

# **Teaching Innovation and Internationalization of Higher Education: International Seminar of Consumption and Leadership Management**

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*Under the influence of world economic integration, globalization of science and technology information, and mass culture diversification, how does higher education move towards internationalization and reform teaching and innovation? Through the practice of Sino-US cooperation, we appreciate that under economic globalization, we must effectively combine management science with the practice of economic development, management theory with government administration and enterprise management, and China's achievements and value ideas with the experience of the United States. Without teaching innovation in this area, university education will wander in the traditional teaching mode for the long run, resulting in the separation from practice and gradually losing its practical and social value. We should introduce high-quality foreign educational resources scientifically, learn from relevant foreign educational philosophy and managerial experience and motivate students to study hard to achieve teaching quality recognized internationally. The purpose is to foster international composite talents who integrate Chinese and Western cultures, master advanced knowledge and technology, and meet the needs of China's economic construction and development.*

*Keywords: higher education, teaching innovation*

## **INTRODUCTION**

We have been pondering for a long time now the issue of how to reform and innovate university teaching. Establishing the most suitable methodologies to enhance student learning and evaluation is a significant emphasis of discussion among scholars and experts (Moreno & Martinez, 2022). Universities have not been the primary innovation protagonist but have recently launched several innovations in teaching that, in many cases, have spread quickly (Moliní & Cañada, 2021). Nonetheless, more innovations in

business administration teaching are necessary in the ever-changing global business world. We believe that, under the premise of economic globalization, combining management science most effectively with economic development practice and integrating theories concerning government management and enterprise management is an urgent task for teaching the business administration major. If there is no change in teaching innovation in the business education arena, business administration teaching will be long shackled in the traditional teaching model, resulting in being disconnected from practice and the real business world and gradually losing its application value and meaning of existence.

In the face of globalization and the international community, two phenomena manifest: emerging China and fast-growing academic research. First, the economy in China is already the fastest-growing and most stable in the world, and the trend has lasted for more than three decades. Second, in the process of 36 years of economic and social reforms, scholars in China have gradually formed several new theories. One of these new theories, by Mr. Bingxin Wu, entitled *New Theory of Leadership Management Science*, is the latest and most advanced leadership and management theory.

Instead of relying on the traditional teaching model, we must invest in teaching and learning based on real-world situations and authentic experiences (Moreno & Martinez, 2022; Vélez, Fraile, & Lacambra, 2018). When designing the *Theory and Practice of Leadership Management* Program for the MBA students at the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV), it was decided to walk out of the classroom, out of the campus, and out of the United States and move the program to China. Three partners were involved in running the program: UHV Business School, CUFU School of Government and Economics, and Shandong Sanzhu Group. Shandong Sanzhu Group is a manufacturer of pharmaceutical, health, and cosmetic products, which use high-tech organic fermentation techniques with 32 patents worldwide. The intention was to get the students from business and government together to learn from one another since these are the two sides of the same coin in modern society. In this manner, students' motivation to learn rises, they pay closer attention to what is being said, participate more actively in the discussions, and can communicate and interact with their peers collaboratively as they share their existing knowledge (Barkley & Major, 2020). Enough has been done to artificially separate the two fields and separate each other far away from one another. Business executives and government officials need to know each other's business for modern society's effective and efficient operations. Apart from this, in most lectures, no matter if for business or public courses, firms are not part of the equation. However, in reality, firms are the cornerstones for the very existence of business schools and public schools. For this reason, two big firms participated in the program: Airtech Asia Ltd., one of the most successful US manufacturers in China, and Sanzhu Group, one of the most successful private firms in China.

The pilot program was done in China in 2013. It consisted of five UHV MBA students and 15 MPA and doctoral students from the School of Government at the Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE) in Beijing. UHV students participating in the program in 2014 grew to 29.

The teaching sites were chosen very carefully for this program: Beijing, Tianjin, and Jinan. Beijing is the capital of China and the center of Chinese traditional culture. Beijing is also China's political, economic, cultural, science, and technology center. The specific teaching site in Beijing where lectures took place was the Central University of Finance and Economics. In addition to lectures, there was also a visit to the ancient Chinese Palace - Beijing Forbidden City, the Imperial Garden, the Summer Palace, and the ancient Great Wall in Beijing's suburbs. All of these symbolize and reflect ancient Chinese culture.

Tianjin is one of the four central government-controlled municipalities with a well-developed economy. Our partner in Tianjin is Airtech Asia Ltd., which is a very successful US-owned firm in China. Dr. Perwaiz, the general manager, has more than 35 years of experience working in China. He has been very well-liked by Chinese government officials and business colleagues even though he has no real competitors in producing the parts for customers, such as Boeing and Airbus.

Jinan is the provincial capital of Shandong and is also the center of Qi-Lu culture, which is the most important source of Chinese traditional culture. It is a 1.5-hour drive away from Beijing and a three-hour drive away from Shanghai. Jinan is located at the center of the four most well-known ancient Chinese thinkers. Located to the south of Jinan, about a two-hour drive, is the former residence of Confucius, the most famous Chinese ancient thinker, and educator. About a 1.5-hour drive North of Jinan is the former

residence of Sun Tzu, the first Chinese military strategist. To the east, about a 1.5-hour drive from Jinan, is the former residence of Guan-Tzu, the most significant theorist in ancient China. To the southwest, about a four-hour drive from Jinan, is the former residence of Lao-Tzu, the greatest thinker in ancient China.

The students commented that the selected teaching site seemed surrounded by ancient Chinese culture, bringing a different feeling.

The American Embassy paid great attention to this program. On the first day that American students entered China, the American Embassy dispatched more than ten staff to bring students from America and China into the embassy and warmly received all students and professors. One of the officials spent the whole morning introducing the current situation of China's economic and social development and opportunities for the United States.

The program has the following features that make it stand out from other programs of this kind.

## **UNIQUE TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

This program is a dialogue of scholars between the East and the West. It is the interface of Eastern and Western culture, the combination of Chinese management elements and American management experience, and the integration of Eastern and Western wisdom. This international program has a strong academic atmosphere.

Participants included professors and experts, famous entrepreneurs and government officials, doctoral students, and postgraduates in universities from both China and America. Participants from the US crossed the Pacific Ocean and gathered with their Chinese counterparts in Beijing and Jinan, where knowledge collided, experiences were exchanged, learning was extended, and Sino-US friendship was bred and strengthened.

Sino-US cooperation can give full play to their strengths, which makes teaching methods more valuable with both Chinese and Western cultural characteristics. Chinese students can learn about advanced theories in the United States, and the US students can learn about Chinese history knowledge and the actual new theories developed in China.

In the past, the approach of cooperation between two countries was between business schools. Now it is triune interactions among school-school, school-government, and school enterprise, which is the theory system of learning and communication based on practical methodology. This approach not only enables students to obtain knowledge but also enhances the friendship between individuals of the two countries, which is of great significance for the future.

## **TEACHING STRUCTURE**

The teaching structure and teaching methods of leadership management are innovative, and the program content is cutting-edge and realistic. The main teaching format is a combination of practical teaching and international exchange, online teaching, and classroom teaching. The main teaching content consists of ancient Chinese management theory, modern world management theory, and the new theory of leadership management.

### **Chinese Ancient Leadership Management Theory**

The program covered Guan-Tzu, the most significant Chinese ancient thinker and management theorist; Confucius, the ancient Chinese educator; Lao-Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher; and Sun-Tzu, the earliest Chinese military strategist.

### **Frontier Theories About Modern Consumption Economy and Leadership Management / Mainly New Theories About Leadership and Management Science**

In globalization, the United States and China have become more and more competitive. We need practical strategies and operation theories. More effective and efficient work has become increasingly important, not only for government leaders but also for enterprise leaders. In this program, through theory

learning and practice, students from both countries learned Wu Bingxin's advanced leadership management theory, practical experience of China's reform and opening up, and Mr. Wu's enterprise management experiences. Therefore, the program did not only disseminate knowledge but also successful practical methodologies at a higher level of essence. The program focused on how to operate to get more benefits and competitive value in the dynamic world. Through the participants' interactions and teamwork, the future leadership of Chinese and American enterprises and governments is integrated.

It should be noted that Mr. Wu is the most famous entrepreneur in China and one of the most famous theorists. The program adopted his book entitled *New Discoveries on Leadership Management* as the textbook because it is the epitome of experiences that Mr. Wu has accumulated over the last five decades. He is one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the world.

Such teaching structure and methods enabled doctoral students and postgraduates from UHV Business School and CUFU School of Government to combine social relationships and social network operation, which at a higher level contributes to cultural understanding. The program also enabled these students to gain experiences to enhance their chances of promotion in governments and enterprises in the future.

### **The Core Content of New Theory of Leadership Management Science**

The new theory of leadership management is the theory Mr. Wu built over thirty years of careful research. The author is China's first private entrepreneur, and it took more than half a century to trace China's economic development.

To play the role of preconception before the class began, it took nearly six months for preparation, including compiling teaching materials, the syllabus, and the enriched version of the leadership management science theory. Students read the textbook and wrote a reading digest before the program started, which played a role in teaching outside the classroom.

### **Interaction of Teaching With Practice and Combining Classroom Learning With Practice, Government, and Society**

The collocation of teaching instructors is more scientific, consisting of senior professors from Chinese and American universities, researchers, entrepreneurs, theorists, and top enterprise executives with practical experiences.

American professors included Dr. Jifu Wang and Dr. Farhan Niroomand. Dr. Wang lectured on modern Western leadership management advanced theory with 16 assessment tools. Dr. Niroomand lectured on globalization and economic development.

Dr. Jinghua Zhao, the dean of CUFU School of Government, lectured on China's traditional culture and the comparative management theory with Chinese characteristics.

Mr. Bingxin Wu, entrepreneur, and theorist taught from the perspective of the combination of theory and practice. He lectured on the consumption comprehensive theory system and economic development, the leadership management theory, the relationship between enterprises and government, and practices and operations.

Prof. Xinsheng Li, a senior researcher at Shandong Academy of Social Sciences, analyzed and interpreted ideas of leadership management in ancient Chinese culture and introduced in detail the leading management ideas of Guan-Tzu, Confucius, Lao-Tzu, and Sun-Tzu.

The teaching process includes classroom lectures, field observations, culture visits, group discussions, and conference presentations. This learning process enabled students to understand that leadership is the prerequisite to ensure the efficient operation of enterprise and government. The students also learned specific methods and the working art of government and enterprise leadership management in terms of consumer awareness and consumption behaviors. They not only understood the dialectical relationship between the two but also learned to promote the consumption behaviors of individuals by raising their consumption awareness. The fast-changing world increasingly demands individuals who can adapt quickly and therefore, every country should have individuals who can generate information, utilize information accurately, and have creative thinking skills (Zamzam et al., 2023; Aldig & Arseven, 2017).

As we all know, Eastern and Western cultures are different, which is related to the difference in their way of thinking in sensibility and rational, theory and practice, ethics and morality, precept and example, inspiration and comprehension. In the past, China's so-called modern leadership management theory, was copied from the Western-style leadership management theory.

Since the reform and opening up of the rapid development of the Chinese economy and its huge success, Westerners have had to come into the Oriental culture for inspiration due to the increasing development of leadership management theory and the increasing complexity of the theoretical system. Eastern cultures, especially traditional Chinese management ideas, increasingly reveal their unique value and become the new source of leadership management scientific development. The students in this international program learned and studied the dialectical thinking of the Book of Changes, the universe, the environment, and humans of Guanzhong, people-oriented management thinking of inaction and subjective creative governance thinking of action, Taoism and inaction for the governance of Lao-Tzu, benevolent government and rule of the virtue of Confucius, and the military science of Sun-Tzu. All of these embody the leadership management wisdom of the East. This study opened a new era of east-west management culture development in the interaction.

This program taught and transformed western management theories and integrated the excellent leadership management ideas in ancient China, especially the leading management ideas of Guan-Tzu, Confucius, and Sun-Tzu. Also, for the Chinese practical experiences, we put forward employment strategy, culture strategy, public relations strategy, and other theories to constitute a complete theoretical system of leadership management practical strategies.

Some scholars believe that Asians, especially Chinese have excellent leadership management talent, and the next significant development of leadership management science will appear in eastern cultures in the next twenty years. It may well be a blessing that the American business school and its scholars can stand at the forefront of the times to experience the collision, integration, and interaction of Chinese and Western cultures and use Oriental wisdom to help construct modern leadership management science.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

After 15 days of learning, all participants felt deeply and strongly about the experience, wrote a summary of the study program, and talked about their learning experiences.

The students shared the same perspective that during this trip to China to attend the international program, they received the education they could not receive on any campus. Some revealed, "We went out of the classroom, out of the country, and into a foreign society to interact with students in another culture and swim between teaching and practice. What we learned not only broadens our horizons but also carries out effective practice, which greatly breaks through the limits of the classroom." Some also said, "Most programs are aimed at making money by charging fees, but this one is sponsored by Sanzhu Group in China, which reflects the enthusiasm about Sino-US cultural exchanges by Mr. Bingxin Wu."

Mr. Wu, the Chinese entrepreneur, and theorist has donated the capital to establish the International Education Center at the University of Houston, Victoria, and offers adequate funding for most of the program's expenditures. This will provide reliable funds for the international program in the future, which will contribute to continuously deepening our innovative educational practice, enriching theories, and accumulating practical experiences that can be put into practice for generating results. Therefore, this innovative program has profound significance for both America and China.

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