

Analysis of Chinese Talent Management Strategy: Emphasis on Cao Cao's Competencies from Records of Three Kingdoms

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Abstract: *The objectives of this study were to explore how the leadership attributes of Cao Cao attracted talent, retained the talents, and the method of talent management according to the Three Kingdoms approach. This research used mixed methods for the study. The researcher used document analysis and content analysis for the qualitative part. The researcher read the Records of the Three Kingdoms. The researcher studied and analyzed the leadership attributes of Cao Cao; how did Cao Cao attract talents; how did Cao Cao retain talent at the end of Eastern Han Dynasty. The researcher designed a questionnaire based on the results of the qualitative part. This questionnaire was used for current managers in Qingdao City. The results show the leadership attributes are foresightedness, strategic planning, conscientiousness, strong cognitive ability, and good management skills. The company and organization that wants to attract and retain talent should have a leader that is good at identifying and using the talents; good at emotional control; understands how and when to reward and punishment; creates a good reputation; provides good and clear career paths; assures justice and mercy; and utilizes good payment.*

Keywords: Talent Management Strategy, Human Resource Development, Record of Three Kingdoms, Cao Cao.

Introduction

Twenty-first century competition is for talent compete (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). It is the talent war competition of talents (Cappelli, 2008). Human Resource Management (HRD) is a question of human beings functioning in productive systems, with focus on the resources that humans bring to the success equation—both personal success and organizational success (Swanson & Holton, 2001). In HRD, the selection, development, and application of talents is very important. Talent is the blood and power of the development of an enterprise or organization.

A talent person is a person who has a special ability and this ability could help them to do something well. It distinguishes them from ordinary people. The labor market is constantly changing. The labor market is characterized by safety, increasing mobility, outsourcing, and organizational commitment. Moreover, these characterizations will lead to new challenges for the organization from the organization's perspective. General organizational success will be increasingly attracting and retaining the talent individuals to make sure the organization meets the present and future needs (Florida, 2005; Frank & Taylor, 2004). Every year several colleges and universities graduates are added to the workforce, organizations are spending a lot of resources in order to acquire their needs for talent. However, the number of talent is still inadequate, and this leads to a talent shortage (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). World economic development and the competition between

the various parts of the world are no longer confined to regional competition. It has become competition of country and country. Currently, talent has taken place of natural resources as the world's most important scarce resource.

The first priority of the HR agenda is to attract and retain talent (Frank, et al., 2004). To attract and retain talent is not only the responsibility of the organization, but it is also the responsibility of leadership. People are the most important organizational asset, especially in knowledge-intensive organizations (Alvesson & Kaerremann, 2007; Barney & Wright, 1998; Ulrich, 1998). Price Water House Coopers (PWC) published that most CEOs are fearful that a shortage of talent will impede the growth of their companies. Organization needs aligning the process with talent management to achieve sustainable success (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. As a leader, it is not only doing the leadership job well, but also attracting and retaining talents for the company or organization to provide fresh blood and development power for the future of the company or organization.

Attraction and retention of talent into the workplace is important for HRD. Historical experiences and lessons are valuable for people to work and survive in this modern world. Social, historical and political contexts in which HRD emerged has been little explored. Much of the historical work that does exist has uncritically viewed HRD as the latest and most humanistic phase of an ongoing educational process where an organization facilitates the learning of its employees to become increasingly productive and "empowered". Traditional history has taken an anecdotal and evolutionary approach to the emergence of HRD (Schied, 1995). History is the accumulation of time and records what happened in the past. Humans fostered, enriched, and developed different kinds of civilizations in the long course of history. Humans could be sagacious if they sum up past experiences and lessons from history.

With the rapid economic development of East Asia, more and more scholars and experts have begun to focus attention on East Asia. East Asia is attractive to many countries. East Asia during 1950s and 1960s was one part of a relatively poor development of the world. After Japan's first rise of the East Asian economies, China has become the main force of the economic growth momentum in these areas. East Asia is also host to the highest concentration of newly industrialized economies (e.g., Japan, South Korea, Taiwan) found anywhere in the world. Now East Asia has achieved the most profound economic change in history. In the 1990s, East Asia became one of the three core economic zones (along with Europe and North America) (Dent, 2016).

HRD practice has followed the western world philosophy up to the present time. However, current world development has shown a shift from Western world dominance to Eastern world dominance. The emerging of the Chinese economy combined with the current Japanese and Korean economic development can clearly indicate the swing from the West to the East. The people management strategy, from Chinese ancient philosophy namely the Record of Three Kingdoms, could be a good topping stone for studying Eastern people management, specifically talent management. The leadership attributes of Cao Cao could help managers to inspire and remedy their shortcomings. The knowledge of attracting and retaining talent could give precious experience for managers to use, specifically Chinese or other Asian managers. The author proposes a talent management model from Record of Three Kingdoms to use. It is of interest for the researcher to explore the possibility.

Research Questions

The researcher has answered four research questions:

1. What were the leadership attributes of Cao Cao?
2. How did Cao Cao attract talents to work for him?

3. How did Cao Cao retain his talents?
4. What should be the methods of talent management according to the Three Kingdoms approach?

Literature Review

The researcher has reviewed the literature concerning talent management as follows: 1) People Management, 2) Records of the Three Kingdoms, 3) Leadership Attributes, 4) Talent Management

People Management

People management was a science originated in the United States. It is a generic term for plan, organize, command, coordinate, information and control people. It is the process of managing people in organizations in a structured and thorough manner (Need, 2006).

Records of the Three Kingdoms

The Record of the Three Kingdoms is a Chinese historical text which covers the history of the late Eastern Han Dynasty (C.184–220 A.D.) and the Three Kingdoms period (220–280 A.D.). Characterized by its brevity in content, it is widely regarded as the official and authoritative historical text for that period. Prepared by Chen Shou in the third century, the work combines the smaller histories of the rival states of Cao Wei, Shu Han and Eastern Wu in the Three Kingdoms period into a single text.

Leadership Attributes

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. Leadership is a key construct in organization sciences. It leads to a number of desired outcomes for the individual, group and also organizational levels (Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992).

Each person is different, different people have their own attributes. Leader Attributes can be defined as relatively coherent and integrated patterns of personal characteristics, reflecting a range of individual differences that foster consistent leadership effectiveness across a variety of groups and organizational situations (Zaccaro & Banks, 2004).

Talent Management

The CIPD (2009) defined talent management as the systematic attraction, identification, development, retention and deployment of high potential individuals who are of value to an organization. Both talent management and HRD include about getting the right people in the right place at the right time (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

Research Method

In this study the researcher started the mixed method with a sequential exploratory strategy by employing a qualitative research method to explore Cao Cao's leadership competencies, then conducting a quantitative method by asking current Chinese managers who were working in companies in China to answer a questionnaire developed from the results of the qualitative study. The quantitative research aimed to confirm the results of the qualitative study done prior. The mixed method could help to clarify the nature of the researcher's intentions. Based on the research objectives: 1) To explore the leadership attributes of Cao Cao; 2) To explore how Cao Cao attracted the talents; 3) To explore how Cao Cao retained the talents; 4) To propose Methods of talent management according to the Three Kingdoms approach

For the Qualitative Research the researcher chose Document analysis and Hermeneutic content analysis for this study. The Hermeneutic content analysis emphasizes the true, objective and comprehensive reflections of the original meaning of the text content. For the Quantitative Research, the researcher chose factor analysis to do this part. The results of the quantitative study were used to assure the qualitative data analysis results which were done.

Data Analysis: Qualitative Part

First, Document Selection and Selection of Content

The researcher selected the book entitled Record of Three Kingdoms which was reviewed by Chen Naiqian (philologist, editor and publisher in China). In this study, the researcher has reviewed Cao Cao's leadership. So, the Book of Wei (volumes 1- 30) was the position of the main reading and content selection. Volumes 31-45 and volumes 46-65 were the record of Shu and Wu's history and character. The researcher has chosen all of the volumes that related to Cao Cao as the content.

Second, Conduct the Open Coding and Do Coding Sheets

The researcher had read and skimmed the written content to identify the context and select the volumes that are related to the leadership attributes of Cao Cao: 1) How did Cao Cao attract the talents? And 2) How did Cao Cao retain his talents.

The researcher set up an open code by reading the selected data. When the researcher established an open code, the content of the selected data was encoded. The content encoded was classified and summed up. The researcher chose the content related to Cao Cao on the basis of research questions and encoded them. The researchers got a total of 168 codes.

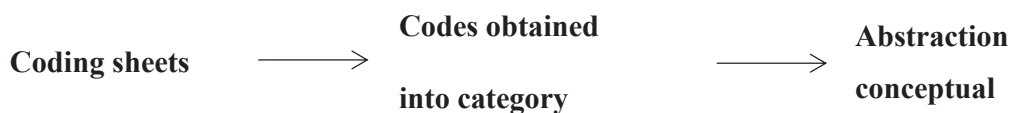
Third, Grouping the Codes Obtained into Categories

The researchers made a preliminary classification of the codes by analyzing the data. The researcher built coding sheets with the information which were noted in the book. The information was analyzed according to the research questions, and the researcher grouped the information. The refinement of the coding categories was done after continuous reading and analysis, the researcher established group names and grouped the codes.

According to the analysis of the content of the data, the researchers grouped the information into preliminary groups as: Suppression of the Yellow turban uprising; Against Dong Zhuo; End the vassal separatist; Against the foreign invasion; the use of legal norms; A decent official; Be good at empowerment; Far sighted political and military capabilities; Good strategic strategy; A good desire for knowledge; Good listening ability; A fair leader; Pay attention to the cultivation of talents; Effective identification and use of talent; and complex characters.

Finally, Abstracting the Conceptual According to the Research Questions

The researchers summarized and collated each group on the basis of the research questions proposed in this paper. Then the researchers came up with the results of the study. An example is the Figure 1.



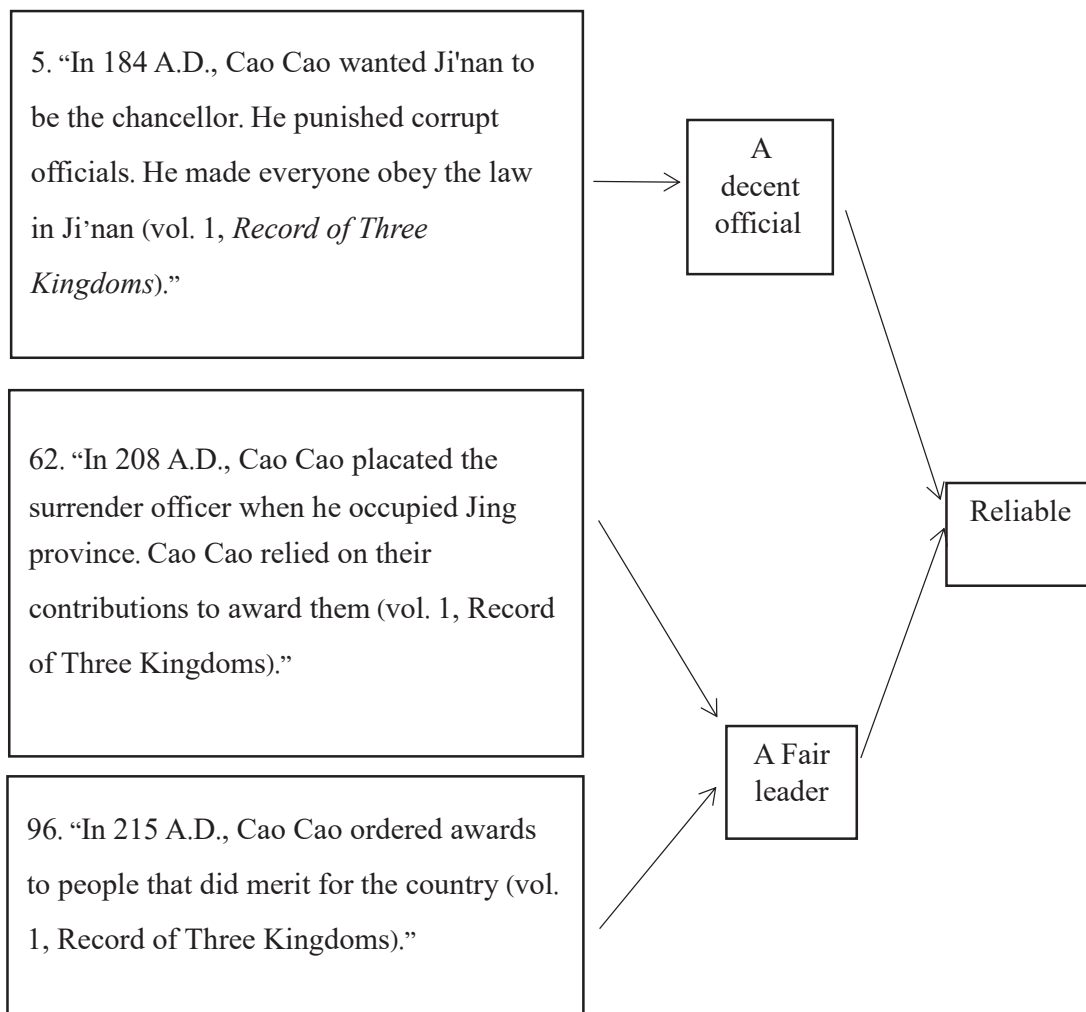


Figure 1 Example of qualitative data analysis

Data Analysis: Quantitative Part

The research collected the quantitative data from the quantitative results to confirm the qualitative results and made the research results generalize-able. The researcher chose 229 managers as the population in Qingdao City, Shan Dong province. The population of the managers was engaged in administrative work in service, manufacturing and production, and merchandising business. The researchers carried out a questionnaire survey of the managers and 158 questionnaires were successfully recovered. According to the Krejcie and Morgan Table, more than 158 respondents were considered valid. The researcher used these 158 discrete data for analysis. The researcher used the following steps for the quantitative data analysis:

First, Established the Data Analysis Method

After the researchers succeeded in recovering the data. The researcher chose the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to analyze the data. Exploratory factor analysis is committed to finding the intrinsic structure of things. The researchers chose exploratory

factor analysis to determine the fact that the grouping of variable theory is in line with the actual situation, and to ensure the rationality of the results model.

For this study, the researchers carried out an analysis of the collected data with SPSS software. The principal component analysis was to set up a linear equation with a set of variables to explain as much information as possible, that is to say, the maximization of mutation. The main goal was to use fewer components to explain as many variables as possible to simplify the data (Velicer & Jackson, 1990).

Second, Analysis

The role of the project analysis was to analyze the various topics. It kept the topics that can be easily divided into high and low scores. And other areas with low degrees of division were modified or eliminated.

The researcher used project analysis through the analysis of the independent sample in the analysis, whether each item was suitable for exploratory factor analysis.

Finally, Conducted Exploratory Factor Analysis

After determining the suitability of each item, the researcher did an exploratory factor analysis of the data.

Findings and Discussion

Leadership Attributes

1) The leader should have a personality to fit the team. Leadership is the core of the organization. The main role of leadership is to command, lead, guide and encourage subordinates to work hard to achieve their goals (Wayne et al., 1997).

2) The leader should be a foresighted person in a team. Foresight is a necessary ability of a leader. There is a reason for everything. Its origin and direction have a strong logical relationship within it, so the development of things is foreseeable. Foresight is not a groundless reverie as some people think. In fact, it is formed from the experience of the leaders and the experience of the people around them (O'Brien & Robertson, 2009).

3) The leader should be a good strategic planner. The promotion and realization of organizational goals will not happen. For this reason, the leader should put the main energy on the important issues concerning the overall situation (Saaty, 1990). Strategic leadership is the builder of team spirit and organizational culture. A strategic leader must be responsible for the entire team of the organization, and must be committed to creating a team spirit and a good organizational culture (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

4) The leader should be a conscientious person in a team. Mayer (1995) divided leader trustworthiness into three different parts: ability, benevolence and integrity. Ability is the key factor that affects whether a leader is trusted or not. The ability of a leader not only affects the development of the organization, but also affects the personal development of the staff. There are two kinds of people in the world: leaders and followers. From a psychological point of view, a competent leader tends to be respected and attracts a number of people around him. The personal ability of the leader attracts the people around him to serve him (Jackson & Johnson, 2012).

5) The leader should have a strong cognitive ability. Cognitive ability refers to the ability of the human brain to process, store and extract information, that is, the ability of people to build things, the relationship between performance and other things, the power of development, the direction of development and the basic rules. It is the most important psychological condition for the successful completion of activities. The abilities of perception, memory, attention, thinking and imagination are all perceived as cognitive

abilities. Gagné and Deci (2005) proposed three cognitive abilities: speech information, intellectual skills, and cognitive strategies. Cognitive ability is the ability to measure a person's ability to learn and accomplish a job. Cognitive ability affects leadership and plays an important role in leadership.

6) The leader should have good management skills. Organizational management ability is the external comprehensive performance of a person's knowledge, quality and other basic conditions. Modern society is a huge, complex system, and most of the work is often required by a number of individuals. A leader need to be a good listener. The leaders who are good at listening to the correct opinions and suggestions of others can keep the stable development of the organization (Bass, 1985).

Attracting talents & retaining talents

7) The leader that is good at identifying and using the talents can attract and retain talents in his/her group. The leader is good at identifying and using the talent can give full scope to the talents. The ability of identifying people can make the leader effectively understand the strengths of subordinates. This ability has a certain ability to predict and judge the potential of the employees. Through this ability, leaders can make subordinates do what they are good at and create conditions for their advantage. It provides a good platform for employees to develop individuals in the organization (Cerinsek & Dolinsek, 2009).

8) A good leader's emotional management can attract and retain talents. The leader's passion, humbleness and forgiving is the emotional management for the leader. Managers can become leaders of excellence through the control of emotions. Emotion refers to the short and strong reactions of individuals to the relationship between the needs and the objective things. A good leader's emotional management can affect the mood of the employee and affect the performance level in the enterprise or organization (Goleman, 2006).

9) The leader knows how and when to reward and punish to make the talents join his/her group. Reward is an effective incentive. It has been used by the leaders from ancient times to the present. Incentives can mobilize the enthusiasm of the staff, encourage morale and improve the performance of the enterprise. Rewards are the identification of employees' work and personal values (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

10) The leader with his/her renown can make the talents join his/her group. The Halo Effect is one of the qualities of a person, or some characteristic of an item that gives a very good impression. Under the influence of this impression, people will give better evaluation to the other qualities of the person, or the other features of the item. It is a factor that affects interpersonal perception (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977).

11) The leader provides good and clear career paths can retain the talents in the group. A good organizational goal provides a direction for the development of the organization. Enterprises or organizations provide good and clear career paths could make employees feel space for growth and development, so that employees can feel optimistic about their career development prospects, and achieve greater self-satisfaction and job satisfaction (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010; Scullion & Collings, 2011).

12) The leader is assuring of justice and mercy can retain the talents. As mentioned earlier, justice and mercy are important to leaders. Justice is one important part of organization culture and organization environment. Organizational justice is divided into fairness within the organization and equity outside the organization. Justice within the organization is aimed at employees within the organization. It provides a fair working environment for employees within the organization, which includes fair pay, promotions,

personal development and many other aspects. Justice outside the organization is to give equal treatment to the recruitment and attraction of external talents. Justice for the organization could enhance employees' sense of organizational identity, and improve the image of the organization (Dutton, et al., 1994).

13) The leader utilizing good payment can retain the talents in their work. As an important part of the human resource management system, compensation management is the most concerned content of top management and all employees. It is directly related to the effectiveness of human resource management and the overall performance of enterprises. A flexible and effective salary system plays an important role in motivating employees and maintaining the stability of employees. The establishment of a good salary system will help to retain employees. Employees want their salary to be relative to their performance. The main reason for employees leaving is that the employees do not see the link between salary and performance (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Application

1. As a leader in Chinese history, Cao Cao's leadership had a very important reference to modern managers. The modern leaders can improve their own personal strengths based on their own circumstances and the wisdom of the ancients.
2. Ancient Chinese had a lot of strategies and methods to attract and retain talents. This is an important reference for organizations and the companies. The leader in the organization or the company should attract and retain talent to meet the needs of the organization.
3. With the change of the times, people's thinking has also changed. But following the law of the development of things, it is always inseparable from this rule. The summary and application of past events can help managers avoid mistakes in future work.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. This study introduced Cao Cao's leadership attributes from the Record of Three Kingdoms. The Record of Three Kingdoms recorded other warlords, and each of them utilized different leadership attributes to be successful, e.g., Liu Bei and Sun Quan. It is suggested that there should be an in-depth study on the leadership attributes for other warlords.
2. This study suggests that Cao Cao attracted his talent by promising a good future, but the researcher has not explored the details of how he promised a good future to his talent. It is suggested that there should be an in-depth study on how he promised a good future.
3. Cao Cao had good management skills for managing his talent and he was good at identifying and utilizing his talent in his organization. The researcher did not explore how he was good at identifying the talents and utilizing the talents in his organization. There should be an in-depth study on how Cao Cao could identify and utilize good and credible talents in the organization.

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