Professionalization of Human Resource Management in China: the Role of Associations

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by

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Building on work examining the driving forces behind the rise and professionalization of human resource management (HRM) in China, this paper turns attention to the role of people management associations. In considering the rapid development of the HRM associations worldwide, there has been little exploration of the role of the professional associations in China. This is surprising given the unparalleled development of HRM in China. This paper explores whether something akin to a “professionalization project” is observable in China through an exploration of the major bodies and institutions driving such transformation. The research identifies the role of people management associations as agents of institutionalization in conjunction with the state and market.

Focusing specifically on the role of people management associations, the paper examines the professional standards, membership and code of ethics documentation directly related to the manifestation of dedicated HR professional association activity. This activity will be contextualized globally by reference to similar material produced elsewhere in the world. A qualitative content analysis of people management associational documentation in China will then be conducted in conjunction with materials collected from HR governing body websites to provide knowledge of the normative composition of HR professionalization. Interview data will also be collected from the insights of associational actors and practitioners, such as the Human Resource Association (HRA) in Beijing, to discuss the prospects for HR professionalization in China.

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All are welcome!