

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN CHONGQING, CHINA*

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were 1) to examine the five dimensions of leadership among private school administrators in Chongqing, China, 2) to develop a comprehensive multi-dimensional leadership model, and 3) to evaluate the feasibility and practical application of the model. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. The conceptual framework was adapted from the leadership model proposed by Campbell and Sammie. The target group comprised 30 private school administrators in Chongqing. The research was conducted in 3 steps as follows: Step 1: Studying five dimensions of leadership for school administrators. Step 2: Creating a multi-dimensional leadership model. Step 3: Evaluating the feasibility and utilization of the multi-dimensional leadership model. Data were collected using a questionnaire and in-depth interviews, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

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The research results revealed that 1) the multi-dimensional leadership of school administrators consisted of five aspects: having a vision, personnel participation, building relationships with personnel, coaching and monitoring and the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the multi-dimensional leadership of school administrators. 2) The multi-dimensional leadership model of school administrators was appropriate and accurate, consisted of 5 aspects: having a vision with 10 items, personnel participation with 7 items, building relationships with personnel with 10 items, coaching with 12 items, and monitoring with 9 items, totally 48 items. 3) The results of the evaluation of the feasibility and utilization of the multi-dimensional leadership model of school administrators indicated that the feasibility was at a high level. When considering individual aspects in descending order of means as follows: having the vision, building relationships with personnel, having personnel participation, coaching, and monitoring.

Keywords: Multi-dimensional leadership, School administrators, Private schools in Chongqing

Introduction

China's private education sector has grown significantly in the past two decades, responding to increased demand for diverse educational opportunities, competition for quality, and internationalization pressures (Ozturgut, 2011; Wu et al., 2023). In Chongqing—one of China's four municipalities directly under the central government—the expansion of private schools is particularly notable due to the city's rapid urbanization, rising middle-class population, and strategic role in the Chengdu–Chongqing Economic Circle (HKTDC Research, 2022). These dynamics place new demands on administrators, who must not only ensure compliance with government regulations but also provide innovative, student-centered leadership to sustain competitiveness and legitimacy.

Leadership in private schools requires a multi-dimensional approach. Traditional models of leadership, such as transformational or transactional styles, often emphasize singular aspects of leadership—either inspiration or managerial control (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, administrators in Chinese private schools face multifaceted challenges: they must act as visionaries (aligning institutional goals with national education policies), managers (ensuring compliance with strict Ministry of Education and local government regulations), and cultural leaders (balancing community expectations, Confucian values, and market needs). Research on Chinese higher education governance highlights that administrators often overemphasize routine managerial duties at the expense of strategic and visionary functions (Ruan et al., 2024). This imbalance limits their ability to adapt to policy changes and stakeholder expectations.

Moreover, the regulatory environment for private schools has become more stringent with the implementation of the 2021 *Implementing Regulations for the Promotion of Private Education Law*, which requires clearer governance structures, enhanced accountability, and improved quality assurance mechanisms (China Justice Observer, 2021). Administrators must therefore demonstrate multidimensional leadership that integrates compliance management, educational innovation, and stakeholder engagement to thrive under these conditions.

A multi-dimensional leadership model—incorporating visionary leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, and moral-paternalistic leadership—offers a comprehensive framework for private school administrators in Chongqing. Visionary leadership emphasizes inspiring shared goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2017), instructional leadership ensures teaching quality (Hallinger, 2003), distributed leadership enhances collaborative decision-making (Spillane, 2006), and paternalistic leadership reflects the cultural realities of Chinese organizational behavior (Farh & Cheng, 2000). Together, these dimensions

reflect both global educational leadership theory and local Chinese cultural and governance contexts.

Developing such a model is important not only for theoretical advancement but also for practice. It will provide private school administrators in Chongqing with a context-sensitive tool to guide leadership development, inform professional training, and enhance institutional performance. Ultimately, the study contributes to improving educational quality, sustaining institutional competitiveness, and supporting national goals for building a “strong education nation” (*qiang jiaoyu guo*) by 2035 (State Council of China, 2025).

Objectives

1. To identify the key dimensions of leadership relevant to private school administrators in Chongqing, China.
2. To develop a multi-dimensional leadership model for private school administrators in Chongqing, China.
3. To assess the feasibility and practical application of the developed multi-dimensional leadership model.

Literature Review

The development of effective leadership models in educational settings has become increasingly vital in the 21st century, particularly in the context of rapid societal change, globalization, and educational reform. Leadership in schools is no longer confined to administrative authority; rather, it encompasses a broad spectrum of competencies and behaviors that influence the school’s direction, culture, and performance. This literature review synthesizes major theories, conceptual frameworks, and empirical studies relevant to five key dimensions of educational leadership: visionary leadership, participative leadership, relationship-building, coaching leadership, and monitoring or

evaluation-based leadership. These five dimensions form the foundation for developing a comprehensive multi-dimensional leadership model tailored to private school administrators in Chongqing, China.

Visionary Leadership Visionary leadership has long been recognized as a cornerstone of effective educational administration. Nanus (1992) defined visionary leaders as those who create and articulate a compelling vision of the future that guides strategic decision-making and inspires others to follow. According to Yukl and Lepsinger (2004), visionary leaders anticipate trends, set long-term goals, and motivate organizational members by aligning their values with institutional objectives. This type of leadership is especially relevant in private educational institutions, where autonomy and competition demand proactive planning and innovation. Research by Taylor and Machado (2010) emphasizes that visionary leadership is critical for initiating change, building institutional identity, and responding to stakeholder expectations in complex educational environments. Empirical studies, such as those by Colette M. Taylor (2013) and Kamkrit Phromchin (2017), confirm that leaders who demonstrate strong visionary skills tend to drive organizational efficiency and foster commitment among staff. In the context of Chongqing's private schools, visionary leadership is essential for navigating educational reforms and digital transformation. As such, it forms the foundational pillar of the proposed multi-dimensional model.

Participative Leadership The dimension of participative leadership focuses on shared decision-making, collaborative problem-solving, and inclusive governance. Rooted in democratic leadership theory (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939), participative leadership fosters a sense of ownership among staff, enhances morale, and improves the quality of decisions through collective intelligence. According to Robbins and Judge (2017), leaders who involve team members in planning and decision-making build trust, promote professional growth, and reduce resistance to change. Educational research, including work by Siriporn Saleewong (2015) and Wiedemann & Femers (1993),

highlights the positive impact of participatory management on organizational climate and effectiveness. School administrators who practice participatory leadership not only empower teachers but also enhance communication and collaboration. In private schools, where stakeholder engagement and accountability are highly valued, participative leadership is crucial for building community trust and achieving sustainable development.

Building Relationships with Personnel Interpersonal relationships are at the heart of educational leadership. Goleman (1998) introduced the concept of emotional intelligence, suggesting that self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management are key traits of effective leaders. Fullan (2003) emphasized the importance of building relational trust and fostering a collegial culture to support continuous improvement. Leaders who demonstrate warmth, fairness, and consistency in their relationships can influence motivation, reduce turnover, and enhance organizational commitment. Relationship-oriented leadership is particularly important in private school settings, where cohesion among staff and between stakeholders can significantly affect institutional stability. According to Bird (2013) and Kanya Sankijkosol (2015), global leaders must possess strong interpersonal skills and cultural sensitivity to foster inclusivity and collaboration. This dimension includes behaviors such as open communication, conflict resolution, and team-building, which are essential for nurturing a positive school climate.

Coaching and Mentoring The coaching dimension of leadership focuses on the professional development of personnel through mentoring, feedback, and skill enhancement. According to Leithwood and Riehl (2005), effective educational leaders act as instructional coaches, guiding teachers through pedagogical innovation and reflective practices. Passmore (2016) argues that coaching is not merely a supervisory task but a developmental strategy that promotes lifelong learning and empowers staff to achieve their potential. Empirical studies by Stebbins (2012) and Aphorn Phuwittayaphan (2019) confirm

that coaching enhances staff competence, fosters trust, and leads to improved student outcomes. Coaching leadership also contributes to succession planning by nurturing future leaders within the organization. In Chongqing's private schools, where teacher retention and quality assurance are major concerns, coaching leadership can serve as a tool for continuous improvement and institutional capacity building.

Monitoring and Evaluation-Based Leadership Monitoring is the dimension that ensures alignment between goals and performance through data collection, feedback, and accountability systems. According to Daft (2015) and Wilayalai (2014), monitoring allows school leaders to track progress, identify challenges, and make informed decisions. It involves both formative and summative assessment, as well as the application of performance indicators such as KPIs. Leadership research emphasizes that effective monitoring practices contribute to transparency, efficiency, and improvement. The works of Kotteva Mojsovski (2015) and Witthaya Kirksuklavanich (2014) show that systematic evaluation, when conducted ethically and constructively, supports evidence-based leadership and policy implementation. In rapidly evolving educational landscapes, such as in Chongqing, the ability to monitor, analyze, and respond to feedback is critical for adaptive leadership. Theoretical Foundations: The proposed multi-dimensional leadership model draws from several foundational theories in leadership studies. Transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1990) provides a broad framework for understanding how leaders inspire and mobilize others toward shared goals. Strategic leadership (Davies & Davies, 2005) emphasizes goal setting, planning, and environmental scanning, while distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006) advocates for shared leadership practices across organizational levels. These theories support the integration of the five leadership dimensions into a coherent and dynamic model. Moreover, the model is designed to be adaptable to the unique context of private education in China,

considering cultural, economic, and policy-related factors. It not only reflects international best practices but also responds to local demands for effective and accountable school leadership.

Related research

A variety of research studies have investigated leadership frameworks in educational contexts, particularly focusing on the development of models that support effective school administration. These studies have contributed significantly to the formation of the five-dimensional model of leadership adopted in this research.

1. Visionary Leadership: Research by Nanus (1992) emphasized the importance of visionary leadership in creating strategic direction and mobilizing institutional resources. Similarly, Colette M. Taylor (2013) found that visionary leadership was positively correlated with organizational efficiency, particularly in educational institutions. Her findings supported the idea that leaders who clearly articulate a compelling vision can enhance stakeholder commitment and guide meaningful change. The confirmatory study by Kamkrit Phromchin (2017) also revealed that vision is the highest-weighted factor among leadership attributes influencing 21st-century school effectiveness.

2. Personnel Participation: Suchart Thongma (2017) examined leadership styles of educational administrators and found that participative leadership contributed significantly to academic administration efficiency. His research outlined three major components—transformational behavior, participative management, and decision-making—which directly influence the institutional climate. Wiedemann and Femers (1993) also discussed how inclusive decision-making processes build shared ownership and improve communication between leaders and staff.

3. Building Relationships with Personnel: Bird (2013) argued that interpersonal relationships are among the most important competencies for global educational leaders. Relationship-based leadership, supported by findings

from Garrison and Bly (1997), enhances teamwork, reduces conflict, and contributes to organizational cohesion. Kanya Sankijkosol (2015) also indicated that executives with strong interpersonal and people-management skills are better equipped to lead in complex multicultural contexts.

4. Coaching Leadership: Research by Passmore (2016) and Stebbins (2012) demonstrated that job coaching significantly influences professional development and staff performance. Coaching leaders empower personnel to solve problems independently and develop career competencies, thereby creating a learning organization. Aphorn Phu Wittayaphan also emphasized that coaching should be practiced in real work contexts and adapted to suit different levels of staff.

5. Monitoring: Monitoring, as a leadership function, was thoroughly explored in studies by Kotteva Mojsovski (2015) and Witthaya Kirksuklavanich (2014), who emphasized that effective monitoring enhances transparency and allows for continuous improvement. Their research identified feedback systems, KPI setting, and performance-based evaluation as core components of leadership accountability in educational institutions. Collectively, these studies provide strong empirical support for the multi-dimensional leadership model proposed in this study. They demonstrate the relevance and practicality of integrating various leadership functions—vision, participation, relationships, coaching, and monitoring—into a cohesive framework for educational excellence.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the leadership dimensions among private school administrators. The study was conducted in three sequential phases: Phase 1: Qualitative Exploration – Aimed at identifying key leadership dimensions through

documentary analysis and expert interviews. Phase 2: Model Development – Focused on constructing a multi-dimensional leadership model and validating it through expert review. Phase 3: Model Evaluation – Employed quantitative methods to assess the feasibility and utilization of the model using survey questionnaires.

Population and Sample The target population consisted of private school administrators in Chongqing, China. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 30 participants who possessed more than 10 years of experience in school administration and were currently holding executive positions. This ensured that the participants had sufficient expertise and contextual knowledge relevant to the study objectives.

Research Instruments

Three primary instruments were used: **Document Analysis Framework:** To extract leadership dimensions and indicators from existing literature and research reports. **Semi-Structured Interview Guide:** Designed with 34 open-ended questions aligned with the five leadership dimensions: vision, participation, relationship building, coaching, and monitoring. **Questionnaire:** Developed to measure the feasibility and utilization of the proposed leadership model, comprising 48 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Instrument Validation **Content Validity:** Five educational administration experts reviewed the questionnaire to assess content validity using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). Items scoring below 0.50 were eliminated, resulting in a final set of 48 valid items. **Model Appropriateness:** A focus group of 10 experts evaluated the draft model for language clarity, alignment with theoretical constructs, and practical applicability.

Data Collection Procedures **Documentary Research and Expert Interviews:** Data were gathered through document reviews and interviews with five qualified experts from academia and school leadership. **Model Drafting and Expert Validation:** Insights from Phase 1 were synthesized into a draft model, which was

refined based on expert feedback. Questionnaire Distribution: The validated questionnaire was distributed to 30 school administrators. Participants were asked to evaluate each leadership dimension for both feasibility and utilization.

Data Analysis Qualitative Data: Thematic content analysis was used to synthesize findings from documents and interview transcripts. Quantitative Data: Descriptive statistics, including means (\bar{x}) and standard deviations (SD), were used to evaluate the feasibility and utilization of each leadership dimension. All analyses were conducted using statistical software, and results were interpreted in alignment with the study objectives.

Result

The results of this study are presented in accordance with the three key research phases: (1) Identification of leadership dimensions, (2) Development and validation of the leadership model, and (3) Evaluation of feasibility and utilization of the model by private school administrators in Chongqing, China.

Phase 1: Identification of Leadership Dimensions

A comprehensive review of theoretical literature, relevant research, and in-depth interviews with five educational experts resulted in the identification of five core dimensions of leadership applicable to private school administration:

Having a Vision

Personnel Participation

Building Relationships with Personnel

Coaching

Monitoring

From this phase, 23 initial indicators were identified and subsequently used to draft the first version of the leadership model.

Phase 2: Development and Validation of the Model

The initial version of the model contained 51 indicators. After conducting an Index of Item–Objective Congruence (IOC) analysis with five experts, three indicators were removed for scoring below the 0.50 threshold. The remaining 48 indicators were:

Vision: 10 indicators

Participation: 7 indicators

Relationships: 10 indicators

Coaching: 12 indicators

Monitoring: 9 indicators

The refined model was presented to a panel of 10 experts in a focus group discussion, where recommendations were provided to improve clarity and appropriateness. As a result, the finalized model was deemed suitable for practical application.

Phase 3: Feasibility and Utilization Assessment

A total of 30 private school administrators participated in evaluating the leadership model. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the feasibility and utilization levels of the five dimensions. Results are as follows:

Leadership Dimension	Feasibility		Utilization	
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
1. Having a Vision	4.49	0.38	4.50	0.53
2. Personnel Participation	4.48	0.42	4.47	0.60
3. Building Relationships with Staff	4.48	0.40	4.47	0.56
4. Coaching	4.46	0.40	4.42	0.52
5. Monitoring	4.40	0.48	4.38	0.59
Overall	4.46	0.36	4.45	0.56

All five dimensions received high mean scores for both feasibility and utilization, confirming the model’s practical applicability. The “Having a Vision”

dimension received the highest scores in both categories, highlighting its perceived central role in leadership effectiveness. While all dimensions were evaluated positively, Monitoring showed slightly lower averages, suggesting an area for future leadership development initiatives.

Discussion

The development of a Multi-Dimensional Leadership Model for private school administrators in Chongqing, China, reveals significant insights into the essential leadership competencies required to meet the growing complexities of school management. The research findings affirm that the five identified dimensions—Having a Vision, Personnel Participation, Building Relationships with Personnel, Coaching, and Monitoring—are all crucial to effective leadership in private school settings. These dimensions align with global educational leadership paradigms and confirm the relevance of integrated leadership frameworks in localized Chinese contexts. The dimension of Having a Vision emerged as the highest-rated in both feasibility and utilization. This confirms the centrality of visionary leadership in steering institutional direction and fostering collective commitment toward long-term goals. Nanus (1992) and Yukl (2006) both emphasize that visionary leaders are capable of anticipating change, articulating clear direction, and mobilizing followers through strategic foresight. In the context of Chongqing's private schools, where educational institutions face intense competition, technological disruption, and rising parental expectations, visionary leadership becomes not merely desirable but essential. School administrators who can synthesize contextual knowledge with future-oriented thinking are better equipped to navigate institutional challenges and initiate transformative practices. The second dimension, Building Relationships with Personnel, was also highly rated, reflecting the importance of interpersonal competence in leadership. As Goleman (1995) noted, emotional intelligence and

relational trust are foundational to organizational cohesion. The findings demonstrate that school leaders who invest in fostering trust, mutual respect, and professional rapport with staff are more likely to cultivate a collaborative and motivated school environment. This is consistent with Bird's (2013) view that leadership effectiveness is directly tied to the ability to manage human dynamics and build authentic interpersonal relationships. The dimension of Personnel Participation underscores the participatory approach in decision-making, problem-solving, and institutional development. Research by Robbins (2003) and Cohen & Uphoff (1980) supports the assertion that inclusion fosters a sense of ownership, enhances employee morale, and leads to higher institutional performance. In this study, school administrators who encouraged inclusive planning, empowered staff voice, and leveraged collective wisdom were perceived as more effective. The research findings validate the idea that participatory leadership promotes transparency, shared accountability, and innovation at the school level. Coaching, as the fourth dimension, emphasizes professional support and capacity building. Leaders who act as coaches rather than mere supervisors enable staff to grow professionally and contribute meaningfully to the school's mission. This approach aligns with contemporary leadership theories such as transformational leadership (Bass, 1990), which highlights individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation as key behaviors. The data in this study indicate that coaching promotes a learning-centered culture, continuous improvement, and organizational adaptability—factors critical in maintaining relevance in an ever-changing educational landscape. Lastly, Monitoring represents the accountability and evaluation function of school leadership. This dimension includes performance assessment, data-informed decision-making, and continuous improvement cycles. Monitoring was rated slightly lower than the other dimensions, suggesting that while it is recognized as important, its implementation may face challenges such as time constraints, lack of technical expertise, or cultural reluctance toward evaluation.

Nevertheless, the findings reinforce Wilayalai's (2014) notion that structured monitoring enhances transparency, identifies gaps, and informs policy refinement—thus supporting institutional effectiveness. The coherence between feasibility and utilization across all five dimensions reflects the model's practical applicability and conceptual soundness. This consistency implies that the model is not only theoretically well-founded but also resonates with real-world leadership experiences and expectations in Chongqing's private school context. Moreover, the model's alignment with established frameworks—such as Campbell and Samiec's (2000) leadership dimensions and the Five Dimensions of Leadership by Evans (2017)—demonstrates its theoretical robustness.

Importantly, the study contributes to the localization of educational leadership theory in the Chinese context. While much leadership research is rooted in Western paradigms, this study grounds those principles in the realities of Chinese private education, where Confucian values, centralized policy expectations, and market-driven operations converge. The model thus serves as both a theoretical contribution and a practical tool for leadership development programs, performance assessment, and strategic school management in China and potentially beyond.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Practice

1.1 Adoption of the Multi-Dimensional Leadership Model in Leadership Development Programs Educational authorities and private school organizations should incorporate the proposed leadership model—comprising five key dimensions: having a vision, personnel participation, building relationships, coaching, and monitoring—into leadership training programs. The model provides a holistic framework to guide current and future school administrators in enhancing their leadership competencies.

1.2 Strengthening Visionary Capacity Among School Leaders As “having a vision” was rated the highest in both feasibility and utilization, it is recommended that leadership training emphasize strategic thinking, future-oriented planning, and digital-age adaptability. Administrators should be encouraged to align their institutional vision with technological trends, stakeholder expectations, and national educational policies.

1.3 Promoting Participatory and Relational Leadership School administrators should be trained to foster inclusive and participatory practices in their institutions. Building strong relationships and engaging personnel in meaningful ways not only enhances morale but also facilitates collaborative problem-solving and shared ownership. Institutions should establish platforms for staff voice, feedback, and collaboration.

1.4 Embedding Coaching into Routine Administrative Practices Coaching should be viewed not only as a periodic intervention but as an integral part of day-to-day leadership. Administrators should receive training on mentoring techniques, feedback delivery, and professional development planning. This practice supports teacher empowerment, retention, and continuous improvement.

1.5 Enhancing Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Although monitoring was rated slightly lower than other dimensions, it remains a vital leadership function. It is recommended that private schools invest in developing robust monitoring systems that use data to inform decisions, assess progress toward strategic goals, and foster accountability. School leaders should be trained in data literacy and evidence-based evaluation techniques.

1.6 Use of the Model as a Self-Assessment and Performance Tool The 48 indicators under the five leadership dimensions can be adapted into a leadership self-assessment tool for school administrators. This can facilitate reflective practice and guide professional growth plans at the individual level, as well as inform institutional leadership evaluations at the organizational level.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Expansion to Other Geographic Regions and School Types Future studies should apply and validate the Multi-Dimensional Leadership Model across diverse contexts, including public schools and other provinces in China. A comparative analysis between urban and rural private schools could provide further insights into contextual adaptability of the model.

2.2 Longitudinal Studies to Assess Impact on Educational Outcomes To determine the long-term effectiveness of the leadership model, longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine the relationship between leadership practices and student achievement, teacher performance, institutional innovation, and organizational sustainability.

2.3 Exploration of Mediating and Moderating Variables Future research could investigate factors that influence the relationship between multi-dimensional leadership and school effectiveness. Variables such as organizational culture, policy environment, digital transformation readiness, and teacher engagement could provide deeper understanding of leadership dynamics.

2.4 Integration with Digital Leadership Frameworks With increasing digital transformation in education, future studies may consider integrating elements of digital leadership, including data-driven decision-making, online stakeholder engagement, and AI-based school administration, into the existing multi-dimensional framework.

2.5 Development of a Standardized Measurement Instrument Further research should focus on refining and standardizing the questionnaire used in this study to create a validated instrument for assessing multi-dimensional leadership across various educational levels and institutional settings.

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