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A Review of the Correlation Between Educational Evaluation Reform and Human Resource Allocation

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Abstract. Presently, China's educational evaluation reform has entered a critical phase transitioning from policy advocacy to in-depth implementation. Since the promulgation of the Overall Plan for Deepening Educational Evaluation Reform in the New Era, the concept centered on the "Four Evaluations" has been explored across all levels and types of education. This exploration aims to break the entrenched issues of the "Five-Only" approach and construct a new scientific, diversified and developmental evaluation system. This research systematically reviews the correlation between the increasingly diversity-oriented educational evaluation reform and human resource allocation. It reveals that the reform, via initiatives including the "Strong Foundation Program", core competency evaluation, and the integration of industry and education in vocational education, facilitates a more holistic identification and cultivation of students' diverse potentialities. This, in turn, optimizes the talent structure, enhances the quality of human capital and underpins the development of new quality productive forces. However, the reform also faces challenges related to equity and risks of technicism. The successful implementation of educational evaluation reform requires systemic coordination across policy, culture, technology and resources.

Keywords: Educational Evaluation, Human Resources, Diversified Evaluation

1. Introduction

The steady development of current Chinese society calls for talents in various fields, whose cultivation hinges on the empowerment of education. Therefore, China is at a crucial period in promoting high-quality educational development. As an essential component of educational practice and a key guiding force for it, the importance of educational evaluation has reached an unprecedented strategic height [1]. Nonetheless, the long-standing monolithic evaluation paradigm dominated by academic examination scores, despite its efficacy in enhancing social equity and operational efficiency, has progressively exposed its intrinsic constraints. This single-signal system not only struggles to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' diverse potentials and integrated competencies but also risks distorting the educational ecosystem, exacerbating the homogenization of human capital and its structural mismatch, thereby constraining the overall improvement of national human capital quality and the enhancement of innovative vitality [2]. Consequently, the Chinese government has explicitly called for systematically "improving outcome evaluation, strengthening process evaluation, exploring value-added evaluation and refining

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comprehensive evaluation." This marks a shift in China's educational philosophy from a single dimension focused on "only scores, only advancement to higher education, only diplomas, only theses, only titles" to a multi-dimensional comprehensive evaluation [3].

Education constitutes the most critical investment in human capital—a core factor of production. According to theories by Schultz and others, knowledge, skills and competencies accumulated through education can significantly enhance individual productivity, ultimately translating into higher personal economic returns and societal developmental momentum [4]. In this process of value transformation, educational evaluation serves as both a key tool for measuring the efficiency and output of educational investment and a core mechanism for the education system to identify, stream and allocate students to different social positions. Therefore, reforms in educational evaluation inevitably induce adjustments in human resource allocation. This study endeavors to systematically synthesize existing literature centered on the core research question: How does the comprehensive development-oriented educational evaluation reform influence human resource allocation mechanisms?. Through an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms linking them, this study hopes to provide reliable theoretical reference and effective practical insights for understanding the operational logic of educational evaluation reform, discerning its effects on human resource allocation and promoting the implementation of the reform.

2. The domestic and international reform process of educational evaluation system

The core of China's educational evaluation system reform lies in shifting from a "selection" logic to an "educating" logic, a process profoundly reflecting the evolution of societal demands for talent. The early evaluation system, anchored in the National College Entrance Examination (Gaokao) and a suite of standardized assessments, prioritized academic scores and progression rates, exerting a pivotal role in safeguarding social equity and operational efficiency. However, over time, its potential disadvantages gradually emerged. Researchers represented by Liu began systematic reflection on single-score evaluation at an early stage, pointing out its neglect of students' holistic development and calling for the establishment of a diversified evaluation system which promotes the development of students, teachers and schools [5]. In recent years, with growing societal demand for diversified talents, educational evaluation reform has progressively focused on comprehensive quality, process evaluation and value-added evaluation. Driven by multiple factors including the manifestation of the "Five-Only" problem, expert recommendations, positive pilot results and shifts in national development strategy, the government launched the Overall Plan for Deepening Educational Evaluation Reform in the New Era in 2020. This document delineates the four evaluation dimensions, epitomizing the robust national resolve to reshape the educational ecosystem and empower the cultivation of new-quality talents, thereby heralding a pivotal policy breakthrough for educational evaluation reform [6]. This reform concept is being implemented in both higher and basic education.

In higher education, the "Strong Foundation Plan" aimed at selecting and cultivating top-notch talents in basic disciplines is a typical case. Through comparative research, Ma et al. found that this plan, employing a diversified admission model combining "Gaokao scores + school test scores + comprehensive quality evaluation", ensures the quality of enrolled students while, to some extent, correcting the "score-only" tendency of Gaokao. It promotes fairness in selection and provides a new pathway for the early identification and precise allocation of top innovative talents [7]. However, drawing on a case study of Peking University, Liu argues that elite talent development in the era of mass higher education perpetually confronts a tension between students' "autonomous choice" and the system's "selection and stratification". While the original intention of diversified

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evaluation is to broaden pathways to success, in practice, without the support of a scientific educational culture, it may devolve into new forms of exam-oriented routines or even exacerbate hidden inequities stemming from family background disparities. This suggests that reform needs to address implementation risks at both individual and societal levels [8].

In basic education, reform focuses on the assessment of core competencies. Xin and Jiang argued that basic education evaluation reform must center on students' core competencies, driving comprehensive changes in evaluation content, standards and methods to transform them from rigid teaching objectives and evaluation systems into motivation for teaching and learning [9]. Shi further asserts that educational evaluation reform ought to revert to the fundamental essence of education, emphasizing its nurturing function rather than reducing it to a mere identification instrument. He criticizes the educational alienation caused by single evaluation and calls for constructing a student development-centered evaluation system [1]. To ensure the implementation of this concept, the "teaching-learning-assessment consistency" principle proposed by Cui and Xia is crucial. It emphasizes the inherent alignment between assessment tasks and learning objectives, embedding evaluation within the teaching process to continuously improve teaching and promote students' competency development [10]. Regarding feasibility, Liu and Xu focus on comprehensive quality evaluation, arguing that the key to its implementation lies in establishing operable indicators, integrity mechanisms and avoiding formalism. Their case studies show that comprehensive quality evaluation can promote students' holistic development but may face challenges like regional imbalances and insufficient teacher training [2]. Li and Zhang further explore the construction of academic assessment systems within this context, advocating for the integration of formative, performance-based, and summative assessments to comprehensively gauge students' developmental levels [11].

Furthermore, vocational education, as a crucial component of human resource cultivation, also sees significant impacts from its evaluation reform. Ren points out that the key to vocational education evaluation reform lies in overcoming the tendency of "general education imitation" and establishing an evaluation system centered on vocational competence with deep participation from industry and enterprises, thereby improving the supply quality of high-quality technical talents [12]. Xiong and Tan further clarify the pathways for promoting vocational education evaluation reform in the new era, emphasizing deepening the evaluation of industry-education integration and highlighting the characteristics of "type education" to precisely empower the human resources required for industrial upgrading [13].

Regarding the diversification of educational evaluation methods, foreign education systems have practiced earlier. For example, the US has shifted from standardized testing to multiple assessments, emphasizing "21st-century skills" and a growth mindset. The UK focuses on student progress through national curriculum assessment and value-added measures. Finland is known for its "no standardized exams" approach, emphasizing teacher-led assessment and process feedback. These practices provide valuable references for China's educational evaluation reform. Moreover, international research indicates that diversified evaluation can facilitate the heterogeneous development of human resources. For instance, Hanushek and Woessmann, based on cross-national data, found that cognitive skills correlate positively with economic growth, but single tests may overlook non-cognitive skills like creativity, potentially leading to human capital mismatch [14].

3. The impact of educational evaluation on human resource allocation in the new era

As the guiding indicator for the output of the education system, educational evaluation directly determines the types and structure of human capital signals, thereby profoundly affecting their

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allocation efficiency within the socio-economic structure. The educational evaluation reform, centered on diversification, is reshaping the human resource allocation landscape in the new era through various mechanisms.

Firstly, the reform enriches the dimensions of human capital identification, facilitating the optimization of talent structure and mitigating homogeneous competition. Liang points out that there exists a profound synergistic mechanism between educational evaluation reform in the new era and the cultivation of new quality talents. When the evaluation system can identify and incentivize students' innovative literacy, practical ability and critical thinking, it can provide diversified, high-quality talent support for national development of new quality productive forces [15]. This aligns with the logic of the "Strong Foundation Plan". Research by Ma et al. shows that diversified admission methods help incorporate "specialized or eccentric talents" with disciplinary potential and innovative traits into the cultivation system, thereby avoiding the premature narrowing of human capital caused by the traditional arts and science division and reserving strategic talents for basic disciplines and key fields [7].

Secondly, the reform guides the flow of educational resources towards more efficient directions by strengthening process and value-added evaluation, thereby enhancing the overall quality of human capital accumulation. Liu emphasizes that developmental evaluation promotes the professional development of teachers and schools, which in itself constitutes an optimization of educational human resources [5]. Cheng and Zhou also note, in their discussion of educational resource allocation, that educational innovation requires shifting resource allocation from a sole focus on hardware input to an emphasis on performance and output efficiency. The value-added and process data provided by diversified evaluation offer the basis for more refined and efficient resource allocation decisions [16]. This implies that the reform not only resets the standards for allocating human resources but also optimizes the resources shaping human capital.

However, the reform also faces challenges and risks in human resource allocation. The foremost challenge lies in safeguarding the fairness and scientific rigor of multi-dimensional evaluation. Liu's research warns that when evaluation criteria expand from single scores to ambiguous comprehensive qualities, advantaged classes with more cultural, economic and social capital may be better at planning and presenting these qualities, leading to latent exclusion in the selection process and exacerbating inequity in the initial distribution of human resources [8]. Furthermore, Zhao's rethinking of "good education in the age of measurement" reminds us to be vigilant against a new technicist tendency emerging in the reform—an over-reliance on quantitative data and AI labeling that neglects the educational essence of nurturing people and their holistic development, potentially causing a data-driven mismatch of human resources [17].

Finally, technology empowerment is becoming a new variable reshaping the relationship between evaluation and human resource allocation. The "Internet + Education" framework proposed by numerous scholars offers possibilities for recording learning processes and realizing diversified evaluation through technological means [18]. Zheng further envisions how AI technology can empower educational evaluation. Through unobtrusive collection and analysis of multimodal data, precise profiles of learners' cognitive and non-cognitive abilities can be achieved. This harbors significant potential for more personalized and targeted human resource development and career pathway guidance in the future [19].

4. Conclusion

First of all, this study clearly reveals the pathways through which educational evaluation reform interacts with human resource allocation. By reorienting talent cultivation objectives, the reform

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directly reshapes the types and structural characteristics of educational outputs. At the macro level, through diversified selection mechanisms like the “Strong Foundation Plan”, it identifies, selects and reserves more innovative, heterogeneous talents for foundational disciplines and strategic fields, effectively addressing the challenges of human capital homogenization and structural mismatch. At the micro level, practices centered on core competencies, such as “teaching-learning-assessment consistency” and the evaluation of industry-education integration in vocational education jointly aim to cultivate students’ comprehensive abilities to meet future societal and industrial needs, enhancing the quality and relevance of human capital at its source.

Secondly, this study also exposes the hidden risks and challenges in the reform process. While pursuing comprehensiveness, diversified evaluation may trigger new crises of fairness. When evaluation dimensions extend from objectively quantifiable academic scores to more subjective comprehensive qualities, the cultural and social capital advantages of privileged social strata may be further exacerbated, resulting in pre-existing constraints in the selection process. This not only contradicts the reform’s original intent but may also reinforce social stratification, thereby exacerbating inequity in the initial distribution of human resources. Additionally, over-reliance on technological empowerment carries the risk of reducing the complex educational process and human holistic development to quantitative data. Society may fall into a new technicist trap, causing a data-driven mismatch of human resources.

However, this study also has certain limitations. First, the analysis is primarily based on existing literature and policy texts, lacking support from empirical data, which may introduce research bias regarding the effectiveness and feasibility of reform practices. Secondly, the research focuses on macro-level institutional analysis, with insufficient discussion on the differences among regions, educational stages, school types and the unevenness of reform implementation. Future research could further collect empirical data through large-scale surveys, longitudinal case tracking, and comparative analyses to quantitatively measure the specific impacts of reform measures on human capital structure, students’ developmental pathways, and social mobility dynamics. Simultaneously, research should be strengthened on local innovations, resistance factors and coordination mechanisms during the implementation process to provide a more solid evidence base for constructing a more adaptive, equitable and scientific educational evaluation and human resource development system.

In summary, the diversity-oriented educational evaluation reform is a systematic project concerning national human resource strategy, essentially a reconstruction of the human capital signaling system. It attempts to break the screening mechanism based on mere scores, instead establishing a multiple-signal system capable of deeply understanding students’ diverse potentials, competencies and growth processes. This shift, as underscored by human capital theory from scholars like Schultz, aims to enhance the precision and effectiveness of educational investment, thereby optimizing the allocation efficiency of the nation’s most important strategic resource, which is human resources. It necessitates a return to the educational essence of nurturing people, upholding the bottom line of educational equity while pursuing scientificity and being vigilant against its alienation risks while utilizing technological empowerment. Only through systemic coordination among policy, culture, technology, and resource dimensions can the educational evaluation reform truly evolve into a pivotal link in unleashing individual potential, optimizing human resource allocation, and advancing high-quality national development.

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