No theory, experience!

— Talent Management in the Chinese Educational Sector
ABSTRACT

Talent management (TM) has been researched and practiced by many researchers and practitioners for years. The theory itself is based on empirical findings. However, there is no clear and solid definition for it despite thousands of articles and books were published in the past century. Among them, there are not many related to TM in Chinese context, not to mention TM in the Chinese educational sector which we are quite interested in. The lack of literature and research in this specific field evoked curiosity from us. Therefore, a case study was conducted in Chinese middle schools with a focus on talented teacher management where those teachers are considered the talent which need to be managed. This study is based on qualitative approach with empirical data collected from four in-depth interviews. After analyzing the data, we got unexpected results. As a matter of fact, the schools have no knowledge about TM even though what they did to the teachers reflect some aspects of TM, or in other words, they are not aware of what they did is in fact part of TM. This empirical finding reflects how TM is found, developed and labeled. In the end, we concluded that TM is an area of fascination and inspiration. It comes from the practice without which it will not exist and develop, which is embodied in our case study. In this study, school leaders are not aware that they were in fact using some methods of TM. They just do not know how to label those methods.

Key words: Talent Management, Teacher Management, Educational Sector, China, Middle School, Industrialization of Education, Gaokao, Zhongkao
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Qingqing Dai & Sihao Chen
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1 Introduction

Here in this section we will introduce the socio-economic background of China’s education system, especially the middle school and emphasize the importance of teachers in competition among middle schools. Then we will discuss the development of research on China’s teacher management in middle schools and later come up with the general problem and the research questions that aim to contribute to the general problem from one perspective. In the end, to reiterate the process of formulating the research questions and the topic, we will give five reasons of why we choose them.

1.1 Background

Education in China has been always given priority from ancient China’s Civil Service Exam (Keju) in 7th century to contemporary China’s national exam with one interruption during the period of Cultural Revolution (Yu & Suen 2005). After ten years of interruption, in 1977, Deng Xiaoping announced China would resume national college entrance examination which was also called “gaokao” (Zhang 2013). The next year thereafter China opened her door to the world and decided to establish a socialism market economy which later boost China to become an economic giant. In order to meet the needs of marketization and privatization brought by a series of reforms, education in China gradually became an industry. Previously banned private schools since 1949 reemerged because of the socialism market introduced in 1978 (Kwang 1997). Besides, in 2015, the Education Law and the Higher Education Law was revised with the abolishment of the rule “Individuals or groups may not establish a school for profit-making purposes.” (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China 2016). This act went a step further to sweep away the obstacles and created space for the development of private schools. In 2015, private middle schools were 7461 in total with an increase of 275 compared with the number in 2014 and their students were increased as well (ibid).

In education industry, schools are like companies. The teachers are the employees. Students and their parents are the clients. They have the demands of striving for a better university and a better future, of which the two aims are consciously connected rooted in people’s minds. That leads to
“the fever for education” or “the war without smoke” (Yu & Suen 2005). One can see the fever for education embodied in companies´ recruitment information which more or less contains the requirement of education background. Under these circumstances, despite the disputes from the academic world (Wang 2000; Yang 2006; Wang 2002), industrialization of education is going on its way with a higher speed.

In the fever for education, the most important battlefield that will determine a student´s course of life is Gaokao. High school students in the third year (final year) can attend Gaokao. Gaokao will evaluate one’s qualification level with the sole criterion——score. That means the higher score you get, the better college or university you can go. For example, China´s top two universities, Tsinghua University and Peking University, will enroll the top students with highest scores from the whole country.

Regarding Gaokao, it cannot be separated from the education of high school and junior school which together constitute middle school education system in China. According to Ministry of Education of the People´s Republic of China (2016), the middle school in China is defined as the schools including junior schools (students from age 12 to 14) and high schools (students from age 15 to 17) (see fig. 1).

Figure 1 China´s Education System

<table>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade(schooling)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>PHD Programme</td>
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There is a similar exam like Gaokao only for junior school students, that is “Zhongkao”, which literally means high school entrance exam. The aim of “Zhongkao” for students is to enter the best high school through gaining best score in zhongkao exam and in the end hopefully enter the best university. In this way, middle schools (junior schools and high schools) are connected in alignment with the common goal of eventually entering the best universities through Zhongkao and Gaokao. For those schools, the key criteria of evaluating the quality of teaching are enrollment rate of key high schools and key universities. Accordingly, the middle schools’ attraction to students and their parents lies in the reputation brought by the enrollment rate.
The single pursuit for scores resulted in that middle schools pay much attention to helping students gain better score in the exam. Therefore, the schools need to improve the teaching quality from the perspective of teachers who are the persons that in fact teach students, which is the main service that those schools offer. Among the schools, competition is not just from enrollment rate but also from good teachers that they have. Good teachers or talented teachers that we would like to call, are defined as the teachers who are good at teaching one or more subjects and specially have the talent of helping students improve their test-taking ability (later can help students gain higher score in gaokao). Based on this definition, one can know that not all the teachers are talented teachers, and every teacher has the possibility to become a talented teacher.

Some schools offer higher salary in order to attract talented teachers. Some rich private schools may have the ability to afford much higher salary compared with their competitors. For example, in Shanghai (1st tier city in China), the average monthly salary of public school teachers in 2017 was around 5000 RMB (793.4 US dollars) which was higher than the average salary in second tier and third tier cities (China Times 2017), while in the same year, Yulin Huadong Middle School (a private school in Shanxi province) offered 100,000 to 150,000 RMB (1322.3 to 1983.5 US dollars per month) annual salary in order to recruit good teachers under age 40 with at least bachelor’s degree and 5-year teaching experience (Yulin Huadong Middle School 2017).

The income sources of teachers are composed of basic salary and performance salary (see fig. 2). The basic salary is as mentioned previously the salary that Yulin Huadong Middle School offered in the recruitment advertising. It can be divided into two parts based on two criteria, teaching years and professional title. When the basic salary is stable (in the same school), the performance salary is the main factor that influences a teacher’s income through evaluating his/her performance in helping students improve their grades in the tests. It can also be divided into four components——basic performance salary, rewarded performance salary, holiday allowance and academic year bonus.
The structure of teacher’s salary leads to the connection between teacher performance or teaching results (students’ score) and actual salary. In this way, teacher performance is directly related to the core competition ability of the school, which contributes to the importance of teachers. Therefore, schools put a lot of efforts on attracting best teachers who may be outstanding graduates or prominent teachers working in other schools. However, the methods and strategies that schools use in teacher management are under-researched.

1.2 Problem Discussion
Teacher management from the perspective of talent management is under-researched even though some scholars discussed teacher management in general in their work, for instance, Cathy Gaynor (1998), Rebecca M. Chory and James C. McCroskey (1999) and Yin Cheong Cheng (2009). When we scanned the literature, majority of them were related to teacher management in western countries or other countries like some Asia-Pacific countries (Cheng 2009) and very few articles (all in Chinese) were concerning the issue in China, which lead to the lack of research in teacher management in the Chinese context and especially in the aspect of middle school teacher
management. For instance, when Cheng (2009) discussed teacher management in Asia-pacific countries, she mentioned mainland China as well. But, she did not touch the deep discussion of the issue in China, instead, she generally discussed the teacher management in several countries and regions including mainland China, which blurred the difference among nations and contexts. Nonetheless, the competition for teachers among middle schools is increasingly high in China. As the Principal of the Experimental School of Santai Middle School CL (anonymous) said, “Some teachers prefer schools in big cities because they will have more opportunity to make extra money after class in big cities. Besides, some schools can offer positions which are in the authorized system. Those positions are quite attractive to teachers since they bring a series of welfare and most importantly job stability. But the problem is only public schools can offer such positions, while private schools do not.” According to Student Affairs Office coordinator TXM (anonymous) from Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School, “The mobility of teachers never stops. Teachers like to go to the schools that can offer better salary, better welfare and so on. The way our school manage teachers is quite simple. Money and reward-system. Indeed, we have a talent management system. But it’s just not enough.” Under these circumstances, middle school teacher management in China is more like an ongoing phenomenon instead of a research topic despite the hot debate on competition for teachers.

1.3 Research Interest

Based on abovementioned discussion, we are quite interested in teacher management in Chinese context from a talent management perspective since that is still under-researched and we ourselves are closely related to this topic as well.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the interest above, at the beginning we would like to solve a general problem:

How do you relate talent management theory to teacher management?

But since it is not practical to solve it with limited time and knowledge in this study, we would like to try to contribute a little bit to it from the perspective of impacts, and therefore we formulate the research questions:

What are the impacts of talent management on Chinese middle school teacher management?
1.5 Reasons of choosing Chinese middle school teacher management as the target of study:

a) Chinese middle school teacher management is the miniature of Chinese society. It reflects the course and changes of Chinese society. On the one hand, the whole society attach great importance to education and knowledge. Parents’ great expectations for their children to become a better person and live a better life are embedded in receiving good education. There is a verse from a poem, “Wan Ban Jie Xia Pin, Wei You Du Shu Gao”, which means “The value of all the other pursuits is small. Gaining education excels all other careers.” This piece of poem was passed among different eras of Chinese and echoes the mainstream values in current society. On the other hand, the teachers’ components changed, which reflects the improvement of work participation of women and their social status. In ancient China or before China entered modern society, women were not allowed to teach. It changed dramatically when in contemporary China women not only are allowed to teach but also occupy a significant position in education sector. According to a report from National Institute of Education Sciences (2013), the percentage of female teachers among middle school teachers was 47% in 2010, which reflected the changes of gender structure of teachers in China.

Besides, the privatization and marketization brought by the reform and opening-up policy not only influenced the business world but also reached the education sector. The industrialization of education reflects the transition of China, from a planned economy to a socialism market economy.

b) It also reflects the trend of globalization and the mobility of resources. The resources are moving from one organization to another in the pursuit of attraction. Talented teachers as human asset or resource are not immobile. They are in fact inclined to move among schools if the other school is more attractive. Under this circumstance, competition for talented teachers among middle schools is intensified especially when talented teachers are the key asset to enhance their teaching quality and competitive advantage. Those middle schools are eager to attract talented teachers with any methods.
c) Education sector contribute a lot to economy directly or indirectly (McMahon 1987) which proves its importance. That attracted us to this field and later inspired us to formulate a specific research idea.

d) We both experienced six years of middle school education in China, which brought us familiarity to this field. This part of life played an important role for us, which shaped our value systems and ways of thinking. Hence, we want to go back to the period of middle school and dig out the roots of the other selves of us.

e) Talent management especially TM of middle school teachers in China are lack of research and study. When reviewing the literature, we found it difficult to gain much effective information about TM in China, let alone talented teacher management. That gave rise to curiosity from us.
2. Theoretical Framework

In the following part, we will look back and discuss the development of talent management, including its origin, definitions, different streams, TM in China and some extra discussions related to our research, like socialism and capitalism in Chinese context and industrialization of Education which may help readers better understand our topic and study in a holistic way.

We chose those theories as the theoretical framework because we thought before relating talent management to our topic, we needed to give an introduction about TM’s past and ongoing researches which could serve as the background of our study. Then we turned to discuss about TM in China which aimed to give a guiding map of the TM issues in the Chinese context. This context would later partly explain the phenomenon in the educational sector. With the purpose of helping the readers understand the educational sector’s situation and how it related to the teacher management in China, we added the dispute on socialism and capitalism. After that, we decided to present the phenomenon of educational industrialization in China. That could serve as the background of talented teacher management and leadership decisions in the schools.

2.1 Talent Management

2.1.1 The War for Talent

In 1997, the consultants from McKinsey & Company first came up with the idea or concept of “The War for Talent” which brought about a huge degree of academic and practitioner interest (McKinsey 2001; Collings & Mellahi 2009). After that it seemed that everyone was talking about the war for talent which became a phenomenon that gave rise to a broad discussion among individuals associated with the topic (ibid). However as pointed out by another group of McKinsey experts in 1998, companies were still not aware of the importance of human resource or talent and on the contrary, they were more focusing on physical and financial assets instead of human asset (Chambers et al. 1998). In this research, Chambers and other authors (1998) believed that companies should see their people as a priority. Besides, they also supported that the companies needed to develop a talent mindset and gave attention to employee value proposition as well as developing a robust sourcing strategy which means the companies should
figure out what kind of talent that they needed and get them in the right positions (ibid). In addition to Chambers and other experts from McKinsey, there were other researchers who realized the importance of talent mindset, like Lynne Morton and Chris Ashton (2005). They came up with the idea that talent management strategy needed to be aligning with the organization’s business goals and visions, and companies should integrate all the related systems and processes in order to create a talent mindset (Ashton & Morton 2005).

In the late 1990s, the companies were struggling to gain and retain the talent that they needed, and they had a lot of vacancies that waited to be filled with potential employees (McKinsey 2001). At the same time, the employees were asking for more rewards including higher salary, which seemed talent were quite attractive and popular among employers, and employers were showing their advantages and competition to recruit talent (ibid). This period of time was an age when employers were desperately competing for talent who were at a vantage point. As stated at the beginning of the article, McKinsey consultants contended that “Better talent is worth fighting for.” (Chambers et al. 1998, p. 45). However, later, when encountering the dot-come bubble and economic decline, individuals started to be more cautious and doubtful about the war for talent which was considered being ended soon (McKinsey 2001).

Nevertheless, McKinsey consultants (2001) did not think that the age for “the war for talent” was over. On the contrary, they believed that the war for talent would last at least two decades and would continue to reshape the workplace in the business world (McKinsey 2001). In this way, today’s world is still in the time of the war for talent, although now may be in its late phase. When companies are looking for talent to fill the positions, they are also facing the problem of selecting the right persons. They may employ the persons who are either not qualified enough or overqualified (overeducated). In Jauhiainen’s (2010) research about overeducation in Finnish regional labour markets, he pointed out that, in a spatially limited area, job hunters are inclined to be overeducated since the market has less requirements for applicants. According to Van Ham

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1 The McKinsey survey and research outcomes are only based on the company’s own interest and the outcomes mentioned in the thesis cannot be considered as academic research, which the readers should be aware of. In this way, we used the material from McKinsey only for the purpose of helping readers understand the research background from the view of the society.
(2002), if in this area there is no job that matches one’s education level, one has to decide that s/he accepts the job requiring less education, remains unemployed or widens the job search area (going to another place or market). Job mobility (Ham 2002) among regions and industries is not a new phenomenon since workforce is always in the pursuit of gaining position advancement or higher salary, which can be explained as motivation or aim for their work. Individuals shift between one job and another job in order to find a better one which can fulfill their desire. When one position is not attractive anymore, individuals are inclined to move on to the next. Therefore, in talent management, retention is a crucial part that needs much more efforts and attention.

2.1.2 Talent Retention
While the need for talent or good employees was increased, US companies found it difficult to attract and retain the talent that they needed (Chambers et al. 1998). Executives and consulting experts contended that there was an increasingly severe shortage of talent that were needed to work as managers who run the divisions or administrate the departments in the organization (ibid). On the one hand, some companies relied heavily on outside hiring and had no plans for talent management. The age, however, had already passed because of its outdated way of management and the importance of human capital (Cappelli 2008). On the other hand, some companies were not aware of the succession plans which might undermine the talent demand and supply base in that they were training people in a way that would give implicit signal which means those people would be recruited while after training program companies did not think those trainees were qualified enough for the positions and recruited other people (ibid). During this period, job requirements changed, and individuals left, which led to a waste of tremendous time and energy in the organization (ibid). In this way, internal talent management failed in the 1970s since it could not cope with the increasing uncertainties in the marketplace and in the internal environment of an organization (ibid). Therefore, Cappelli (2008 p. 3) came up with a new approach to deal with the issues in talent management, “a talent on demand framework”, which was inspired by the idea of “just-in-time” in the field of supply chain management. This model was based on four principles that support it from supply chain perspective (ibid). These principles are:

➢ Make and Buy to Manage Risk
➢ Adapt to the Uncertainty in Talent Demand
➢ Improve the Return on Investment in Developing Employees
➢ Preserve the Investment by Balancing Employee-Employer interests

The first principle basically means that companies outsource TM to a third party with the purpose of lowering the cost (ibid). The second means companies make TM strategies according to the talent demand and the uncertainty in the market (ibid). The third one focuses on the return on investments in developing employees which emphasizes the importance of internal talent (ibid). The last principle turns to the alignment between the interests of the employees and the companies (ibid).

In order to make it more understandable, Cappelli gave a further explanation with several metaphors from the supply chain perspective (Cappelli 2008). In his analogy, he compared forecasting talent needs to forecasting product demand, hiring outside to outsourcing some parts of manufacturing work, plans for succession to timely delivery, and low-cost talent development to estimating the cheapest and fastest way of manufacturing products (ibid).

After discussing the talent management in general, we would like to discuss the blurry definition of TM and the various streams emerging from the TM research based on the study of different schools of scholars in the next part.

2.2 Talent Management Streams
Up till now, the definition of talent management is still unclear and its theoretical framework boundaries are blurred, even though there have been decades of discussion and hype both in the academic and practitioner world. Practitioners or scholars either failed to admit the inconsistent and unconcise definitions of talent management or did not reach the common agreement of TM (Lewis & Heckman 2006). Nevertheless, the readers of our study may as well look at the definition of strategic talent management by David G. Collings and Kamel Mellahi (2009):

“...activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these..."
positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization.” (p.304)

From this definition, you may notice that identification of key positions, the potential talent who may fill these roles and the retention of those talent are quite important in talent management. In this way you may further understand that what talent management is from a general perspective, although you may not be able to know a clear definition of it.

As shown in figure 1, Collings and Mellahi (2009)´s definition can be further uncovered in the figure that indicated one of its core components, identifying the pivotal positions, and a second element which

Figure 1: Strategic Talent Management

Source: David G. Collings and Kemal Mellahi 2009, p.306

put emphasis on talent pool where both internal labor market and external labor market offered potential workforce (talent) to fill in the roles. Besides, a third element of the definition focused on an organization´s human resource architecture, including employees work motivation, their commitment to the organization and extra role behavior (ibid).
Despite the ununified definitions and endless discussions about talent management shown at the beginning of this part, we will probe further and reveal the three main streams of thoughts concerning TM (Lewis & Heckman 2006).

2.2.1 First Stream

Heinen and O’Neill (2004) discovered the first stream which could be explained as another version of human resource management. They contended that the organizations which had long-term and lasting success were the ones that emphasized the importance of employee growth and achievement by attracting, nurturing and retaining the best talent (ibid). In addition to that, they regarded talent management separately from an organization’s business strategies, investment in programs and other activities (ibid). In other words, they considered that talent management, like human resource management, was the work of a certain department instead of the issue of the whole organization (ibid).

This stream saw talent management as a substitute of human resource management and originally considered that managing talent was equivalent to doing the similar work as HR was required to do but in a more advanced and faster way which was influenced by the new technology like internet and information & communication technology and the changes that took place in the marketplace in the last decades (Lewis & Heckman 2006). According to Olsen (2000, p.24), an organization’s traditional department-oriented attracting and recruiting processes needed to be adjusted to an enterprise-level talent recruitment and retention effort. Even though some advocates of this perspective regarded talent management as a broad concept, many practitioners who focused on specialist area within HR had the tendency to narrow down the definition of TM (Lewis & Heckman 2006). For instance, employers were inclined to discuss talent management in the light of getting the most suitable candidates to the key positions in the organization which indicated a tendency to human resource management (ibid). Therefore, essentially, these authors just replaced the concept of “human resources” with another concept “talent management” (ibid). Furthermore, as pointed out by Cohn, Khurana and Reeves (2005), companies which held the view as mentioned above were, to some extent, shortsighted because
they did not pay much attention to succession planning and leadership development in the long term which could be illustrated in their words:

“Many executives believe that leadership development is a job for the HR department. This may be the single biggest misconception they can have.” (p. 66)

In our opinion, the first stream of talent management overlaps the common practices in human resources, including detecting, attracting, nurturing and retaining the talent, but still does not go beyond the general concept or framework of human resource management. To some extent, it does not take into consideration of all levels of management in organizational strategy but instead it is only looking at the phenomenon with a human capital level, which can be seen as the limitation of this stream of thought.

2.2.2 Second Stream
The second stream regarding talent management focused on talent pools (Lewis & Heckman 2006). For some researchers, talent management was a set of processes which were designed to ensure an abundant flow of employees into the positions in the organization (Kesler 2002; Pascal 2004; “The changing face of talent management” 2003 cited in Lewis & Heckman 2006 p. 140). Those approaches were often related to succession planning or human resources planning and again included typical practices and processes of HR, which led to more focus on organizational internal activities than external factors (Lewis & Heckman 2006). These approaches, commonly known as manpower or workforce planning, were involving modelling organizational employee flow by matching levels of hierarchy, rules for entering and exiting a position, and criteria such as costs, expected occupation, and employees´ supply and demand (ibid).

Kesler (2002) argued that succession planning should not be considered equivalent to replacement planning since effective succession or talent pool management involved in building a series of provider group throughout the entire process of leadership pipeline or progression while replacement planning was just narrowly focusing on identifying some certain particular potential candidates for given leadership or senior management positions. He further critized that recruiters did not have a clear picture of the outcomes that they may gain before the implementation of new talent management practices (ibid). He contended that:
“When new practice unfold without a clear sense of what results must be delivered, they become mere activity generators.” (Kesler 2002)

In the end of his study, Kesler (2002) concluded that companies should become more ambitious in constantly recruiting new talent into their business, and they must become more creative in rewarding and retaining the highest performers. That is what the second stream which focuses on talent pool may lack of since companies or recruiters spend much more time and effort on attracting new talent while they may neglect the importance of further work like retention of the talent that they recruit into their organizations. In this way, it is obvious that this thought or stream of talent management may inevitably confront the situation of a great amount of talent flow in and out the organization when the recruiter continually gains new people but have no further plan of retaining and nurturing the talent that have already been inside, which consequently may lead to inefficiency of talent management and organizational operation.

Another perspective from Cappelli (2008) addressed the second stream in a differently way, which means companies started to look outside for help since the identified candidates through succession planning no longer met the demands of the position. In his first principle for talent management, he held the idea that companies may buy outsider in order to avoid risk (ibid). In his second principle, he gave solutions to adapt to uncertainties in talent demand, one is to break up development programs into smaller or shorter units to fasten the process of talent growth, another is to create an internal talent pool that can be distributed among business units within the organization as needs arise.

As shown in figure 1, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing candidates which are designed to fill the roles that differentially contribute to an organization’s sustainable competitive advantage should be addressed (Collings & Mellahi 2009 p. 306). In their study, authors also put emphasis on the high performing incumbents, which means other less capable employees will not be in consideration of the talent programs, and the differentiation in key roles and key talent, which means different levels of performers (A, B, C) will be filled in different positions that have accordingly variable requirements (ibid).
Even though talent pool may bring the organizations with a great number of talent, the unpredictability of demand and supply can lead to unanticipated outcomes. We believe that there are problems and difficulties in the second model, which mainly concerns how to manage and control the talent flow in a favorable way that aims to keeping and nurturing talent in positions and facilitating employee development in alignment with organization vision and purposes. If those issues can be addressed, talent pool may produce positive outcomes and contribute to talent management in future.

2.2.3 Third stream
The third stream centered generally on talent themselves (Lewis & Heckman 2006). That means it only focuses on the talent themselves without consideration of the organization’s real situations or the positions that need to be filled (ibid). Lewis and Heckman (2006) then further gave two perspectives regarding talent to explain the uniqueness of the third model. From the first aspect, talent, which was defined as talent with high potential and high performance, were categorized into three levels according to their performance in the organization(A-top, B-medium, C-bottom performers) (Axelrod, Handfield-Jones, & Michaels, 2002; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001 cited in Lewis & Heckman 2006) and only the “A” performers were hired, rewarded and retained without putting into consideration their specific roles or, in some cases, the organization’s specific needs. Under these circumstances, companies only recruit top performers and put them into all kinds of positions from top or senior level to the bottom level, which caused that some positions were occupied by overqualified people. At the same time, in order to raise the percentage of “A” players, those companies also got rid of “C” players through firing. In other words, they were “topgrading” the organization by exclusively hiring “A” performers (Smart 1999; “Welcome to topgrading” 2005 cited in Lewis & Heckman 2006). A second aspect viewed talent as a consistent good and emerged both from humanistic and demographic perspectives (Lewis & Hackman 2006).

Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001) also supported the third stream from humanistic and demographic perspectives. They argued that “the talent is inherent in each person, one individual at a time, which was ultimately our greatest strategic differentiator.” (ibid p.17). In order to
succeed in helping to maximize individual’s contribution to the organization’s goals and vision, companies should develop a better understanding of a person’s talents and the whole process of matching them to the roles or positions in the organization (ibid). Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001) emphasized that the HR leader must understand that their accountabilities for their work, for instance, strategic partner or change agent, were just theoretical abstractions, which might blur the most practical question to success or failure of each human resource initiative:

“What is the best way to increase one person’s performance?” (ibid p.18)

To answer that question, Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001 p. 22-23) provided suggestions based on following initiatives:

❖ **Identify the outcomes expected of each role.**
❖ **Identify the natural talents common to the best in each key role, and design interviewing systems to select people who possess similar talents to that best.**
❖ **Measure each person on the required outcomes.**
❖ **Identify each person’s areas of talent and non-talent.**
❖ **Encourage each person to strengthen talents with skills and knowledge, and then find ways to manage around areas of non-talent.**
❖ **Apply the label of employee’s weakness “areas for improvement” to areas of talent.**
❖ **Rate people on whether they have improved on the required outcomes.**

When companies, instead of identifying competencies required for each role, align the talents with the outcomes (goals) of the role, the goals will guide them towards the right direction of finding the most suitable talents (ibid). When companies encourage people to strengthen their talents and later find ways to manage the areas of non-talent, those people will not be frustrated and stuck in areas of non-talent since the greatest opportunities lie in talents instead of weakness (ibid). When companies rate people on whether they have improved in required outcomes, people will be clearer about what they lack and need to do next and they will also gain motivation from the outcomes they achieved (ibid).
To further uncover the essence of human asset, Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001) emphasized the uniqueness of each person. They believed each employee had a unique component of talent--each employee was driven by her or his unique motivations, each thought in her or his own unique way (ibid). Faced with this lasting uniqueness, companies have basically two approaches to deal with it. One is to fight against the uniqueness by training everyone in the organization to be the standardized person required by position, for example, training the manager to manage in the same way. That is competency-based approach (ibid). Another is to capitalize on the uniqueness, which means identifying one’s talents and deploying them into suitable work or roles according to the organization’s needs.

In conclusion, these three streams on talent management were all flawed and problematic. The first perspective, essentially, was based on human resources and in fact did not add anything useful to talent management. In other words, it was more like repackaging a set of HR practices to make it new and refresh to be sold to the academic and practitioner worlds (Lewis & Hackman 2006).

The second stream just repeated pretty much the same work done in succession planning and workforce planning and as a result it did not go beyond the practices and theories long-developed in HR (Lewis & Heckman 2006). It did not provide value-added understanding of talent management and therefore was unnecessary (ibid).

The third stream was not strategic even though it was seemingly appealing in a way that appreciated everyone’s inherent talents, which might contribute to the increase of performance in the organization (Lewis & Heckman 2006). This perspective had some problems. First, it did not give clear criteria to assess to what extent the companies should allocate their resources to identifying one’s talents (ibid). Secondly, it seemed to assume that every employee in the company was valuable from an economic or organizational development view (ibid). In this way, the company had to spend a lot more resources on human asset, which could lead to waste and inefficiency. Besides, categorizing of performers to separate them into three levels (A, B, C) and only retaining the high performers “A” simply ignored the possibility that, for some positions, competent performance may be totally acceptable, and, in some cases, companies might not put
enough emphasis on some competencies since they overexaggerated the importance of the top performers and the corresponding competencies.

To sum up, this perspective built on advice and anecdote and therefore was lack of rigorous data, which made it impossible to conclude the degree to which the results can be attributed to talent in the organizational performance (Lewis & Heckman 2006).

2.2.4 A New Stream
Despite all the disputes and controversies around the three perspectives on talent management, a new stream was emerging. This stream focused on identifying the key positions and later on filling the roles with the perfectly qualified talent. Lewis and Heckman (2006) used the metaphor “Architect” for talent management (Jackson & Schuler 1990; Walker 1980 cited in ibid p. 143). They thought this analogy would best serve describing the vision of early proponents of talent management and offer a systematic and strategic perspective for TM (ibid). In alignment with “talent as architect”, Lewis and Heckman (2006) contended it was necessary to explain the relation between strategy and talent. One example was provided by Zuboff (1988). In her example, implementing automated manufacturing system changed the talent pool which was required to change the nature of information collected from the process. She believed that changes in technology would in turn facilitate changes in talent which was required to use that technology in the work (ibid). Under this circumstance, the talent strategy was deeply imbedded in business strategy.

The strategy related to talent can also be understood in another way. The matching of roles and talent requires the strategy in question. According to Huselid, Beatty and Becker (2005), it was impossible for companies to afford all top performers without B and C-level performers in their positions. Instead, they suggested companies identify the strategically important A positions, support B positions and reduce C positions (ibid). In addition, they also believed investing in all positions with resources may cause huge costs and therefore A positions should get the best resources and B positions may not need equivalent amount of support as A positions require (ibid). They gave an example of an airline to illustrate the aforementioned argument (ibid). If the pilots (B players who had enough training) got the same amount of support as A positions
require to improve their performance, it could be a waste for the airline. As for C positions, Huselid, Beatty and Becker (2005) gave another suggestion which was to outsource them in that outsourcing can help the organization reduce cost. All in all, organizations manage human asset or workforce in a differentiated way which can increase their efficiency and profitability.

Nevertheless, compared with this talent management approach based on a ranking system, Zuboff (1988) not just simply used the ranking system, but also added market issues to the strategic decisions to be made with regard to talent. She put the value of talent and difficulty of replacing it together to contribute to a new model of talent classification (see Fig. 2) with the help of Stewart (1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty To Replace</th>
<th>Difficult to replace</th>
<th>Low value added</th>
<th>High value added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low value added</td>
<td>Easy to replace</td>
<td>Low value added</td>
<td>High value added</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value Added

*Figure 2 Talent classified by difficulty to replace and value (adapted from Zuboff 1988)*

This model of talent classification depicts how to manage talent when strategies emerge or the environment (talent pool, technology) changes but does not explain how talent in turn affects strategy development. Just reacting according to the market changes is not enough to make talent strategic. Talent management needs to influence or reshape organizational strategy (Lewis & Heckman 2006).

Two perspectives were offered to create a truly strategic approach to talent management (Lewis & Heckman 2006). Barney (1991, 2001) provided the first perspective, a resource-based view (RBW). This view considered that if a company wanted to gain enduring competitive advantage,
it must develop resources which were valuable, rare and difficult to imitate (ibid). In Barney (1991, 2001)´s definition, resources can be all kinds of assets in the organization, including physical, financial, human and organizational assets. Talent as one kind of resources are valuable, rare and difficult to imitate. However, the value of talent cannot be identified clearly since it´s impossible to separate the value contributed to the organization by talent themselves and by technology as shown in previous example (Barney 1991, 2001; Zuboff 1988). Besides, talent´s contribution to developing rare resources for the organization was also unclear since analyzing unit was the organization instead of the talent pool (Lewis & Heckman 2006). The most relevant attribute to talent probably was the imitability (ibid). Talent provide skills and abilities for the company, through which the company is able to develop a culture, social networks, and organizational/managerial structure that is difficult for its competitors to imitate. However, the problem lies in this perspective is that it is hard to evaluate the tie between people´s practices and the organizational performance (ibid).

The research has not been clear about the need to invest in the methods of managing talent and the need to invest specifically in selected talent (focusing on one talent pool) and the need to develop and invest in talent in general (Lewis & Heckman 2006). For this reason, Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) came up with a second perspective for strategic talent management. They looked through the lens of marketing and finance and proposed the concept of “talentship” in hope of developing a “decision science” regarding talent management (Boudreau & Ramstad 2005 cited in Lewis & Heckman 2006 p. 146). Based on that, Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) developed the HC Bridge Decision Framwork (see fig. 3).

Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) outlined the dynamics of the linkage between talent and strategy in the organizational management through introducing the concept of “talent decision science” (like the one of finance and marketing), which helped them go beyond the discussion of strategic elements influencing talent decisions and opened up the possibilities of talent investments in turn affecting strategy decisions (ibid).
2.3 Talent Management in China

China owns a huge population of university graduates who are however not qualified for international business or global market, which leads to the looming shortage of talent in China (Farrell & Grant 2005). According to McKinsey consultants Farrell and Grant (2005), in order to meet the demands of global talent, China had to raise the quality of its university graduates by enhancing their language skills and other practical abilities.

China’s pool of potential talent is tremendous (Farrell & Grant 2005). A survey about the college graduates from 2006 to 2016 shows China has an increasing number of potential talent (Statista 2017). In this survey, there were around 3.775 million of graduates in 2006 and about 7.042 million in 2016, which shows a huge increase of around 86.54% (ibid). According to Chinese
Ministry of Education, a total of 7.95 million college students would graduate in 2017 (Xinhua 2016).

In spite of all the seemingly positive data, multinationals are still facing the difficulty in finding the qualified graduates who have required skills for service positions (Farrell & Grant 2005). On the one hand, most of the graduates are not qualified. In the study of recruitment of eight occupations in China, McKinsey consultants found only less than ten percent of Chinese applicants were qualified for the positions (ibid). The main reason for them to reject the other

![Geographical distribution of China’s universities and colleges, 2003](image_url)

*Source: China’s Ministry of Education; McKinsey analysis (2005 p. 2)*
applicants is their poor English ability. Besides, communication style and cultural difference were also hindering those potential talent from being recruited (ibid).

On the other hand, multinationals found it difficult to access the potential talent. Geographically speaking, the graduates are widely dispersed (Farrell & Grant 2005). In 2003, less than one third of graduates were from top ten university cities (see fig. 4) and just one quarter of graduates lived in a city or a region close to an international airport which is one of the most important requirement for multinationals to set up offshore branches (ibid). Moreover, most of Chinese graduates are not willing to leave their cities or towns for other cities. Only one-third of Chinese graduates moved to other provinces to work (ibid).

In addition to the two factors, multinationals who want to develop in Chinese market are confronted with fierce competition since domestic competitors and other multinationals have already occupied many suitable talent and they still offer a lot of opportunities of jobs that can attract young professionals in a more competitive way (Farrell & Grant 2005).

Taken into consideration those issues of shortage of talent in China, talent management is still an under-researched area in Chinese academic and practitioner fields (Cooke 2008 cited in Preece, Iles & Chuai 2011) even though it has aroused some interest in the business and academic worlds in China. Some key contributors to the interest in TM are imbalanced development, low-quality workforce, an incomplete market system (market-oriented economy), underdeveloped technical, managerial and professional labour markets, a lack of managerial talent and a shortage in human resource management (Preece, Iles & Chuai 2011). Other contributors to this interest in TM are the aging population of China (Jackson and Howe 2004 cited in Preece, Iles & Chuai 2011) and the lack of global leaders (McKinsey Global Institute 2005, cited in Preece, Iles & Chuai 2011).

Many current leaders with upbringing during the time of cultural revolution, lack of required knowledge, experiences and skills for management and at the same time some younger leaders have little management experiences despite good education they acquired. Besides, the recruiters claim that they are lacking in qualified applicants (Preece, Iles & Chuai 2011) due to the low-quality labour in China as mentioned by McKinsey consultants in previous discussion (Farrell &
Grant 2005). In addition, many companies are not necessarily committed to leadership development and succession planning therefore is not effective, which is also led by shortages of talent to fill the leadership positions. Under these circumstances, companies’ short-term business goals are often put in priority over long-term talent development (Preece, Iles & Chuai 2011).

In conclusion, talent management in China is still under-researched and under-developed because on the one hand potential talent are comparatively unqualified and difficult to utilize in global market, and on the other hand companies do not pay enough attention to TM with little management commitment and strategic long-term thinking. In order to uncover the deep roots of the underdeveloped TM in China, we would like to discuss and analyze the unique societal, economic structure with special focus on its economic reforms and their impacts on education sector in the next two parts.

2.4 China: Socialism or Capitalism?

Since China decided to open the door to the world in the late 1970s, she has experienced a series of reforms and accordingly huge socio-economic changes (Mok 2005). China abandoned its self-isolation policy and started to embrace the world market (Rawski 2008 cited in Li 2015). Facing the trend of globalization, China took years of efforts to join World Trade Organization in 2001, which helped China to gain advanced technology and science from other global giants to facilitate its economy as well as benefiting from the fruits of global markets.

From the period of the pursuit of absolute socialism (1950s-1970s) towards the phase of forming a localized socialism with Chinese characteristics (late 1970s-now), it seems the ideology of socialism was changed or adapted according to the needs of economic development and the real situations happening in the country. Looking back at the reforms in state-owned enterprises, agriculture, prices regulation and the market (Miller 1998), one will find that China embodied some characteristics of capitalism. For example, the idea of giving enterprises more freedom was extended to state-owned enterprises and China allowed foreign capital to get involved in state-owned enterprises (ibid). Later, the trend of privatization of state enterprises started to sweep over the whole country. Those enterprises which wanted privatization could partly or completely
fulfill that through either changing the shareholders which means selling the stock to private persons or selling the whole enterprise to a private person.

Nevertheless, Deng Xiaoping believed that China´s version of socialism was embedded in the deep roots of Chinese soil by arguing that it aligned itself with the essence of socialism which was the liberation and development of productive forces (ed. Ash 2013). Under his lead, China established a socialist market economic system which aimed to liberate and develop productive forces in the pursuit of fulfillment of common wealth of whole people in the society (ibid). In order to achieve the goal, Deng came up with the concept of the wealth of a small group of population and later expansion of the wealth to a larger amount of people until the common wealth of the rest of the people (ibid). Based on this idea, in a short term or the foreseeable future, individual incomes would vary increasingly and the gap between rich and poor would inevitably get enlarged, which seemed to go opposite to the goal of reducing exploitation and polarization (ibid).

Based on current situations and short-term plans, China is going to form a country which is, in terms of economy, inclined to be more capitalistic to some extent, especially embodied in the private sector which contributes a lot to its economy. With the belief of the contribution of private sector, China took measures and movements to boost private companies, for instance, giving them tax breaks and lowering the requirements for visa of the staff (Murphy 2018). Compared with other countries, China paid much more efforts to help domestic start-ups and its total amount of investment in the start-ups reached 2.2 trillion yuan (332.6 billion US dollars) in 2015 (ibid). However, since the biggest companies are state-owned, including energy, banks, and transportation sectors and the private companies are in fact interfered a lot by the government (Communist Party Committee has its small branches in most of the private companies), it may be not appropriate to define China as a capitalism country like Western countries. As the Chinese communist party describe the country “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, we think China is not a pure socialism or capitalism country while it is essentially a socialism country with some capitalism characteristics for the needs of economic development.
From the economic perspective, we then found it was quite interesting to study the educational sector which reflects the economic changes and the unique socialism road gradually developed in the past decades in China. Inevitably, the educational sector was influenced by the economic reforms and their results, which can be seen in the public and private middle schools’ structural changes and managerial reforms. Before we go to the specific study of talent management in educational sector, we would like to discuss the relation between education and industrialization in China with the purpose of helping readers understand the research background and how we developed the idea of talented teacher management.

2.5 Industrialization and Education in China
China’s education system has been through years of reforms since 1980 (OECD 2016). This huge system is under the direct control of both central government and provincial governments. Generally speaking, education in China is state-run but with little aspect of private capital involvement (ibid).

However, recent years, educational industrialization has been a hot topic which aroused broad discussion among Chinese researchers (Wang 2000; Yang 2006; Wang 2002). Education in China has become an economic factor that boosts GDP to some extent. Confronted with the unprecedented trend, researchers hold opposite attitudes, either against or for it. Nevertheless, education’s contribution to industrialization is self-evident. From the perspective of Walter W. McMahon (1987), he believed there was a close tie between education and industrialization which could be proved in his survey about current state of knowledge on the relation between education and per capita growth, income distribution, and industrialization. He used return estimates of education in terms of economic contribution and offered grounded evidence (20% of educational contribution) for the tie (ibid).

Back to nowadays China, education is influenced by the general trend of marketization, privatization and reformation (OECD 2016). Its contribution to national economy is enormous. According to Deloitte (2015), China’s education market was expected to grow from RMB1.6 trillion in 2015 to RMB 2.9 trillion by 2020. From the perspective of investment, an increased
volume of VC/PE investment was put in education industry with around RMB 4 billion in 2013 up to about RMB 16 billion in 2015 (ibid).

China’s education industry has been and is in a period of rapid growth. According to a report made by Deloitte research team (2017), there will be six new heights in China’s education industry.

❖ Height one: sub-sectors are showing "full blossom".
❖ Height two: capital market is gaining ground by hitting new records in the scale of M&A and asset securitization.
❖ Height three: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education ushers in a golden age.
❖ Height four: "going global" trend is continuing to heat up.
❖ Height five: educational real estate expands rapidly and the collaboration between real estate and education further deepens.2
❖ Height six: technology redefines education and education industry will experience unprecedented transformations.

Among the six trends, capital market changes are most relevant to our interest with respect to the tie between industrialization and education in China. Capital market has been reshaped by the huge investments in education sector in the past decade, which contributed to the securitization of asset and a number of M&A implementation in education industry (Deloitte 2017).

The total amount of capital mergers and acquisitions in China’s education industry reached RMB12.6 billion in 2016 (Deloitte 2017 p. 19), which saw the rapid increase of M&A investments and cases in the past five years (2010-2016 see fig. 5). M&A in 2016 was focusing on education informationization from the view of industry segments which could be explained by two reasons, one is the market demand of infrastructure for building the path to traditional education transformation, and another is China’s 13th of Five-Year Plan emphasized the importance of informationization of education industry.

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2 Materials from Deloitte are also based on the company’s own interest and therefore cannot be seen as academic research, which the readers should be aware of.
Therefore, in the education sector, China sees huge opportunities to its economic development. But, when we look back at the managerial practices and TM in education sector, we find it is lack of research, especially in the talented teacher management, which arouses our curiosity of what we can discover in that field.
3 Methodology

In this chapter, we will explain all the methods that we will apply in this research. The methods will be explained one by one. Besides, we will also explain the reasons why we chose these approaches.

3.1 Research Approach

Researchers choice approaching for the research problem, these approaching called research approach (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Research approach can take into account the scientific theory that people insist on. For example, quantitative and qualitative study, or abductive, deductive and inductive (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).

3.1.1 Deductive and Inductive Approach

In general, deductive approach means theories lead research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), the theories will guide interview questions if authors apply deductive research approach in their own research. But, the inductive research approach is opposite, because of the theories is the consequence of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As Bryman and Bell (2011), the inductive research approach shows that the connection between the empirical finding and theories (Boso et al, 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2011). This research will apply deductive research approach, because of the previous research and theories will lead interview and qualitative research models (Bryman & Bell, 2011). What’s more, all of the theories that have been applied for this research and analyze the talented teacher management in four Chinese middle school are interrelate with the purpose of this research. Besides, all of the interview questions in this research are based on the previous theories, thus, the deductive research approach are lead this research.

3.1.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Approach

There are some differences between the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The quantitative research approach relys on data collection and it uses quantitative data and numbers to make hypothetical measurements and tests (Bryman & Bell 2015). As Bryman and Bell (2011) contend, if researchers use quantitative research approach to collect their data, they usually make
the data get into quantitative numbers. However, Bryman and Bell (2015) conducted that the qualitative research approach usually get the information from words that are collected and analyzed by author's interpretation. Besides, in order to collect data, if researchers use qualitative research approach, they can use documents, interviews and observations (Creswell, 2014). What’s more, the qualitative research approach can help researchers to find deep information on the behavior of individuals and their organization when they experience an event (Willing, 2013). Thus, the qualitative research is about “who”, “where”, “why”, “what”, “how” (Yin, 2009). In order to gain knowledge and deep understanding about this research, the qualitative research approach will be applied in this research. Because, the qualitative research approach can help researchers to collect information and data about talent management in Chinese middle schools directly. Additionally, the purpose of this research is get into the talent management in Chinese middle school, in order to find out the in-depth information. Thus, the qualitative research method is an appropriate approach for this research.

3.2 Research Design

In a research, the research design is extremely significant, because the process of operations has been improved by research design (Yin, 2009). Besides, According to Yin (2009), research design helps researchers fulfill research purpose when they analyze data. What’s more, there are five different research designs that are Cross-cultural design, Experimental design, Comparative design, Longitudinal design and Case study (Yin, 2009). In this research, the case study will be applied, in order to help researchers to collect data from different Chinese middle schools’ cases. Besides, the case study is also the comparative design (Yin, 2014), which means the case study can help researchers discover the difference within four Chinese middle schools. Moreover, since researchers apply case study that allow researchers to communicate directly with the school leaders, it is easier for researchers to acquire information. Thus, if applying case study, the researchers can afford full research’s information.

3.3 Data Sources

There are two types of data can be utilized for research, which are primary data and secondary data (Saunders et al, 2012). Primary data is usually collected in a direct way, such as interviewing, e-mail and so on. Secondary data usually comes from previous literature, such as
published articles and others research (Saunders et al. 2012; Bryman & Bell 2015). The advantage of primary data is that when researchers collect data, they can choose where and when to collect it. However, according to Bryman and Bell (2015), there is one big disadvantage——collecting primary data is time-consuming. Besides, there are other disadvantages about primary data (ibid). For instance, researchers may inevitably have their own subjective understanding to primary data, thus it may cause the conclusion becomes irrelevant with purpose of research (ibid).

In this study, we will apply both primary and secondary data. The interviews as primary data help us to get in-depth understanding. We need more in-depth information and specific data to fulfill research question, thus, the primary data is very important to our study. Comparing with the secondary, the primary data cost more time to collection, but we believed the primary data can provide in-depth understanding about subject and better control of research process. For secondary data, it comes from previous theories and researches, which are the basis that we build up our study on.

3.4 Data Collection Method
The data collection method is significant for researchers, the interviews between researchers and different school leaders is the main data collection approach for this research. There are two type of data collection method: Structured and less structured (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Researchers can build a wide structure by using the structured method (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Besides, Bryman and Bell (2015) also conduct that the researchers must know the wide structure at the beginning of a research, and design corresponding research tools. However, comparing with structured method, the less structured method is opposite. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), researchers freely research that what they want to find out if they apply less structured method, thus, from the data, researchers can see the theory and the concept.

3.4.1 Qualitative Interview
Since the qualitative interview method will be applied in this research, when researchers interview the leaders of Chinese middle school, researchers can get an in-depth understanding and improve validity. There are more divergence and influence on each group member when more group members do the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, the group interview will not
be applied for this research. In order to gain available information, only leaders in the Chinese middle school will be interviewed, such as principals, and vice principals. In the following parts, the detail about semi-structured interview will be conducted.

### 3.4.1.1 Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview includes open questions of defining the field, which based on a loose structure (Britten, 1995). Britten (1995) also conducts that if researchers and target interviewee make a topic too specific, it will cause diverge. Therefore, in order to find out the meaning of terms and the rules of the target interviewee, researchers will use free listings (Bayliss et al, 2003). So, the target interviewee has more chances to freely answer questions that are asked by researchers. In this research, in order to make research integrated, we will apply the semi-structured interview when we interview four leaders of Chinese middle school. Besides, during the interview, we will use open questions in order to get more data. Meanwhile, we will offer a chance for the target interviewees to talk freely.

### 3.4.1.2 Open-end Questions

As Bryman and Bell (2011) contend, the open-end questions allow researchers to collect insight data and provide a chance for the interviewees to talk freely. However, the closed question is opposite. That only allows interviewees to follow the provided information to answer the questions (Saunders et al, 2009). In this research, the open-end questions will be applied, because it helps researchers to collect more data and get in-depth information.

### 3.5 Sampling

According to Saunders et al (2012), the research objectives and questions always rely on some types of sampling. It is impossible to do researches for everything. Thus, to get useful information and data, researchers usually choose a suitable sample (Saunders et al, 2012). Saunders et al (2012) also conducted that researchers should choose a sample of leaders or employees in an organization and even a case study organization itself can be a sample. There are two kinds of sampling that were introduced by Bryman and Bell (2015): probability and non-probability sampling. In the next part, the sample selection will be conducted.
3.5.1 Sample selection
The probability sampling is that the samples are statistically chosen from whole population randomly (Bryman & Bell, 2015), which means each sample has an equal chance to be selected. However, the non-probability sampling is the opposite. In the whole population, some samples have a bigger chance to be selected, which means the non-probability sampling do not choose samples randomly (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This research will apply non-probability sampling, because of researchers already have contacts with some Chinese middle schools. Thus, it is easier for researchers to contact these schools in order to arrange the interviews and further collaboration. The convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Bryman and Bell (2011) contended that Researchers could easily and simply get convenience samples. These four Middle school are in the same area that called Mianyang. Mianyang is one of most accretive education areas. In 2017, more than 180,000 students and their parents from the whole country went to Mianyang and attend the school’s entrance exam (Sichuan.scol.com.cn, 2017). Besides, Mianyang is the hometown of one of the researchers. Thus, this research will choose Mianyang as the research area.

Four Chinese middle schools have been selected as the research’s objects which are The Experimental School of Santai Middle School, Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School, Santai Middle School, Santai Foreign Language School. There are some reasons to explain why we selected these schools. First of all, these four schools are the most popular schools in Mianyang city and they represent the best public school and privet school in this city. Many parents want to send their children to these four schools. Second, the scales of them are similar. They all have around 6000 students in the school. Third, compared with other schools, these four schools have a good teaching quality, and they also want to keep their advantage, which means they have a high demand for talented teachers. Fourth, since these four schools are high teaching quality schools, we suspect that school leaders apply talent management in their daily management. Last, we have resource that help us to contact these leaders in each school.
3.6 Ethical Principles

Since business strategy is very sensitive, this topic is including ethical issues that may give rise to interviewee’s reactions. Thus, it is very important for researchers to consider ethical principles during the process of this research. Bryman and Bell (2015) introduced four different Ethical Principles that should be remembered by researchers.

3.6.1 Invasion of Privacy

Bryman and Bell (2011) conducted that researchers should consider invasion of privacy, which means they should not invade but respect people’s privacy. It is impossible for researchers to forecast the sensitivity of respondents, because different respondents have different feelings, experiences and personalities (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this research, when asking interview question, researchers will try to be as careful and objective as possible. Besides, researchers will also fully consider the values and beliefs of interviewees.
3.6.2 Deception
Bryman & Bell (2015) argued that Deception means researchers promise to present something, but they finally present something else. In order to prevent deception, all the relevant personnel of this research have been explained, and if any problems arise, the researchers will answer and explain it again. In addition, the final results of the study will be read and approved by the relevant personnel, and then they can argue whether it is considered to be based on the agreed content.

3.6.3 Lack of informed consent
Lack of informed consent means researchers do not inform people of all the information about the research topic (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In this research, to reduce misunderstandings, researchers have sent WeChat messages to all the contact persons before the interview to clarify the purpose and all details of this research, such as the interview questions and research question. Besides, researchers also explain why they were chosen and what contribution they may make to the research.

3.6.4 Harm to Participants
Bryman and Bell (2015) argued that harm to participant means researchers should reduce the stress, emotional harm and increase safety, which should be considered before the research. In this research, researchers asked all the participants and interviewees whether they wanted to be anonymous or not. However, all of the interviewees think it is unnecessary to be anonymous, because their management strategy is not very sensitive. Because of the personal relation, these interviewees allow researchers to interview them. All the interview records were only available to the researchers.

3.7 Data analysis method
The data analysis is very significant for a qualitative method that requires researchers choose the suitable Data analysis approach (Sohrabpour et al, 2016). Mile and Huberman (1994) introduced three different kind of Data analysis methods: Data reduction, Data Display and Conclusion Drawing. These three methods will be applied to this research.
3.7.1 Data Reduction
This analysis has three different steps: Selecting, Sorting, Organizing and Transforming data (Mile & Huberman, 1994). The conclusion will be done after all the steps (ibid). In this research, researchers will keep the useful research information and reduce some useless information. In order to combine with theories and analysis data, all the information from the Chinese middle school will be summarized.

3.7.2 Data Display
Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that Data display means that researchers can develop identification and explanation that connect with existing theories, which can be done through conducting table listing or charts. Then these table lists, and charts will be combined with research topics (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thus, all the collected information and data will be conducted with ordered structure, such as text, chart (Mile and Huberman, 1994; Peighambari et al, 2016). Since this research is a qualitative research, all the useful data of Chinese middle school will be described in the part of Empirical Findings.

3.7.3 Conclusion Drawing
Mile and Huberman (1994) believed that researchers should prove the meaning behind the data. Besides, researchers should also make sure the data source is in this research (Mile and Huberman, 1994). In this research, researchers can answer the research questions, because different data from Chinese middle schools will be shown in the conclusion drawing.

3.8 Quality criteria
3.8.1 External Validity
According to Yin (2009), the external validity is to check whether the conclusion of this research can be applied to others’ research and generalized. The case study can only represent the specific situations that the case encounters, but it cannot generalize other situations (Yin 2009). Yin (2009) also argues that there are some problems to assume external validity when researchers apply qualitative study with small samples and case study. In this research, since researchers do
this research only in one area and four middle schools, and different areas have different education policy, it is hard to generalize a wide range of this research. Besides, The Experimental School of Santai Middle School is a new school, they still try to explore talent teacher management. Thus, researchers think it is not enough to generalize this research, which also means this research has a lower external validity.

3.8.2 Content validity
As Bryman and Bell (2011) contended, in order to check whether the new measured approach is fulfilling the research questions and purpose of research, researchers should apply content validity when this new measured approach is built. Besides, researchers should find an individual who is irrelevant with this research to help to assess the new measured approach (Bryman & bell, 2011). In this research, in order to measure the content validity, researchers reviewed the previous research in the same study area and Master program. Moreover, researchers found some relevant research articles from Google scholar and Linnaeus University’s library.

3.8.3 Construct validity
For the concepts, in order to identify the right operational measures, researchers should apply construct validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As Yin (2013) contended, when researchers apply a case study, there are three different strategies to improve construct validity, which are Using sources of evidence, Setting up the chain of evidence, and Making key informants able to be reviewed. In this research, the construct validity was increased, because researchers collect In-depth information from Chinese middle schools. Besides, the voice recording will be used during the interview. Thus, it helps researchers to avoid losing key information and reduce the risk of misunderstanding.

3.8.4 Reliability
In a research, the reliability is to minimize and reduce bias (Yin, 2009). According to Bryman & Bell (2011), if researchers apply a qualitative research, there are two different kinds of reliability should be considered. The first one is External reliability, it conducts the degree of how a research can be replicated (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Besides Bryman & Bell (2011) also argued that Internal reliability means all the researchers should join the whole research and reach
an agreement about what they experience during the research process. Thus, the Internal reliability requires more than one researcher in a research team (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this research, the internal reliability is growing. Since before this research started, two researchers have already discussed the details, such as purpose of this research, research questions. Besides, if researchers do not meet each other, researchers still keep in touch by WeChat during the whole research process in order to exchange information and ideas in time.
4. Empirical Findings

In this chapter, we will describe the detailed information of the four Chinese middle schools, the Experimental School of Santai Middle School, Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School, Santai Middle School and Santai Foreign Language School. All the information was collected from the school websites and interviews with school leaders. This chapter will be divided into three parts: Recruiting Talented Teachers, Managing and Training Talented Teachers, Retaining Talented Teachers.

4.1 The Experimental School of Santai Middle School

The Experimental School of Santai Middle School is a private school established in 2017. It inherited the culture of Santai Middle School to create a highland for educating people in the 21st century. The Experimental School of Santai Middle School cooperate with Santai Middle School, Santai Foreign Language School and Feng Ze Education Investment Co., Ltd. Besides, the Experimental School of Santai Middle School applies small class teaching in which there are only 35 students in a class. They hope the people of Mianyang can spent less money to let their children receive the best education of wisdom (stzxsyxx.com, 2018).

4.1.1 Recruiting talented teachers

First of all, the principal of Experimental School of Santai Middle School Chen Lin also gave the answer about what the definition of a talented teacher is.

“First of all, I think talented teachers should have good professional skills, which also means they should have a good knowledge about their subject. Second, talented teachers should also have good teaching skills, thus they can help their students understand the knowledge that they teach. Last, talented teachers should own a good morality. If a teacher has a good knowledge and teaching skill but this teacher has bad morality, that is a big problem as well.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-04)
Besides, the talented teachers are very important for the Experimental School of Santai Middle School.

“The talent teachers are very important for us, because they can help us improve educational quality in a short time, thus more students’ parents are willing to send their children to our school.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-04)

However, the Experimental School of Santai Middle School only have few ways to recruit talented teachers.

“Since we are a new school, now we only post recruiting information on our website, but we will find more ways to recruit talent teachers, especially new teachers who just graduate from the universities.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-04)

For some talented teachers who have already become famous in other schools, the school will try to find and attract them. But there are also some problems. For example, it is hard to manage talented teachers who came from other schools to establish common values. Besides, the Experimental School of Santai Middle School do not cooperate with human resource companies. They do not apply any talent management theories when they recruit teachers as well. But the school also has her own standard process to recruit talented teachers. First, the recruiting group will check the CV of teachers to know if they meet their basic requirements. Second, they will arrange exams for the teachers, such as written exam and teaching practice. If the teacher passes all the exams, they will invite this teacher to their school and have a face-to-face interview.

The entry requirement of the Experimental School of Santai Middle School is similar to the one in a business company. They only recruit teachers who at least have Bachelor's degree. Because they believe a teacher with higher education have more potential to become a talent teacher. But if a talented teacher has taught for decades, the teaching experience is more important in this situation.
Finding a talented teacher is difficult for the Experimental School of Santai Middle School, because this school locates in a small city and the talented teachers or young potential talented teachers are more likely to work in a big city. There are two reasons to explain that. First, a talented teacher prefers higher salary. Second, s/he also considers a lot about the children’s education. For example, if a talented teacher goes to a better school in a big city, their children can get into same school to study easily. Besides, the formal position is key point as well. The formal position means teachers have a formal job, the government will take care teachers who have formal position. The school cannot easily fire them, only government can offer formal position for schools. If some teachers do not get formal positions, they have to pay insurance and other social welfare by themselves. Since the Experimental School of Santai Middle School is a privity school, they do not have many formal positions for their teachers.

“In short time, we can offer a good salary and a limited amount of formal positions. But in long time, we cannot offer many formal positions for talented teachers.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-04)

Chen also believed industrialization of education has both positive and negative impacts on talented teacher. On the positive side, Chen thought industrialization of education could make talented teacher become more excellent, because talented teachers have to keep working hard to go to better school in order to get more salary.

“Under the background of industrialization of education, there are more competition, if talented teachers want to have a better life, they have to work harder. Thus, the education quality will also increase.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-04)

However, the negative influence of industrialization of education cannot be ignored.

“Under the background of industrialization of education, if teachers always pursue higher salary and better life. I think those teachers cannot be called talented teacher. Some teachers may only care their salary. But they only occupy a small percent of teachers.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06).
4.1.2 Managing and Training talented teachers

First of all, the Experimental School of Santai Middle School do not use any talent management theories.

“The management of the school do not just use some theory and rules. Since teacher is a very special occupation. First teachers usually have higher degree compared with other professions. Second, teachers want to gain the compliment from their students and parents. Talent teachers care more about the two points than other teachers do. Thus, as I say, the school management is not from theory. It is more about humanized management.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06)

The most important part to show the humanity of the Experimental School of Santai Middle School is the promotion system. All the leaders in the school should be selected from talented teachers in the same school. Some schools have some leaders from other schools. But Chen thinks it is not good, because if leaders came from other schools, these leaders may not know the situation of the new middle school. Besides the talented teacher may be upset about they cannot move to a leadership position. The school have an open system of promotion. If a teacher wants to move to a leadership position, he/she needs to join the leadership election campaign.

“The teacher who wants to join the campaign must be a talented teacher, because only talented teachers can convince the public.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06)

Since there are only around 200 teachers in this school, they do not have a person or a department to manage talented teachers. But they have one department that is responsible for teachers. It is called Teaching Quality Centre. The Teaching Quality Centre has one leader and four staff. This department’s responsibility is to manage and organize teachers. They evaluate all teachers’ performance. According to the school rules, Teaching Quality Centre will evaluate the rate of attendance of teachers. Besides, Teaching Quality Centre also evaluates the teaching preparation book of teacher, the teaching performance, and the results of students’ monthly exams. Another main function of the Teaching quality Centre is to find the top 20 best teachers.
“According to the information from Teaching Quality Centre, if a teacher’s name often appears on the top 20 list, we can call him/her talented teacher. In the end of semester, we will give talented teachers more rewards. Unfortunately, now, the result of student exam is the only criterion for judging a talented teacher. I don't think this criterion is wrong, but it needs to be improved.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06)

The Experimental School of Santai Middle School uses talent pool. All the information of teachers was imputed in this system. The information includes the background and performance of all the teachers. Then if school leaders need some talented teachers to go to other schools to study or organize an open class for the people from outside of the school, they will check this system to find out the talented teachers they need.

4.1.3 Retaining talented teachers
Chen thought the flow of talented teachers is inevitable. Chen even quoted a Chinese old saying:

“People go up high and water flows to the bottom.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06)

This sentence means people never satisfy and always want to have a better life.

Therefore, the Experimental School of Santai Middle School uses some ways to retain talented teachers. First is salary. This school pays higher salary to talented teachers than other middle schools do in the same area. Thus, when talented teachers compare their salary with the one offered by other middle schools, they will feel satisfied and willing to stay in The Experimental School of Santai Middle School. Second is humanistic rules. Chen thought school rules were important, but they also should be humane.

“If I know some talented teachers made mistakes, I will let it go instead of punishing them. I call it “green light”. Talented teachers want to show their personality, so we should respect them.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06)
The third is relationship. The school tried to help the talented teachers find their values and the sense of identity. Letting talent teachers teach best student in the school make them feel valued. Besides, as Chen said:

“Talented teachers are more sensitive than other teachers. Which means talented teachers hope to be respected by leaders as well. They hope that they have chances to speak in front of leaders, thus they will be happy.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06)

Chen believed that none of salary, humanistic rules, relation can be neglected. For example, a talented teacher has a very good relationship with school leaders and colleagues. S/he also has a happy experience in this school. If the salary is lower than the one in other middle schools, s/he may also leave. However, Chen did not think salary is the most important thing for a talented teacher.

“Higher salary may attract talented teachers but may not retain talent teachers.” (Chen, interview, 2018-04-06).

### 4.2 Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School

Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School is a public school established in 2013. It is a new high teaching quality school in Mianyang city. It is a combination of Mianyang Education Investment Development Corporation and Mianyang Foreign Language School, which enjoys a great reputation in Sichuan province. The school buildings and teaching facilities are qualified according to the national first-class level. All teachers from Mianyang Foreign Language School go to Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School to do the course management and teaching guidance. Besides, to create one of the best quality schools in Mianyang, the school strictly carries out small class teaching, and employs foreign teachers to teach in class. (mfles.cn, 2018).

#### 4.2.1 Recruiting Talented Teachers

For Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School, a talented teacher should own 4 conditions. First, s/he must have a good teaching skill that make their students easily understand
the knowledge. Second, s/he must have a good personality. Third, s/he is able to build trust with the students. Fourth, s/he aligns his/her values with the school values. A talented teacher should always stand with school.

“Personally, I think if a teacher can help his or her students make a huge progress in the exam, I also called this kind of teacher talented teacher. If a teacher cannot lead student’s soul, this teacher cannot be called talented teacher.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-07)

For Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School, talented teachers are very important.

“Talent teachers are not only important for us, but also for any middle schools.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-07)

Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School always selects teachers among the graduates from the top-class universities. Besides, it also looks for talented teachers from other middle schools. But there are two situations where the school will look for teachers from other schools. First, there are unoccupied positions that need to be fulfilled with teachers. Second, if there are very talented teachers in other schools and they are the teachers that Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School needs, the school will try to attract them to jump ship. What’s more, it does not cooperate with any human resource companies. It has some ways to recruit talented teachers.

“We are still different from business company; our recruiting information is posted by Education and Sports Bureau and Personnel Bureau of Mianyang.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-07)

About the entry requirement, Student Affairs Office Coordinator Tang Xiaomeng has his own opinion:

“The new school usually has higher standard for a teacher, which is the inevitable requirement of social development. Talented teachers are good at teaching. When compared with new
teacher, they have less space to make progress. But, to make a new teacher become a talent teacher, one has to train this teacher for at least three years.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)

Besides, Tang thinks teachers from top universities have good ability of learning and environmental adaptability. Thus, these new teachers can become talented teacher in a short time.

Since Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School has a high standard for talented teachers, it thinks the talented teachers are not as many as people think.

“Different middle schools have different requirements. Many middle schools only believe the teachers who can make their students get good scores in the exam. These teachers can be called talented teachers. But we are different.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-07)

Finding a talent teacher is also hard for Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School.

“Compared with other middle schools, we have much higher standard. As I said, good teaching skill, good character, good communication skills with student, consensus with school. In the reality, it is not easy to find a teacher who owns these four conditions. But we are Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School, we always need talented teachers who meet these four requirements.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)

The attraction of Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School has three points. First, the salary is higher than the one in other middle schools. Second, Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School is a famous school. If teachers work in this school, they will feel sense of pride, because only talented teachers can work in this school. Third, teachers also care about their children’s education. If a teacher works in Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School, his/her children can also study in this school.

“Industrialization of education is good, but if all the schools are pursuing profits, this will be not good for talented teachers and their students.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)
Tang thinks Industrialization of education may make talented teachers focus more on the results of exams and ignore to help students build morality and soul. Therefore, the students cannot get comprehensive development. But Tang also thinks industrialization of education makes education quality of the whole area improve. There are more talented teachers appearing during the process of industrialization of education.

4.2.2 Managing and Training Talented Teachers
Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School does not apply talent management theory in the daily work.

“The school may not use talent management theory. The way of managing the teachers is quite flexible in our school.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)

The talented teachers will show their ability in the teaching skills and management skills. The leaders will look at talented teachers and consider promoting them to become grade leader. If a talented teacher also works well as grade leader, they will be promoted to become higher leader in the school.

“In general, talented teachers are good at teaching. Besides they are also being recognized by their colleagues and leaders. Therefore, talented teachers can be promoted.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)

However, school leaders cannot promote all the talented teachers to leadership positions. As Tang said:

“Some talented teachers feel jealous. For example, talented teacher A always has the same exam result as Talent Teacher B does, but only B is promoted. Thus, A may feel jealous, and leave this school.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)

Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School does not build any department or arrange any person to do talent management. But the school always tries to meet the needs of talented
teachers. For example, a talented teacher may need an apartment, thus the school will help him/her to buy an apartment. Some talented teachers need to help their partners get employment. Thus, the school will also help them look for jobs.

“Our school prefers to use the same rules to manage all the teachers. For talented teachers, we offer more rewards. Thus, talented teachers will satisfy, because they find a sense of presence, confidence, and satisfaction, which is more important than salary.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)

The talent pool is not used by Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School. Because the talented teachers usually have already become subject leaders or research team leaders. But the Education and Sports Bureau built a talent pool that can be used by all the schools in Mianyang. For example, the information of a talented teacher in talent pool includes teaching years, position, academic contributions and so on. When the school needs new teachers, it will indirectly recruit teachers through the recruitment activity organized by the government who will check this talent pool.

4.2.3 Retaining Talented Teachers

Tang thinks the flow of talented teachers is a good thing for the education of Mianyang but bad for the schools. This flow also indirectly helps talented teachers become more excellent. To reduce the amount of leaving talented teachers. Tang introduces three ways:

“First, the salary is important. I don’t think talented teachers will ignore their salaries. Second, relationship is also important. If a talented teacher has a good relationship with others, especially leaders, s/he will feel sorry if s/he decides to leave this school. Third, as I said, the position is important. If a talented teacher feels satisfied with his/her position, there is no reason for him/her to leave.” (Tang, interview, 2018-04-08)

Besides, Tang thinks salary is most useful and important for the retention of the talented teachers. The salary must meet the expectation of the teacher. If it does not, the teacher may leave.
4.3 Santai Middle School

The Santai Middle School is a public school. It is also a national demonstration senior school. It was established in 1905. In 1982, Santai Middle School was approved by the provincial Education Department as the first key middle school in Sichuan province. In 2002, it was awarded the title of "national demonstration school". Now Santai Middle School has 8000 students, and 460 staff (scstzx.net, 2018).

4.3.1 Recruiting talented teachers

At the beginning, the vice principal of Santai Middle School Wang Hui talks about what kind of teacher she would call him or her talented teacher.

“If a teacher wants to become a talented teacher, she or he needs to spend at least three years on teaching practice. But many teachers spend more than five years to become talented teachers.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-01)

Wang believes a teacher who can help students to build their character is a talent teacher as well. Besides, Wang thinks talented teachers are very important for Santai Middle School. The development of the school depends on three elements: talented teachers, talented students and proactive management.

“Talented teachers are the core of a school, because if leaders of a school have talented teachers working for them, it will make management more flexible. The school competition is also talented teacher competition.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-01)

Since Santai Middle School is a public school, they recruit teachers through Education and Sports Bureau and Personnel Bureau. This process is also called “open recruitment”. The local government will organize different school leaders to go to universities to select new teachers. After that, the schools will organize the exam and interview for new teachers.

“Now we have higher standard for a new teacher, we will go to some top class normal university to select teachers.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-01)
Moreover, Santai Middle School also recruits teachers from other schools, but it only recruits talented teacher. Besides, Santai Middle School does not cooperate with human resource companies. Wang thinks public schools do not need to cooperate with human resource companies, because the school leaders know where talented teachers are. Besides, Santai Middle School also does not use talent management theory. But Wang said:

“We should learn talent management from business world.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-01)

Santai Middle School has similar basic entry requirements as other middle schools do. The teacher must have a master's degree, or a bachelor's degree from a key university.

“Since we are national key middle school, in order to keep our advantage, we set a high standard for our new teachers.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-01)

However, Wang thinks recruit talent teachers is not difficult for him, because there are many talented students in Mianyang. Thus, it is easy for Santai Middle School to find a talented teacher. But Wang also emphasized that the new educational reform will come soon, thus there will be higher demand for talented teachers, which is also a challenge for school leaders.

“For example, this year more students choose to study mathematics, so we need to find more talented teachers who teach mathematics. But in the next year, maybe more students choose to study geography, thus we also have to reduce the amount of the talented teachers who teach mathematics and find more talented teacher who teach geography. How to keep the balance among different talented teachers is a challenge for us.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-09)

The attraction of Santai Middle School for talented teachers is that they have more than 100 years old history that means Santai Middle School has already built up its reputation. However, Wang thinks many talented teachers see Santai Middle School as a springboard to better schools. Santai Middle School locates in a small city, but talented teachers prefer to move to big cities.
But, because of the employment pressure in recent years, Santai Middle School is still the first place that new teachers want to go.

The educational industrialization also influences public school like Santai Middle School. Wang believes that the educational industrialization can make talented teachers earn higher salary. Besides, talented teachers have more places to show their ability, which also increase their reputation. However, there are also disadvantages. The competition among schools will be very intense, which also forces talented teachers to work much harder. Talented teachers will feel tired every day.

4.3.2 Managing and training talented teachers

“There are two different approaches in teacher management. School rules are one of them, this approach fits the school that has different teachers. For our school, since we have a lot of talented teachers, we prefer to apply less school rules, because almost all the teachers can work perfectly by themselves. Therefore, the leaders focus more on the future of the school.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-09)

Santai Middle School thinks talented teacher management is human resource management. Every grade will manage their own teachers. In order to assess teachers’ performance, especially talented teachers’ performance, the grade leaders will evaluate two parts of a teacher. First is process evaluation. In this part, leaders will check preparation book, assignment correction and so on. Second is the result evaluation. In the part, the exam result of students will be evaluated by leaders. This is the most important part for talented teachers. If a talented teacher wants to be promoted or get more rewards, he or she must get a good result in result evaluation. Besides, the moral quality of a talented teacher is also important. If a talent teacher has a bad morality, he or she will not be considered to get any reward and promotion.

Santai Middle School does not use talent pool. Wang explained that:
“The flow of talented teachers is huge. When we put information of a talented teacher in our talent pool, this teacher maybe has already left. Therefore, it is not very useful.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-09)

Wang also thinks it is not a good idea to put information of talented teachers from other schools into the talent pool, because there is much cooperation between his school and other schools. If Santai Middle School always recruits talented teachers from other schools, it will do harm to their reputation in Mianyang.

4.3.3 Retaining Talented Teachers
About the flow of talented teachers, Wang also shared her opinion:

“As a school leader, I hope talented teachers can stay with us. But if we try to stop the flow of talented teachers, our school will also lose fresh blood.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-09)

Wang thinks the flow of talented teachers promote a talent teacher to be more excellent, and further enhance the educational quality in Mianyang. However, the approach of retention of talented teachers in Santai middle school also has three aspects. Salary is the first one. A talented teacher usually can get good result of evaluation. Thus, s/he can get a good salary. Santai Middle School pays more salary than other public schools do. But compared with the salary offered by private schools, the salary from Santai Middle School is not high. Second, relationship. For the leaders of Santai Middle School, they have to build a good relationship with talented teachers.

“If you are a talented teacher, our school leaders will pay more attention to you.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-09)

If a teacher has a good relationship with the school, s/he is not likely to leave. Last is position. Santai Middle School creates an open way of promotion for talented teachers. The school helps talented teachers apply for higher title of teacher or leadership position. Besides, Santai Middle School also lets talented students teach talented student.
“If some talented students can be admitted by Tsinghua University or Peking University, their teachers can be called talented teacher.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-09)

Wang thinks high salary is the most useful approach to retain talented teachers.

“The life of a talent teacher is depending on salary. If we always talk about relationship or position to talented teachers, I don't think it is useful to retain them.” (Wang, interview, 2018-04-09)

Wang also thinks if the school leader ignores position or relationship, and only focuses on salary, s/he cannot retain a talented teacher for long time. Besides, the family of a talented teacher is also an important factor to make a talented teacher to stay. Talented teachers need to consider about their children´s education and their partners´ jobs if they want to leave.

4.4 Santai Foreign Language School

Santai Foreign Language School is a private school in Mianyang city. It is a full-time boarding school founded by Sichuan Shaxin Real Estate Development Co., Ltd. and Sichuan Bo Qiang Education Investment Co., Ltd., which has invested more than 2 billion yuan. The building area of school are more than 70 thousand square meters. The school has intelligent, modern teaching building, science building and indoor gymnasium; it has assembled first-class laboratories, art activities rooms, video recording rooms, notebook computers and iPad classrooms (stwgy.com, 2018).

4.4.1 Recruiting Talented Teachers

Moral character is most important for Santai Foreign Language School.

“We always check whether a teacher can cooperate with other as a team. Besides we always check whether a teacher can take responsibility for the school and students. If a teacher owns these two abilities, we think this teacher is a talented teacher.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-10)
Santai Foreign Language School also pays attention to teaching ability of a teacher. However, Santai Foreign Language School believes that if a teacher has a good moral character, this teacher has a good teaching ability as well. Talented teachers are very important for Santai Foreign Language School. Zhou thinks that a good school depends on talented teachers.

“If our school can reach a high level, that must be supported by talented teachers.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-10)

In order to find talented teachers, Santai Foreign Language School sent invitation to the whole Sichuan province. Some talented teachers noticed this invitation and applied for jobs from Santai Foreign Language School. After that, these teachers took the exam and interview. After all the process, usually, the ability of left teachers is no problem. However, Zhou also said that:

“The process also has a disadvantage, that is, we cannot see much moral character about teachers. Therefore, recent years, we only recruited teachers in Mianyang area.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-10)

If some teachers are willing to come to Santai Foreign Language School, the school will check if they have good moral characters and teaching ability first. For example, the school will check the performance of the teachers, and the relationship between them and their colleagues. If the leaders of the school approve the teachers, the school will send recruiting information to them. Usually, if the school wants to recruit the talented teachers from other schools directly, it will limit teachers’ age to around 35 years old. Besides, Santai foreign language school does not cooperate with human resource companies.

“As far as I know, in Mianyang, there are not any schools that cooperate with human resource companies.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-10)

What’s more, Zhou thinks the school did not apply talent management theory when they recruited talented teachers.
The entry requirement of Santai foreign language school is quite different from others, because they put moral character to the first place. However capable a teacher is, if this teacher has a bad moral character, the school will not recruit this teacher. Besides, Santai foreign language school requires that new teachers have at least master’s degrees. As Zhou said:

“Finding a talented teacher is difficult, because we will consider many things about a teacher. If we only focus on Mianyang area to find talented teachers, it will be much easier.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-10)

Zhou thinks talented teachers in Mianyang always go out to communicate with other schools, such as open class. Therefore, it is easy for leaders of Santai foreign language school to know who talented teachers are. Compared with other schools, the attraction of Santai Foreign Language School consists of two aspects. First, the salary of Santai Foreign Language School is higher than the one in other schools. Second, the work environment of Santai foreign language school is less stressful. Talented teachers can free their minds and achieve their dreams.

“Our teachers are very young, just around 30 years old, all of them have the opportunities to achieve their dreams.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-10)

Zhou also thinks educational industrialization has huge impacts on talented teachers. The positive impact is that the educational industrialization offers more opportunities for the teachers to pursue their teaching careers. The negative impact is that talent teachers can not accompany with their family because of the fierce competition. The competition also increases the requirement of a talented teacher, which makes the talented teacher work very hard and feel tired.

4.4.2 Managing and Training Talented Teachers

In Santai Foreign Language School, there is a department called Teacher Development Center. This center has three leaders, which is responsible for training teachers. The function of Teacher Development Center is to follow every teacher in the school, especially talent teachers. They record the performance of the teachers, such as teaching research, exam results, teaching outcomes and so on. Besides, Teacher Development Center also organize teaching forum. All the
teachers will do the evaluation and reflection by themselves, and also summarize their work. The leaders of the school are really focusing on team building.

“We have a program called Qinglan Project, which lets senior talented teachers lead young potential talented teachers.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-19)

In this project, the pairing of teachers is based on what subjects they teach. For example, a senior English teacher will be paired with a young English teacher. Thus, school leaders will arrange a senior teacher for a young teacher as a mentor according to the subjects. Santai Foreign Language School organized a ceremony where the senior talented teachers and young talented teachers exchanged gifts. Besides, the school asked senior talented teachers to go to the class of their apprentices at least two times a week and give some advice to them. Besides, young talented teachers will be asked to teach in open class for four times. Before the open class, whole subject team and senior talented teachers will help this young teacher to prepare the open class.

“Thus, we believe young talented teachers will improve their teaching ability a lot. Besides, during the preparation, the whole team will also improve their ability.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-19)

The school will also arrange the open classes where the senior teachers teach in the class and the young teachers stand aside and learn the way how they teach. What’s more, each grade organizes a lot of workshops. In these workshops, senior talented teachers will also come up with new ideas and become more creative. In the end of semester, the school will give paper to all the teachers and ask them to write down their thoughts: First, the best things I have done in this semester; Second, the things that my colleagues touched me most; Third, I want to apply for a reward, such as the title of “best partner”, “best class” and so on. When teachers hand in the paper to leaders, leaders will select some good stories and adapt these stories to a stage show.

“In each odd year, we have top 10 talented teachers’ selection activities. In each even year, we have top 10 teams for the selection activities as well. We spent a lot of time on organizing these
activities. But we think behind everything, there is a beautiful story. Thus, sharing these stories is a good way to enhance team cohesion.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-19)

The talent pool is not applied by leaders of Santai foreign language school. But school leaders remember talented teachers in their heart. Therefore, leaders will concern about talent teachers in daily work.

4.4.3 Retaining talented teachers
Zhou thinks the flow of talented teachers has a huge impact on Santai Foreign Language School. “It is not easy for us to train a talented teacher. Thus, when our leaders focus on the management of school, if a talented teacher leaves, leaders will try to look for new teachers to fulfill the positions.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-19)
But the loss of talented teachers does not frequently happen in Santai Foreign Language School.

The school leaders apply three different approaches to retain talented teachers. First is to offer formal position and promotion chance. If a talented teacher gets a formal position, this means he or she can get social welfare from government. If this teacher jumps ship to another school, s/he will lose the position. Second is Salary,

“We pay more salary than other schools do in this area. Even compared with private schools, our salary is higher than them.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-19)

The third is humanized management. The aim of humanized management is creating a happy campus environment. For example, if a teacher gets sick, s/he does not need to worry about the work. Because other teachers will help him or her to teach.

“Thus, our teachers feel like family, when one gets troubles, others will help.” (Zhou, interview, 2018-04-19)

Zhou thinks humanized management is the most important factor instead of salary. The talented teachers are like children. Thus, they also need psychological satisfaction. If a talent teacher is
unhappy in Santai Middle School, no matter what good salary and formal position s/he has, this teacher will leave in the end.
5. Analysis

In this section, we will use the relevant theories of Talent Management to analyze our empirical findings. The structure will also follow the empirical findings in the order of three subsections, Recruiting Talented Teachers, Managing and Training Talented Teachers, Retaining Talented Teachers.

5.1 Recruiting Talented Teachers

Under the background of war for talent, leaders should see their talent as a priority (Chambers, 1998). All the school's leaders have realized that the war for talent is going on in Chinese educational sector, and they agreed that the future of the school relies on the talented teachers. Because talented teachers can help schools improve the results of the student exams, which also directly increases the reputation of schools. Thus, these leaders have already realized the importance of talented teachers, which will help them to manage talent. For the definition of talented teachers, the ideas of four schools’ leaders are similar. But there are their own understandings as well. All the leaders believed that the teaching skill is a very important factor for a talented teacher. Except for teaching skill, a talented teacher should also help their students to build up the personality and character. What’s more, having shared values with the school is also very important for talented teachers. Besides, if talented teachers own good moral character, it will make talented teachers reduce the possibility of making mistakes. As the Lewis and Heckman (2006) said, the third stream of talent management focused less on the demand of the organization but more on the talent themselves. However, according to the interviews, all the school leaders put their school needs in the first place. Thus, leaders are not applying the approach from the third stream of talent management.

Since the Experimental School of Santai Middle School and Santai Foreign Language School are private schools, they do recruitment work by themselves. The Santai Middle School and Mianyang Foreign Language Experimental School are public schools, so they organize recruiting activity through the cooperation with local governments. There are four steps to recruit talented teachers. The first is an interview, which helps talented teachers and school understand each other. The second is an entry exam, which will check the knowledge of the teachers. If they pass the exam, the third is last interview, which will be conducted by the form of an in-depth talk.
between the school leaders and the teachers. Therefore, leaders will have a comprehensive understanding of the teachers. These steps can guarantee that the leaders find the teachers that they want. As Barney (1991, 2001) argued, if an organization wants to get an advantage in competition, it has to develop resources. One kind of resource is talent who are rare and valuable (ibid). Moreover, the organization will look for help from the outside when no one can meet the vacant position (Cappelli, 2008). The four schools are recruiting talented teachers from other schools as well. But recruiting teachers is not easy and may hurt the reputation of the school. Thus, leaders should not recruit talented teachers from another school except under emergency circumstance. None of the schools cooperate with human resource companies to recruit talented teachers. In the talent retention theory, Cappelli (2008) argued that in order to reduce the cost, organizations will outsource their talent management to a third company. But the schools’ leaders have their way to find new teachers instead of buying HR service. Meanwhile, all the interviewees claimed that the schools do not apply talent management theory when they manage teachers. Authors think there may be some reasons. First, in Chinese academic and practitioner fields, talent management is still lack of research (Cooke 2008 cited in Preece, Iles & Chuai, 2011). Second, the business organization does not attach enough importance to talent management commitment and strategic long-term thinking (ibid). Third, some younger leaders have a good education but lack of management experience (Preece, Iles & Chuai, 2011). Authors believed that the second reason is the main reason. Because some approaches of leaders is similar to the one from talent management theory, such as using high salary to retain talents.

The entry requirements of four schools are similar. For the new teachers, the schools need the teachers who have as high university degrees as possible. For the private schools, they require that the teachers must have at least a master’s degree. Because only the new teachers who own a master’s degree will get formal positions from the government. Usually, school leaders require only a bachelor's degree. Besides the moral character of talented teachers is as important as teaching skill. As authors mentioned, considering the moral character when they recruit talented teachers, will help to reduce possible teaching risk, like a teacher gives students physical punishment.

Under the background of educational industrialization, China's education market was expected to
grow 1.3 trillion RMB from 1.6 trillion RMB to 2.9 trillion RMB in 5 years (Deloitte, 2015). The more schools appear, so there is also more competition among them to recruit talented teachers. Except Santai Middle School, the other three schools believe it is hard to find talented teachers in China, because they have a higher standard for talented teachers, such as good moral character. Many good middle schools appear in Mianyang, but there are not as many talented teachers as people think in Mianyang. If school is in a small city, it is hard to find talented teachers. The talented teachers usually want to go to the big cities where there is higher salary. In recent years, there is high pressure of employment in China. According to Statista (2017), from 2006 to 2016, there was a huge increase of graduates, from 3.775 million to 7.042 million, of which the difference was around 86.54%. Many new teachers also face employment pressure. Thus, more talented teachers are willing to work in a small town. The attraction of these four schools has a common point which is the high salary. Compared with other schools, these four schools pay more salary to talented teachers. For the private schools, the formal position is important to attract talented teachers, because teachers want to get stable jobs. Besides the long history of a school is one attraction for talented teachers as well. What’s more, the reputation of the school is also an important element to attract talented teachers. Solving the educational issue of talented teacher’s children is also an attraction. However, less stressful management environment can be the major attraction for talent.

Regarding the industrialization of education, it has both positive and negative impacts on talented teachers. For the positive impact, all the school leaders think that industrialization of education can force talented teachers to become more excellent and get more salary. The industrialization of education does not only bring higher salary to talented teachers, but also contribute to Chinese national economy. As Deloitte (2017) believed, education brings a golden age in China. According to the interviewees, the industrialization of education also improves the educational quality in Mianyang. Besides, it offers a platform for talented teachers to show their ability. As for the negative impact, industrialization of education may make talented teachers focus on the salary and ignore the moral character. Moreover, the industrialization of education may also make talented teachers feel tired and do not have time to accompany with family because of the high competition environment.
5.2 Managing and Training Talented Teachers

Managing and training talented teachers are the most important task of school leaders, because good school management can inspire potential of talented teachers. However, all the school leaders do not think they applied talent management theory in their teacher management. Managing talented teachers is more flexible in the school. For example, the leaders prefer to conduct more humanized management. In other words, in order to manage talented teachers, except school rule, school leaders should also care more about the daily life of talented teachers. School leaders just do not realize that they in fact embodied talented management theory in their practice. Again, authors think school leaders do not pay enough attention to TM theory (Preece, Iles & Chuai, 2011), which also means school leaders care more about talented teachers, not talent management. They manage talented teachers by their experience. Different schools use different approaches to manage talented teachers. But each school open the promotion path for talented teachers, which helps talented teachers get more opportunities to show their ability and value in leadership positions. According to Huselid, Beatty and Becker (2005), the organization should put more resources on their top talent. These four schools offer chances for their talented teachers to release their wonderful ability in a leadership position. Besides, leaders should give more chances to the talented teacher in their own schools instead of hiring teachers from other schools. What’s more, meeting the life demands of talented teachers is also important, such as offering an apartment, which makes talented teachers feel happier when working in this school. The training project is also a very useful way to train talented teachers.

In the first stream of talent management, Heinen and O’Neill (2004) conducted that some people thought talent management was a response by a department instead of a whole organization, like human resource management. However, none of the schools arrange a specific department or a person to manage talented teachers. They usually arrange a department to manage all personnel. Authors think that since almost all teachers in these four school are talented teachers, arranging a department or persons to manage only the talented teachers is a waste. What’s more, there are only less than 400 teachers in each school, it is also unnecessary to use many sources to only manage talented teachers.
For talent pool, according to the interview, all the leaders think they only use the pool which is not talent pool. Because they put all teacher information in their pool, not just the information of talented teachers. Second Stream of talent management focuses on talent pool management. It is just identifying some certain particularly potential candidates, which may make organization ignore further talent management, such as retaining talents (Kesler, 2002). Since school leaders do not apply talent pool, it is better to spend more time on retaining talented teachers.

5.3 Retaining Talented Teachers
Because of the impacts from the general trend of marketization, privatization and reformation on Chinese education sector (OECD 2016), the flow of talented teachers started to increase. All the leaders think the flow of talented teachers is normal, but it hurts the profits of their schools. According to Kesler (2002) organizations not only become more ambitious in recruiting new talents, but also become more creative in rewarding and retaining talents. Thus, in order to reduce the flow of talented teachers, leaders use three ways to retain their talented teachers. According to the interviews, leaders believed that high salary is one of the most important attraction to retain talented teachers. It is impossible to retain talented teachers without satisfying salary. Besides, in the Chinese cultural context, the relationship is also very important. For example, if a talented teacher has a very good relationship with the school leader. S/he will feel embarrassed if s/he decides to leave, because that may harm the relationship with the leader, and it may further harm his or her reputation in the future because people may think this teacher is an ungrateful person. That is also the reason why all the schools are applying humanized management. Moreover, the chance of promotion is also a reason to make the teacher stay. In China, a leadership position is attractive. If a talented teacher has to opportunity to become a leader in a school, s/he is likely to stay.


6 Conclusion  
Throughout the whole process of our study, we gradually understand that learning is a course of reflection and practice. Theories may come from practice, empirical findings or themselves, and in turn shape what are already out there in the researched field. One never knows what s/he is going to find in the research. Unexpected findings always happen during the research, which is embodied in our study of talent management.

It seems that talent management has been widely researched for many years in western world, while TM in China is still a wild land. We were fascinated by the truth that TM in the Chinese educational sector was under-researched and we were especially expecting what we would find in this area.

According to the interviews with the school leaders from four middle schools, to our surprise, they claimed that they heard of the term “talent management” but they did not think they applied it in their work, which may partly answer the research question “What are the impacts of talent management theory on Chinese middle school teacher management?” Clearly, we can tell from them the answer is “There may be no impacts at all.” This result is not what we expected before the study. We took it for granted so we assumed there were impacts of TM on Chinese middle school talented teacher management and developed the research question accordingly. However, the truth is the leaders only relied on their experiences when they were managing the talented teachers because they thought experiences could help them work more flexibly.

While we further analyzed the records of the interviews, we found that there were cues that we might not notice. Those school leaders in fact are using some methods related to talent management but they are not aware of that. For example, they offer higher salary and better welfare in order to attract talented teachers. Besides, the leaders also try to build good relationships with the teachers so that they may stay. When we reflected on what we learned about TM theory in the program, we surprisingly found that those cues were matching what we referred to as talent management. Thus, as a matter of fact, the leaders were using some methods of TM. They just did not know how to label those methods. Now, we give them the label.
Before this study, we were wondering whether people could use a theory even when they did not know the theory existed. Then, we found that the school leaders were in fact using some methods which reflected talent management theory even though they were not aware of that. But this does not mean they applied the theory in their work. Instead, what they have used should not be considered as part of theory. Thus, we can conclude that it is possible for people to utilize some methods which might later become part of a theory without awareness while there is also a chance that those practices might never be transformed into any kind of theories or theoretical concepts. In a word, before this transformation, what people are applying are just “experiences”. Besides, we also gain from this study that the theory comes from practitioners and it is a good reflection of practice. It is not the theory that has impacts on the middle school talented teacher management in China, instead, it is the practice which gives impacts by creating experiences. The school leaders acquire practice and experiences from their colleagues, their daily work and other practitioners. However, they do not apply all parts of the theory. They just apply some parts. For example, some leaders invest more resources in the talented teachers, like offering higher salary and other rewards. They do not apply other methods which is very usual in TM theory, like talent pool. Therefore, we may teach them more about the theory and help them utilize this theory more systematically.

Another finding is that the theories we presented in the second chapter do not explain everything. For instance, in the theory, organizations were expected to either have a HR department or outsource HR service. However, in our case study, the situation is different. The public schools cooperate with the local governments which establish a platform of recruitment and provide with recruiting personnel for the schools. In this way, the schools indirectly recruit teachers through this platform.

To sum up, talent management is an inspiring and fascinating area of study, which never presents the results one may expect. TM theory comes from the practice without which it will not exist and develop. When we recalled the reaction while asking the interviewees about their opinions on talent management theory, we were quite surprised by the answer “Talent Management Theory? No, experience. We prefer to use experiences.” Thus, one needs to be cautious not to take everything for granted, especially the existing theories or knowledge s/he has already known.
Besides, we also gain some knowledge from this study and would like to give some suggestions which may help the researchers and practitioners in their future work: for the former, theories can be used under a limited circumstance but do not explain everything, so, researchers need to be aware that they are always welcomed to add more to the existing theories if it is necessary; for the latter, a systematized structure or a clear label may help them work more efficiently.
LIMITATIONS

During the data collection, we only interviewed four schools, two public and two private schools, with the purpose of making the cases more diversified. However, the number is quite limited. What we found can only represent the four specific schools, not thousands of other schools in China. Under this circumstance, our findings cannot generalize the situation of teacher management in Chinese context.

Besides, due to lack of research in the area, our study is built on the raw materials we collected. In the translation of interview records (originally in Chinese), we may inevitably miss some information, which is a regret of the study.

Finally, given limited time (around three months), we were not able to conduct more interviews in more schools in other cities or provinces of China. Thus, there are still many more unknown practices and cases that need to be researched and included in the area of talent management.
Further Research

Since talent management theory has no impacts on Chinese middle school teacher management, we are curious if there is any possibility that TM theory can be applied in this area. Besides, this study was conducted in Chinese middle schools and the situations in other countries may be quite different, therefore, the further research can be conducted in other countries, for example, Sweden or Japan. In addition, this study was applying qualitative method with four cases which cannot present all schools in China, so, a further research might be conducted in a quantitative way which requires thousands of questionnaires and a huge amount of data. In this way, a more comprehensive “map” of teacher management in China will be presented.
Last words

Theory comes from practice which complements it in turn through creating experiences.

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Qingqing Dai & Sihao Chen
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