

CURRENT STATUS AND DESIRED STATES OF FIXED ASSETS MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITIES OF JIANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA

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1. Abstract

In recent years, with the deepening of China's education reform and the formulation of the comprehensive implementation of the strategy of developing the country through science and education and the strategy of strengthening the country through talents, the development of higher education has shown even more great potential and has entered a period of rapid development. Therefore, the state has increased investment in the field of higher education, and China's higher education has entered into a high-speed development track, while universities have accumulated a large amount of state-owned assets.

To investigate the components of fixed assets management in Chinese Universities. Firstly, the researchers consulted a large amount of literature, including professional books, academic journals, research reports, academic papers, etc. Secondly, the researchers invited experienced experts from Chinese universities who were in related fields to examine the composition of fixed asset management. Thirdly, researchers made decisions on the research tools to be used and analyzed the collected data.

Keywords: fixed assets, the current and desired states, data collection, questionnaire survey, semi-structured interview.

1. Introduction

Universities have specific management responsibilities for the possession and use of their state-owned assets. The president of the university is the first responsible person for the management of state-owned assets, and the leader in charge of the university is the main responsible person for the management of state-owned assets.

Universities should establish and improve the specific system of asset allocation, asset use, asset disposal, performance evaluation, information construction, statistical report and daily supervision. The internal

state-owned assets management organization is scientifically and reasonably set up to implement unified leadership and centralized management of school state-owned assets (Ministry of Education of China, 2017). Since the fixed assets management of Jingdezhen University has been in a relatively lagging condition for a long time, there are many problems such as backward management system, weak management awareness and vague management authority, which have hindered the long-term development of colleges and universities.

Therefore, Jingdezhen University should adjust its fixed assets management mode and set up a separate fixed assets management department to unify the management of school fixed assets.

2.

3. The current state of fixed assets management in universities

Chinese Universities are equipped with the function of cultivating and training talents, and their own development has become the key to sustain the competitiveness of a country and nation. In recent years, with the deepening of China's education reform and the formulation of the comprehensive implementation of the strategy of developing the country through science and education and the strategy of strengthening the country through talents, the development of higher education has shown even more great potential and has entered into a period of rapid development. Therefore, the state has increased investment in the field of higher education, and Chinese higher education has entered into a high-speed development track, while universities have accumulated a large amount of state-owned assets.

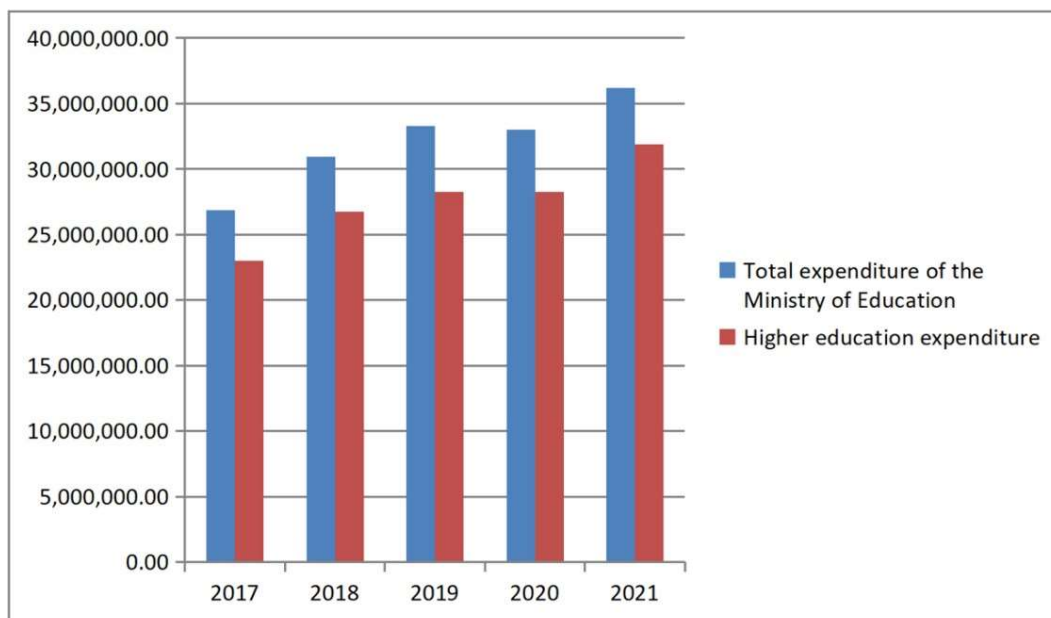


Figure 1 Ministry of Education on Higher Education Expenditures

State-owned assets of universities include assets formed with state financial funds, assets transferred to universities by the state without compensation, assets formed by using the income of state-owned assets organization according to the state policy, and other assets recognized as owned by the state by law such as accepting donations, which are expressed in the form of current assets, fixed assets, construction in progress, intangible assets and outward investment (Ministry of Education of China, 2017). Fixed assets of the universities are the hardware guarantee and basic conditions for the development of college running business, and fixed assets of universities are not only the external standard to measure the scale of college running, but also the material basis to determine the level of higher education.

Article 28 of the Regulations on the Management of State-owned

Assets of Administrative Institutions, which first came into effect on April 1, 2021, states that "administrative institutions shall establish and improve the performance management system of state-owned assets, clarify performance indicators, and delineate performance evaluation criteria so that the performance management of state-owned assets can be carried out smoothly" (The State Council of China, 2021). Therefore, the state and education authorities have stricter requirements for fixed assets management in universities, and fixed assets managers should make full use of the feedback results of fixed assets management indicators, analyze and study them, make up for the loopholes of assets management, improve asset management related systems, increase the management of fixed assets, and use them for talent training, scientific research and social services.

4. Significance of the Investigation

In recent years, the government and education authorities have increased the supervision of state-owned assets of universities. According to the inspection and inventory of state-owned assets of universities, as well as the situation reflected by various audits, we face challenges in ensuring the safety, integrity, and value-keeping of state-owned assets in universities. Since most of the universities focus on teaching and scientific research, they have been negligent in managing state-owned assets for a long time, which makes it difficult to sort out the amount, coverage and ownership of state-owned assets, and a series of problems such as unsound management institutions, imperfect management systems, inefficient use of assets and weak transformation of achievements are eroding the interests of universities and the state (Rong, 2020). The special inspection of fixed assets management of universities by the Jiangxi Province Department of Education and the inventory of fixed assets of administrative institutions in the province organized by the Jiangxi Province Department of Finance pointed out the shortcomings and weaknesses in the fixed assets management in universities directly.

This study will have certain reference value for the researchers working in the similar field of fixed asset management. New problems will arise, which means we need to improve the fixed asset management in universities. Providing reference suggestions to policy makers and administrators of fixed asset management in Jiangxi universities will help universities improve the quality of fixed asset management in universities.

2. Review of Related Literature

The development history of assets management research in universities can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century. With the continuous expansion of university scale and financial scale, the research on asset management is also deepening. "Managing Higher Education Facilities: New Directions for Institutional Research" edited by Michael J. Worthen and William F. Massy, the book examines facility management in higher education institutions, including asset planning, maintenance and operation, asset investment and evaluation, facility use efficiency and other aspects; "University Fixed Assets Management" (Sun Song, et al. 2020) introduces the theory and practice of university fixed assets management, including the basic concept of asset management, management process, evaluation method, asset allocation and investment decision; "University Asset Management and Operation" (Wang Haifeng, Chen Heng, etc. 2021) studies the basic principles, procedures and methods of university asset management, pays attention to the mechanism and practice of university asset operation and

management. Research on Asset Management in universities (Liu Fulin, 2021): summarizes the theoretical and practical research results of asset management of universities in China, including the theoretical framework, policies and regulations, asset evaluation and management mode of asset management of universities. These works and research contents focus on the basic concepts, theoretical framework, policies and regulations, evaluation methods, management modes and asset allocation of asset management in universities, and provide theoretical support and practical guidance for universities, which can help universities effectively manage and use their own assets, and improve the efficiency and performance of asset management.

On November 30, 1992, the Ministry of Finance has issued the "General Principles for Enterprise Finance" and the "Enterprise Accounting Standards", marking the establishment of the concept of fixed assets management in China and defining the direction and objectives of fixed assets management research in China. In the past ten years, new standards and norms about fixed assets management have been released one after another, because the traditional fixed assets management model is difficult to meet the needs of the current society, both in terms of quality and efficiency. Finding a simple and efficient fixed assets management model has become inevitable.

Fixed assets management refers to the management of the entire process of planning, purchasing, acceptance, registration, requisition, using, maintenance, and scrapping of fixed assets. Fixed assets management is a complex organizational work, involving infrastructure department, finance department, logistics department, etc., which must be managed by these departments jointly (Qiang & Jiang, 2008). At the same time, fixed assets management is a strong technical work, so it should be equipped with dedicated personnel who are responsible, capable, familiar with the business, experienced in computer operation and are willing to work. Since fixed assets generally occupy a large proportion of the total assets of an enterprise, it is of great significance to ensure the safety and integrity of enterprise assets. Losses caused by uncontrolled management of fixed assets will far exceed those caused by current assets such as general merchandise inventory (Song, 2008).

3. Methodology

Target group of the study

The researcher focused on the target group currently engaged of fixed assets management in universities in Jiangxi Province, China, including Jingdezhen University, Jingdezhen Ceramic University, and Jiangxi Arts & Ceramics Technology Institute. There are approximately 221 staff members of fixed assets management in colleges and universities in Jingdezhen, China.

5. Data Collection

- (1) Step 1 of data collection: After completing the construction of the checklist, researchers will review the components to ensure that their content is explained clearly, accurately, and easy to understand.
- (2) Step 2 of data collection: Researchers contact experts and submit checklists to check the accuracy and strength of these components.
- (3) Step 3 of data collection: Collect the questionnaire in a timely manner according to the agreed time. Researchers adjusted the questionnaire components based on expert feedback to ensure the quality of the components of fixed asset management implementation in universities.

In order to ensure the quality of the study, academic integrity and social responsibility, the researchers also followed the ethical principles of data collection and statistical analysis. To fulfill the ethical considerations, all respondents were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study before filling out the questionnaire. Respondents were educated on the informed consent forms, and all respondents had the right to withdraw from the survey without any explanation.

6. Data analysis

- (1) Analyze the data from the assessment of the appropriateness of components and indicators of fixed assets management in universities of Jiangxi Province, China by analyzing for mean and standard deviation (S.D.).
- (2) Analyze data from the questionnaire by using SPSS Program in order to find out mean and standard deviation (S.D.) of the current and desirable conditions of fixed assets management in universities of Jiangxi Province, China.
- (3) According to the calculated average and standard deviation of the current situation of international student learning management in 4 universities in Jiangxi Province, Modified Priority Need Index (PNI_{modified}) was obtained, and the results of key priority needs were evaluated using PNI_{mod}.

7. Conclusion

- (1) The researcher synthesized the books, journals, academic articles, valid reports, and past studies. The five components of fixed assets management in higher education were derived

from “The Circular on Strengthening Fixed assets management in Administrative Institutions issued” by the Ministry of Finance of China. The results show that international students from four universities in Jiangxi Province learn the management which consists of 5 components and 14 sub-components, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Components of fixed asset management

Components	Sub-components
1.Allocation	1.1 Allocation standards
	1.2 Establishing system
	1.3 Approval process
2.Purchase	2.1 Agreement procurement
	2.2 Government procurement
3.Registration	3.1 Fixed assets acceptance
	3.2 Fixed assets inventory
	3.3 Establishment of ledger
4.Use	4.1 General fixed assets use
	4.2 Special fixed assets use
	4.3 Fixed assets transfer
	4.4 Fixed assets leasing
5.Disposal	5.1 Disposal scope
	5.2 Disposal methods and procedures

(2) The evaluation results of all components of fixed asset management in universities have reached the highest level, indicating that experts unanimously agree that the following 5 items are suitable as components of international students learning management and can be used in later survey questionnaires, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Assessment results of the components and indicators of fixed assets management in universities of Jiangxi Province, China

Components of fixed assets management in universities	Suitability Level		
	\bar{X}	S.D.	Result
1.Allocation	4.80	.183	Highest
2.Purchase	4.60	.418	Highest
3.Registration	4.47	.298	Highest
4.Use	4.75	.177	Highest
5.Disposal	4.80	.274	Highest
Total	4.68	.118	Highest

(3) The evaluation results of all sub components of fixed asset management in universities

have reached the highest level, indicating that the five experts unanimously believe that all 14 sub items are suitable as sub components of the five major components of fixed asset management, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Five expert assessment results of the 14 sub-components of fixed assets management of the universities in Jiangxi Province

Components	Sub-components	Level of suitability		
		□X	S.D.	Result
1.Allocation	1.1 Allocation standards	5.00	.000	Highest
	1.2 Establishing system	4.60	.548	Highest
	1.3 Approval process	4.80	.447	Highest
2.Purchase	2.1 Agreement procurement	4.60	.548	Highest
	2.2 Government procurement	4.60	.548	Highest
3.Registration	3.1 Fixed assets acceptance	4.20	.447	Highest
	3.2 Fixed assets inventory	4.60	.548	Highest
	3.3 Establishment of ledger	4.60	.548	Highest
4.Use	4.1 General fixed assets use	4.80	.447	Highest
	4.2 Special fixed assets use	4.80	.447	Highest
	4.3 Fixed assets transfer	4.80	.447	Highest
	4.4 Fixed assets leasing	4.60	.548	Highest
5.Disposal	5.1 Disposal scope	4.80	.447	Highest
	5.2 Disposal methods and procedures	4.80	.447	Highest
Total		4.68	.118	Highest

(4) The survey results of the current situation and ideal situation of fixed assets management of the universities in Jiangxi Province are generally at a moderate level. From five aspects, the priority needs for fixed assets management of the universities in Jiangxi Province, from high to low, are: allocation, purchase, use, registration, and disposal, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Results of the current and desirable conditions of fixed assets management in universities of Jiangxi Province, China

fixed assets management	Current status			Desirable state			PNmodified (I-D)/D	Rank
	□X	S.D.	Result	□X	S.D.	Result		
1.Allocation	3.12	.379	Moderate	4.68	.303	Highest	0.5	1
2.Purchase	3.07	.364	Moderate	4.54	.372	Highest	0.48	2
3.Registration	3.10	.393	Moderate	4.55	.379	Highest	0.47	4
4.Use	3.11	.466	Moderate	4.57	.360	Highest	0.47	3
5.Disposal	3.13	.485	Moderate	4.54	.410	Highest	0.45	5

Total	3.11	.174	Moderate	4.58	.271	Highest	0.47	
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4. Discussion

Comenius pointed out that the system is the "soul" of all school work, where the system is stable, everything will be stable; where the system is shaky, everything will be shaky; where the system is loose, everything will be loose and chaotic. During the survey, it was also found that the current situation of fixed asset management is at a moderate level, mainly due to four main issues: (1) Management system construction;

(2) Equipping management team; (3) Asset management mode; (4) Management assessment mechanism. Researchers believe there are five feasible approaches:

1. Improve the system of fixed assets management

Universities have institutionalized the specific tasks, responsibilities, authorities, and methods of fixed asset management in order to make the allocation, procurement, registration, use, and disposal of fixed assets more restrictive, and to ensure that the fixed asset management system always serves the administration, scientific research, teaching, and logistics of universities (Lu, 2021).

2. Strengthen the construction of management team

With the increasing scale of the university and the importance of fixed assets management, fixed assets management has become a professional, institutionalized and normalized work. For this reason, it is necessary to establish a sound asset management team, clarify the tasks and responsibilities, focus on the selection of accounting, statistics, computer and other professionals with high theoretical level and practical experience, and assign a good and strong work team to create conditions for the overall improvement of fixed assets management (Xu, 2007).

3. Intelligent management model

Li (2021) pointed out that in the actual process, staff should fully utilize information technology, integrate it into various aspects of fixed asset management, improve the overall level of fixed asset management, and thus reflect the advantages of intelligent management of fixed assets in universities.

4. Constructing performance assessment index system

The composition of investment subjects in China's universities all present a diversified pattern with government as the main body and other investment subjects as the supplement. Constructing a set of performance appraisal index system for fixed assets management of universities in this background can, on the one hand, serve as a basis for the government to analyze the educational resources of universities, which is helpful for it to make a correct judgment on how much and how to invest in universities; on the other hand, other investment subjects can also decide the investment direction and investment strength according to the assessment standards of fixed assets management of schools (Zou, 2018).

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