

# Social work Vocational Education under "1 + X" certificate system

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**Abstract:** In 2019, the Chinese government officially proposed to start the system of "academic certificate + several vocational skill level certificates" in vocational colleges, that is, "1 + X" system. The "1 + X" education mode ensures that students obtain several vocational skill level certifications in vocational skills while obtaining academic certificates. As a professional social work that has been rooted in China for only 20 years, the "1 + X" model has brought it a great opportunity for development. Improving the professionalism of teachers, optimizing the education evaluation mechanism, and inviting professional social work organizations to participate in practical training have become important ways to promote social work vocational education.

**Keywords:** 1+X Certificate System, social work, vocational education

## 1. Introduction

The development of China's vocational education has gone through 70 years since the founding of new China in 1949, with several ups and downs. Finally, it officially entered the 3.0 stage with the decision on accelerating the development of Modern Vocational Education issued by the State Council in 2014. However, today, there is still a bias in the traditional concept of Vocational Education in the public view. This bias believes that the educational value of vocational education is small, and the skills cultivated by vocational education have problems of professionalism and legitimacy. Social work vocational education is facing great challenges.

## 2. Problems of Vocational Education in Current Social Work

For a long time, China's social work has adopted the strategy of "education first and practice follow-up". In the "3.0 stage theory" put forward by scholar Bonian Shi, the development of social work in China is divided into recovery and reconstruction period from 1987 to 1993, preliminary development period from 1994 to 2000 and rapid development period after 2000. After the completion of the three stages of development, social work has initially taken on a large scale in the field of education. However, it can not be ignored that the current development of social work still has the following problems:

First, localization is insufficient. Social work education originated from the West. In its early construction, it failed to fully adapt to the characteristics of China's socio-economic and social development, and the problems of acclimatization and weak application were more serious;

Second, the number of social work teachers in vocational education is not enough, and it is common to rely on teachers of other disciplines to form professional teams. According to the current regulations, more than 60% of teachers majoring in social work have professional education background. There are no clear regulations and distinctions between theoretical teachers and empirical teachers. As a practice oriented specialty, social work is difficult to meet its needs in the current allocation of teachers. Because teachers themselves lack sufficient understanding of social work, the lack of recognition of professional value and weak professional ability are more obvious. In terms of assessment and evaluation, the current teacher assessment mechanism focuses on theoretical research, which also affects the effort dedicating of professional teachers in social work practice. Similar to field practice and other "time-consuming" and "laborious" practical methods, it is difficult to find support and recognition in the teacher evaluation system.

Third, in the process of social work practice implementation, the degree of conformity with the

specific reality is low. Teaching students to practice is generally ignored. This is not only the lack of practice education, but also the unreasonable design of practice curriculum. In 2006, the notice of the Ministry of personnel and the Ministry of Civil Affairs on printing and distributing the Interim Provisions on the professional level evaluation of social workers and the measures for the implementation of the professional level examination of assistant social workers and social workers was implemented, and the vocational qualification level examination was officially opened in 2008, which has also become a landmark event of China's social work vocational education. However, the post construction, professional title evaluation, incentive and training system for social workers after obtaining the corresponding qualification certificate is not yet mature. After graduation, 90% of the graduates of social work majors in Colleges and universities fail to enter the professional field of social work, and the graduates engaged in social work are generally faced with problems such as low status, complicated work, poor treatment and confusion of follow-up development;

Fourth, the reality that the foundation of China's social work industry is weak makes it difficult to guarantee social work practice. The lack of professional institutions has greatly affected students' choice of practice according to their interests and abilities. Domestic social work institutions are mainly concentrated in provincial capital cities and core cities. The operation of institutions is mainly purchased by the government, and the service demand is relatively single. As the most important practice place - community, interns are mainly engaged in streets, neighborhood committees, social assistance and security. However, these units did not design specific posts for social work, and most of the work overlapped with the work of the original staff. Professional practice is a mere formality, "nothing to do", "don't know what to do" and "feel like doing chores" have become the current situation of most internships. On the contrary, some institutions entrust a large number of administrative affairs to social work interns, resulting in interns' misunderstanding of professional social work practice and unable to meet interns' learning needs. It even affects students' confidence in social work.

### **3. The significance of 1 + X certificate system to the development of social work Vocational Education**

First, the "1 + X" career path promotes the legitimacy construction of social work vocational education. Professional certificate is an important part of fair evaluation of professional skills. The legal and fair evaluation system endows the practice certificate with credibility and provides a basis for enterprises to select workers. In 2015, the Chinese government carried out a drastic reform of the existing vocational qualification system, and many national certificates, including psychological counselors, were cancelled. The cancelled vocational qualification license and recognition items have been separated from the due talent screening function in the vocational qualification assessment, and more categories have formed an obstacle to the market entrepreneurship. Clearing up such certification is conducive to improving the supervision mode, promoting standardized management and reducing the burden on candidates and employers. Innovate and improve the development model and development plan from the national system. It can be expected that with the further promotion of "1 + X", more and more laws, systems and policies will be put forward. It plays an important role in changing the traditional prejudice of some groups towards vocational education. It also provides a basis for the implementation of vocational education and student employment.

Second, a clear training system model is of great significance for talent employment. Especially in the market economy, pension services with welfare nature lack relevant national standards, service standards and evaluation standards. In terms of personnel selection and employment, enterprises can refer to the "1 + X" training system to achieve the goal of making the best use of everything and people. The innovative system model optimizes the educational concept, promotes the development of the workplace, and plays a great role in employment, assessment, evaluation, employment and so on.

Third, the implementation of the "1 + X" certificate system can effectively promote the practice of professional social work into the campus and professional supervision into the campus, and break the dilemma that school vocational education is divorced from social reality. The demand in the development of institutions has become the direction of vocational education, and the skills in practical difficulties have become the focus of learning, so as to ensure that the needs of professional institutions can be met after completing vocational education to the greatest extent. In addition, the entry of professional institutions into campus is an important link for students to understand social work. Abstract knowledge such as ethical dilemmas of social work and practical work skills can be specifically and directly taught on campus. The process of practical training is also the process of students' understanding of vocational skill assessment, which is of great significance to the annoyance of social work itself. The "1 + X"

certificate system is only set up around social work qualifications and social work skills, which is bound to be of great significance to the sustainable development of students.

#### **4. Exploration on social work Vocational Education under 1 + X certificate system**

##### ***4.1 The dilemma of social work education and non-academic education***

In the "1 + X" system, "1" represents academic certificate and reflects the educational function of social work specialty. "X" stands for professional and technical grade certificate, which is the embodiment of social work as a professional function. In the pilot system, the corresponding social work is the senior care skill level certificate. As a profession in the field of pension, social work vocational education should not only help students obtain professional technology, but also stimulate students' ability of employment innovation. This reflects the characteristics of Chinese vocational education. Furthermore, vocational qualification level certificate is also the strengthening and expansion of social work education. Students who have received social work vocational education should not only complete the needs of academic education under the supervision of schools and other relevant departments, but also actively participate in vocational skills training, obtain corresponding certificates after passing the assessment of management departments and professional institutions. However, there are also some problems in the specific implementation process.

First, social work vocational education institutions lack the facilities and environment for vocational assessment. Social work vocational skills training puts forward higher requirements for the teachers. However, the reality of insufficient specialization of teachers in current vocational education makes it extremely scarce for talents who are skilled in mastering social work practical ability, training ability and supervision ability. Most vocational colleges in China lack practical experience in skill training and do not have a mature grade assessment system. In terms of vocational skill appraisal, the vocational skill grade appraisal in China is generally in the charge of the vocational skill appraisal subordinate to the local human resources department. The establishment of a vocational skill appraisal institute shall be subject to the examination and verification of the administrative department of labor and social security. In some vocational colleges with small scale and imperfect construction, they do not have the qualification of vocational skill level appraisal. It will be difficult to complete the educational task of "x + 1"

Second, the joint training of professional social work institutions and schools is lack of motivation. As a major innovation in social work vocational education, "1 + X" certificate system breaks the barriers between academic education and vocational education and connects the closed education system with social enterprises and institutions. In this process, it is bound to have a great impact on the traditional vocational colleges with absolute advantages. How to maximize the coordination of professional institutions into the campus and invest in the front line of cultivating social work students' vocational skills has also become a difficult problem that managers of schools must face. On the one hand, the social work education system still lacks the experience of close cooperation with professional institutions. On the other hand, the investment in vocational skills training will inevitably have an impact on the development of professional institutions. Professional social work institutions need to measure their own economic and social value, but also need to take into account the needs of professional development. The establishment of school enterprise cooperation model can not simply rely on the reform of vocational training colleges, but must be based on the reconstruction of education model and system on a larger scale. From the perspective of the current government division of labor, there is a lack of clear norms in the cross management of cooperation between human resources and social security departments and education departments. To realize the cooperation between schools and professional institutions, we need to find the mutual benefits of each department. Promoting the implementation of the "1 + X" vocational system in social work education requires the cooperation of the government, colleges and institutions.

##### ***4.2 Integration of "1 + X" certificate system and social work Vocational Education***

###### ***4.2.1 Based on the current social needs, create characteristic vocational education***

The development of social work in China is based on the rapid economic and political development. Responding to the needs of urbanization and population aging in the process of social development is the top priority of the development of social work. According to relevant surveys, China's existing welfare services can only meet 5% of social needs. The development of professional social work is of great significance to change the previous rigid system of government arranged social welfare. Through the

form of government purchase, encourage and support non-profit organizations and welfare service institutions to participate in the solution of social problems, which can improve the efficiency of problem solving and accurately improve the level of social services.

At present, China is facing the problem of population aging. In terms of gender differences, the female elderly have become the vast majority of the elderly population. According to the statistics of the same authority, it is estimated that by 2024, the proportion of the elderly aged 65 and over in China will exceed 20%, accompanied by the aging trend of the elderly population. According to statistics, the number of people over 80 years old is increasing at a rate of 5% every year. In contrast, China's young and middle-aged population is declining rapidly. According to relevant statistics, China's population aged 25 to 64 will drop from 1.008 billion in 2015 to 730 million in 2055. The traditional family support model is facing a great test. The elderly care skill level certificate is put forward based on the current national conditions. It is the national macro-control in the field of elderly care and the national standard in the field of elderly care.

Based on their own advantages, social work vocational institutions should create characteristic training of social workers under the condition of national elderly care skill level requirements. For example, institutions with medical and electromechanical foundations can combine elderly care services with medical resources, and encourage students to carry out the development of intelligent products suitable for the elderly and experience services. Based on the "1 + X" certificate system, it's important to continue to explore and practice, and make characteristic elderly care service talents that meet the needs of the industry and diversified elderly care needs.

#### ***4.2.2 Exploration on the teaching mode of "1 + X"***

Social work vocational education institutions should strictly follow the vocational skill level standard on the basis of fully mastering the elderly care service curriculum. Under the guidance of model and project, learn the content of skills and expand the "1 + X" practical skills of elderly care services. For example, through cooperation with medical colleges, teach students the physiological and psychological characteristics of the elderly. Cooperate with nursing homes to strictly implement students' social work practice.

The main body of the implementation of the "1 + X" certificate system model is colleges and universities, and the main force of the implementation is teachers engaged in teaching. Social work "1 + X" vocational education puts forward higher requirements for teachers' professional skills and professional quality. It is the top priority to solve the shortage of teachers and ability in the vocational education of social work. In the teaching evaluation of teachers, social work vocational education institutions should fully consider the specialty particularity, and fully affirm the field learning mode of field research, "time-consuming" and "money consuming". For the existing teachers who are not from the social work department, they shall coordinate relevant institutions to send them to the existing professional institutions for on-site learning and training. After understanding the "X" work objectives, tasks and processes of social work, teachers should accurately improve their "X" certificate training ability. For teachers who do not have relevant professional qualification certificates, they should be encouraged to obtain relevant professional qualification registration certificates after completing daily teaching tasks, and strengthen the construction of double qualified teachers. Reference to the Implementation plan of national vocational education reform, social work teachers with experience in professional institutions should be invited to undertake the teaching tasks of colleges and universities. Part time teachers are a powerful supplement to the teaching staff of social work vocational education. They are also a window for students to understand specific professional practice. Teachers who perform well in practical learning should be encouraged. Practical teachers should be established to imitate and social work teachers should be encouraged to learn from them, While reflecting on their own shortcomings, they should change their teaching ideas and become practical social work teachers.

#### ***4.2.3 Docking with professional institutions for accurate job skill positioning***

The core of the "1 + X" system is to ensure that students have the professional knowledge of social work and firmly grasp the skill needs of the target post, so as to become "skilled" In the actual social work vocational skills training, we should take the elderly care certificate as the basis and professional institutions as the media to cultivate students' practical ability. Vocational education institutions should connect with various professional institutions and design a large number of practical training courses. We should improve the practical ability of elderly care from the perspectives of case work, group work and community work. During the training process, educators should always pay attention to the latest trends in the field of elderly care, help students master the latest industry knowledge, cultivate and improve students' comprehensive quality. The promotion path of qualified elderly social workers can be

taken like from elderly care nurses, to nursing team leaders, and finally to the head of the nursing department. The infrastructure involved in this process requires the cooperation of professional institutions and training institutions.

## 5. Conclusion

The proposal of "1 + X" certificate system is of great significance to social work vocational education, but it also poses new challenges to vocational education. For teachers, colleges and universities should encourage them to participate in relevant vocational qualification examinations while completing daily teaching tasks, and go deep into the front line of professional social work to learn practical knowledge. For students, colleges and universities should implement "1 + X" policy, meet the requirements of academic training and provide diversified practice and internship opportunities, and strictly assessed students' mastery of professional knowledge and skills. For professional social work institutions and pension institutions, colleges and universities shall adopt an open attitude and provide opportunities and platforms for them to participate in practical courses of Colleges and universities. Experienced front-line practical social workers can be employed as part-time teachers of colleges and universities vocational teachers. For the curriculum system, based on the requirements of "1 + X", colleges and universities reform the traditional evaluation system that emphasizes scientific research rather than practice, and encourage the innovation of elderly care model in combination with the advantages of colleges and universities. The "1 + X" certificate system is both a platform and a link, combining social work vocational education and training with vocational skills, so as to promote a new situation of vocational education integrating work and learning and combining inside and outside schools.

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