# Human Capital Management and Organizational Effectiveness in China's Private Universities

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## Abstract

This research examines the Human Capital Management (HCM) practices in private universities in China and their impact on Organizational Effectiveness (OE). The objectives of this research were 1) to explore the current situation of human capital management (HCM) practices in private universities in China; 2) to analyze the relationship between HCM and organizational effectiveness (OE) of private universities in China; 3) to develop an HCM model for the OE of private universities in China. This combined research adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data, and SPSS and AMOS software were employed for analysis. The reliability and validity of research tools were ensured through Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). A total of 400 valid questionnaires were collected, and in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 respondents.

The research findings were as follows: 1) Human capital investment, knowledge management, and job satisfaction significantly affect organizational effectiveness. 2) The proposed model OE = 0.883 •HCM + 0.864 • KM + 0.901 •JS + $\varepsilon$ verified these relationships, indicating that structured teacher development, knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and participation programs were crucial for improving institutional success rates. 3) Qualitative research revealed that teachers faced issues such as limited career development and unreasonable human resources policies, emphasizing the importance of leadership involvement, teacher autonomy, and digital knowledge sharing platforms in enhancing OE.

Based on these results, the HCM – OE model was proposed to provide references for universities to optimize management. Future research could further explore HCM models in different contexts.

**Keywords:** Human Capital Management; Organizational Effectiveness; Job Satisfaction; Knowledge Management; Structural Equation Modeling

## Introduction

The growing significance of knowledge as an economic driver has shifted the focus from traditional production factors to human capital for organizational success. In the knowledge–driven economy, harnessing the workforce's intelligence is vital for a competitive edge. Schultz stressed human intelligence's role in societal progress, and Drucker advocated knowledge–based management. Thus, human capital development and strategic management are crucial, especially in China's private higher education system.

Over the past four decades, private universities in China have grown rapidly but face faculty–related challenges. University administrators often lack managerial expertise, leading to fragmented management and inefficient systems that hamper faculty performance and institutional development.

Theoretically, human capital is recognized as a key resource for sustained competitive advantage. Schultz introduced it as an economic growth driver in the 1960s, and the resource–based view emphasizes intangible assets like human capital. However, Chinese private universities struggle to utilize human capital due to structural and managerial flaws. Faculty face limited growth, ineffective evaluation, and weak knowledge management, reducing innovation and excellence.

To overcome these, private universities need structured human capital management. Strategic investment in faculty development, retention, and knowledge management can improve outcomes. Transparent evaluations, career paths, and incentives boost faculty productivity. With the evolution of higher education, AI–powered knowledge platforms and collaborative research are essential. This study, which bridges the gap in higher education–focused human capital research, offers theoretical and practical contributions, guiding university leaders and policymakers toward long–term academic competitiveness.

## Research Objectives

1. To study human capital management of private universities in China

2.To analyze the relationship between human capital management and organizational effectiveness of private universities in China

3. To propose a human capital management model for the organizational effectiveness of private universities in China

## Literature Review

### Concepts/Theories

### Human Capital Management Theory

The concept of human capital has evolved. Adam Smith first noted the economic value of investing in human skills. Schultz formalized it as crucial for productivity and national growth. Human capital encompasses skills acquired through education, training, and experience. Gary Becker categorized its investments into education, health, and on–the–job training, connecting them to income and organizational performance, suggesting that investing in employees boosts efficiency. Human Capital Management (HCM) is vital for competitiveness in Chinese private universities. It covers talent acquisition, training, leadership growth, performance assessment, and retention. Research shows that structured HCM improves organizational effectiveness and faculty performance in higher education.

### Knowledge Management Theory

Knowledge Management (KM) theory arose as organizations realized the significance of handling intellectual assets for innovation and performance. Nonaka and Takeuchi proposed the SECI model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, Internalization), elucidating how knowledge is created, shared, and used in organizations. They stressed knowledge transfer for better decision–making and innovation. Davenport and Prusak defined KM as a systematic way to capture, distribute, and utilize knowledge.This is highly relevant in universities, where knowledge creation and dissemination are fundamental. In Chinese private universities, structured KM practices like digital repositories, collaborative platforms, and faculty development are crucial for continuous learning and growth. Integrating KM with Human Capital Management can enhance organizational effectiveness through

faculty collaboration, curriculum improvement, and higher research productivity. Using technology for knowledge storage also reduces the risks of faculty turnover and knowledge loss.

### Organizational Effectiveness Theory

Organizational effectiveness (OE) theory explores how well an organization attains its goals. The Goal Model, centered on reaching set objectives, and the System Resource Model, which evaluates an organization's resource–securing and resource–using efficiency, are among the proposed models. In higher education, OE is gauged by faculty performance, student satisfaction, research productivity, and institutional reputation. Research shows that universities excelling in human capital and knowledge management perform better. Effective leadership, strategic planning, and a culture of continuous improvement are key to organizational success.

### Related Research

#### The Impact of Human Capital Management on Knowledge Management

Research highlights a strong link between human capital management (HCM) and knowledge management (KM), with well–structured HCM policies fostering knowledge sharing and innovation. Bontis et al. (2003) found that investing in employee training cultivates a knowledge–friendly culture. Faculty development and mentorship programs in Chinese private universities enhance knowledge transfer, ensuring institutional sustainability.

#### The Impact of Knowledge Management on Organizational Effectiveness

Effective KM boosts innovation, productivity, and decision–making (Nonaka & Takeuchi; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). KM improves curriculum development, research output, and faculty performance in higher education. Chinese private universities leverage digital repositories, collaborative research, and AI–driven knowledge storage to enhance academic and administrative efficiency and improve institutional rankings.

#### The Impact of Human Capital Management on Organizational Effectiveness

HCM directly impacts organizational effectiveness (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Wright & McMahan, 2011), enhancing productivity, job satisfaction, and institutional success. Faculty engagement, competitive salaries, and clear career pathways reduce turnover and boost motivation. Transformational and participatory leadership further align HCM with OE by fostering collaboration and growth. Integrating

HCM and KM enhances faculty performance and knowledge sharing, with future research needed on the role of AI and big data in optimizing these strategies.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** This study employs a mixed–methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to examine the impact of human capital management on organizational effectiveness in Chinese private universities. Quantitative data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), while in–depth interviews provided contextual validation.

**Population and Sample:** The study's target population consisted of faculty members and administrators from private universities across China. A stratified sampling method ensured regional representation. Structured questionnaires were completed by faculty, while 15 key administrators participated in semi–structured interviews.

**Research Tools:** The survey, developed through literature review and expert validation, covered demographics, human capital management, knowledge management, and organizational effectiveness. A pretest improved clarity and reliability before distribution. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo software to explore faculty engagement and institutional policies.

**Data Analysis:** Quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and SEM to examine variable relationships. Qualitative data were coded thematically using NVivo, allowing for the identification of key insights from faculty and administrators. Ethical standards, including informed consent and data anonymization, were strictly upheld.

This methodological ensures methodological rigor, offering a comprehensive understanding of how human capital management shapes organizational effectiveness in private universities.

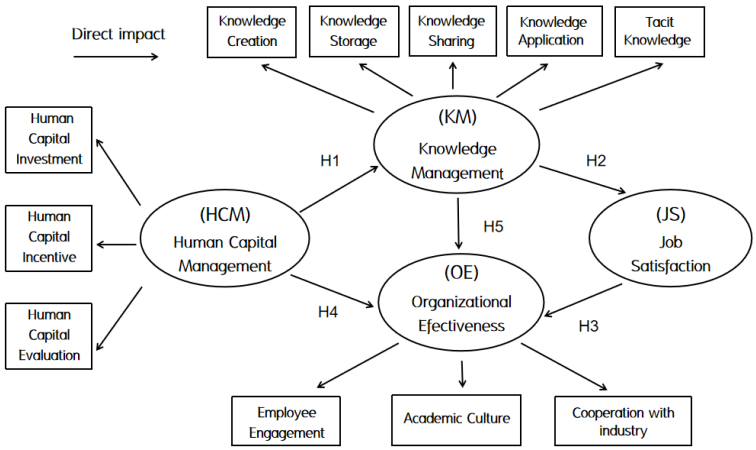


**Figure 1** Theoretical Research Framework

## Research Results

The research results are categorized into two sections: quantitative results, analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and qualitative results, derived from a content analysis–based model. These two aspects provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's outcomes and are presented sequentially.

### Part 1: Quantitative Results

1. The quantitative analysis encompasses data collected from 400 respondents, detailing their general demographic information. The collected variables include marital status, age, educational background, professional qualification, years of work experience, monthly income, work department, and work position, as illustrated in Table 1. These demographic characteristics provide essential context for understanding the broader findings of the study.

**Table 1** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Variables | Items | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 238 | 59.5 |
| | Female | 162 | 40.5 |
| Age | 21–30 years old | 152 | 38.0 |
| | 31–40 years old | 187 | 46.8 |
| | 41–50 years old | 37 | 9.2 |
| | 51–60 years old | 24 | 6.0 |
| Levels of education background | Below undergraduate | 108 | 27.0 |

| Variables | Items | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Bachelor's degree | 219 | 54.8 |
| | Master's degree | 52 | 13.0 |
| | Ph.D. | 21 | 5.2 |
| Levels of Professional Qualification | Teaching Assistant / Junior | 190 | 47.5 |
| | Lecture / Intermediate | 176 | 44.0 |
| | Associate Professors / Associate Senior | 31 | 7.7 |
| | Lecture / Intermediate | 176 | 44.0 |
| | Professor / Senior | 3 | 0.8 |
| Years of Work Experience | Less than 3 years | 85 | 21.3 |
| | 3–6 years | 112 | 28.0 |
| | 7–10 years | 105 | 26.2 |
| | 11–20 years | 77 | 19.3 |
| | More than 20 years | 21 | 5.2 |
| Monthly Income | Below 6,000RMB | 181 | 45.2 |
| | 6,001 – 9,000RMB | 132 | 33.0 |
| | 9,000 – 12,000RMB | 52 | 13.0 |
| | More than 12,000RMB | 35 | 8.8 |
| Work Departments | Teaching | 162 | 40.5 |
| | Education Management | 120 | 30.0 |
| | Student Management | 58 | 14.5 |
| | Administrative Management | 32 | 8.0 |
| | Logistics | 11 | 2.8 |
| | Others | 17 | 4.3 |
| Work Position | Administrative Staff | 223 | 55.8 |
| | Lecturer | 145 | 36.3 |
| | Administrator | 32 | 8.0 |
| **Total** | **400** | **100.0** | |

Table 1 outlines the demographic characteristics of 400 respondents, providing important context for interpreting the study's findings. Most respondents were male, accounting for 59.5 percent, while 40.5 percent were female. The largest age group was 31 to 40 years, comprising 46.8 percent, followed by those aged 21 to 30 at 38 percent. Smaller segments fell into the 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 age

brackets. For education, 54.8 percent held a bachelor's degree, while 27 percent had qualifications below the undergraduate level. Master's and doctoral degrees were held by 13 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively. Most participants occupied junior teaching roles, with 47.5 percent in entry–level positions and 44 percent as lecturers or intermediate posts. Higher academic ranks, such as associate professor and professor, were less represented. Most respondents had three to ten years of experience, and 45.2 percent earned under 6,000 RMB monthly. Their roles were mainly in teaching and education management, reflecting a junior to mid–career faculty demographic.

This section examines the four core variables of the study Human Capital Management (HCM), Knowledge Management (KM), Job Satisfaction (JS), and Organizational Effectiveness (OE) along with their eleven associated sub–variables. HCM is represented by investment, incentives, and evaluation practices, while KM encompasses knowledge creation, storage, sharing, application, and tacit knowledge. Job Satisfaction is analyzed as an independent variable, and OE is evaluated through employee engagement, academic culture, and industry collaboration. The findings reveal that OE in private universities is strongly influenced by HCM, KM, and JS. Universities that invest in mentorship, professional development, and inclusive decision–making structures see higher levels of faculty commitment. KM is also pivotal; institutions using digital repositories, research collaboration platforms, and structured knowledge–sharing systems benefit from improved academic innovation and interdisciplinary work. However, limitations in digital knowledge storage and transfer persist, calling for strategic upgrades. The study further emphasizes that effective HCM practices—particularly in recruitment, retention, and career progression enhance OE. Transparent evaluation systems, fair compensation, and performance–based incentives contribute to institutional efficiency, though ongoing gaps in leadership development and training continue to hinder progress.

2. This result part consists of reliability analysis, validity analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis, as shown in the following: The reliability of the study's measurement instruments was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs—Human Capital Management (HCM), Knowledge Management (KM), and Organizational Effectiveness (OE)—achieved Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating high reliability. To further verify the reliability of the scales, an item–total correlation analysis was conducted. Items with low correlations were reviewed and either refined or removed to enhance the consistency of the survey instrument. A pilot test involving 40 participants was also carried out before the full–scale distribution, allowing the researchers to identify

and address any ambiguities or inconsistencies in the questionnaire. This process ensured that the survey instruments were both reliable and appropriately structured, strengthening the credibility of the data collected and enabling more accurate interpretation in subsequent analyses.

The study evaluated both content and construct validity. Content validity was established through expert reviews by five specialists in human capital management and organizational effectiveness. Construct validity was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The EFA results showed that all items loaded significantly onto their respective factors, confirming that the constructs were appropriately defined. CFA further validated the measurement model by demonstrating acceptable fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI). In addition, discriminant validity testing confirmed that each construct was distinct, supporting the model's theoretical integrity and empirical reliability.

To explore the interrelationships among Human Capital Management (HCM), Knowledge Management (KM), and Organizational Effectiveness (OE), correlation analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation coefficients. The results revealed statistically significant positive associations, suggesting that improvements in HCM and KM practices contribute directly to enhanced OE. Multicollinearity tests confirmed the independence of the predictor variables, with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values falling within acceptable thresholds. CFA using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) demonstrated a strong model fit, supported by favorable values of CMIN/df, RMSEA, and Goodness–of–Fit Index (GFI). Path analysis revealed that human capital investment, faculty engagement, and knowledge–sharing significantly impact OE, with KM emerging as a mediating factor.

3. The results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Fitting and Hypothesis Testing:

Model Fit Assessment: Several fit indices were used, including the Chi–square ($\chi^2$) test, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). As shown in Table 2, the model achieved a Chi–square value of $\chi^2 = 307.208$ with 88 degrees of freedom ($p < 0.001$), indicating statistical significance. The RMSEA value of 0.041 falls well within the recommended threshold of 0.08, suggesting a strong model fit. Additionally, the CFI (0.949) and TLI (0.951) exceeded the minimum acceptable value of 0.90, while the SRMR value of 0.032 further confirmed an acceptable fit, validating the model's overall adequacy in explaining the observed data.

**Table 2** Model Fit Indices for SEM

| Goodness of Fit Index | Level of Good Fit | Test Result | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| CMIN | – | 307.208 | – |
| Df | – | 88 | – |
| CMIN/df | < 5 | 3.491 | Passed |
| GFI | ≥ 0.90 | 0.948 | Passed |
| AGFI | ≥ 0.90 | 0.902 | Passed |
| TLI | ≥ 0.95 | 0.951 | Passed |
| CFI | ≥ 0.90 | 0.949 | Passed |
| RMSEA | < 0.08 | 0.041 | Passed |
| SRMR | < 0.08 | 0.032 | Passed |
| P–Value | > 0.05 | 0.167 | Passed |

These results indicate that the model exhibits an acceptable level of fit, and therefore, further examination of the structural relationships is justified.

Path Analysis Results: The structural path coefficients between the latent variables were examined to test the proposed hypotheses. Figure 2 illustrates the path model with the standardized estimates. The results indicate that Human Capital Management (HCM) has a significant positive effect on Organizational Effectiveness (OE), with a path coefficient of $\beta$ = 0.883. Similarly, Knowledge Management (KM) is positively associated with OE, with a path coefficient of $\beta$ = 0.864. Job Satisfaction (JS) emerged as the most influential factor, with a coefficient of $\beta$ = 0.901. These findings suggest that structured faculty development, knowledge–sharing mechanisms, and engagement initiatives are critical determinants of organizational effectiveness.

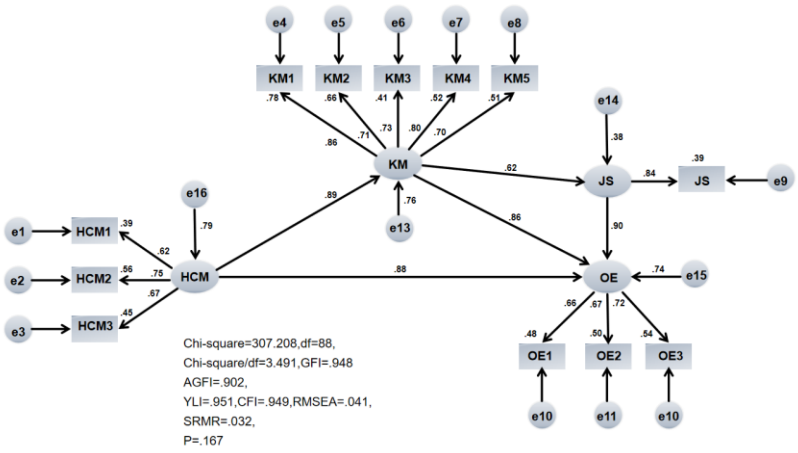


**Figure 2** Structural Equation Model with Standardized Path Coefficients

The significant relationships revealed in the model emphasize the importance of integrating Human Capital Management (HCM) and Knowledge Management (KM) strategies to enhance Organizational Effectiveness (OE). The positive impact of HCM on OE indicates that well–structured faculty development programs, transparent evaluation systems, and performance–based incentives play a vital role in improving institutional outcomes. Similarly, the strong association between KM and OE highlights the value of effective knowledge storage and application. Nonetheless, barriers such as limited digital access and weak collaboration frameworks continue to hinder knowledge–sharing efforts and must be addressed.

Hypothesis Testing: Table 2 summarizes the hypothesis testing results, including standardized path coefficients, standard errors, critical ratios, and p–values for each proposed relationship. Statistical significance was determined using the critical ratio (t–value), with values greater than 1.96 considered significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, confirming the validity of the hypothesized paths in the model.

**Table 3** Hypothesis Testing Results

| Path | Standardized Estimate ($\beta$) | S.E. | C.R. | Hypothesis Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HCM ⟶ OE | 0.883 | 0.978 | 4.124 | Supported |
| KM ⟶ OE | 0.864 | 1.042 | 7.121 | Supported |
| JS ⟶ OE | 0.901 | 2.346 | 4.734 | Supported |

The hypothesis testing results confirm that all proposed relationships in the model are statistically significant, reinforcing the interconnected roles of Human Capital Management (HCM), Knowledge Management (KM), and Job Satisfaction (JS) in enhancing Organizational Effectiveness (OE). Among

these, Job Satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictor, suggesting that faculty commitment, satisfaction, and sense of belonging have a substantial influence on institutional performance. Based on the findings, the following equation was derived: OE = 0.883•HCM + 0.864•KM + 0.901•JS + $\varepsilon$, where OE represents Organizational Effectiveness and $\varepsilon$ denotes the unexplained variance.

This equation provides empirical validation for the proposed relationships and highlights the importance of integrating faculty development, knowledge–sharing strategies, and job satisfaction initiatives to strengthen organizational outcomes in private Chinese universities. Institutions aiming for improved performance should prioritize faculty engagement programs, adopt AI–driven knowledge management tools, and implement structured performance evaluation systems to enhance institutional effectiveness and sustainability.

These findings are consistent with prior research, emphasizing that investments in human capital and knowledge management significantly contribute to organizational success. The strong influence of HCM on OE supports the implementation of professional development programs, transparent evaluations, and performance–based incentives. Furthermore, the results advocate for leadership development, faculty retention strategies, and comprehensive evaluation frameworks to improve institutional efficiency. These validated relationships and hypothesis–testing outcomes are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4** Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypotheses | Results | |
|---|---|---|
| | Coefficient Influence | Accepted/ Rejected |
| **Hypothesis 1:** Human capital management has a significant direct effect on knowledge management. | 0.891 | Accepted |
| **Hypothesis 2:** Knowledge management has a significant direct effect on job satisfaction. | 0.624 | Accepted |
| **Hypothesis 3:** Job satisfaction has a significant direct effect on organizational effectiveness. | 0.901 | Accepted |
| **Hypothesis 4:** Human capital management has a significant direct effect on organizational effectiveness. | 0.883 | Accepted |
| **Hypothesis 5:** Knowledge management has a significant direct effect on organizational effectiveness. | 0.864 | Accepted |

The strong influence of Job Satisfaction on Organizational Effectiveness highlights the need for a supportive work environment. The faculty emphasized career growth, leadership support, and fair incentives while also noting challenges like administrative inefficiencies and workload. Addressing these through mentorship, leadership policies, and research incentives can boost institutional performance.

**Part 2 Qualitative Results**

The qualitative analysis highlights key factors influencing organizational effectiveness, aligning with quantitative findings. Faculty emphasized career development, transparent evaluations, and supportive leadership as essential for a positive work environment. Concerns included excessive administrative duties limiting research productivity and the need for structured mentorship programs for knowledge transfer. Though enhanced by digital platforms and collaboration, effective knowledge–sharing practices face challenges like limited funding and institutional bureaucracy. Engaged leadership emerged as a crucial driver of faculty motivation and job satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of a collaborative and development–focused academic culture.

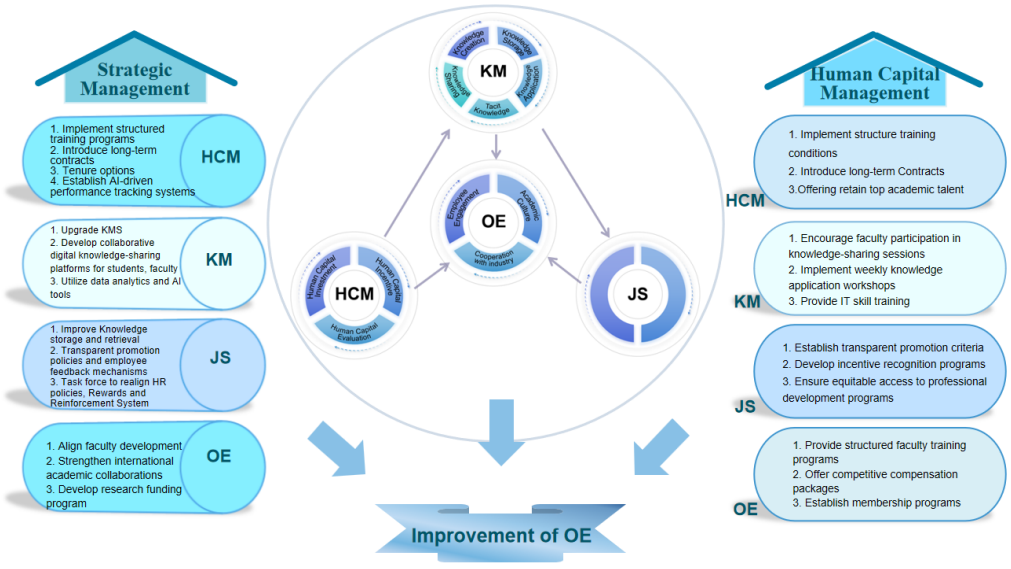


**Figure 3** A HCM–OE Model

Figure 3 presents a conceptual framework based on qualitative findings, highlighting Human Capital Management (HCM), Knowledge Management (KM), and Job Satisfaction (JS) as key drivers of organizational effectiveness in private universities. Leadership support, career development, and fair evaluations enhance faculty retention, while structured knowledge–sharing and interdisciplinary collaboration strengthen institutional performance. Job satisfaction, driven by motivation, recognition, and

inclusion in decision–making, fosters professional commitment. Balancing teaching, research, administrative duties, mentorship, and leadership–driven initiatives boosts faculty productivity. The framework underscores the strategic integration of these elements to create a high–performing academic environment, reinforcing the study's quantitative findings.

## Discussion

The study highlights the impact of Human Capital Management (HCM) on Organizational Effectiveness (OE) in China's private universities, identifying both strengths and challenges. While structured recruitment, training, and evaluation exist, issues like faculty retention, career progression, and compensation equity persist. Quantitative data indicated moderate satisfaction with incentives, while qualitative insights emphasized the need for transparent tenure pathways, mentorship, and leadership development. Strong correlations were found between HCM, KM, and OE, with faculty training and knowledge–sharing as key drivers. Barriers included inadequate knowledge storage, limited funding, and weak industry collaboration. The study proposes a structured HCM model integrating faculty development, performance incentives, and digital tools to enhance retention and competitiveness, offering practical insights for institutional improvement and future cross–cultural research.

## New Knowledge

The integration of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and qualitative analysis provides a comprehensive view of Human Capital Management (HCM), Knowledge Management (KM), and Job Satisfaction (JS) in China's private universities. SEM results confirm that these factors strongly influence organizational effectiveness (OE), with JS having the most significant impact and highlighting the importance of faculty motivation and engagement. Universities with structured faculty development, transparent evaluations, and strong knowledge–sharing systems show higher efficiency. Qualitative insights further emphasize leadership support, equitable workloads, and clear career paths as key to faculty commitment. Mentorship, AI–powered knowledge management, and participatory decision–making are critical for academic growth and institutional success. These findings present a holistic model for enhancing faculty engagement and organizational effectiveness.

## Recommendations

Recommendations for Model Application: The proposed Human Capital Management (HCM) model should be implemented through well-structured faculty development programs, transparent performance evaluations, and strong leadership engagement. Universities must invest in digital knowledge-sharing platforms, mentorship initiatives, and AI-powered knowledge management systems to enhance collaboration and improve institutional effectiveness. Integrating competitive compensation, clear career progression pathways, and professional development incentives is essential for improving faculty retention. Strengthening partnerships between academia and industry will also support research funding and promote knowledge exchange. Additionally, adopting participatory decision-making frameworks can foster greater faculty engagement and boost overall performance. Successful implementation will require continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation to ensure alignment with evolving educational needs.

Recommendations for Future Research: Future studies should examine the applicability of the HCM model across different cultural and institutional contexts to assess its global relevance. Longitudinal research is necessary to assess the long-term impact of faculty engagement on institutional sustainability. The impact of digital transformation on knowledge management and collaboration should also be further explored. Comparative studies between public and private universities can reveal structural differences and strategic outcomes. Moreover, research into the effectiveness of AI-driven faculty development programs will provide valuable insights into fostering innovation and sustainable growth in higher education.

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