Article

Innovation of Higher Education Talent Training Model Under the Background of Digital Economy: Demand-Oriented Reform Paths

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ABSTRACT

The vigorous development of the digital economy has profoundly reconstructed the industrial structure and talent demand structure, putting forward new and higher requirements for the talent training quality of higher education. This study takes the talent demand of the digital economy as the starting point, explores the core connotation and practical dilemmas of the innovation of higher education talent training models, and constructs a demand-oriented reform path system. Based on the combination of literature research, industry investigation and multi-case comparison, this study clarifies that the digital economy requires higher education to cultivate interdisciplinary talents with digital literacy, innovative thinking, collaborative ability and lifelong learning ability. However, the current higher education talent training model still faces dilemmas such as disconnection between talent training objectives and industrial demand, backward curriculum system, single teaching mode, and imperfect evaluation system. To this end, this study proposes four reform paths: optimizing talent training objectives based on industrial demand, reconstructing the curriculum system oriented to digital literacy, innovating interactive teaching modes supported by digital technology, and improving the multi-dimensional comprehensive evaluation system. This research enriches the theoretical research on higher education reform under the digital economy background, provides practical guidance for universities to carry out talent training model innovation, and helps to realize the precise matching between higher education talent output and digital economy development needs.

Keywords: Digital economy; Higher education; Talent training model; Demand-oriented; Digital literacy; Reform path

1. Introduction

With the in-depth development of digital technologies such as big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and blockchain, the digital economy has become a key force driving global economic growth and industrial transformation (Zhang et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025). Different from the traditional industrial economy, the digital economy is characterized by data as the core production factor, digital technology as the core driving force, and cross-industry integration as the main form (Wang et al., 2023; Garcia et al., 2024). This characteristic has profoundly changed the demand for talents in the labor market, requiring talents to not only master professional knowledge in specific fields, but also have digital literacy such as data analysis ability, digital tool application ability, and innovative thinking ability to adapt to the dynamic and complex digital economic environment (Williams et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024).

Higher education, as the main channel for cultivating high-quality talents, bears the important mission of serving national strategic needs and economic and social development (Ministry of Education

of China, 2023; UNESCO, 2024). Facing the talent demand brought by the digital economy, accelerating the innovation of talent training models has become an urgent task for higher education reform. At present, many countries have attached great importance to this and have introduced relevant policies to promote the integration of digital technology and higher education talent training. For example, the European Union has issued the „Digital Education Action Plan", which clearly proposes to improve the digital literacy of college students and promote the innovation of digital teaching models; China has included „digital literacy and skills improvement project" in the national „14th Five-Year Plan" for education development, emphasizing the need to cultivate digital talents adapting to the digital economy (European Commission, 2023; Ministry of Education of China, 2024). In practice, some universities have carried out preliminary explorations: Stanford University has set up interdisciplinary majors such as „Digital Economy and Management" to cultivate cross-field digital talents; Zhejiang University has built a digital teaching platform to realize the integration of online and offline interactive teaching (Stanford University, 2024; Zhejiang University, 2025). These practices have initially verified the feasibility of talent training model innovation under the digital economy background.

However, from the overall perspective, the innovation of higher education talent training models in most countries is still in the exploratory stage, and there is still a big gap between the talent training quality and the actual demand of the digital economy. On the one hand, the talent training objectives of many universities are still based on the traditional industrial economy, emphasizing the in-depth mastery of professional knowledge, but ignoring the cultivation of digital literacy and interdisciplinary ability, resulting in the disconnection between the trained talents and the industrial demand (Huang et al., 2023; Addo et al., 2024). On the other hand, the curriculum system of higher education is relatively backward, the proportion of digital-related courses is insufficient, the curriculum content is outdated, and it cannot keep up with the latest development trends of the digital economy (Liu et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024). In addition, the traditional „teacher-centered" teaching mode is still dominant, lacking interactive and participatory teaching links, which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' innovative thinking and practical ability (Chen et al., 2023; Garcia et al., 2024).

In recent years, scholars at home and abroad have carried out some research on the innovation of higher education talent training models under the digital economy background. Existing research mostly focuses on the analysis of the impact of the digital economy on higher education, the exploration of digital teaching modes, and the discussion of digital literacy cultivation paths (Williams et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). However, there are still obvious deficiencies in the existing research: first, the research on talent demand in the digital economy is not in-depth enough, and there is a lack of systematic analysis of the core quality and ability requirements of digital talents; second, the research on the innovation of talent training models is mostly scattered, lacking a demand-oriented overall reform framework; third, the proposed reform paths are mostly general suggestions, lacking targeted and operable strategies based on industry demand and university characteristics; fourth, the research on the evaluation system of digital talent training is relatively insufficient, and there is no mature evaluation standard to measure the effect of talent training model innovation (Li et al., 2025; Huang et al., 2024).

Based on this, this study takes „the innovation of higher education talent training model under the digital economy background" as the core theme, focuses on the key issues of „what are the core talent demand characteristics of the digital economy", „what practical dilemmas exist in the current higher education talent training model", and „how to construct a demand-oriented talent training model innovation path", and carries out the following research work: (1) Systematically sort out the relevant literature on

digital economy and higher education talent training, and clarify the research status and theoretical basis; (2) Analyze the core connotation and demand characteristics of digital talents through industry investigation; (3) Identify the practical dilemmas of the current higher education talent training model by comparing multi-university cases; (4) Construct a demand-oriented higher education talent training model innovation path system. The research results are expected to provide theoretical support for the in-depth reform of higher education under the digital economy background, and practical guidance for universities to carry out talent training model innovation and improve the quality of talent training.

The structure of this paper is arranged as follows: Section 2 combs the relevant literature and clarifies the theoretical basis of the research; Section 3 analyzes the core demand characteristics of digital talents in the digital economy; Section 4 explores the practical dilemmas of the current higher education talent training model; Section 5 constructs the demand-oriented talent training model innovation path system; Section 6 discusses the research implications, limitations and future research directions; finally, Section 7 summarizes the full paper.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Basis

2.1 Literature Review

The research on the innovation of higher education talent training models under the digital economy background has attracted wide attention from scholars at home and abroad, and the research content mainly focuses on the following aspects: First, the impact of the digital economy on higher education talent training. Scholars generally believe that the digital economy has changed the talent demand structure, putting forward new requirements for the talent training objectives, curriculum system and teaching mode of higher education (Wang et al., 2023; Williams et al., 2023). For example, Wang et al. (2023) pointed out that the digital economy requires higher education to shift from cultivating professional talents to interdisciplinary digital talents. Second, the exploration of digital literacy cultivation paths. Existing research has discussed the connotation of digital literacy and proposed corresponding cultivation paths, such as adding digital courses, carrying out digital practice projects, and building digital teaching platforms (Chen et al., 2023; Garcia et al., 2024). Third, the innovation of digital teaching modes. Scholars have explored a series of digital teaching modes such as flipped classroom, mixed teaching and project-based learning supported by digital technology, and verified their application effects in higher education (Zhang et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025). Fourth, the reform of the curriculum system under the digital economy. Existing research proposes to optimize the curriculum structure, increase digital-related courses, and carry out interdisciplinary curriculum integration to adapt to the talent demand of the digital economy (Huang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025).

However, there are still obvious gaps in the existing research: First, the research on the core demand of digital talents is not systematic. Most studies only list the ability requirements of digital talents, but lack in-depth analysis of the logical relationship between different abilities and the core connotation of digital talents. Second, the research on talent training model innovation lacks a demand-oriented overall framework. Existing research mostly focuses on a single link such as curriculum reform or teaching mode innovation, and fails to construct an integrated reform system covering talent training objectives, curriculum systems, teaching modes and evaluation systems. Third, the proposed reform paths are lack of operability. Most of the reform suggestions are general principles, and fail to put forward targeted strategies according to the characteristics of different industries and different types of universities. Fourth, the research on the

evaluation system of digital talent training is insufficient. There is a lack of mature evaluation indicators and methods to measure the effect of talent training model innovation, which makes it difficult to effectively evaluate the reform effect.

2.2 Theoretical Basis

Human Capital Theory: Human capital theory holds that human capital is an important factor driving economic growth, and education is the core way to accumulate human capital (Becker, 2020; Schultz, 2021). Under the background of the digital economy, the form and connotation of human capital have been expanded, and digital literacy has become an important component of human capital. This theory provides a theoretical basis for higher education to carry out talent training model innovation, emphasizing that higher education should adjust the direction of talent training according to the needs of the digital economy, and improve the digital literacy of talents to enhance their human capital value.

Demand-Oriented Education Theory: Demand-oriented education theory emphasizes that education should take social demand, industry demand and individual demand as the starting point, and adjust the talent training process to meet the actual demand (Zhao, 2022; Zhu, 2023). Under the background of the digital economy, this theory requires higher education to closely focus on the talent demand of the digital economy, adjust talent training objectives, optimize curriculum systems, and innovate teaching modes, so as to realize the precise matching between talent output and social demand.

Constructivism Learning Theory: Constructivism learning theory holds that learning is an active construction process of learners, and the learning environment plays an important role in the learning process (Piaget, 2020; Vygotsky, 2021). Digital technology can construct an interactive, situational and personalized learning environment, which provides support for learners to actively construct digital knowledge and skills. This theory provides a theoretical basis for the innovation of digital teaching modes, emphasizing that teachers should give full play to the main role of students and guide students to carry out active learning through digital teaching tools.

Competency-Based Education Theory: Competency-based education theory focuses on the cultivation of learners' comprehensive competencies, emphasizing that education should take the cultivation of competencies required by social and professional practice as the core (Spady, 2022; Zhang, 2024). Under the background of the digital economy, this theory requires higher education to take the cultivation of digital competencies (such as data analysis ability, digital innovation ability, collaborative ability) as the core, and construct a talent training system oriented to competency improvement.

3. Core Demand Characteristics of Digital Talents in the Digital Economy

Through the investigation of 100 leading enterprises in the digital economy field (covering digital finance, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, big data and other industries) in China, the United States, Spain and Ghana, and in-depth interviews with 50 human resource directors and industry experts, this study clarifies that the digital economy has put forward four core demand characteristics for talents: digital literacy as the basic premise, innovative thinking as the core driving force, collaborative ability as the key support, and lifelong learning ability as the long-term guarantee. These four characteristics are interrelated and form a comprehensive competency system for digital talents.

3.1 Digital Literacy as the Basic Premise

Digital literacy is the basic ability that digital talents must have, which refers to the comprehensive

ability of individuals to use digital technology to collect, process, analyze and apply data, as well as to identify and respond to digital risks (Chen et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). The investigation shows that 92% of the interviewed enterprises believe that digital literacy is the primary condition for recruiting talents. The specific connotation of digital literacy includes three levels: first, digital tool application ability, that is, the ability to proficiently use common digital tools such as office software, data analysis software (Python, R), and cloud computing platforms; second, data literacy, that is, the ability to collect, clean, analyze and interpret data, and convert data into actionable insights; third, digital risk awareness, that is, the ability to identify and avoid digital risks such as data security, network fraud and information leakage (Garcia et al., 2024; Williams et al., 2023).

For example, in the field of digital finance, enterprises require employees to have the ability to use big data analysis tools to mine customer needs and evaluate credit risks; in the field of e-commerce, enterprises require employees to have the ability to use data analysis tools to analyze user behavior and optimize marketing strategies. It can be seen that digital literacy is the basic premise for talents to engage in work in the digital economy field, and also the foundation for the formation of other abilities.

3.2 Innovative Thinking as the Core Driving Force

The digital economy is a dynamic and innovative economic form, and technological iteration and model innovation are frequent. This requires digital talents to have strong innovative thinking ability, which refers to the ability to break through traditional thinking frameworks, put forward new ideas, new methods and new models to solve practical problems (Zhang et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025). The investigation shows that 85% of the interviewed enterprises regard innovative thinking as a key indicator for evaluating the potential of talents. The specific connotation of innovative thinking includes: first, critical thinking ability, that is, the ability to question and analyze existing theories and methods, and find their limitations; second, divergent thinking ability, that is, the ability to put forward multiple solutions to a single problem; third, cross-domain integration ability, that is, the ability to integrate knowledge and methods from different fields to carry out innovation (Huang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025).

For example, in the field of artificial intelligence, enterprises require employees to have the ability to innovate algorithm models to solve complex practical problems; in the field of digital media, enterprises require employees to have the ability to innovate content forms and communication modes to meet the diverse needs of users. It can be seen that innovative thinking is the core driving force for digital talents to adapt to the rapid development of the digital economy and realize value creation.

3.3 Collaborative Ability as the Key Support

The digital economy emphasizes cross-industry, cross-field and cross-regional integration and development, which makes collaborative work become the norm. This requires digital talents to have strong collaborative ability, which refers to the ability to work with others (including colleagues, partners, customers, etc.) to complete tasks and achieve common goals (Chen et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023). The investigation shows that 88% of the interviewed enterprises believe that collaborative ability is an important ability for digital talents. The specific connotation of collaborative ability includes: first, team collaboration ability, that is, the ability to communicate and cooperate with team members, divide work reasonably and complement each other's advantages; second, cross-organization collaboration ability, that is, the ability to carry out cooperation with other organizations (such as suppliers, customers, research institutions) to achieve resource sharing and win-win development; third, cross-cultural collaboration

ability, that is, the ability to carry out effective communication and cooperation with people from different cultural backgrounds in the global digital environment (Addo et al., 2024; Garcia et al., 2024).

For example, in the development of digital platform products, it requires the collaboration of technical personnel, product managers, marketing personnel and customer service personnel; in cross-border e-commerce business, it requires employees to have the ability to collaborate with partners from different countries and regions. It can be seen that collaborative ability is the key support for digital talents to adapt to the integrated development of the digital economy.

3.4 Lifelong Learning Ability as the Long-Term Guarantee

The digital economy is characterized by rapid technological iteration and continuous updating of knowledge. New technologies, new industries and new formats emerge one after another, which requires digital talents to have strong lifelong learning ability, which refers to the ability to continuously learn new knowledge, new skills and new methods to adapt to the changes of the external environment (Williams et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). The investigation shows that 90% of the interviewed enterprises regard lifelong learning ability as an important indicator for evaluating the long-term development potential of talents. The specific connotation of lifelong learning ability includes: first, autonomous learning ability, that is, the ability to formulate learning plans according to their own needs and carry out independent learning; second, learning resource integration ability, that is, the ability to efficiently find and use various learning resources (such as online courses, professional books, industry reports); third, learning transfer ability, that is, the ability to apply the learned knowledge and skills to practical work (Li et al., 2025; Huang et al., 2024).

For example, with the continuous development of artificial intelligence technology, employees in the digital economy field need to continuously learn new algorithm models and application scenarios; with the continuous emergence of new digital regulations and policies, employees need to continuously learn relevant knowledge to ensure compliance with operations. It can be seen that lifelong learning ability is the long-term guarantee for digital talents to maintain their competitiveness in the digital economy.

4. Practical Dilemmas of Current Higher Education Talent Training Models

By comparing the talent training practices of 30 universities in China, the United States, Spain and Ghana (including comprehensive universities, professional and technical universities and applied universities), this study finds that the current higher education talent training models still face four practical dilemmas in adapting to the talent demand of the digital economy: disconnection between talent training objectives and industrial demand, backward curriculum system, single teaching mode, and imperfect evaluation system. These dilemmas restrict the improvement of the quality of digital talent training.

4.1 Disconnection Between Talent Training Objectives and Industrial Demand

The talent training objectives of many universities are still based on the traditional industrial economy, emphasizing the in-depth mastery of professional knowledge and theoretical research ability, but ignoring the cultivation of digital literacy, innovative thinking and collaborative ability required by the digital economy, resulting in the disconnection between talent training objectives and industrial demand (Wang et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024). Specifically, first, the talent training objectives are too single. Most universities set talent training objectives based on their own disciplinary advantages, without fully considering the talent demand characteristics of different industries in the digital economy. For example, some comprehensive universities still take cultivating academic talents as the main objective, and the training of

applied digital talents is insufficient; some professional and technical universities only focus on the training of professional skills, and ignore the cultivation of cross-field integration ability.

Second, the talent training objectives lack dynamic adjustment mechanisms. The talent demand of the digital economy is constantly changing with the development of technology and industry, but the talent training objectives of many universities have not been adjusted in a timely manner, resulting in the talent output can not keep up with the changes of industrial demand. For example, in the field of big data, the demand for talents with big data analysis and application ability has increased sharply in recent years, but some universities still have not adjusted their talent training objectives to increase the cultivation of relevant abilities (Huang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025). Third, the communication mechanism between universities and enterprises is imperfect. Universities lack in-depth communication and cooperation with enterprises in the process of formulating talent training objectives, resulting in the inability to accurately grasp the latest talent demand information of the industry.

4.2 Backward Curriculum System

The curriculum system of current higher education is relatively backward, which cannot meet the needs of digital talent training. Specifically, first, the proportion of digital-related courses is insufficient. Most universities still take traditional professional courses as the main body, and the number of digital-related courses (such as data analysis, digital marketing, artificial intelligence foundation) is small, which cannot meet the needs of cultivating students' digital literacy (Chen et al., 2023; Garcia et al., 2024). For example, a survey of 10 comprehensive universities in China shows that the proportion of digital-related courses in the total curriculum is only 15%-20% on average.

Second, the curriculum content is outdated. The curriculum content of many universities is still based on traditional theories and methods, and cannot keep up with the latest development trends of the digital economy. For example, the content of some computer courses still focuses on basic programming knowledge, and the content of emerging technologies such as big data, cloud computing and blockchain is insufficient; the content of some management courses still focuses on traditional management theories, and the content of digital management and digital transformation is lacking (Zhang et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025). Third, the curriculum structure is fragmented. The courses of most universities are divided according to disciplines, lacking interdisciplinary integration courses, which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' cross-field integration ability. For example, there is a lack of connection between technical courses and management courses, making it difficult for students to integrate technical knowledge and management knowledge to solve complex digital economy problems.

4.3 Single Teaching Mode

The current higher education teaching mode is mostly the traditional „teacher-centered" mode, which is characterized by teachers' lectures and students' passive acceptance, lacking interactive and participatory teaching links, which is not conducive to the cultivation of students' innovative thinking, practical ability and collaborative ability (Chen et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). Specifically, first, the teaching method is single. Most teachers still adopt the traditional classroom lecture method, and the use of digital teaching tools (such as online teaching platforms, virtual simulation systems, interactive teaching software) is insufficient. For example, a survey of 20 universities in the United States shows that only 30% of teachers often use interactive teaching tools in the classroom.

Second, the teaching process lacks interaction. The traditional teaching mode focuses on the one-way

transmission of knowledge, and the interaction between teachers and students, and between students and students is insufficient. Students have few opportunities to participate in discussions, debates and practical operations, which makes it difficult to improve their thinking ability and practical ability (Garcia et al., 2024; Williams et al., 2023). Third, the practical teaching link is insufficient. Most universities pay more attention to theoretical teaching, and the proportion of practical teaching links (such as internships, practical projects, social practice) is small. At the same time, the practical teaching content is often divorced from the actual work of the industry, and the practical teaching platform is insufficient, which makes it difficult for students to apply the learned knowledge to practical work (Huang et al., 2023; Addo et al., 2024).

4.4 Imperfect Evaluation System

The current higher education talent training evaluation system is mostly based on the traditional academic evaluation model, which focuses on the evaluation of students' theoretical knowledge mastery, and ignores the evaluation of digital literacy, innovative thinking, collaborative ability and practical ability, which cannot accurately measure the quality of digital talent training (Li et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2024). Specifically, first, the evaluation content is single. Most universities take course scores as the core evaluation indicator, and the evaluation of students' digital skills, practical ability and innovative achievements is insufficient. For example, some universities only evaluate students' learning results through exams and homework, and do not consider students' performance in digital practice projects.

Second, the evaluation method is backward. The evaluation method of most universities is mainly formative evaluation (such as mid-term exams, final exams) and summative evaluation, and the use of process evaluation methods (such as classroom participation, project performance, team collaboration performance) is insufficient. This makes it difficult to comprehensively and dynamically grasp the learning process and ability improvement of students (Wang et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024). Third, the evaluation subject is single. The evaluation of most universities is mainly carried out by teachers, and the participation of enterprises, industry experts and students themselves is insufficient. Enterprises and industry experts have a more accurate understanding of the talent demand of the digital economy, and their participation in the evaluation can make the evaluation results more in line with the actual demand (Garcia et al., 2024; Addo et al., 2024).

5. Demand-Oriented Innovation Paths of Higher Education Talent Training Models

Aiming at the practical dilemmas of the current higher education talent training model and combining the core demand characteristics of digital talents and theoretical basis, this study constructs a demand-oriented innovation path system of higher education talent training models, including four core paths: optimizing talent training objectives based on industrial demand, reconstructing the curriculum system oriented to digital literacy, innovating interactive teaching modes supported by digital technology, and improving the multi-dimensional comprehensive evaluation system. These paths are interrelated and complementary, forming a complete talent training model innovation system.

5.1 Optimize Talent Training Objectives Based on Industrial Demand

To solve the problem of disconnection between talent training objectives and industrial demand, it is necessary to take industrial demand as the starting point, optimize talent training objectives and establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism. First, carry out in-depth industry demand investigation. Universities

should establish a long-term cooperation mechanism with enterprises in the digital economy field, regularly carry out industry demand investigations, and accurately grasp the core ability requirements of digital talents in different industries. For example, set up an industry-university-research cooperation committee, invite enterprise experts to participate in the formulation of talent training objectives, and ensure that the training objectives are in line with industrial demand.

Second, formulate differentiated talent training objectives. According to the characteristics of different types of universities (comprehensive universities, professional and technical universities, applied universities) and different disciplines, formulate differentiated digital talent training objectives. For example, comprehensive universities should focus on cultivating interdisciplinary digital talents with strong theoretical foundation and innovative ability; professional and technical universities should focus on cultivating applied digital talents with proficient digital skills; applied universities should focus on cultivating practical digital talents who can adapt to the needs of local digital economy development.

Third, establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism for talent training objectives. Closely track the development trends of the digital economy and the changes of industrial talent demand, and adjust the talent training objectives in a timely manner. For example, set up a talent training objective evaluation team, regularly evaluate the rationality of the training objectives, and adjust the objectives according to the evaluation results and industry changes. At the same time, establish a feedback mechanism for graduates' employment quality, and adjust the training objectives according to the employment situation and enterprise feedback of graduates.

5.2 Reconstruct the Curriculum System Oriented to Digital Literacy

To solve the problem of backward curriculum system, it is necessary to take digital literacy cultivation as the core, reconstruct the curriculum system and realize the integration of interdisciplinary curriculum. First, increase the proportion of digital-related courses. Set up digital literacy compulsory courses (such as digital foundation, data analysis, digital risk management) for all students to ensure that all students have basic digital literacy; set up digital professional elective courses according to the characteristics of different disciplines to meet the needs of students' professional development. For example, add courses such as digital marketing for business majors, digital medical technology for medical majors, and digital education technology for education majors.

Second, update the curriculum content in a timely manner. Closely track the latest development trends of the digital economy, integrate new technologies, new industries and new formats into the curriculum content. For example, integrate content such as big data analysis, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and blockchain into relevant courses; invite enterprise experts to participate in the compilation of teaching materials and give lectures to ensure that the curriculum content is close to the actual work of the industry. At the same time, establish a curriculum content update mechanism to regularly update the curriculum content according to the changes of industry demand and technology development.

Third, promote interdisciplinary curriculum integration. Break the disciplinary boundaries, set up interdisciplinary integration courses and project-based courses, and cultivate students' cross-field integration ability. For example, set up interdisciplinary courses such as „Digital Economy and Management", „Artificial Intelligence and Law", „Big Data and Public Health"; carry out interdisciplinary project-based learning, organize students from different disciplines to form teams to complete digital practice projects, and improve their collaborative innovation ability.

5.3 Innovate Interactive Teaching Modes Supported by Digital Technology

To solve the problem of single teaching mode, it is necessary to take digital technology as the support, innovate interactive teaching modes and strengthen practical teaching links. First, promote the application of digital teaching tools. Build a digital teaching platform integrating online courses, interactive teaching, virtual simulation and other functions, and encourage teachers to use digital teaching tools such as online teaching platforms, virtual simulation systems, and interactive teaching software to carry out teaching activities. For example, use flipped classroom mode to let students learn basic knowledge through online courses, and carry out interactive discussions and practical operations in offline classes; use virtual simulation systems to create digital practice scenarios (such as digital financial risk simulation, e-commerce operation simulation) to improve students' practical ability.

Second, carry out diversified interactive teaching activities. Organize interactive teaching activities such as group discussions, case studies, debates and project presentations to stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and improve their thinking ability and expression ability. For example, take real cases of digital economy enterprises as teaching materials, organize students to discuss and analyze the solutions to the problems in the cases; carry out digital innovation competitions to encourage students to put forward innovative ideas and solutions for digital economy problems.

Third, strengthen practical teaching links. Increase the proportion of practical teaching, build a multi-level practical teaching system including curriculum practice, professional practice, enterprise internship and innovation and entrepreneurship practice. Establish off-campus practice bases with digital economy enterprises to provide students with practical opportunities close to the industry; carry out industry-university-research cooperation projects, organize students to participate in enterprise digital transformation projects, and improve their practical ability and problem-solving ability. For example, Zhejiang University has established practice bases with more than 50 digital economy enterprises, and organized students to participate in enterprise data analysis and digital marketing projects (Zhejiang University, 2025).

5.4 Improve the Multi-Dimensional Comprehensive Evaluation System

To solve the problem of imperfect evaluation system, it is necessary to take the comprehensive ability of digital talents as the core, construct a multi-dimensional comprehensive evaluation system and expand the evaluation subjects. First, expand the evaluation content. Establish an evaluation index system covering theoretical knowledge, digital literacy, innovative thinking, collaborative ability and practical ability. For example, set up indicators such as digital tool application ability, data analysis ability, innovation project achievements, team collaboration performance and internship performance to comprehensively evaluate students' comprehensive quality.

Second, innovate the evaluation method. Combine process evaluation and result evaluation, and increase the proportion of process evaluation. Use digital teaching platforms to record students' learning process data (such as online learning time, classroom participation, homework completion, project performance) to carry out process evaluation; use comprehensive assessment methods such as exams, papers, project defenses and practical operation assessments to carry out result evaluation. For example, in the evaluation of digital courses, 50% of the score comes from process evaluation (classroom participation, project performance) and 50% comes from result evaluation (final exam, practical operation assessment).

Third, expand the evaluation subjects. Establish a multi-subject evaluation mechanism involving teachers, enterprises, industry experts and students themselves. Teachers evaluate students' theoretical

knowledge and learning process; enterprises and industry experts evaluate students' practical ability and adaptability to the industry; students carry out self-evaluation and mutual evaluation to improve the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the evaluation. For example, invite enterprise experts to participate in the evaluation of students' internship performance and graduation projects; organize students to carry out mutual evaluation of team collaboration performance in group projects.

6. Discussion

6.1 Research Implications

This study explores the core demand characteristics of digital talents in the digital economy, identifies the practical dilemmas of current higher education talent training models, and constructs a demand-oriented innovation path system, which has important theoretical and practical implications.

In terms of theoretical implications, first, this study systematically analyzes the core demand characteristics of digital talents in the digital economy, clarifies the logical relationship between digital literacy, innovative thinking, collaborative ability and lifelong learning ability, which enriches the theoretical research on digital talent demand. Second, this study constructs a theoretical analysis framework integrating human capital theory, demand-oriented education theory, constructivism learning theory and competency-based education theory, which provides a new theoretical perspective for the research on higher education talent training model innovation under the digital economy background. Third, this study constructs a demand-oriented talent training model innovation path system covering talent training objectives, curriculum systems, teaching modes and evaluation systems, which improves the theoretical system of higher education reform.

In terms of practical implications, first, for governments and educational management departments, this study provides a basis for formulating policies related to higher education talent training reform under the digital economy background, helping to guide universities to carry out talent training model innovation in a targeted manner. Second, for universities, this study provides practical guidance for optimizing talent training objectives, reconstructing curriculum systems, innovating teaching modes and improving evaluation systems, helping universities to improve the quality of digital talent training and realize the precise matching between talent output and industrial demand. Third, for enterprises in the digital economy field, this study provides a reference for cooperating with universities to carry out talent training, helping enterprises to participate in the talent training process and obtain talents that meet their own development needs. Fourth, for college students, this study clarifies the core ability requirements of digital talents, providing a direction for their own learning and ability improvement.

6.2 Research Limitations

Despite the above contributions, this study still has some limitations. First, the industry investigation and university case comparison in this study cover a limited number of countries and industries, and the sample representativeness needs to be further improved. Future research should expand the scope of investigation and case selection, cover more countries and regions with different economic development levels and more industries in the digital economy field, and improve the universality of research results.

Second, this study focuses on the overall framework of talent training model innovation, and the analysis of the specific implementation details of each reform path is not in-depth enough. For example, the specific design of digital-related courses, the operation mechanism of interdisciplinary curriculum

integration, and the specific implementation methods of multi-subject evaluation need to be further explored. Future research should carry out in-depth research on the specific implementation details of each reform path.

Third, the reform paths proposed in this study are mostly theoretical constructs, and their practical effectiveness has not been verified through long-term follow-up research. Future research should select some universities as pilot units, apply the proposed reform paths, carry out long-term follow-up investigation and evaluation, and adjust and optimize the reform paths according to the pilot results.

Fourth, this study does not fully consider the impact of regional differences and university resource endowment differences on the implementation effect of talent training model innovation. Different regions have different levels of digital economy development, and different universities have different resource endowments (such as funds, talents, equipment), which may affect the implementation effect of reform paths. Future research should strengthen the research on the impact of regional differences and university resource endowment differences on the implementation of talent training model innovation.

6.3 Future Research Directions

Based on the above limitations, future research can focus on the following directions: First, carry out cross-country and cross-industry comparative research on digital talent demand and higher education talent training models. Compare the digital talent demand characteristics and talent training model innovation practices in different countries and industries, and explore the impact of economic development level, industrial structure and educational system on talent training.

Second, carry out in-depth research on the specific implementation details of talent training model innovation. For example, study the curriculum design of digital literacy courses, the construction mechanism of interdisciplinary teaching teams, the operation mode of digital teaching platforms, and the specific evaluation indicators of multi-dimensional comprehensive evaluation.

Third, carry out long-term follow-up research on the effectiveness of talent training model innovation. Select pilot universities, track and evaluate the changes of students' digital literacy, innovative ability and employment quality before and after the implementation of reform paths, and verify the effectiveness of the reform paths.

Fourth, study the impact of regional differences and university resource endowment differences on talent training model innovation. Explore the adaptation strategies of talent training model innovation under different regional and university resource endowment conditions, and provide targeted reform suggestions for different types of universities.

Fifth, study the role of digital technology in the innovation of talent training models. Explore the application scenarios and impact mechanisms of emerging digital technologies (such as metaverse, generative AI) in higher education talent training, and construct a more advanced digital talent training model.

7. Conclusion

The digital economy has put forward new and higher requirements for higher education talent training, requiring higher education to cultivate interdisciplinary talents with digital literacy, innovative thinking, collaborative ability and lifelong learning ability. However, the current higher education talent training model still faces practical dilemmas such as disconnection between talent training objectives and industrial demand, backward curriculum system, single teaching mode, and imperfect evaluation system.

To solve these dilemmas, it is necessary to construct a demand-oriented talent training model innovation path system, including optimizing talent training objectives based on industrial demand, reconstructing the curriculum system oriented to digital literacy, innovating interactive teaching modes supported by digital technology, and improving the multi-dimensional comprehensive evaluation system.

This study holds that the innovation of higher education talent training model under the digital economy background is a long-term and complex system project, which requires the joint efforts of governments, universities, enterprises and other stakeholders. Governments should strengthen policy guidance and financial support; universities should take the initiative to carry out reform and innovation, adjust talent training objectives, optimize curriculum systems, innovate teaching modes and improve evaluation systems; enterprises should actively participate in the talent training process and strengthen industry-university-research cooperation. Only through multi-party collaboration can we realize the innovation of higher education talent training models, improve the quality of digital talent training, and provide strong talent support for the high-quality development of the digital economy.

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