Research on Training Programs Reform of Business Administration Talents in Agricultural Universities in New Era

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Abstract. In recent years, with the constant development and expansion of Chinese leading enterprises of agricultural industrialization, new higher demands have been raised for the quantity and quality of enterprise management talents. In the paper, by investigating and analyzing the training programs of business administration talents in agricultural universities, it was found that existing talent training programs and the demands of agriculture-related enterprises for management talents in new era have large gaps, and the business administration majors in such universities are suggested to reform their current talent training programs as per the demands of the above agriculture-related enterprises so as to further define their talent training objectives and improve agriculture-related enterprise management courses and practical teaching systems.

Introduction

At present, Chinese agricultural development is in a new era transforming to modern agriculture from traditional agriculture. In recent years, with the rapid development of Chinese market economy and agricultural industrialization, more and more leading enterprises of agricultural industrialization (hereinafter referred to as agriculture-related enterprises) continuously emerge, develop and expand. The development of such agriculture-related enterprises raises new demands on the quality of management talents, namely the management personnel in such agriculture-related enterprises shall not only understand theories and knowledge related to business administration, but also understand some knowledge and skills related to agricultural production and operation. As everyone knows, agricultural universities are the most authoritative and dominant schools for passing on agricultural knowledge. Business administration majors in such agricultural universities can use the discipline advantages of such schools to establish some agriculture-related courses closely related to the development of agriculture-related enterprises for business administration students, that is to say the positioning of the business administration majors in agricultural universities shall be training management personnel for agriculture-related enterprises. Therefore, can the talent training programs for those business administration majors in agricultural universities meet the requirements of composite and applied management talents required for the development of agriculture-related enterprises in a new era? In this paper, some investigations and analyses were made for the talent training programs of business administration majors in some agricultural universities to understand...
that whether current talent training programs of business administration programs in agricultural universities meet the requirements of agriculture-related enterprises for management personnel.

**Changes of Agricultural Operation and Requirements on Management Personnel in New Era**

In 1980s, the target of Chinese agricultural development was pursuing enough foods and clothes and increasing output, while in 1990s the target was pursuing agricultural benefits and increasing the quality of agricultural products. In fact, the changes of Chinese agricultural production and operation were the product for adapting to such changes. Agricultural industrialization is a kind of new agricultural operation for adapting to the target of pursuing agricultural benefits and increasing the quality of agricultural products.

Since the appearance and implementation of the industrialization of agriculture in 1990s, agricultural pre-production, in-production and post-production have formed a complete industry with integrated operation. The typical form of agricultural industrialization is “leading enterprises + bases + farmers” and the core of agricultural industrialization is leading enterprises. In recent years, with the constant development of Chinese marketization and agricultural industrialization, more and more leading enterprises of agricultural industrialization have emerged and developed rapidly. By the end of 2015, there were 386,000 agricultural industrialization organizations in China, including 129,000 all kinds of leading enterprises of agricultural industrialization. The development and expansion of such agriculture-related enterprises urgently need a large number of composite type management personnel who understand relevant agricultural knowledge. In a word, with the constant promotion of marketization and rapid expansion of food industry, the demands of agriculture-related enterprises on agricultural operation and management talents have become leading forces; in addition, with the gradual “new normal states” of Chinese economic development, all enterprises face new challenges and opportunities, and new higher requirements have been raised for the aspects such as the knowledge structure, innovation & application ability, professional dedication, enduring capability and communication and coordination skills of management talents trained in universities and colleges.

**Gaps of Existing Talent Training Programs in Business Administration Majors of Agricultural Universities**

In a new era of rapid development of agricultural industrialization, leading enterprises of agricultural industrialization raise higher demands on practical management talents, namely the management personnel in such agriculture-related enterprises shall not only understand theories and knowledge related to business administration, but also understand some knowledge and skills related to agricultural production and operation. They shall not only have solid theoretical basis, but also have excellent skills. They shall not only grasp strong practical operation ability, but also master various capabilities such as innovation capability, foreign language ability, information management ability, and teamwork ability, while the business administration majors in agricultural universities have such features and advantages.

Can the talent training programs of business administration majors in agricultural universities meet the requirements of agriculture-related enterprises on management personnel? In the paper, by conducting investigations and analyses of business administration
majors in some agricultural universities, it was found that the talent training programs of business administration majors in most agricultural universities cannot meet the special requirements of agriculture-related enterprises on management personnel. The specific reasons are as follows:

**Homogenization of Training Objectives and Common Agricultural Features**

Talent training objectives determine the type and orientation of professional talents and they directly affect teaching methods, approaches and contents. The training objectives of business administration majors in Chinese agricultural universities are similar to those in comprehensive universities, namely they cultivate talents who have basic theories of economics and management, grasp basic methods and skills for business administration and be able to engage in management, teaching or scientific research in enterprises, institutions or government departments. Such training objectives and positioning are similar to those in non-agricultural universities, the advantages and features of agricultural universities cannot be displayed and the graduates cannot adapt to the differentiated demands of agriculture-related enterprises on management personnel. In addition, similar training objectives also result in broad employment directions of business administration students in agricultural universities. Compared with those business administration graduates from finance and economics universities and comprehensive universities, such students have insufficient competitive power and it is hard for them to get hired as a result. However, a large number of agriculture-related enterprises are in urgent needs of management talents of relevant fields. Therefore, similar training objectives and common agriculture-related features lead to discrepancies between the training directions of business administration majors in agricultural universities and the demands of potential employers, which reduce the supply of management talents required by agriculture-related enterprises to a certain extent.

**Stereotyped Curriculum and Few Agriculture-related Courses**

According to the investigations made by the research group, the business administration majors in agricultural universities generally attach great importance to universal business administration major courses, and the differences with those of non-agricultural universities are quite small. The courses provided by the business administration majors in agricultural universities mainly include management and economics courses, including management, enterprise strategic management, production and operation management, organizational behavior, human resource management, financial management, micro-economics and macro-economics, which agriculture-related courses are absent. By conducting investigations and contrastive analyses of talent training programs of business administration majors in agricultural universities, among 31 nationwide agricultural universities with business administration majors, only few of them such as Nanjing Agricultural University and Jilin Agricultural University have agriculture-related featured courses. The absence of agriculture-related courses not only makes students have no basic agricultural knowledge, but also know little about agriculture-related enterprise management knowledge, which causes gaps and disconnection between school trainings and social demands and students cannot meet the requirements of modern agriculture-related enterprises on management personnel.

**Small Proportion of Practical Teaching and Insufficient Agriculture-Related Practice Bases**

The research group selected five typical agricultural universities for investigations and
research and calculated the proportions of practical teaching credits to total credits in the talent training programs of business administration majors. The results are as shown in Table 1. In accordance with Table 1, except for South China Agricultural University, the proportions of practical teaching in other four agricultural universities are less than 20%, and the credits of military training, social practices and graduation thesis are included in the credits for practice courses. The proportion of practical teaching will be smaller if the credits for the above three items are deducted. Thus it can be seen that the proportions of practical teaching for business administration majors in agricultural universities are quite small.

Table 1. Proportions of Practical Teaching for Business Administration Majors in Typical Agricultural Universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative University</th>
<th>Total Credits</th>
<th>Credits of Practice Courses</th>
<th>Proportion of Practice Courses to Total Credits</th>
<th>Proportion of Theoretical Courses to Total Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China Agricultural University</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>15.31%</td>
<td>84.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanjing Agricultural University</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.44%</td>
<td>82.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South China Agricultural University</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huazhong Agricultural University</td>
<td>161.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>88.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jilin Agricultural University</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18.24%</td>
<td>81.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Processed as per the talent training programs of business administration majors in relevant universities.

In addition, the absence of agriculture-related enterprise practice bases is also a main problem. At present, although the business administration majors in agricultural universities actively establish practice and practical training bases, most of such bases are loose practice bases, and many of them are established as per the needs of industrial and commercial enterprises. Such bases have no close connections or ties with agriculture-related enterprises, agricultural economy management departments or professional agricultural cooperative associations for farmers, which make students and teachers hard to understand the actual conditions of agriculture-related enterprise management and meet the needs of practical teaching.
Suggestions for Reforms of Talent Training Programs for Business Administration Majors in Agricultural Universities in New Era

Through investigations and analyses, it can be found that the talent training programs of business administration programs in agricultural universities have room for improvement and there are certain gaps between such programs and the demands of agriculture-related enterprises for required management personnel. Therefore, in the paper, specific suggestions on the reforms of talent training programs are put forward on the basis of the demands of agriculture-related enterprises for required management personnel as well as specialty and school features.

Define Talent Training Objectives, Highlight Features Serving “Agriculture-related Enterprises”

Training objectives are the specific expression for school guiding thoughts, starting points and terminal points for teaching activities and basis for designing training specification, process and making assessment [5]. Talent training objectives shall reflect social needs and consider school features and discipline advantages. According to statistics, there are 694 universities offering business administration majors in Mainland China, including 213 comprehensive universities, 98 finance and economics universities and 31 agriculture and forestry universities. Due to the late start of business administration majors in agricultural universities, the training objectives of business administration majors in comprehensive universities were referenced when such majors were initially established in agricultural universities. However, agriculture-related enterprises have rapid development nowadays, in case the training objectives of business administration majors in agricultural universities are not adjusted, on one hand, the graduates of business administration majors in agricultural universities cannot compete with those from comprehensive universities or finance and economics universities in job market; on the other hand, the graduates from agricultural universities cannot meet the demands of agriculture-related enterprises on management personnel as well. Under such background, the business administration majors in agricultural universities shall make “agriculture-related enterprises” as their main employment directions, adjust talent training objectives and training programs and highlight agricultural features and discipline advantages, which not only differentiate from those business administration graduates from comprehensive universities or finance and economics universities, but also meet the demands of agriculture-related enterprises for management personnel.

Increase Agriculture-related Courses and Improve Course Systems

Course systems are materialization of talent training objectives. In order to make the talent training objectives of business administration majors in agricultural universities reflect the feature that agriculture-related enterprises are the main targets of relevant graduate, corresponding agriculture-related courses shall be increased to continuously improve course systems. Due to the production and operation particularity of agriculture-related enterprises, relevant agricultural basic knowledge shall be provided for relevant students. Therefore, the business administration majors in agricultural universities shall increase some modular courses of agriculture-related enterprise management or increase some relevant courses such as Introduction to Agriculture, Introduction to Animal Science, Introduction to Agricultural Economics, Food Marketing, Farm Operation and Management, and Agricultural Commodity Futures. In addition, some course related to innovation and entrepreneurship shall also be
provided so as to cultivate the innovation awareness and entrepreneurial ability of students.

**Enhance the Construction of Practice Bases and Increase the Proportion of Practical Teaching**

In a tough job market, all universities shall increase practical teaching as per discipline backgrounds and features so as to improve the comprehensive quality of students. For those business administration majors in agricultural universities with objectives of cultivating applied management talents, they shall properly increase the ratios of practical courses and increase the proportions of practical teaching steps so as to make students have opportunities to participate in practical production, operation and management of agriculture-related enterprises.

As for increasing practical teaching steps, the crux is to establish stable training and practice bases inside and outside universities so as to make students not only grasp relevant business administration theoretical knowledge, but also make them digest relevant theories in practices and combine theories with practices. Therefore, agricultural universities shall enhance the construction of practice bases so as to establish adequate and stable training and practice bases inside and outside universities as soon as possible. Agricultural universities shall strengthen the connection and joint cultivation with agriculture-related enterprises; they shall establish teaching and practice bases jointly with local agricultural associations, agriculture-related enterprises and professional agricultural cooperative associations for farmers, further facilitate cooperation between universities and enterprises and that between universities and governments, and explore diversified talent training programs combining production, teaching and research so as to enhance the teaching quality of business administration majors and realize the objectives of training and cultivating composite and applied management talents.

**Summary**

With the “new normal states” of Chinese economic development and constant developments of agricultural industrialization, the demands of agriculture-related enterprises on professional management talents are higher and higher, which not only bring opportunities for the development of business administration majors in agricultural universities, but also gradually reveal the problems of existing talent training programs. In new eras, in order to enhance their competitiveness, the business administration majors in agricultural universities shall grasp opportunities, rely on the features of agricultural universities and discipline advantages and reform relevant talent training programs as per market demands and their own development rules so as to cultivate more composite and applied management talents who can meet the demands of agriculture-related enterprises in a better way.

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