

China needs its own model of management education

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Rather than maintaining adoration for the American style of business management education, China should explore its own model of nurturing management talents in a way that matches the economy's transition toward quality and innovation-driven growth.

It's fair to say that business management education is too conservative. It's not changing enough. Often, it doesn't follow what businesses are doing. This is especially the case in the current era when management education is actually learning digitalization from businesses. Therefore, management programs should be much more creative themselves and also aim to make people more creative. Not only should an integration of functional skills, such as finance, accounting and marketing, be pursued from the beginning, but the creative capacities of managers or would-be managers need to be made a priority in preparation for the fast-changing and sometimes elusive business environment.

As such, it's worth pointing out that business management education in China has gone down the same old path as almost all other management schools have opted for: focusing too much on functional skills without connecting them enough. The wisest choice would be to choose a different route in pursuit of the model that caters best to Chinese businesses.

There are certainly a few exceptions in China, for instance, Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management and the School of Management at Zhejiang University, which have changed to deal with entrepreneurship, innovation and experiential learning. Nevertheless, I have the impression that many of China's business schools are trying too hard to catch up with their domestic and international counterparts, which follow the mindset of American business schools, which are stable but come across as lagging behind in innovation. The big names in business management education are there - Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Stanford. Everybody is thrilled to study in these places. The fact that everybody wants to attend these big-name schools could be one reason they are not motivated to innovative.

Many of the graduates of business schools in the US were involved in the financial crises the world has suffered. They actually have to unlearn what they learned, only then can they start learning something new.

That said, there's nothing wrong with the methodologies prevailing in these schools, notably using case studies, but there's space for innovating so as

to be relevant to local business communities. For those really invested in changing management education, they will spare no effort in understanding what businesses truly need. Not all entrepreneurs need to be the same, and thus management education should become more individualized.

More importantly, business ethics and responsible management should be regarded as a key element in management education. This is of particular importance in China where the longstanding triumph of quantity has put aspirations for quality on the back burner. Now that China has made the tremendous step of catapulting the country into the world's second-largest economy in such a short period of time, it's time to turn more to quality, which indisputably attaches more importance to responsible management.

Business ethics and responsible management should build on existing efforts to urge current or future managers to think about everybody in society, not purely the maximization of profits, for there to be a genuinely admirable Chinese model of economic growth.

I imagine this won't be too difficult a task in China, considering that solidarity has always been important in the Chinese society. What the deans of business schools in China need to do is just add some new elements to that traditional Chinese wisdom. A Chinese model of management education would not only help Chinese businesses advance more creatively, but also more sustainably.

*The article was compiled by Global Times reporter Li Qiaoyi based on a recent interview in Beijing with Mrs **Danica Purg**, president of the **IEDC-Bled School of Management** in Slovenia and president of **CEEMAN**, the international association for management development in dynamic societies. **bizopinion@globaltimes.com.cn***