

Leadership of Normal Students in a Selected University in China

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Abstract: Normal students are a special group in the field of China education. They are quasi teachers specially trained by universities for basic education. Their leadership vary significantly depending on their major. The educational ecological environment, including social environment, university environment, family environment, and individual traits, has a significant impact on their leadership. Universities need to create a good educational environment and develop improvement plans based on professional characteristics to enhance the leadership of normal students.

Keywords: Leadership; Normal Student; Education Leadership.

1. Literature Review

Along with the educational reform practice in the United States in the 1980s, teacher leadership has always been one of the hot topics in academic circles. Scholars have discussed issues such as the conceptual essence, value functions, and influencing factors of teacher leadership. In the Leadership Challenge Model, leadership is defined as the process of stimulating excellent qualities in oneself and others. In the Social Change Model, leadership refers to being purposeful, cooperative, having a clear value orientation and bringing about positive changes in society process. In the Distributed Leadership Model, the essence of leadership is empowerment, sharing and collaboration, which is reflected in the communication practices and role relationships between leaders and followers. In the WICS Model, leadership is considered a synthesis of wisdom, intelligence and creativity.

Initially, scholars believed that only leaders had leadership (Ken, 2019). In practice, the leadership practice process mostly centers on the development of teacher leaders, focusing on the development of teacher leadership roles and leadership abilities, thus forming a Leader Role-based practice model. Leadership, including skills, knowledge, literacy, etc., can traditionally be conceptualized as individual-level leadership capabilities. Teacher leadership is a skill that can be developed through professional development, development projects, and competency standards. Therefore, the development of leadership can be reduced to the development of leadership ability, forming a leadership capability practice model. Scholars have noticed that the development of leadership is closely related to the ecological environment. They pay more attention to the relationship between ecological systems (schools, groups, systems) and teacher leadership development (Smith, P. S., et al.2017), thus forming a leadership ecological practice model.

The leadership role practice model, leadership capability practice model and leadership ecological practice model have all been criticized to varying degrees. Based on the limitations of practical models of teacher leadership development, scholars have tried to construct theoretical models to explain the development process and mechanism of teacher leadership. Some scholars have adopted the grounded theory approach and constructed an Ecological Model consisting of individual core competencies and ecosystem factors through

interviews with teachers participating in the Florida Master Teacher Initiative, based on their leadership development experiences (Poekert P, Alexandrou A, Shannon D, 2016). Other scholars have constructed an Analytic Model based on the issue of teacher leadership development (Eckert, J., & Daughtrey, A. 2019).

As with previous studies, this study focuses on the roles, abilities, and ecological issues of leadership, focusing on their impact on leadership, and adopting empirical research methods. However, the difference is that researchers will adopt an ecological perspective, with the ecological theoretical model as the main framework, and integrate roles and abilities into the ecological model. Based on this, we will investigate the differences in leadership among normal students in terms of age, gender, grade, major, etc., analyze the relationship between educational environment (including social environment, university environment, family environment, personal traits, etc.) and normal students' leadership, and propose suggestions to improve their leadership.

Based on this, we will investigate the current situation of leadership among normal students, analyze the relationship between the educational environment (including social environment, university environment, family environment, individual traits, etc.) and the leadership of normal students, and explore how to improve the educational environment to enhance the leadership of normal students.

2. Significance of the Study

This study takes normal students from a local normal university in China as the research object, and explores the leadership improvement strategies of this group through case studies. This research can benefit the following individuals:

1.Normal students. The researcher will provide normal students with a good learning atmosphere and campus cultural atmosphere in terms of leadership development, helping them become successful teachers and leaders of educational institutions in the future.

2.Administrators. This study will provide policy recommendations for universities to improve the leadership of normal students, promote the improvement of the education and teaching system, optimize the management system, and create a good ecological environment, and promote the overall improvement of higher education and

teaching.

3. Teachers. The suggestions we put forward have positive significance for improving the classroom teaching and practical teaching of teachers. These suggestions will motivate teachers to shift their focus from imparting knowledge to developing abilities.

4. Future researchers. Our study can serve as a reference for future researchers, encouraging them to continue to explore this issue, further study other variables, and provide critical opinions to enrich leadership knowledge.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Hypothesis

Ho1 There is no significant difference on the assessment of the student respondents in terms of their core competency when profile is taken as test factor.

Ho2 There is no significant relationship between educational environment and the leadership of the student respondents.

3.2. Research Design

The age, gender, grade level, and major of the respondents will be considered as testing factors. The researcher will study the current leadership status of normal students from three aspects: professional knowledge, teaching skills, and educational philosophy, and then study the impact of four factors: social environment, university environment, family environment, and personal traits on the leadership of normal students.

This study adopts a quantitative research design, which aims to provide a comprehensive and comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect the leadership development of Z University's normal students. We ensure that Z University allows for detailed and specific research on influencing factors. This method is reasonable as it provides a solid foundation for developing targeted strategies and interventions within a specific educational environment.

Quantitative data will provide us with statistical insights into the relationships between variables. A structured questionnaire survey will be distributed to a portion of normal students at Z University. This will enable us to quantitatively evaluate variables such as social environment, university environment, family environment, and individual traits. Statistical analysis methods will be used to identify correlations and patterns in the data.

3.3. Sampling Technique

The respondents of this study came to Z Normal University as normal students. They were randomly selected from Z Normal University. Using the Qualtrics sample size calculator, at a 95% confidence level, the researcher obtained 615 normal students from Z Normal University with a population of 2000 students.

3.4. Research Instrument

This study used questionnaire survey as a tool. The researcher created a questionnaire based on existing literature and statements of the cited questions. The questionnaire for Z Normal University normal students is divided into three parts. The first part is their personal information, including their gender, age, grade level, and major. The second part of the questionnaire includes the leadership of the normal students, including professional knowledge, teaching skills, and educational philosophy. The third part of the questionnaire will evaluate the impact of ecological environmental factors on the leadership of normal students. The ecological environment is divided into social environment, university environment, family environment, and individual traits.

4. Research Results and Analysis

The research has found that there are no significant differences in leadership among normal students in terms of age, grade, and gender, but there are significant differences in their majors. Ho1 is rejected.

Table 1. Difference in the Assessments of Leadership by Respondents' Major

Variable	Major	Mean	F-value	sig	Decision Ho	Interpret
Professional Knowledge	Chinese, English, Politics, Education	3.32	7.752	.000	Reject	Significant
	Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology	3.19				
	Music, Physical Education, Art	3.38				
	Others	2.91				
Teaching Skills	Chinese, English, Politics, Education	3.32	7.418	.000	Reject	Significant
	Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology	3.23				
	Music, Physical Education, Art	3.42				
	Others	2.89				
Educational Philosophy	Chinese, English, Politics, Education	3.58	3.104	.026	Reject	Significant
	Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology	3.52				
	Music, Physical Education, Art	3.59				
	Others	3.31				
Overall			6.091	.009	Reject	Significant

Using ANOVA or F-Test, the overall result on the differences in the assessment of student-respondents on their

leadership by major yielded significant findings in terms of professional knowledge, teaching skills and educational

philosophy. This denotes that regardless of the major the student-respondents have varied assessments on their leadership regarding those specific variables. The null hypothesis was rejected at a 5% level of significance.

This supports the research findings of some scholars. As they explained, the reason for the differences may be that students from different majors have different structural learning abilities (such as time management abilities). For example, students in humanities have more freedom, even if they are lying in bed studying novels, they are still learning; The experiments and assignments of science students require

a lot of time and energy, as well as relatively fixed locations (Jing Jing, Wang Caiqin, 2019). However, the art major (taking music education as an example) has problems such as unscientific curriculum design, low disciplinary status, and imperfect enrollment and examination systems, which affect the improvement of the professional abilities of art students (Hu Shujian, 2021).

This study also found that the leadership of teacher trainees is related to the educational environment, and a good educational environment can promote the improvement of their leadership. Ho2 is rejected.

Table 2. Relationships between the Educational Environment and the Leadership of Students

Leadership of Students	Statistical Treatment	Educational Environment				
		Social Environment	University Environment	Family Environment	Individual Traits	Overall
Professional Knowledge	Pearson r	.601**	.583**	.613**	.574**	.593**
	sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Decision Ho	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject
	Interpret	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Teaching Skills	Pearson r	.571**	.597**	.645**	.608**	.605**
	sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Decision Ho	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject
	Interpret	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
Educational philosophy	Pearson r	.713**	.769**	.709**	.748**	.735**
	sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Decision Ho	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject
	Interpret	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant

Using a Product Moment Correlation Coefficient or Pearson r, the relationships between the leadership of students and educational environment revealed significant correlation between and among its respective variables. This implied that educational environment greatly influences students' leadership. The degree of correlation seemed to be medium, high and very high in some aspects of the relationships of variables. The null hypothesis was rejected at a 5% level of significance.

This conclusion is consistent with the research findings of some scholars. They pointed out that: (1) A social environment that provides material, professional, and emotional support can effectively enhance the sense of professional mission of normal students (SHANG Wei - wei, 2022). (2) A good family and university environment, as well as the cultivation of excellent traits, have a significant impact on the leadership of students (CHEN Wenen, ZHENG Qian, 2022). (3) Personal factors, teaching factors, and environmental factors can all have a significant impact on student leadership (Liu Tianxing, 2023). (4) Social participation, family function, and personal temperament have a significant impact on the leadership of college students (Lu Zhe, 2018). (5) Interpersonal communication ability, teamwork ability, and problem-solving ability have a significant impact on the leadership of college students (Pi Lisha, 2018). (6) Family factors, knowledge and skills, and school factors have a significant impact on the leadership of college students (Fu Qiong, Li Jing, 2019).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

1. Most of the respondents were female and very eager to improve their leadership skills in order to adapt to the needs of the times.

2. Educational philosophy was considered the most

important leadership element based on the assessment of student respondents in order to achieve better educational results.

3. There is no significant difference in educational philosophy of normal students in terms of age and grade.

4. The professional knowledge and teaching skills of normal students vary depending on age and grade. The difference is mainly between freshmen and other grades, but the difference between other grades is not significant.

5. There is no significant difference in leadership of normal students in terms of gender.

6. The leadership of normal students vary significantly depending on their major.

7. The educational ecological environment, including social environment, university environment, family environment, and individual traits, has a significant impact on their leadership.

5.2. Recommendations

1. Strengthen education and guidance on leadership for lower grade students, and implement a gradient leadership enhancement plan.

2. Building dual platforms for on campus and off campus practice.

3. Strengthen the curriculum of normal universities. Improve the educational and teaching abilities of teachers.

4. Create an atmosphere of equal rights between teachers and students, strengthen communication between teachers and students.

5. Educational philosophy, professional knowledge, and teaching skills are integrated. Universities need to further strengthen the education of professional knowledge and teaching skills for normal students, so that they can achieve balanced development in these three aspects.

6. Increase investment in education, focus on building teacher skill training venues and facilities, and make full use

of these venues and facilities to provide sufficient teacher skill training for normal students.

7. Form learning groups, and guide students to learn independently. Enable students to enhance their abilities through diverse campus cultural activities.

8. Normal students should strengthen their professional identity, emotions, and sense of responsibility as teachers, taking pride in becoming a teacher and striving towards becoming an excellent teacher.

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