

The Structural and Conceptual Model of Development of Leadership in Junior School Children

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses a problem that is currently relevant for the modern society - the development of leadership. It attempts to analyze theoretically the literary sources that cover the development of leadership. The authors give their opinion on the general leadership theory, which regards leadership as a two-subject phenomenon, give their reasoning behind the necessity of developing leadership at the junior school age, and distinguish the peculiarities of junior schoolchildren. Research methodology used in the elaboration of structural-content model of leadership development in junior schoolchildren was based on axiological, system, activity and the student-centered approaches. This model includes the following components: objectives, tasks, theoretical and methodological frameworks, principles, types of activity, criteria of the formation of leadership, indicators of the formation of leadership, and the expected results. Proposed recommendations will simplify the work of specialists for developing leadership in junior schoolchildren by giving them the opportunity to observe the respective process, predict results, and make timely corrections.

KEYWORDS

Leadership, leadership qualities, leadership skills, junior school children leadership, model of development of leadership

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Introduction

The modern society is characterized by intensive reforms in all fields. Therefore, there is a demand for individuals, capable of rallying and uniting people to solve common tasks quickly. This can only be accomplished by people with developed leadership skills (Jordan, Healey & Leahy, 2016).

Leadership is one of the uniting mechanisms of group activity, when an individual or part of a social group acts as a leader, i.e. organizes and guides the actions of the entire group that anticipates, accepts, and supports the leader's actions (Alimo-Metcalf, 2013). It is also developed both in the "natural" social

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environment, and in artificially created conditions. It is an art of relationships, the skills of which are acquired both in real activities and by means of artificially created situations (Zhереbova, 1973).

The opinion of psychologists and pedagogues regarding the phenomenon of leadership is of interest. In psychology, the leader is regarded as a member of a group, to which it gives the right to make important decisions in important situations, i.e. the most authoritative individual that actually plays the major role in the organization of joint activity and the management of relations within the group (Taykova, 2014). In pedagogy, the leader is regarded as a member of a group with the highest status, who is given the right to make decisions in situations that are important for the group (Arkin, 1929; Dakhin, 2002; Parygin, 2003).

It is pertinent to point out that education can form the habit of a leader, develop knowledge of leadership, skills and abilities of constructing leadership roles and functions, and leadership skills (Riggio & Mumford, 2011). So there are three main approaches to developing leadership skills and abilities: psychological, pedagogical, and comprehensive (Glazkova, 2004; Taykova, 2014).

Leadership in junior schoolchildren is formed when the pupils are involved in various types of activity. The teachers plays a major role in their development by constantly teaching the pupils to perform various tasks and by creating necessary situations (Grigorov & Mukhortov, 1994). The foundation in this case is the leadership theory, which is based on the assumption that the manifestation of a specific type of leadership depends on the situation in which the group or the individual that subsequently becomes its leader finds itself (Day et al., 2016).

Leadership qualities also can be formed in a situation of successful leadership behavior: an individual that plays the role of a leader for a long time may form and consolidate the necessary traits (that, which was the social role now becomes part of him or herself); in addition, since leadership is a social phenomenon, it is necessary to master the leadership models of behavior during interpersonal and intragroup interaction (Duncan, 2013).

Another important factor and condition for the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren is the psychological and pedagogical diagnosis of the child group and the influence of its leader. The teacher should influence the development of leadership based on the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil and help the pupils develop and consolidate their positive traits and eliminate flaws (Ponomarenko, 2001).

In Kazakhstan, the problem of leadership, like other strategically important objectives, is enshrined in governmental documents on education (The Concept of the State Youth Policy up to 2020 "Kazakhstan 2020: the Path to the Future", 2013). On the other hand, despite numerous attempts to study leadership in various schools and through various approaches, the problem not only remains relevant, but also requires more attention of scientists and pedagogues with each passing year.

Many models of development of leadership exist nowadays (Day et al., 2016; Peterson, O'Reilly & Wellman, 2016). However, a structural and conceptual model of personal development of junior schoolchildren is lacking.

Literature Review

Leadership has many definitions, which is explained by the multidimensionality of this phenomenon and the fact that the problem of leadership is currently under development (Kudryashova, 1996).

According to A. Meneghetti (2004), leadership is determined by three factors – the situation, the group, and the personal qualities of the leader. The diversity of approaches to studying leadership is explained by the fact that it can be regarded from various perspectives: as a result of communication, as a process of group organization, etc.

Some scholars consider leadership a positive influence (Foli et al., 2014; Haber, 2013). According to this concept, if the goal of group member “A” is to change the behavior of member “B”, then the effort of “A” is an attempt at leadership. If member “B” actually changed his or her behavior after the efforts of “A”, then the leadership was successful. If the change in the behavior of “B” satisfied, rewarded, and achieved the goal of member “A”, then, according to B.M. Bass (1960), this leadership is effective. A leader is positioned as a group member, whose right to make the most responsible decisions that influence the interests of the entire group and determine the entire group’s course of activity, are recognized by all other group members (Umansky, 1980).

In the aggregate, in recent studies leadership interprets as one of the processes of organization and management of a small social group, which helps achieve group goals in optimal terms and with optimal efficiency (Haber, 2013; Khodayeva, 2002).

W. Blank (1995) emphasizes in the leadership phenomenon the obligatory presence of followers, i.e. the element, which underlies leadership and gives an individual the right to be considered a leader.

The study of Kazakhstan’s experience and that of other countries shows that leadership can be learned and taught. This study shares the opinion of Italian researcher A. Meneghetti (2004), who believes that each individual acquires certain makings of a leader at birth, but this does not imply that he or she will be a leader in the future.

The diversity of psychological models of the development of leadership is related to scientific achievements and the multitude of leadership theories (Allayarova, 2011). According to these models, the ethic competence of a leader can be complemented by knowledge of the mechanisms of influence and psychotechnics. Training can recreate the conditions that are similar to those that form the individual habit of a leader and develop a leader’s knowledge of him- or herself and of the followers.

Some scholars (Mumford, 2011; Bass, 1960; Smyth, Down & McInerney, 2014) also made the assumption that the demand for this or that leader is determined by the time, place, and circumstances.

The advantage of pedagogical theories, compared to the psychological models, is that they work with individuals, whose habit is still being formed. They imply both the theoretical familiarization of children with the concepts of “leader” and “leadership”, as well as the creation of situations that require leadership and teaching to act in accordance with the roles and functions of a leader (Petrenko, 2013). The teaching of leadership ought to base on the values of an individual and the society, and the consideration of national traditions; therefore, modern models should be comprehensive.



The development of leadership in junior schoolchildren has several stages (orientation, familiarization, enrichment), which correspond with the logic of development of this dynamic personal development (Zaluzhny, 1931). The goal of the first stage is to actualize leadership needs (personalization, self-expression, recognition, achievement, respect, aspiration to take the leading position); the second stage shifts focus to the activation of leadership abilities (self-realization of potential abilities to organize, manage, analyze, and influence hidden, implicit, and non-actualized potentials that manifest in certain conditions, situations, and means during the educational process in elementary school); the third stage is aimed at organizing leadership interaction (communication, constructive relationship between subjects of the educational process; development of personally important interaction, constantly changing leadership positions of junior schoolchildren that are determined by their competence of emotional enrichment) (Zaluzhny, 1929).

The emergence and existence of leadership requires a combination of two of its aspects that are associated with the dual nature of leadership. On the one hand, the need of the child community for various leaders, on the other hand, the personality traits of the child: his or her inclination, motivation, character, and need for self-affirmation (Peters, 2015).

Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze theoretically the literary sources on the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren and to substantiate the characteristics of the designed structural and conceptual model. The attempt to outline the key points in the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren is presented in the form of a structural and conceptual model.

Research questions

Analysis of pedagogical literature and current recommendations for leadership development shows that there is a lack of models that have been created on the integrated approach to the study of the formation of leadership qualities.

So the objectives of our study are:

- to analyze theoretical base of leadership development;
- to describe the specifics of development of leadership skills in Junior School Children;
- to create the structural and conceptual model of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren.

Method

Research methodology used in the elaboration of structural-content model of leadership development in junior schoolchildren was based on axiological, system, activity and the student-centered approaches. To write this article we used the following methods: theoretical analysis and synthesis of information in psychological, pedagogical, philosophical, and sociological literature, abstraction, concretization, analogy, and modeling.

In this study, the presentation of the model of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren was preceded by an attempt to analyze the existing models of development of leadership: O.V. Yevtikhov's (2012) "Socio-psychological model of development of the leadership potential of a manager as an organizational leader",

D. Vyunova's (2012) "Forming leadership qualities in prospective teachers in the high school educational environment", I. Inyakina's (2009) "The structural and functional model of development of leadership potential in senior schoolchildren through pedagogical stimulation", K. Yemelin's (2010) "The role of student groups in training young leaders for sociocultural activity", and Ye. Lukhmenyova's (2010) "The relevance of the formation of leadership qualities in military school students" (Yevtikhov, 2012).

The model proposed in table 1 includes the following components: objective, tasks, theoretical and methodological framework, principles, types of activity, criteria of the formation of leadership, indicators of the formation of leadership, and the results.

Table 1. The structural and conceptual model of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren.

Objective block	Objective:	<i>to develop leadership in junior schoolchildren</i>		
	Tasks:	1) to motivate to accept the leading role; 2) to develop leadership skills; 3) to develop self-analysis skills; 4) to form a culture of perception of leadership subjects.		
Conceptual	Theoretical framework	theories:	L.S. Vygotsky, R.L. Krichevsky	
	Methodological framework	approaches:	systems, activity-based, axiological, personality oriented	
		principles:	subjectivity, individualization, and natural conformity	
Stages of development of leadership	1) the child studies itself and its leadership potential; 2) self-management, self-regulation, 3) organization of the activity of others.			
Organizational and activity-based	Types of activity	Learning		
		Work		
		Game		
		Communication		
Results and criteria	Criteria of formation	motivational component	needs, motivation, attitude, emotions.	
		activity component	actions, activity, leadership behavior.	
		reflective component	the leader's ability to self-analyze, the culture of perception of leadership subjects	
	Indicators	motivation to accept the leading role, self-analysis, and leadership activity		
		the ability to perform the leadership activity		
		a formed culture of perception of leadership subjects		
	Result	junior schoolchild with developed leadership	proper-leadership component	psychological qualities: communicativeness personal ability to lead, high self-esteem organizational qualities: the ability to create a team and manage it
perceptive-leadership component			perceptive qualities: authority in class, being perceived as a leader by classmates	



This model is neither rigid, nor univariate. It is a flexible model of the studied object and serves as a means of studying and improving the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren.

The following diagnostic materials were used to study the level of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren: the technique for determining communicative and organizational abilities; pedagogical observation; the “Do you know yourself?” method; “The Tree” (Ponomarenko, 2001); the method of self-esteem measurement; sociometrics; a questionnaire for parents; a questionnaire for teachers.

Data, Analysis, and Results

The theoretical framework of the model suggested in this study included L.S. Vygotsky’s (1963) theory of mental development and R.L. Krichevsky’s (2007) leadership theory. The methodological framework of the model included the axiological, systems, activity-based, and personality oriented approaches.

The systems approach enables the interaction of all parts of the structural and conceptual model of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren. This, in turn, stimulates the development of all components of this process in complexity and unity. The systems principle ensures the holism of the process, improves its effectiveness, and enables studying the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren as a unified system with various internal successive connections.

The activity-based approach allows junior schoolchildren to learn actively the knowledge and skills related to the conceptual component of the structural and conceptual model. The axiological approach allows determining the moral values as the foundation of the moral development of an individual during the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren. The personality oriented approach focuses all the components of the structural and conceptual model on the development of the personality of junior schoolchildren.

The objective block of the designed structural and conceptual model is determined by the need to develop leadership in elementary school as an important stage in the formation of a personality. The objective is to develop leadership in junior schoolchildren, which is seen in the accomplishment of the following tasks: to motivate junior schoolchildren to accept the leading role; to develop leadership skills; to develop self-analysis skills; to form a culture of perception of leadership subjects.

The theoretical and methodological approaches determined the principles of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren: subjectivity, individualization, and natural conformity. According to the subjectivity principles, a child should become a true subject of the group’s life.

The individualization principle implies the creation of conditions for the formation of the child’s individuality.

The principle of natural conformity implies the scientific study of the interrelation between natural and sociocultural processes and the development of pupils with regard to their gender and age.

The interconnection of blocks is ensured by feedback forms that provide real time and high quality information on the state of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren.

The main types of activity are as follows: learning, work, communication, and game, since they are part of the individual development of a person. It is worth

noting that different types of activity have different objects for applying activity. For instance, the objects of communication are people and animals; the object of a game is the process and a certain result in an arbitrary field of activity; the object of learning is the system of concrete knowledge; the object of labor is the produced material and creative result.

The criteria block includes the motivational, activity, and reflective component. The motivational component is the initiating function – the formation of the junior schoolchildren’s need for leadership activity. The activity component is the technological function – the formation of experience of leadership. The reflective component is the regulatory function – the formation of a reflective attitude to the product of their activity in junior schoolchildren. The above components have functional links and dependences that form a holistic image of the leader in junior schoolchildren. The indicators of the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren are as follows: motivation to accept the leading role, self-analysis, leadership activity, the ability to perform the leadership activity, and a formed culture of perception of leadership subjects.

It is necessary to develop leadership according to the distinguished stages. It is worth noting that the development of competences related to each stage provides for the fastest achievement of the set objective.

In this study, leadership in junior schoolchildren was formed according to the presented structural and conceptual model. A special program for developing leadership in junior schoolchildren was compiled.

The development of leadership included the following areas: fairytale therapy, cooperative games, and training exercises.

Outstanding pedagogue V.O. Sukhomlynskyi (1976) noted that the fairytale is a seed that grows to become the child’s emotional evaluation of phenomena encountered in life. Fairytales have a strong psychological and educational effect on the child’s inner world; they are a powerful tool that can develop the self-consciousness of subjects of the educational environment. Through fairytales, the child learns human values, comes to know the world, acquires experiences in adult independent life, builds its own model of the world, and learns to live therein (Boym, 1969).

The experiment used I.V. Vachkov’s (2011) psychological fairytales about the leadership of junior schoolchildren. It is a collection of nine fairytales with a common theme – the concept of leadership. The fairytales are written in a language that allows children to identify as best a possible with the protagonist – a person with a certain quality. To that end, the fairytales do not mention the names of their child characters, but rather leave empty spaces between parentheses, so that the teachers could insert the name of the child they were working with while reading the fairytale. These fairytales can help develop the main leadership qualities in children. For instance, when working with the “King’s Advice” fairytale, children learn to improve the environment they live in; the “Aquaputs” fairytale helps develop trust during teamwork and take risks when making decisions; when analyzing the “Ant House” fairytale, children learn to offer their own solutions to various problems (Vachkov, 2011).

Cooperative games are effective in developing leadership qualities. The game implies an independent activity of junior schoolchildren, through which they begin communicating with their peers for the first time. They are united by a common



goal, joint effort put into its achievement, common interest, and common experience. Games improve children's self-esteem, their initiative and can-do attitude, mental processes, skills of communication and speech, independence, the ability to adapt to different situations, emotionality, and the ability to resolve conflicts and to take a stand. In games, children learn to feel part of the team, to judge fairly their own actions and those of their peers, to cooperate with their peers, and learn standards of behavior.

A series of different games was developed under this study, which allow choosing and playing the part of the leader. For instance, the "Web" game: children stand in a circle, reach out to the center and on the teacher's mark take each other by the hand, so that each child ends up holding the hands of other participants in both the left and the right hand (but not the hands of the children that are standing next to him or her). The children then have to untangle themselves without letting go of the hands (10 minutes). The game helps create a psychologically comfortable and creative atmosphere, and to develop the activity and mobility of children.

The "Rearrange" game consists of several tasks that require quick rearranging: by shoe size, so that the rightmost child has the largest shoe size, while the leftmost child has the smallest size; by eye color, so that the ones on the right have the lightest eye color, while those on the left – the darkest color; by height, so that the rightmost child is the tallest, while the leftmost one is the shortest. Three minutes are given to complete each task. While analyzing and discussing the gaming activity, children described their feelings and difficulties, the causes of certain failures, and the things they would change if given the chance to redo all the challenges. During the final part, the children shared the experience they acquired and selected aphorisms for leaders.

The "Family Photo" game suggests children imagine they are one big family and they have to take a photo for the family album. They choose the photographer, who then has to arrange the family members for the photo. First, they choose the "grandfather", who helps the photographer arrange the other members of the "family". Then the children independently choose who is who and where each of them should stand. The game allows the teacher to reveal the system of sympathies and antipathies in the class. Children learn to express, prove, and give reasons for their opinion, as well as to make participative decisions, which are important qualities for a leader.

Training exercises are active learning techniques, aimed at developing the knowledge, abilities, skills, social attitudes, and personal qualities. This study used exercises that created conditions for the pupils' self-disclosure and independent search for ways to achieve set goals.

The "Who Is My Leader?" exercise: at the individual stage of the exercise, each child is asked to imagine a leader – an individual, whose personal qualities make him or her a leader and an authority in many respects. This has to be a real person or a character from a book or movie. The child has one minute to characterize the individual – who he or she is, what are his or her qualities, and why the child considers him or her a model leader. Then children group into pairs and share their image of the leader with their partner (two minutes). During the third stage, children share their images of the leader with the entire group and discuss the images (three minutes).

The "Anti-leader" exercise: the teacher asks the pupils to imagine a person, who in their opinion is absolutely unsuited to be a leader, in other words, an image

of a “negative leader”, i.e. a person that has a negative influence on his or her followers. This has to be a real person or a character from a book or movie. Children have to explain their choice. The work also takes place individually, in pairs, and in groups (10 minutes).

The “Definition of Leadership” exercise: words, phrases, and sayings of famous people, definitions from dictionaries and specialized literature are written on the board. The task is to choose the ones that best fit the child’s conception of leadership and write them down in the notebook (10-15 minutes).

The “Yellow Jersey of Leadership” exercise: each pupil has five minutes to write signs for their “jerseys”. These signs have to be “expressive”, i.e. the sign has to say something about the person – his or her favorite activities, attitude to other people, what he or she wants from other people, etc. After this, the pupils read out their signs and hold a discussion. The generalized characteristics are presented in the form of a poster and put up.

The work for the development of leadership was carried out according to the designed structural and conceptual model.

A total of more than 120 third- and fourth-grade pupils and 6 teachers from secondary schools in Pavlodar participated in the experiment.

The analysis of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren in experimental classes at the start and at the end of the experiment is presented in Figure 1.

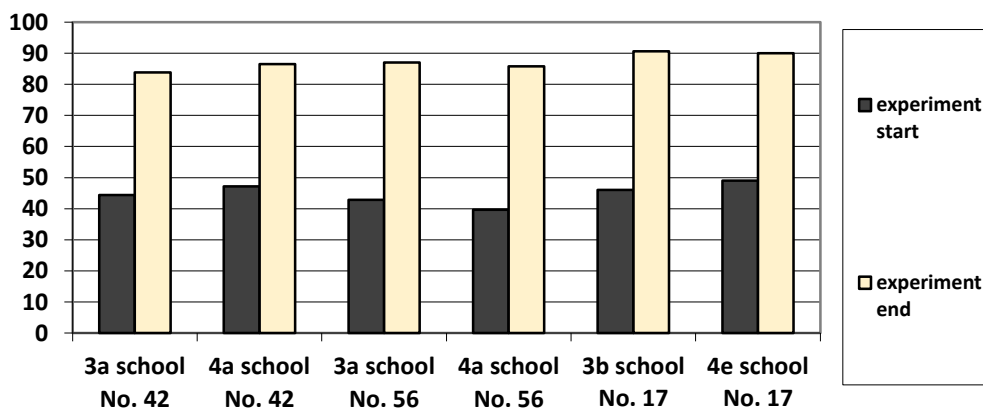


Figure 1. The analysis of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren in experimental classes at the start and at the end of the experiment.

Experimental classes showed a positive dynamic of the development of leadership, which proves the effectiveness of the model offered herein.

Discussion and Conclusion

The problem of early discovery, education, and development of future leaders is actively studied in pedagogy and psychology. This enables incorporating the latest theoretical and practical achievements into the development of qualitatively new approaches to the organization of the pedagogical process in any educational institution.



Junior school age is especially important. The interest in this age is explained by the fact this period of formation of the child's personality sees an expansion of his or her range of activities with other people, the development of such personality traits as organized nature, positive orientation, purposefulness, enterprise, etc., the formation of value orientations and attitudes, which determine the child's behavior in various circumstances.

The experience of other authors in this subject was analyzed and taken into consideration when designing the model of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren. This experience shows the necessity of an interconnection between three elements – the context, the organization, and leadership.

In terms of context, the school managers should be contextually literate. To that end, the managers should focus on evaluating their success and on developing professional opportunities for their training. It is necessary to expand the boundaries of cognitive and academic performance. National and governmental educational organizations should pay more attention to the efficient implementation and development of occupational literacy of school managers.

In terms of organization, school managers should be proficient therein, i.e. they should be able to accumulate potential. To that end, decentralization in schools should be consistent with the overall quality of the system, i.e. it is necessary to ensure the autonomy of schools with appropriate support. Schools and their communities should be the focal point of sustainable improvement strategies. The quality of the educational potential is an important intermediate variable between the management and the teacher, which affects the improvement of the pupils' performance. More attention should be paid to the opinion of pupils and managers.

In terms of leadership, schools and school systems and their leaders should confer greater professional autonomy to educational leaders, working with and through them; the role responsibilities and levels of administrative support for school leaders should be reviewed to ensure that the priority is educational leadership; models of distributive leadership and differentiated staffing (for example, administrator-only positions working for the educational leaders and wider use of teacher aides) should be trialed, evaluated and reported upon; school leaders need the strong support of quality and specific professional learning; provision of early leadership experiences for young teachers and leadership development for middle managers should become part of a whole career framework for leadership development (Mulford, 2008).

Using the same research methods professors from the University of Minnesota conducted a study aimed at the investigation of leadership qualities of students and the impact of leadership on student achievement (Seashore et al., 2010).

The result of the offered model is a junior schoolchild with developed leadership. Since leadership is a phenomenon that implies the participation of two subjects, the formation of leadership was presented as two components: proper-leadership (communicativeness, personal ability to lead, high self-esteem, the ability to create a team and manage it) and perceptive-leadership (authority in class, being perceived as a leader by classmates).

The designed model is a visual presentation of the complex process of the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren. It enables studying in detail the main fields of this process and the stages of junior schoolchildren's involvement in leadership.

The effectiveness of the model is proven by the comprehensiveness of measures. Thus, the development of leadership in junior schoolchildren is a relevant psychological, pedagogical, and social problem.

At present, the problem of early discovery and development of leadership is regarded as a strategic governmental goal, since it is related to the hopes of social progress. This study does not cover the entire problem of development of leadership in junior schoolchildren, but rather presents one of its solutions. The herein described approaches imply further theoretical and experimental studies of the development of leadership in people of different ages.

Implications and Recommendations

The study can facilitate the development of leadership by logically structuring this process and thus making it predictable and manageable. The article also provided selection and justification of the leadership development principles in younger schoolchildren. The suggested model provides visualization of the complex process of leadership development in junior schoolchildren, as well as the detailed examination of the main directions, and the steps aiming at the involvement of younger schoolchildren in leadership. It can be used in educational institutions in order to simplify the work of specialists for developing leadership in junior schoolchildren by giving them the opportunity to observe the respective process, predict results, and make timely corrections.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contribution

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