Analysis on the Situation and Present Situation of Social Science Research Investment of Central Enterprises

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Abstract. The world's unprecedented great changes have accelerated its evolution, and all kinds of risk challenges and difficult problems have become increasingly severe and complicated. Social sciences are of vital supporting significance in helping central enterprises to enhance their core competitiveness, enhance their core functions, give play to the supporting role of scientific and technological innovation, industrial control and security, and accelerate the process of building world-class enterprises. This study analyzes the internal and external situation challenges faced by the central enterprises in the new period, combs the current situation of the central enterprises' social science research investment, and provides an important reference for the central enterprises to improve the quality and depth of social science research.

Keywords: Social Science Research, Investment, Central Enterprises, Situation Challenges, Current Situation Analysis.

1 Introduction

The social science research investment of central enterprises is at the critical stage of strategic opportunity and mission. Under the background of Chinese-style modernization and the comprehensive implementation of the reform and promotion of state-owned enterprises, social science research has become the core support for central enterprises to practice "the country is the best" and improve the modern enterprise system with China characteristics. The State Council SASAC's "Opinions on the Construction of New Think Tanks for Central Enterprises" and other policy arrangements have clarified the strategic direction of social science research investment, which is not only related to the improvement of the scientific level of enterprises' own decision-making, but also of great significance to the national strategies such as serving the optimization of state-owned assets supervision, ensuring the safety of industrial chains, promoting green and low-carbon transformation and building the "Belt and Road" with high quality. Strengthening the investment in social science research is not only the internal demand of central enterprises to build new think tanks and enhance their core competitiveness, but also the inevitable requirement to solve the deep-seated problems of

X. Pan et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2026 11th International Conference on Financial Innovation and Economic Development (ICFIED 2026)*, Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research 382,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6239-642-5_126

reform and development and contribute to China's plan for global corporate governance [1].

2 Situation Analysis of Social Science Research Investment of Central Enterprises

2.1 The External Pressure under the Reconstruction of the Global Pattern Continues to Increase

First, anti-globalization and geopolitics aggravate the difficulty of policy research. At present, the trend of anti-globalization is on the rise, and some countries set up trade barriers and technical blockades on the grounds of "national security", which makes the social science research of central enterprises have to deal with the dual pressures of "policy uncertainty" and "fragmentation of regional rules". On the one hand, in the process of "going global" of central enterprises, overseas projects are faced with frequent adjustments of host country policies (such as the EU's Key Raw Materials Act and the US's Chip and Science Act), and it is necessary to quickly judge the policy impact. However, the existing social science research mostly focuses on China, and the tracking depth of overseas regional policies is insufficient. An energy central enterprise failed to predict the tightening of local environmental protection policies in a new energy project in Africa in time, resulting in the project being delayed for six months and the additional cost exceeding 200 million yuan. On the other hand, the rules of regional trade agreements (RCEP, CPTPP, etc.) are quite different, so central enterprises need to study the tariff, labor and environmental protection provisions under different agreements, but the investment in cross-regional policy comparative research is insufficient, which leads to high compliance cost in multi-regional layout. Because a central automobile enterprise has not fully understood CPTPP's "rules of origin", its export models do not meet the requirements, and it misses the market share in Southeast Asia [2].

Second, international think tanks compete to squeeze the right to speak rules. Developed countries rely on the mature think tank system to lead the formulation of global governance rules, and the social science research of central enterprises faces the dilemma of "passive follow" in the struggle for international discourse power. Top think tanks in Europe and America (such as Brookings Institution and RAND Corporation) have long focused on policy research in the fields of energy, digital economy and climate change, and their achievements have been directly translated into proposals for international rules (such as the design of carbon border adjustment mechanism CBAM), while social science research in central enterprises is mostly oriented to "domestic policy landing", with international issues accounting for less than 15%, and there is no normalized dialogue mechanism with international think tanks. For example, in the field of global energy transformation, although central enterprises are leading in the research and development of new energy technologies, the research on "global carbon pricing mechanism" and "cross-border carbon trading rules" is lagging behind, which makes it difficult to participate in the design of rules in international energy cooperation

and can only passively adapt to the standard system dominated by Europe and the United States.

Third, research collaboration on data cross-border flow restrictions. In the era of digital economy, social science research is highly dependent on global data resources (such as industrial chain data and policy dynamic data), but some countries have introduced strict data cross-border control policies (such as GDPR of the European Union and Cloud Act of the United States), cutting off the channels for central enterprises to obtain key overseas data. On the one hand, when central enterprises carry out research such as "global industrial chain risk early warning" and "international market demand analysis", it is difficult to form an accurate judgment due to limited data acquisition. An equipment manufacturing central enterprise cannot obtain European industrial order data in real time, resulting in a forecast deviation of overseas market demand of 30%; On the other hand, international collaborative research is blocked, and when central enterprises and overseas universities and research institutions jointly carry out research on "cross-border industrial policy", data sharing faces compliance risks. In 2024, the project of "New Energy Automobile Industrial Policy" co-operated by a central enterprise and a German think tank was forced to stop due to cross-border data problems, and the initial investment loss exceeded 5 million yuan.

2.2 Respond to the Internal Test and Upgrade under the High-Quality Development

First, the development of new quality productive forces forced the upgrading of research capabilities. The two-wheel drive characteristics of "scientific and technological innovation+institutional innovation" put forward higher requirements for "interdisciplinary integration" and "scene landing" of social science research in central enterprises, and the existing research ability has obvious shortcomings. First, interdisciplinary research is insufficient. The new quality productivity involves the fields of digital economy, green and low carbon, artificial intelligence, etc., and requires the compound research ability of "technology+policy+management". However, only 15% of social science researchers in central enterprises have interdisciplinary background, which leads to the disconnection between research results and technical practice on topics such as "digital factor confirmation policy" and "AI supervision rules". Second, the long-term research lags behind, and the development of new quality productivity has the characteristics of "long cycle and high risk", which requires long-term follow-up research. However, the social science investment of central enterprises tends to be "short-term emergency projects" (accounting for over 60%), and the investment in long-term projects such as "future industrial policy reserve" and "technology-system co-evolution" is insufficient, which leads to the lack of forward-looking policy research support in the layout of quantum technology, bio-manufacturing and other fields [3].

Second, the reform of state-owned enterprises in deep water areas increases the complexity of institutional research. The reform of state-owned enterprises has entered the stage of "gnawing hard bones", the reform of mixed ownership has deepened, and the authorized management system of state-owned capital has improved, which requires social science research to provide refined system design, but the existing research has

the problem of "dabbling". On the one hand, there is insufficient research on the differentiation of reform policies, and the reform of central enterprises in different industries and regions is facing personalized problems. However, the social science research of central enterprises mostly adopts a "one size fits all" model, lacking an industry-appropriate plan, and a local energy central enterprise copied the experience of mixed reform of central enterprises and did not design a governance mechanism in combination with local resource endowments, resulting in the operating efficiency after mixed reform falling short of expectations. On the other hand, the research on reform risks is insufficient, and the reform of state-owned enterprises involves interest adjustment, so it is necessary to predict the risks such as "employee placement" and "preservation of state-owned assets" in advance. However, the existing research focuses on "reform path design", and the research on risk prevention and control accounts for less than 20%. In the mixed reform of subsidiaries, a central construction enterprise failed to study the "risk compensation mechanism after dilution of shares" in advance, resulting in the appreciation rate of state-owned assets being lower than expected by 15 percentage points.

Third, the acceleration of ESG development has intensified the pressure of policy response. The accelerated improvement of domestic ESG policy system (such as Guidelines for ESG Disclosure of Enterprises and Measures for Green Finance Evaluation) requires the social science research of central enterprises to keep up with the policy rhythm quickly, but the existing research has the problem of "passive response". First, the interpretation of ESG policy is not timely, and the newly issued ESG standards (such as carbon footprint accounting and social responsibility indicators) need to be quickly transformed into enterprise action plans, but the social science research of central enterprises lags behind the interpretation of policies by an average of 2-3 months, and a chemical central enterprise fails to study the "ESG information disclosure rules" in time, resulting in the first disclosure report not meeting the regulatory requirements and needs to be re-compiled; Second, the research on industry adaptation is insufficient, and the ESG focus of different industries varies greatly (energy industry focuses on "carbon emission reduction" and financial industry focuses on "green credit"), but the existing research mostly adopts a general framework and lacks industry pertinence. The ESG research report of a financial central enterprise does not design specific products in combination with "green financial policy" and cannot guide the credit business; Third, there is a lack of research on regional differences. There is a gap between the central and western regions on the basis of ESG development. Central enterprises need to adjust ESG strategies when doing business in the central and western regions, but social science research has not paid attention to this difference. A wind power project of a central enterprise in the central and western regions has increased the environmental protection investment cost by 15% because of applying the eastern ESG standards.

3 Present Situation of Social Science Research Investment in Central Enterprises

From the perspective of investment scale, although there is no special statistical data, the related indicators show that the growth trend is remarkable: in 2022, the total investment in R&D of central enterprises exceeded 1 trillion yuan, of which the proportion of funds for social science research such as strategic planning and policy judgment continued to increase, and the growth rate of social science research investment of some energy and financial central enterprises has reached more than 60% of the investment in scientific research and development [4].

From the perspective of field distribution, the investment focus is highly in line with the national strategic needs: in the field of state-owned enterprise reform, research investment on topics such as mixed ownership reform and market-oriented operating mechanism accounts for over 30%, which supports the policy of "promoting the concentration of state-owned capital in strategic emerging industries"; In the field of industrial transformation, the investment of energy and power central enterprises in topics such as "energy structure optimization under the goal of double carbon" and "new power system governance" has increased by 45% annually, directly serving the cultivation of new quality productivity; In the field of risk prevention and control, financial central enterprises focus on the research of "industrial chain supply chain security" and "adaptability of international rules", and the investment scale is positively related to cross-border business expansion.

The investment carrier shows a trend of specialization and upgrading. By 2025, the central enterprises have built 23 new think tanks, of which 5 have been selected as national high-end think tank construction pilots, forming a multi-input platform of "enterprise research institute+university cooperation base+cross-border joint laboratory". China Petrochemical Economic and Technological Research Institute, State Grid Energy Research Institute and other institutions have invested more than 10 million yuan in social science research every year, becoming the core hub of industry policy research.

The development of new quality productivity puts forward the transformation requirement of "from scale expansion to innovation leading" for central enterprises, and social science research has become a key tool to solve the bottleneck of transformation. When the central enterprises of energy and electric power laid out new energy industries, they increased their research investment in "regulatory policies for emerging industries" and "industrial ecological construction" due to the problems of "limited market perception ability" and "insufficient resource integration ability". Facing the difficult problem of organizational reconstruction in digital transformation, manufacturing central enterprises invest 25% of social science funds in topics such as "digital governance structure" and "inter-departmental coordination mechanism". This kind of investment has a strong problem orientation. Through the "Industry-University-Research Collaborative Innovation Mechanism" designed by a space central enterprise, the transformation period of technological achievements is shortened by 40%, which proves the practical value of social science investment.

The adjustment of policy assessment orientation has significantly activated the input power of social sciences. In 2018, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission jointly issued a document to include "R&D investment intensity" in the performance evaluation of central enterprises. Although social science indicators are not listed separately, strategic research investment has been included in the "innovation capability evaluation system". Some local state-owned assets supervision and administration commissions further refined the rules. For example, Shanghai incorporated the "effectiveness of think tank construction" into the term assessment of the heads of state-owned enterprises, which directly promoted the average annual growth of social science investment of local central enterprises by 35%. More breakthrough is the policy exploration of "R&D investment is regarded as profit", which provides a financial buffer for high-risk and long-term social science research [5].

4 Conclusion

Under the new situation, the investment in social science research by central enterprises faces multiple challenges: the deep adjustment of the global economic structure and the accurate implementation of national strategic tasks put forward higher requirements for the forward-looking research, and social science research needs to be deeply integrated with technological innovation to cope with the complex market and policy environment under the wave of digital transformation. Its era significance is prominent. It is not only the core support for central enterprises to practice national strategy and serve high-quality development, but also provides theoretical guidance and decision-making reference for deepening the reform of state-owned state-owned enterprises and breakthroughs in key areas.

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