

# Perceptions of School Management Transformation in Guangdong Province: Between Digital Reform and Administrative Persistence

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## ABSTRACT

School management transformation has become a central issue in educational modernization, yet descriptive evidence on how this transformation is perceived in Guangdong Province remains limited. This study aims to examine perceptions of school management transformation across six dimensions embedded in the research instrument: Traditional Limitations, Value Transformation, Teacher Development, Collaborative Governance, Digital Transformation, and Regional Collaboration. The study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design using a 30-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale administered directly to respondents in the field. The analysis was based on 38 valid responses. Because respondent role categories were not recorded in the final tabulated records, the findings are interpreted as descriptive perceptions rather than as representative evidence of a clearly defined stakeholder group. The results show that Digital Transformation and Regional Collaboration received the highest dimension-level mean scores, while Traditional Limitations also remained relatively high, indicating that reform-oriented perceptions coexist with continued recognition of administrative persistence. At the item level, the strongest support was found for data-informed school leadership and inter-regional sharing of management experience. In contrast, lower scores were observed on items related to protecting students' educational rights, integrating local resources, and the practical use of regional policy opportunities. Overall, the findings suggest that school management transformation in Guangdong is perceived as meaningful but still incomplete.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

School management transformation has become a major concern in contemporary educational modernization because schools are increasingly expected to respond not only to administrative demands, but also to digital change, institutional adaptability, educational

equity, and broader social expectations [1], [2]. Recent scholarship shows that educational management is no longer understood solely as a routine technical function. It is increasingly framed as a dynamic field through which institutions reorganize leadership, governance, and decision-making in response to new educational conditions [3], [4]. In this context, transformation is not simply a matter of introducing new management tools; it involves a deeper reorientation in how schools define authority, organize professional roles, and align educational practice with changing developmental needs [1], [4].

Within China, this issue has become especially significant as educational reform continues to move beyond conventional managerial routines toward more adaptive and responsive forms of school organization [5], [16], [17]. Existing studies have shown that reform in Chinese education often unfolds through gradual institutional adjustment rather than a single, uniform model, making local and regional contexts analytically important [16], [17]. Guangdong Province offers a particularly meaningful setting for such inquiry. Research in Guangdong has linked educational management reform to sustainable learning capacity, leadership challenges, and wider regional integration within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area [7]–[9]. These studies indicate that school management reform in Guangdong is connected not only to internal administrative improvement, but also to broader questions of institutional coordination, professional quality, and regional educational development [7], [8].

At the same time, the literature suggests that school management transformation should not be reduced to digitalization alone. Studies on digital transformation in educational settings show that managerial change affects professional interaction, school culture, and institutional practice rather than merely the adoption of new technologies [6], [23]. Other work has emphasized that educational transformation also depends on leadership quality, teacher professional development, educational equity, and governance structures that link schools with families, communities, and policy environments [12], [14], [15], [18]–[20]. In other words, school management transformation is best understood as a multidimensional process involving technical, organizational, relational, and value-based change [6], [12], [15].

Despite the growing relevance of this topic, an important gap remains. Prior studies have discussed educational modernization, governance reform, leadership practice, vocational management strategies, and regional standard development in ways that are individually useful [7]–[9], [15], [18]–[20]. However, they have not adequately provided an integrated descriptive account of how school management transformation is actually perceived in Guangdong, using a structured set of operational dimensions. Much of the existing literature remains either conceptually broad, sector-specific, or focused on particular institutional themes, making it difficult to see how multiple reform elements are perceived together within one analytical frame [7], [8], [15]. As a result, the relationship between digital reform, teacher development, collaborative governance, regional coordination, value reorientation, and the persistence of traditional administrative limitations remains insufficiently mapped in a single descriptive analysis.

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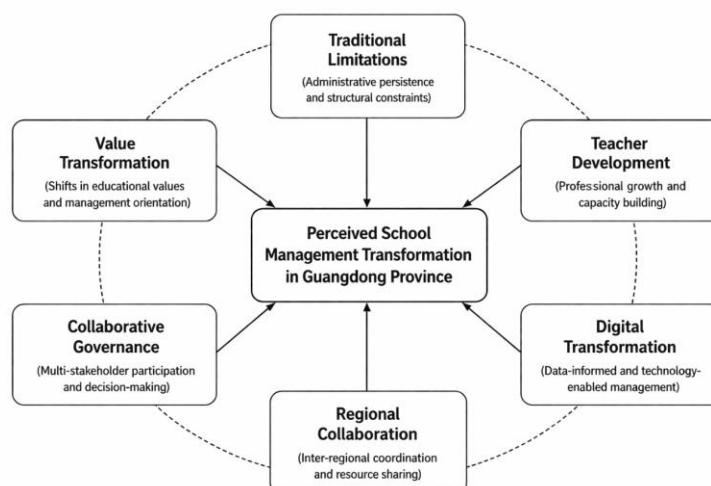


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of perceived school management transformation in Guangdong Province

A perception-based descriptive study is useful in this context because reform is not experienced only through policy texts or formal institutional claims. It is also reflected in how respondents recognize priorities, constraints, and unfinished aspects of managerial change. Although perception data cannot by themselves verify actual policy effectiveness, they can reveal which dimensions of reform appear most salient, most supported, or least consolidated in practice [21]–[23]. This is especially relevant when educational transformation is still unfolding and when the available evidence is better suited to descriptive rather than causal interpretation [21], [23]. A carefully bounded descriptive analysis can therefore contribute empirical clarity without overstating what the data can prove.

Based on that rationale, this study examines perceptions of school management transformation in Guangdong Province using field-collected survey data that were subsequently tabulated for descriptive analysis. The analysis is organized around six dimensions embedded in the instrument: Traditional Limitations, Value Transformation, Teacher Development, Collaborative Governance, Digital Transformation, and Regional Collaboration. The objective of the study is to describe how these dimensions are comparatively perceived and to identify which aspects of transformation appear stronger, weaker, or more contested in the available data. By doing so, the article offers a cautious empirical contribution to current discussions on school management reform in Guangdong, while remaining consistent with the dataset's descriptive scope and limitations.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design. The design was selected because the article aims to describe how school management transformation in Guangdong Province is perceived across the dimensions captured in the research instrument, rather than to test causal relationships, intervention effects, or predictive associations. In this sense, the study is positioned as a perception-based descriptive inquiry that focuses on identifying

response patterns, comparing dimensional tendencies, and interpreting the internal structure of the survey results.

The empirical data were obtained through direct field-based questionnaire administration to respondents at the research location and were subsequently compiled into a tabulated workbook for analysis. Accordingly, the present article analyses field-collected survey data in their documented dataset form. This approach is methodologically appropriate because the purpose of the study is not to claim institutional effectiveness or policy impact at a broad level, but to provide a bounded descriptive account of how the respondents assessed major aspects of school management transformation, including Traditional Limitations, Value Transformation, Teacher Development, Collaborative Governance, Digital Transformation, and Regional Collaboration.

Given this orientation, the study does not attempt to establish experimental validity or causal explanation. Instead, it uses descriptive statistical evidence to examine how the dimensions of school management transformation appear in the available field-based survey responses. This design is therefore appropriate for generating an organized descriptive reading of the phenomenon while remaining consistent with the scope and limits of the data.

## **2.2 Conceptual and Analytical Framework**

The analytical framework of this study was derived from the structure of the research instrument used in the field survey. The main construct examined in this article is the transformation and practice of school management concepts in Guangdong Province in the new era. To operationalize this construct, the questionnaire was organized into six analytical dimensions.

The first dimension, Traditional Limitations (Q1-Q5), functions as a diagnostic domain. It addresses issues such as administrative dominance, continued reliance on conventional managerial routines, limited family and community participation, regional imbalance in management quality, and the inadequacy of traditional evaluation methods. The second dimension, Value Transformation (Q6-Q11), captures reform-oriented shifts in school management, including moving from management-centered to education-centered approaches, aligning with student development and broader social needs, comprehensive evaluation reform, protecting educational rights, supporting diverse learners, and implementing virtue-oriented education in daily management practice.

The third dimension, Teacher Development (Q12-Q16), focuses on the professional and institutional conditions of teachers, including training systems, performance evaluation, teacher-respectful school culture, responses to uneven regional development, and incentive mechanisms to support staff stability and improvement. The fourth dimension, Collaborative Governance (Q17-Q21), reflects governance modernization through multi-stakeholder participation, role clarity among home, school, and community, communication under conditions of high population mobility, local resource integration, and governance platforms that reflect Guangdong's contextual characteristics.

The fifth dimension, Digital Transformation (Q22-Q26), represents the technological and evidence-based aspect of school management reform. It includes the use of scientific evidence and data in leadership, the digitalization of management processes, analytics for

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decision-making, digital risk mitigation, and alignment with Guangdong's digital development orientation. The sixth dimension, Regional Collaboration (Q27-Q30), captures the inter-regional dimension of reform, including experience sharing across regions, the use of policy opportunities related to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, access to high-quality resources and management experience, and support for more balanced educational development across the province.

Taken together, these six dimensions provide the conceptual framework for examining school management transformation in this article. Rather than treating transformation as a single, abstract idea, the framework allows the study to describe the phenomenon in a more organized, multidimensional way.

### **2.3 Data Source, Setting, and Participants**

This study was conducted in the context of school management transformation in Guangdong Province, China, in accordance with the research instrument's thematic focus. Data were collected directly from respondents at the research location through field-based questionnaire administration and were subsequently tabulated for analysis.

Based on the data, the study obtained 38 valid respondents, defined as cases with completed responses beginning from Q1. These respondents form the empirical basis of the present article. The demographic profile in the workbook indicates that the respondents were predominantly male, comprising 32 (84.2%) and 6 (15.8%) female respondents, respectively. The age profile was heterogeneous, with a mean age of 20.42 years, a minimum age of 14 years, and a maximum age of 61 years.

Because the final dataset does not classify respondents by role (e.g., student, teacher, school administrator, or parent), participants are referred to as respondents in this article. This wording is methodologically necessary in order to remain fully consistent with the evidence. The absence of respondent role categories limits the ability to interpret the sample as a coherent stakeholder group. Similarly, the broad age range and the gender imbalance indicate that the findings should be understood as a bounded descriptive account of the available perceptions rather than as demographically balanced or stakeholder-specific evidence.

### **2.4 Instrument and Measures**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 30 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was designed to capture both the obstacles and the reform-oriented directions associated with school management transformation in Guangdong Province. Items Q1-Q5 were classified under Traditional Limitations and were explicitly marked in the codebook as negatively worded items. This means that agreement with these items indicates stronger recognition of persistent administrative or structural constraints. In contrast, the remaining dimensions primarily reflect reform-oriented aspects of school management, including value transformation, teacher development, collaborative governance, digital transformation, and regional collaboration.

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The number of items per dimension varied: Traditional Limitations, 5; Value Transformation, 6; Teacher Development, 5; Collaborative Governance, 5; Digital Transformation, 5; and Regional Collaboration, 4. This dimensional arrangement allowed the study to examine school management transformation not as a single score alone, but as a construct composed of several interrelated domains.

### **2.5 Data Collection Procedure and Validity Considerations**

The data used in this study were collected through direct field administration of questionnaires to respondents at the research site in Guangdong Province. In practice, the instrument was distributed on-site, and the completed questionnaires were subsequently compiled and tabulated into the workbook used for the present analysis. The empirical basis of this article, therefore, derives from actual field survey collection, rather than from archival compilation or hypothetical reconstruction.

Only valid cases were retained for analysis, in accordance with the tabulated dataset's internal logic. In the workbook, validity was operationalized as the presence of a response to Q1, yielding a final analytical sample of 38 respondents. This rule was maintained in the present study to ensure consistency between the respondent-level entries and the descriptive summaries reported in the article.

Validity considerations in this study are addressed in a bounded but transparent manner. On the one hand, the dataset has clear empirical grounding because the responses were obtained directly from respondents in the field. On the other hand, interpretive validity remains constrained by the information available in the final tabulated records. In particular, the dataset does not classify respondents by role (e.g., student, teacher, administrator, or parent), and the institutional field was left blank. These limitations reduce the precision with which the responses can be interpreted as representing a clearly defined stakeholder group or a specific institutional context.

In addition, the broad age range and marked gender imbalance mean that the dataset should be read as a bounded descriptive record of perceptions rather than as statistically balanced evidence of all school-related actors in Guangdong Province. For that reason, the findings are interpreted cautiously as perception-based descriptive evidence derived from field-collected questionnaire data, rather than as definitive proof of policy implementation quality or school management effectiveness across the province.

### **2.6 Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The tabulated workbook provided the number of valid respondents, demographic summaries, item-level and dimension-level means and standard deviations, and overall instrument statistics. Consistent with the study's descriptive purpose, the analysis was organized into three levels.

First, the respondent profile was described using the demographic information available in the dataset, particularly gender, age summary, and the number of valid cases. Second, dimension-level descriptive statistics were used to compare the relative prominence of the six analytical domains: Traditional Limitations, Value Transformation, Teacher Development, Collaborative Governance, Digital Transformation, and Regional

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Collaboration. Third, item-level means and standard deviations were used to support a more detailed interpretation of which statements received relatively stronger or weaker agreement.

The instrument's descriptive statistics were retained only for the general analytical reading of the field-collected data. However, these statistics were interpreted cautiously because the instrument combines negatively worded diagnostic items with positively worded reform-oriented items. Accordingly, the overall tendency was not treated as a uniform measure of successful school management transformation.

In keeping with the descriptive orientation of the study, the analysis did not extend to inferential testing, causal modeling, or predictive estimation. The purpose of the analysis was to provide an organized descriptive account of how school management transformation was perceived in the field-collected questionnaire responses, while remaining consistent with the scope and limitations of the available data.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Respondent Profile

The empirical basis of this article consists of 38 valid respondents derived from the field-based questionnaire administration and retained in the tabulated data for analysis. Based on the available demographic summary, the respondents were predominantly male: 32 (84.2%) and 6 (15.8%) females. The age profile was heterogeneous, with a mean age of 20.42 years, a minimum age of 14 years, and a maximum age of 61 years. These values indicate that the respondents did not belong to a single narrowly defined age cohort, although younger respondents were numerically prominent in the sample.

This respondent profile should be interpreted in a bounded way. Because the tabulated data do not classify respondents by role (e.g., student, teacher, administrator, or parent), the present study reports the respondent profile only through the demographic variables explicitly available in the field-survey records. Accordingly, the respondent profile is presented here as a descriptive background to the analyzed perceptions rather than as a basis for stakeholder-specific comparison. This caution is important because the broad age range and the absence of role categories limit the interpretive precision with which the responses can be linked to particular institutional positions.

Table 1. Respondent profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	32	84.2
	Female	6	15.8
Age summary	Mean	20.42	-
	Minimum	14	-
	Maximum	61	-

#### 3.2 Descriptive Results by Dimension

As shown in Table 2, the highest mean scores were recorded for Digital Transformation and Regional Collaboration, both with a mean of 4.263. These were followed very closely by Traditional Limitations ( $M = 4.253$ ,  $SD = 0.810$ ) and teacher Development ( $M = 4.247$ ,  $SD = 0.718$ ). Collaborative governance had a mean of 4.189 and a standard deviation of

0.739, while Value Transformation had the lowest dimension-level mean at 4.088 and a standard deviation of 0.780.

Although these statistics are informative, the numerical differences among several dimensions are relatively small. For that reason, the ranking should be interpreted as a descriptive ordering of tendencies rather than as evidence of sharply separated domains. Overall, the responses indicate a generally favorable orientation toward many aspects of school management transformation, but this broader tendency should be interpreted cautiously, as the instrument combines reform-oriented items with negatively worded diagnostic items.

In substantive terms, as shown in Table 2, digital governance and inter-regional coordination were among the most strongly supported reform-related domains in the field responses. At the same time, the relatively high score for Traditional Limitations should not be interpreted as a positive outcome, because that dimension consists of negatively worded items. Instead, it indicates that respondents still perceived traditional administrative dominance, conventional managerial dependence, and related structural constraints as meaningful features of school management practice.

Accordingly, the dimension-level pattern does not support a simplified narrative of completed reform. Rather, it suggests a more complex condition in which support for transformation coexists with continued recognition of unresolved institutional limitations. This duality is analytically important because it shows that respondents did not perceive school management in Guangdong as moving in a purely linear reform trajectory.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics by dimensions

Rank	Dimension	Number of Items	Mean	SD
1	Digital Transformation	5	4.263	0.678
1	Regional Collaboration	4	4.263	0.867
3	Traditional Limitations*	5	4.253	0.810
4	Teacher Development	5	4.247	0.718
5	Collaborative Governance	5	4.189	0.739
6	Value Transformation	6	4.088	0.780

\*Items in Traditional Limitations are negatively worded in the codebook. A higher mean, therefore, indicates stronger recognition of existing limitations, not stronger positive transformation.

### 3.3 Item-Level Results

As shown in Table 3, the highest mean score was recorded for Q22 ( $M = 4.474$ ,  $SD = 0.647$ ), which states that school leadership relies on scientific evidence and data in management practice. This was followed by Q27 ( $M = 4.447$ ,  $SD = 0.686$ ), concerning the sharing of management experience across regions, and Q2 ( $M = 4.395$ ,  $SD = 0.887$ ), which indicates that current management practices still rely more on past conventions than on evidence-based innovation. The next highest scores were Q16 ( $M = 4.368$ ,  $SD = 0.714$ ) on incentive mechanisms for staff stability and improvement, and Q30 ( $M = 4.368$ ,  $SD = 0.942$ ) on regional collaboration in support of balanced educational development.

These item-level results reinforce the dual pattern already visible at the dimension level. As shown in Table 3, the strong score for Q22 suggests that respondents regarded data-informed leadership as one of the clearest markers of contemporary school management

transformation. Likewise, the high score for Q27 indicates strong approval of inter-regional learning and experience sharing. However, the similarly high score for Q2, which is negatively worded, shows that respondents also continued to perceive traditional administrative logic as influential. Thus, the item-level pattern does not depict reform as a completed replacement of older practices. Instead, it shows that reform-oriented confidence and diagnostic concern coexist in the field responses.

At the lower end of the distribution, as also shown in Table 3, the lowest mean score was recorded for Q9 (M = 3.868, SD = 0.777), which concerns the adequate protection of students’ educational rights and development opportunities. This was followed by Q20 (M = 4.000, SD = 0.658) on the effective integration of local social resources, Q28 (M = 4.026, SD = 0.885) on leveraging policy opportunities associated with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Q19 (M = 4.053, SD = 0.769) on adapting communication with parents under conditions of high population mobility, and Q11/Q12 (both M = 4.079) on virtue-oriented daily management and stratified teacher training.

Although these lower-ranked items remain relatively high in absolute terms, their position within the overall item distribution suggests that some relational, normative, and implementation-oriented aspects of reform were less strongly consolidated than data-based leadership and regional experience sharing. If permitted by the journal, the full item wording may be included in an appendix to improve transparency in the interpretation of the item-level structure.

Table 3. Selected the highest and lowest scoring items

Category	Item	Mean	SD	Brief Content
Highest	Q22	4.474	0.647	School leadership relies on scientific evidence and data.
Highest	Q27	4.447	0.686	The school participates in sharing management experience across regions.
Highest	Q2*	4.395	0.887	Management still relies more on past conventions than evidence-based innovation.
Highest	Q16	4.368	0.714	Incentive mechanisms help maintain staff stability and improvement.
Highest	Q30	4.368	0.942	Regional collaboration supports balanced educational development.
Lowest	Q9	3.868	0.777	School management adequately protects educational rights and development opportunities.
Lowest	Q20	4.000	0.658	School effectively integrates local social resources.
Lowest	Q28	4.026	0.885	The management strategy leverages opportunities in Greater Bay Area policies.
Lowest	Q19	4.053	0.769	Communication with parents adapts to high population mobility.
Lowest	Q11 / Q12	4.079	0.749 / 0.818	Virtue-oriented daily management / stratified teacher training

Q2 is negatively worded. A high mean indicates stronger agreement that traditional administrative logic remains influential.

### 3.4 Discussion

The field-based survey results suggest that school management transformation in Guangdong Province should not be interpreted as a completed transition from traditional administration to a fully modernized governance model. The data directly show that respondents strongly agreed with items related to digital leadership and regional collaboration, while also strongly recognizing traditional administrative limitations. This indicates a transitional pattern in which reform momentum coexists with administrative persistence. In this sense, the descriptive evidence supports an interpretation of school management transformation as an ongoing, uneven process rather than a settled institutional condition.

The prominence of Digital Transformation is analytically important. At the level of direct evidence, the highest item mean was observed for data-informed school leadership, suggesting that respondents strongly associate contemporary school management with evidence use, analytics, and digitally supported decision-making structures. This result aligns with the broader literature, which shows that digital transformation in schools becomes meaningful when it affects not only technical systems but also leadership, organizational processes, and educational practice [6], [23]. At the same time, this article does not claim that high agreement with digital items proves that digital governance has already become fully effective or ethically mature in practice. Rather, the field responses suggest that respondents view digitalization as a central and credible direction of reform. This more cautious interpretation is also consistent with evidence that data-based decision-making can support improvement only when schools can interpret and act on data meaningfully, rather than merely possessing digital tools [21], [22].

The high score for Regional Collaboration deserves an equally careful reading. The data directly indicate strong support for inter-regional sharing of management experience and for collaboration as part of school improvement. However, the comparatively lower score for the practical use of Greater Bay Area policy opportunities suggests that the endorsement of regional coordination may be stronger in terms of perceived importance than in practical institutional uptake. The literature helps explain why this distinction matters. Research on professional learning networks suggests that collaboration across schools and regions can contribute to improvement only when it is supported by facilitation, shared goals, and mechanisms for transferring knowledge into local practice [26]. Thus, the present study does not claim that regional collaboration in Guangdong is already institutionally consolidated; rather, it suggests that respondents see it as a valued and promising reform direction whose implementation may still be uneven.

The weaker relative performance of items related to educational rights protection, local resource integration, and adaptive communication with parents is also significant. At the level of direct findings, these items were positioned toward the lower end of the distribution, even though their absolute values remained moderately high. This pattern suggests that relational and value-based dimensions of reform may be perceived as less consolidated than procedural and strategic dimensions. The broader literature provides a useful interpretive context here. Studies on family-school-community collaboration have shown that educational improvement depends not only on managerial efficiency, but also on the quality

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of relational coordination and support around students [25]. On that basis, it is reasonable to infer that school management transformation may remain incomplete as digital and structural reforms advance more quickly than the protection of educational rights, the integration of local resources, and parent-responsive communication.

A similar pattern appears in Teacher Development. The field responses showed relatively strong support for incentive mechanisms and staff stability, but more cautious support for stratified teacher training. What the data directly show, therefore, is not the absence of teacher development, but a more uneven profile within that domain. The literature suggests that leadership quality and teacher development are closely related, especially where organizational trust, fairness, and developmental support shape how teachers respond to reform [18], [24]. For that reason, the present findings may be read as indicating that teacher development in the context of school management transformation is not only a technical question of training provision, but also a question of institutional culture and leadership practice.

Several limitations must be acknowledged within this discussion. Although the data were collected directly from the field, the final tabulated records do not identify respondent roles, institutions, or clearly bounded school categories. The sample is also relatively small, age-heterogeneous, and gender-imbalanced. In addition, some of the differences among dimension-level means are numerically narrow. These conditions mean that the findings should not be treated as representative of all stakeholder groups or as definitive proof of the quality of policy implementation across Guangdong Province. Instead, they should be read as bounded descriptive perceptions derived from field-collected questionnaire data.

Taken together, the study indicates that school management transformation in Guangdong is perceived most strongly through its digital and regional-coordination dimensions, while its relational, value-oriented, and some teacher-development components appear less consolidated. This does not mean that reform has failed. Rather, it suggests that transformation is experienced as a negotiated process in which new managerial directions are increasingly visible, while older administrative logics and uneven implementation persist.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This study examined perceptions of school management transformation in Guangdong Province using field-collected questionnaire data that were subsequently tabulated for descriptive analysis. The findings suggest that transformation is not perceived evenly across all dimensions of school management. The strongest support emerged in Digital Transformation and Regional Collaboration, particularly regarding evidence-based leadership and inter-regional sharing of management experience. At the same time, the relatively high score for Traditional Limitations indicates that respondents still recognized the continued influence of conventional administrative logic. These results suggest that school management transformation is perceived as meaningful but still incomplete.

A second conclusion concerns the internal pattern of transformation itself. The lower relative scores in items related to students' educational rights, local resource integration, adaptive communication with parents, and some aspects of teacher development suggest that

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relational, value-oriented, and implementation-based aspects of reform may be less consolidated than digital and strategic dimensions. In this respect, the findings point not to a simple narrative of institutional success or failure, but to a transitional condition in which reform-oriented practices are becoming more visible while older constraints remain present.

The study has an important methodological limitation. Although the data were collected directly from the field, the analytical sample was relatively small, respondent roles were not identified in the final tabulated records, and institutional information was incomplete. For that reason, the findings should be interpreted as bounded descriptive perceptions rather than as representative evidence of all stakeholder groups or as definitive proof of school management effectiveness across Guangdong Province.

Within those limits, this article's contribution lies in providing a structured, descriptive account of school management transformation across six dimensions: Traditional Limitations, Value Transformation, Teacher Development, Collaborative Governance, Digital Transformation, and Regional Collaboration. The study, therefore, offers a cautious empirical basis for understanding how reform is perceived in practice, while also showing that reform momentum and administrative persistence continue to coexist.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the descriptive pattern of field responses, school management reform in Guangdong Province should continue to strengthen its digital governance capacity, particularly in data-informed leadership, evidence-based decision-making, and the digitalization of management processes. At the same time, reform should not be confined to procedural modernization or technological advancement alone. The comparatively lower relative scores on educational rights protection, local resource integration, and adaptive communication with parents suggest that the relational and value-oriented dimensions of school management also require greater institutional attention. In practical terms, this means that reform needs to be advanced not only as a technical project of managerial improvement, but also as an educational project concerned with fairness, responsiveness, and stronger coordination between schools and their surrounding communities.

The findings also indicate the importance of strengthening teacher development and collaborative governance in a more integrated manner. Although support for incentive mechanisms was relatively strong, some aspects of training and governance integration appeared less consolidated, suggesting the need for more sustained alignment between leadership practice, professional development, and multi-stakeholder coordination. Future research should therefore extend the present study by using a larger and more clearly classified sample, including respondent role categories and more complete institutional identifiers, so that the descriptive patterns identified here can be examined with greater precision across different school contexts.

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