

Original Research Article

## Research on the Application of Flexible Management in Human Resource Management of Universities

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**Abstract:** Universities are a key force in the construction of the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area and an important base for cultivating high-quality talents. Flexible management, as an emerging management concept, gradually plays an important role in human resource management in universities with its unique flexibility, inclusiveness, and innovation. Based on years of work experience and in-depth analysis of the connotation of flexible management, this article proposes the necessity of applying flexible management to human resource management in universities, and then puts forward application strategies of flexible management in human resource management in universities, in order to enhance the work of human resource management in universities and help cultivate high-quality talents.

**Keywords:** flexible management; human resources; universities; people oriented

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### 1. Introduction

Flexible management is a human centered and humanized management that highlights human nature. With the continuous development of higher education reform, promoting “comprehensive human development” is an important function of higher education, which urgently requires universities to transform the traditional human resource management model from rigid to flexible, in order to stimulate the enthusiasm of faculty and cultivate more high-quality and practical talents.

### 2. Overview of Flexible Management

Flexible management is a modern management concept that adopts non coercive means to form potential persuasiveness, thereby enabling individuals to transform organizational intentions into conscious behavior. It breaks through the limitations of traditional rigid management models and places greater emphasis on human participation. Compared to rigid management, flexible management has the following characteristics: firstly, equal participation. The external characteristics of flexible management are psychological relaxation and emotional integration, which reflect the equal participation of individuals. Managers and subordinates are independent individuals with equal rights and obligations in society. The rights of managers are granted by subordinates. Therefore, flexible management advocates equality between leaders and employees, encourages employees to put forward innovative ideas, and gives them more decision-making power; The second is flexible work arrangements. Flexible management emphasizes flexibility and adaptability. In the context of the development of big data technology, office modes are showing a trend of diversified development, especially driven by factors such as teaching work and scientific research tasks for university teachers. Flexible management emphasizes employee autonomy, providing teachers and staff with broader development opportunities by setting flexible work events and modes; The third is learning and development. Flexible management emphasizes sustainable development, providing necessary training for employee growth and promoting professional skill improvement

by building smooth career development channels; The fourth is the flattening of the organization. Flexible management adopts a flat structure and weakens the hierarchical management to reduce communication costs.

### **3. The Necessity of Applying Flexible Management to Human Resource Management in Universities**

Flexible management is closely related to human resource management in universities. On the one hand, flexible management emphasizes flexibility, which can meet the complex and ever-changing requirements of human resource management in universities. On the other hand, the new features of human resource management in universities are converging with the characteristics of flexible management, which can promote the innovative development of flexible management. Based on the increasingly complex domestic and international environment, practice has proven that applying flexible management to human resource management in universities has significant practical significance

#### **3.1. The Inevitable Requirement to Adapt to Changes in the Demand for Human Resources in Universities**

In recent years, human resource management in universities has faced enormous pressure, partly driven by higher education reform. In order to meet the needs of social development and cultivate high-quality talents, universities are facing challenges such as professional structure adjustment, expansion of school scale, and discipline setting. They have put forward new requirements for human resource management in universities, not only requiring human resource managers to possess interdisciplinary professional knowledge, but also changing the rigid human resource management mode, adjusting the human resource management mode around the trend of higher education reform and development, and forming a flexible management structure. For example, in order to adapt to the requirements of professional structure adjustment, universities need to build a human resource management information platform, which requires universities to introduce flexible management models and adjust human resource management work in a timely manner according to the performance requirements of the information platform, in order to meet the needs of new science and education teaching; On the other hand, there is a new demand for young teacher management. In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the “Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Reform of the Construction of the College Teacher Team in the New Era”, which clearly stated the need to accelerate the reform of the management of college teacher staffing positions and implement the management of job tenure. The transformation of university faculty from civil service positions to a market-oriented employment system is a trend, and young faculty are the main force in teaching and research, bearing the pressure of “either promotion or departure”. In the face of this situation, universities are required to change the traditional human resource management mode and introduce a flexible management mode in combination with the new requirements of young teacher management work, fully mobilizing the work innovation of young faculty and staff.

#### **3.2. Internal Measures to Improve the Efficiency of Human Resource Management in Universities**

With the advent of the digital age, the education sector is undergoing profound changes. The digitization of education is driving the transformation and upgrading of traditional universities, with the first priority being the digital transformation and development of human resources. The management of human resources in universities is tedious and complex, involving not only faculty and staff, but also the correct handling of the relationship between higher education and administrative departments, cooperative enterprises, and other

institutions. The traditional human resource management model is difficult to meet the requirements of current digital transformation and development, while the application of flexible management can quickly adapt to the requirements of digital transformation and improve the efficiency of human resource management in universities. Firstly, in the face of the complexity of human resource management in universities, flexible management can reduce the repetitive work of human resource management workers by optimizing resource allocation and creating flexible office models, ensuring that staff can quickly adapt to new tasks and flexibly adjust work processes according to work needs, forming a goal oriented human resource management model, and strengthening internal coordination and office work in universities; Secondly, flexible management weakens the management hierarchy, reduces communication time and costs, allows more faculty members to participate in university management, unleashes their sense of ownership, stimulates their work enthusiasm, and promotes the high-quality development of human resource management in universities.

### **3.3. Important Means of Cultivating High-Quality Practical Talents**

Cultivating high-quality practical talents is an important mission of universities, and human resource management is an important means of cultivating high-quality practical talents. By introducing flexible management, universities can accelerate the cultivation of high-quality practical talents. Firstly, flexible management has changed the traditional human resource management model, emphasizing personalized and humanized management. It can help the managed develop personalized development plans based on their own characteristics, advantages, and development directions, thereby promoting the formation of their comprehensive literacy. For example, by implementing a flexible management model, following factors such as students' learning situation characteristics, career planning, and professional development characteristics, providing personalized and specialized curriculum systems and teaching plans for students, cultivating students' practical employment skills, and achieving zero gap connection between university teaching and employment; Secondly, society has increasingly strict requirements for college graduates, who not only need to possess professional knowledge, but also interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Flexible management emphasizes lifelong learning. By constructing a flexible management model, it can break down disciplinary barriers, promote the integration of different disciplines and majors in universities, provide a platform for students to exchange research projects, and help cultivate high-quality practical talents.

## **4. Application Strategies of Flexible Management in Human Resource Management in Universities**

### **4.1. Improve the Professional Skills of Human Resource Managers**

The application of flexible management in human resource management in universities is a huge challenge for human resource managers. It urgently requires university human resource managers to update their personal knowledge structure and enhance their professional skills based on the essential characteristics and application methods of flexible management. To meet the requirements of flexible management work, universities should strengthen the education and training of human resource management workers and enhance their work skills. Firstly, they should enhance education and training to improve the work skills of human resource management workers. For a long time, human resource management workers in universities have been accustomed to rigid management models, and the human resource knowledge they receive is mostly based on hard knowledge. Based on the introduction of flexible management mode, universities should base themselves on the current

situation of the human resource management team, and carry out special training, specialized learning and other activities to enable more human resource managers to learn flexible management knowledge. Combined with the new characteristics and changes of university human resource management, flexible application of flexible management knowledge can enhance work skills. For example, in response to the problem of cognitive bias in flexible management knowledge among human resource managers in universities, the human resource management department of universities should organize relevant personnel to hold a special training activity on “Practical Application Skills of Flexible Management” to enable human resource managers to apply flexible management strategies more flexibly; The second is to organize benchmarking learning to enhance the practical operation ability of human resource management workers. Flexible management is a new thing for universities, and implementing flexible management involves many departments. In order to improve the effectiveness of flexible management and build a scientific flexible management plan, universities should strengthen communication with other excellent universities and enterprises, organize human resource management workers in universities to learn from their advanced experience, and master the experience and practices of flexible management.

#### **4.2. Establishing A Diversified Incentive Mechanism**

Flexible management emphasizes flexibility and adaptability, while flexible management of human resources in universities highlights meeting the individual needs of faculty and staff, and stimulating work enthusiasm. Incentives are an important component of human resource management. To promote flexible management, universities need to change the traditional single incentive mechanism and form a diversified incentive mechanism that matches flexible management. Firstly, optimize the incentive methods for faculty and staff, and develop incentive plans to stimulate their work enthusiasm. Incentive methods play a crucial role in stimulating the work enthusiasm of faculty and staff. For a long time, universities have focused more on the performance evaluation of faculty and staff from hard aspects such as students’ academic performance and scientific research achievements, lacking assessment of the soft culture level of faculty and staff, resulting in faculty and staff being stuck in a habitual work thinking state, which is not conducive to innovative development. To this end, universities need to change traditional incentive methods and establish a performance evaluation system based on RBRVS theory, which focuses on workload and comprehensively assesses work quality, reflecting the work value and labor contribution of different positions, and achieving the principle of “more work, more pay” and “better pay for better work”. For management personnel, establish management awards to highlight the assessment of management effectiveness; The second is to embody the concept of flexible management and unleash the value of faculty and staff. In order to stimulate the enthusiasm of faculty and staff, fully tap into their professional knowledge value, universities have established diversified incentive measures to achieve the goal of “making full use of talents”. For example, universities need to change traditional incentive measures, encourage university teachers to take part-time jobs, promote the transformation of scientific and technological achievements, introduce high-tech enterprises, industry associations and other institutions to participate in the performance evaluation system of faculty and staff, encourage private enterprises to hire university teachers, and provide corresponding incentives for those who perform well in annual performance evaluations.

#### **4.3. Optimize Organizational Structure and Reduce Management Hierarchy**

Flexible management emphasizes equal communication between employees and leaders. In order to meet the

requirements of higher education reform, universities should combine the requirements of flexible management, follow the goal of promoting high-quality development of human resource management, optimize and adjust the internal organizational structure of universities, and improve the efficiency of human resource management work. Firstly, organizational structure adjustment should focus on optimizing department settings. Too many internal departments and too detailed division of labor in universities can easily lead to scattered resources and low efficiency. To improve management efficiency, universities should reasonably integrate departmental functions and form an efficient and collaborative work mechanism. For example, integrating relevant departments such as teaching, research, and management, establishing comprehensive functional departments, reducing management levels, and shortening the decision-making chain. For example, based on the requirements of the administrative reform work in universities, universities restructure their administrative management departments, abolish duplicate functional departments, and effectively solve the problems of multiple branches of government, overstaffing, bureaucratic disputes, and low efficiency; Secondly, organizational restructuring should strengthen matrix management. Matrix management is an organizational form that balances the advantages of functional management and project management. In universities, matrix management can break down departmental barriers, promote interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary cooperation, and improve resource utilization efficiency. Universities should establish a project-based matrix organizational structure to ensure that various resources are obtained during the project implementation process; Thirdly, the reform of university departments should strictly control the number of internal institutions, and in principle, only reduce them without increasing them. And optimize the structure, that is, based on departmental job responsibilities, focus on optimizing the structure, eliminate zombie institutions, merge those with overlapping, similar responsibilities, and unsaturated work tasks to prevent overly detailed division of labor among institutions.

#### **4.4. Design Flexible Positions and Implement Flexible Work Mechanisms**

Flexible management breaks the traditional rigid management mode, emphasizing people-oriented approach and providing employees with more freedom in working time and place while meeting work tasks. College teachers not only undertake teaching tasks, but also have the function of scientific research and innovation. In order to promote flexible management of human resources and maximize the enthusiasm of faculty and staff, universities should combine the characteristics of flexible management and flexibly set up job positions based on the teaching, research tasks, and job nature of the university, including various forms such as full-time, part-time, and short-term contracts. In terms of job settings, diverse requirements should be met, such as teaching positions, research positions, management positions, service positions, etc., to meet the needs of different professions and functions. For example, based on the deep development of the integration of industry and education, in order to support the construction of the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area, universities should meet the requirements of regional industrial development, set up on campus teaching positions, off campus research positions, and internship guidance positions for teachers, in order to meet the requirements of diversified career development for teachers and serve the high-quality development of regional industries; In addition, universities should establish flexible work mechanisms. Flexible working hours refer to a system in which teachers can independently adjust their working hours based on personal work needs and actual situations within a certain number of working days. When formulating policies, the scope of application of flexible working hours should be clearly defined, such as teaching, scientific research, management and other work, as well as different types of universities and teacher groups. On the premise of ensuring basic teaching and research tasks, universities allow

teachers to adjust their commuting time, lunch break time, etc. according to their personal situation and work needs. Regularly evaluate teachers who implement flexible working hours, focusing on their work quality and effectiveness. For teachers who perform well, certain rewards and incentives should be given to improve their work enthusiasm.

## **5. Conclusion**

In short, during the critical period of deepening reform in higher education, doing a good job in human resource management is the key to promoting high-quality development of universities. Flexible management emphasizes people-oriented approach, highlights flexible management and flexible management, and shares similarities with human resource management in universities. In order to improve the overall quality of human resource management in universities, flexible management should be applied to human resource management, forming a human resource management model that promotes sustainable development of teachers and students, and assisting in the high-quality development of the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area.

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