

# Rational Thinking on the Reform of Super-Ministry System in Colleges and Universities

Anyuan Wang

China West Normal University, Nanchong, Sichuan, 637002, China

**Abstract.** The Super-Ministry System has been considered as the main direction of the reform in colleges and universities, but it can not avoid the limitations of traditional solidified organization, most colleges and universities still hold a wait-and-see attitude towards this innovation. The relevant theory and practice need rational thinking, overcome the three limitations of "change and invariance", so as to promote the reform in depth. Firstly, it should overcome the limitation of unstable and unlimited expansion of the functional boundary caused by "changing functions with remaining institutions", then establish dynamic adjustment mechanism and "overload" supervision mechanism for further improvement. Secondly, it should overcome the limitation that academic rights cannot be highlighted due to "changing institutions with remaining power", fulfill the "addition and subtraction" of power, restructure the system of responsibility with certain adjustment. Thirdly, it should overcome the limitation of "changing environment with remaining institution", which can not meet the new requirements of discipline construction and governance modernization under the support of new platform and new technology.

**Keywords:** Colleges and Universities; Super-Ministry System; Reform; Collaboration.

## 1. Introduction

"Super-Ministry System" is short for "Super Ministry System", which is compared with the traditional small department system, whose basic characteristic is profound function, wide field, few organization, less reform motive force with benefit barrier, lower coordination cost and higher work efficiency. The Super-Ministry System in colleges and universities has played a positive role in reducing the cross of functions, promoting the integration of disciplines and reducing the management cost, which used to be considered as the main direction of the future institutional reform. But most universities remain on the fence, with the exception of Peking University, Wuhan University, Beijing Normal University and a few universities that have tried to relevant reform. Some scholars think that it should be actively promoted, while others suppose it should be abandoned. From the author's point of view, whether colleges and universities should carry out the reform of the Super-Ministry System needs rational analysis, neither blindly praise nor put off easily by a slight risk, since it may be the best choice to play the advantages to overcome the limitations.

## 2. Giving Full Play to the Advantages of Internal Function Integration and Overcoming the Limitation of "Changing Functions with Remaining Institutions"

The reform of the Super-Ministry System in colleges and universities will focus on the core issue of "function-organization", whose advantage is to promote the integration and transformation of functions, combine those similar functions and business convergence matters, so as to avoid the problems of functional cross, institutional overlap and multiple governmental departments. However, the reform is not simply the elimination and consolidation of institutions, but shall overcome the limitation of "changing functions with remaining institutions".

### (1) Establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism to overcome the limitation of variable functional boundaries

The reform of the Super-Ministry System in colleges and universities is to streamline and merge institutions with similar and overlapping functions, then form new super ministries with clear functions, reasonable division of labor and reasonable boundaries, so as to simplify the links and

improve the efficiency. However, the functions of will also change with the education development. For example, the original functions of undergraduate college are recruitment and employment, educational administration and student work. With the rise of innovation and entrepreneurship education, the original functions have to be changed as well. The main function of the traditional department system is to integrate the resources of Science Department, Engineering Department, Humanities Department and Social Science Department. With the rise of "Music Artificial Intelligence and Music Information Technology", "Political science, Economics and Philosophy", the boundary function of the original department has to be broken. Changing functions with remaining institutions cannot adapt to the development needs of schools [1]. It needs dynamic braking and the establishment of dynamic overall mechanism, so as to overcome the limitations of the traditional Super-Ministry System function variability. [2] On the one hand, it can explore the trigger mechanism of functional boundary monitoring, set up a special functional monitoring organization to clarify the functions and responsibilities of Super-Ministry System and establish the function trigger and early warning mechanism. On the other hand, it can establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism. When carrying out the reform of the Super-Ministry System, the dynamic adjustment mechanism of supporting mechanism can adjust most of the structure in time according to the change of demand, so as to re-stabilize the boundary.

### **(2) Establishing "overload" supervision mechanism to overcome the limitation of the expansion of functional boundaries**

In a certain extent, the Super-Ministry System is conducive to straighten out the functions and responsibilities of the post. "Overload" will lead to the problems of overstuffed institutions, large and complex staff with dysfunctional operation. But like traditional institutions, it has the natural attribute of expansion, which is easy to induce the "overload" problem. For example, with the popularity of quantitative assessment, the Super-Ministry increase in the assessment function is bound to expand the number of internal institutions and staff, so as to ensure the normal play of the assessment function. [3] With the rise of new engineering and new arts, the scope of Super-Ministry adjusted disciplines will be expanded, which is bound to increase the number of internal institutions and staff, easily leading to the failure of operation. Excessive expansion will inevitably lead to Super-Ministry becoming overload, thus reducing the efficiency. To curb expansion, it needs to establish an "overload" supervision mechanism, clarify core functions and extended functions, review the responsibilities and scope of major posts, then scientifically evaluate the "overload" condition. According to the workload or the actual situation of the affiliated institutes, centers and academies, the number of posts and positions should be limited to strictly control the "overload" state.

## **3. Giving Play to the Advantages of Alleviating Administration and Overcome the Limitation of "Changing Institutions with Remaining Power"**

To solve the problem of excessive administrative power and interference in academic affairs, the reform of Super-Ministry System of administrative organs in colleges and universities mainly focuses on the transformation of administrative functions with "power subtraction". The academic system reform solves the problem of small administrative power by means of "power addition" through the power shift at the university and the department level. From the perspective of "addition and subtraction" of power, the reform of Super-Ministry System in colleges and universities contains the profound connotation of "de-administration". However, in the practice of reform, the transition of functions and power is not smooth, which is difficult to achieve a new balance between administration and academia to highlight academic power.

### **(1) Fulfill power "subtraction" and overcome the "chronic disease" of excessive executive power intervention**

The reform of the Super-Ministry System of administrative organs will transform the small departments that "handle everything themselves" into large departments that only assume the functions of macro coordination, supervision, information provision, policy guarantee and logistics

services, so as to realize the purpose of "de-administration" by "focusing on the large and releasing the small organs". However, influenced by various factors, the "chronic disease" of excessive executive power intervention after the reform of the Super-Ministry System is not easy to get rid of. The authority of personnel appointment, running funds, staff training, scientific research projects, international cooperation and exchange in universities are all at the government and university level. Even after the reform of the Super-Ministry System, universities still have "two means" and operate within the framework of "command-obedience" [4]. Meanwhile, the reform of the Super-Ministry System has become a wedge between the university and the original secondary schools and departments. Adding a first-level administrative organization will not change the administrative function, but aggravate the administrative color. To overcome the problem of excessive executive power intervention, it needs to complete the "subtraction" of power at the government and school levels. Firstly, it should clarify the relationship between the government, the university and the internal institutions. The government is mainly responsible for policy supply and financial support, Super-Ministry System is mainly responsible for overall coordination and supervision, the academic department is mainly responsible for the coordination and management of academic affairs, the secondary departments are mainly responsible for daily teaching and scientific research. Secondly, it should establish a power list, responsibility list and negative list system to reduce the crowding out of the power of Super-Ministry at the government and school level. Thirdly, it should play the role of democratic academic management institutions, clarify the power scope of academic committees, academic degree committees, professional title evaluation committees, and consolidate the operating mechanism of academic decision-making power.

#### **(2) Complete the "addition" of power to overcome the disadvantages of academic power**

The reform of Super-Ministry System mainly carries on the power of talent introduction, financial management, professional title evaluation and scientific research project evaluation from the university level, then integrates the power of discipline construction, teaching and scientific research evaluation, strengthens the academic management function of discipline construction, scientific research and talent training, so as to highlight academic power. However, the power and responsibility of the academic department are not equal after the reform, with many tasks and heavy responsibilities, but limited right of pooling, resource allocation and evaluation, which is difficult to present the academic power. Moreover, there is a phenomenon of "hollowing out" of power in the Super-Ministry of some colleges and universities. Apparently, it has high administrative level and complete internal organs, but in fact they only have the "academic suggestion right". [5] To demonstrate academic rights, it's vital to complete the "addition" of academic departmental powers. On the one hand, it should reconstruct the power system of the academic department system, complete the power transfer of the university and the department, endow the academic department with more academic administrative power, and play the role of coordination and traction. On the other hand, it needs to optimize and strengthen the leadership of the academic department, strengthen the autonomy, empower the management of personnel, finance and property, so as to prevent the phenomenon of "hollowing out" of power.

#### **4. Giving Play to the Advantages of Promoting the Improvement of Discipline Construction Level and Governance Ability, Overcoming the Limitation of "Changing Environment with Remaining Institution"**

The reform of the Super-Ministry System has transformed the original complex external coordination into internal coordination, strengthened the connection between departments and disciplines, eliminated the power boundary, broke the disciplinary barriers, played the advantage of promoting the level of discipline construction and the improvement of internal governance ability. However, with the new requirements of discipline construction and the drastic change of the external environment, the weakness of Super-Ministry coordination gradually has emerged, forcing the support of new platforms and new technologies.

### **(1) Establish a cross-departmental platform to overcome the difficulty of "free combination" of disciplines**

With the in-depth implementation of the construction of new engineering, new medical science, new agricultural science and new liberal arts, the breadth and depth of discipline integration have gone beyond imagination, and the traditional Super-Ministry System cannot better meet the needs of the construction of high-quality discipline system and the training of talents in short supply. According to the theory that a major is a group of courses [6], courses in different professional fields can be freely combined to form new disciplines according to needs. For example, "musicology + artificial intelligence" and "medicine + literature" have emerged in large numbers. However, there's difficult "free combination" between disciplines and majors due to the "solid" boundary of traditional departments. To make up for the defects of traditional Super-Ministry System, it is necessary to establish a cross-department collaborative innovation platform. On the one hand, it can establish new Super-Ministry across divisions. For example, Peking University has established the "Interdisciplinary" department, which has eight academic institutions under its jurisdiction: Yuanpei College, Institute of Molecular Medicine, Institute of Frontier Interdisciplinary Studies, and Institute of Artificial Intelligence, so as to effectively realize the "free combination" between disciplines. On the other hand, it can carry out the project system of discipline construction, so as to build a bridge of coordination between Super-Ministry and realize the free reorganization of personnel, property and resources in different departments. Meanwhile, the project system is also conducive to the introduction of outstanding talents from different industries outside the university with the realization of "industry-university-research collaborative innovation".

### **(2) Build a "Wisdom Super-Ministry" to overcome the impact of external environmental upheaval**

In the face of the unprecedented changes nowadays, colleges and universities urgently need to comply with economic and social development, adjust their coping strategies according to the time and situation. However, due to the rigid organizational structure, it is not easy to achieve the rapid and effective collection of information, resources and talent elements through inter-departmental cooperation, so as to lead and support the development of economic society. To enhance the ability to cope with drastic changes in the external environment, it's vital to use modern information technology to build a "Wisdom Super-Ministry" for more flexible, intelligent and modern types. It should strengthen the top-level design and planning and decision-making of informatization construction, complete the informatization and intelligent development planning, build the intelligent Super-Ministry architecture of large platform sharing, big data wisdom governance and co-governance, so as to realize the precise management, convenient service and intensive development of network infrastructure.

## **5. Conclusion**

Under the background of the new round of "double first-class" construction, colleges and universities should rationally view the reform of the Super-Ministry System and overcome the adverse effects caused by the three "change and remain" limitations: "changing functions with remaining institutions", "changing institutions with remaining power" and "changing environment with remaining institution". They should enhance the modernization level of university governance system and governance capacity to achieve connotative and high-quality development. In the process of reform practice, they need to establish dynamic adjustment mechanism and "overload" supervision mechanism, complete "power subtraction" and "power addition", establish a cross-departmental platform, and create a "Wisdom Super-Ministry". In this way, a new type of large department system with more flexible operation, clearer rights and responsibilities, and more "free" cross-integration will be constructed to promote the reform and upgrading of university institutions.

## References

- [1] Wang Hongcai. Research on the "Adaptation Theory" of Higher Education and Its Transcendence [J]. Beijing University Education Review, 2013 (4).
- [2] Wang Liping. Transcending the Super-Ministry System with the Idea of whole Government [J]. Democracy and Science, 2013 (3).
- [3] Li Zhifeng, Wang Yang. Structure and Classification Management Logic of World-class University Faculty: A Case Study of MIT [J]. Teacher Education Research, 2018 (1).
- [4] Pu Zhenzi, Liu Yibo. Co-existence and Symbiosis: Research on the Relationship between Government and Social Organization in Social Governance [J]. Journal of Tianjin Administration University, 2016 (4).
- [5] Li Jun, Qu Xixi. Current Situation and Suggestions of the Academic System Reform of High-Level Universities in China: Based on the Investigation of 23 "Project 985" Universities [J]. Jiangsu Higher Education, 2020 (2).
- [6] Lu Xiaodong. Logic of Undergraduate Majors and the Establishment of Interdisciplinary Majors [J]. University Teaching in China, 2010 (9).