
Research on Innovative Strategies for University Management under the New Public Management Theory

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Abstract: In recent years, with the popularization of higher education, the talent cultivation work in universities has gradually received more and more attention. To optimize and intensify talent cultivation, universities should base themselves on the perspective of the new public management theory, propose corresponding innovative paths according to the actual development of current management work, and lay a good foundation for the innovation and development of efficient management work.

Keywords: New public management theory; Innovation in university management; Management strategies

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1. Introduction

With the intensification of global competition and the vigorous development of the knowledge-based economy, higher education, as an important path to promote social progress and innovation, also faces unprecedented opportunities and challenges. Traditional university management models often focus on administrative control, planned resource allocation, and stability, which, to some extent, limit the flexibility and innovation of universities. The new public management theory, however, advocates introducing market mechanisms and private-sector management methods into the public sector, emphasizing result-orientation, cost-benefit analysis, and performance evaluation, providing new ideas and methods for university management work.

2. The meaning of the new public management theory

2.1. The definition of new public management

New public management is a public administration model that emerged since the 1960s. Its core lies in comprehensively improving the management efficiency of the public sector by introducing business management theories, methods, and technologies to achieve the modernization of the public sector. This theory emphasizes the application of market-based mechanisms to improve the quality of public services. It has great practical significance for university management in China. In practical applications, universities should adhere to the fundamental interests of students as the core, scientifically plan the responsibility ratio between universities and the government according to the development situation of the socialist market economy, and ensure the autonomy of university running while promoting the healthy development

of university management^[1].

2.2. The characteristics of new public management

The characteristics of new public management are mainly reflected in the innovation of its theoretical basis, integrating knowledge from multiple disciplines such as economics, management, and political science; the diversification of value orientation, pursuing economic goals while also paying attention to political goals such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and social justice; the integration of public-and private-sector management, encouraging the application of private-sector management principles, methods, and technologies in public management; emphasizing innovation and flexibility, adapting to changes in the social environment, maintaining organizational stability while dealing with emergencies; focusing on performance evaluation and accountability, establishing a performance evaluation system to ensure the effectiveness of policies and the sustainability of projects, and emphasizing the accountability of the public sector; and promoting democratization and transparency, encouraging public participation in decision-making, and improving the transparency and democracy of services. However, in practical applications, it is necessary to balance economic efficiency and political goals, ensure the protection of public interests when the private sector is involved, and flexibly adjust and improve to adapt to different situations^[2].

3. Problems existing in university management in the new era

3.1. Problems of administrative institutions and power allocation

Currently, many universities have problems such as redundant and complex administrative institutions and a large number of staff. This not only leads to an increase in management costs but also makes the overall decision-making process more lengthy and cumbersome. A simple decision often requires approval and coordination at multiple levels, consuming a large amount of time and energy and easily causing unclear division of responsibilities, ultimately resulting in a significant reduction in management efficiency.

In Chinese universities, administrative power often holds a core position, while academic power is relatively weak. This power-allocation model leads to excessive administrative intervention in academic affairs, restricting the innovation space and academic freedom of teachers and researchers. At the same time, the over-expansion of administrative power is also likely to cause unfair resource allocation. Some projects with real innovation and academic value may have difficulty obtaining sufficient funds and resources due to a lack of administrative support. This unreasonable power allocation not only dampens the enthusiasm of teachers and researchers but also hinders the healthy development of university academics^[3].

3.2. Problems of management systems and human resources

In terms of the management system, the power allocation among universities, colleges, and departments or between universities and departments in current universities is too centralized at the university level, suppressing the autonomous development capabilities of grass-roots academic organizations and colleges. This power structure leads to a slow response speed and difficulty in adapting to the rapidly changing educational environment. In addition, the functional departments of the school are overstaffed, with unclear responsibilities and frequent mutual shirking of responsibilities. The excessive intervention of administrative management departments in academic affairs also limits academic freedom and innovation.

In terms of human resources, the unscientific talent selection mechanism causes some universities to overly focus on academic qualifications and the number of papers when selecting talents, while ignoring practical work experience and professional skills. Some universities still rely on traditional professional titles and seniority in talent incentives, lacking effective competition and incentive mechanisms, resulting in a serious loss of outstanding talents and low enthusiasm among faculty and staff. In addition, universities have insufficient investment in employee training and development. The training content focuses on academic level and academic qualifications, neglecting teaching skills and technology, resulting in a low overall teaching staff level^[4].

3.3. Problems of academic atmosphere and scientific research

At present, the construction of the academic atmosphere and the self-discipline management mechanism of academic ethics in Chinese universities are still imperfect. On the one hand, the content and form of academic activities are relatively single, mainly limited to traditional forms such as academic reports, special lectures, and academic seminars, lacking innovation and diversity, and it is difficult to stimulate students' enthusiasm for participating in academic activities and broaden their academic horizons. On the other hand, academic misconduct such as fraud, corruption, and favoritism occurs from time to time. These behaviors seriously damage the academic atmosphere and reputation of universities and hinder the healthy development of academic research. At the same time, there are unreasonable aspects in the academic evaluation mechanism and reward system. It overly pursues the number of papers and the SCI inclusion rate while ignoring the originality and practicality of scientific research achievements, resulting in some important scientific research achievements being overlooked or ignored, further affecting the construction of the academic atmosphere. In addition, some advantageous disciplines and key laboratories often receive more scientific research funds and support, while some emerging disciplines and young teachers face a shortage of resources, leading to a significant gap in the quality and quantity of scientific research achievements. These problems will all have a certain impact on university management^[5].

4. Innovative paths for university management under the new public management theory

4.1. Optimizing the content of teaching management

The new public management theory emphasizes an effectiveness-centered approach, which requires university management to focus on improving teaching effectiveness in teaching. By optimizing the allocation of teaching resources, it ensures that resources are preferentially used for improving teaching quality and scientific research innovation. The introduction of market competition mechanisms and the implementation of internal assessment and evaluation systems can comprehensively improve the enthusiasm and creativity of teachers and administrators, thus effectively enhancing teaching management efficiency.

In addition, the new public management theory advocates a result-oriented approach, which requires university management to set clear teaching goals and establish a comprehensive performance evaluation mechanism in teaching. Universities should attach importance to students' academic achievements, focus on developing students' comprehensive qualities, and promote their all-round development. At the same time, they should also pay attention to teachers' teaching achievements and scientific research contributions and establish a scientific and reasonable teacher evaluation system. This can not only encourage teachers to continuously improve their teaching levels but also provide strong talent support for the long-term development of the school^[6].

4.2. Reconstructing the teaching management organization

In traditional university teaching management organizations, there are often problems such as too many levels, slow decision-making, and uneven resource allocation, which seriously limit the teaching quality and innovation ability of universities. Therefore, under the new public management theory, universities need to reconstruct the teaching management organization to create a more efficient, flexible, and adaptable teaching management system. To this end, universities should first start with optimizing the hierarchical structure of the teaching management organization, reducing unnecessary levels and decision-making links. For example, by merging departments and streamlining staff, the teaching management process can be simplified to ensure more efficient teaching management. Strengthening the main position of colleges and departments in teaching management and giving them more autonomy and decision-making power can effectively stimulate their enthusiasm for teaching innovation.

Introducing the new public management theory into the field of university teaching management means breaking the original monopoly pattern, enabling in-depth competition and cooperation among different colleges, departments, and teachers, and ultimately achieving an overall improvement in teaching quality and innovation ability.

In specific implementations, universities can establish a sound teaching management system and process, clarify the responsibilities and authorities of teaching management organizations at all levels, and strengthen the construction of the teaching management team to improve the professional qualities and management abilities of teaching administrators^[7].

4.3. Simplifying the power operation procedure

To simplify the power operation procedure, universities should promote the flattening of the management structure. In traditional university management, power is often concentrated in the university-level management, and grass-roots units such as colleges and departments lack autonomy, resulting in low management efficiency. Under the guidance of the new public management theory, universities should simplify the hierarchical structure and give more decision-making and management power to grass-roots units such as colleges and departments. This can not only improve management efficiency but also stimulate the enthusiasm and innovation of grass-roots units. By reducing management levels and decentralizing power, universities can build a more flexible and efficient management system^[8].

In addition, universities should optimize the power operation process, minimize unnecessary approval links, clean up and integrate existing approval items, cancel unnecessary approval links, and shorten the approval cycle. At the same time, universities should promote information construction, use modern information technology means to automate and intelligentize the approval process, and further improve the approval efficiency. Moreover, universities should establish an effective power supervision mechanism to ensure that power is not abused while the operation procedure is simplified. By establishing a sound supervision mechanism, universities can conduct real-time monitoring and evaluation of the power operation process and promptly discover and correct existing problems.

4.4. Innovating the teaching management mode

Under the guidance of the new public management theory, universities should break away from the traditional fixed teaching management mode and shift to a more flexible and responsive management mechanism. This includes promoting modular curriculum design, giving students enough space to choose courses according to their interests and learning progress; implementing credit-based management, encouraging students to study across disciplines and broaden their knowledge horizons; and establishing project-based learning groups to promote the cultivation of students' teamwork and practical abilities. Through these innovations, universities can better meet the personalized learning needs of students and comprehensively improve the flexibility and effectiveness of teaching management.

In addition, the public management theory emphasizes the importance of data in decision-making. Universities should build a comprehensive teaching data collection, analysis, and feedback system, use modern information technology means such as big data and artificial intelligence to accurately analyze data such as students' learning behaviors, performance, and satisfaction, and provide a scientific basis for teachers to adjust teaching strategies and optimize teaching content. At the same time, this data can also help administrators identify bottlenecks and problems in teaching management and promptly adjust management strategies to achieve precise management^[9].

4.5. Transforming the university management subject

Under the new public management theory, the university management subject is no longer just an executor and acceptor of policies but an active participant in policy-making, supervision, and evaluation processes. This requires management subjects to have stronger self-management and self-driving abilities, be able to actively identify problems, propose solutions, and actively participate in the problem-solving process. For example, teachers can actively improve teaching quality and effectiveness by participating in teaching evaluations and curriculum reforms; students can exercise their leadership and teamwork abilities by participating in student self-governance organizations and club activities. Finally, the new public management theory also emphasizes market competition and customer orientation, which requires university management subjects to have a stronger market awareness and competitive consciousness. Universities need to pay close attention to changes in market demands, promptly adjust professional settings to meet the requirements of

society for relevant talents. At the same time, universities also need to carry out healthy competition and cooperation to jointly improve the quality and level of education. This requires management subjects to have keen market insights and a competitive consciousness, be able to actively participate in market competition and cooperation processes, and comprehensively promote the healthy and sustainable development of universities^[10].

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, in the face of the opportunities and challenges of higher education development in the new era, universities must actively draw on the essence of the new public management theory. Through multi-dimensional paths such as optimizing teaching management content, reconstructing the teaching management organization, simplifying the power operation procedure, innovating the teaching management mode, and transforming the university management subject, they can comprehensively promote the innovation and development of university management, ensuring that universities can better adapt to the needs of social development and become an important force in promoting social progress and innovation.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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