

Research on the Evaluation System for Implementing the Effectiveness of Fostering Virtue and Cultivating Talents in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

"Fostering virtue and cultivating talents" is the fundamental mission of education, and constructing a scientific and effective evaluation system is crucial for its concrete implementation. Addressing current practical challenges such as the emphasis on intelligence over virtue, fragmented content, and simplistic methods, this study analyzes the theoretical roots, including the dominance of instrumental rationality over value rationality, the contradiction between educational complexity and the implicit nature of moral development, and institutional path dependence. Based on Marx's theory of all-round human development, an integrated evaluation framework across primary, secondary, and higher education is proposed. This framework entails a shift in focus from knowledge-based to character-based evaluation, from a management tool to a developmental engine. It establishes a "six-in-one" core competency framework encompassing political identity, national sentiment, moral cultivation, legal awareness, cultural literacy, and psychological qualities, reflecting progression across educational stages. Methodologically, it promotes the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches, process and outcome evaluation, and the construction of a "Multi-stakeholder Collaborative Evaluation Community". Finally, practical pathways such as strengthening top-level design, enhancing teachers' evaluation literacy, and fostering a conducive educational ecology are suggested to ensure the effective operation of the evaluation system and the comprehensive realization of the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talents.

KEYWORDS

Fostering virtue and cultivating talents; Evaluation system; Integration of primary, Secondary, And higher education; Reform of educational evaluation

1 Introduction

Establishing "fostering virtue and cultivating talents" as the fundamental mission of education profoundly addresses the core questions of "what to cultivate, how to cultivate, and for whom to cultivate," representing a strategic choice to return education to its essential purpose of nurturing individuals capable of undertaking national rejuvenation. However, the efficacy of the evaluation system, a key safeguard, faces global challenges due to the implicit, long-term, and complex nature of moral development, often leading to "soft indicators" and formalistic tendencies in practice. Therefore, from a Marxist theoretical perspective, this study aims to systematically analyze the practical dilemmas and underlying causes of the current evaluation system across primary, secondary, and higher education. It seeks to construct an integrated evaluation framework that spans all educational stages, aligns with student development and educational Regularities, and provides theoretical reference and practical guidance for fully implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talents.

2 Practical Dilemmas in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Fostering Virtue and Cultivating Talents

The tipping behavior of minors exhibits five primary characteristics: subject specificity, behavioral virtuality, uncertainty of intention expression, irrational consequences, and complexity of legal relationships. Due to the limited civil capacity and cognitive abilities of minors, their tipping motivations are diverse, thus involving intertwined legal relationships among multiple parties.

2.1 Evaluation Concept: Persistent Predominance of "Emphasizing Intelligence Over Virtue"

Influenced by academic Pressure and utilitarian social trends, evaluations centered on scores and Transition Rate continue to dominate. Moral education evaluation is often treated as a "soft task," leading to misallocated resources, teacher assessments, and institutional evaluations Overemphasis on Intellectual Education, preventing the core status of fostering virtue and cultivating talents from being genuinely realized.

2.2 Evaluation Content: "Fragmentation and Disconnection" Coexist with "Vague Standards"

There is a lack of effective articulation in moral education goals across different educational stages, with content either repetitious or abruptly advanced, resulting in superficial outcomes. Furthermore, evaluation standards are often overly broad and abstract, lacking specific, observable behavioral indicators, which makes precise implementation difficult and prone to formalism.

2.3 Evaluation Methods: "Singular and Rigid" with "Data Worship"

Current evaluations rely heavily on static methods like questionnaires, knowledge tests, and teacher comments, failing to capture the dynamic and internalized nature of students' moral development. Concurrently, the push for educational informatization has led to an over-reliance on quantifying complex virtues into data points, such as equating volunteer activity frequency with social responsibility or memorization of doctrines with political identity. This simplistic approach overlooks the implicit and contextual characteristics of moral cultivation.

2.4 Evaluation Stakeholders: "Unidirectional and Singular" with "Insufficient Collaboration"

Evaluation subjects are predominantly teachers and school administrators, while students' self-assessment and peer evaluation are undervalued. External stakeholders like families, communities, and practical bases lack channels and mechanisms for participation. This unidirectional and singular model cannot comprehensively reflect students' true moral conduct and hampers the synergy of home-school-community education.

2.5 Application of Results: "Ineffective Utilization" and "Lack of Incentives"

Evaluation results often culminate in summary reports or grades with little connection to critical areas like student advancement, teacher performance reviews, or resource allocation. Their primary use for "classification and appraisal" rather than "diagnosis and improvement" fails to leverage evaluation's potential for promoting student development, enhancing teaching, and optimizing school management.

3 Theoretical Exploration of the Dilemmas in Evaluating Fostering Virtue and Cultivating Talents

Current evaluation challenges reflect deep-seated theoretical contradictions: the marginalization of value formation due to instrumental rationality overshadowing value rationality; a fundamental mismatch between linear evaluation paradigms and the implicit nature of moral education; and the systemic resistance posed by path dependency within the examination-oriented system. These three contradictions collectively form the profound barriers to evaluation reform.

3.1 Instrumental Rationality Overpowering Value Rationality

Max Weber's distinction between "instrumental rationality" and "value rationality" provides an analytical framework. The modern education system's pursuit of efficiency, controllability, and measurability has unconsciously reinforced instrumental rationality. Knowledge transmission and skill training, being easily standardized and measured, take center stage, while "fostering virtue and cultivating talents," concerned with value shaping and spiritual growth, is marginalized due to its resistance to quantification. This "modern predicament" naturally inclines the education evaluation system toward "measurable" intellectual indicators at the expense of the essential yet "hard-to-measure" moral foundation.

3.2 Complexity of the Education System and the Implicit Nature of Fostering Virtue and Cultivating Talents

Education is a complex giant system, with moral growth being its most intricate and subtle aspect. It involves the unity of knowledge, emotion, intention, and action—a long-term, immersive, and internalized process. Its outcomes are characterized by lag, variability, and implicitness, making accurate assessment through one-time exams difficult. The current linear, reductionist evaluation paradigm is ill-equipped to handle this nonlinear, emergent complex system, leading to inappropriate methods and vague content.

3.3 Constraints of Institutional Inertia and Path Dependence

The current evaluation system, centered on the College Entrance Examination Gaokao and Senior High School Entrance Examination Zhongkao, has created powerful institutional inertia and path dependence. Any attempt to alter this core evaluation model faces significant risks and costs. Schools, teachers, parents, and students are deeply embedded

in this "score- and advancement-only" system, forming stable interest structures and behavioral patterns. In this context, promoting evaluation reform for fostering virtue and cultivating talents essentially constitutes a profound "educational paradigm revolution," with It is conceivable that immense resistance.

4 Constructing an Integrated Evaluation System for Fostering Virtue and Cultivating Talents Across Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education

Addressing current evaluation dilemmas requires systematic reconstruction to build an organic whole aimed at promoting students' all-round development, spanning all educational stages, and embodying scientific rigor, developmental focus, comprehensiveness, and operability. This reconstruction demands comprehensive innovation across key dimensions: concepts, content, methods, stakeholders, and application.

4.1 Conceptual Transformation: From "Management Tool" to "Development Engine"

The fundamental purpose of the evaluation system must shift from emphasis on selection and screening to serving improvement and growth. This requires three fundamental changes in core concepts: in focus, from assessing fragmented knowledge "knowledge-based" to caring for sound personality and core competencies "character-based"; in function, from serving school management and assessment "management tool" to driving students' lifelong development and continuous improvement of education quality "development engine"; in perspective, from focusing on performance at a single point "static judgment" to tracking growth processes, development potential, and progress "dynamic generation". These shifts collectively form the value foundation of the new evaluation system.

4.2 Content Construction: "Six-in-One" Core Competency Framework and Stage Articulation

Evaluation content should be guided by Marx's theory of all-round human development, constructing a "six-in-one" core competency framework and achieving organic articulation across educational stages. This framework encompasses six interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions: political identity, national sentiment, moral cultivation, legal awareness, cultural literacy, and psychological qualities. Implementation must follow the laws of student cognition and moral development, achieving a spiral progression in evaluation content: the primary stage focuses on emotional enlightenment and concrete perception; the secondary stage promotes knowledge internalization and systematic understanding; and the higher education stage emphasizes theoretical deepening and belief consolidation. To ensure practical implementation, indicator design must be concretized into observable, perceptible behavioral expressions, forming clear, hierarchical behavioral descriptions.

4.3 Methodological Innovation: Pluralistic and Integrated Evaluation Method System

Methodologically, it is essential to break singular dependencies and adhere to the principles of combining quantitative and qualitative, process and outcome evaluation, building a pluralistic and integrated evaluation method system. This requires deepening naturalistic behavioral observation based on scientific scales, systematically promoting portfolio assessment that panoramically records student growth, and standardizing the use of critical incident interviews to deeply explore value judgments. Simultaneously, the application of big data must be cautious, positioning it as a supplementary reference while strictly adhering to ethical boundaries, never allowing data to replace holistic human understanding. Ultimately, by integrating the above methods and improving the "360-degree" appraisal mechanism involving multiple stakeholders—teachers, peers, self, family, and society—a holistic, multidimensional chain of evaluation evidence can be formed.

4.4 Stakeholder Collaboration: Building a "Pluralistic and Collaborative Evaluation Community"

Effective evaluation relies on clearly divided responsibilities and effective collaboration among multiple stakeholders. It is necessary to construct an "evaluation community" encompassing students, teachers (counselors), peers, families, and social forces. Within this community, students are the subjects of self-reflection and evaluation; teachers are the professional force leading design and implementation; peers promote mutual learning and supervision through mutual assessment; families provide feedback on students' authentic performance at home and in the community; and social institutions offer evaluation perspectives from off-campus practices. To ensure comprehensiveness and consistency in evaluation, effective information-sharing platforms and regular consultation mechanisms must be established to achieve interoperability and mutual verification of evaluation information among stakeholders.

4.5 Application of Results: Strengthening Diagnostic, Incentive, and Improvement Functions

The application of evaluation results must go beyond simple classification and appraisal, focusing on strengthening their diagnostic, incentive, and improvement functions. Firstly, results should serve student growth by providing "developmental diagnostic reports" that indicate strengths, weaknesses, and personalized growth paths. Secondly, results should serve teaching improvement, helping teachers and schools accurately identify weaknesses in fostering virtue and cultivating talents, thereby optimizing curriculum, teaching, and activity design. Finally, results should serve management decision-making, serving as an important basis for school quality evaluation and resource allocation. However, the key lies in focusing on "diagnosis" to promote continuous improvement, rather than simple "ranking" and "linking," to avoid triggering new utilitarian tendencies.

5 Practical Pathways: Supporting Conditions for Ensuring the Effective Operation of the Evaluation System

Constructing a scientific evaluation system is only the starting point; the realization of its educational value ultimately depends on systematic support at the practical level. To ensure effective implementation and long-term operation, it is necessary to break institutional bottlenecks, solidify professional foundations, optimize the social ecology, and combine top-level design with grassroots innovation to form systematic safeguards for promoting the continuous deepening of evaluation reform.

5.1 Strengthening Top-Level Design and Breaking Institutional Barriers

Deepening evaluation reform requires systematic breakthroughs at the institutional level. There is an urgent need to construct an institutional framework that vertically integrates all educational stages and horizontally connects various evaluation stakeholders. By formulating guiding and binding national-level evaluation standards and implementation plans, clear and consistent normative guidance can be provided for grassroots practice. This institutional design must not only clarify the core dimensions and basic requirements of evaluation but also strive to crack long-standing institutional and mechanism obstacles hindering moral education evaluation. Particularly, it is essential to deepen the comprehensive reform of the enrollment examination system and establish selection mechanisms compatible with students' comprehensive quality development. By organically combining process evaluation with outcome evaluation and substantially incorporating the effectiveness of fostering virtue and cultivating talents into the education quality assessment system, the evaluation inertia solely oriented towards scores and advancement rates can be fundamentally reversed, creating institutional space for the effective operation of the evaluation system for fostering virtue and cultivating talents.

5.2 Enhancing Teacher Literacy and Building a Professional Team

The quality of evaluation reform implementation highly depends on the professional literacy and execution capabilities of the implementers. Enhancing teachers' evaluation literacy must be placed at the core of teacher professional development, constructing a professional development system covering pre-service training, induction training, and in-service Training. This system should not only help teachers master professional skills such as evaluation design, data collection and analysis, and result feedback but also guide them to deeply understand the essence of developmental evaluation idea, achieving a role transition from "evaluation managers" to "growth facilitators." To this end, it is necessary to establish normalization professional support mechanisms and provide continuous professional guidance and practical support for teachers through school-based teaching research, regional collaboration, expert guidance, and other means, ultimately building a professional team that understands educational laws and is skilled in evaluation practice.

5.3 Fostering a Conducive Ecology and Forming Educational Synergy

The successful implementation of evaluation reform relies on broad social recognition and a favorable ecology of collaborative education. To break the limitation of schools "fighting alone," it is necessary to help families and society establish scientific views on education and talent through systematic public opinion guidance and policy publicity, deeply understanding the contemporary connotation of fostering virtue and cultivating talents and the significance of evaluation reform. Simultaneously, it is essential to actively build a home-school-community collaborative education mechanism, forming an educational community with consistent goals and complementary functions through establishing regularized communication channels, shared resource platforms, and complementary educational practices.

Additionally, attention must be paid to creating a positive and healthy socio-cultural environment, especially purifying cyberspace and promoting socialist core values, providing comprehensive positive guidance and emotional support for students' moral development.

5.4 Encouraging Pilot Projects and Advancing Reform Steadily

Given the complexity and long-term nature of evaluation reform, a gradual implementation strategy is required. Under the unified national framework, conditions should be encouraged in regions and schools to carry out diversified explorations based on their actual situations, especially making breakthroughs in key areas such as the concretization of evaluation standards, innovation in evaluation methods, and the application mechanism of evaluation results. A complete pilot work guarantee mechanism and experience summarization and promotion mechanism should be established, providing necessary policy space and resource support for grassroots innovation through the establishment of reform experimental zones and project schools. Meanwhile, a dynamically adjusted and continuously optimized reform advancement mechanism should be established. We will promptly refine successful practices that have been tested in practice into typical experiences that can be copied and promoted, and promote the continuous improvement of the evaluation system for cultivating people with moral integrity through the way of leading by example and radiation, so as to realize the steady and orderly progress of the reform.

6 Conclusion

Constructing a scientific evaluation system for the effectiveness of fostering virtue and cultivating talents across primary, secondary, and higher education is a strategic project related to the future of education and national rejuvenation. It is by no means a technical operation achievable overnight but rather a profound transformation of educational concepts and systematic institutional innovation. We must adhere to the guidance of Marx's theory of all-round human development, courageously confront practical dilemmas, deeply analyze their roots, and conduct overall reconstruction with systematic thinking. Through comprehensive innovation in concepts, content, methods, stakeholders, and application, an integrated evaluation system capable of effectively guiding and ensuring the implementation of the fundamental task of "fostering virtue and cultivating talents" can be established, thereby truly cultivating socialist builders and successors who are developed in an all-round way—morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and labor-wise—laying a solid talent foundation for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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