

**ENHANCING COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP PRACTICES
THROUGH ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT
INTERVENTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF ZHEJIANG YUEXIU
UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES (ZYUFL), CHINA**

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Abstract: This research mainly investigated the impact of Organization Development Interventions (ODI) on the leadership practice of college students, to determine the significant difference in university student leadership before and after ODI. The researcher firstly surveyed on 339 students in ZYUFL Jinghu Campus to study the current university students' leadership practice, it was found that the level of leadership of college students was not high. Meanwhile, significant differences of the students' leadership practices according to their experiences of knowledge learning, practical training, and team building were determined. Based on these findings, the researcher had designed relevant leadership activities, and conducted a four-month intervention for improving the selected college students' leadership practices. Then, the researcher further tested and compared the students' leadership practices in the control group and the experimental group, before and after the intervention. In this process, a paired samples t-test was applied and significant differences with the students in the experimental group before and after the intervention were determined, which proved that the intervention was effective, and the college students' leadership practice could be effective through intervention. Discussion on the findings and recommendations were also provided in this study.

Keywords: Knowledge Learning; Practical Training; Team Building; Organization Development Interventions (ODI)

Introduction

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Countries all over the world set an upsurge on the cultivation of college student leadership. Governments increased their input to the cultivation of college student leadership, and focused their resources on the systematic cultivation of university students' leadership. As early as the 1980s, the United States launched an education program towards university student leadership that designed to train future leaders. This program aroused the attention of the world in which various countries imitate and follow. In particular, the higher education circles in all countries were competing to carry out similar educational activities (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999).

The education of college student leadership throughout Asia was gradually evolving. The governments of various countries were vigorously promoting the leadership education of college students together with universities and social organizations. Although the starting time was relatively late, many achievements had already been made. China's leadership education started later than the United States and other countries. The specific approaches were drawn from many Western countries. The theories and other aspects were not yet mature. However, the implementation of China's national policy was highly efficient, so the speed of advancement was very fast. Many colleges and universities attached great importance to the leadership education of college students, but the total number was relatively small. There was no specialized agency to promote this work. The level of attention and awareness was not enough. The overall situation was still in its infancy, with a lot of room for improvement. Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages (ZYUFL) as a newly-built private undergraduate college aims in cultivating high-quality global citizens. It requires students to have a global vision and the responsibility and awareness of the world's citizens. This coincides with the leadership of globalization and its goals. It is consistent. In order to achieve these goals, some activities have also been carried out to cultivate students' international perspectives. The education of college students' leadership does not attract much attention, and it has not carried out relevant series of education. It is therefore found that the school is not conducive to the formation of university students' leadership and career development. Hence, the future employment competitiveness of students and leadership education development of undergraduates are not realized.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the current students' leadership practices at ZYUFL, China.
2. To compare the students' leadership practices according to their experiences of knowledge learning, practical training, and team building at ZYUFL, China.

3. To provide and design the strategies for enhancing students' leadership practices at ZYUFL, China.
4. To measure the implemented strategies for students' leadership practices at ZYUFL, China.

Literature Review

Organizational Development Theory

In the 1950s, the concept of organizational development was proposed. In the 1960s and 1970s, organizational development was rapidly developed and gradually improved. After the 1980s, the theory of organizational development shifted to the study of contingency and situation. The research content and technology of organizational development theory became more mature and systematically researched. McLagan (1989) argued that organizational development was a multi-directional interaction process between individuals and organizational groups that maintained a benign and healthy relationship within and outside the organization, while organizing change and management. Organizational development was the cycle and community of individuals, teams, and organizations. The core of organizational development was participation and empowerment. Individuals were attached to the team building and the team needed to be integrated into the organization. As individuals, they headed to actively participate to form a community. Mclean (2001) believed that organizational development was benefited individuals and teams. The organization's internal knowledge, skills and performance improvement processes, however were beneficial to organizations, communities, and countries in the long run. Organizational development also depended on the strength of the internal team composed of individuals. The organization would be fully empowered, and mobilize their enthusiasm to achieve organizational goals.

Leadership Related Theories

During the decades of development, a variety of incentive theories had emerged. The most influential theories were: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), Herzberg's dual-factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), Vroom's expectation theory (Oliver, 1974), and Adams's fairness theory (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002).

Many scholars studied the leader traits of young students and formed a relatively rich theory. Karnes, Bean (1997) proposed that young students with strong innovation and critical reasoning ability, ability to motivate others, good verbal ability, courage to accept challenges, consistent words and deeds, had greater potential than the average student. They were active and initiated action and had a strong physical and mental advantage. Ward, Ellis (2008)

argued that the strengths of young leaders were: to build a deep and intimate friendship with people, create values that were similar to members, provide social support, simulate successful leaders and enhance social influence. Young leaders had better emotional performance, and confidently maintained their voice in the team.

Leader continuum theory (Watt, 2003), Lewin's three leader style theories (Nahavandi, 1997), leader quadrant theory (Burns, 1978), Liken's four management style theories (Heifetz, 1994) and management grid theory (Yukl, 1994) were representative results of leader behavior theory. After interviewing and observing a large number of leaders in the military and other fields, these theories suggested that the behavior of leader could be distinguished from the care of people and production, the leader of superiors and the active participation of subordinates. The theory of leader behavior put leader behavior together with leader effectiveness and organizational performance. There had achieved certain results, but neglected that leader behavior was implemented in specific situations without considering the surrounding environment.

In response to the research flaws of leader behavior theory, in the 1960s and 1970s, scholars took the research forward and proposed the theory of leadership contingency, also called the leadership situation theory (Antonakis, Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2005). This believed that the effectiveness of leadership was highly correlated with the situation. Instead of just considering the behavior of the leader, the organization target task and the subjective needs of the organization members. Leadership contingency theory mainly included Fiedler's (1967) contingency model of leadership effectiveness, Korman's (1966) leadership life cycle theory, House's (1974) path goal theories, Vroom and Yeton's (1973) leader-participation model, Redding's (1970) three-dimensional leadership model.

In the face of the new situation, scholars proposed a new leadership theory in the 1970s. Leader-member exchange (LMX theory) and transformational leadership theory were the main theoretical achievements (Lord, De vader & Allinger, 1986).

The transformational leadership theory had a wide range of influences and implemented in many fields leading to better results. Astin (1993), through three years of research and hard work, successfully launched the social change model of college student leadership development at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1993.

The project was fully funded by the Eisenhower Foundation of the US Department of Education and received strong support and recognition from numerous leadership experts (Astin, Astin, 2000). The model believed that leadership was a process of civic responsibility and values. Under the guidance of goals, they worked together to drive positive change in society. Leadership and social change were combined closely to enhance the abilities and knowledge to work with team members to change society. The core of the social change model of university student leadership development was changed (Llies, Gerhardt & Le, 2004).

The social change model of college student leadership development proposed that individuals should have self-awareness, enhance their knowledge level and ability. They needed to be consistent in words and deeds, and assume corresponding responsibilities in the organization (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

College Student Leadership

There are different views on the educational models of college student leadership. Langone (2004) believed that the citizen leadership model was a very good training model. Magolda (2002) advocated that student learn cooperatively and learn to shape their leadership in cooperation. Kouzes and Posner (2018) specially designed the Student Leadership Challenge in order to cultivate and evaluate college students' leadership, mainly to help college students form leadership, complete leadership vision and achieve excellent results.

The Student Leadership Challenge includes five practices of exemplary leadership: (1). Model the Way is to clarify their own values, gain the trust and recognition of team members, align with team values, and set an example for other team members to achieve organizational goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). (2). Inspire a Shared Vision is to describe the common vision of the team, gain everyone's recognition, advance and retreat with team members, as well as allow more members to join and benefit through an effective communication and dialogue between leaders and team members; (3). Challenge the Process requires leaders to have the courage to face change, since there are always some challenges in the process of leadership. They should unite their members, listen to others' opinions, work with others to solve difficult problems, dare to take risks, and work innovatively to achieve organizational success; (4). Enable Others to Act means that leaders fully respect team members, listen to their opinions, trust and empower team; they let the team members play their own initiative, make plans, actively solve problems, participate in team decision-making and foster strong team cooperation, thus cultivating and developing their various abilities; (5).

Encourage the Heart is to recognize the contributions of team members, to see their efforts and achievements and to celebrate and commend their accomplishments openly, building a positive team spirit and motivating everyone to contribute to the realization of organizational goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2018).

Organizational Development Intervention

Organizational intervention as one of the most difficult part of organizational development was extremely challenging. Different means and methods of intervention were needed for different organization and organizational environments. Scholars analyzed successful organizational change cases and found that successful organizational change often used a variety of interventions that were appropriate for the organization. Organizations were very complex, and organizational development interventions were the most difficult to implement. Organizational experts used a variety of interventions to conduct action research and design multiple intervention models.

Cooperrider & Whitney (2005) proposed the famous appreciative inquiry theory in the 1980s to intervene in the organization to carry out deep changes. Appreciation inquiry was to look at the people and things of the organization with appreciation and attitude, see the advantages of others, tap positive forces, trust each other, work together, and accomplish organizational goals together.

Beckhard (1972) pointed out that team building was very important in the organization development, as team building required a good teamwork. Team formation must go through the five stages, namely forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning, through which a true cooperation could be formed. It was known as the "FSNPA" model (Beckhard, 1972). An efficient team was embodied the following aspects: trust, accountability, clear goal, conflict resolution, responsibly, communication, coordination and leadership (Rothwell, Sullivan & McLean, 1995). Only if team members followed the rules of these eight aspects and worked together, could a virtuoso team be formed (Rothwell, Sullivan & McLean, 1995).

Action Research Framework

Action research framework will be completed in three steps: Pre-ODI, ODI and Post-ODI. According to the current characteristics of college student leadership at ZYUFL, this paper analyzes the shortcomings of college student leadership and develops to intervene and improve the college student leadership at ZYUFL.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below shows the Conceptual Framework of the current study. The Conceptual Framework was developed on the basis of the theoretical framework of the researcher. Knowledge learning, practical training and team building were independent variables. Knowledge, attitudes and skills of Students Leadership Practices (SLP) were dependent variables. The researcher believed that knowledge learning, practical training and team building could improve college students' leadership.

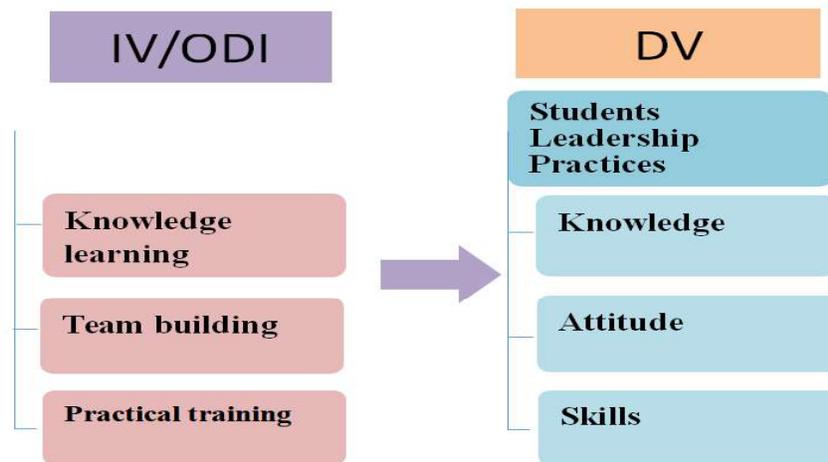


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of This Study

Research Methodology

This study conducted statistical analysis on the students and experimental students who would be tested. This study found out the current status of college student leadership at ZYUFL, mainly through questionnaires and comparative research methods. The results of the questionnaire that night show the current characteristics of college student leadership at ZYUFL was assumed to reflect the true characteristics of students. To analyze the data for each objective, the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, t-test, and one-way MANOVA were used in this study.

Findings

Research Objectives One: To determine the current students' leadership practices at ZYUFL, China

In order to test the current status of university students' leadership in Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages, the researcher used a random sampling method at the Jinghu Campus in September 2019. The researcher conducted careful statistics and analyzed them using the one-way MANOVA method. The questionnaire survey has a total of 50 questions. In order to

present the statistical results in a simple and clear way, the researcher analyzed and explained the three modules of Knowledge, Attitude, and Skill, and finally gave an overall description of the current status of university students' leadership. In order to reflect the results more intuitively, the three parts of Knowledge, Attitude, and Skill were now combined and compared. Table 1 presents the statistics of Knowledge, Attitude, and Skill.

Table 1. Overall Status of University Student Leadership

Current Students' Leadership Practice	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Knowledge	2.729	.819	Moderate
Attitude	2.742	.836	Moderate
Skill	2.728	.856	Moderate
Total	2.733	.819	Moderate

The highest value of Mean in the table above was 2.742, which shows the level of Attitude. The lowest Mean value was 2.728, which shows the level of Skill. The Mean of Current students' leadership practice was 2.733, and the overall level was "Moderate". To sum up, the level of leadership of students was not ideal. They also need to be assisted. To cultivate their leadership ability and improve their leadership level, it was necessary to conduct leadership education and training.

Research Objectives Two: To compare the students' leadership practices according to their experiences of knowledge learning, practical training, and team-building at ZYUFL, China

In the questionnaire, the first part was to detect the actual situation of students participating in knowledge learning, practical training and team building. Knowledge learning, practical training and team building each include two questions. For statistical convenience, use VAR1 to represent the frequency of students' taking the course on leadership in the college; VAR2 to represent the frequency of students' learning "leadership knowledge" on your own; VAR3 represents the frequency of students' participation in practical training activities organized by the school; VAR4 represents the frequency of students' participation in the part-time management of the school during your college years (such as administrative assistant, assistant teacher); VAR5 represents the frequency of students' participation in the team building activities of the student organization; VAR6 represents the frequency of students' participation in some team work projects or activities organized by the college.

Then, the researcher used the Multivariate Tests method to verify whether university students' participation in knowledge learning, practical training, and

team building had a significant effect on the formation of university students' leadership, knowledge, and skills, Table 2 presents statistical results

Table 2. *Multivariate Tests^{aN}*

	Effect	Value	F	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.977	3597.401 ^b	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.023	3597.401 ^b	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	42.322	3597.401 ^b	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	42.322	3597.401 ^b	.000
VAR1 * VAR2 *	Pillai's Trace	.000	. ^b	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	1.000	. ^b	.000
VAR3 * VAR4 *	Hotelling's Trace	.000	. ^b	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.000	.000 ^b	.000

From Table 2, it can be seen that when the significance level α was 0.05 (the default), students participating in knowledge learning, practical training and team building have a significant impact on the formation of College Students' Leadership Knowledge, Attitude, and Skill. Research was very meaningful and necessary, and it requires intervention and training of college students.

The researcher used the Multiple Comparisons method to verify that when college students participate in the above three situations, they will have a significant impact on the formation of Knowledge, Attitude, and Skill of college student leadership. Through MANOVA analysis and comparisons, it was found that the participation of college students in knowledge learning, practical training and team building has a significant impact on the formation of college students' leadership, knowledge, and attitude. When participating in the above three activities at the same time, regardless of the level of participation, the college's leadership and knowledge, attitude. The formation of Skill was obvious, and both were significant and effective. College students should participate in knowledge learning, practical training and team building.

Research Objectives Three: To provide and design the strategies for enhancing students' leadership practices at ZYUFL, China

As mentioned earlier, knowledge learning, practical training, and team building had a significant effect on the students' leadership practices. The researcher had conducted design-related activities to intervene in the above three aspects to improve college students' leadership.

In the knowledge learning session, the researcher specially taught the leadership knowledge to the students in the experimental group, so that the students could understand and master the systematic leadership knowledge. At

the same time, let college students listen to a series of lectures and know the practical knowledge of the organization's vision planning, strategic design, plan execution, etc. Through the success stories of experts and entrepreneurs, let college students understand the practice and application of leadership in specific environments. The students in the experimental group felt that the learning effect was very good and learned a lot. Through lecture learning, college students combined their knowledge with reality, so as to ensure that theory does not deviate from reality. They found their own deficiencies in practice, increased their horizons in practice, and laid the foundation for future work.

In the practical training session, the researcher let the college students go to the science and technology museum and library to practice and serve, and participate in the preparatory preparation and conference services of various conferences. Let them feel the improvement of one's own ability in practice. Director Wang of the library praised our students' ability. He believed that college students were very proactive in their library services and their attitudes were extremely correct. Knowing their own goals, they had a very strong sense of responsibility, conscientiousness, meticulousness, attention to communication methods, and a good explanation, so that the serviced could experience a smile and high-quality service. They could apply leadership knowledge to specific job positions, and they had very good self-management and self-discipline. They made a careful plan before coming, and correctly implemented the plan in the course of practice. These college students had very strong leadership and were good college students.

In the team building session, the researcher used the intervention theory of Tuckman & Jensen (1977) of organizational development to conduct four rounds of team building on the students in the experimental group. Each round specifically set up five links around the theme: knowledge narration, practical activities, group discussions, game activities, and leadership assessment. The students felt that they had learned a lot, indicating that they would make better use of the cooperation among team members in future studies and work to improve the efficiency of organizational operations. College students participated in a lot of team activities and insisted on training every day. Not only did they practice their movements well, but also cooperate with the team members. Consequently, the movements of the entire team are more uniform, better-looking and successful. Everyone thought that they had learned a lot in all aspects, which was a very meaningful practical experience.

Research Objectives Four: To measure the implemented strategies for students' leadership practices at ZYUFL, China

In order to achieve the research goals, the researcher selected 80 college students as experimental subjects at the Chinese Language and Culture Institute, and divided the 80 people into experimental and control groups. Before the experiment, questionnaire tests were performed on two groups of students to see the current situation of leadership in these two groups of students before OD intervention. After that, the students in the experimental group were intervened for 4 months to improve the leadership of college students in knowledge, skills, and attitude through knowledge learning, practical training, and team building. No intervention was taken against the students in the control group. After the intervention, a questionnaire test was performed again on the two groups of college students, and the T test method was used to see if there were substantial changes in the two groups of college students before and after the OD intervention, as well as to see if the intervention had a practical effect.

In order to explain the actual effect of the control group and the experimental group before and after the OD intervention, the researcher used the T test to determine whether the average of the leadership of the two groups of students before and after the OD intervention had changed significantly to see if there was any actual intervention effect. The leadership of college students in the control group before the OD intervention was represented by "SLP1", and the leadership of college students in the control group after the intervention was represented by "SLP2". The leadership of the experimental group of the experimental group before the OD intervention was represented by "SLP3", and the leadership of the experimental group of the experimental group after the OD intervention was represented by "SLP4". Tables 4 to 5 presented the comparison of leadership among the control group students before and after the OD intervention.

Table 4. *Basic Descriptive Statistics of Leadership of University Students in the Control Group between pre-ODI and post-ODI stages (Paired Samples Statistics)*

		Mean	N	SD
Pair 1	SLP (Student Leadership Practice) 1	2.06	40	.224
	SLP (Student Leadership Practice) 2	2.17	40	.263

Table 4 shows that Mean, Std. Deviation, of pre-ODI of the control group college students' leadership. There was a little difference in the Mean of the control group's university student leadership before and after the OD intervention, but the difference was not significant.

Table 5. *Paired Samples Test of Leadership of University Students in the Control Group between pre-ODI and post-ODI stages*

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Pair 1 SLP (Student Leadership Practice) 1 – SLP Student Leadership Practice) 2	-.116	.367	-.233	.001	-2.005	39	.052

Table 5 shows that the average difference in leadership among the control group students before and after the OD intervention, since P-value was greater than .05, the which meant that there was no significant difference in the Mean of leadership of the undergraduates in the control group before and after the OD intervention. It could be considered that the intervention did not have a corresponding effect. This was in line with the reality, and the students in the control group were not intervened, but were allowed to develop by themselves. The research results showed the actual situation.

Tables 6 to 7 presented the comparison of the leadership of the experimental group of students before and after the OD intervention.

Table 6. *Basic Descriptive Statistics of University Students' Leadership between pre-ODI and post-ODI stages (Paired Samples Statistics)*

		Mean	N	SD
Pair 2	SLP (Student Leadership Practice) 3	2.07	40	.344
	SLP (Student Leadership Practice) 4	4.05	40	.295

As can be seen from Table 6, the Mean, SD of the leadership of the experimental students pre-ODI. The average values of the leadership of the experimental group students before and after the OD intervention were very different, and the average value post-ODI was greater than the average value pre-ODI.

Table 7. Paired Samples Test of Leadership of University Students in the Experimental Group between pre-ODI and post-ODI stages

	Mean	SD	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Pair 2 SLP (Student Leadership Practice) 3 - SLP (Student Leadership Practice) 4	-1.975	.491	-2.132	-1.817	-25.412	39	.000

The table showed that the Mean difference in leadership between pre-ODI and post-ODI of the experimental group students, as the P-value was less than the significance level α , close to 0, then the mean difference of the college students' leadership in the experimental group was considered to be significantly different from 0, which meant before and after the OD intervention there was a significant difference in the average leadership of the experimental group of college students. It can be concluded that the intervention had played a very significant role in the leadership of the experimental group of college students, and the effect was significant.

Conclusions

College student leadership was very important for college students nowadays. College students were in an era of changing moments. College student leadership can help college students cope with complex environments, challenges and guide social change. The college students seriously participated in the whole process of this research, feeling that they had learned something, learned leadership knowledge and skills, and changed their previous attitude. More importantly, they knew the importance of vision and plan, learned the skills of effective cooperation with team members, established common goals together, and enjoyed the joy of success after rising in adversity. The most gratifying thing was that through the practice of college students, they firmly believed that college student leadership could be learned and used, which was very useful in their study and life, especially in their future careers. They were determined to serve the society, interact effectively with the community, and grow with the organization and team members.

First, the current research was carried out under the guidance of relevant theories of OD. In order to be more effective and scientific, it can be comprehensively researched and applied with disciplines such as pedagogy. The effectiveness and extension of leadership education for college students

can be better promoted by using a multi-disciplinary and multi-variable research perspective.

Second, try to explore more influential factors of leadership education for college students, not only to popularize leadership knowledge, but also to explore the effects of leadership education for college students, and to find better ways and methods of leadership development and education for college students.

Third, to be able to practice college student leadership over a longer period of time, the intervention may not be only for four months. To find a way for college student leadership to continue to play a role, compare the similarities and differences between college student leadership education and other education models, and draw lessons to help colleges and universities better carry out related education.

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