Towards an analytical framework for understanding the establishment of quality assurance in joint doctoral degree programmes

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@ECC 2016.04.14
Outline

• Introduction

• Research approaches

• Empirical findings
Introduction

- Research background
- Research questions
Research background

• Quality assurance (QA) has become a key issue to address in providing doctoral education: e.g. in China…in Europe…

• International collaboration in doctoral education between Europe and China has been developing in a very fast pace since 1990s, and further flourished and materialised since 2010s: e.g. a key form of collaboration: joint doctoral degree programme
Research questions

• 1) How can we understand the initiation and implementation of a quality assurance system in an international joint doctoral degree programme from institutional theory perspective?

• 2) How can such theoretical insights be applied for analysing the development of quality assurance system in an EU-China doctoral degree programme, particularly a Chinese-Portuguese joint programme?
Research approaches

- Theoretical approaches
- Methodological approaches
Theoretical approaches:

Towards an analytical framework of institutionalization of a QA system in joint programme

1. Conceptions of quality (Harvey & Green, 1993)
2. Institutional logics (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012; Thonton, 2004; Friedland and Alford, 1991)
3. Organisational innovation (Levine, 1980)
1. Conceptions of quality in higher education

- Quality as exception
- Quality as perfection
- Quality as fitness for purpose
- Quality as value for money
- Quality as transformation

Quality is relative to either ‘process’ or ‘outcome’ (Harvey & Green, 1993)

Transformation ➔ meta-quality concept: other four categories of quality are possible operationalisation of transformative process than ends in themselves (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003)

Source: Harvey & Green (1993)
2. Institutional logic perspective

- A school of institutional theory
- Definition of institutional logics
- Primary motivations for institutionalists to develop the institutional logics approach (Cai and Mehari 2015)
- ‘Institutionalisation’ from institutional logics perspective

institutionalisation is a process of reconciling different or even competing institutional logics and draws particular attention to institutional compatibility and the role of agency in the process of institutional changes.

➢ To use institutional logics to concretely define the content and meaning of institutions (Thornton and Ocasio 2008)
➢ To better explain the process of institutional changes (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012)
Typologies of institutional logics

- Friedland and Alford (1991): bureaucracy state, democracy, Christian religion, Capitalist market, nuclear family

- Thornton (2004): state, family, religion, profession, market, corporation

- Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012): state, family, community, religion, profession, market, corporation
Approach 1: 1+2 = Institutional logics aligning with concepts of quality (Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>categories</th>
<th>key notions of the definition</th>
<th>outcome/process – oriented perspective</th>
<th>underlying logics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exception</td>
<td>1) traditional notion of quality: distinctiveness</td>
<td>outcome-oriented</td>
<td>profession logic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) exceeding high standards (excellence)</td>
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<td>3) checking standards</td>
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<td>value for money</td>
<td>1) accountability</td>
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<td>market logic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) customer’s charter</td>
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<td>fitness for purpose</td>
<td>1) I: meeting customer specification</td>
<td></td>
<td>market logic and bureaucratic state logic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) II: meeting institution mission</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>perfection (consistency)</td>
<td>1) zero defects (excellence)</td>
<td>process-oriented</td>
<td>democracy logic and corporation logic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) getting things right first time</td>
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<td>3) quality culture</td>
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3. Institutionalisation process of organisational innovation (Levine, 1980)

1. Recognition of need
2. Planning and formulating a solution
3. Initiation and implementation of plan
4. Institutionalization or termination

- Profitability
- Compatibility
- Agencies of Institutional entrepreneurs
Approach 2: 2+3 = Theoretical framework (Figure 1)
Empirical research methods

Single case study
- Data collection
- Data analysis
Methodological approach

• Single case study: DHM Programme
• Data collection:
  • Time: September 2014, March 2015, May 2015
  • Place: SMU, Guangzhou, China
  • Resources:
    ➢ Documentation
    ➢ classroom observation
    ➢ participation in thesis seminars and student-supervisor meetings
    ➢ interviews of programme manager/coordinator (4), supervisor (1), administrator (2), students (3) of the programme
Data analysis (coding)

- Interpreting managers' perceptions of quality and underlying logics (based on Table 1).
- Interpreting managers' different QA approaches and underlying logics, and profitability and compatibility of the approaches at different phases (following Figure 1).

Categories key notions of the definition outcome/process-orientation perspective:

- Exception 1) Traditional notion of quality:
  - Distinctiveness
  - Exceeding high standards (excellence)
  - Checking standards

- Process-oriented profession logic:
  - Value for money:
    - Accountability
    - Customer's charter

- Market logic:
  - Fitness for purpose:
    - I: Meeting customer specification
    - II: Meeting institution mission

- Market logic and bureaucratic state logic:
  - Perfection (consistency):
    - Zero defects (excellence)
    - Getting things right first time
    - Quality culture

- Process-oriented democracy and corporation logic:
  - Institutionalisation of a QA system

Factors affecting the innovation process (as a process of institutionalisation):
- Profitability
- Compatibility
- Agency of institutional entrepreneurs
Empirical findings

1. Key managers’ perception of quality and the underlying logics
2. QA system at Initiation Phase
3. QA system at Current Phase
4. Reasons behind the changes of logics and QA system: profitability, compatibility, and agencies
Preparation Phase
(Logics at Preparation Phase)

SMU managers

A1
Quality as value for money, Fitness for purpose

A2
Quality as value for money, fitness for purpose, perfection

ISCTE-IUL managers

B1
Quality as exception and perfection

B2
Quality as exception and value for money
Initiation phase

- Underlying logics of QA system at Initiation Phase

DHM Programme

SMU managers

By-passing gov. accreditation, routine administration

A1

A2

ISCTE-IUL managers

Outcome

Objective

Development of quality culture: staff training, hub offices...
Standardizing managerial process
Marketing strategy of the programme...

Develop academic rules following Portuguese mode...

B1

B2
Current Stage

• Underlying logics of the current QA system of DHM Programme

1. Quality culture,
2. Standard process management,
3. Changes of marketing policies
4. Changes of academic rules
5. Government accreditation

profitability
compatibility
Agencies

A1
A2
B1
B2

QA system of DHM Programme
Thank you!

Questions and answers?

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Main references