



1. Background

Leadership compacity is commonly recognized as one of the most important competencies in the 21st century. In general, leadership can be described as the capacity to influence others and create better changes. Leadership behaviours have different characteristics at different stages. Research on leadership have often associated with college students and career development, while there is a gap in publication of research literature that targets non-adult students in recent decades.

Command types of Leadership:



Charismatic/ Transformational leadership: Leaders inspire and motivate followers' engagement by satisfying their self-interests in order to archive common goals.



Transactional leadership: Leaders set up clear expectations rewards with followers to exchange their work effects.



Distributed leadership: Team members shares responsibilities and tasks based on skills of individual.



Servant leadership: Develop leadership skills when serving and helping others.

2. Objective

- To explore current leadership education in K-12 school systems in Canada and China.
- To compare differences and similarities in leadership studies between Canada and China.

3. Methods

Literature reviewing is the main method used for this study. Only English literature was viewed for student leadership development in Canada. Chinese literature found on CNKI, the greatest and most authoritative Chinese scholar literature database, and educational policies were read to explore leadership reality in China. Keywords used when researching relevant literature include:

- Student leadership
- K-12 student development/ kindergarten/ elementary school/ (junior) high school student development
- Canadian/Chinese leadership studies

These keywords divide K-12 literature into four different developmental stages¹. Those are early and late childhood, early and late adolescence, and early adulthood as shown in Figure 1.

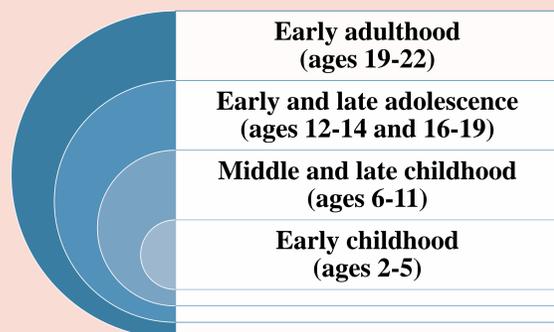


Figure 1. Four developmental stages of early leadership.

4. Results

Similarities and differences are found between Canadian and Chinese literature in K-12 leadership development. The understanding of leadership with regards to maximizing personal growth is similar, while differences exist in emphases of student leadership education. One of the main differences is Canadian scholars believe that all educational stakeholders. That requires students, teachers, school boards, and communities to share the responsibilities to ensure student leadership development. Not such leadership research in China indicates the collaborations with school boards and communities. Another main difference is student involvement in decision-making at the school level and upper administration level are considered as effective leadership practices in Canada while Chinese leadership scholars put more focus on students' self-management skills and interpersonal skills among their peers^{2,3}. Details on similarities and differences between K-12 leadership research between Canada and China are shown in Figure 2.

Factors and barriers of student leadership are found to have more similarities than differences while those differences reflect the different social cultures in these two countries. Cultural background has more impacts in Canada as a reflection of more immigrants in Canada. School location has magnified impact in China shows the imbalance between education sources available in urban and rural school⁴. Figure 3 lists some of the common influencing factors of leadership development.

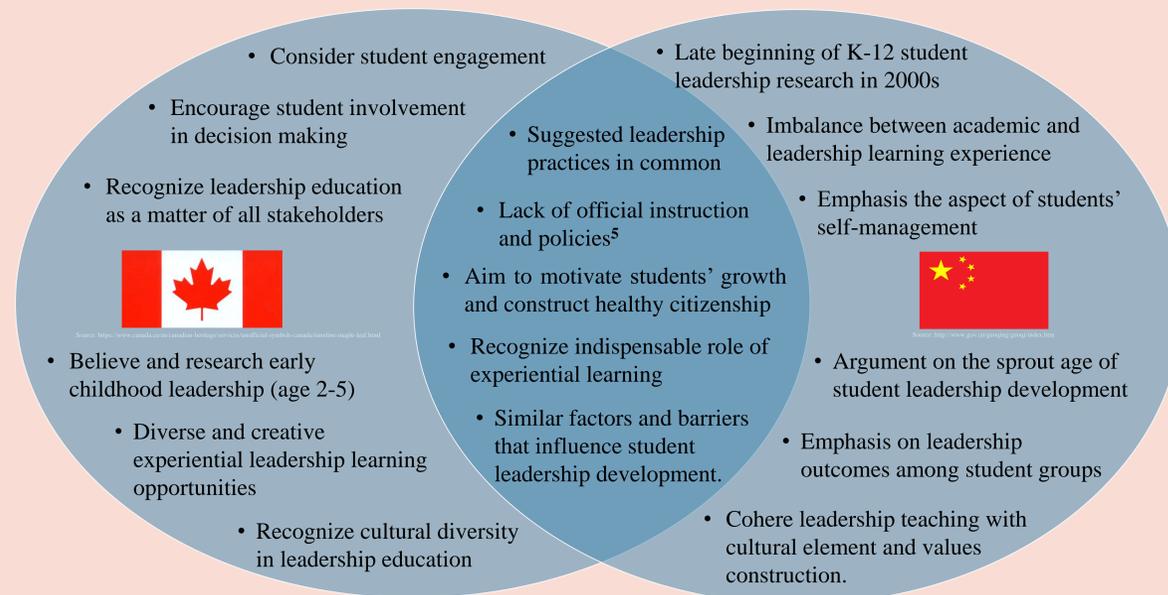


Figure 2. Similarities and difference found from K-12 leadership literature between Canada and China.

Impacts from teachers
• Teachers' abilities to identify, recognize, and encourage students' leadership performance
Family background
• Understanding and supports from parents
• Socio-economic status
• With or without siblings
• Cultural background
Physical restriction
• Age
• Sexuality
• Disabilities

Figure 3. Common influencing factors of student leadership development.

5. Conclusion

In short, differences and similarities exist between K-12 student leadership education in Canada and China. From the differences, we can notice that the concept of leadership development in Canada is more developed from the perspective of social responsibilities and draws more connection with communities. Leadership education in China has more emphasizes on personal effects for leadership development. Differences in leadership education are reflections of differences in social culture and structure between two countries. In terms of similarities, an unneglectable finding is the lack of official instructions and policies in leadership development. That to some degree reveals leadership development in K-12 stages is not given enough attention. However, that might be due to the complexity of leadership development, for instance, the various forms of effective practice and various uncontrolled factors. There is a need to develop student leadership guidelines and policies that address the boundaries and scope of student leadership, assist teachers in conducting student leadership appropriately, and empower students to try their best. Suggestions for future studies are research on successful and unsuccessful student leadership engagement. Those will help identify what to avoid and what are the barriers and challenges in leadership education.

Acknowledgment

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