

Analysis of Distance Education Model in Chinese University

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Abstract —*This article described the meaning of Chinese scholars' analysis on the modern distance education models. At the same time, the models were classified from different dimensions. From the point of if there are other parties involved in the process, it will be divided into independent model and cooperation model, intermediary service model. From the point of the host university's management system it will be divided into first management model and second management model. From the point of Network Education's operating system it will be divided into company Operation model and Institutions operating model.*

Index Terms — *modern distance education, school-running model, university;*

Modern distance education has been processed ten years and carried out more fruitful results. The model as a core element of modern distance education development has been a hot and difficult problem concerned by industry and academic research. In China's 68 universities which carry our pilot project, the development of modern distance education shows a difference and character degree, especially embodied in running model. Most of these universities combined with their own traditions, educational philosophy and orientation have processed useful exploration and practice on modern distance education model, which have a strong impetus to the continuous enrichment and evolution of China's modern distance education model. .

The Meaning of Model

There are many researches on the school-running model. In this thesis we hold Chinese scholars' point as the main point and make a review and refine on the school-running model which is the basis of our discussion about modern distance education model. Zhao Qingdian insists that school-running model is a system engineering consisting of many elements. School system, investment system, management system, recruitment and graduate employment system and the internal management structure are all the important parts of the school and play a constraint role in school-running. The lack of any one of the main aspects will impact on school's quality and efficiency, or even threaten the survival of the school. Therefore, in addition to the perspective of the multi-model, it should be integrated from a systematical perspective to study model. The school-running model is an abstract of the practice of objective school-running. Generally speaking, the school-running model is holding management or running school's institutions and mechanisms of the style or pattern. In practice, the school-running model includes both the broad and narrow sense. Broad model includes macro, meso, micro

levels. Macro model means a country or region's normative behavior or a general concept of school running; meso model is the standard behavior of school running, or the combination of school management system, financial system and the management of operational mechanism. Micro-model mainly refers to the process of school organization and the norms of teaching or teaching system, structure and operation mechanism. Here the statement including many government documents refers to the broad concept of the model.

Yao Yun reputes that higher education running model is a typical paradigm under the guidance of the organization of higher education, consisting of the organization of higher education, managers and operators' distribution of power and the operating mechanism.

Li Fengqi believes that the school-running model is under the guidance of idea which is gradually built up in practice with examples model operation; It is an important part of open educational system. The school-running model is a relatively broader and more flexible concept.

Liu Changping holds that the school-running model is according to certain guidelines. To accomplish the established goals, elements will be designed in stable composition and active process to constitute a comprehensive strategy system. It is the way and characteristics and rules of school-running, reflecting the theoretical framework of procedure.

Pan Maoyuan, Wu Daguang said that higher education model is defined under certain historical conditions guided by some ideas and formed standardized structure and mechanisms in practice. It is a stable power structure and focuses on the relationships among school-running system, investment system, management system and universities. Higher education model has a direct relationship with a country's political, economic, and cultural traditions, embodying profound historical inheritance. However, because of people's different understanding of the model, the logical starting points for their researches are different. The perspectives of the researches are mainly from two dimensions, One starts from a macroscopic system of higher education, to discuss school systems of higher education, investment and management systems; the other is the higher one from the microscopic point to explore its operation status.

Luo Li considers that the school-running model refers to the operators of investment and business model, operating philosophy and management system, personnel training objectives and training model, educational philosophy and teaching model, enrollment patterns, and other specialty organic combination of the overall operation patterns.

Sun Yong claims that, Higher education running model refers to the university in a certain social and institutional constraints and under the control of certain educational goals with a specific structure formed by the operation of certain operating mechanism, and it has some typical characteristics of school-running model or pattern. Elements of Higher education running model at the macro level, involving the value of the pursuit of higher education, policy orientation, education system and structure; at the micro level, each of the universities is involved in educational philosophy, training objectives, management system, organizational structure and operation mechanism which mainly consists of the objective elements, structural elements, institutional elements.

So, "school-running model" is a broad and yet to be developed and perfected concept. In this thesis we from the perspective of an integrated use of the concept, mainly from the points of the school system, investment system, management system, and operation mechanism, so as to explore China's modern distance education model.

The modern Distance Education Model and Its Classification

Modern Distance Education in China originated in the general higher education, the initiator and the main body is 68 colleges and universities, which make this model inevitably be affected by higher education in those schools' guiding ideology, values, policy direction, running practice. And this also brings a certain level of convergence to the macro model. However, as the educational philosophy, target location, management system, organizational structure and operating mechanisms of each host university are different, meanwhile, the modern distance education as a new thing, is still in the pilot. China's education administration department has less restrictive polices and holds an, innovating attitude

to the active exploration of its development. Therefore, distance education model displays flexibility and diversity. In micro level investment system, management system, operation mechanism and so on reflected in the school system, are different.

To use an established standard of modern distance education model for clear delineation is not realistic. Below, view of the current modern distance education pilot's several existing typical approaches in practice and if there are other parties involved in the process of hosting the university's management system, network and operating mechanism of the colleges on Modern Distance Education Running model processed a preliminary classification.

Whether the Process is Involved in Other Parties

Higher Education's Independent Model. The host university should make full use of its own power (financial, technical, personnel) to invest in online education, build distance education management platform, open up and construct its teaching resources, and also host the traditional university's teaching management in distance education teaching. In the process of running the campus learning center in which the outside university participates as a partner. Therefore, the model with a strong university flavor is the host university model's continuity and development. The model inherits the host university's cultural heritage, management and quality standards, and it requires a higher level of the host university, which must have enough strength, good running brand, rich education resources. Besides their upfront investment of the host university needs more money and high degree techniques. (Figure 1) Since the model achieves a goal which is highly concentrated by the host colleges and universities, it plays a promoting role in guaranteeing teaching quality and establishing a school brand. However, pre-market development will also encounter difficulties in managing the late running system which is too rigid and lack flexibility and autonomy. At present, Tsinghua University, Huazhong University of Science are in this kind of model.

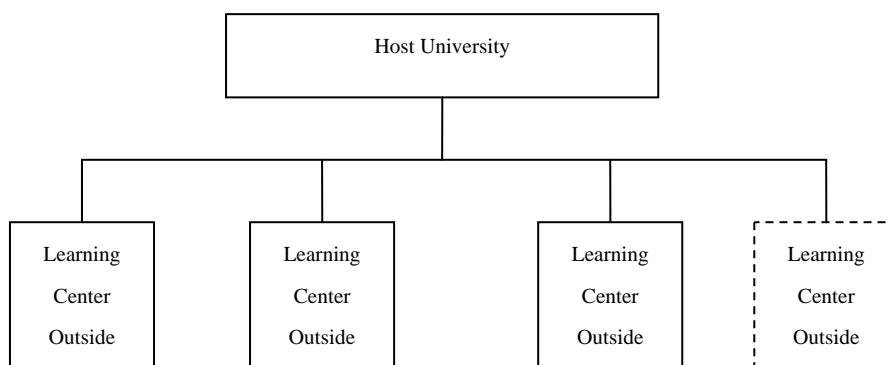


FIGURE 1: Independent Model

University Cooperative Model. Pilot institutions and enterprises establish a cooperation alliances relationship to build networks of Education for risk-sharing and benefit-sharing. Pilot is responsible for teaching academic institutions, business side of capital, technology, equipment, etc. The clear division between schools and enterprises is that enterprises built on strengths and easily managed in commercial and professional division of labor can provide services to distance education, it is beneficial to both resource integration and operation of the market. In China, Hunan University and Hunan Telecom established China's first online university. (Figure 2)

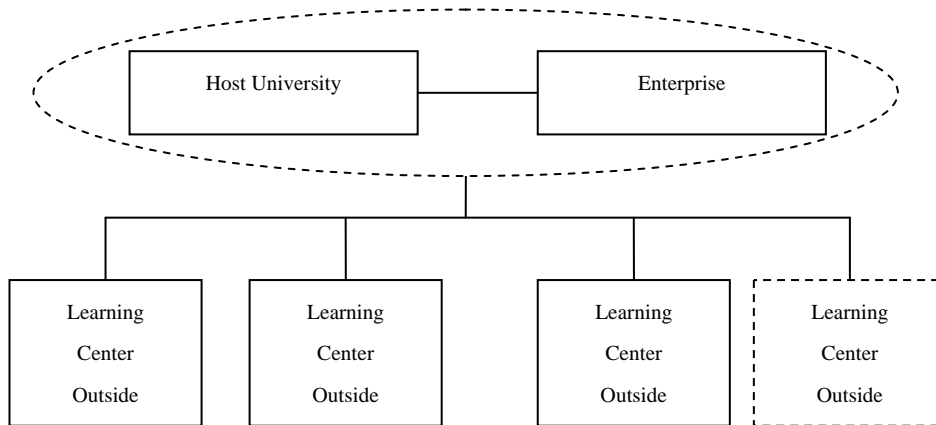


FIGURE 2: College Cooperative Model

Of course, the university cooperative model is not only limited to cooperation between universities and enterprises but also colleges and universities can cooperate. China's national Teacher Education Network Union is a good exploration form. This kind of model takes the parts of Teachers College and other University's teacher education as the main body, the high-level university as the core, the regional teacher learning and resource center as the main source of the supporting service, social forces participate in, through construct the network system of teacher education covering urban and rural areas, sharing high-quality educational resources to meet the different regions and different levels of primary and secondary school teachers in a variety of educational needs. Although this model currently used in special areas and special populations, because it focuses on resources sharing, and avoids low-level duplicated construction, it can be expected to arouse wide attention in the near future, and the application of it will further be expanded.

Intermediation Services Model. In recent years, Ao Peng, Hong Cheng, Zhi Jin are representatives of the public service system. A new type of modern distance education model is getting into our vision, and continues to thrive. This model is different from the above two models,] in that the host university level in the traditional sense is no longer a certain college, but many colleges and universities integrate educational resources, to form a coalition similar to the university union which is "school principal". Meanwhile, in addition to its direct establishment of post-school learning centers, the host university, relying on the public service system platform established the market service system under the public-school learning centers. These learning centers function as an educational "supermarket" to provide educational resources of the different colleges and universities to learners disaggregated free choice. (Figure 3) The biggest advantage s of this model are the followings : The first, the university can free from market development and services support, so that they can focus on their expertise in teaching, which is beneficial to improve the quality of education; The second, low level of duplication of resources technology can be avoided ; The third, professional manner which is conducive to outstanding educational advantages of universities can help to build a number of professional courses and brands.

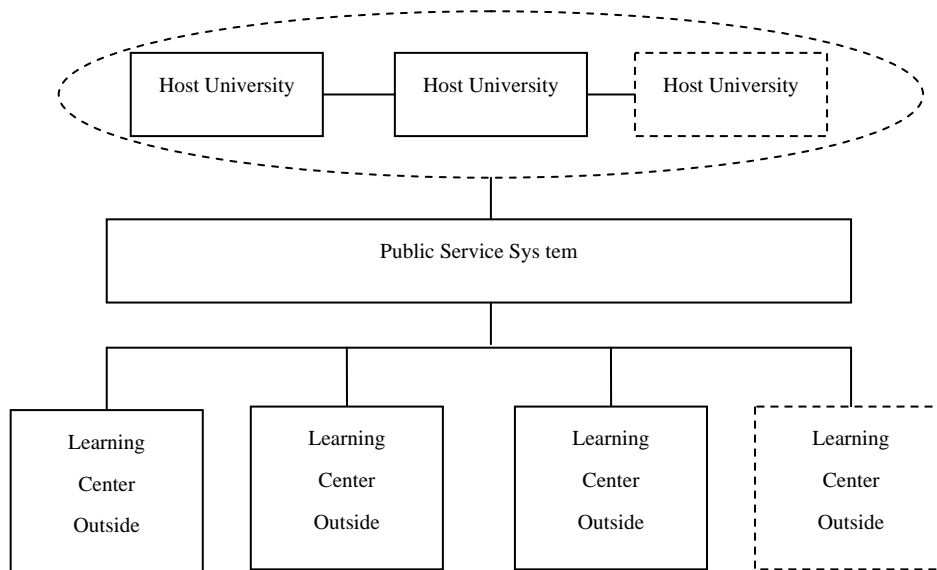


FIGURE 3 intermediation services model

Management System Organized by Host University

First Level Management Model. Within the host university, the network of Chinese Higher Education as an independent set of a secondary college, on behalf of schools under the jurisdiction of the exercise of management functions of modern distance education, equivalent to a management department, also, as a school entity, it is also specifically responsible for all aspects of modern distance education. This model realizes modern distance education's high centralization of management and running, reducing obstacles of the administrative settings for information exchange and makes administrative and educational practices to achieve the maximum degree of understanding so as to effectively improve the management and operating efficiency. (Figure 4) Currently, most universities are taken such model.

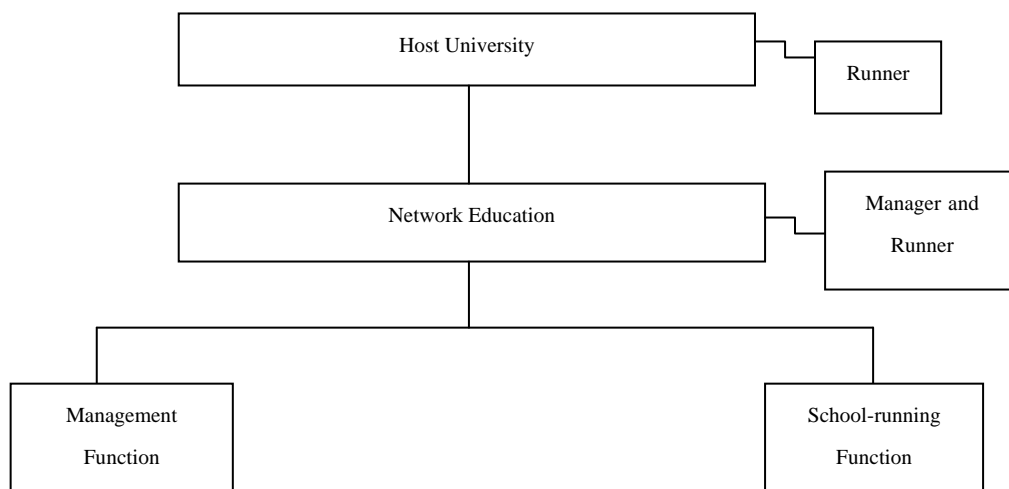


FIGURE 4 First level Management Model

Second Level Management Model. Within the host university, it will peel the administrative functions of modern distance education off network of Education and set up to separate education management. It is centralized management of the school on behalf of the school of modern distance education development. This is a purely administrative department. The main functions are exercise guide, management, supervision and other rights. Network of Education becomes a real educational entity, specifically responsible for the modern practice of Distance Education. (Figure 5) At present, China Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University, Zhongshan University and a few other universities have implemented this model. This model is based on the development of education and training of large-scale production and the performance management functions is to regulate and coordinate the education and training programs. Dangers existence in this model by stressing the normative administrative settings, which resulted in the communication barriers between management and implementation and can easily lead to information blockage or distortion of information, management and implementation level but the disagreements reduced management and running efficiency.

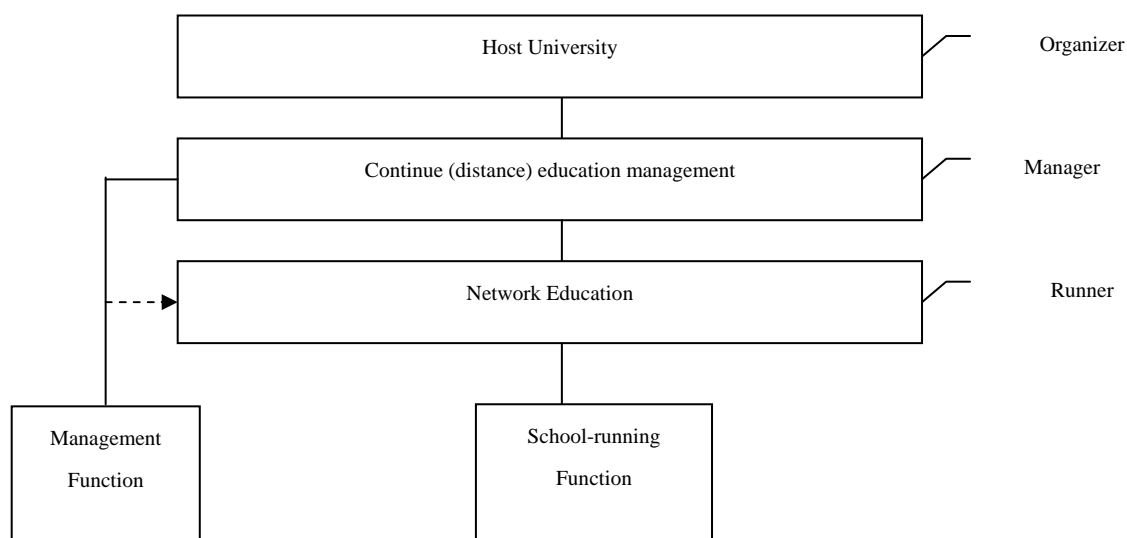


FIGURE 5: second level management model

Operating Mechanisms in School of Distance Education

Corporatization of operating model. Company Operation model, regardless of whether the host university or enterprise co-investment in network, will treat the Network Education as an enterprise (Services Sectors), to take its management structure and operating mechanism as a company. The model takes its non-teaching departments running as business operation processes. Its personnel system and financial system are in accord to the operation of modern enterprise system; although teaching management is the succession of host university's cultural traditions, but it also consults the enterprise management mechanism (including quality assurance mechanisms).

This pattern transformed the modern distance education holder, managers, operators from the traditional three-one to three separate from highly-centralized one to an appropriate decentralized one. Therefore, the network education organization structure and decision-making process need do the appropriate adjustments and restructuring. In the educational goals, principles and mission of the school's decision-making process, by the organizers, managers and

operators, formed the decision-making to discuss the school plan. Investment in the host system is transformed from a single investment to a diversified investment system. Cost-effectiveness is the main goal of the network education running process. Management system is changing with the network education system and the investment system with strong ownership and market characteristics. For example, the human management system is like a company and teacher appointment system is like a market as well as the financial system is according to the work force, teaching management becomes a system and so on. Because of the diverse of school-running system, investment system, management system companies, in the school-running process, network education relies on cost-effective as guidelines for the operation and the enterprise ISO9000 for the work quality standards. In the establishment of organizational process, the realization of core competencies of each partner's strengths complement each other, which enhanced the organization's competitiveness and the staff's sense of crisis and their response to changes in the market by rapid reaction mechanism. Internal organization and management of institutions are out of the host university system's constraints. The establishment of mechanisms and new work processes adapt to market demands. However, the model is easily affected by the market and too much emphasis on the economic benefits, while ignoring the quality of talents.

Institution Operating Model. Network education still follow the traditional management institutions as a secondary school faculty. Network education is without its own independent human resources rights and financial rights. The university as a main body of investment, sponsoring and managing, discretionary Network Distance Education Centre has overall responsibility for all aspects of school work. Network Education within the organization structure, decision-making procedures, and management methods are exactly the same with the general departments, or even as a purely administrative department to deal with. The most obvious sign is that net tuition revenue directs into the school finance, by the secondary allocated. This pattern is likely to breeding bureaucracy and cannot establish the running performance of the core assessment and incentives, resulting in awareness of cost-effectiveness. The planned economy easily causes the "iron rice bowl" phenomenon.

As mentioned above, it is difficult for China modern distance education model to be a simple division of two standards. The existing models exists cross and overlapping. For example, for the independent model in college, from the micro level, the hosting universities are taken in cooperation with the institutions outside to build campus learning center. Intermediary services in the school-running model, for each specific university is also taken with cooperate with the public service education system model, while some universities have both models. The first and secondary management model exist both independent, cooperative model and intermediary service model. The operating model also has company model and institution model. Some universities are semi-corporatization model but we not introduced here, In fact, modern distance education in some developed countries has already formed a relatively stable and efficient model, such as the U.S. University of Phoenix, Open University, all of which will provide valuable references for China Modern Distance Education.

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