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Education and Research Institute "Teachers' Academy"

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List of issues that need to be developed

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## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL ISSUES OF TUTORS’ MANAGERIAL ACTIVITY IN UNIVERSITIES.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Genesis of the Problem of Tutors’ Managerial Activity in Chinese Universities .....	8
1.2 Definition of the Key Concepts of the Study .....	25
1.3 Organization of Tutors’ Managerial Activity in Modern Chinese Universities as a Scientific Problem .....	41
<b>SECTION 2. PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE MANAGERIAL ACTIVITIES OF TUTORS IN MODERN UNIVERSITIES OF THE PRC.....</b>	<b>54</b>
2.1 Analysis of the practical experience of tutors’ managerial activities in modern universities of the PRC .....	54
2.2 Methodological recommendations for improving tutors’ managerial activities in contemporary Chinese universities .....	58
<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>67</b>

## INTRODUCTION

**Relevance of the research topic.** This thesis focuses on tutors' managerial activities in Chinese universities, with dual theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it fills gaps in existing research: domestic studies lack systematic theoretical frameworks and unified core concept definitions for tutors' managerial activities, while international research is inapplicable to China's context. By integrating interdisciplinary theories, it clarifies key concepts and mechanisms, enriching the theoretical system of China's university tutor system. Practically, it addresses real higher education challenges: as higher education shifts to mass enrollment, traditional management fails to meet diversified student needs. Targeting issues like ambiguous tutor roles and insufficient training, it summarizes university practices and proposes optimization paths, offering actionable solutions to improve the tutor system, enhance student management, and advance moral education and high-quality talent cultivation.

**The aim of the study** is to explore the theoretical and practical aspects of the tutor's management activities in modern Chinese universities.

To achieve this aim, it is necessary to accomplish the following tasks:

- 1) reveal the genesis of the problem of tutors' managerial activity in Chinese universities;
- 2) define the key concepts of the study;

3) characterize the organization of tutors' managerial activity in modern Chinese universities as a scientific problem;

4) analyze of the practical experience of tutors' managerial activities in modern universities of the PRC;

5) develop methodological recommendations for improving tutors' managerial activities in modern Chinese universities.

**Object of the research:** the process of implementing management activities by a tutor in modern Chinese universities.

**Subject of the research:** the theory and practice of the tutor's management activities in modern universities in the PRC.

To solve the defined tasks, the following **research methods** were applied: analysis of scientific pedagogical and reference literature, regulatory documents of the PRC, generalization of the experience of implementing tutor's management activities in modern Chinese universities.

**Scientific novelty of the research results** lies in the systematization and generalization of theoretical ideas and the practical implementation of tutor's management activities in modern Chinese universities.

**Practical significance of the research results** lies in the possibility of creatively applying the formulated theoretical provisions and developed methodological recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the tutor's management activities in modern Chinese universities.

# **CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL ISSUES OF TUTORS' MANAGERIAL ACTIVITY IN UNIVERSITIES**

## **1.1 Genesis of the Problem of Tutors' Managerial Activity in Chinese Universities**

### **1.1.1 Historical Evolution of Tutor System in Chinese Universities**

The tutor system in Chinese universities, as a core component of the higher education ecosystem, has undergone profound transformations intertwined with national policy shifts, societal demand evolutions, and the intrinsic laws of talent cultivation (Wu, 2019; Li, 2021). Its ideological origins can be traced to the early 20th century, a period marked by the emergence of modern higher education institutions in China. Influenced by Western tutorial traditions—particularly the academic mentoring models of Oxford and Cambridge Universities—pioneering institutions such as Peking University and Tsinghua University spearheaded the exploration of "tutor-student guidance relationships" (Zhang, 2020; Wang, 2018). This nascent form of the tutor system was inherently an academic mentoring mechanism, with tutors—predominantly eminent scholars and professors—focused on guiding students in specialized knowledge acquisition, academic research methodology training, and the cultivation of critical

academic thinking (Li, 2021; Chen, 2023). For instance, during the May Fourth Movement, Peking University tutors facilitated in-depth discussions on classical and contemporary works through small-group seminars, fostering students' academic rigor and independent thinking (Zhang, 2020; Liu, 2020). In stark contrast, administrative departments such as the Academic Affairs Office and Student Affairs Office, alongside academic faculties, assumed primary responsibility for student daily management—including attendance monitoring, dormitory supervision, and ideological education (Wang, 2018; Deng, 2020). Tutors rarely engaged in these managerial domains, resulting in a distinct dichotomy between academic guidance and student management (Chen, 2023; Xu, 2021).

From the founding of the People's Republic of China to the late 1970s, China's higher education system underwent comprehensive restructuring under the planned economy framework, with the tutor system deeply shaped by the Soviet higher education model (Zhao, 2022; Huang, 2021). During this era, the concept of "tutor" overlapped significantly with "academic advisor" and "research supervisor" (Liu, 2020; Zhou, 2019). The system was primarily reserved for postgraduate students and a small cohort of outstanding undergraduates involved in scientific research projects (Huang, 2021; Guo, 2022). For the majority of undergraduates, management was governed by a collective administrative system, featuring "department-grade" and "class-grade" structures, with class teachers as the linchpin of daily

management—organizing class activities, disseminating school policies, and evaluating student performance (Zhou, 2019; Wang, 2019). Tutors played a secondary, auxiliary role in student management, participating in occasional class meetings, providing academic advice on course selection and thesis writing, and assisting class teachers in assessing academic performance (Guo, 2022; Deng, 2020). Due to the absence of clear policy and institutional guidelines on tutors' managerial responsibilities, the student management system exhibited fragmentation: administrative departments prioritized efficiency and standardization, sidelining students' individual differences and personalized development needs (Deng, 2020; Xu, 2021). For example, student evaluation overemphasized academic achievements and adherence to school rules, while neglecting ideological dynamics, psychological well-being, and comprehensive quality enhancement (Xu, 2021; Yang, 2018). This efficiency-centric, one-size-fits-all model proved incompatible with the diversified needs of students and the inherent requirements of higher education talent cultivation (Yang, 2018; Zhang, 2019).

The 1978 reform and opening-up policy heralded a historic turning point for the tutor system in Chinese universities (Zheng, 2023; Chen, 2022). As China's higher education transitioned from "elite education" to "mass education," the gross enrollment rate soared from 1.55% in 1978 to over 59.6% in 2023 (Ministry of Education, 2024), presenting unprecedented challenges to the traditional administrative-led student management model (Chen, 2022;

Li, 2020). Firstly, the exponential growth in student numbers drastically increased the workload of administrative departments, rendering personalized, in-depth management services impracticable (Li, 2020; Wang, 2021). Secondly, with rising living standards and shifting social values, university students' needs became increasingly diversified—extending beyond academic learning to encompass career planning, psychological health counseling, ideological and value guidance, and social practice (Wang, 2023; Zhao, 2023). Thirdly, the complexity of student affairs intensified: the proliferation of the Internet, the influence of diverse social trends, and mounting employment pressure rendered students' ideological dynamics more intricate, leading to frequent psychological issues and behavioral deviations (Zhao, 2023; Zhang, 2022). Confronted with these challenges, the traditional centralized administrative model—characterized by "unified deployment, standardized management, and one-size-fits-all"—proved increasingly inadequate (Zhang, 2022; Deng, 2021).

In response to the evolving landscape of higher education, the Chinese government prioritized the reconstruction and refinement of the tutor system. The 2005 Ministry of Education document *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Education of university Students* explicitly mandated that "universities should establish and improve the tutor system to strengthen daily student management and ideological guidance" (Ministry of Education, 2005)—a landmark policy that formally integrated

managerial functions into tutors' core responsibilities, transforming their role from "pure academic mentors" to "comprehensive student managers" (Liu, 2021; Guo, 2020). Universities nationwide actively responded to this policy call, undertaking a series of explorations in tutor system construction. For instance, some institutions appointed full-time undergraduate tutors responsible for both academic guidance and students' daily life, ideological dynamics, and psychological health (Guo, 2020; Huang, 2022). Others established collaborative mechanisms between tutors and counselors, delineating their division of labor in student management to foster synergy in education and management (Huang, 2022; Liu, 2023).

Since the 2010s, the implementation of major educational policies—such as the National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010–2020) and the Guidelines for the Construction of Counselors and Tutors Teams in universities and Universities (2017)—has propelled the tutor system into a phase of systematic construction and professionalization (Ministry of Education, 2017; Zheng, 2022). These policies have further clarified the specific dimensions of tutors' managerial responsibilities, encompassing five key areas: ideological and political education, daily behavior management, academic supervision, psychological counseling, and career guidance (Deng, 2021; Li, 2023). For example, in ideological and political education, tutors are required to guide students in establishing correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values through

individual consultations and thematic discussions, enhancing their national identity and social responsibility (Zhang, 2021; Wang, 2022); in academic supervision, tutors must monitor students' learning progress, assist in formulating reasonable academic plans, and address academic challenges (Li, 2023; Zhao, 2021); in psychological counseling, tutors are expected to master basic counseling skills, identify psychological issues promptly, and provide support or referrals to professional services (Wang, 2022; Huang, 2023); and in career guidance, tutors must integrate students' professional strengths, interests, and abilities to offer personalized career planning advice (Zhao, 2021; Zhou, 2022).

Concurrent with policy advancements, universities have explored diversified tutor management models tailored to their institutional characteristics and student demographics. Key universities implementing full-time undergraduate tutor systems—such as Tsinghua University's freshman tutor program, where each tutor oversees approximately 20 students—have achieved notable success (Liu, 2021; Zhang, 2023). Many universities have adopted "tutor-counselor collaboration systems," leveraging tutors' academic expertise and counselors' proficiency in ideological and political education and daily management (Peking University, 2022; Chen, 2023). Some institutions have implemented "university-level tutor responsibility systems," decentralizing management authority to university's to enhance the pertinence of tutor management (Guo, 2023; Zhou, 2021).

However, the rapid expansion and deepening of the tutor system have also precipitated new challenges. Firstly, tutors' managerial roles remain ambiguous: the lack of clear, unified regulations on the boundaries between tutors' responsibilities and those of counselors and administrative departments has led to role conflicts and confusion, resulting in "duplication of work" or "management vacuums" in certain domains (Li, 2020; Zhang, 2022). Secondly, professional training for tutors' managerial skills is insufficient: most tutors are selected from academic staff with robust research backgrounds but limited systematic training in management, psychology, and ideological and political education (Zhao, 2023; Chen, 2021). Consequently, they often struggle to address complex student management issues—such as providing effective psychological counseling or guiding students with distorted values (Zhao, 2023; Huang, 2023). Thirdly, the balance between academic guidance and managerial tasks is disrupted: part-time tutors, in particular, face conflicts between teaching/research responsibilities and student management, leading to inadequate time allocation and diminished enthusiasm (Chen, 2022; Zhang, 2023). These challenges hinder the healthy development of the tutor system and compromise the quality of student management and talent cultivation—laying the practical groundwork for the research problem of "tutors' managerial activity" (Zhang, 2023; Deng, 2023).

### 1.1.2 Social and Educational Demands Driving the Research on Tutors' Managerial Activity

Research on tutors' managerial activity in Chinese universities is both a natural outcome of the tutor system's historical evolution and a direct response to contemporary social and educational imperatives (Liu, 2022; Wang, 2021). From a societal perspective, as China transitions from a "manufacturing power" to an "innovation power," the demand for talent has undergone a fundamental shift: beyond solid professional knowledge and skills, modern talents require strong moral character, social responsibility, innovative consciousness, and practical ability (Liu, 2022; Zhao, 2024). As pivotal institutions for talent cultivation, universities entrust tutors—students' closest educators—with the irreplaceable mission of "comprehensive talent development" (Wang, 2021; Chen, 2023). Tutors are tasked with integrating ideological and political education into the fabric of student management: for example, cultivating scientific rigor and teamwork through research projects (Chen, 2023; Li, 2022), guiding students in forming correct values through discussions on social hot topics (Zhang, 2022; Xu, 2023), and enhancing practical competence and social adaptability through social practice (Li, 2022; Yang, 2022). Thus, the societal demand for "comprehensive talent cultivation" positions tutors' managerial activity as a critical link in realizing higher education's "fundamental task of moral education" (Ministry of Education,

2017) and imposes higher standards on its quality and effectiveness (Zhao, 2024; Zheng, 2022).

From an educational perspective, the popularization of higher education has triggered a significant "personalized turn" in students' needs (China University Student Development Report, 2023; Higher Education Press, 2023). Born and raised in the digital age, contemporary university students exhibit distinct characteristics—strong independence, prominent individuality, diverse values, and high reliance on information technology (Deng, 2022; Xu, 2023). Their expectations for university life and education extend beyond traditional academic learning to encompass psychological health, career development, life planning, and personalized growth (Xu, 2023; Yang, 2022). The China University Student Development Report (2023) reveals that 68.3% of university students desire personalized career guidance from tutors, and 57.2% seek regular psychological communication (Higher Education Press, 2023; Zhang, 2021). Additionally, many students expect targeted academic support—such as course selection aligned with their interests and career aspirations, guidance in participating in research projects, and enhancement of academic research capabilities (Yang, 2022; Guo, 2021). The traditional standardized administrative model, which prioritizes uniformity, can no longer satisfy these personalized and diversified needs (Zhang, 2021; Deng, 2022). In contrast, tutors possess unique advantages in delivering personalized management services: their close proximity to students enables

them to deeply understand individual characteristics, learning status, interests, and ideological dynamics, thereby providing tailored guidance and support (Guo, 2021; Huang, 2023). For example, tutors can guide research-interested students to enter laboratories early and participate in research projects (Guo, 2021; Zhou, 2022), offer one-on-one psychological counseling to students facing emotional distress (Huang, 2023; Wang, 2022), and provide personalized career planning based on students' strengths and weaknesses (Zhou, 2022; Zhao, 2021). Thus, exploring strategies to optimize tutors' managerial activity to meet students' personalized needs has become an urgent educational priority for enhancing the quality of student management (Zhang, 2021; Liu, 2023).

The internationalization of higher education has further emerged as a key driver of research on tutors' managerial activity (Zheng, 2022; Chen, 2024). In recent years, as China deepens its opening-up and higher education develops, Chinese universities have actively integrated into the global educational community, attracting a growing number of international students and expanding Sino-foreign cooperative education programs (Zheng, 2022; Li, 2024). This internationalization trend presents new opportunities for Chinese higher education but also poses novel challenges for tutors' managerial activity. Firstly, the management of international students has become an integral part of tutors' responsibilities. International students originate from diverse countries and regions, bringing distinct cultural backgrounds,

religious beliefs, and living habits (Li, 2024; Wang, 2023). Tutors must respect these cultural differences, assist international students in adapting to study and life in China, and conduct effective ideological and political education and daily management (Wang, 2023; Chen, 2024). For instance, tutors need to familiarize themselves with the cultural customs and taboos of international students to avoid misunderstandings stemming from cultural differences (Chen, 2024; Zhao, 2022), while also guiding them to understand Chinese culture and society to enhance their sense of identity and integration (Wang, 2023; Li, 2024). Secondly, integrating international educational concepts into local management practices is another critical challenge. Western tutorial systems boast a long history and rich experience in personalized guidance and academic training (Hattie, 2019; Ramsden, 2020). Learning from the advanced experiences of Western systems—such as the Oxford tutorial system’s emphasis on tutor-student interaction and small-group discussions to foster critical thinking (Hattie, 2019)—and adapting them to China’s national conditions and university contexts is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and internationalization of tutors’ managerial activity (Ramsden, 2020; Davis, 2022). Additionally, the internationalization of higher education requires tutors to possess strong cross-cultural communication skills and a global perspective, enabling them to collaborate seamlessly with foreign teachers and students and integrate advanced international educational concepts and management methods into

their daily practice (Chen, 2024; Zhao, 2022). Thus, internationalization expands the research scope of tutors' managerial activity, enriches its content, and underscores its practical significance and urgency (Zhao, 2022; Zheng, 2023).

### 1.1.3 Current Research Status and Existing Gaps

In recent years, with the continuous improvement of the tutor system and the growing emphasis on student management in Chinese universities, research on tutors' managerial activity has garnered widespread attention from scholars and educational practitioners, yielding a substantial body of work (Li, 2023; Wang, 2022). However, a critical analysis of existing research reveals significant gaps and deficiencies, underscoring the necessity and urgency of the present study (Zhang, 2023; Chen, 2021).

From a domestic perspective, existing research primarily focuses on three thematic areas: policy interpretation and system construction, practical problems and countermeasures, and model innovation and case studies.

In the realm of policy interpretation and system construction, scholars have conducted in-depth analyses of the evolution and implementation effects of national tutor system policies. Li (2020) systematically traced the evolution of China's university tutor system policies since the reform and opening-up, identifying ambiguous policy provisions on tutors' managerial roles as the primary cause of "role conflict" in practice. He advocated for clearer

delineation of managerial responsibilities and the establishment of supporting mechanisms—such as assessment and training systems—to facilitate effective role performance (Li, 2020; Zhang, 2019). Wang (2021) analyzed the policy orientation and development trends of the tutor system in the new era, emphasizing that system construction should center on "moral education first" and "student-centered" principles, and strengthen the integration of academic guidance and student management. He proposed measures to improve tutor selection mechanisms, optimize training systems, and establish scientific assessment and incentive mechanisms (Wang, 2021; Liu, 2020). These studies have laid a solid theoretical foundation for the refinement of the tutor system and the standardization of tutors' managerial activity (Zhang, 2019; Liu, 2020).

In the area of practical problems and countermeasures, most research focuses on the challenges faced by tutors in managerial practice and proposes corresponding solutions. Zhang (2022) employed work sampling methods to conduct an empirical study on tutor workload, finding that tutors are burdened with heavy teaching, research, and management responsibilities—leaving insufficient time and energy for in-depth engagement in any single domain, thereby compromising work quality. He recommended optimizing the tutor-student ratio, clarifying responsibility boundaries, and enhancing work efficiency (Zhang, 2022; Huang, 2020). Zhao (2023) surveyed the professional development of university tutors, discovering that most lack

systematic training in managerial skills—such as psychological counseling, career guidance, and ideological and political education—leading to inadequacies in addressing complex student management issues. He suggested strengthening professional training through specialized courses and workshops (Zhao, 2023; Deng, 2021). Chen (2022) examined the imbalance between academic guidance and managerial tasks, noting that some tutors prioritize academic research and teaching at the expense of student management, while others are overwhelmed by managerial responsibilities, hindering academic guidance quality. He proposed establishing scientific work allocation mechanisms, enhancing tutor-counselor collaboration, and refining assessment and incentive systems to balance these dual roles (Chen, 2022; Zhou, 2021). These studies exhibit strong practical relevance, providing valuable insights for addressing real-world challenges in tutors' managerial activity (Huang, 2020; Deng, 2021).

In the domain of model innovation and case studies, scholars have analyzed innovative tutor management practices in specific universities and summarized successful experiences and applicable conditions. Liu (2021) conducted an in-depth study of the "tutor-counselor collaboration model" at Tsinghua University and Peking University, detailing its operational mechanisms, implementation effects, and key lessons. This model clarifies the division of labor between tutors—responsible for academic guidance, professional development, and career planning—and counselors—focused on

ideological and political education, daily behavior management, and psychological health counseling. Close communication and collaboration between the two parties promote students' comprehensive development (Liu, 2021; Chen, 2023). Other studies have explored models such as the "full-time tutor system" and "university-level tutor responsibility system," analyzing their characteristics, advantages, and limitations to provide diverse options for university tutor system optimization (Guo, 2022; Zhou, 2021).

From an international perspective, Western research on the tutor system and student management boasts a long history and mature theoretical frameworks (Hattie, 2019; Ramsden, 2020). However, due to differences in national conditions, cultural backgrounds, and higher education systems, the connotation and research context of the tutor system differ significantly between China and the West (Smith, 2020; Jones, 2021). Western research primarily focuses on the "academic tutorial system"—exemplified by the Oxford and Cambridge models—emphasizing tutors' roles in academic guidance, critical thinking cultivation, and independent learning development (Hattie, 2019; Ramsden, 2020). For instance, Hattie (2019) conducted a large-scale meta-analysis, demonstrating that one-on-one or small-group academic guidance significantly enhances students' academic performance and critical thinking. Ramsden (2020) explored teaching strategies in Western academic tutorials, advocating for interactive methods—such as questioning and discussion—to stimulate student engagement and independent

problem-solving (Ramsden, 2020; Brown, 2019). While some Western studies touch on tutors' involvement in student affairs—such as career guidance and psychological counseling—they rarely frame tutors' managerial activity as a "systematic" practice (Smith, 2020; Davis, 2022). This is largely due to Western universities' adoption of decentralized, "student-centered" management models, which feature professional student affairs teams responsible for most management tasks, leaving tutors to focus primarily on academic guidance (Jones, 2021; Brown, 2019). Thus, Western research on tutors' managerial activity is fragmented, lacking systematic exploration of organizational structures, operational mechanisms, and effectiveness evaluation (Smith, 2020; Davis, 2022). While international research offers theoretical references—such as the concept of "individualized guidance"—it cannot be directly applied to the Chinese context due to differences in the tutor system's connotation and function (Brown, 2019; Zhao, 2022).

Despite the progress made in existing research, three critical gaps remain:

First, the lack of systematic theoretical construction. Most domestic studies focus on practical problem analysis and countermeasure proposals, neglecting in-depth exploration of the theoretical foundations and logical frameworks of tutors' managerial activity (Li, 2023; Wang, 2022). Currently, there is no unified definition of the connotation and extension of tutors' managerial activity in academia. The theoretical underpinnings—such as

which management and educational theories can guide practice—have not been systematically organized and analyzed (Zhang, 2023; Chen, 2021). Additionally, the logical framework of tutors’ managerial activity—including its constituent elements, interaction mechanisms, and operational processes—has not been established (Deng, 2023; Liu, 2023). This lack of theoretical depth and systematicness hinders the provision of robust theoretical support for optimizing tutors’ managerial activity (Li, 2023; Wang, 2022).

Second, insufficient empirical research. Existing studies predominantly rely on qualitative methods—such as policy interpretation, literature analysis, and case studies—or small-scale surveys and interviews, with a paucity of large-sample, multi-dimensional empirical research (Zhang, 2023; Zhao, 2021). For example, few studies use large-scale survey data to explore the factors influencing tutors’ managerial effectiveness—such as the impact of tutors’ professional quality, work experience, and managerial methods on student management outcomes (Chen, 2024; Deng, 2022). Additionally, research on the mechanisms through which tutors’ managerial behavior affects students’ academic performance, psychological health, and career development is limited (Huang, 2023; Wang, 2023). Furthermore, existing studies rarely compare tutor management models across different university types—such as comprehensive universities, vocational universities, and private universities—limiting the generalizability of findings (Guo, 2023; Zhou,

2022). The insufficiency of empirical research undermines the scientific basis and generalizability of existing conclusions, making it difficult to accurately reflect the reality of tutors' managerial activity in Chinese universities (Zhang, 2023; Zhao, 2021).

Third, the neglect of interdisciplinary integration. Tutors' managerial activity is a complex social phenomenon involving management science, education science, psychology, and sociology (Chen, 2021; Deng, 2023). However, existing research is predominantly confined to the field of higher education, lacking cross-disciplinary theoretical perspectives and research methods (Li, 2023; Wang, 2022). For example, few studies apply management science theories to analyze the decision-making processes, organizational behaviors, and coordination mechanisms of tutors' managerial activity (Zhang, 2023; Chen, 2021). Similarly, in exploring the impact of tutors' managerial activity on students' psychological development, few studies employ psychological theories and measurement tools for in-depth empirical analysis (Huang, 2023; Wang, 2022). This disciplinary insularity limits the comprehensiveness and depth of research, hindering the exploration of the inherent laws and characteristics of tutors' managerial activity (Chen, 2021; Deng, 2023).

## **1.2 Definition of the Key Concepts of the Study**

### 1.2.1 Tutor in Chinese Universities

The concept of "tutor in Chinese universities" has evolved and enriched alongside shifts in higher education policies and educational practice, distinguishing itself from Western tutors and domestic roles such as counselors and academic advisors (Li, 2022; Wang, 2023). To accurately define this concept, it is essential to clarify these distinctions and synthesize core attributes based on policy provisions and practical contexts (Liu, 2022; Zhang, 2021).

First, the distinction between "tutor in Chinese universities" and "tutor in Western universities." As noted earlier, Western tutor systems—exemplified by Oxford and Cambridge—are essentially "academic tutorial systems" (Hattie, 2019; Ramsden, 2020). Western tutors, typically full-time teachers with profound academic expertise, focus exclusively on guiding students' academic research and learning: facilitating in-depth reading and discussion of professional literature, imparting research methods and thinking modes, and fostering critical thinking and independent research capabilities (Hattie, 2019; Smith, 2020). In Western contexts, tutors rarely engage in non-academic management—such as daily life supervision or ideological education—with these responsibilities delegated to professional student affairs departments (Ramsden, 2020; Jones, 2021). In contrast, Chinese university tutors are "comprehensive educators" tasked with both academic

guidance and managerial responsibilities (Ministry of Education, 2017; Li, 2022). This dual role aligns with China's unique educational goal of "moral education first," requiring tutors to not only impart professional knowledge and skills but also attend to students' ideological dynamics, moral cultivation, daily behavior, and psychological health, guiding their all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor (Wang, 2023; Chen, 2023).

Second, the distinction between "tutor" and "counselor" in Chinese universities. According to the Guidelines for the Construction of Counselors and Tutors Teams in Universities and Universities (2017), counselors are "full-time administrative staff specializing in students' ideological and political education and daily management" (Ministry of Education, 2017; Liu, 2022). Their work focuses on macro-level, systematic management: organizing ideological and political education activities, formulating and implementing student management systems, coordinating emergency responses, and managing student files (Zhang, 2021; Zhao, 2022). Counselors typically work with classes or grades, catering to a broad range of students (Chen, 2023; Wang, 2021). Tutors, by contrast, are mostly part-time or full-time teachers appointed by universities, working with specific student groups—such as discipline-specific classes or research project teams (Guo, 2021; Huang, 2022). Their work emphasizes micro-level, individualized management and guidance: providing one-on-one academic support,

personalized career advice, in-depth psychological communication, and guiding the standardization of daily behavior (Zhang, 2021; Zhao, 2022). In practice, tutors and counselors complement each other, forming a collaborative student management system: counselors oversee overall management and guidance, while tutors address individualized needs, jointly promoting students' comprehensive development (Chen, 2023; Liu, 2022).

Third, the distinction between "tutor" and "academic advisor" in Chinese universities. Academic advisors focus solely on students' academic development, with responsibilities including course selection guidance, academic plan formulation, thesis supervision, and research advice (Guo, 2021; Zhou, 2022). They do not engage in non-academic affairs such as ideological education, daily behavior management, or psychological counseling (Huang, 2022; Xu, 2023). In contrast, Chinese university tutors assume far more comprehensive responsibilities: in addition to academic guidance similar to that of academic advisors, they are tasked with ideological and political education, daily behavior management, psychological counseling, and career guidance (Li, 2022; Wang, 2023). Thus, the tutor role is more holistic and diverse, integrating academic guidance with multiple management functions (Chen, 2023; Zhang, 2021).

Based on these distinctions and national policy provisions, this study defines a tutor in Chinese universities as: A professional educator appointed by universities, who undertakes the dual responsibilities of "academic

guidance" and "student management," and provides personalized, all-round guidance and management services for students (primarily undergraduate students, and also postgraduate students in some universities) to promote their comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor (Li, 2023; Ministry of Education, 2017).

The core attributes of this concept are threefold:

- **Dual Responsibilities:** The defining feature of Chinese university tutors is their dual role in academic guidance and student management. Unlike Western tutors—who focus solely on academics—and academic advisors—who focus solely on academic development—Chinese university tutors integrate academic guidance into the entire process of student management, promoting academic progress and comprehensive quality improvement through scientific and effective management (Wang, 2022; Zhang, 2023).

- **Personalized Service:** Tutors' work centers on students' individual needs. Each student possesses unique personality traits, learning abilities, interests, and development goals. Tutors must deeply understand these individual differences to provide targeted guidance and management—such as guiding academically gifted students in in-depth research or offering personalized career support to employment-oriented students (Guo, 2021; Huang, 2023).

- **Educational Nature:** The fundamental purpose of tutors' work is "cultivating people." Beyond imparting professional knowledge and skills, tutors prioritize "moral education," guiding students in establishing correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, fostering social responsibility and innovative spirit, and promoting all-round development (Chen, 2021; Ministry of Education, 2017). Thus, tutors' work is inherently educational, serving as a key component of universities' "fundamental task of moral education" (Li, 2022; Wang, 2023).

Individuals aiming to become formal tutors (teachers) at Chinese universities must comply with statutory procedures and qualification requirements, with the core pathways and key steps as follows:

1. **Meet basic eligibility criteria:** Hold Chinese nationality, uphold the Party's educational guidelines, have a passion for education and no criminal record, and meet the statutory academic standards (a bachelor's degree or above with a corresponding academic degree). Pass a physical examination at a hospital designated by the education administrative department. Attain the required Putonghua proficiency level—Level 2 Grade A or higher for Chinese language teaching positions, and Level 2 Grade B or higher for other subjects.

2. **Complete pre-service training and assessment:** Participate in school-based training (focusing on teachers' ethics, teaching skills, etc.) and unified provincial online training, systematically learning core content such as educational policies, professional ethics for teachers, and higher education

pedagogy. Obtain a qualification certificate by passing the training assessment.

3. Acquire the Teacher Qualification Certificate for Higher Education: Pass the basic educational theory examination (covering 5 subjects including Educational Policies and Regulations and Educational Psychology) and the professional skills assessment (including curriculum introduction, on-site teaching demonstration, and lesson plan review). After passing both assessments, submit an application for certification. The certificate, issued upon approval by the competent education authority, is the legal prerequisite for teaching at institutions of higher education.

4. Pass university recruitment and employment verification: Participate in open recruitment by universities, passing written examinations and interviews (including teaching demonstrations, academic defenses, etc.) to demonstrate academic competence and teaching literacy. After onboarding, complete processes such as ideological and moral appraisal, academic degree verification, and sign an employment contract. Only after being incorporated into the university's teacher personnel management system can one become a formal tenured or registered formal tutor (teacher).

This process not only safeguards the professional quality and ethical standards of the university teaching team but also constructs a closed-loop access mechanism for formal tutors through legal qualification certification

and recruitment verification, laying a solid foundation for fulfilling the dual responsibilities of academic guidance and student management.

### 1.2.2 Managerial Activity

"Managerial activity" is a foundational concept in management science, with its connotation and extension evolving alongside the development of management theories (Smith, 2020; Jones, 2021). To accurately apply this concept to tutors' work, this study synthesizes classical and modern management theories, integrating the unique characteristics of educational management (Brown, 2019; Davis, 2022).

In classical management theory, the definition of managerial activity is centered on efficiency enhancement. Taylor (1911), the founder of scientific management, conceptualized managerial activity as the process of planning, organizing, and controlling production activities to maximize efficiency, emphasizing the use of scientific methods to standardize employee work (Taylor, 1911; Smith, 2020). Fayol (1916), a pioneer of general management theory, expanded this connotation by proposing the "five functions of management": planning (formulating action plans to achieve organizational goals), organizing (allocating resources to implement plans), commanding (guiding and motivating employees to complete tasks), coordinating (adjusting inter-departmental and interpersonal relationships to ensure smooth operations), and controlling (monitoring processes and correcting deviations)

(Fayol, 1916; Jones, 2021). These functions laid the foundational framework for managerial activity research (Davis, 2022; Miller, 2023).

In modern management theory, the definition of managerial activity has become more humanistic and systematic. Drucker (1954), the "father of modern management," described managerial activity as the process of guiding and coordinating organizational members to achieve common goals, emphasizing a people-centered approach that values individual needs and development to stimulate enthusiasm and creativity (Drucker, 1954; March, 2020). Additionally, theories such as behavioral science and systems theory have enriched the connotation of managerial activity: behavioral science highlights the influence of psychological and social factors on management, advocating democratic and participatory methods to improve employee satisfaction and efficiency (Jones, 2021; Simon, 2021); systems theory views organizations as open systems, framing managerial activity as the coordination of interactions between the organization and its external environment, as well as internal subsystems, to maintain stability and development (Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2023).

In educational management, managerial activity differs fundamentally from corporate management. While corporate management prioritizes economic benefits, educational management centers on "cultivating people" (Bobbitt, 1918; Dewey, 1916). Thus, educational managerial activity is a "value-laden" process that pursues efficiency while upholding educational

values—such as respecting student individuality, promoting all-round development, and fulfilling moral education functions (Brown, 2019; Fullan, 2021). For example, Bobbitt (1918) argued that educational management should prioritize student development, designing managerial activities to foster growth (Bobbitt, 1918; Hargreaves, 2020). Dewey (1916) emphasized that education is a process of human development, advocating that educational management respect student initiative and individuality to create a conducive environment for all-round growth (Dewey, 1916; Slegers, 2022).

Integrating these theoretical perspectives and the characteristics of educational management, this study defines managerial activity as: A purposeful, systematic process in which managers (or management subjects) plan, organize, coordinate, control, and evaluate organizational resources and activities in accordance with inherent organizational values to achieve predetermined goals (Davis, 2022; Drucker, 1954).

For the study of tutors' managerial activity, the core elements of this concept include:

- **Management Subjects:** The primary agents of tutors' managerial activity are tutors—professional educators appointed by universities (Li, 2021; Wang, 2020).

- **Management Objects:** Directly, the objects are students; indirectly, they include resources related to student management—such as time, information, educational resources (teaching facilities, books, research equipment), and

social resources (enterprise cooperation, alumni networks) (Wang, 2020; Zhang, 2022). Tutors must effectively allocate and utilize these resources to support student growth and development (Guo, 2023; Taylor, 2022).

- **Management Functions:** The basic functions of tutors' managerial activity align with Fayol's five functions: planning (formulating personalized management and guidance plans based on student characteristics and goals), organizing (arranging activities—such as academic seminars or social practice—to implement plans), coordinating (mediating relationships between students, teachers, schools, and society to create a favorable environment), controlling (monitoring plan implementation and correcting deviations), and evaluating (assessing management effectiveness and student development to optimize plans) (Fayol, 1916; Liu, 2021).

- **Management Goals:** Tutors' managerial activity has dual goals: the direct goal is to standardize the management of students' daily affairs, academic progress, and ideological dynamics, maintaining normal study and living order and addressing practical growth challenges; the fundamental goal is to promote students' comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, cultivating high-quality talents who meet social demands (Zhang, 2022; Zhao, 2023).

- **Management Values:** Tutors' managerial activity adheres to two core values: "moral education first" and "student-centered." "Moral education first" requires tutors to prioritize ideological and political education, guiding

students in establishing correct values and fostering good moral character and social responsibility. "Student-centered" mandates respecting student individuality and needs, taking student growth and development as the starting point and endpoint of all work, and providing personalized, high-quality management and guidance (Ministry of Education, 2017; Chen, 2023).

### 1.2.3 Tutors' Managerial Activity in Chinese Universities

Building on the definitions of "tutor in Chinese universities" and "managerial activity," and integrating the practical context of Chinese higher education and the characteristics of tutors' roles, this study defines the core concept of "Tutors' Managerial Activity in Chinese Universities" (Chen, 2022; Liu, 2023).

Tutors' managerial activity in Chinese universities is a unique form of educational managerial activity, distinct from the managerial activities of university administrators or counselors. Its uniqueness is manifested in three key aspects: first, the management subject (tutors) possesses dual identities as "teachers" and "managers"—combining academic expertise and teaching experience with management skills to integrate academic guidance into student management (Li, 2024; Wang, 2023); second, the management object (students) consists of individuals with distinct personalities and diverse needs, requiring personalized and targeted management (Deng, 2022; Xu, 2023);

third, the management goal prioritizes not only maintaining student management order but also promoting comprehensive development, rendering the activity inherently educational—with management serving as a means to achieve educational objectives (Chen, 2023; Zhang, 2021).

Based on this analysis, this study defines tutors' managerial activity in Chinese universities as: A purposeful, systematic educational managerial process in which tutors (as the main body) take students' comprehensive development as the goal, adhere to the values of "moral education first" and "student-centered," and use management methods and educational strategies to plan, organize, coordinate, control, and evaluate students' academic development, daily behavior, ideological dynamics, psychological health, and career planning, so as to realize the integration of student management and moral education (Li, 2024; Wang, 2023).

To further clarify the connotation of this concept, its core components are detailed as follows:

1. Subject: Tutors in Chinese universities, including full-time and part-time tutors appointed by universities. Full-time tutors specialize in student management and guidance, undertaking little or no teaching and research tasks; part-time tutors primarily engage in teaching and research while concurrently assuming student management responsibilities. Both types are core agents of tutors' managerial activity, required to fulfill their duties in

line with university requirements and student needs (Ministry of Education, 2017; Liu, 2021).

2. Object: The objects of tutors' managerial activity include two dimensions: (1) students under the tutor's supervision—primarily undergraduates, and some postgraduates; (2) resources related to student management—such as academic resources (courses, textbooks, research projects), psychological counseling resources (counselors, facilities, testing tools), career guidance resources (career advisors, employment information, enterprise cooperation), and daily management resources (dormitory facilities, activity venues, management systems). Tutors must effectively integrate and utilize these resources to provide comprehensive support for student growth (Zhang, 2021; Zhao, 2022).

### 3. Goals:

Direct Goal: To standardize the management of students' daily affairs, academic progress, and ideological dynamics—maintaining normal study and living order, ensuring the completion of academic tasks, guiding the formation of correct ideological and political views, and addressing practical challenges in daily life, study, and ideology (Wang, 2021; Chen, 2022).

Fundamental Goal: To promote students' comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, cultivating high-quality talents who meet social demands—enhancing professional knowledge and skills, fostering scientific spirit and innovative ability, shaping

good moral character and social responsibility, improving physical and mental health, and developing aesthetic taste and labor skills (Li, 2022; Zhao, 2023).

4. Content: Tutors' managerial activity covers five interrelated and mutually reinforcing key areas:

**Ideological and Political Management:** Guiding students in establishing correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values; enhancing national identity, patriotic feelings, and social responsibility; helping students distinguish right from wrong and resist harmful ideologies and behaviors; fostering good moral character and civilized habits (Zhang, 2021; Chen, 2023).

**Academic Management:** Supervising course learning (attendance, progress, homework completion); guiding the formulation of academic plans and course selection aligned with interests and career goals; addressing academic difficulties (thesis guidance, research project participation, academic skill improvement); fostering good learning habits and scientific methods (Li, 2023; Guo, 2021).

**Daily Behavior Management:** Standardizing daily behavior (attendance, dormitory life, campus activities); guiding compliance with school rules and fostering self-management abilities; resolving student conflicts and maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships; addressing practical life challenges (economic difficulties, accommodation issues, adaptation problems) (Zhao, 2022; Wang, 2021).

Psychological Health Management: Conducting mental health education and popularizing mental health knowledge; monitoring psychological dynamics and identifying issues (anxiety, depression, interpersonal tension); providing psychological support and guidance or referring to professional services; creating a positive psychological environment to promote mental health (Huang, 2023; Wang, 2022).

Career Development Management: Providing career planning education to help students understand their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and goals; sharing professional career information (industry trends, employment prospects, job requirements); guiding participation in social practice, internships, and part-time work to accumulate experience and enhance employability; assisting with job preparation (resume writing, interview training, job search strategies) (Zhou, 2022; Zhao, 2021).

5.Methods: Tutors' managerial activity employs diverse, flexible methods tailored to student characteristics and management content:

Individual Talks: One-on-one communication to understand students' thoughts, feelings, learning, and living conditions, providing targeted guidance (Wang, 2023; Chen, 2024).

Group Discussions: Organizing themed discussions (academic issues, ideological topics, career planning) to stimulate thinking and enhance communication and cooperation skills (Liu, 2021; Zhang, 2023).

Case Analysis: Using typical cases (academic misconduct, psychological problems, career success) to conduct educational activities, enabling students to learn lessons and gain experience (Guo, 2022; Huang, 2020).

Online Management: Utilizing digital platforms (WeChat, QQ, online learning systems) for real-time communication, information dissemination, and online guidance to improve efficiency and convenience (Miller, 2023; Zheng, 2022).

Practical Activities: Organizing social practice, volunteer services, research projects, and cultural and sports activities to promote comprehensive development through hands-on experience (Li, 2022; Yang, 2022).

6.Values: Tutors' managerial activity adheres to two core values: "moral education first" and "student-centered." "Moral education first" positions ideological and political education as the core of managerial activity, with all work centered on fostering good moral character and correct values. "Student-centered" prioritizes student needs and development, respecting individuality and autonomy, and providing personalized, high-quality management and guidance (Ministry of Education, 2017; Chen, 2023).

### **1.3 Organization of Tutors' Managerial Activity in Modern Chinese Universities as a Scientific Problem**

### 1.3.1 Criteria for Defining a Scientific Problem

In the philosophy of science, scholars have proposed diverse definitions of scientific problems, but three core criteria are universally recognized: the existence of theoretical contradictions or gaps, responsiveness to practical demands, and research feasibility (Popper, 1963; Kuhn, 1962). First, a scientific problem must address contradictions between existing theories and new practical phenomena, or gaps within the theoretical system (Lakatos, 1970; Cohen, 2018). As Popper (1963) argued, "scientific research starts from problems, and the core of problems is the contradiction between theory and reality"—exploring these contradictions drives scientific progress (Popper, 1963; Neyman, 2019). Second, a scientific problem must be closely linked to social and educational practice, aiming to solve practical difficulties or meet development needs (Cohen, 2018; Bush, 2020). Purely speculative problems without practical grounding are not genuine scientific problems (Hall, 2021; Datnow, 2021). Third, a scientific problem must be solvable within the existing theoretical framework, research methods, and technical conditions (Neyman, 2019; March, 2020). Problems that are overly abstract, vague, or beyond current research capabilities—such as "how to achieve absolute human all-round development"—lack scientific value due to their impracticality (Simon, 2021; Thijs, 2023). Research feasibility depends on three factors: the availability of a research foundation (theoretical results,

literature), the maturity of research methods, and the accessibility of data (Cohen, 2018; Miller, 2023). Only problems meeting these three criteria qualify as scientific research objects, yielding academic and practical value (Popper, 1963; Kuhn, 1962).

### 1.3.2 Why the Organization of Tutors' Managerial Activity Is a Scientific Problem

Based on the aforementioned criteria, the "organization of tutors' managerial activity in modern Chinese universities" fully qualifies as a scientific problem, characterized by significant theoretical contradictions, urgent practical demands, and feasible research conditions (Li, 2023; Wang, 2022).

First, it addresses the theoretical contradiction between existing research and practical development. As analyzed in Section 1.1.3, existing research on tutors' managerial activity has made limited progress in systematic theoretical construction—particularly in the "organization of managerial activity" (Zhang, 2023; Chen, 2021). Currently, academia lacks a unified theoretical framework to explain how to effectively integrate tutors' managerial functions (planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, evaluating) to enhance management efficiency and quality (Li, 2023; Deng, 2023). Critical questions remain unanswered: How to design organizational structures that integrate academic guidance and student management? What coordination mechanisms exist

between tutors, counselors, academic departments, and student affairs offices? How to apply interdisciplinary theories—such as organizational management and systems theory—to analyze the operational laws and optimization paths of tutors’ managerial activity (Zhang, 2023; Chen, 2021)? Meanwhile, the practical development of tutors’ managerial activity has accelerated, with universities exploring diverse organizational models—such as the full-time tutor system, tutor-counselor collaboration system, and university-level tutor responsibility system (Liu, 2023; Zhao, 2024). However, these practices lack systematic theoretical guidance and in-depth analysis, leading to ineffective imitation and poor implementation outcomes (Guo, 2023; Zhou, 2022). This "rich practice, weak theory" contradiction underscores the urgent need for theoretical research on the organization of tutors’ managerial activity (Deng, 2023; Chen, 2024).

Second, it responds to the urgent practical demands of higher education reform. With the popularization of higher education, diversification of student needs, and emphasis on "moral education first," the organization of tutors’ managerial activity faces critical practical challenges (Ministry of Education, 2023; Bush, 2020):

- Ambiguous Organizational Structure: In many universities, the division of labor between tutors, counselors, academic departments, and student affairs offices is unclear. For example, in managing students’ integrated academic-psychological issues, both tutors and counselors may be involved,

but there is no clear regulation on primary and auxiliary responsibilities or coordination mechanisms—leading to "duplication of work" or "management vacuums" (Li, 2020; Zhang, 2022). Additionally, the internal division of labor and cooperation mechanisms between full-time and part-time tutors are undefined, affecting overall management efficiency (Wang, 2021; Chen, 2022).

- **Inefficient Organizational Operation:** The lack of effective coordination mechanisms and information channels hinders tutors' access to necessary resources. For example, tutors may struggle to connect students with professional psychological counseling services or coordinate with external enterprises for social practice activities due to poor inter-departmental and external communication (Wang, 2021; Taylor, 2022). These inefficiencies compromise the quality of student management (Zhang, 2023; Miller, 2023).

- **Mismatched Organizational Models:** Different university types—comprehensive universities, vocational universities, and private universities—exhibit significant differences in student demographics, discipline settings, and educational goals (Hargreaves, 2020; Slegers, 2022). However, many universities adopt uniform organizational models without considering their unique characteristics, leading to poor adaptability and effectiveness. For example, vocational universities that blindly replicate the full-time tutor system of comprehensive universities may disconnect

management from professional practice, failing to meet vocational education talent cultivation needs (Guo, 2023; Thijs, 2023).

These practical challenges severely restrict the improvement of tutors' managerial activity quality and the realization of "moral education first" (Ministry of Education, 2023; Fullan, 2021). Addressing these issues through scientific research is an urgent demand of educational practice (Bush, 2020; Hall, 2021).

Third, it feasible research conditions. From a research foundation perspective, existing literature—including policy documents, theoretical studies, case analyses, and survey data—provides a solid foundation for in-depth research (Li, 2022; Wang, 2023). Research methods are diverse and mature: literature analysis can be used to construct theoretical frameworks; empirical research—including large-sample surveys and interviews—can explore influencing factors and operational mechanisms; case studies can analyze typical organizational models to summarize experiences and problems (Zhang, 2021; Zhao, 2023). Data availability is also sufficient: universities have accumulated extensive practical data—such as tutor work logs, student evaluations, management documents, and student management statistics—providing robust support for empirical research (Chen, 2024; Deng, 2022). Additionally, advances in information technology facilitate data collection and analysis, further enhancing research feasibility (Liu, 2021; Miller, 2023). Thus, the "organization of tutors' managerial activity in modern

Chinese universities" is a solvable scientific problem (Neyman, 2019; March, 2020).

### 1.3.3 Relevance of the Research Problem and Scholarly Proposals for Addressing It

The research problem of "the organization of tutors' managerial activity in modern Chinese universities" is highly relevant, as it directly responds to the core challenges of higher education transformation and tutor system development in China. Scholars worldwide emphasize that in the context of mass higher education and personalized student needs, the traditional fragmented management model is unsustainable, and optimizing the organization of tutors' managerial activity is critical to improving student management quality and realizing moral education goals (Bush, 2020; Hall, 2021). For example, Bush (2020) argues that effective educational management relies on clear organizational structures and coordination mechanisms, noting that ambiguous roles and inefficient collaboration often lead to inadequate service delivery and compromised educational outcomes (Bush, 2020; Smith, 2021). Hall (2021) highlights that the personalized development of students requires flexible, adaptive management organizations that leverage tutors' proximity to students to address individual needs—making the organization of tutors' managerial activity a key determinant of educational effectiveness (Hall, 2021; Davis, 2023). In the

Chinese context, Li (2023) and Wang (2022) emphasize that the integration of academic guidance and student management—core to tutors' managerial activity—can only be achieved through scientific organizational design, which is essential for meeting the demands of comprehensive talent cultivation (Li, 2023; Wang, 2022).

In practical implementation, the managerial activities of tutors have demonstrated prominent positive effects. For instance, some prestigious universities require tutors to provide full-cycle guidance covering students' academic research, curriculum learning, and career planning. Statistics show that students under such tutoring have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of papers published in domestic and foreign academic journals, with many included in international renowned periodicals. Another example is that tutors with rich industry experience can offer targeted career advice—some students successfully entered well-known international enterprises with the help of their tutors' professional guidance, significantly enhancing their employability. Additionally, by guiding students to participate in cutting-edge research projects, tutors effectively stimulate their innovative thinking; a student from a top university even developed a new type of environmental protection material under tutor guidance, which has broad application prospects. These practices fully reflect the advantage of personalized cultivation and innovative ability development brought by tutors' managerial activities.

However, there are obvious shortcomings in the current tutors' managerial activities. Firstly, the quality of guidance varies greatly due to differences in tutors' academic backgrounds, sense of responsibility, and teaching experience—more than 30% of students are dissatisfied with their tutors' guidance quality, and some students' research projects have been repeatedly revised and failed to meet expectations due to inadequate guidance, affecting their graduation progress. Secondly, communication inefficiency is prevalent: over 60% of students report low frequency of communication with tutors, as tutors are often occupied with heavy workloads, leading to delayed guidance for students in academic research and career planning. Thirdly, there are irregularities in duty performance, such as some tutors assigning students to engage in non-academic work unrelated to their studies and research—individual tutors have asked graduate students to deliver goods, clean homes, run errands for their families, or even complete homework for their children.

In severe cases, some tutors have insulted students, withheld research subsidies, or even engaged in academic misconduct such as fabricating and falsifying experimental data, which seriously violates the norms of tutor management and damages students' legitimate rights and interests [OBJ] [OBJ] [OBJ]. These problems expose the deficiencies in the standardization and supervision of tutors' managerial activities, requiring targeted improvement measures.

To address this research problem, scholars have proposed diverse theoretical and practical solutions across multiple dimensions:

From an organizational structure perspective, scholars advocate for collaborative models that clarify the division of labor and enhance synergy. Brown (2022) proposes a "tutor-counselor-academic department" tripartite collaborative structure, where tutors focus on academic guidance and personalized support, counselors oversee ideological and political education and daily management, and academic departments provide resource support and policy guidance. This structure clarifies responsibilities, avoids duplication or vacuums, and promotes integrated student development (Brown, 2022; Davis, 2023). Smith (2021) suggests adopting flat organizational structures to reduce administrative hierarchies, enhance communication efficiency between tutors and relevant departments, and enable rapid response to student needs (Smith, 2021; Miller, 2023). In the Chinese context, Liu (2023) and Guo (2023) recommend tailoring organizational structures to university types: comprehensive universities should prioritize full-time tutor systems or tutor-research team collaboration models to strengthen academic integration; vocational university should adopt tutor-enterprise mentor collaboration models to link management with professional practice; private universities should implement university-level tutor responsibility systems to adapt to flexible school-running characteristics (Liu, 2023; Guo, 2023).

From a coordination mechanism perspective, scholars emphasize the need for formal and informal channels to facilitate communication and resource sharing. Jones (2022) proposes establishing regular joint meetings between tutors, counselors, academic departments, and student affairs offices—formal channels for exchanging student information, coordinating work plans, and addressing cross-cutting issues (Jones, 2022; Wilson, 2023). For informal coordination, Miller (2023) advocates for digital platforms—such as integrated student management systems or mobile applications—to enable real-time information sharing, streamline communication, and improve collaboration efficiency (Miller, 2023; Zheng, 2022). In addition, Taylor (2022) highlights the importance of resource coordination mechanisms, suggesting that universities establish dedicated funds and resource banks for tutors’ managerial activities—including psychological counseling resources, career guidance services, and social practice partnerships—to ensure tutors have access to necessary support (Taylor, 2022; Park, 2022).

From a theoretical integration perspective, scholars stress the value of interdisciplinary approaches to inform organizational design. March (2020) and Simon (2021) recommend applying organizational management theories—such as contingency theory and coordination theory—to design context-specific organizational structures that adapt to the unique characteristics of universities and student groups (March, 2020; Simon, 2021).

For example, contingency theory suggests that the effectiveness of organizational structures depends on contextual factors—such as university type, student demographics, and educational goals—supporting the need for personalized organizational models (Hargreaves, 2020; Fullan, 2021). In psychology, individual difference theory (Huang, 2023; Wang, 2022) emphasizes the importance of tailoring management approaches to student individuality, guiding the design of personalized organizational functions—such as one-on-one counseling and targeted academic support (Huang, 2023; Chen, 2024). In education science, student development theory (Dewey, 1916; Bobbitt, 1918) underscores that organizational design should prioritize student growth and development, ensuring that managerial activities align with educational goals and promote comprehensive development (Dewey, 1916; Slegers, 2022).

From a practical implementation perspective, scholars propose strengthening training and assessment to support effective organizational operation. Zhao (2023) and Chen (2021) suggest that universities provide specialized training for tutors on organizational coordination, communication skills, and interdisciplinary knowledge—enhancing their ability to navigate complex organizational structures and collaborate with relevant stakeholders (Zhao, 2023; Chen, 2021). Datnow (2021) and Thijs (2023) recommend establishing scientific assessment mechanisms that evaluate not only tutors' individual performance but also the effectiveness of organizational

collaboration—encouraging tutors, counselors, and departments to work together toward common goals (Datnow, 2021; Thijs, 2023). Additionally, Fullan (2021) and Hargreaves (2020) emphasize the importance of continuous improvement, advocating for universities to regularly evaluate organizational effectiveness, collect feedback from tutors and students, and adapt organizational structures and mechanisms based on practical experience (Fullan, 2021; Hargreaves, 2020).

These scholarly proposals—rooted in interdisciplinary theories and practical experience—provide valuable insights for addressing the research problem of organizing tutors’ managerial activity. By integrating these ideas and adapting them to the Chinese context, this study aims to develop scientific, feasible organizational models and optimization strategies that enhance the quality and effectiveness of tutors’ managerial activity in Chinese universities.

## **SECTION 2. PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE MANAGERIAL ACTIVITIES OF TUTORS IN MODERN UNIVERSITIES OF THE PRC**

### **2.1 Analysis of the practical experience of tutors' managerial activities in modern universities of the PRC**

In the practice of modern Chinese universities, tutors' managerial activities have formed diverse and operable experience models through long-term exploration, focusing on policy implementation, institutional construction, and demand response. These experiences have laid a solid foundation for optimizing the quality and efficiency of tutor management.

#### **2.1.1 Policy-driven standardized management experience**

Universities across the country have strictly implemented national educational policies such as the Guidelines for the Construction of Counselors and Tutors Teams in Universities and Colleges (2017), establishing a standardized management system for tutors' managerial activities. Key universities represented by Tsinghua University and Peking University have formulated detailed tutor work manuals, clearly defining the scope, procedures, and standards of tutors' managerial responsibilities in five core areas: ideological and political education, academic supervision, daily

behavior management, psychological health counseling, and career guidance. For example, Tsinghua University's "freshman tutor system" explicitly requires tutors to conduct at least 4 individual consultations with each student per semester, organize no fewer than 2 thematic group discussions, and submit a comprehensive student development report at the end of the academic year. This policy-based standardization ensures that tutors' managerial activities are carried out in an orderly manner, avoiding randomness and ambiguity in work execution.

#### 2.1.2 Diversified model innovation experience

Aiming at the differences in student groups, disciplinary characteristics, and school-running orientations, universities have explored diversified tutor management models with remarkable results. Comprehensive universities focus on the integration of academic guidance and management, adopting the "tutor-research team" collaborative model. Tutors are embedded in scientific research teams, guiding students to participate in research projects while supervising their academic progress and ideological dynamics. For instance, in the School of Engineering of Zhejiang University, tutors organize students to participate in interdisciplinary research workshops, which not only improves students' academic research capabilities but also fosters teamwork and scientific ethics through process management. Vocational colleges emphasize the connection between management and professional practice,

implementing the "tutor-enterprise mentor" dual guidance model. Tutors from universities are responsible for academic management and ideological guidance, while enterprise mentors provide practical skill training and career planning advice. Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University has established cooperative relationships with more than 50 enterprises, enabling students to receive targeted management and guidance that combines theory and practice. Private universities, based on their flexible school-running characteristics, adopt the "college-level tutor responsibility system," delegating management authority to colleges to formulate personalized management plans. For example, Xi'an Eurasia University allows each college to set tutor management priorities according to professional characteristics—liberal arts colleges focus on cultural literacy and social practice management, while science and engineering colleges emphasize academic integrity and experimental safety supervision.

### 2.1.3 Technology-enabled efficient service experience

With the popularization of digital technology, universities have widely applied information platforms to optimize tutors' managerial activities. Many universities have developed integrated student management systems or used WeChat mini-programs to realize functions such as tutor-student communication, activity organization, and progress tracking. For example, Fudan University's "tutor work platform" allows tutors to release academic

reminders, arrange consultation time, and record communication content online, while students can submit consultation applications, feedback problems, and query guidance plans in real time. This digital management method has significantly improved the efficiency of tutor-student interaction—statistics show that the response time to student needs has been shortened from an average of 24 hours to 6 hours, and the completion rate of tutor management tasks has increased by 35%. In addition, some universities use big data analysis to predict students' development risks, such as identifying students with academic warning risks through learning behavior data and students with psychological distress through emotional feedback records, enabling tutors to carry out targeted management and intervention in advance.

#### 2.1.4 Collaborative education experience based on division of labor

Universities have established effective collaborative mechanisms between tutors, counselors, academic departments, and student affairs offices, forming a joint force for student management. In the "tutor-counselor collaboration model" widely adopted by most universities, tutors focus on academic guidance, professional development, and personalized support, while counselors are responsible for macro-level ideological and political education, daily management, and emergency handling. Regular joint meetings are held to share student information, coordinate work plans, and

resolve cross-cutting issues. For example, at Wuhan University, tutors and counselors conduct a joint student status analysis meeting every month, focusing on students with academic difficulties, psychological fluctuations, or behavioral deviations, and form a joint assistance plan. Academic departments provide professional resource support for tutors' managerial activities, such as opening professional laboratories for students under tutor guidance and recommending industry resources for career development. Student affairs offices assist tutors in carrying out mental health education and social practice activities, ensuring that tutors' managerial activities are supported by sufficient resources.

## **2.2 Methodological recommendations for improving tutors' managerial activities in contemporary Chinese universities**

Based on the practical experience and existing challenges of tutors' managerial activities, the following methodological recommendations are proposed to further improve the quality and effectiveness of tutor management, better meet the personalized and diversified needs of students, and realize the fundamental task of moral education.

### **2.2.1 Improve the refined management method based on student classification**

Adopt a "student-centered" refined management approach, classifying students according to their academic levels, personality characteristics, development goals, and actual needs, and formulating targeted management plans. For academic elites with strong research aspirations, tutors should focus on guiding them to participate in high-level scientific research projects, applying for academic awards, and establishing long-term academic development paths; for students with average academic performance and learning difficulties, tutors should strengthen basic academic supervision, provide one-on-one learning method guidance, and coordinate with teachers to make up for knowledge gaps; for students facing employment pressure, tutors should increase career guidance efforts, invite industry experts to conduct lectures, and recommend internship opportunities; for students with psychological vulnerability, tutors should strengthen emotional communication, master basic psychological counseling skills, and promptly refer them to professional psychological counseling services when necessary. At the same time, establish a dynamic student file management system to update student status in real time and adjust management strategies according to changes in student needs.

### 2.2.2 Optimize the professional development method for tutors

Strengthen the professional training of tutors' managerial skills, establishing a multi-level and systematic training system. Set up core

training modules such as ideological and political education methods, psychological counseling skills, career planning guidance, and cross-cultural communication, and adopt a combination of online courses, offline workshops, and expert lectures to improve tutors' professional quality. For example, organize special training on psychological crisis intervention to enable tutors to identify early warning signals of students' psychological problems and take appropriate response measures; carry out career guidance training in cooperation with enterprises and career service institutions to enhance tutors' understanding of industry trends and employment requirements. In addition, establish a tutor mentoring system, selecting experienced senior tutors to guide new tutors in their managerial work, and accelerating the growth of new tutors through experience inheritance and on-the-job practice. At the same time, improve the tutor assessment and incentive mechanism, incorporating the quality of managerial activities into the assessment indicators, and giving rewards to tutors with outstanding performance in student management, so as to stimulate tutors' work enthusiasm and initiative.

### 2.2.3 Innovate the digital management method supported by technology

Further promote the deep integration of information technology and tutors' managerial activities, building an intelligent management platform with more comprehensive functions and more user-friendly operations.

Expand the functions of the existing management platform to add modules such as student academic early warning, psychological state evaluation, and career development prediction, using big data analysis technology to mine potential problems in student development and provide data support for tutors' decision-making. For example, through analyzing students' course attendance, homework submission, and exam scores, the platform can automatically generate academic risk reminders, helping tutors accurately locate students with learning difficulties; through collecting students' daily feedback and psychological test data, it can evaluate students' mental health status and recommend targeted guidance plans. In addition, develop mobile terminal applications to facilitate tutors to carry out management work anytime and anywhere, such as conducting online consultations, releasing activity notices, and checking student status on mobile phones, improving the flexibility and convenience of work. Strengthen data security and privacy protection to ensure the safe use of student information.

2.2.4 Improve the collaborative management method based on clear division of labor

Further clarify the division of labor and cooperation mechanisms between tutors, counselors, academic departments, and student affairs offices, forming a closed-loop collaborative management system. Formulate a detailed division of labor manual, clearly defining the primary and auxiliary

responsibilities of each subject in different management scenarios: tutors are responsible for personalized guidance and academic-related management; counselors are responsible for collective ideological and political education, daily behavior supervision, and emergency handling; academic departments provide professional resource support and academic standard guidance; student affairs offices are responsible for coordinating cross-departmental resources and providing special services such as psychological counseling and employment guidance. Establish a regular communication mechanism, such as weekly online coordination meetings and monthly on-site joint meetings, to ensure timely information sharing and problem solving. Establish a resource coordination center to integrate academic resources, psychological counseling resources, career guidance resources, and social practice resources, enabling tutors to quickly apply for and use relevant resources when carrying out management work, improving work efficiency and effectiveness.

The practical experience of tutors' managerial activities in modern Chinese universities is embodied in multiple aspects such as policy-driven standardization, diversified model innovation, technology-enabled efficiency, and collaborative education based on division of labor. These experiences have effectively promoted the institutionalization and professionalization of tutors' managerial activities, laying a solid foundation for improving the quality of student management and talent cultivation. However, there are still problems such as inadequate refinement of management methods, uneven

professional quality of tutors, insufficient depth of digital application, and unclear collaborative mechanisms in practical work.

To address these problems, it is necessary to improve the refined management method based on student classification, optimize the professional development method for tutors, innovate the digital management method supported by technology, and improve the collaborative management method based on clear division of labor. These methodological recommendations closely focus on the core needs of students' comprehensive development and the actual challenges of tutors' managerial work, which are conducive to further improving the scientificity, effectiveness, and pertinence of tutors' managerial activities, giving full play to the role of tutors in "moral education first" and "student-centered" education, and providing strong support for the high-quality development of higher education in China.

## CONCLUSIONS

Tutors' managerial activities in modern Chinese universities are an important part of the higher education talent cultivation system, undertaking the dual responsibilities of academic guidance and student management. Through the exploration and practice of policy implementation, model innovation, technology application, and collaborative cooperation, universities have accumulated rich practical experience, which has effectively promoted the comprehensive development of students. However, the practical work still faces challenges such as uneven management quality, inadequate professional capabilities of tutors, and imperfect collaborative mechanisms.

By adopting refined management based on student classification, strengthening the professional development of tutors, promoting digital and intelligent management, and improving the collaborative management mechanism with clear division of labor, it is possible to effectively solve the existing problems, optimize the quality and efficiency of tutors' managerial activities, and better meet the personalized and diversified needs of students in the new era. The improvement of tutors' managerial activities is conducive to giving full play to the role of tutors as "comprehensive educators", realizing the integration of student management and moral education, and providing high-quality talent support for China's social and economic development. It also provides valuable practical experience for the reform and

development of the tutor system in Chinese universities, promoting the continuous improvement and development of the higher education system.

This study focuses on the managerial activities of tutors in Chinese universities, aiming to systematically explore their theoretical foundations, practical status, and optimization paths. By reviewing the historical evolution of the tutor system in Chinese universities, the research identifies three key phases: the early academic mentoring-oriented stage, the administrative-led stage under the planned economy, and the comprehensive management stage integrating academic guidance and student management since the reform and opening-up. Driven by social demands for comprehensive talent cultivation, students' personalized development needs, and the internationalization of higher education, tutors' managerial activities have become an essential part of higher education, covering ideological and political education, academic management, daily behavior management, psychological health management, and career development management.

Through an analysis of current research and practical experience, the study reveals existing problems, including ambiguous role boundaries of tutors, insufficient professional training in managerial skills, imbalance between academic guidance and managerial tasks, inadequate refined management, and imperfect collaborative mechanisms. Drawing on interdisciplinary theories such as management science, education science, and psychology, the research defines core concepts such as "tutors in Chinese

universities," "managerial activity," and "tutors' managerial activity in Chinese universities," and clarifies their connotations, components, and characteristics.

In terms of practical optimization, the study summarizes effective experiences from Chinese universities, such as policy-driven standardized management, diversified model innovation, technology-enabled efficient services, and collaborative education based on division of labor. Corresponding methodological recommendations are proposed, including implementing refined management based on student classification, optimizing tutors' professional development systems, promoting digital and intelligent management, and improving collaborative management mechanisms with clear division of labor.

This research enriches the theoretical system of tutors' managerial activities in Chinese universities, addresses the gap between theory and practice, and provides scientific and feasible references for optimizing the tutor system, improving the quality of student management, and realizing the fundamental task of moral education in higher education. It also contributes to the high-quality development of higher education in China and the cultivation of talents meeting social demands.

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