
APPROACHES TO IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF CHINESE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

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Improving the management of vocational education is the key to training highly qualified personnel

The article discloses main approaches to improving management efficiency in Chinese vocational educational institutions based on the experience results analysis of Jiangxi Vocational and Technical College of Industry and Trade and Jiangxi Industrial Polytechnic collage.

Introduction. At the present moment, China's vocational education is at a critical juncture of transitioning from scale expansion to quality enhancement and the improvement of management efficiency has become a core element in promoting high-quality development of vocational education. Effective vocational education management requires a systematic integration of theoretical frameworks with practical implementation strategies. Through a comprehensive comparative analysis of managerial models at Jiangxi Vocational and Technical College of Industry and Trade and Jiangxi Industrial Polytechnic College this article reveals critical insights into optimizing management efficiency while maintaining high-quality educational outcomes.

Main part. The work experience comparative analysis of Jiangxi Vocational and Technical College of Industry and Trade and Jiangxi Industrial Polytechnic College confirms that both institutions implement systematic and standardized management mechanisms, with organizational structures aligned to modern management principles. While both colleges adopt a three-tier "college-department-major" system, they demonstrate distinct development priorities. Jiangxi Industrial Polytechnic College emphasizes high-level institutional construction through specialized departments such as the "Double First-Class

Construction Office" and "Higher Vocational Education Research Institute." In contrast, Jiangxi Vocational and Technical College of Industry and Trade focuses more on internal capacity building through the "Faculty Development Center" and "Development Planning Department", underscoring the importance of human resource advancement and long-term planning.

Student management practices are also well-established in both colleges. Jiangxi Industrial Polytechnic College implements 24 clearly defined management policies, while Jiangxi Vocational and Technical College of Industry and Trade adopts innovative approaches such as a "star-level counselor" system. Those frameworks have proven to be effective: the former reports employment rates of 92% and maintains 156 enterprise partnerships, whereas the latter achieves an 89% employment rate and 142 partnerships, indicating positive associations between systematic governance and institutional performance.

However, several managerial challenges remain. The analysis identifies insufficient cross-departmental coordination, excessive administrative documentation, insufficient depth of enterprise participation in governance, reactive student support mechanisms, limited outcome-oriented evaluation models, and a mismatch between partnership quantity and funding support from industry.

The further systematic improvements may be connected, first of all, with the necessity to overcome the limited cross-departmental coordination identified in both institutions, by implementing a matrix management structure that combines vertical hierarchy with horizontal project teams. This approach will establish formal inter-departmental coordination committees with rotating leadership, regular cross-functional meetings, and shared performance indicators that encourage collaborative problem-solving [1]. The excessive administrative burden can be reduced through process reengineering, eliminating redundant approval layers, and implementing digital workflow systems that automate routine administrative tasks.

For inadequate industry integration, both institutions can establish dedicated Industry-Education Integration Centers with full-time staff responsible for managing enterprise partnerships, coordinating internship programs, and facilitating curriculum development with industry input. These centers should have direct reporting lines to institutional leadership and measurable targets for industry engagement depth.

Improving student management approaches is as follows. To shift from reactive to proactive student management, both institutions are supposed to implement predictive analytical systems that identify at-risk students early through academic performance patterns, attendance data, and behavioral indicators. This requires training counselors in data interpretation and early intervention techniques, moving beyond crisis response to prevention-focused support systems.

Student voice in management can be enhanced through formal student representation in academic committees, regular student satisfaction surveys with published response plans, and student-led quality improvement initiatives. Both institutions should establish Student Advisory Councils with real decision-making authority over student life policies and budget allocations.

For individualized support, institutions should develop student success pathway programs that recognize different learning styles, career goals, and personal circumstances. This includes flexible scheduling options, personalized academic support services, and differentiated assessment approaches that accommodate diverse student needs.

Another direction is strengthening Quality Assurance Systems. To expand beyond narrow performance metrics, both institutions should adopt comprehensive outcome assessment frameworks that include graduate career progression tracking, employer satisfaction with graduate competencies and long-term impact on regional economic development. This requires establishing alumni tracking systems and regular industry feedback mechanisms.

External validation can be strengthened through international accreditation processes, third-party quality audits, and benchmarking studies with leading vocational institutions globally. Feedback loops should be systematized through quarterly quality review cycles, action learning approaches that involve all stakeholders in continuous improvement, and transparent reporting of quality enhancement initiatives and their outcomes.

Optimizing resource allocation is very important too. To address uneven investment distribution, both institutions should conduct comprehensive resource audits and implement zero-based budgeting approaches that require justification for all expenditures based on educational impact. This includes shifting resources from administrative functions to direct student support services and teaching enhancement.

Enterprise financial participation can be increased through innovative partnership models such as equipment leasing arrangements, shared facility development, and co-investment in research and development projects that provide mutual benefits to institutions and industry partners.

Technology integration gaps should be closed through comprehensive digital transformation strategies that integrate all management processes into unified platforms, provide real-time data analytics for decision-making, and enable mobile access for students and faculty.

As mentioned in the preceding sections, management, as an important component of the educational process, possesses particular complexity and significance in the field of vocational education [2]. To better understand the characteristics and development directions of China's vocational education management, it is necessary to examine the advantages and disadvantages of existing management models through in-depth international comparison.

Compared to Germany and Finland the China's vocational education management embodies characteristics of unity and centralization. Although important progress has been made in school-enterprise cooperation and industry-education integration in recent years, enterprise investment proportion remains below 10%, and the role of industry organizations remains limited, mainly undertaking coordination and support functions [3].

However, resource allocation efficiency remains a key factor in educational management success. Financial investment is an important factor affecting vocational education management efficiency, and changes in investment structure directly reflect the government's emphasis on vocational education and development orientation. In recent years, the vocational education financial investment has shown a sustained growth trend.

Table 1 — China’s Education Investment Trends (2020–2024)

Year	Total Education Investment (Trillion Yuan)	Vocational Education Investment (Billion Yuan)	VE as % of Total	Annual Growth Rate (%)
2020	5.3	360	6.80%	–
2022	6.1	380	6.20%	5.60%
2023	6.45	400	6.20%	5.30%
2024	6.8	430	6.30%	7.50%

Source: Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance statistical bulletins and public data compilation

From the analysis of the data in Table 1, we can discover several important trends: first, China’s total education investment maintains steady growth, increasing from 5.30 trillion yuan in 2020 to an estimated 6.8 trillion yuan in 2024, with an average annual growth rate maintained at a reasonable range of 5%–7%, reflecting the country’s sustained emphasis on educational development. Based on this table, we can conclude that although vocational education investment as a proportion of total education investment fluctuates, it generally maintains a level of 6.2%–6.8%, which still has a considerable gap compared to Germany’s enterprise participation funding rate exceeding 70%.

It is particularly noteworthy that since 2023, vocational education investment growth rate has been significantly higher than total education investment growth rate, with vocational education investment growth rate reaching 7.5% in 2024 while total education investment growth rate was 5.4%, reflecting the country’s policy inclination toward vocational education and increased resource investment.

Enhancing vocational education management efficiency requires starting from the following key pathways.

Systematic innovation of management concepts. It is the fundamental prerequisite for improving management efficiency and addressing the conceptual limitations identified in both institutions. Modern vocational education management needs to achieve a transformation from traditional “control” to modern “management” [4]. This requires managers to establish open, systematic, and collaborative management concepts, focusing not only on internal operational efficiency but also on coordination and cooperation with external stakeholders.

Based on world experience, it is necessary to establish the management concept of “pluralistic management, clarifying the responsibilities of all

parties through institutional arrangements and forming a management pattern with clear rights and responsibilities and orderly coordination. It is desirable to establish a management structure with government coordination, industry guidance, enterprise participation, and school autonomy.

Flattened Restructuring of Management Structure. From the comparative analysis of the two institutions, we can see that flattened management has become an important trend, but the key lies in how to achieve effective flattening while addressing the cross-departmental coordination weaknesses identified. This requires redesigning organizational architecture and functional allocation according to the characteristics and requirements of vocational education, avoiding information transmission distortion and low decision-making efficiency caused by excessive management hierarchies.

Taking into account Singapore’s ITE model experience, we recommend constructing a “flattened + matrix-style” organizational structure. Vertically reduce management levels, achieving “college-department-major” three-level flattened management; horizontally establish cross-departmental project teams and professional committees, forming flexible matrix-style coordination mechanisms. Simultaneously, it is important to strengthen the supporting role of information systems, achieving technical support for flattened management through digital means.

Systematic Improvement of Management Systems. Systematic improvement of management systems is the institutional guarantee for improving management efficiency and addressing the policy proliferation issues identified in both institutions. System construction cannot remain at the simple addition of quantity but must focus on the consistency, coordination, and operability of systems [5].

It is recommended to establish a modern vocational college system with charters as the core,

Table 2 — SWOT Analysis of Management Practices at Two Jiangxi Vocational Institutions

Internal Factors	Strengths	Weaknesses
Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » JXIPVT comprehensive system framework » JXITVT management innovation prominence » Both schools established flattened management architecture » Student management systems systematic and standardized » School-enterprise cooperation networks preliminarily established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Limited cross-departmental coordination mechanisms » Over-bureaucratization through policy proliferation » Insufficient industry-education integration depth » Reactive rather than proactive student management » Limited external validation of quality systems
External Environment	Opportunities	Threats
Development Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » National policies strongly support vocational education development » Vocational education legal status significantly elevated » Digital technology provides tools for management innovation » Industrial upgrading increases demand for skilled talents » International cooperation and exchange opportunities increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Technological transformation poses higher requirements for management capabilities » Industrial structure adjustment brings uncertainty » Competition for quality teachers increasingly fierce » Large gap with developed countries' enterprise participation » Management standardization requirements continuously increasing

to improve internal management structures and clarify the boundaries and operational mechanisms of decision-making power, executive power, and supervisory power. Simultaneously, it is necessary to establish supervision and evaluation mechanisms for system implementation, ensuring system effectiveness and adaptability through regular assessment and dynamic adjustment.

Digital Upgrading of Management Methods. Vocational education management must fully utilize modern information technology means to establish data-driven management models. This includes not only the construction and improvement of management information systems but what is more important, the achievement of deep data mining and intelligent analysis to provide scientific basis for management decision-making.

It is recommended to establish an integrated smart campus management platform, achieving digital collaboration in teaching management, student management, personnel management, financial management, logistics management and other fields. Through big data analysis technology, establish early warning mechanisms and decision support systems to enhance the foresight and scientific nature of management.

Strategic Choice Framework Based on SWOT Analysis. To more systematically analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the two institutions'

management practices and formulate scientific development strategies that address identified shortcomings, we employ SWOT analysis methods to comprehensively evaluate their management status:

Based on SWOT analysis results, we can formulate corresponding strategic choices that directly address the shortcomings [6].

SO Strategy (Strengths-Opportunities): the full use of management innovation advantages, of opportunities of the national policy support and digital development and the acceleration of management processes' modernization, focusing on strengthening information management system construction, establishing data-driven decision-making mechanisms and improving the scientific level of management.

WO Strategy (Weaknesses-Opportunities): Addressing the weaknesses of limited cross-departmental coordination and insufficient industry-education integration depth, actively utilize international cooperation opportunities and policy support to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with advanced vocational education institutions in Germany, Singapore, and other countries, and deepen school-enterprise cooperation mechanism innovation.

ST Strategy (Strengths-Threats): relying on comprehensive system frameworks and

management innovation capabilities, actively respond to challenges of technological transformation and standardization requirements, maintaining competitive advantages through continuous management innovation while streamlining excessive policies. Focus on strengthening digital capability building in faculty teams and improving adaptability to industrial structure adjustment.

Conclusion. The improvement strategies developed in this article demonstrate that vocational education management in China is transitioning from administratively oriented approaches towards more capability and performance-driven management. Aligning institutional management with digital innovation, stakeholder participation and industry collaboration has become an essential condition for enhancing management efficiency and achieving high-quality development in vocational education.

Although international experiences provide valuable references, their applicability depends on a contextualized adaptation to China's management system and long-term policy goals. Management reform should therefore be regarded as a gradual and ongoing institutional evolution rather than a single policy change. The sustainable modernization of vocational education will rely on whether institutions can internalize these strategies into stable mechanisms and maintain continuous improvement in response to economic and social demands.

Literature

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