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A Study of Technical High School Evaluation Benefits in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT. *The purpose of this study is to understand the benefits produced by school evaluation, and conduct a questionnaire survey on educators related to technical high schools. The research tool is "the assessment indicators of technical high school evaluation benefits", which were constructed in the pilot study. The main result is: The importance and current situations of the assessment indicators for technical high school evaluation benefits both achieve high levels; moreover, there are statistically significant differences between each dimension. In addition, there are statistically significant differences between the importance of each dimension and the actual performance of the assessment indicators for technical high school evaluation benefit. Several suggestions in accordance with the result of this study are presented, which could provide reference for practical promotion.*
Keywords*: Technical High School, School Evaluation, School Affair Evaluation, Evaluation Benefit.*

1. Introduction

Evaluation is the process of determining proposals to meet the purpose and problems identified by evaluation, including criteria/indicators, collection, analysis, and interpretation of evaluation data, communication, and the application of evaluation results. Evaluation can provide opportunities for individuals and teams to think, communicate, share, and explore the

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significant topics of an organization. Participation in the evaluation process will benefit organization members in their thinking, attitudes, and motivations of the evaluation of topics, understand the organizational goals and action priorities, and possibly provoke follow-up decisions and actions (Cherin & Meezan, 1998; Forss, Rebien, & Clarlsson, 2002; Patton, 1997; Reeve & Peerbhoy, 2007; Torres & Preskill, 2001). School evaluation is a process in the field of education to fully provide information on various actual situations, assist schools to improve measures accordingly, and achieve equal education opportunities (Maslow & Kelley, 2012).

Roller and Bovee's (2003) investigation of 122 vocational schools in America indicated that, accredited schools are better than unaccredited schools in the promotion of the benefits of post school evaluation, the goal and competitiveness of the program, and the learning of students. The Ministry of Education in Taiwan established "the 12-year basic education implementation program" in early 2007, and the technical high school evaluation task is adopted in its sub-program. To encourage technical high schools to improve from homogeneity to high quality, and establish a good foundation for the development of the 12-year basic education program, all technical high schools are required to conduct school evaluations. The author has long been commissioned by the Ministry of Education to preside over the planning and implementation of high school evaluations, as well as the urgent need to explore the actual benefits of schools after evaluation.

There are 43 evaluation benefit indicators for technical high schools, as constructed by focus groups, the fuzzy Delphi method, and structural modeling (SEM) in the pilot study. The purpose of this study is to understand the benefits produced in the practical operations of schools by conducting a questionnaire survey on educators related to schools, as based on the results of the previous study.

2. Literature Review

Stukalina (2010) argued that, only through an evaluation mechanism can the quality of educational environments be monitored at any time, and stimulate students to have better

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academic performance. Therefore, the evaluation of school learning environments, including student feedback, students' participation in school affairs, students' satisfaction with learning, and interaction among people in a school (including managers, teachers, and students), can determine whether the school is progressing (Stukalina, 2012). The school evaluation process is understood in different ways due to different evaluation theories; evaluation includes the technical activities of information collection and analysis (Hall, 2013), as well as continuous interactions between evaluators and subjects.

Patton (1997), Johnson (1998), Torres and Preskill (2001), and Owen (2007) suggested that the benefits of educational evaluation refer to the functions and effects of the evaluated subjects and organizations that are influenced by the outcomes and processes of education evaluation. School evaluation is a system that can effectively check whether schools achieve interactive organizational management and receive students' feedback. The school evaluation process is understood in different ways due to different evaluation theories; evaluation includes the technical activities of information collection and analysis (Hall, 2013), as well as continuous interactions between evaluators and subjects

Effective school evaluation is to continuously apply the results into school operations through complete collection and integration of information (OECD, 2008; Stukalina, 2012). Estyn (2011) thought that the benefits of evaluation occur during follow-up activities, and such evaluation should not be seen as "a one-time event", or it will lose its effectiveness. OECD (2012) asserted that, school evaluations are conducted based on the outcomes of each unit, as well as students' academic performance, thus, the performance of each unit is vital; moreover, their cooperative performance is essential, as whole school evaluation is a continuous cycle. The evaluation benefits can be seen in Figure 1.

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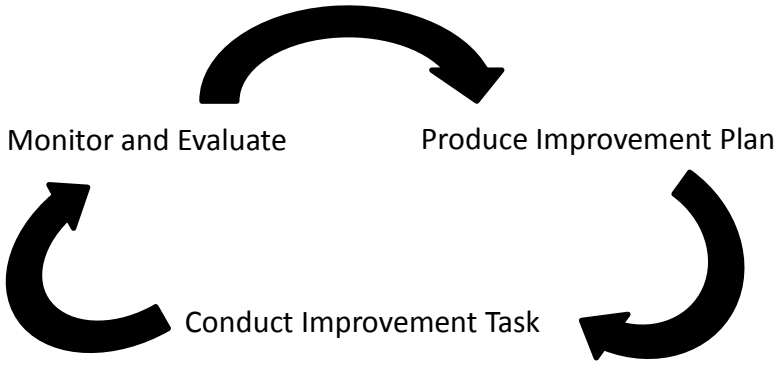

Figure 1. Illustration of Continuation Evaluation Benefit

Source: Author

The process of educational evaluation research can encourage members' organizational learning through various related methods, such as conversation, in-depth thinking and reflection, and identifying and clarifying values, beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge. That is, the implementation process of evaluation can promote members to engage in conversation and deep thinking, thus, organizational and personal values, beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge can be clarified and confirmed (Foley, Klinge, & Reisner 2008; Preskill, 2005). Muraski (1993) assumed that evaluation includes the three aspects of process, outcome, and impact. Impact is assessed on the benefits after evaluation.

Under such interaction, organizational structure, system and culture, members' growth, and professional growth are produced, as showed in Figure 2. These are the important benefits that may be brought to accredited schools after evaluation is implemented.

Vanhoof and Petegem (2012) believed that evaluation is more than a temporary evaluation process and relevant results, it also produces the following unique benefits: 1. It can better educate, organize, and encourage members to share their ideas. 2. It adds more positive attitudes and views matters more critically. 3. It contains positive and negative thinking patterns for school affairs. 4. It can generate more motivations (power) to improve the quality of education.

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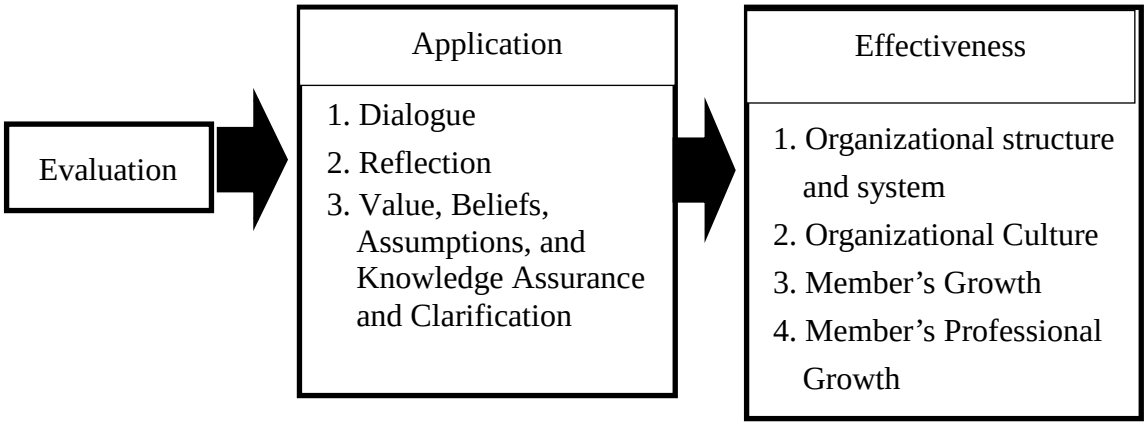

Figure 2. The Evaluation Effectiveness

Source: Author

5. It makes those evaluated more willing to become a member to determine school policies. 6. It makes one become more aware of his/her responsibilities. 7. It makes one more willing to work with others at school and share organizational visions. 8. It enhances the cohesion of a school. 9. It enables school members to establish and improve school culture together. 10. It enhances one's identity of school education. 11. Organization members can speak about their ideas in an assured, open, and honest manner, while obtaining effective response. 12. It renders higher willingness of cooperation at work. 13. Members are trustworthy. 14. It makes one more willing to provide feedback, and learn from mistakes anytime and anywhere. 15. It enhances one's sensitivity to school affairs. As the Ministry of Education of Taiwan revealed in its "Plan to Implement Evaluation of Senior Vocational Schools", evaluations of school affairs include nine items: "principal's leadership", "administration", "course teaching", "student affairs counseling", "environment and equipment", "social interaction", "teachers' professionalism", "internship counseling", and "performance".

After analyzing and integrating related literature (Amo & Cousins, 2007; Cousins et al., 2004; Owen, 2007; Reeve & Peerbhoy, 2007; Vanhoof & Petegem, 2012), it appears that technical high school evaluation benefits can be divided into school management and professional development. For school management, it includes administrative effectiveness, resource integration, organizational interaction, and environment improvement. For professional

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learning, it includes course planning, teacher profession, student performance, and top-notch talent cultivation, and remedies for weaker talents.

3. Research Method

1. 1. Definitions of variables

1) School business

(1) Administrative efficiency

It refers to the improved efficiency of a school after evaluation, including an understanding of school development goals, improved administrative execution, and the operation of a feedback improvement mechanism.

(2) Resource integration

It refers to the improvement of resources after evaluation. The filing, seeking, utilization, and integrating of resources inside and outside a school become more effective.

(3) Organizational interaction

It refers to the evaluation of the friendly atmosphere of a school. Administrators, teachers, students, and students' parents have better interactions. School members have higher recognition of and participation in school affairs, and they are proud to be a part of the school.

(4) Environmental improvement

It refers to the experience of the overall equipment and environment of a school; campus, dorms, teaching equipment, venues, equipment, and renewable resources become more effective, which facilitates better management and use.

2) Learning development

(1) Course planning

It means that the organization and operation of the curriculum becomes more effective after evaluation, and the school can provide guidance for career development and remediate or broaden appropriate courses for students.

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(2) Teachers' professionalism

It means that, after evaluation, teachers can have better performance in terms of teaching, preparation of teaching materials, student assessment, and class management. Furthermore, teachers can more actively participate in learning and professional communities.

(3) Students' performance

It means that, after evaluation, students have better results in terms of behavior, learning atmosphere, physical goodness-of-fit, and participation in activities and competitions inside and outside the school.

(4) Top-notch talent cultivation

It means that, after evaluation, a school can establish a mechanism to effectively make excellent students more excellent, and help those with poor academic performance to improve.

1. 2. Research Samples

The range of this study is technical high schools in Taiwan. In Taiwan, there is a total of 157 senior vocational schools. In the pre-test and the formal test, 51 schools are selected as the samples, wherein, 10 are randomly selected. Hence, 160 people in the schools are selected as the samples for pre-test. The objects are educators in technical high schools, including principals, teachers and directors, teachers and leaders, full-time teachers, and full-time administrators. Using the schools as the sample unit, this study randomly selects 41 schools, and takes 20 people from each school, for a total research sample of 820 people. The tool used in this study is 43 assessment indicators of technical high school benefits.

1. 3. Research Tools

This study conducts pre-test in order to establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. After the questionnaire copies are collected, relevant identification, reliability, and exploratory factors are analyzed to form the formal questionnaire. The formal questionnaire is conducted, verification factors are analyzed, and the scale is verified.

(1) Verification of the goodness-of-fit of the school evaluation efficiency measurement model

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In terms of the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model, Table 1 demonstrates that, the load of a standardization factor should be greater than .5; the current load of the standardization factor is between .740 and .925. The reliability of an observation indicator should be greater than .5; the current reliability of observation indicators is between .548 and .855. AVE should be greater than .5, the current AVE is between .709 and .853. Finally, CR should be greater than .6; the current CR is between .907 and .965, indicating that the eight potential variables have good reliability. In summary, the verification of goodness-of-fit of "school affair operations" and the "learning development" measurement model has good intrinsic quality regarding the loads of standardization factors, reliability of observation indicators, AVE, and CR.

Table 1 Verification of Goodness-of-fit of "School Affair Operation" Measurement Model

Indicator for School Affair Operation	Load of Standardization Factor	Reliability of Observation Indicator	AVE	CR
1-1 Administrative efficiency	.798-.879	.637.-773	.712	.937
1-2 Resource integration	.838-.852	.688-.725	.709	.907
1-3 Organizational interaction	.850-.892	.723-.795	.760	.950
1-4 Environmental improvement	.740-.892	.548-.795	.716	.946
Indicators for learning development				
2-1 Course planning	.871-.890	.759-.753	.770	.952
2-2 Teachers' professionalism	.835-.913	.697-.833	.799	.960
2-3 Students' performance	.922-.925	.850-.855	.853	.921
2-4 Top-notch talent cultivation	.838-.923	.702-.824	.794	.965

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(2) Standards for the goodness-of-fit of the overall school evaluation efficiency model

Table 2 shows the standards (external quality) for the goodness-of-fit of the overall model. Table 7 displays the evaluation results and reference to the goodness-of-fit standard. Generally, various goodness-of-fit indicators are used to verify whether a model is fit. The chi-square value is 1315.754/1251.132. The degree of freedom (df) = 226/185, p = .000/.000, implying that the number of samples is too big, thus, it does not reach a significant level. GFI and AGFI of this model do not have goodness-of-fit, which shall be improved. RMSEA and SRMR are close to the indicators of goodness-of-fit. Incremental (relative) goodness-of-fit and streamlined goodness-of-fit are both good. Overall, with the exception of X2 and absolute goodness-of-fit, which do not meet the standards of goodness-of-fit, incremental (relative) goodness-of-fit and streamlined goodness-of-fit are both good.

Table 2 Standards for the Goodness-of-fit of the Overall School Evaluation Efficiency Model

Evaluation Item		Standard of Goodness-of-fit	School Business		Learning Development	
			Evaluation Results	Determination of Goodness-of-fit	Evaluation Results	Determination of Goodness-of-fit
X2 (the smaller, the better)		Not significant	1315.754 df = 226, p = .000	No	1251.132 df = 185, p = .000	No
Absolute goodness-of-fit	GFI	Greater than .9	.867	No	.857	No
	AGFI	Greater than .9	.838	No	.822	No
	RMSEA	Good if smaller than .05; Between .05 and .08 Reasonable	.080	Reasonable	.088	No
	SRMR	smaller than .05;	.0317	Yes	.0287	Yes

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Incremental (relative) goodness-of-fit	CFI	Greater than .9	.941	Yes	.948	Yes
	NFI	Greater than .9	.929	Yes	.940	Yes
	NNFI	Greater than .9	.934	Yes	.941	Yes
	IFI	Greater than .9	.941	Yes	.948	Yes
	RFI	Greater than .9	.921	Yes	.931	Yes
Streamlined goodness-of-fit	PGFI	Greater than .5	.710	Yes	.687	Yes
	PNFI	Greater than .5	.830	Yes	.828	Yes

To sum up, regarding the standards of the overall model of "school business" and "learning development", with the exception of X2 and absolute goodness-of-fit, which do not meet the standards of goodness-of-fit, incremental (relative) goodness-of-fit and streamlined goodness-of-fit are both good.

4. Result and Discussion

1. The Importance Analysis of Assessment Indicators of Technical High Schools Evaluation Benefit

(1) The Importance Analysis of School Management

Table 3 shows that, the mean of the importance perception of principals and teachers regarding overall school management in technical high schools achieves 4.5149, which surpasses the “most consistent” standard, that is, it is generally considered that school management is an important assessment indicator of evaluation benefits in school evaluation. In light of the one-way ANOVA of dependent samples, the principals and teachers in technical high schools have different cognition regarding the importance of school management. Ex-post comparison implies that, the importance perception of every dimension in school management, from highest to lowest, are administrative effectiveness, environment improvement, resource integration, and organizational interaction. In other words, the principals and teachers in

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technical high schools attach the highest importance to administrative effectiveness, thus, organizational interactions should be enhanced.

Table3: The Importance Analysis of the Dimensions in "School Management" for Assessment Indicators of Technical High School Evaluation Benefit

School Management	The Mean of per Question	The Number of Questions	Standard Deviation	*F*	Post hoc comparisons
1.Administrative Effectiveness	4.6282	6	.92508		
2. Resource Integration	4.5097	5	95728		
3.Organizational Interaction	4.3896	5	.97639	46.416***	1 > 4 > 2 > 3
4. Environment Improvement	4.5322	7	.92257		
Overall School Management	4.5149	23	.88444		

***$P < .001$

(2) The Importance Analysis of Professional Development

Table 4 shows that, the mean of the importance perception of principals and teachers regarding overall professional development in technical high schools achieves 4.4246, which surpasses the "most consistent" standard, that is, it is generally considered that professional development is an important assessment indicator of evaluation benefit in school evaluation. In light of the one-way ANOVA of dependent samples, the principals and teachers in technical high schools have different understanding of the importance of professional development. Ex-post comparison implies that, the importance perception of every dimension in professional development, from highest to lowest, are course planning, teacher profession, top-notch talent cultivation, remedies for weaker talents, and student performance. In other words, the principals

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and teachers in technical high schools deem that course planning has the best performance, while student performance should be improved.

Table 4: The Importance Analysis of the Dimensions in "Professional Development" for Assessment Indicators of Technical High School Evaluation Benefit

Professional Development	The Mean of per Question	The Number of Questions	Standard Deviation	*F*	Post hoc comparisons
1. Course Planning	4.4976	6	.97173		
2. Teacher Profession	4.4369	6	1.00876		
3. Student Performance	4.3280	3	1.11418	16.299***	1 > 2 > 4 > 3
4. Top-notch Talent Cultivation and Remedy for Weak	4.4360	5	1.00419		
Overall Professional Development	4.4246	20	.96636		

***$P < .001$

2. The Current Situation Analysis of Assessment Indicators of Technical High Schools Evaluation Benefit

(1) The Current Situation Analysis of School Management

Table 5 shows that, the mean of the current situation perception of principals and teachers regarding overall school management in technical high schools achieves 4.2923, which surpasses the "most consistent" standard, that is, it is generally considered that school management has high achievement on evaluation benefit in school evaluation. In light of the one-way ANOVA of dependent samples, the principals and teachers in technical high schools have significantly different understanding of the evaluation effectiveness of school management. Ex-post comparison indicates that, the performance of each dimension in school management, from highest to lowest, are administrative effectiveness, environment improvement, resource integration, and organizational interaction. In other words, the principals and teachers in

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technical high schools hold that the evaluation effectiveness of administrative effectiveness has the best performance, while organizational interaction should be strengthened.

Table 5: The Current Situation Analysis of the Dimensions in "School Management" for Assessment Indicators of Technical High Schools Evaluation Benefit

School Management	The Mean of per Question	The Number of Questions	Standard Deviation	*F*	Post hoc comparisons
1.Administrative Effectiveness	4.4151	6	.95126		
2. Resource Integration	4.2907	5	.97388		
3.Organizational Interaction	4.1669	5	.99242	52.973***	1 > 4 > 2 > 3
4. Environment Improvement	4.2964	7	.94588		
Overall School Management	4.2923	23	.91204		

***$P < .001$

(2) The Current Situation Analysis of Professional Development

Table 6 shows that, the mean of the current situation perception of principals and teachers overall professional development in technical high schools achieves 4.2074, which surpasses the "most consistent" standard, that is, it is generally considered that professional development has high achievement on evaluation benefit in school evaluation. In light of the one-way ANOVA of the dependent samples, the principals and teachers in technical high schools have significantly different understanding of the evaluation effectiveness of professional management. Ex-post comparison indicates that, the performance of every dimension in professional development, from highest to lowest, are top-notch talent cultivation, remedies for weaker talents, course planning, teacher profession, and student performance. In other words, the principals and

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teachers in technical high schools pointed out that, the evaluation effectiveness of top-notch talent cultivation has the highest performance, while student performance should be reinforced.

Table 6: The Current Situation Analysis of the Dimensions in "Professional Development" for Assessment Indicators of Technical High Schools Evaluation Benefit

Professional Development	The Mean of per Question	The Number of Questions	Standard Deviation	*F*	Post hoc comparisons
1. Course Planning	4.2234	6	1.0091		
2. Teacher Profession	4.1896	6	1.01962		
3. Student Performance	4.1676	3	1.15232		
4. Top-notch Talent Cultivation and Remedy for Weak	4.2489	5	1.00410	6.048^{**}_{*}	4 > 1 > 2 > 3
Overall Professional Development	4.2074	20	.97873		

$^{***}P < .001$

In order to understand the differences of the evaluation effectiveness of senior middle schools in importance and actual performance, Paired-samples t-test is conducted.

(3) Comparison of the overall evaluation effectiveness

Table 7 implies that, the importance and actual pair-wise test of the evaluation indicators for the evaluation effectiveness of senior middle schools reach significant levels. The significance of overall importance is higher than that of actual performance. In other words, the assessment of the actual performance of school personnel shows that evaluation effectiveness should be further improved.

3. The Analysis of the Difference between Importance and Current Situation for Every Assessment Indicator of Technical High Schools Evaluation Benefit

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In order to understand the differences of the evaluation effectiveness of technical high schools in importance and actual performance, Paired-samples T-test is conducted.

(1) The Difference between Importance and Current Situation of School Management

Table 8 shows that, in regard to the four aspects of administrative effectiveness, environment improvement, resource integration, and organizational interaction, the importance and current situation of these four dimensions in school management all achieve statistically significant difference. The importance of the four dimensions is also significantly higher than the current situation, that is, the actual performance of school management benefit is less important than originally expected. Hence, technical high schools should consolidate the actual performance of school business effectiveness in the future.

Table 8: T-test Analysis for Assessment of Every Dimension in "School Management" of Technical High Schools Evaluation Benefit

Pair	Dimension	Paired Sample statistic	Paired Variable Difference			t
		Mean	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Standard Error	
Pair 1	Administrative Effectiveness	Importance 4.6282 / Current Situation 4.4151	.21311	.54750	.01999	10.660***
Pair 2	Resource Integration	Importance 4.5097 / Current Situation 4.2907	.21900	.61546	.02247	9.745***
Pair 3	Organizational Interaction	Importance 4.3896 / Current Situation 4.1669	.22267	.67779	.02475	8.997***
Pair 4	Environment Improvement	Importance 4.5322 / Current Situation 4.2964	.23581	.66509	.02429	9.710***
Pair 5	Overall School Management	Importance 4.5149 / Current Situation 4.2923	.22265	.55106	.02012	11.065

(2) The Difference between Importance and Current Situation of Professional Development

Table 9 shows that, the importance and current situation of the four dimensions in professional development all achieve statistically significant difference. The importance of

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top-notch talent cultivation, remedies for weaker talents, course planning, teacher profession, and student performance of the four dimensions are significantly higher than the current situation, that is, the actual performance of professional development benefit should be further improved.

Table 9: T-test Analysis for Assessment of Every Dimension in "Professional Development" of Technical High Schools Evaluation Benefit

Pair	Dimension	Paired Sample Statistic	Paired Variable Difference			t
		Mean	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Standard Error	
Pair 1	Course Planning	Importance 4.4976 / Current Situation 4.2213	.27622	.69646	.02534	10.862***
Pair 2	Teacher Profession	Importance 4.4369 / Current Situation 4.1878	.24911	.69043	.02521	9.881***
Pair 3	Student Performance	Importance 4.3280 / Current Situation 4.1680	.16000	.72556	.02649	6.039***
Pair 4	Top-notch Talent Cultivation and Remedy for Weak	Importance 4.4366 / Current Situation 4.2489	.18768	.59232	.02164	8.672***
Pair 5	Overall Professional Development	Importance 4.4246 / Current Situation 4.2074	.21798	58527	.02139	10.193***

***$P < .001$

5. Conclusion

1. School staffs generally believe that technical high school evaluation benefit is important for school management and professional development. Among all the dimensions, administrative effectiveness and course planning are the most important. The principals and teachers

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thought that, evaluation plays a vital role in improving the operational efficiency of a school, understanding the school development goals, administrative execution, and the operation of the feedback improvement mechanism.

2. School staffs generally believe that, technical high school evaluation benefit achieves a good level on the current situation of school management and professional development. Among all the dimensions, administrative effectiveness, top-notch talent cultivation, and remedies for weaker talents have the best performance. The principals and teachers argued that, after evaluation, schools can have actual benefits in terms of the organization and operation of course development, the provision of guidance and remediation for career development, and broaden appropriate courses for students.
3. Regarding administrative effectiveness, resource integration, organizational interaction, and environment improvement in school management, the importance of evaluation benefits are all higher than the current situation. The situations are the same for course planning, teacher profession, student performance, top-notch talent cultivation, and remedies for weaker talents in professional development.

6. Suggestions

1. Educational administrative authorities can use the indicators of this study as the basis of evaluation planning to encourage schools to improve school management and professional development, and thus, move toward excellent sustainable development.
2. The overall current situation of school evaluation benefit is lower than importance, thus, educational authorities should track the gap between the actual benefits produced by schools and expected benefits to show the proper function of school evaluation.
3. Schools can use the assessment indicators of school evaluation benefits to analyze, learn, and improve the results after evaluation.
4. Regarding the perception of the current situation in overall school management, “environment improvement”, “resource integration”, and “organizational interaction” are lower than the

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others for principals and teachers in technical high schools, thus, they should be actively strengthened to improve performance.

5. Regarding the perception of the current situation of overall professional development, "course planning", "teacher profession", and "student performance" are lower than the others for principals and teachers in technical high schools, thus, they should be considered as key points in school development.

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