

Research on the Classification and Evaluation of Colleges and Universities for the Implementation of the Double First-Class Strategy

Wenhua Wang¹, Hanchi Zhang^{2,*}

¹ Liaoning Institute of Education 110032, China

² Shenyang Sport University 110102, China

* **Corresponding author:** Hanchi Zhang (Email: Hanchizhang@126.com)

Abstract: Against the important strategic background of the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities, this study aims to examine ways to classify and evaluate colleges and universities and their significance for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy. In this study, world-class universities and first-class disciplines are preliminarily classified for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy; the world-class universities and first-class disciplines are then classified by establishing a classification basis and formulating evaluation criteria and then using different methods for comprehensive evaluation. Finally, the formulation of this research idea is summarized and discussed.

Keywords: "Double first class" strategy, Classification evaluation, Classification method, Evaluation criterion.

1. Introduction

In January 2017, with the consent of the State Council, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, and National Development and Reform Commission issued the implementation measures for promoting the comprehensive establishment of world-class universities and first-class disciplines (provisional). On September 21 of the same year, the Ministry of education, Ministry of Finance, and National Development and Reform Commission jointly issued a notice officially confirming and publishing a list of world-class universities and first-class disciplines.

This means that the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities has officially become a major national development strategy. In this process, colleges, universities, and scholars have conducted in-depth research on the performance evaluation of the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities and the mechanism guarantee for the Double First-Class strategy. Therefore, this study mainly discusses the related issues in the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy from another perspective, that is, the classification and evaluation research in the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities. Different from previous research on the evaluation of education and teaching, this study mainly focuses on examining the problems related to "classification before evaluation." To some extent, this method can avoid the unclear organization phenomenon in the previous teaching-evaluation model.

2. On the Definition of Classified Evaluation

Classified evaluation is an evaluation method, and its specific measures are a dynamic process in which the evaluator divides the evaluated party according to a certain classification standard and then evaluates it. In this process, we should first establish the evaluator and evaluated party. In the classified evaluation of the Double First-Class

construction of colleges and universities, we can clearly determine that the evaluated party comprises a university and a discipline, while the evaluator depends on the evaluation method. However, irrespective of the evaluation method adopted, the following steps are indispensable in the classified evaluation of the Double First-Class construction of colleges and universities: first, establish the evaluation objects; second, establish the classification basis according to the characteristics of the evaluation objects; third, classify the evaluation objects according to the classification basis; fourth, establish the evaluation index suitable for the evaluation objects; fifth, establish the evaluation method; sixth, classify the evaluation objects. For the classified evaluation of colleges and universities for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy, the evaluation objects comprise the colleges and universities that are and will be in the Double First-Class strategy for a long time. This requires that these colleges, universities, and disciplines be classified according to their characteristics; the evaluation index corresponding to their characteristics is then constructed, the evaluation method established, and finally, dynamic classified evaluation conducted.

3. Diversification of Evaluation Methods

From the perspective of the theory and method of public-policy evaluation, policy evaluation requires the basic content, standard, procedure, and method. The classified evaluation for Double First-Class construction must also be informed by the relevant theory of policy evaluation, for example, in the form of evaluation. The classification and evaluation of colleges and universities for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy can take the form of an internal evaluation of colleges, universities, and disciplines; a mutual evaluation of different colleges and universities in the same region; or a third-party evaluation. Of course, these three evaluation methods have their own advantages and disadvantages.

3.1. Internal Evaluation

Internal evaluation is appropriate when the evaluation subject has a comprehensive understanding of the whole process of the policy and masters the first-hand materials, which is conducive to the development of the evaluation activities. Based on the evaluation outcome, the evaluator can quickly adjust the main objectives and realization scheme for the evaluation activities to play a meaningful role.

However, it is also difficult for policy makers and implementers to objectively and fairly assess their own behavior. Evaluators tend to consciously or unconsciously exaggerate achievements, cover up mistakes, and report good but not bad news. The evaluation outcome often represents a specific institution's local interests; thus, an internal evaluation can easily be one-sided and subjective. Moreover, an internal evaluation requires evaluators to systematically master relevant theoretical knowledge and specialized technical methods, which requires them to be well-trained in technology and methods.

Similarly, in the classified evaluation of colleges and universities for the Double First-Class strategy, universities and disciplines can conduct self-evaluation based on first-hand information, and the operation process is relatively simple and less time-consuming, which helps in performing the evaluation activities. Second, problems found in the evaluation process can be corrected in time, although the evaluation results will require further scrutiny.

3.2. Mutual Evaluation Among Colleges and Universities

To a certain extent, mutual evaluation among colleges and universities is more objective than internal evaluation. The evaluation outcomes are more convincing and fair. However, the evaluation results may not be consistent with reality when

all parties consider their own interests.

When applied to the classified evaluation of colleges and universities for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy, this evaluation method not only strengthens the exchanges among colleges and universities in different regions and increases the opportunities for mutual learning and common discussion, but the evaluation results can also be discussed amongst the evaluators, thus providing effective help for the Double First-Class construction scheme for the colleges and universities in the future. Compared to those of internal self-evaluation, the evaluation results are also more objective; however, the cost of participating in the mutual evaluation must still be considered.

3.3. Mutual Evaluation Among Colleges and Universities

In third-party evaluation, evaluators can evaluate based on a relatively neutral evaluation standard, which can be objective and fair compared with the first two methods in terms of role identity. Moreover, third-party evaluation is conducted by professionals from professional evaluation institutions, with professional evaluation tools, while the evaluation process is sufficiently rigorous to ensure the scientificity of the evaluation and accuracy of the results. However, the evaluation cost should be considered.

Third-party evaluation plays an important role in the classified evaluation of colleges and universities for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy. Because a third-party evaluation agency has professional evaluators, a systematic evaluation system, and scientific evaluation tools, we should pay more attention to the results of third-party evaluation. Compared with the above two evaluation methods, the results are more scientific; however, it also means that the evaluation cost will be greatly increased.

Table 1. Comparison of the characteristics of three evaluation methods

Evaluation method	Self-evaluation of colleges and universities (internal evaluation)	University mutual evaluation	Third-party evaluation
Is it easy	handy	commonly	inconvenient
Duration	short	long	longer
Evaluation cost	low	higher	higher
Evaluation results	poor objectivity	general objectivity	relatively objective
Scientific and professional	commonly	commonly	higher

From the table, we can see that the above three evaluation methods cannot be generalized; however, for the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities, we can consider simultaneously using the above three evaluation methods and retaining their respective strengths to establish a set of diversified and collaborative evaluation methods. We can design a long-term and lasting evaluation system that is divided into different periods in which different evaluation methods are applied, so that the classified evaluation of colleges and universities for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy is more flexible, more diversified in time, more operable, fairer, and more objective, thus providing a high-quality and sound guarantee for the lasting and effective implementation of China's Double First-Class strategy.

4. The Role and Feedback of Classified Evaluation in the Establishment of Double First-Class Colleges and Universities

Based on the above research, this study discusses the classification and evaluation methods for the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities. Next, we must comprehensively use the classification and evaluation methods we have constructed to conduct a classified evaluation of colleges and universities for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy. That is, we must comprehensively use the self-evaluation of colleges and universities, mutual evaluation among other colleges and universities, and third-party evaluation to comprehensively evaluate the world-class universities and first-class disciplines that have been classified.

This also reflects the role of classified evaluation in the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities. From a macro perspective, the establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities is a grand and long-term strategy. To ensure that it can be steadily conducted and in a relatively fair environment, in addition to having a clear development plan, it is also necessary to establish a diversified and detailed evaluation system to provide a guarantee. However, a single standard cannot adapt to the diversified environment and is prone to a single and rigid phenomenon. To avoid this problem, we must conduct classified evaluation research on colleges and universities in the development of the Double First-Class strategy; the evaluation should not only be conducive to the effective implementation of the Double First-Class strategy from the perspective of the national macro strategy, but should also, at the micro level, be conducive to improving the effectiveness of higher education and teaching and providing a guarantee for the cultivation of high-quality talents.

In this regard, it is worth noting that we must also build a supervision system to ensure scientific and effective evaluation; that is, to assess whether the evaluation results are true, whether the evaluators are responsible, and some other situations. For example, in the case of a reconsideration of the evaluation results, the operation of such a supervision system would be required to play its function.

In addition, if the evaluation results are true, it is also necessary to analyze and summarize them. The good aspects can play a guiding role in the development and construction of the Double First-Class strategy in the future. Where the evaluation results are different from the construction objectives, it is necessary to determine and correct the problems in time to provide reference for future work.

5. Summary and Reflection

The establishment of Double First-Class colleges and universities refers to the establishment of world-class universities and first-class disciplines. It is a major strategic decision taken by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council of the People's Republic of China. It is also another national strategy in the field of higher education in China, following the "211 Project" and "985 Project." This strategy is conducive to enhancing the comprehensive strength and international competitiveness of China's higher education and provides strong support for the realization of the "two centenary goals" and Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This study mainly examines and discusses the classified evaluation of colleges and universities for the implementation of the Double First-Class strategy and provides a solution for this evaluation.

Regarding the establishment of world-class universities, this study classifies universities according to their geographical location as the basis for their evaluation and explains the importance of this basis. Regarding the development of Double First-Class disciplines, regions are still used as the basis for division; disciplines are then classified according to the major categories. On the one hand, such a basis is suitable for different types of disciplines; on the other hand, it is useful for the orderly classification and evaluation of disciplines. Thus, different evaluation methods can be used in the orderly evaluation of different disciplines.

Of course, a region cannot be fully representative only as a division basis, while other division bases can be used, such as the similarity of construction schemes for colleges and universities, academic and scientific research achievements, and other factors, to re-establish the classification and evaluation criteria. In the evaluation process, the three evaluation methods presented in this study have their own advantages and disadvantages and must be further improved in the specific practice process.

However, no classification evaluation is all-inclusive and perfect. Any evaluation method has its own advantages and disadvantages. The classification-evaluation model examined in this study only provides one of the ideas, which can be further scrutinized and discussed based on its scientific and effective aspects. Accordingly, the classification of the model is not perfect; there is room for improvement.

References

- [1] Notice of The State Council about Printing and Issuing The overall scheme of planning and advancing construction of the world's first-class universities and first class subjects [J]. The Communiqué of The Ministry of Education of The People's Republic of China, 2016(Z1):2-7.
- [2] CAO Guihua.Exploration and Analysis on the Social Value of China's Higher Education under the Background of Creating Double First — class[J].Heilongjiang Researches on Higher Education,2017,No.277(05):92-94.
- [3] MEI Hong, SONG Xiaoping. Curriculum assessment and innovative exploration during the implementation of the "Double First-Class University Plan" [J]. Academics Degrees & Graduate Education, 2017 (05): 22-28.DOI:10.16750/j.adge.2017.05.005.
- [4] [3] LIN Lantao. Research on construction of China's Double First-Class universities and evaluation indexes for the world's first-class universities [J]. Tribunes of Education Culture, 2017,9(02):1-15+32.DOI:10.15958/j.cnki.jywhlt.2017.02.001.
- [5] [4] JIANG Hua, SU Yongjian, LIU Shengbo, HUANG Shuai. Thinking about building the evaluation system for colleges and universities in the context of the "Double First-Class University Plan" [J]. China University Science & Technology, 2018(07):7-11.DOI:10.16209/j.cnki.cust.2018.07.002.
- [6] WU Yang. An International Perspective on the Construction of Scientific Research Innovation Evaluation System of "Double Top" Universities—— Based on the Experiences and Inspirations of Britain,Australia, Japan and South Korea [J]. Science & Technology Progress and Policy, 2018,35(15):126-131.
- [7] ZHANG Lei, WU Suhua. Building the evaluation system for the Double First-Class universities of Chinese characteristics [J]. Beijing Education(Higher Education), 2018(Z1):24-27.
- [8] ZHANG Bin, REN Pengfei. A Study of the Standardization of Talents Flow among China's Universities under the Background of "Double First-Class" Strategy[P]. Proceedings of the 2019 3rd International Conference on Education, Economics and Management Research (ICEEMR 2019),2019.
- [9] ZHANG Zhibai. Evaluating China's Double First-Class Project from the Perspective of Economics[J]. Higher Education Policy,2020(prepublish).
- [10] WANG Man, ZHOU Cheng. How Does Graduate Training Promote Sustainable Development of Higher Education: Evidence from China's "Double First-Class" Universities' Programs [J]. Sustainability,2023,15(2).