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BUSINESS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT: EXPLORATION OF PROFESSIONAL-ORIENTED SUBJECT UNDER THE DISCIPLINE OF INFORMATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Chen Chenwei
PhD, School of Economics and Management, Yunnan Technical College of Industry, Kunming, China

ABSTRACT
This study provided a brief introduction to the discipline of Information Resource Management (Former Name: Library & Information & Archive Management) and the subject of Business Information Management along with its background in Mainland China. Further, a tentative exploration for designing a professional-oriented Model Curriculum of Master in Business Information Management was given for the future development of Business Information Management in Mainland China.
KEYWORDS: *Business Information Management; Professional-oriented; Information Resource Management; Mainland China*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of the wave of informatization, today has become “digital age”, and people are paying more and more attention to effective management of information or data itself. Therefore, the demand for information management talents in society is also increasing (Garg, 2015). In the past few decades of higher education in Mainland China, the discipline of Library & Information & Archive Management (LIAM) has always undertaken the important task of cultivating information management talents for society. A necessity is felt to solve a long-standing dilemma and create a new kind of academic program by connecting theory with practice. Recent years in some typical foreign countries, Library and Information Science (LIS) education presents three distinct characteristics, namely, the first is that most countries have renamed the “Library and Information Science” discipline as “Information Management” or “Information Resource Management (IRM)”; the second is that postgraduate level gradually becomes the major part of LIS academic education to encourage the admission of students with other discipline backgrounds, that is, to let students learn the knowledge of LIS after systematically mastering the knowledge of a certain subject before Master level study so that they can be better qualified for the actual professional work; the third is that the classification of secondary majors under the discipline of LIS is becoming more and more diverse (Oluwabunmi & Babajide, 2024).

On March 18, 2011, the Academic Degrees Committee, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of People’s Republic of China jointly held the inaugural meeting of the National Professional Degree Graduate Education Steering Committee. Since then, National Committee on Masters of Library and Information Science has been established. The following year, pilot project to begin integrated program of Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) were launched (Xu & Li, 2011). To meet current and future demands of job market, it appeared to be a kind of degree program emphasizes on professional competences training of information management. On September 14, 2022, the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and the Ministry of Education in Mainland China released the "Catalogue of Graduate Education Disciplines and Majors (2022)", in which the first level discipline "Library & Information & Archive Management" was renamed "Information Resource Management".

With the development of LIAM (or IRM) subject in Mainland China over the past decade, many universities in China have started to offer “Master of Information Resource Management” or “Master of Library and Information Science” offering subordinate disciplinary subjects such as financial data analysis, e-commerce services, management information system, information policy and law, enterprise competitive intelligence and so on.

2. PROFESSIONAL-ORIENTED SUBJECT: BUSINESS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Today all knowledge is interdisciplinary. This has been duly considered. Flexible and interactive models have been presented for the universities to extend them further as they would like. Each institution may have to work out certain uniform structures for courses at the same level, so that effective interaction between subjects and faculties is possible (Lihitkar, 2013).

Business Information Management is an emerging interdisciplinary major under the first-level discipline of Information Resource Management (or Library & Information & Archive Management). The major of Business Information Management is mainly aimed at cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents with comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, and physical fitness in the information age, including basic knowledge of mathematics science, management science, economic science and information technology science. The graduates of this major can proficiently apply the basic principles and methods of information technology and modern management science to deal with practical problems in business information management of enterprises (Michele & Bobbie & Dale, 2024). The graduates of Business Information Management have strong abilities in market analysis, market development, marketing planning, business communication, customer service, etc. They can engage in positions such as enterprise information management, marketing information management, customer information management, and online store operation with both morality and talent, sustainable development, innovative spirit, and practical ability. At present, in Mainland China, the construction of this major has not yet formed a systematic and specialized system.

3. MODEL CURRICULUM OF BUSINESS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Based on the reference of other universities' master's programs in Information Resource Management, this study provides an exploratory training plan for a professional-oriented master's program in Business Information Management. Following is the Model Curriculum which is consist of eight parts:

Training Objectives

To educate students to love their country and culture, have good professional ethics and a realistic attitude of career, and keep good physical and mental health.

To train students in professional knowledge and skills of business information management, and equip them with the comprehensive application of Management, Mathematics, Laws, Business and Information Technologies to solve practical problems in business information management professional work.

To provide students with research ability training in the field of Management Science.
To equip students with the ability of at least one foreign language for them to read professional foreign literature.

Duration for Academic Program

The academic program is semester-based. The minimum length of study shall be two years, and the maximum shall not exceed four years. The exact length can be decided by academic institutions.

Training Mode

The academic program adopts a full-time training mode that combines course learning, practical teaching, and degree thesis. The teaching mode of professional courses adopts a combination method of standard teaching mode and research-discussion mode, which is also supplemented with other additional methods such as simulation training, internships, team learning, and social surveys.

Required Courses

Students are required to obtain 62 credits for course work and complete four special links (S-1; S-2; S-3; S-4) during the whole academic program. Every credit equals to 18 teaching hours.

Paper Code	Courses	Credits	Note
LIS-01	Socialist Theory and Practice with Chinese Characteristics	2	
LIS-02	Marxism and Methodology of Social Science	2	
LIS-03	Mathematics Foundation of Management Science	4	Core
LIS-04	Information Management	4	Core
LIS-05	E-Business	4	Core
LIS-06	Advanced Programming Language	4	Core
LIS-07	First Foreign Language	2	
LIS-08	Information Analysis	4	Core
LIS-09	Managerial Operations Research	4	Core
LIS-10	Database Technology	4	Core
LIS-11	Information Retrieval	4	Core
LIS-12	Competitive Intelligence	4	Core
LIS-13	Social Network Analysis	3	
LIS-14	Business Data Mining	3	
LIS-15	Financial Econometrics	4	
LIS-16	Artificial Intelligence	4	
LIS-17	Information Law	4	
LIS-18	Employment Guidance and Personality Development	2	
S-1	Dissertation opening report	---	
S-2	Dissertation mid-term report	---	
S-3	Practical Training (90 days)	---	
S-4	Dissertation (Final)	---	

Assessment Mode

The assessment methods of professional courses mainly adopt standardized testing, research reports, and project assignment methods. The internal assessment results account for 20% to 30% of the total scores, and the final scores are calculated on a hundred-mark system.

Evaluation method for four special links: Four scales grading system shall be adopted for the evaluation of special links, namely, “Excellent”, “Middle”, “Pass” and “Failed”.

Professional Practice

The professional practice is mainly to let students apply knowledge of theoretical courses into practical work and to teach students relevant knowledge of business information management.

The professional practice should not be less than 90 days, which can be carried out in the qualified private or public sectors in the way of the combination of centralized and segmented practice. The evaluation committee of department shall finally give the grade based on the comprehensive evaluation of students’ practice performance and practice report.

Dissertation

Students are required to read at least 30 literatures on the topics related to their thesis and research direction, including 10 literatures in foreign languages, and write a literature overview report during the “S-1 Dissertation opening report”.

Thesis must be written in a systematic and complete manner, presenting clear concepts, correct argument, realistic description, concise writing structure, smooth writing style, correct calculation, reliable data, and clear icons. Furthermore, the findings presented in the thesis should have higher theoretical value and positive impact on the development of profession.

Only after the students pass all coursework along with the S-1 & 2 & 3 link will they be allowed to enter the final stage of the thesis defense. Thesis should be written based on the students’ own study and research. Students are required to conduct at least one year of research for the dissertation. The final dissertation must be reviewed and judged as per specific regulations of concerned university and National Education Ministry.

Diploma and Degree Awarded

Master of Business Information Management program will adopt "Dual-Certificate" system which contains "Graduation Diploma" and "Academic Degree".

Students can only get credits if they scored more than 60 points for each academic course with credits (Full mark is 100). In addition, minimum level "Pass" is required for S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 links. Only if the above conditions are met, concerned student will be able to be awarded Graduation Diploma. In case candidates want to be awarded Master degree, they should meet all the following conditions:

(1) The concerned student needs to fulfill all the requirements for the award of Graduation Diploma.

(2) The average credit score ($\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} Marks_{(Coursei)} \times Credits_{(Coursei)}}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} Credits_{(Coursei)}}$) of all courses inside the "Core Course" group must be higher than 75.

(3) The concerned student shall pass S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4 four links with level not lower than "Middle".

(4) Student is required to publish at least one research article related to the final dissertation topic in provincial or national professional journal before S-4 link.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The talent cultivation model for Business Information Management should abandon the traditional model that focuses on cultivating students' academic research abilities, and at the same time, place more emphasis on an educational model that emphasizes both vocational application skills and academic research skills. As an interdisciplinary major closely related to Information Resource Management, in addition to focusing on core courses of Information Resource Management, it is also necessary to introduce and integrate courses from fields such as business and artificial intelligence in the design process of educational training plans. The Model Curriculum proposed in this study can not only be used as the reference for universities in Mainland China, but also for other international universities.

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