

Optimization Analysis of Human Resource Management Strategies of Nantong University, a Local Comprehensive University in China

Fei Jin*

Graduate School, Manila Campus, University of the East, Manila 1008, Philippines

*Corresponding author: Fei Jin, 1729575760@qq.com

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Abstract: This study analyzes the current situation and challenges of Nantong University amid the rapid development of higher education, addressing aspects such as faculty structure, administrative management efficiency, and promotion mechanisms. Through questionnaire surveys and field research, coupled with SWOT analysis and various theoretical methods, a comprehensive analysis was conducted on Nantong University's internal and external environment. The study proposes an improved comprehensive development strategy and implementation measures, which include updating management concepts, strengthening professional training, optimizing employment conditions, and improving salary systems. Ultimately, this study provides practical strategies for human resource management and the transformational development of Nantong University and other local comprehensive universities.

Keywords: Local comprehensive universities; Transformation and development; Human resource management; SWOT

Online publication: March 28, 2024

1. Introduction

Nantong University, as a local comprehensive university in China, stands at a critical moment of transformation and development, facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. In the current context of economic development and educational reform, the demand for higher education presents new characteristics and requirements. To better adapt to this new situation, Nantong University needs to conduct in-depth research and optimize its human resource management strategies. The research and optimization of these strategies not only hold profound significance for Nantong University itself but also can provide valuable theoretical and practical guidance for other local comprehensive universities. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how Nantong University can make better decisions in human resource management and provide sustained and effective theoretical and practical support.

2. Analysis of internal and external environment

Using the SWOT model, this section analyzes the current situation of human resource management at Nantong University amidst its development strategy transformation, both internally and externally.

2.1. Development opportunities

As a local comprehensive university, Nantong University is encountering opportunities for strategic transformation amid rapid economic expansion and increased emphasis on higher education in China. The university attracts a diverse student body and outstanding faculty, utilizes information technology and the Internet to promote online education and distance learning, and caters to the diverse needs of its students. Furthermore, the international cooperation opportunities stemming from the “Belt and Road” initiative attract international scholars and students, facilitating international exchanges for the university. Nantong University must formulate development strategies to capitalize on these opportunities and propel the institution toward broader development prospects. Moreover, leveraging its geographical advantages, the university can strengthen collaboration with local industries, promote industry-university research projects, provide students with practical internship opportunities to enhance their skills, and foster innovation and socio-economic development through institution-enterprise cooperation.

2.2. Development challenges

Despite its strengths, Nantong University faces challenges such as insufficient reputation and influence compared to other universities in Jiangsu Province. Its faculty and research competitiveness are relatively weak, and financial constraints hinder its development. In the context of strategic transformation, the university’s bloated organizational structure and multiple decision-making levels impede decision-making efficiency, thereby affecting its adaptability to the external environment. Additionally, the recruitment and selection mechanisms within the human resource management framework fail to fully meet the university’s needs, leading to ineffective employee incentives and diminishing work motivation and efficiency. To enhance its competitiveness and strength, Nantong University must optimize human resource management, establish a scientific organizational structure, improve recruitment mechanisms, and implement effective incentive measures.

2.3. Advantages

Nantong University possesses significant strengths in human resource management. Its teaching staff boasts rich academic backgrounds and professional knowledge, contributing to achievements in teaching and research and supporting human resource management endeavors. High-quality teaching facilities and a conducive campus environment attract outstanding faculty and students, enhancing resource utilization efficiency. The university prioritizes talent cultivation and recruitment, implementing scientific selection mechanisms and designing multi-level talent training plans tailored to the needs of various professions. Moreover, the university actively recruits excellent teachers and researchers domestically and internationally, infusing new ideas and motivation into the institution. These measures provide sustainable momentum for human resource management at Nantong University, enabling the university to maintain a competitive edge in the higher education market and support its development strategy transformation.

2.4. Shortcomings

Despite its strengths, Nantong University faces challenges in its development strategy transformation. The lack of systematization and standardization in human resource management leads to limited efficiency in

resource utilization and development. Furthermore, despite the university's commitment to talent cultivation, there are operational deficiencies such as incomplete introduction mechanisms and the absence of personalized training plans, impacting the quality and capability of the talent pool. Moreover, issues related to employee motivation and benefits, including ineffective incentive measures and an inadequate welfare system, affect employee motivation, work efficiency, and team cohesion. Therefore, Nantong University must strengthen the standardization and systematization of human resource management, improve talent introduction and training mechanisms, and enhance employee incentives and welfare benefits to promote overall institutional development.

3. Literature review on human resource allocation in Chinese universities

Research on human resource allocation in domestic universities began relatively late and remains limited in quantity. Current research primarily focuses on two aspects:

Firstly, scholars have studied the allocation of human resources for university teachers from a macro perspective. Some advocate for optimizing human resource allocation in universities through market mechanisms ^[1], while others argue that local universities should adhere to economic laws to reconstruct human resource allocation ^[2]. Additionally, there have been studies on the operational mechanism of shared configuration within regions ^[3], offering analyses and suggestions for universities in different geographical areas ^[4]. However, these studies have struggled to effectively break down boundaries between universities and promote optimized allocation within regions.

Secondly, researchers have explored human resource allocation in universities from various perspectives. For instance, they have optimized configurations by constructing the "Five in One" model, contributing to discipline construction ^[5]. Others have delved into the relationship between knowledge management and human resource management based on optimization configuration methods in knowledge management ^[6]. Furthermore, some studies have utilized cost-effectiveness analysis to construct models aimed at optimizing the hierarchical structure and subject distribution of teachers ^[7]. While these studies offer valuable references for human resource allocation in universities, there are still shortcomings in comprehending the complexity, systematic nature, and operability of human resources.

4. Problems with the human resources of Nantong University

4.1. Need for improvement in administrative management

The primary issues in the administrative management of Nantong University stem from inefficient processes and a lack of professional knowledge among management personnel. The decision-making process is cumbersome, resulting in slow decision-making speed and diminished operational efficiency. Numerous inefficient processes and systems plague the administrative management of Nantong University ^[8]. For instance, within human resource management, managers lack the necessary professional knowledge and experience to provide effective training and development opportunities. Moreover, the cumbersome decision-making process further impedes operational efficiency. These challenges contribute to a low level of administrative management, necessitating corresponding measures for optimization.

4.2. Analysis of teaching staff structure

Firstly, the structure of the teaching staff lacks balance, leading to an imbalance in the educational structure. While most teachers possess doctoral degrees or higher and have research abilities, their teaching skills require

significant improvement over time. This imbalance affects teaching quality. Secondly, there is a deficiency in training mechanisms for young and outstanding teachers within the teaching staff. These young teachers represent the future of the institution; however, Nantong University currently lacks sufficient training and incentive measures for them, resulting in a dearth of effective training and promotion channels. Consequently, the loss of young and talented teachers undermines the construction and development of Nantong University's teaching staff. Thirdly, the teaching staff lacks international and interdisciplinary characteristics^[9]. With the globalization of higher education and the rising demand for interdisciplinary studies, teaching staff must possess an international perspective and interdisciplinary research capabilities. However, significant deficiencies persist within Nantong University's teaching staff in this regard. Strengthening international exchanges, cooperation, and the recruitment of interdisciplinary research talents are necessary to enhance the comprehensive quality of the teaching staff. Addressing these issues requires targeted reforms and optimization strategies.

4.3. Inadequate training mechanism for administrative personnel and teachers

Under the current management system, Nantong University offers limited opportunities for administrative staff and teachers to pursue further education, resulting in a lack of effective training and development plans. Consequently, their professional knowledge and skills struggle to keep pace with the rapidly evolving needs of higher education. Within Nantong University's human resource management, the inadequate training mechanism for administrative and faculty members hampers talent cultivation and performance improvement. Due to the imperfect training mechanism, many administrative personnel and faculty find it challenging to access learning opportunities and further education, hindering the timely update of their professional knowledge and skills. This not only restricts their personal career development but also impacts teaching quality and overall management level.

4.4. Unreasonable salary incentive mechanism

The current salary incentive mechanism at Nantong University is flawed. It is overly rigid and lacks corresponding incentive measures to stimulate the enthusiasm and creativity of faculty and staff. Salary distribution predominantly relies on fixed wages, lacking a mechanism for differentiated incentives based on individual performance.

4.5. Incomplete assessment mechanism

The assessment mechanism requires further refinement. Presently, deficiencies exist in Nantong University's assessment mechanism implementation process. Firstly, the setting of assessment indicators lacks scientific rigor, often excessively focusing on academic achievements while neglecting other comprehensive qualities. Secondly, unclear assessment standards lack specific quantitative indicators and evaluation criteria, creating uncertainty and pressure for teachers and employees. Thirdly, the inadequate utilization and feedback mechanism of assessment results hinder their effective utilization and feedback, failing to facilitate further development and improvement of teachers and employees.

5. Solution suggestions

5.1. Enhance the professional level of administrative management personnel

Enhancing the professional level of administrative personnel is crucial for optimizing human resource management at Nantong University. With the increasing professionalization trend in university management, these personnel require greater proficiency in handling complex management tasks. Therefore, the university

should intensify training and further education opportunities, providing avenues for professional development. Concurrently, establishing a performance evaluation system and incentive mechanism can foster enthusiasm and creativity among staff ^[10]. Moreover, collaboration with enterprises and participation in academic conferences can broaden knowledge and skills, creating a conducive working environment and developmental opportunities for administrative personnel, thus enhancing their professional abilities and levels and ultimately promoting the improvement of school management.

5.2. Enhance employment conditions and improve the teaching staff structure

Key strategies for enhancing human resource management at Nantong University include improving employment conditions and optimizing the faculty structure. By enhancing standards for recruiting high-level talents and strengthening evaluations of teaching experience and research achievements, the university can attract outstanding individuals, bolstering the teaching team's quality and the institution's reputation and competitiveness. Additionally, emphasis should be placed on recruiting teachers with international perspectives and interdisciplinary backgrounds to foster disciplinary integration and innovation ^[11]. Establishing a comprehensive training system, offering diverse training courses, and encouraging participation in academic exchanges can further enhance employees' professional abilities and comprehensive qualities, preparing them to tackle challenges and changes.

5.3. Establish a training mechanism for administrative personnel and teachers

Establishing a training mechanism for administrative personnel and teachers is a pivotal strategy for improving human resource management at Nantong University. This mechanism can enhance their professional abilities and skills, boosting work efficiency and competitiveness, thereby elevating the university's management, teaching quality, reputation, and competitiveness. Additionally, it enables administrative personnel and teachers to stay abreast of the latest management concepts and teaching methods, exchanging experiences with professionals through training courses and seminars, thus fostering personal and institutional development.

5.4. Establish and enhance the school's salary incentive mechanism

Improving Nantong University's salary incentive mechanism is critical to its human resource management improvement strategy. The university should establish a fair and transparent salary system, determining salary levels based on employees' work performance and contributions ^[12]. Enhancing the salary incentive mechanism can better attract, retain, and motivate talents, enhancing faculty and staff job satisfaction and performance levels. Moreover, establishing an effective performance evaluation system to assess faculty and staff work performance and contributions, and ensuring a transparent and fair evaluation process will uphold the objectivity and credibility of evaluation results.

5.5. Establish and enhance the assessment mechanism

Establishing a robust assessment mechanism is pivotal to Nantong University's human resource management improvement strategy ^[13]. High-quality human resource management necessitates accurate evaluation and reward/penalty of employee work performance. Therefore, introducing a performance evaluation system with clear performance indicators and evaluation standards can effectively measure employee quality and performance.

6. Reflection

In the 21st century, amidst accelerated globalization and the knowledge economy, higher education institutions, particularly local comprehensive universities, play a pivotal role. They not only cultivate local and national talents but also provide crucial support for local economic and social development. In this context, effective human resource management strategies have become the cornerstone of sustained and healthy university development. This study examines Nantong University as a case study to delve deeply into the human resource management strategies of local comprehensive universities in China. Research reveals that amid external environmental changes such as policy adjustments, economic shifts ^[14], and technological revolutions, local comprehensive universities encounter diverse challenges. The key to successfully overcoming these challenges and maintaining competitiveness lies in the reasonable and effective allocation and management of human resources. Through an exploration of Nantong University's specific practices, it was observed that optimized human resource management strategies positively impact education quality enhancement, discipline construction strengthening, and academic research enhancement. Specifically, through the judicious allocation of human resources, Nantong University can better leverage its educational and research resources, nurture more high-quality graduates, and contribute significantly to local and national development. Furthermore, this study proposes a series of optimization suggestions for human resource management strategies, offering guiding insights not only for Nantong University but also for other local comprehensive universities ^[15].

Therefore, the optimization of human resource management strategies holds immense significance for the development of local comprehensive universities. Only through continual self-improvement and innovation can these universities maintain a leading position in intense competition and make substantial contributions to local and national development.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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