

# Research on the Paths of College Internal Audit Innovation From the Perspective of Co-construction and Collaboration

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## ABSTRACT

Under the modern governance system, the change of national governance environment and the needs of internal governance in colleges and universities require the self-innovation of internal audit in colleges and universities. It is an inevitable need for improving the quality of the internal audit work in colleges and universities in the new era to construct the internal audit supervision mechanism of co-construction, joint governance and shared benefits. At present, there are mainly five plights in the internal audit work in colleges and universities, such as the lack of information sharing and open platform resources, the imperfect university co-construction and collaborative supervision mechanism, the lack of innovation motivation and consciousness, the lagging internal audit information technology and the urgent need to improve the comprehensive ability of internal auditing staff, etc. Based on this, from the perspective of co-construction and collaboration, this paper puts forward the realization paths of the innovative development of internal audit in colleges and universities through strengthening the information data sharing construction mechanism, establishing and perfecting the internal audit co-construction and collaboration mechanism, innovating the internal audit work mode and improving the internal audit information skills and auditors' comprehensive quality ability, etc.

**Keywords:** colleges and universities, internal audit, co-construction, collaboration, innovation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Audit is an important part of the national supervision system. Since 2019, China has put forward new and higher requirements for audit supervision in the new era, and the scope of responsibilities of internal audit has been adjusted accordingly. In this new situation, the internal audit of colleges and universities, as an important part of the supervision and governance system, needs to keep pace with the times, innovate constantly, follow the mechanism of co-construction and collaboration, make sure its upper and lower bodies be interconnected and cooperate with each other. Only in this way, the efficiency of audit work can be improved and the innovative development of audit work be realized. Therefore, it is of great theoretical significance and practical value to construct the sharing mechanism and business cooperation platform of internal audit information in colleges and universities for innovating the audit work mode and improving the audit work efficiency.

## II. THE NECESSITY OF COLLEGE INTERNAL AUDIT INNOVATION

### A. The need for modernization of China's system and capacity for governance

A social governance system based on collaboration, participation and common interests is an important part of the thought on Socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. China has put forward clear requirements for adhering to and improving the social governance system based on collaboration, participation and common interests, pointing out the direction for strengthening and innovating social governance in the new era [1]. In November 2012, the "five-sphere" social governance system for economic, political, cultural, social and ecological progress was proposed in China; in November 2019, it proposed a "seven-sphere" social governance system featuring party leadership, government responsibility, democratic consultation, social coordination, public participation, law guarantee, and scientific and technological support. It is a major institutional innovation to build a community of social governance in which everyone has a responsibility and fulfill the due responsibility and

enjoy shared benefits. As an important system design for standardization of internal management and normalization of risk prevention and control, internal audit in colleges and universities is not only an indispensable means to strengthen internal control, but also a basic link and an important part of the national governance system. So in the face of the new situation and new requirements, it is necessary to keep pace with the times and blaze new trail.

*B. The need of full-coverage audit*

In February 2018, China proposed to "build a unified and efficient audit supervision system to achieve full coverage". The full coverage of audit puts forward higher standards and requirements for the intensity, scope and depth of audit supervision. The internal audit of colleges and universities play a key role in supplementing the national audit strength and realizing the full coverage of audit. In order to achieve full coverage of audit and reduce blind areas of audit supervision, it is necessary to integrate internal audit resources, plan internal audit strength and strengthen the application of internal audit results, so as to realize the complementary advantages of national audit and internal audit, and expand the depth and scope of audit supervision, which inevitably requires universities to strengthen the innovation of internal audit work.

*C. The need of university internal governance development*

As an important part of the school governance system, the internal audit is an internal self-restraint mechanism in colleges and universities, which is

playing an increasingly important role in the development of colleges and universities. Under the modern governance system of colleges and universities, the focus of internal audit must be shifted from "checking errors and preventing defects" to serving for the internal management, decision-making and benefit of colleges and universities, extending the traditional function of supervision and inspection to serving for management, and extending the scope of work from internal inspection and supervision to providing value-added services for colleges and universities. In this way, the university internal audit can constantly adapt to the needs of effectively serving university governance, give full play to the protective function of "good economic doctor" for the healthy development of various institutions of higher learning and the construction of modern governance system, and promote the perfection and improvement of university governance.

*D. The need of university internal audit self-innovation*

The change of national governance environment and the demand of internal governance in colleges and universities put forward higher requirements for internal audit work. As shown in "Fig. 1", under this new situation, the internal audit of colleges and universities should change the audit concept and innovate the audit method. In practice, the audit work should be planned from a high level to promote the development of colleges and universities, so that the function of the audit "immune system" can be brought into play more actively and effectively, and new situations and problems in audit work can be solved with innovative thinking and ways.

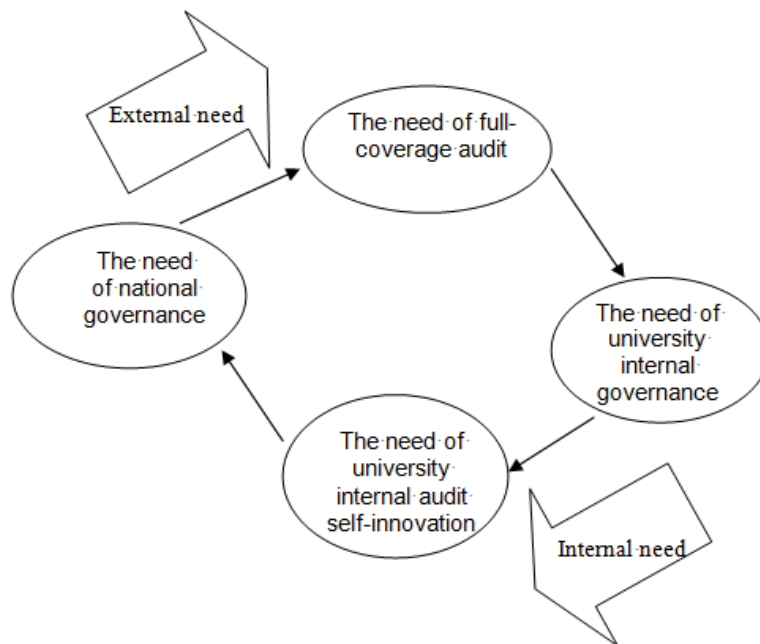


Fig. 1. Background of the internal audit work innovation in colleges and universities.

### III. THE PREDICAMENTS FACING THE DEPARTMENT AUDIT WORK INNOVATION FACES

#### A. *The lack of available open information platform for internal co-construction and collaboration*

In order to achieve full-coverage audit, internal audit in colleges and universities faces challenges in data sharing and opening. In order to expand the scope and depth of audit, colleges and universities need a lot of horizontal comparative data analysis when carrying out internal audit work. However, there are few public information platforms that can be open and shared for data collection of the internal audit in colleges and universities. Although the government has opened up the data in education, medical care, culture and sports, environment and other aspects [2], the total amount of open data is low, and the quality of available data information is not high. The first reason is that the government and universities are not fully aware of the use of external data to improve the quality and efficiency of their own business. Second, with a lack of public platforms, there is a phenomenon of information island and it is difficult for channels to be shared; the government and the university departments just do things in their own way and lacks connection, which makes the systems difficult to be integrated. Third, data sharing and opening across departments lacks the protection of laws and regulations, so data owners are afraid of breaching confidence and their data lacking security guarantee after entering the circulation link.

#### B. *Imperfect co-construction and collaboration mechanism for internal audit*

According to the requirements put forward by the Audit Commission of the CPC Central Committee, "it is necessary to optimize the allocation of audit resources, ensure that all audits are performed with due diligence, and all audits are strictly enforced and held accountable; strive to build a centralized, unified, authoritative and efficient audit supervision system with comprehensive coverage, and better play the important role of audit in the supervision system of the Party and the state". As a part of the supervision system, the internal audit of colleges and universities must be strengthened to realize the full coverage of audit, so as to enhance the overall efficiency of audit supervision. But at present, the internal audit of colleges and universities has not established a perfect co-construction and collaboration mechanism, the work pattern of "big supervision" has not been established, the linkage mechanism has not been given full play, and a perfect working mechanism for information sharing, result sharing and problem rectification with internal discipline inspection and supervision, finance, assets,

organization and personnel departments has not yet been established.

#### C. *Insufficient impetus for university internal audit innovation*

The strategic objectives and development tasks of China's education reform and development put forward new requirements for the internal audit work. The full coverage of audit requires "horizontal coverage to the edge and vertical coverage to the bottom", and the scope and field of audit is becoming more and more extensive. The traditional audit mode of financial income and expenditure cannot meet the needs of internal governance in colleges and universities. Faced with the new situation, new tasks and new requirements, the internal audit of colleges and universities lacks initiative consciousness in innovating organizational management mode, strengthening work integration, personnel integration and audit measure integration, and there are still gaps in concept innovation, mechanism innovation, mode innovation and management innovation. The status quo of internal audit does not adapt to the new era and new requirements, which leads to the insufficiency of the role of internal audit.

#### D. *The lagging informationization construction of internal audit*

Informatization is playing an increasingly important role in improving the efficiency and quality of internal audit work. With the increase of investment in education funds, the state and education authorities have increasingly strict supervision requirements on the use of various funds in colleges and universities. In addition, the demand of internal governance of schools leads to the increase of audit projects and arduous audit tasks. At present, although university administrators have improved their recognition of the importance and effect of internal audit informatization, there are still limitations in the depth of understanding and practical application of information technology audit [3]. The investment of colleges and universities are insufficient in the development and maintenance of auditing informatization software, and the management personnel and skills of auditing informatization are relatively backward, so the practical application effect is not ideal.

#### E. *The comprehensive ability of internal auditing staff needs to be improved*

In order to adapt to the new situation of the country, further strengthen audit supervision and realize full coverage of supervision, internal audit in colleges and universities needs compound talents who are proficient in audit business, have macro analysis ability and high

level of policy theory, and skilled talents with rich practical experience and high level of informatization. However, the existing auditors in colleges and universities have the problems of single professional structure, insufficient knowledge reserve of related disciplines and narrow scope of knowledge, etc., so the personnel allocation can no longer meet the needs of the internal audit work in colleges and universities under the new situation.

**IV. PATHS OF REALIZING THE INNOVATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT WORK IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

Audit co-construction and collaboration is an activity in which internal audit interact with relevant parties in the role of consultant through some mechanism or method on the basis of the supervision and confirm, so as to achieve long-term and continuous sharing of audit results, sharing of management information, continuous improvement of the organization's risk management, control and governance processes, and improvement of internal audit service capabilities. Audit co-construction and collaboration focus on information sharing and management linkage with business departments and audit objects [4].

*A. Strengthening top-level design and building a mechanism for information-based data sharing*

Information-based data sharing can solve the problem of data collection and utilization commonly faced by the internal audit of colleges and universities, which is not only conducive to the improvement of the quality of the internal audit work of colleges and

universities, but also can promote the improvement of the multi-faceted work efficiency of the government and colleges and universities. To realize information and data sharing, efforts should be intensified to strengthen the construction mechanism of information-based data sharing at government level and university level. At the government level, it is necessary to set up a collaborative management organization of big data, improve the institutional framework and system related to big data, and establish a basic database. On the one hand, the shared data should be centrally stored, and clearly verified and integrated at the same time, and a shared directory should be provided so that users can access and receive these data [5], so as to realize the sharing of data and information collection between government and university users. In addition, at the university level, it is necessary to increase input in information system construction. It is necessary to strengthen top-level design and make overall planning. A comprehensive information platform that is shared and open internally should be built to break down barriers between higher and lower levels and among internal systems and bridge the information islands, so as to strengthen the timely update and maintenance of information systems, and realize interconnection and data sharing. The logical relationship of data acquisition is shown in "Fig. 2". At the same time, information technology management departments of colleges and universities need to conduct regular training and technical guidance for information administrators of auditing departments, so as to form a good user cultivation environment for information co-construction and sharing.

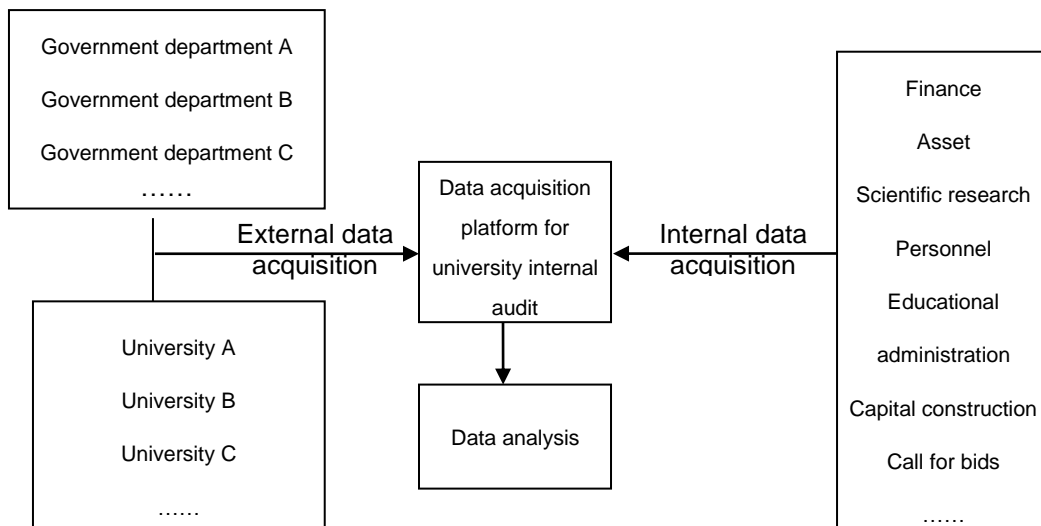


Fig. 2. Data sharing platform for university internal audit.

*B. Joint efforts should be coordinated to establish and improve the internal audit co-construction and collaboration mechanism*

It is a practical action to implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era to establish and improve the internal audit co-construction and collaboration mechanism. Colleges and universities should establish the mechanism of supervision cooperation between internal audit and other internal supervision forces and the linkage mechanism of rectification and implementation of problems found in audit.

*1) The perspective of the supervision and collaboration mechanism:* The internal audit department of colleges and universities should strengthen the coordination and connection with other departments of discipline inspection, supervision, finance and other supervision departments, so as to form a work pattern of "big audit and big supervision" with smooth connection, resource sharing, coordination and efficiency. This will be conducive to the integration of internal audit resources in colleges and universities, and promotes the improvement of internal audit work efficiency and school governance ability. In the arrangement of annual audit tasks, colleges and universities should constantly improve the work coordination mechanism, do a good job at pre-audit investigation, make overall research and make audit plans, and give full play to the synergies of joint meetings on economic responsibility audit. All relevant departments should cooperate with each other, actively connect with each other, provide each other with problem clues according to the needs of the tasks, and complement each other. They should focus their efforts and make targeted treatment, so as to create a benign and healthy supervision mechanism guarantee for the development of the school.

*2) The perspective of implementation mechanism of follow-up audit rectification of problems found in audit:* As for problems discovered through auditing and the rectification, a linkage mechanism shall be established and improved. In the process of problem rectification, the rectification of the leading department as well as its collaborating units should be implemented, and the responsible unit and person shall be clarified. It is necessary to work closely with the commission for discipline inspection and supervision departments to implement accountability simultaneously. In addition, relevant information disclosure methods, such as joint notification, publicity and meetings, should be adopted to warn the problems found in the audit, and the audit results and rectification situation should be taken as an

important basis for the assessment, appointment and removal of leading cadres. At the same time, it is also important to establish a long-term mechanism for the rectification of problems discovered by auditing, change the concept which focuses on correcting problems immediately after they are noticed yet neglects the follow-up implementation. Follow-up supervision and implementation of rectification is an important measure to consolidate audit results.

*C. Innovating working methods and continuously improving the overall effectiveness of internal audit*

In order to meet the new requirements of the new era, the internal auditors of colleges and universities need to update their ideas, change their thinking, and take the initiative to innovate in personnel integration, business integration and audit measure integration. First, in terms of personnel integration, in the implementation of audit projects, auditors should focus on forming joint forces and giving play to their professional advantages, deploying audit forces uniformly, deepening the integration of different professionals and giving play to their respective advantages, so as to form a flexible and efficient joint audit team. Second, in terms of business integration, the audit department should make full use of the functions of the internal business advantages, deepen the integration of business and audit, pay attention to the communication and business learning with functional management departments like financial department, asset department, logistics department, infrastructure department, teaching department, scientific research department and informatization, etc. fully understand the latest policy information and the information technology advantages, so that they can help each other and give full play to the mechanism of resource sharing and linkage to form a general pattern of auditing. Third, in terms of audit methods integration, it is necessary to make rational use of and learn from the auditing forces of various parties, pay attention to combining the auditing bodies, internal auditing and social auditing methods, and give full play to the overall effectiveness of auditing. In terms of the integration of audit methods, internal audit and external audit can be combined. On the basis of the maximum integration of internal audit resources, audit projects can be outsourced to social intermediary institutions, and an effective assessment and evaluation mechanism can be established to improve the efficiency and quality of audit work and save audit resources. Finally, it is necessary to take audit institutions and intermediary institutions' audit projects in colleges and universities as an opportunity, make use of the professional strength of audit institutions and intermediary institutions to understand and learn the latest audit methods and technical means, strengthen the business learning and guidance, and make up for the inherent shortage of

internal audit strength, so as to improve the overall efficiency of internal audit.

*D. Putting data analysis first to improve the quality and level of internal audit*

With the increasing development and extensive application of information technology, management and accounting modes in colleges and universities are turning to efficient and complex information systems. Auditors are no longer faced with traditional manual vouchers, account books and statements, but massive data information with high complexity and relevance [6]. This requires auditors to make active use of big data technology and establish big data thinking consciousness, so as to improve the quality and level of internal audit. First of all, the internal audit department should strengthen the publicity of audit informatization, improve the management level, information supply department and internal audit personnel's attention to informatization, increase the input of information construction budget, and create a good atmosphere for the promotion and use of big data audit. Secondly, the internal audit department also needs to be equipped with specialized informationized system administrators, strengthen learning and understanding of the business process and business data of each department of the university, cooperate with information and data provider departments to collect accurate and realize the integration of data and information, realize the combination of information sharing, data exchange and comprehensive analysis, so as to improve the ability to carry out audit work under the condition of big data technology. Finally, it is necessary to cultivate and improve the thinking ability of internal auditors on big data, set up a way that gives priority to data analysis and integrates with on-site verification, constantly improve the audit ability and comprehensive analysis ability on big data, highlight key points, accurately find doubts and problems, and then improve the efficiency of audit work.

*E. Practicing internal skills — improving the comprehensive quality of auditors*

In order to meet the needs of the internal audit work in colleges and universities in the new context, under the condition of insufficient audit personnel and professional talents, only by giving full play to the advantages of the team and improving the comprehensive quality and ability of auditors, can a joint force be formed and the function of internal audit be fully played. To improve the comprehensive quality of auditors, internal audit department should make overall planning. First, the professional ethics education of auditors should be strengthened to guide them to perform their duties correctly, strictly abide by relevant laws and regulations and the professional standards of internal audit, be devoted to their duties, be

independent, objective and fair. Second, a long-term education mechanism should be established to strengthen training and learning, incorporate training and learning into the annual work plan, support and guarantee auditors to improve the team's learning and practical ability through various ways, build a professional team proficient in "IT+ audit", and strive to cultivate versatile and versatile talents. Third, a good promotion channel for auditors should be set up. It is necessary to, in accordance with the principle of being conducive to career development and fully mobilizing initiative, provide policy support in terms of the professional title and promotion of auditors, guide audit professionals and management professionals to continuously improve their professional quality and stimulate their internal potential, so as to better perform their duties and responsibilities.

## V. CONCLUSION

Faced with the new requirements of the new era, the internal audit work in colleges and universities needs to set up the thinking mode of co-construction and collaboration, and expand the breadth and depth of internal audit through the innovation of ideas, mechanisms, methods and management; and to meet the needs of effectively serving the country and governance of colleges and universities, it is necessary to form new ideas of internal audit, solve new situations and problems in audit work, improve new skills in internal audit work under the new situation, do a good job in the development of colleges and universities as a "good economic doctor", and give full play to the function of internal audit as an "immune system". In this way, the goal of standardizing the internal management, perfecting internal control, preventing risks and improving quality and efficiency can be achieved.

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