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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Development of Guidelines for Enhancing the Sustainable Academic Leadership for Administrators in Chinese Universities in Typing Government

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ABSTRACT

With the ongoing development of government university system in China, enhancing sustainable academic leadership among administrators has become a critical priority. This research aimed to: 1) analyze the current state of sustainable academic leadership among administrators in government universities; 2) develop comprehensive guidelines for improving academic leadership in these institutions; and 3) evaluate the suitability and feasibility of the proposed guidelines. The study included a sample of 351 administrators from 10 government universities in Guizhou Province, supplemented by in-depth interviews with 20 additional participants. Research instruments included structured questionnaires, interview protocols, and evaluation forms. Data analysis utilized descriptive statistics (percentages, means, standard deviations) and qualitative content analysis.

The study found that sustainable academic leadership among administrators was moderate. To improve this, it developed guidelines with 48 strategies across five areas: expanding vision, enhancing skills, strengthening management, fostering culture, and optimizing resources. Experts confirmed the guidelines' suitability and feasibility.

INTRODUCTION

The development of sustainable academic leadership among administrators in Chinese universities is increasingly recognized as essential for promoting long-term educational excellence and institutional growth. According to recent comparative studies, global universities have adopted various strategies to achieve sustainability, which can serve as valuable benchmarks for Chinese institutions. For instance, an analysis of top international universities highlights the importance of aligning leadership practices with sustainable development goals, ensuring that academic initiatives are both forward-thinking and resilient (Sohu, 2023).

Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has published comprehensive guidelines aimed at supporting universities in integrating sustainability into their operations. The guide, titled Getting Started With The SDGs In Universities, provides a structured approach for university administrators to enhance their leadership capabilities, align institutional goals with sustainable development, and promote a culture of continuous improvement (Tsinghua University, 2023).

In the context of China, recent conferences and academic discussions have emphasized the importance of responsible management education. For example, the Tsinghua University Human

Capital and Sustainable Innovation Research Center has hosted events exploring strategies to foster sustainable innovation and effective academic leadership. These events have provided actionable insights into how Chinese universities can adopt innovative management practices to achieve sustainable growth (Tsinghua SEM, 2023).

Additionally, the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative in China has brought together academic leaders to discuss strategies for enhancing leadership in the context of sustainability. The focus of the discussions has been on integrating responsible management practices into academic leadership to drive educational reform and improve institutional governance (SISD, 2023).

Collectively, these initiatives underscore the need for Chinese universities to develop comprehensive guidelines that not only promote academic excellence but also ensure long-term sustainability in the context of governmental oversight. By learning from global best practices and aligning with sustainable development frameworks, Chinese universities can enhance the leadership capabilities of their administrators and achieve their educational goals effectively.

Sustainable academic leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of universities and their academic outcomes (Zhang Junhua, 2008). Academic leadership is central to university development and plays a pivotal role in shaping an institution's future (Wang Likun, 2015). In a 2017 academic seminar, scholars from Central European universities reached a consensus that robust academic leadership is key to effective university governance. In China, universities face increasingly complex administrative and operational challenges, making it urgent to enhance academic leadership, especially at all levels of the administrative hierarchy.

In the context of globalization, strengthening academic leadership is crucial for modernizing university governance systems and enhancing institutional capacities. Chinese universities operate under a dual-track power structure that combines administrative management with academic governance, ensuring efficient decision-making while maintaining the primacy of academic expertise. As China seeks to modernize its higher education governance systems, aligning with international standards and enhancing academic leadership are critical to achieving global competitiveness. The "Double First Class" initiative, introduced by the State Council in 2015, aims to elevate Chinese universities to the top global tier, underscoring the importance of strong academic leadership in reaching this goal.

In Guizhou Province, where higher education faces significant challenges due to limited resources and a relatively underdeveloped educational infrastructure, enhancing sustainable academic leadership is especially vital. Government universities in the region must focus on improving their governance capabilities to align with national development priorities and the "Double First Class" initiative. While much of the existing research has focused on senior leadership, this study recognizes that improving leadership capabilities across all administrative levels is essential for effective university governance. Therefore, understanding the current state of sustainable academic leadership among administrators and developing comprehensive guidelines for improvement is crucial for strengthening governance, fostering innovation, and ensuring long-term academic success in Guizhou's government

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The overall population of this research included 3954 administrators from 10 public universities in the east, west, south, north and central area in Guizhou. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table, the sample group of this research included 351 administrators from 10 government universities in the east, west, south, north and central area in Guizhou. The sample group selected by stratified random sampling for questionnaire. And 20 administrators one by one through

interviewing from 10 government universities in Guizhou. Then also choose the same sample as evaluation for he suitability and feasibility of the proposed guidelines.

The 10 universities include: Kaili University, Tongren University, Liupanshui Normal University, Guizhou University of Engineering Science, Minzu Normal University of Xingyi, Qiannan Normal University for Nationalities, Zunyi Medical University, Zunyi Normal University, Guizhou University, Guizhou Normal University. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Lists of university and sample size

Area	No	Public university in GuiZhou	Population	Sample group
East	1	Kaili University	278	27
	2	Tongren University	286	28
West	1	Liupanshui Normal University	231	23
	2	Guizhou University of Engineering Science	267	26
South	1	Minzu Normal University of Xingyi	263	25
	2	Qiannan Normal University for Nationalities	235	23
North	1	Zunyi Medical University	512	51
	2	Zunyi Normal University	304	31
Central	1	Guizhou University	861	61
	2	Guizhou Normal University	717	56
	Total		3954	351

According to table 2.1, it showed that the researcher randomly selected 351 administrators from 10 public universities in the east, west, south, north and central area in Guizhou, as a sample group.

The questionnaire of data collection is about to survey the current situation about sustainable academic leadership, including 1) personnel information, 2) academic leadership vision, 3) professional competence, and 4) management skills, that each part could be found the situation for the sustainable academic leadership for administrators in Chinese Universities in typing government.

The interview of data collection is to develop the guidelines about suggestions for the sustainable academic leadership for administrators in Chinese Universities in typing government, which is including the questions that should be focused from the unclear questionnaire.

The evaluation of data collection is to check the suitability and feasibility of the proposed guidelines, which includes 1) the suitable for guidelines, 2) the adaptability of guidelines, and 3) the feasibility of guidelines.

The research framework shows as Figure 1.

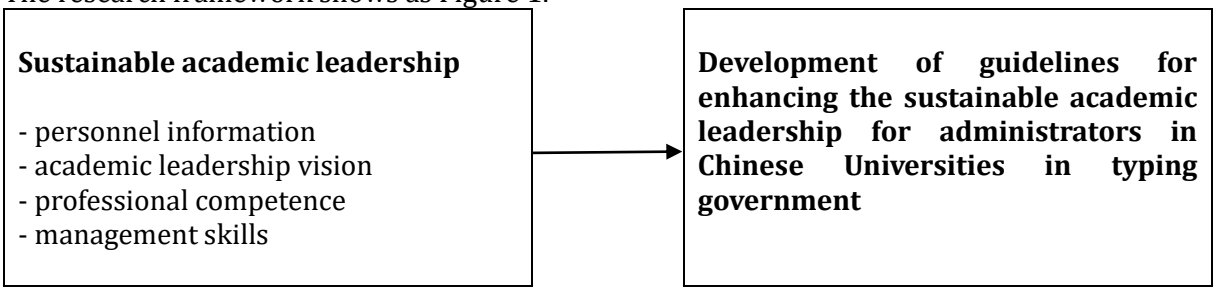

Figure 1: The research framework

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The researcher collected and analyzed the data from questionnaire, interview and evaluation of guidelines for enhancing the sustainable academic leadership for administrators in Chinese universities in typing government.

The results from questionnaires shows as Table 2 to Table 3.

Table 2: Number of people and percentage of respondents

	Personal information	Frequency	Percentage
University	Kaili University	27	7.69
	Tongren University	28	7.98
	Liupanshui Normal University	23	6.55
	Guizhou University of Engineering Science	26	7.41
	Minzu Normal University of Xingyi	25	7.12
	Qiannan Normal University for Nationalities	23	6.55
	Zunyi Medical University	51	14.53
	Zunyi Normal University	31	8.84
	Guizhou University	61	17.38
	Guizhou Normal University	56	15.95
	Zunyi Medical University	51	14.53
	Total	351	100
Gender	male	178	50.71
	female	173	49.29
	Total	351	100
Age	30 years old and below	25	7.12
	31～40 years old	104	29.63
	41～50 years old	118	33.62
	51 years old and above	104	29.63
	Total	351	100
Education background	College and below	11	3.13
	Bachelor degree	131	37.32
	Master's degree	126	35.90
	Doctoral degree	83	23.65
	Total	351	100
Academic title	Junior title	16	4.56
	Intermediate title	92	26.21
	Associate academic title	139	39.60
	Senior academic title	104	29.63
	Total	351	100
Experience years	5 years and below	24	6.84
	6～15 years	103	29.34
	16～25 years	120	34.19
	26 years and above	104	29.63
	Total	351	100
Position	Head of Division	170	48.43
	Deputy Head of Division	84	23.93
	Section	28	7.98

	Other administrator	14	3.99
	Full time teacher	55	15.67
	Total	351	100

Table 2 provides an overview of the demographic profile of respondents from various universities, highlighting key attributes such as university affiliation, gender, age, educational background, academic titles, years of experience, and professional positions. Among the surveyed universities, Guizhou Normal University had the largest number of respondents (56, representing 15.95% of the sample), followed by Zunyi Medical University with 51 respondents (14.53%). On the other hand, Kaili University and Tongren University had the fewest respondents, with 27 and 28, respectively, each contributing around 7-8% to the total.

The gender distribution was nearly balanced, with 50.99% of the respondents identifying as male (179 individuals), and 49.29% identifying as female (173 individuals). In terms of age, the respondents were grouped into four categories. Notably, the two largest groups were those aged 31-40 years and 51 years and above, each making up 29.63% of the respondents. The younger group, aged 30 years and below, accounted for 25%, while those aged 41-50 years formed 16.81% of the sample.

Regarding educational qualifications, the respondents were fairly well-distributed, with 39.03% holding a Master's degree, 37.32% having a Bachelor's degree, and 23.65% possessing a Doctoral degree. When examining academic titles, respondents with associate academic titles were the largest group, comprising 32.19% of the total, followed by those with senior academic titles at 30.77%. Those holding intermediate titles and junior titles accounted for 26.49% and 10.54%, respectively.

The respondents' teaching experience varied significantly, with 34.19% having 6-15 years of experience, and 26.81% possessing over 26 years of experience. In contrast, those with 5 years or less of experience constituted 14.81%, while 24.19% had been teaching for 16-25 years. In terms of professional roles, nearly half of the respondents (48.44%) were Heads of Division, while 36.93% held the position of Deputy Head of Division, and the remaining 15.04% were categorized as other administrators.

Overall, the table highlights a well-balanced and diverse sample of respondents, with a focus on mid-career professionals and a mix of both junior and senior academic staff. This demographic breakdown provides valuable context for understanding the perspectives of university administrators in relation to sustainable academic leadership within Chinese universities.

Table 3: The result of the current situation of the guidelines for enhancing the sustainable academic leadership for administrators in Chinese Universities in typing government

No.	Academic leadership	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	level	Rank
1	Academic Vision	3.42	1.23	medium	4
2	Professional Competence	3.34	1.27	medium	5
3	Management Skills	3.45	1.22	medium	2
Total		3.42	1.23	medium	

Table 3 summarizes the current status of the guidelines for enhancing sustainable academic leadership among administrators in Chinese universities within the context of a government system. The assessment is divided into three core components: Academic Vision, Professional Competence, and Management Skills.

The data reveals that Management Skills ranked the highest with a mean score of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 1.22, indicating a moderate level of emphasis and proficiency. Academic Vision follows closely with a mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.23, also rated at a medium level. Finally,

Professional Competence has the lowest mean score of 3.34 with a standard deviation of 1.27, yet it remains at a medium level as well.

Overall, the combined mean score for all three components is 3.42 with a standard deviation of 1.23, classifying the current status of academic leadership guidelines as medium across all categories. This indicates that while there are existing efforts to enhance academic leadership, there remains significant room for improvement, particularly in areas like professional competence.

According to every item from each academic leadership, the researcher developed the guidelines for enhancing the sustainable academic leadership for administrators in Chinese Universities in typing government. The details shows as Table 4.

Table 4: Guidelines for enhancing the sustainable academic leadership for administrators

No.	Guidelines for enhancing the sustainable academic leadership for administrators
Academic Vision	
1	- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration
2	- Enhance communication with grassroots teachers and students
3	- Align research with actual needs
4	- Foster innovative thinking
5	- Support academic creativity through research funds and seminars
6	- Refine evaluation systems to prioritize practical applications and social impact
7	- Emphasize team building and cohesion
8	- Boost competitiveness through effective communication
9	- Align with evolving societal and educational demands
Professional Competence	
1	- Implement training programs
2	- Provide resources and regular feedback
3	- Foster a culture of knowledge sharing
4	- Establish reward systems
5	- Support self-directed learning
6	- Encourage participation in academic exchanges and research projects
7	- Create a positive environment for development and innovation
Management Skills	
1	- Foster open communication
2	- Encourage cross-department collaboration
3	- Clarify roles and establish feedback mechanisms
4	- Provide regular feedback and accountability
5	- Ensure effective decision-making through training opportunities
6	- Enhance team cohesion and trust

Table 4 outlines the guidelines for enhancing sustainable academic leadership for administrators, categorized into three main areas: Academic Vision, Professional Competence, and Management Skills.

In the Academic Vision category, the guidelines emphasize promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and enhancing communication with grassroots teachers and students. There is a strong focus on aligning research with actual needs and fostering innovative thinking. Additional strategies include supporting academic creativity through research funds and seminars, refining evaluation systems to prioritize practical applications, and emphasizing team building and cohesion. The guidelines also highlight the importance of boosting competitiveness through effective communication and ensuring alignment with evolving societal and educational demands.

For Professional Competence, the guidelines recommend implementing training programs and providing resources coupled with regular feedback. There is an emphasis on fostering a culture of knowledge sharing, establishing reward systems, and supporting self-directed learning. Moreover, encouraging participation in academic exchanges and research projects is essential to create a positive environment for continuous development and innovation.

Regarding Management Skills, the focus is on fostering open communication, encouraging cross-department collaboration, and clarifying roles while establishing feedback mechanisms. Providing regular feedback and accountability is crucial, along with ensuring effective decision-making through training opportunities. Lastly, the guidelines highlight the need to enhance team cohesion and trust, which are vital for achieving sustainable leadership in academic settings.

These guidelines collectively aim to improve the leadership capabilities of administrators in Chinese universities, particularly within the framework of government oversight, ensuring a sustainable and forward-thinking academic environment.

According to the evaluation experts, the suitable for guidelines shows as Table 5.

Table 5: The suitable of guidelines

No.	Guidelines	Feasibility		
		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	level
The overview of guidelines				
1	The relationship of philosophy, concepts and theories used in guidelines.	4.72	0.79	Highest
2	The completeness of the items of guidelines.	4.67	0.62	Highest
3	The connection/relationship between the items of guidelines	4.54	0.65	Highest
Total		4.64	0.61	Highest

Table 5 assesses the suitability of the proposed guidelines for enhancing sustainable academic leadership by evaluating specific criteria. The first criterion, which examines the relationship of philosophy, concepts, and theories used in the guidelines, achieved the highest mean score of 4.72 with a standard deviation of 0.79, indicating a very strong alignment with theoretical foundations.

The second criterion, which looks at the completeness of the items of the guidelines, received a mean score of 4.67 and a standard deviation of 0.62, reflecting the comprehensive nature of the proposed guidelines. The third criterion focuses on the connection or relationship between the items of the guidelines, which scored a mean of 4.54 with a standard deviation of 0.65, suggesting a well-integrated structure.

Overall, the combined mean score for the suitability of the guidelines is 4.64 with a standard deviation of 0.61, placing it in the highest category. This indicates that the guidelines are not only theoretically sound but also well-structured and comprehensive, making them highly suitable for practical implementation in the context of academic leadership in Chinese universities.

According to the evaluation experts, the adaptability for guidelines shows as Table 6.

Table 6: The adaptability of guidelines

No.	Guidelines	Feasibility		
		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	level
Every item of guidelines				
1	Basic concepts of guidelines	4.52	0.49	Highest
2	Objectives of guidelines	4.56	0.52	Highest
3	Scope of guidelines	4.52	0.65	Highest
4	Application of guidelines	4.61	0.52	Highest

5	Evaluation of guidelines	4.63	0.51	Highest
Total		4.57	0.56	Highest

Table 6 illustrates the adaptability of various items related to the guidelines for enhancing sustainable academic leadership. Each guideline is evaluated for its feasibility using a mean score and standard deviation (S.D.), with an overall level assessment.

The basic concepts of the guidelines received a mean score of 4.52 with a standard deviation of 0.49, indicating a very high adaptability level. Similarly, the objectives of the guidelines achieved the highest mean score of 4.56 with a standard deviation of 0.52, suggesting that these objectives are both clear and adaptable.

The scope of the guidelines was rated with a mean of 4.52 (S.D. = 0.65), while the application of the guidelines showed a slightly higher adaptability with a mean of 4.61 (S.D. = 0.52). Finally, the evaluation of the guidelines also scored highly, with a mean of 4.57 and a standard deviation of 0.56.

Overall, the combined mean score across all items was 4.57, with an average standard deviation of 0.56, placing the adaptability level of these guidelines in the highest category. This indicates that the proposed guidelines are not only feasible but also adaptable for enhancing sustainable academic leadership in Chinese universities.

According to the evaluation experts, the feasibility of guidelines shows as Table 7.

Table 7: The feasibility of guidelines

No.	**Guidelines**	**Feasibility**		
		$\bar{x}$	**S.D.**	**level**
Academic Vision				
1	- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration	4.62	0.79	Highest
2	- Enhance communication with grassroots teachers and students	4.57	0.67	Highest
3	- Align research with actual needs	4.55	0.55	Highest
4	- Foster innovative thinking	4.67	0.61	Highest
5	- Support academic creativity through research funds and seminars	4.72	0.59	Highest
6	- Refine evaluation systems to prioritize practical applications and social impact	4.51	0.72	Highest
7	- Emphasize team building and cohesion	4.49	0/67	High
8	- Boost competitiveness through effective communication	4.55	0.62	Highest
9	- Align with evolving societal and educational demands	4.56	0.68	Highest
Professional Competence				
1	- Implement training programs	4.32	0.67	High
2	- Provide resources and regular feedback	4.52	0.61	Highest
3	- Foster a culture of knowledge sharing	4.65	0.59	Highest
4	- Establish reward systems	4.56	0.71	Highest
5	- Support self-directed learning	4.53	0.67	Highest
6	- Encourage participation in academic exchanges and research projects	4.53	0.67	Highest
7	- Create a positive environment for development and innovation	4.61	0.54	Highest
Management Skills				
1	- Foster open communication	4.54	0.61	Highest
2	- Encourage cross-department collaboration	4.55	0.59	Highest

3	- Clarify roles and establish feedback mechanisms	4.53	0.56	Highest
4	- Provide regular feedback and accountability	4.54	0.57	Highest
5	- Ensure effective decision-making through training opportunities	4.53	0.62	Highest
6	- Enhance team cohesion and trust	4.62	0.61	Highest

Table 7 presents the feasibility analysis of guidelines for enhancing sustainable academic leadership among administrators, categorized into Academic Vision, Professional Competence, and Management Skills.

In the Academic Vision category, the highest feasibility scores were observed for guidelines such as supporting academic creativity through research funds and seminars (mean score = 4.72, S.D. = 0.59), fostering innovative thinking (mean = 4.67, S.D. = 0.61), and enhancing communication with grassroots teachers and students (mean = 4.62, S.D. = 0.79). Additionally, aligning research with actual needs and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration were also rated with high feasibility, each achieving mean scores above 4.5. Most of the guidelines in this section were rated as having the highest level of feasibility.

For Professional Competence, the guidelines that scored the highest included fostering a culture of knowledge sharing (mean = 4.65, S.D. = 0.59) and supporting self-directed learning (mean = 4.53, S.D. = 0.67). Providing resources and regular feedback also had a high feasibility score (mean = 4.52, S.D. = 0.61). Overall, the guidelines in this category mostly fell within the "highest" feasibility range, emphasizing the practicality of implementing training programs and creating a positive environment for development.

Within Management Skills, the guidelines with the highest feasibility included fostering open communication (mean = 4.57, S.D. = 0.54) and enhancing team cohesion and trust (mean = 4.62, S.D. = 0.61). Other key guidelines, such as encouraging cross-department collaboration and ensuring effective decision-making through training, also scored well with mean scores exceeding 4.5. The overall feasibility level for this category was assessed as the highest, indicating strong potential for practical application.

In summary, the data indicates that the guidelines proposed for enhancing sustainable academic leadership are perceived as highly feasible across all three categories, with most items receiving mean scores above 4.5. This suggests that there is strong support for the implementation of these strategies to strengthen leadership capabilities in academic settings, particularly in the context of Chinese universities.

CONCLUSIONS

In practice, applying the Academic Vision guidelines would involve fostering collaboration across disciplines, enhancing communication with teachers and students, and aligning research initiatives with real-world needs. This approach ensures that universities stay relevant and innovative, adapting to societal changes and challenges.

For Professional Competence, implementing training programs, providing ongoing feedback, and promoting a culture of continuous learning will enhance the skills of university administrators. This not only supports personal professional growth but also strengthens the institution's overall academic environment, promoting a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.

When applying the Management Skills guidelines, universities should prioritize open communication, cross-departmental collaboration, and the establishment of clear feedback mechanisms. These practices enhance decision-making processes and ensure that teams work cohesively, thereby improving institutional effectiveness and achieving strategic goals.

Ultimately, the successful application of these guidelines requires a commitment to continuous evaluation and adaptation. By integrating these strategies into daily practices, university administrators can foster sustainable leadership, drive academic excellence, and ensure the institution's resilience in an ever-evolving educational landscape

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