

Leadership Skills of Physical Education Students in China towards the Development of an Innovative Training Model

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Abstract

Leadership can be described as a combination of a series of behaviors that will motivate people to follow the leadership to achieve goals, rather than simply obey. It refers to the ability to make full use of existing resources within the scope of authority to achieve goals with the lowest cost and the highest efficiency. This research shows a college student with high leadership skills is significantly more likely to achieve success after graduation than other peers. Therefore, it is important to carry out leadership training in universities, as it can improve students' overall quality and promote their comprehensive development. Studies by many scholars have shown that structured curriculum and experiential learning are effective ways to improve students' leadership. And, due to the characteristics of openness, interactivity, and competitiveness in their courses, students majoring in physical education have unique advantages in cultivating leadership. The paper will through analyze and investigation leadership level of physical education students and the current situation of their leadership cultivation to explore and propose a model which conducive to cultivating leadership among physical education students.

Keywords

Leadership, physical education students, development, training model

1. Introduction

Many of scholars believe that sports have more obvious effects on the cultivation of students' leadership. Gerdes believes that sports activities can provide students with the opportunity to lead or be led. Cultivating their skills as leaders or being led is an important means to cultivate students' leadership. The research of Carlson and Hastie (1997) shows that sports activities can cultivate students' social adaptability and improve leadership. Chinese scholar Lupeping (2008) also pointed out that participating in military training and sports can not only help students keep healthy, but also stimulate their leadership potential. The research of many experts shows that normal teaching activities can help students master certain leadership skills and improve leadership. Hay and Dempster (2004) put forward a theoretical framework for developing students' leadership in normal teaching activities and carried out experiments in 2006. They focused on combining students' four learning factors and leadership skills such as interpersonal skills, motivation, learning skills and participation skills in teaching activities to develop students' leadership, and achieved the expected results. In the process of Owen (2007) investigating teachers' and students' perceptions of leadership in many schools in the UK and Wales through questionnaires

and interviews, teachers said that they had benefited a lot and would also carry out some teaching attempts to cultivate students' leadership in their future work.

Therefore, incorporating leadership training into the daily teaching of students majoring in physical education can enhance their cognitive, communication, coordination, organization, planning, decision-making, and execution abilities, promote their mental development, enhance their emotional experience, and enable them to achieve comprehensive development.

2. Methods of the study

This paper intends to adopt the following research methods: firstly is the literature review method, which provides a theoretical basis for the article by reviewing, summarizing, and analyzing relevant papers and research results. The second is expert interview method, which involves interviewing industry experts and professional teachers to obtain first-hand information. The third is the questionnaire method, which is to use the questionnaire to grasp the students' leadership level and the basic situation of leadership training received.

3. Result analysis

Through the analysis of the collected survey questionnaires, physical education students received high evaluations in leadership ability evaluation indicators such as Decision Making, Interpersonal, and Conceptual skills.

3.1 Decision-Making Skills

Table 1. Assessment in terms of PE student's Decision-Making Skills

| Decision Making Skills | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|------|-----|----------------|
| As a student ... | | | |
| remain calm when I have to make decisions very quickly | 2.46 | .52 | Less Adept |
| give decisions governed by my ideals regardless of practical difficulties | 3.64 | .61 | Very Adept |
| consider various options in terms of a specified goal | 3.46 | .50 | Adept |
| double-check my information sources to be sure I have the right facts before making decisions | 3.49 | .50 | Adept |
| look for something better even if I have found a course of action that is just about OK | 2.44 | .50 | Less Adept |
| work out all the pros and cons before making a decision? | 2.46 | .52 | Less Adept |
| Composite Mean | 2.99 | .44 | Adept |

Notes: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Very Adept; 2.51-3.50 Agree/ Adept; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Less Adept; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Adept

Investigation shows that students are very adept in giving decisions governed by my ideals regardless of practical difficulties with a mean of 3.64. However, the student respondents were less adept on looking for something better even if they have found a course of action that is just about OK with a mean of 2.44. Overall, the student respondent's decision-making skills were considered adept with a composite mean of 2.99.

According to Jennifer Herrity (2022), the ability to make decisions is a valuable leadership trait and it demonstrates your capacity to think objectively and weigh different options. In addition, your aptitude to make a quick decision can help establish a strong bond of trust with other employees that can strengthen your company's culture.

3.2 Interpersonal skills

Table 2. Assessment in terms of PE student's Interpersonal Skills

| Interpersonal Skills | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|------|-----|----------------|
| As a student ... | | | |
| I usually know ahead of time how people will respond to a new idea or proposal. | 2.64 | .63 | Adept |
| I understand that the social fabric of the organization is very important | 3.51 | .58 | Very Adept |
| I am able to sense the emotional undercurrents in my group. | 2.54 | .52 | Adept |
| I use my emotional energy to motivate others. | 3.50 | .54 | Adept |
| I believe that the key to successful conflict resolution is respecting my opponent. | 2.54 | .61 | Adept |
| I work hard to find consensus in conflict situations. | 2.55 | .59 | Adept |
| Composite Mean | 2.88 | .47 | Adept |

Notes: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Very Adept; 2.51-3.50 Agree/ Adept; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Less Adept; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Adept

Through investigation, we found student respondents were very adept on understanding social fabric's importance with the highest mean of 3.51. Also, they tend to use emotional energy to motivate others with mean of 3.50. The composite mean of the interpersonal skills of the student respondents was 2.88 and were considered adept.

We use Interpersonal skills when interacting and communicating with others to help start, build, and sustain relationships. Sometimes called people skills, these are innate and learned skills used in social situations pertinent to your career, education, and personal life. These skills include working creatively with others, communicating clearly, collaborating, adapting to change, flexibility, interacting effectively with diverse teams, guiding and leading others, and being responsible, according to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

Interpersonal skills become so natural that students may take them for granted, never thinking about how they communicate with other people. Impairment in the ability to effectively communicate may hinder successful relational development in young adults. This can potentially impact an array of life areas such as family relationships, socialization, college performance, and employment. Subconsciously we've all been developing our interpersonal skills since childhood. Students need to be taught the skills required for interacting effectively with others and then motivated use these skills if students are to become socially competent.

3.3 Conceptual skills

Table 3. Assessment in terms of PE student's Conceptual skills

| Conceptual Skills | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|------|-----|----------------|
| As a student ... | | | |
| I am effective at problem solving | 2.55 | .54 | Adept |
| I immediately respond to address problems when they arise | 3.52 | .59 | Very Adept |
| I see the big pictures comes easily for me. | 2.50 | .56 | Less Adept |
| I enjoy making strategic plans for my organization | 2.53 | .58 | Adept |
| I enjoy discussing organizational values and philosophy | 2.45 | .56 | Less Adept |
| I am flexible about making changes in our organization | 2.51 | .54 | Adept |
| Composite Mean | 2.68 | .48 | Adept |

Notes: 3.51-4.00 Strongly Agree/Very Adept; 2.51-3.50 Agree/ Adept; 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Less Adept; 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Not Adept

The data show that students tends to immediately respond to address problems when they arise with the highest mean of 3.52. However, they less enjoy discussing organizational values and philosophy with the least mean of 2.45. Overall, the conceptual skills of the respondents were considered adept with a composite mean of 2.68.

Conceptual skills are the abilities used to understand complex situations and visualize abstract concepts. Rather than looking at day-to-day operations, conceptual skills help leaders look at the larger goals of their company and plan for ways to work toward them.

According to an editorial from the Indeed Editorial Team (2022), conceptual skills refer to the ability to come up with solutions using theories and ideas. This also includes addressing challenging situations with a creative, unique approach. With such skills, it becomes simpler to comprehend abstract or complex ideas. In this article, we review what these skills are and why they're vital in the workplace.

In addition, despite receiving high evaluations on the above projects, surveys and expert interviews still show that some of them lack communication, coordination, and communication skills and need improvement. Unfortunately, they have hardly received systematic training support, which requires schools and teachers to provide them with more opportunities, .Such as: physical education teachers can integrate in their lessons activities that will develop the decision-making, interpersonal, and conceptual skills of students; Make the strategic planning a collaborative project of the school to ensure that students and teachers and other stakeholders are involved in developing leadership training programs and activities for students.; Develop and implement an innovative leadership training model that would ensure the total development of students in honing their leadership potentials, and so on.

4. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions derived in this study, researchers also recommend following the 3D Leadership Training Model (3D stands for Discover, Design, and Delivery) when helping students improve their leadership. This 3D Leadership Training Model is a small step to provide a relevant training model for aspiring leaders in the academic community.

4.1 Discover (What core leadership skills are needed to be successful?)

In this stage of training, the students will be tested on their leadership capabilities in order to find out the gaps that would be used to proceed to the next stage which is designing programs and activities for attaining the goals for leadership development.

4.2 Design (Did we design leadership development activities and program to attain needed leadership skills?)

Designing a leadership training program is one of those things that seems easy on the surface but is actually really quite difficult—especially if you’re looking to create a sustained learning impact.

Before you can start putting together a leadership training program, it’s important to understand the learning cycle each of your learning program participants will be going through.

Stage 1. Experience

Simply put, this is the “do”. In this stage, the leadership training program participants will either learn something new or reinterpret a familiar concept in a new way. In-person training days with a variety of activities, including lectures, exercises, and group work assignments, are great examples of typical learning experiences that are critical in putting the learning cycle in motion.

Stage 2. Reflect

Reflection allows the learning program participants to notice any inconsistencies between their experience and understanding. This part is essential, but often neglected. In fact, one of the reasons why social learning platforms are becoming increasingly popular is that they allow the learning program participants to reflect with their peers without interrupting the natural flow of their work. Instead, the participants can freely decide when they need the support and guidance of either the facilitator or their co-learners.

Stage 3. Conceptualize

From reflection, new ideas arise and the participants of the leadership training program can make a conclusion about whether or not they will adapt their existing concepts.

The problem with traditional leadership training programs is that they don’t encourage the participants to conceptualize what they’ve learned in between in-person sessions. However, without this step, the learning cycle will be incomplete, which is likely to affect the results of the learning program.

Stage 4. Test

Now it’s time to put all that learning into action and experiment with these new ideas. The great thing about leadership training is that leadership skills can easily be practiced in everyday situations at work. By putting their newly learned skills to practice, the program participants are much more likely to keep applying their learning in the future.

Then the design cycle starts again, as the learning program participants come full circle and begin experimenting with a new concept. Keep in mind there are a ton of different learning styles.

4.3 Deliver (Did we build the skills and competencies needed?)

Armed with the knowledge and skills to be successful, you’re ready to build and deliver a leadership development program to accelerate your competencies and enhance the skills and satisfaction for training leaders.

According to LinkedIn’s 2019 Workplace Learning Report, organizations are increasingly seeking the help of learning and development (L&D) to complement business strategy by attracting, developing and retaining top talent. A critical aspect to consider, besides the type of training to deliver, is the method of training delivery itself.

Choosing a training delivery method can be a daunting task, given the number of considerations, including budget, size and type of the workforce, location, time frame, and goals. Adding to this complexity are the multiple training delivery options available today that make decision-making easier said than done.

Instructor-led Training (ILT): Instructor-led training, or classroom training, is the most traditional form of training, best leveraged for creating an overall understanding of the training topic.

Virtual Classrooms: While ILT continues to be popular, advancements in technology have propelled the use of virtual classrooms, or virtual instructor-led training (VILT). Virtual classrooms enable organizations to deliver training in the form of text, video and documents in real time. They can deliver training from anywhere, and learners can attend the session from wherever they are located, saving organizations valuable time and money on logistics and venues. Good virtual trainers can still offer a human touch.

E-learning: E-learning is a good option for organizations that want to offer flexible learning opportunities in a short

time frame to a global audience by delivering interactive and engaging training programs in the form of games, videos, HTML, quizzes and other content. E-learning is also suitable for organizations that need to provide a simulated environment for learners performing high-risk tasks.

Mobile learning: Mobile learning, although a relatively new training delivery method, is increasingly offered by leading organizations due to the host of benefits it offers, including the ability to deliver training anytime, anywhere and on any device and in the form of microlearning, short how-to videos, social learning and other engaging formats. While best suited to the needs of the on-the-go or field workforce, mobile learning is also popular in offices. In some cases, the nature of the industry (e.g., oil and mining) involves work at locations with no internet connection too, making an offline mobile learning app or platform the go-to solution.

Blended learning: With blended learning, organizations can leverage a combination of approaches, ensuring that every learner retains information. A blended learning approach is perfect for organizations with diverse training requirements and complex learning objectives.

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