

Exploring the Governance Path for the Coordinated Development of Higher Education in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

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Abstract: Against the background that regional coordinated development has become a global trend, the coordinated development of higher education in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) is a key support for enhancing regional innovation vitality, optimizing talent reserves, and strengthening core competitiveness. Due to practical factors such as institutional differences and diverse governance subjects among Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, the coordinated development of higher education faces many governance challenges. This paper explores the governance path for the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA from the dimensions of governance subject coordination, institutional connection, resource integration, and collaborative mechanism construction, aiming to provide theoretical guidance for breaking the bottlenecks in regional higher education coordinated development and realizing the efficient linkage of high-quality educational resources.

Keywords: Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; higher education; coordinated development; governance path

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1. Introduction

As the core carrier of talent training, scientific research, and social services, the quality of higher education is directly related to the potential and stamina of regional economic and social development. As one of the most open and economically dynamic regions in China, the GBA has gathered a large number of high-quality higher education resources, laying a natural foundation for realizing the coordinated development of higher education. Promoting the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA can not only promote the complementary advantages of educational resources in the region, improve the overall school-running level of higher education, but also provide solid talent guarantee and intellectual support for regional industrial upgrading and technological innovation, helping the GBA achieve the goal of high-quality development. However, affected by multiple factors such as historical background, institutional systems, and management models, higher education in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao has formed its own characteristics and patterns in the development process, and there are also problems such as imperfect collaborative governance mechanisms, barriers to resource flow, and poor institutional connection. These problems have to a certain extent restricted the depth and breadth of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA. At present, with the acceleration of global integration and the in-depth advancement of China's regional coordinated development strategy, solving the governance

problems of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA and building a scientific and efficient collaborative governance system have become important issues that need to be addressed urgently. Based on this, this paper focuses on the governance path of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA from a broad perspective, conducts in-depth discussions on related issues, and provides useful references for promoting the coordinated development of regional higher education.

2. Core connotation and value orientation of the governance of higher education coordinated development in the gba

The collaborative governance of higher education in the GBA refers to a practical process of establishing reasonable governance mechanisms, institutional connections, and resource sharing among the government, higher education institutions, market, and social forces based on the strategic background of the GBA, promoting the effective interaction and complementary sharing of higher education resources in the region, and thus promoting the integrated development of higher education and the economic and social development of the GBA. Its essential feature is to change the fragmented state of higher education development in the region, and form a situation of multi-subject coordination of governance subjects, orderly and efficient governance processes, and shared and win-win governance results under the guidance of the concept of coordination. From the perspective of value orientation, the governance of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA first adheres to the principle of equal emphasis on fairness and efficiency. It is necessary to ensure that higher education in the three places has equal development opportunities in the process of coordinated development, avoiding development imbalance caused by excessive concentration of resources, and at the same time, optimize resource allocation to improve the utilization efficiency of educational resources and realize the radiating and driving role of high-quality resources. Adhere to the innovation-driven orientation, stimulate scientific research and innovation vitality through the coordinated development of higher education, promote interdisciplinary integration, cultivate compound talents with innovative thinking and practical abilities, and provide support for the construction of the GBA's technological innovation system. Highlight the open and inclusive orientation, fully respect the institutional differences and development characteristics of higher education in the three places, promote regional educational and cultural exchanges with an open attitude, facilitate the collision and integration of diverse educational concepts, and build a higher education coordinated development ecosystem with GBA characteristics^[1].

3. Practical dilemmas faced by the governance of higher education coordinated development in the gba

3.1. Unclear division of powers and responsibilities among governance subjects, and insufficient collaborative motivation

The coordinated development of higher education in the GBA involves the participation of multiple governance subjects, including governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, educational administrative departments, different types of higher education institutions, and relevant social organizations. At present, there is a lack of a coordinating mechanism for collaborative governance as the leader^[2]. The powers and responsibilities among various governance subjects are unclear, and there is a phenomenon of acting independently. In the work of coordinated development of higher education led by local governments at all levels, more consideration is given to the interests and needs of their own regions, resulting in the failure of the top-level design of regional coordinated development to be well implemented. Higher education institutions are the key subjects of coordinated development. Some higher education institutions lack the concept of active coordination, only focus on their own interest development, and have a weak willingness to carry out coordinated development in discipline construction, talent training, and other aspects^[3]. In addition, the degree of participation of market and social forces in

the coordinated development of higher education is not high, and there is a lack of a multi-party linkage mechanism of government-industry-university-research-application, resulting in a lack of joint force for coordinated development.

3.2. Significant differences in institutional systems and imperfect connection mechanisms

Due to the implementation of different social systems in Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and the mainland, their higher education management systems, admission systems, academic degree systems, and talent flow systems are all different. This makes it difficult to realize the free flow of higher education factors in the region. For example, problems such as mutual transfer of students, mutual recognition of credits, and connection of courses among universities in the three places cannot be solved smoothly, hindering the off-site study and growth of students. The off-site flow of talents faces problems such as household registration, social security, and professional title evaluation, which hinders the reasonable allocation of high-quality educational resources; at the same time, cross-regional laws, regulations, and policies related to the coordinated development of higher education are not perfect, and no unified development coordination standards and guidelines have been formulated. It is also difficult to properly handle problems arising in the process of coordinated development, which increases the difficulty of institutional connection^[4].

3.3. Unbalanced resource allocation and low efficiency of collaborative integration

There is an unbalanced distribution of higher education resources in the GBA. High-quality higher education resources are mainly concentrated in a few core cities, while educational resources in some areas are relatively weak. The degree of sharing of high-quality higher education resources among regions is not high, there is a lack of a good collaborative mechanism in cooperation, and the advantages of high-quality higher education resources have not been transformed into motivation for promoting the educational development of the entire region. Universities in various regions cannot give full play to the complementary role of their respective disciplinary advantages. On the one hand, there are phenomena of redundant construction and resource waste; on the other hand, the resource sharing mechanisms for scientific research resources, teaching resources, training resources, etc., are not perfect. Cross-regional resource sharing has high costs and low efficiency, which hinders the improvement of the overall quality of higher education^[5].

3.4. Imperfect collaborative governance mechanisms and lack of long-term guarantee

At present, the governance mechanism for the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA is not yet fully mature, and there is a lack of normalized communication and coordination mechanisms, interest sharing mechanisms, and risk sharing mechanisms. In terms of communication and coordination, communication among the three places is mostly carried out in the form of phased meetings and special cooperation, lacking fixed communication channels and coordination platforms, resulting in information asymmetry and untimely communication, which restricts the progress of coordinated development. In terms of interest sharing and risk sharing, due to the lack of clear standards and norms, problems such as unreasonable interest distribution and unclear risk liability are prone to occur in the process of coordinated development, leading to conflicts in development cooperation and hindering the stability of coordinated development; at the same time, the evaluation and supervision system for the coordinated development of higher education is not perfect, making it difficult to effectively evaluate the effect of coordinated development, and it is impossible to timely discover and correct problems, providing effective guarantee for coordinated development^[6].

4. Governance path of the coordinated development of higher education in the gba

4.1. Clarify the powers and responsibilities of governance subjects and build a multi-subject collaborative pattern

Building a multi-subject co-governance cooperation model is a basic condition for promoting the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA. First of all, give full play to the leading and guiding role of the government in the

coordinated development of higher education in the GBA, establish a Higher Education Coordinated Development Working Committee in the GBA, clarify the powers and responsibilities among the governments and educational administrative departments of the three places, uniformly plan the regional higher education coordinated development plan, and handle major issues arising in the process of coordinated development. At the same time, the government should guide the participation of universities, markets, and society in coordinated development through formulating policies, and form a good atmosphere for coordinated development^[7]. Secondly, highlight the main role of universities and strengthen the concept of coordinated development of universities. Support universities to establish cross-regional university-university joint development communities, carry out exchanges and cooperation focusing on disciplines, talents, and science and technology, and form a collaborative joint force. All universities should actively go out of the campus, strengthen contacts with other brother universities, and establish a consensus and development plan for coordinated development^[8]. Finally, use the power of the external environment to promote coordinated development. Encourage and attract industry organizations such as enterprises and associations to participate in the coordinated development of universities, and provide help and support in talent training, scientific research, and other aspects. Promote the in-depth integrated development of higher education and industry; encourage social institutions to participate in the integration and sharing of collaborative educational resources, and provide service support for the coordinated development of higher education^[9].

4.2. Promote institutional connection innovation and break barriers to coordinated development

Institutional connection is the key to breaking the obstacles to the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA. Based on the reality of institutional differences among the three places, we should carry out institutional connection innovation oriented by problems and form an institutional system suitable for regional coordinated development^[10]. In terms of the education management system, establish a cross-regional education management coordination mechanism, strengthen communication and consultation among the education authorities of the three places, and enhance the connection and mutual recognition of education policies. In terms of enrollment and talent training, explore the establishment of a unified credit recognition and curriculum connection system, simplify the procedures for students to transfer and exchange studies in different places, and promote the free flow and training of students in the region; establish a mutual recognition mechanism for academic degrees, realize the equivalent recognition of university degrees in the three places, and enhance the versatility and mobility of talent training. In terms of the construction of teaching staff, break the institutional barriers to the flow of teaching staff, establish unified standards for the mutual recognition of teachers' professional titles, social security connection mechanisms, and household registration convenience policies, encourage high-quality teaching staff to flow across regions and take part-time teaching positions, and optimize the allocation of teaching resources. In addition, we should accelerate the construction of a cross-regional higher education legal and regulatory system, issue special laws, regulations, and policy documents for coordinated development, clarify the core contents such as rights and obligations, cooperation models, and interest distribution of coordinated development, and provide legal guarantee for institutional connection^[11].

4.3. Optimize the resource allocation mechanism and improve the efficiency of collaborative integration

Optimizing resource allocation and improving resource integration capacity are also important goals of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA^[12]. On the one hand, we should strengthen the integration of regional higher education resources, scientifically layout disciplines and majors in combination with the industrial development and educational development reality of the three places, reduce redundant construction, and promote the formation of characteristic discipline clusters to a certain extent. First, focus on the unbalanced distribution of educational resources in the region, establish a radiation-driven mechanism for high-quality educational resources, encourage high-quality universities in core cities to extend to areas with weak educational resources by establishing branch campuses and cooperative schools, and improve the overall level of higher education in the region; second, establish diversified resource

sharing platforms to realize the sharing of scientific research resources, teaching resources, training resources, library resources, etc., in the region. On the other hand, establish an online resource sharing platform to break the limitations of time and space and improve resource utilization efficiency; encourage universities, enterprises, and research institutes to co-construct and share practical training rooms, laboratories, internship bases, and other physical resources, forming a three-dimensional industry-education integration model. At the same time, establish a resource sharing incentive system, and give encouragement and rewards to schools, enterprises, and social organizations that have done a good job in resource sharing to stimulate the enthusiasm for integration^[13].

4.4. Improve the collaborative governance mechanism and strengthen long-term guarantee

Improving the collaborative governance system is an important guarantee for the sustainable advancement of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA. First, improve the normalized communication and coordination mechanism, build a cross-regional coordinated development communication platform, hold regular communication and coordination meetings among governments, education authorities, universities, and relevant institutions of the three places, timely exchange the progress of coordinated development, and solve problems encountered in the process of coordinated development; establish an information sharing system, promote the disclosure and sharing of information related to higher education in the region, and improve the transparency and efficiency of collaborative governance^[14]. Second, establish a scientific and reasonable interest sharing and risk sharing mechanism. Clarify the principles and methods of interest distribution among all parties involved in collaborative cooperation, reasonably distribute the achievements of coordinated development according to the investment and contribution of all parties, and safeguard the interests of all parties involved in cooperation; build a risk assessment and sharing mechanism, predict possible risks in the process of coordinated development, determine the risk responsibilities of all parties, and formulate relevant risk prevention and control measures to reduce the risks of collaborative cooperation. Third, improve the evaluation and supervision mechanism, build a diversified evaluation index system for coordinated development, comprehensively evaluate the effect of coordinated development from the aspects of resource integration, talent training, scientific research, and social services; strengthen the supervision and assessment of the coordinated development process, establish an accountability mechanism, and hold accountable subjects that fail to fulfill their coordinated development responsibilities or hinder coordinated development to ensure the effective implementation of the coordinated development plan^[15].

5. Conclusion

The coordinated development of higher education in the GBA is an important part of the regional coordinated development strategy, and its exploration in governance paths has important theoretical and practical value. The coordinated development of higher education in the GBA faces practical dilemmas such as insufficient coordination of governance subjects, poor institutional connection, low efficiency of resource sharing and utilization, and lack of governance mechanisms. To get rid of the above practical dilemmas, efforts should be made in clarifying the powers and responsibilities of governance subjects, promoting institutional connection innovation, optimizing the resource allocation mechanism, and improving the collaborative governance mechanism, so as to form a governance system with multi-subject coordination, institutional adaptation, efficient resources, and strong guarantees. It should be recognized that the governance of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA is a long-term systematic work. We should fully consider the institutional differences and development characteristics of the three places, adhere to the principles of openness, inclusiveness, and gradual progress, and gradually improve and optimize the construction of the collaborative governance system. It should be noted that the governance of the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA is a long-term systematic project. It is necessary to fully consider the institutional differences and development characteristics of the three places, adhere to the principles of openness, inclusiveness, and gradual progress, and gradually promote the improvement and optimization of the collaborative governance system. In the future, with the continuous

exploration and practice of governance paths, the coordinated development of higher education in the GBA will be continuously deepened, providing stronger talent guarantee and intellectual support for the high-quality economic and social development of the region, and helping the GBA build itself into a world-class innovative region.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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