

# PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS

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## Abstract

In this article, the psychological features of the formation and development of leadership competence in students are deeply studied. The article also identifies such psychological indicators as emotional intelligence, self-awareness, social adaptability, initiative, and decision-making ability as the main factors directly influencing the leadership potential of students.

**Keywords:** Leadership, competence, emotional intelligence, adaptability, initiative, social environment.

## Introduction

In modern society, human resources are considered one of the main assets. In particular, the development of the individual and professional potential of young people studying in higher educational institutions, their formation as active, proactive, and leading individuals is one of the pressing issues of today. In the context of global integration and competitiveness, personnel with leadership competence form the basis of the development of each sphere. Therefore, one of the most important tasks facing psychology is the disclosure of students' personal potential, the correct orientation of their internal capabilities, and the in-depth study of the psychological mechanisms for the effective development of leadership competence.

The formation of leadership competence includes several important components. Among them, a special place is occupied by such personal qualities as communicative abilities, social flexibility, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, the ability to make decisions, and stress resistance. It is these qualities that serve as the basis for the formation of a psychologically mature personality - that is, a leader. The psychologist, through a deep analysis of the stages of development of the student's personality, develops ways to identify, assess, and

develop this competence. In this process, an individual approach, the identification of a personal psychological portrait, and the analysis of motivational factors are of great importance.

The development of leadership competence among students has a direct impact not only on individual success, but also on the effectiveness of collective activity. This, in turn, is an important factor in the formation of a healthy psychological environment in higher educational institutions, the establishment of effective social connections, and the strengthening of students' sense of responsibility. The task of psychologists in this regard is to identify factors hindering the development of leadership competence, to develop strategies for their elimination, and to carry out activities aimed at creating supportive psychological conditions in the learning environment.

Today, psychologists use modern psychodiagnostic methods, training programs, and individual counseling techniques to study the stages of student leadership development. In particular, the development of leadership qualities through interactive methods formed on the basis of experience - simulation, role-playing games, multi-level reflection - gives positive results. Therefore, through in-depth study of this topic, it is possible not only to enrich psychological practice, but also to form such important skills of students in the educational process as independent thinking, inspiring others, and a sense of social responsibility.

### **Analysis and review of literature**

An important factor in the psychological study of leadership competence is the level of emotional, social, and cognitive development of the individual. The foreign psychologist D. Goleman, in his theory of emotional intelligence, emphasizes that leadership is based not only on commanding, but also on the ability to understand, feel, and inspire others. According to him, effective leadership is a personal resource based on self-management and the management of others.

In Uzbek psychology, Professor M. Davletshin connects leadership competence with psychological stability, social adaptability, and the ability to think independently. Through scientific experiments, he proved that leadership qualities are formed in students from childhood, but actively develop during the student period.

Student age is one of the most active stages of psychological development and at the same time plays a key role in the formation of leadership potential. According to the Russian scientist A.A. Rean, the foundation of leadership competence is the social activity, motivation, and communication skills of young people. In his research, it was shown that the level of students' interaction and participation in discussions directly affects their leadership abilities.

The research of the Uzbek scientist G.S. Sultanova substantiates that the role of teachers and psychologists, as well as the influence of the socio-psychological environment, is of particular importance in the development of leadership qualities in students.

In the development of leadership competence, emotional intelligence (EI) and decision-making skills are considered as the main psychological components. Western psychologists P. Salovey and D. Mayer, characterizing emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions, proved that this aspect is the basis of the leader's personality.

Uzbek psychologist R.A. Kholmatov connects the ability to make decisions with the inner will of the individual, analytical thinking, and the ability to act independently. According to it, a student studying in a socially active environment can strengthen leadership competence by openly expressing their opinion and being ready to take responsibility.

Another important psychological aspect of leadership is the process of social identification. According to the "social identification theory" of British psychologists H. Tajfel and J. Turner, when an individual feels like a member of a community, they can develop as a leader and implement social management within the group. Uzbek psychologist S.A. Abdullaeva studied this process in a national context and determined that it is possible to orient students towards leadership competence by increasing psychological adaptation, empathy, and mutual trust within the group. He experimentally proved that it is possible to gradually form leadership qualities in students by participating in teamwork.

The level of internal motivation and self-awareness plays a leading role in the formation of leadership qualities among students. In the "theory of self-determination," developed by American psychologists E. Dechy and R. Ryan, it is emphasized that the basis of leadership is personal choice, internal motivation, and initiative. Uzbek psychologist D.T. Yuldasheva believes that self-awareness is the psychological foundation of personal growth. In his opinion, when a student

realizes their social role, strengths and weaknesses, these knowledge serve the development of their leadership competence. This approach can be effectively applied through psychological training.

Practical psychological methods, especially trainings, yield effective results in the development of leadership competence. According to the meta-analysis conducted by R. Laserenza and her colleagues at the international level, interactive classes, role-playing, and conflict management simulations strengthen leadership competence in students. The training program "Personal Development and Leadership" by the Uzbek psychologist M.O. Zhuraeva has been implemented in higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan and serves to develop independent thinking, openness in mutual communication, and management skills among students. Such methodological approaches can become the basis for the formation of psychologically mature, socially responsible leaders.

### **Analysis and results**

Analysis shows that the development of leadership competence in students is formed through the emotional state of the individual, the level of self-awareness, and interaction with the social environment. From a psychological point of view, leadership is a complex mental system that develops not only through innate abilities, but also through environment, upbringing, personal experience, and social roles. In this regard, such factors as self-esteem, internal motivation, stress resistance, critical thinking, and empathy are of particular importance. As a result of practical observations and experiments, it was established that students with the above characteristics stand out as leaders in teamwork, strive to perform responsible tasks, and have a positive influence on other peers. This indicates that leadership competence is formed precisely on psychological grounds.

Based on psychological research and experience, the development of leadership competence in students through training and interactive methods yields significant results. In particular, through exercises on role-playing, problem-solving, decision-making, and exercises on emotional self-analysis, students realize their inner strength and strive to occupy a leading position in communication with others. These methodological approaches form not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills. Analysis shows that students who regularly participate in psychological training increase their personal

effectiveness, increase social activity, and demonstrate positive leadership qualities. The changes observed during such training confirm the formation of leadership competence through individual psychological factors.

According to the results obtained on the basis of scientific and practical research, classes organized on the basis of psychological approaches significantly increase the leadership competence of students. During the study, an increase in indicators of social activity, initiative, and responsibility was observed in 82% of the participants. It was also revealed that the desire to occupy a leadership position within the group, the development of skills in managing and motivating others. These results prove the effectiveness of psychological methods and the possibility of conscious development of leadership competence. In general, through approaches led by psychologists, students developed self-confidence, goal orientation, and coordination skills in the team, and their potential to become future professional leaders was strengthened.

## **Conclusion**

The formation of leadership competence is a complex process that requires not only preparation for the performance of social or managerial tasks, but also the comprehensive development of the individual's psychological capabilities, emotional stability, self-confidence, initiative, decision-making ability, and communicative potential. Studies show that it is during the student period that these qualities are actively formed, since at this stage the process of personal identification, mastering a social role, and determining a professional orientation takes place. From a psychological point of view, the main factors in the development of leadership competence are the emotional intelligence of the individual, the level of self-awareness, and interaction with the external environment.

Such methodological approaches as psychological trainings, role-playing lessons, problem-solving situations serve as an important tool in the development of leadership competence in students. Through these methods, students actively develop skills such as self-testing in social situations, taking a leadership position, influencing others within the group, and taking responsibility. Such practical activities psychologically strengthen students' self-confidence, increase their social activity, and form in them the psychological readiness necessary for effective leadership. Observations conducted by psychologists show that students

who regularly participated in interactive methods demonstrated their leadership qualities at a much higher level.

The formation of leadership competence is directly related not only to individual characteristics, but also to the environment and the system of psychological support. The socio-psychological environment in educational institutions, the supporting role of mentors and psychologists, the quality of communication with peers - all this influences the process of formation of a student as a leader. Therefore, to develop leadership competence in students, it is necessary to actively introduce special trainings, motivational programs, a coaching system, and a psychological counseling service, taking into account their personal psychological potential. Through such an approach, it will be possible to train mature, socially responsible, and stable-minded leaders in society.

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