

Current Situation and Prospect of Research on Two-Level Power Allocation of Universities and Colleges Based on Visual Analysis

Jingbo Feng^(⊠) and Meijuan Tian

Shenyang Normal University, Shenyang 110034, Liaoning, China feng329074229@synu.edu.cn

Abstract. In order to explore the research status of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges in China, 1351 papers from the CSSCI related to "two-level power allocation of universities and colleges" included in CNKI database from 2000 to 2021 were selected as samples, and the visual software COOC was used as the research tool to carry out subject stage analysis, keyword co-occurrence analysis, system cluster analysis, etc. based on knowledge map. Through the analysis of the existing literature, it can be seen that the research on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges needs to be further expanded in terms of research paradigm, perspective and content. In the future, it is necessary to strengthen the localization research on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges with Chinese characteristics, pay attention to the dynamic integration research of the internal power of universities, focus on the research from the micro perspectives of human, financial and administrative power, and value the research on the vertical structure of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges, explore the empirical research of power allocation based on practice, and excavate the implicit influencing factors of power allocation at the two levels of universities and colleges.

Keywords: Two levels of power of universities and colleges \cdot Power allocation \cdot Knowledge mapping

1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the continuous deepening of the comprehensive system reform of colleges and universities in China and the continuous advancement of the modernization of university governance, scholars in China have carried out a lot of researches on the internal governance structure reform of universities. Among them, the power allocation is the focus of the two-level management. In order to build a modern university system with Chinese characteristics and promote the modernization of university governance system and governance capacity, it is necessary to analyze and explore

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the current research on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges, so as to provide ideas and reference for further research. This study makes a visual knowledge graph analysis of the relevant literature on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges, so as to enhance the objectivity of the research, avoid the omission of subjective literature collection and classification, effectively control the research status of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges in China, and provide a reference for the internal governance reform of colleges and universities in China in the future development of the research on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges.

2 Research Design

2.1 Research Methods and Tools

This study described and inferred the literature data by using the Bibliometrics and statistical principles. When the measurement results were obtained, the data visualization method was used to present them more intuitively. In this study, COOC [1] software was selected as the research tool to analyze the visual knowledge mapping of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges.

2.2 Data Source and Processing

Core journals are important carriers of high-level academic papers. Core journals were used as data sources in this study. According to the database of CNKI, 1895 papers were selected on the topics of "university governance", "power allocation in universities", "two-level power of college and university" and "two-level management of college and university". The search scope was limited to "CSSCI", and the time frame was limited to 2000–2021. Excluding papers and book reviews that were not very relevant to the topic, a total of 1351 papers were obtained and exported in refworks format.

3 Analysis of Results

3.1 Analysis of Authors Who Published Papers

In order to understand the current status and focus of research on power allocation at the university and college levels, the frequency of authors' publications was counted (see "Table 1"). Li Liguo, Sui Yifan, Gan Yongtao, Liu Aisheng, Zhou Zuoyu and other scholars have published many papers in this field¹, and their research results reflect the focus of research on internal university governance to a certain extent. Keywords frequency statistics were carried out for these authors respectively, and keywords of high frequency that can reflect the unique research perspective of scholars were sorted out (see Table 1). It is found that these authors focus on the theoretical speculative research of university governance, and co-governance has become a governance development model

¹ In order to keep the accuracy of the research, the authors involved in this article refer to the author who published the CSSCI paper as the first author or the sole author.

Table 1. Authoritative authors and focus of research on two-level power allocation of university and college

Author	Number of papers	Research focus
Li Liguo	15	University governance, Governance model, Governance practice
Sui Yifan	14	Modernization, first-class universities, university leadership, good university governance, organizational rationality
Gan Yongtao	13	International comparison, Co-governance, University governance structure, Governance system
Liu Aisheng	8	Cultural basis, co-governance, ambiguity
Zhou Zuoyu	8	Micropolitics, Good governance, Governance ethics, Organizational culture, Collective thinking

Table 2. Authors of highly-cited research on two-level power allocation of colleges and universities and paper titles

Author	Citations	Paper title	Year of publication
Gong Yizu	284	"University Governance Structure: The Cornerstone of Modern University System"	2009
Zhan Zhongle	185	"Modern University Governance by Bylaws"	2010
Zhou Guangli	175	"Modernization of China Higher Education Governance: Current Situation, Problems and Countermeasures"	2014
Qin Huimin	173	"Power Balances and Coordination in the Internal Governance of Chinese Universities: An Analysis of the Power Phenomenon of Universities in China"	2009

recognized by most authors. Meanwhile, some non-institutional factors in university governance have been taken into account, including cultural basis, mental basis and ethical basis. In terms of research perspectives, not only do they explore the natural state of university governance, but also recognize the need to study the real state of university governance, emphasizing that theoretical research should be based on the vivid practice of university governance.

Through retrieval of highly-cited papers in this field on CNKI platform, it can be known that these authors have become academic authoritative experts in the field of university governance (see "Table 2"). They put forward the connotation, framework design, core issues and bottlenecks of university governance, which are new research horizons for a modern university governance system with Chinese characteristics.

Institutions	Quantity	Research focus	
Beijing Normal University	52	Governance structure, world-class universities, academic community, good governance	
Huazhong University of Science and Technology	52	University governance structure, the United States, institutional change, bureaucracy	
Renmin University of China	48	Governance model, University system, Governance subject, University Charter	
Zhejiang University	43	Co-governance, Governance model, American University Governance, Modernization of University Governance	
Dalian University of Technology	32	Governance Culture Reshaping, Network Governance, Secondary College Governance	

Table 3. The core institutions and priorities of research on the two-level power allocation of colleges and universities

3.2 Analysis of Issuing Institutions

In terms of the number of papers published by institutions, Beijing Normal University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Renmin University of China, Zhejiang University, and Dalian University of Technology have relatively high output of high-quality papers, and have a certain scientific research influence in this field (see "Table 3"). It can be seen that these units are the main research institutions of university internal governance. Scholars from colleges and universities such as Beijing Normal University mainly focus on the construction of world-class universities, the study of academic communities, and the good university governance model. Scholars from universities such as Huazhong University of Science and Technology focus on comparative studies of countries and institutional changes in university governance. Scholars from Renmin University of China focus on the study of university governance models, institutions and subjects. Scholars from Zhejiang University pay attention to research on co-governance, international comparison, and modernization of university governance. Scholars from Dalian University of Technology are devoted to research on network governance and secondary college governance.

3.3 Thematic Stage Analysis

Sorting out the research context is the only way to conduct research on the internal governance of universities. The trend of research popularity is observed through the statistical chart of the annual number and cumulative number of papers on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges (see "Fig. 1"). It is obvious that there is a high popularity among researches on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges. Besides, the number of papers has been relatively stable in the first decade

and has continued to increase in the next decade. Through the theme stage analysis of the collected papers, it can be found that the research topics, contents and methods are increasingly enriched, showing a trend of diversified and microscopic research development. The expansion of college enrollment in 1999 has led to the rapid expansion of the scale of college students, which will inevitably cause the government and society to worry about the quality of college talent training, and then force colleges and universities to turn inward, attach great importance to connotation construction, and strengthen internal governance reform. The academic circles have conducted extensive research on the reform of the internal governance structure of universities. The construction of the internal governance system of universities is the foundation of the reform of the governance structure. At the same time, it has become the focus of research. In 2004, the "two-level management system of colleges and universities" became the core theme of scholars' extensive attention and key exploration, and the research on "modern university system", "academic power", "administrative power" and "university charter" also became the focus of research in 2007, and continued to this day. Since 2011, "teacher participation", "deliberative democracy", "social participation" and "student participation" have been widely concerned by scholars. In 2017, based on "Chinese characteristics", scholars carried out research on the internal governance of localized universities with Chinese characteristics from the aspects of "talent training in the new era" and "construction of first-rate universities and disciplines". At the same time, they paid more attention to the connotative development and the "school-running concept". Since 2019, China higher education has entered the stage of popularization, and the gross enrollment rate has reached 51.6%. The popularization of higher education puts forward higher requirements for colleges and universities to improve their governance ability and level. The diversification, personalization and modernization of university governance have become the basic value pursuit. Academic circles have conducted research on governance community, first-class university construction, discipline construction, accountability mechanism, negative list system and other aspects, showing the characteristics of diversification and decentralization.

3.4 Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis

The COOC software was used to analyze the co-occurrence mapping of keywords (see "Fig. 2"), and the whole mapping was centred on "university governance", with a radial pattern. University governance is a superordinate concept of power allocation at the university and college levels, and the keywords presented in the diagram are all within the research scope of university governance. In addition to "university governance", other keywords that show the specific content of the study are "modern university system", "academic authority", "governance structure", "university statutes", "internal university governance", "co-governance", "executive power", "stakeholders", etc. The term "modern university system" has occurred 89 times. The construction of a modern university system is the core of university governance research, and how to build a modern university system with Chinese characteristics is a major issue that has been discussed by academics. "Academic authority" and "administrative power" are the two main types

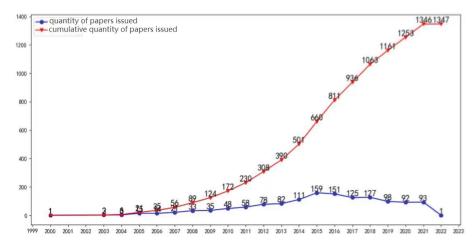


Fig. 1. Number of published papers and cumulative quantity of published papers on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges from 2000 to 2021.

of power in the internal governance of universities from the perspective of power subjects, and there has been no consensus on how to allocate them. The position of "cogovernance" is in line with the characteristics of university stakeholder organisations, and co-governance is the goal of future university internal governance reform. According to the analysis of these high-frequency terms, the current research on the power allocation at the university and college levels in China is characterised by static and structured institutional research, with less implicit and unstructured cultural factors and intelligent technologies. ("Table 4").

3.5 Keyword Cluster Analysis

With the use of VOSviewer software, a total of six clusters were obtained (see "Table 5"): research on the concept of power allocation of colleges and universities (power, university power, two-level management, power allocation), research on the division of power (academic power, administrative power, political power, democratic power), research on the object and content of the two-level power allocation (decision-making, execution, supervision), two-level power allocation mode of colleges and universities (governance model, co-governance, law-based governance, good governance and so on), research on the reform of the two-level management system of colleges and universities (deadministration, two-level management, comprehensive reform, academic committee, board of directors, etc.), research on the power operation mechanism at the two levels of colleges and universities (governance mechanism, university culture, power constraints, legislation, incentives, accountability, etc.).

 Cluster 1: Research on the concept of two-level power allocation of colleges and universities

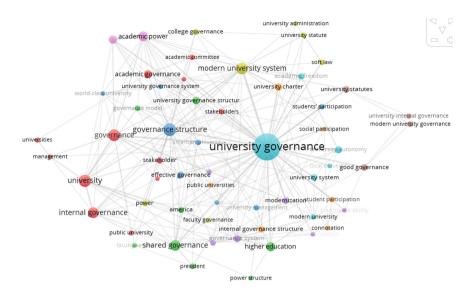


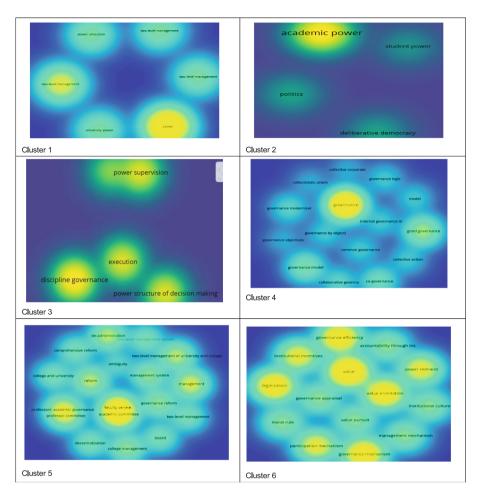
Fig. 2. The co-occurrence mapping of keywords in the two-level power allocation of colleges and universities from 2000 to 2021.

Table 4. Statistical table of keyword frequency of two-level power allocation in colleges and universities from 2000 to 2021

Serial Number	Keywords	Frequency	Serial number	Keywords	Frequency
1	University Governance	483	8	internal governance	53
2	modern university system	89	9	University internal governance	52
3	university	85	10	university governance structure	48
4	academic authority	83	11	co-governance	48
5	governance structure	81	12	executive power	41
6	university statutes	75	13	higher education	35
7	Governance	65	14	stakeholder	33

Dacher Kertner believes that "power is to change the state of others" [2]. In Olson's opinions, "power is the ability to produce coercive obedience, so it is related to coercive authority and the ability to exercise repression" [3]. These discourses reflect the

Table 5. Keyword clusters of two-level power allocation of colleges and universities from 2000 to 2021



coercive and authoritative characteristics of power. With the deepening of higher education management system reform in China, the gradual decentralization of school power, and the increase of college autonomy, the power relationship between colleges and universities is no longer a relationship between managing and being managed, but more inclined to the relationship between entrustment and commission. The two-level power allocation of colleges and universities is the key to the two-level management system, and it is a practical activity for the distribution and adjustment of power in the vertical structure of the school.

• Cluster 2: Research on the division of power and responsibilities of colleges and universities

According to existing researches, university power is divided into political power, administrative power, academic power and democratic power from the perspective of the subject of power. In terms of the value orientation of power, it is generally believed that the academic power and democratic power should be promoted in the university, and the political and administrative power should be restrained so as to realize the main position of the college.

 Cluster 3: Research on the objects and content of two-level power allocation of colleges and universities

The objects of power allocation at the two levels of universities and colleges are mainly personnel power, financial power and affairs power. From the perspective of financial power, some scholars have conducted research on the reform of financial management at the two levels of universities and colleges [4]. From the perspective of financial power and administrative power, some scholars have conducted research on the matching of financial power and administrative power [5]. The research on the twolevel power allocation of universities and colleges mainly includes decision-making power, executive power and supervisory power. From the perspective of decisionmaking, some scholars conducted empirical research based on the current situation of academic decision-making power in colleges and universities [6]. Some scholars have conducted research on the allocation of supervision power of discipline inspection commission in colleges and universities [7]. There are more research results based on the subject of power than the object and content of power. The rational allocation of college power and university power must be implemented to the specific content and process, and the macro abstract power allocation can be reflected in the micro specific power allocation. Based on the macro subject power allocation, it is difficult to show a clear picture of power operation. The research on the allocation of personnel power, financial power, affairs power and decision-making power, execution power and supervision power based on the content of power is the focus and breakthrough of the research on the two-level power allocation of colleges and universities.

 Cluster 4: Research on the two-level power allocation model of universities and colleges

As an abstract symbol and theoretical construction, model is an abstract generalization and sublimation based on realistic logic. University governance research experts have made in-depth exploration on the two-level power allocation model of universities and colleges. From the perspective of power subject status, some scholars believe that the decision-making management mode of universities can be divided into three types: college mode centered on academic power, bureaucratic mode centered on administrative power and compound mode centered on academic and administrative power [8]. Based on the problem orientation, some scholars believe that good governance is a people-oriented and democratic governance model and an ideal governance model [9]. Some scholars have learned from the experience of universities in the Republic of China that the governance reform of Chinese universities should build a governance structure of "bottom" and "scholarship" [10]. From the perspective of jurisprudence, some scholars have applied the entrustment-agent method to the allocation of academic power and administrative power within the university, abstracting the internal power allocation mode into two modes: centralization and decentralization [11]. It can be seen that the research on the two-level power allocation model of universities and colleges is not sufficient, and most of them focus on the horizontal power allocation model, lacking discussion on the vertical power allocation model of universities and colleges. In addition, there is a disconnection between theory and practice, and there is still a lot of room for exploration in the future.

 Cluster 5: Research on the reform of two-level management system of universities and colleges

Since the enrollment expansion of universities, the internal management system reform of colleges and universities is also deepening. The traditional "unified" management system of universities can no longer meet the development needs of colleges and universities in the new era. The two-level management system of colleges and universities takes into account the centralization and decentralization, increases the flexibility compared with the "centralization" of universities, and is simpler and more effective than the "three-level system of universities-colleges-departments", which is the focus of the internal management system reform of colleges and universities. On the issue of whether to take the university as the entity or the college as the entity, most scholars advise to take the college as the entity and have made rich exploration. Some scholars believe that the implementation of the entity status of the college requires "real power, real resources and real ability" [12]. To deepen the two-level management of colleges and universities, it is necessary to stimulate the internal vitality of the grassroots academic community [13]. Some scholars believe that it is suggested to improve the operation efficiency of the two-level management of colleges and universities and follow the ideas of perfecting the leadership system of the secondary colleges and strengthening academic autonomy [14]. In terms of improving the secondary management efficiency of universities, some scholars proposed to improve the leadership system, strengthen the construction of academic autonomy, build risk prevention and control mechanism, and emphasize supervision and management. [14] The core of the two-level system reform is to adjust the power, responsibility and obligation of the two-level management [15]. Some scholars have analyzed the two-level management and optimization of universities and colleges from the perspective of governance modernization [16]. Based on an interactive perspective, some scholars have explored the practical logic of secondary management of universities from the perspective of promoting the organic combination of people and universities [17]. Some scholars put forward the reform mode of authorization decentralization [18]. Some scholars have proposed the path of collaborative governance and protocol authorization [19]. These studies are characterized by the western concept of governance.

 Cluster 6: Research on the two-level power operation mechanism of universities and colleges

In view of main problems existing in the current university governance in China, some scholars believe that it is necessary to establish mechanisms such as decentralization restriction, system restriction, procedure restriction, right restriction and cultural restriction [20]. Some scholars believe that the unification of power and responsibility is the basic value orientation, which requires not only clarifying the subject of power and responsibility, but also improving the accountability mechanism and strengthening the ethical construction [21]. Some scholars think that the basic idea of the two-level power operation mechanism of universities and colleges should be transformed from "horizontal decentralization" to "vertical decentralization". In addition,

it is suggested to implement the bureaucratic organization model at the university level, with the academic organization model as the main and the bureaucratic organization model as the auxiliary [22]. In the research on the path optimization of the power operation mechanism, some scholars have studied the internal power operation mechanism of the university from the perspective of financial power, and proposed a path that requires both hierarchical and horizontal constraints [5]. Other scholars have taken the matching mechanism of financial power and administrative power as the main path to optimize the two-level management mechanism [23].

4 Conclusion

From 2000 to 2021, the annual number of papers issued by universities and colleges on power allocation at the two levels showed an increasing trend, and the research topics, contents and methods showed a diversified development trend. However, there are still following aspects worthy of in-depth discussion.

First, the researches mostly adopt the speculative research paradigm, and are on the debate and reflection on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges. These studies are of strong academic color. In addition, they reflect the profound theoretical accumulation of scholars and lay a theoretical foundation for the follow-up study of university internal governance. However, to a certain extent, these studies lack evidence-based empirical research and do not achieve a good interaction between theory and practice.

Second, most of the studies are dependent on university governance in western countries. According to Xi Jinping, Chinese universities must be rooted in the land of China, and academic research should gradually get rid of dependence on Western governance models and turn to thinking about running schools in China. However, the research on university governance with Chinese characteristics still has a long way to go for the construction of China higher education discourse system and the establishment of university governance model in China.

Third, most of the existing studies stick to the static thinking logic, study the structural institutional arrangements in the internal governance of universities (such as academic committees and boards of directors), and pay attention to the static structure and mode of the internal governance of universities, which is convenient for scholars to analyze and discuss. However, from the reality of universities, the convergence of multiple powers must be implemented, so that the power within universities is in a state of dynamic balance.

Fourth, most of the existing studies focus on the subject power at macro level, but few are on the micro level of human, financial and administrative power. Studies at the macro level provide a broader vision, but researches at the micro level can show the real picture of university internal governance more intuitively.

Fifthly, the existing studies pay more attention to the distribution and restriction of subject power, but lack coordination and balanced thinking on the vertical power relationship between universities and colleges, and the power responsibility relationship between universities and colleges is messy.

Sixthly, the existing researches are on the static and explicit institutionalized research, while the research on the implicit non-institutionalized governance factors such as university culture and university concept in the internal governance of universities is relatively weak.

Based on the above analysis and understanding, the future research on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges will focus on the following aspects:

4.1 To Pay Attention to the Empirical Research of Power Allocation Based on Practice and Explore the Influencing Factors of Power Allocation

The research on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges should shift from theoretical analysis to empirical research based on university practice, and explore the influencing factors of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges based on evidence. From the existing literature on the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges in China, most of them are on sorting out concepts and theoretical speculation. These theoretical studies are fundamental and necessary. However, for the development of higher education, what's more important is to conduct empirical research based on the situation of universities in China, infer its internal cause and effect, find out the crux of two-level power allocation of universities and colleges, and then build a modern university system.

4.2 To Emphasize the Theoretical Research on the Localization of Power Allocation and Build the Governance Model of Universities in China

To establish a modern university with Chinese characteristics and build a governance system of higher education in China, it is suggested to base on the reality of university development under China's political system, take basic concepts as the logical starting point, form the core concepts and basic theories of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges that adapt to China's national conditions, and explore the two-level power allocation mode and operation mechanism of the Chinese model.

4.3 To Pay Attention to the Dynamic Adjustment Process of Power Allocation at the Two Levels of Universities and Colleges and Emphasize the Linkage Research of Multiple Powers

It should be recognized that power allocation is a concept different from power distribution, and it is not a simple static power allocation. In the future, more attention should be paid to the research on dynamic power allocation at the two levels of universities and colleges. The university is a complex academic body, where a variety of powers converges and restricts each other. Therefore, investigating the operation of one or two power subjects cannot meet the development needs of multiple interest subjects of the university. Besides, it is necessary to pay attention to the integration and linkage of power. In the future, it is required to pay attention to the linkage of two levels of power, and take the research on the dynamic mechanism of two levels of power as a foothold.

4.4 To Pay Attention to the Operability of the Research and Focus on the Research of the Micro Power Allocation of Human, Financial and Financial Affairs

In order to effectively grasp the two-level power operation process, explore an operable and stable two-level power allocation mode, and construct a reasonable two-level power operation mechanism, it is necessary to express the process of power decision-making, implementation and supervision through the research of people, finance and affairs. The two-level power of universities and colleges can only be reflected in specific affairs. Therefore, the study of human, financial and administrative power at the micro level is more conducive to exploring the operation law of the two-level power of universities and colleges.

4.5 To Focus on the Vertical Power Allocation of Universities and Colleges and Implement the School-Running Autonomy

With the extensive and in-depth research on the co-governance theory, the research on the power allocation among stakeholders has become more and more extensive. However, most of the researches are horizontal research at the same level, while the current researches on the power structure between universities and colleges are not deep enough. In practice, it is common for universities to increase the workload of colleges due to the power allocation mode of overall management and implementation by universities. Therefore, the vertical power allocation between universities and colleges will become a key issue.

4.6 To Focus on the Research on the Implicit Factors of University Governance and Consider the Impact of University Culture on the Power Allocation at the Two Levels of Universities and Colleges and the Optimization Strategies

The process of university governance from "rule by man" to "rule by law" highlights the rigidity of governance, which improves the efficiency and effectiveness of governance and promotes the process of governance democratization. However, when some affairs of the university are regulated, the efficiency of university management will inevitably be hindered. Therefore, for the "rule of law" of universities, it is necessary to consider non-institutional factors such as university culture, which is conducive to the construction of a more adaptive localized university governance research, and promote the development of university governance system and governance capacity with Chinese characteristics. In the future, university culture should be included in the research on the influencing factors of university internal governance effectiveness.

The two-level power allocation of universities and colleges is an important topic in the study of university governance and modern school system. Chinese scholars have carried out researches and achieved fruitful results. These research results provide rich theoretical materials in concept abstraction, theoretical research, and improvement suggestions and so on. However, with the deepening of the reform of higher education management system in China, the internal governance of universities is facing some new situations and problems, and the theory of higher education management is facing new challenges.

Most of the existing studies put forward the principles and paths of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges in an abstract way and pay more attention to the horizontal power distribution and restriction, making the research results lack the due guiding function and application value. Especially, the existing studies cannot explain and guide the reform practice of the core issue of the two-level power allocation of universities and colleges. With the acceleration of the construction of "first-rate universities and disciplines" in colleges and universities in China, the reform of internal management system in colleges and universities must be attached great importance. As the main focus, the two-level power allocation of colleges and universities will be widely concerned and seriously studied. Based on micro, dynamic, vertical, integrated and empirical research, the researches on the power allocation between universities and colleges will contribute to the "China plan" in the field of higher education, stimulate the vitality of colleges and universities and improve the efficiency of resource utilization.

Authors' Contributions. Jingbo Feng is responsible for experimental design, and Meijuan Tian analysed data.

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