Leadership of Organization Administrators in an Open University in China: A Case Study

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Abstract

Background and Aim: In the context of enhancing educational quality and leadership effectiveness, the study aimed to evaluate academic leadership and the attributes of being a learning organization among educational institution administrators at Guangdong Open University. This assessment is critical for identifying the strengths and areas for improvement within the institution's leadership and resource development strategies. The research specifically focused on measuring various dimensions of academic leadership, including the development of learning media, resources, measurement and evaluation practices, educational supervision, and internal quality assurance systems.

Materials and Methods: A quantitative research design was employed to gather data from educational institution administrators at Guangdong Open University. A structured questionnaire was developed, encompassing several dimensions of academic leadership and organizational learning characteristics. The questionnaire was validated for content and reliability, and respondents rated their agreement with various statements on a Likert scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Data analysis involved calculating means and standard deviations for each item, as well as overall scores for each dimension. Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the level of academic leadership, with specific attention given to identifying areas of strength and those requiring further development.

Results: The findings indicated that the administrators demonstrated high levels of academic leadership across various dimensions, with average scores as follows: Development of Learning Media: 4.57
Development of Learning Resources: 4.55 Measurement and Evaluation: 4.52 Educational Supervision: 4.62
Development of Internal Quality Assurance Systems: 4.63 Being a Learning Organization: 4.48
These results highlight a significant commitment by the administrators to enhancing educational practices, promoting the use of learning resources, and establishing robust internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Conclusion: The study concludes that educational institution administrators at Guangdong Open University exhibit strong academic leadership qualities, particularly in the areas of learning resource development and internal quality assurance. The high average scores across all measured dimensions suggest that administrators are effectively fostering an environment conducive to learning and academic growth. Moving forward, the institution should focus on maintaining these strengths while addressing any identified gaps, particularly in fostering team learning and systematic thinking. Continuous professional development and training opportunities for administrators may further enhance their leadership capabilities, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes.

Keywords: Leadership, Corporate Executives, Guangzhou University

Introduction

Organizational progress is crucial and essential for every institution as it plays a significant role in driving national prosperity across various sectors, including economic and political growth, as well as improving citizens' quality of life (Wang & Kacmar (2022). In today's rapidly changing digital era, organizational leaders are vital in steering organizations toward achieving their goals. Leadership research is important for expanding knowledge that supports organizational development, particularly in education. Previous studies have identified transformational leadership as a key approach that enhances an organization's adaptability and fosters innovation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). However, there is still a research gap regarding leadership in the educational context, especially in open universities, which face distinct challenges in the digital transformation process.

Guangzhou Open University, founded in 2005, is a higher vocational institution that focuses on engineering and is directly overseen by the Provincial Department of Education. It faces the dual challenge of modernizing its leadership and administrative processes while adapting to the demands of the digital era. This research focuses on identifying the leadership challenges faced by the administrators of Guangzhou Open University, which operates under a two-brand management system with Guangdong Open University. Given the rapid technological advancements and the unique role of open universities in providing flexible education, there is an urgent need to explore leadership development in this context. This research, therefore, aims to understand the leadership skills that align with and support the institution's administrative processes to meet societal and technological demands (Zhou, 2022).

The main objective of this research is to examine the transformational leadership skills required for executives at Guangzhou Open University in the digital age. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative in-depth interviews with quantitative surveys to gather insights from both administrators and faculty members. The focus will be on exploring the leadership, management, and adaptability of university leaders within the context of open education and digital transformation. The findings will serve as a guideline for leadership development, providing practical recommendations for university administrators to enhance their leadership capabilities in the evolving digital landscape.

Learning organization for agencies Therefore, every agency or organization must provide support for personnel. Or workers in the organization have sources to study and find new knowledge. However, the leader should be the spark. Or trying to make the organization a true learning organization Because of the learning organization It is like a source of knowledge that workers can use as a source for researching knowledge that is nearby at all times. Especially organizations that are educational units. There must be a source of up-to-date knowledge available to teachers. Teachers can research and find new knowledge all the time, which has determined the essence of achieving the goals of educational development in five areas: accessibility, equality, quality, efficiency, and response to context. That change (Relevance) during the next 15 years. From the reasons mentioned above, educational institution administrators should be characteristics of academic leadership that can promote educational institutions to become learning organizations (Learning Organization: LO) and effectively change or develop departments to become learning organizations. Agencies must have leaders who have characteristics that facilitate knowledge creation. Or innovations that are valuable and beneficial to the organization In addition, administrators with academic leadership will be able to advise and motivate teachers. Coordinate and allow teachers and personnel in educational institutions to work together using quality techniques. As a result, the academic administration of educational institutions is more efficient and effective (Seyfarth, 1999).

Guangzhou Open University, founded in 2005, is a government higher vocational college directly under the Provincial Department of Education and focuses on engineering. It is the project construction unit of the provincial higher vocational college construction plan, operating "one team" with Guangdong Open University, a two-brand management system. Sharing resources and additional advantages The school explores a variety of school operating models. Implement a pilot project for joint education from junior college to undergraduate level. Combining talent training between higher vocational colleges and open education bachelor's degrees. And create a joint training base for graduate students with general universities. It has Guangdong Province's doctoral workstation and has established multiple A channels for improving educational qualifications at all levels to cultivate high-quality technical talents and skills that meet the needs of economic and social development and transformation. Industrial This research article presents a study on transformational leadership in the digital era, focusing on the role of executives at Guangzhou Open University. The article will begin with a literature review on leadership and change management in educational settings, followed by qualitative and quantitative data analysis gathered from the university's leadership and staff. The article will conclude with recommendations on how to foster leadership development and improve management practices in educational institutions, particularly in response to the challenges of digital transformation. This research will contribute to the academic field by offering insights into the

development of leadership strategies that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration.

Objectives

1. To study the academic Leadership of Organization Administrators in Guangzhou Open University

2. To study the Leadership of Organization Administrators at Guangzhou Open University

3. To study the academic leadership of administrators. Toward the learning organization of administrators Administrators in Guangzhou Open University

Literature review

Leadership in the educational sector has long been a focal point of research due to its significant impact on organizational success. One of the most prominent leadership theories in this context is transformational leadership, which emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating their teams to exceed expectations and embrace change (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership is particularly relevant in education, where leaders must not only manage but also inspire and guide their organizations through continuous advancements, especially in the digital age (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Educational institutions, especially universities, require leadership that fosters a culture of continuous learning, adaptability, and the integration of technology (Fullan, 2001). Transformational leaders are key to driving such organizational change, especially in environments like open universities that cater to diverse learners and face the challenge of keeping pace with technological advancements (Jung, 2001).

The digital transformation has revolutionized how educational institutions operate, pushing leaders to adopt new technologies and innovate administrative and academic practices. According to Ng & Feldman (2015), the digital era demands that educational leaders not only possess traditional leadership skills but also exhibit digital leadership competencies. These include a strong understanding of emerging technologies, the ability to implement technology-driven solutions, and fostering a culture that embraces digital change.

Open universities, such as Guangzhou Open University, operate under unique circumstances that require leaders to focus on flexibility, inclusivity, and the provision of accessible education. As Lifelong Learning Institutions (Tait, 2018), open universities must balance traditional academic goals with the need to provide relevant, practical, and up-to-date knowledge to a diverse student body, many of whom are non-traditional learners.

In the Chinese context, open universities have become increasingly important as the country focuses on expanding access to higher education (Wang, 2019). However, leaders in these institutions face numerous challenges, including the need to improve teaching quality, maintain academic standards, and enhance digital infrastructure (Chen et al, 2024). Chinese open universities are also tasked with supporting the government's goals of building a knowledge-based economy by developing students' skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (Zhou & Li, 2021).

Methodology

Population and Sample

Teachers and administrators, teachers and administrators, educational institution administrators Under the Department of Artificial Intelligence Technology computer network technology software technology Computer application technology of 4 places: Guangdong, Zhongshan, Baiyunshan and Nanhai, Guangdong Vocational College, *Guangdong* Open University, by determining the sample size according to the table of Krejcie and Morgan (Krejcie and Morgan. 1970: 608) and then put it to simple random sampling with proportions. (Proportional Simple Random Sampling) by drawing lots. The total sample size was 113 people.
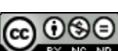
Instruments

The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire, divided into 3 parts as follows.

Part 1 is a questionnaire regarding the general status of the respondents. It has a checklist format, classified by gender, age, education level. and work experience.

Part 2 is a questionnaire regarding the opinions of administrators on academic leadership that influences becoming a learning organization in teachers' and educational institutions. Guangdong, Zhongshan, Baiyunshan, and Nanhai educational institution administrators. Guangdong Vocational College, Guangdong Open University, has a rating scale with 5 levels: the most, the most, the moderate, the least, and the least.

Part 3 is a questionnaire regarding the opinions of the learning organizations of educational institutions and administrators of Guangdong, Zhongshan, Baiyunshan, and Nanhai Vocational Colleges, Gungdong Open University. It is a rating scale.) 5 levels: most, very, moderate, little, and least.

Data collection

Creating and quantifying the quality of tools

1) Creating research tools

1.1) Study documents, concepts, theories, and research related to the academic leadership of educational institution administrators and the learning organization of educational institutions. Then set a framework of factors to cover the content according to the research objectives and the definition of specified terms. For use as a guideline for creating questions.

1.2) Study the format and methods for creating a questionnaire and proceed with creating a comprehensive questionnaire according to the framework of factors specified in Section 1.1.

2) Finding the quality of the tools used in research by finding content validity (Content Validity) and finding confidence values. (Reliability) as follows:

2.1) Finding content validity (Content Validity) by taking the questionnaire to 3 experts to check the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the content as well as the wording of each question. Then use it to find the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC).

2.2) Finding the confidence value (Reliability) by taking the modified questionnaire according to the recommendations of experts and testing it out (try-out) on a population that is not the sample. Then the alpha coefficient was determined according to the method of Cronbach (1974).

3) Improve the questionnaire to be a complete version for further use with real samples.

Data collection

In order to receive cooperation in answering the questionnaire. And get truthful information The researcher has collected data as follows.

1.) Contact to request a letter from the Educational Administration branch. Faculty of Education Bangkok Thonburi University to ask for cooperation From the director of the educational institution Deputy Director or the person acting on his behalf and the sample teachers in educational institutions provided information by answering the questionnaires for this research.

2.) The researcher collects the data himself. For educational institutions that can operate As for educational institutions that are stuck with limitations in readiness regarding the time of the researcher or being an educational institution where transportation is not convenient, The researcher used the method of sending questionnaires via social media. In order for the respondents to return the questionnaires to the researcher.

Data Analysis

When all questionnaires have been returned The researcher reviewed all questionnaires. To carry out the data analysis as follows: 1. Check the completeness of the returned questionnaire. 2. Check scores according to the scoring criteria for each questionnaire. 3. Use the said data to calculate statistical values. To analyze data using ready-made programs.

Statistics Used to Analyze Data

Research carried out, data analysis Using statistics to analyze data As follows, data analysis this time Set the sample executives as the unit of analysis and analyze the data to calculate the statistics as follows.

1. Analyze the status and basic information of the respondents and calculate the percentage (Percentage).

2. Analyze factors that influence learning organizations using mean and standard deviation for each question. The overall picture sets out the criteria for interpreting results according to Best's ideas (Best, 1981, p. 182)

3. Analyze being a learning organization. By using the mean (Mean) and standard deviation (Standard Deviation) for each question, overview by specifying criteria for interpreting results according to Best's concept (Best, 1981, p. 182)

4. Analyze the relationship between the academic leadership of administrators and the learning organization of the Guangdong Wittaya School, Zhongshan, Baiyunshan, and Nanhai, Guangdong Vocational College, and Guangdong Open University, by finding the correlation coefficient. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient

Results

table 1: Academic Leadership and Learning Organization

Aspect	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Academic Leadership		
1. Curriculum Management	4.51	0.68
2. Learning Management	4.57	0.65
3. Learning Media Development	4.57	0.68
4. Development of Learning Resources	4.55	0.68
5. Measurement, Evaluation, and Research	4.52	0.70
6. Educational Supervision	4.62	0.65
7. Internal Quality Assurance Systems	4.63	0.61
Overall Academic Leadership	4.56	0.63
Being a Learning Organization		
1. Well-Rounded Person	4.54	0.68
2. Thought Models	4.55	0.67
3. Shared Vision	4.49	0.55
4. Team Learning	4.37	0.66
5. Systematic Thinking	4.48	0.46
Overall Learning Organization	4.49	0.60

Table 2: Key Findings of Internal Quality Assurance

Aspect of Quality Assurance	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Set educational standards with personnel	4.57	0.69
2. Establish an information system for quality assurance	4.50	0.69
3. Explain key concepts to teachers	4.57	0.66
4. Conduct internal quality assessments	4.73	0.52
5. Prepare internal quality assessment reports	4.78	0.47
Overall Quality Assurance	4.63	0.61

Table 3: Being a Well-Rounded Person

Aspect of Being a Well-Rounded Person	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Dissemination of news and events	4.52	0.73
2. Encouragement for self-development	4.65	0.64
3. Development of personnel potential	4.62	0.60
4. Energetic and interested personnel	4.44	0.74
5. Exchange activities for skill expansion	4.46	0.69
Overall Well-Roundedness	4.54	0.68

Table 4 Summary Table of Research Results on Internal Quality Assurance and Learning Organization

Aspect	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Key Insights
Academic Leadership			
Systematically set educational standards	4.57	0.69	Establishing clear standards collaboratively with personnel.
Administrative system for quality assurance	4.50	0.69	An effective system to support educational quality.
Training for teachers on quality concepts	4.57	0.66	Enhancing knowledge and understanding among educators.
Internal quality assessments	4.73	0.52	Systematic internal quality evaluations.
Annual quality assessment reports	4.78	0.47	Transparent reporting to stakeholders.
Overall Academic Leadership	4.63	0.61	Strong academic leadership.
Being a Learning Organization			
Well-Rounded Person	4.54	0.68	Promoting diversity and developing personnel potential.
Thought Models	4.55	0.67	Developing collaborative thinking patterns.
Shared Vision	4.49	0.55	A shared vision is created through participation.
Team Learning	4.37	0.66	Collaboration for problem-solving and knowledge development.
Systematic Thinking	4.48	0.46	Systematic thinking to enhance efficiency.
Overall Learning Organization	4.49	0.60	Promoting a learning organization culture.

Summary Insights
- Academic Leadership: Demonstrates a high level of capability in setting educational standards and producing internal quality assessment reports, contributing to transparency and accountability.
- Learning Organization: Personnel receive support for potential development, with a collaborative vision and a focus on teamwork.

Summary of Findings:

The evaluation of academic leadership and the status of being a learning organization among educational institution administrators at Guangdong Open University indicates a significant role played by the administrators in developing learning resources, facilitating evaluation and research, overseeing

education, and establishing internal quality assurance systems. The data reflects high average scores across various dimensions of academic leadership, as follows:

Development of Learning Resources: Administrators actively encourage teachers to utilize effective teaching aids and innovations, achieving a high average score of 4.57, indicating a strong commitment to resource development.

Facilitation of Learning Resources: There is notable support for teachers to explore and apply both internal and external learning resources, with an average score of 4.55, reflecting a substantial level of engagement.

Measurement and Evaluation: The establishment of clear guidelines for assessment and evaluation has garnered an average score of 4.52, demonstrating a strong backing for teachers to enhance the quality of learning.

Educational Supervision: The administrators have instituted effective supervision systems, with an average score of 4.62, signifying a high commitment to supporting teaching and learning arrangements.

Development of Internal Quality Assurance Systems: The administrators are focused on creating clear educational standards and conducting systematic internal evaluations, with an average score of 4.63, indicating a significant level of commitment.

Being a Learning Organization: Administrators promote systematic thinking, achieving an average score of 4.48, which illustrates a dedication to fostering sustainable learning practices.

Overall, this study highlights the dedication of the administrators to creating a high-quality learning environment that effectively promotes academic development at Guangdong Open University.

Discussion

The analysis of academic leadership among administrators at Guangdong Open University, based on the views of both administrators and teachers, reveals several key findings regarding its influence on fostering a learning organization. The discussion is structured around several objectives:

Overall Academic Leadership: Academic leadership is rated at the highest level, reflecting a commitment to educational reform focusing on teacher and learning improvements, equity, and enhanced workforce competitiveness. Administrators are expected to engage in continuous self-development to effectively manage and support educational reforms and maintain a conducive working environment.

Curriculum Management: Administrators exhibit strong leadership in curriculum management, employing strategies that foster collaboration and systematic learning. They support teachers through resources and consultation, encouraging participation in curriculum development tailored to community needs.

Learning Management: High-level academic leadership is evident in the organization of efficient collaborative learning processes. Administrators promote learner-centered planning and create an environment conducive to academic growth.

Development of Learning Media: Administrators successfully lead the development and implementation of educational media, ensuring quality and efficient use. There is a focus on encouraging innovation in teaching methods and media production, with an emphasis on integrating ICT.

Development of Learning Resources: High-level support for curriculum development and the integration of technology and local knowledge enhances teaching and learning experiences.

Measurement, Evaluation, and Research: There is a systematic approach to teaching and evaluation, ensuring alignment with educational policies and fostering accountability.

Learning Organization Characteristics: The institution demonstrates strong characteristics of a learning organization, adapting to rapid technological changes and fostering an environment of continuous improvement.

Being a Well-Rounded Person: Teachers are encouraged to engage in self-development and contribute to the shared vision, promoting holistic educational practices.

Prototype Ideas: Leadership effectively inspires and motivates staff, fostering a culture of transformational leadership that enhances organizational efficiency.

Shared Vision: The vision is collaboratively developed, ensuring alignment with the institution's values and fostering commitment among stakeholders.

Team Learning: Collaboration among staff leads to shared problem-solving and collective growth, supported by regular exchanges of knowledge and experience.

Systematic Thinking: Staff demonstrates an ability to connect different aspects of the educational process, enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness.

In conclusion, The academic leadership at Guangdong Open University significantly influences the development of a learning organization. Through a focus on collaborative curriculum management, innovative learning strategies, and continuous professional development, administrators foster an environment that promotes high-quality education and adaptability to changing educational landscapes.

Knowledge Contribution

This study contributes valuable insights into the academic leadership practices and organizational learning characteristics of educational institution administrators at Guangdong Open University. By systematically assessing various dimensions of academic leadership, including the development of learning resources, educational supervision, and internal quality assurance, the research highlights the critical role that leadership plays in enhancing educational quality.

The findings indicate that effective academic leadership is not only essential for fostering an environment conducive to learning but also for promoting a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration among faculty and staff. The high levels of academic leadership identified in this study underscore the importance of administrative support in driving educational initiatives and ensuring that educators have access to the necessary resources and training.

Moreover, this research provides a framework for future studies aimed at exploring the relationship between academic leadership and student learning outcomes. By establishing a baseline understanding of current leadership practices, the study opens avenues for further investigation into how these practices can be optimized to support innovative teaching strategies and improve student engagement and success.

The insights gained from this research can inform policymakers, educational leaders, and practitioners about the critical components of effective academic leadership, thus contributing to the broader discourse on educational reform and development in higher education.


Decision Mind Mapping: Academic Leadership
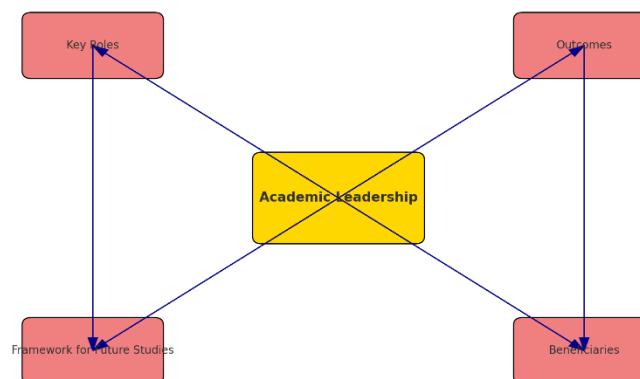
Figure 1 Academic Leadership Practices at Guangdong Open University

1: Academic Leadership as the Central Node

Academic Leadership is positioned as the central idea in the revised graphic, signifying its fundamental function in Guangdong Open University's educational administration. With direct connections to every other element, this core node highlights how academic leadership powers a variety of institutional procedures and results. Its importance in forming the organizational structure and directing decision-making is highlighted by its center location and gold hue.

2: Key Roles and Outcomes

Two primary branches emerge from the central node: **Key Roles** and **Outcomes**.

- **Key Roles** symbolize the direct duties and procedures carried out by academic leadership, including encouraging teamwork, guaranteeing quality control, and directing educational oversight. Since they are portrayed as one of the higher branches, their strategic alignment with the objectives of leadership is evident.
- **Outcomes**, Conversely, highlight the concrete advantages of good leadership, such as enhanced student learning opportunities, creative teaching methods, and increased involvement. Because they are consequential, the results are placed strategically on the other side.

3: Framework for Future Studies

The Framework for Future Studies branch emphasizes its intermediary role in maximizing leadership practices by connecting back to both Key Roles and Outcomes. It represents a strategic and introspective process that evaluates the current leadership practices and their conformity to institutional objectives. It is positioned beneath the central node. This framework serves as a link between continuing leadership initiatives and the more general objective of developing creative and successful teaching strategies.

4: Beneficiaries of Leadership Practices

Lastly, the stakeholders who benefit the most from academic leadership initiatives are represented by the Beneficiaries branch. This includes legislators, teachers, and students who gain from increased access to resources, higher-quality education, and improved learning settings. The diagram emphasizes that leadership ultimately serves the greater purpose of enhancing learning and teaching circumstances, generating a positive feedback loop of innovation and growth, by placing this component as a direct link to both the Outcomes and Framework for Future Studies.

Together, the diagram arranges these interrelated elements in a methodical, decision-mind mapping style that facilitates comprehension of the connections and directional flow of the influence of academic leadership.

Recommendation

From the results of the study of academic leadership of administrators that influence a learning organization at Guangdong Open University, the researcher has the following suggestions:

Suggestions for using research results

1. From research it was found that the Academic leadership of administrators at Guangdong Open University is overall at the highest level in every aspect. When considering each aspect, it was found that Curriculum management has a smaller average than other aspects Therefore, educational institution administrators should be the development of a curriculum aimed at promoting and stimulating teaching practice. Or design Innovation in content and teaching methods, jointly creating local curricula with the community

2. From the research it was found that the Academic leadership of administrators at Guangdong Open University is overall at a high level and the best in every aspect. When considering each aspect, it was found that the learning aspect was teamwork. It is less average than other areas. Therefore, educational institution administrators The thought process should be encouraged. Team learning Organizing group activities Exchange of knowledge Leave a comment and listen to each other together to solve problems and make decisions in line with organizational changes. This will result in a learning organization occurring when personnel have a mental model. Have unity Learn from each other and aim to do things for the common good.

3. From the research it was found that the Academic leadership of educational institution administrators and being a learning organization in Guangdong Open University as a whole has a high

level of connectedness. When considering each pair, it was found that the aspect of developing learning media and being a knowledgeable person was at the lowest level. Administrators should develop and build learning potential in the use of various types of learning media, promoting and supporting training. Learning how to create and use media in 21st-century education will result in the educational institution being developed into a more complete educational institution learning organization.

Suggestions for future research

1．There should be research on the academic leadership of administrators. That influenced a learning organization at Guangdong Open University to use the information obtained to further develop education in that area.

2．There should be a study to analyze other elements. To the factors affecting the academic leadership of educational institution administrators and the learning organization of educational institutions.

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