

Current and Challenge of Master of Social Work Education in Mainland China: An Empirical Research from Students' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT Social Work education in mainland China was established late but it has experienced a rapid development. It was not until 2009 that the government decided to put huge investment into the Master of Social Work (MSW) education. This study conducted an empirical investigation to evaluate the MSW education from the students' perspectives. 500 MSW students were randomly selected from 10 universities, 8 provinces in mainland China. The results indicated the MSW education curriculum is not appropriate, teaching methods are not student-oriented, professional practice is not sufficient and so on. In such a training mode, MSW students demonstrate a negative attitude towards their majors and future development. Nearly half of respondents said that they did not obtain enough professional knowledge and skills and that they are reluctant to be engaged in careers related to social work after graduation due to the low salary and bad welfare. The reason lead to the crisis and challenges were analyzed. Improve suggestions were provided accordingly.

INTRODUCTION

Social Work in Contemporary China

With the reform and opening policy, China's economy has gained consistently rapid increases since the late 1970s. But the social construction and development has been lagging and re-

mained incomplete (Wang 2011). The unbalanced development between economy and society has caused tension to the social order and people's lives. Thus to maintain a stable social order or ruling, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) proposed the strategy of "to construct a socialist harmonious society", and raised the specific policy of "to establish a grand team of social workers" in the Sixth Plenary Meeting of the 16th Central Committee of CPC held in 2002. It aimed to increase the recognition of the value of the professional social work (Gray 2008; Jia 2008; Law and Gu 2008; Leung 2012). It was read as being instrumental in promoting economic growth and stabilizing society, by resolving social problems and enhancing citizens' social participation (Hutchings and Taylor 2007; Tsang et al. 2000). So it is necessary to construct a comprehensive social service program staffed by professional social workers (Yan and Tsang 2005). In 2010, the Chinese government also issued a plan to cultivate a team of profes-

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sional social workers, with there being 2 million professional social workers by 2015 and 3 million by 2020 (Xu 2012a; Yip 2007).

Thus it can be seen that social work in China ushered unprecedented opportunities with policy promotion, which enables professional services to boom for the purpose of resolving social contradictions and safeguarding social order (Cullen et al. 2016). The development of social work education in China is also in progress in accordance with the governmental policy related to social work professionals. However, its history is very short with less than 100 years. The policy promotion stimulates the necessity to explore more about the current situation and challenges of social work education in contemporary China.

History of Social Work Education

Scholars have categorized the process of China's social work education into three stages, that is, stage of introduction, abolishment, and reinstatement (Xia and Guo 2002; Yan and Cheung 2006). It was actually from the beginning of the 1920s, which was marked by the establishment of the Department of Sociology and Social Services in Yanjing University (now Peking University) (Wang 2004; Xu 2012b; Yip 2007). The university initially launched two disciplines, the theoretical sociology and applied sociology. The department taught courses such as, social service, social investigation. Later more than 10 universities, such as Jinling University (now Nanjing University), Shanghai University, Fudan University, followed up and set up social work departments or provided related social work courses (Xu 2012b).

Unfortunately, labeled as "a product of capitalism", social work education was suspended by the CPC in the early 1960s (Law and Gu 2008; Ogden 1982; Yip 2007). It was not until the 1980s after the Cultural Revolution that the education has got rid of destruction and has welcomed reconstruction (Law and Gu 2008; Leung 2012; Li Han and Huang 2011; Xiong and Wang 2007). The Chinese government decided to transform the economic system into a market oriented model. It also accelerated the reform of social security system. Thus as the social service needs were rapidly increasing (Xia and Guo 2002).

In 1987, the State Education Commission approved to reconstruct the major "social work

and management" in some universities and colleges (Law and Gu 2008; Xiong and Wang 2007; Yip 2007). Several universities, such as Jilin University, Xiamen University and Renmin University of China, have established a department of social work since 1990s. And the China Association for Social Work Education was set up in 1994. However, China's social work education development had been relatively slow without the government's more official approval or support. Only 27 schools provided social work undergraduate education by the end of 1999 (Wang 2004).

The stage of rapid development began at the end of the twentieth century. At the beginning of 1999, the State Council forwarded the "Action Plan to Revitalize Chinese Education in 21st Century" drawn up by China's Ministry of Education, intending to implement high quality education by releasing the university management autonomy and expanding the scale of higher education. Under the influence of this policy, social work undergraduate education rapidly increased in recent years. In the year 2000, 27 colleges and universities were approved to teach undergraduate courses. The number climbed up in the sequential years. By the end of 2007, more than 220 universities or colleges had set up the majors in social work (Lv 2011). By 2010, according to the statistics of China Association for Social Work Education, the number of the universities that set up social work undergraduate courses was about 260.

Currently there are about 10,000 social work students graduating each year. It should be said that China's social work undergraduate's level has a large scale of training. However, the undergraduate education is criticized for focusing only on the basic theory education and lacking a focus on the practical knowledge. And its values on re-recognition are different from western countries (Zhao et al. 2017). It is difficult to become competent for some difficult social work tasks such as social services planning, integrative service, social service administration and others as a result (Li et al. 2011).

MSW Education Development

Although it experienced rapid development since 1980s, the social work education has not focused on the graduate level. The Master of Social Work (MSW) course in the mainland China only occurred in two joint training programs,

that is, between Peking University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University (launched in 2000), as well as between Fudan University and the University of Hong Kong (launched in 2001). The formal professional degree system has not yet been established until 2009 (Chan and Chan 2005). The Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council Office approved to set MSW degrees in 2008 and officially implement them in 2010. It was a competence-based program of qualifying education which consisted of both generic and specialized teaching, aiming to prepare students for professional practice (McCrystal and Wilson 2009; Guo et al. 2016). The development of MSW degrees is an important action for the government to construct a grand social work professional team.

Therefore, the MSW education has stepped into a rapid development stage. In 2010, a total of 33 colleges and universities gained the authority to award MSW in the first round approved by the Academic Degrees Committee. Later in 2010, another 25 colleges also received the authority, following the number increased to 58 (Zuo and Liu 2012). However, MSW professional education in China was set up for a short time and in a state of blind expansion (Li et al. 2011). As it lacked the mature concepts to educate social work students, which, in turn, led to them being faced with serious occupational confusion and professional dilemmas (Lam et al. 2016). The social workers cultivated by Chinese colleges and universities cannot meet the social needs. MSW education does not meet the requirements to train students' ability to deal with practical affairs, therefore students find it difficult looking for a job after graduation and often consider changing their careers (Li et al. 2011; Liang 2014). Chau and Liu (2001) pointed that a major challenge for social work in China is the lack of social recognition. It is manifested in the lack of employment opportunities for social work graduates (Wu et al. 2016). Thus, most social work graduates in the past two decades had to find jobs unrelated to their field of study (Law and Gu 2008; Yan and Cheung 2006).

Research Questions and Objectives

In China, social work education takes the lead in development process while the professional practice lags. Therefore, the education is unable to offer guidance to the MSW students when

they practice (Tsang et al. 2008; Wang and Chui 2016). This leads to MSW students having a negative frame of mind towards their employment. They are also reluctant to engage in social work occupation after graduation (Wu et al. 2016). But the reality is that the professional social work personnel are in great demand with the society and government. So how should the MSW education adjust to meet the needs of professionals' practice? How should the university or colleges educate the MSW students to be qualified in the future career? Particularly, as the abovementioned literature is mainly about theoretical exploration but lacks empirical research. How did the students think about their education quality? What are their opinions towards the current situation? From their perspectives, what are the challenges? How should we improve it?

To answer these questions, this study intended to carry out an empirical investigation to examine the current situation and challenges of MSW education in contemporary China. Particularly, we examine it from students' perspectives. This paper would sample 500 MSW students from 10 universities around 8 provinces in China, to ask their evaluation on the MSW education quality in Chinese university. The study wanted to find out the advantages and defects of MSW education in mainland China. It expects to put forward some feasible suggestions on the potential improvements to the current MSW education. It is a pressing matter for China's MSW professional education to develop and improve. By trying to suggest and establish the right concept of education and professional training mode, as well as to improve the curriculum system and teaching methods, we hoped the social workers with MSW degrees cultivated by the universities and colleges could meet the needs of the Chinese society. As a result, the MSW education in mainland China can achieve sustainable and healthy development.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sampled students were mainly from mainland China April 2012. The researchers judgmentally decided the investigation sites to balance the sample distribution in the whole country. According to the list of universities that are

authorized to award MSW degree, there were 58 universities in 2011 (Zuo and Liu 2012). Therefore the researchers chose 4 universities in the Eastern China, 3 in the Central, and 3 in the West. The chosen universities must be able to provide MSW education. Therefore, ten among 58 were chosen, namely Nanjing University, Soochow University, Nanjing University of Science and Technology, Fuzhou University, Jilin University, Central South University, Anhui Normal University, Sichuan University, Northwest Normal University, Yunnan University. Among them, half of them were the first round of universities that were authorized to award MSW degrees. Therefore the chosen universities can reflect well the economic and educational differences between the regions. Then the researchers used the simple random sampling method to draw samples and issued 500 questionnaires with each school having 50 samples. And 467 questionnaires were retrieved with the response rate of 93.4 percent. After logical examination and amplitude inspection of the original questionnaire, 41 ineffective questionnaires were abandoned and 426 left, so the final effective rate reached 85.2 percent.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section was the socio-demographic information, which helped the researchers to have a general understanding of respondents. In this study, the respondents were MSW students. They were mostly between 20-25 years of age and unmarried, so the researchers did not use the age and marital status variables. But gender was taken into account. Moreover, another three variables in line with Chinese specific situation were also analyzed. They are the CPC membership, the level of undergraduate university¹ and majors when they were undergraduate.

CPC Membership

In China, CPC membership was an important indicator of political and social capital. Members of CPC usually had more privileges to access more resources like get employed, be awarded, etc. (Bian et al. 2001; Dickson and Rublee 2000). So for college students, being a member of CPC also means they were more likely to get awarded in the school or employed in the job market. In the CPC membership management

systems, people need to become the youth leagues members for years when they were high school students or college students before they applied to join in the CPC full membership. It is not easy to become a full member of CPC. So many students are still youth leagues members of CPC when they are at college. Therefore, the researchers had three options for this question: Non-CPC membership, youth league of CPC membership, CPC full membership.

Level of Undergraduate University

The Chinese government also divided the universities into different levels so that it could support them differentially. Accordingly, this variable contains three levels, ordinary university, "211 project" university, and "985 project" university. "985 project" is the first higher education construction project implemented by the government in May, 1985. It aimed to construct a number of internationally renowned high level universities in China. There were 39 universities to be elected in this project. These "985 project" could receive the largest investment and most preferential policies from the education departments of the governments. "211 project" is second project to be implemented by the government to develop excellent universities in China. In 1995, the Chinese government decided to assemble the central and local forces to construct about 100 colleges and a group of key disciplines and professionals to meet the challenge of 21st century. 112 universities were included in the "211 project". It is the important policy put forward by the Chinese government, covering the largest areas. But generally speaking, the education quality of "985 project" universities are better than "211 project" universities (only some of the universities have received support from both 211 and 985 project), and "211 project" universities are generally better than ordinary universities. The differences in access to resources for colleges and universities can make a direct and important influence to the higher education mode, therefore on the research and teaching quality (Ngok and Guo 2008; Zhang et al. 2013).

Majors When They Were Undergraduates

It is also necessary to learn whether the MSW students were majors in social work when they were undergraduates. As we know, college student learn the basic knowledge and theories

related to their discipline at the undergraduate level. Their faith and attitudes towards the major is built on during this period. While the graduate education generally provides with professional education, aiming to train their capability to get enrolled in practice. So the MSW education focused on the professional training and achievement. Thus it is assumed that students who have learned social work since they were undergraduates might have better knowledge and faith about the discipline and future career.

Evaluation on MSW Education Quality

The second section obtained information about the evaluation of MSW education quality from MSW students' perspectives. Currently there was no consensus about how to evaluate the MSW education quality. Referred to small-scale or pilot studies conducted by Chinese researchers (Liang 2014; Lu 2012), the researchers used four dimensions. They are "curriculum setting", "teaching method", "supervisors quality", "practice activities". Detailed questions can be seen in the statistical tables in the Results part.

The third section included more detailed questions on MSW students' attitudes towards their future employment. Similar to the measurement of education quality, it is difficult to comprehensively measure the students' attitudes towards their future careers (Li P 2012). In this study, the researchers used three dimensions, "career tendency", "career cognition."

Before the investigation, this paper first explained to the respondents that this survey had been complied with the ethics principles of social science research. Also that the information they provided would be confidential and only used for academic research. Finally it used the social

statistics software SPSS20.0 for data analysis.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 shows the characteristics of 426 respondents in this study. Among the sampled MSW students, 171 were males, accounting for 40.1 percent. And there are 255 females, accounting for 59.9 percent. And the Youth league of CPC member is the main-stream political status of current MSW students, that is, 52.6 percent hold this identity. Followed by the CPC full membership, 135 out of 426 have joined in the CPC. Besides, the distribution of different levels of universities was even. 28.6 percent were ordinary universities, while 35.0 were the "211 project" university and 36.45 were "985 project" university. When asked whether they were majors in social work when they were undergraduates, a majority of the respondents answered yes (accounted for 70.2 percent). And nearly 30 percent were majors in other disciplines when they were undergraduates.

Students' Evaluation on MSW Education in China

In this study, the researchers evaluate the quality of MSW education in China from students' perspectives. Particularly, we measured it through four dimensions: "Curriculum Setting", "Teaching Method", "Supervisors quality", "Practice Activities".

Curriculum Setting

There are five indicators in the curriculum setting dimensions. Students were asked their assessment towards the timing and contents, theory learning, practice learning, relations with

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	171	40.1
	Female	255	59.9
<i>CPC Membership</i>	Non-CPC member	67	15.7
	Youth league of CPC member	224	52.6
	CPC full member	135	31.7
<i>Type of Undergraduate University</i>	Ordinary university	122	28.6
	"211 project" university	149	35.0
	"985 project" university	155	36.4
<i>Majors When They Were Undergraduates</i>	Social work	299	70.2
	Non-social work	127	29.8

future employment, and teaching material selection. Table 2 shows the frequency of students' views on the curriculum setting of current MSW education. Overall, the evaluation is not very high. When respondents were asked "do you think the timing and content of curriculum setting are reasonable", 50.3 percent of the total respondents did not agree that curriculum setting was reasonable. 12.9 percent of the respondents said that it did not matter, and only 36.8 percent were satisfied.

Respondents were also not satisfied with the theory and practice course teaching. Table 2 revealed that 59.9 percent thought the graduate education should strengthen the theory learning and 59.1 percent thought that it should strengthen practice courses learning, too. In additional, 56.8 percent of students said practice course setting would be helpful for their future employment. On the selection of teaching material, students were not satisfied. Only 39.5 percent of the students were satisfied with the textbooks. 49.7 percent of students were not satisfied, and they believed that their universities now urgently needed the indigenous teaching materials that were suitable for China's actual situation.

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Teaching Method

There are five indicators in the teaching method dimensions. Students were asked their assessment about the teaching methods of MSW education. As shown in Table 3, 47.5 percent of students expressed dissatisfaction with the teacher's teaching method. The researchers also randomly interviewed some respondents. They thought that some open or half-open teaching methods such as role playing, group learning, community practice, social surveys and seminars were neglected by the teachers in the classroom.

Specifically, more than half (55.2%) of students strongly recommended that teachers should pay close attention to the interaction with students in the course of instruction. And 44.4 percent of the students made it clear that students should be the center in the teaching process while the teachers should be supplemental. Besides, 58.6 percent of students found the diversity of teaching methods were conducive

Table 2: Student's views on curriculum setting of MSW education

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
Current curriculum time and content are appropriate	22.8	27.5	12.9	25.1	11.7
Theory learning of social work should be paid attention to in Master's stage	14.1	13.4	12.7	39.2	20.7
Practice learning of social work should be paid attention to in Master's stage	12.4	15.7	12.7	34.5	24.6
Practice course setting will be helpful in my future employment.	11.3	10.8	21.1	35.9	20.9
I'm satisfied with selection of graduate teaching materials	24.6	25.1	10.8	26.1	13.4

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 3: Student's views on teaching method of MSW education

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
I'm satisfied with teacher's teaching method.	26.8	20.7	14.1	25.6	12.9
Interaction should be increased between teachers and students in the teaching process.	9.2	20.7	14.8	31	24.2
Students should be the center in the teaching process while teachers should be supplemental.	19.5	20.4	15.7	28.2	16.2
Diversified teaching methods are conducive to MSW education	9.2	22.1	10.1	44.8	13.8
Teachers from different disciplines should be invited to lecture.	14.3	29.8	7.7	35.4	12.7

Note: All figures are percentages.

to the MSW education by stimulating students' interest in learning. Also 48.1 percent of students thought that teachers from different disciplines should be invited to enrich their knowledge structure and promote their study quality.

Supervisors' Quality

There are eight indicators in the supervisors' quality dimensions. Students were asked their opinion about their supervisors' teaching quality and interaction process. The results are indicated in Table 4. When students were asked about their supervisor's education backgrounds, more than a half of students said social work department teachers in their universities were PhD from other social science disciplines such as sociology. The percentages of students who believed that their supervisors' levels were good was just over 50 percent. In other words, many college teachers could not receive high evaluation from their students, in aspects of scientific research (46.5%), theory (47.4%) and practice (46.7%).

Additionally, the results also showed that 45.5 percent of students found that the supervisors had too many students to supervise, and they could not get sufficient supervision as a

result. The time assigned to each student was very little. Some students even said that they could only see their supervisors 1 or 2 times in a year, also suggesting that they could not supervise the students according to the requirement of awarding the MSW degree. In addition, 48.8 percent of students believed that the instructor's guiding method was unreasonable. 49.3 percent of students said instructors provided them little opportunities to participate in the research. Therefore they lacked training. 47.9 percent of respondents pointed out that the teacher could not meet the students and discuss with them regularly. When students encountered difficulties in learning and practice, they could only ask via mail or telephone. Still the teacher was often too busy to answer questions patiently and carefully.

Practice Activities

There are eight indicators in the practice activities dimensions. Students were asked to evaluate the practice activities in their MSW study. The results are indicated in Table 5. Practical skills and abilities are thought to be the most competitive advantage in future employment. But when asked, 'Have you learned to use the basic professional social work methods and prac-

Table 4: Student's views on supervisors' quality of MSW education

Questions	Disagree	Agree
Instructor has high levels of scientific research	46.5	53.5
Instructor has a lot guidance time	46.5	53.5
Instructor provides many research opportunities	49.3	50.7
Number of the students instructed by instructor is moderate	45.5	54.5
Instructor has high levels of social work theory	47.4	52.6
Instructor has high levels of social work practice	46.7	53.3
Instructor can guide students according to the characteristics of professional degree	48.8	51.2
instructors meet students o discuss issues regularly	47.9	52.1

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 5: Student's views on practice activities of MSW education

Questions	Disagree	Agree
I have learned to use basic professional methods and practice skills of social work	51.6	48.4
I know how to carry out case social work intervention	53.1	46.9
I know how to carry out group social work	50.9	49.1
I know how to carry out community social work	48.8	51.2
I used to host or participate in professional case work guidance	49.1	50.9
I used to host or participate in professional group social work	49.5	50.5
I used to host or participate in professional community social work	47.9	52.1
I used to host or participate in the process of social work administration	49.8	50.2

Note: All figures are percentages.

tical skills?’ As Table 5 showed, 51.6 percent MSW students answered no. That is to say, more than half MSW students did not themselves master knowledge well and could not apply what they had learnt to work appropriately. Besides, many students believed that they did not know how to carry out case work and group work, and never hosted or participated in professional case work guidance, group social work, community social work and the process of social work administration. The MSW students’ response illustrated their insufficiency of training and capability to engage in some practical activities.

Students’ Attitude towards Employment

Career Tendency

There are two dimensions in measuring the students’ attitudes towards their future employment. Table 6 indicated the results of MSW students’ career tendency. Half of them were not willing to be engaged in social work after graduation (50.8%). And about 60 percent of them would not be engaged as social work professionals after their graduation (59.4%). These two questions illustrated the MSW students’ reluctance to become professionals, both intentionally and in action. When asked ‘do you have a social work career plan?’ there were 54.2 percent

of students answering ‘No’. Also 54 percent of respondents said that their first job after graduation would not be social worker. The answer to these questions showed that half the MSW graduates could not continue to be engaged in social work, or choose the related work would whether intentionally or practically.

Career Cognition

There are four indicators in the career cognition dimension. Students were asked to evaluate their career cognition (See Table 7). Nearly half of MSW students in this survey did not consider their profession could have very good employment prospects. Only 35.2 percent of them thought that they had a lot of counterpart jobs after graduation, and 31.5 percent of students considered the salary of social work jobs as relatively high. The researchers can see that two-third students found that they could not find counterpart jobs in social work after graduation. And even if they could, they could only get poor remuneration.

DISCUSSION

The results show that, the current situation of MSW education in China has lots of problems. These are consistent with previous studies (Cullen et al. 2016; Lam et al. 2016; Wu et al. 2016), illustrating the urgency to reform the social work education mode in China.

Main Findings

1. The Curriculum Setting is Not Inappropriate

More than half of the students think that the theoretical and practical course arrangements are lacking. As we know, the curriculum setting of MSW education should reflect the characteristics of social work personnel training, meet the requirements of professional master’s curricu-

Table 6: Student’s attitudes on career development

Questions	No	Yes
Are you willing to be engaged in social work after graduation	50.8	49.2
Will you be engaged in social work after graduation?	59.4	40.6
Do you have a social work career planning	54.2	45.8
Do you want to do social workers as your first job after graduation?	54.0	46.0

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 7: Student’s attitudes on career recognition

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
MSW graduates have good employment prospects	20.4	28.6	10.1	23.0	19.0
There are many counterparts jobs	18.3	30.8	15.7	23.0	12.2
High compensation packages for social work jobs	29.8	29.3	10.8	22.5	8.9
The MSW students’ knowledge and skills learned at the school are adapt to the needs of society	22.8	29.3	14.3	22.5	11.0

Note: All figures are percentages.

lum, and increase the students' competence (Guo et al. 2016). However, most respondents in our investigation did not think the current Chinese MSW education was practice-oriented.

2. Teaching Methods Are Rigid Without Flexibility

Discipline characteristics of social work calls for flexible teaching methods in MSW education. Currently, the dominant mode of social work education in China is still classroom teaching. Teachers are the main body of the teaching activities, teaching content is fixed, information transmission is one-way, and students absorb new knowledge negatively.

3. Supervisors' Quality Needs Improvement

For teachers in colleges and universities, students are generally not satisfied. Many of the social work teachers hold master's degrees. Though some are PhD, they major in other disciplines like sociology, political science, public administration. They often switch their teaching or researching to the social work discipline in the middle of their career. So they often do not have enough social work experience or the relevant background.

4. Practice Activities Should Emphasize On Practical Training

Due to the inadequate development of China's non-governmental organizations, there are less internship agencies for the MSW students. Many of the students intern in non-profitable organizations with governmental support or the government agencies. So it was difficult for the MSW students to get professional training during their practice (Wang and Chui 2016). Over a half of respondents considered that the knowledge and skills they learned in school did not meet the needs of society.

5. Students Had Negative Attitude Towards Their Future Employment

As can be seen, most of the MSW students express their unwillingness to become social work professionals after they graduate. They are pes-

simistic about their future career development. They also had low career recognition (Wu et al. 2016). The loss of MSW professional's is very serious. And the poor treatment and lack of jobs are the important reasons for MSW students' reluctance to engage in the social work profession (Yan et al. 2013).

Crisis and Challenges

To understand the crisis of challenges faced with MSW education in contemporary China, we need to know the development trajectory of social work education. Social work in western countries originated from the practice of helping others, and then uses professional education to serve vocational service. However, Chinese social work was "introduced", starting from professional education. Social Work education was significantly ahead of local professional practice. And China's Social Work education has been paused for 30 years due to political unrest in the 1960s to 1970s. When it was reset up and flourishes the MSW education, it was early 21st century. Then it entered the rapid expansion stage, leading to some problems of MSW education in professional teaching and trainings.

1. MSW Education is Ineligible to Cultivate Professional Social Work Personnel

Education in universities cannot meet the requirements of the job market. Students thought that the MSW curriculum setting valued too much the theory side and ignored practice; teachers' professional level was relatively weak; and students practice activities became superficial. Therefore MSW graduates are not that qualified to perform their work.

2. Mature and Indigenization Social Work Theory System is Poor

Modern theories of social work have been very rich, but they only summarize the experience of social work in the western countries, and do not apply for China with a different societal and cultural background. Up till now, China mainly learned and assimilated western theory. It seriously lacked indigenized theories and researches about the local conditions and practice.

3. Practice Activities are Formalistic

The social work profession particularly emphasizes on application and practice. However, currently few schools can reach the 800 hours of practicum in the social work education in Chinese universities. MSW students felt that they have not mastered professional knowledge and skills and applied the theory to work correctly after two years of learning.

4. The Practicum Seriously Lacks Qualified Supervisor

Current many of the supervisors of social work practicum in Chinese universities do not have adequate social work practice experience. So some young social work practitioners are hard to receive sufficient supervision with high quality.

5. Many Students Are Unwilling To Be Engaged in Social Work

More than half of MSW graduates finally do not choose to work in social welfare agencies or the community after their graduation. One important reason for this phenomenon is that the workload as a social worker is relatively high while it gets poor remuneration and low professional identity. In addition, it is hard for them to find a favorable job in the market because Chinese society lacks enough well established social welfare or non-profitable agencies.

Therefore, this paper provides a few suggestions. Firstly, promote the professionalization and localization of MSW education. The national educational agencies should establish a national norm of social work education. Secondly, adopt flexible teaching methods. The teaching methodologies should be based on application and student oriented; and interactive teaching methods rather than classroom teaching should be used. Thirdly, pay great attention to practical skills training. MSW education should highlight the practicum in their courses. Lastly, improve the work environment for social workers in the society. There should be a wide range of institutions for MSW students to work in after their graduation. It also needs to establish a complete occupational system for the social workers, ensuring that they have sufficient payments, decent job status and good occupational recognition.

CONCLUSION

MSW education in China has undergone rapid development since the 21st century. But it has just started and it faces many crises. The main focus of this paper is to analyze the current situation of MSW education in Chinese colleges and analyze the challenges faced by the MSW students from student's perspectives. It's found that there were some issues related the curriculum setting, practice activities, teaching method, supervisors' quality in the MSW education. And students reported negative attitude towards their future employment. Based on these findings, we referred that there were noticeable crisis and challenge in Chinese MSW education, like immature professional theories, formalistic practice activities, and unqualified supervisors. So some improvement suggestions or policy implications were put forward to promote the MSW education development in China. Chinese society and government are paying great attention and effort to promote the social work discipline and profession development. By overcoming the current crisis and challenges, we believe they can go better and further.

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