A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF INSTRUCTORS' LEADERSHIP ON TEACHING EFFICACY AT HUAIHUA CITY IN HUNAN PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore the impact of instructors' leadership on teaching efficacy, significantly improving teaching quality and promoting instructors' professional development. A total of 1335 instructors from Huaihua University of Hunan Province and Hunan Medicine University were selected as the research objects by questionnaire survey. 315 samples were collected according to Morgan Table, and 297 valid questionnaires were retained, with an effective recovery rate of 94.29%. Descriptive statistics, difference analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used to investigate the current status of instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy, understand the differences between the two in different demographic backgrounds, and explore the impact of instructors' leadership on teaching efficacy. Finally, this research analyzed the results and put forward some relevant suggestions. The results showed that the current status of instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City in Hunan Province was relatively high. There were significant differences in the instructors' leadership regarding teaching age and professional titles. Regarding gender, teaching age and professional title, there were significant differences in the instructors' teaching efficacy at Huaihua City in Hunan Province, China. There was a significant positive correlation between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy. Instructors' leadership had a positive impact on teaching efficacy.

Keywords: Instructors' leadership, Teaching Efficacy, Instructors

Introduction

On a global scale, with the development of economic globalization, the competition between countries is becoming increasingly fierce, and the core of the competition has gradually turned to talent competition. As an important way to train high-quality talents, the quality and impact of education are directly related to the stability and development of a country. At present, all countries are actively

promoting educational reform to improve the quality of education. Therefore, in the context of the growing demand for cultivating talents with innovative thinking and superb professional skills, the expectations of all sectors of society for higher education continue to rise, which also puts university instructors in a complex situation full of challenges and unlimited opportunities (Xu et al., 2020; Kottmann et al., 2024). As two core concepts, instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy have increasingly highlighted their key roles in promoting students' learning outcomes and improving education quality, so they have gradually become the focus of extensive attention in the global education research field.

In China, with the deepening of education reform, improving higher education quality has become the focus of the government, educational institutions and all sectors of society. Because of this, the roles and positioning of university instructors were also undergoing profound changes, and improving instructors' leadership was not only the need for individual instructor development but also one of the important directions of higher education reform and education quality improvement (Liu et al., 2017; Zhang, 2020). In addition, the instructors' teaching efficacy significantly impacted their teaching behavior, which was a key factor in ensuring the full play of the core competitiveness of higher education quality. It was also crucial to conduct in-depth research and help instructors improve their teaching efficacy to improve higher education quality (Gong & Li, 2022). Therefore, this study aimed to explore the relationship between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China, which was of great significance for improving teaching quality and promoting instructors' professional development.

Research Objectives

(1) To investigate the current status of instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China.

(2) To investigate the differences in instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China, regarding demographic backgrounds such as gender, teaching age and professional title.

(3) To analyze the correlation between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China.

(4) To explore the impact of instructors' leadership on teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China.

Literature Review

Research on Instructors' Leadership

The concept of instructors' leadership originated from the wave of American education reform in the 1980s. Since its birth, it has quickly attracted deep concern and high attention from all walks of

life and many education experts in the United States. However, due to the different understanding of the essence of instructors' leadership, there were still differences in its definition. Overall, the development of the concept of instructors' leadership could be divided into several stages. First, early researchers tended to define instructors' leadership from the perspective of instructors assuming responsibilities that originally belonged to principals. For example, Barth (2001) pointed out that instructors' leadership was the process of carrying out tasks that were traditionally the responsibility of senior school administrators. It was mainly reflected in two dimensions. Secondly, researchers focused on classroom teaching and believed that instructors' leadership was embodied in instructors playing the role of a leader in the classroom. According to Katzenmeyer & Moller (2009), instructors' leadership refers to the leadership role that instructors play inside and outside the classroom, embodied in the ability to guide and manage their teaching activities and students' learning process.

As for the impact study of instructors' leadership, researchers found that instructors' leadership could profoundly affect instructors themselves and their related interest groups. Zhao (2021) found that the instructors' leadership in universities plays a crucial role in the career of instructors. Especially for young instructors, instructors' leadership could be a powerful boost to their growth, help them build up their teaching confidence more quickly, and better develop their professional quality and teaching ability.

Research on Instructors' Teaching Efficacy

The academic community has not reached a consensus on the concept of instructor teaching efficacy. Due to the differences in guiding theories, scholars' understanding and elaboration of instructor teaching efficacy have corresponding divergences and diversity. Based on the locus of control theory, Armor et al. (1976) interpreted instructor efficacy as instructors' belief that their internal factors could impact students' learning effectiveness. In contrast, according to the self-efficacy theory proposed by Bandura (1977), instructors' teaching efficacy was described as instructors' internal cognition and firm belief in their teaching ability.

With the vigorous development and popularization of relevant research abroad, domestic scholars also take the initiative to accept and deeply explore the concept of teaching efficacy and its related theoretical system. Lei & Wang (2022) pointed out that teaching efficacy not only covered instructors' inner perception of their teaching ability and teaching value but also reflected their firm belief that they could have a positive impact on students.

This research discusses the overall status of instructors' teaching efficacy and the differences among different demographic backgrounds. Li & Zhang (2022) found that the teaching efficacy of pre-service instructors was above the mean level on the whole, and there were significant differences in the teaching efficacy of different genders. This result might be due to differences in gender characteristics and teaching styles. Female pre-service instructors tended to show more patience, meticulousness and empathy. These characteristics made female pre-service instructors pay more attention to students'

personal and emotional needs and are willing to establish close relationships with students and provide additional support and guidance. This kind of care and support could enhance students' self-confidence and learning motivation, thus improving female preservice instructors' teaching efficacy.

Many factors affect instructors' teaching efficacy, including internal factors such as individual characteristics and external factors such as school environment. From the perspective of internal factors, the research showed that individual instructors' personality characteristics, teaching beliefs, teaching styles and emotional states all impact their teaching efficacy. Liu & Dan (2019) revealed the impact of emotional intelligence on instructors' teaching efficacy in their research. Teachers with high emotional intelligence could recover their emotional balance more quickly and maintain a positive teaching attitude when faced with teaching pressure. At the same time, they were also better at establishing positive interactive relationships with students, thus achieving better teaching results.

Research on the Relationship Between Instructors' Leadership and Teaching Efficacy

While consulting domestic and foreign literature, there were abundant independent studies on the two single variables of instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy. However, the research on the relationship between the two variables was relatively scarce.

Instructors' leadership plays a crucial role in the educational environment, which could significantly promote instructors to form a more positive teaching attitude. Siriparp et al. (2022) pointed out that instructors' leadership could greatly enhance instructors' sense of teaching efficacy. Under the impact of leadership, instructors were more confident that they could overcome various difficulties and challenges in the teaching process and more confident that they could guide students' growth. The improvement in self-confidence made instructors more daring to try new teaching methods and means and to continuously face uncertainties and risks in the teaching process to improve their teaching level and ability. Thien et al. (2024) also pointed out in their research that instructors' leadership could significantly improve instructors' sense of teaching efficacy by promoting positive teaching attitudes and enhancing teaching self-confidence.

Other studies showed that instructors with strong leadership were better at setting clear teaching goals, adopting effective teaching strategies, and managing the classroom environment more actively. These behaviors were conducive to improving instructors' teaching efficacy. There was a close positive correlation between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy (Zhou et al., 2022). Improving instructors' leadership helped enhance their teaching efficacy, improving teaching quality and students' learning outcomes.

In addition, some empirical studies have confirmed the positive correlation between instructors' teaching leadership and their teaching efficacy. Huang et al. (2023) found that instructors with high-level teaching leadership were more confident in teaching and could stimulate students' learning interest and participation, thus achieving better teaching results. At the same time, these instructors were more willing to participate in teaching reform and innovation and constantly improve their teaching ability

and leadership.

Methodology

Convenient sampling was adopted in this study. Two universities, Huaihua University of Hunan Province and Hunan Medicine University, were selected as the research sites, and 1335 instructors currently teaching at the university were selected as the research objects. In the investigation stage, 315 questionnaires were collected, and 297 valid questionnaires remained after sorting and screening. The effective return rate reached 94.29%. The number of recovered questionnaires met the criteria for determining the minimum sampling size of the Morgan Table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

This study chose the instructor Leadership Scale compiled by Wang et al. (2017) as the questionnaire for instructors' leadership. Based on Katzenmeyer & Moller's (2009) relevant scale content structure and combined with the teaching situation and characteristics of instructors, the questionnaire was revised one by one. The questionnaire included 16 items in four dimensions: interpersonal communication, academic leadership, teaching mastery and environmental adaptability.

In this study, the instructors' teaching efficacy scale compiled by Xiong (2023) was selected as the instructors' teaching efficacy questionnaire. Based on the content structure of Gibson & Dembo (1984) and Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001), the questionnaire was revised based on the teaching situation and the instructors' characteristics. The questionnaire involved two parts, general educational efficacy and personal teaching efficacy, including four dimensions: general educational efficacy, instructional strategy efficacy, classroom management efficacy and student participation efficacy, with 30 items.

Results

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

This study analyzed 297 valid questionnaires collected and counted the distribution of basic information characteristics of instructors participating in the survey. Regarding gender, 101 male instructors participated in the questionnaire, accounting for 34.0% of the total, and 196 female instructors, accounting for 66.0%. The number of female instructors exceeded that of male instructors. Regarding teaching age, 79 of the instructors who participated in the questionnaire had teaching age of 5 years or less, accounting for 26.6% of the total, teaching age of 6-10 years were 117, accounting for 39.4% of the total, 101 had teaching age of 11 years and above, accounting for 34.0% of the total, and the number of instructors with teaching age of 6-10 years was the largest. Regarding professional titles, 62 of the instructors participating in the questionnaire were teaching assistants, accounting for 20.9% of the total, 112 were lecturers, accounting for 37.7% of the total, 85 were associate professors, accounting for 28.6% of the total, and 38 were professors, accounting for 12.8% of the total. The number of instructors participating in the survey was lecturers, while the number of professors was the least.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

1) The current status of instructors' leadership

According to Table 1, the overall mean of instructors' leadership M=3.72, and the score standard was high, indicating that the overall level of instructors' leadership in universities was high. The means of all dimensions meet high standards. The means were ranked from highest to lowest: teaching mastery > interpersonal communication > academic leadership > environmental adaptability.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistical of Instructors' Leadership

Dimension	N	M	SD	Interpretation
Interpersonal communication	297	3.78	0.490	High
Academic leadership	297	3.72	0.472	High
Teaching mastery	297	3.79	0.503	High
Environmental adaptability	297	3.59	0.551	High
Instructors' leadership overall	297	3.72	0.387	High

2) The current status of instructors' teaching efficacy

As seen from Table 2, the overall M=3.80 of teaching efficacy was high, indicating that the overall level of instructors' teaching efficacy in universities was relatively high. Among all dimensions, the general educational efficacy was moderate, while the mean of the remaining dimensions reached high standards. The means were ranked from high to low, in order of which were student participation efficacy > classroom management efficacy > instructional strategy efficacy > general educational efficacy.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistical of Instructors' Teaching Efficacy

Dimension	N	M	SD	Interpretation
General educational efficacy	297	3.36	0.879	Moderate
Instructional strategy efficacy	297	3.84	0.450	High
Classroom management efficacy	297	3.92	0.554	High
Student participation efficacy	297	4.08	0.523	High
Teaching efficacy overall	297	3.80	0.436	High

Difference Analysis

The overall F=5.783, P=0.003, and P < 0.01 of instructors' leadership reached the significant standard. The results of LSD multiple comparisons showed that the teaching age of 11 years and above was greater than that of 5 years and less and that of 6-10 years.

The overall teaching efficacy of F=7.807, P=0.000, and P < 0.001 reached the significant

standard. The results of multiple LSD comparisons showed that the mean value of professors was higher than that of teaching assistants, lecturers and associate professors, and the mean value of associate professors was higher than that of teaching assistants.

Correlation Analysis

According to Pearson correlation analysis in Table 3, the correlation coefficient between overall instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy was 0.573 ($P < 0.01$), reaching the significant standard. The correlation coefficients of each dimension of instructors' leadership and overall sense of teaching efficacy were 0.400, 0.523, 0.611 and 0.248, respectively, with $P < 0.01$ reaching the significant standard. The correlation coefficients between the dimensions of teaching efficacy and the overall instructors' leadership were 0.380, 0.593, 0.399 and 0.337, and $P < 0.01$ reached the significant standard. Therefore, it showed that the verification results of the research hypothesis H2 were valid. There was a significant positive correlation between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of Instructors' Leadership and Teaching Efficacy

	General educational efficacy	Instructional strategy efficacy	Classroom management efficacy	Student participation efficacy	Teaching efficacy overall
Interpersonal communication	0.278**	0.409**	0.241**	0.259**	0.400**
Academic leadership	0.314**	0.562**	0.409**	0.299**	0.523**
Teaching mastery	0.360**	0.607**	0.501**	0.377**	0.611**
Environmental adaptability	0.223**	0.267**	0.100	0.116*	0.248**
Instructors' leadership overall	0.380**	0.593**	0.399**	0.337**	0.573**

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01

Regression Analysis

According to the regression analysis in Table 4, with the overall instructors' leadership as the independent variable, the regression analysis was carried out on instructors' teaching efficacy, and the adjustment R2=0.326, F=144.119, and $P < 0.001$ reached the significance standard, indicating that the regression equation was significantly effective. Taking interpersonal communication, academic leadership, teaching mastery and environmental adaptability as independent variables, regression

analysis was carried out on instructors' teaching efficacy, and the adjustments R2=0.411, F=52.743, P < 0.001 reached the significant standard, indicating that the regression equation was significantly effective. Among them, the academic leadership dimension T=3.823, P=0.000, the teaching mastery dimension T=8.042, P=0.000, P < 0.001 reached the significant criterion, that is, the academic leadership and teaching mastery dimension entered the regression equation, and the academic leadership and teaching mastery dimension jointly predicted the 41.1% variation of the overall teaching efficacy.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Instructors' Leadership on Teaching Efficacy

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	F	P	R^2	adj R^2
		B	SE	Beta					
1	(Constant)	1.400	0.201		6.968	144.119	.000	0.328	0.326
	Instructors' leadership	0.645	0.054	0.573	12.005				
2	(Constant)	1.353	0.188		7.194	52.743	.000	0.419	0.411
	Interpersonal communication	0.064	0.050	0.071	1.269				
	Academic leadership	0.214	0.056	0.232	3.823				
	Teaching mastery	0.392	0.049	0.452	8.042				
	Environmental adaptability	-0.021	0.040	-0.026	-0.517				

Dependent Variable: Teaching efficacy

Discussion

Discussion on the Current Status of Instructors' Leadership and Teaching Efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China

In the specific data results, the overall level of instructors' leadership was high, with the highest level of teaching mastery and the lowest level of environmental adaptability among all dimensions, which indicates that instructors' leadership ability and impact in education, teaching, academic research and other aspects were at a high level. On the other hand, a low score for environmental adaptability might indicate that instructors have certain obstacles and difficulties in dealing with the rapidly changing educational environment. It might be due to instructors' limited acceptance of new technologies and teaching methods, lack of motivation for continuous learning and self-improvement,

and dependence on traditional teaching models.

The specific data showed that instructors' overall teaching efficacy level was high. The level of participation efficacy of middle school students was the highest, while general education efficacy was the lowest, only reaching a moderate standard. General educational efficacy refers to instructors' overall evaluation and belief about the relationship between pedagogy and the impact of higher education on students. The low level of this dimension might mean that instructors feel certain challenges and pressures when facing the complexity and uncertainty of the whole education system and social development situation.

Discussion on the Differences Between Instructors' Leadership and Teaching Efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China

Regarding gender differences, there were significant differences in the instructors' teaching efficacy. The overall level of female instructors' teaching efficacy was higher than that of male instructors. However, there was no significant difference in instructors' leadership regarding gender. Other authors supporting this result include Shangguan (2014), and Li & Zhang (2022). The reasons might be as follows: First of all, in traditional social role positioning, women were often given more responsibility for education and raising children, and their cognition and belief in the impact of education tended to be positive.

There were significant differences in instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy regarding different teaching age differences. Teachers with 11 years and above of teaching age have the highest overall leadership level, while instructors with less than 5 years of teaching age have the lowest overall teaching efficacy. This conclusion was consistent with previous studies (Sun 2019; Song t al., 2024). The reason might be that instructors of 11 years and above of teaching age have rich teaching and management experience, and they have gradually formed a unique leadership style and management strategy in their long-term career and could better deal with various complicated situations in teaching and scientific research work, so their leadership level was relatively high. In addition, the rich teaching and scientific research experience of instructors with longer teaching ages could also help enhance their teaching self-confidence, thus enhancing their teaching efficacy. In contrast, instructors with 5-10 years of teaching age were in the "adaptation period" or "transition period" of career development. Some young instructors were exploring a suitable career development path for themselves. They usually face the dual pressure of teaching and management and have not yet formed a stable leadership style and management strategy, so their leadership level might be relatively low. At the same time, instructors with 5 years of teaching age or less might lack continuous professional development opportunities due to busy work or other reasons. They might not have enough time and energy to attend training and learn new teaching concepts and methods. This lack of continuous learning and improvement might make their teaching ability and teaching effectiveness gradually decline.

Regarding different professional titles, there were significant differences in instructors'

leadership and teaching efficacy. The leadership level of the instructors with the title of associate professor or above was higher than that of the instructors with the title of teaching assistant and lecturer, and the instructor with the title of professor has the highest level of teaching efficacy. This conclusion was consistent with previous studies (Zhang & Hu, 2017; Li, 2019). The reason might be that, on the one hand, instructors above associate professors usually have more outstanding performance in teaching and scientific research and have accumulated rich leadership experience. They might hold positions such as subject leaders, middle managers or school leaders and need to assume more management responsibilities, so their leadership level was relatively high.

Discussion on the Correlation Between Instructors' Leadership and Teaching Efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China

The correlation analysis results showed a significant positive correlation between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City in Hunan Province. This result was consistent with Zhou et al. (2022) research conclusion. These results indicate a close relationship and the same direction change. In other words, when the overall level of instructors' leadership was improved, instructors' teaching efficacy would also show an enhancement trend.

Discussion on the Impact of Instructors' Leadership on Teaching Efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China

Regression analysis results showed that instructors' leadership has a positive impact on teaching efficacy, and academic leadership and teaching mastery have a significant positive impact on teaching efficacy in all dimensions. This conclusion was consistent with the research results of Siriparp et al. (2022) and Huang et al. (2023).

First of all, academic leadership, as an important part of the leadership of university instructors, reflected the guiding role and impact of instructors in academic research. Teachers with strong academic leadership usually have deep academic foundations and unique insights in their research field. They were also more confident in their teaching abilities and believed they could provide students with higher-quality academic guidance. This increase in self-confidence directly affected instructors' sense of teaching effectiveness. In addition, instructors with strong academic leadership also have significant advantages in teaching. They integrated the latest academic research results and cutting-edge developments into their teaching content, making the curriculum more interesting and challenging. This teaching method stimulated students' interest and motivation in learning, enhancing instructors' teaching effectiveness. When instructors saw that their teaching achievements were recognized and appreciated by students, their teaching efficacy would be correspondingly improved.

Secondly, improving teaching mastery also has a significant positive impact on teaching efficacy. It might be because instructors with strong teaching mastery could manage the classroom more effectively. They would improve teaching strategies and update teaching methods in the process of continuous exploration and innovation. While stimulating students' subjective initiative, they would

actively guide students to participate in learning activities and complete their academic goals, thus enhancing their teaching efficacy through the accumulation of good teaching age. At the same time, instructors with strong teaching mastery establish a good instructor-student relationship with students. They understand the characteristics of students and can accurately capture their learning needs and development expectations, adjusting their teaching strategies to meet their needs. Driven by this good instructor-student relationship, the emotional connection made the students sincerely respect and love the instructor and then actively participate in classroom learning. This positive classroom atmosphere would further enhance instructors' sense of teaching effectiveness.

In general, the regression analysis results not only reveal the intrinsic relationship between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy but also provide important enlightenment for the professional development of instructors. It showed that improving instructors' leadership was one of the effective ways to enhance their teaching efficacy. By exerting instructor leadership, instructors could motivate themselves and other instructors to continuously improve teaching quality and enhance teaching efficacy to provide students with better educational services.

Conclusion

(1) The current status of instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China was relatively high.

(2) Among different There were significant differences in the instructors' leadership with different teaching ages and professional titles.

Regarding gender, teaching age and professional title, there were significant differences in the instructors' teaching efficacy.

(3) There was a significant positive correlation between instructors' leadership and teaching efficacy at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China.

(4) Instructors' leadership at Huaihua City, Hunan Province, China has a positive impact on teaching efficacy.

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