

A Study on The Impact of Funding for Rare and Unique Studies on The Development of Disciplines

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Abstract. In the current academic world, the allocation of funds and the use of funds for unpopular studies have aroused widespread concern among the public and scholars. However, there are still some obvious inadequacies in the allocation and use efficiency of funds. This paper aims to explore the relationship between the investment of funds and the output of academic achievements through specific case analysis and in-depth research on relevant policies. After in-depth analysis, this paper reveals the imperfect place in allocation mechanism of the funds of the rare academic, the low efficiency of use, and the long-term shortage in the development process. Based on these findings, this paper proposes that quantitative analysis should be adopted in future research to conduct research more scientifically and accurately. At the same time, this paper also suggests to learn from the international excellent cases and successful experience in this field, and take this as a reference to further optimize and improve the fund allocation and management mechanism, to improve the efficiency of the use of funds, promote the output of academic achievements, and ensure the better development and inheritance of the rare learning.

Keywords: Education; economics; philosophy.

1. Introduction

The funding for rare studies mainly comes from national and social donations, funding from local governments, and special support from universities and research institutions. In recent years, the state has significantly increased its funding for rare studies, which has injected new vitality into the development of disciplines. The significance of funding investment is not only to support specific research projects, but also to provide a guarantee for the long-term development of rare studies. Financial support is of great significance for the republication and dissemination of classic academic works, and helps to accumulate and pass on the knowledge of rare studies. In addition, the investment of these funds also promotes interdisciplinary cooperative research, making the research of rare studies no longer limited to a single field, but can be combined with modern science and technology, culture, education, and other fields, thus broadening the research vision and depth. At the same time, it also provides more opportunities for young scholars to devote themselves to this field, arousing their enthusiasm for traditional culture and academic research, and injecting fresh blood into the future of unpopular studies.

During the research process, the study found that relatively few studies have been conducted on "unpopular studies". Although there is a limited number of scholars dedicated to studying the funding issue of unpopular studies, these valuable research results still provide a unique perspective and in-depth thinking for the academic community. These studies have revealed the limiting effect of funding issues on the development of niche disciplines and proposed possible solutions. For example, Li Jingzhi emphasized the importance of establishing diversified sources of funds and the potential to improve the efficiency of fund utilization through policy guidance and market mechanisms [1]. In addition, the research of Li Danyang and Yin Zehao did not directly address the funding and allocation issues of obscure and unique schools [2]. However, in their exploration of the inheritance and development of obscure and unique schools, they indirectly touched upon the importance of financial support. Based on this, this study aims to supplement the shortcomings of previous research, comprehensively recognize the core role of funding issues in the development of niche schools, analyze the current funding problems of niche schools, and discuss solutions.

2. The Role and Development of Funding for Obscure and Unique Education

2.1. Financial Investment

In recent years, the government and social organizations have gradually recognized the importance of protecting interdisciplinary fields and implemented multiple measures to provide support [3]. For example, with the approval of the National Leading Group for Philosophy and Social Sciences Work, since 2018, the National Social Science Fund has established special programs for obscure "cutting-edge" and national history research to enhance funding for related research fields. This special project aims to focus on funding a series of research projects, thereby incentivizing higher education institutions and research institutions to offer relevant courses with professional aims to cultivate a new generation of professional talents.

In the early stages of the policy, research work was quickly initiated with a unified funding quota in 2018. Subsequently, in 2019, policy adjustments were made to consider differences in project types, and in 2020, it was further refined into team and individual project funding, encouraging collaborative research and disciplinary exchanges. The team project provides high support for interdisciplinary research and has a high demand for resources. The adjustment of the funding amount is affected by the fiscal budget [4]. The team project will be fixed at 800000 yuan in 2023 and adjusted to 600000-800000 yuan in 2024, reflecting budget fluctuations or project effectiveness evaluation. The changes in funding policies indicate that the country supports the integration of academic research and talent cultivation, from projects to talent development. In the future, the allocation of funding may focus more on educational projects. There has been a significant change in the government's funding strategy for obscure schools, with a focus on the long-term and stable nature of the funding. Projects that receive continuous funding support from policies can receive multi-year funding after the first successful phase, with the amount increasing from 300000 to 400000 to 800000. This funding growth provides an economic foundation for research, stabilizing and developing the team of scholars. The policy also encourages interdisciplinary cooperation, promotes knowledge exchange and innovation. The scope of the project for obscure and unique skills has been refined, involving a wider range of disciplines, and the number of spots has been increasing year by year. These changes and policy directions provide important guidance for future research and practice, indicating development directions and funding expectations for scholars and research institutions.

2.2. Effectiveness of Funding Investment

2.2.1 Promote academic output

In academic research, funding support is crucial for obscure and cutting-edge studies, providing resources and platforms for these studies and driving the output of academic achievements. The National Social Science Fund's Rare and Unique Learning Special Fund has promoted the development of the discipline through a chain mechanism of fund injection, platform construction, and achievement transformation in the research of Yinming Studies at Guizhou University [4]. After receiving funding for the Yinming Studies research project at Guizhou University, the Buddhist Quantitative Theory Yinming Research Institute was established, rare literature was purchased, an interdisciplinary team was formed, and basic engineering was promoted to solve the problem of missing original texts in the study of Han dynasty Yinming. The continuous investment of special funds has triggered the iterative upgrading of disciplinary ecology. The "Guizhou University Yinming Forum Special Fund," established in 2023, will extend its funding scope from a single project to multiple dimensions, such as academic exchange and talent cultivation. The research institute relies on its financial advantages to construct a three-dimensional training system of "literature theory application". At the same time, this case demonstrates the leverage effect of special funds. The initial investment of the National Social Science Fund attracted a matching fund of 2 million yuan from the Education Department of Guizhou Province, and jointly established a research base with three national academic institutions, forming a collaborative support network. This integration of resources has driven breakthroughs in disciplines, such as the VR experience project in collaboration with the

Guizhou Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism and the international forum cohosted with the Indian National Institute of Buddhist Studies, enhancing international discourse power [5].

The case of Mingxue reveals the inherent law of revitalizing obscure disciplines: special funds can effectively break through the "So low trap" of disciplinary development through a three-stage progressive mechanism of "precise supply system reconstruction value radiation". Its success stems not only from the precise grasp of the characteristics of "Han Tibetan civilization mutual learning" in Ming studies, but also from the transformation of funds into a structured driving force of "physical platform support (30%) +academic community activation (40%) +social value mining (30%)". This practice provides a replicable transformation path for similar disciplines - when external resource investment resonates with the endogenous development logic of the discipline, endangered and unique disciplines may achieve a paradigm shift from "literature research (1.0)" to "theoretical innovation (2.0)" and then to "cultural empowerment (3.0)", ultimately completing the functional transformation from academic "living fossils" to civilization "gene banks".

2.2.2 Strengthening the cultivation of disciplinary talents

The injection of funds has a significant promoting effect on the output of academic achievements and plays a core role in the inheritance process of disciplines. Abundant financial support is provided for research fields that are relatively marginalized but contain significant cultural and academic significance [6].

The discipline of value provides a solid foundation for talent cultivation, which greatly helps alleviate the talent gap phenomenon that occurs in the process of disciplinary inheritance. Taking German higher education institutions as an example, by setting up specific funds to support disciplines that are relatively less attractive to students and the market, this strategy not only injects new vitality into the development of these disciplines, but also provides valuable experience and important references for other countries and regions in terms of discipline inheritance.

In recent years, Germany has focused on the obscure discipline of cognitive science. The federal government has released a research project funding plan, clarifying the scope and conditions of funding, with a particular focus on technological originality and the possibility of achievement transformation [7]. For example, in niche areas of cognitive science, such as the study of language cognitive neural mechanisms, government grants may provide long-term funding to support basic theoretical exploration, while requiring applicants to demonstrate their contributions to the development of technology in federal government-related fields. After receiving funding, the International Conference on Cognitive Linguistics (ICLC) has been held multiple times in Germany [8].

The University of Dusseldorf held a conference on the theme of "Language and Cognitive Modeling", attracting over 500 experts and scholars from around the world. At the same time, German universities have offered numerous undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs related to cognitive science, cultivating a large number of professional talents [9]. Universities such as Munich University and Göttingen University have well-established cognitive science education systems, providing students with interdisciplinary courses and research practice opportunities.

3. Obstacles to Development

3.1. The Distribution Mechanism

The current funding allocation mechanism for obscure and unique disciplines seems to be showing. An unbalanced state. Specifically, in specific fields and research institutions, such as linguistics, history, etc. [10]. These fields seem to receive relatively more funding support, while at the same time, other equally important fields, including but not limited to philology, oracle bone research, and some interdisciplinary fields that require more economic support to purchase materials, are facing the dilemma of insufficient funding. This uneven distribution phenomenon undoubtedly has a certain impact on the comprehensiveness and depth of academic research.

At the same time, it was also noted in the research that the "Matthew effect" in the funding allocation mechanism is also an issue that cannot be ignored. In some popular disciplines or well-known research institutions, due to their abundant resources and high academic status, they often have easier access to funding support [11]. In contrast, some obscure or emerging research fields may find it difficult to obtain the necessary funding support due to a lack of sufficient visibility and influence. This phenomenon of 'the stronger the strong, the weaker the weak' will undoubtedly exacerbate the development dilemma of obscure skills.

3.2. Efficiency of Use

In the current academic research field, some obscure and profound research projects often face the problem of insufficient funding. Due to the lack of widespread public attention and commercial application prospects, these projects are often at a disadvantage in obtaining research funding. In addition, these projects also have certain problems in fund management, such as the lack of an effective fund management mechanism, which leads to low efficiency in the use of funds [12]. Even if some financial support can be obtained at times, the efficiency of using these funds is often unsatisfactory due to the lack of effective management and supervision mechanisms. For example, some research projects, after receiving funding, have experienced waste and abuse of funds due to a lack of clear plans and goals. This not only damages the reputation of obscure research but also further exacerbates the problem of funding shortage.

The lack of professional talent is another significant issue. Due to the small scale or low expectations of the industry, few students and professionals are willing to engage in it. This has led to a huge gap between talent supply and demand, increasing the work pressure on existing professionals and also constraining the overall development of the industry. In addition, a lack of talent also means a lack of innovation and leadership, making it difficult for the industry to break through existing bottlenecks and achieve long-term development.

3.3. Long-term Development of Disciplines

For most obscure disciplines, their research often requires long-term accumulation and in-depth exploration [13]. These disciplinary fields typically involve a wide range of knowledge systems and complex theoretical frameworks; therefore, researchers must invest a significant amount of time and effort in excavating, organizing, and analyzing them. However, the current funding support system tends to favor short-term projects. According to the relevant policies issued by the National Office of Philosophy and Social Sciences, the research period for special project proposals is 3-5 years. This relatively short research cycle is insufficient for obscure disciplines that require long-term investment and sustained attention. And such short-term academic requirements are difficult to meet the long-term development needs of these disciplinary fields.

In addition, the academic value of obscure disciplines often needs to be fully reflected and recognized over a longer period. Due to the complexity and profundity of research results in these disciplinary fields, they often require a long period of precipitation and accumulation before gradually being recognized and accepted by the academic community and society. However, the current funding support system often places more emphasis on short-term academic achievements and benefits, which puts some obscure and niche disciplines that require long-term investment and sustained attention at a disadvantage when seeking funding support [14]. This excessive pursuit of short-term results may not only result in some obscure research projects with long-term value not receiving sufficient funding support, but also lead to deviations in the academic community's understanding and comprehension of these disciplinary fields.

4. Suggestion

4.1. Quantitative Study on Funding Input and Academic Output

Future research work can adopt quantitative research methods to explore in depth the specific relationship between funding investment and academic output in niche fields. Through this research, a more scientific and reasonable basis can be provided for the allocation and effective use of funds, ensuring the optimal allocation of resources and promoting the development of related academic fields. When conducting case studies, researchers can select specific niche fields as research objects, and record and analyze in detail the funding usage and corresponding academic achievements of these fields at different stages. Through comparative analysis, the correlation between funding input and academic output can be revealed, as well as which factors may affect this relationship. In addition, research should also consider factors such as the characteristics of different disciplines, the management efficiency of research institutions, and the personal abilities of researchers, all of which may have significant impacts on the efficiency of fund utilization and academic output.

4.2. Research on Optimization of Fund Management Mechanism

In response to the current problems in budget management, future research can explore and find effective ways to optimize budget management mechanisms. These paths may include, but are not limited to, improving the allocation mechanism of funds and strengthening the supervision of the use of funds. Researchers can propose a set of scientifically reasonable funding allocation standards to ensure that funds can be allocated reasonably based on factors such as the importance of disciplines, innovation, and the practicality of research projects. In addition, research should also focus on how to strengthen the supervision of fund use, establish a transparent reporting system for fund use, regularly disclose the use of funds, accept social supervision, and thus improve the transparency and fairness of fund use. At the same time, relevant departments specifically hire some professionals.

Talents are responsible for institutional design, and dedicated personnel are assigned to supervise the use of funds for obscure and unique skills, to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the fund management mechanism.

In addition, this study also considers that some emerging research fields, although currently not widely recognized, may play a crucial role in future academic development. Therefore, the allocation mechanism of funds should also have a certain degree of flexibility and foresight to respond to these changes in the academic community promptly and provide necessary financial support for emerging research fields.

4.3. International Experience Reference

In the process of conducting in-depth research and exploration, this study compared and analyzed the different practices of funding support policies for obscure disciplines at home and abroad, and studied the experiences and practices of some advanced countries internationally. For example, referring to the "Research Infrastructure" project of DFG in Germany, a "Rare Discipline Equipment Sharing Center" will be established in the densely populated areas of western universities. Through blockchain technology, high-value equipment such as ancient book restoration equipment and multispectral scanners can be pre-booked across institutions to improve resource utilization efficiency and promote academic exchanges. In addition, drawing on the experience of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and Technology (JSPS), a "Rare and Unique Learning Overseas Training Fund" has been established to support scholars to visit top research institutions overseas and participate in international projects, to broaden their research horizons and promote international cooperation. At the same time, referring to the "Endangered Language Recording Project" of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in the United States, the "Rare Oral History Project" has been launched to use modern technology to record and disseminate endangered knowledge, providing new ways for the inheritance of disciplines [15].

International experience has shown that the revitalization of obscure and unique disciplines requires not only financial investment but also supporting policies, innovative talent training mechanisms, and deepening international cooperation [16]. By drawing on advanced international practices and combining them with the actual situation in the country, building a diversified and efficient funding support system for obscure and exceptional education is the key to ensuring the inheritance and development of these valuable academic resources.

5. Conclusion

The issue of funding for obscure and unique disciplines has been rarely studied. Although it has attracted attention from countries around the world in recent years and its current situation has improved, there are still problems such as low efficiency in use, imperfect distribution mechanisms, and the need to strengthen management systems. This study aims to explore the relevant issues and their underlying reasons, conduct a specific analysis of the problems, and promote the optimization of funding allocation and use for obscure and unique disciplines through quantitative research, strengthening management, and drawing on successful experiences from around the world. At the same time, it is hoped that more scholars will focus on this topic in the future to promote the sustainable development of obscure disciplines.

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