

# **Empirical Study on the Influence of College Student Cadres' Organizational Commitment on Leadership**

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## **Abstracts**

This study explored the impact of organizational commitment on leadership and the differential analysis of organizational commitment and leadership by different demographic variables. We constructed the measurement model and the structural equation model using the Organizational Commitment scale and the Student Leadership Practice Behavior Scale. The two scales underwent expert revision and confirmatory analysis with good reliability and validity and fit. Student cadres of 5 universities in Jilin Province, China were selected as the research objects, and electronic questionnaires were distributed for testing. A total of 986 valid questionnaires were collected. The analysis results show that the organizational commitment of student cadres in universities positively predicts leadership, with significant differences in organizational commitment and leadership in different political landscape and origin, no significant difference in different gender, significant difference in organizational commitment in grade, and no significant difference in leadership in grade. Therefore, improving the organizational commitment of university student cadres in China can improve the leadership of student cadres, so as to provide reference for university student administrators and student organization supervisors.

**Keywords:** Student Cadres; Organizational Commitment and Leadership

## **Introduction**

Leadership is a very important comprehensive quality in the management process, which is regarded as an important part of higher education in European and American countries. In the 1980s, the United States began to vigorously promote the leadership education program for college students, and other European and American countries quickly followed up. With the increasingly active and perfect development of the leadership education and cultivation of foreign college students, at the end of the 20th century, the theoretical research and practical exploration in this field gradually began in China.

As an autonomous organization of college students, the college student union plays an important role in the construction of campus culture, the expansion of quality education and promoting the all-round development of college students. The student cadre of the student union is the main force for the smooth development of college student management, and is an important link between teachers and students. To build a team of excellent political literacy, good at organization and leadership, stronger than communication and coordination of student cadres is the key to realize student self-education, self-management, self-management and self-service in colleges and universities. The improvement of student cadres' leadership is conducive to promote the all-round development of students and the improvement of their

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comprehensive quality and ability, to improve the practical efficiency of college students' education and management, and to improve the quality and level of talent training in colleges and universities (Hou Qiangqiang, 2017). It can be seen that the cultivation and promotion of student cadres' leadership is very important. However, there are many problems in the cultivation and promotion of student cadres' leadership, which are lack of pertinence and effectiveness.

The organizational commitment of student cadres reflects their recognition of the organization and their active participation in the organization, which is of great significance to enhance the cohesion and competitiveness of student grass-roots organizations. In her study, Huang Xiaofeng (2018) believed that organizational commitment positively affected work input. Therefore, strengthening the organizational commitment of organizational members can promote the increase of work input (Pang Jiao, 2013; Tang Ping et al., 2022). The higher the energy and enthusiasm invested in the organizational work, the more ability training the student cadres will get, thus promoting the leadership of student cadres. That is to say, the work input is positively related to the leadership level of college student cadres (Zhang Qian et al., 2021).

Based on the above analysis, this research focus on the organization commitment to the university student cadre leadership level, discusses the influence of college student cadre leadership mechanism, in order to enrich and perfect the existing research, provide support for the construction of college student cadre leadership education way, further enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of college students' leadership education.

## **Literature review**

### **1. Organizational commitment**

Organizational commitment was first proposed in 1960 by American sociologist Becker, who believed that organizational commitment was a psychological phenomenon that forced employees to stay in the organization as they invested more in it (1960). Meyer & Allen (1993) interpreted organizational commitment as one's sense of identity and participation in the organization. Ling Wenquan et al. (2000) believe that the organization's commitment explains the reasons and attitude of employees staying in the enterprise. Organization commitment since this concept is put forward, the scholars take different research methods to define and explore, although has not formed a unified definition, but after being put forward, scholars have research from different angles, constantly enrich the development of organizational commitment theory, and experienced the development from one-dimensional to multi-dimensional interpretation process. Buchanan (1974) initially identified organizational commitment as a one-dimensional structure, while Meyer & Allen (1993) constructed a three-dimensional model of emotional commitment, continuous commitment, and normative commitment. According to the empirical research, Ling Wenquan (2000) proposed the five-dimensional model of organizational commitment of Chinese enterprise employees, and discussed the influencing factors of organizational commitment. He believes that organizational commitment is more influenced by emotional factors such as values and morality than economic factors such as wages and welfare. In addition, Igbaria & Greenhaus (1992), Mahanta (2012), McInnis et al. (2009), Wang Yanfei (2017) and others believe that demographic variables, psychological capital, employee trust, work pressure and so on will affect the organizational commitment of employees. According to the previous

article, this paper proposes hypothesis H1: student cadre organizational commitment varies significantly between demographic variables.

## 2. Leadership

Leadership (Leadership) is an important study of management in the 20th century, originally published in Webster's 1828 English language dictionary, as a description of leadership behavior or leadership role. After nearly a century of development and improvement, the leadership theory has been very mature and has been applied in all fields and industries of society. The research on college students' leadership began in the 1970s. Relying on the relatively mature leadership theory and combined with the practical characteristics of college students, researchers began to study the leadership of college students. There are two main views about the connotation of college student leadership: (1) College student leadership is a series of characteristics or abilities that college students have or need to master (Weng Wenyan, 2007; Wen Li et al., 2011). (2) Some scholars believe that the leadership of college students is a process in which college students use their own and surrounding resources to finally realize their organizational vision and goals (Posner & Kouzes, 2008; Hou Changqiang, 2017). In view of the research on the influencing factors of leadership, Huang Hongqiang (2007) studied the leadership quality structure of college student cadres and found that gender and major factors have a significant influence on leadership. Luo Ailin (2010) also confirmed that there is a significant relationship between gender, major type, origin, personality and personality charm and leadership. Based on the literature, this paper proposes that hypothesis H2: student cadre leadership is significantly different between different demographic variables.

## 3. Relationship between organizational commitment and leadership

Research on the relationship between organizational commitment and leadership mainly focuses on the leader of the leadership behavior, leadership style of the influence of employee commitment, and for the relationship between individual organization commitment and its leadership research is still lack of direct literature support, but studies have shown that organization commitment in employee social responsibility and intermediary role between work, and organization commitment positive influence work input (huang, 2018). Pang Jiao (2013), Tang Ping et al. (2022) In the study, it is also believed that organizational commitment positively affects the work input, that is to say, the enhancement of organizational commitment can promote the improvement of work input. The higher the energy and enthusiasm invested in the organizational work, the more ability training the student cadres will get, so as to promote the leadership of student cadres. That is to say, the work input is positively correlated with the leadership level of university student cadres (Zhang Qian et al., 2021). Based on the analysis of the literature, this study proposes hypothesis H 3: student cadre organizational commitment positively and significantly affects leadership.

## **Research design**

### **1. Research ideas**

In this study, hypothesis H1: explore whether there is a significant difference between student cadre organizational commitment and different demographic variables; hypothesis H2: explore whether there are significant differences in student cadre leadership among different demographic variables; hypothesis H3: explore the influence of student cadre organizational commitment on leadership. Then, questionnaire data submitted by Chinese university student cadres were used to verify the proposed hypothesis. The SPSS22.0 and A. AMOS24.0 software were used for reliability and validity analysis, constructed the measurement model and structural equation model (Bollen, 1989; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004), and then discussed the study conclusion.

### **2. Study subjects**

In this study, the student cadres of 5 universities in Jilin Province, China were selected as the research objects to conduct group test and fill in the questionnaire. With the help of the counselor, the electronic questionnaire was distributed to the subject. After the subject briefly explained the purpose and requirements of the test, the subject answered the questions. After answering the questionnaire, 986 valid questionnaires were collected, with a recovery rate of 98.6%.

Since the study design data were collected and processed anonymously and used only for research purposes and did not involve serious ethics, the Institutional Review Board of Jiale University of Thailand was judged low risk and approved to conduct the study. Verbal consent was obtained from school administrators, teachers, students, and their parents before conducting this study. In addition, students were also told that students would voluntarily participate and could withdraw from the event at any time.

### **3. Research Tools**

#### **3.1 Organizational commitment**

The organizational commitment of college student cadres is an attitude and behavior tendency of student cadres to agree with the goal and value of the student union organization and to be willing to actively participate in it. It includes four dimensions: emotional commitment, ideal commitment, normative commitment, and effort commitment. The organization commitment scale compiled by Wang Haoyu (2009) for the members of student organizations (adapted from the commitment scale of Lingwen), contains 16 questions and 4 dimensions, and each dimension contains 4 questions.

#### **3.2 Leadership**

Student cadre leadership is a kind of value pursuit (organizational vision and goal) based on the position of student cadre; the various abilities and qualities that attract, influence and motivate other students in the process of realizing the vision and goal of student organization. The Chinese version of The Self-Measurement Table of Student Leadership Practice Behavior (The Student Leadership Practices Inventory-Self Instrument, SLPI-Self) compiled by Posner and Kouzes (2008) and translated by Dr. Tao Siliang in 2014 is adopted. The scale was developed based on the student leadership challenge model, with 30 questions and five dimensions: lead by example, share the vision, challenge the status quo, make people act and inspire people, each dimension with six to questions.

The measurement method adopts the Likert5 point scoring method, according to the answers of the respondents, and according to the "1 point, 2 points, 3 points, 4 points, and the full consent is 5 points". The higher the score, the higher the organizational commitment and leadership of college student cadres.

#### 4. Study Methods

##### 4.1 Reliability analysis

In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to analyze the reliability, Results show the total reliability of the organizational commitment scale of 0.867, The Cronbach's Alpha values of the four dimensions are respectively: emotional commitment of 0.975, An Ideal Commitment of 0.963, Specification commitment of 0.942, Effort commitment of 0.968; The total reliability of the Student Leadership Practice Behavior Scale was 0.867, The Cronbach's Alpha values of the five dimensions are respectively: lead by example, 0.983, Total Vision 0.957, Challenge the status quo at 0.988, Make 0.990, Inspirational: 0.984. It can be seen that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of both scales is greater than 0.8, which is of high reliability, and the results are stable and reliable.

##### 4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

Validation factor analysis was used to further verify the structural validity of the variables in this study, and the validity of the scale was verified mainly by observing whether the fitting indicators of the measurement model meet the standard, and the results of validation factor analysis were comprehensively evaluated from the absolute, incremental fit and reduced fit test indicators. The measurement model of student cadres' organizational commitment is shown in Figure 1, and the student cadre leadership measurement model is shown in Figure 2.

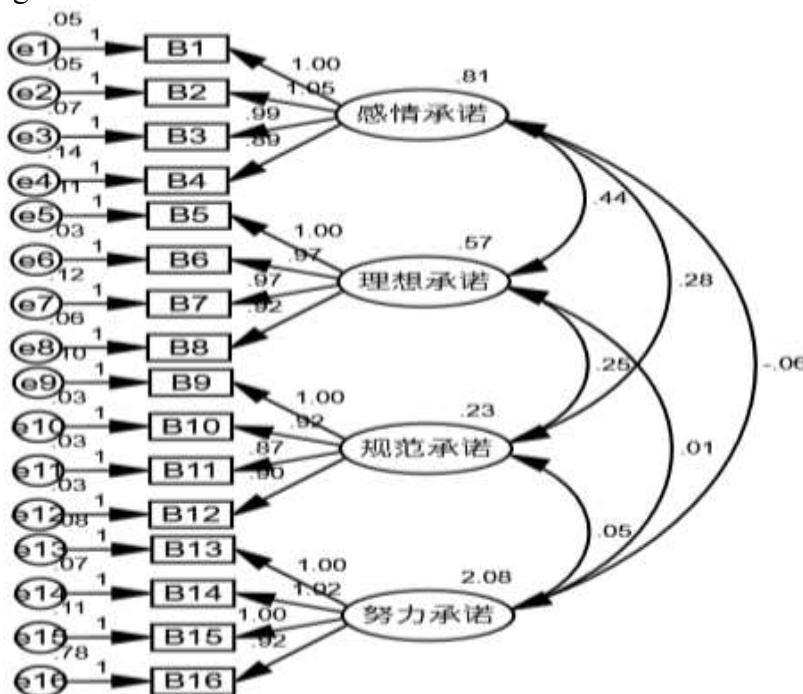


Figure 1 Measurement Model of organizational commitment of student cadres

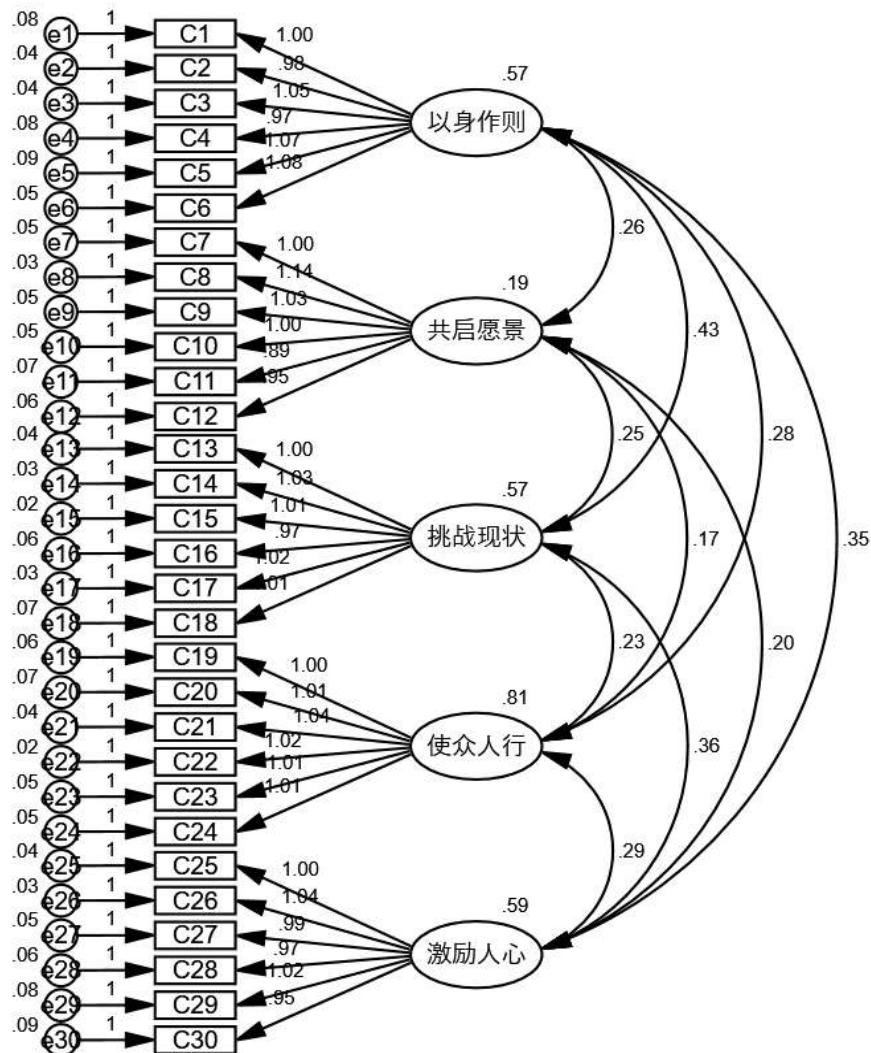


Figure 2 Leadership measurement model of student cadres

As shown in Table 1, from the fit index of the measurement model, all the indicators of the organizational commitment measurement model and the leadership measurement model reached the standard. Therefore, both scales have good fit validity (Wu Minglun, 2010) and can effectively measure the organizational commitment and leadership of student cadres.

Table 1

| Quantitative statistical inspection | metric      | standard value | organizational commitment | leadership |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------------|------------|
|                                     | $\chi^2/df$ | < 5.000        | 3.995                     | 3.584      |
| Absolute matching indicators        | RMR         | $\leq 0.500$   | .017                      | .011       |
|                                     | GFI         | $\geq 0.900$   | .946                      | .904       |
|                                     | RMSEA       | $\leq 0.080$   | .055                      | .051       |
| Incremental matching index          | NFI         | $\geq 0.900$   | .979                      | .960       |
|                                     | IFI         | $\geq 0.900$   | .984                      | .971       |
|                                     | TLI         | $\geq 0.900$   | .980                      | .968       |
|                                     | CFI         | $\geq 0.900$   | .984                      | .971       |
| Streamline matching indicators      | PNFI        | $\geq 0.500$   | .799                      | .872       |
|                                     | PCFI        | $\geq 0.500$   | .804                      | .881       |

## Results

### 1. Current situation analysis

According to the mean and standard deviation analysis, the organizational commitment was scored  $M=4.46$ ,  $SD=0.58$ , and the leadership was scored  $M=4.5$ ,  $SD=0.62$ , indicating that the degree of organizational commitment and leadership of college student cadres in this sampling was at a high level. As shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of organizational commitment and leadership of student cadres

| variable                  | N   | M    | SD   |
|---------------------------|-----|------|------|
| organizational commitment | 986 | 4.36 | 0.81 |
| leadership                | 986 | 4.5  | 0.62 |

### 2. Difference analysis

As can be seen from Table 3, the gender differences between organizational commitment and student leadership practice behavior were compared by independent sample t-test. The test values of each variable were 0.064 and 0.032, respectively, and the significance level was greater than 0.5. Therefore, there was no significant difference in gender between organizational commitment and student leadership practice behavior.

Table 3 Test of differences in gender

|                                      | sex   | N   | average value | standard deviations | t     | P     |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-----|---------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| organizational commitment            | man   | 224 | 4.3650        | .89931              | 0.064 | 0.949 |
|                                      | woman | 762 | 4.3610        | .78595              |       |       |
| Student leadership practice behavior | man   | 224 | 4.5082        | .62712              | 0.032 | 0.974 |
|                                      | woman | 762 | 4.5066        | .62083              |       |       |

According to Table 4, one-way ANOVA to compare the difference between organizational commitment and student leadership practice behavior in grade, the test value of organizational commitment  $t=4.333$ , the significance  $P=0.005 < 0.05$  level, so there are significant differences in the grades of freshman and sophomore year are significantly higher than that of the third year; the test value  $t=2.396$ , significance  $P=0.067 > 0.05$  level, so there is no significant difference in student leadership practice behavior in grade.

Table 4 Test of differences in grade

|                                      | grade       | N   | average value | standard deviations | F     | P     | multiple comparisons |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----|---------------|---------------------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| organizational commitment            | freshman ①  | 508 | 4.3885        | .79980              | 4.333 | 0.005 | ①、②><br>③            |
|                                      | sophomore ② | 134 | 4.5163        | .75129              |       |       |                      |
|                                      | junior ③    | 329 | 4.2481        | .85194              |       |       |                      |
|                                      | senior ④    | 15  | 4.5750        | .56655              |       |       |                      |
| Student leadership practice behavior | freshman ①  | 508 | 4.4936        | .63284              | 2.396 | 0.067 |                      |
|                                      | sophomore ② | 134 | 4.6214        | .55712              |       |       |                      |
|                                      | junior ③    | 329 | 4.4725        | .63310              |       |       |                      |
|                                      | senior ④    | 15  | 4.6956        | .41859              |       |       |                      |

According to Table 5, By performing a one-way ANOVA, Comparing the political landscape of organizational commitment, student leadership practice behavior, Test value promised by the inspection organization,  $F=3.258$ ,  $P=0.021 < 0.05$  level, Thus significant differences in the political landscape, Specifically, the scores of the CPC members and the Communist Youth League members were significantly higher than those of the masses; Test value for student leadership practice behavior,  $F=5.413$ ,  $P=0.001 < 0.05$  level, Thus, there are significant differences in the political landscape of student leadership practice behavior, Specific performance for the Communist Party members and the Communist Youth League members scored significantly higher than those of the masses.

Table 5 Test of the differences in the political status of the variables

|                                      | political status  | N   | average value | standard deviations | F     | P     | multiple comparisons |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----|---------------|---------------------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| organizational commitment            | Communist Party members<br>(including probationary party members) ① | 97  | 4.4427        | .75172              | 3.258 | 0.021 | ①、②><br>③            |
|                                      | communist youth league member ②                                     | 704 | 4.3894        | .77322              |       |       |                      |
|                                      | the masses ③  | 183 | 4.2063        | .96501              |       |       |                      |
|                                      | other ④   | 2   | 5.0000        | .00000              |       |       |                      |
| Student leadership practice behavior | Communist Party members<br>(including probationary party members) ① | 97  | 4.5852        | .53229              | 5.413 | 0.001 | ①、②><br>③            |
|                                      | communist youth league member ②                                     | 704 | 4.5357        | .59577              |       |       |                      |

|              |     |        |        |
|--------------|-----|--------|--------|
| the masses ③ | 183 | 4.3495 | .73414 |
| other ④      | 2   | 5.0000 | .00000 |

Table 6 shows that through independent sample t-test, comparing the differences between organizational commitment and student leadership practice behavior on the student ground, the test value of organizational commitment  $t = -4.511$ , significance  $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ , so organizational commitment has significant differences on the student ground, which showed significantly higher urban scores; student leadership practice  $t = -3.857$ , significance  $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ , so there are significant differences in student leadership practice behavior on the student ground, which showed significantly higher urban scores.

Table 6 Difference test of each variable in the source land

| origin of student                    |            | N   | average | standard deviations | t      | P     |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----|---------|---------------------|--------|-------|
|                                      |            |     | value   |                     |        |       |
| organizational commitment            | rural area | 514 | 4.2518  | .86296              | -4.511 | 0.000 |
| Student leadership practice behavior | town       | 472 | 4.4817  | .73638              |        |       |
|                                      | rural area | 514 | 4.4349  | .67177              |        |       |
|                                      | town       | 472 | 4.5855  | .55280              | -3.857 | 0.000 |

### 3. Correlation analysis

Table 7 shows that the correlation between organizational commitment and leadership components is compared by Pearson product difference correlation (Pearson product-moment correlation). The tested correlation coefficient in .498-. Between 624, all are greater than .400 and less than .700, is a moderate correlation, that is, organizational commitment and student leadership practice behavior have a significant moderate positive correlation with each other.

Table 7 Coranalys of each structure

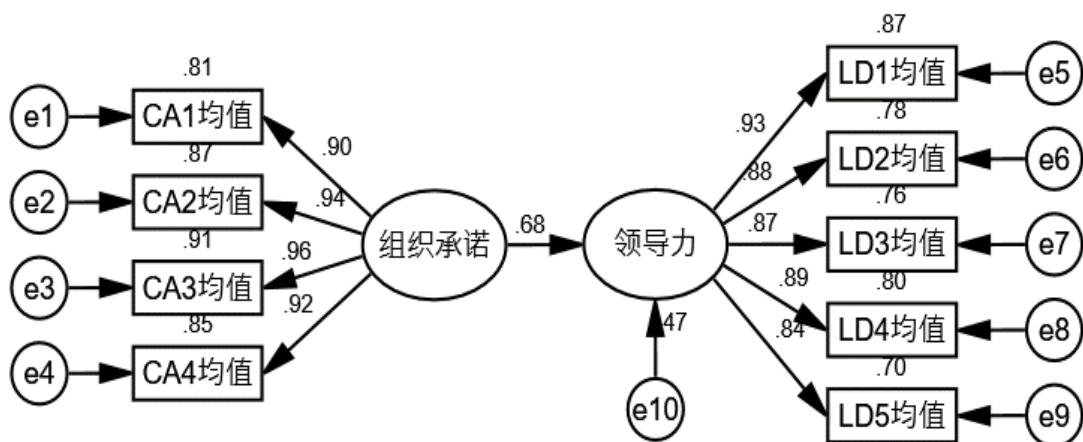
| Configuration                  | B1     | B2     | B3     | B4     | C1     | C2     | C3     | C4     | C5 |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| Emotional commitment to B1     | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Ideal promise B2               | .867** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Specification commitment B3    | .859** | .886** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |    |
| Efforts to commit to the B4    | .800** | .858** | .890** | 1      |        |        |        |        |    |
| Practice what you preach C1    | .572** | .590** | .615** | .624** | 1      |        |        |        |    |
| Common Launch Vision C2        | .501** | .514** | .540** | .554** | .844** | 1      |        |        |    |
| Challenge the status quo in C3 | .529** | .549** | .576** | .580** | .808** | .762** | 1      |        |    |
| Make everyone do C4            | .564** | .577** | .599** | .605** | .821** | .773** | .788** | 1      |    |
| Inspirational people in the C5 | .498** | .515** | .535** | .539** | .764** | .727** | .734** | .778** | 1  |

\*\*. At the 0.01 level (two-tailed), the correlation was significant.

#### 4. Fitness test

In order to further analyze the interrelationship between the dimensions of organizational commitment and the dimensions of leadership, it is necessary to build a relational model of survey data. The path analysis method in the structural equation model is used to explore the influence of the organizational commitment of college student cadres on leadership. Organization commitment and leadership is a latent variable, not directly measured, with emotional commitment, specification commitment, ideal commitment and commitment to the organization, lead by example, and the vision, challenge the status quo, make all line, inspiring for the observation of leadership, build college student cadres organization commitment on leadership structure of the equation model, as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3 Structural equation model diagram of the impact of organizational commitment on leadership



The fit of the structural equation was tested by maximum likelihood estimation using AMOS24.0 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004; Ming Wu, 2010). The model fit index data  $\chi^2 / DF = 5.758$ ,  $RMR = .009$ ,  $RMSEA = .069$ ,  $GFI = .967$ ,  $AGFI = .942$ ,  $CFI = .98$ ,  $NFI = .985$ ,  $IFI = .988$ ,  $TLI = .983$ , all indicators reached the standard, so the model is well adapted (Ming Long Wu, 2010). Organizational commitment explains 47% of leadership ( $p < .001$ ), thus, hypothesis 3 is supported and organizational commitment positively influences leadership.

## Conclusion and Discussion

### 1. Conclusion and Discussion

1.1 Differences between student cadres of different background changes in different research changes

A. Gender as the background change: there is no significant difference in organizational commitment and leadership, which is consistent with the research results of Lin Xidi (2022), Liu Anhui, Feng Wei and Li Qian (2015), Wen Ronghua (2019) and other scholars.

B. Grade as background change: The conclusion of this study shows that there are significant differences in organizational commitment among student cadres of different grades. This is consistent with the research results of Sun Xiaodong and Gao Lin (2022). However, there was no significant difference in student leadership practice behavior in grade. This is consistent with the research results of Liu Hanxi, Feng Wei and Li Qian (2015), Wen

Ronghua (2019) and other scholars.

C. Taking the political outlook as the background: College student cadres with different political status have significant differences in organizational commitment and leadership, and the scores of the CPC members and the Communist Youth League members are significantly higher than those of the masses, which is consistent with the research results of Fu Anrong et al. (2013), Wen Ronghua (2019) and other scholars.

D. Background changes: College student cadres from different origins have significant differences in organizational commitment and leadership, and urban scores are significantly higher than rural scores, which is compared with Tao.X.(2010), wen Ronghua (2019) and other scholars are consistent.

1.2 Organizational commitment has a significant positive impact on leadership

The results of this study show that the organizational commitment of college student cadres positively and significantly affects the leadership, assuming that H 3 is established. The higher the organizational commitment level of college student cadres, the stronger the leadership of student cadres; otherwise, the lower the organizational commitment, the weaker the leadership. This is similar to Pang Jiao (2013), Huang Xiaofeng (2018), Tang Ping et al., (2022) and Zhang Qian et al. (2021). That is to say, the higher the organizational commitment of student cadres, the higher the energy and enthusiasm invested in the organizational work, the more experience in the student organization, the greater the comprehensive ability improvement, so as to promote the leadership of student cadres. Therefore, strengthening the organizational commitment of college student cadres can promote the leadership of student cadres.

## Recommendations

1. Strengthen ideological guidance and inject red "gene" into leadership promotion

By the conclusion of this paper, the communist party and the communist youth league in leadership score significantly higher than the score (wen, 2019), so through the history of the party national education, guide the student cadre firm ideal faith, help and guide the student cadre to insist on xi jinping new era socialism armed mind, guiding work, guide the student cadre to set up correct values, help them set up lofty ideals, inject red gene to improve student cadre leadership (Xu Taotao, 2021).

2. Consolidate the organization construction, and pour the tough "bones and muscles" for the leadership improvement

The results of this study show that the organizational commitment of student cadres in universities has a significant impact on leadership, so the improvement of student cadres' leadership needs a strong organizational guarantee, and efforts to explore and enhance the organizational commitment of student cadres to improve leadership. First, strengthen the construction of organizational norms and management mechanism, so that the student cadres can clear the purpose and goal of the organization, shape the appropriate organizational culture, enhance the cohesion of the student organization, and then build a strong organizational environment for the leadership cultivation of student cadres (Porter & Ritser, 1997). The second is to improve the organizational commitment of student cadres through the establishment and improvement of the assessment and incentive mechanism for student cadres (Luo Lei and Zhou Wenn, 2016; Irina Cheremisova et al., 2020), to enable student cadres to strive for the goals of the student organization, and improve their sense of responsibility, self-

esteem and personal achievement in practical work, so as to improve their personal leadership level. Third, construct the subjectivity of student cadres, enhance their enthusiasm and initiative to participate in organizational activities (Yang Huan, 2017), fulfill their duties, dare to take responsibility, take the initiative to serve students and the school, so as to improve their leadership in practical work.

Although this study has obtained some expected results, but limited by the researcher's time and ability, the study samples only to six departments of the student cadre, the sample range is small, the universality needs to be further expanded, suggest researchers to expand the scope of the study sample, make the research results are universal.

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