

Redesigning and Exploring the Curriculum Framework for Human Resource Management under the New Liberal Arts Initiative

Jiangyong Liu*

Guangzhou Huashang College, Guangzhou 511300, Guangdong, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: As China's higher education transitions from extensive expansion to intensive development, the 'New Liberal Arts' concept has emerged as a pivotal strategic direction for transforming humanities disciplines. This approach emphasizes interdisciplinary integration, parallel development of theory and practice, and optimizing talent cultivation models guided by societal demands. The diversified economic structure and high-quality development trajectory of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area present new demands for talent cultivation, curriculum design, and pedagogical reform within university Human Resource Management (HRM) programs. Taking Guangzhou Huashang College as the research subject, this paper analyses the core competencies required for HRM programs under the New Liberal Arts framework through policy document analysis, literature review, and field research. It identifies shortcomings in the current curriculum system regarding knowledge structure, practical pathways, and cross-disciplinary integration. Guided by Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Competency-Based Education (CBE) frameworks, a new curriculum architecture was designed comprising four pillars: general education and humanities literacy, professional core competencies, cross-disciplinary integration, and practical innovation. Practical explorations were undertaken in areas such as university-enterprise collaboration and industry-education integration. Preliminary outcomes demonstrate that the new scheme comprehensively enhances students' data comprehension, strategic awareness, and humanistic sensitivity, providing a reference paradigm for the high-quality development of HRM programs within the new liberal arts context.

Keywords: New liberal arts development; Human resource management; Curriculum reform; Competency cultivation; Industry-education integration

Online publication: Oct 22, 2025

1. Introduction

In 2018, the Ministry of Education launched the 'Six Excellence and One Top Talent' Initiative 2.0, which for the first time proposed the parallel development of 'New Engineering, New Medicine, New Agriculture, and

New Liberal Arts’, marking the entry of higher education into a new era of structural transformation ^[1]. The development of the new liberal arts aims to integrate humanities and social sciences with modern technological capabilities, dismantle disciplinary barriers, and cultivate interdisciplinary talents possessing a sense of national and global responsibility, innovative spirit, and digital literacy. In 2020, the Declaration on the Development of New Liberal Arts was issued, further articulating the need to ‘ground efforts in the new era, adapt to emerging demands, and advance the integration, contemporary relevance, Sinicization, and internationalization of the liberal arts’ ^[2]. This provided a clear overarching blueprint for reforming humanities and social sciences programs.

Within human resource management, traditional curricula have long centered on organizational behavior, recruitment, employee training, and performance/compensation management. However, the widespread adoption of AI, big data, and cloud computing, coupled with organizational shifts towards platform-based and agile structures, has fundamentally altered corporate expectations for HR professionals. These now demand integrated competencies spanning data analytics, cross-cultural communication, and strategic support, moving beyond transactional execution ^[3]. Within the strategic Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the rapid development of high-tech industries and modern services has created an urgent demand for professionals who are proficient in digital tools and possess strategic human resource thinking.

2. Literature review and theoretical foundations

2.1. Current state of research on new liberal arts development in China

In recent years, the ‘New Liberal Arts’ has emerged as a significant topic within educational research ^[4]. contends its core lies in dismantling disciplinary barriers to achieve integration between arts and sciences, thereby elevating both humanistic spirit and scientific literacy while shifting educational objectives from knowledge transmission to competency development ^[5]. Emphasizes that curriculum design should priorities student development, strengthen problem-driven and project-oriented approaches, and focus on cultivating critical and innovative thinking. Within business education, advocates embracing the digital wave by embedding technologies such as big data and AI into business talent development, forming an ‘Intelligence +’ model ^[5].

Regarding reforms in human resource management programs, stresses the need to transcend traditional functional boundaries, embracing new roles such as strategic partner, change agent, and employee experience optimizer, while strengthening content in data analytics and organizational development ^[6,7]. Recommends course design drawing upon the ‘HR three pillars’ framework (Centre of Excellence, HR Business Partner, Shared Service Centre) to enhance systematic coherence and practical applicability.

2.2. International reform experiences

Leading international institutions have widely adopted interdisciplinary integration in HRM education. The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania offers a specialization in ‘Behavioral Science and HRM,’ integrating neuroeconomics, organizational psychology, and big data analytics ^[8]. MIT Sloan’s ‘Human Resource Analytics’ course requires students to master Python and R for data modelling ^[9]. The London School of Economics (LSE) places greater emphasis on ‘Global Labor Markets and Policy’, incorporating legal, ethical, and equity considerations into its HR curriculum. The overarching trend can be summarized as ‘technology-enabled, data-driven, and ethically grounded’, with flexible course structures designed to respond to rapidly evolving industry demands.

3. Analysis of talent development objectives for human resource management within the new liberal arts paradigm

According to the China HR Capability Development White Paper published by the China Human Resources Development Association, corporate demands for human resource management professionals over the next five years will increasingly emphasize both multidisciplinary and specialized competencies ^[10]. Data analytics emerges as a critical skillset, with enterprises requiring HR practitioners to master tools such as Excel, SPSS, or Python for conducting quantitative analyses of metrics including employee turnover, performance, and remuneration to inform decision-making. The application of digital tools is also growing in importance, with HR professionals needing familiarity with HRIS, e-HR, and AI interview systems to adapt to digital transformation. Organizational development and change management capabilities are increasingly valued, encompassing organizational diagnosis, cultural shaping, and change facilitation to support corporate strategic adjustments and transformation. Additionally, enterprises emphasize interdisciplinary knowledge integration, requiring an understanding of industrial and organizational psychology, labor regulations, and data ethics. Humanistic literacy and communication coordination remain pivotal. HR professionals possessing empathy, cross-cultural communication skills, and employee care capabilities are better positioned to foster harmonious labor relations and enhance organizational cohesion. Collectively, these competencies form the core competency model for high-caliber HR talent in the new era. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area stands as one of China's most economically dynamic and open regions, characterized by high-tech industries and modern services with pronounced outward-oriented economic features. According to Guangdong Provincial Bureau of Statistics, the Greater Bay Area hosted over 60,000 high-tech enterprises in 2022, with the digital economy accounting for more than 45% of GDP ^[11]. This industrial structure imposes heightened demands on HR professionals: technology firms like Huawei and Tencent priorities HR specialists with 'technology + management' expertise, requiring understanding of R&D processes and agile team management; Numerous Hong Kong, Macao, and multinational enterprises require HR professionals with bilingual proficiency, familiarity with international labor laws, and cross-cultural management expertise. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups widely adopt new models such as flexible employment arrangements and equity incentives, urgently necessitating HR personnel with innovative and rapid response capabilities. Consequently, cultivating versatile HR talent aligned with regional industrial characteristics has become a key direction for professional reform in applied universities. As an applied undergraduate institution under Guangdong Province, Guangzhou Huashang University's Human Resource Management program should anchor its development in the educational positioning of 'regional service, practice orientation, and competency-based education'. It aims to cultivate high-caliber applied talents who are morally and professionally competent, possess solid foundations, strong practical abilities, innovative spirit, and an international outlook. Specific competency objectives include: proficiency in recruitment, training, performance management, compensation, and employee relations; foundational organizational diagnosis and human resource planning capabilities; mastery of at least one data analysis tool to process employee turnover, performance, and satisfaction metrics for decision support; strong communication, collaboration, and cross-departmental coordination skills; and an understanding of labor policy, employment systems, and corporate cultural differences within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, coupled with regional adaptability and cross-cultural management awareness. This framework aligns with the Greater Bay Area's developmental demands for high-tech industry concentration, diverse enterprise structures, and frequent talent mobility. It embodies the new liberal arts philosophy of 'integration, innovation, and application,' providing clear direction for curriculum restructuring ^[12].

4. Research and problem analysis of the existing curriculum framework

To accurately determine the starting point for curriculum reform, the project team conducted research in January 2025 on the human resource management program curricula at Guangzhou University of Business and Technology and five other applied universities in Guangdong Province (including Dongguan University of Technology City College and Guangdong University of Science and Technology). Employing a combination of questionnaire surveys, syllabus analysis, and corporate interviews, the following prominent issues were identified in the current curriculum framework.

4.1. Pronounced disciplinary barriers and insufficient interdisciplinary integration

The current curriculum for Human Resource Management remains centered on traditional management knowledge systems, exhibiting a rigidly phased structure.

- (a) Year 1 focuses on foundational courses such as Principles of Management, Microeconomics, and Organizational Behavior, emphasizing theoretical grounding
- (b) Year 2 introduces specialized modules including Introduction to Human Resource Management, Recruitment and Placement, Training and Development, establishing a preliminary professional framework
- (c) Year 3 concentrates on functional modules such as Performance Management, Compensation Management, and Labor Relations, deepening specialized skills;
- (d) Year 4 addresses career management and corporate culture, broadening professional perspectives.

Recruitment and Placement, and Training and Development to establish an initial professional framework. Year 3 concentrates on functional modules like Performance Management, Compensation Management, and Industrial Relations to deepen specialized skills. Year 4 incorporates extension courses such as Career Management and Corporate Culture alongside graduation internships, aiming to bridge theory and practice. However, interdisciplinary courses constitute less than 15% of the overall curriculum, with only sporadic offerings such as “Labor Law” and “Business Communication”. There remains a lack of deep integration with fields like data science (e.g., Python programming, statistics), psychology (e.g., industrial and organizational psychology), and information technology (e.g., HRIS). This course model, characterized by pronounced disciplinary barriers and a singular knowledge structure, leaves students ill-equipped to analyses complex management scenarios, such as digital transformation, organizational change, and employee experience design, from multiple perspectives or to synthesize solutions. Consequently, it struggles to meet the demands for cultivating versatile, innovative human resource management professionals within the new liberal arts paradigm ^[13].

4.2. Weak practical teaching components and insufficient university-industry collaboration

Although most universities incorporate practical teaching components such as ‘corporate internships’ and ‘graduation theses’ to enhance students’ operational capabilities, numerous issues persist in implementation. Firstly, internship durations are typically brief, often spanning only 8–12 weeks and predominantly concentrated in the final semester of undergraduate studies. This creates a significant disconnect from prior coursework, resulting in ineffective bridging between theoretical learning and practical application. Consequently, students struggle to systematically apply classroom knowledge to real-world work scenarios. Secondly, the value of internship positions is often limited. Students are frequently assigned to administrative support roles such as administrative assistance, document filing, and data entry, with scant opportunity to engage in core human resources functions like recruitment, training, performance appraisal, or employee relations management. This restricts the development and refinement of professional competencies. More critically, the depth and effectiveness of university-industry collaboration remain inadequate. Most partnerships remain superficial,

confined to signing agreements and establishing joint internship bases, lacking substantive collaborative mechanisms. These include co-developing course content, integrating corporate mentors into teaching, mutual faculty appointments, and jointly conducting human resource management research projects. Consequently, corporate resources fail to integrate effectively throughout the talent development process, significantly diminishing the educational impact of practical teaching. Student feedback indicates that over 60% of internships fail to enhance professional competencies ^[14].

4.3. Outdated curriculum content, lack of digitalization and cutting-edge topics

Currently, Human Resource Management programs predominantly utilize traditional authoritative textbooks such as Human Resource Management (Renmin University Press). While these texts offer comprehensive frameworks and robust theoretical foundations, they generally suffer from outdated content that struggles to reflect emerging industry trends. For instance, recruitment management courses predominantly focus on foundational techniques like CV screening and structured interviewing, with minimal coverage of emerging technologies widely adopted by contemporary enterprises. These include AI-powered interviews, talent profiling, big data-driven candidate matching, and social media recruitment (e.g., talent sourcing via LinkedIn or Maimai). Consequently, students lack awareness of modern recruitment practices. Regarding performance management, curricula predominantly feature traditional tools like KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and MBOs (Management by Objectives), while offering insufficient coverage of contemporary performance models better suited to rapidly changing organizational environments. These include OKRs (Objectives and Key Results), agile performance management, and continuous feedback mechanisms, which have garnered significant attention in recent years. Furthermore, the professional curriculum lacks dedicated courses or modules systematically covering critical digital economy topics such as ‘Human Resources Data Analytics,’ ‘Employee Experience Design (EX),’ ‘Remote and Hybrid Team Management,’ and ‘Organizational Health and Psychological Safety.’ This leaves students inadequately equipped to address novel organizational structures and management challenges, failing to meet corporate demands for HR professionals with innovative thinking and technological application skills ^[15].

4.4. Monolithic assessment methods undervalue competency development

Existing course evaluation methods exhibit pronounced structural flaws, failing to align with contemporary talent development requirements. For years, most courses have relied predominantly on end-of-term closed-book examinations, which typically constitute over 60% of assessment weighting. This approach excessively emphasizes rote knowledge recall while neglecting students’ comprehension, application, and innovative capabilities. For instance, in practice-oriented courses such as Compensation Management, final examinations frequently center on textbook concepts. Students can achieve high marks through last-minute cramming, yet remain ill-equipped to address real-world challenges like compensation surveys or scheme design within actual enterprises. This highlights the disconnect between assessment methods and practical competency requirements. The absence of formative assessment mechanisms further exacerbates this issue. With coursework contributions typically below 40%, and some modules relying solely on final examinations, students fall into the trap of ‘slacking off during term time and cramming before exams,’ lacking sustained engagement with the learning process. For instance, in Statistics courses, evaluating performance solely through final examinations may cause students to overlook the processes of data collection, organization, and analysis. This hinders the mastery of practical statistical techniques, contradicting the ‘process-oriented, competency-based’ philosophy emphasized in the advancement of the new liberal arts ^[16].

The deepening development of the new liberal arts and the pursuit of high-quality regional economic

and social progress demand increasingly sophisticated, innovative, and multidisciplinary talents. Whether it be grassroots talent for rural revitalization who ‘understand agriculture, cherish the countryside, and care for farmers,’ or interdisciplinary technical professionals for the digital economy era, all require solid specialized knowledge, outstanding practical abilities, and sound innovative thinking. Yet the existing course assessment system remains entrenched in a traditional ‘knowledge-centric’ approach, failing to adequately evaluate students’ comprehensive competencies. A systematic overhaul is urgently needed. Consequently, reforming course assessment methods is imperative. On one hand, the weighting of end-of-term examinations should be appropriately reduced, while increasing the emphasis on formative assessment. This includes incorporating regular assignments, classroom discussions, and group projects into the assessment framework to guide students towards valuing the learning process. On the other hand, diverse evaluation methods must be expanded, introducing practical assessment tools such as case studies, simulation competitions, and field research to comprehensively evaluate students’ ability to apply knowledge, their innovative thinking, and their teamwork skills. Only through such measures can a talent cultivation quality evaluation system be established that aligns with the requirements of new liberal arts development and regional growth, thereby genuinely achieving the objectives of ‘promoting learning through assessment’ and ‘enhancing teaching through evaluation’.

5. Principles and approach for curriculum system reconstruction

Based on the aforementioned problem analysis, this study proposes a ‘three-dimensional integrated’ principle and implementation approach for curriculum system reconstruction.

5.1. Reconstruction principles

Four core principles have been established in the curriculum reconstruction process to ensure the forward-looking nature and effectiveness of talent cultivation. Firstly, it upholds the principle of multidisciplinary integration, transcending the boundaries of traditional single-discipline ‘management studies. It actively promotes deep integration between the Human Resource Management discipline and fields such as data science, psychology, law, information technology, and ethics. By establishing ‘interdisciplinary course modules’, it encourages students to select courses in statistics, computer fundamentals, industrial and organizational psychology, and related subjects. This fosters a ‘T-shaped’ knowledge structure characterized by ‘broad foundations and deep specialization’, enhancing comprehensive literacy and cross-boundary integration capabilities. Secondly, adhering to the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principle, the curriculum is reverse-engineered from the twelve core competencies graduates must possess. Learning Outcomes for each course are explicitly defined and precisely aligned with specific competency metrics, ensuring teaching objectives are clear, measurable, and evaluable, thereby achieving closed-loop management in talent cultivation. Thirdly, the practice-driven principle is implemented by reinforcing the ‘learning by doing’ philosophy. Practical teaching components including project-based learning, real-world corporate case studies, and HR simulation exercises are substantially increased, raising the proportion of practical teaching credits to over 35%. This establishes a virtuous cycle of ‘theoretical learning-practical application-feedback optimization’. Finally, the principle of collaborative education between institutions and enterprises is implemented by deepening industry-education integration mechanisms. This involves engaging corporate mentors in teaching and project supervision, co-developing course content with industry partners, and jointly establishing practical projects. These measures foster dual-qualified teaching teams, ensuring teaching content aligns seamlessly with industrial frontiers, thereby substantially enhancing students’ job readiness and career development capabilities. These four principles mutually reinforce and organically unify, collectively forming a

robust foundation for curriculum reform within the new liberal arts framework ^[17].

5.2. Design approach

Table 1. Curriculum stage design based on progressive competency development

Academic Year	Course Stage	Design Objectives	Primary Teaching Strategies and Curriculum Content
Year One	Foundation in General Education and Humanities Literacy	Strengthening critical thinking, communication skills, ethical awareness and digital literacy	Offering courses such as ‘Introduction to the New Liberal Arts’, ‘Logic and Critical Thinking’, ‘Business Ethics’, ‘Cross-Cultural Communication’ and ‘Fundamentals of Data Literacy’, with emphasis on cultivating humanistic depth and foundational competencies.
Academic Year	Building Foundational Professional Competencies	Systematically master the core knowledge framework of human resource management	Systematically study six key modules: recruitment, training, performance management, compensation, labor relations, and career development. Utilize case-based teaching and group discussions to consolidate foundational expertise.
Year Three	Interdisciplinary Competence Development	Enhancing Comprehensive Application and Cross-disciplinary Integration Skills	Courses including Human Resource Management, Marketing, Special Topics in Professional Awareness and Management Frontiers, and Introduction to Human Resource Management are introduced to broaden strategic perspectives and strengthen multi-disciplinary integration capabilities.
Year Four	Practical and Innovative Capability Enhancement	Achieving Knowledge Integration, Competency Output and Career Transition	Through collaborative industry workshops, corporate placements, graduation projects and innovation competitions, students undertake real-world enterprise projects to demonstrate integrated competency application and deliver tangible outcomes.

Note: This table illustrates a ‘modularized and tiered’ curriculum structure design, adhering to a progressive logic of ‘general education–foundational studies–advanced studies–practical application’. It emphasizes the phased and developmental nature of competency cultivation, aligning with the principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and the requirements for cultivating applied talents under the New Liberal Arts initiative ^[18].

5.3. Innovation in teaching methods

Table 2. Innovative teaching methods and their implementation to support competency development objectives

Teaching Methods	Specific Implementation Methods	Application Scenarios and Objectives
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Each semester features 1–2 real-world human resource management projects sourced from enterprises, such as ‘Optimizing Recruitment Processes for a Specific Company’ or ‘Employee Satisfaction Surveys and Improvement Plans’. Students work in groups to conduct research, analyze data, design solutions, and submit reports.	Develops students’ ability to solve authentic management challenges while enhancing teamwork, project management, and professional practice skills.
Flipped Classroom	Prior to lessons, micro-lecture videos, reading materials and preparatory tasks are provided via online platforms; classroom time is primarily dedicated to problem discussions, case studies, role-playing and practical exercises.	This enhances students’ autonomous learning capabilities, increases classroom interactivity and engagement, and promotes knowledge internalization and deep learning.
Digital Tool Integration	Courses such as Human Resource Data Analysis, Compensation Management, and HR Information Systems systematically incorporate practical training modules including advanced Excel functions, foundational SPSS statistical analysis, Python data processing, and HRIS system simulations.	This enhances students’ digital literacy and technical application capabilities, equipping them with the core tools and skills required for modern HR roles.
Corporate Mentorship Program	Corporate HR directors, organizational development (OD) specialists, and compensation and performance consultants are invited to serve as guest lecturers or project mentors. They participate in curriculum co-development, deliver specialized lectures, provide project guidance, and evaluate outcomes.	This achieves deep industry-education integration, enhancing teaching practicality and foresight while helping students understand industry dynamics and professional requirements.

Note: Through systematic innovation in the aforementioned four teaching methodologies, a dynamic, open curriculum ecosystem responsive to industry shifts has been established. This effectively underpins the talent development objectives of the Human Resource Management program within the New Liberal Arts framework, characterized by a competency-oriented, practice-driven approach.

6. Curriculum framework restructuring proposal design

6.1 Curriculum module design

Table 3. Restructured curriculum modules and competency focus in the human resource management major

Module	Course Title (Partial)	Credits	Competency Focus
Module One: General Education and Humanities	Introduction to the New Liberal Arts, Logic and Critical Thinking, Business Ethics, Intercultural Communication, Foundations of Data Literacy	18	Humanities literacy, communication skills, digital awareness
Module Two: Foundational Professional Courses	Principles of Management, Organizational Behavior, Introduction to Human Resource Management, Recruitment and Placement, Training and Development, Performance Management, Compensation Management, Labor Relations Management	28	Professional Core Competencies, Systems Thinking
Module Three: Interdisciplinary Expansion Courses	Human Resource Data Analysis (including Python Fundamentals), Organizational Development and Change Management, Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Labor Policy and Regulations (including Comparative Analysis of Hong Kong and Macau Labor Laws), HR Information Systems (HRIS)	20	Data Competence, Interdisciplinary Integration, Strategic Vision
Module Four: Practice and Innovation	HR Project-Based Training (Year 3), Corporate Internship (Year 4), Graduation Project, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Practice, HR Case Competition	24	Practical Skills, Innovative Spirit, Team Collaboration

Total credits: 160 credits (including 56 practical credits, accounting for 35%)

6.2. Specialized course description

Following the restructuring of the curriculum, a range of interdisciplinary and innovative courses have emerged as highlights, reflecting the program's exploratory achievements in transformation and upgrading within the context of the new liberal arts. For instance, Human Resource Data Analysis is designated as a core cross-disciplinary course, carrying 3 credits and 48 contact hours. The module guides students through data pre-processing, descriptive statistics, correlation testing, and regression modelling, demonstrating these methodologies' application in HRM. Practical sessions utilize Python and Pandas libraries for case studies on employee attrition prediction, thereby enhancing data literacy and analytical skills.

Another course, Organizational Development and Change Management (2 credits, 32 hours), introduces classic OD theories such as Lewin's three-stage model and Kotter's eight-step approach. It combines these with practical case studies involving corporate mergers, organizational restructuring, and digital transformation to cultivate students' diagnostic and intervention capabilities in complex organizational change scenarios^[19].

HR Project-Based Training is an intensive practical course totaling 4 credits over 8 weeks. Students complete real-world assignments from partner enterprises in teams, such as 'Corporate Culture Assessment,' 'Performance System Optimization,' or 'Recruitment Process Redesign.' Enterprise mentors and academic staff provide continuous guidance, enabling students to hone their skills within authentic business environments. Additionally, the Labor Policy and Regulations module features a specialized section on 'Comparative Labor Systems in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area'. This systematically analyses institutional differences across mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macao concerning employment contracts, working hours, social security, and dismissal protections, equipping students to navigate diverse regional employment landscapes^[20]. Overall, this curriculum framework preserves the core strengths of HRM while emphasizing the design principles of 'solidifying foundations, broadening domains, strengthening practice, and driving

innovation.’ It deeply integrates data science, organizational theory, and regional practice, aligning with the interdisciplinary and forward-looking nature of new liberal arts development, and demonstrates strong scalability ^[21].

7. Practical exploration and case analysis

In January 2025, the project team conducted a questionnaire survey among HRM students regarding the new curriculum framework, collecting 108 valid responses. Findings revealed strong student endorsement of the revised structure. Data indicates that 87% of students perceive the restructured curriculum as ‘more closely aligned with practical workplace demands,’ significantly enhancing learning utility and purpose; 76% explicitly stated their ‘data analysis capabilities had markedly improved,’ demonstrating the effectiveness of interdisciplinary course design in cultivating technical literacy. Particularly regarding practical components, 91% of students expressed satisfaction with ‘corporate project placements,’ viewing this as an effective bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Overall, students’ comprehensive satisfaction with this curriculum reform reached 89.3 points (out of 100), indicating high acceptance and positive feedback. Additionally, the project team conducted interviews with industry mentors ^[22]. Participating mentors offered positive evaluations, consistently noting that ‘student proposals were data-driven, logically coherent, and demonstrated nascent professional consultancy capabilities.’ This confirms the teaching reform has achieved substantive progress in enhancing students’ professional thinking and practical skills. Industry mentor feedback: ‘Student proposals were data-driven, logically coherent, and demonstrated nascent professional consultancy capabilities.’

8. Effectiveness evaluation and reflection

8.1. Effectiveness evaluation indicator system

Establish a multi-dimensional evaluation system based on OBE (as shown in Table 4):

Table 4. Multi-dimensional evaluation system for talent training quality in HRM major based on OBE concept

Dimension	Indicator	Data Source
Knowledge Mastery	Course GPA, Core Course Pass Rate	Academic Management System
Capability Enhancement	Quality of HR data analysis reports, project defense scores	Faculty evaluations
Practical Outcomes	Internship host evaluations, project adoption rates	Corporate feedback
Student Development	Employment rates, professional alignment rates, progression rates	Employment Office data
Social Recognition	Employer satisfaction, competition awards	Survey questionnaires

8.2. Key outcomes

During the research and design phase of the curriculum restructuring initiative, the project garnered multifaceted positive feedback and achieved anticipated outcomes. Surveys indicate widespread endorsement of the restructuring plan among academic staff, students, and industry experts, with particularly high ratings for its emphasis on practical teaching and alignment with industrial demands. Questionnaire and interview findings reveal that over 85% of teaching staff believe the new curriculum structure enhances students’ comprehensive competencies; among corporate participants, nearly 80% deemed the curriculum highly aligned with industry

development requirements. Retrospective employment data also indicates anticipated improvements in the employability and job suitability of the 2024 cohort, with significantly heightened willingness to pursue specialization-related careers. Enterprises fully endorsed the program's focus on cultivating graduates' 'data analysis capabilities' and 'problem-solving skills', demonstrating the scientific rigor and practical feasibility of the restructuring plan in developing core competencies^[23].

8.3. Existing shortcomings

Despite broad endorsement during the research phase, the implementation process faces several potential challenges. Firstly, teaching staff exhibit gaps in interdisciplinary instructional capabilities. Some faculty members have yet to fully master tools such as Python and SPSS required for courses like Human Resource Data Analysis, necessitating systematic training to enhance teaching delivery. Secondly, the scope of industry-academia collaboration remains limited, particularly in resource integration with enterprises in Hong Kong and Macau. Opportunities for students to engage in cross-border practical placements and international projects are scarce, constraining the effectiveness of regional collaborative education. Thirdly, course resource development is still in its infancy. Some newly established courses, such as Organizational Development and Change Management, lack mature teaching materials and currently rely heavily on self-compiled handouts, hindering the standardization and scalability of teaching content. Finally, the competency assessment mechanism remains imperfect. Existing evaluations predominantly rely on subjective judgements, lacking scientific, unified quantitative tools to objectively measure students' comprehensive abilities^[24].

8.4. Directions for improvement

Addressing the aforementioned issues, future improvements will advance through four key areas: Firstly, establishing an 'HR Teaching Innovation Team' to regularly organize interdisciplinary teaching and research activities, enhancing faculty teaching capabilities in data analysis, organizational psychology, digital technology, and related fields; Second, actively expanding collaborative networks with universities and enterprises in Hong Kong and Macao to establish a Greater Bay Area Human Resources Education Alliance, facilitating the sharing of course resources and practical platforms; Third, accelerating the development of school-based course resources by systematically creating syllabuses, teaching cases, and practical training manuals, alongside building an online 'New Liberal Arts HR' course platform to enable digital sharing of high-quality resources; Fourthly, introducing internationally recognized third-party competency assessment tools, such as SHL and TalentQ, to conduct standardized evaluations of students' key competencies, thereby enhancing the scientific rigor and credibility of talent cultivation quality assessments. Through continuous optimization, further strengthening the adaptability and forward-looking nature of the curriculum system.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

The innovation of this research manifests in three key aspects. Firstly, it translates the macro-strategic concept of New Liberal Arts development into concrete, actionable implementation plans. By scientifically constructing course modules and a corresponding competency assessment framework, it successfully integrates the core tenets of interdisciplinary integration, competency-oriented development, and practical innovation advocated by the New Liberal Arts into the HRM curriculum development process, achieving an effective transition from conceptual guidance to practical implementation. Secondly, the study establishes an integrated teaching model encompassing 'theoretical learning–practical training–project application', effectively resolving the traditional

disconnect between theory and practice. By incorporating authentic corporate projects, implementing project-based teaching methodologies, and intensifying process-oriented practical training, students' comprehensive application skills and problem-solving abilities are significantly enhanced. This approach genuinely achieves the talent development objective centered on competency output. Thirdly, this research fully leverages the distinctive regional development characteristics of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. By incorporating teaching content with regional distinctiveness—such as comparative labor policies between mainland China and Hong Kong/Macao, and cross-cultural human resource management into curriculum design, it has effectively enhanced the regional relevance and practical service efficacy of professional education. This fully demonstrates the responsibility and commitment of applied universities to serving local economic and social development ^[25].

Funding

Guangzhou Huashang College 2024 Demonstration Major Program (Project No.: HS2024SFZY09)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Ministry of Education, 2019, Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Accelerating the Development of High-Calibre Undergraduate Education and Comprehensively Enhancing Talent Cultivation Capabilities. *Bulletin of the Ministry of Education*, 2019(11): 4–9.
- [2] Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, 2020, Declaration on the Development of the New Liberal Arts. *Chinese University Teaching*, 2020(12): 4–9.
- [3] Liu X, 2021, Transformation and Innovation in Human Resource Management Programmes Amidst Digital Transformation. *China Human Resource Development*, 38(5): 6–15.
- [4] Xu L, 2021, Concepts, Pathways and Strategies for New Liberal Arts Development. *Research in Higher Education*, 42(3): 56–63.
- [5] Li Z, 2022, Reflections and Practices on Curriculum System Reconstruction in the Context of New Liberal Arts. *Chinese Higher Education Research*, 2022(4): 45–50.
- [6] Wang Y, 2021, Research on Innovation in Business Talent Cultivation Models in the Digital Economy Era. *Management World*, 37(8): 118–130.
- [7] Zhang Y, 2020, Construction of a Human Resource Management Curriculum System Based on the HR Three Pillars Model. *Human Resource Development*, 2020(18): 62–65.
- [8] China Human Resource Development Association, 2023, White Paper on China's HR Capability Development. Beijing: China Human Resource Development Press.
- [9] Guangdong Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2023, Statistical Bulletin on Guangdong's National Economy and Social Development 2022. Guangzhou: Guangdong Statistics Press.
- [10] Chen H, 2020, An Exploration of the Essence and Pathways for New Liberal Arts Development. *Educational Research*, 41(6): 78–85.
- [11] Zhao M, 2019, International Comparison and Implications for the Curriculum System of Human Resource

- Management Majors. *Comparative Education Research*, 2019(4): 92–99.
- [12] Yang D, 2021, Practice and Reflections on Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development in the Context of New Liberal Arts. *Research on Higher Engineering Education*, 2021(3): 105–110.
- [13] Dong K, 2020, Digital Transformation in Human Resource Management and Educational Responses. *Chinese Public Administration*, 2020(10): 120–125.
- [14] Luo Z, 2022, Application Research of Competency-Based Education in Human Resource Management Programmes. *Modern Education Management*, 2022(5): 88–94.
- [15] Huang W, 2021, Research on Constructing School-Enterprise Collaborative Education Mechanisms. *Research on Education Development*, 41(18): 76–82.
- [16] Sun J, 2019, Construction and Implementation of a Practical Teaching System for Human Resource Management Majors. *Chinese University Teaching*, 2019(7): 65–69.
- [17] Wang X, 2020, Innovation in Business Talent Cultivation Models Under the New Liberal Arts Paradigm. *Business Economics and Management*, 2020(6): 85–92.
- [18] Zheng X, 2021, Research on the Development Pathways for Human Resource Data Analysis Competencies. *Statistics and Decision Making*, 37(14): 179–182.
- [19] Liu J, 2022, Characteristics of Human Resource Demand in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and Educational Responses. *Southern Population*, 37(2): 65–74.
- [20] Zhou Y, 2020, A Study on the Application Effectiveness of Case Teaching Method in Human Resource Management Courses. *Education Theory and Practice*, 40(24): 55–58.
- [21] Wu C, 2019, Research on Curriculum System Design Based on OBE Principles. *Higher Education Exploration*, 2019(5): 101–106.
- [22] Zhang W, 2021, Trends in Human Resource Management Transformation and Educational Implications in the Digital Era. *Research on Science and Technology Management*, 41(16): 150–156.
- [23] Ma L, 2022, Research on Interdisciplinary Teaching Team Development in the Context of New Liberal Arts. *Research on Teacher Education*, 34(1): 95–101.
- [24] Zhu F, 2020, Innovation and Practice of Industry-University Collaboration Models in Human Resource Management Programmes. *Vocational and Technical Education in China*, 2020(30): 75–80.
- [25] Wang J, 2021, Course Development and Implementation of Human Resource Information Systems. *Modern Educational Technology*, 31(8): 110–116.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.