

## An Innovative Research on the Cultivation Pattern of Human Resources Management Professionals

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### Abstract

With the approaching era of knowledge-based economy as well as the gradual universalization of China's higher education, the quantity issue in talent cultivation has given way to the quality one consequently. Setting out from some problems in the cultivation of human resources management professional in China, this article puts forward patterns for objectives, curriculum systems as well as teaching methods in innovative talent cultivation.

**Keywords:** Human resources management, Talent cultivation pattern, Innovation

Originating from labor economics in the 1950s, China's human resources management has experienced its initial development in the first period, its closing down during ten-year Cultural Revolution, its joint development with labor personnel management from 1977 to 1992 and finally its independent development since 1998.

China's human resources management has achieved rapid development in its forty-year tortuous development. This is mainly shown in four aspects: first, human resources management has been accepted as an undergraduate specialty. Second, human resources have become a new direction for universities' development with its importance and prospect realized by an increasing number of insightful people. Third, this specialty has stepped into a spontaneous development stage. For example, the first Seminar on Teaching and Practice of Human Resources Management was held in Shandong Institute of Business and Technology in August 2000, at which China's Research Association on Teaching and Practice of Human Resources Management was founded. Fourth, human resources management as an idea has been accepted by a larger number of entrepreneurs.

With the establishment of market economy and the fierce competition of labor force market, the man-oriented management idea has rooted in people's minds, hence making human resources management an indispensable part in enterprise management and higher-quality professionals in human resources management particularly important. However, due to China's laggard education and training in human resources management, it is lacking in professionals in this field, not to mention advanced ones with high comprehensive abilities.

### 1. Problems in the Cultivation of Human Resources Management Professionals in China

Through our quality analysis on human resources management majors in our university, we found that they suffer from defects in communicative, analytical as well as innovative abilities, teamwork, self-control abilities, expressive abilities and physical qualities and so on. In our opinion, these problems should be attributed to the following reasons:

#### 1.1 Incorrect Specialty Orientation

(1) Human resources management suffers from a onefold orientation, hence lacking in its special features. In China, the specialty of human resources management is intended to cultivate advanced professionals equipped with knowledge and abilities in management, economics, law and enterprise management and so on as well as qualified for management, teaching and research in enterprises, government institutions and departments or to cultivate human resources management professionals and managers for all kinds of enterprises, government institutions, government departments, teaching and research units and so on. With many universities adopting the objectives set by the Ministry of Education and some well-known universities as theirs and copying those well-known universities in their teaching plans, they are unlikely to form their own features. Meanwhile, their practice fails to follow the law for specialty development under the current labor market system.

(2) The advantages of local areas are not manifested in specialty orientation. Disconnected from local industrial and commercial enterprises, China's human resources management education fails to adapt itself to the economic development, industrial features, cultural features and social structure of local areas, hence departing from the original

intention for localization. Due to this sightless cultivation pattern, university graduates majoring in human resources management finally end up with an embarrassing situation in which they cannot be retained in local areas due to their reluctance to stay there as well as their inadaptability to local enterprises.

### *1.2 Unclear Cultivation Objective and Specification*

The setting of objective and specification for talent cultivation is actually that of graduates' future professional roles. Accordingly, unclear setting in this aspect will cause a series of negative influences on the subsequent teaching stages and result in graduates' inadaptability to market demands. As far as the specialty of human resources management is concerned, no clear and common answers have been given to some questions such as whether it is intended to cultivate professionals in human resources departments of enterprises or human resources managers in enterprises, whether the idea of human resources management or the techniques to conduct it should be emphasized and what the importance of satisfying enterprises' actual demands is and so on.

### *1.3 Unreasonable Curriculum System and Structure*

At present, most universities set their curriculum systems and structures according to the functions and posts of human resources management in enterprises' actual operations (with quite different subjects in different universities) with the hope to prepare their students for a variety of tasks in their future career. In spite of their emphasis on students' practical skills, this instrumentalist curriculum system neglects two significant facts: first, the idea of human resources management should come first in any enterprise with its function to set, regulate and systemize policies of human resources management; second, not all skills should be taught for a long time, nor will it be achieved by being taught.

### *1.4 Immature Specialty Teaching Pattern*

With the current researches on teaching methods mainly focused on different subjects instead of specialties, the teaching method for a certain specialty seems laggard in which teachers mainly use their lecture notes and chalk to input knowledge instead of practical skills to students. Therefore, the effect and level of specialty education has been restrained to a large extent.

### *1.5 A Lack of Qualified Teachers*

The lack of qualified teachers is manifested not only in the small number of qualified teachers in human resources management but in the poor quality of teachers caused by their main focus on their individual subjects instead of the overall knowledge and development of the whole human resources management specialty. In addition, since human resources management is a new specialty itself, most teachers don't receive quite regular professional training in spite of their Master's Degrees or even above, hence having only limited knowledge accumulation about this specialty.

## **2. An Innovative Pattern for the Cultivation of Human Resources Management Professionals**

### *2.1 Exactly Positioning the Objective Pattern for Cultivating Human Resources Management Professionals*

According to the directional advise for the cultivation objectives and requests of human resources management professionals laid down in *the Undergraduate Specialty Catalogue and Introduction* issued by the Ministry of Education in 1998 as well as a comprehensive analysis on the current requests for the quality of human resources management professionals, we think the following objectives should be set for the cultivation of human resources management professionals: cultivating advanced professionals with favorable comprehensive quality, an overall development of morality, intelligence and physical fitness, solid theoretical knowledge in modern economics, management, behavioral science as well as labor law, a good command of a foreign language and the computer, proficiency in the modern theories, operation principles and techniques of human resources management and the ability to analyze problems in human resources management comprehensively and systematically.

### *2.2 Constantly Innovating the Curriculum Pattern for Cultivating Human Resources Management Professionals*

(1) Employing "integrated pattern" and emphasizing high-level management. Instead of traditional administrative professionals conducting personnel management functions, our modern human resources management specialty is mainly intended for the cultivation of high-level management professionals who are capable of selecting, acquiring, maintaining, stimulating, controlling, regulating, training and developing human resources in a reasonable way and therefore to better achieve the goals of their enterprises by fully exerting their staff's potential and enthusiasm. Then, high-level comprehensive management instead of routine management should be emphasized in this specialty. Accordingly, "integrated pattern" should replace "function pattern" and "institution pattern", in which the general principles, disciplines, ideas and basic methods should be based on with particular emphasis on the planning, regulation, stimulation and development of human resources in order to display its high-level management characteristics.

(2) Strengthening humanity courses and emphasizing sense cultivation. The gradual course to classify human resources management as an independent specialty shows that the whole management world has got their knowledge deepened, ideas changed and methods perfected with economics development and the strategic conversion of enterprise

management focuses. That is to say, instead of treating human resources equally important as other production and operation elements as in our past practice, we are giving more importance to human resources now, especially how to encourage their enthusiasm as well as how to develop their potentials. When it comes to human resources management as a specialty, the research on human resources should take an important role in the whole curriculum system. Therefore, a variety of branches and fields involving culture, philosophy, society, psychology, religion and ethics should be included.

(3) Giving prominence to three mainlines including management and economics, behavioral science and law. Although human resources management is classified into management category, it displays multidisciplinary feature in knowledge system. In accordance with this feature, six modules including economics, management, physiology and psychology, social disciplines, law and disciplines on techniques and skills should be the basic ones with emphasis on the former two and with behavioral science and law as a supplement in order to cultivate practical professionals.

(4) Setting the curriculum system for human resources management specialty. According to the objective pattern for the cultivation of human resources management professionals, we divide the curriculum system of this specialty into basic knowledge, professional knowledge and relevant knowledge, which is shown in Figure 1:

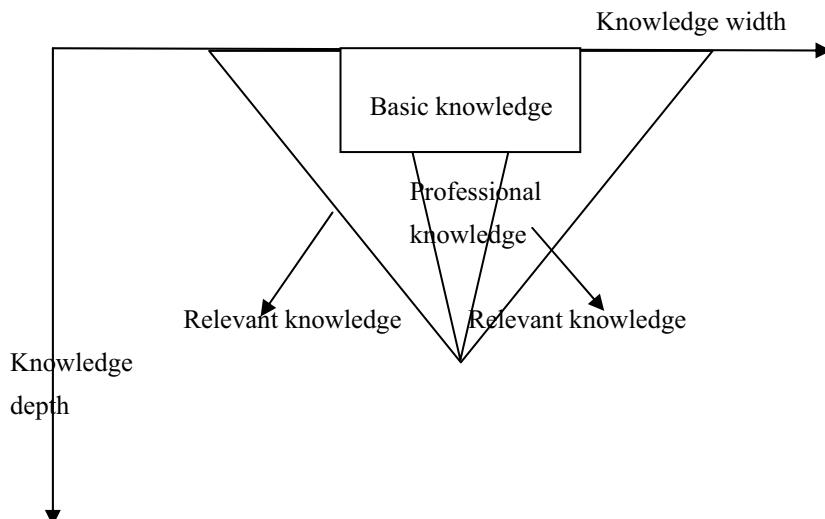


Figure 1. The curriculum system of human resources management specialty

In this curriculum system, basic knowledge provides bases for the construction of professional knowledge of human resources management as well as gives access to relevant knowledge. Therefore, this part must be solid with the inclusion of linguistic courses, courses about political theories, mathematical courses, computer courses and basic courses on economic theories.

Professional knowledge refers to the specialized knowledge indispensable for human resources management professionals, which includes compulsory courses, such as labor economics, organization behavioral science, human resources management, human resources strategies, social security and so on as well as optional courses, including human capital theory, career design and management, theories and methods of personnel quality assessment, training and development of human resources and so on. Students are expected to have a profound command of these professional knowledge.

Here, relevant knowledge refers to the extended knowledge based on basic knowledge and centered in professional knowledge, which includes economic management courses, humanity courses and courses about natural scientific technologies.

### *2.3 Actively Exploring the Teaching Pattern for Cultivating Human Resources Management Professionals*

(1) Employing a variety of teaching methods flexibly. Teachers are expected to use different teaching methods, such as examples, questions, group discussions, simulations, role plays and multimedia teaching, to help students to establish a complete and systematic structure of professional knowledge, to encourage their enthusiasm and interest, as well as to develop their potentials.

(2) Reforming the traditional testing form of study results in the exam-oriented education system. Instead of their scores achieved by learning by rotes, teachers are expected to give more prominence to students' performance in practical activities, such as designing questionnaires for social surveys, organizing the distribution, statistics and analysis of questionnaires and writing survey reports and so on. Actually, survey reports and course thesis are good ways to test students' performance in that they will reveal students' mastery of knowledge as well as their comprehensive ability of using them.

(4) Putting importance to the training of professional skills and strengthening practical teaching. On one hand, students should be given more opportunities and better conditions to practice with the simulation function of school labs fully exerted. On the other hand, due to the present practice activities running for a short period and poorly related to students' majors, more fixed practice bases should be established to offer students opportunities to practice what they have learnt at school. In addition, besides their professional studies, students' comprehensive quality should be fully developed, especially their abilities in interpersonal communication, verbal expression and psychological adaptability and so on in order to adapt themselves to the complicated and variable social environment.

#### 2.4 Constantly Strengthening Teaching Staff Construction of Human Resources Management Specialty

Due to the nationwide shortage of human resources management teachers as well as their poor ability in teaching and research, it is impossible to solve this problem by just introducing professional teachers from other universities. Therefore, developing teaching force inside a university seems the only way to go. On one hand, teachers can be cultivated by teaching specialized courses and taking part in research projects; on the other hand, sending teachers to attend advanced courses and to attend academic conferences in their specialty is also a good way to cultivate professional teachers.

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