

## Innovative Empowering Leadership Guidelines for Administrators' High Performance in the Universities under Jilin Province

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the establishment of the innovative empowering leadership guidelines for administrators' high performance in the universities under Jilin Province.

This study was a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. In the first step, the purposive sampling method was selected 13 key informants, consisted of administrators, presidents and vice professors with more than 10 years' experience in Jilin Province. The second step: sample was 358 administrators and teachers, determined sample size with Krejcie and Morgan's table, and obtained by the stratified random sampling technique. The third step, the 7 key informants included deans and directors from different universities in Jilin Province by purposive sampling method. The instruments used for data collection were in-depth interview form, five-point rating scale questionnaires and focus group discussion form.

Results of research were found that: the innovative empowering leadership guidelines for administrators' high performance in the universities under Jilin Province include: (1) policy and resources support, (2) autonomy, (3) encourage teamwork, (4) participative decision making, (5) coaching, (6) enhancing the meaningfulness of work, (7) open communication, (8) professional development opportunities, (9) perceived organizational support. By implementing innovative and empowering leadership guidelines for administrators, universities were likely to enhance the overall education quality.

**Keywords:** Innovative Empowering Leadership, Guidelines, Administrators, High Performance, Universities, Jilin Province

## 1. Introduction

In today's dynamic and ever-evolving educational landscape, the role of university administrators has grown increasingly complex and multifaceted. Within the vibrant academic milieu of Jilin Province, where institutions of higher learning play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the region, the need for innovative and empowering leadership among administrators has never been more critical. As the crucible of knowledge dissemination, innovation, and societal transformation, universities in Jilin Province require effective leadership that not only steers these institutions through challenges but also empowers administrators to excel in their roles. This research embarks on a comprehensive journey to understand the essence of innovative empowering leadership and its tangible effects within the academic context of Jilin Province.

Empowering leadership has garnered significant attention as an influential leadership style that empowers teachers to take initiative, make decisions, and contribute their unique perspectives and talents. Empowering leaders create an environment where individuals feel valued, trusted, and supported, which enhances their motivation and engagement (Kong, D.T., 2020). The concept of empowering leadership has been developed from a series of theories and concepts, and a review by Cheong et al. (2019) reviews this process in detail. The concept of empowering leadership was first introduced by Manz et al. (1980). Specifically, Manz and Sims (1980) developed the concept of self-management from the perspective of social learning theory, on the basis of which Manz (1986) further constructed the theory of self-leadership, and later Manz and Sims (1989 and 1991) developed the concept of "super leadership". Super leaders are generally considered by academics to be the prototype of empowered leadership (Salam et al., 1996; Vecchio et al., 2010). In their 1996 manuscript (published in 2003), Pearce et al. expanded the traditional transactional and transformational leadership types into four leadership types: transformational, transactional, direct, and empowering, thus making "empowering leadership" stand alone as a specific type of leadership that is clearly differentiated from the other leadership types.

In the context of universities, empowering leadership is believed to positively impact faculty innovative behavior by creating an environment that encourages risk-taking, autonomy, and creativity. When teachers perceive their leaders as empowering, they are more likely to

feel empowered themselves and exhibit innovative behaviors that can positively impact the learning experience of their students.

Jilin Province is located in the northeastern part of China, sharing borders with Russia and North Korea, having an area of approximately 187,400 square kilometers (72,300 square miles). Jilin Province is home to several prestigious universities offering a wide range of academic disciplines, including Jilin University, Northeast Normal University, Yanbian University, and Changchun University of Technology etc. The existing culture within universities in Jilin Province may not be conducive to empowering leadership. A culture that values conformity and compliance over innovation and empowerment can be a significant obstacle to implementing this leadership style. Meanwhile, When administrators are given more autonomy and decision-making power, there can be ambiguity regarding their roles and responsibilities. This lack of clarity can lead to confusion and potentially hinder effective leadership. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the administrators in Jilin Province to improve their empowering leadership.

This article aimed to improve and promote the innovative empowering leadership for administrators' high performance in the universities under Jilin Province. The guidelines are likely to focus on developing innovative and empowering leadership skills among educational administrators. This can lead to improved decision-making, communication, and team management abilities. With empowering leadership guidelines in place, administrators may become more effective in their roles. They can better manage academic programs, administrative processes, and student services, leading to a more efficient university environment. Administrators with high performance are more likely to provide adequate support and resources to faculty and staff members. This can result in improved job satisfaction and motivation among university employees.

## **2. Research Purposes**

To propose the innovative empowering leadership guidelines for administrators' high performance in the universities under Jilin Province.

### **Benefit of Research**

To provide guidance for the innovative empowering leadership for administrators' high performance in the universities under Jilin Province and even in China.

### **3. Research Process**

Step 1: Exploring the variables of empowering leadership of administrators in universities under Jilin Province.

Step 2: Quantitative analysis of the factors affecting empowering leadership of administrators in universities under Jilin Province.

Step 3: Based on the results of the quantitative analysis in the second step, propose the innovative empowering leadership guidelines for administrators' high performance in universities under Jilin Province, and organize focus discussion to arrive at the final guidelines.

#### **Population and Sample**

1. 13 key information providers from universities in Jilin Province conducted in-depth interviews as key informants.

2. According to the Krejci and Morgan tables, 358 administrators and teachers were obtained by the stratified random sampling technique.

3. 7 experts, as 3 deans and 4 directors who come from different universities in Jilin Province, confirmed the innovative empowering leadership guidelines.

#### **Instruments**

Semi-structured interview form

A five-point rating scale questionnaire

Focus group outline

#### **Data analysis**

1. To extract keywords through literature review and in-depth interview by content analysis.

2. Conduct a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire results to find out the current situation and influencing factors of empowering leadership of administrators in universities under Jilin Province. Based on the results of the step, the researchers will propose preliminary guidelines for the innovative empowering leadership of administrators' high performance in universities under Jilin Province.

3. The researchers organized experts to conduct focus discussion and came up with the final guidelines for the innovative empowering leadership of administrators' high performance in universities under Jilin Province.

### **4. Conclusion and discussion**

#### **Section 1 Result of Content Analysis for Variables**

From the outline of variables from review of literature and related research, there were 9 main variables, and 55 sub-variables. Then, identified 15 relevant studies by famous scholars for analysis. Define the criteria for selecting variable in the model: select variable with a probability greater than 50% as effective elements, among 55 variables with a probability greater than 50%.

The research had prepared in-depth interview form to conduct interview from 13 key informants obtained by purposive sampling method according to a prescribed access framework, transcribed and classified the data, and then enumerated and classified the variables using Braun & Clarke's topic coding approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As 2 presidents, 2 administrators and 9 vice professors in universities.

Based on interviews with key informants, The researcher chose percentage variables that were greater than or equal to 50%, resulting in 45 variables. 9 new variables were obtained by removing the duplicate content with the literature review. Accordingly, the factors influencing empowering leadership in universities under Jilin Province newly found including 9 sub-variables. The literature review and in-depth interviews with key-informants, selected 64 effective variables, repeated comparison.

As for the content validity of the questionnaire, had sent the questionnaire to 5 research experts for verification. Consistency of project objectives (IOC) used to evaluate items in the questionnaire on a score range from +1 to -1. Revisions were made for items with scores below 0.5. On the other hand, scores higher than or equal to 0.5 points were retained. Results A total of 61 questionnaires were found as table 1.

**Table 1:** Literature review and in-depth interview variable as expert IOC selection

NO.	Variables	NO.-Variables	Variables
1	Government support	31	Consult teachers
2	Policy guidance	32	Share responsibility
3	Management philosophy	33	Build consensus
4	Clear Definition	34	Organize events or platforms
5	Decision-making framework	35	Allocate resources
6	Feedback mechanisms	36	Internal coaching programs
7	Training and development	37	Hire external coaches
8	Accountability and responsibility	38	Training for leaders

NO.	Variables	NO.-Variables	Variables
9	Digital tools	39	Promote interdisciplinary collaboration
10	Knowledge repositories	40	Connect goals with smaller goals
11	Cultural development initiatives	41	Emphasize importance
12	Recognition and reward systems	42	Emphasize the big picture of the job
13	External consultants and experts	43	Align values
14	Mentoring and coaching	44	Ensure teachers' job security
15	Training programs	45	Establish regular channels
16	Feedback platforms	46	Encourage feedback
17	Encourage Self-reward	47	Promote a heard and valued culture
18	Encourage Independent Action	48	Organize events
19	Encourage personal development support	49	Organize town hall meetings or forums
20	Encourage self-development	50	Offer workshops, seminars, and courses
21	Self-directed Decision Making	51	Provide resources
22	Provide collaborative tools	52	Provide information and support
23	Encourage cross-functional collaboration	53	Offer sabbaticals or fellowships
24	Provide team-building opportunities	54	Collaborate with external experts
25	Encourage peer mentorship	55	Provide financial support or allowances
26	Promote a culture of trust	56	Allow flexible scheduling or reduced teaching loads
27	Resolve conflicts promptly	57	Values the goals
28	Set team-based performance metrics	58	Expect help from the university

NO.	Variables	NO.-Variables	Variables
29	Work together	59	Consider best jobs to grow teachers' potential
30	Refer to teachers	60	Help teachers in trouble
31	Consult teachers	61	Give a raise

## Section 2: Result of Data Analysis for Research Objective 1.

To study the components of empowering leadership of administrators in universities under Jilin Province.

### Part I: Result of Data Analysis on Questionnaire: Demographic Information.

By analyzing the distribution and structure characteristics of 5 universities in Jilin Province, the proportion of males and females was basically the same. In terms of age, 124 people were 35-44 years old, so there were more young and middle-aged faculty in the universities. Among the positions of the respondents, 144 associate professor accounted for 40.6%, with the highest proportion, followed by 113 people with lecturer, accounting for 31.8%. The maximum number of Education Background of Master was 269 people, accounting for 75.8 %, followed by 68 people with Doctor, accounting for 19.2 %. Among the respondents, the maximum number of working experiences of more than 15 years was 185 people, accounting for 52.1 %, followed by 97 people with 10-15 years, accounting for 27.3 %. The maximum number of position of teachers was 298 people, accounting for 83.9 %, followed by 57 people with administrators, accounting for 16.1 %.

### Part II Result of Data Analysis on Questionnaire: Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Firstly, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett test were conducted.

The results of KMO test in the following figure show that the value of KMO is 0.934, which is greater than 0.6, satisfying the prerequisite requirements for factor analysis, indicating that the data can be used for factor analysis studies. The data passed the Bartlett's test of sphericity ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the data in this study is suitable for factor analysis. Meanwhile, the results of Bartlett spherical test show that the P-value of significance is 0.000, which is significant at the level, the null hypothesis is rejected, the correlation is variable, the factor analysis is effective, and the degree was suitable as table 2.

**Table 2:** The KMO test and the Bartlett's test

KMO	0.934	
Bartlett test	Approx. Chi-Square	16700.995

	df	1830
	p value	0.000

Secondly, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient value of the final questionnaire was tested. As can be seen in the table below, the dimensions of the questionnaire in this study and the total Cronbach's Alpha coefficient are all greater than 0.7, which indicates that the questionnaire has a high degree of reliability as a whole.

**Table 3:** Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient value

Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$
PRS	0.972
AUT	0.905
ET	0.931
PDM	0.901
COA	0.932
EMW	0.926
OC	0.919
PDO	0.939
POS	0.878
Total	0.949

Thirdly, the questionnaire survey data analysis results: the analysis of empowering leadership of administrators in universities under Jilin Province. The researchers analyzed the arithmetic mean and Standard Deviation, that is, the arithmetic mean, standard deviation Skewness Kurtosis and level of each variable, by comparing the derived arithmetic mean with a criterion based on Beste concept.

**Table 4:** Descriptive statistics

Items	( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D.	Sk.	Ku.	Level
PRS1	3.530	1.242	-0.434	-0.824	High
PRS2	3.450	1.344	-0.463	-0.962	Moderate
PRS3	3.540	1.324	-0.508	-0.848	High
PRS4	3.440	1.359	-0.379	-1.088	Moderate
PRS5	3.450	1.269	-0.396	-0.889	Moderate



Items	( $\bar{X}$ )	S.D.	Sk.	Ku.	Level
PRS6	3.400	1.348	-0.394	-1.063	Moderate
PRS7	3.470	1.289	-0.421	-0.851	Moderate
PRS8	3.560	1.295	-0.476	-0.872	High
PRS9	3.500	1.268	-0.480	-0.782	Moderate
PRS10	3.480	1.256	-0.466	-0.768	Moderate
PRS11	3.500	1.270	-0.394	-0.932	Moderate
PRS12	3.580	1.245	-0.487	-0.735	High
PRS13	3.540	1.304	-0.478	-0.887	High
PRS14	3.530	1.261	-0.439	-0.852	High
PRS15	3.480	1.287	-0.417	-0.893	Moderate
PRS16	3.490	1.305	-0.449	-0.931	Moderate
AUT1	3.480	1.296	-0.444	-0.894	Moderate
AUT2	3.520	1.296	-0.442	-0.954	High
AUT3	3.490	1.227	-0.395	-0.784	Moderate
AUT4	3.450	1.253	-0.410	-0.820	Moderate
AUT5	3.520	1.294	-0.396	-1.004	High
ET1	3.440	1.292	-0.349	-0.949	Moderate
ET2	3.520	1.252	-0.413	-0.858	High
ET2	3.520	1.252	-0.413	-0.858	High
ET3	3.520	1.247	-0.378	-0.919	High
ET4	3.410	1.276	-0.314	-0.930	Moderate
ET5	3.480	1.258	-0.369	-0.957	Moderate
ET6	3.480	1.305	-0.470	-0.877	Moderate
ET7	3.500	1.292	-0.464	-0.860	Moderate
PDM1	3.520	1.343	-0.422	-1.067	High
PDM2	3.480	1.341	-0.408	-1.052	Moderate
PDM3	3.450	1.336	-0.408	-1.004	Moderate
PDM4	3.440	1.329	-0.425	-0.935	Moderate
PDM5	3.520	1.281	-0.400	-0.952	High
COA1	3.530	1.298	-0.524	-0.794	High
COA2	3.470	1.283	-0.342	-0.962	Moderate
COA3	3.520	1.263	-0.490	-0.816	High
COA4	3.590	1.334	-0.470	-1.034	High

Items	( $\bar{X}$ )	S.D.	Sk.	Ku.	Level
COA5	3.490	1.311	-0.461	-0.888	Moderate
COA6	3.520	1.258	-0.422	-0.903	High
EMW1	3.520	1.322	-0.447	-0.982	High
EMW2	3.590	1.338	-0.524	-0.948	High
EMW3	3.590	1.310	-0.484	-0.943	High
EMW4	3.550	1.327	-0.469	-0.964	High
EMW5	3.550	1.262	-0.489	-0.816	High
OC1	3.460	1.306	-0.384	-0.934	Moderate
OC2	3.520	1.274	-0.406	-0.918	High
OC3	3.450	1.300	-0.359	-0.982	Moderate
OC4	3.440	1.325	-0.327	-1.095	Moderate
OC5	3.570	1.270	-0.535	-0.762	High
PDO1	3.460	1.280	-0.396	-0.871	Moderate
PDO2	3.430	1.318	-0.326	-1.057	Moderate
PDO3	3.520	1.328	-0.446	-0.988	High
PDO4	3.470	1.378	-0.445	-1.042	Moderate
PDO5	3.530	1.291	-0.473	-0.873	High
PDO6	3.420	1.274	-0.347	-0.867	Moderate
PDO7	3.520	1.261	-0.407	-0.886	High
POS1	3.540	1.278	-0.475	-0.859	High
POS2	3.480	1.335	-0.343	-1.122	Moderate
POS3	3.540	1.254	-0.416	-0.923	High
POS4	3.430	1.312	-0.395	-0.973	Moderate
POS5	3.530	1.355	-0.435	-1.078	High

From Table 4: found that overall was at high level. (mean 3.40-3.59) and the S.D value was between 1.227 and 1.378, which indicates that the acceptance of the item was relatively consistent across all researchers. The concentrated in PRS, AUT, ET, PDM, OC, and PDO, which indicates that the respondents had a low level of acceptance of the variables.

Finally, the data in this study were rotated using the maximum variance rotation method (varimax) in order to find out the correspondence between factors and study items. The factor loadings of PDM2, POS2 and POS4 are less than 0.5, so the PDM2, POS2 and POS4

items were removed, and the commonality values of the corresponding values of the remaining items are all greater than 0.4, which indicates that there is a strong correlation between the research item and the factor, and that the factors can extract information effectively. After ensuring that the factor could extract most of the information from the research item, the corresponding relationship between the factor and the research item was analysed (when the absolute value of the factor loading coefficient was greater than 0.4, it indicated that the item had a corresponding relationship with the factor).

**Table 5:** Components of empowering leadership of administrators in universities under Jilin Province

No.	Components	Nominate	variables	Factor loading
1	Component 1	PRS	16	0.797-0.837
2	Component 2	PDO	7	0.797-0.853
3	Component 3	ET	7	0.789-0.835
4	Component 4	COA	6	0.813-0.847
5	Component 5	EMW	5	0.841-0.870
6	Component 6	OC	5	0.840-0.863
7	Component 7	AUT	5	0.777-0.833
8	Component 8	PDM	4	0.813-0.844
9	Component 9	POS	3	0.837-0.871
		Total	58	

From Table 5: correlation analysis was used to investigate the correlation between PRS, AUT, ET, PDM, COA, EMW, PDO, and POS, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the correlation. Specific analyses showed that the significance of the nine correlations of PRS, AUT, ET, PDM, COA, EMW, PDO, and POS was less than 0.05, i.e., there was a positive correlation between both PRS, AUT, ET, PDM, COA, EMW, PDO, and POS.

Based on the Exploratory Factor Analysis to extract variables to key component variables by analyzing the most likely conditions (maximum likelihood) to obtain important variables, which appeared to have acquired 9 components and 58 variables of empowering leadership of administrators in universities under Jilin Province.

**Section 3:** Result of Data Analysis for Research Objective 2. To propose innovative empowering leadership guidelines for administrators' high performance in universities under Jilin Province.

The focus group was chaired by the researcher. "The innovative empowering leadership guidelines for administrators' high performance in universities under Jilin Province" 7 key informants included 3 deans and 4 directors from different Higher Education by purposive sampling for condition of the components of propose innovative empowering leadership guidelines for administrators' high performance in universities under Jilin Province. The researcher sorted out and analyzed the discussions of 7 experts, choosing percentage guidelines that were greater than or equal to 50%, a total of 44 guidelines were sorted out, divided into 9 components:

Components 1: Policy and Resources Support as Government support, Policy guidance, Management philosophy, Decision-making framework, Feedback mechanisms, Training and development, Digital tools, Cultural development initiatives, Recognition and reward systems, External consultants and experts, Mentoring and coaching, Training programs, Feedback Platforms.

Components 2: Autonomy as Encourage Self-reward, Encourage Independent Action, Encourage personal development support, Encourage self-development, Self-directed Decision Making.

Components 3: Encourage Teamwork as provide collaborative tools, Encourage cross-functional collaboration, Resolve conflicts promptly, Set team-based performance metrics.

Components 4: Participative Decision Making as Work together, Build consensus

Components 5: Coaching as organize events or platforms, Allocate resources, Internal coaching programs, Hire external coaches, Training for leaders, Promote interdisciplinary collaboration.

Components 6: Enhancing the Meaningfulness of Work as Align values, Ensure teachers' job security.

Components 7: Open Communication as Establish regular channels, Encourage feedback, Organize events;

Components 8: Professional Development Opportunities as Organize town hall meetings or forums, provide resources, provide information and support, Collaborate with external experts, Provide financial support or allowances, Offer workshops, seminars, and courses, Offer sabbaticals or fellowships, Allow flexible scheduling or reduced teaching loads

Components 9: Perceived Organizational Support as Consider best jobs to grow employees' potential, Give a raise.

## 5. Recommendation

### Recommendation for Policies Formulation

1. To foster innovative and empowering leadership among administrators. A policy direction could involve the establishment of a Leadership Development Program (LDP) for university administrators within Jilin Province. By experiential learning opportunities aimed at enhancing leadership skills, fostering innovation, and promoting collaborative decision-making. The LDP could also facilitate interactions with industry leaders and experts to expose administrators to diverse perspectives.

2. The policy could be formulated to encourage universities to review and revise the organizational structures to incorporate principles of decentralization. To promote open communication and idea sharing could encourage universities to implement digital platforms that facilitate cross-departmental and cross-functional collaboration.

3. The regular implementation of 360-degree feedback assessments, could inform professional development plans and help administrators refine their leadership approaches and administrators could benefit from exposure to external perspectives.

### Recommendation for practical application

1. Emphasizes the importance of innovative and empowering leadership in driving high performance in the context of higher education institutions in Jilin Province.

2. Critical issue in the realm of university administration: the need for effective leadership strategies that can adapt to the evolving landscape of higher education. As universities continue to face complex challenges such as technological advancements.

3. The implementation of training and development programs for university administrators. To cultivate the skills and mindset required for innovative and empowering leadership. Furthermore, workshops and seminars could be organized to foster collaboration and idea sharing among administrators, enabling them to learn from each other's experiences and insights, or professional development opportunities to motivate administrators to continue the pursuit of innovative leadership practices.

4. Innovative Empowering Leadership Guidelines for Administrators' High Performance in the Universities offers practical recommendations that can significantly enhance leadership practices within university administrations. By implementing training programs, revising

decision-making processes, promoting open communication, and recognizing exemplary leadership.

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