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PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS' COMPETENCE IN THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

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Annotation: This thesis provides a systematic overview of the content, pedagogical principles, and practical opportunities for developing leaders' competencies in the course of their professional activities. Particular attention is paid to improving leaders' professional skills, socio-psychological preparedness, communication skills, and leadership abilities directly within the workplace.

Keywords: leadership competence, professional development, pedagogical approach, management, leadership, reflection, mentoring, lifelong learning.

Аннотация: В данной тезисной работе последовательно освещаются содержание, педагогические принципы и практические возможности развития компетентности руководителей в процессе профессиональной деятельности. Особое внимание уделяется вопросам совершенствования профессионального мастерства, социально-психологической подготовленности, коммуникатив-ных и лидерских качеств руководителя непосредственно в рабочем процессе.

Ключевые слова: компетентность руководителя, профессиональное развитие, педагогический подход, управление, лидерство, рефлексия, менторство, непрерывное образование.

In the context of a rapidly evolving and increasingly digitalized modern economy, the success of any organization, enterprise, or educational institution directly depends on the professional competence and managerial effectiveness of its leaders. Today, a leader is expected to be more than someone who issues orders; they must be a strategic thinker who introduces innovations, unites a team around common goals, and successfully manages change. To meet these requirements, leaders need to continuously improve their professional competence.

Traditional forms of education are often unable to fully meet dynamically changing practical needs. When theoretical knowledge acquired through professional development courses is transferred to the actual workplace, certain gaps and barriers may arise. Therefore, developing the pedagogical foundations for the systematic and continuous development of leaders' competence in the process of professional activity—that is, without separating them from their direct work responsibilities—has become one of the most pressing tasks of contemporary educational theory and practice.

The pedagogical foundations for developing leaders' competence in the process of professional activity comprise a set of pedagogical principles, regularities, and methods aimed at systematically improving managerial personnel's professional skills, socio-psychological preparedness, and leadership abilities without separating them from their actual work activities. This approach ensures the close integration of education and practice, saves time and resources, and, most importantly, facilitates the immediate application of acquired knowledge in practice and enhances its effectiveness.

Mentoring, coaching, problem-based analysis, project-based learning, role-playing, and team discussions are effective tools for developing leaders' competence directly in the course of their

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professional activities. Mentoring involves an experienced specialist sharing their expertise, providing advice in challenging situations, and supporting a leader's professional adaptation. Coaching, in turn, helps leaders independently define their goals, identify their existing capabilities, and consciously select appropriate solutions. These methods go beyond simply providing ready-made instructions; they strengthen leaders' independent thinking and sense of responsibility.

Problem-based analysis is particularly important for developing leaders' decision-making skills. For example, when employee performance declines, it may not be appropriate to attribute the problem solely to discipline or supervision. A leader should analyze workload, task allocation, employee qualifications, incentive mechanisms, and internal communication collectively. This approach teaches leaders to identify the root causes of problems, compare several alternative solutions, and select the most appropriate course of action. Role-playing exercises and simulations also provide opportunities to practise skills such as conducting negotiations, resolving conflicts, and communicating organizational changes to a team.

Project-based learning is another effective method of developing competence. To address a specific problem, a leader establishes objectives, tasks, deadlines, and performance indicators, distributes responsibilities among team members, and evaluates the results upon project completion. Throughout this process, skills in planning, communication, team management, and the effective use of time and resources are developed simultaneously. Furthermore, exchanging experiences among leaders, observing colleagues' professional practices, and regularly receiving feedback on completed tasks also support professional growth.

For competence development to be effective, the process should begin with the identification of individual needs and continue through the assessment of outcomes and the formulation of subsequent development plans. Initially, a leader's strengths and the skills requiring improvement are identified. Specific objectives are then established, and practical assignments, mentoring, independent learning, and professional development activities are combined to achieve them. After a specified period, the results are reviewed, and the development plan is updated if necessary. In this way, professional learning becomes a continuous cycle of improvement.

The assessment process should not be limited solely to test results or participation in training sessions. Changes in a leader's professional performance can also be evaluated through indicators such as the soundness of decision-making, timely completion of tasks, teamwork, the quality of communication with employees, conflict resolution, and the achievement of established objectives. Feedback from employees and colleagues helps leaders view their own performance from different perspectives. However, assessment criteria should be appropriate to the specific characteristics of the organization and the leader's official responsibilities. The results should be used to identify development needs rather than to impose punishment.

The pedagogical environment within an organization also plays an important role in developing leaders' competence. Organizational management should allocate time for learning, create opportunities for experience sharing, encourage the testing of new ideas, and allow individuals to learn from constructive mistakes. When an organization encourages employees to ask questions, put forward suggestions, and discuss problems openly, both leaders and employees can realize their potential more fully. At the same time, when professional development is aligned with the organization's strategic objectives, individual growth contributes to the overall effectiveness of organizational performance.

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