

# **A MODEL FOR DEVELOPING STUDENT LEADERS THROUGH STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

Orrachat Pisuthipat  
Graduate School of Education  
Assumption University of Thailand

**Abstract** . The objectives of this study were: 1) To identify characteristics of student leaders; 2) To ascertain a taxonomy of student leader characteristics; 3) To propose a model for developing new student leaders through student activities. The research methodology was divided into 5 steps according to the objectives. The first procedure in the research design was to identify characteristics of the leader, so the researcher reviewed materials from various sources such as leadership documents, textbooks, websites, research, journals. In addition, the researcher used content analysis methods to synthesize leadership characteristics that existed in leadership theories and found out core characteristics of leaders as presented in dendrograms. The second procedure in the research design was to ascertain a taxonomy of student leader characteristics. The researcher used the core leader characteristics to create the Student Leader Characteristics Checklist and test validity through input from experts combined with using a pilot study of 30 university students at ABAC for a reliability test. Next, a survey of student leaders at universities in Thailand was conducted. The result was the development of Grounded theory of Thai University Student Leader Characteristics. The third procedure in the research design was to find the gaps between student leader characteristics and general leader characteristics. That meant the researcher had to compare the characteristics of student leaders and what ideal characteristics of the leader could potentially be. These were tabulated and grouped by frequency count. The fourth procedure in the research design proposed a model for developing new student leaders through student activities. After determining the missing characteristics of the student leaders, these were matched to student leader characteristics using student activities. If none of the activities enhanced missing characteristics, they were recommending for the new activities. The fifth procedure in the research design was to test the proposed model using expert review. The researcher used the connoisseurship model technique to evaluate the model by the judgment of experts toward the proposed model. Finally, after running through these procedures, a model was developed for new student leaders through student activities. The major findings were as follows : 1) the characteristics of the leader are divided into four dimensions : Intellectual Dimension, Social Dimension, Style Dimension and Management Dimension. 2) The student leader characteristics were in four dimensions but the most non-evident characteristics were Creativity and Critical thinking, Emotional intelligence, Vision and Work in team. 3) A proposed model for developing student leader characteristics through the student activities program in order to enhance the characteristics of the student leaders that reflected on 4 dimensions of the leader characteristics.

## **1. Introduction**

In this study, the researcher conducted descriptive research and described data and characteristics regarding leader characteristics including trait theory, behavioral theories, participative leadership, situational leadership, contingency theories, transactional leadership, transformational leadership and other leadership theories. By using content analysis techniques to synthesize the characteristics of leaders through existing research, text books, journals and paper presentations which were then presented in dendrograms.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To identify characteristics of the leaders.
2. To ascertain a taxonomy of student leader characteristics.
3. To propose a model for developing new student leaders through student activities.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study involved an integrated process in which leadership amongst students was examined and calibrated using an interactive approach.

### 2. Research Design Procedure

Research design procedure is summarized in table 1.

Table 1 Summary of research the research design procedure

Objective	Source	Data Collection (Instruments)	Data Analysis	Result
1. To identify characteristics of the leader.	Documentation, textbooks, websites, research materials, journals	Library and online database	Content Analysis	Leader characteristics presented in dendogram
2. To ascertain a taxonomy for student leader characteristics.	Results from Objective # 1	Student leader characteristics checklists and survey student leaders Sample : 260 (By hand/mail) Test Validity by experts and pilot study 40 students	To check student leader characteristics by using core characteristics of the leader.	Grounded theory of Thai University Student Leader Characteristics
3.To find out the gap between student leader characteristics and leader characteristics	Result from Objective # 1&2	-	Tabulate and group by frequency count	Missing characteristics that need to be developed.
4. To propose a model for developing new student leader through student activities	Result from Objective # 3	-	Matching student leader characteristics with student activities	A proposed model for developing new student leaders through student activities.
5. To test the model by expert judgment.	A proposed Model for developing new student leaders through student activities.	Experts	Connoisseurship model	A model for developing new student leaders through student activities.

Validity

Content Validity (Index of Item-Objective Congruency (IOC) of The checklist of student leader characteristics was validated by the experts before distribute of the sample. To ensure the quality of the checklist of student leader characteristics

The checklists have been verified regarding the content validity (IOC) by three content experts who meet the researcher's criteria as the experts who are specialized and having at least ten year experiences in the field of education, student affairs and academics and human resources and graduated at PhD level.

#### *Reliability*

The researcher conducted a pilot study using 40 university students at Assumption University of Thailand by utilization of checklists.

Furthermore, the statistical reliability of the checklist of student leader characteristics was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency for the checklist. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.8. It is the appropriate type of reliability when the checklist of student leader characteristics and falls within the range of possible answers for each item.

#### *Validate the model (Connoisseurship)*

The researcher processed the validity of the proposed model through connoisseurship. The experts who met the researcher's criteria were the experts who are specialized and having at least ten year experience in the field of education, knowledge of student affairs and academics in addition to human resources and have graduated at the PhD level. The researcher conducted meetings with experts who are specialized in the field of education, student affairs, academics and human resources as desirable qualification for experts by the researcher and the experts gave their recommendations on the proposed model.

### **3. Research findings**

#### *Objective One*

Research objective one was : "To identify the characteristics of the leaders". In order to analyze the characteristics of the leaders, the researcher synthesized the characteristics of leaders and finalized characteristics of leaders. Finally, semantic content analysis was conducted and categorized regarding the characteristics of leaders into 4 dimensions : intellectual dimension, social dimension, leading style dimension and management dimension as presented in dendrograms resulting from characteristics of student leaders.

#### *Objective Two.*

Research objective two was : "To ascertain taxonomy of student leader characteristics". All variables were measured by frequency variables for demographic data and characteristics variables in order to find out what are the characteristics of student leaders in universities in Thailand. Descriptive statistics were used to compute the frequency and percentages of the each variables. The characteristics of the leaders were divided into 4 dimensions and these results were tabulated.

#### *Objective Three*

Research objective three was : "To propose a model for developing new student leaders through student activities" as shown in figure2.

*Figure 2* A model for developing new student leader through student activities

#### **Intellectual Dimension**

Creative thinking  
Ability to cope with complexity  
Decision making  
Problem solving  
Innovation

#### **Social Dimension**

Emotional intelligence  
Maturity



### **Leading Style Dimension**

Gentleness  
Self-efficacy  
Honest

Morality and Ethical

### **Management Dimension**

Align the organization  
Vision  
Inspire a shared vision  
Work in team

## **Conclusion**

The frequency of Thai university student leader characteristics can be shown in 4 dimensions: Intellectual dimension, the top five high frequency of the variables were using logic and intuition, ability to learn, superior judgment, ability to change, and intellectual capacity, whereas, the top five low frequency of the variables were creative thinking, ability to cope with complexity, decision making, problem solving skills and innovation: These are the missing characteristics that need to be developed for student leader characteristics through student activities.

Social dimension, the top five high frequency of the variables were understanding of self, openness, extravert, inspirational communication and understanding of others; whereas, the top five low frequency of the variables were emotional intelligence, maturity, social skill, consciousness and relationship skills: These are missing characteristics that need to be developed for student leader characteristics through student activities.

Leading style dimension, the highest frequency of the variables was democratic style, whereas, the lowest frequency of the variables was exploitative autocratic: Morality/ ethical and gentleness are missing characteristics that need to be developed for student leader characteristics through student activities.

Management dimension, the top five high frequency of the variables were task, creating team values, share values and beliefs, individualized consideration and corporate culture; whereas, the top five low frequency of the variables were work in team, strategic vision, inspired a shared vision, vision and align the organization: These are missing characteristics that need to be developed for student leader characteristics through student activities.

Finally, the researcher found the gap between the preferred characteristics of the leader and the student leader characteristics: The missing characteristics or the low frequency of student leader characteristics should be developed through student activities.

The characteristics that needed to be developed are:

*Intellectual Dimension:* Creative thinking, ability to cope with complexity, decision making and problem solving skill and innovation.

*Social Dimension:* Emotional intelligence and maturity

*Leading style Dimension:* Gentleness, self-efficacy, honesty, morality and ethical and self-confidence.

*Management Dimension:* Align the organization, vision, inspired a shared vision, work in team and strategic vision.

## **4. Recommendations**

*Recommendations for future practice:*

The results of this research prompt recommendations regarding the development of student leaders through student activities in universities in Thailand.

- Student affairs, faculties and universities should pay more attention to student development and encourage students to do extracurricular activities. Universities might include extracurricular activities with the actual grading in the semester, so it is compulsory for students to register in

extracurricular courses that could enhance student's success in student development, especially on those missing characteristics of student leader characteristics.

- Student activities should be provided using quality and practical activities for student development in the dimensions of: cognitive, affective and psychomotor, and also in ethical and morality dimensions.
- Universities might coordinate with outsourcing training and development centers in order to provide student activities courses for students. Keeping student's records can also be important for tracking students' progress.
- Universities might be encouraged to be more aware of the missing characteristics found in this research and provide enough student activities accordingly to improve the intellectual dimension, social dimension, leading style dimension and management dimension.

#### *Recommendations for future research*

- Results of the study indicated that student leaders need to be developed more in different dimensions therefore, it might be a useful point for future research to find more activities to support student's learning.
- To conduct a research study on student leaders at other student leader levels that might be in other level of student leaders.
- To implement the proposed model in a case study is suggested as a sensible avenue for research.
- To build student characteristics in the 4 dimensions of intellectual dimension, social dimension, leading style dimension and management dimension in order to encourage the development of good future student leader.

#### **References**

- Adair, J. (1989). *Great Leaders*. Guildford: The Talbot Adair.
- Allinson, C.W., Armstrong, S.J. and Hayes, J. (2001). The effects of cognitive style on leader-member exchange : a study of manager-subordinate dyads. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 74, 201–220.
- Bass, B.M. and Valenzi, E.R. (1974). Contingent aspects of effective management styles. In J.G. Hunt and L.L. Larson (Editors). *Contingency Approaches to Leadership*.
- Bennis, W.G. and Goldsmith J. (2003). *Leading to lead : A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*. Basic Books.
- Blake, R.R. and Mouton, J.S. (1964). *The Managerial Grid*. Houston : Gulf.
- Bloom, B. S., Engelhart, M. D., Frost, E. J., Hill, W. H., and Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives, handbook I: Cognitive domain*. New York: David McKay.
- Bryman, A. (1992). *Charisma and Leadership in Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Cartwright, D. and Zander, A. (1968). Leadership and performance of group functions: introduction. In D. Cartwright and A.Zander(Editors). *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory, 3rd Edition*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Chickering ,A. and Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and Identity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Commission on Higher Education (2007). *Summary report of total number of the students in the higher education levels 2007*. Retrieved on September 7, 2008 from <http://www.mua.go.th>
- Gardner, H.(1993). *Frame of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z.(2002). *The Leadership Challenge (3rd Edition)* . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Northouse, P.G.(1997). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Pardey, D. (2008). Next Generation Leaders. *Strategic HR Review*, 32-36. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.