

# *Research on the Influencing Factors of Postgraduate Tutor's Guiding Ability*

Qiang Liu\*, Liuyang Jia, Xintao Yu, Ming Liu

*School of Economics and Management, Liaoning University of Technology, Jinzhou, Liaoning, 121001, China*

*\*Corresponding author*

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**Abstract:** In the training of graduate students, tutor is the most important link, responsible for guiding students' academic frontiers, guiding students' academic behavior, and is the key to the quality of graduate training. However, at present, the quality of postgraduate training has been questioned and gradually become a hot spot. Therefore, there is no need to elaborate on the significance and value of building a high-level tutor team. The urgent task is to have a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the basic situation, existing problems and influencing factors of the tutor's guidance ability of graduate students in China, and then put forward relevant suggestions that help improve the tutor's guidance ability.

## **1. Introduction**

Postgraduate education is an important guarantee for national development and social progress. From the perspective of short-term benefits, the teaching quality of graduate students will directly affect the future work and life of graduates. From the long-term interests, it will affect the future competitiveness of the country. Tutor is the first person responsible for postgraduate education. Tutor's guidance directly affects the quality of postgraduate education. However, in the current postgraduate education in China, the tutor's guidance is not in place, "sheep herding guidance" and "pressing guidance" are widespread, which greatly affect the quality of postgraduate education.

The level of tutor's guidance ability directly determines the training quality of graduate students. In 2018, relevant documents clearly pointed out that it is necessary to "continuously improve the guidance ability of graduate tutors". The "2020 National Graduate Education Work Conference" once again emphasized the need to "strengthen the tutor team and improve the teaching level of tutors" [1]. In order to meet the needs of improving the quality of higher education and talents in China, this paper analyzes the current situation of tutor guidance in postgraduate education, discusses the factors affecting tutor guidance ability, and puts forward constructive suggestions on optimizing the guidance ability.

## 2. Related Literature Review

The tutor's guidance ability of graduate students has attracted widespread attention of scholars at home and abroad. Relevant studies show that there is a positive correlation between the tutor's guidance ability and the training quality of graduate students [2, 3]. However, in comparison, the domestic understanding of "tutor guidance content" is relatively broad. In addition to professional guidance, tutors also need to complete non professional care responsibilities [4], while foreign countries pay more attention to tutor's guidance responsibilities at the academic level [5]; With regard to the tutor's guidance behavior, most of the domestic tutors share their personal guidance experience [6], and foreign countries pay more attention to the evaluation of tutor's guidance ability and satisfaction survey [7]. In general, there is no consensus on the research on the content and behavior of graduate tutors at home and abroad, and the refining and summary of effective guidance behavior of graduate tutors are still insufficient. In China, the relevant research is still at the stage of personal experience sharing and theoretical deduction, and the empirical analysis is insufficient; At present, the research mainly involves the research on the quality of graduate students, the current situation of tutor guidance in the process of graduate education, and the research on teacher-student relationship, tutor role, ideal tutor and other issues. What kind of guidance ability should graduate tutors have "What are the ideal coaching behaviors and skills?" And other issues have not been explored. Relevant studies have not answered the question of "influencing factors of tutor's guidance ability" well. It is urgent to make breakthroughs in research methods and the above contents in the future [8].

### 2.1. Postgraduate Quality Research

At present, there are many controversies in academic circles about what is the quality of graduate students, and different scholars have different understandings. Liao Wenwu and others proposed that the connotation of postgraduate quality should include three levels: first, cultivate high-quality talents to meet the needs of society and human development; Second, the scientific research achievements of schools and scientific research institutions should meet the needs of schools, disciplines, society and individuals; Third, provide services for social and personal development [9-10]. Duan Li believes that the quality of postgraduate education refers to the knowledge, ability and quality formed through a series of education and teaching activities on the basis of the training objectives and requirements, so as to meet the needs of social development and self-development [11].

What are the indicators for measuring the quality of graduate students? At present, there are many literatures involved. Some scholars believe that the publication level, publication quality, professional ethics, examination results and practical ability are the main criteria for evaluating the quality of graduate students [12]. As for the quality of postgraduate training, with the increase of the number of postgraduate students, these problems are mainly as follows: first, the quality consciousness is weak; Second, college students lack practical operation skills and scientific research innovation consciousness; Third, the bad social atmosphere has a great impact on the postgraduate's learning attitude and comprehensive quality; Fourth, the social recognition of graduate students has been seriously reduced [13].

### 2.2. Research on the Relationship between Teachers and Students

The research on teacher-student relationship can be said to be the focus topic in the field of higher education research in recent years, and this issue is often accompanied by tutor guidance [14]. Scholars Qin Huan and others have pointed out in detail the dislocation of the guidance relationship

between tutors and graduate students: first, the guidance relationship has become a subsidiary relationship; The second is the alienation from the cooperative relationship to the employment relationship; The third is the weakening of the relationship between guidance and learning, "the tutor does not guide"[15]. This is mainly due to two reasons. First, at the current stage, it is common for tutors to hold administrative posts concurrently. Many tutors are busy with various meetings and have no time to manage students. Second, some tutors are busy with all kinds of research and do not have much time to teach students. Bi Hexia pointed out that due to the continuous expansion of graduate education and the reform of higher education, the relationship between graduate students and tutors has been disharmonious and alienated, of which the most prominent is the lack and dilution of emotion; The conflict between teachers and students is obvious; The dislocation of teacher-student relationship is obvious, which is mainly manifested in the evolution of teacher-student relationship into employment relationship and subordination relationship [16-17].

### **2.3. Research on Tutor Role**

Scholars have different opinions on the type of tutor role [18]. In the transformation of the role of tutor for graduate students in Colleges and universities, Zhu Cheng divides the role of tutor into three types: one is "Bole", which means that tutors should guarantee the teaching quality of graduate students with their own reputation and reputation; The second is "leader", that is, guide students to step into the scientific research stage and guide students to academic development; The third is "multi-faceted". While undertaking the traditional work, the tutor should also take the responsibility of Relieving Students' psychological pressure and confusion [19]. In addition, some scholars pointed out that tutors should have the role of academic experts, academic norms, career planning guides, personality shapers, and like-minded partners [20].

Foreign scholars have also conducted a lot of discussions on the role of tutors. First, as a guide, the tutor consciously creates a certain form of organized learning atmosphere to improve students' professional skills. The second is the role of the employer, that is, the relationship between "supervisor" and "employee" is between "supervisor" and "student". Third, as a social intermediary, its role is to provide students with opportunities for career development, that is, teachers should play the role of a professional master, instill professional awareness into students, and introduce it into academic culture [21].

### **2.4. Research on the Role and Responsibility of Tutors**

Tutors assume many roles, but no matter what role they play, they will have a profound impact on the academic, moral and life of graduate students. Liu Xishan and others believe that there are four main roles of tutors in postgraduate education: one is the moral model of students; Second, the guidance of scientific research; The third is the role of psychological counseling in dispelling doubts; The fourth is the role of career counseling [22]. Other scholars pointed out the following two points: first, the role of the commander-in-chief, who has a relatively relaxed academic atmosphere. The second is the influence. The tutor plays an important role in guiding and enlightening [23].

Regarding the duties of tutors, some scholars believe that: first, guide students to learn and cultivate their personalities; Second, determine the frequency of meeting with graduate students and ensure that students have a safe, healthy and free environment. Third, help students understand the process of academic research and select and formulate research topics. Fourth, help students collect information and plan for the future. Fifth, encourage students to introduce their research results and evaluate them and affirm the role of students [24].

### **3. Research Method**

#### **3.1. Document Method**

The research literature on the influencing factors of graduate tutor's guidance ability in Colleges and universities mainly focuses on degree theses and published papers, and there are not many related works. The ways to collect documents include: library books, China HowNet, superstar database, Wanfang database, etc. In the process of literature collection, the key words used are: teacher-student relationship, tutor guidance ability, graduate student quality, tutor guidance behavior, etc.

#### **3.2. Interview Method**

Through face-to-face conversation with the interviewees, we can understand the current situation of the tutor's guidance ability and the students' satisfaction with the tutor's guidance. Based on the answers of the interviewees, we can collect objective and unbiased data in written form. Interview tools: researcher, interview outline, telephone, recording pen and souvenir.

### **4. Problems in the Construction of Postgraduate Tutor Team**

#### **4.1. The Supervisor's Post Responsibility Is Vague**

Some tutors are not clear about the scope of their duties and cannot perform the duties of "the first person in charge". The purpose of setting up graduate tutors is to guide students' academic and scientific research work, improve their comprehensive quality, and cultivate high-level and high-quality talents [25]. However, in Colleges and universities, the role of tutors is often ambiguous, and the training results of students have no direct relationship with their own development. In addition, universities often pay more attention to the evaluation of their research achievements and academic abilities when evaluating their tutors, which leads to the tutors only paying attention to their own research and neglecting the training of students. At present, the "boss type" teacher-student relationship is the product of such management problems. Some teacher-student relationship is more like an employment relationship. Students help them complete their research, while tutors only guide their scientific research work. In addition to scientific research, tutors are more concerned about their own research results. They are far away from students and lack communication [26]. The tutor's lack of clear guidance responsibilities for students directly leads to the decline of teachers' sense of responsibility, which further affects the teaching quality of graduate students.

#### **4.2. Pay More Attention to Appointment and Selection than Assessment and Inspection**

A sound assessment system is an effective way to improve the guidance ability of tutors. However, at present, colleges and universities in China overemphasize the selection before appointment, neglect the regular assessment of tutors, and the evaluation system is not perfect. There is only selection and no assessment, which forms a "lifelong" tutor system. Once a tutor is selected and hired, he will feel that he has an "iron rice bowl", loses pressure, and loses the power to move forward, which will have a great impact on the overall quality of the tutor.

#### **4.3. Insufficient Incentive Measures for Tutors**

With motivation, there will be motivation. At present, the incentive mechanism for tutors in

Universities in China has little to do with the quality of students' training, and their excellent teaching work has not been properly rewarded [27, 28]. At the same time, teachers' salary, working conditions, status and other incentive mechanisms related to teachers' working environment are also ignored, such as cultivating students' sense of achievement and cultivating students' social identity. Under the abundant material conditions, the instructors have extremely low material requirements. At this stage, the teachers pay more attention to self respect and the realization of self-worth. In the process of guiding the work, the instructors can obtain great satisfaction from this level, so as to continuously improve their sense of achievement. However, this high-level incentive mechanism is often ignored by colleges and universities, resulting in the lack of enthusiasm of tutors in guiding and cultivating students [29].

#### **4.4. The Tutor Selection system Lacks Scientificity**

When selecting graduate tutors, many colleges and universities often only use some qualitative descriptions and lack quantitative evaluation on their academic and scientific research ability, which will lead to the influence of many subjective factors, which are not scientific, fair, convincing and can not guarantee the quality of tutors. In addition, the selection criteria only focus on the tutor's research results and teaching level, and the tutor's student training quality is not taken as the evaluation criteria [30]. However, the selection criteria are "one size fits all" and do not take into account the particularity and needs of the discipline. The differences between disciplines lead to the imbalance in the selection of teachers among disciplines, which is not conducive to the healthy development of the discipline and the scientific guidance and training of the students of the discipline [31].

### **5. Influencing Factors of Postgraduate Tutor's Guidance Ability**

#### **5.1. Coaching Time and Energy**

The tutor's guidance ability is directly proportional to the energy and time invested. The research points out that the energy invested by the graduate tutor is related to the tutor's work in the school [32]. For example, the heavy scientific research pressure, complicated public relations affairs, and even the cumbersome application and settlement process of scientific research projects have greatly consumed the time and energy of the instructors. As a result, tutors have no time and energy to guide students and are forced to adopt sheep herding management. Students' scientific research is too superficial to grasp the essence. In addition, due to too many tutors and frequent participation in administrative meetings and academic conferences, tutors will not have enough time and energy to guide students, thus forming a vicious circle and affecting the cultivation of graduate students [33].

#### **5.2. Scientific Research Guidance Ability**

The academic research ability of tutors is an important basic ability to guide graduate students. Their academic achievements, innovation ability and academic influence are very attractive to graduate students [34]. However, the ability of some graduate tutors in these aspects needs to be improved. On the one hand, graduate tutors with high academic level and quality lack experience in guiding students. For example, there are obstacles in the output of information, resulting in the value of "guidance" not being fully realized. On the other hand, some tutors are unwilling to actively provide opportunities for scientific research and academic exchange, which makes the students' scientific research level and ability unable to be improved [35].

### **5.3. Practical Guidance Ability**

Research shows that some tutors are weak in practical guidance and employment guidance, especially in practical guidance [36]. To a certain extent, it shows that the tutors do not pay much attention to the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality and ability. In the process of guidance, some tutors are busy with research and frequent social activities, and students can not timely understand the situation of scientific research, life, employment and other aspects, resulting in a lack of communication between students and tutors, which reduces the value of tutors in graduate employment guidance. On the other hand, teachers lack confidence in the ability of students and fail to fully mobilize the enthusiasm of students when conducting academic activities at home and abroad, making them unable to participate in the project [37].

### **5.4. Demonstration and Guidance Ability**

The tutor's demonstration ability and mental health counseling ability will also have a certain impact on the tutor's guidance ability. The results show that some teachers' role of demonstration and guidance is not obvious, and the radiation intensity to students is low; Due to the lack of psychological health guidance for college students, it is impossible to find and communicate in a timely and effective manner. Therefore, teachers must set an example, take the lead in demonstration, and influence and guide students from the aspects of politics, style of study and style of study [38].

## **6. Suggestions on Improving the Guidance Ability of Graduate Tutors**

### **6.1. Strengthen the Consciousness of "the First Responsible Person" of Tutors**

First, it is necessary to strictly implement the postgraduate educational administration system and relevant management systems [39]. It is necessary to establish a sense of responsibility, attach importance to the humanistic care for graduate students, which is reflected in the study, life, thoughts, emotions and other aspects, timely communicate and communicate with different students, care about their physical and mental health, and effectively help them solve practical problems [40]. Secondly, from the perspective of colleges and universities, improve the job management system of tutors, actively explore the measures of combining rewards and punishments, and give certain material and spiritual rewards to actively responsible tutors to ensure their work enthusiasm. For teachers who cannot actively perform their duties, they should also be investigated for certain responsibilities and strengthen the binding force of leaders [41].

### **6.2. Strengthen the Construction of Teachers' Ethics and Style**

Establishing morality and cultivating people is the foundation of colleges and universities. It is the basis for guiding the majority of teachers to establish themselves, study and teach with morality. Teachers' personal behavior and moral quality have a subtle impact on students and play a pivotal role in academic research and development [42]. Tutors teach and educate people. Teaching is the way and educating people is the responsibility. From the release of several opinions on strengthening the ideological and political work of graduate students (jiaodangzi [1987] No. 084) to the establishment of the opinions on comprehensively implementing the responsibilities of the graduate tutors to establish morality and cultivate people today, the importance and exemplary role of "morality" in education have fully emerged [43]. However, in recent years, academic misconduct in Chinese universities has occurred continuously, exposing that teachers' responsibilities have not

been fully performed, and students' awareness of learning and self-management is not enough [44-46].

### **6.3. Improve the Scientific Research Level and Guidance Ability of Tutors**

The professional level of tutors has a direct impact on the quality of postgraduate education, and the primary goal is to cultivate students' scientific research ability, which requires higher academic guidance ability of tutors [47]. However, academic research is a hard and innovative process, especially in today's highly developed information technology and information technology [48]. Instructors should change their thinking, constantly absorb new things and concepts, and improve their academic quality. Integrate their own academic resources, obtain effective information related to disciplines, and apply it to education, scientific research and guidance in a timely manner to ensure the continuous improvement of knowledge level. Excellent tutors can not only distinguish students' abilities and levels, but also excavate and develop the characteristics not found in students from a deeper level, and guide students to make valuable exploration by using their academic advantages. On the contrary, teachers with insufficient level can only guide students to conduct low-level research. The tutor has rich experience in practice, teaching and scientific research. Through teaching, demonstration, cooperation, research and other methods, cultivate the scientific research consciousness and ability of graduate students; Timely grasp new research trends; Break through the knowledge barrier between disciplines; Strengthening the integration of multiple disciplines; Communicate with graduate students regularly and conduct in-depth research [49-53].

### **6.4. Improve the Tutor Assessment and Evaluation System**

To ensure the quality of graduate students and improve the guidance level of tutors, it is necessary to establish a scientific and effective tutor evaluation system [54]. In February 2019, the general office of the Ministry of education advocated to further standardize and strengthen the management of postgraduate education. It is necessary to establish and improve the teacher education and evaluation system, strengthen the management of postgraduate education, improve the quality of postgraduate education, and promote the quality of postgraduate learning and life [55]. Strictly perform the duties of tutor. Therefore, it is an effective way to improve the quality of tutors to establish a new type of tutor management system.

First, adopt the elimination system, pay attention to cultivating excellent young teachers, break the professional title evaluation and "lifelong system", pay attention to cultivating students' competence and optimize the structure of tutors; Secondly, we should also increase the performance indicators of teachers' Ideological and moral character and work responsibilities [56, 57]. For example, the guidance time, guidance frequency and guidance mode are taken as the evaluation criteria. Actively learn the management mode of foreign universities, determine the teaching level of the tutor according to the scientific research, teaching, administration and other work of the tutor, and then allocate guidance shares to the tutor, which can not only ensure the teaching quality of the tutor, but also effectively complete the work [58].

Finally, we should build a diversified evaluation mechanism for teachers. In order to ensure the fairness and referentiality of evaluation, teacher evaluation should combine student evaluation, peer review and relevant management evaluation; In terms of evaluation criteria, there are differences due to different disciplines, and it is necessary to develop a set of reasonable evaluation criteria [59]. In the assessment content, the evaluation and recognition of teachers' practice ability are added; In terms of assessment results, in order to improve the teaching quality of counselors, we must adhere to the combination of "positive motivation" and "reverse force"[60].

## 7. Research Conclusion

Thoughts on improving the quality of postgraduate training based on the search of relevant literature and interviews, this study analyzes the influencing factors of Postgraduate Tutor's guidance ability, including guidance time and energy, scientific research guidance ability, practice guidance ability and demonstration guidance ability. And put forward countermeasures and suggestions for the existing problems. This is to enhance the sense of responsibility of the tutor, strengthen the moral construction of the tutor, improve the scientific research level and leadership ability of the tutor, and improve the evaluation system of the tutor.

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