Effective strategic management model of university student's association in Nanchang city

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Abstract: This study investigates the strategic management of university student associations (USAs) in Nanchang City, focusing on seven key factors: government support, communication and feedback, resource utilization and allocation, event organization and scheduling, association management and leadership, management transparency and accountability mechanisms, and teamwork and atmosphere. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected from 540 respondents across 36 universities through structured surveys and interviews. Descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed that leadership effectiveness, transparent governance, resource optimization, and collaborative teamwork significantly enhance organizational performance and member engagement. The study proposes a comprehensive management model tailored to the context of Nanchang City, offering actionable strategies to address identified challenges. These findings contribute to the understanding of effective governance in higher education, providing practical insights for improving the operational efficiency and strategic alignment of student associations.

Keywords: Effective strategic management, Student associations, University administration.

1. Introduction

University student associations (USAs) play an essential role in fostering student leadership, personal development, and academic engagement in higher education. In Nanchang City, these associations serve as a vital link between students, universities, and society. However, despite their potential, student associations face significant challenges in their management, including issues related to leadership, resource allocation, communication, and the overall organizational structure. This research aims to explore the strategic management of these associations, emphasizing the factors that contribute to their effectiveness and the strategies that can be employed to improve their operations. The problem lies in the growing complexity of managing student associations within the context of rapid educational and societal changes. The increasing number of student associations, coupled with diverse student interests and activities, has led to management challenges that hinder their ability to fulfill their educational and social roles effectively. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of strategic management in addressing these challenges, yet research on student association management in the specific context of Nanchang City remains limited. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive examination of the factors that influence the strategic management of student associations in Nanchang universities. The necessity of this study is underscored by the critical role that student associations play in the development of students' leadership skills, community engagement, and extracurricular involvement. Effective management of these associations is essential for enhancing their contribution to student development and for aligning their activities with the broader objectives of higher education institutions. This research will provide valuable insights into how strategic management can optimize the functioning of student associations, ultimately contributing to improved student satisfaction, institutional performance, and the overall educational experience. The importance of the study is twofold: firstly, it addresses a gap in the literature concerning the

management of student associations in China, specifically in Nanchang City, and secondly, it offers a practical framework for universities to enhance the effectiveness of their student associations through strategic management. The findings of this research will contribute to the broader field of educational management, particularly in the areas of student affairs and organizational governance.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To study the level of effective strategic management of student's association universities in Nanchang City.

2. To analyze the exploratory factors of effective strategic management of student's association of universities in Nanchang City.

3. To propose the effective strategic management model of Student's association of universities in Nanchang City.

2. Literature Review

The review of concepts and theories begins with effective education theory, which highlights frameworks such as Kyriakides' concept of educational effectiveness. This theory emphasizes achieving desired educational outcomes through high-quality instruction, effective leadership, and efficient resource allocation. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory underscores the critical role of social interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in facilitating learning, emphasizing collaborative engagement and scaffolding. Gardner's multiple intelligences theory broadens the traditional understanding of intelligence by recognizing diverse intellectual strengths and advocating for personalized teaching strategies tailored to different learner profiles. Complementing these ideas, Bruner's discovery learning theory promotes active engagement, scaffolding, and the spiral curriculum, fostering exploration and intuitive thinking for deeper conceptual understanding.

In the domain of educational strategic management, strategic management is defined as the systematic alignment of organizational resources to achieve specific objectives. Key components include situation analysis, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Luenendonk, 2022). Applied to education, this process integrates internal and external environmental assessments to optimize institutional performance and realize long-term goals. Core elements such as environmental scanning, stakeholder involvement, and iterative evaluation enhance adaptability and overall effectiveness in educational settings.

University student associations (USAs) are characterized as voluntary organizations formed by students with shared goals and interests. According to the *China Encyclopedia* (1985), USAs function as platforms for cultural, artistic, and scientific activities. Li Zhongcheng (2010) defined USAs as spaces for mutual exchange and collective growth, while Yang Fengjuan (2013) highlighted their emotional connections and broad member base. Liu Liang (2008) further positioned USAs as critical tools for fostering self-governance, skill development, and education, integral to modern campus culture.

The historical development of USAs has been examined extensively. Jiang Chuhan (2021) traced their roots in China to the pre-Qin and Han dynasties, while Zhang Yan (2017) identified seven developmental stages, spanning from the early 20th century to rapid growth after 2004 (Ma Kexin, 2018). Long Xili (2014) noted significant peaks during the May Fourth Movement and the post-reform era of the 1980s. Internationally, Robbins (2005) and Wang Xinting (2020) documented the evolution of U.S. student associations, from literary societies to modern student governance structures. Cobban (1975) and Rashdall & Emden (1936) explored the medieval origins of European student guilds, underscoring their role in shaping university governance.

The characteristics and functions of USAs further define their significance. Xu Qun and Wang Shulan (2005) identified spontaneity, diversity, and flexibility as core traits. Lan Yu (2007) highlighted their increasing personalization, market orientation, and internationalization. Functional aspects include fostering socialization, skill development, and entrepreneurship (Wang Jiangbing, 2012; Wen Jihong, 2006), while Jia Hui (2005) emphasized their role in promoting innovation and adaptability to future social roles.

The related research section reviews the management and development of USAs. National studies reveal challenges such as unclear governance, insufficient resources, and the absence of standardized systems. Pi Li (2010) stressed the importance of transparent administration and tailored strategies for different types of associations. Li Min (2012) identified five critical management factors, including leadership awareness, communication mechanisms, and financial transparency. Zhang Congxi (2021) proposed solutions to structural imbalances and inadequate leadership training, while Luo Qin (2008) introduced a "three-in-one" classified management model combining federations, faculty guidance, and structured categorization. Lian Shujiao (2016) noted persistent issues such as resource scarcity and outdated management approaches. International research complements these findings. U.S. studies document the progression of student associations from literary groups to organizations promoting leadership and activism (Robbins, 2005; Wright, 2002). European research highlights medieval student guilds as precursors to modern university associations (Cobban, 1975). Recent scholarship emphasizes the role of strategic management in enhancing association governance, with a focus on leadership, resource optimization, and stakeholder engagement (Latorre-Medina & Blanco-Encomienda, 2013; Bantila et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding and improving the strategic management of USAs, particularly in the context of Nanchang City.

3. Method

3.1. Population and Sample

The population used in this research was administrators and association instructors of university in Nanchang City. A total of 40 public universities in Nanchang city.The sample group used 36 public universities in Nanchang city, which the researcher has determined the sample size by using the schedule of the sample size of Krejcie and Morgan (1970, pp. 607-610). The researcher has assigned 15 respondents to each public universities(including undergraduate universities and higher vocational colleges), consisting of 5 respondents of administrators (180 respondents) and 10 respondents of association instructors (360 respondents), totaling 540 respondents using simple random sampling

3.2. Research Instrument

1) The questionnaire on demographic data of the respondents. It was in the form of a checklist to ask for basic information of the respondents

2) The questionnaire of the teacher competency development of higher vocational schools in Shandong province, created by the researcher in the amount of 125 items. And

3) A semi-structured interview for 9 key informants for interview for the teacher competency development model of higher vocational schools in Shandong province.

3.3. Data Analysis

The demographic data of the Respondents: analysis of frequency and percentage personal status of respondents

The level of effective strategic management of student's association universities in Nanchang City: analysis of the mean and standard deviation

The exploratory factors analysis of effective strategic management of student's association of universities in Nanchang City: analysis of the exploratory factors analysis of effective strategic management of student's association of universities in Nanchang City.

The content analysis by in-depth interview: semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine educational experts to gain in-depth insights into their perspectives on effective strategic management of student's association of universities in Nanchang City. The interview protocol included open-ended questions focused on the composition, current status, and influencing factors of teacher competency.

4. Research Results

4.1. Results of Demographic data of the Respondents

The demographic data of 540 respondents shows 52.8% are male and 47.2% are female. The age distribution shows that 21.9% are under 25 years, 18% are 25-29, 20.2% are 30-39, 22% are 40-49, and 18% are 50 and above, indicating a predominance of younger to middle-aged managers. In terms of professional roles, 51.5% are university administrators and 48.5% are faculty members, reflecting balanced representation. Regarding academic qualifications, 28.3% hold a Bachelor's degree, 23% have a Master's, 25.2% possess a Doctoral degree, and 23.5% have postdoctoral experience, indicating diverse educational backgrounds. The experience distribution reveals that 22.6% have 5-10 years of experience, with smaller groups having less than five years (21.3%), 11-15 years (21.3%), 16-20 years (18%), and over 20 years (16.9%), suggesting a concentration of respondents with moderate to intermediate experience levels.

4.2. The Results of the Level of the Level of Effective Strategic Management of Student's Association Universities in Nanchang City.

In order to get to know the results on the level of effective strategic management model of student's association of universities in Nanchang city, the researcher has illustrated both Mean(M) and Standard Deviation (*S.D.*) for 125 items of questionnaires in Table 2. And the valid number of questionnaires is 540. Based on the data, the findings of the research can be summarized as follows: 1. Range of Mean

Values: Across the 125 questionnaire items, the mean ($\overline{\chi}$) values range from 2.85 to 4.43. 2. Range of Standard Deviation Values: The standard deviation (*S.D.*) values span from 0.20 to 0.79. 3.Extremes of

Mean Values: The lowest mean value ($\overline{\chi}$) is 2.85 (Q124), while the highest mean value ($\overline{\chi}$) is 4.4315 (Q36). 4.Extremes of Standard Deviation Values: The smallest standard deviation (S.D.) value is 0.20 (Q105), and the largest is 0.79 (Q48).

The analysis of the mean values from the data reveals that the overall management of student associations in Nanchang universities is commendable, with respondents generally expressing satisfaction with current management practices. Areas such as communication and feedback, resource use and allocation, management transparency and accountability mechanisms, and government support received high evaluations. These results suggest that respondents recognize the effectiveness of the measures implemented by universities in these domains, reflecting positive outcomes in these management strategies. However, the analysis also identifies significant variability in the responses, particularly with respect to certain aspects of management. For example, the highest standard deviation (*S.D.*) value was observed in Question 48, indicating considerable differences in respondent opinions. This suggests that while there is general satisfaction, some areas elicit diverse perspectives among respondents. In contrast, the lowest *S.D.* value was observed in Question 105, indicating strong consensus and agreement on that particular item. This pattern demonstrates that respondents' opinions were largely shaped by personal preferences, providing valuable insights into individual viewpoints. In terms of specific management areas, aspects related to association management and leadership, event organization and scheduling, and teamwork and atmosphere received generally high or moderately high ratings, which indicates that respondents are largely satisfied with these dimensions of management. However, the presence of moderate ratings in these areas also points to ongoing challenges, suggesting that further improvements are needed to optimize management in these domains.

Table 1.
Total variance explained.

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	31.774	38.749	38.749	31.774	38.749	38.749	12.888	15.718	15.718
2	15.666	19.105	57.854	15.666	19.105	57.854	11.709	14.280	29.997
3	9.892	12.063	69.917	9.892	12.063	69.917	11.670	14.232	44.229
4	5.331	6.501	76.418	5.331	6.501	76.418	10.582	12.904	57.133
5	2.927	3.569	79.987	2.927	3.569	79.987	9.807	11.960	69.093
6	2.436	2.970	82.957	2.436	2.970	82.957	7.853	9.576	78.669
7	1.774	2.164	85.121	1.774	2.164	85.121	5.290	6.451	85.121

On the other hand, the analysis highlights significant deficiencies in four critical areas: member development and growth, publicity and promotion, innovation and improvement, and strategic awareness and uniqueness. Although the mean values for these areas appeared relatively high at first glance, closer inspection reveals lower levels of satisfaction compared to other areas, indicating that these aspects require more focused attention. The relatively lower ratings suggest that these domains are perceived as less effective, and thus, targeted efforts should be made to address these gaps.

The findings underscore the importance of addressing these deficiencies to enhance the overall effectiveness of student association management in Nanchang universities. In particular, member development and growth, publicity and promotion, and innovation are crucial to ensuring the continued relevance and impact of student associations. Additionally, enhancing strategic awareness and ensuring the uniqueness of associations are essential for aligning their activities with the broader goals of the universities. Therefore, universities must implement targeted strategies to improve these areas, focusing on fostering innovation, promoting more effective publicity, and supporting the growth of student members.

In conclusion, while the overall management of student associations in Nanchang universities is satisfactory in several key areas, there are distinct challenges that need to be addressed. The moderate satisfaction in leadership, event organization, and teamwork, alongside significant gaps in areas like member development and innovation, point to the need for a more focused and strategic approach to improve the management of student associations. Addressing these shortcomings will not only optimize the management strategies but also ensure that student associations can better contribute to the holistic development of students and align with the strategic objectives of the universities.

4.3. The Results of the Exploratory Factors Analysis of Effective Strategic Management of Student's Association of Universities in Nanchang City.

This study used the maximum variance rotation method (varimax) to rotatethe data in order to identify the corresponding relationship between factors andresearch items, The table above shows the information extraction of factors forresearch items, as well as the corresponding relationship between factors and research items. From the table above, it can be seen that the commonality values for all research items are higher than 0.4, and the absolute value of the corresponding factor loading coefficient is greater than 0.5, indicating a strong correlation between research items and factors, and factors can effectively extract information. Therefore, the scale has good structural validity. The 7 extracted factors are shown below:

4.4. Factor 1. Government Support

1. Government policies contribute to the innovative activities of student organizations.
2. Government support positively impacts the leadership development within student organizations.
3. Government policies motivate more students to participate in student organizations.
4. Government policies effectively guide the developmental direction of student organizations.
5. Government policies help to regulate the management and operations of student organizations.
6. Government support enhances the social impact of student organizations.
7. Government support leads higher education institutions to place greater emphasis on the management and development of student organizations.
8. Government policies provide necessary legal protections for the development of student organizations.
9. Government support makes it easier for student organizations to access resources.
10. Government policies provide a conducive environment for the growth of student organizations.
11. Financial support from the government is essential for the effective management of student organizations.
12. Government support promotes collaboration and exchanges between student organizations across different higher education institutions.
13. Government policies positively influence the diversity of student organizations.

14. The government encourages higher education institutions to support student organizations through policy measures.

15. Government policies supporting student organizations contribute to the overall development of higher education institutions.

16. Government policies play a crucial role in supporting the development of student organizations in higher education institutions.

4.5. Factor 2. Communication and Feedback

1. The management of the association is clear and unambiguous in communicating important information.

2. There is a good communication atmosphere within the association.

3. The association's management listens to the opinions and suggestions of its members.

4. I am satisfied with the feedback mechanism of the association.

5. The association's management deals with members' queries and problems in a timely manner.

6. Communication between members of the community flows smoothly.

7. I am satisfied with the internal communication channels (e.g., microblogging groups, emails, etc.) of the association.

8. The association's management holds regular meetings to communicate information.

9. The management of the association respects the members in their communication.

10. The association uses multiple platforms to ensure frequent communication with all members.

11. Communication in the association is unhindered.

4.6. Factor 3. Resource Use and Allocation

1. The association has a good resource stockage.

2. The association has adequate equipment and materials for its members.

3. I am satisfied with the overall management of the association's resources.

4. There is equity in the distribution of resources for associations.

5. The association manages its financial budget wisely.

6. I am satisfied with the efficiency with which my association's funds are used.

7. The sponsorship and support of the association are distributed appropriately.

8. The association makes effective use of external resources and support.

9. The resources used by associations in their activities are adequate.

10. Associations are transparent in the use of their funds.

11. The management budget ensures that resources are available throughout the academic year.

4.7. Factor 4. Event Organization and Scheduling

1. The association's activities engage the members.

2. I am satisfied with the diversity of my association's activities.

3. The scale of the association's activities is appropriate.

4. The association manages its financial budget wisely.

5. The theme of the association's activities is creative.

6. The preparations for the activities of the association are well thought out.

7. I am able to stay up-to-date on the latest trends in industry.

8. The association uses multiple platforms to ensure frequent communication with all members.

9. Association activities are held regularly as planned.

10. The scheduling of the organization's activities takes into account the academic workload of its members.

11. The schedule of association activities is reasonable.

4.8. Factor 5. Association Management and Leadership

1. I think the management of the society have a clear plan for the long-term development of the society.

2. The leadership of the society provides regular feedback to members on management.
3. I am satisfied with the execution of the society's management.
4. I have confidence in the professionalism of my association's management.
5. The leadership of the association is timely in dealing with problems.
6. The leadership of the society is innovative in its management.
7. Members of the student association actively participate in decision-making processes due to encouragement.
8. The society's management treats all members fairly.
9. The society's management is transparent in its decision-making process.
10. I think the leadership skills of the club president are satisfactory.
11. I am satisfied with the overall management of the association's leadership.

4.9. Factor 6. Management Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms
1. The association has a clear code of conduct.
2. The association respects the privacy of its members.
3. The association has a clear assignment of raesponsibilities.
4. The association's decision-making process is transparent.
5. The management team of association promptly responds to members' concerns or complaints regarding their work.
6. The association's management corrects mistakes in a timely manner after they have been made.
7. I am satisfied with the transparency of the management of the association.
8. The association has clear accountability mechanisms.
9. The association has effective evaluation and feedback mechanisms.
10. The association's management system is open and transparent.
11. The management of the association regularly discloses its financial situation to its members.

4.10. Factor 7 Teamwork and Atmosphere
1. Team members support each other during task execution.
2. I am satisfied with the culture of teamwork in my association.
3. There is good teamwork within the association.
4. There is a good relationship between the members of the association.
5. The association organizes team-building activities.
6. There is a good spirit of mutual assistance within the association.
7. The association has a clear division of labor and responsibilities.
8. I am satisfied with the overall atmosphere of the community.
9. The association focus on teamwork in its activities.
10. The association has clear rules for teamwork.
11. The association encourages cooperation between members.

4.11. Results of Guidelines for the Effective Strategic Management Model of Student's Association of Universities in Nanchang City

The content analysis of the guide to an effective strategic management model for student unions in Nanchang's colleges and universities was done by nine experts and veterans who shared their professional experiences and opinions. In summary, the key factors identified through this research underscore the importance of a holistic approach to effective strategic management of student's association of universities that incorporate government support, communication and feedback, resource use and allocation, event organization and scheduling, Association management and leadership, management transparency and accountability mechanisms, teamwork and atmosphere. These insights provide a foundation for designing and implementing guidelines for effective strategic management aimed at enhancing effective strategic management model of Student's association of universities in Nanchang City.
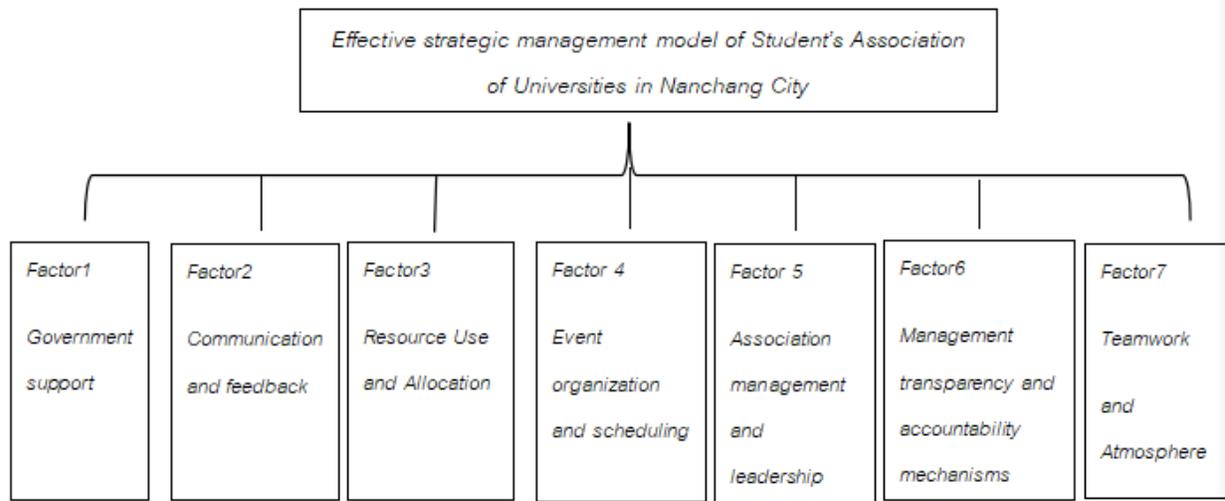
Figure 1.
Names of 7 factors.

The effective strategic management model for student associations in universities in Nanchang City should integrate seven key factors. Government support provides essential funding, policy guidance, and frameworks for sustainable development. Communication and feedback systems ensure clear, open exchanges among members, administrators, and stakeholders, fostering collaboration and problem-solving. Resource utilization and allocation focus on optimizing financial, human, and material resources to support activities and goals. Event organization and scheduling should align with the academic calendar and institutional objectives to maximize participation and engagement. Association management and leadership require strong governance, clear roles, and decision-making structures to guide the organization effectively. Management transparency and accountability mechanisms ensure openness in decision-making and resource use, building trust among stakeholders. Finally, teamwork and atmosphere create a supportive, collaborative environment that promotes creativity and a strong sense of community, essential for achieving collective goals. These factors, when effectively combined, enable student associations to operate efficiently and align with broader university objectives.

5. Discussion

The research findings highlight 7 key factors that significantly influence the strategic management of student associations in Nanchang City. Firstly, government support emerged as a critical enabler of student association effectiveness. Data indicated that associations receiving consistent financial and policy support from government bodies were able to implement a wider range of activities and engage more effectively with students. This aligns with the finding that governmental backing provides a solid foundation for sustainability and operational growth (Kyriakides, 2015).

Secondly, communication and feedback mechanisms were found to be essential in fostering an environment of collaboration. The survey results suggest that associations with structured communication channels experienced fewer coordination issues and greater alignment between university administration and student leaders. These findings corroborate previous research highlighting the positive impact of clear communication in organizational settings (Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000).

Moreover, resource utilization and allocation played a pivotal role in the success of student associations. Associations that had well-defined strategies for managing human, financial, and material resources showed higher efficiency and were able to maximize their impact. This supports the notion that resource optimization is vital for organizational performance, as evidenced by previous studies on organizational management (Luenendonk, 2022).

In conclusion, the integration of these factors into a strategic management model is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of student associations in Nanchang. The findings suggest that a balanced approach, combining strong leadership, transparency, and effective resource management, is critical for achieving alignment with institutional goals and fostering student engagement.

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