

LINK: <https://www.edutus.hu/cikk/contemporary-trends-of-the-chinese-human-resource-management/>

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS OF THE CHINESE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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DOI: [10.47273/AP.2025.34.17-39](https://doi.org/10.47273/AP.2025.34.17-39)

ABSTRACT

Human Resource Management (HRM) is aiming effective utilization of available human resources both inside and outside the organization through recruitment, selection, onboarding, training, compensation, and other management forms to meet the current and future development needs of the organization, ensure the achievement of organizational goals and maximize the development of members. It is the entire process of predicting organizational human resource needs and making manpower demand plans, recruiting, and selecting personnel for effective organization, evaluating performance and paying rewards for effective incentives, and combining organizational and individual needs for effective development to achieve optimal business performance. In this context, high quality human resources can play crucial role in developing, reinforcing, and changing the culture of any organization. Chinese HRM practices gained significant attention and become an important research area that underpins unprecedented economic growth, business development, global engagement, and institutional transformation in China. In addition to these trends, the traditional Chinese HRM practice should be convergence to the Western HRM practices maintaining its primarily Confucian-based cultural values and unique Chinese characters adopting the emerging social, technological, economic trends arising from globalization.

This paper aiming to provide relevant landscape about the current trends in the Chinese HRM and proposed some promising future strategies making alignment and exploitation the opportunities related to the challenges.

Keywords: Chinese HRM, organisational goals, business performance, organisational culture

1. Introduction

Based on the population, China used to be regarded as the largest country in the world, but nowadays its population size is only second compared to India. Every year, millions or even millions of people in China have been seeking employment opportunities. According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, the employment rate in 2023 dropped to its lowest level in nearly a decade, only 78.5%. This means that over 20% of the workforce cannot obtain satisfactory employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, the employment population of college students has reached a record high of 14 million, an increase of 10% compared to last year. (Cheng, 2023; Guardian, 2023; Hancock 2023; National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

In this paper, the authors analysing the special characteristics of the Chinese Human Resource Management (HRM), highlighted its differences compared with the Western World HRM practice. Furthermore, this research work also focuses on challenges and opportunities that can transforming the Chines HRM practice via HRM case studies of two Chinese companies: Haidilao Hotpot and Sunning Enterprises. Finally, the study proposed some potential strategic alternatives for the decision-makers to exploit the hidden opportunities in this dynamic and competitive environment.

2. Methodology

In this review paper, the authors had studied the available relevant theoretical literatures as reference base, gathering, structuring data and draw conclusions. The implementation methodology based on secondary or “desk” research analysing international organisations documents and special databases (Fortune, PwC, MOFCOM, National Bureau of Statistics), scientific publications, studies, online literature sources. The conclusions and suggestions made by this research work in this article reflect the private professional view of the authors.

3. Evolutionary Trends in Human Resource Management

Human resources refer to the total amount of labor capabilities possessed by individuals within a certain range, or rather, the total amount of intellectual and physical labor that can drive the entire economic and social development. HRM refers to the optimal allocation of available human resources in a planned manner according to the requirements of the enterprise's development strategy. Through a series of processes such as recruitment, training, performance assessment, motivation, and adjustment of employees in the enterprise, the enthusiasm of employees is mobilized, their potential is unleashed, value is created for the enterprise, and benefits are brought to the enterprise. To ensure the realization of the strategic objectives of the enterprise is a series of human resources policies and corresponding management activities of the enterprise. These activities mainly include the formulation of enterprise human resource strategies, recruitment and selection of employees, training and development, performance management, salary management, employee turnover management, employee relationship management, employee safety and health management. That is, a management behavior in which enterprises use modern management methods to plan, organize, command, control, and coordinate a series of activities in the acquisition (selection), development (education), retention (save), and utilization (employment) of human resources, ultimately achieving the goals of enterprise development.

You can see in the Table 1, the different approaches about the essence of the HRM.

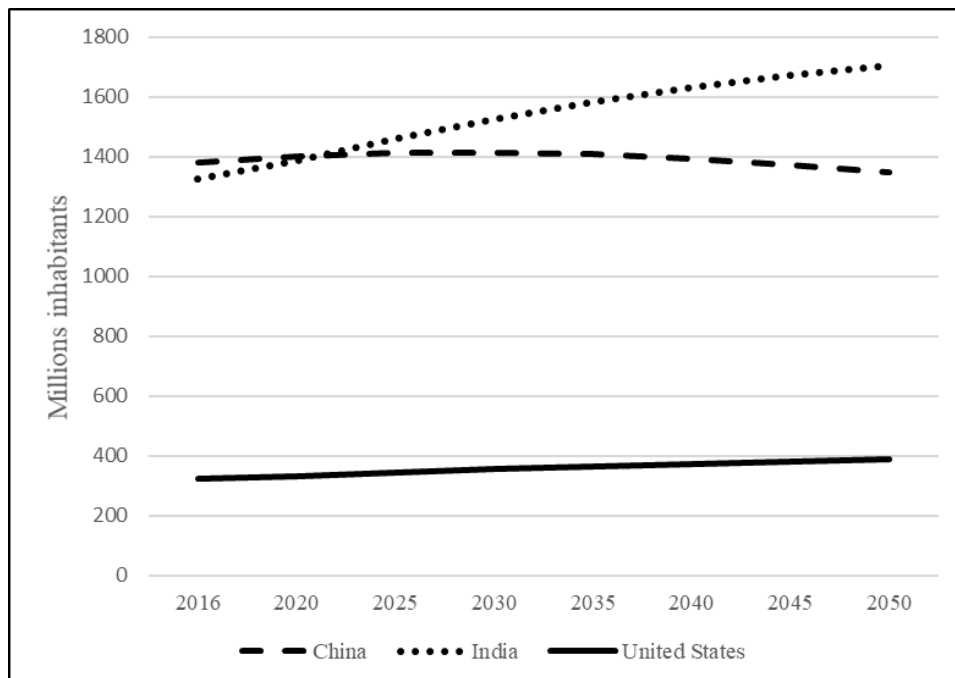
Table 1. Different definitions on HRM according to the international scholars literature

Name and year	Essence of the definition
Armstrong and Taylor (2014)	HRM is concerned with all aspects of how people employed and managed in organizations; and it can be defined as a strategic, integrated, and coherent approach to the employment, development and well-being of the people working in organizations. HRM includes all aspects of employing people and managing them in organizations.
Aswathappa (2017),	HRM refers to the application of management principles to management of people in an organization. HRM is a management function that helps managers plan, recruit, select, train, develop, remunerate and maintain members for an organization.
Bohlander and Snell (2017)	HRM as the process of managing human talent to achieve an organization's objectives. HRM brings together different employees to achieve a common purpose which is the purpose of the organization being considered
Dessler (2017)	The definition of HRM is: the process of acquiring, training, appraising, and compensating employees, and of attending to their labor relations, health and safety, and fairness concern.
Mathis and Jackson (2011)	HRM is designing management systems to ensure that human talent is used effectively and efficiently to accomplish organizational goals. Human talent means valuable employees.

Source: Own edition based on Opatha, Henerath (2021)

In the below Figure, you can see the demographic trends in international context, making comparison between China, India and the United States.

Figure 1. Forecasted total population trends (millions) between 2016-2050



Source: Own edition based on PwC (2017)

It can be seen that in such a severe employment situation, the mode of HRM is important, as it determines the efficiency of employment in China (Tsinghua, 2021).

The concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) comes from the field of economic management, but from the entire history of human development, the concept of HRM has been gradually formed since a very early time. In ancient China, starting from the Zhou Dynasty three thousand years ago, the royal family and feudal lords would recruit talented people as their guest ministers to contribute to themselves, which was the embryonic form of human resource management. In modern times, the concept of "human resources" has gradually become clear. The predecessor of "human resources" was called "personnel management", and its main job responsibilities were to recruit employees, pay salaries, and provide employee benefits for enterprises. The job responsibilities were relatively marginalized. Until David Ulrich, a professor at the University of Michigan in the United States, conducted research and found that an HR personnel with excellent qualities can affect about 20% of a company's controllable performance, he began to propose the concept of "human resources" because he believed that "talent" was the most indispensable "resource" for the rapid development of a company, and human resources should not be just a "miscellaneous" logistics department. Instead they should be strategic partners and pioneers of change for the enterprise, helping it create more value (Rakesh et al., 2022; Saini, 2011).

After the concept was proposed, enterprises worldwide gradually began to introduce the concept of "human resources". In the past half century, HRM has undergone three different stages of transformation, the first being the administrative affairs stage. At this stage, 80% of the time invested in human resources work generates only 20% of value, with most of the energy consumed in complex administrative affairs and varying standards and low efficiency. Later, it evolved into the second stage - functional management. In this stage, human resources work can be divided into six modules, namely human resource planning, recruitment and allocation, training and development, performance management, salary and welfare management, and labor relations management. This is also the most common human resource allocation module in small and medium-sized enterprises today (Shang, 2019). The below Table 2. illustrates the main focal points of the HR Planning and Recruitment Decisions.

Table 2. Job Performance, Selection Criteria and Projections

Decision points	Main focus areas
HR Planning	How many employees and when needed Requested qualifications, skills and competencies
Strategic Recruiting	Who, where, how to recruit: internal vs. external Nature of job requirements
Recruitment Methods	Advertising Choices (via different offline and online media channels) Recruiting activities
Elements of job performance	Quantity and quality of work Compatibility with others Presence at work Flexibility
Selection Criteria for Potential Candidates	Ability, motivation, intelligence Appropriate risk for employer Appropriate performance
Operational Predictors of Selection Criteria	Experience, Tenure on previous job, Past Performance Physical skills, Education, Interest Work references, Test scores, Personality measures Salary requirements

Sources: Own edition based on Rakesh et al. (2022); Xu (2020)

In addition, you can draw the conclusion that during the last decades an significant shift took place in the HRM practice. The traditional, administrative HRM approached transferred into Strategic HRM Practice. The differences can be summarized briefly in the below Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison between traditional HRM and the SHRM characteristics

Traditional HRM Practice	Newly Emerging HRM Practice
Administrative Approach	Strategic focus, primarily based on partnership
Reactive	Proactive
HR Unit is separate and isolated from organizational mission	HR Unit integrated and essential part of organizational mission
Production focus	Service focus
Functional Organization with vertical lines of authority	Process-based (Generalist with horizontal responsibility, Teams of specialists)
Employees as expenses	Employees as investment into the future (contribution to business profitability, stability, organizational brand bulding)

Source: Own edition based on Aslam et al. (2013); Kalavakolanu et al. (2023); Rakesh et al. (2022)

3.1. International Dimensions

The demand for modern HRM in China's current market is more urgent than ever before (Jin, 2018). Nowadays, many global outsourcings service companies have taken root and sprouted in China, serving as an extension of the human resources team for local Chinese companies to handle all the requirements of salary management, benefits, taxation, and compliance for foreign new employees. To meet the needs of local enterprises in promoting human resource growth. In addition, the human resource management model of local enterprises also needs to be in line with international standards, expanding their own business, whether it is developing new customers or creating a more substantial talent pool, all of which require a professional international human resource system to ensure. According to Shang (2019) in China's diversified development, HRM lies in the part of international integration, which is prone to the possibility of weakened, differentiated, and strengthened functions. Human resource management departments should grasp the characteristics of informatization and marketization, analyze the current situation of the times and enterprise development, and continuously optimize the allocation of enterprise human resources from the aspects of enterprise incentives, welfare, compensation, recruitment, training. Promote the comprehensive development of enterprises and ensure stable integration with international trade exchanges.

When a business has valuable, rare, and unique human resources, it will always have a competitive advantage over other similar organizations. Enterprises have three major resources: human, material, and financial resources, and the utilization of material and property needs to be combined with human resources to achieve this. Many stable operating organizations are in aware that their success depends on the knowledge and skills of their employees, which is their human capital.

International HRM is a key component of enterprise labor productivity. It is necessary to reasonably organize the labor force, constantly adjust the relationship between Subject of labor, make full use of the existing Means of production and labor resources, maximize their role in the process of reproduction and operation, form the best configuration, and ensure the smooth operation of production and operation activities. Enterprises should handle the three relationships of material motivation, behavioral motivation, and ideological education work well. Enterprise employees should always maintain a positive work enthusiasm, fully utilize their professionalism, learn technology, research work, continuously improve work, and achieve the goal of improving labor productivity.

Economic benefits generally refer to the comparison of costs and benefits in production activities. The process of reducing labor consumption is the process of improving economic efficiency. Therefore, by scientifically organizing labor and allocating human resources in a reasonable manner, enterprises can achieve maximum results with minimal labor consumption.

A scientific and standardized enterprise management system is an important guarantee for the healthy operation of modern enterprises, and human resource management is the most important part of enterprise management. If a company lacks excellent managers and employees, even with advanced equipment and technology, it cannot be effective. Through effective international HRM, strengthening the development and utilization of enterprise human resources, and improving employee education are important links for enterprises to achieve scientific and modern management.

Jin (2018) stated that with the development of the knowledge economy era, the role of human beings in organizational development and improving competitiveness is becoming increasingly important, and the significance of human resource management is very prominent. At present, with the rapid growth of the international human resource management industry, the human resource industry is paying attention, and the significance of enterprise human resource management is becoming increasingly prominent. China needs to constantly maintain synchronous development with the international human resource management system and make progress together.

3.2. Differences between the Chinese and Western HRM practices

Internationalized human resource management still includes work, which is no different from China. However, according to Xu (2020) the degree, region, and relevant target group of the international resource management system's involvement vary. Compared to conducting human resource management work in a single country, the specific content of international human resource management work (such as recruitment, training, compensation) is the same. However, international human resource management work is more complex because it involves different countries and requires management and coordination of employees of different nationalities. Its complex characteristics are mainly in the following aspects:

First, international HRM should involve more work contents: such as international tax planning (such as how we should pay our employees abroad in order to reasonably reduce the tax burden of companies and individuals), international placement and oriented training. Secondly, a broader perspective is needed. When a company's business extends to overseas markets and its internal human resources are distributed across borders, it is necessary to consider the issue from different perspectives. Thirdly, more attention should be paid to the personal career development and specific life arrangements of employees.

How should the company integrate and coordinate international career development channels to provide opportunities for overseas employees' career development. These issues are usually not considered by domestic operating enterprises. Fourthly, the focus of HRM has changed. Unlike domestic enterprises, multinational enterprises (MNE) should pay more attention to the international flow and balance of human resources, as well as how to achieve localization of branch development. Fifth, there will be more risks encountered in HRM. These risks can be divided into two types: direct risk and indirect risk. If an employee who does not meet the requirements is dispatched abroad, it will not only cause direct cost losses, such as transportation costs, salary costs paid to the employee, but also cause significant indirect losses to the business development of the enterprise in the country where it is located. For example, due to unfamiliarity with the dispatched market, a certain business of the company violates local laws, resulting in market restrictions. These are all issues that multinational corporations must face. Sixth, in human resource management, there will be more external influencing factors to face. For example, the political, economic, legal and tax policies of the host country will have a profound impact on international HRM.

At the same time, there are objective differences (Chen 2019).

Cultural Differences

Domestic HRM mainly targets local employees, while international HRM needs to consider the different needs and habits of employees from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Cultural differences have always been a problem that multinational corporations must address, and this situation is particularly severe in China. According to BBC News, 70% of Chinese passersby in their neighborhoods believe that they do not want to work with foreigners, and 8% of them strongly reject foreigners. At the same time, foreigners have different attitudes towards work compared to Chinese people. Chinese people are required to work under high pressure for a long time, which is clearly not in line with foreigners' work habits (Froese et al., 2019).

Legal Regulation Differences

Domestic human resource management needs to comply with Chinese labor regulations, while international human resource management needs to understand labor regulations in different countries and comply with local laws and regulations. Similarly, non-compliance with relevant laws is also a problem that Chinese enterprises need to address. Management issues are one of the main reasons for the exploitation of bottom tier employees. Within state-owned enterprises, some managers lack a humanized management philosophy and focus on controlling and oppressing employees, while neglecting their rights and needs. They often overemphasize efficiency and profit, treating employees as tools rather than people, disregarding their physical health and workload, repeatedly working overtime, and increasing task pressure, resulting in a harsh working environment for low-level employees who are in a high-intensity work state for a long time and unable to break free from the constraints of work pressure. Secondly, institutional issues are also one of the factors that lead to the exploitation of bottom tier employees. The management system within state-owned enterprises generally lacks transparency, fairness, and supervision mechanisms, leading to frequent abuse of power and corruption.

Many enterprises openly violate labor laws and laws. In the promotion and reward and punishment system, privileges and relationship backgrounds often determine the promotion of low-level employees, making those who work hard and perform well feel frustrated and unfair. In addition, some state-owned enterprises lack effective trade union organizations within them, which are unable to effectively protect the rights and interests of employees, making it difficult for lower-level employees to receive the necessary protection and support when facing issues such as salary treatment and work environment (MOFCOM 2019; Xing et al. 2018).

Language Barriers

International HRM needs to address communication and coordination issues between employees in different languages. Language barriers are also prevalent among small and medium-sized enterprises. Many foreign employees are required to have fluent Chinese, which is mentioned when recruiting in the human resources department. Because SMEs do not have a widespread English penetration rate, this has brought certain problems to communication between employees (Zhao, Du, 2012).

Cross-border Management

International human resource management needs to address the management issues of multinational corporations, including coordination and communication between employees from different countries, and the management of multinational cultures. In this regard, Samsung provides a good example for large enterprises in China: Samsung will establish a headquarters in the local market, which is mainly Korean. However, there will be a dedicated translation department for foreign employees to ensure that there are no problems during important communication. At the same time, Samsung has also handled cultural differences well. They often organize employee exchange meetings to strengthen communication at employee homes, Make the connection between Korean and foreign employees closer (Singh et al., 2019).

Although China's human resource management model is similar to international human resource management models in many aspects, there are differences in many details. In addition, due to the different situations in various countries around the world, there will be significant differences in human resource management models. According to Chen (2019) even the human resource management models of multinational enterprises in China largely refer to their local human resource management system, rather than China's. This indicates the different understanding and development of human resource management between the two countries. China obviously has many problems in establishing a system for human resource management (Warner 2009). The country has placed this part on higher education: nowadays, the human resource management major cultivates applied senior specialized talents who adapt to the development needs of the Internet and digital information era industries. Master the basic theories and skills of HRM, and possess the abilities of human resource strategic planning, human resource recruitment, training and human resource development, performance management, salary management, and labor relations management (Luo, 2021).

The below Table 4. makes comparison between the Western and the Chinese HRM main characteristics.

Table 4. Main differences between the Western-world and the Chinese HRM

Western HRM Practice	Chinese HRM Practice
Primarily focusing on outstanding individual performance, results and achievements, performance-based rewards.	Focus on the overall order and stability of society. Individual differences are recognized, but collective interests come before those of individuals.
An emphasis on individual responsibility for assigned work with strong preferences of competency, abilities and performance of the employees.	Emphasis on integration into strong, cohesive groups with rewards based on seniority, social status and not achievement or performance. Prefer equal distribution with minimal differences in rewards and treatment.
Focus on a rational, systematic scientific approach in HRM to improve efficiency and effectiveness of standards and systems.	Emphasis on benevolence, indulgence, loyalty and do not focus on short term or immediate results.
Employees are trusted and allowed to work autonomously and have control over their work.	Workplace is family, and it is important to maintain trust, teamwork and harmonious relationship
HRM has to be closely linked with the strategic objectives of the organization, with responsibility devolved to line managers instead of the HR managers	Control was centralized with focus on employees conforming to group norms and discipline. Employees are expected to follow instructions, with a weak position of unions

Source: Own edition based on Peredy et al., (2025)

3.3. Evolution of Human Resource Management

Continuous changes in technology, economic, social, and psychological understandings, and structures have an influence on both Human Resources and their management. As firms strive to make their HR Departments leaner and more strategic, current HRM models show that expectations about HR jobs are evolving. HRM is critical to every organization's success. The development trend is that the management of employees by enterprises is no longer limited to offline department division, and a human resource service platform is established for online personnel management. It is no longer limited to company employees, but also includes the management and service of customers and strategic partners; Training is no longer just a time slot training, but rather a clear and transparent planning of employees' career paths, making them full of trust and enthusiasm, and placing more emphasis on the reflection of employees' self-worth.

The overall development trend of human resource management can be summarized in the following points (Ganeshan, Vethirajan, 2022; Zhao, Du, 2012):

With the continuous progress of computer technology and the continuous development of modern economy, traditional management technology can no longer meet the needs of enterprises. Computer information management systems are increasingly being valued by enterprises and personnel management systems. They are one of the typical computer information management systems.

With its help, enterprises can achieve twice the result with half the effort. In addition, meaningful HRM trend will be big data predictive analysis projections.

Organizations have articulated about big data that it examines large data sets to uncover hidden patterns, unknown correlations, market trends, customer preferences, and other useful business information. For quite some time, the analytical findings have been pointing to more effective marketing, new revenue opportunities, better customer service, improved operational efficiency, competitive advantages over competitors, and other business benefits, and it is now time to start acting on that data and putting it to us.

Companies restructuring involves acquisitions, mergers, divestitures, downsizing, the entire business around an organization's core competence. As a result of restructuring or reorganizations, employees have to address the following potential changes: a) Loss of job, pay, and benefits. b) Job changes, including new roles and assignments. c) Transfer to a new geographic location. d) Change in compensation and benefits. e) Change in career possibilities. f) Changes in organizational power, position, and prestige; new colleagues, leaders, team members; and changes in organizational power, status, and prestige. e) Change in corporate culture and loss of identity with the company.

In today's competitive market, team quality of products or services has become the buzzword for companies to survive. This high emphasis on quality has generated a new concept known as Total Quality Management (TQM). The various principles of TQM have an impact on the role and style of functioning of HRM.

Increasing diversity of workforce: in the future is the changing nature of the workforce will be included: a) Primary dimensions of diversity: six primary dimensions are age, race, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/ qualities, and sexual or affectional orientation. b) Eight secondary dimensions are education, work background, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, geographic location and parental status.

The trend of outsourcing HRM is becoming increasingly evident. Implementing HRM outsourcing can obtain professional human resource services and the latest human resource information technology, eliminating time pressure. The investment in human capital is expanding. Enterprises can carry out multi-level, multi-channel, and multi-form industry training according to their own needs to improve employees' professional skills and professional literacy.

4. Main pillars of the Chinese Human Resource Management

As China continues to play a pivotal role in the global economy, understanding the intricacies of its HRM model becomes imperative for both domestic and international businesses. This analysis not only provides insights into the current state of HRM practices in China but also serves as a foundation for anticipating future trends and challenges. By shedding light on the multifaceted aspects of the Chinese HRM model, this study aims to equip organizations with the knowledge needed to navigate and thrive within this dynamic and culturally rich business environment. The below Table 4. pointed out the Chinese HRM values including benefits and drawbacks, as well as some issues and challenges.

Table 4. Summary of the main characteristics of the Chinese HRM values

Values	Description
Importance of harmony	Focus on the overall order and stability of society. Individual differences are recognized, but collective interests come before those of individuals.
Group orientation, Seniority and social status more important than achievement, Egalitarianism	Emphasis on integration into strong, cohesive groups Emphasis on integration into strong, cohesive groups with rewards based on seniority and social status and not achievement or performance. Prefer equal distribution with minimal differences in rewards and treatment.
Long-term view	Emphasis on benevolence, loyalty and do not focus on short term or immediate results.
HRM – hard approach Central control of people management Reliance on top-down instructions	Control was centralized with focus on employees conforming to group norms and discipline. Employees are expected to follow instructions, with a weak position of unions.
Low instrumental value of rewards	Low instrumental value of rewards, with ideology or non-material rewards preferred
Importance of personal relationship	Workplace is family, and it is important to maintain trust, teamwork and harmonious relationship.

Source: Own edition based on Li, Nesbit (2014).

China is the second most populous country in the world and has enormous human resources. According to the Tsinghua (2021), China is moving from a populous country to a human resource powerhouse.

The report points out that the overall human resource volume in China has shown a continuous upward trend in the past 20 years, with a 14% increase in 2019 compared to 2000. According to predictions, with the continuous improvement of education and health levels, China's total human resources will maintain a stable and slow increase before 2050.

In terms of protecting and improving human resources, Chinese HRM has always had the development advantage of continuously optimizing both education and health. We have always focused on increasing the length of compulsory education while improving the quality of education, optimizing higher education and vocational education, and providing more labor quality and skills for the educated. At the same time, while enjoying the health dividends brought by environmental governance in terms of health, we are committed to exploring a high-level medical and health service system that can widely serve the majority of the people, ensuring the quality of human resources, and ultimately conducting technological research and innovation for future development.

Some domestic units are investing more and more in human resource training and continuing education and have invested in establishing training and continuing education colleges, with a wider range of training content. However, many units blindly follow the trend and imitate the practices of competitors or sister units when carrying out employee training activities, resulting in increased human resource management costs.

Although many units have human resource management departments, they are virtually non-existent. The work done by these departments is mostly administrative and the scope of activities is still very limited, rarely involving strategic decision-making at the top of the organization, let alone having decision-making power. From this, it can be seen that it is the obligation and responsibility of everyone within the unit to do a good job in human resource management and make it truly effective. Therefore, each unit should selectively abandon the ideological constraints of traditional personnel management work and use modern human resource management ideas to guide the advanced strategic decision-making of the unit.

In fact, effective use of employees is a human resource development method with low investment and quick results, as it only needs to fully unleash employees' work enthusiasm and potential abilities, which can be converted into labor productivity. If employees are effectively utilized, their satisfaction will increase and their enthusiasm for labor will greatly increase; For organizations, it manifests as the reasonable allocation of employees and the efficient operation of the organization.

Some units incorporate HRM into the administrative management department and appoint 2-3 people to be responsible for a series of human resource management. Most of these units hold the view that "money can buy the world's talents", relying on attractive salaries to attract and retain talents, and thus giving up the necessary development and management of human resources. Although this pathological state of the unit may be feasible in a short period of time, according to the degree of reform and opening up in China, the future will face a crisis of talent transfer.

Due to some units capturing talents everywhere and neglecting the cultivation and exploration of internal personnel, there is a significant investment in human resource management costs. If the cost of external acquisition of manpower is invested in the development of internal talents, it can not only save resignation costs, but also timely supplement the organization's backup technical or management personnel to cope with sudden talent transfers and prepare for various replacements.

Current Challenges for the Chinese HRM

According to relevant statistics (National Bureau of Statistics 2023), nearly 4 million people in China are currently engaged in HRM work, but most of them have only 3-5 years of experience, and their overall management level urgently needs to be improved. At present, many high-level units in China have not put human resource management on the agenda and are still in the stage of traditional administrative and transactional labor and personnel management. They pay more attention to static management and control, treating people as a tool, focusing on cost, usage, and control, and not treating people as innovative resources. Most units lack scientific human resource management and are not yet suitable for market competition.

Lack of awareness of talent's career development

Under the influence of traditional ways of thinking and the employment system, a considerable number of people are unable to choose a suitable work unit based on their own characteristics, hobbies, and ideals. This not only causes a waste of talent, but also brings huge losses to the country. More importantly, the country has wasted a lot of initial investment and efforts in this field. According to statistics from relevant departments (Guardian, 2023), there are relatively many college students in China who stayed in their professional fields in the 1950s, but many of them have reached retirement age. In the 1960s, there were also many college students in their professional fields, but the vast majority of them had outdated knowledge.

However, a considerable portion of college students in the late 1970s and early 1980s are no longer in their profession, some have been promoted to leadership positions, while others have moved to other professional fields.

Lack of human resource training and development

Professional and technical personnel in China generally have outdated knowledge, lack innovative awareness and thinking, There is a serious shortage of senior management and high-tech talents; the capital investment in human resources is lower than the world average, which makes the development of human resources in China urgent. According to Luo Qing's paper, the foundation of human resource management in many units is very weak, and the mechanisms for selecting, employing, retaining, and educating employees are not sound. The recruitment methods are outdated and extensive, and there is no scientific and reasonable job analysis and job description. The human resources department is unable to effectively train, assess, promote, and reward employees. At the same time, the understanding of employees' individual needs is unclear, and they are eager for quick success and instant benefit, being stingy with money and time investment, neglecting employee training, prevents employee capital from gaining value. Due to the difficulty in mobilizing and unleashing the potential of employees and the lack of broad room for growth, it is difficult for units to retain talent.

No effective management mechanism has been established yet

Some units have inadequate incentive mechanisms and weak constraints. While emphasizing internal management, they often neglect respecting people, putting people first, and realizing employees' self-worth, or overly rely on material stimuli, neglecting spiritual and cultural incentives, resulting in a considerable lack of enthusiasm for work among many employees. Although some units have advanced human resource management concepts, it is difficult to apply advanced technologies and methods to transform them into operational systems, measures, and technical means that are suitable for the characteristics of the unit, resulting in extremely low work efficiency. Zhou Xiaohong, Secretary General of the Office of the China Enterprise Evaluation Association, said at the first China Human Resources Management Award Ceremony and Summit: "An outstanding human resources manager not only needs to have advanced concepts, solid theoretical knowledge, and proficient grasp of human resources management methods and technologies, but also requires a thorough understanding of human nature and scientific" (CHH, 2009).

Lack of market regulation in human resource flow

Due to the lack of market regulation function and the egalitarianism in distribution in many units, people are eager to find geographically advantageous regions and units with better welfare benefits during the job search process. Although the government has made great efforts to take many measures to control the uneven distribution of talents, the results have been minimal. Currently, many units and regions in urgent need of talents are still unable to obtain the necessary talents, which seriously hinders the balanced development of society and economy. In addition, traditional employment and management methods also make it difficult to achieve reasonable talent mobility in state-owned enterprises and public institutions.

5. Business Case Studies

5.1. Haidilao Hotpot: Brand of New Human Resources System

Haidilao International Holding Ltd. restaurant chain was established in Jianyang, Sichuan province (China) in 1994. Its restaurant operates under Haidilao Hot Pot brand name. As one of the largest catering enterprises in China, Haidilao has achieved efficient human resource management with its leading technology and efficient service model, greatly improving employee satisfaction, improving service quality, and increasing the overall efficiency of the organization, thus achieving good profits. Haidilao adopts a hierarchical management system to achieve effective management within the organization. Hai Di Lao has established a comprehensive and flexible human resource management system that combines internal and external aspects of the organization. Hai Di Lao relies on technology and utilizes big data to manage human resources. Finally, the fourth is to implement a scientific and humanized incentive mechanism for Haidilao to improve employee motivation and engagement (Haidilao, 2023, Yang, 2020).

To achieve efficient human resource management, Haidilao has adopted a hierarchical management system and improved its organizational structure. Haidilao divides the organization into headquarters, branches, and various other forms of operation departments. Each operation department is the responsibility of the general manager, and multiple managers cooperate to complete the relevant work. Each manager has also developed and implemented detailed rules and procedures related to human resource management, and established strict assessment mechanisms in recruitment, promotion, training, and other aspects to ensure that every employee receives sufficient development opportunities and receives sufficient respect and care.

Haidilao has adopted a flexible management model and carried out comprehensive reforms in organizational structure, management mechanisms, human resource management, and performance evaluation, making management more flexible and timelier. Haidilao utilizes the concept of lean management and implements a flexible management model, achieving organizational development with the main goal of meeting customer needs, thereby better meeting customer needs and improving employee satisfaction. Meanwhile, Haidilao has built a comprehensive and flexible human resource management system that combines internal and external aspects of the organization:

In order to better achieve the efficient operation of human resource management, a series of effective measures have been formulated to adapt to external recruitment and promotion policies, in order to meet the development and needs of the organization. Haidilao has adopted a strict recruitment process to ensure professionalism and prioritize experienced personnel to meet the needs of the organization. In addition, Haidilao has implemented a performance-based promotion policy to motivate employees to continuously strive and improve the overall efficiency of the organization.

In order to effectively promote the development of employees, Haidilao has implemented a comprehensive internal training mechanism to help employees acquire more professional knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the organization. In addition, Haidilao has implemented a comprehensive assessment mechanism to evaluate employees' work performance, thereby better motivating employees and providing a reliable foundation for the development of the organization. At the same time, Haidilao has also launched many different training programs targeting various objective factors such as personality and family environment and has different training policies for introverted and extroverted employees. The mature and comprehensive employee training mechanism of Haidilao can be said to be quite outstanding.

What is more, Haidilao relies on technology and utilizes big data to manage human resources. within the organization, such as recruitment, training, assessment, performance, and promotion, in order to obtain effective human resource data and analyze it to better meet the development needs of the organization. Furthermore, Haidilao has also adopted technological innovation to achieve more efficient HRM. Haidilao has developed a brand new human resource management system, which enables the management of the entire process from recruitment to training, assessment, and promotion, effectively improving the efficiency of the organization and better meeting its development needs.

Haidilao implements a scientific and humanized incentive mechanism to enhance employee motivation and engagement. In order to enhance the enthusiasm and dedication of employees, Haidilao has implemented a scientific and humanized incentive mechanism, which not only improves the level of motivation, but also pays more attention to the development of employees and meets their skill improvement needs. Haidilao has implemented a performance-based incentive mechanism to ensure the continuous improvement of employee performance and meet the development needs of the organization. In addition, Haidilao has implemented economic incentive policies to improve employees' compensation levels and enhance their sense of professional satisfaction. In order to further enhance employee engagement, Haidilao has taken a series of measures, such as organizing regular performance evaluations, skill training, career development, and other activities to improve employee engagement and satisfaction. In addition, Haidilao also pays attention to the work status of employees, continuously improves the work environment, and implements various activities to increase employee engagement and satisfaction.

Through this example, it can be seen that Haidilao, as one of the largest catering enterprises in China, has achieved efficient HRM with its leading technology and efficient service model, greatly improving employee satisfaction, improving service quality, and increasing the overall efficiency of the organization, thus achieving good profits. This section analyzes the aspects of a hierarchical management system, combining internal and external human resource management systems within the organization, relying on technology, and implementing scientific and humanized incentives. The purpose is to elaborate on the outstanding aspects of human resource management in Chinese enterprises, which are worth learning from other enterprises

5.2. The Innovative Path of Talent Cultivation and Organizational Management Reform in Suning Enterprises

Suning Commerce Group Co., Ltd., is one of the largest non-government retailers in China, headquartered in Nanjing, Jiangsu. Suning has more than 10,000 stores nationwide and its e-commerce platform. Suning.com ranks among top three Chinese B2C companies. The operation categories include physical merchandise, such as home appliances, 3C products, books, general merchandise, household commodities, cosmetics and baby care products, content products and service merchandise (Fortune, 2021).

The reform of HRM in Suning, a large enterprise, can be described as a bold and valuable reference for reference. Every organizational change in Suning almost always involves organizational strategic transformation and progress in human resources. And its every strategic transformation is basically based on changes in the external environment, and the increasingly fierce market competition has led them to carry out this thorough reform of human resources and management organization. The major reforms of Suning mainly include the following two points (Zhi, 2021):

Innovation in talent mechanism

The deepest and most crucial aspect of enterprise transformation and transformation is still the transformation of people, including changes in ideological concepts and innovation in talent mechanisms. Under the guidance of transformation strategy, Suning has conducted many innovative explorations in human resource management. The team of the enterprise should transform from the past "single operation of the army" to "joint operation of land, sea, and air". The human resources department of Suning has done a lot of work in the construction of the "joint operation of land, sea, and air" team over the years, with the most prominent being the proposal of "three objections": against professional managers, against migrant workers, and against putting people first. Oppose professional managers and demand business partners; Oppose migrant workers and demand business successors; Oppose the mentality of working and strive to become new talents who are "dedicated, professional, and career oriented". Everyone should start their own businesses, and Suning provides a career platform for its employees; Oppose the vague concept of putting people first, cultivate lazy and idle people, and prioritize those who can pass the ideological, ability, and performance levels. This requires every Suning person to shift from "task driven" to "career driven". Guided by the concept of business partners, Suning implemented two consecutive employee stock ownership plans in 2014 and 2015, which is also the second and third equity incentive plan in Suning's history. The first equity incentive plan was implemented in 2008. Suning's employee stock ownership plan expands Suning's shareholders from senior to mid to senior, core, and veteran employees, expanding the scope of employees and gradually increasing the degree of shareholding, truly achieving the goal of "allowing employees and the enterprise to grow together, create value together, and enjoy changes in value, which cannot be changed". In addition, in the past few years, in order to fully encourage innovation and improve the organizational strength of human resources, Suning Group has continuously reformed its organization, established innovative organizations and entrepreneurial teams, and enabled small teams from all over the group to fight, with micro innovation constantly emerging. The increasingly powerful human resources have provided Suning with stronger grassroots motivation, effectively supporting the transformation and development of Suning Group from the organizational and management levels.

According to the report from Zhi (2021), nowadays, in terms of human resource management, it is roughly divided into three categories, and the group has designed differentiated management objectives at different levels based on this. The first category is the core management cadres. After years of personal development at Suning Group and the arrangement of Suning Group's equity system, these cadres have established a long-term development relationship with Suning Group, becoming the entrepreneurial team of Suning Group. The second category is professional and technical personnel. They are an important force in the development of technology Suning and diversified Suning. For these professional talents, Suning encourages everyone to start their own businesses based on enterprise platforms, which can take any form, such as project buyout or team responsibility, or joint investment by enterprises and individuals to achieve product and service corporatization. The third category is a large number of stores, logistics, and after-sales employees. For these basic workers, Suning proposes to also exert their personal subjective initiative, allowing them to share the achievements of the successful development of the enterprise, "creating a side for Suning's development, and adhering to their own career". On the one hand, it is emphasized to adhere to the Suning culture of "system over power, colleagues over family and friends, advocating a family style atmosphere".

On the other hand, it is emphasized that culture should also keep up with the times, and be based on changes in the times, the mission pursuit of the enterprise, and strategic layout, to create a new corporate culture that emphasizes both openness, inclusiveness, cohesion, and combat effectiveness. This aspect is quite worth learning from for Chinese enterprises.

Unprecedented organizational transformation

The full utilization of human resources, while also influenced by internal factors within the organization, is crucial for the quality and efficiency of its organizational structure. The direction of Suning's organizational transformation is to change the process driven large business unit system in the past and shift it towards user demand oriented, goal-driven small team operations. This is also what we often say, to make a large enterprise smaller, it is necessary to have both the resource allocation advantages of a large enterprise and the flexibility and agility of a small enterprise. In the past, under the chain mode, Suning was a unified model, like a train with dozens of carriages running at the front. Now Suning has become a joint fleet: it has formed three major clusters: retail, logistics, and finance. Under these three clusters, there are twenty to thirty business units. Under the jurisdiction of twenty to thirty business units, more than four thousand small teams have been formed nationwide, from subcategories to regions, cities, and storefronts. All business work is done by these four thousand independent small teams. Professional departments such as finance, personnel, branding, and legal affairs have become resource-sharing platforms.

The reform goal of Suning is to transform the organization from a "one train" to a "joint fleet", and to enhance the flexibility of large enterprises. However, it is not possible to split large enterprises from one enterprise to thousands of enterprises, thus losing the resource advantage and scale advantage of large enterprises. Suning not only needs to support small team operations in the system, achieve organizational fragmentation on the management side, but also maintain strong integration and unity in management. The organizational change carried out by Suning can be summarized as a "combination of recruitment and release".

One is "collection": Suning has undergone several "major surgeries" on its organizational structure, breaking the enterprise apart and reassembling it. It has carried out large-scale mergers and reorganizations of the original 28 business departments, merging the chain platform operation headquarters and e-commerce operation departments to establish an operation headquarters, and integrating the operation and marketing functions of the online and offline platforms into one. With the revocation of the "e-commerce operation headquarters", the organizational boundaries of "Suning Easco" have been broken, and the PC, store, mobile, and TV ends are collectively referred to as Suning Easco. It can be seen that Suning has gradually internalized into a company that is more internet-based than internet companies.

The second is "decentralization": streamlining administration delegating power, and implementing flat organizational reforms. Suning proposed eight tasks for organizational system reform: streamlining administration and delegating power, flattening the organization, vertical management, strengthening target performance management, professionalization of operations, corporatization of business units, project management, and small team operations. In 2015, after a stormy reform, strong promotion of streamlining administration, delegating power, and flattening the organization, over 600 processes were cut by Suning within three months—decentralization of personnel power and sinking of finance and decision-making. Accompanied by the reform is a major shift in mindset from 'I want to do it' to 'I want to do it': previously, the headquarters coordinated departments to allocate resources and each department was responsible for execution.

However, now the bosses of each business unit and region have become the bosses of independent operating companies, learning to self-position, set goals, assign tasks, and take full responsibility.

In fact, when Suning initially announced this reform that was highly likely to shake the foundation of the entire enterprise, many people were not optimistic, and some experts commented that this was undoubtedly a daunting challenge of "learning elephants to dance". However, the current performance of Suning shows that most people have passed this challenge. Nowadays, Suning, with its brand-new organizational structure and full utilization of human resources, has become more competitive in the market compared to the past, competing with today's e-commerce giants Alibaba and JD.com.

Through these two cases, a comprehensive explanation can be made: both companies are trying new ways to improve their HRM capabilities in the increasingly strong market competition. Their actions are full of adventure and uncertainty, but they have brought huge benefits to themselves after success. Nowadays, the service model of Haidilao has been imitated by major catering enterprises, and Haidilao's stores have already gone abroad, with branches in developed countries such as the UK, the United States, Italy, and South Korea, bringing their unique service culture abroad. Suning, on the other hand, has developed from a traditional home appliance enterprise into China's third-largest online shopping platform through a series of reforms. They have enabled their home appliance industry to occupy a huge share of the Chinese home appliance market through excellent marketing methods.

6. Future opportunities for quality improvement of the Chinese HRM practices

Undoubtedly, the development of Chinese enterprises is quite rapid nowadays. Since 2018, the number of Chinese enterprises has increased from over 13 million to over 51 million. Among them, private enterprises have increased from over 10 million to over 47 million, and the number of foreign-invested enterprises has increased by over 50%; The newly established "four new economy" enterprises in China account for over 40% of the total number of newly established enterprises in the country. As of September, this year, China has cultivated nearly 9000 specialized, refined, and innovative "little giants" enterprises (Ministry of Commerce of China, 2022).

Numerous enterprises still adopt outdated methods in HRM, ignoring the efficient and high-quality human resource management in the "Internet Age", which has restricted the production efficiency and development of the majority of the companies. The future possibilities of human resource management practice involve multiple aspects, and with the development of technology, society, and economy, HRM is also constantly evolving. Here are some possible future trends and improvement directions. With the development of big data and artificial intelligence, HRM will rely more on data analysis to make decisions. Talent analysis, performance management, and recruitment processes will be more data-based, helping companies better understand employee needs, optimize processes, and make more strategic human resource decisions. Therefore, cloud based human resource systems are becoming increasingly popular in enterprises, especially among young employees who are familiar with and almost completely online work. Cloud software is hosted on servers, allowing authorized users to easily access secure company and personnel data in real-time from almost any location. Other increasingly popular cloud-based advantages include:

- *Ability to use human resource analysis to enhance previous recruitment experience and develop new systems to attract job seekers;* Comprehensive training plan, including employee access to company materials; Improve employee satisfaction by allowing employees to use self-service portals and chat functions;

- An effective cloud-based human resources system has also laid the foundation for future labor expansion. As the company expands, this automation technology can be expanded to meet the growing demand for more employees.
- *Artificial intelligence and automation:* Automation technology will play a greater role in recruitment, training, salary management, and other aspects. The HRM system may use automated tools to handle routine tasks, allowing HR professionals to focus more on strategic human resource issues. According to 96% of senior human resources professionals, artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to significantly improve talent recruitment and employee retention. As companies adopt ultra-automation as a new method of digital transformation, human resource management is one of the main functions that benefit from intelligent automation. Intelligent automation can help complete the following human resource processes: 1) Artificial intelligence robots can collect and filter resumes, guide qualified candidates to the next stage of the recruitment process, and send personalized emails to rejected candidates. 2) Intelligent robots can enhance self-service onboarding by automatically creating email addresses and user accounts, and mailing onboarding documents to new employees. 3) Robots can collect employee performance data from different company systems for data-driven analysis. 4) Robots can collect data from login systems and use it to calculate overtime compensation and related commissions, as well as create reports on various payroll statistics.
- Remote work and flexible work systems: With the popularity of remote work, HRM will need to reassess methods for employee management, performance evaluation, and training. Developing more flexible work systems and adopting adaptive management methods will be the future trend. Remote work has many advantages, including greater flexibility: working from home or elsewhere makes it easy to balance work and life. Reducing transportation and housing costs: Remote work can avoid issues such as commuting time and traffic congestion and can also reduce housing rental expenses. Larger recruitment scope: Companies can search for the best talent globally, without having to be limited to their local areas. Higher productivity: Because remote work allows employees to work at their own pace, creating a better work experience and higher work efficiency. Of course, remote work also has some potential hazards, such as the lack of face-to-face communication, which may make employees feel lonely and affect their mental health and work efficiency. Secondly, remote work requires better communication and management methods to ensure seamless collaboration between teams. Finally, data protection and network security are important issues in remote work, and effective security measures must be taken.
- Enterprises will pay more attention to employee experience and happiness, which will directly affect employee work efficiency and enterprise performance. HRM will pay more attention to employees' job satisfaction, work environment, and work life balance. There are many ways to improve happiness, such as flexible working hours, which can bring significant happiness improvements to employees. If the business content of the enterprise allows, it may even be advisable to try to have some employees work remotely.
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) will become an important component of HRM. HRM will not only focus on internal issues within the enterprise, but also actively participate in the sustainable development of society and the environment. This part is somewhat difficult to understand. Simply put, participating in sustainable social and environmental development can enhance the reputation and reputation of enterprises, which may attract talent to join. Enterprises that simultaneously fulfill relevant responsibilities will also attract the attention of investors and receive investment.

- Many heavy industry enterprises in China have neglected the important responsibility of social sustainable development, which has led to many employees of heavy industry enterprises working in poor environments for a long time, with a significant impact on human resources.

These trends all indicate that in the future, HRM will focus more on strategic planning, data-driven decision-making, and the overall experience of employees. In this constantly changing environment, HR professionals need to possess more skills, including data analysis, technology application, cross-cultural communication, and so on. These all require managers of Chinese enterprises to have a broader mindset and the determination to meet new challenges, and must take HRM more seriously.

Summary and conclusions

Chinese HRM practices gained significant attention and become an important research area that underpins unprecedented economic growth, business development, global engagement, and institutional transformation in China. In addition to these trends, the traditional Chinese HRM practice should be convergence to the Western HRM practices maintaining its primarily Confucian-based cultural values and unique Chinese characters adopting the emerging social, technological, economic trends arising from globalization. Furthermore, by exploring the underlying connection between Taoist philosophy and sustainability management (Chen, 2009; Xing et al., 2023). Based on previous analysis, we can make the following major conclusions:

- China has huge labor resources, but due to differences between different provinces, regions and industries, there is an imbalance in talent supply and demand.
- The Chinese economy is transitioning from traditional manufacturing to service and innovative industries, placing higher demands on talent demand.
- The Chinese government is committed to cultivating a more competitive workforce by improving education levels, but some industries and regions still face skill shortages.
- Labor regulations are constantly improving, emphasizing the protection of employee rights and interests, while enterprises also face higher social responsibility and compliance requirements.
- Enterprises are increasingly focusing on diversity and inclusivity, committed to building teams with different cultures and backgrounds, and promoting gender equality and inclusive leadership.
- Enterprises focus on the career development and training of employees to improve their skills and adapt to rapidly changing market demands.
- Enterprises are increasingly focusing on internationalization in talent competition, attracting and retaining international talents to maintain competitiveness in the global market.
- With the increase in talent mobility, enterprises need to take measures to retain core talents and improve employee loyalty.
- HRM is gradually digitizing, and enterprises are increasingly using data analysis to make decisions and improve the efficiency of recruitment and performance management.

The above mentioned points are a comprehensive explanation of the current situation of HRM in China. The Chinese HRM is getting better and better, as was mentioned in the case studies of Haidilao and Suning. They are constantly trying and making progress, which has led to great growth in the human resource management of the enterprise itself and has also been imitated by peers. There are still many problems in HRM in China, and the Chinese managers have to face the existing problems and start solving them.

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