The Design of an Actor-Network Theory-Based Framework for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

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Abstract:

This study applies Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to analyze the structure and implementation of student learning outcomes assessment systems in Sino-foreign cooperative universities. ANT conceptualizes both human and non-human actors as integral components in dynamic networks, allowing for a nuanced exploration of how various stakeholders—students, faculty, institutions, learning resources, assessment methods, and digital tools—interact to shape assessment practices. By employing a systematic coding framework based on ANT principles, this research examines existing literature and empirical data to identify key actors, their interrelations, and the evolving nature of assessment networks.

Findings highlight the central role of students as primary agents in the assessment system, the institutional support mechanisms that influence assessment effectiveness, the emergence of digital learning management systems as pivotal assessment tools, and the increasing diversification of assessment methods such as peer-assisted learning and rubric-based evaluation. Moreover, insights from Wenzhou-Kean University showcase practical applications of learning outcomes assessment, demonstrating the integration of Chinese educational frameworks with American evaluation standards. The study underscores the necessity of dynamic and adaptive assessment models to ensure academic quality in cross-border education.

Keywords:

Student learning outcomes, actor-network theory, quality assurance, Sino-Foreign cooperative education.