

# The Dilemma and Outlet of Higher Education Management Research

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**Abstract:** Under the background of continuous deepening of domestic education reform, higher education management research is facing many challenges. Based on this, this paper explores the development process of China's higher education, reveals the problems existing in the current management process of China's higher education, such as concept deviation, system and mechanism ossification, and then finds a way out from the aspects of concept innovation, system optimization, team construction, etc., to promote the development of higher education management research, improve the quality of higher education, enhance the strength of China's higher education in the international competition, and provide strong support for the cultivation of high-quality talents needed by the times.

**Keywords:** Higher education management; Development history; Predicament; Way out

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## 1. Introduction

As an important part of the national innovation system, higher education plays an important role in personnel training, scientific research, and social services. With the acceleration of global economic integration and scientific and technological revolution, the development environment of higher education has changed greatly. In this context, it is very necessary to explore the dilemma and outlet of higher education management research. On the one hand, the traditional management mode of higher education has exposed many shortcomings in the process of dealing with new challenges, such as low management efficiency, unreasonable resource allocation, and other problems that are increasingly apparent. On the other hand, with the continuous improvement of the quality and innovation ability of higher education, educators must re-examine the direction and methods of management research. The study of these problems can promote the reform and innovation of higher education management and realize sustainable development.

## **2. The development of higher education in China**

The development of higher education in China has gone through several important stages, each of which is closely related to the social background at that time and has different development tracks. In ancient times, the main body of higher education was government schools and private schools, such as the imperial college and academy of classical learning, which focused on Confucian classics to cultivate talents for feudal rule. Its educational philosophy is to attach importance to moral cultivation and practical application, and its teaching methods are mostly teaching, reading, and discussion.

In modern times, with the aggravation of the national crisis caused by the invasion of foreign powers, China began to introduce the Western education system and set up new schools. The establishment of the Beiyang public school in 1895 and the Capital University in 1898 marked the beginning of modern higher education. These schools introduced Western natural science and social science courses, adopted new teaching and management modes, and started the modernization process of higher education.

After the founding of the people's Republic of China, under the planned economic system, the state implemented unified planning and management of higher education, set up many industry-oriented professional colleges and universities, focused on cultivating professional and technical talents, and closely focused on the needs of the country's industrialization construction, laying the foundation for economic development.

After the reform and opening up, the resumption of the college entrance examination has restored the normal operation of higher education. Since then, higher education has been continuously reformed, expanding the autonomy of colleges and universities, adjusting specialty settings, and strengthening international exchanges and cooperation. The implementation of the "211 Project" and "985 Project" has improved the overall level of higher education in China.

In the new era, higher education has gradually shifted from elitism to popularization. Driven by the "double first-class" construction strategy, educators will pay more attention to connotative development and focus on cultivating students' innovation, practice, and comprehensive quality. With the wide application of new technologies such as the Internet and artificial intelligence, the online and offline integrated teaching mode has been promoted, which has brought new opportunities and challenges to higher education <sup>[1]</sup>.

## **3. The main difficulties faced by China's higher education management**

### **3.1. The management concept is out of touch with the development of the times**

In today's rapidly changing era, some university management concepts have not kept pace with the times. First of all, in terms of professional planning, it failed to connect the dynamic changes of industrial change and market demand accurately. The demand for interdisciplinary talents in emerging industries surged, but colleges and universities failed to adjust the professional curriculum in time, resulting in the disconnection between the students' knowledge and skills and the actual work. The second is teaching management. The previous "one-way indoctrination" mode still exists, ignoring students' independent exploration needs in the learning process. At the same time, in the course arrangement, the proportion of practical teaching is insufficient, which makes it difficult to meet the needs of students to improve their practical ability.

Finally, in terms of international exchanges, some universities only regard international cooperation as a short-term task, lacking long-term strategic planning. The introduction of international cutting-edge education concepts and teaching methods is not systematic, and it is difficult to integrate them into the school's teaching system, missing the opportunity to use international resources to improve the quality of education.

### **3.2. The management system lacks flexibility and coordination**

At present, the management system of higher education is rigid. First, the internal management structure of colleges and universities is complex, and multi-level management leads to slow information transmission and lengthy decision-making processes. Second, the definition of responsibilities between different departments is vague, and the phenomenon of buck-passing often occurs when encountering cross-department affairs, which reduces the management efficiency. Third, in terms of personnel management, teachers' career development path is limited by fixed assessment standards and promotion rules. The evaluation method of emphasizing the quantity of scientific research achievements and ignoring the teaching quality and actual contribution makes teachers devote a lot of energy to the publication of papers, which affects the teaching investment. At the same time, the phenomenon of seniority restricts the growth space of young teachers.

Fourth, the resource allocation mechanism lacks a scientific basis. Most of the resources are allocated by administrative instructions, and the development potential and actual needs of the discipline are not fully considered. The resources of popular specialties and key disciplines are accumulated, while the resources of emerging interdisciplinary disciplines are scarce. In addition, the collaborative cooperation between colleges and universities and the outside world is superficial, and the industry university research cooperation is mostly short-term projects, lacking in-depth integration, which is difficult to form a strong joint force to promote the development of education.

### **3.3. There are shortcomings in the construction of teaching staff**

First, the knowledge structure of some university teachers is aging and cannot keep up with the development of the frontier of disciplines. In terms of teaching methods, they still rely on traditional lecture teaching and lack the application of new methods such as case teaching and project-based learning. This is due to the lack of close ties with the industry and the lack of practical experience of teachers. Therefore, educators integrated actual cases into teaching.

Second, the channels of teachers' professional development are narrow and lack diversified promotion paths. The school's incentive mechanism for teachers focuses on material rewards but does not pay enough attention to their sense of professional achievement and academic reputation. This leads to a lack of motivation for teachers' work and a serious setback in their enthusiasm for innovation.

Third, in the process of talent introduction, colleges and universities follow the trend, blindly introduce highly educated talents, and fail to fully consider the compatibility of talents with the university's discipline characteristics and development strategy. After the introduction, the lack of supporting training and support system makes it difficult for talents to give full play to their maximum efficiency, resulting in a waste of talent resources.

### **3.4. Imperfect teaching quality assurance system**

The loopholes in the teaching quality assurance system in colleges and universities have existed for a long time. The monitoring of the teaching process lacks a proper and dynamic process, and it is mostly regular inspection, which cannot find and solve problems in time. The quality control of online teaching, practical teaching, and other emerging teaching forms is insufficient.

At the same time, the teaching quality evaluation system is not scientific and comprehensive, students' evaluation of teaching is vulnerable to subjective factors, and peer evaluation and leadership evaluation are not deep and professional. The evaluation index does not reflect the characteristics of different disciplines and courses, and the evaluation results cannot reflect the teaching quality.

The feedback and application mechanism of evaluation results is also not perfect, and it is difficult for teachers

to get effective suggestions for improvement from the evaluation. In addition, there are great differences in teaching quality evaluation standards among colleges and universities, and there is no universality and comparability, which is not conducive to mutual learning and common improvement among colleges and universities. This makes the improvement of teaching quality lack external reference and motivation.

### **3.5. Management needs lag behind information construction**

At present, although the informatization construction in colleges and universities has made some progress, it still cannot meet more and more management needs. This is mainly due to the lag in the construction of network infrastructure in some colleges and universities and the lack of network bandwidth, which affects the smooth broadcasting of online teaching resources and the development of large-scale online examinations.

At the same time, the education management information system has its own way; the data is stored dispersedly, the format is not unified, and the data integration is difficult. For example, student information is entered repeatedly in different department systems, and the data is inconsistent, which brings great inconvenience to the management work.

Finally, the ability of teachers and managers to apply information technology is uneven. Some people only use information technology for simple data recording and document processing and fail to make full use of big data analysis, artificial intelligence decision-making, and other functions to strengthen management efficiency and accuracy. This limits the role of informatization in optimizing the educational management process and innovating the management mode <sup>[2]</sup>.

## **4. The trend and outlet of higher education management research**

### **4.1. Innovate the management concept and conform to the development trend of the times**

The innovation of the management concept is the key to promoting the development of higher education. Therefore, colleges and universities should establish the management concept of student-centered, market-oriented, and international vision. Taking students as the center requires colleges and universities to pay attention to students' individual differences and comprehensive development and provide diversified educational services and support. For example, according to students' interests and abilities, educators should formulate personalized learning plans, provide rich elective courses and practice opportunities, and cultivate students' innovative thinking and practical ability.

The market-oriented management concept urges colleges and universities to pay close attention to the market demand and industry dynamics, and timely adjust the professional settings and curriculum content; Establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism for majors, regularly assess the market demand and employment prospects of majors, increase investment in majors with strong demand, and adjust or cancel majors with employment difficulties. At the same time, educators should strengthen cooperation with enterprises and invite enterprises to participate in the course design and teaching process so that students' knowledge can be closely combined with actual work needs.

The international perspective requires universities to actively carry out international exchanges and cooperation and introduce foreign advanced educational concepts and teaching resources. Encourage teachers and students to participate in international academic exchange activities, carry out joint training programs and exchange student programs with foreign universities, broaden the international vision of teachers and students, and enhance the international influence of universities <sup>[3]</sup>.



## **4.2. Optimize the management system, enhance management efficiency and vitality**

Optimizing the management system is an important guarantee for improving management efficiency and quality. First, within colleges and universities, educators should promote the simplification and optimization of management institutions, clarify the responsibilities and authorities of various departments, and build a collaborative and efficient management mechanism. For example, by establishing a cross-departmental working group or project team, educators can break down departmental barriers and improve work efficiency. In terms of personnel management, educators should improve the teacher evaluation and incentive mechanism, establish a diversified teacher evaluation system, comprehensively consider teachers' teaching quality, scientific research achievements, social services, etc., and stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and creativity.

Second, outside colleges and universities, the government should further transform its functions and implement the autonomy of colleges and universities. Reduce the direct intervention in colleges and universities, and guide the healthy development of colleges and universities through the formulation of policies and regulations, financial support, quality assessment, and other means. At the same time, the government should build a bridge between colleges and universities and society, promote the cooperation between colleges and universities and enterprises, scientific research institutes, etc., and create a good external environment for the development of colleges and universities. At the same time, the local government should strengthen the overall management of colleges and universities, guide the rational positioning of colleges and universities, optimize the allocation of resources, and improve the ability of colleges and universities to serve the locals according to the needs of local economic and social development.

## **4.3. Strengthen the construction of teaching staff and improve the quality of teachers**

Strengthening the construction of teaching staff is the center of improving the quality of higher education. On the one hand, colleges and universities should improve the construction of teacher training and development systems and provide teachers with a variety of training opportunities. For example, teachers are often organized to participate in teaching method training, academic frontier lectures, enterprise practice exercises, etc., to improve their teaching ability and professional quality. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to research and reform teaching, and excellent teaching achievements are rewarded and supported.

On the other hand, educators should improve the incentive mechanism for teachers, paying more attention not just to teachers' professional development and spiritual needs but also their material rewards. Through the establishment of honorary titles such as famous teacher award and outstanding contribution award in scientific research, outstanding teachers are commended and publicized to enhance teachers' sense of professional honor and achievement, provide more promotion opportunities and development space for teachers, and encourage teachers to keep forging ahead in teaching, scientific research and social services.

In terms of talent introduction, colleges and universities should formulate a scientific and reasonable talent introduction plan in combination with their own development strategy. Educators should not only pay attention to the introduction of high-level talents with innovative ability and practical experience but also take into account the discipline background and team cooperation ability of talents to ensure the quality and efficiency of talent introduction. After the introduction of talents, it is necessary to provide them with good working and living conditions, build a development platform, and enable them to enter the school as soon as possible to maximize their efficiency.

#### **4.4. Improve the teaching quality assurance system and promote the steady improvement of education quality**

First of all, colleges and universities should establish a whole process and all-around teaching quality monitoring mechanism to carry out strict quality monitoring from the formulation of teaching plans, the implementation of courses, practical teaching to examination and evaluation. For example, educators should formulate a teaching quality supervision system and organize experts to regularly inspect and evaluate the teaching process. The use of information technology means, such as real-time monitoring and analysis of teaching data, allows for the timely discovery of existing problems to take improvement measures.

Secondly, establishing a scientific and reasonable teaching quality evaluation system to evaluate the teaching quality scientifically and reasonably is the key to accurately evaluating the teaching quality. The evaluation system should include students' learning effect, teachers' teaching quality, curriculum rationality, and other aspects, and ensure the objectivity and fairness of the evaluation results through student evaluation, peer evaluation, expert evaluation, employer evaluation, and other evaluation methods. At the same time, according to the characteristics of disciplines and specialties, different evaluation indexes are formulated to enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of the evaluation.

Finally, educators should strengthen the feedback and application of teaching quality evaluation results, link the evaluation results with teachers' performance appraisal, professional title evaluation, post promotion, etc., and encourage teachers to continuously improve teaching. For the problems found in the evaluation, teachers should be organized to conduct training and learning in time to help teachers improve their teaching level. In addition, the tracking mechanism of teaching quality improvement should be established to continuously track and evaluate the implementation effect of improvement measures to ensure the continuous improvement of teaching quality.

#### **4.5. Strengthen information construction and help modernize education management**

Promoting the informatization construction of higher education is an inevitable choice to conform to the development of the times. In practice, colleges and universities should increase investment in information infrastructure, improve the stability and speed of campus network, and ensure the smooth development of online teaching and management; Build an integrated education management information platform, integrate teaching management, student management, scientific research management and other information systems, and realize the centralized management and sharing of data. This includes establishing a unified identity authentication system and data standards, breaking the information island, and improving management efficiency.

Strengthen the informatization training of teachers and managers and improve their information technology application ability. Set up special information training courses to help teachers master online teaching tools, teaching resource production software, etc., and improve the level of teaching information. Carry out training on information system operation and data analysis for managers so that they can skillfully use information means to make management decisions.

In addition, educators should use big data, artificial intelligence and other technologies to understand students' learning behavior and needs and implement personalized teaching through in-depth analysis of teaching data; Through the development of artificial intelligence technology, intelligent teaching aids, such as intelligent tutoring system and intelligent examination system, can improve the teaching quality and management efficiency. At the same time, educators should strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the teaching process and quality using informatization to realize the accuracy and intelligence of education management <sup>[4]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, in the face of the challenges of globalization and the development of the times, China's higher education management must face up to the existing difficulties and make breakthroughs from the aspects of concept, system, teachers, quality assurance, and information construction. Only in this way can educators continuously improve the management level of higher education, help the good development of China's higher education, cultivate more innovative talents that meet the needs of the times for the society, occupy a more favorable position in the international higher education competition, and become a powerful country in higher education.

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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