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A Systematic Literature Review Of Education Management Systems In China And Indonesia: Governance Models, Digital Transformation, And Emerging Trends

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Abstract

Education management systems are essential in determining the quality, equity, and efficiency of national educational outcomes. This study seeks to analyze and contrast the strengths, flaws, and developing trends of educational management systems in China and Indonesia by a systematic literature review (SLR). This study, adhering to the PRISMA 2020 model, consolidates findings from 11 peer-reviewed, Scopus-indexed primary papers published between 2021 and 2025. The results indicate divergent governance orientations: China's education administration system is marked by significant centralization, policy consistency, and resource allocation motivated by efficiency, whereas Indonesia's system prioritizes decentralization, institutional independence, and participatory governance. Recent research trends in both contexts underscore the increasing significance of digital transformation, encompassing Learning Management Systems (LMS), artificial intelligence tools, data-driven decision-making, and program-based institutional management. Nonetheless, enduring problems persist, including restricted institutional flexibility in China and inconsistent implementation ability along with quality discrepancies in Indonesia. The study suggests that neither centralized nor decentralized methods independently meet the intricate requirements of modern school management. A hybrid governance paradigm that combines centralized coordination with regional authority may provide a more sustainable and equitable solution. These findings enhance the comparative education management literature and offer evidence-based insights for policymakers and educational leaders implementing system-level reforms.

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Keywords: Education management system, comparative education China and Indonesia, systematic literature review, digital education management.

INTRODUCTION

Education management systems serve as the backbone of national education quality (Grace et al., 2023), providing the structural, administrative, and pedagogical frameworks that determine how effectively a country delivers learning outcomes to its citizens. In both China and Indonesia, education management has evolved in response to complex socio-economic transformations, technological advancements, and shifting global educational paradigms (He et al., 2007; Sumintono et al., 2023). China's system has historically emphasized centralization, state supervision, and policy uniformity, enabling it to maintain a cohesive direction in curriculum implementation, teacher training, and evaluation standards (Naughton, 2008). The Ministry of Education in China plays a dominant role in strategic planning and the allocation of educational resources(Shen & Xia, 2022), ensuring that national objectives such as technological innovation and equitable access are consistently pursued. This level of coordination has become one of the major strengths of China's education management system, contributing to remarkable improvements in literacy rates, teacher qualifications, and educational technology integration across diverse regions.

However, despite these achievements, the Chinese education management system also exhibits several weaknesses that stem primarily from its rigid administrative hierarchy and examination-oriented culture. Excessive centralization tends to limit institutional autonomy and discourage grassroots innovation in teaching and learning practices(Geletu & Adige, 2024). Furthermore, the persistent emphasis on standardized testing as a metric of success has reinforced competition and stress among students, while sometimes neglecting the cultivation of creativity, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking skills (Tagher & Robinson, 2016). Regional disparities, especially between urban centers such as Shanghai and underdeveloped western provinces, remain a pressing concern that challenges the principle of equitable education. Thus, while China's model demonstrates systemic coherence and control, it struggles to accommodate the localized needs and cultural variations that influence educational outcomes across its vast territory (Kwong, 2016).

In contrast, Indonesia's education management system is characterized by a decentralized and participatory governance structure, rooted in the post-1999 regional autonomy reforms (Muhtada, 2017). This approach allows provincial and district governments greater authority over

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curriculum development, teacher management, and budgeting. One of the primary strengths of this decentralized model lies in its responsiveness to local conditions and community needs, which promotes inclusivity and flexibility (Allen & Smith, 2023). Decentralization has also encouraged innovation in school-based management, empowering principals and teachers to make pedagogical and administrative decisions that better align with their students' realities (Chin & Chuang, 2015). Moreover, initiatives such as the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) policy have strengthened the focus on creativity, student-centered learning, and teacher professional growth, marking a progressive shift toward adaptive and competency-based education management (Mayana & Santika, 2023).

Nevertheless, Indonesia continues to face substantial weaknesses in the implementation of its decentralized management framework. The autonomy granted to local authorities is often undermined by disparities in financial capacity, bureaucratic inefficiency, and limited managerial expertise(Said et al., 2020). These challenges have led to inconsistent education quality across regions, with rural and remote areas suffering from inadequate facilities, insufficient teacher training, and weak accountability mechanisms. The lack of a unified data-driven monitoring system further complicates national efforts to evaluate educational outcomes effectively (Hegestedt et al., 2023). Consequently, while Indonesia's system promotes democratic participation and local empowerment, it struggles with fragmented policy execution, inequitable resource distribution, and limited coordination between central and local authorities (Indriyanto, 2013).

Despite the vital importance of education management systems in advancing national quality and equity, a substantial governance gap persists, as neither centralized nor decentralized models alone adequately address the complex demands of contemporary educational environments. While China's centralized framework ensures policy coherence and efficient resource distribution, it concurrently limits institutional flexibility; in contrast, Indonesia's decentralized approach fosters participatory governance but encounters challenges related to inconsistent implementation and notable disparities in quality across regions. Additionally, both countries face an analytical dilemma in reconciling these traditional governance paradigms with the rapid emergence of digital transformation and data-driven decision-making, resulting in a deficiency of integrated management strategies capable of effectively balancing administrative efficiency with local autonomy.

The comparative evaluation of China and Indonesia reveals a critical governance gap in balancing centralization and decentralization to achieve both equity and efficiency in education

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management. China's highly centralized system ensures coherence, standardization, and strong state control (Mohrman et al., 2011), but at the expense of institutional flexibility and local innovation. In contrast, Indonesia's decentralized framework promotes inclusivity and adaptability but suffers from inconsistencies, inefficiencies, and lack of systemic coherence (Latief & Wijaya, 2025). This gap underscores a fundamental tension in educational governance, the need to reconcile uniform national standards with context-sensitive autonomy**.** An integrative model that synthesizes China's policy coordination strengths with Indonesia's participatory and flexible management could serve as a more sustainable framework for educational reform. Such a hybrid approach would not only enhance managerial efficiency but also support innovation, equity, and accountability across diverse educational settings, offering valuable insights for policymakers and researchers in comparative education management.

METHOD

This investigation employs a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, adhering to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to facilitate a transparent, reproducible, and methodologically sound review protocol. This review concentrates on empirical investigations of educational management systems within China and Indonesia. A two-stage screening process was employed, encompassing title-abstract screening and full-text evaluation, which was conducted by independent reviewers to mitigate selection bias. The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed primary studies published in English between 2021 and 2025. This encompassed quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research explicitly addressing managerial aspects, including governance, policy implementation, curriculum management, digital transformation, and institutional leadership. Studies that were non-empirical or lacked a management focus were excluded. The data were acquired solely from the Scopus database, owing to its extensive compilation of reputable journals. A refined search query, incorporating predetermined keywords, publication stages, document categories, and country affiliations, was employed. By systematically applying these criteria and procedures, this study synthesizes current and pertinent evidence to identify research trends, strengths, weaknesses, and gaps within the comparative analysis of education management systems in China and Indonesia, thus establishing a solid basis for scholarly discourse and evidence-based policy recommendations

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section outlines the results from the 11 peer-reviewed studies that used primary data and satisfied the inclusion criteria of this review. The analysis is structured around key themes identified from the data, illustrating how education management systems have been implemented and examined in both Indonesia and China. "The small number of studies is due to the strict inclusion criteria (peer-reviewed, primary data, 2021-2025, Scopus indexed, China and Indonesia)." This improves methodological rigor while reducing the overall number of eligible research. Table 1 presents a summary of these selected studies.

Table 1: Higher Education Management and Technology in Indonesia

This table focuses on the integration of AI, the effectiveness of Learning Management Systems (LMS), and autonomous governance within the Indonesian educational landscape.

Theme	Key Findings	Authors & Year
System Standardization	Quantitative analysis across 31 provinces shows that a 1% increase in system standardization leads to a 0.527% improvement in student management quality.	Li, X. (2024)
Big Data & Efficiency	"Clustering" models in Northwest China's "double first-class" universities have optimized resource allocation efficiency. Multidimensional big data is essential for upgrading higher education management structures.	Tan, B. (2024); Lv, Z. (2022)
Regional Comparisons	Comparative studies analyze how program and project management increase university competitiveness across China, Russia, and India.	Sorokin, M.Y.; Yu, L. (2024)
Asian Open Universities	Benchmarking system and service quality across open universities in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Pakistan using Moodle-based platforms.	Mir, K.; Figueroa, R.B.; Zuhairi, A. (2024)

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Table 2: Educational Management and Digital Transformation in China

Theme	Key Findings & Methodology	Authors & Years
AI Integration & Student Autonomy	Students demonstrate high readiness for AI tools (ChatGPT/Chatbots) to reduce academic stress and improve self-regulation. These tools act as non-judgmental companions that enhance independent learning planning.	Martha et al. (2025); Rohid et al. (2025)
LMS Success & Behavioral Analytics	LMS effectiveness is significantly driven by system and information quality based on the DeLone and McLean model. High-achieving students exhibit more complex interaction patterns with course materials, though vocational programs face hurdles in IT infrastructure.	Rulinawaty et al. (2024); Mir et al. (2024); Cenka et al. (2022); Prihantoro (2021)
Efficiency via Data & Standardization	Quantitative models show that system standardization directly boosts management quality specifically, a 1% increase in standardization results in a 0.527% increase in effectiveness. Big data and clustering algorithms optimize resource allocation.	Tan (2024); Li (2024); Lv (2022)
Institutional Governance & Strategy	National competitiveness in higher education is linked to robust program and project management[11]. In specific cultural contexts, such as pesantren-based universities, managerial autonomy is the primary driver for overcoming globalization challenges.	Sorokin & Yu (2024); Fatmawati et al. (2023)

This table highlights research focused on system standardization, big data applications, and comparative competitiveness involving China.

Interpretation: Overarching Patterns and Meaning

The eleven primary data studies (2021–2025) primarily focus on a limited set of applied themes: the effectiveness and analytics of Learning Management Systems (LMS), AI-enabled

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learner support tools (such as chatbots and ChatGPT), data-driven management approaches (including big data and process mining), institutional program and project management and clustering, as well as governance and ethical considerations in student administration and moral education. Across these strands, there is a consistent practical objective, enhancing operational efficiency, fostering learner engagement, and increasing institutional competitiveness, rather than evaluating complex theoretical frameworks of educational governance. Research from Indonesia predominantly emphasizes Learning Management Systems, student autonomy, and artificial intelligence support. (e.g., Prihantoro, 2021; Rohid et al., 2025; Rulinawaty et al., 2024), while Chinese studies often address resource allocation, clustering models, and system standardization (e.g., Tan, Li, Lv, 2024). This collection collectively proposes a research agenda focused on practical applications, addressing the urgent requirements of digital transformation within higher education, and aligning with national objectives for competitiveness and student success. The aggregate count of articles addressing the specified topics surpasses that of China, thereby mirroring observed publication patterns. Specifically, Indonesian universities demonstrate a greater volume of output in the areas of Learning Management Systems and Artificial Intelligence-related management research, whereas Chinese studies exhibit a more institutional or administrative focus and are less frequently disseminated in English-language publications.

Synthesis of substantive findings

1. AI and learner-facing conversational agents: Two recent studies (Martha et al., 2025; Rohid et al., 2025) demonstrate promise improvements in student preparedness, autonomy, and self-regulated learning when chatbots or ChatGPT are incorporated into courses. Students acknowledge practical advantages such as assistance with homework and alleviation of tension, while also expressing concerns regarding the potential decline in critical thinking skills, ethical considerations in AI use, and the importance of AI literacy. The implication is pragmatic: artificial intelligence can support learner autonomy; however, it must be complemented by a redesign of pedagogy that emphasizes higher-order tasks.
2. LMS effectiveness, quality models, and analytics: Several studies utilize the DeLone & McLean IS success framework alongside process-mining techniques (Cenka et al., 2022; Pratiwi, 2023; Rulinawaty et al., 2024). Findings demonstrate that systems, information, and service quality influence the effectiveness of LMS, and that behavioral patterns in LMS logs are associated with achievement. Nevertheless, a persistent vacuum remains: numerous studies conclude

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with correlational assertions and benchmarking suggestions rather than providing evidence of how institutional modifications—such as governance or funding inputs—causally enhance outcomes.

3. Institutional management, clustering, and competitiveness: Chinese-focused studies (including Tan; Sorokin's comparative analysis involving China (Sorokin & Yu, 2024)) highlight program and project management, clustering strategies, and efficiency improvements achieved through resource allocation. Quantitative indicators indicate enhanced scale efficiency in certain provinces; however, the analyses frequently overlook equity—specifically, whether the benefits are predominantly confined to already privileged institutions or regions.
4. Big Data and Student Development: Level and Process Mining studies support enhanced data integration to improve student administration; evidence indicates potential benefits such as more comprehensive monitoring and predictive capabilities, although it also raises governance concerns related to data quality, privacy, and staff capacity. The existing literature falls short of providing comprehensive models for ethical data governance and for integrating predictive analytics with practical, humane interventions.

Comparative Critique: China vs Indonesia

The collection exposes a governance tension: China's research highlights centralized policies, efficiency, and clustering as key strategies for system-wide enhancement; Indonesia's focus emphasizes decentralization, institutional autonomy, including open universities and vocational LMS adaptation, and grassroots technological adoption, such as chatbots and LMS practices. Empirical evidence indicates that Indonesian studies offer more comprehensive qualitative and user-focused insights, including student perceptions and vocational curriculum adaptations(Suyetno et al., 2024; Tuan, 2022), whereas Chinese studies primarily contribute to institutional and administrative modelling (Guo et al., 2022; Li, 2024). However, the table also reveals a discrepancy: assertions regarding which model performs better are not well substantiated due to the limited availability of cross-national comparative primary-data studies. In summary, the literature is complementary but has not yet been integrated into comprehensive causal analyses.

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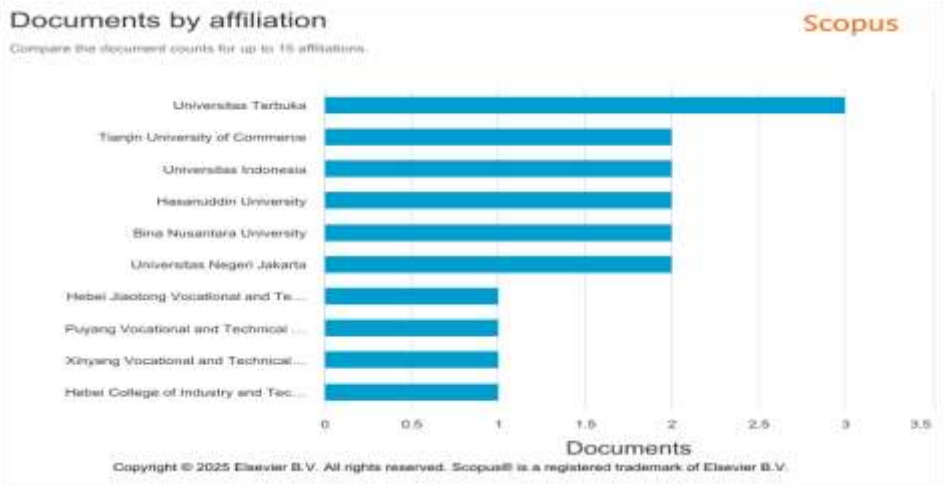


Figure 1 Documents by Affiliation: Comparative Analysis

The figure above illustrates the distribution of publications by institutional affiliation, comparing the research productivity of universities involved in studies related to education management systems in China and Indonesia. The data reveal that *Universitas Terbuka* leads with the highest number of publications (three documents), indicating its strong engagement in research on online learning, educational technology, and management systems. Several other Indonesian universities, *Universitas Indonesia, Hasanuddin University, Bina Nusantara University,* and *Universitas Negeri Jakarta*, each contribute two documents, demonstrating Indonesia's broad institutional participation in this research field. In comparison, Chinese institutions such as *Tianjin University of Commerce* and several vocational and technical colleges (e.g., *Hebei Jiaotong Vocational and Technical College, Puyang Vocational and Technical College, Xinyang Vocational and Technical College, and Hebei College of Industry and Technology*) contribute fewer publications, typically focusing on vocational and technical education management. Overall, the figure indicates that Indonesia exhibits a higher research output in education management system studies, particularly in universities emphasizing digital learning and decentralization, while China's contributions tend to focus on applied and technical aspects of educational management aligned with national workforce development goals.

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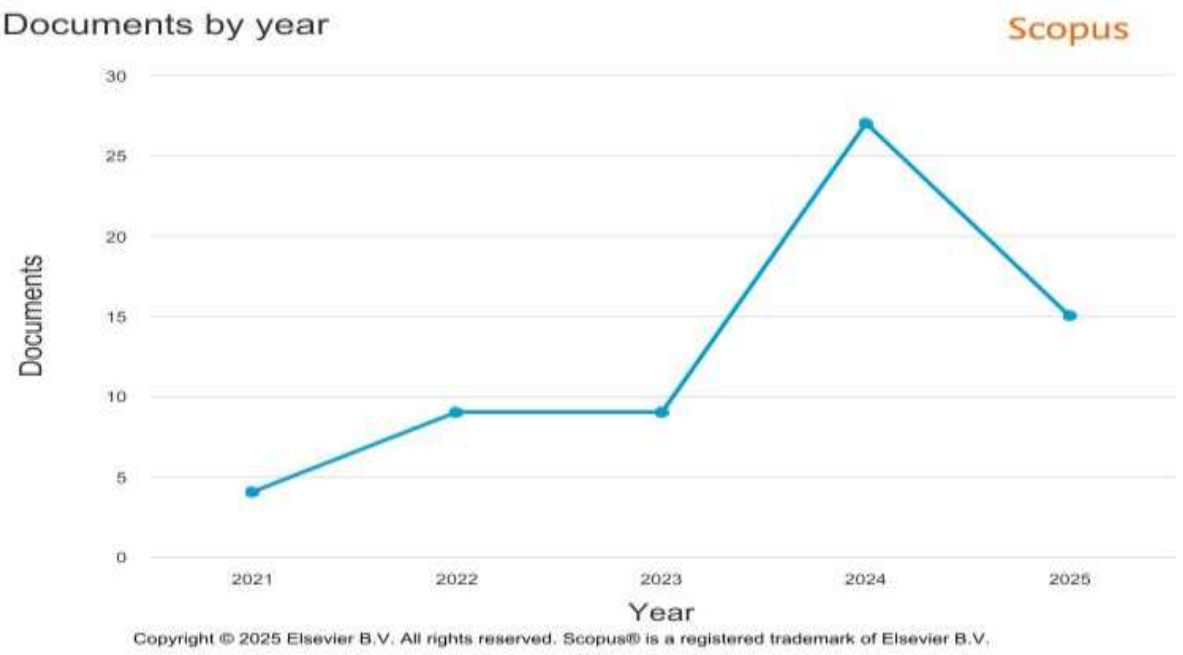


Figure 2 Research Trend

The graph depicts the research trends on Education Management Systems in China and Indonesia from 2021 to 2025, as indexed in Scopus, and demonstrates a distinct upward trajectory followed by a recent correction. In 2021, the volume of publications was comparatively modest, indicating that scholarly focus on education management systems in China and Indonesia remained limited or in the early stages of development. This period may be regarded as an initial phase characterized by research predominantly centered on fundamental issues, including policy reforms, governance frameworks, and the early development of digitalization in education administration.

In 2022 and 2023, the graph indicates a steady yet moderate growth in the volume of documents. This growth indicates a heightened academic interest, presumably prompted by post-pandemic educational reforms, the expanded implementation of digital management systems, and comparative analyses assessing governance, leadership, and institutional efficacy in both nations. The stability observed between 2022 and 2023 signifies a period of consolidation, during which researchers concentrated on refining established themes rather than swiftly exploring new avenues.

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A substantial increase takes place in 2024, representing the apex of research productivity. This significant rise indicates that education management systems emerged as a highly prominent subject, potentially driven by intensified government policies, extensive digital transformation efforts, reforms in quality assurance, and international cooperation. For China and Indonesia, this period corresponds with an increased focus on intelligent education, data-informed management, accountability, and system-level governance, leading to a significant increase in scholarly publications. In 2025, the volume of documents decreases relative to 2024, although it continues to be greater than in the initial years (2021–2023). This decline does not inherently signify diminished interest; instead, it may be attributed to partial-year data, publication delays, or a natural stabilization following a peak research phase. It may also indicate a transition from exploratory and descriptive research toward more targeted, evaluative, or empirical investigations that necessitate extended publication timelines.

Overall, the graph illustrates that research on education management systems in China and Indonesia is a developing and evolving field, with significant growth observed in recent years. The trend underscores growing academic and policy significance, especially concerning digital governance, system efficiency, and comparative education management, while also reflecting a shift toward consolidation and more in-depth analysis following a period of accelerated expansion.

Implications of the Study

The results of this study have significant consequences for policy, practice, and research. The comparative analysis underscores the need to balance centralized authority with decentralized autonomy from a policy standpoint. Chinese policymakers might advantageously expand institutional flexibility incrementally to foster innovation, creativity, and context-specific management, whereas Indonesian policymakers ought to enhance central coordination mechanisms to mitigate inequities and bolster responsibility across regions. The increasing dependence on digital tools like Learning Management Systems, artificial intelligence, and data analytics highlights the necessity for institutional capacity enhancement, especially in data literacy, ethical governance, and system integration. Educational leaders and administrators are urged to integrate technological adoption with pedagogical reform instead of considering digital tools as independent answers. This study enhances the comparative education management literature by synthesizing current empirical evidence and pinpointing governance conflicts that are frequently addressed conceptually but seldom analyzed systematically with primary data. The

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report serves as a reference for higher education institutions aiming to evaluate their management practices against national and regional standards.

Future Research Recommendations

Future research should progress from descriptive and correlational analysis to more rigorous causal and comparative designs. Longitudinal and mixed-methods studies are advised to investigate the direct impact of particular governance reforms, funding structures, and managerial initiatives on educational quality, equity, and institutional performance. Cross-national primary data research involving China and Indonesia are essential to validate comparative assertions and find transferable best practices. Moreover, subsequent research should investigate the ethical and governance aspects of data-driven educational management, encompassing privacy, algorithmic bias, and the humanization of student administration. Considering the swift proliferation of artificial intelligence in educational administration, additional research is necessary to evaluate its enduring effects on critical thinking, institutional culture, and academic integrity. Ultimately, broadening the scope to encompass basic and vocational education would yield a more thorough comprehension of education administration systems across various educational tiers.

CONCLUSION

This comprehensive literature analysis concludes that school management systems in China and Indonesia have fundamentally distinct governance ideologies, influencing their unique strengths and limits. China's centralized model provides robust policy coherence, administrative efficiency, and strategic alignment with national development objectives; yet, it is hindered by restricted institutional autonomy and ongoing regional disparities. In contrast, Indonesia's decentralized and participatory model promotes flexibility, innovation, and local responsiveness; yet, it is hindered by inconsistent implementation capability, fragmented accountability, and regional variations in educational quality. Recent empirical studies across both contexts demonstrate a distinct transition towards digital management practices, notably the implementation of Learning Management Systems, artificial intelligence, and data-driven decision-making, signifying that technological transformation has emerged as a primary catalyst for modern educational management reform. Nonetheless, the research indicates that digital tools alone are unable to address systemic governance issues without concurrent institutional capacity enhancement, ethical supervision, and pedagogical reorientation. The findings

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emphasize the necessity for a hybrid education management paradigm that deliberately combines centralized coordination with localized autonomy, allowing systems to achieve a balance of efficiency, equity, and innovation. This integrative method presents a more sustainable avenue for educational reform and serves as a significant reference for politicians, administrators, and scholars involved in comparative education management.

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