

Thinking and Exploration on the Improvement of the Quality of Overseas Graduate Students' Training in China from the Perspective of Tutors

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ABSTRACT

The internationalization and globalization of higher education are the future development trend of Chinese higher education. Under the background of "Belt and Road Initiative", Chinese internationalization of higher education is accelerating. With the increase of the number of graduate students coming to China, the quality of their training has become a serious problem. There are some special factors that affect the quality of training, such as the quality of students, language barriers and cultural differences. Most universities in China adopt the tutor responsibility system for postgraduate training mode, exploring how to improve the quality of postgraduate training in China from the perspective of tutors, which can provide reference for the improvement of the quality of postgraduate training in China.

Keywords: Graduate students, tutor, higher education, training quality

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the plan for studying in China released by the Ministry of education set the development goal of China becoming the largest destination of studying in Asia by 2020. With Chinese economic and social development, especially the promotion of the "Belt and Road Initiative" Cooperation in 2013, Chinese international influence has been enhanced, and the pace of internationalization of higher education in China has accelerated. In 2016, China has become the largest country of international students in Asia. With the influx of a large number of graduate students to China, the problem of training quality has appeared.

Postgraduate education in China conforms to the requirements of the era of building a world-class university and opening education to the outside world. It is an important sign to measure the comprehensive strength and international level of a university [1]. At present, the research on the quality of postgraduate training in China is often from the perspective of teaching management, and the characteristics of postgraduate training determine the important role of tutors in the training process.

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF OVERSEAS GRADUATE STUDENTS IN CHINA

With the increase of the political and economic status of China, as well as the development of the globalization of higher education and the improvement of the influence of Chinese higher education, this can be achieved from entering the list of QS World University rankings (QS rankings, which is the annual World University Rankings published by the education organization quacquarelli Symonds (QS)). As can be seen from the number of schools, as shown in Figure 1, the number of foreign postgraduates in China is increasing. In 2016, China has become the first destination in Asia and the third in the world. Moreover, the number of graduate students coming to China and the proportion of overseas students with education background in China are constantly expanding, as shown in Figure 2 and figure 3. The growth rate of foreign students remained above 10%, with an average of 16%, as shown in Figure 4.

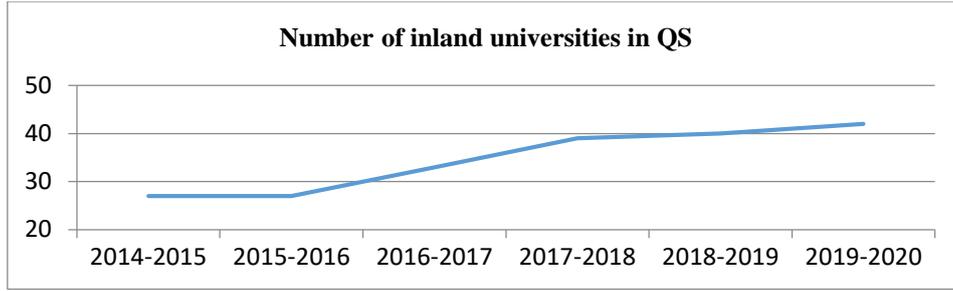


Figure 1 Number of mainland universities in QS list

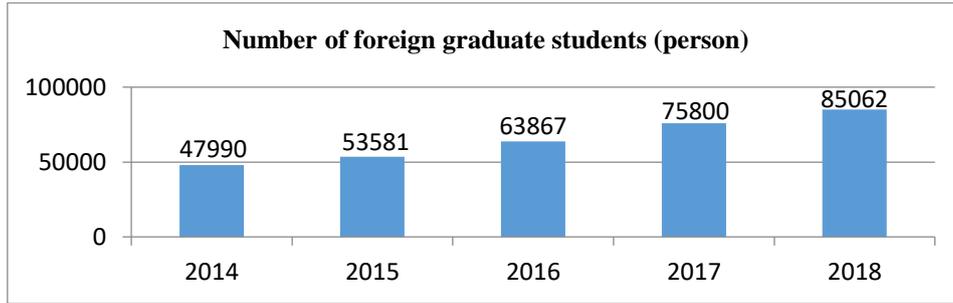


Figure 2 Number of overseas graduate students in China (approximate in 2017)

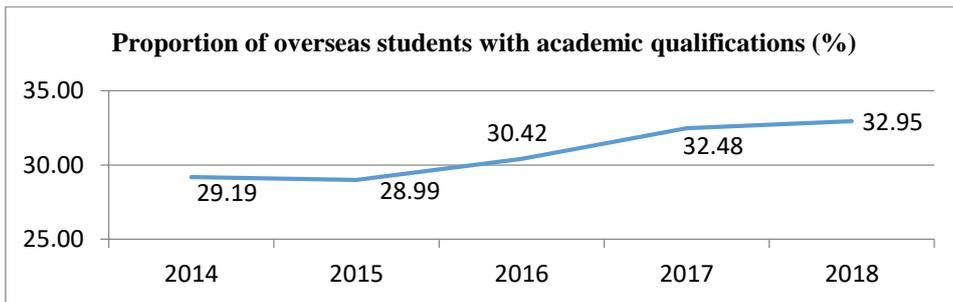


Figure 3 Proportion of overseas students with academic qualifications

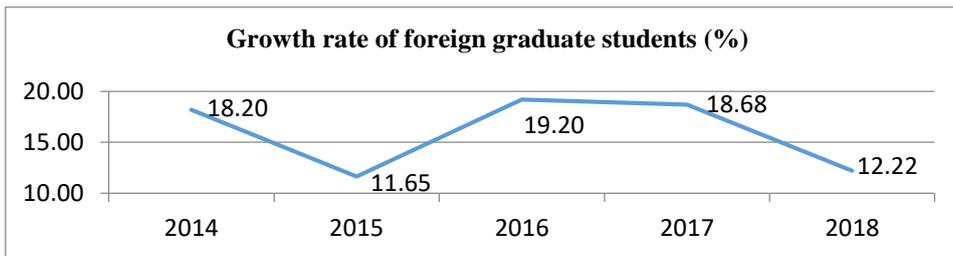


Figure 4 Growth rate of foreign graduate students

In 2018, the number of foreign graduate students in China reached 85062, accounting for 32.95% of the total number of overseas students with academic qualifications. It can be said that the number and quality of overseas students in China have improved.

3. THE MAIN FACTORS INFLUENCING THE QUALITY OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION IN CHINA

Many graduate students coming to China will return to work after graduation. The quality of their training will not only affect the students' intuitive understanding of Chinese

higher education level, but also affect the international reputation of Chinese higher education, and also affect the internationalization process of Chinese higher education. At present, the factors that affect the quality of postgraduate education in China are as follows:

In addition to the influence factors of teaching resources, academic atmosphere, tutor guidance and social environment, there are also special factors affecting the quality of training.

3.1. Problems of Students' Source Quality

Although the source of overseas graduate students in China is becoming more and more diversified, most of them are from developing countries, especially those along the "Belt and Road Initiative". The quality of higher education in these countries is also unsatisfactory. At the same time, the application of foreign graduate students in China is mainly in language. The Chinese language examination often checks the daily application of Chinese, ignores the evaluation of the innovation ability and scientific research ability of them. This results in the uneven quality of foreign students coming to China, which brings difficulties to the cultivation of graduate students.

3.2. Problem of Language Barrier

The teaching and thesis writing of overseas graduate students can be divided into two ways: Chinese and English. For foreign students who come to China for Chinese taught and paper writing, they usually study Chinese for more than one year till pass the Chinese proficiency test. Then they apply for and become graduate students, carry out professional courses of Chinese learning, which makes it too difficult for foreign graduate students who have only learned Chinese for 3-4 years to write papers that reach the level of Chinese graduate students. If the graduate students who apply for English, it will be difficult for the tutors to match their English writing level.

3.3. Problem of Cultural Differences

As the source of foreign graduate students in China tends to be diversified, and diversified countries bring diversities and diversified cultural conflicts, different cultures have different understanding of the same thing, even the opposite understanding. This has brought difficulties in the conflict of different cultures and new challenges to the cultivation of graduate students.

4. THE ROLE OF TUTOR TO IMPROVE THE TRAINING QUALITY OF OVERSEAS GRADUATE STUDENTS IN CHINA

At present, the tutor responsibility system is widely used in graduate student training in China, and the tutor is also the most directly contacted by overseas students. So the role of tutor in the process and quality of graduate student training is very essential. In order to improve the quality of training, the following work can be carried out from the perspective of tutors.

4.1. Improvement of Tutor's Ability

4.1.1. Establish the sense of responsibility and mission of the mentor

Cultivating talents, developing science and social services are the three social functions of the University, and cultural heritage is another embodiment of the social functions of the University. The cultivation of overseas graduate students in China is the process of tutors to cultivate talents and spread Chinese culture. In the process of cultivating graduate students, tutors not only represent individuals, but also represent schools and countries. The tutor must establish the sense of responsibility and sense of mission in the process of training. It not only has the sense of responsibility to cultivate talents, but also has the sense of mission to spread Chinese culture.

4.1.2. Tutors should strengthen learning and communication

Tutors strengthen learning and communication to improve their instructing level. Teachers should communicate with each other. At the same time, the foreign language level of the tutor, especially the improvement of English level. It is better for tutors to have bilingual communication.

4.1.3. Improvement of academic character

As a teacher and a model, the teacher should guide students with high academic character, and is a teacher who pays great attention to academic integrity. What is more important is to cultivate academic character instead of obtaining a diploma. In order to cultivate the academic character of postgraduates, the academic character of tutors should be noble first and constantly improved.

4.2. Improvement of Mentoring Skills

4.2.1. Chinese and foreign student assistance system

Many foreign students take part in a year's Chinese language learning in China, and then apply for graduate students in Chinese universities. There is still a gap between their Chinese proficiency and real smooth communication. There are still many difficulties in the study of postgraduates, especially in Chinese learning and writing papers in Chinese. If Chinese postgraduates can provide help in their study process, it will be very helpful to the learning effect of foreign students. At the same time, many foreign students have a high level of English. Chinese students can improve their English level through exchanges with foreign students, and at the same time understand foreign culture and system, which is conducive to the development of domestic student research.

4.2.2. Regular reporting system

According to a German study, the average time for doctoral students who are often guided by their tutors to complete their papers is 3.4 years. For doctoral students who receive guidance once every three months, it will take 4.4 years to complete their papers. For students who also rarely receive guidance once a year, the time for completing their papers is 5.8 years [2]. Tutors should urge postgraduates to study. The regular report system is undoubtedly a good way. On the one hand, it can promote students' learning. On the other hand, it can also create opportunities for foreign graduate students to exercise. At the same time, through regular reporting, students can learn from each other's strengths and make up for their weaknesses, so as to achieve the effect of knowledge spillover. Teachers can also grasp the progress of students' learning, and solve problems in time.

4.2.3. Tutor group system

The tutor group system can overcome the disadvantages of the single tutor system. The graduate students brought by each tutor in the tutor group can form a task group to share their resources and present them in the form of academic discussion or academic report exchange [3]. And in the process of postgraduate training, thesis writing is a very important work. Thesis writing generally includes three main links: opening, mid-term and replying. If there are fixed teachers participating in these three links, it is a guarantee for the improvement of postgraduate training quality. We can learn from the tutor group system, with one teacher as the main tutor and 3-5 tutors as the Steering Committee tutors, participating in the whole process of training foreign students.

4.2.4. Project participation system to create scientific research scope

If the topic of dissertation is related to the topic of tutor, we can get more theoretical and technical support from the research. The research of the project is an important way for students to be innovative and practical. We should encourage foreign postgraduates to participate in the tutor's project. The students with strong ability can assign tasks independently, the students with weaker ability can form a team with the Chinese students, and gradually develop their practical ability.

In addition to helping and guiding students in their studies, mentors should also take care of them in life. For example, on Chinese traditional festivals, foreign graduate students are invited to participate in some activities at home and experience Chinese culture, such as making dumplings during the Spring Festival. The harmonious relationship between teachers and students will also play a positive role in promoting the study of foreign graduate students.

No matter what system is adopted, it should be combined with the principle of "teaching students in accordance with their aptitude". It is not allowed to promote the growth of young people or adopt the way of letting them go. The tutor should integrate the thought of "three comprehensive education" into the training guidance of foreign graduate students. This is not only the completion of teachers' mission of "teaching and educating", but the embodiment of their work responsibilities.

4. SUMMARY

With the rapid development of the internationalization of higher education, the cultivation of overseas students in China is an enduring topic. Based on the analysis of the influencing factors of the quality of postgraduate education in China, this paper puts forward the strategies to improve the quality of postgraduate education in China from the aspects of improving the tutor's ability and guiding skills. It is hoped that the discussion of this paper can attract many scholars to pay attention to the relevant issues of the quality of overseas students' training in China, and make efforts to improve the information literacy level of graduate students in China.

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