

Study on the Higher Education in Holland

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Abstract

Holland is a country that established the quality assurance system of higher education very early. Holland's higher education has been renowned worldwide for its excellent quality and distinctive internationalization, which is inseparable from the national law and quality monitoring system in Holland. This paper takes Holland as example to study the enlightenment of its higher education system and the quality guarantee model of higher education to the construction of the quality guarantee system of higher education in China.

Keywords

Higher education, quality assurance, Holland, China.

1. Introduction

Holland's higher education has always been renowned worldwide for its excellent quality and distinctive internationalization, which is inseparable from the national law and quality monitoring system in Holland. In recent years, Holland has gradually become a popular destination for studying abroad, not only because Holland is teaching in English, but also thanks to the high quality of teaching in Holland universities. Meanwhile, Holland's universities focus on discipline construction, which is obvious to all over the world. Besides, the key secret of the success of higher education in Holland lies in having the strictest curriculum evaluation system in the world[1]. The curriculum is highly consistent with market demand. Moreover, many universities in Holland have established cooperative relations with famous enterprises in Holland, thus those famous enterprises offer many internship opportunities to Holland college students. It is precisely because of these excellent teaching resources and mechanisms that the higher education in Holland has achieved an unprecedented success.

2. The Higher Education System in Holland

There are three major systems of higher education in Holland: Universities, University of Professional Education and International Education Institute (IE).

2.1 Universities.

There are fourteen regular universities with different scale in Holland, which mainly cultivate students' independent scientific research ability for future research. At present, there are about 150 thousand students in Holland regular university. Among them, the oldest one is University Leiden, which was founded in 1575. The largest number is University of Amsterdam and University of Utrecht. Holland's regular university education system is called "University" in the British and American education system, regardless of the University Department and Research Institute. The curricula and research subjects of such schools are highly professional. After four-year or five-year courses, students will obtain a master's degree that are approved by British and American system, that enable them to apply for Ph.D. and postdoctoral research after graduation. However, not all regular universities in Holland have educational research courses. Only a few universities can provide courses covering natural science, hygiene, economics, law, social behavior and language and culture, includes University Leiden, two universities of Amsterdam, a university of Groningen, a University of Maastricht, a University of Nimegen, a University of Tilburg and a University of Rotterdam. Meanwhile, there are three universities that are mainly devoted to engineering education research,

that are Universiteit Delft(TU Delft), University of Twente(UT) and Eindhoven University. There is also a Wageningen University that mainly devoted to the study of agriculture.

Other than above, there is a traditional educational mode called Open University. Such universities mainly provide distance higher education, so that some students who want to get a degree and cannot attend full-time regular training courses have access to get the same education level.

2.2 University of Professional Education.

Universities of Professional Education (also called Hogeschool) are mainly devoted to the training of Applied Science, humanities and technological science, and have the right to grant a degree. There are 56 universities in Holland. They are all funded by the government, and the total number of students is up to 280 thousand. The greatest advantage of Hogeschool is to be very flexible and to maintain a good partnership with companies and institutions so that all graduates can find an ideal career. Therefore, affected by the employment market, such universities should adjust their curriculum and teaching plan according to the specific needs of the labor market. Meanwhile, students will attend strict internships at school, so that they can quickly adapt to their work after graduation. These students can get a bachelor's degree when they graduate.

In the course of curriculum, Hogeschool also has several classes of advanced courses, such as agriculture and natural environment, society and behavior, health care, engineering science and technology, art and performing arts, economics and management and education. Some courses can get graduate degrees, and some can also get a doctorate.

2.3 International Education Institute.

The international education in Holland began in 1950s when the Holland government realized that it could benefit both overseas and domestic students. From then on, a number of International Education Institute(IE for short) specializing in international education have been established in order to provide quality education to foreign students. Since 1950s, IE in Holland has been taught in English. By 1970s, due to the changing policy of developing education in Holland, the IE Institute has shifted its focus to helping overseas universities to build their own systems and to begin to undertake more consultancy and research.

The IE Institute is characterized by a wide range of subjects from short-term courses to doctoral degrees, and most of them can get a bachelor's degree or a master's degree. Generally speaking, the internationalization level of higher education in Holland has gained high reputation in the world. The most famous subjects are business, management, agricultural science, water conservancy, medicine, urban architecture, remote sensing and literature. Meanwhile, the level of higher education in Holland is generally high and the quality of education is recognized in the world. Its success is closely related to the Holland's nationwide legal and quality monitoring system, which ensures that all colleges and universities can achieve the same high quality [2].

3. Quality Assurance and Evaluation System of Higher Education in Holland

3.1 Quality Assurance in Holland.

The so-called quality assurance model of higher education refers to a set of theoretical and practical systems for guaranteeing the quality of higher education to all sectors of the society under the guidance of the quality concept and value orientation of higher education, in accordance with a set of quality standards and work processes, so as to control and review and evaluate the related factors of teaching and learning. The basic idea is to improve the level of teaching and research in universities, protect the interests of students and parents, and make universities contribute to the development of society and economy [3].

Because of the differences in historical culture and social environment, the quality assurance system of higher education shows different characteristics. Considering the three factors of government, intermediary organizations and universities, there are three types of university quality assurance models: continental model, American model and British model.

(1) Continental Model

The continental model refers to the evaluation of higher education strictly controlled by the government. The countries that carry out this model are mainly European continental countries and Asian countries, such as Holland, France, Sweden, Germany, Thailand, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and so on. Most of these countries belong to the centralized management structure of higher education. The quality assurance of this mode is implemented by the government from outside of the higher education system. External evaluation with government's will and value orientation plays an important role in this evaluation process.

(2) American Model

The American mode is to guarantee the quality of higher education through the certification, ranking and doctoral evaluation of NGOs. The government does not directly participate in the evaluation activities without official special assessment agencies, but the certification organization must be approved by the government to carry out activities. The United States has an excellent tradition of private participation in education assessment, and the Council Higher Education Accreditation is responsible for accreditation of certification organizations. There are two kinds of accreditation organizations: college accreditation and professional accreditation. National and regional certification organizations are responsible for accreditation of colleges and universities, focusing on the overall quality of schools. Professional accreditation is assessed by professional accreditation organizations, such as medical, art and business, to ensure professional level of teaching.

(3) British Model

The British mode mainly exists in some countries in the UK and the Commonwealth, such as Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, etc. The key feature is that the university enjoys greater autonomy. That is to say, the quality of teaching is mainly judged by academic experts from universities, without government intervention. However, in recent years, the government has gradually strengthened its intervention in higher education and established an intermediary independent of the government, which is closely related to the higher education, and is responsible for the evaluation of the quality of higher education.

3.2 Evaluation System of Higher Education in Holland.

Holland has a complete system of higher education, which is world-famous for its high quality. The system originated from the traditional education and economic development in Holland. Holland has a nationwide legal and quality control system. The Ministry of Education and Science of Holland is responsible for the legislation related to education. The Ministry of Agriculture and Public Health plays an important role in guaranteeing the quality of education in their respective fields. Meanwhile, all teaching courses in Holland are evaluated regularly by independent expert committees. The members of the committee are appointed by the University Federation. The committee's assessment report will be published in time. The Ministry of education and culture and science will take measures to solve the problems raised in the report, and the relevant departments and relevant colleges and universities will take seriously and adopt the inspection and opinions of the Committee. Therefore, the perfect quality control system ensures that all colleges and universities in Holland can achieve the same quality standard [4]. Therefore, when students choose colleges and universities in Holland, they do not have to consider the school itself, but only take into account the location, the key professional and academic atmosphere of the school, as well as the specialties of their interest.

3.2.1. The Formation of the Evaluation System

Since 1950s, Holland has adopted the policy of expanding the scale of higher education and realized the popularization of higher education quickly. As higher education was free at that time, the considerable pressure of state budget and the decline in the quality of higher education has generally attracted the attention of the government and the community, which finally led to the determination of the government of Holland to carry out the reform of the quality guarantee system of higher education in 1985[5].

In 1985, the government of Holland issued a policy white paper *Higher Education: Autonomy and Quality*, which has great historical significance. It emphasizes that quality and quality evaluation is the responsibility of the university itself. The formation of the formal quality control system is an important condition for the self-regulation of colleges and universities. It is suggested to give higher autonomy to universities and develop a quality control system with traceability, so as to improve the cooperation between universities, higher vocational education institutes and open universities, in order to improve the effectiveness of the higher education system.

In early 2000, Herman, the Minister of Education and Science of Holland, published an open letter about "*International Education in Holland*", and proposed that the improvement of citizens' international quality should be an important embodiment of improving the quality of higher education, making Holland an invincible position in the future competition and an important factor for Holland to gain greater interests in the future. In November 2000, the Holland Higher Education Accreditation Committee was established, and the final report "*Incentive, Realization and Improvement*" was published in September. It was suggested that the role of the current quality assessment system is not satisfactory. The introduction of the identification mechanism is not a revision of the current assessment system, but a new system, to monitor the quality of existing and newly established courses in Higher Education.

In 2002, the bill of higher education introduced in Holland was passed by the Parliament and began to build the National Accreditation Agency (NAO), trying to monitor the existing and newly established degree courses in higher education so that all courses are of the required quality.

3.2.2. The Composition of the Evaluation System

The quality evaluation system of higher education in Holland is composed of three parts: VSNU, PIU and HBO-Raad. The University Association (VSNU) mainly carries out off campus evaluation of the quality of teaching and research in universities. The University Association conducts a routine inspection of the university every 5 years. It focuses on the examination of various disciplines, and evaluates the quality of the education by consulting the documents and information of the University and interviews with teachers. PIU (Performance Indicators for the University sector) is a new system of internal quality control, which is widely adopted by various universities in Holland under the new legal framework, that is, the internal quality analysis model (AMOS). The model is based on the internal data of the University Association's behavior guidelines, including the quality of students' registration, the quality of the students, the quality of the graduates, the quality of the staff, the quality of the educational institutions and the quality of the education reform. The HBO-Raad mainly evaluates the educational status of higher education institutions in non universities. The assessment results will be directly referenced by the Ministry of education and science of Holland, and will be included in the relevant agenda.

3.2.3. The Characteristics of the Evaluation System

The government plays a macro-guiding role in the evaluation of universities. In the evaluation of universities in Holland, colleges and universities are responsible for internal evaluation, and two unofficial institutions are responsible for external evaluation. Although the government is not directly involved in the assessment, it has not given up its participation in the assessment through special ways, so as to give full play to the guiding role of the government. The higher education guidance group is the government department that is responsible for the government to supervise, review and inform the legitimacy of the two institutions in the process of the evaluation of the outside school and in the process of the follow-up evaluation of universities [6]. Meanwhile, The results of the assessment are not linked to the allocation of educational administration. The government and the institutions of higher education should agree on the content of the assessment, that is to say, teaching quality assessment must be formed and published, so as to enhance the transparency of teaching quality. But the assessment results are not sorted, nor directly linked to educational administrative appropriations, because the funding for higher education is the responsibility of the government. Besides, the evaluation of teaching is separated from the evaluation of scientific research. Since the

experts needed for research assessment are different from those required by teaching evaluation, a national academic association has been set up to evaluate each scholar's research activities. In order to carry out the evaluation smoothly, orderly and effectively, the Holland University Association has made strict and clear regulations on the purpose, principle, process and evaluation organization of education and teaching evaluation after integrating the views of the government, the University and the community.

3.2.4. Basic Procedures for the Assessment of Higher Education

The quality evaluation of higher education in Holland is mainly composed of two parts, that is, self-assessment carried out by departments and schools, and field evaluations conducted by peers.

The purpose of self-assessment is to activate the management system of internal evaluation in Colleges and universities, as well as prepare for on-site assessment of peer experts. The contents of self-assessment include goals and objectives, curriculum, teaching, quality of graduates, teaching level, internationalization and external relations, etc.

The members of the peer assessment are nominated by the presidents of the subject of evaluation on the basis of certain standards and appointed by the association of Holland University and the Federation of higher vocational education. The assessment team generally conducted 7 days of on-site visits to the schools assessed, and evaluated the research program from four aspects: the development of academic activities, the number of papers published, the relationship between academic and society and academic prospects. The assessment team points out the four aspects and then writes a report that points out the subjects that have been awarded for the degree and the problems that exist in the whole discipline and make suggestions.

4. Reflections and enlightenments

4.1 Development Trend of the Quality Assessment of Higher Education.

Due to the differences in the politics, economy, culture and education management system, the quality evaluation of higher education in different countries is also different. But behind the differentiation, there are some common characteristics and trends in the quality assessment of higher education in the world.

First of all, improving the pertinence and differentiation of evaluation is a common pursuit in the development of higher education quality evaluation in different countries. According to the survey report of the European Union of Higher Education Quality Assurance (ENQA), the most commonly used quality assessment method of higher education in the mainland of Europe is to be accreditation and evaluation in a professional way. Secondly, the purpose of higher education quality assessment is to be multiplied. Improving quality is the fundamental indicator of evaluation. And it is also an important goal for the assessment to ensure the right to know and the interests of the stakeholders of the quality of higher education through the publication of quality information. Thirdly, the management subject of the evaluation is separated from the executive subject. In 2002, the Holland government established the Holland accreditation organization (NVAO), which is responsible for certifying professional and new majors in higher education. But the Holland certification organization does not directly carry out the certification and evaluation work. Instead, it establishes a basic certification standard framework to entrust its accredited, independent evaluation agency to implement the certification and evaluation[3]. Fourthly, it's a must to clear the quality responsibility and autonomy of colleges and universities, and highlight the core role of colleges and universities in quality improvement. Efforts should be made to improve the quality assurance system in the University. Attention should be paid to the efficiency of resource utilization and the learning process as well as learning effectiveness of students. Meanwhile, pay attention to qualitative description of quality information, not just quantitative statistics. The results of the assessment are suggested to fully or partially disclosed to the society. Fifthly, constantly improve the evaluation criteria or standards, and strengthen the evaluation of evaluation work. The government of Holland has also formulated the agreement on Quality Assessment Institutions, and has put forward a series of requests

for the evaluation institutions, and has made regular reviews. We should pay more attention to the research of quality evaluation of higher education and raise the level of specialization of evaluation.

4.2 Thoughts on the System of Higher Education Evaluation in China.

Firstly, we should enhance our understanding of self-evaluation and correct the purpose of self-evaluation. The purpose of self-assessment should be to strengthen research, analyze tasks, clarify goals and values, clarify strengths and weaknesses, and provide quality assurance for teaching. However, at present, self evaluation in the evaluation of higher education in China is only a link in the examination of experts' admission to the school, and it does not combine self evaluation with the improvement of the quality of the teaching. In fact, universities should recognize that self assessment is a means to improve teaching quality, a process of reaching standards, and a tool to understand their gap between strategic tasks and goals.

On the other hand, the experts of higher education evaluation should be independent of the evaluated schools, and have solid professional knowledge and a thorough understanding of the evaluation objects. However, at present, China's evaluation expert group is relatively single, mostly from universities and education authorities. Therefore, we should let the students and parents participate in the assessment, and absorb some of the social intermediary evaluation institutions and the professional personnel of the social employers, and actively play the role of the social assessment force. Only in this way can our higher education evaluation be more objective, practical, scientific and universal.

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