

Exploring talent management on employee performance in Chinese higher education institutions: the interplay of job engagement and job satisfaction - Frontiers

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Executive Summary

This study examines how talent management practices influence employee performance in Chinese higher education institutions through job engagement and job satisfaction as mediating factors. The researchers conducted a cross-sectional survey of 408 faculty members from public universities in Guangdong Province, using validated scales adapted for the Chinese context. The analysis employed PLS-SEM modeling to test hypotheses derived from social exchange theory. Results revealed that talent management positively affects employee performance through two distinct mediating pathways: increased job engagement and increased job satisfaction. The study found that career development and performance management components of talent management had particularly significant effects on academic employees. The findings support dual mediation consistent with social exchange theory within the Chinese higher education context, suggesting that institutional talent management practices create reciprocal relationships where faculty respond with higher engagement and satisfaction, ultimately improving performance.

Key Insights

1. Talent management influences employee performance through two distinct mediating pathways: job engagement and job satisfaction, rather than through a single mechanism
2. Career development and performance management components of talent management show unique significant effects on academic employees in Chinese higher education
3. Social exchange theory explains the reciprocal relationship where institutional investment in talent management creates faculty obligations resulting in higher engagement and performance

Practical Takeaways

- Higher education institutions can enhance faculty performance by implementing structured talent management practices that focus on career development and performance management components
- Regular feedback mechanisms and role clarification can boost both job engagement and satisfaction simultaneously, creating dual pathways to improved performance

Frameworks Mentioned

Social Exchange Theory — Framework explaining reciprocal relationships where organizational support creates employee obligations, resulting in stronger dedication and better performance

PLS-SEM — Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling used for hypothesis testing and analyzing relationships between constructs

Critical Analysis

Strengths include rigorous methodology with validated scales, expert validation, back-translation procedures, and appropriate statistical analysis using PLS-SEM. The sample size of 408 faculty members provides adequate statistical power. However, limitations include cross-sectional design preventing causal inference, convenience sampling from a single province limiting generalizability, and focus only on public universities. The study lacks longitudinal data to confirm causal directions and broader geographic representation within China.

Organizational Practice

Chinese higher education institutions implement talent management through four dimensions: recruitment and selection processes, training and development programs, performance management systems with regular appraisals and feedback, and career management with transparent promotion pathways and counselling services

Strategic Implications

The dual mediation model suggests that organizations investing in comprehensive talent management practices can expect performance improvements through multiple pathways, indicating that both engagement-focused and satisfaction-focused initiatives contribute to overall effectiveness

Validation Status: passed
