

# Leadership competence of the teacher as a factor in the development of professional skills

## La competencia del liderazgo docente como factor en el desarrollo de la excelencia profesional

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#### ABSTRACT:

This study presents leadership as a specific type of activity in education. The focus of the research is on the content and structure of leadership competence as one of the goals of professional training in pedagogical universities with much attention paid to the ways students and teachers conceptualize this phenomenon. The results of the study allow putting forward some ideas concerning the techniques of developing leadership qualities as part of the teacher's professional competence.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical leadership, Leadership competence, Leadership competency, Leadership qualities

#### RESUMEN:

Este estudio representa el liderazgo en educación. El objetivo principal del estudio es el contenido y la estructura de la competencia de liderazgo como uno de los objetivos de la formación profesional en una universidad pedagógica, mientras se presta mucha atención a la forma en que los estudiantes y los profesores interpretan este fenómeno. Los resultados del estudio nos permiten presentar algunas ideas sobre técnicas para desarrollar habilidades de liderazgo como parte de la competencia profesional del maestro.

**Palabras clave:** Liderazgo pedagógico, competencia de liderazgo, competencia de liderazgo, cualidades de liderazgo

## 1. Introduction

Modern Russia, aiming at fostering all spheres of its society, prefers clear guidelines that could solidify its future. A special attention is paid to an individual who, with his/her intellectual potential, experience and personal traits, is capable of initiating innovative ideas, creating effective technologies and responding productively and adequately to global challenges. In other words, he/she should possess certain qualities characterizing him as a leader. In accordance with the Federal State Standard of Education in Russia, the development of leadership competence is one of the educational goals. Undoubtedly, a significant role in achieving it belongs to teachers because it is on them that the image of the future citizen depends. In this context, the teacher is supposed to acquire leadership qualities that he/she is called upon to form in students.

The purpose of the article is to provide leadership competence conceptualization based on scientific literature analysis and generalization of advanced education practices and to find out whether this conceptualization correlates with students' and teachers' perception of this notion. We seek to identify

the structure and content of this competence and provide empirical evidence regarding the attitudes of teachers and students to leadership and ways of its development.

Any educational system is the target of various reforms and the Russian educational system is no exception. The competence paradigm of education that took root in Russia a couple of decades ago is based on the principles of active learning, collective participation and individual learning strategies (Selevko G.K., 2004). Accordingly, the learner is recognized as a self-value and a bearer of individual experience. He perceives pedagogical influence as the disclosure of his personal potential, a source of individual activity and development resources (Khutorskoy A.V., 2003). This leads to the formation of such qualities as responsibility, initiative, sociability, erudition, creativity, perseverance etc. (Nesivkina I.V., 2014; Scherbinina N.G., 2017). In total they can be implemented in motivational, instrumental and reflexive components of leadership (Kagan M.S., 2019).

The development of leadership competence as an educational innovation allows: a) to achieve societal and educational goals; b) to enhance the efficiency and improve the quality of teacher training; c) to develop practical and prognostic leadership skills; d) to contribute to personal and professional success.

Although leadership competence appears to be a well-established term, there exist its various interpretations, which requires clarifying to support practice (Burns J. M., 2012). The discussion of the notion "leadership competence" is confined to the analysis of the terms "leadership" and "competency", the distinction between competence and competency, which are complementary concepts in Russian pedagogical context, being very fine.

Competency is viewed as a result of learning, a range of issues in which an individual is versed, or as a body of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, while competence is interpreted as an ability to carry out a certain type of activity on the basis of corresponding competencies resulting in acquiring personal qualities. The content of leadership competence is determined by the nature of the leader's activity, whereas the set of competencies comprising this competence is governed by the structure of this activity (Khutorskoy A.V., 2003; Selevko G.K., 2004).

The notion of leadership admits of various interpretations largely explained by different views on the nature of an individual and personality in educational context and on the mechanisms and conditions of their formation in various scientific schools and theories.

The theory of traits or personal qualities is based on the hereditary principle in accordance with which leaders are supposed to have a set of inborn qualities such as ambition, adaptability, an ability to influence the situation, to foresee, to attract attention that help them bring a person to success (Galton F., 2010). Behavioral theories focus on the style of leadership, which is understood as a set of characteristic techniques and methods to influence people (Levin K., 2000).

The proponents of situational theories consider leaders as a result of coincidence of the subject, place, time and circumstances thus implying that it is the situation that arouses leadership qualities and ignores the active position of the leader (Hersey P., 1984).

According to the situational-personal theory, the phenomenon of leadership is determined by the following factors: personal qualities of a leader, the motives of a leader, the image of a leader and his/her followers' motives to submit to him, role characteristics of a leader and institutional context (Gerth H., Mills C.W., 1952). The motivational theory states that the leader is the result of interaction with his/her followers and is viewed through the effectiveness of his/her activity and the ability to influence the motivation of the followers to experience satisfaction while solving a problem (Evans M.G., 1970). In keeping with the "path-goal" approach formulated by T. Mitchell and R. House, the effective leader must inspire, motivate and persuade those around him/her to achieve the set goals (Drucker P.F., 2006; House R.J., Mitchell T.R., 1974, 1975).

The leadership contingent model is based on the integration of the leader's influence, his/her personal qualities, situational variables and, particularly, relationship between the leader and his followers. Accordingly, there exist two leadership styles: task-oriented instrumental style and emotional style based on interactional relationships (Fiedler F.E., Chemers M.M., 1984).

In the Russian scientific context, leadership is often associated with management and decision-making process (Parygin B.D., 1971). The leader should motivate his/her followers to focus on their self-realization and self-development in teamwork and harmonious interaction with the followers. The leader should take into account both his/her personal qualities as well as group values and norms. One of the most significant tasks of the leader is to inspire the team to work productively and achieve common goals at the lowest cost. Leadership as a democratic value encourages participation of each team member in decision-making process. Consequently, collaboration with the followers and maintaining productive relationships promote setting clear and achievable goals and developing team spirit (Ivancevich D.M., Lobanov A.A., 2006; Napris A.V., 2009).

Thus being a set of intellectual, personal and professional qualities and skills, leadership is realized in teamwork and has an interactive and situational character, determined by such situational factors as personal qualities of team members, their self-realization and ability to influence the situation.

## 2. Methodology

Proceeding from the theory of activity (Leontyev A.N., 2011) as the methodological basis of our research, leadership can be defined as a special kind of human activity aimed to develop leader's qualities. As a pedagogical phenomenon, leadership should be considered from the angle of educational objectives, teaching techniques and roles of teachers and trainees in the learning process. Since the individual development of students takes place in cognitive activity, the teacher's leadership role consists in supporting their interests, values and personal experience to help them realize their intellectual and emotional potential.

Pedagogical leadership is motivational and prognostic by nature, which means that team members are result-oriented, the result being understood as the final educational product. Another leadership feature to be mentioned is its informational and cognitive character manifested in the scope of knowledge, skills and abilities aimed at searching, processing and storing information later transformed into productive knowledge to be used in further pedagogical activity.

The innovative aspect of pedagogical leadership involves non-standard solutions of professional tasks, proposing new ideas and their implementation into educational practice.

Leadership can never be realized unless it possesses a creative nature implying the development in trainees such abilities as critical thinking, choosing priorities, strategic goal setting.

The empathic-participatory essence of leadership in education reflects the system of teacher-student relations uniting them against the background of common activities and each other's emotional perception and abilities to interpret mutual experience in a reflexive way.

The instrumental character of pedagogical leadership is associated with the choice of problem-solving techniques, where the teacher's leadership position consists in advancing a general direction in decision-making, in designing algorithms and taking responsibility for the result of the collaborative activity.

The interactive mode of teacher-trainees cooperation determines the communicative nature of leadership, which embraces all aspects of pedagogical "dialogue".

The activity approach to leadership competence research disclosed in the above-mentioned characteristics of leadership in education is supplemented with experimental survey providing data obtained in the course of questioning.

About one hundred of second and third-year students and 35 teachers of the Foreign Languages faculty of the South Ural State Humanitarian Pedagogical University participated in the survey.

## 3. Results

The content analysis of leadership as an activity allowed us to identify a set of competencies that ensures the implementation of leadership competence (Table 1). It includes **informational, managerial, empathic-participatory and communicative** competencies, but is not reduced to the sum of these components. Each of the competencies presented has in its structure **cognitive, operational and personal components**.

**Table 1**  
The structure and content of the leadership competence

Competency	Content	Cognitive component	Operational component	Personal component	Pedagogical functions
<b>Informational</b>	Mastering knowledge and information which manifests in a network principle of operation, virtual character, spontaneous clip presentation, requiring modern means of searching, receiving, storing and processing information to implement	Types of information sources (printed, multimedia, Internet), basic information search algorithms, methods of processing, presenting and storing information, etc.	Skills: search for information, work with various sources of information, analysis and evaluation of the information received, maintaining security, accuracy and completeness of information.	Personal qualities: erudition, awareness, curiosity and hunger for knowledge.	Cognitive, informational, analytical, reflexive.

	effective communication.				
<b>Managerial</b>	Mastering a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for goal setting, organization, execution, control and accounting in the educational process.	Awareness of the goal, openness to information required for correct decision-making, forecasting the results of problem-solving, choosing adequate approaches to achieve goals, motivating teamwork, management styles, functions, forms, methods and tools, management quality criteria.	Skills: launching a decision-making mechanism, realizing feedback, forming numerous behavioral stereotypes and habits underlying standard norms of students' behavior.	Personal qualities: responsibility, initiative, creativity, interpersonal attractions and professionalism.	Prognostic, organizational, stimulating, reflexive, controlling, evaluative.
<b>Empathic-participatory</b>	Organizing interpersonal interaction based on the perception and understanding of emotional and axiological attitudes of students and the teacher to the world around them.	The concepts of empathy and participativity, types of empathy, means of empathy and participativity	Skills: to overcome errors of perception, organize group interaction, work in team, envisage possible difficulties and overcome them, provide feedback, predict behaviors.	Personal qualities: tolerance, respect for people, understanding and acceptance of diverse forms of self-expression, manifestations of human individuality, desire for cooperation.	Cognitive, stimulating, managerial, analytical, emotional and evaluative.
<b>Communicative</b>	Information exchange and personal development in the course of teacher-student cognitive interaction.	The concept of communication, types of communication, communication styles, norms of communication, ways of interaction etc.	Skills: to make use of group work methods, build strategies to communicate with various social groups, maintain contacts, admit various social and communicative roles and apply technologies of dialogue and polylogue	Personal qualities: ability to communicate, respect for other people, tolerance, emotionality.	Communicative, cognitive, reflexive and stimulating functions.

Our conceptualization of leadership competence implies that the value constituents embodied in empathic-participatory competency should be viewed as fundamental and reflecting the humanistic nature of leadership. It means that this competency plays a system-forming role, thus determining the specifics and functioning of other competencies.

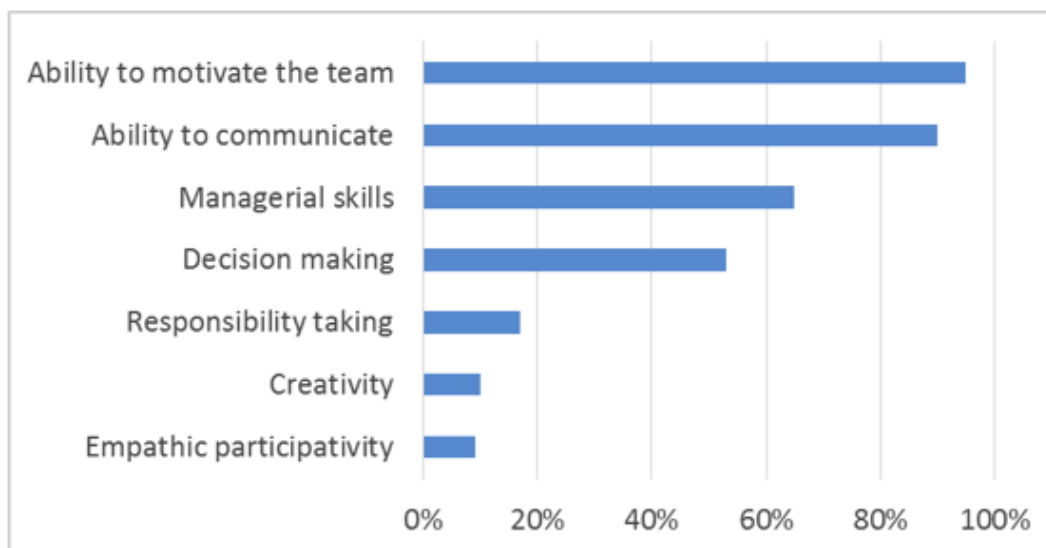
Empathy involves emotional knowledge that helps understand the other person, share his feelings; the ability to experience and sympathize and to assume the role of another person. It is generally recognized that leadership is closely related to emotional intelligence developing in an individual the ability to understand both his/her emotions and other people's feelings and emotional states (Goleman D., 2006).

Participativity in the structure of the competency under analysis also focuses on the development of forms of interpersonal interaction. It implies self-organization, self-control, mutual assistance and development of common strategies that determine the behavior of each student as well as taking responsibility for the results of joint activities and their effectiveness (Afanasyeva O., Nikitina E.). Therefore, participativity reflects such an important aspect of leadership as democratization of decision-making process based on voluntariness, mutual interest and consensus.

The purpose of the survey was to identify the students and teachers' perception of leadership competence and its role in the professional development of a teacher. The survey revealed that more than half of teachers (56%) do not take into account the necessity to develop leadership competence of students in their work though it is connected with their future professional activity. At the same time, about 85% of respondents believe that certain qualities of a leader, such as initiative, erudition and responsibility should be considered as belonging to other competences developed in the education process. About 32% of the surveyed teachers hold that the teacher should possess leadership skills in the framework of his innovation activities.

We compiled a list of basic qualities related to leadership competencies described in Table 1. When asked what qualities from the proposed list are required for a leader, the teachers favoured the following ones (Fig. 1).

**Figure 1**  
A survey of teachers' selected leadership qualities



Answering the question whether they have leadership qualities, about 70% of respondents gave a negative answer, about 3% said that they did not feel as a leader and did not want to be the one, and 6% had never thought about it.

Thus, the survey shows that teachers have some difficulties in explaining their attitude to the phenomenon of leadership, regarding it as a manifestation of the administrative type of activity.

The second stage of the survey aimed at identifying the students' attitude to leadership. The students were asked to answer six questions presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
A survey of students' attitudes to leadership

Question	No	Rather No than Yes	Yes	Rather Yes than No
1. Do you have leadership qualities?	52%	27%	3%	18%

2. Is leadership development a priority for you?	66%	30%	1%	3%
3. Do you think leadership has an impact on career growth?	45%	7%	33%	15%
4. Do leadership qualities influence professional development?	53%	14%	17%	16%
5. Does studying in a university contribute to the formation of leadership qualities?	15%	49%	19%	17%

Answering the first question, only 21% of the respondents gave a positive answer, 79 % said they had no leadership qualities at all or they doubted. This result is proved by the fact that 96 % of the students do not see leadership development as a top priority goal, though 48% agree that leadership qualities influence career success. While 33% of the surveyed connect leadership with further professional growth, 64% note the absence of leadership focus in professional training at the university.

On the next stage of the research, we offered the students a list of leadership qualities and asked to rank them from the point of view of their significance for professional career. The obtained results are given in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
Ranking leadership qualities

Quality	Ability to motivate	Team work	Interpersonal communication	Responsibility	Decision making	Erudition	Tolerance	Creativity	Promotion of new ideas
Rank	97%	60%	54 %	43%	41%	39%	34%	25%	15%

Finally, the students rated their leadership qualities on a scale from 0 to 2 (0 - these qualities are not manifested, 1 - poorly manifested, 2 – fully manifested). The results of this survey are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
The students' self-esteem of their leadership abilities

Quality	The quality is not manifested (% of respondents)	The quality is poorly manifested (% of respondents)	The quality is e fully manifested (% of respondents)
1. Erudition	12%	16%	72%
2. Interpersonal communication	3%	27%	70%
3. Teamwork	27%	30%	43%
4. Tolerance	15%	63%	22%
5. Decision making	23%	69%	8%
6 Responsibility	21%	46%	33%
7. The promotion of new ideas	1%	44%	15%
8. Creativity	10%	52%	38%
9. Ability to motivate group members	33%	40%	27%

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The majority of the students 72% and 70% show the high level of development of such qualities such as erudition and interpersonal communication. This fact justifies that students are likely to have strict stereotypes that make it hard to realize their personal qualities, but on the other hand, the diversity of data about other qualities manifests great potential in realization of these qualities or absence of individual experience in this field.

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## 4. Discussion

The analysis of the results demonstrates that the prevailing part of students diagnose the absence or partial presence of individual leadership qualities. It suggests that the problem of pedagogical leadership and personal qualities of a leader requires theoretical and methodological comprehension and interpretation to improve the quality of teacher training at the university.

Our research reveals that when a teacher comes into contact with a student or a group of students his (her) pedagogical activity takes the form of leadership, the leadership qualities mentioned above making this activity relevant and open to students. Such qualities as erudition, critical thinking, openness to new ideas, goal-orientation etc. change the content of pedagogical activity by making it innovative. The group of qualities including sociability, desire for cooperation and teamwork, motivation, creativity inspire interaction opening a way to collaborative means of activity. At the same time tolerance, respect for people, acceptance of diversity influence the structure of teaching activity by attaching importance to humanistic values. Thus, leadership not only allows the pedagogical environment to be influenced but also to be transformed.

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## 5. Conclusions

The results of our study of leadership competence in education brought us to the following conclusions:

The necessity to develop leadership competence as an indispensable requirement for an effective teacher is very often neglected in professional training since leadership qualities are sometimes viewed as manifestations of administrative career.

Constantly changing educational environment needs a new type of teacher who can immediately respond to the transformations of the social context, make the necessary decisions, share responsibility, promote new ideas and develop these qualities in their students.

Leadership competence can be efficiently developed in teacher training process if it encompasses its cognitive, operational and personal aspects. For the use in educational practice, we can recommend interactive technologies, problem and communicative situations, discussions, case studies, projects as the most productive techniques promoting basic leadership qualities.

The involvement of students in extra-curricular activities, namely in scientific research, international cooperation and students' autonomy creates a wide field for the realization of leadership qualities.

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