Research on Optimization of the Studies Withdrawal System for Doctoral Students

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Abstract: The studies withdrawal system of doctoral students is an important aspect of the modernization of higher education, and also an important measure to ensure the quality of doctoral cultivation and the level of education. Through the research on the process of doctoral students' withdrawal, the necessity of doctoral students' withdrawal and the implementation of the current situation are discussed, and the practical problems and reasons of the system are analyzed. The study also proposes to further improve the implementation rules of the process from the aspects of establishing and improving the policy guarantee and supervision process of the system, optimizing the management system of doctoral students in colleges and universities, increasing the publicity of the system, and so on, to ensure the implementation effect of the system.

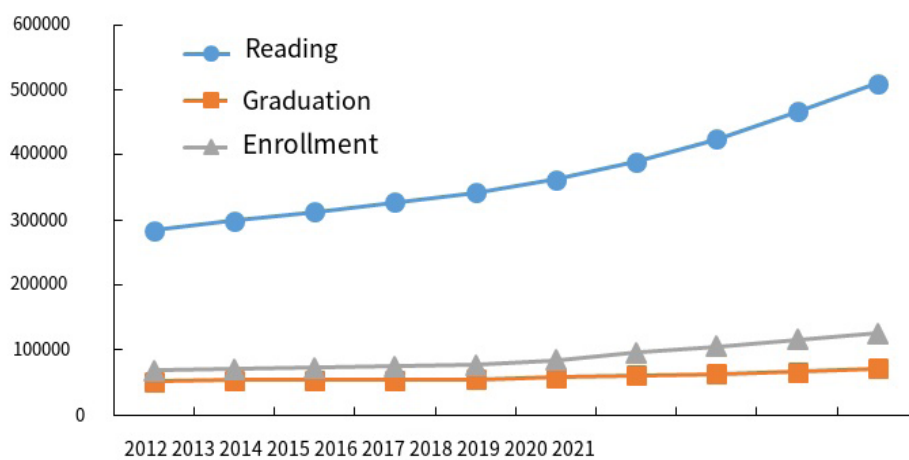**Keywords:** Doctoral students; Withdrawal system; Graduate education; Cultivation quality

1. The proposal and necessity of the diversion and withdrawal system for doctoral students

Nowadays, the development of the international society has entered the era of the knowledge-based economy, so improving the quality of higher education in China has more and more significant impact on national influence, international competitiveness, and comprehensive national strength. Realizing the modernization of higher education is also one of the important measures to help China become a powerful country in education, learning, human resources, and talent [1–3]. As the highest academic degree in China's higher education, doctoral education is an important way for China to train high-quality and high-level innovative talents. With the continuous advancement of the strategy of building a strong education country, the scale of China's graduate education is also expanding [4–6]. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the number of graduate students has been increasing year by year. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, as shown in **Figure 1**, during the ten years from 2012 to 2021, the average annual growth rate of doctoral students is 6.5%. The average ratio of the number of doctoral graduates to the number of students is about 1:1.5, which indicates that one of the reasons for the increase in the number of doctoral students is the increase in the number of doctoral

students who delay graduation year by year.

In the process of doctoral education and training, through setting the corresponding assessment standards for the training links, and taking the assessment results as indicators, the students who are not suitable for continuing to study for doctoral degrees are relegated and withdrawn timely and as soon as possible [7]. On the one hand, the implementation of the system of relegating doctoral students is an important measure to effectively improve the training quality of high-level innovative talents and the level of higher education in China, which reduces the pressure on educational resources brought by the postponement and withdrawal of doctoral students in universities. On the other hand, it also reflects the educational concept of "student-oriented and individualized teaching" in China's higher education, which aims to help doctoral students find a more suitable development direction and realize their self-value [8–9]. It can be seen that it is of great practical significance to implement the system of relegating and withdrawing doctoral students.

Figure 1. Basic data on the number of doctoral students in China from 2012 to 2021 (Source: Educational Statistics of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China)

2. Implementation status and problems of the withdrawal system for doctoral students

Doctoral education is the main way to train high-level innovative talents in China, and the quality of doctoral education is also an important standard to measure the quality of cultural education in the country. But for many years, doctoral graduate training in our country has been taking the mode of "in and out", which is closely related to the high-speed development of graduate education in the country in recent years, and the rapid expansion of graduate student scale leads to the graduate student training system not being meticulous and rigorous enough [10]. Therefore, there are also many difficulties in the implementation process of the system of relegating doctoral students, which can be roughly divided into the following categories.

2.1. Universities lack management experience and implementation of the withdrawal system for doctoral students

Due to the relatively short popularization time of the system, the implementation rules promulgated by universities are mostly based on existing national policy documents and add some evaluation indicators and assessment standards for the training of doctoral students, but the regulations are relatively rough and the assessment standards are not clear. Moreover, the implementation of the system is mostly superficial, and the

implementation of the policy is limited to the written level [11]. For example, the course assessment and mid-term assessment results in the training program of doctoral students are important indicators to measure whether they are relegated. However, in the actual training process, schools, colleges, and supervisors have low requirements for the course assessment and mid-term assessment of doctoral students, and the implementation process of students is more "going through the motions." As a result, the relevant assessment indicators in the training process of doctoral students cannot be directly related to the diversion withdrawal system; In the assessment of doctoral students' withdrawal, there is a phenomenon of avoiding relegation, especially the problem of how to apply for the examination system of doctoral students relegation is not clearly explained, and the doctoral students after relegation have no detailed explanation documents in the aspects of grievances, student status transfer, award and scholarship application.

2.2. The withdrawal system of doctoral students is not perfect, and the implementation rules are not detailed

The state vigorously promotes the system of relegating doctoral students, the main purpose is to improve the quality of education and training of doctoral students, so that graduate students who are not suitable for continuing to study for a degree can be withdrawn as early as possible. But even now, most of the policy documents have emphasized the need to strengthen the implementation of the system of doctoral students' diversion, explore the diversion channels, and improve the system without clarifying the system guiding regulations, implementation rules, precautions, supervision departments, and so on, which also leads to universities can only explore based on the existing graduate degree management methods, unable to achieve standardized and systematic implementation [12–13]. For example, the assessment system of delegation is not perfect. In addition to the quantitative and qualitative assessment of academic performance in the training process of doctoral students, the lack of consideration for psychological quality, ideological morality, academic ethics, and other factors. In addition, the supporting system of withdrawal is not perfect, and there is no professional psychological guidance, employment guidance, or corresponding assistance policies, which makes the doctoral students not respond positively to the withdrawal process, which then leads to the current phenomenon of difficult implementation of the system.

2.3. The recognition degree of the system's target groups and social groups is low

The target groups of this policy are supervisors and doctoral students. Due to reasons such as long research cycles, high living costs, and great employment pressure of doctoral students, the withdrawal from studies undoubtedly increases the time cost and economic cost during their study period, which leads to the resistance of doctoral students towards withdrawal. As the main body responsible for the training of doctoral students, if the doctoral students supervised by the supervisor withdraw, it will affect the teacher's reputation, performance assessment, progress of scientific research projects, personnel arrangement, and so on [14–15]. Therefore, the recognition and enthusiasm of the supervisor and doctoral students for this system are not high, and most of them hold a wait-and-see attitude. From the social level, doctoral education is the high point of China's education system. For individual students, a doctoral degree can not only directly reflect their learning ability, but also bring them certain social status, social resources, job opportunities economic benefits, and so on. In the public's cognition, withdrawing means "being eliminated" and "insufficient ability." In turn, it will affect the employment opportunities, mental health, and social identity of doctoral students, and it will also indirectly affect the implementation of the doctoral students' withdrawal system.

3. Suggestions on optimization of the withdrawal system of doctoral students

Vigorously carrying out the withdrawal process of inadequate doctoral students is an important link in realizing higher education modernization in the country, and it is also an important measure to guarantee the quality of high-level talent education in the country. The effective implementation of the system requires the cooperation of the state, universities, teachers, students, society, and other parties. Based on the above research and analysis, the optimization of the doctoral student withdrawal system can be carried out from the following aspects.

3.1. Establish and improve the policy guarantee and supervision system of the doctoral student withdrawal process

In the process of implementing the system, clear and effective guiding policy documents are the necessary prerequisite to protect the reasonable rights and interests of the university, supervisors, and doctoral students. Therefore, the state or universities should focus on the implementation of the system for different disciplines and categories of doctoral students to formulate detailed implementation rules, clear the scope of functions of the parties, and promote the connection between the implementation of the main body, so that the implementation of the system can be followed. At the same time, it is necessary to establish and improve the supervision and management process. On the one hand, it can prevent the phenomenon of "the form is greater than the content" in the implementation of the policy, and ensure the fairness, justice, rationality, and effectiveness of the implementation of the system. On the other hand, the supervisory department can further optimize the implementation rules of the system through the feedback of the system implementation body, standardize the system implementation process, and ensure that the doctoral student withdrawal system can be better implemented.

3.2. Optimize the management system of doctoral students in colleges and universities, clarify the main body of responsibility, and explore the reward system

The training period for doctoral students in China is generally 4–6 years, which includes many training steps, such as course assessment, literature reading review, proposal report, mid-term assessment, and so on. Graduate schools and departments should play a leading role in strengthening the quality control of each training step of doctoral students following the training programs of different disciplines and categories. Formulate the corresponding assessment methods and scoring standards so that the assessment requires the formation of a high-level assessment team and the assessment results must be approved by the academic committee to ensure that the assessment results are fair, just, and authoritative. In addition, it is necessary to clarify the identity of the doctoral supervisor as the first responsible person for doctoral student training, and actively explore the reward system of the withdrawal process. Doctoral supervisors should regularly conduct qualitative evaluations on the learning ability, innovation ability, scientific research level, and other indicators of doctoral students under their guidance and form evaluation reports to be kept on file, which can be linked with the assessment of supervisors. It can increase the interaction between teachers and students, enhance the enthusiasm of doctoral supervisors for education, and guarantee the training quality of doctoral students. Moreover, it can also make doctoral supervisors and doctoral students more deeply realize the necessity of doctoral students' withdrawal, and take the initiative to participate in the implementation of doctoral students' withdrawal system.

3.3. Strengthen publicity and create a good social environment

The state, colleges, and universities should actively publicize the withdrawal system of doctoral students, correct the wrong cognition of social groups for the withdrawal of doctoral students, and dispel the inherent cognition of the social level for doctoral students that withdrawal means elimination and failure, and guide

the public to correctly understand the nature of the system of withdrawal of doctoral students. They should also further enhance the recognition of the doctoral studies withdrawal system at the social level, obtain the tolerance and support of society for doctoral studies withdrawal, reduce the negative impact of withdrawal on doctoral employment, and help improve the enthusiasm of doctoral supervisors and doctoral students to actively choose withdrawal.

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