Recommendations for Evidence-based Thinking on Migrant Worker Training

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Abstract Evidence-based thinking originates from the United States. It stresses combination of actual facts and practical experience of managers to find out optimal evidence and make decisions accordingly. Migrant worker is a unique concept of China. Migrant workers are essential parts of industrial forces. However, due to limitation of their quality, they generally fail to bring into play their important function in the industry chain. At present, there are many problems in training models of migrant workers, leading to failure to raise their employment ability. This study is expected to introduce the evidence-based thinking into the building of training models for migrant workers, to provide recommendations for migrant worker training, raise efficiency of migrant worker training, and so as to bring into play important function of migrant workers in socialist construction of China.

Key words Evidence-based thinking, Migrant workers, Training models, Recommendations

1 Basic concepts

1.1 Evidence-based thinking
Evidence-based thinking originates from medicine field in the United States. Professor David L Sackett elaborated definition of evidence based medicine: "the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of the individual patient. It means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research."[1] In 2006, Professor Rousseau stated that evidence-based thinking is a management thinking turning the best scientific evidence into organization practice[2]; John Boudreau from Harvard University and Ravin Jesuthasan from Towers Watson Company stated that evidence based thinking includes logical thinking drive, talent segmentation, risk utilizing, talent investment combination, and human resource optimization[3]. In sum, we define evidence-based thinking is a thinking mode taking the best evidence available as basis and critically applying the best evidence available to decisions.

1.2 Migrant worker training model

1.2.1 Migrant workers.
Academic circle has made extensive researches on definition of the migrant worker. Some scholars consider migrant workers as special group in the process of industrialization of China, essential part of China's labor group, and play an important role in social construction of China. Some scholars define migrant workers as workers engaged in non-agricultural production having rural household registration and living in cities for a long time[4]. In this study, we define migrant workers as worker groups with rural household registration, not engaged in agricultural production, living in cities for a long time, and conducting spontaneous work to satisfy their survival and development. These worker groups have following characteristics: (i) workers have rural household registration; (ii) workers live in cities for a long time; (iii) workers are not engaged in traditional agriculture any more, but engaged in production and operation like urban workers, to satisfy their demands.

1.2.2 Migrant worker training model.
Training of general human resource management includes pre-job training and on-the-job training. The pre-job training is to provide necessary skills for pre-employment workers, while on-the-job training is to provide new job knowledge and skills for workers to make them constantly adapt to demands of their jobs. These trainings are mainly carried out by in-house human resource development and related training institutions. Combining with characteristics of migrant workers and general training theories, we define migrant worker training as short-term education carried out by relevant enterprises or training institutions for migrant workers in employment skills of non-agricultural production, to help them become qualified for job demands. This process mainly refers to pre-job training of migrant workers. Migrant worker training model is a fixed model established in the process of migrant worker training, including subjects, objects, objectives, mechanisms, structure, and effect of training[5].

2 Characteristics of migrant worker training models with reference to evidence-based thinking

2.1 High specialization level of training mechanism
Subjects of migrant worker training mainly include government departments, enterprises, private training institutions, and some social organizations. In traditional migrant worker training models, specialization level of training subjects is relatively low. Many personnel engaged in migrant worker training are not professional. They do not have proficient skills, let alone provide training for others. This leads to course setting of migrant worker training is usually carried out with reference to experience and intuition. Training

content is separated from labor market, so it is difficult to reach expected effect. The evidence-based thinking on migrant worker training models stresses government departments, enterprises and private training organizations, enterprises, and private training institutions can build a migrant worker training team with high specialization level and solid professional knowledge. This requires every team member must grasp theoretical knowledge and practical skills of training, and should provide systematic and practical training for migrant workers before conducting migrant worker training, to make training courses more specialized and close to current situations of labor market, close to work practice of migrant workers, and get rid of thinking model of relying on subjective experience.

2.2 High integration and coordination of training subjects

Traditional migrant worker training model can be divided into three types according to nature of training subjects: (i) government departments leading training model; (ii) private training institutions leading model; (iii) in-house human resource department leading training model. Government department leading training has large scale, wide coverage, dose not need funds. However, in actual process of training, it usually leads to excessive administration, and training content is also difficult to be put into practice due to excessive wide and not specific. Compared with government department, private training institutions are small and need high expenses, but the training content is pertinent and close to labor market. Pre-job training provided by enterprises is highly practically, but most enterprises ignore pre-job training due to saving operating cost. Even there is pre-job training, the training content is just some basic content and does not have much practical significance. In traditional training model, three training subjects act separately. As a result, training content is highly repeated and wastes huge resources. It is difficult to bring into play advantages of three subjects and finally leads to no optimum effect of training. In contrast, the evidence-based thinking stresses integration and coordination. This means three parties should perform their own duties according to their characteristics, strengthen mutual communication and cooperation, and bring into play their advantages, to reach the effect of "1 + 1 + 1 > 3".

2.3 Segmentation of training objects

In this study, the training objects refer to migrant workers. Talent segmentation is to determine different training implementation courses through making clear differences between migrant workers. Traditional migrant worker training neglects regional economic level, migrant worker educational level, and age. In training methods and content, uniformity is always imposed. Different migrant workers receive the similar training. As a result, it is impossible to satisfy demands of migrant workers and difficult to make migrant workers become interested in accepting training. The evidence-based thinking of migrant worker training model focuses on segmentation of migrant workers according to different criteria and formulates different courses to satisfy demands of different migrant workers according to characteristics of each segmented migrant worker group. Taking

economic development level as an example, there is a great gap between eastern and western areas. In areas with lower economic development level, more farmers choose to do migrant work. Therefore, for training demands of western areas, training content should be different from eastern areas in the volume and abundance, rather than no difference.

3 Recommendations for evidence-based thinking on migrant worker training

3.1 Improving specialization level of migrant worker training

Firstly, it is recommended to accelerate reform of personnel system of migrant worker vocational training organizations, and select and employ specialized talents for the society. As specialized training personnel, it is recommended to have in-depth understanding of basic knowledge and practice, to accurately grasp situation of labor market, understand practical demands of different types of migrant workers, make training courses get accepted by more migrant workers, and improve the correlation between course setting and employment of migrant workers. Secondly, China should improve supervision and assessment mechanism of relevant training institutions and establish a complete set of training monitoring system. Currently, apart from training provided by the state, other trainings are excessively utilitarian in training implementation, leading to low training specialization level, inadequate course setting and teacher level, difficult to bring into play training function of migrant workers. Therefore, the state should improve monitoring and examination mechanism of training institutions, make objective, standardized and scientific evaluation and assessment on practical ability of training institutions, to raise specialization level of training institutions. Finally, it is recommended to energetically bring into play functions of scientific research institutions and colleges and universities, and combine evidence-based thinking theories and practice, to form best evidence for decision making. Scientific research institutions and colleges and universities with agricultural management discipline are indispensible in the process of migrant worker training. Therefore, migrant worker training should fully rely on academy of agricultural sciences and agricultural universities, integrate specialized resources of scientific research institutions and universities, build specialized migrant worker vocational training bases, arrange related training personnel of training institutions to receive certain practical exercise, improve practical operation ability, and further improve their specialization level.

3.2 Cultivating evidence-based thinking for training subjects

Firstly, it is recommended to cultivate logical analysis thinking of training subjects. In the big data time, traditional management thinking is already unable to cope with the problem of information overload. This requires that training subjects should effectively utilize data related to employment of migrant workers and explore hidden information with logical analysis thinking, and take such information as basis of setting courses of migrant worker training. Secondly, it is recommended to segment migrant work-

ers, to realize education of migrant workers in accordance with actual situations, and save education resources. Training should adopt different training methods, course setting and course quantity in accordance with demands of different migrant workers. For example, for new generation migrant workers with high comprehensive quality, it is feasible to provide specialized training in appropriate guidance and subsidy manner; for old migrant workers with weak cultural foundation, it is recommended to provide them with some basic vocational training[6]; training personnel should change attitude toward risk. Here, risk mainly refers to unbalance between income and cost. To avoid the problem of cost exceeding income, many private training institutions or enterprises generally carry out migrant worker training perfunctorily. In order to transform such phenomenon, training institutions and enterprises should deeply analyze and ponder over the income and cost, find out new methods to raise their benefits and enhance migrant worker training effect. Finally, it is recommended to strengthen training personnel in optimizing investment concept with reference to evidence-based thinking of training subjects. Migrant workers are also important human capital. Therefore, we should provide reasonable input for them, utilize such capital in a scientific manner, and optimize capital management model, to promote optimum use of investment.

3.3 Establishing multiple cooperation mechanism for migrant worker training

At present, subjects of migrant worker training mainly include government, private training organizations and enterprises. In traditional training model, these subjects have little cooperation and communication and basically perform training separately, so it is difficult to reach the optimal training effect. The evidence-based thinking of migrant worker training focuses on improving efficiency. Training subjects should complement each other, while training objects should promptly feed back training effect, to facilitate training subjects to constantly improve training model. Firstly, government should play the role of guidance and safeguarding in the process of migrant worker training. Government should energetically propagate the importance of migrant worker training, and let more migrant workers to realize significance of training for their employment. Besides, government should provide essential laws, regulations, and rules for operation of migrant worker training, and avoid bad phenomenon of migrant worker training to practically safeguard rights of migrant workers through banning illegal training organizations. Secondly, private training institutions, as essential part of migrant worker training, should provide suitable training courses according to demands of labor market and regulations and rules formulated by government. Besides, training institutions should provide pre-job training for personnel engaged in migrant worker training, and make performance assessment for training personnel, to ensure specialization level of training personnel. In addition, enterprises should take migrant worker training as their obligations, provide pre-job training and on-the-job training for migrant workers, properly arrange time of migrant worker training, and provide certain training subsidies. Finally, as objects of training, migrant workers should realize the significance of training, actively participate in related training, to improve their employment skills, and feed back their experience of training to training subjects, to help training subjects to constantly improve training content, training methods, and training quality[7].

3.4 Promoting innovation and reform of migrant worker training model

Constant development of big data will make migrant worker training model take on an entirely new look. This requires training personnel can utilize new technologies such as big data and Internet to realize migrant worker training adapt to times and become more efficient. According to evidence-based thinking, training subjects should get rid of traditional thinking and increase operating efficiency of migrant worker training with the aid of advanced technologies in the big data time. Firstly, it is recommended to take agricultural scientific research institutions and agricultural colleges and universities as carriers to establish training bases, so as to apply the latest research findings to training practice.

It is recommended to encourage and guide training personnel to combine theories and practice, to satisfy demands of migrant workers to the maximum extent[8]. Secondly, the state should create new atmosphere for innovation through appropriate policy guidance and higher fund subsidies, and encourage private training institutions and enterprises to utilize big data and Internet technologies, weed out the old and bring forth the new, and innovate upon migrant worker training model, to constantly reduce training costs of migrant workers and increase migrant worker training efficiency. Finally, migrant workers also should realize significance of reform of training model, especially old migrant workers, change their conservative ideas, actively accept new training content, training methods, and adapt to new training model. Only in this way, may it be possible to ensure constant advance in innovation of migrant worker training model.

4 Conclusions

Migrant workers play a great role in current social development. Enhancing migrant worker training is not only requirement for promoting urbanization process, but also requirement of building a harmonious society. Evidence-based thinking is a type of new management thinking and is of great significance for reform of current migrant worker training model. Through optimizing investment of migrant worker human capital, it is expected to increase its utilization efficiency. Now, to achieve this objective faster in higher efficiency, it is recommended to change the thinking model of traditional migrant worker training, cultivate evidence-based thinking, make talent segmentation of migrant workers through raising specialization level of training institutions, and promote reform of traditional migrant worker training model through consolidating training subjects, realize smarter, more reasonable and more scientific training, and constantly increase training efficiency, and maximally bring into play significant function of migrant workers for the whole society.

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