

Strengthening Academic Administrative Performance at Guangxi Open University

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Abstract

The research objectives were 1) to analyze the current situation and ideal states of academic administrative at Guangxi Open University, 2) to propose appropriate approaches for strengthening the academic administrative level of Guangxi Open University. This research is quantitative research. The samples were 335 teachers and 50 administrators from the Guangxi Open University. The instrument used was a questionnaire. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis, modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{modified}), content validity (IOC), and a five-point Likert scale for agreement assessment. The findings revealed that 1) administrators rated the current state of academic administration as moderately high (3.100–3.780) but expressed even higher ideal state expectations (3.720–4.000), with “The Effectiveness of Administrative Management” identified as the most urgent area for improvement ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.290$), particularly in developing clear, performance-based incentive measures; 2) teachers also showed moderate-to-high recognition of the current state (3.393–3.940) and uniformly high ideal state means (4.000–4.077), with “Academic Administration by Processes” being the weakest link ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.202$) while other sub-dimensions had gaps below 0.100; 3) two sets of targeted approaches were proposed accordingly: for administrators, designing transparent performance evaluation and incentive systems alongside multi-channel participation and feedback mechanisms; and for teachers, establishing teacher-led process improvement teams and creating feedback mechanisms for process adjustments; and 4) as evaluated by the experts, all draft approaches received mean scores of 4.8–5.0 (S.D. = 0.00–0.16) from both the administrators' and teachers' perspectives, indicating strong expert consensus and high approval of the draft approaches proposed in this study.

Keywords: Academic administrative, Academic administrative by processes, Effectiveness of administrative management

Introduction

Global higher education recognizes academic administration as central to quality and value, with its function shifting from control to an integrated framework of quality, learning outcomes, teacher development, and digital governance. Effective administration enhances student satisfaction and learning (Brennan & Shah, 2019) and supports faculty growth and online teaching (Ioannou, 2023, p. 384). Open universities across Southeast Asia have actively sought to enhance academic administration by implementing quality assurance systems. For example, the Philippines employs a stakeholder committee model, while Indonesia has developed standardized process documentation systems (Zuhairi et al., 2020, pp. 297–320). The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) has specifically established a Code of Good



Practice for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programs, which sets normative standards for curriculum design, student assessment, and staff qualifications in open universities (UNESCO, 2023). Chinese policy mandates administrative reengineering for quality accountability, digital governance, and regional equity, including interuniversity committees to bridge east-west human capital gaps (State Council, 2019, p. 22; State Council, 2022, p. 31).

Open universities, including Guangxi Open University (GOU), face persistent challenges: student satisfaction with examination and graduation services is below 80% (Lin et al., 2023, p. 1194), and over 60% of learners from county-level or poorer areas have low literacy, declining performance, and poor employment outcomes (Nuissl & Egetenmeyer, 2010, p. 10). Without timely improvement, the "loose entry, strict exit" model cannot be sustained. This study compares current and ideal administrative states at GOU, applying global theoretical shifts to local conditions to identify bottlenecks and propose feasible pathways, contributing to Chinese open education governance theory and offering replicable reforms and policy evidence.

Research Objectives

1. What are the current situation and ideal states of academic administrative at GOU?
2. What are the appropriate approaches for strengthening the academic administrative level of GOU?

Scope of the Research

1. The overall research population of academic administrative at GOU consists of 385 faculty members (including 335 teachers and 50 administrators).
2. The methods for enhancing the academic administrative of GOU mainly cover two research areas: one is academic administrative, and the other is improving administrative effectiveness.
3. The study was conducted from November 2025 to May 2026.

Literature Review

Academic administrative coordinates academic activities via resource allocation (Yao & Singh, 2023) and covers teaching, research, teacher, and enrollment management (Álvarez-Huertas et al., 2023). Teaching benefits from quality assurance and feedback; research from oversight and accountability; teacher management from mentoring; enrollment is market-oriented (Kwiek, 2021, pp. 71–90). Operational processes (curriculum, pedagogy, classroom management, follow-up, regulation, goal-setting), and support systems underpin these functions (Cheung & Vaish, 2024, pp. 441–461). Yet, New Public Management has caused labor alienation and weakened mentorship (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2024, p. 221); in China, low research support awareness and digital divides persist, while Guangxi faces administrative dominance, outdated curricula, and quantitative evaluation (Li & Qin, 2020, p. 966). Strengthening requires process optimization, efficiency, and strategic implementation: connectivity management shortens decisions, lean methods add value, HRM boosts publications, and risk management reduces failure (Peralta Tapia et al., 2023). In Guangxi, digital governance is emerging, reengineering cut approval time, and information silos affect 44% of universities (Peng Juping, 2019, p. 84). However, most studies are cross-sectional; larger samples and technology impacts are needed.



Research Methodology

1. Research Methodology

1.1 Research Samples

The research population comprised 385 faculty members (335 teachers, 50 administrators) from the GOU. Using Yamane's formula (1973) with simple random sampling, 233 respondents (183 teachers, 50 administrators) were selected.

1.2 Research Instruments

This quantitative study used tailored questionnaires for teachers and administrators. Both captured demographics via a checklist and assessed the current situation and ideal states of academic administration using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Extremely Low to 5 = Extremely High).

Grounded in the data, a draft of approaches for strengthening academic administrative at GOU was formulated. To assess its appropriateness and feasibility, a Draft Evaluation Form was designed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Five experts or stakeholders were then selected to validate the draft.

2. Research Steps

2.1 A review of relevant policy documents was conducted to define the core constructs for questionnaire development.

2.2 Two versions of the questionnaire were developed: the Administrator version and the Teacher version: general Information and the current situation and ideal states of academic administrative at GOU.

2.3 The research advisor reviewed the instrument to ensure language standardization and questionnaire objectivity.

2.4 Content validity was assessed using the Item Objective Consistency (IOC) index. Three experts in education management were selected via purposive sampling to evaluate the instrument.

2.5 The questionnaire demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.964 for administrators (n = 50 items) and 0.925 for teachers (n = 183 items).

2.6 With assistance from GOU, the questionnaires were distributed.

2.7 Upon collection, the data were analyzed to identify needs. Needs were determined via $PNI_{\text{modified}} = (I-D)/D$, where I = ideal state, D = current state. Higher values indicate higher priority.

2.8 A draft of approaches addressing these needs was formulated.

2.9 Five experts were invited to assess this draft.

2.10 Based on feedback from both the experts and the research advisor, the final proposed approaches for strengthening the level of academic administrative were generated.

3. Data Collection

Data were collected through online questionnaires administered via Wenjuanxing, with assistance from the GOU.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) was used to examine the internal consistency of the main constructs of the questionnaire. A Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7 indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency.

4.2 Descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to summarize the sample characteristics and respondents' attitudes toward the questionnaire items. The demographic variables in the first part were described using frequencies and percentages;



the mean and standard deviation of the second part were used to reflect the overall level and dispersion of the needs.

4.3 Modified Priority Needs Index. The Modified Priority Needs Index was used to rank the needs and identify the most urgent ones.

4.4 Content validity (IOC). Content validity was evaluated using the IOC (Index of Item–Objective Congruence). If $IOC \geq 0.50$, the item is considered congruent with the objective/content.

4.5 Five-Point Likert Scale. The scale was used to assess both the current and ideal states of academic administration and the level of agreement among experts.

Research Results

1. Survey of Administrators

1.1 Analysis of Administrators' Group Characteristics

The sample of 50 administrators from GOU shows that the Enrollment Office (36%) and the Personnel Department (30%) together account for nearly two-thirds of respondents, with no representation from other departments. In terms of rank, general staff comprise 36%, while Division Chiefs and above make up only 10%. Years in higher education administration are concentrated in the 3–5-year bracket (45%), compared to 14% under three years and just 4% with 15 or more years. A clear majority (78%) work in general administration, logistics, IT, or student services; only 22% are directly involved in curriculum management, research, quality assurance, or degree administration.

1.2 The Current Situation and Ideal States of Academic Administrative at GOU from the Perspective of Administrators

Table 1: Administrator Sub-dimension Comparisons (Current vs. Ideal)

No.	Administrators	Current States			Ideal States			PNI _{modified}	Order
		Means	S.D.	Level	Means	S.D.	Level		
1	Functional management	3.485	0.918	High	3.805	1.084	High	0.092	5
2	Processes and practices	3.329	0.887	High	3.774	0.963	High	0.134	4
3	Support and safeguards	3.380	0.998	Medium	3.840	1.052	High	0.136	3
4	Innovation theory	3.780	1.375	High	3.720	1.386	High	-0.016	7
5	Academic administrative by processes	3.400	1.059	Medium	3.950	1.148	High	0.162	2
6	The effectiveness of administrative management	3.100	1.055	Medium	4.000	1.278	High	0.290	1
7	Strategic management though	3.780	1.093	High	3.910	1.048	High	0.034	6

Table 1 shows that across all administrator sub-dimensions, current means (3.100–3.780) fall below ideal means (3.720–4.000), with Effectiveness of Administrative



Management ranking first in improvement priority ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.290$) and Innovation Theory being the only sub-dimension with a negative PNI_{modified} (-0.016).

2. Survey of Teachers

2.1 Analysis of Teachers' Group Characteristics

The general information of teachers with a total sample size of 398. For gender, there are 66 males (36.10%) and 117 females (63.90%), totaling 183 respondents (100.00%). Regarding age groups, 36 teachers (19.70%) are under 30, 32 (17.50%) are 31–35, 59 (32.20%) are 36–40, 28 (15.30%) are 41–45, 18 (9.80%) are 46–50, 3 (1.60%) are 51–55, and 7 (3.80%) are 56 and over, with a total of 183 (100.00%). For academic rank/title, 100 teachers (54.60%) are Assistant Professors, 70 (38.30%) are Associate Professors, and 13 (7.10%) are Full Professors, totaling 183 (100.00%).

2.2 Analysis of Teachers' Group Characteristics

Table 2: Teacher Sub-dimension Comparisons (Current vs. Ideal)

No.	Administrators	Current States			Ideal States			PNI_{modified}	Order
		Means	S.D.	Level	Means	S.D.	Level		
1	Functional management	3.792	0.632	High	4.020	0.704	High	0.060	5
2	Processes and practices	3.793	0.670	High	4.041	0.689	High	0.065	4
3	Support and safeguards	3.680	0.941	Medium	4.030	0.919	High	0.095	3
4	Innovation theory	3.940	1.115	High	4.000	1.218	High	0.015	7
5	Academic administrative by processes	3.393	1.143	Medium	4.077	1.056	High	0.202	1
6	The effectiveness of administrative management	3.792	1.191	High	4.016	1.051	High	0.059	6
7	Strategic management though	3.686	0.833	High	4.098	0.879	High	0.112	2

Table 2 shows that across all teacher sub-dimensions, current means (3.393–3.940) fall below ideal means (4.000–4.098), with Academic Administrative by Processes ranking first in improvement priority ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.202$) and Effectiveness of Administrative Management and Innovation Theory tied at the lowest ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.015$).



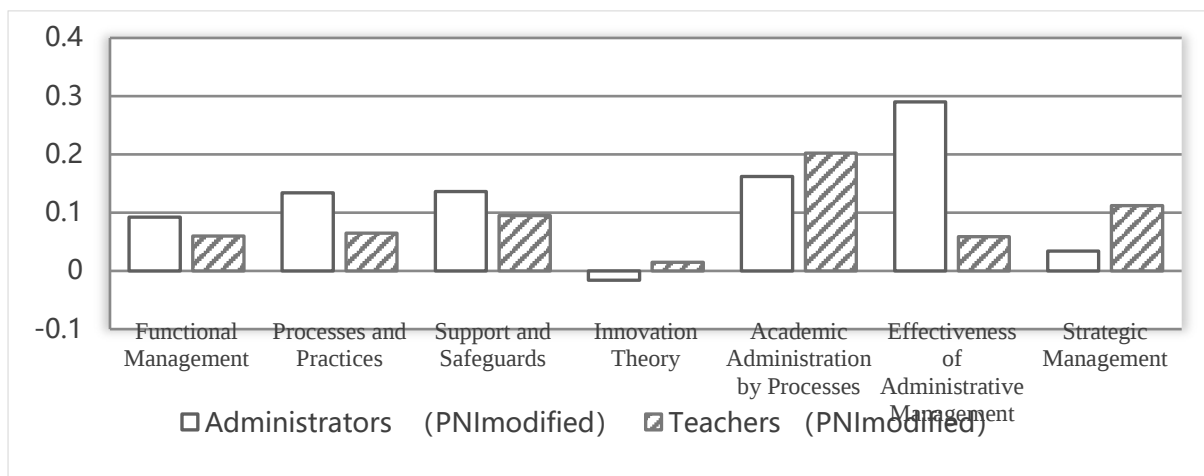


Figure 1: Priority Needs

Figure 1 shows that administrators identified Effectiveness of Administrative Management as the highest priority ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.290$), while teachers prioritized Academic Administration by Processes ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.202$).

1. Expert Evaluation of the Draft

Drawing on the gap analysis and document review, the draft improvement plan targets the two top-priority sub-dimensions: Effectiveness of Administrative Management (administrator $PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.290$) and Academic Administrative by Processes (teacher $PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.202$).

2. Draft approaches

The draft approaches were evaluated by five invited experts in the field of educational management. Details are as follows:

Table 3: Administrator assessment of the draft plan's appropriateness and feasibility

Draft approaches for Administrators		Levels of Appropriateness		Levels of Feasibility	
		Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Approach 1: Designing Transparent Performance Evaluation and Incentive System	1. Clarify Job Responsibilities: Develop detailed job descriptions for each administrative position, defining the scope of work, task objectives, and accountability standards to prevent overlapping duties.	5	0.00	5	0.00
	2. Establish Performance Indicators: Create quantitative and qualitative evaluation criteria, including work efficiency, service quality, and innovation contributions.	4.8	0.16	4.8	0.16
	3. Link Rewards to Performance: Implement a scientific salary and promotion mechanism that offers competitive compensation and career advancement opportunities based on performance results.	4.8	0.16	4.8	0.16



Table 4: Teacher assessment of the draft plan's appropriateness and feasibility

Draft approaches for Teachers		Levels of Appropriateness		Levels of Feasibility	
		Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.
Approach 1: Establishing Teacher-Led Process Improvement Teams	1. Form Interdisciplinary Teams: Create process improvement teams comprising teachers from different departments, including personnel from various areas with relevant expertise.	5	0.00	5	0.00
	2. Define Process Ownership: Assign teachers as process owners responsible for continuous improvement of specific academic processes, distinct from process creators.	5	0.00	5	0.00
	3. Implement Regular Review Cycles: Establish quarterly review meetings where teacher teams analyze process efficiency and propose adjustments based on practical teaching experiences.	4.8	0.16	4.8	0.16
Approach2: Creating Feedback Mechanisms for Process Adjustment	1. Develop User-Friendly Feedback Channels: Set up accessible platforms (online suggestion systems, monthly forums) for teachers to report process inefficiencies and propose improvements.	4.8	0.16	4.8	0.16
	2. Integrate Feedback into Process Updates: Create a standardized procedure where teacher feedback is systematically reviewed by the Quality Management Committee and incorporated into process revisions.	5	0.00	5	0.00
	3. Communicate Changes Transparently: After process adjustments are approved, notify all teacher stakeholders through official channels and provide training on updated procedures.	5	0.00	5	0.00

Table 4 shows that teachers rated all proposed improvement approaches as highly suitable and feasible (means 4.8–5.0, SDs 0.00–0.16), indicating strong consensus.

Discussion

1. To analyze the current situation and ideal states of academic administrative at GOU
Administrators: Current means (3.100–3.780) fell below ideals (3.720–4.000), with "Effectiveness of Administrative Management" ranking highest for improvement ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.290$). Administrators specifically called for clearer performance-based incentives. Huang (2024, pp. 64–69) argued that current incentive methods are monolithic and insufficiently tailored, undermining evaluation authenticity. Huang (2020, pp. 54–56) further noted that job–person mismatch, stress, and reward inequity lead to burnout and turnover; subjective, unquantifiable performance reviews often yield merely passing grades, fostering a risk-averse mentality rather than active engagement.

Teachers: Current means (3.393–3.940) were lower than ideals (4.000–4.077); "Academic Administration by Processes" had the highest PNI_{modified} (0.202). Teachers prioritized continuous process adjustment to boost efficiency. Tang (2025, pp. 29–31) pointed to cumbersome approvals and poor departmental coordination as sources of redundancy. Zhang et al. (2018, pp. 310–313) and Guo & He (2020, pp. 1016–1020) contended that administrative power widely overrides academic power in university governance, marginalizing scholarly participation and creating conflict. Shen (2025, pp. 273–279) added that although the Higher Education Law grants the academic committee decision-making authority, it is often nominal, with faculty feedback channels effectively blocked.

2. To propose appropriate approaches for strengthening the academic administrative level of GOU

Based on the gap analysis, two approaches are proposed for administrators: a transparent performance evaluation and incentive system, and multi-channel participation and feedback mechanisms. Jihuallanca (2023) stresses that managers need mechanisms linking their actions to collective goals and responsibilities. García Barragán et al. (2023, pp. 16–30) view performance evaluation as a core tool, recommending semester-based expert reviews, and note that communication strengthens coordination and cultural change. Prodius & Lobintseva (2020, pp. 57–65) argue that personnel efficiency depends on an effective incentive system, proposing an IMOT indicator to balance income and performance, and suggest using survey feedback to improve job satisfaction. Zuhairi et al. (2020, pp. 297–320) found that the Philippines, through its stakeholder committee model, enables teachers and frontline staff to participate in governance, thereby fostering intrinsic responsibility and a sense of ownership—an empowerment-based incentive mechanism. Peralta Tapia et al. (2023) add that management relies on community participation, and without communication, institutional goals cannot be conveyed; thus, feedback mechanisms are essential.

For teachers, since “academic administration by processes” is the weakest link, we propose teacher-led process improvement teams and formal feedback channels. Avilés & Cordero (2017, pp. 681–690) advocate process-based management (BPMN) with interdisciplinary teams, clear task ownership, and a three-stage review cycle (Quality Management Committee → Vice President → Academic Committee → Senior Committee), plus mechanisms for user suggestions. In their study of open universities in Southeast Asia, Zuhairi et al. (2020, pp. 297–320) found that Indonesian universities have developed standardized process documentation frameworks to enhance academic administration. Peralta Tapia et al. (2023) emphasize that administrators should assign teachers as Process Owners to



ensure professionalism, while collecting views from both administrators and teachers is vital for improvement. Jihuallanca (2023) stresses forming multidisciplinary teams and using evaluation to identify weaknesses for continuous change. Anam et al. (2024, pp. 2977-2995) note that school management requires continuous planning and coordination, particularly in developing countries.

Recommendations

1. Key Findings

Gap analysis shows that administrators prioritize performance incentives ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.290$), whereas teachers view interdepartmental coordination as the main issue ($PNI_{\text{modified}} = 0.202$). The diagnostic model combining Cronbach's α , PNI, and Delphi provides a workable framework for identifying and addressing specific problems.

2. Implications for Thailand

The results are relevant to Thai open universities facing similar administrative challenges. The proposed performance-linked reward system and teacher-led process teams offer practical options for improving efficiency and academic autonomy in Southeast Asian settings.

3. Practical Recommendations

A dual-track strategy is suggested. For administrators, set up a Performance Evaluation Committee to pilot duty-metric-reward procedures. For teachers, establish cross-disciplinary process teams led by Process Owners, overseen by a Vice-President-chaired committee. Annual reviews using standardized tools are recommended.

4. Recommendations for Future Research

Cross-national comparisons with ASEAN countries (e.g., Thailand, Malaysia) could test the cultural transferability of the findings. Longitudinal studies over 3–5 years with repeated post-intervention measures would help assess long-term effectiveness. An online diagnostic platform based on the current indicator system could also be developed for real-time monitoring and early warning.

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