5 RECRUITMENT PROCESS WITH THE HELP OF TALENT MANAGEMENT - UNIVERSITY AND PRIVATE COMPANY COOPERATION (R)

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Abstract

As a part of academic research, authors focused on describing how universities and private companies can cooperate in order to increase the quality of education on one hand, and the readiness of students for work on the other. To show how this might be achieved, authors chose to use talent management as a starting point to prepare a cooperation plan with two subjects which willingly accepted the offer to participate in this research. Talent management in particular has been used in many different ways over the recent years. Authors of this paper came up with a solution by using working principles and applying them in a slightly different way than big corporations usually do. This paper comprises the idea behind this research, factors that influence implementing talent management's principles, basis for creation a cooperation plan and a cooperation plan draft derived from preliminary meetings with subjects participating in the research.

Keywords

education quality; talent management; university private company cooperation; competences; capabilities; recruitment

JEL Codes: A11, J24, O15, I2

INTRODUCTION

When studying, not many students ask themselves, will my degree be enough to get a job that I would be happy to do? Or should I find myself an internship abroad to get some experiences and learn the language? In most cases, these are not questions that students asks themselves, even though the current economic situation in the Czech Republic shows that most of university graduates cannot find a decent job in their area of expertise or level of education. They end up in supermarkets as cashiers hoping to find a better job later. This paper is not about explaining causes of this trend or behaviour neither it is not about solving it. This unfortunate trend causes two problems. The first is that universities are not able educate proper experts, because students lack the ambition to study themselves. They are content with having passed the exam from English with thinking it is enough for them to get a job they like. The second problem is that companies are striving to find well-educated, ambitious and experienced people. Surely, there had never been anyone who was born educated, but hiring inexperienced employees and expensively educate them afterwards is also not very efficient.

In this research, we devise a possible solution demonstrated on a real example of two subjects – Technical University of Liberec (TUL) and private company Valbek. These two institutions agreed to take part in our research. We bring an option of dealing with this unfortunate trend by focusing on a one specific job position in Valbek and one specific study programme at TUL. The idea in short is to find a way for TUL to get its study programme more attractive while providing Valbek an opportunity to assess and support students who might be potential candidates for the job. Such a situation shows the necessity of creating a mutual cooperation on a working model using competences and capabilities.

As The McKinsey Survey suggests, "Better talent is worth fighting for." (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, Michaels, 2007) Pursuing potential talent is worth more than deciding among 30 candidates who is the least worst.

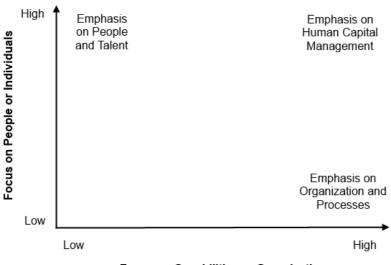
1 TALENT MANAGEMENT AS A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Why Talent Management

It used to be that three basic things that were necessary for conducting business were capital, labour and land. In the time we live in, the information is considered as another asset vital for a successful business. Nevertheless, it is still people who invent new technologies, new information, therefore as Dave Ulrich and Edward Lawler call it, instead of labour, human capital. (Lawler, Ulrich, 2008) Through optimized talent management we develop a way to help TUL and Valbek achieving higher performance, productivity and applicability of students and potential candidates in both organizations. (Galagan, Oakes, 2011)

Figure 1 clearly illustrates this trend. Companies should focus on emphasizing the people and talents, because they are the source of their organizations' success. When companies realize this, they look for a tools and methods how to achieve more efficient organization while increasing profit.

Figure 1: Mix of Individual Ability and Organization Capability



Focus on Capabilities or Organization

Source: LAWLER, E. E.; ULRICH, D. (2008), p. 11

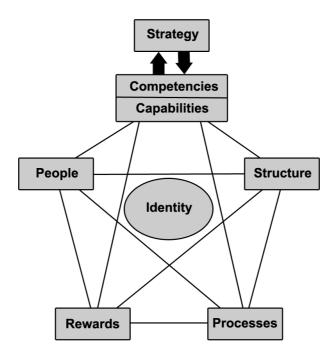
What Lawler and Ulrich also stress out is that one of the most important management challenges is to recruit high-quality people. (Lawler, Ulrich, 2008) This is not an issue for big corporations who employ thousands of people, finding an appropriate candidate for the job seems to be even more difficult in small and middle-sized companies which do not have large resources and they are not able to go through hundreds of applicants while hoping in finding someone suitable for the job. However, there might be a solution. Why not to use talent management and work with talents who create a competitive advantage? Ulrich describes such company as a human-capital centric organization. (Lawler, Ulrich, 2008) Such an approach comprises the whole design of the company, how it functions, its organizational structure, interconnection between processes and policies. Such an organization could be described as high-involvement organization.

Characteristics of high-involvement organization (Lawler, Ulrich, 2008):

- Enriched work designs
- Participative decision-making structures
- Shared business information
- Committed to education and development of people
- Career oriented
- Rewards for organization performance
- Community
- Shared leadership
- Committed to talent management

The following figure vividly shows how principles of talent management can be implemented in a company as a form of strategy adjustments. The important thing about it is the addition of competences and capabilities which are also basics for our cooperation plan in this research.

Figure 2: HC-Centric Star Model



Source: LAWLER, E. E.; ULRICH, D. (2008), p. 38

Effective Recruitment Process

Recruitment process is usually very standardized. The need for recruitment is usually of two kinds. There is either a new business contract, meaning that workload for current staff would be too much, therefore the quality would decrease. The second type is when someone is leaving or was promoted. In effective recruitment process, Joyce describes 6-step process ladder.

Strategy – Identification of what hiring strategy will be used in order to find appropriate candidate. Standard four options:

- external completely new candidate
- internal from the human capital pool inside the company
- time-limited hire someone for a limited time, (i.e. until the project is finished)
- re-hire persuade the leaving employee to stay

Proposition – This step is all about creating a proposition about the organization with emphasizing why this is the company to work for in terms of talent seeking.

Branding – Covering the proposition in organization's brand complying with the corporate culture and strategy.

Talent Translation – In this point, it is crucial to stress out current human capital pool and reasons why talents would want to work there.

Channels – This point is about how to get the offer among talents. These days, there are countless possibilities to connect with people, such as the popular social networks.

Measuring Success – Final step is important for having a feedback whether the campaign was successful, what are the points that should be re-evaluated or re-designed. (Galagan, Oakes, 2011)

Why Competences

Every individual is unique, same applies to companies. This uniqueness can be described as set of unique skills and behaviour, in other words competences. As any person have different competences, so do specific jobs or organizations. For example, FedEx has competences in transporting parcels, whereas HSBC in banking and investing. With the knowledge of these competences, organization can use it to implement them into any strategic decision in order to align the whole organization to HC-centric approach. When competences for a certain job are described in detailed way, then everyone knows exactly what that job requires and what the person doing that job should be able to do.

This is surely a way of measuring performance. When we have a framework of competences for every organization level and every job position then not only the feedback from supervisor to its subordinate is possible, but also the other way round, from subordinate to supervisor. The reason is simple, people drive the business in such company, and therefore the feedback is essential. (Armstrong, 2013) Illustratively, the Figure 3 used by Turner in case of Kaiser Permanente shows how the leadership capacity can be build by using talent management methods. (Carter; Goldsmith, 2010)

Exec

LR & Development of Sr. Leadership Team

LR & Development of Directors and Sr. Directors

Punctional LR and Development of Staff

Managers

Supervisor / Individual

Entry Level / Junior Staff

Figure 3: Building Leadership Capacity in Colorado

Source: CARTER, L.; GOLDSMITH, M. (2010), p. 141

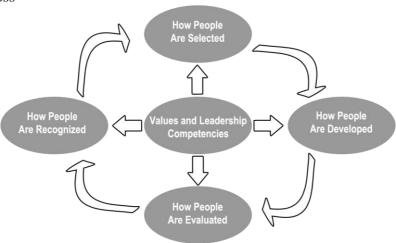
If we follow Armstrong's Competency framework (Armstrong, 2013) for a Competent Manager, we can observe what qualities and abilities manager should posses and with such a framework we can

easily assess the managers or candidates' skills whether he/she either retains them or in case of a candidate for a manager posses them.

Competence Model in Organization

Well-developed competence model is not enough if it is not applied in overall company's strategy as it is described in Lawler's and Ulrich's Star model. To be able to work with people as a human capital it is also important to look on processes that people are going through the organization. We can see that very vividly on the Figure 4 described by Clayton, Baugh and Ferrero in Internal Revenu Service as an illustration of how leadership competences can be connected to core processes and competences.

Figure 4: Values and Leadership Competencies Inform HR Decisions and Drive the Design of the Development Process



Source: CARTER, L.; GOLDSMITH, M. (2010), p. 120

Possible Limits of Competence Models

Competence models seem to be very complex and therefore well-functioning, but this does not have to be always true as Conger describes 3 pitfalls of competency-based models (Dowel, Silzer, 2010):

Too Complicated – When creating a competences list for a leadership position, experts tend to be too thorough and put there as many skills and behaviour as possible. That complicates the process of development because of scattered focus on too many areas.

Ideal Leader – The concept describing the position through competences tends to be idealistic, because in reality, not many people are able to fulfil all of it on 100%.

Focus – Many of competence-based concepts are developed in regard to past or current high-performing leaders which is obvious, because devising a competence model requires time and a lot of research. On the other hand, for future managers, such competences may not be appropriate because of new challenges.

Why Capabilities

Capabilities are activities the subject is able to do. (Lawler, Ulrich, 2008) It is the possibilities and means that organization can use to execute its business activities. In the Star model, capabilities together with competences play an important role in planning and executing the organization's strategy. In order to be efficient, the strategy must be driven by competences and capabilities. It

applies the other way round too. Consideration of strategy, competences and capabilities has to be done at the same time.

Typical organizational capabilities are nicely summarized in Table 1 composed by Evans and Chun:

Table 1: Organizational Capabilities

Capability	Description	
Talent	Attracting, motivating, and retaining competent people	
Speed	Making important changes happen fast	
Shared mind-set	Common framework of understanding communicated to internal and	
	external stakeholders	
Accountability	Ensuring responsibility and quality results	
Collaboration	Working across boundaries to ensure efficiency and leverage	
Learning	Generating and generalizing ideas with impact	
Leadership	Embedding leaders throughout the organization	
Client connectivity	Building enduring relationships of trust with clients and stakeholders	
Strategic unity	Articulating and sharing an intellectual, behavioral, and procedural	
	agenda for strategy	
Innovation	Creating new ideas and deliverables	
Efficiency	Reducing costs by managing process, people, and projects	
Simplicity	Keeping strategies, processes, and deliverables simple	
Social responsibility	Contributing to communities and broader public good	
Managing and	Managing disruption in a volatile economy	
anticipating risk		
Diversity	Building a culture of inclusive excellence	

Source: EVANS, A.; CHUN, E. (2012)

Focus on people – talents

When talking about human-capital-centric organization, we know that the focus throughout the organization is on people, specifically on talents. Such companies have abilities to attract new talents, develop new one or retain the current one according to the organization's competences and capabilities. (Lawler, Ulrich, 2008)

The competitive advantage of an organization is created by its employees, talented employees. When using the Star model, it is of course not only about the strategy together with competences and capabilities, but also about the rest of the parts. Otherwise, wrongly executed strategy and planning does not create HC-centric company.

2 RESEARCH SUBJECTS

In this part, we introduce both subjects who agreed to participate in our research. We emphasize the analysis of current situation, their competences and capabilities. The important part is also what each subject can offer to the other.

Technical University of Liberec

Founded in 1953 in Liberec, TUL represents the important facility providing education in the North of the Czech Republic. Known for its scientific research in the textiles, it offers variety of study programmes from architecture to economics. TUL provides education for more than 8 000 people.

There are various programmes of cooperation with nearby universities across the border from which one of them is called Neisse University.²³

Cross-border Study Programme

Neisse University was established in 2001 as a joint project of three universities from three countries – the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany. It offers a bachelor study programme in Information and Communication Management. The uniqueness about this project is that students study every year in one of the cooperating university. In order to unify the whole span of studies, the general language is English.

The studies start in Liberec at TUL for the first year, the second year is administrated by Wroclaw University in Poland and the 5th semester is held in Germany administrated by Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz. The last, 6th semester is left for compulsory internship.²⁴

The programme itself is also very interesting. Its focus, IT and communication, is non-standard the least. Students go through economics, psychology, but also programming, business processes, marketing, and national languages of each country.

In summary, students of Neisse University have basic knowledge of at least two typical study programmes, all in English and apart that they have good basics for all three national languages.

Current Situation Analysis

At its beginning, Neisse University project was very popular in terms of number applications and students. All three countries had more applications than the capacity of the programme was. However, around the year 2009, the trend in number of applications slightly decreased, but the number of students who actually decided to go for this programme decreased much more.

During our sessions with representatives of Neisse University, we discussed several reasons which might have been causing it:

- Weak year of birth
- Fear of studying in English
- Lack of interest in experiences

If we consider the first reason, it surely may be the reason, but it can also be caused by too many offers of study programmes or oppositely, too few students able to pass the entry exams.

The reason number two is partly connected to the 3rd reason and the fact that there might have been less and less students able to pass the entry exams. NU representatives explained this as students who passed the exams had the opportunity to choose whether to study the whole three years in Liberec in Czech or whether they will study at Neisse University in English. Many of them chose the first option, because they either thought or knew that with their current level of English, they would not last long or they did not want to move abroad.

In fact, the third reason is kind of a reflection of current generation of young people. Everyone can study and if they try a little. It is not difficult to pass the entry exams. The problem is that they do not really know what they will use the knowledge for.

²⁴ For more information, see http://www.neisse-uni.org

²³ For more information, see http://www.tul.cz

Considering Neisse University, it is almost an excellent bachelor programme for the beginning. In fact, many alumni said that NU gives a great overview in many areas of expertise and that it helped them to decide whether they will continue in economics or IT or any other way.

What is a plus for students at this programme, there is no tuition and surprisingly, all three universities try to help students by different scholarships for accommodation. Therefore, financially, it is not different from any other university programme.

Schools Capabilities

Here, we focus on what Neisse University is doing and is able to provide as a partner with a private company:

- Talent Attraction (attracting talents and develop them)
- Collaboration (cross-border collaboration to ensure high quality of education)
- Learning (variety of subjects to broaden the knowledge)
- Diversity (diverse cultures including languages, styles of education)
- Innovation (implementation of latest technological and educational news and methods)

From this list, we can derive that the university is able to organize special courses and meetings for students and it is able to let students go for an internships. These capabilities of the university will play a big role for creation any cooperation plan.

Student Competences

In order to confront needs of an employer (Valbek) and offer of an education provider (NU), we needed to develop a list of competences which can be acquired by studying this programme, in other words we devised an ideal Neisse University student.

Organization:

- time management
- project management
- analytical skills

Expertise IT:

- programming
- databases
- information systems
- data security

Expertise Management (basics):

- business
- marketing
- intellectual property
- European law

Communication:

- rhetoric
- negotiation
- psychology

• cultural understanding

Valbek

Valbek is a designing company founded in 1990. With just 7 employees, it started designing and engineering road and bridges. Within 20 years, it developed into a company of almost 250 employees with subsidiaries located around the Europe. From bridges and roads, it expanded its services to designing almost any kind of construction projects (water, railroads, buildings, etc.). Apart the designing, Valbek provides services in surveying, technical supervision at sites, visualizations and construction management software.

Aspe – Software Department

Interesting fact about Valbek is that apart the main work as a designer; it also develops its own software for construction management projects. In fact, it is one of the mostly used software in the Czech Republic for managing construction projects. It started in 1990s as a simple program for estimation budgets for construction. After the years, it was developed into the complex system that serves all participants in construction projects realization – designers, investors and contractors.

Despite the scale of their business (the Czech Republic and Slovakia), all the development process, distribution and technical support is done solely by their employees. Offices are located in Liberec where the main headquarter of Valbek is.

Almost all large construction companies in the Czech Republic use software Aspe, i.e. Eurovia, Metrostav, Skanska, and others. Among investors, Aspe is used by, for example, Road and Motorway Directorate of the CR, City Hall of Prague, Ministry of Finance or Skoda Auto. This is just a fragment of all customers of course, because as described above, Aspe can be used for different purposes by different participants of construction project.

Current Situation Analysis

In total, the department responsible for software Aspe counts almost 30 people, which includes programmers, salesmen, administration workers and consultants. Programmers and salesmen' jobs are quite clear when discussing software, but the job of consultants is more complex.

Since it is quite a small company which serves tens of customers, providing technical support, as well as trainings and retaining customer relations is consultant's job. Even though, it might sound as a complex and interesting job, there has been the largest fluctuation of employees from the whole department.

When discussing this matter with Director of the Department, several possible reasons came up:

- Too much workload and expectations
- Low motivation
- Low or none career promotion

The reason number one mainly dated back when consultants served more as technical support hotline; therefore it was necessary to know quite a lot in a quite short time in order to be able to help the customers over the phone. Currently, consultants serve more like a project managers. They are assigned a customer about whom they have to care in the sense of the whole implementation process, training, customizations and other support. Low motivation was apparently connected to the monotonous type of work it used be. Basically, people were not motivated to do something extra when they had just answered phones.

Career promotion is also important factor that influences people's decisions. Some are fine with the routine work, some need to develop. Since the scale of the company is so small, it is obvious reason for some people to look for a different job. However, it is very probable that there will be expansion plans in the future and the need for experienced employees speaking foreign languages will be high.

Valbek's Capabilities

As previously in case of the university, we tried to make a list of capabilities that Valbek too. Specifically, we focused on department Aspe:

- Client Orientation
- Accountability (quality ensuring)
- Shared Mind-set (clear internal and external communication)
- Trainings (constant learning)
- Speed (implementing changes fast)
- Collaboration (working with other departments and subsidiaries to ensure quality outputs)

For the purposes of this research, it is clear that Valbek has capital which can be offered, especially for students who can have great possibilities to either go on internship or apply for diploma thesis support.

Consultant Competences

In this part, we devised a competences that ideal consultant for Aspe should possess.

Communication:

- telephoning
- rhetoric
- training skills
- negotiation

Relationships:

- customers satisfaction
- managers satisfaction
- colleagues satisfaction

Organization:

- project management
- analytics
- time management
- change management

Expertise IT (basics):

- databases
- server installation and configuration

Expertise (Aspe):

• Aspe[®]

3 COOPERATION PROPOSITION

From the analysis of both subjects, it is much clearer now what they needs are and considering the principles described at the beginning, it is possible to sketch up a possible plan of cooperation that would be mutually beneficial for both of them. Even though, it might sounds easy, our goal is to use models of such cooperation from other European countries, such as Germany. However, the analysis of this model is still in progress, therefore any suggestion described here will be revised after the analysis will be finished within next months.

Our goals are to:

- confront both subjects' needs while considering their capabilities
- confront competences of Valbek's consultant position with NU's student
- develop a plan containing possible forms of cooperation

Employees' Satisfaction

Before confronting our research subjects needs, capabilities and competences, we want to stress out couple of things that for an employer should be of a high priority. We talk about reasons why the employees want to stay in the company. Kaye and Jordan-Evans conducted a survey asking more than 17,000 people what are the reasons of their staying in the company. (Galagan, Oakes, 2011)

The 5 most frequent reasons (Galagan, Oakes, 2011):

- Exciting work and challenge
- Career growth, learning and development
- Working with great people
- Fair play
- Supportive management (good boss)

As authors of the survey correctly note, the results cannot be taken as a strict dogma that every employer must fulfil, because every person has different attitudes and different priorities. But we can observe certain aspects that are important for most of them.

To illustrate a bit of different view on ways how to retain employees, we use couple of extra benefits found in Dot-Coms companies (Lawler, Ulrich, 2008):

- Electronic game room
- Pet insurance
- Online shopping discounts
- Oil change in parking lot
- Forty-two kinds of drinks

This clearly shows that type of business plays a big influential role on what benefits and values are important for retention of employees; in this case IT.

If we consider the type of job position as a consultant in Valbek and competences that student from Neisse University can get, we receive a combination of both illustrations above. Typical corporate position, working in teams, following procedures on one hand, on the other, there are basic and advanced work with IT, high expertise in certain technology and software development.

Subjects' Needs

When we confronted both sides and their needs, it is quite clear that NU and Valbek have lack of human capital or talents probably because there is not a very good publicity (case of NU) or that Aspe is not taken as an attractive workplace. These problems have a chance to be solved. The first reason is their location. Both organizations are located right next to each other. Therefore, there are almost no expenses for travelling and even if we consider the other years (2nd and 3rd, Poland and Germany), the travelling distances are not that large. The second reason is that both organizations have something to offer each other.

Table 2: Neisse University and Valbek's needs comparison

Neisse University	Valbek
attract students	attract qualified candidates
increase publicity	retain talents
increase cooperation (with public sector)	increase cooperation (with universities)

Subjects' Capabilities

In this section, we looked at the capabilities of both organizations in terms of what they can do and what they are doing. Obviously, Valbek is a business company, so the biggest priority and most of the resources go to the development and client relationship management which consequently generate profit. Oppositely, NU is not run to be profitable, but to provide high-quality education in culturally diversified environment. When confronting these two approaches, we could say they are complementary.

Table 3: Neisse University and Valbek's capabilities

Neisse University	Valbek	
Talent Attraction	Client Orientation	
Collaboration	Accountability	
Learning	Shared Mind-set	
Diversity	Trainings	
Innovation	Speed	
	Collaboration	

NU alumni and Valbek Consultant Competences

The most important part of this research was to confront competences of typical ("ideal") Neisse University alumni with competences of consultant position in Valbek. In the following table, we can observe how this comparison ended up. Interestingly, both positions have a lot in common. In terms of soft skills or organizational skills, the competences are almost the same. Of course, there are different demands at real work than at university. However, having real examples of what students could do and why they study this programme may give them a deeper insight on their future career.

Table 4: Comparison of NU alumni and Valbek consultant competences

Neisse University	Valbek	
Organization:	Organization:	
time management	 project management 	
 project management 	analytics	
 analytical skills 	• time management	
Expertise IT:	 change management 	
programming	Expertise IT:	
databases	 databases 	
 information systems 	 server installation, configuration 	
 data security 	Expertise (Aspe):	
Expertise Management:	• Aspe [®]	
business	Customer-orientation:	
 marketing 	 customers satisfaction 	
 intellectual property 	 managers satisfaction 	
 European law 	 colleagues satisfaction 	
Communication:	Communication:	
• rhetoric	 telephoning 	
negotiation	• rhetoric	
 psychology 	 training skills 	
cultural understanding	 negotiation 	

Suggestions for Activities

Since, there are already several examples of partnerships between universities and companies (banking, IT, etc.); the idea was to come up with suggestions of how to provide such an opportunity locally, for a smaller company and with almost no costs other than the time.

Based on the comparisons, we believe that cooperation should be implemented throughout the whole studies as a structured and scheduled plan.

Table 5: Suggested activities

Time Frame	Activity
1 st semester	Introduction by showing the possibilities (not only consulting Aspe)
2 nd semester	Case studies – specific subjects (help identifying talent)
	Practical seminars
summer	Internship (3 months)
holidays	
3 rd semester	Practical seminars
4 th semester	Real problems finding solutions – competitions for "prizes"
summer	Internship (3 months)
holidays	
5 th semester	Own ideas - competition
	Thesis support
6 th semester	Internship (3 months) with the possibility to extend (if capacity allows it)
	Thesis support

Cooperation Plan – Suggested Fields

How Valbek can input into the cooperation is described in previous section. Mainly these activities were directed to students just from the software department developing Aspe. What about the input of the whole organizations then? Neisse University regularly organizes a Neisse Meeting, which gathers students, alumni, teachers and other partners of all three universities. Occasionally, there are conferences related to Euroregion Neisse, which representatives of NU usually attend. In case of Valbek, the reach is also significant.

Therefore, we suggest following forms of cooperation:

- attending conferences of opposite side in cases it relates in the field of discussed competences
- promote the other side at related events
- prepare together plans for increasing the quality of education by practical activities (section 3.5)
- promote students creativity (case studies, practical exercises)

CONCLUSION

In this research, we focused on increasing the human-capital value of two institutions – Technical University Liberec and private company Valbek. They both struggle to fulfil some of their needs in the field of human-capital and talents. What we stressed out was that a strategic partnership among organizations located in the same area can be mutually beneficial and at the same not very costly. As a first part of this research, we analysed situation at both companies, confronted the results and drafted certain possibilities based on the talent management model of competences and capabilities.

The next part of this research will be focusing on analysis of similar model of cooperation in Germany. Findings will be then used to confront our first draft. Using the results, we will present the solution stated at the beginning of this paper.

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