An Empirical Analysis on Food Mechanical Technology Transfer in Universities

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the mechanism of food technology transfer of universities based on the patent licensing network. University is an important part in building an innovation-oriented country in China. University food technology transfer also plays an important role to promote economic and social development. In this study, the university food technology patent licensing network in Fujian province was taken as an example to analyze its network characteristics, inspect features of university food technology transfer and do an in-depth investigation between the universities and their inventors. Then the existing problems were analyzed to make relevant recommendations to improve the ability of university food technology transfer. The empirical analysis results show that (1) it needs to complete the university intellectual property management system, (2) to change the relevant recommendations to improve the ability of university food technology transfer. The empirical analysis results show that (1) it needs to complete the university intellectual property management system, (2) to change the relevant recommendations to improve the ability of university food technology transfer. The empirical analysis results show that (1) it needs to complete the university intellectual property management system, (2) to change the relevant recommendations to improve the ability of university food technology transfer. The empirical analysis results show that (1) it needs to complete the university intellectual property management system, (2) to change the relevant recommendations to improve the ability of university food technology transfer. The empirical analysis results show that (1) it needs to complete the university intellectual property management system, (2) to change the relevant recommendations to improve the ability of university food technology transfer.

Keywords: Food technology transfer, knowledge creativity, patent licensing network

INTRODUCTION

University has a large number of laboratories and commitment of many research projects and has also made extensive studies results, which strongly support the China’s innovative national strategy of constructing an innovation-oriented country, the main output of these laboratories and research projects are papers, however, patent applications also greatly increase, such as Zhejiang University, ranked in the first place of patent applications, its application number has reached 24,715 at the end of 2013. Meyer (2002) considered that the output of scientific research is articles and technical innovation outputs is patents. Through implementing, licensing, transferring and other forms, patents can apply their technologies and thus to create value for society. General universities themselves are not directly involved in economic activities. They need to license these patents or transfer to other organizations to realize the economic value of their technology.

Research on food technology transfer in universities focuses on two aspects, the macro management and micro mechanism, among which, macro-management include organization (Hoppe and Emre, 2001; Siegel et al., 2003), operation mechanism (Thursby and Kemp, 2002; Friedman and Silberman, 2001) and performance (Powers, 2004) of food technology transfer in universities; micro aspects is from the perspective of the knowledge flowing to inspect knowledge flowing mechanism (Mansfield, 1998; Lowe, 2006) in the process of technology transfer in universities and the effects of knowledge flowing on food technology transfer (Tijssen, 2001). In the process of studying on the knowledge flowing in universities, citation analysis method (Jaffe and Trajtenberg, 1999) and social network analysis method plays an important role.

In the history of the development of social network analysis, Barnes (1954) firstly took the lead in a more rigorous and analyzed way to use concept of network, then Bavelas (1950) studied on the form feature of centrality in network and later Freeman (1979) and Scott (2000) enriched the concepts and methods of social network analysis. The use of social network analysis is very extensive (Sorenson, 2003), for example, Droge et al. (2003) studied the relationship between property of social networks and tacit knowledge diffusion. Brechi and Lissoni (2005) and Singh (2005) use patents citation to demonstrate that social proximity between invention of human cooperation network is basic motion of knowledge flowing. Zander and Kogut (1995) considered that interpersonal networks is an important way to the spread of knowledge and information. Fleming et al. (2007) also pointed out that contacts between patent inventors and co-operators can make their information deliver to someone else. Hong and Su (2012) use social network analysis methods to build knowledge flowing network from university to the enterprise. Wassermann and Faust (1994) considered that social network analysis is based on the assumption that the importance of the interaction between interaction unit, contact is defined as a connection between the units, this...
connection is also a fundamental part of the network theory. Patent license includes the licensor and the licensee, the licensee contacts with licensor through the way that licensor give a piece or a few pieces of patent licensing to licensee and this contact has direction that point to the licensor from the licensee. This can constitute a directive multi-value patent license network, among them, the licensor and the licensee is defined as a unit, the number of patent licenses is defined as the direction of the contact. We can use this patent license network to study relationship between these units. However, up to date very limited work has been done to address the problem on the mechanism of food technology transfer of universities based on the patent licensing network. It is very urgent to carry out researches to inspect the mechanism of food technology transfer of universities.

This study aims to investigate the mechanism of food technology transfer of universities based on the patent licensing network. The patent licensing network in university food technology transfer was built to analyze its network characteristics and investigate the relationship between the universities and their inventors. Lastly, based on the existing problems, some useful recommendations have been proposed to improve the ability of university food technology transfer.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Chinese patent law, patent license contract must be filed in the State Intellectual Property Office. In patent licensing contract, one record number of contracts can contain one patent or multiple patents and one patent can be permitted by one licensee or multiple licensees, of course, one patent may contain multiple patent holders, namely, multiple licensors. Assuming that patent license conditions is shown as Table 1, we only extract the licensors A's patent license contract, who has three copies of the patent license contract (T1-T3), where T1 contains patent P1, T2 contains patent P1 and P2, T3 contains patent P3, P1 and P2 are licensed to Licensee B, P3 and P4 is only one licensee person, C and D. This constitute the 4 by 4 matrix A_{ij}, number 2 in matrix shows that there are 2 pieces of patent licenses from A_{11} to A_{12}, licensor A belongs to region R_{A}, licensees are subject to B-D, region R_{B}, R_{C} and R_{D}. Region of licensors also constitutes a 4 by 4 matrix R_{ij}, number 2 in matrix shows that there are 2 pieces of patent licenses from R_{11} to R_{12}. The entire patent license network can be represented as Fig. 1. In Fig. 1, the University a license patent to two organizations, geographic region R_{A} to R_{C} has one time knowledge flowing, this network is a directed graph; numerical value in the figure indicates the number of patent licenses. This study will build a university patent license network based on above-mentioned method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results: In this study, Fujian University is selected as the research object, according to information of food technology patent license contract registration in the State Intellectual Property Office collates relevant statistics that obtained a patent license, Fujian Province has a total of 122 pieces of patent licenses, involving 11 universities, namely, Fujian University of Technology (FJUT), Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (FAFU), Fujian Academy of Agricultural Sciences (FAAS), Fujian Normal University (FJNU), Fuzhou University (FZU), Huaqiao University (HQU), Jimei University (JMU), Xiamen University (XMU), Xiamen University of Technology (XMUT), Fujian Institute of Research on the Structure of Matter, Chinese Academy of Sciences (FJIRSMCAS). Among these patent licenses, 97.54% of the licenses are an exclusive license type, including 95 invention patents, 27 utility model patents, design patents. The overall network characteristics are shown in Table 2.

As can be seen from Table 2, the network size of XMU reached the maximum of 21 and MJU and XMUT only had one connection, the Degree of FJNU is the maximum of 25, the minimum is XMUT is 1. After computation, the mean degree of the whole network is
When selecting the connection number is greater than one, the whole network left XMU, JMU, FJUT, HQU, FZU and MJU these 7 universities, which had 12 licensee, mostly had only 2 licenses, the most is FJNU, which had licensed 12 patents to the Fuzhou Minyou Jixin Digital Technology Co., Ltd, the second is MJU had licensed 6 patents to the Fujian Baode Group, their status as shown in Fig. 3.

All these universities only located in Fuzhou city, Xiamen and Quanzhou city of Fujian Province and then examined its geographical radiation effects, according to the method of Fig. 1, we got the following networks, shown in Fig. 4 to 6. Table 3 lists the statistical results.

As can be seen from Fig. 4 to 6 and Table 3, these three areas mainly licensed their patents to its own cities, mostly in Fujian Province, where Fuzhou had licensed 8 patents to the other provinces, only Guangdong Province had twice, the other 7 provinces are only had one time, Xiamen and Quanzhou cities had 6 licenses to the outside provinces, each one had one time, the distribution of these outside provinces was scattered. Overall, the economy of these provinces were developed, such as Beijing city, Guangdong city, Shanghai city, Zhejiang city and Jiangsu city, which showed that regional patent licensing more concentrated in location, licensing to the local province carried out the majority, the outside provinces mostly were developed areas.

Therefore, the technology transfer of Fujian universities was scattered, Individual difference was bigger, concentrated in Fuzhou, Xiamen and Quanzhou these three cities, the licensees were also scattered, but

Table 2: The network descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>NrmDegree</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FJNU</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.042</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XMU</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.961</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FZU</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.716</td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAFU</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.634</td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQU</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.817</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJU</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.490</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMU</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJUT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAAS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJIRSMCAS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XMUT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Network Centralization = 1.89%; Heterogeneity = 4.41%; Normalized = 3.47%.

Table 3: The area patent licensing statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Local city</th>
<th>Local province</th>
<th>Outside provinces</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuzhou</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiamen</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quanzhou</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.33 and the density is 1.3043, indicating that this network is relatively dispersed. The whole patent licensing network is shown in Fig. 2.
the concentration of some individuals were very high, the licensees’ areas mainly concentrated in the local province, the outsides provinces were very scattered.

**Analysis:** This study made a survey to the above 11 universities and its inventors, of which provided 300 copies to these inventors, recovered 148 copies, the rate was 49.33%. According to the result, we examined the situation of its patents, patent licensing, technology transfer management system and the problems of technology transfer, then made the recommendations to promote university technology transfer.

**The basic situation:** According to the questionnaire, these universities have a total of 3,638 patents, the rate of patent licensing is 3.35%, if coupled with the self-use and transfer, the number reaches 279 and the implementation rate is 7.67%. The management agencies believe that only 21.43% of its university staff pays attention to the patent technology transfer, the attitude of the rest is general understanding, which showed that: the majority of the staff does not well understand the patent technology transfer, need to improve their ideology, the result as shown in Table 4.

As can be seen from Table 4 that staff approve the patent implement, technology services and the patent transfer, but also want to do the above things, but if they use too much time on patent implement, which will reduce the time on teaching and research, so if the university will enact suitable policy to solve above problem, 42.86% of the staff wants to help companies to effectively patent implement. Since universities and staff are willing to use the patent, the reasons of the patents have not been used as shown in Table 5.

As can be seen from Table 5, the most important reason for these patents not to be used is that the inventors could not contact the investors or manufacturers, the following reason is the need for technical layout. The most choices of the second and the third reason is the patent market opportunities immature, which indicate that the search of buyers and licensees is the most important, which requires the government to enhance the construction of patent trading platform, to provide more opportunities for inventors.
The usages of patents owned by the inventors are manufacture products and transfer (both 23.65%), license to manufacture products (20.27%), there are a few other selections, such as advertising (7 choices), discounted shares (2 choices) and bidding (1 choice), which indicate that although the university patents mostly used in the manufacture, transfer and licensing, but also had the other ways.

Management mechanism: On these universities surveyed, only one university did not set any management office and managers, HQU and FAFU had the intellectual property management department, the other 71.42% were managed by its Science and Technology Department or the relevant department. Only two universities did not establish the patent management rules and regulations, FAFU, HQU, FJNU, FZU and XMU had the intellectual property management rules and regulations and also had the separate patent management rules and regulations, the other 6 universities put the patent management regulation into the intellectual property management regulations.

There are 8 universities have the incentive measures for the service invention, which are reflected in income distribution system, on the survey of income distribution system, only 57.14% have such system, the average rate of income to the inventors is 60%, the highest is FJNU of 80%.

As can be seen from Table 6, the largest channel to patent transfer and trading is involved in the technical exhibition or trade fair, there are 4 universities have their own patent transfer offices, which are XMU, FZU, HQU and XMUT, the channel of friends has selected 4, one thing to note is that patent agency are ranked second, but also the most trusted intermediary, but the law agency has no choice, indicating: University will look for the specialized intermediaries, has the relatively high ideology of patent.

**The difficult in technology transfer:** The survey of the difficult in the patent transfer and licensing is shown in Table 7. The most difficult is the patent trading platform market is underdeveloped, the following are the patent product is hard to manufacture, patent value is hard to assess, hard to find buyers, low patent quality and the income of service invention is difficult to divide from university to inventor.

The survey of the difficult of the process from the patent application to implementation is shown in Table 8.
Table 9: The major problems of food technology patent use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack leadership attention</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant rules and regulations are not perfect</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of intellectual property management funds</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack the necessary guidance to the intellectual property management rules and regulations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack intellectual property managers</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack intellectual property use and protection ideology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack the market information</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack the motivation of staff to patent use</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main task of teachers is to research and teaching, lack the time in patent transfer</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low evaluation of intellectual property</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: The supports wanted from government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide fund for patent implementation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax relief for the patent use income</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide patent trading platform</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide public information</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: The measures provide from government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide fund for the patent implementation</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact the appropriate manufacturer or the investors for patent product</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the function of patent information trading service platform</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make clear income distribution policy</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

which shows that the patent industrialization is the most difficult in the patent implementation, we should provide more support in this area and the personnel training.

In the survey of the supports need from government for inventors, the ranked first is fund support; the following choices are to contact the appropriate manufacturer or the investors for patent product, to complete the function of patent information trading service platform and to make clear income distribution policy, the results as shown in Table 11.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the patent licensing rate of universities was 3.35%, plus its own implementation and transfer reached 7.67%, through investigate and analysis the questionnaires of universities and inventors, we can draw the following conclusions and recommendations:

- Need to complete the university intellectual property management system because there are less than 50% of universities that have the income distribution rules for food technology patent use, which need to make more intellectual property management rules and regulations for all the universities
- Change the functions of university management office and suggest that:
  - Allocate a certain percentage of food technology patent transfer income to the management officers to improve their enthusiasm:
  - Leading the professional food technology transfer managers to search the market
  - Provide training for the university staff, enhance their ideology, in order to enhance the food technology transfer initiative and ability
- Change the teacher evaluation system
- Complete the food technology transfer agency market and recommend that:
  - Improve the functions of intellectual property services platform
  - Change the business model of the food technology trading and patent exhibition centre and enhance the initiative service capabilities to provide the suitable patent information for the technology demand side and to build a investor team with knowledge of technology, market, investment, intellectual property, for intellectual property value-added service
- Increase the government supports
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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