

Publish or Perish? An Analysis of the Internal Mechanism Driving Academic Productivity of Graduate Students

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Abstract: The publication of graduate students' academic papers is the externalized result of the embodiment and expression of graduate students' research productivity and academic ability, and the driving mechanism of graduate students' academic productivity has been distorted in the reality of the academic evaluation system that emphasizes too much on the publication of papers. Therefore, it is necessary to make clear the dilemmas of the three aspects of the demand side, the process side, and the supply side of the production of knowledge, academic creation and publication of papers, so as to truly optimize the development of the graduate students' academic productivity through the reform and optimization of academic evaluation. Evaluation, strengthening innovation and quality leadership and building new-quality productivity mechanisms to effectively drive the endogenous and high-quality development of graduate students' academic productivity.

Keywords: Academic productivity; Graduate students; Research quality; Innovation; New-quality productivity.

1. Introduction

Publish or Perish? Graduate students seem to have fallen into the reality of the zero-sum game of "publish-or-perish", and the success or failure of academic paper publication has become a difficult academic competition that every graduate student has to face if he can realize or get awards and grants, defend graduation, and develop his career. Blind competition and ineffective competition have become the biggest circle of this academic competition, and such disorderly and inefficient development continues to be staged, seriously deviating from the production of knowledge, scientific research, and academic creation of scientific, orderly, and correct development direction.

2. The reality of the graduate student academic paper published requirements

The status quo of academic publication without publication has become a common phenomenon in Chinese colleges and universities. The cultivation and shaping of academic research ability is an important part of graduate education and high-level talent training, and having certain scientific research ability is also a basic requirement for graduate students to obtain the corresponding degree. Although the national policy level is already in the process of reforming the education evaluation system to reduce the path dependence on quantitative and factorial scientific research achievements in terms of assessment, promotion, and evaluation, the biggest external factor driving graduate students to engage in academic production is still through the setting of mandatory requirements on the number or quality of academic papers published by graduate students who are required to graduate or obtain a higher degree.

By quantitatively examining the academic publication status of doctoral students applying for degrees at University "C" from 2018-2023, a total of 1,164-degree applications were filed, but 8.68% failed to pass the basic requirement of

academic publication of research output and were forced to choose to defer their studies. Although graduate students face the realistic requirements of academic publication, it has also become a basic reality that they cannot successfully complete their studies because they have not fulfilled the requirements of academic publication, which objectively reflects the insufficient intrinsic motivation to drive graduate students' academic productivity. The output of innovative results is heavily dependent on the results and quantitative judgment will inevitably lead to the involution of graduate students' academic production, reducing the efficiency of graduate students' academic production, increasing the number of academic results at the same time as the quality of knowledge production and academic research is uneven, graduate students' knowledge production of academic results of the original originality and innovativeness is not really stimulated, the overall development of postgraduate students, innovation, the actual effect of talent training and quality of training. The actual effect of talent training and training quality will also be greatly reduced, postgraduate academic paper publication-oriented evaluation standards, this educational baton also makes academic productivity into a developmental dilemma and academic extremes.

3. The reality of graduate students' academic productivity drive dilemma

3.1. Demand side: For obvious reasons, there is a short-board effect in the original innovation ability of graduate students

The lack of original innovation ability among graduate students is the main reason for the lack of original innovation in Chinese universities and various scientific research behaviors. From the demand side of academic production for graduate students, as the main body of academic production and innovation creation, their development in basic research ability, academic innovation ability, empirical analysis ability, and other aspects often falls into the dilemma of "pseudo

research" and "exquisite mediocrity". Although graduate academic production can face both science and academia, theory and practice, as well as career and application, the motivation to practice the spirit of scientific creation in academic research is still insufficient to support the continuous generation of academic innovation. Academic papers or dissertations that devalue graduate education or aim for complete employment in academic production ultimately cannot meet the needs of independent innovation and original innovation. It can be seen that graduate students lack endogenous motivation for original innovation and have obvious shortcomings.

3.2. Process side: Information asymmetry of academic paper submission and publication

The quantification or externalization of graduate academic production needs to be reflected through corresponding platforms or journals. From the perspective of the process of graduate academic production, the results of research production need to be conveyed through production media to become academic products. However, there is a situation of information asymmetry and incompleteness in this process of academic publication. In the process of submitting academic papers, the selection of academic journals can also be time-consuming and laborious. Even when submitting, there is often a long waiting period for review, usually 2-3 months, and many journal review results are not responded to promptly, making it difficult to achieve timely publication of academic papers. On the other hand, even if a journal refuses to submit, the reasons for rejection are often unclear, and the academic exchange and response of academic submissions, as well as the real issues, cannot be conveyed to the contributors. The low quality and efficiency of academic submission processing further reduce the success rate of submissions. Even if accepted and waiting for real publication, it is still a long waiting period. Therefore, the information asymmetry between academic paper submissions and publications has become a hindrance to the implementation of academic production in the process.

3.3. Supply side: The scarcity of the number of high-quality core journals that can be published

The platforms that can provide academic output and publication are mainly concentrated in journals and academic newspapers, and evaluating the quality level of journals and whether they can be defined as "core" journals has also become a pursuit of fame and fortune. On the one hand, the journal level defined by the evaluation centers of Peking University, Nanjing University, or other scientific research institutions has become an important arena for academic achievement publication on the supply side in China. However, the demand for publishing tens of thousands of scientific research achievements still cannot be met, and the number of high-level core journals and issues always seems insufficient. Some important journals even have quota restrictions for authors, and accepting articles also have conditions such as titles, professional titles, educational qualifications, and funding projects, which further exacerbates the scarcity of academic journals available for publishing graduate research achievements. On the other hand, the authority, dissemination, and recognition of academic

evaluations in international journals have led to more academic publications in international journals. However, the evaluation, classification, and publication process of international journals also have their own limitations, making it difficult to sustain the publication of graduate academic achievements solely in complex foreign language journals. Therefore, the high-level platforms available for publication also to some extent limit the academic productivity of research.

4. The development mechanism that drives the improvement of academic productivity

4.1. Effectively reforming the academic evaluation mechanism for graduate students

How the educational evaluation baton plays a guiding role has a profound impact on the production of academic achievements, and effectively reforming the graduate academic evaluation mechanism is an important aspect of driving the sustainable development of academic productivity. To break the simple constraints of quantification and factorization of graduate research achievements, it is not possible to simply score graduate academic achievements based on quantity to evaluate scholarships and various research project funding. The publication of graduate academic papers cannot be used as a prerequisite and limiting standard for graduation and thesis defense. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a scientifically effective academic evaluation mechanism for graduate students, adhere to the principle of adhering to scientific research ethics first, and correctly guide graduate students to establish a scientific and rigorous scientific research spirit and academic norms at the policy level, promoting the two-way development of academic freedom and scientific research improvement.

4.2. Strengthening the quality of scientific research and emphasizing innovative leadership

Breaking away from the quantity-oriented academic evaluation mechanism for graduate students is to establish a research development and academic evaluation mechanism centered on quality and led by innovation. Quality is the lifeline of graduate academic productivity, and innovation is the primary driving force of academic production. Building a high-quality and top-notch innovative talent training system requires a quality concept as the guiding principle, effectively motivating graduate academic achievements to develop towards innovation and high quality. The construction of a quality-centered academic evaluation mechanism further clarifies that academic production should follow a path of connotative development, encourage the generation of original and high-level academic achievements, and combine them with the actual economic and social development of China, the national major scientific and technological development strategy, and the forefront of scientific development so that graduate academic production achievements have creativity, practicality, and academic discourse power.

4.3. Practical application achievements driven by new-quality productivity

The ultimate goal of academic production activities of reform and innovation is still to serve the practical significance and application value of academic achievements. Science and technology are the primary productive forces, and we need to expand the forms of academic evaluation and encourage more practical application results beyond textual and theoretical aspects to verify the quality and efficiency of academic production. Innovative technology and technological innovation are the essence and connotation of new quality productivity. Graduate academic production activities should firmly grasp the development and innovation of science and technology, especially the rapid development and continuous innovation of digital education, information technology, and artificial intelligence, accelerate the utilization of the production opportunities of new quality productivity, and maximize the academic wisdom and comprehensive development of graduate students as the main force of academic research, Effectively improving research productivity from quantitative to qualitative changes.

5. Conclusion

Graduate academic production activities are the result of graduate students conducting scientific research and academic exploration as junior researchers. Graduate academic productivity is the ability and potential of graduate students as future researchers to continue academic creation and innovation. Therefore, it is necessary to truly guide and promote the evaluation of graduate academic achievements, break the trap of academic achievements being "publish-or-perish", and do a good job in policy guidance and top-level design, To evaluate the academic activities and production

capacity of graduate students from a strategic perspective and a systematic perspective, and to provide more effective innovative paths and development mechanisms for effectively promoting the high-quality development and comprehensive efficiency improvement of graduate education.

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