

# *A Management Scheme for the Universities' reform on Human Resource Management and Development in China*

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**Abstract**—Effective human resource management can improve the performance of universities and also enhance its development. Many Chinese universities, which are carrying on the comprehensive reform nowadays, give higher priority to existing personnel management on their reform agendas. In order to have better performance excellence and achieve its strategic goal, a university has to transform the traditional personnel management into human resource management and development by motivating its staff better and making more use of the staff's potential. By analyzing key aspects of human resource management and development, the study concludes that strategic planning, staff recruitment, staff appointment, staff development, staff assessment and relevant support are indispensable, and also play as key factors to form a full-cycle management scheme of human resource management and development. Moreover, it is essential to enable all schools in a university to have substantial power on selecting, recruiting, developing, and evaluating its staff in order to better match their human resource with the development goals. The key of the success for the reform largely depends on the improvement of staff's dedication, professionalism and potentiality.

**Keywords**—*Personnel management reform; human resource management; staff development; Chinese universities*

## I. BACKGROUND

Today, the development of Chinese Higher Education is changing from a scale expansion to a quality-oriented connotation manner. The National Medium, Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) of China points out that the key of education development in China is to advance the education reform and institutional innovation. Defects in the existing personnel management system have been identified as major obstacles to hamper the development of Chinese universities, therefore, also regarded as bottleneck problems to be solved via Chinese education reform. It appears an urgent need to accelerate the pace of personnel management reform and develop human resource management system further in Chinese colleges and universities. This has become one of the top priorities for the comprehensive reform of Higher Education in China. Motivating all the staff in colleges and universities to a greatest extent, and enabling them to make a full use of their potential is the core of the comprehensive reform, and also

determines whether the human resource management and development in universities can be successful or not.

## II. THE REFORM TREND AND MAIN STAGES FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FOR CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

Personnel management system in China has gone through a changing course. Along with initial government decentralization, colleges and universities in China are having more power for their independent management. With the improvement of internal management system, previously secured positions, jobs and wages are not ensured any more. Profound changes are being made to change personnel management from an identity-management mode into a job position-management mode.

In 2014, Premier Li Keqiang of China signed a decree of the State Council, announced Personnel Management Regulations for Public Institutions. The implementation of the decree provides the basic rules and policies to deepen the personnel management reform for public institutions, including colleges and universities. Given all new intentions of the reform, the traditional personnel management in Chinese universities is turning to the direction of modern human resource management for a better staff development. [1]

## III. CHANGING FROM PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE

The personnel management reform in Chinese universities must answer the questions such as why to change, how to change and what to change. Regarding why to change, the answer is linked closely with the key goal of the reform, undoubtedly, that is to benefit students, staff and the development of a university itself. The success of a university largely depends on its staff development, mainly on staff's professionalism, qualifications and potential mining of human resource. However, existing personnel management system does not perform well in terms of developing and motivating.

What to change is the second question needs to be answered. All the deficiencies restricting staff's enthusiasm, initiative and potential within the present personnel management

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system need to be removed. The simple goal is to release the full potential of all staff, enable them to work more effectively and efficiently, and meet their demands for further development through establishing and improving the human resource management and development system.

Next to that, regarding how to change, the answer is to change a traditional personnel management system into a new human resource management, development and services system. The traditional personnel management was originated from the planned economy. Its scope includes planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, informing and controlling personnel. However, it is unable to fully meet the needs of the development for Higher Education in China. Compared to the traditional personnel management, the human resource management and development system fulfills functions that focused on recruitment of, management of people within the organization, and also providing direction for them.[2] Human resources management, development and relevant services aim to make a good use of all human resources available in and out of the organization, and also ensure goals to be achieved and staff fully developed.

#### IV. IMPLEMENTING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN A FULL CYCLE AND TAKING STAFF DEVELOPMENT AS THE CORE

The core of the human resource management is staff development, which comprises three different aspects, respectively as individual's development, career development and group development. Individual's development is to develop individual's competence and improve his/her performance through carrying out a wide range of development activities, hence collectively to maximize the efficiency of the whole organization. [3] Career development is about making and implementing a career development plan dedicated to each individual for the coming years, in order to guide him/her to achieve successes, based on a good alignment between each individual's goal and the goal of the organization. Group is made up individuals. Apart from individual's development and individual's career development, group development is not simply adding all development activities for each individual in a group. It is more about gathering collaborative strength and stimulating the team spirit in order to achieve an optimal performance for a group. Therefore, a human resource management and development system should be constructed and implemented at all above-mentioned three levels.

All key factors and stages for such a human resource management and development system for universities in China, based on investigations on the nature and analysis on the working flow of the system, are identified and specified in the paper. This provides a systematic guidance on the personnel management reform in universities, by specifying focal areas of the reform while building a new human resource management and development system.

The new human resource management and development system is formed with all essential factors/stages, which can also be regarded as gatekeepers for the system. The factors/stages are defined as human resource strategic planning,

staff recruitment, staff appointment, staff development, staff assessment and relevant support schemes and activities.

The first factor/stage is about making a human resource strategic plan based on deep understandings of the human resource available in a university, and the nature (weakness and strength) of the human resource. The second factor/stage is staff recruitment is about planning and organizing staff recruitment activities with a clear view on what kind of talents are needed by the university, and a clear goal of recruiting best people with possible minimum cost. The third factor/stage is staff appointment, referring to placing each individual on the right job position, which enables each staff to play his/her strength to a greatest extent in each position. A successful staff appointment not only highly depends on knowing each staff well, but also on defining and understanding the responsibility of each job position well. The factor/stage of staff assessment includes performance appraisal, but not limited by it.

Among all the factors in this system, staff development is not an isolated factor, it is the key. It links all the other factors together organically and plays an important role in each factor. It is something important to be included for a human resource strategic planning. Furthermore, in a recruitment process, conclusions need to be made on which competence required can be developed and which not in a required period for a candidate interviewed. This eventually will have an important impact on the whole recruitment process and final decisions on candidate selections. There might be difficult to have a perfect matching between an employee and his/her job positions, however, more important thing is to enable them to match the position better day by day assisted by dedicated staff development activities.

As shown in Fig. 1, all of the factors/stages illustrated above link to each other and form a complete scheme as a full cycle of human resource management and development system, with the core of staff development. Meanwhile, establishing and implementing such a human resource management and development process is meaningful for a good staff development.



Fig. 1. Key Factors/Stages in a Full Cycle for a Complete Scheme of Human Resource Management and Development System

*A. Planning: to have a human resource management and development planning in a global and forward-looking view*

A human resource strategic planning for a university should be based on a deep Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat (SWOT) analysis, which includes the analysis of the current human resources that the university already has, the resources being lack of but needed, and the gap in between in order to achieve the goal of the university. It is always important to note that a human resource strategic plan should be made with a global and forward-looking view. This can be easily done when internal and external opportunities and threats are well investigated, considered and fed into the planning process.

According to the general development goal of the university and the result of SWOT analysis, human resources management and development strategies can be developed and followed by concrete policies and action plans. In practice, schools of a university usually play major roles in the reform; hence, the human resource strategic planning of schools should coordinate and align with the general goal of the university in order to achieve the optimal allocation and usage of human resources.

*B. Recruitment: to pursue for diversified and qualified talents with a high standard*

The key of staff and talent recruitment is to attract most capable staff by all means within the budget. Various actions can be taken, such as exploring and opening up more channels for recruitment, adding more exposure to the public, improving recruitment process, making recruitment system more flexible to adapt to the dynamic human resource market, designing and offering competitive compensation and benefits packages, etc.

Job responsibilities should be carefully defined according to different natures of jobs. Qualified candidates should be searched according to specified job requirements. For instance, when looking for a head of a school in a university, not only whether the candidate is a leader in relevant academic fields or not should be evaluated, but also whether he/she has sufficient knowledge and skills for people management and financial management also needs to be considered. Apart from it, he/she should be able to take up responsibilities of analyzing means of attracting talents, and also ensuring all staff in the school to have necessary knowledge, skills and talents with sufficient enthusiasm on continuous learning and development. By contrast, it might be much less important to consider the financial management skills of an academic staff for teaching in a university.

*C. Appointment: to improve the job classifications and target management mechanism*

The staff appointment in a university in China is often materialized in the form of employment contract based on the mutual agreement between the employee and employer. The appointment procedure often relates to setting posts, defining qualifications, specifying recruitment process, managing appointment process, settling disputes and other issues.

A staff appointment management system generally consists of responsibilities, rights and obligations of staff defined. The appointment system can be further improved when being aligned with job position management, the target management, the compensation and benefits system, in accordance with the development trends of Higher Education in China.

*D. Development: to adhere to the core of developing staff and built a learning and growing organization*

The staff development is organically linked with the development goal of the university. The goal for staff development should have strong consistence and relevance to university's top-level goal, schools' specific goals and individual's goals. Only paying sufficient attention to staff recruitment, but neglecting the continuous developing staff after they are on board is mistakes often made.

Gradually establishing a staff training and competence development system in a university is an important move for Chinese universities to take in order to enrich and update their staff's knowledge and skills. [4] The first step is to set up a core competence framework for staff training and competence building according to the general goal of a university. Based on different job duties and development needs, training targets are specified, training plans are formulated and training courses are designed. The second step is to take training and competence development plan as a part of career development plan for each individual. The third step is to adjust and improve training plans and programs based on evaluation results of all training courses and programs. In order to motivate more staff to participate in lifelong learning and training programs, rewards and incentives schemes can be provided. Additionally, staff's participation in trainings can be used as an indicator to measure the efforts made by schools or departments in a university to enhance staff's professionalism and capability.

While evaluating benefits and gains obtained from staff development, benefits to both individuals and groups should be considered. Staff development activities should be coordinated and planned together by individuals, managers or staff development experts. Results to be expected and plans to be implemented should be well specified. According to different goals, durations, intensities to be assessed, various forms, such as verbal reports, written feedback/evaluation questionnaires, and inviting external consultants for evaluations can be applied. [5]

*E. Assessment: to establish a diversified performance evaluation system oriented with the staff development and performance management*

A staff assessment system needs to be introduced and established to examine and evaluate the performance and development of all staff. It often needs to be built and aligned with staff classification management. According to different types of universities, characteristics of academic disciplines, requirements of job positions, different assessment system are designed and developed respectively for teaching, teaching and research.

Furthermore, it is important to monitor the performance of schools, departments and individuals on a yearly basis, also necessary to assess their achievements and efforts for enhance-

ing the professional capability in a long run. It is the business and academic expertise that each individual, department or school has eventually determines the development progress of the university. Who should assess the performance needs to be explored further. The third party assessment, peer review and other evaluation mechanisms are to be developed. In addition, more channels can be investigated to staff development management. Results of staff performance appraisal should be linked with their career development, compensation and incentive closely, in order to stimulate their enthusiasm and initiative to the greatest extent.

#### *F. Support:to provide resources needed for personalized staff development*

Colleges and universities formulate top-down strategies for staff development, and also provide abundant resources dedicated to staff development. Various measures including establishing a department for education and training, providing professionals support on teaching, research and learning, establishing an office for personnel or human resources development, defining independent training function for non-professional personnel, specifying the quality assurance and management function for communications with external quality organizations are taken.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) should be developed and implemented by taking each individual's different strengths, weaknesses, interests and development needs into considerations. Eventually, goals of departments, schools and universities are achieved by pushing the staff development forward.

### V. PROMOTING SCHOOLS' MAJOR ROLES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The major function of allocating and utilizing human resource should reside in schools and departments in a university. Schools and departments should align efforts of introducing talents, developing and making them functioning well, assessing and promoting them, with their development needs. Schools and departments should also be given more power to speak for their human resource management and development. In order to fully develop staff, effective development plans are made, and all the resources needed for staff development activities are provided. Furthermore, it is important to create an atmosphere in favor of lifelong learning, to form a learning organization or learning community in schools and departments.

To a great extent, the success of staff development relies on a good evaluation system. Schools or departments should be

equipped with a performance evaluation system and a dynamic staff development management system. Criteria for evaluation need to be specified independently on the basis of a school's own situation and its academic characteristic. Furthermore, adopt different evaluation methods can be adopted by schools according to specific academic circumstances. [6]

### VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research of personnel management reform in Chinese universities, this paper concludes carrying on a new human resource management and development is essential to the success of Higher Education reform in China. Accordingly, a new human resource management and development scheme, with the core of staff development is explored and introduced. All indispensable factors and stages of this scheme are specified and illustrated. Human resource planning, staff recruitment, staff appointment, staff development, staff assessment and all supporting together form the full cycle of human resource management and development system, to make it more effectively and efficiently.

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