

Research on the Training Path of the Business Administration Professional Group under the Background of New Liberal Arts

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Abstract: The New Liberal Arts initiative represents a pivotal strategy to address the evolving demands of socioeconomic development and drive transformative reforms in liberal arts education. As the cornerstone of business and management disciplines, the Business Administration program cluster must transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries and pedagogical constraints. By embracing the integrative, practical, and innovative ethos of the New Liberal Arts framework, it requires a comprehensive restructuring of its talent development system. This study examines the contemporary requirements for cultivating professionals within the Business Administration program cluster under the New Liberal Arts paradigm, identifies challenges in current training models, and proposes actionable pathways for talent development. These pathways address key dimensions including goal alignment, curriculum redesign, practical platform development, and faculty capacity building. The research ultimately aims to establish theoretical frameworks and practical models that align with regional economic growth and industrial upgrading needs, thereby facilitating the high-quality development of the Business Administration program cluster.

Keywords: New Liberal Arts; Business Administration program cluster; talent cultivation; industry-education integration; interdisciplinary studies

1. Introduction

The new wave of technological revolution and industrial transformation is accelerating, with emerging technologies like digital economy, artificial intelligence, and big data deeply integrating with the real economy. This integration has given rise to innovative business models such as platform economy and sharing economy, which demand updated knowledge structures and competencies from business management professionals. In 2018, China's Ministry of Education launched the New Liberal Arts Initiative, emphasizing the fundamental principle of "moral education and talent cultivation," adopting interdisciplinary integration as a pathway, and aiming to develop versatile, innovative liberal arts talents that meet the needs of the new era. This initiative drives liberal arts education toward a more integrated direction, transcending traditional single-discipline boundaries to embrace cross-disciplinary, cross-sector, and cross-industry collaboration [1].

The business administration discipline cluster, encompassing core specialties such as business administration, marketing, human resource management, and financial management, serves as a crucial bridge between economic theory and corporate practice. The quality of talent cultivation in this field directly impacts corporate management efficiency and regional economic development. However, current talent development in China's higher education institutions still faces challenges including homogenized

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training objectives, outdated curriculum systems, superficial practical teaching approaches, and shallow industry-education collaboration, resulting in a disconnect between academic training and actual industry demands [2]. Therefore, exploring innovative pathways for talent cultivation within the business administration discipline cluster from the perspective of New Liberal Arts is not only an inevitable requirement to align with the national New Liberal Arts development strategy but also a key measure to enhance the core competitiveness of business administration professionals.

2. Talent Cultivation Requirements under the New Liberal Arts

The construction of the New Liberal Arts emphasizes an integrated educational philosophy that combines value guidance, knowledge exploration, ability development, and personality cultivation. Against this background, the cultivation of talents in the business administration specialty cluster is required to respond to the profound transformation of economic structures, technological paradigms, and social development patterns. Compared with traditional talent training models that focus primarily on disciplinary knowledge transmission, the New Liberal Arts framework places greater emphasis on comprehensive competencies, interdisciplinary integration, and social value orientation [3]. Accordingly, the contemporary requirements for talent cultivation in business administration can be summarized into four interrelated dimensions: cross-boundary knowledge literacy, digital literacy aligned with the times, practical innovation ability characterized by the unity of knowledge and action, and a strong sense of social responsibility.

2.1. Cross-Boundary Knowledge Literacy

Under the New Liberal Arts initiative, business administration professionals are expected to transcend conventional disciplinary boundaries and construct a multidimensional knowledge system that integrates economics, management, science, and the humanities [4]. On the one hand, students should establish solid foundations in core areas such as management theory, economics, accounting, and organizational behavior, which constitute the theoretical backbone of business administration. Mastery of these foundational disciplines enables students to understand the internal mechanisms of enterprise operation and management decision-making.

On the other hand, the rapid evolution of the economic environment requires business administration talents to actively absorb knowledge from emerging fields. In particular, knowledge related to the digital economy, including big data analytics, artificial intelligence applications, and blockchain technology, has become increasingly relevant to modern business practice. By integrating technological knowledge with traditional management thinking, students can better analyze complex managerial problems and propose more effective solutions in the context of digital transformation. Furthermore, cross-boundary knowledge literacy also involves the cultivation of humanistic understanding [5]. Business administration professionals should be capable of recognizing the significance of corporate culture, ethical norms, and social responsibility in organizational management, thereby achieving a balanced integration of scientific rationality and humanistic values.

2.2. Keeping Up with the Times in Digital Literacy

The continuous expansion of the digital economy has profoundly reshaped enterprise management models and competitive mechanisms. Digital technologies have been widely embedded in various aspects of corporate operation, including marketing, production organization, human resource management, and strategic decision-making. Precision marketing driven by data analysis, intelligent decision support enabled by artificial intelligence, and collaborative management supported by cloud computing have gradually become key sources of competitive advantage for enterprises.

In this context, business administration professionals must possess strong and up-to-date digital literacy. This literacy not only refers to the ability to operate digital tools, but also encompasses the capability to understand data logic, interpret analytical results, and apply digital insights to management decision-making. Students should be proficient in using data analysis software to process operational data, familiar with digital management platforms commonly adopted by enterprises, and capable of formulating development strategies based on data-driven evidence. At the same time, digital literacy also implies continuous learning ability. As digital technologies evolve rapidly, business administration talents must maintain sensitivity to technological trends and demonstrate the capacity to adapt to new digital tools and management modes, thus promoting the intelligent upgrading of enterprise management practices.

2.3. The Practice Innovation Ability of Unity of Knowledge and Action

The New Liberal Arts initiative highlights the deep integration of theoretical learning and practical application, emphasizing the cultivation of talents who can effectively transform knowledge into action. For students in business administration programs, practical innovation ability is reflected in the capacity to apply management theories and analytical methods to real-world business contexts. This requires students to move beyond abstract conceptual understanding and engage actively with concrete managerial problems encountered in enterprise operations.

In practical scenarios, business administration professionals should be able to apply theoretical frameworks to address issues related to strategic planning, marketing management, organizational coordination, and human resource allocation. At the same time, they are expected to demonstrate innovative thinking by proposing novel management concepts, business models, and operational strategies that align with industry development trends and organizational needs. Practical innovation also depends heavily on teamwork and communication skills. In modern enterprises, management activities are often carried out through cross-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration. Therefore, business administration talents must be capable of cooperating effectively with individuals from diverse professional backgrounds, integrating different perspectives, and jointly promoting organizational innovation and sustainable development.

2.4. Possessing a Strong Sense of Social Responsibility

In the new era, business administration professionals are not merely creators of economic value, but also important actors in fulfilling social responsibility. Under the New Liberal Arts framework, talent cultivation places significant emphasis on value orientation and ethical awareness. Graduates of business administration programs are expected to establish sound values and a strong sense of social responsibility, enabling them to consider the broader social implications of business decisions.

In enterprise management practice, this sense of responsibility is reflected in the balanced consideration of economic benefits and social benefits. When formulating corporate development strategies, business administration professionals should take into account factors such as environmental protection, social welfare, and the protection of employee rights, thereby promoting sustainable development. In marketing and operational activities, adherence to business ethics is essential, and practices that violate ethical norms should be consciously avoided. Through responsible management behavior, enterprises can achieve harmonious coexistence with society and the environment, while business administration professionals can realize their professional value in a manner consistent with social expectations.

3. The Current Realistic Dilemma in Talent Cultivation of the Business Administration Professional Cluster

Despite the continuous advancement of the New Liberal Arts initiative, the talent cultivation of the business administration professional cluster still faces a series of practical challenges in implementation. These challenges are manifested not only in the formulation of cultivation objectives, but also in curriculum design, practical teaching conditions, and faculty development. If these dilemmas are not effectively addressed, it will be difficult for business administration education to fully respond to the new requirements of economic transformation and social development. From the perspective of actual educational practice, the current dilemmas can be summarized into the following four aspects.

3.1. Unclear Cultivation Objectives and Disconnection from Industry Needs

At present, many higher education institutions offering business administration programs exhibit problems of unclear cultivation objectives and insufficient alignment with industry demand. In some cases, the talent training goals are overly generalized and tend to be homogeneous across institutions, failing to reflect regional economic characteristics or differentiated industrial development needs. As a result, program positioning lacks distinctiveness, and graduates often possess similar knowledge structures and skill profiles, which weakens their competitiveness in the labor market.

In addition, excessive emphasis on theoretical knowledge remains a common issue. While foundational theories are essential, insufficient attention is given to the cultivation of practical skills, problem-solving abilities, and innovative thinking. Consequently, graduates often encounter difficulties in adapting quickly to enterprise job requirements, especially in positions that demand strong practical competence and flexible application of knowledge. Furthermore, some programs have not clearly defined the competency requirements brought about by the digital economy, such as digital literacy and cross-disciplinary integration capabilities, within their cultivation objectives. This lack of clarity makes it challenging to meet enterprises' growing demand for versatile management talents capable of supporting digital transformation.

Moreover, within the business administration professional cluster, coordination among different programs is often weak. Individual majors tend to operate independently, with limited communication and collaboration in curriculum design and resource allocation. This fragmented approach prevents the formation of a systematic educational framework characterized by resource sharing and complementary advantages, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of talent cultivation.

3.2. Rigid Curriculum Structure and Insufficient Interdisciplinary Integration

The rigidity of curriculum structures is another prominent dilemma in the talent cultivation of the business administration professional cluster. Traditional curriculum systems are often designed based on single-discipline logic, resulting in an imbalance between theoretical instruction and practical application. Courses are frequently arranged as isolated modules, lacking meaningful connections across disciplines, which makes it difficult for students to construct an integrated knowledge system.

Although core subjects such as management and economics are well represented, emerging fields related to digital technology and humanistic studies are insufficiently incorporated. The curriculum content still largely focuses on conventional management theories and classical case studies, while emerging economic forms such as the digital economy and platform-based business models receive limited attention. In particular, the integration of technologies such as big data analytics and artificial intelligence into course content remains inadequate, leading to outdated teaching materials that fail to reflect current management practices.

Practical courses also account for a relatively small proportion of the curriculum. Existing practical teaching activities are often limited to classroom simulations and case analyses, with few opportunities for students to participate in real-world projects. The lack of authentic practice scenarios restricts students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge creatively and hinders the development of practical innovation capabilities, which are essential under the New Liberal Arts framework.

3.3. Weak Practical Teaching Platforms and Insufficient Industry-Education Collaboration

Practical teaching platforms play a crucial role in enhancing students' applied competencies, yet their construction in many universities remains inadequate. On-campus practical platforms often suffer from outdated hardware facilities and limited software systems. Simulation training environments are frequently disconnected from real enterprise operations, making it difficult for students to gain a realistic understanding of contemporary management processes and business scenarios.

At the same time, off-campus practical training bases are often underutilized. Although cooperation agreements between universities and enterprises exist, collaboration is frequently superficial. Activities such as enterprise visits and short-term internships dominate, while deeper forms of cooperation, including joint curriculum development, project-based training, and co-supervision, are relatively rare. Enterprises tend to show limited enthusiasm for participating in talent cultivation, and real business projects, management expertise, and actual job requirements are seldom integrated into university training programs. This situation weakens the effectiveness of practical teaching and limits students' exposure to authentic management challenges.

3.4. Homogeneous Faculty Structure and Insufficient Comprehensive Competencies

The composition of the faculty team in business administration programs also presents certain limitations. Most instructors follow an academic career path that emphasizes theoretical research, resulting in a faculty structure characterized by strong theoretical knowledge but limited practical experience. Some teachers lack firsthand experience in enterprise management and have insufficient understanding of real-world challenges related to digital transformation, which constrains their ability to incorporate authentic and up-to-date business cases into teaching.

In addition, the knowledge structure of faculty members is not updated rapidly enough to keep pace with emerging trends. Limited familiarity with areas such as the digital economy and data analysis restricts instructors' ability to conduct interdisciplinary teaching and guide students in developing comprehensive competencies. Furthermore, the mobility mechanism between universities and enterprises remains underdeveloped. Opportunities for industry professionals to participate in teaching activities, such as delivering lectures or providing practical guidance, are relatively scarce. This lack of interaction impedes the overall improvement of faculty competencies and affects the quality of talent cultivation under the New Liberal Arts framework.

4. Talent Cultivation Path of Business Administration Professional Group under the Background of New Liberal Arts

4.1. Precise Positioning of Training Objectives and Establishing a Collaborative Education Framework for Professional Groups

Under the New Liberal Arts framework, the business administration discipline cluster must establish a "categorized training and collaborative education" system aligned with regional economic development needs and industrial upgrading trends. First, universities should strengthen collaboration with local governments, industry associations, and leading enterprises to conduct regular industry demand research. This will clarify the competency requirements for business management professionals in the digital economy era, refining training objectives into three categories: digital management,

innovation and entrepreneurship, and comprehensive management. For instance, in the digital economy sector, cultivate digital management professionals with big data analysis capabilities and enterprise management experience. For small and medium-sized enterprise development needs, nurture innovation and entrepreneurship talents equipped with practical skills and entrepreneurial mindset. Second, enhance interdisciplinary collaboration within the discipline cluster by breaking down disciplinary barriers. Establish a professional education mechanism featuring "resource sharing, curriculum integration, and credit recognition" to achieve complementary strengths among disciplines and elevate the overall educational quality of the cluster.

4.2. Establishing Diverse Practice Platforms to Enhance Industry-Education Collaboration

The practical training platform serves as a crucial foundation for nurturing students' innovative capabilities. A diversified system integrating "on-campus training facilities, off-campus practice bases, and innovation incubation platforms" should be established. To enhance on-campus training infrastructure, universities should increase funding to develop digital management training centers and enterprise simulation sandboxes. By adopting enterprise-grade management software and digital analytics tools, students can gain immersive practical experience. Additionally, virtual simulation technology should be leveraged to create enterprise management simulation projects that replicate real-world scenarios such as strategic decision-making, marketing, and human resource management, thereby addressing the limitations of physical training platforms.

In developing off-campus practice bases, universities should forge deep partnerships with enterprises of diverse types and scales to establish a sustainable collaborative education mechanism featuring joint school-enterprise development, shared resources, and mutual benefits. Enterprises can participate in designing talent cultivation programs by integrating their job requirements and management standards into practical teaching. Additionally, they may provide internship positions and real-world projects for students to undertake on-the-job training, enabling them to enhance practical skills in authentic corporate management environments.

To advance innovation and entrepreneurship incubation platforms, universities should establish business administration incubation centers that integrate campus and external resources. These centers provide students with comprehensive services including innovation training, project incubation, and funding support. Regularly hosting innovation competitions such as the "Internet+" and "Challenge Cup" initiatives can effectively stimulate students' innovative thinking and entrepreneurial drive, while cultivating their capabilities in innovation and entrepreneurship.

4.3. Strengthening Faculty Development to Build a Multidisciplinary Teaching Team

The faculty team is a key factor in talent cultivation, requiring the establishment of a dual-qualified faculty team comprising full-time teachers and part-time corporate instructors to enhance their overall competence. For full-time teachers, universities should establish regular corporate practice mechanisms, encouraging them to undertake on-the-job training and participate in management consulting projects to gain practical business experience. Additionally, universities should support teachers in attending academic conferences and training courses in fields such as digital economy and big data analysis to update their knowledge structure and improve their interdisciplinary teaching capabilities.

For part-time teachers in enterprises, universities should hire senior executives, industry experts, and experienced management consultants as part-time instructors to participate in course teaching, practical guidance, and thesis defense. This approach brings real-world management experience and cutting-edge trends into the classroom, enriching both the content and methods of instruction.

In addition, the university should form an interdisciplinary teaching team, which is composed of teachers from different disciplines such as management, economics, computer science, etc. The teaching team should jointly undertake the teaching and research tasks of professional group courses, and improve the teaching ability of the faculty team.

4.4. Improve the Evaluation System and Implement Diversified Quality Control

Under the New Liberal Arts framework, the Business Administration program cluster must move beyond the traditional "exam-centric" evaluation system and establish a diversified framework integrating formative assessment, summative evaluation, and industry feedback. For formative assessment, the evaluation should comprehensively assess students' classroom participation, practical training, project execution, and teamwork, incorporating elements like practical reports, project outcomes, and innovation competition results. In summative evaluation, the assessment methods should be reformed by reducing written exams and increasing practical operations, project presentations, and case analyses to holistically evaluate students' theoretical knowledge and practical skills. For industry feedback, the program should adopt corporate evaluation mechanisms, incorporating students' internship performance and project quality into the talent development quality assessment system to ensure alignment between educational outcomes and industry demands.

5. Conclusion

The New Liberal Arts initiative has created both opportunities and challenges for the innovative development of the Business Administration program cluster. As a core cluster of economics and management disciplines, the program must align its talent cultivation with the integrative, practical, and innovative nature of the New Liberal Arts. Guided by regional economic development needs, it should precisely define training objectives, reconstruct the curriculum system, establish diversified practical platforms, strengthen faculty development, and refine a multi-dimensional evaluation framework. Only by breaking away from traditional talent cultivation models and deepening industry-education collaboration can we nurture interdisciplinary business professionals with cross-domain integration capabilities, digital literacy, practical innovation skills, and social responsibility awareness-providing solid talent support for China's high-quality economic development.

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