



# LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND MOTIVATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS OF GUILIN CITY, CHINA

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**Abstract:** This study described and identified the leadership skills and motivation of college students of Guilin City, China. It correlated the students' demographic profile, leadership skills. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated: 1) female are empowered in Student Union Departments; 2) a leader must be a good conversationalist and must have sense of direction when speaking; 3) Students vie for student leadership positions to improve social and interpersonal skills and at the same time to contribute in their academics. In addition, the researcher recommends the following: 1) provide more opportunities for younger student leaders to exercise responsibility and leadership; 2) gradual transition between the younger and seniors in terms of workload and responsibility; 3) provide more leadership opportunities with gradual responsibility increase over the years.

**Keywords:** college students, leadership, motivation, leadership skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

Peace and development and economic globalization are the development trends of today's world. With the rapid development and continuous progress of society, talents have become the key to enhancing national competitiveness and the common idea of all countries in the world. All countries have made great efforts in personnel training, increasing investment in education and creating a favorable environment and conditions. Among them, leaders with innovative ability and professional skills have become the focus of the society and received extensive attention from various countries, because the level of a person's leadership, to some extent, reflects a person's comprehensive ability and quality level.

As an important ability of a person, the level of leadership can directly affect the overall quality of a person and will have a profound impact on one's life and work. This means that leadership is essential for all of us, whether you are a leader or not.

The backbone of college students is an important auxiliary force for colleges and universities to carry out activities mainly including student cadres, student party members and outstanding students with outstanding performance in academic science and technology, culture and sports. They are the most representative, influential and promising advanced elements among college students. According to the survey, the backbone of students can play an important role in enliven the class atmosphere, arouse the enthusiasm of class members and guide the direction of activities. As student administrators, their leadership can promote the normal implementation of a series of activities such as teaching and management. They are the intermediaries connecting students and teachers, and the important hubs for timely conveying school instructions to students.

In China, the concept of leadership training has not been gradually recognized by people from all walks of life until recent years, and more and more colleges and universities have begun to strengthen the cultivation of college students' leadership. The Outline of National Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development Plan 2010-2020 clearly points out that the cultivation of college students' leadership should be the focus of the cultivation of university talents.

College students, as the main force of the new generation in China, are the hope of the motherland and also an important source of China's leadership. Therefore, for college students, a special group, to have a good comprehensive ability and quality is to conform to the needs of society and the times.

At present, college students' leadership education is in its primary stage in China. And so we should actively explore the development path of college students' leadership education, so as to promote the smooth development of college students' leadership education and the realization of talent training goals (Liu Hui, 2015).

The study was conducted in five selected colleges in Guilin City, China. It is the aim of this study to describe the leadership skills and motivation of college students of Guilin City, China and correlate the leadership skills of the students with their demographic profile. And put forward the student suggestion to promote the university student leadership education.

## II. RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

This study took 377 college students from Guilin University of Technology, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Guilin Medical University, Guilin Tourism University, and Guangxi Normal University in China as research respondents. A total of third and fourth year college students will be the representatives for each level. The research respondents will be student cadres who held leading positions in the Student union. All college students in this study will voluntarily be accepted to fill out the questionnaire survey.

### III. SAMPLING DESIGN

Random sampling was used in this study. Questionnaires were randomly distributed to students at the university. The purpose of doing this is to ensure that the research results are true and accurate and eliminate the interference of human factors.

### IV. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

#### 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

##### 1.1 Gender

Gender is the state of being male or female in relation to the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women.

Table 1 Gender Profile of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	110	29.18
Female	267	70.82
TOTAL	377	100

Table 1 presents the gender profile of the respondents. As seen from the table, the female group dominates the leadership positions with a frequency of 267 (70.82%) out of the 377 respondents. The male group obtained 29.18% of the total population.

This happened since female are generally more mature than male and more motivated than male, they are more motivated to join the student union than male, so there will be more female in the student union than male.

The report of Universal Intelligence (2016) has shown that girls mature earlier than boys, the same way women do than men. It is reported that women reach proper psychological maturity much earlier than men, at the typical age of 32.

Men are said to mature 10–11 years later than women which means that while women reach proper maturity by 30, men reach that point by 40.

##### 1.2 Age

It pertains to the number of years someone has lived.

Table 2 Age Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
19	83	22.02
20	164	43.50
21	82	21.75
22	39	10.34
TOTAL	377	100.0

Table 2 shows the age profile of the respondents. The bulk of the student leaders are 20 years old. They obtained a 164 frequency which is 43.50% of the whole population. The lowest percentage which is 10.34% (39) belongs to the 22 year old age group.

Relatively speaking, students at this age are more attractive to students, enthusiastic, and more motivated to do things. They are also those who are more capable. The older ones are relatively less active and caring about themselves, their study or future work.

##### 1.3 Major Field of Study

It means the subject categories established by institutions of higher learning or secondary vocational schools according to the needs of social division of labor.

Table 3 Summary of the Major Field of Specialization

Department/ College	Frequency	Percentage
Major In Science And engineering	67	17.77
Majoring In Medicine	58	15.38
Major In Literature, History	123	32.63
Major In Economic Management	112	29.71
Other Major	17	4.51

As can be seen from the data in the table, there are 123 students majoring in literature and history, accounting for 32.63, and 112 students majoring in economic management, accounting for 29.71. The two majors account for 62.34 percent of the total number of students.

The students of these two majors belong to liberal Arts major. Liberal arts students are more active in thinking and outgoing. They are more active than students of other majors and enjoy participating in the student union and various activities.

A liberal arts education prepares students to examine ideas from multiple points of view, solve problems, adapt, and collaborate. By combining multiple disciplines of study, liberal arts colleges expose students to a wide range of subjects, encouraging them to think outside a narrow focus and contribute to original solutions – all skills that are highly valued by top employers. This is a major reason why there are many student leaders from this major.

## 2. Leadership skills of the respondents

This is part of a person's leadership skills. These behaviors motivate people to achieve their goals and become a clear motivation rather than a simple act of obedience. It exists in many areas. Valuable leadership skills include administrative, interpersonal, and conceptual skills. Nowadays, leadership has become one of the indispensable components of comprehensive leadership.

Table 4 Leadership Skills of the Respondents

Leadership Skills	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Interpersonal	4.643	Strongly agree
Communication	4.591	Strongly agree
Self-Discipline	4.514	Strongly agree
Management	4.146	Agree
Adaptability	3.882	Agree
Professionalism	3.975	Agree
GRAND MEAN	4.291	Agree

The three indicators that were rated a little lower, with the verbal interpretation “agree”, are as follows: management skill (4.146), professionalism (3.975), and adaptability (3.882).

Successful leaders tend to show high levels of skill when communicating. Good leaders tend to be extremely good listeners, able to listen actively and elicit information by good questioning. They are also likely to show high levels of assertiveness, which enables them to make their point without aggression, but firmly. They know how to build rapport quickly and effectively, to develop good, strong relationships with others, whether peers or subordinates. These skills come together to help to build charisma, that quality of ‘brightness’ which makes people want to follow a leader (SkillsYouNeed.com, 2020).

## 3. Leadership motivations of the respondents

It is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. The results of the questionnaires show that most of the student leaders seem to be very positive about what they are doing. There are several indicators where they think are causing them to be motivated in doing their tasks well. In addition, the indicator stating that their role as student leaders will help them in their learning and interpersonal skills got the highest mean. The second topmost is the opportunity of their leadership position to be engaged to diverse groups of people.

In China, the students' academic performance is the number one indicator for scholarship grants regardless of their economic status. Student leadership can be an option for the evaluation for scholarship however the government grants it to a few. This is the reason why student leaders do not feel so motivated in this area.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. Female are empowered in Student Union Departments;
2. A leader must be a good conversationalist and must have sense of direction when speaking;
3. Students vie for student leadership positions to improve social and interpersonal skills and at the same time to contribute in their academics.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions formulated, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Provide more opportunities for younger student leaders to exercise responsibility and leadership.
2. Gradual transition between the younger and seniors in terms of workload and responsibility.
3. Provide more leadership opportunities with gradual responsibility increase over the years.

## VII. IMPLICATION

University is the last stop for college students to enter the society and enter the workplace, and the existing educational resources and knowledge system of university should help college students to achieve a successful transition. The education of students' professional ethics and corresponding knowledge runs through the daily cultural quality education. The leadership education of college students can be regarded as specialized education for the cultivation of students' professional quality, which should be paid absolute attention to by colleges and universities.

Leadership is one of the most important comprehensive qualities of contemporary college students. The improvement of leadership ability will improve college students' handling of the relationship between people and society. Improve interpersonal skills to communicate well with others, resolve conflicts, and balance relationships through effective negotiations; Improve the ability to adapt to multiple perspectives to analyze conflicts, more accommodating to others and the environment, more suitable for teamwork; Improve the capacity of service commitment, can be more sensitive to service awareness and social needs; The ability to grasp public policy can enhance the sense of social responsibility, grasp the values and direction of life.

Therefore, the development and emphasis of leadership education in colleges and universities can meet the self-needs of college students, improve the quality of talent training, and meet the needs of social development.

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