterprises and educational institutions. framework requirements for enterprises and educational institutions to carry out vocational education, stipulating the qualifications, rights and obligations for both schools and enterprises participating in vocational education, and so on. In order to strengthen the main position of industry associations in the governance of vocational education, the German government has supplemented the specific requirements and operable guidance for the implementation of management responsibilities by industry associations in laws and regulations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Act, Vocational Education Ordinance, Training Act, Basic Law for Enterprises, and Youth Labor Protection Act. For example, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Act stipulates that each enterprise must join the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in each region and accept the coordination, accreditation, supervision and guidance of vocational training conducted by trade associations, and the Basic Law for Enterprises is used to regulate the participation of enterprises in vocational education, clearly stipulating the rights to be enjoyed by and the obligations to be fulfilled by the management boards of enterprises in the context of vocational education for enterprises, and so on. In addition, standards for vocational education and vocational skills have also been formed within a unified legal framework; for example, standards for vocational education are based on the Framework Teaching Plan for Schools, which forms the standard for specialized teaching, and standards for vocational skills are based on the Regulations on Vocational Training for Enterprises, which forms the standard for job skills training.

Legal system of vocational education in China. The main law governing vocational education in China is the Vocational Education Law. 2022 The Chinese government enacted the newly revised Vocational Education Law (hereafter referred to as the new law, and before the revision as the old law), which supports the current round by law of important reforms to vocational education in China. The new law firstly clarifies the legal status of vocational education as a type of education, equal to general education; secondly, it abolishes the opinion of "categorization and streaming", and puts forward the development guideline of "coordinating the development of vocational education and general education at different stages of post-compulsory education according to local conditions and in an integrated manner"; thirdly, the development guideline of "coordinating the development of vocational education and general education" has been abolished. "Third, it supports the establishment of higher vocational schools that implement education at the undergraduate level and above, which are under the management of the State Council's education administration department, so as to create a modern vocational education system of "secondary

education, specialized education and undergraduate education", which is a major highlight of the new law. In addition, the Chinese government and provinces and municipalities have also promulgated other laws and regulations to supplement the Vocational Education Law, such as the Vocational Education Promotion Law of Guangdong Province, which proposes that "the land for the construction of vocational school buildings and training bases shall be included in the overall land use plan, annual land use plan and urban and rural construction plan"; the Tax Relief Administrative Measures clarifies the conditions for enterprise income tax reduction and exemption (Liu. & Qi., 2017); Measures for Promoting School-Enterprise Cooperation in Vocational Schools issued by the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and other six departments encourages financial institutions to prudently grant credit management in accordance with laws and regulations, and to provide relevant credit and financing support for school-enterprise cooperation (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2018), etc.; all of these provide legal and rationale support for the introduction of vocational education policies by the local government, and promote the government to create a "Land + credit + financial + fiscal" vocational education governance toolbox.

So, Germany's vocational education system is deeply rooted in its federal governance structure and strong industry participation, embodied in its renowned "dual system." This model integrates school-based education with enterprise-based training and is supported by a dense web of legislation and guild regulations. In contrast, China has undergone significant reform of its vocational education system in recent years, most notably with the 2022 revision of its Vocational Education Law. This new law elevates vocational education to the same legal standing as general education and introduces a more centralized, government-driven framework aimed at fostering school-enterprise cooperation and building a modern, multi-level vocational education system.

Comparison of Chinese and German Vocational Education System.

Vocational education systems serve as vital mechanisms for aligning educational pathways with labor market demands and national development strategies (Table 2).

German vocational education system. Germany's education system is closely integrated, in the basic education stage, the second stage of education, higher education stage, students go through at least three times of vocational education and general education streaming. Firstly, the first streaming is carried out in the second education stage, students can choose either vocational schools according to their own interests and aspirations, their parents' and teachers' suggestions, and after graduation, they can further study in advanced vocational schools or find a job, or they can choose specialized liberal arts high schools, and after graduation, they can be admitted to comprehensive universities; secondly, the second streaming is carried out in the second education stage, grade II: a part of the students enters the general high schools, including the senior liberal arts high schools and the specialized liberal arts high schools. A second stream takes place at the second level of education, stage II: some students enter general secondary schools, including upper liberal arts secondary

schools and specialized liberal arts schools with a professional orientation, which lead to a general university; others enter vocational secondary schools, i.e. including "dual" vocational education, vocational further education schools, vocational colleges, etc., which lead to direct employment. The third stage of streaming occurs at the stage of entering higher education. After high school, students can choose to enter different types of higher education institutions, with about three quarters of them studying in research universities, teacher training universities and arts universities every year, while the rest belong to colleges of higher education, vocational and technical colleges, and so on.

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of German and Chinese Vocational Education Systems

Aspect	Germany	China
Education Structure Integration	Integrated into general education at multiple stages (secondary and higher education).	Progressive integration through reforms; traditionally separated from general education.
Streaming Mechanism	Three major streaming points: early secondary, late secondary, and higher education entry.	Major streaming after compulsory education; 50/50 vocational-general split gradually adjusted.
Dual Education System	Strongly established; combines classroom instruction with practical apprenticeship.	Dual system is being developed but not yet as institutionalized as in Germany.
Policy Focus	Emphasis on stability, quality, and employer collaboration in vocational pathways.	Emphasis on flexibility, educational mobility, and modernization of vocational training.
Higher Education Pathways	Pathways exist from vocational schools to universities of applied sciences.	Legal provisions now allow for undergraduate and graduate vocational education.
Government Role	Coordinated by federal and regional authorities with strong industry input.	Strong top-down policy drive; central government sets agenda, provinces adapt to local conditions.
Recent Reforms	Gradual refinement of existing structure and strengthening of the dual model.	Major legal and policy reforms since 2014; new law in 2022 promotes integrated development.
Enrollment Trends	Majority of students opt for vocational paths that offer direct labor market entry.	Shift from rigid 50/50 vocational-general ratio to flexible models based on regional needs.
Legislative Framework	Long-established laws ensure standardization and quality control.	New legislation gives vocational education legitimacy to expand into higher education.
Social Perception	Vocational education is highly respected and seen as a valid alternative to academic education.	Vocational education has traditionally faced stigma; reforms aim to improve its status and appeal.

Source: systematized by the author

China's vocational education system. China's vocational education is also exploring the integration path with general education. "Integration between vocational education and general education" is an important education integration system reform promoted by the Chinese government, and it is the top-level design of the Chinese government to build an education modernization system with Chinese characteristics (Liu., 2023), which means that it refers to the integration of vocational education and general education (including basic education and higher education) to form an "overpass for talent cultivation", which not only opens up the flow channel between higher education and higher vocational education, but also opens up the flow channel

between basic education and secondary vocational education, thus creating a system for cultivating high-skilled talents.

In the old law, "integration between vocational education and general education" was referred to as "streaming between vocational education and general education", which has always been the only way to separate vocational education and general education in China's college entrance exams. However, in 2014, the Chinese government fully promoted the "streaming between vocational education and general education" policy, and it was the first time that "streaming between vocational education and general education" was introduced in primary schools.

Under the old law, the first principle of the 2014 general document on secondary vocational school enrollment issued by the Ministry of Education emphasized "insisting that the ratio of vocational education to universal education be roughly equal," and this principle of the work program has been retained until 2022. According to the data released by the Ministry of Education in 2022, more than 40% of students enrolled in secondary vocational schools in that year, and the ratio of general vocational education to vocational education in the country was about 5.8:4.2 (Xinhua News Agency, 2021). Observing the results of China's high school admissions over the past decade, the phenomenon of "50/50 streaming between vocational and general education" has become more and more normalized, and has aroused strong concern from all sectors of society.

In May 2022, a new law was promulgated, which abolished the phrase "insisting that the ratio of vocational education to general education be roughly equal" in the old law, and added the new expression "at different stages after the compulsory education stage, coordinated development of vocational education and general education shall be promoted in a way that is appropriate to the local conditions" (Yu., 2022). In the same year, the Communist Party of China (CPC) added "integration of vocational education and general education" to the report of the 20th National Congress of the CPC, which became the central task of the CPC in leading the people of all ethnic groups to develop the national cause and build socialism with Chinese characteristics. In accordance with the new law and the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Ministry of Education promptly adjusted the overall requirements of the document on enrollment in secondary vocational schools, amending the expression "insisting that the ratio of vocational education to universal education be roughly equivalent" to "continuing to consolidate the basic status of secondary vocational education". The new law also provides guidance to provincial authorities, emphasizing the importance of "adapting to local conditions," not "one-size-fits-all," and allowing the ratio of general vocational education to vary within a certain range. 2023 data released by the Ministry of Education showed that the ratio of general vocational education to general vocational education was 2.1:3.1. In addition, the new law gives vocational education the legal legitimacy to carry out undergraduate education, and supports the Ministry of Education's efforts to promote the current round of vocational education reforms in terms of education level and enrollment size. Currently, 53 colleges and universities have been upgraded to undergraduate vocational education universities with the approval of the Ministry of Education, while the enrollment scale

of professional degree master's degree and engineering doctoral degree students across the country has been expanding year by year. In 2023, the Ministry of Education issued the "Opinions on Further Promoting the Development of Academic Degree and Professional Degree Graduate Education", which pointed out that by the end of the "14th Five-Year Plan", the enrollment scale of professional degree master's degree students would be expanded to about two thirds of the total enrollment scale of master's degree students.

Both Germany and China have developed complex systems of vocational education that reflect their distinct historical, cultural, and economic contexts. Germany's vocational education is internationally recognized for its structured dual system that integrates academic instruction with practical training through strong cooperation between educational institutions and industries. In contrast, China has been rapidly reforming its vocational education system in recent years, striving to integrate vocational and general education as part of a broader effort to modernize and diversify its educational framework.

Comparison of Chinese and German Vocational Education Management Systems. Vocational education plays a vital role in the development of a skilled workforce and the promotion of national economic growth. The Table 3 presents a comparative analysis of the main bodies responsible for managing vocational education in both countries, emphasizing structural differences, governance levels, institutional roles, and coordination mechanisms.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Vocational Education Management Systems: Germany VS. China

Aspect	Germany	China
Governance Structure	Decentralized, involving federal and state authorities and industry associations	Centralized, led by national ministries with coordination at various levels
Key Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry organizations - Federal Institute for Vocational Education - Federal-State Planning Committee - Federation of Federal Ministers of Culture and Education - State-level education councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Education (MOE) - Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MHRSS) - Vocational Education Development Center - Inter-Ministerial Joint Conference - Presidents' Joint Conference of Higher Vocational Schools
Role of Industry	Strong involvement through industry organizations and chambers of commerce	Involved mainly through enterprise cooperation with schools and training institutions
Federal vs. State Roles	Shared responsibilities; states implement federal frameworks through local education councils	National ministries dominate; provincial and local governments execute policies
Coordination Mechanism	Federal-State Education Planning Committee; Federation acts as a platform for state coordination	Inter-Ministerial Joint Conference under the State Council ensures cross-departmental coordination
Curriculum Development	Developed by Joint Conference of Ministers and binding at federal level	Led by the MOE and related institutions; focuses on national policy priorities
Type of Training Institutions	Vocational schools and company-based training centers under industry oversight	Technical schools, technician colleges (MHRSS); vocational schools (MOE); higher vocational colleges
Focus of Education	Emphasis on practical skills integrated with formal education ("dual system")	Combination of academic and vocational training; re-employment training is emphasized in MHRSS institutions

Source: systematized by the author

Both Germany and China have established comprehensive systems to manage and develop vocational education, yet their approaches reflect different historical, political, and socio-economic contexts. Germany is renowned for its "dual system" of vocational education, which combines enterprise-based training with formal schooling under a decentralized, multi-stakeholder governance model. In contrast, China's vocational education management system is highly centralized, with strong oversight by key ministries and coordination at multiple government levels.

The main body of management of "dual system" in Germany. The German government has five main types of vocational education management institutions, the first one is the authorized industry organizations in charge of enterprise training, the second one is the Federal Institute for Vocational Education which has a number of functions such as research, coordination, consultation and participation in decision-making, and it is under the management of the Federal Ministry of Education, and also supervised by the federal authorities as well as different industry associations. The third is the Federal- State Education Planning Committee, which is the coordinating body responsible for communication between the federal level and the state level; and the fourth is the Federation of Federal Ministers of Culture and Education (hereinafter referred to as the Federation), which was established by the Ministers of Culture and Education of the 16 state governments. The Federation is a joint conference organization supported by German national law and managed independently of the Federal Government's Ministry of Education and the State Education Bureaus. It has become an important platform for the German state governments to communicate and exchange information and to implement the requirements of the federal framework. The Federation of Federal Ministers of Culture and Education convenes the Joint Conference of Ministers of Culture and Education to develop the Framework Teaching Plan, which is binding at the federal level and serves as the basis for the teaching of vocational courses in the vocational education schools of the states. The last of these is the state-level education councils, which are supervised by the state authorities and made up of 18 members, six representatives of labor, employers, and vocational schools, and they are responsible for the implementation of the regulations at the state level in the schools.

Main administrative authorities of vocational education in China. The central-level administrative authorities for vocational education in China are the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MHRSS) of the People's Republic of China. Within the Ministry of Education is the Department of Vocational and Adult Education, which coordinates specific matters relating to the development of vocational education schools, including the formulation of development plans, the implementation of major reforms, and the promulgation of policies and regulations. The Ministry of Education has also set up the Vocational Education Development Center under its direct management, whose public duties are to provide decision-making support and guarantee for state organs, and which is mainly responsible for research on important policies and regulations on vocational education, the development of professional teaching standards, and the design of major reform projects, among other things.

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security is mainly responsible for job training and re-employment training for social workers, including the development of job standards, the development of skill level certificates and the organization of examinations, as well as the provision of recruitment needs of enterprises to help unemployed people re-employ themselves, and so on. It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security has also established vocational education and training schools, such as technical schools and technician colleges. Technical schools belong to secondary vocational education and technician colleges belong to higher vocational education, and the biggest difference between them and the vocational education schools of the Ministry of Education lies in the scope of enrollment. Technical schools and technician schools focus on the cultivation of technical skills and are open to people of all ages, with fewer admission thresholds with score criteria. Vocational education schools focus on academic education and are generally enrolled through the national entrance examination pathways of the secondary school and college entrance exams. The management structure of the two ministries extends to the local level.

In addition, in order to coordinate the various ministries and commissions in promoting the development of vocational education throughout the country, China has set up the Inter-Ministerial Joint Conference on Vocational Education under the State Council (hereinafter referred to as the Joint Conference). The Joint Conference is composed of nine departments and units: the Ministry of Education, the Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, the General Administration of Taxation, and the Poverty Alleviation Office. The Ministry of Education is the leading unit, with a convenor, who is the leading comrade in charge of education work of the State Council; two deputy convenors, who are the main responsible comrade of the Ministry of Education and the deputy secretary-general of the State Council assisting in charge of education work; and the relevant responsible comrades of the other member units are the members of the joint meeting (Xie, 2018). The joint meeting is the highest level of coordination meeting of the Chinese government, the main functions include the implementation of the CPC Central Committee, the State Council on vocational education work of the major decisions and deployments; overall coordination of the national vocational education work, study and solve major problems in vocational education; research and consideration of vocational education laws and regulations to be introduced and major policies, the deployment of the implementation of vocational education reform and innovation of major issues, and so on.

In 2003, the Union of Local Education Colleges and Universities established the National Higher Vocational School Presidents' Joint Conference (later referred to as the Presidents' Joint Conference). The Presidents' Joint Conference has become an important communication platform between higher vocational schools across the country, and the institutions participating in the Presidents' Joint Conference are the leaders who have made great contributions to the higher vocational education in China.

The Presidents' Joint Conference has the roles of research and consultation, practice demonstration, exchange and publicity, and promotes the dialogue among the government, schools and society (Modern Higher Vocational and Technical Education Network, 2021).

Discussion. The legal systems of vocational education in China and Germany have great similarity, both of which are based on the Vocational Education Law and supplemented by other laws and regulations such as the Law on Chamber of Commerce and Industry. However, there is a big difference in the definition of competent authorities between German vocational education laws and Chinese vocational education laws. For example, sections 71, 72 and 73 of the German Vocational Education Act (BBiG) contain detailed provisions on the competent authorities for vocational education, in which a number of trade associations are clearly defined in terms of their areas of responsibility, e.g. the Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the competent authority for vocational education in non-handicraft, industrial and commercial occupations, and the Chamber of Agriculture is the competent authority for vocational education in occupations that include rural areas and the family economy, and so on. China's Vocational Education Law confirms in articles 6, 7, 8 and 9 that vocational education in China is coordinated by the central government, supervised by local governments, industry-led, and socially participatory in the management of the main body of vocational education, and it mainly emphasizes the requirements for the responsibilities of the government at all levels, while the requirements for the responsibilities of industry organizations and enterprises are too vague. Secondly, there is also a big difference between the two countries in terms of other legal descriptions. While other laws issued by Germany explicitly state the rights and obligations of all parties involved in vocational education, China's laws only provide a basis that can be used in the fields of social governance, education governance, security governance, ecological governance, and so on, and do not specifically point to vocational education. For example, Article 60 in the Land Management Law of the People's Republic of China stipulates that, if an enterprise is jointly organized with other units or individuals in the form of land use rights in shares or joint ventures, it shall apply to the competent department of natural resources of the local people's government at or above the county level, with the relevant approval documents. This regulation provides legal support for the Chinese Government to introduce a land policy for industry-teaching integration of vocational education.

Due to the different logic of legislation at the legal level in China and Germany, it can be observed that the two governments think differently about the governance of vocational education. The German government has given industry organizations the status of the rule of law through law, and at the same time introduced other policies and regulations around industry organizations, giving them specific policy support when implementing vocational education management. While China has not paid enough attention to the role of industry organizations, although the law is clear that industry organizations are the important main body of vocational education management, but the lack of supporting policy support, resulting in China's industry organizations in the industrial and commercial sector does not have the dominant right

to promote enterprises to actively invest in vocational education in the running of the school. For example, one of the important functions of the German industry organizations is to regularly develop and revise the industry's personnel training standards, the German industry organizations through their influence in the industrial and commercial sector, convene the Vocational Education Council to develop industry personnel training standards, submitted to the federal government for further revisions, and ultimately through the Federation of Federal Ministers of Culture and Education to form the teaching framework of the vocational schools. In China, the main body of the revision of industry talent training standards is the education sector, although the industrial and commercial sector will also be invited to participate as representatives of the industry, but not the dominant position.

Conclusion. It can be clearly seen that since Germany is a federal country and the Basic Law stipulates that the federal states enjoy the sovereignty of education, the German "dual system" is a two-level management system between the federal government and the states, and the role of the federal government is mainly reflected in the following aspects. Firstly, the federal government develops and promulgates the framework for the development of vocational education, for example, the Vocational Education Act (BBiG), which regulates some major issues in vocational education. Secondly, it relies on industrial organizations to manage vocational education at the enterprise level, for example, assessing and certifying enterprises carrying out vocational education, and organizing unified examinations for enterprise training results. Thirdly, the federal government has become an important promoter of cooperation between enterprises and schools in vocational education by empowering them through legislation to open up the mutual recognition and interoperability of type education and enterprise training. The state governments, for their part, have given full play to their educational sovereignty, and under the guidance of the Vocational Education Ordinance and the Framework Teaching Plan, have developed vocational education at the school level in accordance with the actual situation in each state.

The Chinese government is a typical party-government hierarchical system, and the fundamental characteristic of "Chinese characteristics" is adherence to the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) (Qiusi Theory Network, 2021). Through the extensive establishment of party groups that play a central role in the leadership of central and local state organs, people's organizations, economic organizations, cultural organizations and other non-party organizations (Qiusi Theory Network, 2019), an integrated party-government hierarchical network has been formed, and therefore the guidance and decision-making of the Party Central Committee have absolute influence. The hierarchical system with Chinese characteristics is a great institutional advantage for the reform of vocational education being promoted by the Chinese Government, which can produce good performance in "concentrating strength to do great things". The CPC has set the development of vocational education as a central task of the Party in leading the people of all ethnic groups to build the country, and the party groups of various agencies have played a political mobilization role in guiding central and local government agencies to implement the strategic blueprint of China's vocational education reform, for example,

the Chinese government agencies have pushed for the revision and promulgation of new laws in the context of the reform of vocational education, which opened up the space for the provision of higher vocational education. In terms of the means of governance, it can be seen that the Chinese government is getting rid of the administrative style of governance that relies on authority and decrees, and is more and more inclined to interactive governance, acting as a coordinator of the contradictions between social public opinion and the development of the country, for example, the central government finally adopted public opinion and gave up the idea of "the proportion of the size of vocational education and general education is roughly the same" in the "vocational and general education integration". The Chinese government's promotion of the current round of major reforms in vocational education is not only due to the economic reasons for the urgent need for industrial transformation, but also for the political reasons to push the "education equity" from "school-age children have books to study" to "everyone has the opportunity to obtain high-quality education". This also reflects the political ambition of the CPC to take the "growing needs of the people for a better life" (Hao, 2023) as the starting and ending point of governance.

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