

**PARTICIPATION MANAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATORS IN
SHAOGUAN UNIVERSITY UNDER
GUANGDONG PROVINCE**

Liao Chao

Master of Education

Leadership in Educational Administration

Faculty of Education, Bangkokthonburi University

6733300015@bkkthon.ac.th

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were: (1) To study the level of participation management of administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province; and (2) to compare teacher's perceptions of participation management of administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province classified by educational level and work experience.

The research methodology was survey research. The population consisted of 1,464 teachers in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, the People's Republic of China. The sample consisted of 306 teachers. The sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan's Table and obtained by simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a five-point rating scale questionnaire. The statistics used for data analysis were frequency, percentage, mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test.

The research results showed that: (1) Participation management of administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, overall and in each aspect was at a high level; and (2) Comparison of participation management of administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, classified by educational level and work experience, showed no significant differences across all aspects for education; however, significant differences were found for work experience in terms of overall perception, trust, commitment, and autonomy.

Keywords: Participation Management, Administrators, Shaoguan University,
Guangdong Province

INTRODUCTION

In the era of global educational reform, traditional top-down management models in higher education are increasingly challenged by the need for democratization and inclusivity. Participation management, which emphasizes involving stakeholders in decision-making processes, has emerged as a vital strategy for improving organizational effectiveness and faculty commitment. In the context of Chinese higher education, specifically within provincial universities like Shaoguan University in Guangdong Province, the role of school administrators is shifting from sole decision-makers to facilitators of collaborative governance.

This study conceptualizes participation management through four critical dimensions derived from organizational behavior theory: Trust, Commitment, Goals and Objectives, and Autonomy. Trust represents the bedrock of administrative cooperation; Commitment reflects the psychological bond between the administrator and the institution; Goals and Objectives ensure strategic alignment; and Autonomy provides the necessary professional agency. While the theoretical benefits of such a participatory model are well-documented, its practical manifestation in regional Chinese universities remains an area requiring rigorous empirical validation, particularly concerning how these dimensions are perceived by the frontline administrative workforce.

A critical point of inquiry in organizational management is the extent to which individual demographic characteristics influence institutional perceptions. Within the administrative framework of Shaoguan University, factors such as educational background and professional tenure are often theorized to shape an individual's expectations and engagement levels. For instance, higher educational attainment may correlate with a greater desire for autonomy, while extensive work experience might foster deeper institutional commitment through long-term integration into the university's culture. However, existing literature offers conflicting evidence on whether these variables significantly alter the perception of participation management in a standardized bureaucratic setting.

Rather than merely describing the status quo, this research seeks to analyze the interplay between these professional backgrounds and the multi-dimensional facets of management. By examining the administrators at Shaoguan University, this study provides a granular view of how trust and autonomy are distributed across different career stages and academic levels. The findings serve to bridge the gap between abstract management theories and the practical realities of university governance in Guangdong Province, offering a data-driven foundation for institutional leaders to refine their participatory mechanisms and enhance overall administrative harmony.

Research Objectives

1 To study the level of Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province.

2 To compare teacher's perceptions of Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province classified by work experience and educational level.

Conceptual Framework

In this research, the researchers adopt the concepts of Participation Management proposed by Swansburg (1996), and define a conceptual framework for the Administrator Participation Management of Shaoguan University in Guangdong Province, as shown in Figure 1:

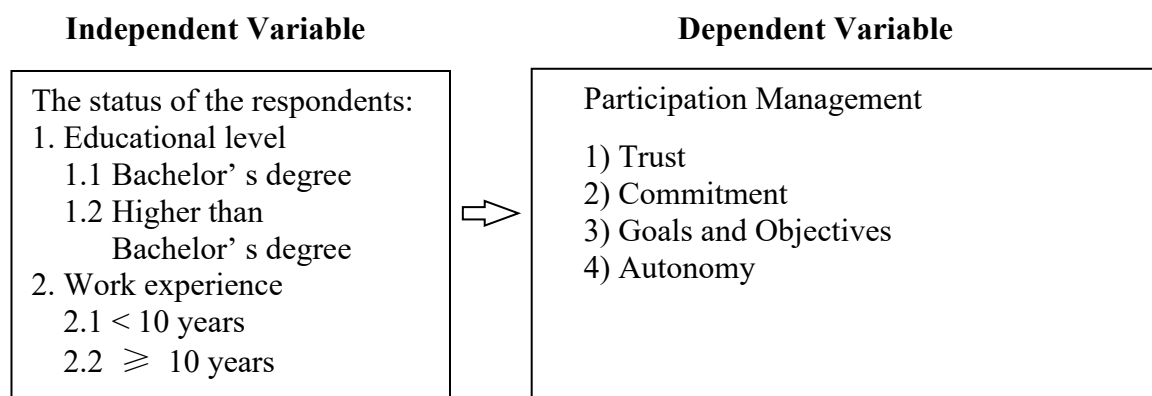


Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework

Methods of conducting research

Population: The population is the teachers of Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province in 2025, with a total of 1464 teachers.

Sample: The sample is 306 teachers from Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province. The sample size was determined by the form of Krejcie & Morgan table (1970) and obtained by stratified random sampling.

Research instruments

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. This questionnaire is divided into three parts as follows:

Part 1: Questionnaire about the general information of the respondents.

Part 2: The Questionnaire on the Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province consists of four aspects: 1) Trust 2) Commitment 3) Goals and Objectives and 4) Autonomy.

Data analysis

Data collection the study collects the information by sending the questionnaire to the University and receiving it in person, details are as follows:

1) Determine the integrity of the questionnaire.

2) In the first part of the questionnaire, the personal general data of the respondents are presented in the form of a percentage description table according to the frequency distribution.

3) In the second part of the questionnaire, percentage, mean and standard deviation are used for data analysis. Explain the result table and find out the factors affecting the efficiency level through comparison.

Average value of participation management level (Best: 1970)

4.50-5.00 means

Participation Management of Administrators
is the highest level

3.50-4.49 means

Participation Management of Administrators

	is the high level
2.50-3.49 means	Participation Management of Administrators
	is the moderate level
1.50-2.49 means	Participation Management of Administrators
	is the low level
1.00-1.49 means	Participation Management of Administrators
	is the lowest level
4) The comparison of the Participation Management of Administrators	
in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province classified by educational level	
and work experience by t-test (independent t-test).	

Data analysis results

Table 1 General information of the respondents:

(n=306)

General Information	Frequency	Percentage
1. Educational Level		
1.1 Bachelor's degree	215	70.30
1.2 Higher than Bachelor's degree	91	29.70
Total	306	100
2. Work Experience		
2.1 < 10 years	128	41.80
2.2 ≥ 10 years	178	58.20
Total	306	100

Table 1 was found that the administrators of Shaoguan University, participation management levels had the respondents had over 10 years of work experience 178 people representing 58.20% and 215 people have bachelor's degree, representing 70.30%.

Table 2 Show the Mean, Standard Deviation, and level of Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, overall and in each aspect:

(n=302)

No.	Participation Management of Administrators	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1	Trust	4.08	0.62	High
2	Commitment	4.21	0.55	High
3	Goals and Objectives	3.82	0.74	High
4	Autonomy	3.95	0.68	High
Total		4.02	0.65	High

Table 2 was found that Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University: overall and in each aspect was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.02$). Considering and in each aspect, it was found that all aspects were at a high level. Commitment had the highest mean ($\bar{X} = 4.21$), followed by Trust ($\bar{X} = 4.08$), and Goals and Objectives had the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.82$).

Table 3 Comparison of Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, classified by work experience, overall aspect:

(n=306)

Participation Management of Administrators	Work experience						t	Sig.
	< 10 years			≥10 years				
	n	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	n	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
Trust	128	3.95	0.70	178	4.17	0.58	-2.153*	0.032

Commitment	128	4.08	0.63	178	4.33	0.52	-2.314*	0.022
Goals and Objectives	128	3.75	0.82	178	3.87	0.76	-1.182	0.239
Autonomy	128	3.82	0.78	178	4.04	0.72	-2.021*	0.044
Total	128	3.90	0.73	178	4.10	0.65	-1.992*	0.047

* $p < .05$

Table 3 was found that, administrators with different work experience came to recognize the Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University, classified by work experience, overall was different, and specifically in the aspects of Trust, Commitment, and Autonomy were different, while the aspect of Goals and objectives was not different.

Table 4 Comparison of Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, classified by educational level, overall aspect:

(n=306)

Participation Management of Administrators	Educational level						t	Sig.
	Bachelor's degree			Higher than Bachelor's degree				
	n	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	n	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
Trust	215	4.06	0.65	91	4.12	0.60	-0.652	0.516
Commitment	215	4.21	0.58	91	4.27	0.54	-0.724	0.471
Goals and Objectives	215	3.80	0.81	91	3.86	0.75	-0.451	0.653
Autonomy	215	3.93	0.77	91	4.00	0.71	-0.581	0.562
Total	215	4.00	0.70	91	4.06	0.65	-0.612	0.542

Table 4 was found that, administrators with different educational level came to recognize the Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University, classified by educational level, overall was not different.

Discussion

Based on the research objectives, the discussion will be presented as follows:

1. Discussion about major findings of objective 1

The level of Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province. Overall and in each aspect at a high level. This high level of perceived participation suggests that the university administration has successfully integrated collaborative management processes into its daily operations. This finding aligns with the theories of Likert (1967), who argues that effective participative management systems rely on robust internal communication and high levels of mutual trust to ensure the seamless functioning of educational institutions. Furthermore, the results reflect the perspectives of Deci and Ryan (1985) in Self-Determination Theory, which suggests that organizational effectiveness is significantly enhanced when employees' basic psychological needs for autonomy and relatedness are satisfied within their work environment.

Among the various dimensions, Commitment and Trust yielded the highest mean scores. This indicates that administrators are effectively utilizing internal driving forces to sustain the efforts and loyalty of their staff. The high score in commitment is supported by the Affective Commitment Theory of Allen and Meyer (1990), which posits that when employees identify strongly with the organization's values, their emotional attachment drives superior work performance. Similarly, as noted by Putnam (1993) in Social Capital Theory, productivity naturally increases when employees experience a strong sense of social cohesion and trust. These results also resonate with the Organizational Trust Model proposed by Mayer (1995), suggesting that the perceived integrity and benevolence of leadership foster a climate of fairness and transparency. Moreover, through the lens of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, it is evident that the administrators are excelling in managing the relational quality

between management and staff, which remains a cornerstone of modern relational leadership.

On the other hand, Goals and Objectives received the lowest mean score among the four aspects. While the score remains at a high level, its relatively lower position suggests that although systematic processes for gathering job information are in place, there is still room for improvement. By applying the Goal-Setting Theory of Locke and Latham (1990), the university could further refine its work processes. Implementing more participative goal-setting and establishing specific feedback mechanisms could help eliminate redundant administrative steps and provide clearer direction for various departments.

2. Discussion about major findings of objective 2

The comparative analysis results from the level of Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, classified by educational level and work experience.

(1) Administrators with different educational levels came to recognize Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, classified by educational level overall was not different. This consistency aligns with the research of Baron and Greenberg (2003), who noted that when an organization fosters a robust and standardized management culture, administrative perceptions tend to become homogenized across the board. This implies that the university's administrative framework provides enough stability and consistency to ensure a unified understanding of organizational outcomes, regardless of the individual's academic background. While Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory suggests that individual values might be influenced by education, these findings show that the institutional environment at Shaoguan University effectively overrides such individual differences.

(2) Administrators with different work experience came to recognize Participation Management of Administrators in Shaoguan University under Guangdong Province, classified by work experience overall was different, though the aspect of Goals and Objectives did not show a significant difference. The data indicates that administrators

with more than 10 years of experience perceive the management climate more positively than those with less than 10 years of tenure.

From a critical perspective, more experienced administrators may be more attuned to the Psychological Contract and reciprocity-driven commitment described by Rousseau (1989). They likely expect and experience a deeper, relationship-based trust that has been built over time, rather than relying purely on formal structures. Social Exchange Theory also provides a valid explanation for this gap; as Becker (1960) suggested, long-tenured employees often have higher commitment scores due to their long-term professional and emotional investments, or "sunk costs," in the institution. Furthermore, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggests that veteran staff may place a higher priority on motivators such as recognition and self-actualization, which they perceive more clearly after years of service. These findings underscore the importance of Fiedler's (1967) Contingency Theory, emphasizing that there is no "one-size-fits-all" management approach. Administrators must adapt their communication and autonomy-granting strategies to meet the specific professional expectations of staff at different career stages.

Recommendations of research

(1) Improve Collective Engagement in Strategic Planning: As the dimension of Goals and Objectives was identified as the least developed aspect of participation management, specific attention should be paid to the departmental goal-setting process. The university leadership should move away from purely top-down administrative mandates and instead establish collaborative forums where staff members can actively participate in defining the annual objectives of their respective units. This inclusive approach directly addresses the need for administrators to be more involved in setting annual goals, ensuring that institutional targets are internalized as shared professional responsibilities.

(2) Increase Transparency in Policy Execution: Regarding the foundation of organizational trust, the findings suggest that the perceived fairness and transparency of policy implementation represent a critical area for improvement within the university management. The administration should develop more robust communication protocols

to explain the rationale behind administrative changes and personnel decisions. By ensuring that management processes are visible and consistent, the institution can mitigate skepticism and foster a deeper sense of mutual confidence between senior leaders and the administrative workforce.

(3) Develop Support Mechanisms for Early-Career Administrators: The comparative analysis revealed a significant gap in the perception of management between staff with different levels of work experience, particularly noting that those with shorter tenure perceive lower levels of trust and commitment. To improve the long-term retention and emotional attachment of newer staff, the university should implement targeted professional integration programs, such as formal mentorship or peer support networks. These initiatives are essential to bridge the relational gap and build a stronger psychological contract for administrators who have been with the institution for less than a decade.

(4) Streamline Administrative Procedures to Enhance Empowerment: In terms of professional autonomy, the results highlight a need to address the perceived burden of approval processes and the limited opportunity for staff to provide suggestions on institutional reforms related to their roles. The administration should conduct a systematic review of its internal workflows to identify and eliminate redundant bureaucratic layers. By granting staff greater authorized discretion over their daily tasks and creating formal channels for their voices to be heard in reform discussions, the university can effectively maximize the professional agency and innovative potential of its workforce.

Recommendations for the next research

(1) Longitudinal Investigation of Professional Development: Future studies should employ a longitudinal research design to observe how the perceptions of trust, commitment, and autonomy evolve as an individual's career progresses within the university. Such research would provide deeper insight into whether the differences found in work experience are a result of organizational socialization or broader generational changes in professional expectations.

(2) Qualitative Analysis of Institutional Barriers: While this quantitative study identified specific areas requiring improvement, such as direct involvement in goal setting and reform suggestions, future research could utilize qualitative methods including in-depth interviews or focus groups. This would allow for a more nuanced understanding of the specific organizational or cultural obstacles that prevent full participation in administrative decision-making processes.

(3) Comparative Studies Across Institutional Types: It is recommended that future research expand the geographic and institutional scope to include a wider variety of universities within Guangdong Province. Comparing regional universities with metropolitan or private institutions would help determine if the findings at Shaoguan University are representative of a wider provincial trend or are unique to the specific administrative culture of the institution.

(4) Exploration of Mediating Organizational Outcomes: Future research should investigate the direct impact of participation management dimensions on other critical organizational variables, such as administrative innovation, organizational citizenship behavior, and staff burnout levels. Understanding these relationships would provide a more holistic view of how collaborative governance contributes to the overall excellence and efficiency of higher education institutions.

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