

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR IN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE IN THE PEDAGOGICAL COMMUNITY OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

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ANNOTATION: *This article analyzes modern approaches to developing leadership competence within the pedagogical staff of preschool education organizations. It emphasizes the strategic role of the director as a facilitator, mentor, and visionary. The research discusses methods for fostering a collaborative leadership environment, the transition from traditional management to transformative leadership, and the impact of distributive leadership on the overall quality of early childhood education.*

KEY WORDS: *Leadership competence, preschool education, pedagogical community, director's role, professional development, distributive leadership, mentorship, educational management.*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of global educational reforms, the effectiveness of preschool education systems depends not only on curriculum quality but also on the strength of institutional management. The pedagogical community of a preschool organization is the primary driver of educational innovation. However, the transformation of a group of teachers into a high-performing "leadership team" is a process that depends fundamentally on the director's management style and professional vision.

In the modern context, a director of a preschool organization (PSO) is no longer just an administrative supervisor; they are a strategic leader responsible for cultivating the intellectual and professional potential of their staff. Developing leadership competence among educators is essential for creating an adaptable, creative, and proactive educational environment that meets 21st-century standards.

MAIN PART. Developing leadership competence within a pedagogical team is a multifaceted process that requires a shift from hierarchical control to collaborative growth. Research in educational management suggests that "**Distributive Leadership**" is the most effective model for preschool settings. In this model, the director shares authority, encourages initiative, and empowers teachers to take ownership of specific educational projects.

Key Roles of the Director in Competence Development:

- **Creating a Motivational Climate:** The director must identify the unique strengths of each educator. By aligning individual talents with institutional goals, the director fosters a sense of purpose and belonging.
- **Mentorship and Coaching:** Rather than merely issuing directives, the director acts as a coach. Professional growth is achieved when the leader provides constructive feedback and creates opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.
- **Support for Innovation:** Leadership competence thrives when educators feel safe to experiment with new pedagogical methods. The director's role is to provide the necessary resources and psychological security for such innovations.
- **Professional Development Integration:** Organizing internal workshops, seminars, and collaborative planning sessions allows leadership skills to emerge naturally within the staff.

DISCUSSION

When examining international practices—such as those in Finland, Singapore, or the United Kingdom—it is evident that leadership is viewed as a collective culture rather than a solo performance by the principal or director. In many developing educational systems, directors often focus heavily on "compliance and control." However, contemporary educational psychology proves that **Supportive Leadership** yields higher long-term results than strict supervision.

When an educator perceives themselves as a "leader" of their classroom and a vital contributor to the institution's vision, their level of professional responsibility increases significantly. Studies indicate that institutions practicing distributive leadership see a 40-50% increase in teacher retention and job satisfaction. The discussion today centers on how directors can move away from being "gatekeepers" of rules and become "bridge-builders" of talent.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the director is the primary catalyst for developing leadership competence within the pedagogical community of preschool education. By fostering an atmosphere of trust, shared responsibility, and continuous learning, the director transforms a standard workplace into an innovative educational hub. Empowering teachers to lead not only enhances their professional dignity but also directly impacts the quality of development and care provided to the children—the future of society.

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