

## **Modern Methodological Approaches to Developing Leadership Competencies in the Management of Preschool Educational Organizations**

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**Abstract:** This article deeply covers the issue of developing the competencies of a leader in the process of managing preschool educational organizations. Today, the changes taking place in the education system, socio-economic requirements, new approaches to pedagogical activity create the need to develop the personal and professional potential of leaders of preschool educational organizations at a new qualitative level. The essence, structure, components of leadership competencies, criteria for their assessment and development methodologies are analyzed on a scientific and theoretical basis. Also, recommendations are given on preparing leaders for competent management activities based on international and national experiences, modern pedagogical management and leadership concepts.

**Keywords:** preschool education, management, leader, personal competence, professional potential, pedagogical management, leadership, modern approach, development of competencies, methodology, innovative management, systematic analysis, professional growth, quality of education.

**Introduction.** In the 21st century, the education system has entered a phase of dramatic changes and developments on a global scale. Emerging global socio-economic processes, digital transformation, and the formation of a knowledge-based society are fundamentally changing the requirements and approaches to education. In particular, the role of preschool education in improving human potential and raising a competitive generation is increasingly increasing. This situation has made the qualitative organization of the activities of preschool educational organizations, the creation of an effective management system, and the development of the competencies of the leader based on modern requirements an urgent issue.

The Action Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021, the Law "On Education", presidential decrees and resolutions emphasize the need for a fundamental reform of the preschool education system, an increase in the number of educational institutions operating on the basis of public-private partnerships, and increasing the management capacity of leaders. In particular, the "Concept for the Development of the Preschool Education System until 2030", adopted in 2019, identified the development of the potential of leaders in this area based on advanced methodologies as an important factor.

Today, leaders of preschool educational organizations are required not only to perform traditional managerial functions, but also to have skills such as managing pedagogical processes,

innovative thinking, applying psychological and pedagogical approaches, effective communication with the team, and developing social cooperation with families. Therefore, it is important to approach the personal competence of the leader - that is, as a set of knowledge, skills, values, and personal qualities - and to systematically develop these competencies. First of all, the deepening of the competency-based approach in the field of educational management is manifested in the growing need to solve problems in preschool education through innovative management methods. In particular, training leaders through modern methodological approaches and systematically developing their potential is one of the promising scientific and practical issues.

The preschool education system is one of the most important areas that determine the socio-economic development of each country. This stage plays a decisive role in the formation of a child as a person, in his mental, moral, physical and social development. Based on this, the effective functioning of this sphere depends, first of all, on the professional potential, personal qualities and competencies of the leaders who manage it. In today's era of globalization and increasing competition, it is necessary for the leaders of preschool educational organizations to have not only traditional knowledge and experience, but also comprehensive competencies formed on the basis of modern methodological approaches.

Leadership competence is understood as the ability of a person to effectively coordinate his knowledge, skills, personal qualities and values in accordance with his position and implement effective management activities. This concept includes not only managerial, but also pedagogical, psychological, social and innovative aspects. When managing a preschool educational organization, the head must not only conduct the organizational and economic activities of the organization, but also be able to perform complex tasks such as managing the team of teachers, parents and the system of social cooperation, creating conditions that serve the individual development of children, and introducing modern technologies.

One of the main problems observed in the field of preschool education today is the insufficient use of innovative approaches in the activities of leaders, the lack of a consistent system for the continuous development of the competencies of the leader. The latest resolutions and decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan indicate the improvement of the management system in this area and the increase in the professional potential of leaders as a priority direction. This requires a deep study of the issue of developing the competencies of leaders based on modern methodological approaches not only theoretically, but also practically. Modern methodological approaches are understood as methods that ensure the development of the personal and professional competencies of the leader on a systematic, integrative, innovative and reflexive basis. Through such approaches, a leader acquires skills such as analytical thinking, problem identification and solution, development of social cooperation, and use of digital technologies in his/her work. For example, a competency-based approach increases the potential of leaders to organize the educational process, while a systematic approach helps the leader make each decision based on in-depth analysis. A reflexive approach forms the leader's competencies to evaluate his/her own performance, realize his/her mistakes, and be ready for change.

In the theory of educational management, the professional competencies of a leader can be represented through the following components: management and leadership potential, communicative culture, pedagogical leadership, innovative activity, independence in decision-making, social responsibility, ethical values, and activities based on reflexive analysis. Each competency has a direct impact on the development of a preschool educational organization in its own way. Therefore, the issue of developing the competencies of leaders in the preschool education system should not be limited to advanced training courses, but should be enriched with methodological approaches such as practical experience, advanced management technologies, distance learning modules, and a mentoring system. World experience also shows that in advanced countries, their competencies are continuously developed through a special certification system for preschool education leaders, maintaining digital portfolios, and platforms

for exchanging experience. Based on the above, it can be said that the competencies of leaders of preschool educational organizations, formed on the basis of modern methodological approaches, serve not only to improve the quality and efficiency of education, but also to ensure the social protection and harmonious development of children in society as a whole. Therefore, the development of personal and professional competencies of leaders should be constantly considered as one of the priority areas of state policy.

The competencies of a leader in managing a preschool educational organization today are not limited only to administrative and organizational potential, but also include broad socio-pedagogical aspects. This requires the formation of a leader as a versatile, forward-thinking person who deeply understands the social environment. In the process of radically reforming the preschool education system in the Republic of Uzbekistan, introducing advanced practices into it, enriching it with new generation programs and modern technologies, the professional training and competence of leaders are becoming a decisive factor. It is through the leadership competencies that the practical results of reforms in an educational institution become visible, the pedagogical team works in one direction, and innovative ideas are put into practice.

Among modern competencies, such skills as digital literacy, the ability to understand the individual needs of students, quick and correct decision-making in problem situations, leadership skills in managing a team, communication culture, critical thinking and self-assessment stand out. These competencies require the continuous development of the leader. Today's leader can achieve success not with the knowledge acquired yesterday, but by reshaping himself in accordance with daily updated information, technologies, and changes in state policy.

For the systematic development of these competencies through methodological approaches, it is important to introduce training modules based on the experience of advanced countries, exercises based on case analysis, role-playing games, "mentoring" and "coaching" technologies. The professional development of a leader is achieved not only through self-awareness and external knowledge, but also through sensitivity to changes in the surrounding community, flexibility and the ability to make strategic decisions. From this perspective, it is necessary to introduce a "transformational leadership" model for preschool education leaders. A transformational leader is a leader who not only controls his team, but also inspires them, directing them to active, conscious and responsible participation in his activities. In addition, the socio-psychological competence of the leader is also of great importance. Effective communication with the team, managing stressful situations, maintaining socio-emotional stability, establishing trusting relationships with teachers and parents are practical issues that a leader faces every day. Solving them requires psychological knowledge, empathy, communicative competence and cultural thinking.

Traditional approaches to assessing the competencies of a leader are losing their effectiveness. Today, assessment systems are being introduced through case analysis, portfolio management, independent project-based growth monitoring, mutual reflection, diagnostic tests, and coaching conversations. It is precisely such assessment tools that help identify the strengths and weaknesses of a leader and create an individualized development roadmap.

The Education Strategy of Uzbekistan until 2030 also identifies continuous professional development of leaders of preschool educational organizations, equipping them with competencies in line with international standards, and forming them as innovative thinkers and leaders capable of strategic planning as a priority. This requires the creation of scientific and methodological support for leaders, a base of best practices, and distance learning platforms at the state level. Developing the personal and professional competencies of a leader in managing a preschool educational organization based on modern methodological approaches is not only an improvement in the process of managing the education system, but also a strategic task that ensures the development of the younger generation as healthy, thinking, socially adapted individuals. Therefore, the need for in-depth scientific research in this area, the development of

theoretical and practical foundations, and the continuous training and self-development of leaders is increasingly growing.

Methodological approaches to developing the personal competencies of leaders of preschool educational organizations should not be limited to theoretical foundations, but should be based on methods that give practical and effective results and have been tested in real experiments. In particular, approaches that are consistent with the competencies of the 21st century - the formation of skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, and communicative leadership in the head of a preschool educational institution - are one of the urgent tasks. Practice shows that in developing the competence of a leader, it is important to first identify individual development areas based on systematic diagnostics. This requires a thorough analysis based on criteria such as the leader's professional activity, management culture, leadership behavior, openness to innovative innovations, and style of working with a team. For example, surveys conducted among the heads of some preschool educational institutions in the Tashkent region showed that, although most of them have strong knowledge in managing the pedagogical process, they do not have sufficient training in resource planning, the use of modern management technologies, and the use of digital tools.

Therefore, in methodological work aimed at developing the personal competencies of managers, it is necessary to draw up individual development plans based on a differentiated approach, and gradually improve them through advanced training courses. These courses should not only provide information to the listener, but also include exchanging experiences with them, thinking in an interactive environment, and searching for practical solutions to real problems. From this perspective, training, coaching, mentoring, accelerator programs, peer-to-peer (i.e. equal exchange between managers) models can be widely implemented. For example, the "Leadership Accelerator" program, implemented in a pilot project in the Andijan region, guided managers to analyze real problems, think on a project basis, and develop innovative solutions for 3 months of intensive training. At the end of the program, a significant positive shift was observed in the reflective attitude of managers towards their activities, the quality of work with employees, and the level of initiative.

Also, the use of digital technologies in the formation of competencies is a requirement of today. Through electronic portfolios, online assessment tools, and distance learning modules, leaders can independently update their knowledge. In this direction, it is possible to integrate special modules for leaders through national platforms such as "Uz Edu Leader ship" or international programs such as "Coursera for Education Leaders", "Future Learn". This not only develops competencies, but also develops the ability to use modern technological tools.

Another practical approach is to create a learning environment within the organization. That is, the leader must create a climate that encourages his team to work on innovative ideas. To achieve this, mechanisms such as "Pedagogical Coaching", "Project-based Learning", "Reflective Seminars", "Analysis based on Mutual Observation" are recommended. This serves not only the activities of educators, but also the self-assessment of the leader. Because the personal competence of a leader is not only knowledge, but also a responsible approach to activity, professional reflection and leadership culture.

**Conclusion.** The development of personal competencies of leaders of preschool educational organizations as an urgent socio-pedagogical issue, one of the important factors affecting all stages of the education system, was deeply analyzed during this work. The success of a leader in the 21st century in management is closely related not only to the effectiveness of the organization's activities, but also to many other important factors, such as the functioning of the pedagogical team as a whole system, the sustainable development of the quality of education, and the full disclosure of children's potential. From this point of view, the level of competence of the leader is a strategic key that determines the quality of the preschool education system.

As it was found during the study, leaders often tend to conduct management based on practical experience, and their lack of sufficient knowledge of modern pedagogical management approaches is one of the factors that hinder their personal and professional development. In particular, aspects such as weak communication skills, slowness in the use of digital technologies, and greater reliance on command in managing the team create a number of problems in leadership activities. Also, special methodological programs, monitoring tools and reflective approaches aimed at the systematic development of the competencies of leaders have not been sufficiently established in preschool educational organizations themselves. The development of personal competencies of leaders of preschool educational organizations is not only an improvement in leadership activities, but also a strategic issue for bringing the entire education system to a qualitatively new level. Therefore, it is necessary to approach this area based on complex, systematic and innovative approaches. By forming a modern leader in preschool education, we will build a solid foundation for the education of the future generation.

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