

An Examination of the Current Condition and Potential Reforms of China's Higher Education Management System

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Abstract

The governance structure of higher education is centered on the interaction between government bodies and academic institutions, involving hierarchical supervision and the delineation of administrative authority. Essentially, this connection relates to the function of the government in managing. This study specifically examines the often neglected yet essential component of China's higher education governance: administrative paperwork. Our objective is to perform a textual analysis of these texts in order to broaden the research on governance systems in higher education. Administrative documents consist of three dimensions: the manifest dimension, which represents the explicit content expressed in the documents; the central dimension, which abstracts the common characteristics and qualities of the management content and methods reflected in the manifest text; and the logical dimension, which explains the governance system, addressing the logic and characteristics of management within the higher education context. The core and logical dimensions form the foundation of the manifest dimension and serve as the main focus of this study. An examination of 331 administrative documents pertaining to teaching and 623 documents pertaining to research, issued by the educational administration to a provincial university from 2017 to 2019, reveals that the primary approaches to management are incentive-based allocation, regulatory limitations, and organizational facilitation. Government entities initiate competitive dynamics by implementing incentive-based distribution methods, which involve the creation of different titles, competitions, and initiatives linked to economic resources. Regulatory constraints encompass the creation of rules, enforcement of monitoring, and assessment of performance to both restrict and enable institutional activities. Organizational facilitation occurs when universities need to efficiently and speedily carry out activities by assigning them, collecting

data and information, and providing operational support services due to conflicting incentives. The combination of incentive-driven allocation, planning, performance assessments, surveillance, information management, task deployment, and service provision creates a structure of interests and resource dependence that influences the development and research direction at higher education institutions.

Keywords

Higher Education, Management System, Reform Path, Administrative Documents

1. Introduction

There are varying perspectives on the impacts of changes to the higher education governance framework. Many researchers contend that these reforms have achieved significant progress, demonstrating noteworthy enhancements and streamlined procedures. However, some argue that China's attempts to change the governance of higher education are incomplete, regressive, or in their initial phases (Gu & Levin, 2021). To assess the efficacy of these reforms, it is imperative to closely scrutinize the practical interactions between the government and academics, conduct a comprehensive analysis of the fundamental issue of governance functions, examine the extensive array of governmental responsibilities, and evaluate the execution of these duties.

In 1985, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee issued the "Decision on the Reform of the Educational System," which identified the primary issue as the government's excessive control over higher education institutions. In 2010, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee and the State Council released the "National Outline for Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development." (Hackett, 2014) This agreement outlines the government's obligations for the comprehensive planning, policy direction, oversight, administration, and delivery of public educational services. In 2017, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with four other ministries, jointly published "Several Opinions on Advancing the Reform of Streamlining Administration, Delegating Authority, Enhancing Regulation, and Improving Services in Higher Education." (Huang, Pang, & Yu, 2018) These writings emphasize the government's duty in supervising national coordination, macro-management, policy guidance, oversight, and public service supply. Governance includes legislation, funding allocation, planning, information services, policy guidance, and administrative measures as required.

While there is a thorough understanding of the primary subject matter and significant issues pertaining to reforms in higher education governance, academic discourse continues to grapple with the issue of bureaucracy within institutions (Ivancheva, 2015). There is a dominant culture where administrative duties hold

more sway than academic ones, leading to a situation where persons in administrative roles have more convenient access to academic resources (Le Cornu, 2013). Faculty members engage in competition for administrative positions, while student union executives wield substantial influence. The outcomes of these programs diverge from their initial aims, necessitating profound reflection.

One contributing factor to the problem in our country is the lack of a comprehensive system for evaluating policy-making departments and a mechanism for self-evaluating policies. The evaluations conducted on the implementation of policies fall significantly short (Leisyte, Enders, & de Boer, 2009). In order to ensure that higher education governance reforms effectively achieve their intended goals and have a positive impact on the academic environment, it is crucial to address this gap.

2. Current Status of Research

2.1. Research Pertaining to the Core Topics of the Higher Education Management System Reform

According to Chinese experts, the government's functions are key to reforming the higher education governance system. According to Zhu (2023), the primary obstacle to restructuring the governance framework of higher education is to address the overbearing control exerted by the government over academic institutions. Chen (2023) argues that the government is the key player in reducing bureaucracy in universities. Liao (2023) suggests that relevant government organizations should undergo a comprehensive reform since they, together with university officials, play a crucial role in both facilitating and hindering the process of reducing bureaucracy in universities. According to him, the main problem with the existing higher education governance model is the government's excessive involvement, lack of involvement, and improper regulation strategies. Jiang & Wang (2023) assert that the state and government exert excessive control over university matters by exercising administrative authority, thereby compromising institutional autonomy. Zhou (2023) says that many issues with the way higher education is governed in China today, like the growth of bureaucratic power going too far, universities losing their autonomy, and a lot of schools using technocratic management styles, are caused by too much or too little involvement from administrators and the wrong use of governance methods, especially the widespread presence of power (Mahony & Weiner, 2019). Essentially, the government plays a crucial role in revamping the higher education governance system. This includes defining its role, as well as selecting and implementing governance solutions. Undoubtedly, bringing about a significant change in the governance system would require substantial modifications in various aspects, including administrative attitudes, work approaches, and operational structures.

As shown in the figure, three different management dimensions (represented by yellow, blue, and black) show significant disparities in performance (Figure 1).

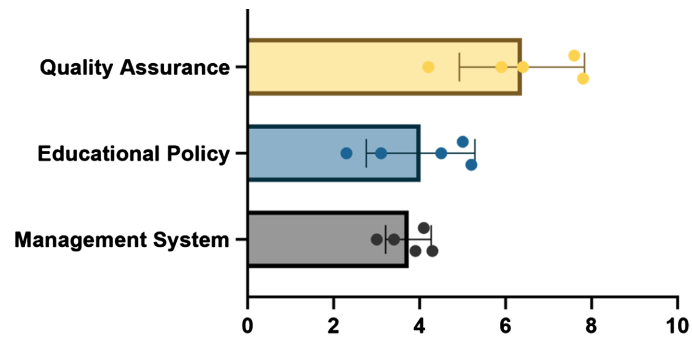


Figure 1. Disparities in management focus and resource allocation within China's higher education system: A comparative analysis of three key dimensions.

Yellow bar chart: This dimension exhibits the highest value, indicating a clear concentration of resources or management focus. The wide error bars suggest considerable variability within this dimension, with some cases performing exceptionally well or poorly. The markers at the end of the chart also indicate a few outliers with particularly strong performance.

Blue bar chart: The performance of this dimension is second to the yellow one, with slightly narrower error bars, suggesting a more balanced performance across this dimension, though still with some variability. This indicates that this management dimension plays an important but secondary role in higher education management, with some differences across institutions.

Black bar chart: This dimension shows the weakest performance, with the shortest bar, indicating that this dimension receives the least resources or attention within the higher education management system. The error bars and data points show relative stability within this dimension, but there is still room for improvement.

2.2. Research on the Challenges of the Higher Education Management System

The management approach's use of direct administrative methods leads to a tendency towards bureaucratization in China's higher education system. Scholars contend that although the government has a twofold responsibility of serving and overseeing colleges, its practical emphasis tends to prioritize management. While the government does interact with universities through economic and legal channels, it frequently demonstrates a bias for administrative approaches. Deeply ingrained, this intervention spans a wide range of domains, from significant resource allocation to the monopolization of the evaluation system. Projects, subjects, honors, and titles allocate key resources in higher education and serve as major indicators to evaluate the quality of education. Bureaucratization occurs when a university's internal administrative authority becomes the final destination for governmental administrative power (Maslow, 1943). This signifies the extension of governmental and political power into the university, where it merges with the administrative and academic powers of the institution.

Moreover, this gives rise to apprehensions over the alteration of university

values and the reorganization of internal administrative structures. Scholars have expressed concerns about the inappropriate use of administrative power and the improper utilization of management tools, which have led to changes in university ethos and the restructuring of internal organizational structures. Louise Morley (2023) argues that universities are shifting from the traditional focus on intellectual communities to a new emphasis on economic rationalism and managerialism. According to Yan (2023) putting government project systems into universities makes them more focused on their commercial or productive sides. This strengthens the link between the government and the university and makes administrative power stronger at different levels of the institution. It also lessens or eliminates the effects of reforms that focus on decentralization.

As shown in the figure. Yellow bar chart: This dimension exhibits the highest value, indicating a clear concentration of resources or management focus. The wide error bars suggest significant variability within this dimension, meaning some areas perform exceptionally well, while others may fall behind. The markers at the end of the chart highlight a few particularly notable cases with strong performance (Figure 2).

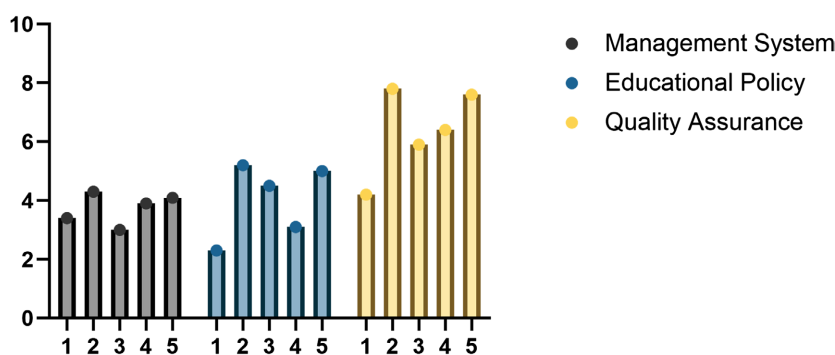


Figure 2. Comparison of resource allocation and focus across key dimensions in higher education management.

Blue bar chart: The performance of this dimension ranks second, with narrower error bars, indicating more balanced performance across this dimension, though some variability still exists. This suggests that the dimension plays an important but less dominant role in higher education management, with some differences across institutions.

Black bar chart: This dimension shows the weakest performance, with the shortest bar, indicating it receives the least resources or attention in the higher education management system. The smaller error bars and data points reflect relative stability within this dimension, with less fluctuation, but there remains room for improvement.

2.3. Studies Investigating the Factors Hindering the Implementation of the Management System Reform

The interaction between the government and universities is the main hindrance

and apparent vulnerability in China's continuous development of its higher education governance system. However, complex and uncertain factors accompany this significant problem in its implementation, leading scholars to explore the underlying causes:

Firstly, policy texts incorrectly use the concept of Governance Structure. From 1985 to 2018, [Zhou \(2023\)](#) thoroughly examined the government's policy on higher education management. His analysis suggests two elements responsible for this phenomenon: the first is the discrepancy between the notion of higher education governance and its representation in these documents, which replace the phrase "governance system" with "institution," "education system," or "funding mechanism." Policymakers and stakeholders' shallow understanding of the "governance system" leads to this conceptual misalignment, as they fail to fully grasp its essential nature. Furthermore, the fundamental principles of governance have shifted from addressing the essential inquiries of "what to govern" and "how to govern" about governmental operations to the more precise matters of determining "which level of government should be responsible for governance." ([Richards, 2022](#)) The deviation in the concept and fundamental essence of the governance reform has clouded its genuine nature, hindering its progress and creating a barrier that impedes the identification and focus on the real influential factors for change.

Based on the two charts provided, here is a native expression of the analysis:

The first graph demonstrates a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables, as indicated by the consistent upward trajectory of the data points. The scatter plot suggests that the dependent variable increases in a linear fashion as the independent variable progresses, with some degree of variability around the regression line. This central tendency underscores a clear and robust relationship between the variables, suggesting a reliable predictive pattern ([Figure 3](#)).

In contrast, the second graph offers a longitudinal perspective through a stacked bar chart, revealing the relative distribution of various categories across a specified time frame. The analysis highlights that while the lower sections of the bars consistently contribute the most substantial proportions, the upper sections demonstrate relatively minor and stable contributions over time. This pattern points to a hierarchical structure of impact, where certain components disproportionately drive the overall outcomes. The graph effectively captures both relative and absolute shifts, offering insight into the dynamic interplay of the contributing categories over the period observed ([Figure 4](#)).

To summarize, scholarly research on China's higher education governance system over the last thirty years has revealed significant progress and notable outcomes at various stages. These achievements are mainly apparent in the interactions between the central and local administration, ([Seligman, 2011](#)) where the allocation of power has mostly been established. Nevertheless, the reform's main limitation and evident vulnerability lie in the power relations between the

government and educational institutions. The persistent difficulty arises from the centralization of governance authority within the government, highlighting the crucial role of the government in reforming higher education.

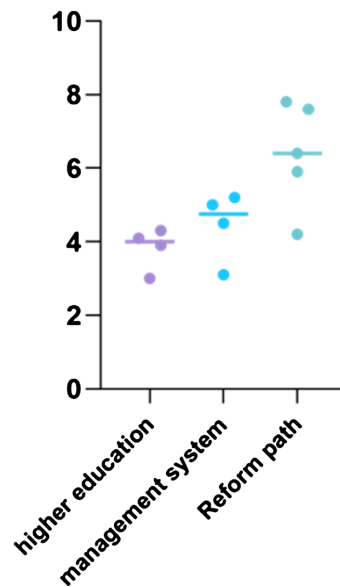


Figure 3. Scatter plot of variable correlation trends.

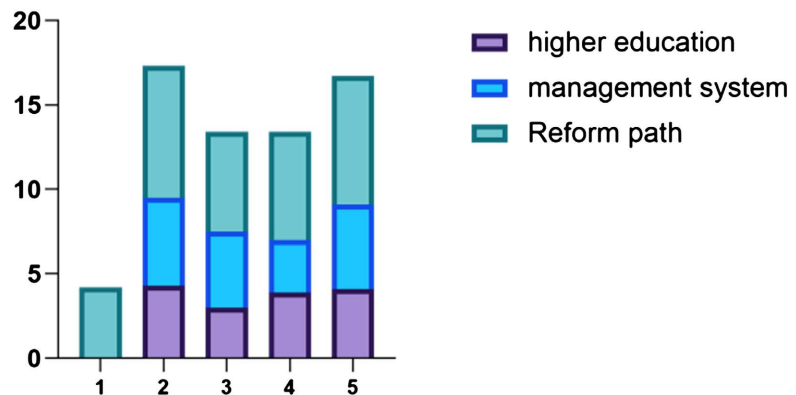


Figure 4. Stacked bar chart of category distribution over time.

The organizational structure presented in the table reveals a multi-tiered governance system within an academic institution, where each body holds distinct responsibilities aligned with its core competencies. The Convocation, functioning as a deliberative and legislative entity, is composed of a broad representation, including principals, representatives from various departments and attached schools. Its scope of responsibility extends to formulating key school policies, drafting regulations, managing financial proposals, and determining the acquisition or decommissioning of significant institutional resources. This broad mandate indicates the pivotal role the Convocation plays in shaping the overall strategic direction of the institution, emphasizing a collaborative approach involving key stakeholders from diverse areas within the educational framework (Table 1).

Table 1. Organizational chart of the “three-congress system”.

Organization	Organizational composition	Main competencies
Convocation (deliberative body, legislative in nature)	Principals; representatives of subjects; representatives of departments; representatives of attached schools and primary schools; committees	It is responsible for drawing up school rules and regulations, deciding on the educational policy of the school, making economic proposals, and adding or abolishing important equipment.
Professors' Council (to guide the work of the whole university)	Rector; Heads of Departments; Heads of Faculties; Professors	The Board of Trustees of the University is responsible for the conduct of public affairs of the University as a whole, for recommending the creation and abolition of departments, for deciding on the granting of honorary degrees, and for setting standards of student performance.
Executive Council (Administrative Pivot)	Academic Affairs Department, Ministry of Affairs, Accounting Department, Documentation Department, Library Department, Publication Department, Physical Education Department, Architecture Department, Presentation Department, Girls' Guidance Department, Medical and Health Department	Plans the public administration of the entire campus; supervises the review of administrative departments; and handles all administrative matters that arise on an ad hoc basis.

The Professors' Council, which assumes a guiding role for the university's operational work, consists of high-level academic leadership, including the rector, department heads, and senior faculty members. This council is tasked with making critical decisions such as recommending the creation or abolition of academic departments, overseeing the conferral of honorary degrees, and setting performance standards for students. The inclusion of top academic figures signifies that this body is essential for maintaining academic excellence and ensuring that the university's academic policies and practices are aligned with both its long-term vision and immediate educational needs.

Finally, the Executive Council, serving as the administrative pivot, is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations and management of the institution. This council includes heads of various administrative departments such as Academic Affairs, Accounting, Library, and Medical and Health, among others. The breadth of departments represented underscores the comprehensive administrative functions this body oversees, ranging from academic and health services to facilities management and student guidance. The Executive Council's role in planning, supervising administrative reviews, and addressing emergent issues highlights its critical function in ensuring the smooth operation of the university's infrastructure and support systems, thereby facilitating the institution's overall educational mission.

This tri-level structure of governance ensures that both academic and administrative responsibilities are clearly delineated while fostering a system of checks and balances that is crucial for the institution's sustainable growth and success. Each body is essential not only for its specific domain of authority but also for how it

interlocks with the other entities to provide a holistic approach to university governance and decision-making.

Excessive administrative control, insufficient management capabilities, improper management approaches, and widespread abuse of authority are the root causes of the numerous problems related to the management system in China's higher education sector. Administrative engagement is marked by a significant and deep influence on many parts of institutional management, resulting in the misuse of power. Therefore, the government's dedication to reform is crucial for both the de-bureaucratization process and the restoration of academic autonomy in universities (Richards, 2022). The government must prioritize a functional approach that emphasizes comprehensive planning and macro-level management. This involves utilizing indirect methods of governance, such as legislative measures, funding allocation, strategic planning, information services, and policy guidance, rather than relying on direct administrative control.

However, current research lacks a comprehensive analysis of the fundamental concepts of "management content" and "management model," which are critical to the essence of the higher education governance system. Furthermore, there is a lack of research that thoroughly examines governmental organizations' reasoning and distinguishing features. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance the examination of written analyses of administrative papers, which play a fundamental role and are essential for the functioning of government management. Moreover, there is a need to increase the intensity of study in order to delve into the management content, models, rationales, and features of governmental bodies.

3. Features and Rationality of China's Higher Education Management System

3.1. The Administrative System Governs the System for Distributing Resources

Let's explore the "Teaching Quality Project" during the 11th Five-Year Plan period as an example of teaching. The creation of this project aimed to improve undergraduate education quality and foster the growth of talented individuals. In order to accomplish these objectives, the central government designated 2.5 billion yuan exclusively for the execution of quality teaching initiatives and educational reforms in higher education institutions. This program is a big and groundbreaking development that will have long-lasting effects on the improvement of teaching and the development of talent in higher education in China. Since the formation of the People's Republic of China, this investment in higher education teaching quality and talent cultivation by the central government is the most significant one.

Since its inception in 2007, the Quality Project has gradually expanded its reach from the national level to encompass provincial and institutional levels, establishing itself more firmly over the course of a decade. It has had a significant impact on universities' daily operations and teaching methods, becoming the primary foundation for teaching construction in higher education institutions. Furthermore, it has emerged as the primary instrument and crucial benchmark for both

governmental and university-level administration, gradually becoming deeply rooted in the behavioral standards of both organizations.

We cite the Teaching Quality Project, a 2007 collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, for its crucial role in directing educational reforms in higher education across China. Since its inception, the Quality Project has had a profound impact on the teaching changes and actions adopted at the provincial level. The Quality Project has formulated all teaching-related administrative documents released in the last ten years according to its established principles. Some examples of these initiatives include unique majors, essential majors, recognized majors, significant laboratories, national engineering practice education centers, (Pitt & Mewburn, 2016) provincial experimental teaching and practice education centers, provincial talent cultivation model innovation and practice bases, provincial outstanding teaching teams, provincial teaching masters, and provincial high-quality teaching materials. The Quality Project initiated the establishment of these categories, which are still in use today.

3.2. The Administrative Perspective: A Streamlined Approach to Management

Educational administrations direct the management of higher education with a coherent and efficient rationale. Yan & Yang (2023) define simplicity as the process of restructuring complicated social phenomena within a state, or the act of simplifying and abstracting various intricate, unclear, difficult, and tangible aspects of governance. The use of tabular, reportable, and measurable information demonstrates this simplicity, enabling a comprehensive understanding and optimization of material and human resources through intervention. The core of simplified governance is characterized by the implementation of standardized processes, quantifiable metrics, and digitalized systems.

As shown in **Figure 5**. This diagram provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges in China's higher education management. It begins with a literature review covering the current situation of China's higher education management system, previous research on reforms, and the organizational structure, including governance and administration. Additionally, the diagram highlights the role of technology in management, as well as the importance of quality assurance and evaluation as a central component.

The key challenges identified are bureaucratic inefficiencies, financial constraints, quality and standards disparities, faculty recruitment and retention issues, and the impact of internationalization and global competitiveness. Each of these challenges represents significant hurdles that need to be addressed to improve management efficiency and the overall quality of higher education.

The diagram also provides implications for future research and practical recommendations for policymakers and educational institutions, aiming to enhance the governance and performance of China's higher education system. It concludes with a summary of key findings and suggests areas for further exploration. This structure offers a clear roadmap for addressing the major issues in the field.

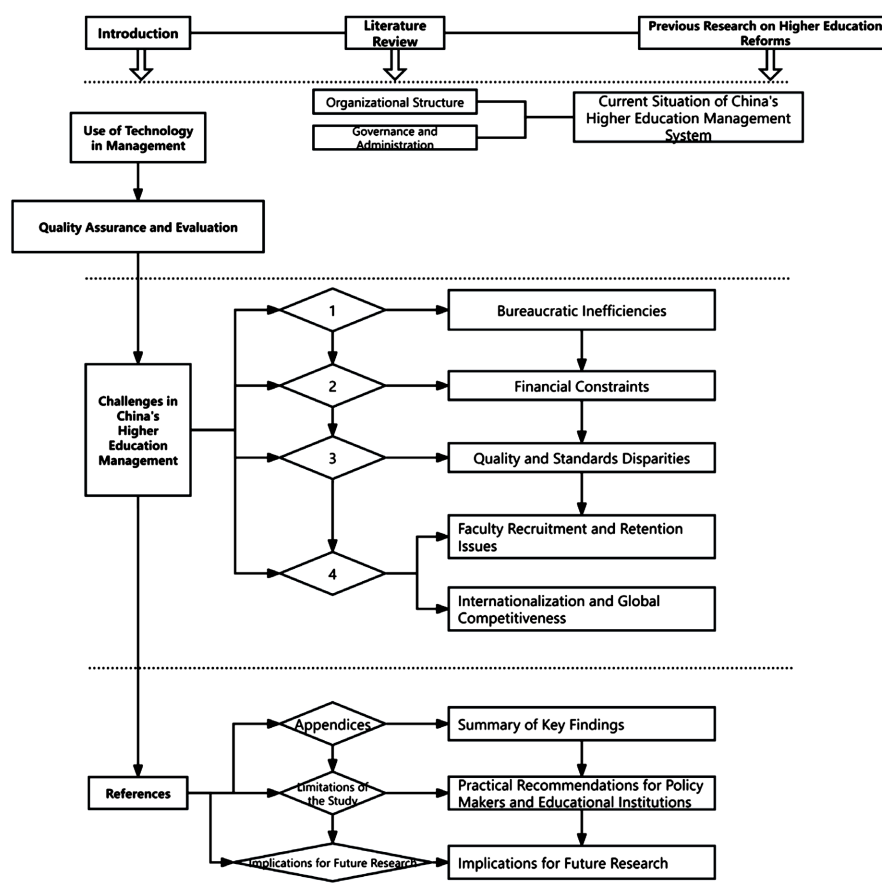


Figure 5. A research framework is proposed to study the current state of China's higher education management system and explore potential paths for reform.

3.3. Integration and Compliance in the Academic Environment

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are increasingly prioritizing the pursuit of measurable and visible performance metrics. The government's responsibility to ensure efficient use of public resources motivates this. Three fundamental mechanisms drive the pursuit: the legitimacy mechanism, the efficiency mechanism, and the relational network mechanism. These mechanisms are interconnected.

The legitimacy process requires HEIs to operate within legal frameworks. Zhou Xueguang posits that the legitimacy of an institution hinges on its perceived validity and rationality, a reflection of the support it garners from society and culture. This process involves the recognition and confidence of educational institutions' symbolic capital by governmental entities and the public.

Bourdieu suggests that the acquisition of symbolic capital, associated with legitimacy, follows its own principles, distinct from those governing economic capital. Symbolic capital has a tendency to convert into credibility and status (Mok, Welch, & Kang, 2020). The perpetuation and reproduction of something rely on its acknowledgment, specifically its transformation into more concealed types of capital like art or education, which amplifies its prominence and worth.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) must obtain assessments from reputable

organizations such as the Ministry of Education, provincial governments, and provincial education ministries. It boosts their social status and serves as a valuable resource. This acts as a crucial criterion for determining the authenticity of higher education institutions (HEIs) and showcases their overall robustness (Leisyte, Enders, & de Boer, 2009). Through exposure and dissemination, these judgments receive societal recognition and engage institutions in more competitive contests for symbolic and economic resources. This elucidates why higher education institutions (HEIs) vigorously compete for esteemed projects such as the Quality 1 agenda item and extensively promote their accomplishments once they have successfully obtained them.

4. Investigating the Trajectory of Transformation in the Higher Education Management System

4.1. Implementing a Tiered Governance Model to Promote Empowerment and Collaborative Decision-Making in Organizational Structures

The term “higher education governance system” refers to a cooperative society that includes organizers, administrators, service providers, and other important stakeholders of higher education institutions. They all work together to efficiently achieve the objectives and missions of higher education. The success of its operation depends on fair contact, consultation, and collaboration among various agencies. The transfer of higher education from “management” to governance is crucial, Le Cornu (2013) indicating a change in the government’s administrative principles and management roles. The transition from hierarchical control to empowerment and negotiation reflects a structural approach among stakeholders, as envisioned by governance theory (Ivancheva, 2015). According to this theory, it is crucial to establish communication protocols that enable inclusive consultations among various governance actors, regardless of whether the leadership originates from the government or society, whether the processes are hierarchical or collaborative, and whether the interventions are voluntary or market-oriented. The main framework for empowering consultations relies heavily on the government, which must execute its function efficiently. In order to accomplish this, the government needs to shift its position from being an all-powerful entity to one that focuses on providing services. This involves clearly outlining its tasks and areas of expertise in managing affairs.

4.2. Universities’ Autonomy is Fostered and Upheld

It is vital for educational governance to acknowledge that academic institutions are autonomous legal organizations, separate from government control, political bodies, administrative divisions, or affiliates. It is critical to acknowledge the autonomy of these institutions and understand that they play an important role in driving innovation within the higher education system (Hackett, 2014). Academic institutions can only achieve true self-governance when granted complete

autonomy.

Governmental entities should primarily respect and value the autonomy of universities. The relationship between modern universities and the state is governed by the essential concept that the state should neither exclusively manage universities nor encroach upon their autonomy. University autonomy necessitates both internal, theoretical validation and external recognition, especially from the government, which encompasses reverence, safeguarding, and support. The government should ensure the external autonomy of universities, placing emphasis on and having confidence in their natural capacity for self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-evolution. Emphasis should be placed on the autonomous coordination of teaching and research efforts while also acknowledging and adhering to the inherent principles that govern their progress.

The recent release of guidelines titled “Regulations for Standardizing the Use of SCI Paper Metrics in Higher Education Institutions to Promote Correct Evaluation Practices” by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology is an effort to influence the natural development of academic institutions by setting external goals. Regardless of whether these criteria apply to national journals or international SCI rankings, they demonstrate the government’s utilization of administrative procedures to interfere with the organic development of higher education institutions (Miller, 2019). The government exerts its influence over academic research by using its resources and issuing directives.

4.3. Market and Social Forces Can Be Demonstrated and Cultivated

Efficient governance requires the comprehensive integration of all stakeholders’ perspectives in both the decision-making and implementation processes. Considering the crucial significance of higher education for individuals, society, and the entire nation, it requires the complete and most efficient involvement of a wide variety of societal participants (Münch, 2014). Effectively harmonizing the various behaviors and organizational structures of the government, academic institutions, the market, and civil society is a major challenge in modernizing the educational governance system and its capacities.

In order to improve governance capabilities, it is essential to not only change the government’s administrative philosophy and support the independence of academic institutions, but also to utilize the influence of the market and society. Recognizing and properly using the role of advising, consultative, and evaluative organizations, as well as other administrative support institutions, is crucial in higher education. Utilizing the power of market and societal dynamics can help make higher education decision-making and implementation procedures more accessible and based on scientific principles (Yan, 2023). Prolonged decision-making resulting from numerous consultations may not pose the greatest threat to higher education, but rather rushed judgments that ignore the institution’s fundamental principles.

According to Robert Birnbaum, the goal of governing higher education should

not be to enhance efficiency but rather to protect the genuine essence of academic institutions. Only when universities loosely relate their primary activities to their formal structures and external settings can they grow more completely.

5. Conclusion

Higher education should strive to strike a balance between complete centralization and complete decentralization. Therefore, it is necessary to implement a logical categorization of higher education. Centralised control carries risks, according to George Stigler's "government control capture theory" and Rousseau's assertion that "each member of the government is first himself, then the administrator, then the citizen." This is because administrators, who are vested interests, may exploit their power and privileges. They could continuously rationalize the implementation of more restrictions to promote their interests and enhance their control. Hence, it is essential to logically divide managerial duties into macro and micro levels.

Macro-level management, as defined by constitutional, educational, and higher education regulations, includes strategic planning, educational system reforms, optimal structures and resource distribution, personnel management rights, and budgetary obligations. The government should exercise regulatory authority over these domains using standardized protocols while avoiding excessive interference in the academic and research matters of higher education institutions, since this could have negative consequences.

Micro-level management in higher education institutions encompasses various internal operations such as enrollment strategies, departmental reorganizations, curriculum development, disciplinary changes, teaching and research endeavors, cultural exchange programs, internal organizational structures, personnel administration, and asset management.

An essential aspect of aligning and surpassing management content is to ensure that all stakeholders operate within legal frameworks. This entails establishing the legitimacy of both government and university responsibilities. Legitimate government management of higher education entails the lawful exercise of authority, adherence to legal procedures, and the restriction of management duties within legal boundaries. Corning highlights the importance of assessing the legality of the government's resource allocation in higher education, especially in the context of market economy jurisprudence or a government-based legal framework.

The Higher Education Act showcases the adaptability of governmental efficiency and the boundaries of authority, depicting them as intersecting. In order to maximize cost-efficiency and societal advantages while improving the value of resources, the government may implement a range of measures aimed at restructuring the higher education system and teaching methods, thereby promoting the advancement of higher education. Efficiency and authority borders, unlike rigid organizational boundaries, are flexible and require the implementation of limitations to manage this flexibility.

How can we effectively harness the market's influence to steer higher education

towards desirable paths? What tactics should administrators employ to tackle the diverse settings found at various levels and categories of educational institutions? How can we resolve the divergence between the concept of “decentralization” and its tangible results? Although governance theory supports decentralization and de-centralization, it also reveals certain disadvantages. When decentralization and centralization interact, governance tends to weaken at the extreme ends of the spectrum. How can governance grant academic institutions the freedom to innovate and thrive, thus achieving a balanced state of control and influence between two separate yet powerful organizational systems? One system relies on legal and authoritative principles to uphold the concept of trusteeship and stewardship, while the other relies on professional authority to validate the faculty’s function. To achieve a new way of governing, one must first address the complexities of the governance system and navigate intricate difficulties with wisdom. Furthermore, considering our past tendency towards strict governance and significant resistance to change, it is crucial to acknowledge that substantial advancements are necessary to establish a governance structure that facilitates the implementation of negotiated communication standards.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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