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ORIGINAL PAPER

ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL CAREER MANAGEMENT IN CHINESE COMPANIES

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Abstract. In modern economy, effective management and employee engagement are critical to run a successful business. Managers face various challenges, especially in recruiting and retaining qualified people. These challenges include skills shortages in several areas, increased labor mobility and globalization, increasing demand for ongoing training and retraining, and the need to ensure overall employee performance. At the same time, managers are tasked with complying with legal frameworks, writing documentation, and implementing innovative practices which are integral components of the career planning process. The issue of planning the professional career of personnel stands out as a serious problem in modern human resource management for any competitive company. As China's economy develops rapidly and Chinese companies gain global prominence, their career opportunities continue to expand in various industries, catering to a wide range of skills and interests of Chinese workers.

The relationship between career opportunities and China's labor market reflects the country's dynamic economic landscape and industrial structure. China has a large and diverse labor market across many industries and sectors. In recent years, China has seen significant career growth in sectors such as technology, e-commerce, finance, and healthcare, providing ample employment opportunities for skilled professionals. The goal of this study is to examine professional career management in Chinese companies. In the paper the experience of developing a professional career management system in Chinese companies is studied; the comparative analysis of the effectiveness of a professional career management system is given; recommendations for improving the career management system in Chinese companies are proposed.

Keywords: career management, career opportunities, Chinese companies, professional career, labor market

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ОРИГИНАЛЬНАЯ СТАТЬЯ

АНАЛИЗ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ КАРЬЕРОЙ В КИТАЙСКИХ КОМПАНИЯХ

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Аннотация. В современной экономике эффективное управление и вовлеченность сотрудников имеют решающее значение для успешного ведения бизнеса. Менеджеры сталкиваются с различными проблемами, особенно при подборе и удержании квалифицированных сотрудников. Этими проблемами являются нехватка квалифицированных кадров в нескольких областях, возросшая мобильность рабочей силы и глобализация, растущий спрос на постоянное обучение и переподготовку кадров, а также необходимость обеспечения общего качества работы сотрудников. В то же время перед менеджерами стоит задача соблюдения законодательных норм, составления документации и внедрения инновационных практик, являющихся неотъемлемыми компонентами процесса планирования карьеры. Вопрос планирования профессиональной карьеры персонала является серьезной проблемой в современном управлении человеческими ресурсами для любой конкурентоспособной компании. Поскольку экономика Китая стремительно развивается, а китайские компании приобретают мировую известность, возможности для карьерного роста в различных отраслях продолжают расширяться, учитывая широкий спектр навыков и интересов китайских работников. Взаимосвязь между карьерными возможностями и рынком труда Китая отражает динамичный экономический ландшафт и структуру промышленности страны. Китай характеризуется обширным и разнообразным рынком труда во многих отраслях и секторах экономики. В последние годы в Китае наблюдается заметный карьерный рост в таких секторах, как технологии, электронная коммерция, финансы и здравоохранение, что открывает широкие возможности для трудоустройства квалифицированных специалистов. Целью данного исследования является изучение управления профессиональной карьерой в китайских компаниях. В статье исследован опыт разработки системы управления профессиональной карьерой в китайских компаниях; дан сравнительный анализ эффективности системы управления профессиональной карьерой;

предложены рекомендации по совершенствованию системы управления карьерой в китайских компаниях.

Ключевые слова: управление карьерой, возможности карьерного роста, китайские компании, профессиональная карьера, рынок труда

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Introduction

Career growth in Chinese companies is characterized by several unique qualities. Chief among these is the strong emphasis on hierarchical promotion, in which employees advance through clearly defined levels within the company’s organizational

structure. This structured path provides employees with a transparent path for professional growth, encouraging them to aspire to higher-level roles.

Table 1 presents the main characteristics of career development in Chinese companies.

Table 1 / Таблица 1

Peculiarities of Career Growth in Chinese Companies / Особенности карьерного роста в китайских компаниях

Peculiarities / Особенности	Description / Описание
Hierarchical Advancement	Clear progression through organizational levels, providing employees with a roadmap for career advancement
Performance-based Evaluations	Emphasis on results and productivity, with performance metrics influencing decisions on promotions, salary increases, and additional responsibilities
Continuous Learning and Skills Development	Valuing ongoing education, training, and acquisition of new skills to enhance capabilities and contribute effectively to the organization
Networking and Relationship-building	Importance of building strong connections with colleagues, mentors, and industry professionals to open doors to new opportunities and gain support
Loyalty to the Company	Rewarding long-term commitment and dedication with priority for promotions and leadership positions, fostering stability and continuity within the workforce

Source: compiled by the authors based on [1] / Источник: составлено авторами на основе данных [1]

Performance-based evaluations have a significant impact on career advancement in Chinese companies. These organizations prioritize results and productivity, rewarding employees who demonstrate outstanding performance with opportunities for advancement and professional growth [2]. Careful tracking and evaluation of performance indicators serves as the basis for decisions regarding salary increases, promotions and the assignment of additional responsibilities.

Career prospects in Chinese companies are rich and varied, offering professionals multiple paths to explore and thrive in the dynamic business landscape. The famous Chinese company Tencent Holdings provides opportunities to achieve excellence in software development, artificial intelligence, and games. Similarly, Alibaba Group presents growth opportunities in e-commerce, cloud computing and digital finance.

Known for its telecommunications prowess, Huawei Technologies offers capabilities in networking and advanced technologies such as 5G and Internet of Things (IoT) [3]. JD.com focuses on logistics, supply chain management and retail innovation, while companies such as Baidu specialize in search engine technology, artificial intelligence, and autonomous driving.

China’s demographic dividend is declining, leading to a shift toward increasing human capital dividends. During the 13th Five-Year Period, the transformation of China’s demographic structure over three decades played a key role. This contributed more than a quarter of GDP growth by offsetting the declining demographic dividend. Since reform and

opening, changing demographic structure has lowered China’s dependency ratio by a third, thereby supporting rapid per capita growth.

Since 2003, China has experienced a decline in the annual growth rate of its working-age population (ages 15-19). China’s total labor force in 2022 was 781,908,269, according to the World Bank’s Compendium of Development Indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources [4].

The events described signal two key turning points for China. First, the turning point marks the depletion of the once abundant labor supply. Secondly, the decline in the demographic dividend is characterized by a decline in the dependency ratio.

The development of education in China places it among middle-income countries, ahead of developing countries with large populations, but lagging high-income countries in terms of development. Despite significant progress in education in general, the current educational model emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge, often without adequate attention to innovative thinking and practical skills.

The disconnection of the education system from science, technology and economic progress has led to poor awareness of innovative talent and limited entrepreneurial potential. According to the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report 2020-2021, China ranks 28th in the world in overall competitiveness, with a lower ranking in education, where it ranks 65th place [5].

China is the world leader in total human resources, but it faces a trend of low per capita production efficiency, which poses a serious challenge. It is noteworthy that China has become the leader

in the number of scientific and technological personnel, possessing the largest workforce in these fields.

Investment in research and development (R&D) personnel in China has increased sharply, with 5.018 million executives dedicated to R&D in 2020 and 3.533 million full-time employees in 2021. This investment is superior to any other country in the world. In fact, among the 41 largest countries and regions actively investing in science and technology, China's share of full-time R&D workers increased from 18.4% in 2011 to 21.3% in 2021, demonstrating its significant advantage in scientific research.

Despite China's leading position in total scientific and technological talent, it still faces challenges in labor density and per capita production efficiency compared to developed countries. The density of R&D researchers per 10,000 employed globally has slowly increased from 15.4 person-years per 10,000 people in 2011 to 19.3 person-years per 10,000 people in 2021, still significantly lower than in developed countries [6].

Workforce composition remains a critical issue as the lack of high-quality R&D professionals and skilled workers hinders innovation, transformation, and modernization. A McKinsey report on talent in emerging markets highlights that only a small percentage of Chinese engineering and finance graduates are employable by global companies, and local MBA graduates are limited in their management capabilities.

Addressing the talent shortage is a must for China's innovation strategy. As of 2021, skilled workers made up just 19% of employment, and highly skilled workers made up just 25.1% of skilled workers, lagging developed countries [7]. Moreover, many Chinese migrant workers do not have secondary education or vocational training, which poses a serious challenge to meeting future labor demands.

Effective linkages between talent development, education, technology, and industry needs are critical to unlocking the potential of human capital for economic and social development. However, China's current innovation environment and incentive mechanisms are inadequate, hindering the transformation of potential human capital into actual productivity.

Solving the above problems requires improving the existing professional career management system. Let's analyze the experience of career management on the examples of Chinese companies.

In recent years, new work paradigms have emerged in the labor market that eschew traditional notions of constant presence in the workplace in favor of flexible task distribution and goal-oriented management.

At the forefront of this transformation is the peer-to-peer (P2P) platform economy supported by computer networks. This decentralized approach allows connected computers to exchange information

without relying on a centralized server. Within the capital platform, participants engage in various activities, such as selling goods (e.g. eBay, Amazon), renting assets (e.g. Airbnb, booking) or offering their knowledge and skills on work platforms (e.g. Uber) [8].

The convergence of technological innovation and the proliferation of smart devices have not only changed the international division of labor but have also catalyzed the development of many applications in various sectors. Industries are poised for the transformation, providing new entrepreneurial opportunities.

China's financial sector, especially first-tier banks such as the Bank of China, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the People's Bank of China, are in high demand in the labor market, reflecting the advanced development and prominence of the sector.

In these types of banks, there are two systems of remuneration for the work of lower-level officials: tangible and intangible. They pay their workers much more than other Chinese industries and provide huge benefits not only to the workers but also to their families. In turn, middle and lower-level banks do not have such a wide range of social packages and huge salaries.

However, these figures are higher than for independent trading activities. Thus, we can conclude that there is a high demand for banking services in China. Many able-bodied Chinese aged 15 to 65 years old do not refuse to work in Chinese banks.

At the same time, to maintain the hierarchy, many financial and human resource management issues need to be resolved. In the 90s. In the 20th century, China began urbanizing and moving from poor to urban areas, reducing the demand for low-skilled labor [9].

However, ill-conceived policies require special attention to supporting the employment of migrants (they are not eligible to register for unemployment, they are not eligible to receive benefits, etc.). Gender discrimination can also be identified as another major challenge in career management in Chinese banks. Gender equality is high in China, but not in the world of work.

Many employees in Chinese enterprises are men. Women can also work, but they earn less than men. This issue is important and relevant for any region of China. It is difficult to provide guidance on this issue as such attitudes may be culturally sensitive.

When fulfilling their tasks, educational institutions put into practice demonstration portals, educational digital resources, multimedia systems and video conferencing rooms, and educational management systems. Today, the quality of students' knowledge and the prestige of the university depend on how developed the technological infrastructure of the educational institution is.

Different experiences also affect earnings. People with 4-8 years of experience receive a salary of

417.490 yuan. Employees with 12 to 16 years of service receive 400.901 yuan.

Depending on education, those with a PhD degree receive the highest salaries. The second highest paid education level is a master's degree with a salary of 195.612 yuan.

The classification can be effectively used in the field of education and science to rank teaching positions. For example, there is a large difference in the average salaries of professors and researchers, with the salaries of the latter being significantly

higher than those of the main employees of an educational institution. The average salary of a university professor in China is 340.814 yuan per year. The most typical salary is 82.945 yuan. The salaries of men and women are different. The average salary for men is 411.269 yuan. Women receive a salary of 252.982 Chinese yuan [10].

The results of the analysis of experience in developing a career management system in Chinese companies are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2 / Таблица 2

Experience in Developing Career Management System in Chinese Companies / Опыт разработки системы управления карьерой в китайских компаниях

Aspect / Аспект	Description / Описание
Provision of Resources	Providing employees with training programs, mentoring opportunities, career counseling services, and networking platforms to support their career development
Utilization of Technology	Leveraging technology, such as online platforms or intranet systems, to enhance accessibility and effectiveness of career management resources and tools
Evaluation and Adaptation	Recognizing that career management is an ongoing process, necessitating continuous evaluation and adaptation to align with the evolving needs of the company and its workforce

Source: compiled by the authors based on [11] / Источник: составлено авторами на основе данных [11]

Thus, we can conclude that the creation of a reliable career management system in Chinese companies requires an integrated approach that considers organizational culture, employee needs and business goals. This work typically begins with a thorough assessment of the company's current practices to identify areas for improvement.

Results and Discussion

Assessing the effectiveness of developing a career management system in Chinese companies requires a comparative analysis of several key factors influencing its success. First, the adaptability of the

system to the unique cultural context of Chinese companies significantly influences its effectiveness. Chinese companies typically operate within hierarchical structures and adhere to different sets of values compared to their Western counterparts [12]. A career management system that recognizes and integrates these cultural nuances, such as respect for authority and the importance of networking, is more likely to resonate with employees and lead to favorable outcomes.

The comparative effectiveness of employee career growth in Chinese companies is presented in *Table 3*.

Table 3 / Таблица 3

Comparative Effectiveness of Employee Career Development in Chinese Companies / Сравнительная эффективность развития карьеры сотрудников в китайских компаниях

Aspect / Аспект	Company Tencent / Компания Tencent	Company Alibaba Group / Компания Alibaba Group	Company Huawei Technologies / Компания Huawei Technologies	Company JD.com / Компания JD.com
Cultural Adaptability	Talent development Program	Career development platform	Huawei University	Performance-based advancement
Alignment with Strategic Goals	Aligned with company vision	Supports business objectives	Tailored to company goals	Directly contributes to organizational growth
Provision of Resources	Skill-building workshops, leadership training, mentorship programs, career counseling services	Online platform with training resources, networking opportunities	Huawei University offers a range of training programs, certification courses, leadership development initiatives	Training programs, cross-functional projects, leadership roles
Utilization of Technology	Utilizes digital platforms for accessibility and effectiveness	Online platform for career management	Integrates technology for accessibility	Leverages technology for performance evaluations, progress tracking
Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation	Regularly evaluates and adjusts strategies	Gathers feedback for improvements	Responsive to changes	Emphasizes continuous improvement and feedback gathering

Source: compiled by the authors based on [13] / Источник: составлено авторами на основе данных [13]

Finally, ongoing evaluation and adaptation of a career management system is critical to its long-term effectiveness. Chinese companies operate in a rapidly evolving business environment characterized by technological advancements, market fluctuations

and changing consumer preferences. A career management system that responds to these changes, regularly collects feedback from employees and stakeholders, and adjusts strategies accordingly is more likely to remain relevant and deliver

sustainable results over time [14].

Despite these examples of performance, career challenges persist in Chinese companies. Issues such as rigid hierarchical structures, limited transparency in promotion processes and unequal access to opportunities based on personal connections can hinder the career advancement of some employees. However, by prioritizing talent development, encouraging a culture of meritocracy, and providing resources for continuous learning, Chinese companies can improve the effectiveness of career development initiatives and empower employees to reach their full potential in the workplace.

Recommendations for improving the company's career management system will be given using the example of Alibaba Group.

The main disadvantage of the mechanism for planning the professional career of Alibaba Group company personnel is that the personnel department works only with certain groups of employees:

- a group of employees included in the personnel reserve;
- a group of employees sent by managers to undergo business and independent personnel assessment. This entails a decrease in involvement in the work process in the company [15].

Recruitment to the personnel reserve is carried out in stages, annually and covers only a certain block of the company's structural diagram. Consequently, you can wait several years for the opportunity to get into the personnel reserve. Vacancies for key positions are not publicly available, making it impossible for potential employees to apply for the position. The selection of candidates for such vacancies occurs from the personnel reserve. But, given the specifics of implementing inclusion in the company's personnel reserve, this is not always a complete list of worthy candidates [16].

From this we conclude that the HR management needs to develop a program that will allow each employee to create his own personal career plan. Thanks to such a program, the employee will receive additional confidence in the future, which will give him an incentive for development and learning, as well as the opportunity to build his further advancement in the company, thereby increasing his involvement in work.

The company has a program for implementing personnel policy aimed at introducing effective personnel management systems, modern personnel technologies and aimed at automated management of the processes of personnel adaptation and personnel reserve based on the platform defined by Alibaba. It is this program that is proposed to be supplemented and expanded.

It is proposed to additionally introduce a career and succession management module (hereinafter referred to as "Career" and a mobile application for company employees as a personnel career planning tool.

The "Career" module and mobile application will

be distributed to all employees of the organization and will become a mandatory part of the work process. But only user registration and filling out an employee's personal card will be mandatory. The employee's activities in this module and the completion of additional training depend on the desires and aspirations of the employee himself. But the employee's interest will be determined by the fact that after completing the training, new prospects will open for him, and there will be an opportunity to speed up the process of moving to the next career stage.

The objectives of the "Career" module:

- to form a group of successor candidates for positions (3 successors for 1 position);
- to provide the employee with the opportunity to plan the development of his career and build a plan for advancement within the organization (in the future of the entire concern);
- to create a unified database of employee characteristics and job requirements (to simplify and speed up the search for a suitable candidate as much as possible);
- to complete the training in electronic-distance format at the workplace.

The "Career" mobile application is essentially a stripped-down version of the "Career" module. You can access it by downloading the application from smartphone stores and from any personal computer with access to the Internet. It will also contain a personal profile where you can select and complete an e-learning course. You can receive information about newly added courses and classes and see statistics of assigned and completed courses.

The goal of the "Career" mobile application is to complete training in electronic format at any convenient time. It is important to note that in the mobile application you will be able to receive not only the training necessary for the work process, but also all available training that will allow you to expand your competencies and obtain useful information. The mobile application will contain electronic courses on areas of activity, interests, and corporate policy of the organization.

Thus, the "Career" module will allow you to organize training in any format (face-to-face, distance learning, electronic), keep records of completed training and collect feedback from employees and their managers. In-person training is organized after applications are collected and approved. This work must be performed by a user with the administrator role, who is an employee of the HR department.

So, the comparative effectiveness of developing a career management system in Chinese companies depends on its cultural sensitivity, alignment with strategic goals, provision of resources, use of technology, and commitment to continuous improvement. Companies that prioritize these factors can create an environment where employees thrive, promoting both individual career growth and organizational success.

Conclusion

The conducted research allows us to draw the following conclusions and proposals.

Stimulating professional career growth and promotion of employees brings significant benefits primarily to the organization. The investment of both human and financial resources in this endeavor is mandatory since it directly affects the prestige and stability of the organization in the labor market. Additionally, such investments increase employee engagement, increase job satisfaction, and therefore reduce employee turnover. This, in turn, leads to an increase in the quality of work performed, a reduction in manufacturing defects and, ultimately, leads to an overall increase in the profitability of the organization.

In addition, the complexity of the career development and promotion process in an organization is exacerbated by the lack of information sharing. Line managers often lack comprehensive knowledge of employees' competencies and complementary skills, while employees may not be able to effectively communicate their desires and aspirations. This communication gap prevents the identification of suitable career opportunities and prevents employees from advancing within the organization.

Based on the overall picture, the main problem was identified, namely the lack of full-fledged career growth opportunities for employees, and for managers - the need to have information about their employees in one source. It was revealed that the company needs to organize a clear system of information about employees in terms of career growth and their competencies and professionalism, management of employee careers and their promotion in the organization, an information base about candidates for each possible vacant position.

The result of the study was a proposal to introduce the "Career" module, as well as the "Career" mobile application as a tool for career management and personnel promotion in the organization. This software will be available to every employee of the organization. It will help to optimize the workflow of the HR department and provide motivation for employees for further development. The "Career" module and the "Career" mobile application will allow employees to manage their development, line managers to control this process, and HR departments to manage and adjust this process depending on the needs of the organization.

Authors' Contribution

The authors have made an equal contribution to the research. Y. Deng collected and analyzed the research material, studied the activities of the companies. C.V. Drokina carried out work to determine the goals and objectives of the study, systematize and scientifically substantiate the results obtained.

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