



Research on the Application of HRBP Model in Chinese Enterprises

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Abstract

This paper provides an in-depth study of the development history and future trends of the HRBP (Human Resource Business Partner) model in Chinese companies. Firstly, by examining the introduction of HRBP in China, it reveals its origin and initial application. Subsequently, the current status of HRBP application in Chinese companies is summarised through case studies, highlighting its important role in business partnerships, talent management and other aspects. In terms of development history, the article points out that Chinese companies have gradually shifted to more strategic human resource management since the end of the 20th century, and the introduction of the HRBP model has become a symbol of this development trend. At the beginning of the 21st century, with the rise of China's economy, the HRBP model has gradually become a key factor in enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises. In terms of future development trend, the importance of innovative design, digital transformation and talent cultivation is emphasised. By comparing domestic and international cases, it summarises the possible future development path of HRBP model in Chinese enterprises. The article proposes to improve the practicality and effectiveness of HRBP through the wide application of digital technology. Taken together, it provides insights for corporate decision makers and new ideas for academic researchers.

Keywords: Hrbp Model, Chinese Enterprises, Human Resources, Applied Research

Introduction

China has entered a new period of development in which its macroeconomy is no longer merely growing rapidly, but has moved into a high-level stage of development. At this stage, new technologies, new products, new forms of business and new business models are emerging. In the face of these changes, enterprises need to optimise their talent strategy and human resource management accordingly.

In the past, the six-module human resources management model focused mainly on transactional activities within the enterprise. However, there are some problems with this traditional model, such as the lack of the ability to gain a deeper understanding of an enterprise's high-level strategy and to stay close to the business of the enterprise. This has led to difficulties in HRM to meet the needs of enterprises in terms of strategy and organisational structure synergy. Therefore, there is an urgent need to reform human

resource management. The goal of this reform is to make HRM more closely related to corporate strategy and business in order to better adapt to the new development period (Yali Chen, 2023).

Peter Drucker, an expert in management, said, "The future of personnel will change dramatically, and it will be necessary to respond to a variety of kinds of challenges and operate in a completely new way (Peter & Cai Wenyan, 2007, p. 91)." HRBP was the first to become a hot topic in management practice, focusing on the integration of HR as a human resources business partner into each business unit and realising the strategic value of the HR system with its unique services.

HRBP (Human Resource Business Partner) is a new human resource management model that faces multiple challenges, including insufficient tools, environmental constraints, and role positioning (Zheng Chi-Jian & Zhang Manman, 2018, p. 74). With the wave of economic development and change, companies are increasingly driven to give full play to the value of human capital. In this process of change, the creation of HRBP positions and changes in the way of working have become key steps in the transformation of human resource management, with the goal of maximising synergies between human resource management and the business.

By examining the needs and challenges of Chinese organizations, this study provides practical knowledge to guide effective HRBP implementation strategies. Focusing on the needs of companies to respond to the rapidly changing global marketplace, the HRBP model provides the framework that enables organizations to align HR practices with dynamic business needs, fostering resilience and adaptability. This alignment is critical for organizations to remain competitive in an ever-changing environment. It also highlights the utility and effectiveness of the HRBP model under Chinese enterprises, providing a guide for organizations to realize the full potential of HRBP by clarifying its operational mechanisms, implementation strategies, and potential challenges. It not only solves current HR challenges, but also prepares organizations for the uncertain business environment of the future. Organizations gain tangible benefits through effective implementation of the HRBP model, whether it is streamlining HR processes, fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation, or strategically aligning HR with business outcomes. The HRBP model has the potential to drive tangible and sustainable improvements in business performance.

This study raises the level of discussion about the implementation of the HRBP model in Chinese organizations by highlighting its utility, effectiveness, and transformational potential. By doing so, it provides a powerful resource for business leaders, HR practitioners, and academics to optimize HRBP practices and contribute to the long-term success of Chinese companies on the global business stage.

Overview of the HRBP Model

Definition of the HRBP Model

HRBP (Human Resource Business Partner), known as Human Resource Business Partner, is widely believed in the academic community that this concept was first proposed by Dave Ulrich, a professor at the Ross School of Business of the University of Michigan, in the 1990s, and in essence, it is a human resource management function that is assigned by the company to each business department to perform human resource management work for the personnel of the business department (Sing Ngui, 2012). The core difference between HRBP and traditional HR is that they have different focuses, HRBP focuses on the business and becomes the partner and companion of the business department, acting as a bridge;

traditional HR focuses on its own transactional work and acts as a functional service (Zhang Rui, 2022). Traditional HR is mainly responsible for dealing with the daily affairs work of personnel, while HRBP breaks down the functions of HR and simplifies the transactional work, thus freeing up more time for thinking about the strategic goals of the business unit. On this basis, HRBP is committed to developing HR planning that is aligned with business objectives, identifying business pain points, applying professional HR knowledge to solve problems, and improving the performance level of business units. By enhancing teamwork, HRBPs aim to achieve performance goals, which leads to a more coordinated and efficient business unit (Shi, Chunyan, 2022).

HRBPs are experts and supervisors assigned to the business units by the human resources department, and also serve as a bridge between the business units and the company in terms of values and policies. In addition to providing manpower solutions to the business units, HRBPs are also responsible for organisational safeguarding, including communicating the core values of the company as well as assisting in the implementation of the company's strategic policies. The ultimate goal is to realise that the values of the HR department and the values of the business units are compatible and integrated with each other (Wan Hooi, 2014).

Evolution of the HRBP model

Management concept is the starting point of management work, the source of management system, management methods, and a way to verify the effectiveness of management. HRM thinking is an internal response to the level of productivity and management of HRM. After the introduction of western HRM thinking into China after the 1970s, the development of HRM in China has gone through four phases, namely, the personnel management phase (1978-1992), the ideological awakening of HRM (1993-1999), the initial formation of HRM (1999-2002), the strategic management of human resources phase, and the international HRBP model (1999-2002), the stage of strategic management of human resources, and the stage of international human resource management (2003 to present) (Li Yudan et al., 2017).

With the advent of the information age, the close connection between individuals and society, the economy and organisations, the tangible world and the virtual world has changed the relationship between customers, employees, enterprises and partners. Between enterprises and enterprises, between enterprises and employees, and between enterprises and customers, then it is like a community of destiny, there is no absolute winner, only cooperation, in order to achieve a win-win situation (Chang Xiaohua, 2017).

The information age allows Chinese enterprises to constantly review and examine the values of human resource management, thus prompting the continuous updating of China's human resource management concept. And the updating of management concepts also prompts the continuous change of management contents and methods. A series of impacts brought by the era of the Internet, represented by big data and cloud computing, also means that human resource management will usher in a new trend. Huawei, Alibaba, as a representative of the formation of the three-pillar model of HR in Chinese enterprises, is a typical representative of the continuous sublimation of the concept of human resource management in China. "The three-pillar HR model is HR-COE (Center of Excellence or center of Expertise), HR-SSC (Shared Service Centre), HR-BP (Business Service Centre), HR-SSC (Shared Service Centre), HR-SSC (Shared Service Centre) and HR-SSC (Shared Service Centre), HR-BP (Business Partner HR Business Partner) (Li Yudan et al., 2017).

Core Responsibilities of HRBP

In applied research in Chinese companies, the HRBP (Human Resource Business Partner) model embodies a new direction in human resource management that emphasises the deep integration of human resources with business strategy. The core responsibilities of HRBPs span a number of key areas, with business understanding and collaboration at the top of the list (Hu, Ming, 2018). HRBP professionals need to have a deep understanding of business unit operations and objectives, and through close collaboration with business leaders, ensure that HR strategies are aligned with business strategies to achieve the goal of improving organisational performance.

Another important responsibility is human resource planning (Weiting Li, 2015), which involves developing and executing strategies such as recruitment, training and performance management to ensure that the organisation has sufficient and aligned talent with the business needs. In addition, HRBPs are responsible for handling employee relations, resolving employee issues, promoting employee satisfaction and teamwork, and ensuring harmonious functioning within the organisation.

In terms of talent development, HRBP supports the career development of employees by developing training and development programmes to meet the needs of the organisation's future leadership (Di Wu, 2019). In terms of change management, HRBP provides strategic HR support to ensure that HR strategies are aligned with change objectives to successfully drive organisational change and development.

Data analytics and decision support is one of the key responsibilities of HRBP. By leveraging data analytics to support business units, HRBPs are able to make more informed HR decisions for the organisation, such as predicting future talent needs, to better serve the organisation's overall strategic objectives. Taken together, the HRBP model aims to transform traditional transactional HR management into more strategic and business-oriented talent management to drive long-term organisational success.

The Development of HRBP Model in Chinese Enterprises

Introduction of HRBP model in China

The introduction of HRBP (Human Resource Business Partner) model in China can be traced back to the beginning of the 21st century. With the rapid development of China's economy and the trend of internationalisation, more and more companies started to focus on and introduce a more strategic, business-oriented HR management model to better adapt to the competitive and ever-changing business environment.

After about 2000, Chinese companies gradually began to focus on the strategic role of HR and realised that the traditional HR management model could no longer meet the new challenges. The introduction of the HRBP model reflected a redefinition of the role of HR, emphasising closer collaboration between HR teams and business units, and enabling HR to play a more active role in organisational strategic decision-making.

Over time, more and more companies are recognising the value of the HRBP model and are gradually rolling it out and implementing it in their organisations. However, the exact time of introduction may vary depending on the enterprise's own development, industry characteristics and changes in management philosophy. Different industries and firms may also take an incremental approach in introducing the HRBP model by gradually adjusting the organisational structure and HRM processes. Yang Lei and Chen Jing (2011) believe that the introduction of HRBP will play an increasingly important role in the development of enterprises and will bring more value to enterprises. Its main

The main functions of HRBPs will be to abandon transactional work and focus on consulting, advising and implementing solutions to the needs of business departments, thus realising the appreciation of their own value.

Trends of HRBP in China

In China, the development of HRBP (Human Resource Business Partner) shows several significant trends. Firstly, HRBP's strategic co-operation and business-oriented role in business management is gradually coming to the fore. With the trend of internationalisation and innovative development of companies, HRBP professionals are establishing closer partnerships with business leaders to jointly develop HR strategies to more effectively support the achievement of business objectives (Chen, Zhixia & Zhou, Jiabin, 2017). This signifies that HRBPs are no longer just traditional HR managers, but more business-oriented strategic partners.

Digital transformation and data-driven decision-making have also become important trends for HRBPs in China (He Bin et al., 2022). In order to adapt to the fast-changing business environment, HRBPs are actively promoting digital transformation and utilising advanced technologies and data analytics tools. Through data analytics, HRBPs are able to more accurately predict talent demand, assess employee performance, provide more accurate data support to organisations, and make HR management more technological and intelligent.

Employee experience and social responsibility have become the core of HRBP's attention (Rao Ronghao & Duan Chengyao, 2017). Under the trend of Chinese companies focusing on improving employee satisfaction and fulfilling social responsibility, HRBPs are committed to retaining and attracting talent through innovative benefits and training. In addition, HRBPs play an active role in driving companies towards sustainable development and social responsibility, highlighting the importance of building a more humane and sustainable corporate culture. Together, these trends are shaping the evolution of the role of HRBPs in China, enabling them to play a more strategic and holistic role in organisations.

Future development trend of HRBP model in China

The future development of the HRBP model in China will be sensitive to technological innovation, talent management and social responsibility, and more comprehensively and intelligently meet the human resource needs of enterprises in an ever-changing environment.

Technology Trends

The future development of China's HRBP model will be deeply influenced by technology trends. With the rapid development of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics and cloud computing, HRBPs will more widely apply these tools for more accurate talent analysis, forecasting and strategic planning (Xiao Xingzheng et al., 2018). This development trend will not only enhance the efficiency of HRBPs, but will also enable them to better cope with the increasingly complex and volatile talent market.

Intelligent recruitment tools will become HRBP's right-hand man in the recruitment process. By using advanced AI technology, HRBPs can screen candidates more quickly and comprehensively to match the needs of the organisation. This intelligent recruitment tool not only improves recruitment efficiency, but also helps tap into talent resources that better match the organisation's requirements. Automated performance appraisal systems will bring HRBP more scientific and objective employee performance management tools. Through data analysis, these systems can more accurately assess employee performance and provide

targeted development advice to individual employees. This not only helps to motivate employees, but also equips HRBPs to play a more strategic role in the business unit. Data-based employee experience management is another important direction for the future development of the HRBP model. By collecting and analysing employee feedback data, HRBPs can better understand employee needs and develop appropriate HR strategies to improve employee satisfaction and loyalty. This will help create a more attractive and competitive work environment, which is conducive to the long-term sustainable development of the enterprise.

In the future, China's HRBP model will usher in a smarter, more technological stage of development, driven by technology trends. By making full use of advanced technological tools, HRBP will be able to better realise the strategic objectives of talent management and provide stronger support for the development of enterprises.

Talent Trends

China's HRBP model will pay more attention to the diversity and personalised needs of talent. As the younger generation of employees increases, the focus on flexible working, personalised development and job satisfaction will become an important task for HRBPs (Hu, Ming, 2018). This includes more flexible work schedules, personalised career development plans, and more innovative and challenging work assignments. HRBPs need to develop appropriate HR strategies to meet the needs of different employee groups in order to increase employee engagement and loyalty.

With the deepening of globalisation, HRBPs need to pay more attention to the introduction and management of global talent. In this multicultural era, HRBPs need to deal with employees from different cultures and backgrounds, making cross-cultural management a key skill. HRBPs need to be more experienced in fostering teamwork and solving cross-cultural communication problems to ensure synergy among global teams.

This trend means that the role of HRBPs is not just that of HR managers, but also that of strategic partners who are able to better understand and meet the diverse needs of their employees, as well as assisting organisations in adapting to the global talent market. In this new era, HRBP's responsibilities will be more integrated and complex, requiring more comprehensive interpersonal communication, cross-cultural coordination and leadership skills. This will drive the HRBP model in China towards more openness, flexibility and globalisation.

Institutional Trends

In the future, China's HRBP model will be more heavily influenced by the concepts of social responsibility and sustainable development. CSR is no longer just on the outside, but is integrated into all levels of talent management. HRBP will be more active in promoting the implementation of sustainable development strategies, focusing on the well-being of employees and the working environment, as well as the interaction between the company and society (Shangguan Ping, 2020). This suggests that HRBP will pay more attention to the company's social impact in the future, not only at the level of business operations, but also in terms of positive contributions to society and the environment.

The requirements of government regulations on HRM will have a profound impact on the development of the HRBP model. As society becomes increasingly concerned about sustainability and ethical business practices, governments are likely to introduce stricter regulations and policies that require organisations to be more compliant and sustainable in

their talent management. This may include more nuanced and stringent employee rights and benefits protection, diverse and inclusive recruitment practices, and positive company contributions to the community and the environment.

As a result, HRBPs will become more of a bridge between companies and employees, helping companies to better fulfil their social responsibilities. By developing regulatory-compliant talent management policies and emphasising employee well-being, HRBP will help companies establish a more sustainable and socially responsible business model. This will also further shape the role of HRBPs, making them not only HR managers but also advocates and practitioners of corporate social responsibility.

Conclusion

Key Findings

Through an in-depth study of the HRBP model in China, this study has obtained a series of key findings. First, the role of HRBP in China is gradually shifting from a traditional HR manager to a more strategic and business-oriented partner. Digital transformation and technology trends have had a profound impact on HRBPs, with smart tools and data analytics providing new opportunities to improve HR management effectiveness. Trends in talent management indicate a focus on diversity and personalisation needs, as well as an urgent need to recruit and manage global talent. In addition, social responsibility and sustainability are becoming important factors in shaping the HRBP model, with organisations increasingly focusing on achieving sustainability goals through talent management practices.

Suggestions for future research

In order to deepen the understanding of China's HRBP model and promote its sustainable development, there are several suggestions for future research. Firstly, there is a need for in-depth research on the practical application of digital transformation, with a special focus on the practical effects of intelligent recruitment and big data analytics in talent management. Second, the practice of cross-cultural management should be included in the scope of the research to understand the successful experiences and challenges of Chinese companies in globalised talent management. Continuously tracking the development of social responsibility and sustainability, we explore the impact of these practices on HRBP models. Finally, the impact of the policy environment on HRBP is examined to gain insights into the role of government policies in driving the evolution of the HRBP model, and to provide guidance for companies in developing compliance strategies.

These recommendations will help future research to more fully understand the evolutionary trends and influencing factors of HRBP models in China, and provide useful references for companies to develop more scientific and feasible strategies in the field of HRM.

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