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The Negative Impact of ESSA on Educational Equity: A Teacher Accountability Perspective

Naicong Xie[1,a,*]

[1]*Duquesne University, 600 Forbes Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15282, United States*
a. xienaicong0210@gmail.com
**corresponding author*

Abstract: The current ESSA Act is constantly improving in maintaining educational equity. Still, the introduction of the Act and the implementation of policies rarely reflect how to achieve educational equity by supporting and promoting teachers' work enthusiasm and improving educational equity to promote students' overall progress in the long-term educational goals. This paper mainly takes Herzberg's two-factor theory of health factors and motivation factors as the theoretical research basis. It analyzes that the rational application of dual theory can improve teachers' work enthusiasm and promote the development of educational equity. Studying teachers' job-related motivating factors can generate job satisfaction, thereby promoting and enhancing teachers' job satisfaction. As a relevant administrative and legislative research institution, it can investigate the content of teachers' work to find out whether teachers have a sense of accomplishment in their work, whether they recognize teachers' work, and whether there are problems in the work process plan. At the same time, in teacher-based assessment policies, we could see that objective measures of student growth, observational measures, and the use of assessment systems to drive targeted support are all associated with motivational factors that motivate teachers. Research on the health factors of relevant teachers requires policy and administrators to ensure the essential work and environment of teachers, as well as living conditions and wages.

Keywords: educational equity, teacher accountability, work motivation, two-factor theory

1. Introduction

It has been seven years since ESSA reauthorized the 50-year-old Primary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015. ESSA is still continuously updating and publishing new guidelines. ESSA's goal is to make continuous progress in high school graduation, educational advancement, and better identification of gifted and talented students. It also addresses achievement gaps identified by No Child Left Behind to ensure educational institutions continue to support K-12 students individually. However, in ESSA, there has been no clear document on the incentives and penalties for teacher accountability in the education bill and policy, and there is a vacancy in whether there is a policy and implementation plan to motivate teachers based on the achievement of accountability indicators. At the same time, the federal government's decentralization of most educational rights also determines that teacher accountability has problems affecting educational equity. Teachers influence educational equity, and it is imperative to promote the teacher system's improvement reasonably.

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This article aims to address some issues that arise in the current teacher accountability system under the ESSA Act by improving teachers' teaching and work and analyzing some of the relevant provisions of the ESSA Act that lead to the negative impact of accountability on educational equity. Finally, from an objective point of view, it can help to achieve educational equity by improving teachers' work motivation.

From the perspective of the two-factor theory, this article discusses the improvement of reward and punishment measures in the teacher responsibility system to promote education fairness. The two-factor theory was proposed by American psychologist Herzberg in 1959. The theory believes that the factors that cause people's work motivation are divided into motivational and hygiene factors. Through the analysis of motivating factors and health factors, it can be applied and explored in the field of education to ensure teachers' sense of responsibility, thereby promoting education equity. We can learn from factors such as the teacher work factor and the impact of accountability on teacher work and how increasing teacher motivation and health factors can improve educational equity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Educational Equity Research History

Maintaining educational equity is the guarantee of providing fundamental educational rights and interests for every school-age student. According to Rothman, equity is students' most critical equity and opportunity [1]. Guiton and Oakes (1995) proposed a typology based on social context, including three ideas of equity: the Libertarian, Liberal, and Democratic Liberal. Liberal and libertarian positions focus on the equitable distribution of educational resources and educational processes [2]. In contrast, democratic-liberal views emphasize whether academic input and processes lead to students achieving adequate learning performance, i.e., outcomes, as equity indicators [3]. This means that scholars will analyze educational equity from different perspectives. Documents published by OECD and UNESCO classify equity in education into equity in learning opportunities and outcomes; equity in resource compensation measures, equity in educational opportunities; educational inclusion (equity and inclusion in education) [4].

2.2. Related Research on Teacher Quality

Teacher quality significantly affects educational equity, and previous research reinforces the belief that teacher quality is an essential component of student success [5]. Research from the 1940s to the early 1960s concentrated on personal characteristics and empirical variables. Still, it was not until the late 1960s that researchers turned their energies toward exploring how specific teacher behaviors were linked to student learning. In the 1970s, research began to focus on the nature of teaching, classrooms, schools, and research methods referred to by different periods: from learning to teaching, classroom ecology, or interpretive research [6]. In recent years, leading researchers have defined teacher quality as including two components: (a) good teaching, which means that teachers meet the expectations of the role (b) effective or successful teaching, which is the result of teacher communication—perspectives on student learning and accomplishment [6]. Meanwhile, Goe and Stickler proposed three categories of teacher quality: personal resources and performance; effectiveness [7]. The quality of teachers can also be tested through four indicators of teacher quality: teacher quality, teacher character education, teacher practice, and teacher effectiveness [8].

2.3. Related Research on Teacher Accountability

The essence of accountability and power is inseparable, and the essence is that when problems arise within the scope of authority, someone needs to take some responsibility. Traditionally,

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accountability "is 'being held accountable and defining a formal relationship of control between parties, one of which is accountable to the other for the performance of duties and the management of public resources." [9]. Accountability at the individual level is rooted in a more abstract concept of responsibility, mainly office responsibility [10]. In accountability research, the nature of accountability can be divided into internal self-accountability and external accountability. External accountability responds to policymakers, principals, and parents' expectations and demands.

In contrast, internal accountability tends to be more about teachers' job satisfaction and self-assessment of teaching development. Smith and Powers propose an outcome-based approach to accountability that falls into one of four main categories: (a) Assessed based on the achievement scores of students taught by graduates of the program, (b) assessments based on teacher candidates' assessment of research to support behavior (c) evaluates teacher candidates based on student performance in teaching, and (d) evaluates student performance in teaching based on student performance in early postgraduate teaching [11]. Accountability in the current educational environment is seen as a mechanism to ensure the professional development of teachers and thus improve professional performance.

2.4. The Relationship Between Educational Equity/Educational Accountability/Teacher Quality

Accountability and fairness can be relatively reflected when educational policies, regulations, and management regulations are fully implemented. Data from accountability systems (e.g., attendance and academic tests) provide a way to spot inequalities caused by racist, classist, and sexist behavior [12]. The foundation of maintaining equity in education is identifying and eliminating issues (at the teacher level, management level, policy, and legal level) that contribute to inequity. Teacher reform is necessary to maintain educational equity, provide knowledge, and cultivate equity awareness and literacy. A robust research program is needed to guide teacher education programs' design and policy development [6]. The idea of improving teacher quality to promote equity in education has come from Congress and educational organizations, and the U.S. Department of Education, which recently revised the HEA's teacher education provisions in response to the NCTAF report. There is a clear consensus between the two: (a) teacher recruitment should be addressed, and (b) support for teacher education colleges should be linked to their collaboration with K-12 schools [13]. Improving teachers' quality can promote education fairness, and the education responsibility system is a solid institutional guarantee for teachers' quality.

The above research discussions can prove the importance of teachers and the impact of teachers on educational equity is still missing in current research on teacher quality, teacher responsibility, and teachers' impact on educational equity. Promoting educational teachers' motivation to explore teacher responsibility by improving educational equity lacks scholarly discussion. I will discuss research based on how the current ESSA Act promotes teacher motivation to achieve educational equity.

3. Analytical Framework

This article will be divided into three main parts. The first part, based on Herzberg's two-factor theory, explores teachers' influence on the equity of educational accountability. Educational accountability in the United States is a division of power managed jointly by the federal government and the states. The accountability system affects education fairness to a certain extent but ignores teachers' work motivation analysis based on teacher responsibility management. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, there are two distinct factors in an organization: job satisfaction and performance. A group labeled "Satisfiers" or "Motivators" that generate satisfaction when fully satisfied. The other group

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was labeled "unsatisfactory" or "hygienic factor," which, if flawed, caused dissatisfaction [14]. Based on the theory of teacher responsibility, explain and analyze whether teachers' job satisfaction and health factors can improve or affect educational equity to a certain extent. The second part explores the relevant analysis and elaboration of various educational issues that have arisen after the introduction of different laws during the iterative process of updating the American Education Act (from ESEA to today's ESSA Act, changes in federal and state education management powers). Current federal and comprehensive state efforts in education. It discusses how policy-based bills can promote educational equity by inspiring teachers' dual motivation. The impact of the relevant teacher indicators in the ESSA Act on teachers and how to use these indicators to analyze further how to improve teachers' work enthusiasm and achieve educational equity based on dual motivation theory.

3.1. The Impact of Teacher Accountability on Educational Equity is Based on the Theoretical Two-factor Theory

In the United States, the basic school-based accountability system is that after the federal government delegates part of the education management and formulation power to states, states can formulate their learning standards based on meeting the fundamental indicators and needs of federal education. But each state needs to have a straightforward program of learning standards and an annual evaluation system based on those standards (to measure whether students meet those standards). Student performance on these standards and the results presented in these student performance outcomes affect how schools are taught and managed. School accountability is designed with a clear purpose: to drive systemic and equitable improvements in student achievement [15]. The theory of action behind standards-based accountability relies on these accountability mechanisms to change school behavior to improve overall student achievement and achieve more equal students in terms of race, family income, English learning, status, and special education score. The quality of teachers is one of the most important factors affecting the education system. The teacher accountability movement is one of the most controversial and important topics in modern educational reform [16]. Too much previous research has shown how teachers can improve their teaching methods, how to train teachers, etc. Researchers use different research options to improve educational equity or force educators and policymakers to improve traditional academic-quality schools for underserved student populations [15]. Hodgetts (2010) pointed out that the current education system emphasizes teachers' responsibility by focusing on performance [16]. But the impact of teacher job satisfaction on educational equity has not been discussed much throughout the teacher accountability system.

The teacher evaluation policy in NCTQ (National Council on Teacher Quality) explains to a certain extent the specific goals and responsibilities that teachers need to complete in the educational accountability system: objectives measure of student growth; the role of state tests in assessing student growth; evaluation system; category of rating; observation measures; frequency of assessment; the student survey part of the state assessment system; use evaluation systems to drive targeted support.

In the two-factor theory of job satisfaction, Herzberg (1959: 3) argued that job satisfaction is caused by what he called "motivating factors." These motivators include achievement, recognition, work, responsibility, progress, and growth. Instead, the dissatisfaction was caused by problems with what Herzberg called the "hygiene factor." These factors contain company policy and management, supervision, relationship with supervisor, working conditions, salary, relationship with co-workers, personal life, relationship with subordinates, status, and safety [17]. Based on the two-factor theory, the accountability system of relevant teachers can improve educational equity through specific reforms based on the content of the two-factor theory. Based on the academic accountability system, we explore whether the motivational factors related to teachers' work are satisfied to discuss whether it can promote and improve teachers' job satisfaction.

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Being able to work as teacher motivators are often intrinsic: they are part of the job content and are managed primarily by staff or (in this case) students [14]. The presence of motivational factors can produce job satisfaction, but the lack of motivational factors can lead to low job satisfaction. As the relevant state education administrators and the federal government, it is necessary to investigate the content of the teacher's work to understand whether the teacher feels a sense of accomplishment in work; whether it recognizes the teacher's job; whether there are problems in the process of work; and future planning. The changes in these incentive factors need to be coordinated and perfected by education managers in different positions. At the same time, in teacher-based assessment policies, we can see that objective measures of student growth, observational measures, and the use of assessment systems to drive targeted support are all associated with motivational factors that motivate teachers. At the same time, motivating factors can increase and improve teachers' job satisfaction.

Hygiene factors are extrinsic and controlled by supervisors or other faculty or students. Job dissatisfaction occurs when these factors deteriorate below the teacher's needs. In these related parts, policies and administrators are needed to ensure teachers' essential work and environment and the conditions and wages of life.

The key point here is that Herzberg's theory does not define satisfaction and dissatisfaction as opposite ends of the same continuum. The opposite of happiness is not dissatisfaction but a lack of joy. The opposite of dissatisfaction is not satisfaction but the absence of dissatisfaction. Extrinsic factors influence job satisfaction and, if not adequately satisfied, can cause dissatisfaction even if the motivating factor is satisfactorily addressed [14]. The two-factor theory provides a perfect teacher accountability system to achieve educational equity by motivating teachers. Policymakers and state administrators can investigate and adjust teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic needs based on the two-factor theory to improve related policies and implementation provisions.

3.2. History of the ESSA Act and Changes and Impact on Teacher Accountability

A review of the Education Act and the development of teacher accountability highlights that establishing accountability for achievement, equity, and transparency did not happen overnight, nor did it emerge from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002 " started. In the early 20th century, K-12 education was primarily the domain of state and local governments. Enacted the Primary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA): "adequate educational opportunities" should be the "primary national goal." ESEA provides federal grants and more for school districts with low-income students. In addition, the law provides federal grants to state educational agencies to improve the quality of primary and secondary education. It started with the Championship in 2009 and ended with the ESEA Flexibility Waiver in 2011 [18]. As a result, most states have turned to assessment systems: that require more frequent assessments of all teachers and incorporate multiple measures, including student achievement.

Before the introduction of the NCLB Act, the continued decline in the quality of education children received was due to a lack of accountability in the system. NCLB requires more responsibilities than any previous act. In exchange for significant resources, the state must meet several absolute benchmarks (states employ "challenging" academic standards; states conduct tests to assess students' proficiency in these subjects; NCLB requires states to ensure students meet specific benchmarks, etc.) [19]. Substantive educational decisions for curriculum and teachers move from state to federal. NCLB requires reporting of High-Quality Teacher (HQT) status: High-Quality Teacher (n.) Educator: 1) Holds a bachelor's degree; 2) Holds full state certification or licensure; 3) Demonstrates academic ability [20]. Thus, the action theory for NCLB teacher policy is to set a minimum credential for teachers, a mandatory requirement for accountability-based education policy [20]. NCLB took consequential steps to correct the problem, but the standards were unreasonable, sometimes requiring a 100 percent success rate—nearly impossible for some schools [21].

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Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) changed several important aspects of federal teacher policy, adding more local discretion regarding teacher responsibility policy [22]. The ESSA Act significantly reduces the role of education administration by limiting the Secretary of Education's ability to grant exemptions and requiring states to adopt specific academic standards, evaluation, accountability, or teacher evaluation systems [23]. These changes represent a step from competing to leading the way, incentivizing states to implement policies that hold teachers accountable for slow gains in students' proficiency and reward them for impressive results on state exams [22]. The most obvious is that the law removes the NCLB requirement for highly qualified teachers (HQT). However, decentralized management power cannot promote the progress and reform of the teacher responsibility system. Keeping education equitable is not easy. The federal government is working with allies in the ESSA Act at the state level. Through standards and accountability activities, they have created quantitative measurement systems to help them "understand" school performance and set automated outcomes to help them "take action" in response to what they saw. However, these systems have proven to be seriously flawed and often fail to measure school quality or deliver appropriate and accurate interventions. As a result, these systems have sparked boycotts and raised questions about their legitimacy. During this period, the federal government has increased its power to develop policies to address funding inequities and systemic discrimination. Yet even with increased power, the federal government has been unable to direct activities within schools and classrooms, leaving its agencies with little control. This needs to be based on the two-factor theory, policies, and implementation measures to improve teachers' sense of responsibility, stimulate the motivation and health factors of teachers' work and enhance the teaching quality of schools and teachers. While some states have used the administrative flexibility provided by the ESSA Act to innovate educational policy tools and modify and expand their accountability, many have opted to adhere to the minimum requirements set forth by the federal ESSA without a clear commitment to promoting equity in their state programs [3]. At the same time, the accountability-related policies included in the ESSA plan focus primarily on the need for educators to be held accountable for state-mandated educational outcomes, examples include student achievement and growth scores and graduation rates as important indicators of equity policy impact. But how to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and hygiene factors based on a sense of responsibility is a problem that needs to be constantly explored. Many reform advocates argue that a lack of proper incentives and support leads to a lack of accountability and inefficiency [23]. Adding responsibility to the education bill is a top priority for the federal government to manage education. Promote equity based on continuous improvements in teacher accountability and the Act's provisions under the ESSA Act in the current environment. In the ESSA Act, states are authorized to use Title II funds in a manner that creates a framework for sustainable teaching excellence, including the Teacher Internship Program and the School Leadership Internship Program; professional development of all teachers (previously funds could only be used for core academic subjects, etc.) [18]. Some funding measures are critical to keeping teachers motivated. While the federal government will continue to oversee federal funds, ESSA allows states to customize their responsibilities [24]. With the continuous improvement of the accountability system, problems and tasks such as teachers still exist. On average, teachers for poor and minority students are mostly inexperienced and unqualified teachers [19]. The financial consequences of this unequal distribution can lead to problems with educational equity. Another research found that states and local territories need to allocate $6.83 billion nationwide to close the funding gap created by teacher salaries [19]. Based on the two-factor theory, funding issues are also critical to advancing teacher healthcare. While the current ESSA Act is still being updated, states continually improve their teacher accountability policies. As educators with a significant impact on educational equity, they remain the object of exploration and improvement by federal and state governments.

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3.3. USA Policy Improves Accountability Based on Recommendations and Perceptions about Educational Equity

Through the ESSA Act, teacher accountability systems are required to accomplish instructional metrics. The completion process of these indicators is related to the dual motivation of teachers. States must incorporate academic metrics (state testing ability, English language proficiency, etc.) into their accountability systems in the ESSA Act. The federal government requires states to add at least one very different type of additional metric (student engagement, educator engagement, advanced course attainment and completion, postsecondary preparation, etc.). These indicators are fundamentally closely related to the teaching work of teachers. The process and results of teachers completing these indicators in the next school year is also a process of continuous demand satisfaction, so policies and implementation measures do not implement policy measures for teachers' needs. Both needs have important implications for the training and work of teachers at the same time. Teachers need recognition, and verbal and behavioral praise needs can be met (but only if the individual's low needs have been met). Herzberg believes that the lack of hygiene factors can lead to employee dissatisfaction with the workplace. These hygiene factors must be present to eliminate dissatisfaction with the work environment, but their presence does not fully ensure satisfaction. But some of the most important ways to reduce dissatisfaction are paying fair wages, keeping employees safe on the job, and creating a positive culture in the workplace. This requires the federal and state to improve teachers' compensation systems.

Teachers significantly influence educational equity; historically, student achievement is related to student and teacher effort [25]. Researchers, educators, and policymakers acknowledge teachers' critical role in students' academic (and non-academic) achievement. This has led governments, states, and local territories worldwide to adopt a range of policy measures around teacher licensure, salaries, and assessments to improve the quality of the teaching workforce. Part of this effort is a call from policymakers and educators for greater accountability and transparency in the work of teacher readiness programs [26]. Research shows that teachers are one of the most important factors in student growth and achievement. A year with an ineffective teacher can cost a student a year and a half of achievement.

On the other hand, having an effective teacher for five years in a row can almost close the achievement gap [18]. The importance of teachers can be seen from previous research findings, which are increasingly expected in the United States and elsewhere to develop a competitive workforce, meet rising societal expectations, and help achieve more significant social equity. Then through the promulgation of the essential ESSA Act, promoting teachers' work motivation is the goal that needs to be continuously explored. The two-factor theory can provide an excellent motivational demand guide for promoting teachers' work motivation [27]. The ongoing stream of updates and revisions to the ESSA Act could show that while teacher accountability reforms could increase costs associated with teaching, plans to assess the pay-for-performance scale could attract more capable teachers into the profession.

In theory, performance pay could increase the relative competency return in the teaching sector enough to offset the increased costs associated with accountability reforms, thereby improving the quality of future teachers [28]. Policy bill changes from NCLB to ESSA expand opportunities for states to experiment with policies to improve their local teaching workforce. Under the ESSA Act, professional development and career development opportunities and differential or performance-based compensation are specifically provided to teachers to recruit and retain teachers. At the same time, ESSA expanded the permissible use of funds for professional development to include teachers in each subject area, as well as principals, librarians, and paraprofessionals. This is the hygiene factor in the two-factor theory, which can improve employee satisfaction through performance pay. Then,

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to improve the motivational aspects of employees, some goals need to help teachers realize their value in policy and management. And states that address shortages by building more robust careers are adopting forgivable loans and service scholarships to support vital preparation, high retention pathways such as teacher internships, high-quality mentoring, and a collegiate practice environment [29]. Integrate educator competencies that support social, emotional, and cognitive development into licensing and certification requirements for teachers, administrators, and counselors, and provide funding to support these reforms [30]. ESSA also provides Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to states to create partnerships between higher education institutions and high-need school districts. Finally, ESSA provides Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grants to national nonprofits and communities to recruit, select, prepare, and provide teacher professional development [31]. Through the above analysis based on the dual theory, we can see that analyzing teachers' work under the teacher accountability system can improve teachers' work motivation to promote educational equity.

4. Discussion & Conclusion

This paper studies teacher accountability based on the two-factor theory for the relatively vacant parts of the current ESSA Act (no clear documentation of incentives and penalties for teacher accountability, whether there are policies and implementation plans to motivate teachers based on the achievement of accountability indicators) Under the motivation of teachers can achieve the effect of improving educational equity. In the article, the two-factor theory proposed by Herzberg is analyzed to explore the influence of teachers on the fairness of educational accountability. Explore the analysis and elaboration of various educational issues that have arisen after introducing different laws during the iteration of the U.S. Education Act update (from ESEA to today's ESSA Act, changes in federal and state education administrative powers). Discusses how the content of a bill based on ESSA policy can promote educational equity by stimulating dual motivation for teachers.

Given the discussion based on the two-factor theory, the relevant teacher responsibility system can improve educational equity through specific reforms based on the content of the two-factor idea. The satisfaction of motivational factors related to teachers' work was explored to explore whether they promote and increase teachers' job satisfaction. Being able to work as teachers' motivators are often intrinsic: they are part of the job content and are primarily managed by staff or (in this case) students [8]. The presence of motivational factors can produce job satisfaction, but the absence of motivational factors can lead to low job satisfaction. As the relevant state education administrative department and the federal government, we can investigate the content of teachers' work to understand whether teachers have a sense of accomplishment in their work, whether they recognize teachers' work, whether there are problems in the work process, and future planning. At the same time, in teacher-based assessment policies, we can see that objective measures of student growth, observational measures, and the use of assessment systems to drive targeted support are all associated with motivational factors that motivate teachers. The hygiene factor requires policy and administrators to ensure teachers' essential work and environment as well as living conditions and wages. The two-factor theory provides a perfect teacher responsibility system and realizes educational equity by motivating teachers. Policymakers and state administrators can investigate and adjust teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic needs according to the two-factor theory to improve relevant policies and implementation regulations.

Although promoting teachers' work motivation based on the two-factor theory can achieve educational equity, this article is only a theoretical analysis and lacks practical evidence. At the same time, the two-factor factor also has certain defects because the task goals of teaching and teachers' work are carried out in the scope of schools, school districts, states, and the federal government, and it is more necessary to connect the satisfaction of personal needs and organizational goals for teachers'

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motivation. Achieving educational equity by improving teachers is a long-term research task requiring all parties' efforts. I hope to do some relevant empirical data surveys on teachers' work motivation in the future.

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