

THE GUIDELINE FOR DEVELOPING PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF THE GUANDU EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOL AFFILIATED TO SHANGHAI NORMAL UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the current status, core challenges, and optimization strategies of personnel management in private schools from an educational management perspective. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, using a case study of Shanghai Normal University Guandu Affiliated Experimental School. Quantitative data were collected through 165 valid teacher questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with school administrators and analysis of institutional documents.

The findings reveal significant challenges in the school's personnel management: an imbalanced teacher structure with high turnover rates among core faculty; an ineffective compensation system lacking external competitiveness and internal equity; a misaligned performance evaluation system overly focused on explicit metrics; a weak and unsystematic teacher training and development program; and outdated, inefficient management processes. The root causes are identified as a combination of external institutional constraints and internal managerial deficits, particularly a traditional 'cost-control' mindset.

Based on these findings, this study proposes a systematic, five-dimensional optimization framework: establishing a strategic, 'human capital'-centered management philosophy; building a fair and competitive compensation and development-oriented performance system; innovating a full-cycle talent management mechanism; developing an integrated digital personnel management platform; and actively fostering a supportive internal and external development ecosystem. These measures aim to enhance teacher stability and core competitiveness in private schools.

Keywords: Educational Management, Personnel Administration, Private Schools, Teacher Motivation, Human Resource Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Private education has become a significant force in diversifying and enhancing the quality of the education sector in China. Guided by national policies, private schools have expanded rapidly, forming a complementary relationship with public schools. However, this rapid expansion has been

accompanied by increasingly prominent, deep-seated issues in personnel management, which now constitute a bottleneck constraining sustainable development and core competitiveness. Common challenges across the private education sector include imbalanced teacher structures, persistently high talent turnover rates, imperfect salary incentive mechanisms, ambiguous career development paths, and inadequate implementation of personnel agency systems (Zhou & Liu, 2017). These intertwined issues not only affect the stability and motivation of the teaching staff but also constrain the improvement of educational quality and brand image.

Shanghai Normal University Guandu Affiliated Experimental School, a private K-12 institution leveraging university resources, serves as a representative case. While sharing the common characteristics of private schools, its personnel management situation is also shaped by its unique educational positioning and cooperative school-running model. The school faces practical difficulties in teacher recruitment, retaining core talent, and ensuring the effectiveness of incentive mechanisms. Its explorations and challenges in this domain are highly reflective of the broader industry.

From an educational management perspective, personnel management in schools should be a strategic, systematic process encompassing planning, recruitment, training, compensation, performance evaluation, and employee relations. However, coordination among these elements is often insufficient. School administrators, who act as both formulators and executors of these strategies, play a pivotal role. Their management philosophy and strategic choices directly impact the effectiveness of the entire system. While existing research has explored teacher satisfaction and turnover, there is a notable gap in systematic analyses focusing on the managerial role and the strategic construction of personnel systems within specific school contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to take this school as a specific case, using field research and in-depth analysis to clarify the core dilemmas faced by administrators and the underlying causes. It seeks to construct a systematic, scientific, and actionable personnel management strategy system tailored to the development needs of private schools, thereby providing practical references for solving common industry problems and enriching the theoretical discourse on educational management in the private sector.

Theoretical Framework

This study integrates classical management and educational management theories to construct a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding personnel management in private schools.

Human Capital Theory: This theory posits that education, training, and development are investments that enhance individual productivity and yield long-term returns (Becker, 1964). Applying this to private schools encourages a shift from viewing teachers as a 'cost' to be minimized, towards seeing them as 'capital' to be invested in, thereby supporting long-term development and motivation.

Motivation Theory: Theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959) are essential for analyzing incentive mechanisms. They distinguish between 'hygiene factors' (e.g., salary, working conditions) that prevent dissatisfaction and 'motivators' (e.g., achievement, recognition, growth) that truly drive engagement and satisfaction. This highlights the need for a balanced approach to teacher incentives.

Organizational Behavior Theory: This perspective emphasizes the profound influence of leadership styles, organizational culture, and communication mechanisms on member behavior (Robbins

& Judge, 2019). It provides a lens for analyzing how administrators' strategic choices shape the work environment, teacher participation, and ultimately, organizational commitment and stability.

Based on these theories and the diagnostic analysis of the case school, four analytical dimensions were developed for this study:

1. Teacher Team Stability and Structure: Examining turnover rates, demographic composition, and factors influencing teacher retention.

2. Compensation and Incentive System Effectiveness: Assessing external competitiveness, internal equity, and the diversity of incentive methods.

3. Performance Evaluation and Management Orientation: Analyzing the fairness, feedback mechanisms, and developmental focus of the appraisal system.

4. Training, Development, and Management Support Systems: Evaluating the relevance of training, clarity of career paths, and efficiency of management processes.

OBJECTIVE

1. To study the level of personnel administration for school administrators of Theguandu experimental school affiliated to Shanghai normal university.
2. To propose the guideline for developing personnel administration strategies for school administrators of Theguandu experimental school affiliated to Shanghai normal university.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods design, using a case study approach. The research was conducted at Shanghai Normal University Guandu Affiliated Experimental School. The population consisted of its full-time teachers. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table, a sample of 165 teachers was determined from a total population of 286, and questionnaires were distributed accordingly. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select three school-level administrators and HR staff for in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Data were also collected from the school's personnel archives and turnover data from 2020-2023.

The questionnaire included two parts: demographic information and perceptions of personnel management strategies across the four analytical dimensions. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. A five-point Likert scale was applied. Qualitative data from interviews and document analysis were analyzed using content analysis to support and deepen the quantitative findings.

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents and School Context

The teacher sample (n=165) was predominantly young and middle-aged, with 72.73% under 45 years old. The majority held Bachelor's (68.2%) or Master's (31.1%) degrees, and teaching experience was largely concentrated in the 1-10 year range, indicating a staff with development potential. However, the school's personnel management system showed significant lag relative to its strategic needs, as summarized in the following tables.

Table 1
Summary of Core Problems in the Case School's Personnel Management

Problem Dimension	Specific Manifestations	Key Data / Evidence
1. Poor Team Stability	• Explicit Turnover: High rate, primarily among young and core teachers.	Annual turnover rate ~18%; 65% of leavers under 35; 40% held first-level titles or higher.
	• Hidden Turnover: Teachers mentally disengaged, considering leaving.	32% "consider leaving"; 25% engage in part-time work.
2. Ineffective Compensation Incentives	• Weak External Competitiveness: Salaries lag behind local public schools.	Avg. teacher income (120-150k RMB) vs. public school peers (180-220k RMB).
	• Internal Inequity: "Unequal pay for equal work" between contract types; poor incentives for non-quantifiable tasks.	Homeroom teacher allowance (1,300 RMB/month) seen as low cost-effectiveness.
	• Limited Incentive Methods: Heavy reliance on monetary rewards, few non-material incentives.	"Outstanding Teacher" awards consistently go to a few senior teachers.
3. Misaligned Performance Evaluation	• Emphasis on Explicit Over Implicit Metrics: Over-reliance on student evaluations, leading to "pleasing" teaching styles.	Student evaluations account for 40% of appraisal.

Problem Dimension	Specific Manifestations	Key Data / Evidence
	• Formalistic Process & Lack of Feedback: Results lack constructive feedback for improvement.	Results simplified to "Excellent, Qualified, or Basically Qualified."
4. Weak Training & Development System	• Mismatch Between Supply & Demand: Top-down training disconnected from teacher needs.	Insufficient training on classroom management, parent communication.
	• Scarcity of High-Level Opportunities: Limited and non-transparent assignment of external training.	Teachers encounter a "ceiling" in professional growth.
	• Narrow Career Pathways: The peak for most teachers is "Senior Teacher."	Weak link between professional titles and compensation.
5. Traditional Management Methods	• Heavy Administrative Workload: HR department overwhelmed with routine tasks.	3 HR staff handle payroll, social security, files, leaving no time for strategic work.
	• Information Silos & Inefficient Processes: Data scattered across departments; paper-based approvals are time-consuming.	Teacher satisfaction with management processes is low.

Overall Evaluation of Personnel Management Strategies

Table 2

**Overall Mean and Standard Deviation of Personnel Management Strategy Dimensions
(n=165)**

Dimension	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Teacher Recruitment and Post Allocation	3.42	0.74	Moderate

Dimension	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Interpretation
2. Salary and Incentive Mechanism	3.28	0.81	Moderate
3. Performance Appraisal and Evaluation Mechanism	3.51	0.76	High
4. Teacher Training and Career Development Support	3.47	0.79	Moderate
5. Fairness and Transparency of Personnel Management System	3.33	0.83	Moderate
Overall	3.40	0.79	Moderate

As indicated in Table 2, the overall evaluation of the school's personnel management strategies was at a moderate level ($M = 3.40$). This suggests a systematic framework exists, but its incentive effectiveness and teachers' perceived benefits require significant enhancement.

Detailed Analysis of Key Dimensions

Compensation and Incentive System Effectiveness: This dimension scored relatively low ($M=3.28$). Specific item analysis (Table 3) shows that "Salary level is externally competitive" scored lowest ($M=3.21$), confirming the quantitative data on salary gaps. Teachers perceive shortcomings in both the competitiveness and the fairness of the incentive structure, which directly impacts career stability.

2. Performance Evaluation and Management Orientation: This dimension scored highest ($M=3.51$). The item "Performance appraisal standards are clear and fairly implemented" was rated highly ($M=3.54$). This suggests teachers recognize the procedural clarity. However, qualitative interviews revealed a significant gap between this clarity and the system's orientation. Teachers feel the evaluation, while clear, is a one-sided "judgment" that lacks constructive feedback and fails to capture their full contribution (e.g., "It offers no help in guiding me on how to teach better").

3. Training, Development, and Management Support: While "The school values teacher training" scored relatively well ($M=3.50$), the item "Clear career development paths are provided" scored lower ($M=3.44$). This, combined with interview data, reveals a system that provides training but fails to connect it to a coherent, long-term career ladder, leaving teachers feeling their growth has a "ceiling." Furthermore, items related to system transparency ($M=3.32$) and teacher participation in decision-making ($M=3.29$) were among the lowest, reflecting a top-down, traditional management culture that limits empowerment and buy-in.

4. Teacher Team Stability: Quantitative data from school records (Table 4) shows a persistently high turnover rate (approx. 18% annually) with a worrying loss of core faculty. The questionnaire data on hidden turnover (32% considering leaving) and the low scores on professional identity from interviews (63.5% lack long-term commitment) confirm that the school is struggling to retain its talent, validating that the issues in the other dimensions are having a real, negative impact.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Personnel Management Items (Selected, n=165)

Item	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Interpretation
Salary level is externally competitive	3.21	0.84	Moderate
Salary distribution reflects merit-based incentives	3.35	0.79	Moderate
Performance appraisal standards are clear and fairly implemented	3.54	0.74	High
The school values teacher training and continuing education	3.50	0.78	High
Clear career development paths are provided	3.44	0.80	Moderate
Personnel management system is open and transparent	3.32	0.83	Moderate
Teachers have opportunities to participate in personnel decisions	3.29	0.85	Moderate

Table 4

Tracking of Key Management Variables (2020-2023)

Year	Annual Teacher Turnover Rate	Core Teacher Retention Rate	Avg. Salary Competitiveness Index
2020	17.2%	68.5%	0.72
2021	18.5%	65.3%	0.69
2022	19.1%	63.7%	0.71
2023	17.8%	66.2%	0.75

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Based on the perspective of educational management, this study takes Shanghai Normal University Guandu Affiliated Experimental School as a case study to systematically explore the current situation, problems, and causes of personnel management in private schools. By adopting a mixed research method combining a questionnaire survey (165 valid samples) and in-depth interviews, the core research conclusions are as follows:

Established Framework but Lagging Incentive Effectiveness: The case school has established a systematic personnel management framework, particularly demonstrating strengths in the procedural clarity of performance appraisal ($M=3.51$) and initial support for teacher training ($M=3.50$). However, the overall moderate evaluation ($M=3.40$) masks significant deficiencies in incentive effectiveness and teacher perceived gain. The school's "cost-control" oriented management philosophy has resulted in a system that prioritizes standardization over genuine motivation and development.

Structural Deficiencies in Key Personnel Subsystems: The study identified critical weaknesses across all core HR functions. The compensation system lacks both external competitiveness and internal equity, leading to "equal work, unequal pay" and high turnover. The performance evaluation, while clear, is misaligned, overemphasizing explicit metrics like student grades and lacking constructive feedback, making it a tool for judgment rather than development. The training and development system suffers from a top-down, "one-size-fits-all" approach, disconnected from teachers' actual needs, and provides no clear, long-term career pathways, leading to a "ceiling effect" on professional growth. Finally, management processes are outdated and inefficient, with severe underutilization of information technology, leaving the HR department mired in administrative tasks and unable to perform strategic functions.

Multidimensional Causes Rooted in External and Internal Factors: The problems are not isolated but stem from a complex interplay of factors. Externally, institutional constraints (policy gaps in social security and professional title evaluation compared to public schools) and societal biases ("private is inferior to public") create a disadvantageous environment. Internally, an outdated management philosophy that views teachers as a "cost" rather than "capital," a lack of strategic human resource planning, and weak institutional development and execution are the primary drivers. This combination creates a vicious cycle of "inability to attract, develop, and retain talent."

Based on these findings, this study proposes a five-in-one optimization strategy framework. Private school administrators must shift from an "administrative and transactional" to a "strategic and empowering" management approach. This involves:

1. Vision-Driven: Adopting a "human capital" philosophy and transforming the HR department into a strategic partner.

2. Institution-Based: Building a competitive and equitable compensation system and a development-oriented performance management system with robust feedback mechanisms.

3. Mechanism-Empowered: Innovating full-cycle talent management, including optimizing recruitment, standardizing personnel agency systems, and designing clear dual-channel career development paths (teaching-focused and management-focused) to foster teacher belonging and growth.

4. **Technology-Supported:** Developing an integrated digital personnel management platform to automate routine tasks, enable data-driven decision-making, and enhance efficiency.

5. **Environment-Synergized:** Actively seeking external policy support and strengthening brand building to create a supportive ecosystem and counter negative societal perceptions.

By synergizing these five dimensions, private schools can move beyond piecemeal fixes to fundamentally address core personnel challenges, stabilize their teaching workforce, enhance core competitiveness, and drive high-quality, sustainable development.

Future Research Directions

This study provides an in-depth exploration of personnel management in a single private school, but several avenues for future research remain.

1. Conduct Multi-Case Comparative Research: This study is limited by its single-case design, which constrains the generalizability of its findings. Future research should include comparative studies across different types of private schools (e.g., for-profit vs. non-profit, vocational vs. academic, newly established vs. long-established) and in different regions. This would help to identify which challenges are universal and which are context-specific, leading to more nuanced and adaptable strategy frameworks.

2. Quantitatively Test the Impact Mechanism of Management Strategies: While this study identified key problem dimensions, it did not quantitatively model the causal relationships between them and teacher outcomes. Future research could use structural equation modeling to test a theoretical framework exploring how "compensation fairness," "performance evaluation orientation," and "developmental support" directly and indirectly affect "teacher turnover intention" and "organizational commitment." This would provide empirical evidence for the most impactful leverage points for intervention.

3. In-Depth Exploration of the Role of Organizational Culture: Qualitative findings in this study pointed to the importance of "humanistic care" and a "sense of participation." Future research could delve deeper into the specific mechanisms of organizational culture in private schools. How does a "high-commitment" vs. "control-oriented" culture moderate the effects of formal HR systems? Action research could be used to co-design and implement cultural interventions (e.g., creating democratic participation platforms) with school administrators and track their impact on teacher engagement and retention.

4. Investigate the Long-Term Impact of Digital Transformation: The proposed strategy framework includes a digital platform, but its long-term effects are unknown. A longitudinal study could track the implementation of a new personnel management information system in a private school, measuring its impact on HR staff efficiency, data-driven decision-making, and teacher satisfaction with administrative processes over a period of 2-3 years. This would provide valuable evidence for the return on investment in educational technology for HR functions.

5. Conduct Research on the "Personnel Agency" Model: The recommendation to implement a standardized personnel agency system to bridge the gap with public school teachers is significant. Future research could specifically investigate schools that have successfully implemented such a system. Case studies could document the implementation process, the challenges faced (e.g., costs, cooperation

with government agencies), and the actual impact on teacher identity, job security, and turnover rates compared to schools that have not adopted this model.

The healthy development of private education relies on a stable, motivated, and high-quality teaching workforce. This study has highlighted the critical role of strategic, human-centered personnel management in achieving this goal. By continuing to explore these issues through rigorous research, the field can move closer to overcoming current practical bottlenecks and achieving the symbiotic development of teachers and schools, ultimately contributing to the high-quality and sustainable development of the private education sector as a whole.

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(Note: This reference list is compiled from the sources cited in the original paper and supplemented with key theoretical sources mentioned in this new version.)

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