

# *Study on the Incentive Mechanism for Administrative Staff in Private Colleges and Universities in Macao*

Hoichon Lai, Jiahao Chen, Minyi Lin, Hoihou Lai, Sengman Kou\*

*International (Macao) Institute of Academic Research, Macau, China*

*\*Corresponding author: Sengman Kou*

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**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the existing problems in the management of administrative staff in private colleges and universities in Macao, and puts forward a series of feasible suggestions based on the actual situation and incentive theory to further improve the performance of administrative staff in private colleges and universities in Macao.

## 1. Introduction

In terms of higher education, since the development of modern higher education in Macao is only about 40 years old, there were few higher education institutions at the early stage. Meanwhile, the courses and academic fields offered are relatively single. However, with the increasing number of universities and the society's demand for different professional knowledge, the types of courses have become increasingly diversified. According to statistics from the Macao Education and Youth Development Bureau, there are currently 10 higher education institutions in Macao, of which 4 are public and 6 are private [1].

With the continuous expansion of higher education in Macao, the continuous expansion of the scale of education, and the progress of the popularization of higher education, the quality of higher education has become one of the issues that people are paying more and more attention to. There are many factors that affect the quality of higher education. Some scholars divide the factors that affect the quality of higher education into three levels: macro, meso, and micro. In their opinion, education system and policy at macro level, teachers' quality, teaching management, specialty construction and curriculum setting at medium level, teachers and students' teaching and learning enthusiasm, teaching methods and means at micro level all have direct and important influence on the quality of higher education [2]. Some scholars also divide the factors that affect the quality of higher education into external factors and internal factors. External factors include domestic and foreign environment, social factors and educational resources. Internal factors include the management systems of colleges and universities, teachers' quality, and students' quality. They believe that the four factors of the management systems of colleges and universities, teachers' quality, students' quality and educational resources have a significant impact on the quality of Macao's higher education. At the same time, domestic and foreign environmental and social factors have an impact on the quality of Macao's higher education, but they have not reached the significant level [3]. However, many scholars have overlooked a factor that affects the quality of higher education-administrative staff.

Some scholars bluntly said that for many years, the salaries and benefits of faculty and staff in private colleges and universities have been neglected for a long time. There are a large number of private college and university administrators who also work hard for education. However, issues like low pay, heavy workload, hindered promotion, forced work during holidays, and high turnover rate are common. They need to be resolved urgently [4]. In this regard, this paper analyzes the existing problems in the management of administrative staff in private colleges and universities in Macau. It combines actual conditions and incentive theory, and puts forward a series of feasible suggestions to further improve the work performance of administrative staff in private colleges and universities in Macau (hereinafter referred to as administrative staff).

## **2. The Existing Problems in the Management of Administrative Staff**

In universities, administrative staff plays an important role in the management and operation of the school. They are the key to the normal operation of the school and an important guarantee for the promotion of the school's development. Therefore, it is very necessary to fully mobilize their work enthusiasm, but the current administrative staff management still has the following problems.

### **2.1 Lack of Legal Protection**

In February 2021, the Bureau of Education and Youth and the Bureau of Higher Education merged into the Bureau of Education and Youth Development, which is responsible for following up local higher education, non-higher education and youth affairs. In terms of non-higher education, as early as 2012, the government promulgated *System Framework for Teaching Staff in Non-Higher Education Private Schools* to provide non-higher education teachers with certain protection. In terms of higher education, the government issued *Outline for the Medium and Long-term Development of Higher Education in Macau (2021-2030)* in December 2020 as a blueprint for the future development of higher education. It mainly includes three overall goals and eight development directions. Among them, although the sixth direction is to strengthen the professional level of the staff of colleges and universities, there is still no provision to protect the staff's salaries and benefits of private colleges and universities. It can be seen that the salary and benefits of teaching and administrative staff in private colleges and universities still lack legal protection. In the absence of legal protection, how does the SAR government implement the governance concepts of “give Macao Education” and “build Macao by talents”[5]? How to establish an incentive mechanism for administrative staff?

### **2.2 Lack of Training Plans**

In the personnel system of colleges and universities, the career development of teaching staff is relatively clear. For example, from teaching assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, professors, etc., their career development has detailed regulations. On the contrary, in administrative staff's daily work, they often encounter nepotism situations. Schools also obviously lack attention to current administrative staff. On the other hand, administrative staff also lack training plans. Even if there is a training plan, the training content is not related to their work content. It will reduce the possibility of executive promotion.

### **2.3 Lack of the Incentive Mechanism**

For colleges and universities, teaching and scientific research are the top priorities. Therefore, many universities put resources on how to improve the school's majors and rankings. For the

administrative staff, the incentive mechanism that can improve their working ability and mobilize them has not yet been perfected. Such circumstances leading to blocked promotions and high turnover rates.

### **3. Suggestions on Improving the Management of Administrative Staff in Private Colleges and Universities in Macau**

Aiming at the current management problems such as lack of legal protection, lack of training planning and lack of the incentive mechanism for the administrative staff in private colleges and universities in Macau, this paper combines the actual situation and the incentive theory to put forward a series of feasible suggestions to further improve the work performance of administrative staff.

#### **3.1 Legislative Guarantee**

After the establishment of Bureau of Education and Youth Development, the connection between non-higher education and higher education should be done well. Legislation should be passed to guarantee the salary and welfare of the administrative staff in private colleges and universities to further promote the development of education. It is recommended to refer to *System Framework for Teaching Staff in Non-Higher Education Private Schools*. These private colleges and universities should provide professional development allowances for administrative staff to narrow the salary and welfare gap between public and private colleges and universities. At the same time, these private schools should promote the improvement of provident funds and retirement funds. In terms of provident funds, a tripartite contribution model of the government, schools, and teaching and administrative staff should be established to reflect the government's commitment to education. Regarding pensions, a lump-sum pension should be given to administrative staff with a certain seniority to protect the retirement life and dignity of the administrative staff.

#### **3.2 Improve Training Plans**

Regarding the career planning of administrative staff, nepotism should be avoided. Meanwhile, targeted training plans should be formulated for administrative staff in different positions, and the promotion rules for teaching staff should be referenced to formulate scientific and reasonable training plans for administrative staff. Flexible, fair, and effective assessment methods should be used to improve the professionalism of administrative staff, increase their sense of identity with the organization in the long run, and increase the possibility of administrative staff being promoted.

#### **3.3 Establish Incentive Mechanisms**

As university administrators, it is necessary to establish an incentive mechanism for administrative staff to improve their work abilities and mobilize their enthusiasm to reduce the obstacles to promotion and the high turnover rate. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory in management can be used to establish incentive mechanisms.

##### **3.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

Abraham Harold Maslow is an American social psychologist, comparative psychologist, and one of the main creators of humanistic psychology. His main works include: *Motivation and Personality*, *Religion, Values and Peak Experience*, *Scientific Psychology*, *The Realm of Human Performance*, *Exploration in Existential Psychology*.

Maslow initially proposed the hierarchy of needs theory in his paper *The Theory of Human Motivation* published in 1943. In 1954, Maslow published the book *Motivation and Personality*, which embodies his humanistic psychology thoughts. In the book, Maslow divided human needs into five levels: physiological needs, security needs, needs to love and be loved, needs to respect, and needs for self-realization. In 1970, he changed human needs into seven levels, namely: physiological needs, safety needs, love and be loved needs, respect needs, knowledge needs, beauty needs and self-realization needs (as shown in Figure 1).

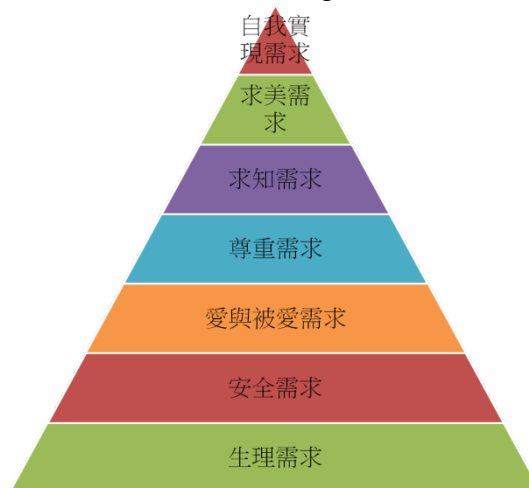


Fig.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

生理需求 physiological needs, 安全需求 safety needs, 愛与被爱的需求 love and be loved needs, 尊重需求 respect needs, 求知需求 knowledge needs, 求美需求 beauty needs, 自我实现需求 self-realization needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory believes that: (1) Human needs mostly develop from low-level to high-level. (2) The lower-level needs are partially or fully met before the higher-level needs become the pursuit needs. (3) Not everyone's needs develop in this order, and sometimes they can be reversed or surpassed. (4) Several needs can be partially met at the same time, but there is always one main one, that is, the need for advantages. (5) Senior needs can motivate people more persistently. [6]

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory can be used to use incentives flexibly according to the needs of employees. For example, if new employees are in the stage of physiological needs, we can appropriately increase their salaries. For employees of a certain seniority, they may be in the stage of respecting needs. We can let them serve as middle administrative staff. For senior employees, they should reach the stage of self-realization. We can let them serve as senior managing staff.

### 3.3.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg is an American psychologist, management theorist, behavioral scientist, and the founder of two-factor theory. His main works include: *Work Motivation Factors*, *Work and Human Nature*, *Management Choice: Is It More Effective or More Human*.

Herzberg proposed the two-factor theory in 1959. The theory believes that there are two main factors that cause people to work motivation: one is the incentive factor (including: a sense of accomplishment at work, recognition of work performance, challenging work, greater responsibility, better development, etc.) The second is health care factor (including: company policies, administrative management, supervision methods, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, status, safety and living conditions.) [7]

Therefore, as administrators, in addition to the factors that do not generate incentives, such as wages, improved interpersonal relationships, good working conditions, status, safety, etc., to avoid dissatisfaction among employees, we must also do well in the factors that generate incentives, such as challenging work, achievements, increased work responsibilities, appreciation, etc., which can make employees feel satisfied.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper suggests that we should pass legislative guarantees, improve training plans, and establish incentive mechanisms to further improve the performance of administrative staff.

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