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Cultivating New Business Talents for International Inland Port: An Innovative Education Model at Huaihua University in China

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Abstract

International dry ports have become essential inland trade hubs, linking to global markets and playing a key role in China's dual circulation strategy and initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Europe Railway Express, and the Western Land-Sea New Corridor. With their rapid development, an urgent need is to cultivate interdisciplinary talents with innovative thinking and a global perspective. Using Huaihua University as a case example, this study investigates the talent needs of the Huaihua International Dry Port, identifying challenges in business education and proposing professional clusters tailored to international dry ports. It introduces a talent cultivation model integrating the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework with industry-education collaboration. It incorporates a work-study integration model and a dual education system to enhance practical competencies. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening industry-academic partnerships to develop application-oriented, interdisciplinary business professionals who can contribute to the international dry port sector. This research provides a structured approach to addressing the talent gap in international trade and logistics education, offering insights for broader educational reforms.

Keywords: *International Dry Ports, Professional Clusters, Interdisciplinary Talents, Business Education, Industry-Education Integration*

Introduction

The rapid globalization of trade and logistics has positioned international dry ports as pivotal inland trade hubs, seamlessly connecting domestic and international markets. As an essential component of China's economic development strategy, these dry ports facilitate regional economic integration and support key national initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the China-Europe Railway Express, and the New Western Land-Sea Corridor. With over 300 international dry ports established across China, they have significantly enhanced inland connectivity and reinforced the country's role in global trade networks.

With the accelerated development of international dry ports, there is an increasing demand for interdisciplinary professionals with expertise in trade, logistics, international business, and regional economic development. Scholars and policymakers have highlighted the importance of education and talent cultivation in this sector. Yet, existing business education frameworks often fail to address dry port operations' multidimensional and practice-oriented nature. This underscores the urgent need for specialized professional clusters and curriculum reforms tailored

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to the evolving demands of this industry.

Recognizing the strategic importance of inland economic expansion, the Chinese leadership has emphasized strengthening inland trade hubs and enhancing international connectivity. Hunan Province, in particular, has emerged as a key player in regional trade development. Huaihua City, strategically positioned at the intersection of the New Western Land-Sea Corridor and the China-Laos Railway, is a crucial logistics hub facilitating trade between China and ASEAN countries. The city has further reinforced its role in international trade by actively participating in the "13+2" inter-provincial consultation mechanism, a regional cooperation initiative consisting of 12 western provinces, Hainan Province, and the cities of Zhanjiang (Guangdong) and Huaihua (Hunan). This mechanism aims to deepen regional collaboration and promote the high-quality development of the New Western Land-Sea Corridor. Additionally, Huaihua is the host city for the Hunan-RCEP Economic and Trade Expo and has positioned itself as a key logistics and trade hub.

Establishing the Huaihua International Dry Port offers Huaihua University a unique opportunity to develop a specialized business education framework tailored to international dry ports. However, research on talent cultivation models and professional cluster development in this field remains insufficient. This study proposes an educational strategy integrating the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework with industry-education collaboration, incorporating a work-study integration model and a dual education system to enhance practical competencies. The findings highlight the need to strengthen industry-academic partnerships to cultivate interdisciplinary business professionals and better align education with international trade and logistics demands.

Literature Review

With the deepening of globalization, international dry ports, as crucial nodes in international trade, have become essential engines for the economic development of various countries. Understanding and analyzing international dry ports' economic operation mechanisms, policy environments, and competitive factors is vital for promoting their growth. Zhu and Dong (2010) explored the formation pathways and mechanisms of international dry ports, providing valuable insights for guiding the practice of international dry ports. Jeevan (2021) analyzed the current state of Malaysian seaports based on lifecycle theory and predicted their lifecycle stages until 2050, proposing the extension of seaport lifecycles through dry ports. Witte (2019), by reviewing the literature on the evolution of dry ports, pointed out the development path from regionalization to diversification and contextualization.

In measuring the competitiveness of international dry ports, Kaliszewski (2020) identified the main factors influencing the global competitiveness of container ports. Liu et al. (2021) assessed the competitiveness of the Bohai Sea cruise ports using the entropy-weight cloud model. Regarding the development of international dry ports, Gou and Ding (2015) argue that international dry ports should form a mutually radiating network with seaports. Based on this, they proposed building an information platform through business linkages within international dry ports, vigorously promoting the integration of logistics and manufacturing industries. As an essential platform for driving socio-economic development, achieving coordinated development between dry ports and cities is particularly important in the early stages of urban development. Yang and Li (2019), using Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), constructed an evaluation system for the coordination between international dry port city logistics capacity and socio-economic development. They empirically studied typical international dry port cities in China, suggesting that developing dry port freight should be promoted to improve the coordination between

logistics capacity and socio-economic development. Guo et al. (2015) believed that the port-city interaction is a key factor in the formation, evolution, and sustainable development of port cities, proposing the DCI method and its algorithm to dynamically analyze the port-city relationship of major seaport cities in the Bohai Sea region.

The competitiveness of international dry ports plays a crucial role in driving economic growth. Competitiveness is a relative concept, and a dry port's competitiveness refers to its comparative advantage relative to other dry ports. Currently, there is limited literature on measuring the competitiveness of dry ports, but research on the comprehensive competitiveness of ports is relatively abundant. Scholars such as Lu (2022) have proposed various evaluation methods, including DEA, TOPSIS, AHP, structural equation modeling, and cloud modeling. Meanwhile, Kaliszewski (2020) identified the factors influencing the global competitiveness of container ports. Research on the competitiveness of international dry ports has important practical significance and high academic value. It plays a positive role in promoting port development, enhancing economic benefits, and advancing scholarly research. Yu et al. (2023) reviewed 81 studies on port competitiveness, identifying four key drivers: infrastructure, governance, market influence, and technology. Their findings emphasize the need for strategic adaptation amid evolving global trade dynamics.

The development of international dry ports relies heavily on cultivating innovative, interdisciplinary talent. Cultivating innovative talent has become an important research topic in education, especially research combining innovation with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) concept. The term "innovation" was first introduced by Austrian-American economist Joseph Schumpeter in his 1912 work The Theory of Economic Development. Liu (2009) emphasized that, besides mastering scientific and technological knowledge, students should be encouraged to develop an innovative spirit and problem-solving ability. Spady (1994) first proposed the OBE educational concept, suggesting that everything in the educational system should be designed and organized around the competencies students should possess at the end of their studies. This theory emphasizes learning outcomes and has been widely recognized and applied in education.

Since the reform and opening-up, research on cultivating innovative talent has gradually become a hotspot in academic circles. With the continuous improvement of innovation awareness and the increasingly intense atmosphere of innovation, the demand for the cultivation of innovative talent has significantly increased. Guo (2012), in his research on the development of contemporary innovative talent, profoundly analyzed the importance and urgency of cultivating innovative talent. Chen et al. (2018), through research on the mode and mechanism of industry-university-research cooperation in cultivating innovative talent, demonstrated the effective models and mechanisms for nurturing innovative talent. Based on the OBE concept, Zhou et al. (2018) explored the practice of collaboratively cultivating innovative engineering talent and emphasized strengthening the cultivation of innovative talent through collaborative development. Acharya (2003), in discussing Outcome-Based Education (OBE), stressed that education should be designed around the students' final learning outcomes to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and assessment. Tang and Biggs (2007) introduced the concept of "constructive alignment," arguing that teaching methods should align with learning objectives to stimulate students' initiative and enhance the depth and quality of learning. These studies focus on student-centered teaching concepts to improve education quality and learning outcomes.

Liu (2021), in his research on the construction path of innovative universities, emphasized the

pursuit of diverse excellence and proposed promoting the development of higher education through diversified reforms and innovations. He (2024), in his exploration of manufacturing vocational education under the OBE concept, proposed a student cultivation model centered around the spirit of craftsmanship, emphasizing the close integration of practice and skills. Starting from the OBE concept, Wu et al. (2024) developed a three-tier progressive practical teaching system for the Applied Statistics program. Through a gradually deepening teaching structure, this system aims to cultivate students' practical abilities and innovative awareness. These studies reflect the broad application of the OBE concept in various educational fields and provide crucial theoretical support for improving educational quality.

The construction of professional clusters is an essential pathway for cultivating interdisciplinary talent and is significant in promoting industrial development and innovation. By conducting in-depth research on the formation mechanisms, internal collaboration models, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms of professional clusters, valuable guidance can be provided to relevant enterprises and organizations. This can help them establish efficient cooperation platforms and collaborative systems, promoting innovation and technological progress. Research on professional cluster development not only facilitates the continuous growth and innovation of industries but also enhances the competitiveness and creativity of organizations. At the same time, it provides new perspectives and theoretical support for management theory research in academia. In professional cluster development, Sun and Tian (2021) emphasized the need to change the concept of educational resource investment and promote the integration and sharing of professional resources. Using the example of the business and logistics professional cluster at Urumqi Vocational University, they explored the basic principles and ideas for constructing professional clusters. Chen (2022) analyzed the new characteristics of cross-border e-commerce industry development and the new demands for talent cultivation. She proposed suggestions for promoting the development of high-level professional clusters from multiple aspects, including reasonable layout, scientific grouping, professional construction, curriculum setting, resource integration, and faculty optimization.

Existing research has shown that both domestically and internationally, the cultivation of innovative talent generally adheres to a student-centered educational philosophy and actively promotes educational and teaching practices. However, compared to foreign countries, there are still some shortcomings in China's research on cultivating innovative talent, especially in terms of aligning the quality of talent with the needs of industrial development. Against the backdrop of the "Belt and Road" initiative, it is imperative to build a logistics talent cultivation system that meets the development needs of international dry ports. Wang (2022) analyzed the necessity and feasibility of cultivating logistics talent for international dry ports under the "Belt and Road" initiative, proposing ideas for constructing the relevant talent cultivation system. Sun (2023), starting from the development needs of international dry ports, explored pathways to improve the logistics talent cultivation system, emphasizing the importance and urgency of talent cultivation in this field.

Drawing on successful international experiences in cultivating innovative talent significantly improves China's innovative talent cultivation model. Current research on the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) concept mainly focuses on curriculum and teaching reforms. In contrast, systematic research on integrating OBE with international dry port talent cultivation remains insufficient. Therefore, based on the OBE education philosophy, conducting a comprehensive study of the cultivation model for innovative talent in international dry ports, constructing a professional cluster cultivation system, and introducing quality evaluation and continuous

improvement mechanisms will support the development of new business talents for international dry ports. This paper takes Huaihua International Dry Port as the research object, drawing on the practices of international dry port construction in more than 30 cities in the western region. The new business talent cultivation model of combining work with study and dual education aims to deepen the integration of industry and education to nurture innovative, interdisciplinary, and globally-minded composite talents for international dry ports.

Research Questions and Situation Analysis

Research Questions

Global trade and logistics transformation, driven by the increasing adoption of digital technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing, has reshaped the operational landscape of international dry ports. These developments necessitate a corresponding evolution in business education to equip graduates with competencies aligned with the digital economy's demands. However, the extent to which business education programs at regional universities address these evolving industry requirements remains uncertain.

Despite growing recognition of the need for interdisciplinary education, business curricula often exhibit structural rigidity and inadequate integration with technological advancements and industry practices. Furthermore, the effectiveness of industry-education collaboration in facilitating experiential learning and competency-based education remains underexplored. This study aims to investigate the following:

To what extent do existing business education curricula reflect the core competency requirements of international dry ports in the digital economy?

What structural and pedagogical constraints hinder interdisciplinary integration and industry relevance in business education?

How can optimize talent development models be optimized to enhance graduates' practical and innovative capabilities while strengthening industry-education collaboration?

By addressing these questions, this research seeks to provide empirical insights into the alignment between business education and industry demands, identify critical gaps in current curricula and pedagogical frameworks, and propose strategies for improving the integration of academic training with real-world applications.

Situation Analysis

Business education has historically focused on developing theoretical foundations in economics, management, and finance. However, with the rise of digital trade and smart logistics, international dry ports require professionals proficient in data-driven decision-making, digital marketing, cross-border e-commerce, and supply chain analytics. These changes necessitate a shift from traditional disciplinary silos toward an interdisciplinary, application-oriented educational model. A comprehensive review of existing programs, supplemented by a survey of students and industry stakeholders, reveals several structural deficiencies that hinder the effectiveness of business education in preparing graduates for employment in international dry ports.

Inadequate Alignment Between Curricula and Industry Competencies

Current business education programs often fail to systematically incorporate international dry

ports' evolving skill requirements. Course structures remain primarily traditional, emphasizing foundational knowledge while neglecting the application of digital technologies in logistics and trade. The lack of integration between business education and emerging technologies, such as blockchain for trade documentation or AI-driven logistics optimization, limits the relevance of existing curricula. Consequently, many graduates require additional post-graduation training to meet industry standards, prolonging the transition from academic learning to professional practice.

Weak Interdisciplinary Integration

Although business education is inherently multidisciplinary, the practical implementation of interdisciplinary training remains fragmented. Business programs frequently operate in isolation from fields such as computer science, engineering, and data analytics. This lack of coordination manifests in two ways:

1. **Limited integration within business disciplines:** Economics, management, and marketing are treated as independent domains, reducing opportunities for cross-disciplinary knowledge sharing.

2. Minimal collaboration with non-business fields: Courses related to trade technology, logistics automation, and data analytics are often offered as electives rather than core business education components. This results in graduates possessing theoretical knowledge of business operations but lacking technical proficiency in digital trade facilitation and intelligent supply chain management.

(3) Outdated Curriculum Content and Insufficient Local Contextualization

A critical limitation of current business education is its reliance on outdated instructional materials and case studies that do not reflect contemporary industry practices. Many curricula emphasize Western business models while neglecting regional trade dynamics, particularly in the context of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the development of international dry ports. Teaching materials frequently focus on European and North American markets, limiting students' exposure to real-world challenges and opportunities in emerging economies. Additionally, the absence of localized case studies reduces the applicability of business education to the specific needs of international dry port operations.

(4) Rigid Pedagogical Approaches and Limited Instructional Innovation

Traditional lecture-based teaching methodologies remain dominant in business education, limiting student engagement and critical thinking development. Several deficiencies in pedagogical strategies have been identified:

Limited experiential learning opportunities: Classroom instruction remains theoretical mainly, with insufficient emphasis on case-based learning, industry simulations, and real-world problem-solving exercises.

Low adoption of digital teaching tools: While online learning platforms and interactive content delivery methods have become essential in modern education, their integration into business courses remains inconsistent.

Lack of faculty industry experience: Many instructors have limited exposure to contemporary business practices, which constrains their ability to incorporate real-world insights into teaching materials.

These limitations collectively reduce students' ability to develop analytical and decision-making skills essential for navigating the complexities of international trade and logistics.

Insufficient Industry-Education Collaboration and Practical Training

The lack of structured, high-quality collaboration between universities and industry partners often hinders the transition from academic training to industry employment. The effectiveness of internship programs and work-integrated learning experiences is limited by:

Superficial School-Enterprise Partnerships: Many collaborations exist in name only, with limited direct involvement from industry stakeholders in curriculum design and student mentorship.

Limited Exposure to Industry Best Practices: Students often engage in internships that do not provide substantive learning experiences relevant to their field of study. Unlike in engineering and technical fields, business education lacks intense apprenticeship or co-op models that offer in-depth industry immersion.

Homogeneous Training Models: Most universities adopt a standardized approach to business education, resulting in a lack of differentiation among graduates and insufficient adaptation to specialized industry needs.

This disconnect between business education and industry demands exacerbates the challenges of workforce employability and talent retention challenges in international dry ports, where firms require graduates with theoretical expertise and practical skills.

Summary and Implications

The situation analysis highlights significant misalignments between business education and the competency requirements of international dry ports. These misalignments manifest as outdated curricula, weak interdisciplinary integration, rigid teaching methods, and insufficient industry-education collaboration. Addressing these challenges requires:

1. Reforming business curricula to incorporate digital technologies, trade analytics, and supply chain management as core components.

2. Enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration by integrating business education with data science, engineering, and logistics programs.

3. Modernizing pedagogical approaches by increasing case-based learning, digital tools, and experiential teaching methods.

4. Strengthening industry partnerships through structured work-integrated learning programs and active employer engagement in curriculum development.

To overcome these challenges, business education can be repositioned better to support the evolving talent demands of international dry ports, fostering graduates who possess both technical expertise and strategic business acumen in the digital economy.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the study's key findings and discusses their implications in the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The results are interpreted in relation to prior research on business education, interdisciplinary integration, and industry-education collaboration, particularly within the international dry port development framework.

4.1 Identifying Core Competencies for New Business Talent in International Dry Ports

Aligned with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework, this study conducted extensive field investigations to assess the evolving competency demands for applied business talents in the international dry port sector. Primary data were collected through visits and discussions with key stakeholders, including the International Dry Port Economic Development Zone, Business Bureau, Development and Reform Commission, Customs, and Transport Bureau. The analysis identified three key competency areas critical for business graduates entering the international dry port industry:

With the advent of the digital economy, the rapid development of big data has raised new requirements for business students' considerable data analysis skills.

The rise of e-commerce (especially cross-border e-commerce), short videos, live-streaming e-commerce, and the "Internet +" initiative empowering traditional enterprises' transformation has made it essential for business students to possess strong digital marketing capabilities.

In the context of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the Western Land-Sea New Corridor strategy, the rapid development of international dry port construction has raised higher demands for students' international business skills, particularly in cross-border e-commerce.

These findings align with previous research highlighting the shift in business education toward technology-driven, application-oriented training to meet emerging industry demands.

Integration and Innovation: Building the New Business Talent Professional Group for International Dry Ports

Considering the demand for interdisciplinary talent in international dry ports, we aim to promote the cross-disciplinary integration of various professional fields. Relying on Huaihua University's nationally recognized top-tier majors in International Economics and Trade, provincially top-tier majors in Logistics Management, Business English, and the newly established Cross-border E-commerce major, we have innovatively proposed the construction of a New Business Professional Group for International Dry Ports. The Hunan Provincial Teaching Reform Key Project successfully supported this initiative. The initiative is designed to:

Facilitate cross-disciplinary integration by embedding big data analytics, digital marketing, and international trade expertise into the core curriculum.

Modernize course structures by incorporating Big Data Product Selection (International Economics and Trade, Cross-border E-commerce), Financial Big Data Analysis (Financial Management), and Innovation & Entrepreneurship Training (VBSE) to enhance industry relevance.

Align curriculum reforms with industry needs to ensure graduates acquire technical and managerial competencies for international trade and logistics operations.

Industry-Education Integration: Establishing the Work-Study Integration, Dual-System Talent Cultivation Model

To deepen industry-education integration and promote the implementation of the collaborative education model, Huaihua University relies on two innovation and entrepreneurship education bases in the Hunan Provincial Cross-border E-commerce and International Dry Port Professional Group, as well as the nationally recognized top-tier majors in International Economics and Trade

and Computer Science and Technology, has partnered with Tencent Cloud Computing Co., Ltd. and other enterprises to jointly establish the Huaihua University International Dry Port Digital and Intelligent Industry Academy. The academy keeps pace with the cutting-edge developments in digital and intelligent technologies in international dry ports, achieving deep collaboration with Tencent, and is committed to cultivating outstanding talent capable of working in digital ports, intelligent ports, and cross-border e-commerce for Hunan and the country.

On this foundation, Huaihua University has established the "Work-Study Integration, Dual-System Talent Cultivation Model" for the New Business Discipline, building an industry-education integration platform for international dry ports. Through deep cooperation with the Huaihua International Dry Port, the practical teaching in each professional group is organically integrated into the construction of various industries in the international dry port. This collaboration effectively enhances students' social practice abilities, improves their employment status, significantly increases the job matching rate in their specialized fields, and expands the employment opportunities for graduates in the international dry port professional group.

Through the joint efforts of schools and enterprises, Huaihua University has formed a "Work-Study Integration, School-Enterprise Cooperation, Three-Phase Practice" training system based on the "Three Platforms, Four Synergies" model. This system effectively integrates enterprise resources with educational resources, achieving a seamless connection between professional education and practical applications, further enhancing students' professional competitiveness and ability to adapt to market demands.

Dual Teachers and Dual Competence: Building the Faculty for the International Dry Port New Business Discipline.

To cultivate a specialized faculty team for the international dry port new business discipline, Huaihua University has undertaken multiple strategic initiatives:

Establishing Research

The university launched the Huaihua University Hunan International Dry Port Development Research Center, focusing on academic research and policy development for international dry ports.

In collaboration with Huaihua Customs and the Huaihua International Dry Port Economic Development Zone, the university founded the ASEAN Research Center, dedicated to regional trade studies, training programs, and capacity-building initiatives.

Strengthening School-Enterprise Collaboration in Faculty Development

Jointly developed business digital marketing and big data analysis workshops with enterprises to enhance faculty expertise in industry applications. Facilitated faculty participation in entrepreneurial training programs, where faculty members engaged in corporate business practices at Huaihua International Dry Port, Shenzhen Dianyue Technology Co., Tencent, and JD.com, enhancing their industry experience and teaching effectiveness.

Expanding International Collaboration and Faculty Mobility

Signed cooperation agreements with institutions like Thailand's Glor University and Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, enabling faculty and student exchanges. Supported faculty development by securing doctoral supervisor qualifications for four professors at Glor University, strengthening international research collaborations. Implemented a mentorship system to train faculty in

overseas business operations and international logistics to cultivate future industry leaders and global business strategists.

Through these initiatives, Huaihua University has enhanced the integration of industry expertise within its faculty, strengthened international cooperation, and fostered an interdisciplinary academic environment, ensuring that faculty members remain at the forefront of global trade, logistics, and digital business innovation.

Credit Transfer to Support Innovation and Entrepreneurship for New Business Talent in International Dry Ports.

To support cultivating innovative and entrepreneurial talents for the new business discipline at international dry ports, Huaihua University has implemented a credit substitution mechanism through large-scale platforms, bridging the "last mile" of innovation and entrepreneurship. The key to nurturing innovative entrepreneurial talents in the new business field lies in placing actual business operations from enterprises into the student's learning process, allowing them to accumulate work experience and enhance their entrepreneurial skills through practice. The university has recently piloted a credit substitution system for third-year business students focusing on cross-border e-commerce entrepreneurship. Practical results have shown that students' abilities to operate cross-border e-commerce have reached the standard of qualified employees in the industry, with some even successfully opening and managing stores on the Amazon cross-border platform during their studies.

The credit substitution mechanism will be implemented across various industry platforms, such as international dry port logistics, trade, and port-related industries, to further develop entrepreneurial talents for international dry ports. This ensures that students can quickly grow into core talents needed to construct international dry ports while still in school. Additionally, the university has built a four-level entrepreneurship incubation system to foster students' innovation and entrepreneurship abilities. This system includes on-campus entrepreneurial bases, Heshang High-tech Zone University Students' Maker Space, University Student E-commerce (Cross-border) Incubation Base, Huaihua International Dry Port University Student Entrepreneurship Park, as well as cross-border e-commerce practical bases in Shenzhen, Dongguan, and Changsha. This system provides comprehensive support for students' innovation and entrepreneurship, helping them gain rich entrepreneurial experience during their academic years.

Improving International Dry Port New Business Disciplines through Competitions

Focusing on cultivating the core competencies required for the international dry port sector, the Business School has actively promoted academic competitions to enhance student skills and practical experience. Efforts have been made to build competition teams that participate in national and international contests related to digital trade and logistics, providing students with hands-on industry exposure and opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios.

A structured competition system has been established to support this initiative, incorporating clear guidelines and faculty-led coaching programs to ensure consistency and long-term participation. At the same time, financial incentives, including reward funds and scholarship opportunities, have been introduced to encourage student engagement and recognize outstanding achievements. These measures aim to create a positive competition culture where students are motivated to challenge themselves, improve their professional skills, and gain valuable industry insights.

To further institutionalize competition-based learning, the university has implemented policies such as the 'Huaihua University Business School Academic Competition Management Regulations and the 'Huaihua University Business School Innovation and Entrepreneurship Credit Recognition and Conversion Measures.' These policies encourage broader student participation and help integrate competition outcomes into academic assessments.

Consequently, students have achieved significant success in international dry port-related competitions, such as the Digitalized Enterprise Management Sandbox Competition and E-commerce (including Cross-border E-commerce) Competitions. Through these experiences, students enhance their technical expertise and develop problem-solving abilities, teamwork skills, and a stronger understanding of industry trends, better preparing them for careers in international trade and logistics.

Conclusion and Recommendations

1. The advancement of reform and opening-up has been a key driver of China's economic development, playing a crucial role in regional transformation and industrial upgrading. As part of this evolution, international dry ports have emerged as vital hubs for inland economic growth, fostering new productive forces and facilitating global trade integration. Despite their increasing significance, research on application-oriented talent cultivation models and professional development for international dry ports remains relatively limited in academic institutions.

Recognizing this need, Huaihua University's Business School has introduced the "Industry-Education Integration Model for Cultivating International Dry Port New Business Application Talent Reform and Practice." This initiative has injected new momentum into talent development, aligning academic training with industry needs and strengthening the role of international dry ports in regional economic advancement. By integrating education with real-world industry practices, this model enhances students' professional competencies and contributes to the broader goal of fostering high-quality economic growth in inland regions.

2. Through Huaihua University's Business School's Industry-Education Integration Model for Cultivating International Dry Port New Business Application Talent Reform and Practice, we can see that the school has achieved remarkable results in promoting innovations in the international dry port talent training model and professional group construction. Relying on the OBE (Outcome-Based Education) philosophy, the school has cultivated core competencies in big data analysis, digital marketing, and international business. In addition, by establishing the 'Three Integrations, Four Synergies, and Five Platforms' joint training system, the university has deepened industry-education integration and effectively improved students' practical abilities and employability. This practice provides a solid foundation for cultivating new business talents for international dry ports in the digital economy and offers strong talent support for regional economic development.

3. To further enhance university-enterprise cooperation, expand the depth and breadth of industry-education integration, and create more forward-looking platforms, efforts must be made to improve students' practical skills. At the same time, the curriculum system should be continuously optimized to keep pace with the development needs of international dry ports. Additionally, strengthening the incentive mechanisms for academic competitions will improve students' overall quality and professional abilities. Further enhancing international cooperation, especially with universities and enterprises in countries and regions along the "Belt and Road" initiative, will expand students' global perspectives and help cultivate highly competitive talents.

Moreover, improving the innovation and entrepreneurship incubation system will provide more policy support and resources for students interested in entrepreneurship, stimulating their potential and helping them achieve their entrepreneurial dreams during their studies. These initiatives will effectively drive the reform of new business talent cultivation at Huaihua University's Business School and enhance its capacity to serve regional economic development and international dry port construction.

This study introduces an innovative model for fostering interdisciplinary, application-oriented business talents tailored to the needs of international dry ports. Integrating the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) concept with industry-education collaboration forms the core of this approach, emphasizing a dual education model to better align students' practical capabilities with the demands of the international dry port sector. The key innovation of this research is its focus on building professional clusters specifically designed to support the development of international dry ports, a vital component of China's trade strategy. However, the study is limited by the single-case study approach, which may not fully reflect the broader challenges and contexts of implementing such a model in different regions. Further research should expand to include diverse institutions or areas to assess the scalability and adaptability of this educational framework. Additionally, future studies could explore deeper industry-academia partnerships, particularly in areas such as curriculum design and the integration of emerging technologies, to further enhance the quality and impact of education for international dry port development.

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