

Development of a Model to Improve Students' Social Change Leadership at Shandong University of Arts, China

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Submitted: 28 Feb 2025 Received: 23 April 2025 Accepted: 04 May 2025	<p>The purpose of this study was to develop a model for improving social change leadership among students at Shandong University of the Arts in China. This study combined qualitative and quantitative methods in the process. For the qualitative study, the researcher used a literature review to analyze the data from previous studies. For the quantitative study, the researcher used a variety of methods to survey a total of 338 students from Shandong University of the Arts through quantitative methods. Means, standard deviations, correlation and multiple regression were used to determine the extent to which the activities of the student organization activities at the University impacted their social change leadership. The study found that: There was significant relationship between student organization activities and the social change leadership of students in Shandong University of Arts. The student organization activities significantly impacted on the social change leadership of students in Shandong University of Arts. The proposed model after implement was proved as effective for enhancing students' social change leadership at Shandong University of Arts, China.</p> <p>Keywords: Students' Social Change Leadership, Student Organization Activities, Shandong University of Arts</p>

Introduction

Following the establishment of Harvard College in the United States in 1636, the aim of higher education in the country encompassed leadership, with a particular focus on preparing individuals for roles in the clergy and public life. Since that time, the process of preparing leaders has evolved from being unclear to becoming increasingly evident. It is now widely recognized as a crucial role of higher education (Susan et al., 2020).

With the rise of initiatives in colleges and universities to teach leadership through various methods of instruction and experiences outside the classroom, there has been a growing demand to study these efforts (Nancy, 2017). Higher education institutions offer a range of activities and practices aimed at improving students' social leadership. Leadership development projects by students often originate from the field of business administration.

This low level of leadership is not only reflected in the small number of students participating in campus and social activities, but also in the obvious lack of participation quality and actual leadership effect. Most students' participation in student organizations or social activities is limited to formal management rather than actively promoting changes in campus and community. They lack the awareness and ability to combine art with social change and are unable to closely combine their artistic expertise with social responsibility and fail to effectively play the unique role of art students as transmitters of culture and ideas.

This problem has existed for a long time and has not been effectively solved. The reasons behind it include schools lack systematic planning for leadership education, students lack opportunities to practice leadership, and students themselves do not pay enough attention to social issues. If this problem is not solved, it will bring a series of negative effects. First, students' poor leadership will limit their wider role in society and weaken their positive influence on society. Secondly, students who lack leadership will face more challenges in their future career development, especially in a rapidly changing social environment, where they may not be able to effectively deal with complex problems. Finally, as the transmitters of future culture and society, if art students cannot realize the mission of social change through leadership, it may not only weaken the value of art education but also affect the long-term development of China's cultural undertakings and social progress.

Thus, the researcher chose Shandong University of the Arts as a representative school among eight art universities to examine the progress of students' social change leadership. They chose Shandong University of the Arts because Shandong is in the Central Plains region and is one of the most densely populated provinces. The position in China holds great significance. Despite the high population density in the province, there is only one public art college available, making it a significant institution with both representation and research value.

Therefore, this study aimed to help students improve their leadership model and enhance their sense of responsibility and influence in social change through targeted leadership training programs, fill the gap in this field, and promote the in-depth development of art education and leadership training in colleges and universities.

Research Objectives

(1) To measure the current level of the students' social change leadership in Shandong University of Arts.

(2) To determine the impact of student organization activities the social change leadership of students in Shandong University of Arts.

(3) To propose a model for enhancing students' social change leadership at Shandong University of Arts, China.

Literature Review

According to Wagner (2006), attempts to tackle the social change paradigm stem from the belief that leadership thrives on collaboration. Successful leadership relies on working together, distributing power, and a strong commitment to "social justice." Leadership involves the collaborative efforts of teams to accomplish a common objective. This does not reflect the behavior expected of someone in a position of authority. Values form the foundation of effective leadership. To establish the trust needed for collective action, it is crucial for students and teams to have a clear understanding of their values and to consistently demonstrate them through their behavior. Every student has the potential to be a leader. Leadership development extends beyond students in leadership positions and is aimed at all students who desire to engage with others and create an impact. Leadership involves embracing change. Being an effective leader involves the skill to bring about positive transformations in individuals and society.

In 1996, the Academy of Higher Education introduced a model for social change that emphasized self-knowledge, unwavering commitment, collaboration, the discussion of shared goals, and citizenship. The model is built upon the following assumptions. Leadership involves bringing about meaningful change that benefits others and society. Effective leadership involves collaboration and teamwork. Leadership involves a process rather than being solely defined by a job title. Leadership

ought to be founded on principles. Leadership potential applies to every student, regardless of their formal leadership positions. Service work is an excellent method for fostering students' leadership abilities.

The SCM focuses on higher education students and is built upon a shifting leadership paradigm (Dugan, 2012). This model also reflects the post-industrial paradigm and asserts that leadership is a relational, transformational, process-oriented, and learner-centered phenomenon. In the SCM, social commitment and working towards common goals are key values. The SCM is a concept widely used and highly recognized in the realm of student leadership. The authors have chosen it as a crucial leadership competency for university students.

According to Dugan et al. (2012), the main objective of higher education institutions is to cultivate student leadership abilities and foster the development of socially responsible individuals. This study is guided by SCM. The social change leadership model incorporates various perspectives, including those of individuals, groups, and communities (Baccei, 2015; Dugan, 2012; Rubin, 2000; Campbell, 2012). These three perspectives have an impact on leadership in social change. As per this model, leadership is viewed as a process rather than a position (Kezar et al., 2017). Higher education students should adopt the following values: self-awareness, alignment, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, resistance to civilization, citizenship, and change.

Higher education institutions and their commitment to social responsibility play a crucial role in shaping the leaders of tomorrow (Nagda & Roper 2019; Dugan et al., 2012). Given the immense demands placed on leaders to tackle numerous social issues, this situation can be quite perilous. Leadership development should be integrated into the educational institution's framework. It is important for social education to promote and facilitate the growth of leadership abilities in students (Garton & Wawrzynski, 2021). Students should strive to achieve socially responsible leadership as a crucial outcome.

Hynes (2009) presents a comprehensive account of the CSM's origins, highlighting its development in the early 1990s by a diverse group of professionals from various fields such as higher education, business, and psychology. Student affairs professionals in higher education were involved in the process due to their extensive experience in facilitating the development of student leadership. Leadership is widely recognized as an independent activity within the development community. They have a belief in the possibility of creating a new leadership paradigm that values the individual and fosters collaboration with others. The Social Transformational Leadership model has been developed with a specific focus on university students, aiming to establish a fresh leadership paradigm. The creators aimed to develop a leadership program that would inspire university students nationwide with a deep sense of citizenship, responsibility, and a drive for social change. These outcomes can be reproduced in both formal and informal programs.

The SCM emphasizes the importance of achieving social change as the desired outcome. Additionally, other leadership models and theories also support the idea that social change is a desired outcome when utilizing this model. In 1996, the American Institute of Higher Education introduced a theory of social change that incorporated the 7Cs: self-awareness, coordination, commitment, collaboration, common purpose argument, civility, and citizenship. This model was proposed as a means of fostering leadership development. This model operates under the belief that leadership entails bringing about meaningful change in individuals and society. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration and views leadership as a dynamic process rather than a static position. Additionally, it advocates leadership that is guided by strong values. Leadership qualities can be found in all students, regardless of their formal leadership positions. Service activities play a crucial role in fostering student leadership (Ryan et al; 2020).

Research Methodology**Population and Sample**

This study was conducted at Shandong University of Arts. The total number of students is 49,074. Shandong University of the Arts is the sole professional art university in Jinan, the capital city of Shandong Province. Education and culture have always been highly valued in Shandong Province, China. It is ranked as No 1 Art university in Shandong, that is famous for training future leaders and artists for the province and the country.

This study selected students with internship experience and leadership activities from the five colleges of Shandong University of the Arts. Students from these five colleges all majored in music and drama; in daily study and life, the students are very active and show a strong level of cooperation in organizing activities. This is the reason for their selection. According to the "Short Table of Sample Size Required for Selected Population Size Educational and Psychological Measurement" (Krejci & Morgan, 1970), the sample size for a total of 2,800 people is 338, so the sample size for a total of 2,730 people should be 338. The sampling number for each college is calculated in Table 1, which shows the detailed information of the data collection for this study: college name, number of students, and sample size.

Table 1 Number of Students and Sample of Each School

School Name	Population	Sample
sic Academy (Music Performance, Composition, Musicology)	489	60
ool of Drama (Broadcasting and hosting art, performance, drama, film and television directing, drama, film and television literature, drama studies)	510	63
dern Music Academy (Musical theatre, music education, pop music, music aesthetic education)	420	52
ool of Media (Broadcast and Television Editing and Directing, Animation, Digital Media Arts, Photography)	635	79
demy of Fine Arts (Painting, Chinese Painting, Sculpture, Fine Arts)	676	84
Total	2730	338

Source: Shandong University of Arts Registration Office (update to June of 2024)

Instrument

The research questionnaire included a section on social change leadership and effective student organizing activities. The leadership section utilizes an enhanced version of the SRLS-R2 from the National Leadership Program Clearinghouse (NCLP). This tool encompasses self-awareness, consistency, commitment, collaboration, and resolving civil disputes. The six values of citizenship are derived from the Student Leadership Model of Leadership for Social Change. This part contains 30 questions. The students' organization activities include six effective student organization activities, with a total of 20 questions and 5 structures.

Content validity of the questionnaire and structured interviews in this study was assessed by 9 experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. Ensuring consistency and reliability in measuring its intended purpose was crucial for the researcher conducting the survey. The overall Alpha's scores for 'Leadership Capacity' and 'Development Activities' were 0.979. and 0.967, respectively, which demonstrated a 'good' performance, with a consistent internal consistency throughout. Table 9 displays the results of each construct and the overall scores from the pilot study.

Results

For Research Objective One: To measure the status of the social change leadership of students in Shandong University of Arts.

For this objective, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of students' social change leadership in Shandong Arts College. Table 4.8 shows the level of social change leadership among the students at Shandong Arts College.

Table 1 shows that students' five practices of exemplary leadership are generally at a high level, with an overall mean score of 3.54, which is in the range of 3.50-4.00, and belongs to a higher level. However, the levels of different dimensions of students' social change leadership are also different.

Table 1. The Level of Students' Social Change Leadership (N=338)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-awareness	3.47	0.518	Moderate
Coherence	3.64	0.532	High
Commitment	3.69	0.530	High
Collaboration	3.60	0.552	High
Citizenship	3.44	0.493	Moderate
Controversy with Civilization	3.39	0.479	Moderate
Overall	3.54	0.430	High

As seen, students' social change leadership in Shandong College of the Arts is at a high level, with an overall mean score of 3.54, which is within the range of 3.51-4.50, and belongs to the higher level. Of the six dimensions, the dimension of controversy with civilization was the lowest ($M=3.39$, $SD=.479$), followed by citizenship ($M=3.44$, $SD=.493$), and the dimension of self-awareness did not reach the advanced level ($M=3.47$, $SD=.518$). All other dimensions scored above 3.50. These general descriptive statistics paint an interesting picture of the current state of development of students' social change leadership in Shandong College of the Arts, which seems to indicate that there is still much room for collaborative development of students' social change leadership. There is still a lot of room.

For Research Objective Two: To identify the impact of student organization activities the social change leadership of students in Shandong University of Arts.

To do this, the researcher used regression analysis to predict the effect of student organization activities on Students' Social Change Leadership.

Table 2. The Relevance of Students' Social Change Leadership to Student Organization Activities

Model	R	R-square	Adjustment of R-square
1	.619a	0.383	0.381

a. Predictor Variables: (Constant), Student Organization Status, Club Activity, Professional Activity, Networking Activity, Student Government Activity.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df Degrees of Freedom	Root Mean Square	F-Statistic	The Level of Significance (P-Value) Sig
1	Return	24.617	1	24.617	215.423	.000a
	Residuals	39.652	347	0.114		
	Total	64.269	348			

a. Predictor Variables: (Constant), Student Organization Status, Club Activity, Professional Activity, Networking Activity, Student Government Activity.

b. Dependent variable: students' social change leadership

Table 3 Multiple Regression Results of The Survey Data Related to the Student Organization Activities Impact on Students' Social Change Leadership

Model	B	SD	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	2.154	0.096		22.499	000*
Student Council Activities	0.036	0.067	0.069	0.535	000*
Professional Activities	0.065	0.067	0.122	0.960	000*
State of Student Organizations	0.132	0.040	0.223	3.288	0.001*
Club Activities	0.178	0.044	0.309	4.044	0.037*
Networking Events	-0.025	0.027	-0.053	-0.933	0.051

B. Dependent Variable: Students' Social Change Leadership

The results of the specific multiple regression data analysis are shown in Table 2-3. The R value of this study is 0.619, which indicates that the correlation between students' social change leadership and students' organizational activities is 0.619. The R-square for this study was 0.383; it was able to predict 38.3% of the variance of the model, which means that student organization activities had a 38.3% effect on Students' Social Change Leadership. Adjusted R-square has no practical significance and is usually used when making model adjustments (increasing or decreasing the number of variables) to determine whether or not you should include the variables you want to include in this model.

For Research Objective Three: To propose a model for developing social change leadership in arts students attending Shandong University of Arts.

According to the results of the second and third objectives, the training model of students' social change leadership in Shandong University of the Arts is designed based on the above process. The four important items of the data analysis results of the training model include student union activities ($\beta=0.036$, $P=.000^*$); professional activities ($\beta=0.065$, $P=.000^*$); student organization status ($\beta=0.132$, $P=0.001^*$); club activities ($\beta=0.178$, $P=0.037^*$). Based on these data, the researcher developed a training model.

The schematic of the model was checked and validated by a team of seven experts consisting of educational scholars with extensive experience in research and management and experts with experience in the field of educational administration. The researcher designed the model, validation form for the seven experts to check, comment and validate the model before it was actually implemented in the real practices. The seven experts have at least 15 years of experience working in higher education institutions in Thailand and China. They are very experienced in the field of educational management and leadership, especially in the areas of research, model development, and educational planning. Therefore, the validation of these experts played a role in the evaluation and implementation of the model.



Figure 1. Final Model for enhancing Students' Social Change Leadership

Discussion

The overall mean score of students' social change leadership at Shandong University of the Arts is 3.54, which is in the upper middle level. Among the six dimensions, civilized controversy ($M=3.39$, $SD=0.72$), civic awareness ($M=3.44$, $SD=0.63$) and self-awareness ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.59$) are relatively low, and more attention should be paid to these dimensions when developing a training model to improve students' leadership for social change. Next, are cooperation ($M=3.60$, $SD=0.84$), consistency ($M=3.64$, $SD=0.58$) and commitment ($M=3.69$, $SD=0.72$), and commitment scored the highest, with a mean score of 3.69. Therefore, according to the results of the indication, Shandong University of the Arts students' leadership for social change is to be improved.

Bryant (2017) also chose social change leadership as the dependent variable to investigate influencing factors. Data from this study provided a descriptive portrait of college students' leadership abilities and needs. Students reported general agreement across all six outcome measures, although their level of agreement was not strong. However, they still need to take more action to improve their leadership for social change. This suggested room for growth in these areas and is consistent with Dugan & Komives' (2011) assertion that institutions have a responsibility to position leadership development as a core component of student learning.

The researcher conducted a survey of student participation in student government activities and found that the largest number of memberships were in charitable organizations. Students involved in these student government organizations reported a more significant development in interdependence, and those who were not involved in the organizations established a clear purpose. Through student government activities, the researcher found that students gained necessary leadership qualities through their activities. Students gain cognitive and behavioral skills as they work through tasks and challenges in the context of student government activities. This lays the foundation for developing future leaders. Therefore, regardless of how these student government activities are defined, they provide opportunities for students to exercise leadership.

The researcher also believes that the situation of student organizational status is useful for the development of student leadership. Student government activities play a vital role in helping students to fully utilize their other skills and talents so that they can experience a sense of belonging (Case, 2011). If students dedicate time and energy that can be invested in meaningful student government activities,

they can gain cognitive and emotional gains throughout their college experience; therefore, involvement in student government activities is an activity that is associated with a variety of educational and developmental benefits (Astin, 2014) and can lead to a sense of personal fulfillment and a sense of responsibility to the community in which they reside (Borges et al., 2017). In particular, students who participate in blood clubs demonstrate a propensity for socially impactful actions that can ensure their responsibility, morality, and social awareness (Routon, & Walker, 2014).

The developed model is proposed based on the results of an analysis of student organization activity data on four key items, including student organization status, club activity, professional activity and student government activity. The results indicate that these four student organization activities are effective in developing student leadership for social change. All students who participated in the leadership training model could improve their understanding and competence (Apesin, & Gong, 2018; Cadenas, & Bernstein, 2020).

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