

Rethinking Evaluation Indicators for Sino-Foreign Cooperative Universities

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of Sino-foreign cooperative education (SFCE) has intensified demands for evaluation systems capable of reconciling national regulatory expectations with global quality standards. Yet existing frameworks remain fragmented and predominantly compliance-oriented. This study examines the evolution and structural tensions of evaluation indicator systems in Sino-foreign cooperative institutions, situating them within broader debates on quality assurance and transnational higher education governance.

Drawing on a mixed qualitative design, the research combines descriptive mapping of 36 Chinese-language publications (2008-2024) with semi-structured interviews involving 10 stakeholders engaged in quality assurance and accreditation practices. Descriptive analysis identifies shifting thematic emphases across policy cycles, while qualitative coding reveals persistent tensions between administrative accountability and developmental enhancement, input metrics and outcome measures, and localization requirements and international benchmarking pressures.

The findings conceptualize evaluation indicators as governance technologies embedded within hybrid regulatory environments. The study advances a developmental evaluation perspective that integrates policy guidance, institutional learning, and global reference standards. By bridging Chinese-language scholarship with international quality assurance debates, the article contributes to theoretical discussions on performance indicators, regulatory hybridity, and the accountability–enhancement nexus in transnational higher education.

Index Terms

Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education (SFCE), Evaluation Indicators, Quality Assurance, Assessment