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DEVELOPMENT OF COUNSELORS' EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN GUANGXI PRIVATE COLLEGES

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the current status and challenges faced by student affairs counselors in private colleges in Guangxi, with a focus on enhancing their educational leadership. Drawing from theoretical frameworks including educational management theory and leadership development theory, the paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of the existing strengths and weaknesses of these counselors. These include their communication skills, organizational abilities, and professional competence. The paper also identifies external environmental opportunities and challenges, such as national policy support and the impact of new media. To improve the effectiveness of counselors' educational leadership, the paper suggests measures including refining training mechanisms, optimizing incentive systems, and fostering a positive campus culture. The findings of this paper indicate that strengthening counselors' leadership capabilities can significantly contribute to students' holistic development and the overall reputation and sustainable growth of private colleges in Guangxi.

Keywords: Private Collage, Counselor, Educational Leadership

Introduction

Private Colleges in Guangxi, as vital components of regional higher education, have played an irreplaceable role in driving local socioeconomic development and cultivating applied talents. In recent years, with the implementation of Guangxi's 14th Five Year Plan for Education Development, these institutions have assumed more comprehensive missions to address the needs of national and stakeholder stakeholders, aiming to achieve sustainable development (Liang Juan, 2024). In this context, enhancing the leadership capabilities of student affairs counselors becomes particularly crucial, as they serve as key figures in student management and ideological education. As direct supervisors and educators of students, the strength of their educational leadership directly impacts student growth and development, as well as the quality of education and management efficiency of the institution (López, A. J., & Slegers, P. J. C, 2025) .

As educational environments continue to evolve, counselors face growing challenges. They must not only demonstrate excellent communication and coordination skills but also achieve breakthroughs in strategic planning, organizational management, and innovation capabilities to better guide students' holistic development and support schools in achieving phased strategic goals (Li Wenwen&Zhang Ming, 2024). Meanwhile, the unique characteristics of students at private colleges require counselors to employ scientific goal setting and effective management strategies to help them overcome issues like lack of self discipline, thereby improving learning quality (Zhang Jialiang, 2020). In addition, with the



widespread use of new media, students' channels for obtaining information have become more diversified and their ideas and concepts have become more complex, posing new challenges to counselors' ideological and political education work (Ma Bingbing, 2019).

Addressing these specific issues, fostering stronger educational leadership among counselors within Guangxi's private higher education sector is critical not only for the institutional competitiveness and student retention rates of these universities but also for aligning with national goals to modernize pedagogical approaches. This article seeks to identify actionable pathways for leadership development. The ultimate goal is to offer evidence-based recommendations that directly contribute to both student well being and institutional resilience. To this end, this paper argues that targeted interventions such as implementing mentorship programs, reforming performance appraisal systems to reward leadership qualities, and fostering a culture of collaborative professionalism are essential. By equipping counselors with these tools and support, they can more adeptly guide students, which in turn is expected to enhance graduate employability and strengthen the university's positive role in the regional social and economic fabric.

The current situation of educational leadership of counselors in private colleges in Guangxi

Current advantages

Counselors at private colleges in Guangxi demonstrate notable strengths in educational leadership. Many of them exhibit strong communication and coordination skills, which allow them to engage effectively with students, parents, and faculty members. For example, by organizing regular symposiums and offering one on one consultations, these counselors are able to stay closely attuned to students' evolving perspectives and academic challenges. This ongoing connection helps them provide timely, personalized guidance and support (He Tao & Zhang Lin, 2024). Additionally, some counselors demonstrate exceptional organizational capabilities, successfully planning and implementing diverse campus cultural activities to enhance students' sense of collective belonging and cohesion (Chen Chunfeng, 2023). These competencies not only boost counselors' personal influence but also lay a solid foundation for the smooth operation of the university's educational management system.

Current deficiencies

Despite existing advantages, counselors at private colleges in Guangxi still face multiple shortcomings in educational leadership. First, uneven professional competence remains a prominent issue. Due to insufficient systematic knowledge in pedagogy, psychology, and related fields, some counselors struggle to handle complex student issues effectively (Tao Cheng, 2023). Second, an incomplete leadership training system hinders capacity building. Currently, many colleges lack scientifically structured training mechanisms, with existing programs remaining theoretical and lacking practical relevance to meet counselors' actual needs (Yang Denglu, 2024). Additionally, some counselors lack awareness of their career development and clear professional planning, which further impedes the enhancement of their educational leadership capabilities.

External environmental opportunities and challenges

The external environment for counselor education leadership in Guangxi's private colleges institutions presents both opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, recent national policies supporting private colleges have provided institutional safeguards for counselor team development and capacity enhancement (Ma Bingbing, 2019). For instance, the "Several Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political



Theory Courses in Schools in the New Era" explicitly requires strengthening counselor teams, creating more development opportunities. However, the advent of new media has posed significant challenges to counselors' work. With the widespread use of social media and online platforms (Avolio, B. J., & Walumbwa, F. O, 2023) , students now access information through diversified channels and develop increasingly complex ideologies, making traditional ideological education models inadequate for modern demands (Mei Chen & Jiaojiao Li, 2021). Additionally, the expansion of university enrollment has led to imbalanced student to faculty ratios, increasing counselors' workload and further complicating their efforts in conducting ideological education.

Theoretical basis for the improvement of counselors' educational leadership

Educational management theory

Educational management theory (T Bush,2002) provides crucial theoretical support for enhancing counselors' educational leadership. The Moral Leadership Theory emphasizes how leaders influence followers through their ethical conduct and behavior to achieve organizational goals (Tao Cheng, 2023). This theory posits that moral actions not only strengthen a leader's authority but also motivate followers to actively participate in organizational activities. For counselors at private colleges in Guangxi, the guiding role of Moral Leadership Theory manifests in multiple dimensions. Firstly, as direct supervisors and mentors of students, counselors exert subtle yet profound influence through their ethical behavior. By updating educational philosophies, cultivating loyal followers, and establishing norms, private colleges can effectively enhance counselors' ethical leadership and better fulfill their educational management responsibilities (Tao Cheng, 2023). Second, the theory moves beyond abstract concepts by highlighting the practical two way relationship between leaders and followers. For counselors, this translates into adopting proactive strategies such as conducting regular, informal check ins or utilizing collaborative goal setting sessions with students. These practices go beyond superficial outreach; they are deliberate methods to build credibility and make students feel valued within the campus community. The resulting trust transforms routine interaction, such as academic advising or personal crisis management, into opportunities for deeper mentorship, thereby authentically reinforcing the counselor's leadership role through everyday actions.

Leadership development theory

Leadership development theory (Lipscombe et al., 2025) offers a robust framework for addressing the specific educational leadership challenges faced by counselors in Guangxi's private universities. Moving beyond a generic skill building model, this theory conceptualizes leadership growth as a dynamic process rooted in continuous experiential learning and critical reflection (Chen Chunfeng, 2023). This perspective is particularly relevant for counselors, as their efficacy depends on adaptable competencies such as learning agility, innovative problem solving, and personal influence, all of which are developed through practice rather than theory alone. For instance, within the counselor leadership model, learning is not merely a skill but an integrated capability fueled by motivation and creative perseverance (Chen Chunfeng, 2023). In an information saturated age, this translates to a necessity for lifelong learning; counselors must perpetually refine their expertise to offer relevant and meaningful student support. Furthermore, the theory's principle of servant leadership redefines the counselor's role. It posits that leadership authority is derived not from position, but from a commitment to



prioritizing student needs and facilitating their development through attentive service (Chen Chunfeng, 2023; Yang Dong, 2019). This student centered approach necessitates institutional support. Private universities in Guangxi must therefore actively cultivate this development by implementing coherent management structures and dedicated training programs designed to foster an environment where counselor leadership can flourish. In summary, by integrating the developmental process, core competencies, and service oriented ethos outlined by leadership development theory, private colleges in Guangxi can formulate a targeted and effective strategy for empowering their counselors as educational leaders.

The elements influencing the educational leadership of counselors in private colleges in Guangxi

School policy

School policies play a crucial role in shaping counselors' educational leadership, especially for the assessment and promotion systems, which profoundly influence their development. As an important tool for evaluating counselors' performance, the scientific and rational nature of the assessment system directly determines their career track and motivation. For example, some universities' evaluation frameworks overemphasize quantitative indicators while neglecting the intangible contributions of counselors in ideological and political education and student psychological counseling, hindering the full realization of counselors' educational leadership (Li Wenwen & Zhang Ming, 2024). Furthermore, the transparency and fairness of promotion systems are equally important. Ambiguous career development paths or human intervention in the promotion process can weaken counselors' professional identity and motivation, thereby hindering the development of their educational leadership (Yang Denglu, 2024). Existing policy documents indicate that many universities lack dedicated career development policies for counselors, resulting in a lack of clear goals and guidance for their career planning, limiting their potential for educational leadership (Yang Dong, 2019).

Training system

A training system is a crucial foundation for enhancing counselors' educational leadership. However, the current training system in Guangxi's private universities still suffers from numerous shortcomings. First, the training content is insufficiently targeted, failing to fully meet the practical needs of counselors and the new characteristics of student management in the new era. For example, some private colleges only focused on traditional ideological and political education theory, with insufficient attention to emerging areas such as new media technology and mental health education. This makes it difficult for counselors to deal with the complex needs of handling student affairs (He Tao & Zhang Lin, 2024). And some private colleges also rely on classroom lectures and centralized learning, its lack of interactivity and practicality, which reduces counselors' willingness to participate (Chen Chunfeng, 2023). To improve this situation, private colleges should actively explore diversified training models, such as case studies and scenario simulations, to enhance the effectiveness and appeal of training and further strengthen counselors' educational leadership.

Self oriented

A counselor's professional competence is the core driving force behind enhancing educational leadership. Both professional knowledge and personal charisma are essential. A counselor's professional knowledge encompasses not only ideological and political education theory but also multiple disciplines, including psychology, education, and management. A solid foundation of professional knowledge enables them to effectively address students' academic, personal, and ideological challenges, it can enhance their authority and influence



among students (Tao Cheng, 2023). Personal charisma is also a crucial component of educational leadership, counselors with strong moral character, a strong sense of responsibility, and a spirit of innovation are more likely to earn students' trust and support, thereby fostering healthy and positive teacher student relationships (Yang Dong, 2019). Counselors should continuously enhance their abilities through activities such as participating in academic conferences and reading professional literature, focusing on moral cultivation and setting an example to comprehensively enhance their educational leadership.

Strategies to improve counselor education leadership

Improve the training mechanism

Improving the training mechanism is essential to effectively enhance the educational leadership capabilities of counselors in private colleges and universities in Guangxi. First, developing targeted training programs stands as a core measure to elevate counselors' professional competence. colleges should design systematic curriculum systems covering ideological and political education, mental health guidance, and career planning, while incorporating modern labor education requirements by integrating exemplary models like model workers and master craftsmen into general education courses (He & Zhang, 2024). Second, inviting experts to teach can significantly boost the authority and effectiveness of training. By engaging labor role models, national level master craftsmen, and education management scholars as adjunct instructors, counselors can not only gain practical experience but also acquire cutting edge theoretical knowledge and methodological skills (Chen Chunfeng, 2023). Additionally, strengthening online to offline interactive learning platforms is essential. As educators closest to students, counselors should leverage modern information technology to create diverse content that resonates with young learners. Initiatives like "Unity of Knowledge and Action" forums or "Face to Face with National Level Master Craftsmen" lectures could reinforce Marxist labor values education (He & Zhang, 2024).

Optimize the incentive mechanism

Optimizing incentive mechanisms serves as a vital approach to motivate counselors in enhancing their educational leadership capabilities. The combination of material and spiritual incentives can comprehensively address counselors' career development needs. On one hand, schools can establish special reward funds to provide financial recognition for counselors demonstrating outstanding performance in ideological education and student management, thereby affirming their achievements and boosting professional identity (Li Wenwen&Zhang Ming, 2024). Spiritual motivation is also important. Establishing recognition systems such as "Outstanding Counselors" and "Model Teachers" can foster a positive atmosphere for learning from role models and further enhance counselors' sense of professional honor and responsibility (Yang Denglu, 2024). Moreover, improving the performance appraisal system is key to enhancing the effectiveness of incentives. Schools should develop scientific appraisal standards that incorporate leadership, student satisfaction, and scientific research achievements, ensuring objective and fair assessments and providing clear guidance for counselors' professional development (Li Wenwen& Zhang Ming, 2024).

Create a good campus cultural atmosphere

Private collages can significantly enhance counselors' educational leadership by fostering a positive campus culture. First, organizing diverse cultural activities can effectively strengthen counselors' sense of belonging and responsibility. Such as regularly holding events like the "Science and Technology Innovation Culture Festival" and the "Labor Spirit Month" not only leverage online and offline interactions and integrate them more deeply into students' daily



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lives, promoting professional ethics while also helping counselors improve their organizational skills through practical experience (He & Zhang, 2024). Second, enhancing class culture proves crucial. Themed class meetings and group activities help students develop sound values and life perspectives while providing platforms for counselors to demonstrate leadership (Li Zhang, 2021). Finally, colleges should prioritize building harmonious interpersonal networks by strengthening teacher student communication, fostering mutual understanding and trust creating ideal conditions for counselors to fulfill their duties. This vibrant campus culture not only elevates counselors' professional competence but also supports the sustainable development of their educational leadership (Li Zhang, 2021).

Enhance the positive impact of counselor education leadership

The benefits to students' development

Enhancing counselors' educational leadership holds profound significance for students' academic, ideological, and comprehensive development (Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P, 2024) . Academically, as key guides in students' learning journey, counselors can help students clarify academic goals and develop scientific study plans, thereby improving learning efficiency and grades (He & Zhang, 2024). Ideologically, through role modeling and subtle influence, counselors impart correct values and social responsibility to students, fostering their moral cultivation. For instance, research on peer education models shows that counselors leverage social learning functions and reference group effects to effectively enhance students' leadership skills and self management abilities, strengthening their ideological awareness (Xiao Kunyao et al., 2020). Additionally, in comprehensive development, counselors' educational leadership promotes holistic growth. By organizing diverse practical activities and campus cultural festivals, counselors not only cultivate students' innovative thinking and teamwork spirit but also reinforce their work ethic and social responsibility, laying a solid foundation for their future success (He & Zhang, 2024).

The effect on the reputation of the school

Enhancing counselors' educational leadership significantly boosts institutional reputation (Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P, 2024) . First, in terms of teaching quality, as key components of higher education administration, improved educational leadership directly optimizes instructional outcomes. Counselors' participation in curriculum development and learning platform construction can support teachers in their teaching activities better, to improving the overall quality of school management (Li Wenwen & Zhang Ming, 2024). Secondly, in terms of student management, the improvement of counselors' leadership helps create a more harmonious campus environment. By optimizing incentive mechanisms and cultivating a positive cultural atmosphere, counselors can mobilize students' enthusiasm and sense of belonging, reduce conflicts in student management, and improve school governance (Zhang Jialiang, 2020). Finally, in terms of social evaluation, the improvement of counselors' leadership enhances the school's external influence. On the one hand, counselors guide students' all round development with a goal oriented approach, cultivating outstanding talents for society; on the other hand, counselors' professional knowledge and career development also highlight the school's unique educational advantages, winning recognition and praise from all sectors of society (Li Wenwen & Zhang Ming, 2024).



Conclusion

This paper discussed the current status of counselor educational leadership in private universities in Guangxi, exploring its theoretical foundations, influencing factors, and practical strategies. It also examines the feasibility and effectiveness of improving counselor educational leadership. The study indicates that enhancing counselor leadership not only significantly promotes students' all round development but is also a key factor in enhancing the reputation of institutions (Liang Juan, 2024; Tao Cheng, 2023). With the support of current education policies, private universities in Guangxi should seize the opportunity to improve training mechanisms, optimize incentive mechanisms, cultivate a positive campus culture, and comprehensively enhance counselor educational leadership (Li Wenwen & Zhang Ming, 2024).

However, this study has certain limitations. For instance, the analysis of some external environmental factors remains insufficient. Future research could further explore the specific impacts of new media technologies on counselors' leadership capabilities. Additionally, more empirical studies are needed to support pathways for enhancing counselors' professional competencies. It is hoped that this paper can provide theoretical references and practical guidance for improving educational leadership among counselors in Guangxi's private colleges. We also anticipate more scholars to focus on this field, collectively advancing the development of China's higher education (Liang Juan, 2024; Tao Cheng, 2023; Li Wenwen & Zhang Ming, 2024).

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