

## **Human Resource Development issue within China**

Globally, there has been a reported phenomenon of shortage of management personnel and public administrators. Management personnel and public administration officers have been reported as few in numbers, with most of the countries failing to support this career. This paper looks into the shortage of management personnel and public administrators, with the main focus on China. It addresses this as a national problem and evaluates on the potential solution for the same. The paper also develops a comparison with United States as an international partner and how it addressed the problem.

Management personnel and public administration are always critical in organizations for effective operations. Across the globe, organizations have been focusing on management personnel in order to establish good grounds in the global competitive market. In this light, recruiting the right personnel for the job has been the main aim of these organizations. However, it is apparent that in various regions across the globe, there has been a scarcity of management personnel and public administrators. Noe & Wright (2003, pp. 79 - 82) as business researchers, discussed that the face of human resource department has been changing and facing increased challenges. In order for companies to stay competitive in today's marketplace, Ulrich & Brockbank (2005, pp. 76 - 81) emphasized that the development of rightful management personnel is critical to keep pace with the times and promote change in organizations.

In essence, the Chinese market economy has grown and attracted substantial foreign investments over the past ten years. It has been preferred to other global markets by numerous investors. A report by the world economic forum indicated that annual economic growth of China averaged 15% over a period of five years (Xuefen & Yang 2010, pp.128 – 145). A case example was a

drastic increase of the country's GDP growth from 9.7% in 1996 to 15% in 2002 (Zhu & Dowling 2002, pp. 569-597). Similarly, the country experienced increased foreign investment estimating US\$7.74 billion in year 2000 (Zhang & Wu 2004, pp.424 – 428). Over the years, China has been marked as the world's largest recipient of foreign investment taking a 42% share of foreign investment from the world.

Chiefly, Werner & Malcolm (2002, pp.553 – 579) conducted researches in China and developed a broad statement that the country is facing a huge shortage of the management personnel and public administrators. From other researches, it is evident that China has been observed and ranked as a leading country in development. The increased development has led to the establishment of huge organizations. A study by Warner (2000, pp. 171-182) found out that multinational corporations have also flooded the Chinese market because it is a great haven of opportunities. The huge population as noted from Xuefen & Yang (2010, pp.128 – 145) case study in China has increased the demand of products and major firms have been established in the country. A resultant feature of the increased firms in the country has been inadequate professional labour force. The increased population has been critical in increasing the manual workers and expertise in other fields. However Zhang & Wu (2004, pp.424 – 428) noted that expertise in management personnel has decreased in number because of the huge demand in the ever increasing labour market due to firms.

Conversely Zhu & Dowling (2002, pp. 569-597) noted that China suffers a scarcity of well-qualified managers and public administrators because of its inefficient education program. The inefficient program has been blamed even in previous researchers as the reason why it has been difficult to develop managers locally, to manage the firms. Zhu (1997, pp. 19-44) undertook a study on Chinese system of education and outlined that there is a paucity of studies on

management development. He emphasized that Academics in the Chinese system tend to focus on human resource practices and they forego the management development in the studies. On the other hand, it has been identified as challenging for the multinational companies to import the management personnel to firms located in china because of the cross-cultural implications. In this light, many of the firms have been forced to rely on local management, which in this case has been inadequate because of the huge demand (Xuefen & Yang 2010, pp.128 – 145). In general, encouraging Chinese economic growth and globalization requires the development of the country's management resources. China has made efforts to accelerate reforms of the personnel system. However, to date, the biggest problem facing the country is the shortage of qualified managers.

Since China opened up to the world, it has been identified that the country has experienced numerous developments. There has been a huge need of personnel management and public administrators including qualified managers. Many of the firms and other public sectors have sought for managers and administrators across the market. The country has not overlooked the situation wholly but some solutions have been implemented to foster the development of management personnel. The efforts have been targeting changes in managerial practices to handle the increased demand for managers. Lu & Bjorkman (1997, pp. 614-628) studied major firms across China and argued that most of them have adopted the western style of business management because most of the personnel management have been imported from foreign countries. With the demand for managerial talents reaching new heights, the country has considered a revolution of the education system in order to produce qualified managers, who are competent enough to manage the increasing firms and investments.

A potential national solution in china for the decreased number of managers has been noted in the establishment of management development programs (Dalton & Austen 1995, pp. 65 - 72). In all factors of economic development in China, human resources are critical. The Chinese Government acknowledges this fact and has strategized on how to handle the situation. Major efforts have been advanced to establish effective Chinese personnel management (Bi 2002, pp. 156 - 163). The idea is to strengthen Chinese talented people and recruit them in management. Through these programs the training and educational level of management personnel are enhanced to develop their capacity. The initial idea for developing these initiatives is to tap local talents and recruit them in the management field, which would be an excellent idea for advancing development in the country.

The most successive programs in China have been the Outline of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic Development. This was a strategy, ratified in 2001 by the National People's Congress. The strategy established a joint MPA training program, which was advanced to develop skills on management among the students (Cowan 2008, pp. 26-44). The program devotes a whole chapter to the development of local talents giving priority to strengthening the talented people in management. Conversely, the implementation of the strategy of strengthening talents in management has resulted in the formulation of great managers who lead firms across the nations. Jian, Richard, & Sandra (2007, pp.198 – 211) noted that the system adopted in china has facilitated a shift from human resources to human capital and thus contributed to the country's objective of developing personnel management. From the established system, the country has been able to accumulate human capital, increase investment, and enhance education, and training.

The MPA training program as established in China has been one of the most effective in addressing the issue of scarcity of management personnel. The MPA program was established with the aim of providing the governments and the society with high-level managerial personnel (Noe & Wright 2003, pp. 79 - 82). In Chinese past, no such programs had been established. The only close system as established at bachelor level with courses on management being very rare in training and educational institutions. However, the MPA program has gained grounds in the country and the number of institutions practicing the same is increasing in China (Werner & Malcolm 2002, pp.553 – 579). In fact, Ulrich & Brockbank (2005, pp. 76 - 81) noted that in the current status of the Chinese labour market, it has become an actual need for one to pursue the MPA program. As a result, the program has been attracting a large amount of enterprise employees, university graduates and civil servants, which work best in increasing the number of personnel management in the country.

Chiefly, China introduced the MPA degree program in year 2001 (Bi 2002, pp. 156 - 163). A definition by the Renmin University of China described the MPA as a “comprehensive applications subject and branch of management” (Cowan 2008, pp. 26-44). The program is targeted to incorporate materials from economics, sociology, politics, law, and other disciplines in efforts of developing qualified managers. The program generally targets training leaders for positions in the public and private sector. MPA as a program for advancing management skills includes the MPP and MPM degrees as applied in the US. Over 83 MPA programs are overseen by a Directing Committee in China to foster development of leaders since year 2005. Bi (2002, pp. 156 - 163) assessed the MPA program and asserted that it is one of the most important programs in the country for developing professionals in the administrative field in China. The Chinese Public Administration Society, which has been in the limelight of developing future

management professionals, established a Memorandum of Understanding with NASPAA and ASPA. The main goal was to cooperate and support the development of the management professionals and benefit the field of management in the country. MPA has advanced the approach in the country by translating some of the U.S. public administration textbooks into Chinese in an effort to advance skill development.

The success of the MPA is evident with the fostering of the development of high-level talents in management. An evaluation conducted by Jian, Richard, & Sandra (2007, pp.198 – 211) revealed that since the implementation of the MPA program, China has constantly cultivated talents in the field of management, which is a positive response to the reported scarcity of managers and public administrators. The MPA program works best to recruit foreign talents in management. This approach is ideal for improving the quality and capacity of managers in the country. A case study of contemporary management in organizations by Werner & Malcolm (2002, pp.553 – 579) established that management within organizations needs to be integrated with the global trends. Therefore, importing talents to train the local potential management professionals works best for China. Consequently, it can be argued that the MPA program in China stimulates the vigour of the talents in management thus triggering the potentials of individuals in the management field.

However, numerous weaknesses engulf the MPA program, which was established in China as a way of increasing the number of people in the management field. A case example is the lack of transparency in the quality assessment of the MPA programs. Improving on transparency would work best in increasing the efficiency of the program in the country. On the other hand, the length of the course for the program is lengthy and holds as a discouragement for majority of interested individuals. The 42 semester hours of course work are quite involving especially in an

economy where people have to study as they work. Therefore, restructuring the program and developing a more appealing structure would be a great motivation for many people to take up courses in the program. The courses offered should also be revised to integrate other fields including law and politics. This is because, such elements are part of the greater global management of firms and service in the public administration. It would therefore be of value in diversifying the knowledge and skills of the students who in turn develop to be efficient and qualified managers. Cowan (2008, pp. 26-44) had noted that the programs have been of less relevance to first time learners who have never studied in the management field. Therefore, it is critical to establish a program approach, which introduces the students to the program for them to establish themselves strongly in the field. An internship would be advisable and may be required for pre-service students. It would be of value to the students entering the program so that they can align themselves with the expectations. With these, at least the Chinese system can develop the efficiency of the MPA program and capitalize on improving the same.

In the United States the MPA is a nationally-accredited degree program that has been facilitated over years to prepare students for successful careers as managers (Emerald 2007, pp. 6 – 8). The country's education system established the program to increase the number of managers for the public and non-profit sectors, which had been reported as experiencing a downward trend. Based on the same principles, the Chinese program has heavily borrowed from the US. The US program has set a curriculum designed to enable the student to become future managers. It enhances the understanding of the scope and activity of governance in modern society. Therefore, US enjoyed the development of graduates who would be recruited in the administration field within the public programs. For the student who earlier experienced some

levels of governance and those with some experience in management, they are provided with opportunities to gain new skills, and become effective managers.

Chiefly, US as a developed country have used the program to develop managers that are recruited in the busy economic sector and for the future. It was able to encourage women into the management field by recruiting them into the program and motivating them (Emerald 2007, pp. 6 – 8). It also ensured that they were given responsibilities and obligations similar to the men in the public sector management. This has enabled the United States to achieve equality in representation of gender in management. For so many years, management has been dominated by the male figure ruling out some of the most talented feminine figures in the field of management. In fact, Fields, Chan, & Terry (2006, pp.171 – 186) noted that women are better learners in the management field as compared to men. In this context, they achieve greater skills which have numerous benefits when applied in the field of management. The United States also benefited with diverse talents in the field of public administration. Before the program was established, management in public administration was associated to having a political science background. However, through this program, students from any discipline were incorporated. The program was open to any student who had interest in public administration careers and this increase the reach for the program.

Basing on what United States has achieved China can learn much from this. Several stereotypes have been a huge challenge in the Chinese system advanced by the political and the cultural systems. Women seclusion and regional segregation are part of the consequences advanced by the stereotypes in China thus lowering the probabilities of success for the MPA program.

Learning from the US, China can implement one of the strongest and most productive programs. This would be a program appreciating gender equality and diversity. The country's system would



also restructure the MPA to make it more flexible to accommodate anyone with interest in the management field. We can conclude that, the efforts by China to establish an MPA have been fruitful in handling the issue of scarcity of qualified managers. However, basing on the success of US in establishing the program, China can do better in this field and sustain itself with locally produced managers and public administrators.

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