



Reflections on the Current State of Digitalisation in Rural China

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Literature Reflections

The majority of the literature on rural digitalisation is currently biased towards a focus on the institutional dimension of the state, which raises a major point of contention: the emphasis on China's institutional superiority, the neglect of the potential risks of the system itself, the failure to effectively analyse the development situation in the context of the Chinese context, and the obvious distance from the development of a complete and coherent unit of analysis [1]. More importantly, the simple focus on the institutional effects of rural digitalisation has led scholars to neglect to analyse the local case of rural digitalisation from economic, technological, and broader perspectives, and the ad hoc unit of analysis has led to a lack of open channels of empathy between the vivid stories of policy and practice of rural digitalisation in China [2].

Keywords: Rural Digitalisation; Digital Policy; Digital Development

Development Reflections

The level of development of digitalisation in rural China is uneven.

Firstly, in terms of geographical location, the level of rural digitalisation in eastern China is significantly higher than that in western China, which is closely related to social productivity, policy support and the level of economic development. Secondly, in terms of population size, the level of rural digitalisation is significantly higher in China's populated areas than in China's sparsely populated areas, which is closely related to the effectiveness of digital value promotion and the level of infrastructure construction.

The development of digitalisation in China's rural areas is not synergistic.

On the one hand, there is a clear disconnect between the development of digital policy in rural China and the digital access of rural residents. This is due to the lack of a bottom-up feedback mechanism in the formulation of existing policies, which makes it difficult for policy makers to grasp the effectiveness of digital

coverage, the pain points of rural residents, their real needs and the room for improvement. On the other hand, the digital development of China's rural areas has been less than ideal for the use of factors. This is reflected in the large discrepancy between technological capital input and technological development output, and the large discrepancy between the demand for rural digitalisation process and the effect of human capital accumulation of rural residents.

Issues related to digitalisation in rural China require in depth consideration.

First, whether the digitalisation model in rural China should be adapted to local conditions or unified across the board. The answer to this question reflects the tendency to extend the path of rural digitisation with Chinese characteristics. Secondly, whether the subject of rural digitalisation in China is the long-term rural residents or the outsiders. The answer to this question determines the focus of the development of rural digitalisation, that is the focus should be on skills training for rural residents or on bringing in highly qualified personnel.

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