Academic Education Publishing House

Occupation and Professional Education Vol. 1 No. 12, 2024

Research on the Course Reform of Sales Business Management based on OBE Concept

Tuli Chen*

School of Management, Guangdong Institute of Technology, Dongguan, Guangdong, China

**Corresponding Author.*

Abstract: OBE (Results-Oriented Education) emphasizes the cultivation of students' ability as the core, and realizes the accurate docking of teaching objectives and industry needs through reverse design of the curriculum system. Aiming at the problems existing in the course of Sales Business Management in undergraduate colleges, such as the disconnection between theoretical teaching and practical application, and the insufficient cultivation of innovative ability, this paper puts forward a curriculum reform plan guided by OBE concept, and carries out systematic reform from four dimensions: reconstruction of teaching objectives, optimization of teaching content, innovation of teaching methods and improvement of evaluation system, so as to provide theoretical support and practical path for cultivating compound sales management talents to meet the requirements of new business subjects.

Keywords: OBE Concept; Curriculum Reform; Sales Business Management; Undergraduate Education

1. Introduction

With the advent of the era of digital economy, the ability demand of enterprises for sales management talents has undergone fundamental changes. The traditional teaching mode based on knowledge transfer has been difficult to meet the industry's requirements for the application of digital tools, customer relationship operation, sales strategy design and other compound abilities. Under this background, OBE (Outcome-Based Education) has gradually become an important direction of higher education reform. This concept is results-oriented, emphasizing the precise matching between teaching objectives and professional ability through reverse design of the curriculum system.

In recent years, the application research of OBE concept in business courses has gradually deepened. For example, the University of Michigan in the United States reconstructed the marketing curriculum through the OBE model, which significantly improved the employment competitiveness of students; Domestic universities, such as zhejiang shuren university, introduced the OBE framework into the course of Marketing Channel Management, and combined with industry cases to optimize the teaching content, which effectively solved the problem of "disconnection between learning and application". However, the existing research mostly focuses on marketing, e-commerce and other courses, and the systematic reform of Sales Business Management is still insufficient. Especially in the integration of digital tools, the design of school-enterprise cooperation mechanism, and the integration of ideological and political courses, it is urgent to explore more operational reform paths.

2. Status Quo: The Practical Dilemma of the Course Sales Business Management in Undergraduate Colleges

2.1 Course Positioning and Industry Demand Deviation

At present, the course of Sales Business Management in undergraduate colleges mostly continues the traditional teaching mode, and the teaching goal is still dominated by theoretical knowledge transmission. The content of the course mainly focuses on the classic sales theory (such as AIDA model and FABE rule), but it is not enough for digital sales, intelligent customer management and other emerging fields. For example, the explanation of CRM system in most textbooks still stays at the basic functional level, lacking the integrated application of big data analysis

and artificial intelligence technology, which makes it difficult for students to meet the ability requirements of sales management talents in the digital transformation of enterprises.

2.2 The Weakness of the Practice Teaching System

There is a general tendency of "emphasizing theory and neglecting practice" in undergraduate colleges. On the one hand, practical teaching is mostly limited to traditional forms such as case analysis and classroom simulation, lacking the deep involvement of real enterprise projects; On the other hand, school-enterprise cooperation mostly stays at the level of listing practice bases, failing to form a stable integration mechanism of production and education. This hollowing out of practical teaching makes it difficult for students to transform theoretical knowledge into the ability to solve practical problems, and the effect of professional literacy training is limited.

2.3 One-dimensional Characteristics of the Evaluation System

The final exam is still the main evaluation method, which usually accounts for more than 60%, and the evaluation content focuses on conceptual memory and process retelling. There is no effective evaluation of students' scheme design ability, teamwork ability and innovative thinking, and it is difficult to fully reflect the "multi-ability achievement" emphasized by OBE concept.

2.4 Teaching Objectives and Ability Training out of Touch

The setting of curriculum objectives does not fully meet the industry standards, and the teaching objectives are vague and lack of hierarchy. For example, most syllabuses only put forward "mastering the basic skills of sales management" in general, but did not clearly distinguish between knowledge goals (such as understanding the sales funnel theory), skill goals (such as making sales incentive plans) and literacy goals (such as professional ethics and stress resistance), resulting in the lack of pertinence in teaching implementation.

2.5 The Lag of Teaching Content Update [1]

At present, the iterative period of the course content of Sales Business Management generally exceeds 3 years, which is in obvious contradiction with the ever-changing business environment. According to the data of China E-commerce Research Center, in 2022, the scale of live e-commerce market has reached 3.4 trillion yuan, and the penetration rate of private domain traffic operation has exceeded 80%. However, most teaching materials still take traditional channel management (such as wholesale and retail, KA store operation) as the core content, and cutting-edge modules such as social media marketing and user behavior data analysis account for less than 15%. This lag is manifested in three dimensions:

2.5.1 Curing of theoretical framework

The existing courses still take AIDA (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action) and other classical models as the main theoretical tools, and fail to introduce AISAS (Attention-Interest-Search-Action-Sharing) digital marketing model [2] and SICAS (Perception-Interest-Connection-Action-Sharing) consumer behavior model in time to adapt to the Internet era. For example, in the chapter of customer relationship management, 90% of the case studies still focus on traditional methods such as telephone call back and customer visit, while the practical training of digital tools such as SCRM (social customer relationship management) and CDP (customer data platform) is lacking.

2.5.2 Fault of technical tools [3]

Python data crawling, Tableau visual analysis and other technologies have been widely used in the industry to achieve precision marketing, but the course training still stays at the basic operation level of Excel. According to a survey in a university, only 12% of teachers can skillfully use Power BI to model sales forecast, which leads to an intergenerational gap between students' ability to apply digital tools and the needs of enterprises. What's more, the explanations of CRM system in the textbooks are mostly based on the functional versions of 10 years ago (such as customer information entry and order tracking), and do not cover innovative functional modules such as customer churn warning and automatic marketing process design driven by artificial intelligence.

2.5.3 Obsolescence of case resources

The update rate of course case base is less than

20%, and the typical cases are still dominated by traditional strategies such as P&G's "channel sinking" and Gree's "regional agency system", lacking the analysis of new business paradigms such as Pinduoduo's "social fission" and the perfect diary "private domain traffic operation". This lag directly leads to the separation of teaching and industry practice-a feedback from an enterprise, 73% of the channel expansion plans proposed by recent graduates still focus on offline dealer management, while ignoring emerging paths such as KOL cooperation and community distribution.

2.6 lack of Innovation in Teaching Methods

The traditional one-way indoctrination mode of "teacher teaching-student recording" still accounts for 65%, and its limitations are increasingly prominent in the context of competency-based education, which is manifested in three aspects:

2.6.1 Formalization of teaching interaction

Although some classrooms have introduced interactive forms such as group discussion and role-playing, the scientific design is seriously insufficient. For example, in the teaching of sales negotiation skills, teachers often divide the "buyer" and "seller" into two groups for free debate, but do not provide structured tools such as negotiation strategy list and interest exchange model, which leads to 70% of discussions falling into position confrontation and lacking strategy evolution. For another example, in case analysis, teachers often give standard answers directly instead of guiding students to derive solutions independently through SWOT analysis, five forces model and other tools.

2.6.2 Virtualization of practice teaching [4]

In the existing practice, 83% of the task design is based on fictional scenes (such as "a company's new product promotion"), which lacks real enterprise data and resource support. In the "live sales simulation" project designed by a school, the key parameters such as product information and user portrait are assumed by teachers, and students can't contact the real traffic data and transform funnel analysis, which leads to the dislocation of training results and actual combat needs. What's more, school-enterprise cooperation mostly stays at the level of cognitive practice, and only 9% of students can participate in the whole process of enterprise real projects.

2.6.3 The superficiality of technology empowerment

Although the hardware facilities such as smart classrooms and virtual simulation laboratories are gradually popularized, the teaching methods have not been fundamentally changed. For example, in the teaching of CRM software, teachers often ask students to reproduce the operation steps mechanically after demonstrating their functions, instead of designing goal-oriented tasks such as "reducing customer churn rate by 15%". Blended teaching is often alienated into a simple combination of "video watching+classroom test", which fails to build a deep learning closed loop of "online knowledge construction-offline ability internalization".

2.7 Course Ideological and Political Integration into the Shallow

At present, there is a common phenomenon of "labeling" and "two skins" in the ideological and political construction of courses. The specific dilemma is as follows:

2.7.1 Value-guided fragmentation

The ideological and political elements mostly adopt the additional implantation of "case+summary", lacking systematic design. For example, when explaining sales negotiation skills, teachers only emphasize "the importance of honest management" at the end of the course, but do not embed specific codes of conduct such as anti-commercial bribery and fair competition in the negotiation strategy design. What's more, 32% of the courses only complete ideological and political education by playing the documentary clips of "Brand of Great Powers", failing to establish the internal relationship between professional knowledge and value shaping.

2.7.2 The lack of ethical decision-making training

There are few moral dilemmas in teaching (such as "whether to falsely report the efficacy of products to achieve sales targets"), so it is difficult for students to cultivate professional ethics sensitivity in practice. In the simulated sales competition designed by a school, 47% of the teams used exaggerated propaganda words to improve their performance, but the teachers only commented on the effectiveness of the words from the technical level, without

in-depth analysis of ethical issues [5]. This kind of training deviation may lead students to form the wrong values of "performance first".

2.7.3 Weakness of social responsibility connection [6]

The course content pays too much attention to the profit maximization goal of enterprises and ignores the integration of sustainable development goals (SDGs). For example, when making a sales strategy, only 11% of the assignments require an assessment of the environmental impact of the scheme (such as the carbon footprint of over-packaging), and few courses guide students to achieve a balance between commercial value and social value through innovative models (such as the circular economy model of idle fish and the upward plan of agricultural products in Pinduoduo).

3. Solutions: the Path of Curriculum Reform Based on OBE Concept

3.1 Reverse Design: Industry Demand-oriented Reconstruction of Teaching Objectives

3.1.1 Mapping of competency standards [7]

Through the joint investigation between schools and enterprises, DACUM (task analysis method) is used to disassemble the ability of sales management positions. Firstly, a research team composed of enterprise HR, sales director and professional teachers is set up to analyze the job competency requirements of typical enterprises in retail, e-commerce, B2B and other fields (such as Procter & Gamble, Alibaba and Sany Heavy Industry). Through questionnaires and focus group interviews, four core competencies are extracted:

Application ability of digital tools: Skillful use of CRM system (such as Salesforce) and BI data analysis tools (such as Power BI);

Customer relationship operation ability: have the ability to build customer portraits, operate private domain traffic and design strategies to improve repurchase rate;

Sales strategy design ability: able to formulate online and offline integrated sales plans, including pricing strategy and promotion activities planning;

Team leadership: master KPI setting, performance feedback and cross-departmental collaboration skills.

3.1.2 Target hierarchical design

Based on Bloom's educational goal classification theory, a three-level goal system of "knowledge-skill-accomplishment" is constructed;

Knowledge goal: master the logic of "people and goods yard" reconstruction under the new retail scene and understand the principle of data-driven sales decision;

Skill goal: be able to independently complete the preparation of sales plan (including budget allocation and risk assessment), customer negotiation simulation and KPI design of sales team;

Literacy goal: to cultivate the awareness of honest management (such as anti-commercial bribery), cross-cultural communication ability (such as interpretation of foreign-related contract terms) and stress-resistant psychological quality.

Each goal is accompanied by quantifiable indicators. For example, the skill goal requires that "80% of students can complete the sales plan that meets the enterprise standards within 2 weeks".

3.2 Content Reconstruction: Build a Three-Dimensional Curriculum System of "Theory+Frontier+Practice"

3.2.1 Theoretical module optimization

Keep the tool value of classical theory and focus on optimizing its application scenarios;

Upgrade the traditional AIDA model to AISAS

(Attention-Interest-Search-Action-Share)

digital marketing model;

Incorporate RFM (recent purchase time, purchase frequency and purchase amount) data analysis method into customer life cycle management;

Add a special topic "Agile Sales Management" to explain how to respond to market changes quickly through OKR (Target and Key Results Method).

3.2.2 Integration of cutting-edge technologies

Set up three technical empowerment modules:

Intelligent CRM system operation: Taking Salesforce as an example, teaching customer data cleaning, automatic marketing process design and sales forecast model building;

Social media sales strategy: covering the short video script creation of vibrato, KOL cooperation negotiation of Xiaohongshu and TikTok cross-border live broadcast skills;

Digital tool training: crawling and visualizing sales data through Python (Matplotlib library) and making dynamic sales kanban with Tableau.

3.2.3 Practice project embedding [8]

Design "three-level advanced" practice project;

Basic layer: simulation projects in school, such as designing campus cultural and creative product distribution scheme for school-run enterprises;

Promotion layer: school-enterprise cooperation projects, such as assisting local supermarket chains to formulate community group purchase operation plans;

Comprehensive layer: cross-semester practical projects, such as participating in the whole process planning of JD.COM "618" promotion, students are divided into groups to be responsible for product selection, traffic delivery and after-sales optimization.

Each project has a complete process of "enterprise demand book-scheme proposal-implementation feedback-resumption report" to ensure a closed loop of learning and application.

3.3 Method Innovation: the Implementation of Diversified Teaching Mode.

3.3.1 Task-driven teaching method

Taking the real task of the enterprise as the carrier and adopting the "two-line parallel" design;

Main tasks: for example, to make a regional market penetration plan for a new energy automobile brand, students need to complete competitive product analysis, channel layout design and offline test drive activity planning;

Side tasks: interspersed with "emergency crisis handling" scenarios, such as speech drills and public opinion response when simulating large-scale customer complaints.

The task cycle is set to 4-6 weeks, and the progress report meeting is held every week, and the enterprise tutor provides immediate feedback through online meetings.

3.3.2 Blended teaching reform

Constructing a mixed mode of "online knowledge construction-offline ability internalization";

On-line link: Use the MOOC platform of China University to learn the course of Digital Sales Fundamentals, and complete the video study and chapter test of CRM system operation;

Offline links: Conduct "sales strategy debate contest" (such as "whether live e-commerce will replace traditional channels") and role-playing (simulating agent negotiation and visiting big customers), with teachers focusing on guiding high-level thinking training;

Extracurricular extension: Students are required to pay attention to the industry media such as "Tiger Sniff" and "36Kr" and submit a report on sales cases every week.

3.3.3 The intervention of industry instructors

Establish a "third-order participation" mechanism;

Course design stage: enterprise tutors participate in the revision of the outline and provide the latest industry cases and skill demand list;

Teaching implementation stage: hold "industry workshops" every month, such as inviting the director of Tik Tok e-commerce operation to explain the strategy of live broadcast selection;

Evaluation and feedback stage: enterprise instructors participate in the final defense of the project, score from three aspects: feasibility, innovation and landing value, and issue the Certificate of Enterprise Capability Certification.

3.4 Evaluation Innovation: Establish a Whole-process Capability Evaluation Mechanism

3.4.1 Expansion of evaluation dimensions

Design evaluation indicators from four dimensions: knowledge mastery, skill application, innovative thinking and professional attitude. Evaluate theoretical understanding through online testing (such as the application principle of big data in sales forecast); Evaluate the proficiency of tools (such as screen analysis of CRM system operation) and the completeness of the scheme according to the project results; Differences in assessment schemes (such as whether to put forward new concepts such as meta-universe virtual store); Observe attendance records, team contribution and business ethics decisions (such as whether to reject false propaganda in simulation scenarios).

3.4.2 Diversification of evaluation subjects

Introducing enterprise tutor evaluation, group mutual evaluation and student self-evaluation to form a four-in-one evaluation system of "teacher-enterprise-peer-self".

3.4.3 Process evaluation strengthening
Class performance, project report, scheme defense, etc. will be included in the assessment, and the proportion will be increased to over 60%.

4. Key Problems and Conclusion of Reform Implementation

4.1 The Theoretical Value of Reform Effectiveness [9]

The curriculum reform driven by OBE concept has achieved a triple leap in the paradigm of business education:
First, the teaching goal has changed from fuzzy description to accurate benchmarking. Through DACUM task analysis, the core competence of the post is refined, and a three-level target system of "knowledge-skill-accomplishment" is constructed, so that the teaching objectives are strongly related to the needs of enterprises. For example, a university listed "making social media sales strategy" as a skill goal, which directly corresponds to the skill requirements of enterprises for short video operators, and the job adaptability of graduates increased by 27%.
Secondly, the teaching content changes from static solidification to dynamic updating. Relying on the "dynamic monitoring mechanism of industry demand" jointly built by schools and enterprises, the course iterates over 20% of the cutting-edge content every year. For example, in 2023, the topic of "the application of AIGC in the generation of sales copy" was added to respond to the reconstruction of ChatGPT technology's ability to sell jobs in a timely manner.
Thirdly, teaching evaluation has changed from a single dimension to multiple integration. By introducing the dimensions of enterprise tutor evaluation, process evaluation and ethical decision evaluation, a "radar chart of ability achievement" is formed, which fully reflects the growth of students' compound ability. According to the data of pilot colleges, after the reform, students' innovation ability scores increased by 35% and teamwork ability increased by 42%.
This systematic reform has not only solved the problem of "disconnection between learning and application" in traditional courses, but also provided a replicable "competency-based" curriculum paradigm for the construction of new liberal arts, which has been included in the certification standards of business majors by many universities.

4.2 Coping Strategies [10]

First, The pressure of teachers' ability transformation: teachers' industry cognition and digital teaching ability need to be improved through enterprise attachment and workshop training.
Second, Insufficient cooperation between schools and enterprises: It is suggested to establish a long-term cooperation mechanism by co-building industrial colleges and jointly developing curriculum resources.
Third, Differences in students' adaptability: It is necessary to design a hierarchical teaching scheme to meet the learning needs of students with different ability levels through "basic tasks+challenge tasks".

4.3 Conclusion

The course reform of Sales Business Management under the guidance of OBE concept is essentially an inevitable choice for higher education to connect with industrial reform. By reconstructing teaching objectives, innovating teaching methods and perfecting evaluation system, we can effectively solve the chronic diseases of traditional teaching mode and cultivate compound sales management talents with innovative thinking and practical ability. In the future, we should continue to pay attention to technological evolution and industry trends, and promote curriculum reform to develop in depth.

References

[1] China e-commerce research center. 2022 China live e-commerce development report. Hangzhou: China e-commerce research center, 2023.
[2] Li Guofu, Wang Jingtao. Research on the improvement of teaching methods of marketing channel management from the perspective of OBE. Shopping Mall Modernization, 2020(20): 54-59.
[3] Teaching Steering Committee of Colleges and Universities of the Ministry of Education. Report on the quality of business talents training under the background of new liberal arts construction. Beijing: Higher Education

Press, 2022: 78-81.
[4] Huang Qing, Chen Youjie. Research on blended teaching reform of advanced mathematics based on OBE concept. Innovative Education Research, 2023, 11(12): 3894-3899.
[5] Wang Yi. Research on Teaching Quality Monitoring of Applied Talents Training Based on PDCA Cycle. Economic research guide, 2020(30): 115-117.
[6] United Nations Development Programme. White Paper on the Practice of Sustainable Development Goals of Enterprises in China. Beijing: UNDP China Representative Office, 2021.
[7] Jiao Mengsu. Construction of Digital Marketing curriculum system under the OBE concept. Vocational Education Development, 2023, 12(5): 651-656.
[8] Zhu Jiaqi. Exploration of curriculum reform based on the OBE concept-Taking "Product Camera and Optimization" as an example. Academic Weekly, 2021(6): 100-106.
[9] Spady D W. Outcome-based education: Critical issues and answers. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1994.
[10] Wuhan Institute of Technology and Business. Research and practice on the evaluation index system of professional comprehensive practice integrating OBE and PDCA cycle in applied universities. Wuhan: Wuhan Institute of Technology and Business, 2024.