

# Innovative Research on Administrative Management Mode of Private Colleges and Universities in the New Era

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## Abstract

In the new era, private colleges and universities, as a vital supplement to the higher education system, bear the dual mission of talent education and social service. With the upsurge of policy support, the diversification of education demand and the innovation of information technology, private colleges and universities have experienced development opportunities, while the lagging and ineffective of administrative management has also become more and more visible. The traditional management model is hierarchical-centric, which has the disadvantages of fragmented functions and rigidity of service, making it difficult to respond to the agility requirements of university governance in the digital age. Private colleges and universities have both market attributes and educational public good, and the innovation of Administrative management is not only the key to improve the effectiveness of internal operation, but also the necessary choice to build the core competitiveness. It is of significance to integrate the modern management theory and the logic of educational governance, and to explore the management mode conformed with the characteristics of private universities is not only of practical significance to break the constraints of resources, but also to achieve sustainable development.

## Keywords

new era, private colleges and universities, administrative management, work mode innovation

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## 1. Introduction

Private colleges and universities have an irreplaceable position in the process of popularizing higher education. The effectiveness of their administrative management has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and the vitality of running schools. At present, the majority of private colleges and universities have still adopted the traditional administrative structure, and the management effectiveness is separated from the actual situation of teachers and students because of the barriers between the departments, and the blocked information flow. Modern management theory emphasizes flattening and humanizing; and educational governance theory emphasizes the synergy of multiple subjects. These theories provide a theoretical basis for solving the management predicament of private colleges and universities. In practice, the lack of service awareness, the lag of technology applications, and other pain points restrict the transformation process of private colleges and universities. From the background of the new era, it is necessary to construct a systematic innovation path from the dimensions of concept, system, method and talent in order to promote administrative management from “transaction processing” to “value creation,” and to provide endogenous power for the high-quality development of private colleges and universities (Peters, 2013).

## **2. Theoretical Basis of Administrative Work Mode Innovation in Private Colleges and Universities in the New Era**

### **2.1 Modern Management Theory**

Modern management theory offers meaningful theoretical support for changing the administrative management mode of private universities. Flat organizational theory calls for the reduction of management levels and the shortening of the length of the decision-making chain, showing a strong compatibility with the characteristics of flexibility and mobility of private colleges and universities, as well as a breakthrough for the inefficiencies incurred by the traditional hierarchy, so that resource allocation can be closer to the front lines of teaching and research. Human-centered management theory emphasizes the realization of individual values drives the development of organizations, revealing a shift in administrators' instrumental rationality thinking, whether it is the integration of teachers' career growth path planning or students' personalized developmental support, into the system design and build a more warm service system. Performance management theory emphasizes goal orientation and results orientation, providing direction for private universities to set up a quantitative assessment system, especially with limited resources, scientific key performance indicators can effectively improve the input-output ratio of administrative work. Process reengineering theory advocates breaking down functional barriers and realizing cross-departmental business synergy through digital transformation, which is of practical significance in solving the problem of information silos commonly found in private universities. These theories do not exist in isolation, but are intertwined to form an organic framework, laying a solid foundation for private colleges and universities to reconstruct their management paradigm in the new era, the core of which lies in the in-depth integration of entrepreneurial operational thinking with the characteristics of the educational organization, and adhering to the original spirit of educating people in the pursuit of efficiency at the same time (Zhang et al., 2017).

### **2.2 Educational Management Theory**

Education governance theory inserts educational attributes and value orientation into the administrative innovation of private colleges and university. Education governance theory advocates multi-party collaborative participation, breaking the monopoly of administrative power, emphasizing teachers, students, and social forces voices in decision-making, and provides a basis for private colleges and universities to build an open and inclusive governing ecology. Stakeholder theory reveals that private colleges and universities need to balance the demands of investors, faculty, staff, students, and society and proposes to shift the discretionary and administrative decision implementation from single one-dimensional execution to strategic coordination of resources, drawing from educational equity in resource allocation. The theory of school-based management advocates managing practices developed by the characteristics of the school to address the campus needs of private colleges and universities for differentiated developed, but calls to consider how to transform the school running concepts in an operational system design, for example, the establishment of a dynamic adjustment mechanism in professional settings and faculty establishing. Academic freedom theory reminds the administration to create a relaxed environment for teaching and research, avoiding the erosion of the academic ecology by excessive administrative intervention, which echoes the inherent needs of private colleges and universities to enhance their core competitiveness. Educational management theory system is not a static dogma, but emphasizes the balance between normative and flexibility, and its core value is to guide the administrative management of private colleges and universities to return to the origin of education - not only to follow the laws of the market to improve operational efficiency, but also to adhere to the mission of cultivating moral character and nurturing high-quality socially responsible talents in the system innovation. Talents.

## **3. Problems of the Existing Administrative Management Mode**

### **3.1 Low Management Efficiency**

The administrative inefficiency of private colleges and universities is rooted in the fundamental contradiction between existing hierarchical structures and the market needs of running schools. Vertical redundancy results in a cumbersome approval process, horizontal interdepartmental cross functions lead to

duplication of work, most matters have to be signed off and approved at multiple levels to move forward, and the procurement of teaching equipment, reimbursement of scientific research funding and many other routine administrative work typically takes several weeks to complete just due to the process blocking the process. Information transfer relies on paper documents and manual dockings, and there are no data sharing mechanism that causes lagging decision-making, for example, files of teachers' title evaluation and recruitment need to circulate among personnel, academic affairs and research departments multiple times to be checked. Some private colleges and universities blindly transplanted the management mode of public institutions, ignoring their own small scale, the characteristics of the mechanism of living, in the conditions of limited resources, exacerbated the consumption of manpower and time costs. This inefficient operation state not only weakens the trust of teachers and students in administrative services, but also makes the administrative management deviate from the core function of serving teaching and research, and restricts the agility of private colleges and universities in responding to the changes in the education market.

### **3.2 Weak Service Consciousness**

The existence of a weak administrative service awareness at private colleges and universities demonstrates the disconnect between management ideals and the nature of education. Some administrative staff hold onto the “governance” mindset, and the service turns into the granting or denial of benefits. When teachers and students try to engage a separate administrative office for business, complexity happens - benefits are delayed or lacking confirmation of receipt, for example, students have to wait for some departments to sign and agree to take student records with them. In institutional assessment, completing affairs is weighted ahead of authorizing who work in service roles. This leads administrative staff to focus less on meeting service needs, and bureaucratically generating extra costs in cash reimbursements for research, or inadequate in-step channels to make which meeting with a departments psychology counseling option. Private colleges' attracting students will favor service quality, though the administrative structure won't modernize with a service format yet rather observing with levels of inertia, and not prioritizing both staff and students in a services well (Qing, 2015). This role perception bias not only exacerbates the separation between administration and teaching and research, but also triggers teachers' burnout and students' weakened sense of belonging, weakening the differentiated competitive advantages of private colleges and universities in the education market.

### **3.3 Difficulty in Coordination Between Departments**

Problems in coordination among academic departments in private colleges and universities arise from the misalignment of the design of the organizational structure and operational needs. A detailed division of labor creates departmental isolation where departments have separate teaching, academic, and logistical systems, and inter-department coordination often rests with the level of the school to coordinate. For instance, during new student orientation, teaching and dormitory assignment arrangements may not be synchronized, and this can lead to confusion on-site. Information isolation is evident; data from the financial system and the scientific research management platform do not interoperate and teachers must manually enter project funding into multiple systems. The design of processes avoids interface-touching, yet approval of action such as a suspension or resumption of studies involves multiple departments (Academic Affairs Office, Student Affairs Office, Financial Affairs Office, etc.) and not mechanisms to investigate and track activity. The advantage of expedited decision-making in private universities is often eroded by a do-nothing pattern on the part of departments, the process to procure equipment for teaching delays the activity because defining the responsibility of the asset management department along with utilization unit is not clear. This collaborative dilemma exposes the lack of a collaborative culture in the administrative system, and in the context of increased competition for students, it may lead to the risk of pedagogical accidents, which affects the social reputation of the school and its ability to develop sustainably.

### **3.4 Lack Of Innovative Vitality**

The administrative stagnation observed in the private institutions of higher education is a product of both path dependency and organizational inertia. Established workflows and evaluation frameworks inhibit the ability of homeowners and their creative staff to innovate from the ground up, while annual evaluation metrics focus, at best, on employee compliance with attendance, rather than improving organizational management, create a situation in which administrators get comfortable implementing “mechanically” the same old

processes each year. Training for administrators centers on protocols and policies without studying recent scholarship or innovative cases around educational management. Moreover, even when digitally transforming how some institutions and administrators function, they are still utilizing traditional processes such as paper sign-in sheets and hand-written summaries, if systems are established at all. Some private institutions over-rely on the management model that was established during the founding of the colleges and universities, and therefore respond slowly to changes within the external environment, exemplified by not creating an online administrative service system in a timely manner during the pandemic, which influenced the efficacy of distance learning support. Organizational culture is risk-averse, and cross-departmental proposals are subject to multiple approvals, making innovative initiatives such as the introduction of intelligent class scheduling systems often shelved due to long decision-making cycles. This innovation blockage makes it difficult for the administration to adapt to the changes in the structure of the student population and the upgrading of industrial demand, and gradually loses its institutional and institutional advantages in the competitive landscape of higher education (Wissema, 2009).

#### **4. Strategies for the Innovation of Administrative Management Mode of Private Colleges and Universities in the New Era**

##### **4.1 Molding Diversified Modern Management Thinking**

The breakthrough of administration reflection at private colleges and universities refers to the capability to transcend the inertia of the traditional hierarchical system; and to establish a cognitive framework that integrates laws of education, market logic and the characteristics of the organization. Enterprise-oriented thinking may reshape the decision-making process; situate the PDCA quality loop into the approval process of professional settings; and allow market-research data to drive the curriculum-system iteration. Agile management concepts are incorporated to suit the flexibility of the private system and utilize the minimum viable product model in the construction of training bases, thus shortening the cycle from demand identification to resource input. In light of the diverse student and faculty population, service-design thinking informs the reconstruction of office-processes, and an intelligent guidance system is developed to connect psychological counseling-appointment status and academic early-warning data to develop an effective intervention plan. Drawing on educational governance theory, a multi-body participation mechanism was constructed to engage industry mentors in revising talent training programs, which allow corporate standards to inform teaching management in real-time. The non-profit organization's management philosophy needs to permeate the financial operations, establish a balance model between cost containment and educational investment, and carry out benefit assessments over the entire life cycle in equipment procurement. The pivotal innovation of thinking hinges on empowering the metacognitive capability of managers, while also conducting comparative seminars on the management cases of public and private colleges/universities to examine the logic of decision making induced by different situational differentiation. Reformation of the cognitive genes can unleash the potential advantages of private colleges/universities of "short decision-making chain and quick responses," provide enabling capacity to adapt to the digital transformation of education and deepen the integration of the industry and education, and upgrade the administrative management system from a transaction processor to a strategic propeller.

##### **4.2 Building an Efficient and Synergistic Governance Structure**

The construction of collaborative governance structure of private universities needs to break down departmental barriers through organizational process reengineering and reshape the flexible management system in line with the characteristics of private education. A matrix management model can be explored to create horizontal project teams on the basis of retaining vertical functional departments, for example, the Career Guidance Center and departmental professional teachers can form a joint working group on career development to adjust practical training programs in real time to meet the needs of employing enterprises. The core lies in the establishment of a data-driven decision-making hub, opening up the interfaces of academic affairs, finance, logistics and other systems, so that classroom utilization and energy consumption data can be synchronized to guide the allocation of space resources (Etzkowitz, 2003). The focus is on promoting the standardization of cross-departmental service scenarios, unifying the list of materials and processing timeframe for high-frequency operations such as approval of student suspension and resumption of studies, and

developing an online tracking system to eliminate information asymmetry. Private colleges and universities should take advantage of institutional flexibility by setting up a quality improvement office under the direct supervision of the school director, with special authorization to coordinate the linkage between teaching and administrative departments. This structural innovation needs to be accompanied by collaborative performance evaluation indicators that incorporate departmental support into the evaluation system for administrative staff promotion, and the introduction of blockchain technology to ensure that the process of cross-departmental collaboration can be traced. The synergistic transformation of the governance structure is essentially a reconstruction of the resource scheduling gene of private colleges and universities, which provides an organizational guarantee to cope with the regional industrial upgrading and changes in education policies.

### **4.3 Integrating Wisdom and Fine Management Tools**

Private colleges and universities need to reconfigure their management paradigm based on technological empowerment, and form a new type of governance ecology by deeply integrating the Internet of Things, big data and education management. Build a digital twin system for campus infrastructure, monitor the use of laboratory equipment and classroom energy consumption data in real time, and dynamically optimize space utilization in combination with course scheduling. Focus on developing a cross-departmental data center, integrating academic attendance, library borrowing and cafeteria consumption records, using clustering algorithms to identify the characteristics of economically disadvantaged student groups, and accurately delivering information on work-study positions and scholarships. Intelligent Q&A robots are deployed on the service side to handle high-frequency affairs such as changes in student registration and issuance of certificates, but manual service channels need to be retained to cope with complex consulting scenarios. To meet the requirements for the effectiveness of the use of funds in private colleges and universities, a budget execution early warning model can be established to automatically trigger financial reminders when research project expenditures deviate from the planned threshold. Teacher development management introduces competency profiling technology to generate personalized growth paths in relation to teaching evaluations, research achievements and training records. The promotion of intelligent management requires supporting digital literacy improvement programs, organizing administrative staff to participate in RPA process automation tools for hands-on training, and turning routine tasks such as Excel data cleansing into machine work. This technological integration is not a simple superimposition of smart devices, but rather a reshaping of the closed loop of data flow-driven management, so that private colleges and universities can still maintain the quality of fine services in the context of declining student population, and build a digital pedestal for the improvement of educational quality (Su, 2021).

### **4.4 Creating a Professional and Dynamic Management Team**

To enhance the professional vitality of the management team of private universities, it is necessary to break through the traditional personnel management style and build an empowerment system that is driven by ability growth and value creation in both directions. A tiered training mechanism covering the entire career cycle has been established, with education policy sand table deduction courses being developed for new administrators, cross-departmental rotation programs being implemented for middle managers, and education group benchmarking training being conducted for senior leaders. Focusing on the cultivation of a complex ability structure, the teaching managers are required to master basic data analysis skills, and the logistics supervisors are required to learn the standards of green campus construction, so as to form a management echelon that understands both the laws of education and the depth of professionalism. Innovative use of the project system team formation model, the enrollment, academic affairs, financial personnel to form a special working group, focusing on tackling complex tasks, such as the articulation of the policy of college entrance exams. Improve the non-monetary incentive system, set up management innovation contribution awards, and link the number of adopted process optimization solutions to the evaluation of titles. Attaching importance to the uniqueness of the management culture of private colleges and universities, organizing regular exchanges with enterprises and public colleges and universities, and absorbing the management wisdom of different organizational forms. In team building, it is necessary to guard against the limitations of vision brought about by over-specialization, establish a cross-departmental knowledge-sharing platform, and encourage teaching secretaries to understand the process of research fund management, and logistic personnel to know the psychological characteristics of students. This kind of team re-engineering project is essentially to activate the “reactivity” of human resources in private colleges and universities, so as to reserve management forces with both executive power and

creativity to cope with the internationalization of education and the deepening of the integration of industry and education (Chen, 2020).

## 5. Conclusion

The innovation of administrative management mode of private universities is a proposition given by the times, and also an important breakthrough to break through the bottleneck of development. By reshaping management thinking, optimizing organizational structure, integrating intelligent technology and stimulating the vitality of talents, private colleges and universities can build a management system that is both efficient and flexible, laying the foundation for the improvement of education quality and the precipitation of brand value. Future exploration needs to take into account both policy orientation and technological change, and balance standardization and flexibility in dynamic adjustment. Only by integrating innovation into the governance gene can private colleges and universities continue to release vitality in the higher education ecosystem and provide a solid guarantee for the cultivation of high-quality talents adapted to the needs of society. This process is not only the practice of self-innovation of private colleges and universities, but also a vivid interpretation of the diversified development pattern of Chinese higher education.

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## Conflicts of Interest

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