

Research on the Current Situation, Pain Points and Improvement Paths of Talent Attraction in SMEs

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Abstract:As the vital force of national economic development, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an irreplaceable role in promoting economic growth, stimulating technological innovation and expanding employment channels. However, in the fierce market competition, SMEs have been in a passive position in the competition for talents, and the problem of weak talent attraction has become a key bottleneck restricting their high-quality development. Based on the perspective of business administration and human resource management, this paper combines authoritative literature data and typical enterprise cases, systematically combs the current situation of talent attraction of SMEs, deeply excavates the core pain points in the process of talent introduction, retention and development, and explores targeted and operable improvement paths. The research finds that the current talent attraction of SMEs is characterized by single talent structure, high turnover rate of core talents and low matching degree of talent supply and demand; the pain points mainly focus on insufficient competitiveness of salary and welfare, imperfect career development system, weak employer brand and inadequate human resource management mechanism; on this basis, from the four dimensions of optimizing incentive mechanism, improving career development channel, shaping characteristic employer brand and standardizing human resource management, this paper puts forward practical strategies to enhance the talent attraction of SMEs, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for solving the talent dilemma of SMEs and promoting their sustainable development.

Keywords: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises; Talent Attraction; Human Resource Management; Pain Point Analysis; Improvement Path

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In the context of economic globalization and digital transformation, talents have become the core strategic resource for enterprises to gain competitive advantages. According to the data released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China, the number of SMEs in China accounts for more than 99% of the total number of enterprises, contributing more than 60% of GDP, more than 70% of technological innovation achievements and more than 80% of urban labor employment. However, compared with large enterprises and multinational corporations, SMEs have obvious disadvantages in terms of enterprise scale,

capital strength and brand influence, which lead to their weak ability to attract high-quality talents. The State Council Development Research Center's research report shows that the average talent turnover rate of Chinese SMEs is as high as 50%, far exceeding the reasonable range of 10%-15% for enterprise talent flow, and more than 60% of SMEs face the dilemma of difficulty in recruiting and retaining talents (She Yu et al., 2023). In the international market, SMEs in Europe, America, Japan and other developed economies also generally face the challenge of talent shortage. The Japanese Management Association survey points out that more than 70% of Japanese SMEs believe that talent shortage is the primary problem restricting enterprise development, and the gap in professional and technical talents is particularly prominent.

Against this background, exploring the current situation, pain points and improvement paths of talent attraction in SMEs has important theoretical and practical significance. In theory, it can enrich the research system of human resource management for SMEs, expand the application scenarios of talent attraction theory in small and micro-sized organizational contexts, and provide new research perspectives for the field of business administration. In practice, it can help SMEs accurately identify the crux of talent attraction problems, formulate scientific and effective talent strategies, break the talent bottleneck, and then realize the improvement of comprehensive strength and sustainable development.

1.2 Research Significance

1.2.1 Theoretical Significance

Firstly, this paper integrates the theories of human capital, employer brand and career development, and constructs a theoretical analysis framework for talent attraction of SMEs, which makes up for the deficiency of previous research focusing on large enterprises and ignoring the particularity of SMEs. Secondly, based on multi-country and multi-industry case data, it carries out empirical analysis on the talent attraction of SMEs, enriches the empirical research results in this field, and provides a theoretical basis for the formulation of relevant academic theories and industrial policies. Thirdly, it explores the innovative paths of talent attraction for SMEs under the digital economy era, which provides a new theoretical reference for the reform and innovation of human resource management of SMEs.

1.2.2 Practical Significance

For SMEs, the research results can directly guide them to optimize their talent management strategies, solve the practical problems of difficult recruitment and retention, reduce the cost of talent introduction and loss, and improve the efficiency of human resource utilization. For the government, it can provide a decision-making basis for formulating targeted talent support policies for SMEs, promoting the rational allocation of social talent resources, and boosting the healthy development of the SME group. For talents, it can help them re-understand the employment value of SMEs, broaden employment channels, and realize the matching of personal career development and enterprise growth.

1.3 Research Ideas and Methods

1.3.1 Research Ideas

This paper takes "current situation analysis - pain point mining - path exploration" as the main research line. Firstly, sort out the relevant theories and literature on talent attraction of SMEs at home and abroad, clarify the research foundation and current research gaps. Secondly, through the analysis of authoritative statistical data and typical enterprise cases, grasp the overall characteristics and specific performance of the current talent attraction of SMEs. Thirdly, combine the theory of human resource management and the actual operation of SMEs to deeply analyze the core pain points and their formation mechanisms restricting talent attraction. Finally, based on the above research, put forward targeted improvement paths and safeguard measures, and summarize the research conclusions and future research prospects.

1.3.2 Research Methods

(1) Literature Research Method: Systematically collect and sort out the authoritative literature, research reports and policy documents related to SME talent management, talent attraction and human resource optimization at home and abroad, clarify the theoretical connotation and research status of relevant issues, and lay a theoretical foundation for the full text research.

(2) Case Analysis Method: Select 12 typical SMEs from manufacturing, service, technology and other industries in China, the United States, Japan and Germany, conduct in-depth research on their talent attraction practices, summarize successful experiences and failure lessons, and provide practical support for pain point analysis and path exploration.

(3) Data Analysis Method: Collect and sort out the statistical data of SME talent supply and demand, salary level, turnover rate and other aspects released by official institutions such as the National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, and international organizations such as the International Labour Organization, conduct quantitative analysis, and accurately grasp the current situation of SME talent attraction.

2. Theoretical Basis and Literature Review

2.1 Core Theoretical Basis

2.1.1 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory was first proposed by Schultz and Becker, who believed that human capital is the capital embodied in workers, such as knowledge, skills, health and experience, which can bring economic benefits to enterprises through investment. For SMEs, talents with high-quality human capital are the core driving force for enterprise innovation and development. Attracting and retaining high-quality talents is essentially an investment in human capital, which can help SMEs improve production efficiency, enhance innovation capacity and gain

market competitive advantages. This theory provides a theoretical basis for SMEs to attach importance to talent attraction and increase talent investment.

2.1.2 Employer Brand Theory

Employer brand theory holds that employer brand is the overall impression and reputation of an enterprise as an employer in the minds of internal employees and external potential talents, including salary and welfare, corporate culture, career development, work environment and other dimensions. A good employer brand can form a unique competitive advantage for enterprises in the talent market, attract potential talents initiatively, and improve the loyalty and retention rate of internal employees. For SMEs with weak brand influence, building a characteristic employer brand is an important way to break the talent attraction dilemma.

2.1.3 Career Development Theory

Career development theory emphasizes that individuals pay attention to the space for self-growth and career promotion when choosing jobs. Enterprises need to provide clear career development paths, perfect training systems and fair promotion mechanisms for employees to meet their career development needs. For SMEs, building a sound career development system can not only attract talents who pursue growth and development, but also stimulate the work enthusiasm and creativity of internal talents, and realize the win-win of individual and enterprise development.

2.2 Foreign Literature Review

Foreign research on SME talent attraction started earlier and has achieved rich results. In terms of current situation research, some scholars pointed out that SMEs in developed economies face the dual challenges of aging labor force and shortage of young technical talents, and the difficulty of talent recruitment is increasing year by year. For example, the research of the European Commission shows that more than 50% of European SMEs have difficulty in recruiting employees with professional skills, and the talent gap in high-tech fields such as information technology and new energy is particularly huge.

In terms of pain point research, foreign scholars mainly focus on the impact of enterprise scale, salary level and corporate culture on talent attraction. Storey (2016) believed that the small scale and limited resources of SMEs lead to their inability to provide competitive salary and welfare, which is the primary reason for weak talent attraction. Jackson (2018) pointed out that the imperfect human resource management system and single career development channel of SMEs make it difficult to meet the long-term development needs of talents, resulting in high talent turnover rate.

In terms of improvement path research, foreign scholars put forward strategies such as flexible employment, personalized incentives and industry-university cooperation. For example, Brown (2020) believed that SMEs can attract flexible talents by adopting flexible working systems and project-based employment modes to reduce the pressure of talent cost. Peters (2021) proposed that SMEs should carry out in-depth cooperation with

universities and vocational colleges to cultivate targeted talents and solve the problem of talent supply and demand mismatch.

2.3 Domestic Literature Review

Domestic research on SME talent attraction has gradually increased in recent years, focusing on the realistic dilemma and countermeasures of Chinese SMEs. In terms of current situation, most studies show that Chinese SMEs are in a weak position in the talent market, with single talent structure, high turnover rate of core talents, and prominent structural talent shortage. Zhou Xiaoguang (2025) pointed out that college students are more inclined to apply for large enterprises, and the number of applicants for SMEs is small, making it difficult to select high-quality talents; at the same time, the high talent turnover rate of SMEs has formed a vicious circle of "recruitment - loss - re-recruitment".

In terms of pain points, domestic scholars summarized the core problems of SME talent attraction into four aspects: insufficient salary competitiveness, imperfect career development system, weak employer brand awareness and inadequate human resource management. Some studies also pointed out that the unstable operation and poor development prospects of SMEs make talents lack a sense of security, which is also an important factor affecting talent attraction.

In terms of improvement paths, domestic scholars put forward countermeasures from the enterprise and government levels. At the enterprise level, it is proposed to optimize the salary and welfare system, shape characteristic corporate culture, and build a sound training mechanism; at the government level, it is proposed to increase policy support, improve the talent service system, and create a good talent development environment. However, the current domestic research has the problems of insufficient theoretical depth, single research perspective and weak pertinence of countermeasures, and lacks systematic and innovative research combined with the new characteristics of the digital economy era.

2.4 Research Review

In summary, domestic and foreign scholars have carried out fruitful research on SME talent attraction, which provides a theoretical reference and practical basis for this paper. However, there are still some deficiencies: firstly, most studies focus on a single dimension of talent attraction, and lack a systematic analysis framework of "current situation - pain point - path"; secondly, the research on the particularity of talent attraction of SMEs in different industries and regions is insufficient, and the universality of conclusions is weak; thirdly, the innovative paths of talent attraction under the background of digital transformation and industrial upgrading are less explored. Based on this, this paper makes up for the above deficiencies through multi-case comparative analysis and multi-dimensional theoretical integration, and carries out in-depth and systematic research on SME talent attraction.

3. Current Situation of Talent Attraction in SMEs

3.1 Overall Characteristics of Talent Attraction in SMEs

Combined with authoritative data and case research, the current talent attraction of SMEs at home and abroad presents three distinct characteristics. Firstly, the overall talent attraction is weak, and it is difficult to compete with large enterprises in the talent market. According to the 2024 China SME Talent Management Report, only 18.7% of SMEs can recruit the required high-quality talents smoothly, while more than 70% of large enterprises can meet their talent needs. In the international market, the US Small Business Administration survey shows that more than 60% of American SMEs believe that they are at a disadvantage in competing for talents with large enterprises.

Secondly, the talent structure is single, and the shortage of high-end and technical talents is prominent. Most of the talents employed by SMEs are general administrative and production personnel, while professional and technical talents, innovative R&D talents and senior management talents are seriously scarce. The data from the State Council Development Research Center shows that the proportion of senior technical and management personnel in SMEs is only 3.2%, far lower than the 11.5% of large enterprises. In Japan, more than 80% of SMEs face a shortage of skilled workers, and the talent gap in manufacturing SMEs is particularly serious.

Thirdly, the talent mobility is high, and the retention rate is low. The average talent turnover rate of SMEs is much higher than that of large enterprises, and the retention period of core talents is generally 1-2 years. A survey of Chinese manufacturing SMEs shows that the annual turnover rate of technical backbones is as high as 35%, and the loss of core talents leads to the interruption of enterprise R&D projects and production plans, causing huge losses to enterprises.

3.2 Industry Differences in Talent Attraction of SMEs

The talent attraction of SMEs varies significantly in different industries. Among them, high-tech SMEs have relatively strong talent attraction due to their flexible mechanism and broad development prospects, but they still face the problem of insufficient high-end R&D talents. For example, a "specialized, refined, differential and innovative" small giant enterprise in the electronic information industry in Shenzhen has a monthly salary of 15,000-20,000 yuan for R&D engineers, but it still takes an average of 3 months to recruit suitable talents, and the annual turnover rate of R&D talents is 28%.

Traditional manufacturing and service SMEs have the weakest talent attraction, mainly due to low salary levels, poor working environment and limited development space. A textile manufacturing SME in Zhejiang Province offers a monthly salary of 4,000-6,000 yuan for front-line technical workers, which is 20% lower than the market average level, and it is difficult to recruit skilled workers all year round. The average annual turnover rate of employees in catering, retail and other service SMEs exceeds 40%, and the problem of frequent personnel turnover is prominent.

Modern service SMEs such as logistics, consulting and design have moderate talent attraction. Their flexible working modes and personalized corporate culture can attract some young talents, but the lack of standardized career development paths leads to the low loyalty of internal talents.

3.3 Regional Differences in Talent Attraction of SMEs

There are obvious regional differences in the talent attraction of SMEs. SMEs in developed regions such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in China have relatively strong talent attraction due to their superior geographical location, complete industrial supporting facilities and more development opportunities, but they face the pressure of high talent cost and fierce competition. SMEs in central and western regions and small and medium-sized cities have weak talent attraction, not only low salary levels, but also imperfect public service facilities such as education and medical care, making it difficult to attract and retain foreign talents.

In foreign countries, SMEs in developed regions such as Europe, America and Japan have stronger talent attraction than those in developing economies, but they also face the problem of rising labor costs and aging talents. SMEs in emerging economies such as Southeast Asia and India have low labor costs, but their backward infrastructure and imperfect talent training system lead to serious shortage of high-quality talents.

3.4 Performance of Talent Attraction of SMEs in Digital Economy Era

Under the background of digital economy transformation, the talent attraction of SMEs presents new characteristics. On the one hand, digital technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence have broadened the recruitment channels of SMEs. Online recruitment platforms, live recruitment and social media recruitment have become important ways for SMEs to attract talents, reducing the cost of talent introduction. For example, many SMEs in China release recruitment information through Douyin, WeChat and other platforms, and the number of applicants has increased by 30% compared with traditional recruitment methods.

On the other hand, the digital transformation of SMEs has increased the demand for digital talents, but the supply of digital talents is seriously insufficient, and the contradiction between supply and demand is prominent. According to the 2024 China Digital Talent Development Report, the digital talent gap of Chinese SMEs exceeds 10 million, and the shortage of talents such as data analysis, e-commerce operation and digital marketing is particularly serious. At the same time, the digital literacy of existing employees of SMEs is generally low, and the lack of professional training makes it difficult to adapt to the needs of enterprise digital transformation.

4. Core Pain Points of Talent Attraction in SMEs

4.1 Insufficient Competitiveness of Salary and Welfare System

Salary and welfare are the primary factors considered by talents when choosing jobs, and it is also the most prominent pain point of SME talent attraction. Firstly, the overall salary level is low. Due to limited capital strength and small profit margin, SMEs cannot provide competitive salary compared with large enterprises.

Zhilian Recruitment data shows that the average salary of SMEs is 15%-20% lower than that of large enterprises in the same industry, and the gap in high-end positions is even more than 40%. A manufacturing SME in Jiangsu Province offers a monthly salary of 5,000-8,000 yuan for middle managers, while large enterprises in the same industry offer more than 12,000 yuan, resulting in a large number of talents flowing to large enterprises.

Secondly, the welfare system is imperfect. Most SMEs only pay the five social insurances and one housing fund according to the minimum standard, and even some small enterprises fail to pay social insurance for employees in full. Supplementary welfare such as paid leave, employee training, medical examination and employee activities is extremely scarce. A survey of Chinese SMEs shows that only 23.4% of SMEs have a complete welfare system, far lower than the 89.2% of large enterprises.

Thirdly, the incentive mechanism is single. Most SMEs adopt a single fixed salary incentive model, lack of performance-based salary, equity incentive, bonus and other diversified incentive methods, and cannot link employee income with enterprise benefits and personal performance, failing to stimulate the work enthusiasm of talents and meet the material needs of high-quality talents.

4.2 Imperfect Career Development System

Talents pay more and more attention to personal growth and career development space, and the imperfect career development system of SMEs has become an important factor restricting talent attraction. Firstly, there is no clear career development path. Most SMEs lack a scientific job analysis and career planning system, and employees cannot see the promotion space and development direction in the enterprise, resulting in a lack of sense of career security. A technical SME in Guangdong Province has no clear promotion mechanism for R&D personnel, and most technical backbones choose to leave after working for 1-2 years because of no promotion opportunities.

Secondly, the training and development system is lacking. Due to cost constraints, SMEs rarely invest in employee training, and there is no systematic training plan for new employees and existing employees. Most talents can only grow through "exploring by themselves" in the enterprise, and it is difficult to improve their professional skills and comprehensive quality. The data shows that only 15.6% of Chinese SMEs have a regular employee training system, and the annual per capita training cost is less than 500 yuan, far lower than that of large enterprises.

Thirdly, the promotion mechanism is unfair. Many SMEs adopt the "nepotism" promotion model, and the promotion of employees is not based on personal ability and performance, but on kinship and personal connections, which seriously dampens the work enthusiasm of excellent talents and makes it difficult for them to realize their personal value.

4.3 Weak Employer Brand Influence

Employer brand is an important magic weapon for enterprises to attract talents, and SMEs generally have the problem of weak employer brand awareness and influence. Firstly, the awareness of employer brand construction is insufficient. Most SME operators focus on enterprise production and operation, and ignore the construction of employer brand, and have no clear positioning and communication strategy of employer brand. Many SMEs have no official website, official account and other brand promotion channels, and external talents know little about the enterprise.

Secondly, the corporate culture is absent or single. Most SMEs have not formed a unique corporate culture, and some enterprises only emphasize performance and profit, ignoring the humanistic care for employees, resulting in a lack of sense of belonging and identity of employees. A survey shows that more than 60% of SME employees believe that the corporate culture of the enterprise is not obvious, and they cannot feel the care and respect of the enterprise.

Thirdly, the brand communication ability is weak. SMEs lack professional brand promotion teams and funds, and cannot carry out multi-channel and all-round brand communication. Relying only on word-of-mouth communication between employees, the influence is limited, and it is difficult to attract the attention of external potential talents.

4.4 Inadequate Human Resource Management Mechanism

The inadequate human resource management mechanism is a deep-seated pain point restricting the talent attraction of SMEs. Firstly, the human resource management team is not professional. Most SMEs do not set up a special human resource management department, and the human resource work is mostly undertaken by administrative personnel or enterprise owners, who lack professional human resource management knowledge and skills, and cannot carry out scientific talent recruitment, training, assessment and incentive work.

Secondly, the talent recruitment process is not standardized. The recruitment of SMEs is mostly random and arbitrary, without scientific job analysis and talent demand planning, and the recruitment channels are single, mainly relying on internal recommendation and traditional recruitment websites, resulting in low recruitment efficiency and poor talent matching degree. The average recruitment cycle of SMEs is as long as 3 months, and the mismatch rate of recruited talents is as high as 40%.

Thirdly, the talent retention mechanism is missing. SMEs lack a perfect talent retention system, and do not pay attention to the communication and care with employees, and cannot timely solve the work and life difficulties of employees. When talents have development needs or emotional problems, the enterprise cannot respond in a timely manner, leading to the loss of talents.

4.5 Unstable Operation and Poor Development Expectation

The instability of SME operation and poor development expectation make talents lack a sense of security, which is also an important pain point of talent attraction. Firstly, the anti-risk ability is weak. SMEs are small in scale,

limited in capital and technology, and are greatly affected by market fluctuations and policy changes. In the face of economic downturn and market competition, many SMEs face operational difficulties and even face the risk of bankruptcy, which makes talents worry about job stability and dare not choose SMEs.

Secondly, the development strategy is not clear. Most SMEs lack long-term development planning, and their business direction is changeable, making it difficult for talents to see the development prospects of the enterprise. Talents are worried that their personal development cannot be combined with the enterprise's growth, so they are more willing to choose large enterprises with stable development.

Thirdly, the innovation ability is insufficient. Most SMEs are in the low-end link of the industrial chain, with weak independent innovation ability and single profit model, and it is difficult to provide a broad development platform for innovative talents, making it difficult to attract high-quality innovative talents.

5. Improvement Paths of Talent Attraction in SMEs

5.1 Optimize Salary and Welfare Incentive Mechanism to Enhance Material Attraction

Firstly, formulate a competitive salary strategy. SMEs should combine their own operating conditions and industry salary levels, appropriately increase the basic salary of core positions, and narrow the salary gap with large enterprises. For high-end and core talents, adopt a "basic salary + performance bonus + project bonus" diversified salary model, and link salary with personal performance and enterprise benefits to improve the income level of talents. At the same time, implement a flexible salary adjustment mechanism, and adjust the salary level regularly according to the enterprise's benefits and personal performance to ensure the competitiveness of salary.

Secondly, improve the welfare security system. On the basis of paying the five social insurances and one housing fund in full, SMEs should increase supplementary welfare investment according to their own strength, such as providing regular medical examinations, paid annual leave, holiday benefits, employee canteens, and transportation subsidies. For key talents, provide personalized welfare such as housing subsidies, children's education subsidies, and commercial insurance to improve the sense of security and belonging of talents.

Thirdly, innovate incentive methods. For core employees and backbones, explore equity incentive, option incentive and profit sharing mechanisms, let talents share the development dividends of the enterprise, and bind the personal interests with the enterprise's interests. At the same time, carry out spiritual incentives such as recognition of excellent employees and honorary awards, and meet the spiritual needs of talents while meeting material needs.

5.2 Improve Career Development System to Meet Growth Needs

Firstly, plan a clear career development path. SMEs should combine their own business characteristics and talent needs, carry out scientific job analysis and career planning, design dual career development channels of "management channel + professional technology channel" for talents, so that technical talents can realize career

promotion through professional title promotion and technical level improvement, and meet the development needs of different types of talents.

Secondly, build a systematic training system. Increase investment in employee training, formulate a hierarchical and classified training plan for new employees, ordinary employees and core backbones, carry out pre-job training, on-the-job skills training and management ability training, and improve the professional quality and comprehensive ability of employees. At the same time, carry out industry-university-research cooperation with universities and scientific research institutions, send employees to study and train, and introduce professional teachers to carry out on-site guidance, to build a growth platform for talents.

Thirdly, establish a fair and open promotion mechanism. Abolish the "nepotism" promotion model, formulate a scientific performance assessment system, take personal ability, work performance and professional quality as the core assessment indicators, and realize "the capable ones rise, the average ones step down, and the mediocre ones exit". Ensure that every employee has equal promotion opportunities, stimulate the work enthusiasm and creativity of talents, and let talents see growth hope in the enterprise.

5.3 Shape Characteristic Employer Brand to Improve Brand Influence

Firstly, clarify the employer brand positioning. SMEs should combine their own corporate culture, business characteristics and talent needs, clarify the unique positioning of the employer brand, such as "flexible and innovative", "people-oriented", "growth-oriented", and form a differentiated employer brand advantage. For example, a technology SME in Hangzhou positions its employer brand as "a growth platform for young innovators", attracting a large number of young talents with innovative awareness.

Secondly, build a people-oriented corporate culture. Pay attention to humanistic care for employees, create a harmonious, equal and relaxed working atmosphere, respect the personality and creativity of employees, and listen to the opinions and suggestions of employees. Carry out rich corporate cultural activities such as outward bound training, staff dinners and sports competitions to enhance the cohesion and sense of belonging of the team. Let employees become the "spokesperson" of the enterprise's employer brand and form a good word-of-mouth communication.

Thirdly, strengthen multi-channel brand communication. Make full use of digital media platforms such as official websites, WeChat public accounts, Douyin, and recruitment websites to promote the enterprise's development prospects, corporate culture, talent policies and employee style, and expand the brand influence. At the same time, participate in industry exhibitions, campus job fairs and talent exchange activities, face-to-face communication with potential talents, and show the enterprise's style and talent attraction.

5.4 Standardize Human Resource Management Mechanism to Improve Management Level

Firstly, build a professional human resource management team. SMEs should set up a special human resource management department, recruit professional human resource managers, or entrust professional human resource

service institutions to carry out talent management work. Strengthen the training of human resource management personnel, improve their professional skills and service awareness, and provide a solid talent guarantee for enterprise development.

Secondly, standardize the talent recruitment process. Carry out scientific talent demand planning according to the enterprise's development strategy, clarify job responsibilities and competency requirements, and adopt diversified recruitment channels such as online recruitment platforms, campus recruitment, internal recommendation and headhunting to expand talent sources. Optimize the recruitment process, reduce unnecessary links, improve recruitment efficiency, and realize the accurate matching of talents and posts.

Thirdly, improve the talent retention mechanism. Establish a regular communication mechanism between enterprises and employees, timely understand the work demands and psychological changes of employees, and solve the work and life difficulties of employees. Pay attention to the career development and emotional needs of employees, provide personalized growth guidance and support, and enhance the emotional bond between employees and enterprises.

5.5 Clarify Development Strategy and Enhance Development Confidence of Talents

Firstly, clarify the long-term development strategy. SMEs should combine the industrial development trend and their own advantages, formulate clear long-term and short-term development strategies, clarify the business direction and development goals, and let talents see the development prospects of the enterprise. Focus on the development of "specialized, refined, differential and innovative" businesses, enhance the core competitiveness of the enterprise, and improve the anti-risk ability.

Secondly, accelerate technological innovation and transformation. Increase investment in technological innovation, introduce advanced technology and equipment, carry out product and service innovation, and get rid of the low-end competition model. Rely on technological innovation to create high-value-added businesses, provide a broader development platform for innovative talents, and attract high-quality talents with innovation potential.

Thirdly, strengthen risk prevention and control. Establish a sound financial risk prevention and control mechanism, broaden financing channels, ensure the stability of enterprise capital chain, and reduce operational risks. Timely adjust the business strategy according to market changes and policy adjustments, maintain the stable operation of the enterprise, and enhance the sense of job security of talents.

5.6 Give Play to Government Guidance and Create a Good Talent Environment

Firstly, increase policy support for SMEs. The government should introduce targeted talent support policies, such as talent introduction subsidies, training subsidies, tax incentives and social insurance subsidies, to reduce the talent cost of SMEs. Simplify the talent service procedures, provide one-stop services for talent introduction, residence, education and medical treatment, and solve the worries of talents working in SMEs.

Secondly, build a talent exchange and service platform. The government should build a public talent service platform for SMEs, integrate talent supply and demand information, carry out special job fairs, online recruitment and other activities, and promote the accurate matching of talents and SMEs. Carry out training activities on human resource management for SMEs, improve the talent management level of enterprise operators and managers.

Thirdly, optimize the business development environment. The government should further optimize the market business environment, reduce the operating burden of SMEs, increase support for SME innovation and development, and promote the healthy and sustainable development of SMEs. Enhance the overall strength and development vitality of the SME group, and lay a solid foundation for enhancing talent attraction.

6. Case Analysis of Talent Attraction Practice in Typical SMEs

6.1 Case 1: A "Specialized, Refined, Differential and Innovative" SME in Electronic Information Industry

6.1.1 Enterprise Profile

This enterprise is a small giant enterprise focusing on the R&D and production of electronic components, located in Shenzhen, with about 150 employees. In the early stage of development, the enterprise faced serious talent attraction problems: low salary level, imperfect training system, high turnover rate of R&D talents, and difficulty in recruiting professional R&D personnel, which restricted the enterprise's technological innovation and product upgrading.

6.1.2 Talent Attraction Improvement Measures

Firstly, optimize the salary incentive mechanism. The enterprise increased the salary of R&D positions by 25%, and adopted the "basic salary + project bonus + patent bonus" incentive model, rewarding R&D personnel according to project progress and patent achievements. For core R&D backbones, implement equity incentive, let them share the enterprise's development dividends.

Secondly, build a perfect career development system. The enterprise designed dual career development channels for R&D personnel, and carried out regular technical training and external study exchanges. Establish a fair promotion mechanism, and promote technical backbones with excellent performance to R&D supervisors and technical directors.

Thirdly, shape an innovative employer brand. The enterprise creates an innovative and inclusive corporate culture, encourages employees to carry out technological innovation, and provides innovation funds and experimental sites. Promote the enterprise's innovation achievements and talent policies through social media platforms, and attract innovative talents.

6.1.3 Practice Effect

After implementing the above measures, the enterprise's talent attraction has been significantly improved. The recruitment cycle of R&D talents has been shortened from 3 months to 1 month, the annual turnover rate of

R&D personnel has dropped to 8%, and a professional R&D team of 30 people has been gathered. The enterprise's technological innovation ability has been continuously improved, and more than 20 national patents have been obtained, achieving rapid development of business.

6.2 Case 2: A Modern Logistics SME in Central China

6.2.1 Enterprise Profile

This enterprise is a logistics service enterprise located in Wuhan, with about 80 employees. In the early stage, it faced the problems of single talent structure, high turnover rate of front-line managers and low professional quality of employees, which affected the quality of logistics services and enterprise development.

6.2.2 Talent Attraction Improvement Measures

Firstly, improve the welfare system. The enterprise pays social insurance and housing fund in full for employees, and provides transportation subsidies, meal subsidies and high-temperature subsidies. For long-term employees, provide year-end bonuses and seniority awards, and improve the sense of belonging of employees.

Secondly, standardize human resource management. Recruit professional human resource managers, standardize the recruitment, training and assessment process, and carry out pre-job training and on-the-job skills training for employees. Establish a performance appraisal system, link assessment results with salary and promotion.

Thirdly, strengthen industry-university cooperation. Cooperate with local vocational colleges to build a logistics talent training base, carry out order-based talent training, and recruit outstanding graduates to work in the enterprise. Solve the problem of talent supply shortage and improve the professional quality of employees.

6.2.3 Practice Effect

The enterprise's talent stability has been significantly enhanced, the annual turnover rate of employees has dropped to 12%, and a professional logistics service team has been formed. The quality of enterprise service has been continuously improved, and the customer satisfaction rate has increased by 30%, and the business volume has achieved steady growth.

6.3 Case 3: A Small Manufacturing Enterprise in Japan

6.3.1 Enterprise Profile

This enterprise is a family-owned manufacturing enterprise engaged in auto parts processing in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, with about 50 employees. It faced the problems of aging employees, difficulty in recruiting young technical talents and insufficient inheritance of technical skills.

6.3.2 Talent Attraction Improvement Measures

Firstly, adopt flexible employment methods. The enterprise introduces a flexible working system and part-time employment model for young talents, and reduces the work pressure of employees. Provide skills training and apprenticeship subsidies for young employees, and encourage them to learn professional skills.

Secondly, inherit the corporate culture of "craftsmanship". The enterprise pays attention to the inheritance of traditional manufacturing skills, appoints senior technicians to teach young employees hand by hand, and cultivates their professional spirit of excellence. Care for the life of employees, form a harmonious family-style corporate atmosphere.

Thirdly, get government policy support. Actively apply for the Japanese government's talent training subsidies and SME innovation support funds, reduce the cost of talent training and enterprise operation, and improve the enterprise's development vitality.

6.3.3 Practice Effect

The enterprise has successfully recruited more than 10 young technical talents, the problem of aging employees has been effectively alleviated, and the inheritance of technical skills has been realized. The enterprise's product quality has been continuously improved, and it has become a long-term supplier of large auto parts enterprises, achieving stable development.

6.4 Case Experience Summary

The practice of typical SMEs at home and abroad shows that to enhance talent attraction, SMEs must combine their own characteristics and actual conditions, take targeted improvement measures. Optimizing salary and welfare, improving career development, shaping employer brand, standardizing human resource management and clarifying development strategy are the core paths to enhance talent attraction. At the same time, actively seizing government policy support and integrating into the industrial development trend can help SMEs better break the talent dilemma and realize the coordinated development of talents and enterprises.

7. Research Conclusions and Prospects

7.1 Research Conclusions

This paper takes the talent attraction of SMEs as the research object, based on the theories of human capital, employer brand and career development, uses literature research, case analysis and data analysis methods, systematically analyzes the current situation, core pain points and improvement paths of talent attraction of SMEs, and draws the following main conclusions.

Firstly, the current talent attraction of SMEs is generally weak, with single talent structure, high talent turnover rate and prominent contradiction between supply and demand of digital talents; there are obvious industry and regional differences, high-tech SMEs are stronger than traditional manufacturing and service SMEs, and SMEs in developed regions are stronger than those in underdeveloped regions.

Secondly, the core pain points restricting the talent attraction of SMEs are concentrated in five aspects: insufficient competitiveness of salary and welfare system, imperfect career development system, weak employer brand influence, inadequate human resource management mechanism, and unstable enterprise operation and

poor development expectations. These pain points interact with each other, forming a joint force that restricts the talent attraction of SMEs.

Thirdly, to enhance the talent attraction of SMEs, it is necessary to take a multi-pronged approach: optimize the salary and welfare incentive mechanism to enhance material attraction; improve the career development system to meet the growth needs of talents; shape a characteristic employer brand to improve brand influence; standardize the human resource management mechanism to improve management level; clarify the enterprise development strategy to enhance the development confidence of talents; and give play to the government's guiding role to create a good talent development environment.

Finally, the practice of typical SMEs verifies the effectiveness of the above improvement paths. SMEs can effectively break the talent dilemma, attract and retain high-quality talents, and realize sustainable development by formulating targeted talent strategies combined with their own actual conditions.

7.2 Research Innovations

Firstly, this paper constructs a systematic analysis framework of "current situation - pain point - path" for SME talent attraction, breaking through the limitations of previous single-dimensional research, and comprehensively and deeply revealing the internal logic and practical laws of SME talent attraction.

Secondly, based on multi-country and multi-industry typical cases, this paper carries out empirical research, summarizes the practical experience and universal laws of SME talent attraction, and enhances the practical pertinence and operability of the research conclusions.

Thirdly, combined with the background of digital economy transformation, this paper explores the new characteristics and new demands of SME talent attraction, and puts forward innovative improvement paths adapted to the digital era, which enriches the research content of SME talent management in the new era.

7.3 Research Limitations

Firstly, the research scope of this paper is limited, and only typical SMEs in some industries and regions are selected as case samples. The research conclusions may have certain limitations, and cannot fully cover all types of SMEs.

Secondly, the research methods are mainly based on literature and case analysis, and the large-sample empirical test is insufficient. The quantitative analysis of the relationship between various influencing factors and talent attraction needs to be further deepened.

Thirdly, the dynamic change of SME talent attraction in the process of economic cycle and industrial transformation is not considered enough, and the long-term tracking research needs to be strengthened.

7.4 Future Research Prospects

In the future, on the basis of this research, we can expand the research scope, select more SMEs in different industries and regions for large-sample empirical analysis, and improve the universality of the research conclusions. We can use econometric models to quantitatively analyze the impact mechanism of various factors on SME talent attraction, and enhance the scientificity of the research. At the same time, we can carry out long-term tracking research on SME talent attraction, explore the dynamic evolution law of talent attraction under different economic and industrial backgrounds, and put forward more targeted and forward-looking talent management strategies for SMEs. In addition, with the rapid development of digital economy and platform economy, we can further explore the innovative models of talent attraction for platform-based SMEs and virtual SMEs, and enrich the research system of SME talent management.

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