

## Enhancing Quality Assurance in Chinese Higher Education: A Practical Approach

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### Abstract

In 2021, China's higher education enrollment had soared to 40%, positioning it as a major player globally. Quality Assurance (QA) has emerged as a central focus in the global higher education landscape, with governments and academic communities worldwide prioritizing reforms and advancements in this area. While China's engagement in QA research began later than Western countries, significant progress has been made, culminating in the establishment of the Education QA System. The construction of a modern university system is integral to enhancing QA in higher education. This involves defining power and responsibility dynamics among internal and external stakeholders, fostering positive interactions between universities, government, and society. At the micro-level, perfecting governance structures and implementing effective QA mechanisms, such as the Undergraduate Teaching Quality Assurance (UTQA) system, are essential. International comparative research reveals variations in internal QA systems across countries, with differing emphases on administrative dominance, governance evolution, and market competition. While domestic researchers adeptly integrate global academic frontiers, there is a need for deeper exploration to inform actionable countermeasures and suggestions for enhancing QA in Chinese higher education. The utilization of student evaluations in QA measures is crucial for ensuring teaching quality in higher education. Scholars have extensively explored the factors influencing teachers' utilization of feedback information, categorizing them into internal and external factors. Internal factors include teachers' attitudes towards QA and students' feedback questionnaires, as well as their acceptance, recognition, and interpretation of evaluation results. Additionally, potential differences between teachers' self-evaluation and students' evaluations may hinder subsequent QA activities. Externally, the school atmosphere emerges as a significant influencing factor, prompting teachers to prioritize educational quality. Effective school support, tailored to individual needs, such as peer guidance or standardized formal training, can facilitate improvements. Furthermore, the tutorial system plays a critical role in teaching quality, with students' feedback reflecting its impact. Factors influencing

students' perceptions of the tutorial system include prior experiences, the learning environment, and the content relevant to teaching. The expansion of higher education in China has been a significant endeavor since the late 20th century, marked by government-led policies aimed at increasing enrollment rates. This paper discusses the study of QA in higher education that is deeply rooted in practical contexts, necessitating a nuanced approach to address the evolving challenges and opportunities in ensuring teaching quality.

**Keywords:** Quality Assurance, Higher Education, Practical Approach, China

**Introduction**

Towards the close of the 20th century, China initiated a government-led higher education expansion policy. The 1998 Action Plan of Revitalizing Education for the 21st Century outlined the goal of expanding the scale of higher education by 2010, with a target gross enrollment rate of nearly 15% (Li Ligu, 2021). As of 2021, the enrollment in higher education in China had reached 7.3785 million, and the gross enrollment rate had surged to 40%. This growth has positioned China among the major players in higher education globally. By 2019, the enrollment rate had further increased to 51.6%, with the number of students enrolled in that year reaching 8.1965 million (Zhao Xiaohong, 2019). Figure 1 illustrates on the Chinese Statistical Bulletin on Education Development in 2019:

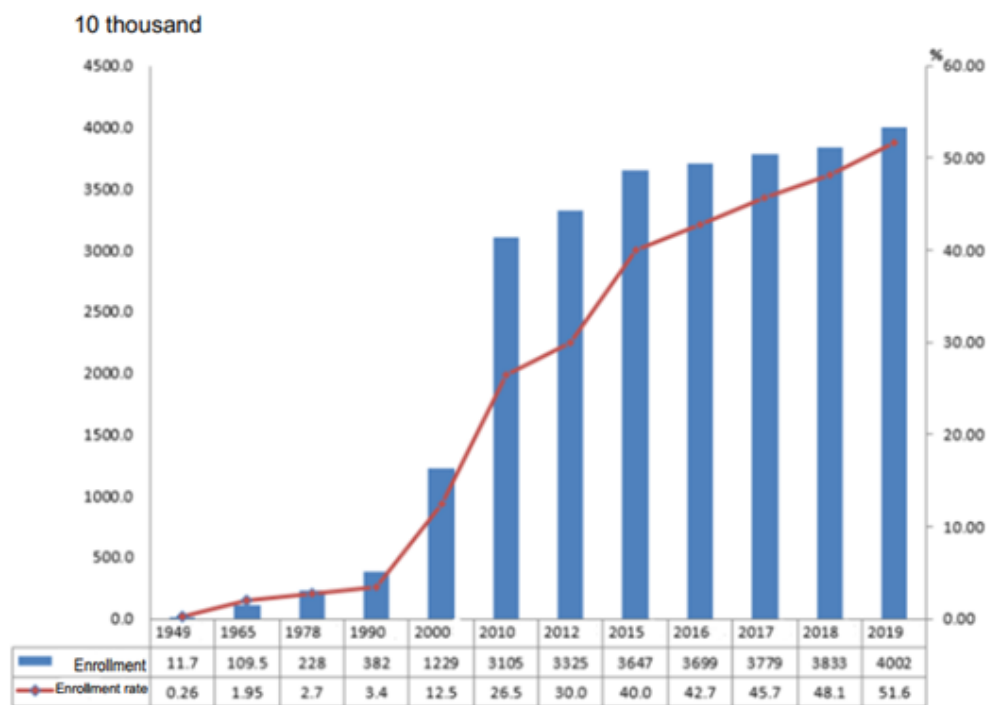


Figure 1: Chinese Statistical Bulletin on Education Development (National Statistical Bulletin on The Development of Education- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2019)

The world's higher education sector has entered an era where quality plays a predominant role. Quality serves as not only the crucial factor for universities to establish their reputation and gain social recognition but also forms the central focus of reforms and advancements in higher education. Since the 1980s, the QA movement in higher education has extended from major Western nations to a global scale. Consequently, governments and academic communities worldwide have engaged in theoretical investigations and practical endeavors

to enhance QA in higher education. Although China embarked on QA research and exploration later than Western countries, it has achieved significant progress. It is evident that the study of QA in higher education is dug in specific practical contexts. As a result of the continuous expansion of higher education, ongoing market economy development, growing awareness of civil society accountability, and the influence of the higher education QA movement in western countries, the quality of higher education in China has collected widespread attention. In response, China established the Education QA System, marking the initiation of theoretical research into higher education QA in the country (Wu Yan, 2021).

The core concept of a modern university system involves establishing a legal, independently managed, democratically supervised, and socially participatory college structure. The emphasis lies in defining the power and responsibility dynamics among internal and external stakeholders. On a broader scale, constructing a modern university system primarily addresses the power and responsibility relationships between universities and external entities such as the government and society, fostering a new form of positive interaction. Analogously, the construction of the higher education QA system necessitates addressing the relationships among universities, government, and society. This illustrates that the macro-level construction of a modern university system aligns with the connotations of higher education QA activities, aiding in standardizing the power and responsibility relationships among different QA subjects.

On a micro level, building a modern university system focuses on perfecting the governance structure, fundamentally relying on the president's responsibility system under the leadership of the Party Committee and exploring effective approaches to faculty research to establish a sustainable QA mechanism. The internal QA activities serve as an essential and integral aspect of micro-level modern university system construction. Similarly, constructing a modern university system serves as a crucial institutional foundation for enhancing internal QA activities in universities, providing a strong basis for clarifying power and responsibility relationships among various subjects within the internal QA system.

The UTQA system is an intricate framework comprising multiple components that encompass all facets of undergraduate teaching. Consequently, exploring into the elements of the UTQA system through research proves beneficial for universities, enabling targeted enhancements in QA construction and effectively elevating the standard of education and teaching. In 2005, the European Higher Education Area Quality Standards and Guidelines, endorsed by the Minister Meeting of Bologna Member States, introduced 7 standards for university QA. By 2021, the Council of Ministers revised the document, expanding the internal quality standards from 7 to 10, and incorporating 3 standards such as student-centered learning, teaching, and evaluation. This revision highlights a significant emphasis on the student-centered learning experience while also addressing the effective integration between internal and external QA. Upon analyzing the aforementioned points, it becomes evident that domestic and foreign researchers emphasize different aspects in their research content. In terms of theoretical research, there is a consensus about the significance of total quality management theory and the ISO9000 standard in UTQA, both playing a guiding role in the practical application and exploration of QA. Simultaneously, researchers globally acknowledge the crucial role of quality culture in QA construction, advocating for the cultivation of a quality culture both within and outside the university. In terms of international comparative research, there are variations in the internal QA systems of universities across different countries. Universities in continental Europe exhibit a strong administrative dominance in their internal QA systems, while the historical evolution of the internal QA system in the United Kingdom aligns closely

with changes in university governance. In the United States, there is a pronounced emphasis on the role of market competition in QA. Despite domestic researchers being adept at grasping academic frontiers and promptly introducing them into the domestic academic arena, there is often a lack of in-depth exploration at the level of countermeasures and suggestions.

### **Background of the Study**

While there have been distinguished accomplishments in Chinese higher education QA (QA) activities, such as a shift in the evaluation paradigm from management to governance and the emergence of college self-evaluation as the primary QA approach, alongside the establishment of internal teaching QA systems in some universities, there remain numerous unresolved issues in both theoretical and practical research. The theoretical framework of higher education QA comprises two interconnected systems: (1) an internal QA system led by colleges, and (2) an external QA system dominated by governments or third-party organizations, demonstrating interdependence and mutual constraints. This study specifically concentrates on exploring elements and factors within the internal QA system of colleges and universities.

Presently, an essential aspect of evaluating undergraduate teaching in China is examining the efficacy of the QA system. The effectiveness of the internal UTQA system not only directly impacts its role in higher education QA but also imposes constraints on the modernization of the higher education governance system and capacity. The focus on undergraduate teaching quality in this research stems from the recognition that undergraduate students represent the starting point for research studies, emphasizing the significance of initiating improvements at this foundational level to enhance the overall education quality of a nation. Elevating University Teaching QA from the outset of the higher education system is crucial in this context.

In college teaching QA system, under the influence of the traditional teaching management concept, most of the colleges and universities teaching quality evaluation criterion has certain deficiency, evaluation methods are relatively single, evaluation criteria standard are not unique, this is unbeneficial to the development and perfection of teaching QA system in colleges and universities. In addition, most colleges and universities still adopt unified evaluation standards for different evaluation subjects, which makes the evaluation of teaching quality not rigorous and unscientific and reduces the reliability and authenticity of teaching information and statistical data, thus affecting the teaching quality.

At present, most colleges and universities already established the quantitative evaluation index system of teaching quality evaluation, however, in the process of actual operation and use, too much emphasis on quantitative evaluation way, ignoring the importance of qualitative evaluation, makes the level evaluation and performance evaluation in a state of imbalance, influence the effective supervision of teaching quality in colleges and universities. Teaching quality standard is an important content of teaching QA system in colleges and universities, and also an effective means to evaluate and monitor teaching quality. But in the actual operation and use, it involves a relatively wide range of teaching quality standards because of the different types of universities and teaching purposes, there is a certain difference. Some colleges and universities are divided into classroom teaching, practice teaching and experiment teaching according to the teaching attributes. However, some colleges and universities are divided into theoretical teaching and practical teaching according

to the teaching content, which will cause confusion in teaching quality standards and affect the effectiveness of teaching quality evaluation.

From past research, there lacking identify about new element of the University Teaching QA (Zhang He, 2019). There only have the old one that must be review back. Besides that, the evaluation indicator of the University Teaching QA must be study in deep research to help university to be outstanding with international standard. Therefore, it is particularly necessary to develop the model of the internal UTQA in research universities of China to makes sure UTQA can give impact to education.

In terms of scientific and technological innovation, research universities, as the centers of the highest level of talent training and the latest frontier science and technology research and development in China, are based on teaching and educating people and scientific research and development and possess high quality of talents and academic output. Research universities represent the highest standard of Chinese universities.

### **Analysis on Influencing Factors of Teaching Quality**

In the context of popularization, it shows the deepening of system openness, close and complicated connection with the outside, and many factors from all aspects affect the teaching quality of colleges and universities. From the macro level, these influencing factors are related to social politics, economy, science, cultural environment, educational policies, systems, and laws, and even the competitive environment of international higher education market. From the perspective of middle view, it is related to the community environment, the idea and orientation of running a university, the conditions of running a university, the construction of majors and disciplines, teaching management and more. While from the micro level, it is related to the quality of teachers, teaching methods and attitudes, students learning attitudes and methods, or curriculum setting, implementation and a series of activities. Nonetheless, in terms of teaching work in colleges and universities, as the article points out in the beginning, colleges and universities should shoulder the primary responsibility of teaching QA, also should give universities and higher education management department to undertake the mission of the school independent space, because of the higher education QA eventually need to develop is the consciousness of QA and school-based ability, external all efforts Should be around this, then this work is likely to be carried out for a long time.

The research on the influencing factors of teaching quality in colleges and universities has obvious academic value and practical significance. Good research results can provide a key point for the teaching QA activities of colleges and universities, provide valuable reference for the implementation and supervision of QA of higher education, thus improving the reliability and validity of QA activities, and enriching the quality management of higher education academically. Since the 1980s, with the deepening of the QA movement of higher education, foreign scholars have carried out a series of systematic and in-depth research on small topics, which meet the needs of practice. However, domestic scholars have entered this field relatively late, and the number of research is small.

Within the college teaching QA system, traditional teaching management concepts have led to deficiencies in the evaluation criteria of most colleges and universities. The criteria lack uniformity, and evaluation methods are overly singular, hindering the development and refinement of teaching QA systems. Moreover, the adoption of unified evaluation standards for diverse evaluation subjects reduces the rigor and scientific validity of teaching quality



assessment, compromising the reliability and authenticity of teaching information and statistical data.

While many colleges and universities have established quantitative evaluation index systems for teaching quality, an excessive focus on quantitative methods neglects the importance of qualitative evaluation. This imbalance between quantitative and qualitative evaluation hampers the effective supervision of teaching quality in higher education institutions. Teaching quality standards, crucial within the teaching QA system, vary widely across different types of universities and teaching purposes. Disparities in categorizations, such as classroom teaching, practice teaching, or theoretical teaching, lead to confusion in standards, diminishing the effectiveness of teaching quality evaluation. Past research highlights a lack of identification of new elements in UTQA. Existing elements need revisiting, and the evaluation indicators of UTQA should undergo in-depth research to align with international standards. Developing an internal UTQA model in research universities is essential to ensure its impact on education.

In terms of scientific and technological innovation, research universities, representing the pinnacle of talent training and cutting-edge research and development in China, serve as the focus of this study. Chen Baosheng, the Chinese Minister of Education, emphasizes the significance of undergraduate education in forming students' worldviews and values, asserting that undergraduate education quality is foundational for improving talent training quality and achieving world-class university status. The analysis of influencing factors on teaching quality in colleges and universities recognizes the complexity of the system, with macro-level factors linked to social, political, economic, and cultural environments, as well as educational policies and international competitiveness. Middle-level factors involve community environment, university management philosophy, infrastructure, and academic disciplines. Micro-level factors include teacher quality, teaching methods, student learning attitudes, and curriculum implementation.

The research on influencing factors of teaching quality holds academic value and practical significance. International scholars have extensively researched QA in higher education since the 1980s, while domestic scholars have entered this field more recently. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding by examining research dynamics from both domestic and foreign scholars and evaluating QA institution criteria. Such insights can enhance the reliability and validity of QA activities in higher education, contributing to academic enrichment and improved management practices.

### **The Significance of Curriculum and Evaluation Criteria of Teaching QA**

The recognition of curriculum's significance has been widespread in both practical applications and research. The extent to which a curriculum aligns with needs exhibits a strong correlation with teaching quality, encompassing various tasks like curriculum design, organization, implementation, evaluation, and enhancement. Cecilia Temponi asserts that QA activities within universities hold a crucial role in administration, particularly in certain courses (Cecilia Temponi, 2019). The ongoing refinement of the curriculum serves as a direct manifestation of the university's commitment to meeting student needs and continuously enhancing educational quality. Thomas et al. argue that diverse courses carry substantial importance in shaping students from various backgrounds, playing a pivotal role in their future integration into society and the job market (Thomas et al., 2021).

Over the past three decades, certain developed countries in Europe and the United States have accumulated a wealth of research achievements in the field of higher education QA.

These accomplishments are characterized by specific research objectives, in-depth investigations, comprehensive analyses, and practical applicability. In examining the factors that influence the quality of higher education teaching, as explored by foreign scholars, the research often encompasses various elements such as teachers, students, teaching conditions, curriculum, classroom teaching, teaching methods, and interaction and communication between teachers and students. The research angle predominantly delves into aspects like student satisfaction, study progress and success rates, learning experiences, learning styles, learning environments, student advancements, course significance, classroom teaching effectiveness, outstanding higher education quality, factors affecting teaching quality, QA measures, and values associated with quality.

Denberg et al. conducted a study on the determinants of students' learning progress and success rate, emphasizing that learning progress is predominantly influenced by three tiers: individual students, educational institutions, and management. Additionally, economic, social, psychological, and organizational factors are recognized as contributors to students' learning advancement (Denberg et al., 2021). To comprehensively account for factors at all these levels, the research employed a multi-level and interdisciplinary framework, utilizing a database encompassing 9000 students and 60 courses at the school level. The findings underscore the significance of both individual student characteristics and school-level dynamics in influencing learning progress.

Jacqueline and her colleagues (2019) employed the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to investigate the in-class and out-of-class experiences of 163 undergraduate students, encompassing teaching, learning, assessment, and other school services. The findings underscore the significance of daily teaching management and services, communication between students and tutors, as well as various teaching and ancillary conditions. These aspects emerge as crucial focal points for education administrators to consider.

Prem Ramburuth and Massimiliano Tani conducted an analysis of the similarities and variances in the learning experiences of students hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds, primarily from different countries. Their study involved a questionnaire survey of 2,200 undergraduate students at an Australian university (Prem Ramburuth & Massimiliano Tani, 2019). The results reveal noteworthy distinctions in the learning experiences and perceptions among students in Australia, Asian countries, and other nations. These disparities are primarily associated with pre-school learning and preparation, encompassing factors such as previous learning methods, language proficiency, and communication skills. Additionally, variations are observed in students' confidence and ability to engage in class discussions, communication among peers, and interactions with faculty and staff from similar or different language backgrounds. The cultural distinctions often pose challenges for many international students, leading to difficulties in overcoming them and a lack of mutual communication between local and international students.

### **Impact of Learning Styles and Environment**

Jan (2021) investigated the correlation between students' learning styles and their personality, environment, and academic performance. Utilizing a questionnaire survey, the study encompassed students from seven different disciplines, employing regression and correlation analyses. The findings revealed a significant association between students' learning styles and factors such as personality, subject, previous education, age, and gender. Particularly, a remarkable relationship between learning style and academic performance was observed.

The learning modes were categorized based on students' performance in cognitive process planning, metacognitive management planning, learning concepts, and learning direction, resulting in four distinct learning modes: goal-oriented learning, repetitive learning, practical learning, and non-directional learning. Specifically, the research highlighted the evident connection between goal-oriented learning style and subject and age. The repetitive learning style exhibited a strong correlation with the subject and prior educational experience.

This aligns with the research conclusions of Saljo et al (2021) regarding the impact of students' early education experience on learning. Their findings suggest that individuals' learning concepts stem from their learning and education experiences. Scholars such as Van der Hulst, Jansen, and Lindblom-Ylänne also assert that students' abilities and pre-college academic performance significantly influence their achievements in college.

The study additionally indicated a positive correlation between students' self-management during the learning process and academic performance. Conversely, excessive external management showed an excessive negative correlation with academic performance, while students lacking in management exhibited a strong negative correlation with grades. In contrast, Vermunt (2021) argued that students' learning processes are entirely reliant on external management, downplaying the role of students' self-management.

Lizzio et al (2021) posited that supervised learning positively correlates with student achievement, while Crombag et al (2019) contended that students adapt their learning behavior based on how classes are organized. In response, the author suggests prioritizing students' independent management, emphasizing that moderate external management should not be disregarded. Crucially, external management should focus on guiding and nurturing students' habits and abilities for independent management, actively cultivating their capacity for independent development and self-restraint.

Busato (2019); Vermetten et al (2020) investigated into the connection between learning styles and personality traits. Their findings revealed a strong correlation, indicating that goal-directed learning aligns with individuals possessing rational and forthright personalities, while repetitive learning is closely associated with cautious and easy-going personalities. Rozendaal et al (2021) explored the relationship between learning styles and cognitive theory, noting that students with a proclivity for knowledge relativity tend to adopt goal-oriented learning, whereas those with knowledge absolutism lean towards repetitive and non-directional learning. Similarly, Severiens et al. examined the intersection of learning styles and gender, uncovering that under non-directional learning styles, boys outperformed girls, while in repetitive learning styles, girls demonstrated higher scores (Severiens et al., 2019). However, Zeegers disputed these findings, asserting that there are no discernible differences in learning styles between boys and girls (Severiens et al., 2021).

Busato (2019) explored students' learning styles in relation to test results, revealing a negative association between non-directional learning styles and academic achievement. Conversely, a positive correlation emerged between goal-oriented learning and learning achievement, as well as between repetitive learning and practical learning approaches. In contrast, Jan D. Vermunt (2019) identified a negative correlation between repetitive learning styles and academic performance. Crombag posited that no significant relationship exists between learning styles and students' academic achievement. Meyer observed that "discordant" learning styles were particularly linked to lower grades (Crombag, 2021). While Carroll (2021) emphasized the significance of effective learning time in learning methods. He argued that optimal use of learning time necessitates a high-quality learning environment, contingent on two preconditions: teaching quality and learning opportunities.



The interaction between students' learning styles and their personalities and related factors influences their academic performance. Yet, there is no unanimous consensus on which learning style directly correlates or opposes academic achievement. The author contends that this variability depends on individuals and subjects. The focal point should not solely be on the study approach and its influencing factors or the specific quantitative relationships between affected elements. Instead, the focus should be on gaining a comprehensive understanding of these complex and dynamic relationships through various research methods, practical applications, and theoretical explorations. This approach aims to avoid stifling students' development in personnel training and prevent teachers from fostering negative perceptions that could impact students' subsequent behaviors.

David and Doris undertook a qualitative study investigating the correlation between workload and working hours. The findings indicated that the association between workload and working hours was not substantial, mirroring the complexity observed in the relationship between teaching and the learning environment (David & Doris, 2019). In light of these results, they advocate for encouraging students to shift their focus towards their learning environment rather than lamenting about the demanding study load, aiming to enhance the quality of their education. To validate this hypothesis, they developed a structural equation model utilizing data from a sample of 3,320 graduate students at the University of Hong Kong. The model for this hypothesis encompasses nine factors related to the teaching and learning environment, categorized into three groups based on their potential influence, namely teaching, teacher-student relationships, and student-student relationships which may impact the level of learning burden students can endure. The outcomes of the study revealed that directing attention towards teaching and the learning environment can serve as a motivational factor for students, preventing them from feeling overwhelmed and encouraging diligent effort.

### **Quality of Excellent Higher Education, Students' Academic Progress and Teaching Effect**

In the late 1980s, Professor Zelda F Gamson of the University of Massachusetts in the United States proposed a study to identify the necessary conditions for enhancing the quality of higher education. This idea garnered support from Arthur W. Mason, Director of the American Association for Higher Education, with backing from Chickering. Subsequently, the American Association for Higher Education formally sponsored the study, which received funding from the Johnson Foundation. Given the myriad and intricate factors influencing the quality of undergraduate education, the researchers pondered the primary audience for this strategy whether it should target teachers, administrators, or higher education policymakers, or perhaps all three. The consensus was to focus on teachers, university administrators, and state higher education policymakers as the primary recipients, with the aim of expanding the findings nationwide.

After nearly a year of dedicated efforts, the researchers published seven measures in March 1987 in the Association of Higher Education in the United States catalog to enhance the quality of undergraduate course teaching. Specifically, these measures included promoting interaction between teachers and students, encouraging mutual cooperation among students, fostering active student learning, providing timely feedback to students, appropriately scheduling study time, setting higher expectations for students, and respecting the differences among students and their various learning styles. These suggestions received enthusiastic responses from numerous universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Canada. Encouraged by the positive reception, the researchers developed self-

evaluation questionnaires for teachers and accompanying cases and indicators for each measure. In 1991, they created a series of matching testing and evaluation tools and case sets, which have since found widespread use in many countries.

Jansen embarked on a study aiming to explore the factors influencing students' advancement and curriculum success. According to Jansen (2021), he posits that students' personality, teaching methods, and the structure of the curriculum are pivotal factors impacting their learning. Furthermore, Jansen contends that students' planned behavior and time management modes play a significant role in influencing their learning progress. In a parallel study, Feldman (2021) employed meta-analysis to categorize teaching behaviors associated with academic achievement into four criteria: organization, clarity, interaction, and expression. Jensen also argues that both course-level factors (such as organizational and teaching characteristics and student-level factors including gender, and previous education's average grade collectively shape students' effort and learning progress. In this research, curriculum teaching characteristics are delineated into three variables: guiding function, practice opportunities, and feedback and supervision. Additionally, course organization features are structured into five variables, encompassing the interval between tests, the gap between retests, the average of parallel courses, the likelihood of scheduling two tests in one week, and the probability of arranging retests and new tests in the same week.

Scholars like Van der Hulst and Jansen contend that younger students exhibit faster progress compared to older counterparts, and girls tend to outperform boys (Van der Hulst, 2019). The average score in previous education significantly influences students' learning progress in college, aligning with the perspectives of Lindblom-Ylance and Lizzio et al.

Classroom instruction stands as the fundamental educational service provided by schools. The quality of teaching, teacher-student interaction, class size, and other factors influence teaching quality and shape students' evaluations of it. According to Robert R. Aver and Jiang Qi, the university classroom functions as a social organization with both formal and informal structures. They identify ten independent factors affecting the class, including class size and opportunities, teacher-student interaction, the professor's role as a knowledge authority, fear of professorial criticism, disapproval from classmates, similar participation in the course, self-confidence, preparation, gender, and age. These factors directly, indirectly, and generally impact class performance. The study underscores the significant influence of teacher-student interaction outside the classroom on students' participation in classroom activities. Encouraging teachers to guide students beyond formal sessions and fostering mutual influence is crucial. Confidence emerges as a core element with a profound impact on class performance, affecting not only students' reported participation but also other relevant factors (Robert & Jiang Qi, 2019). Fassinger concurs, emphasizing the pivotal role of confidence in classroom participation (Fassinger, 2021). Sacker, M., and Sadker, D. assert that classroom participation is integral for effective learning, allowing students to develop more positive views of their learning experiences (Sacker & Sadker, 2021).

Jacqueline Douglas et al. conducted a survey of 3800 students, revealing that material aspects of school services had a relatively minor impact on student satisfaction. The paramount factor was the core service of the school, namely the quality of classroom teaching, representing the most crucial aspect of students' learning experiences. Teachers and tutors' academic background and professional skills, as the primary deliverers of instruction, directly determine the level of classroom teaching (Douglas et al., 2021).

Coles discovered that student satisfaction decreased with increasing class size, and satisfaction with compulsory core courses was lower than that with elective courses (Coles,

2019). Additionally, Banwet Datta, Schneider & Bowen, Hill et al. all assert that the core service mode of schools is classroom teaching, and teaching quality directly influences overall school quality. Students prioritize the effectiveness of classroom teaching, including knowledge and skill acquisition, access to lecture notes and readings, the breadth and depth of lecture content, and teacher feedback on homework (Datta, 2019). The study also found that students demonstrate loyalty to their lecturers, recommending proficient educators to each other and opting for courses recommended by esteemed lecturers.

### **Discussion**

Evaluations conducted by students are a crucial component of QA measures, and the extent to which teachers utilize the feedback information significantly determines the effectiveness of these activities in ensuring teaching quality. Scholars have explored the factors influencing teachers' utilization of students' feedback information, categorizing them broadly into internal and external factors. Internal factors primarily relate to teachers' attitudes towards QA and students' feedback questionnaires, while external factors pertain to the teachers' working environment. Surveys conducted by Trowler (2021); Newton (2020) unveiled diverse attitudes among teachers towards quality policies, with some embracing them out of practical necessity, some viewing them as meaningless forms, and others expressing disbelief.

Internal factors impacting teachers' utilization of students' feedback information encompass three main aspects, according to Don et al (2019): acceptance of students' feedback questionnaires, recognition of evaluation results, and interpretation of feedback information. Don and Laughton et al. contend that teachers' acceptance of students' feedback depends on their perception of the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. If teachers doubt the reliability, they are less likely to consider survey results or engage in subsequent activities. Additionally, teachers may believe that certain factors unrelated to quality, such as students' exam scores, influence students' opinions, although evidence supporting this impact is lacking. Regarding the second internal factor about the acceptance of evaluation results, the evaluation must align with teachers' perspectives and teaching practices (Marsh & Roche, 2019). In terms of the third internal factor about degree of interpretation of feedback, some researchers note that teachers find open-ended questionnaire responses particularly helpful in interpreting data.

It's worth noting that some scholars argue that potential differences between teachers' self-evaluation and students' evaluation of teaching may hinder subsequent QA activities. Regarding external factors, the school atmosphere emerges as the most significant external influencing factor that prompts teachers to prioritize educational quality. If teachers accept students' feedback, improvements can be made. Effective school support for teachers should be tailored to individual needs, such as peer guidance, assistance from education experts, or standardized formal training.

As a crucial measure for ensuring teaching quality, the impact of the tutorial system on the quality of teaching is most clearly reflected in students' feedback. Prosser et al., in their exploration of student learning patterns, highlight numerous factors that influence students' perceptions of the tutorial system. These factors encompass the student's prior experiences, such as social class and school; the student's perception of the learning environment, including expectations of the tutor and the tutor's teaching methods; and the content relevant to teaching, such as the student's subject and grade.

Paul Ashwin investigated the impact of the Oxford tutorial system on students' learning by conducting interviews with 28 students across four groups, each expressing diverse views on

the tutorial system (Ashwin, 2019). The findings indicate that there is no evident correlation between students' perspectives on the tutorial system and their majors and grades. Tinto underscores the significance of teachers and mentors in fostering students' holistic academic progress.

Lee Shulman asserts that teaching quality is influenced by various factors, proposing a comprehensive model that incorporates teachers, students, and the course's teaching process. Within this model, teachers play a crucial role, with their research perspectives shaping their ideas, perceptions, and judgment. It also involves subject content, curriculum, academic exchanges, and social activities, emphasizing that teaching activities serve as a reflection of teachers' capabilities (Lee Shulman, 2021). Regarding students, the environment and group dynamics significantly impact their ideas, perceptions, and judgment, with teaching activities playing a pivotal role in determining their abilities. In terms of the course teaching process, the classroom is highlighted as the key link between teachers and students.

Michael J. Dunkin posits that teaching quality is primarily determined by four types of factors: prediction, encompassing teachers' growth experiences, education backgrounds, and abilities; environment, including students' experiences and abilities, as well as the influence of schools and communities; process, with a primary focus on the classroom; and output, considering the current and long-term growth and impact of students. These factors are identified as crucial for enhancing teaching effectiveness (Michael, 2021).

Ronnie conducted a survey at Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland, revealing that there exists a structured framework for valuing higher education quality. In this framework, they assert that various aspects of the educational process, including curriculum design, curriculum promotion, student recruitment, freshman orientation, teaching methods, content delivery, course evaluation, and teaching conditions, should adhere to specific quality standards. The survey findings also suggest a correlation between the consistency of quality perceptions among students, teachers, and administrators and student satisfaction. Furthermore, there is unanimous agreement on the significance of the educational process, particularly emphasizing the importance of curriculum design and teaching methods (Ronnie, 2019).

In summary, foreign scholars predominantly concentrate on teachers, courses, and students in their investigations into the factors influencing the teaching quality of higher education institutions. Although not exhaustive, these studies delve into specific and profound aspects. Moreover, a substantial body of research on facets is often supplemented by empirical evidence, providing valuable practical insights into enhancing the teaching quality of colleges and universities.

### **Conclusions**

The pursuit of higher education is a global attempt, with countries and regions worldwide striving to expand access to educational opportunities. However, as higher education becomes more accessible, concerns about maintaining academic standards and teaching quality come to the forefront. To address these concerns, educational quality assurance systems have emerged as essential mechanisms to ensure and enhance teaching quality. These systems, rooted in a culture of continuous improvement, aim to comprehensively guarantee educational quality. Within this framework, teaching quality serves as the core component, playing a pivotal role in talent cultivation and educational excellence. Particularly in research universities, which represent the pinnacle of higher education, the focus on

undergraduate teaching quality is paramount. These institutions bear the responsibility of elite higher education and are tasked with nurturing high-quality innovative talent.

Understanding the current landscape of undergraduate teaching quality in research universities in China is critical for achieving broader educational goals. This necessitates a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of UTQA systems, with a particular focus on university governance. By analyzing key elements such as research universities, university governance, UTQA, and effectiveness, insights into the current status and future trends in this domain are gathered. In the meantime, stakeholder engagement is a crucial aspect of UTQA activities, with students, teachers, and administrators playing central roles. The genuine participation of diverse stakeholders is essential for improving the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms. Scholars have emphasized the importance of cooperative engagement among stakeholders, highlighting the need for optimization of their influence and the establishment of mechanisms for multiple participation.

The UTQA system, as an integral part of university internal quality assurance mechanisms, plays a vital role in enhancing teaching quality. Both domestic and international universities have conducted extensive research and practical exploration in this area. By reviewing existing research on UTQA systems, researchers can identify key elements influencing teaching quality and develop effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure quality teaching. Theoretical frameworks underpinning UTQA research vary, drawing from disciplines such as System Theory, Contingency Theory, Accountability Theory, Total Quality Management Theory, and Governance Theory. Additionally, researchers acknowledge the significance of quality culture, recognizing its evolution from technical aspects to broader cultural considerations. Comparative studies of internal quality assurance systems in different countries offer valuable insights for constructing UTQA systems in Chinese universities. For example, European models emphasize student participation in quality assurance activities as a normative practice. In contrast, Chinese universities rely primarily on student evaluations for participation in teaching QA activities, highlighting the need for further research into stakeholder engagement and power dynamics.

In short, ensuring high-quality university teaching is paramount for the advancement of higher education. UTQA systems, rooted in effective university governance and stakeholder engagement, serve as essential mechanisms for maintaining and enhancing teaching quality. By analyzing key elements and drawing on theoretical frameworks from diverse disciplines, researchers can develop comprehensive UTQA systems tailored to the unique needs of research universities in China. Continued research and refinement in this area are essential for achieving educational excellence and realizing the vision of world-class universities.

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