

The Theoretical Thinking on Education Intermediary Evaluation for Professional Degree Graduate in China

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Abstract—Professional degree is an academic type relative to academic degree, which develops relatively late in China. In recent years, the scale of professional degree graduate students has developed rapidly, but the quality is worrying. Scientific evaluation mechanism is an important guarantee for the quality of professional degree graduate education. The research centers on evaluation mechanism of professional degree graduate education quality to find its problems, such as the imperfection of evaluation mechanism of professional degree, the unclear demarcation between professional degree and academic degree evaluation, the dependence of evaluation institution and lack of legal and regulatory protection for evaluation institution. In conclusion, this paper puts forward some specific recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords—Professional Degree; Graduate Education; Social Intermediary; Theoretical Thinking

I. INTRODUCTION

Professional degree is an academic type relative to academic degree. The institutions mainly recruit candidates with certain professional background for professional degrees. The educational process is characterized by practicality and applicability, and trains high-level technicians and managers of specific occupations in society. Professional degree and corresponding academic degree are at the same level and they have different training specifications and different emphasis. In recent years, China's professional degree postgraduate education is gradually recognized by the people, and has become an important way to cultivate high-level, complex and practical talents. The strategic position of professional degree in the overall pattern of postgraduate education in China is becoming more and more prominent, and its large-scale development is a becoming general trend. However, how to guarantee the quality of professional degree postgraduate education and make it develop well and orderly is a problem that we are facing and must solve, and scientific evaluation mechanism plays a decisive role in postgraduate education in China.

In China, professional degree postgraduate education has not been fully accepted and valued as academic degree postgraduate education, and there are some problems existing in practice, such as: the shortage of professional degree students; the utilitarian tendency; unclear characteristics and

the unobvious boundary with academic degree; the absence of tutors and the lack of guidance. As a result, the social trust of professional degree has been declining. Some people have called it correspondence graduate student and advanced graduate student [1]. Therefore, when we are pleased with the rapid development of the scale of professional degree in a short time, the quality of professional degree postgraduate education is really worrying. Many studies show that we need to give full play to the role of evaluation methods in order to ensure the quality of professional degree education.

Since 1985, China began to explore the use of evaluation methods to strengthen the quality supervision and management of postgraduate education. The decision of the CPC Central Committee on system reform issued in that year clearly stated: "the state and the education management departments should strengthen the macro guidance and management of higher education, and the education management departments should organize the education sector, the knowledge sector and the employment sector to run colleges and universities on a regular basis Assessment of learning level [2]" The Interim Regulations on the evaluation of colleges and universities promulgated in 1990 laid the basic framework for the evaluation system of higher education in China. Obviously, the evaluation of professional degree postgraduate education is also an indispensable part of higher education evaluation.

II. THE MAIN INTERMEDIARY EVALUATION INSTITUTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEGREE POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION IN CHINA

The reform of education system of our country is consistent with the reform of the economic system. Under the planned economic system, the higher education is completely monopolized by the government. The government is the only subject of higher education quality evaluation. However, under the market economic system, higher education is related not only to the government, but also to all aspects of society, so the evaluation subject of higher education also should be diversified. In this paper, the current graduate education quality evaluation institutions are generally divided into two categories: one is the government led intermediary evaluation institutions; the other is the social intermediary evaluation institutions.

A. Government-led Education Intermediary Evaluation Institution

The government-led educational intermediary evaluation institution in this paper refers to the public welfare organization with independent legal person qualification, non-profit purpose and the main function of undertaking educational evaluation and consultation between the government and the school[3], which appears in the documents with the words "directly under" and "subordinate". At present, the government-led educational intermediary institutions that participate in the evaluation of professional degree postgraduate education mainly include: Degree and Graduate Development Center of the Ministry of education, National Education Steering Committee of professional degree, provincial and municipal education evaluation institute and other institutions. These institutions mainly participate in the evaluation of professional degree graduate education quality from different aspects.

1) Degree and Graduate Development Center of the Ministry of education. The center is a non-profit social organization with the nature of social intermediary. Its functions include: to undertake the evaluation of the degree and postgraduate education entrusted by the Ministry of education and the academic degree committee of the State Council, and to independently carry out evaluation work related to the degree and postgraduate education according to the needs of the society; to sign the relevant degree and postgraduate with the relevant non-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations authorized by the government. From its nature and function, we can find that this institution belongs to the semi-governmental social intermediary evaluation organization, and plays an important role in the supervision of the quality of professional degree graduate education.

2) National Education Steering Committee for professional degrees. The committee is a public institution specialized in the education of professional degree graduates in China. It is a link between the professional training units and a bridge closely linked with the competent departments of the industry. Professional degree Steering Committee is a social intermediary evaluation organization between the government and the society. Although the evaluation function is only one of its many functions, its work direction is relatively specific, and it plays an important role in directly evaluating the quality of professional degree postgraduate education and promoting the better development of professional degree graduate education.

3) Provincial and municipal education evaluation institutes. In recent years, China's local educational evaluation professional institutions have also gradually developed. At present, more than 10 provinces, cities and autonomous regions have set up their own provincial education evaluation institutions and evaluation centers, such as Jiangsu Education Evaluation Institute, Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute, Liaoning Education Evaluation Office, etc. These institutions are independent or relatively independent of the government; less interfered by the government, and also has corresponding independence, professionalism and fairness.

B. Social Intermediary Evaluation Organization

Social intermediary evaluation organization mainly refers to the evaluation organization of higher education initiated and implemented by mass organizations and non-governmental organizations from all walks of life[4], such as professional associations, academic groups, enterprise and public employment departments and news media organizations, independent of the government and schools. At present, it can be divided into the following categories:

1) Evaluation committee of China Academic Degree and Graduate Education Association. The second level institution affiliated to the Chinese academic degree and postgraduate education association shall abide by its articles of association. The institution is a national social academic organization composed of units and evaluation institutions engaged in degree and postgraduate work, and it receives the professional guidance of the office of the degree committee of the State Council and the management of the Chinese society of degree and postgraduate education. The work of the evaluation committee is directly related to its evaluation functions, such as: independently organizing or accepting the Commission to carry out the special investigation and evaluation of degree and graduate education; carrying out the consultation work of degree and graduate education evaluation; carrying out the publicity work of degree and graduate education evaluation, etc.

2) President's joint meeting of China Graduate School. The organization was established in 1999 by 33 graduate schools in China. The Secretariat is affiliated with Graduate School of Peking University, and 57 graduate schools in China are members of the association [5]. The formal members of the joint meeting are composed of the presidents and executive vice presidents of each graduate school. The joint annual meeting is held once a year to study the development plan and major issues of degree and graduate education, put forward reform and development suggestions, provide advice for national decision-making, and promote the development and improvement of China's graduate system.

3) Academic organizations. Compared with the evaluation institutions of graduate education in the United States, there are quite few academic groups in China that evaluate graduate education. At present, the typical ones are "China University Graduate School Ranking", "graduate innovation environment ranking of research universities" of Guangdong Academy of Management Sciences, China science evaluation research of Wuhan University and the center's "China graduate education evaluation report", etc.[6].

III. THEORETICAL THINKING ON THE CURRENT PROFESSIONAL DEGREE POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION INTERMEDIARY EVALUATION INSTITUTIONS

Through sorting out the semi-official social intermediary evaluation institutions and social intermediary evaluation institutions of professional degree graduate education evaluation in China, we have a preliminary understanding of the nature and evaluation function of these institutions. These institutions do play an important role in ensuring the quality of professional degree graduate education, but as the quality of professional degree graduate education becomes more and

more serious, and compared with the rich and perfect foreign education intermediary evaluation institutions, we find that as a professional degree quality assurance mechanism, there are many problems in the intermediary evaluation system, so we try to solve these problems and put forward some targeted suggestions.

A. Professional Degree Intermediary Evaluation Organization Has Not Been Established

Among the above-mentioned intermediary evaluation institutions for professional degree postgraduate education, we can find that there is only one evaluation institution specifically for professional degree postgraduate education, namely the National Education Steering Committee for professional degree. At present, the National Education Steering Committee of professional degree is the only department specialized in professional degree postgraduate education in China. However, the evaluation function is only one of its many functions, so at present, China has not established an intermediary organization specialized in the evaluation of the quality of professional degree postgraduate education.

At present, our country has not set up the evaluation standards for the quality of professional degree graduate education, and has not built a perfect evaluation system. However, these problems must be solved in order to guarantee the quality of professional degree graduate education. However, the development of professional degrees in the United States, Britain and other western countries is many years earlier than that in China. Compared with China, they have better intermediary evaluation institutions and more perfect education evaluation system. Therefore, the evaluation system in these countries is worth learning from. For example, they adopt the combination of peer evaluation and social evaluation to award professional degrees with clear professional background. In this regard, we can entrust some industry associations or professional steering committees to evaluate the professional degree due to its strong applicability and obvious professional characteristics. At the same time, we also encourage evaluation agencies, graduate employers and original work units established by various academic groups to evaluate it, which not only enriches the main body of professional degree evaluation agencies, but also strengthens the connection between professional degree education and society, so that schools can understand the needs of society for professional degree education and actively meet the requirements of social diversity.

B. The Boundary between Professional Degree and Academic Degree Evaluation is Not Obvious

As we can see from the intermediary evaluation institutions introduced above, the main evaluation object of these institutions is graduate education, or even a narrower scope. For example, the "ranking list of graduate schools of China University" of Guangdong academy of management science is only the evaluation of graduate schools of China. When we study the evaluation projects and procedures of professional degree agencies, we don't see the evaluation system that explains the professional degree and academic degree respectively. Obviously, the boundary between the evaluation

of professional degree and academic degree is not obvious. As some scholars have said, "at present, the evaluation of professional degree education in China is based on the way of scientific degree", "the differentiation of evaluation index system between scientific degree and professional degree, and between different specialties is not high, fuzzy and identical phenomenon is obvious, and the guiding role cannot be effectively played"[7]. We know that academic degree and professional degree have the same level and different specifications, and they are different in training objectives, curriculum, tutor guidance, thesis writing and so on. However, due to the short time of setting professional degree in China, people's awareness of the difference in training mode is not enough, so that people's habitual attention to academic degree drowns out the specialty. Therefore, we must treat differently in the specific evaluation process, highlighting the characteristics and status of professional degree. For example, we can increase the publicity of professional degrees so that more people can understand and participate in the education of professional degrees.

C. The Independence of Evaluation Organization is Not Strong

Compared with that of the western developed countries, the intermediary evaluation institution of graduate education in China is established under the commission of the government, which undoubtedly has irreplaceable administrative authority. To a certain extent, it does make the evaluation work more convenient and improve the work efficiency. However, the result is that it is more dependent on the government. It can be found that the evaluation projects of professional degree evaluation institutions in China are mainly entrusted by the government, and the evaluation funds are mainly supported by the government. Therefore, the evaluation of professional degree graduate education in China is mainly led by the government, and the intermediary evaluation institutions are inextricably linked with the government, so the independence of these evaluation institutions is relatively weak. Moreover, the types of professional degree evaluation institutions in China are relatively single, and the limitations of this relatively single evaluation subject are obvious. For example, we can't give full play to the role of social groups as a bridge between society and universities, let alone support and supervise the smooth development of higher education evaluation activities from all walks of life and improve the quality of higher education; in the process of evaluation, colleges and universities are in a passive position with weak subject consciousness. Colleges and universities cannot fully realize the importance of self-evaluation. The evaluation results from the top to the bottom of the government are only passive acceptance, which will not play a real role in improving the work of colleges and universities.

Therefore, it is crucial and urgent to deal with the relationship between intermediary agencies and the government. As for the relationship between the government and the intermediary evaluation agencies, many scholars have discussed it from different perspectives, and put forward many valuable suggestions in view of the current situation. The government should carry out macro checks on the general

principles and guidelines, while the specific implementation plans and methods should be handed over to the intermediary evaluation agencies for implementation.

D. Guarantee of Laws and Regulations of Intermediary Evaluation Institutions

At present, there is no law and regulation regulating the evaluation institutions of graduate education in China, which is also an important reason for the slow development of the intermediary evaluation institutions of professional degree graduate education in China. Obviously, the professional degree graduate education intermediary evaluation institutions need corresponding laws and regulations as the basis and guarantee, which can be demonstrated from many aspects, such as "based on the consideration of their own development space, educational evaluation agencies hope that their evaluation behaviors and results will be recognized by the government, and also hope that the government can regulate higher education evaluation activities through legal or policy means, so as to legitimize their evaluation behaviors." To confirm the authority and independence of the evaluation intermediary structure through legislation is the fundamental guarantee and important premise to do well in the evaluation. The relatively perfect development of social intermediary institutions in western developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom is inseparable from the national legal security system for higher education evaluation, so it is worth learning from in China.

IV. CONCLUSION

To sum up, we believe that in the process of actively developing the social intermediary institutions of professional education, we cannot deny the government's evaluation and the

school's self-evaluation, because a perfect evaluation system of the quality of professional degree graduate education should be composed of three evaluation subjects: the government, the society and the University. Each evaluation subject represents different value orientation and interest demand, and is able to comprehensively evaluate the quality of professional degree graduate education.

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