

## **Shaping Leadership Potential in Medical Students**

Nowadays, psychological and pedagogical sciences are eager to boost students' interest in studies at higher educational institutions because it is a major factor affecting the development of student's inner potential. The majority of works in this field deal with studies of the student's personal potential, while the problem of the leadership potential development in students (i.e. development of leadership qualities directly in the educational environment of a pedagogical university) is understudied, particularly in students of pedagogical schools. The theoretical and methodological grounds for the research are the analysis of psychological and pedagogical understanding of leadership as a phenomenon of development of leadership skills in students. The article contains the results of the theoretical analysis of the leadership potential of a student's personality development in the educational environment of a higher educational institution, defines the structure of a student's leadership potential, and explores the content of the process of the leadership potential development in the educational environment of a pedagogical higher educational institution.

**Keywords:** leadership, leadership potential, medical students, education.

What is leadership? Nobody can answer this question exactly. Leadership is an intangible quality. It cannot be measured in any traditional sense – on a scale or under a microscope. Fundamentally, leadership is about taking risks. And it is about having the courage of one's convictions; it is about the will to act even in the face of powerful conventional wisdom, or strong opposition. Coping with change is always a challenge, but it is crucial to the survival of the profession – including the personal health and well-being of all physicians. Physician leaders have the responsibility to assist their colleagues in coping with this type of change, but they also have the ability to envision beyond imposed change – to envision their preferred future for the profession and lead others toward this vision.

Physicians have recognized for decades that we are part of a health care team. We recognize that no one member of the team – not one physician, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, or anyone else – can do it alone. We must all work together; we must work with the patient, and for the patient.

This approach mirrors a broader societal move – from the traditional “command and control” form of leadership to a more inclusive style – leadership through influence, not authority; leadership by creating a shared purpose and a common vision, not by using position or power. Today's leadership focuses not on what leaders are, but on what they do when they are leading. This includes challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way and encouraging the heart.

Individual leaders cannot usually bring about complex change on their own. To provide effective leadership, therefore, the medical community needs to develop and sustain a collective force referred to in the literature as “connected leadership.” The concept emphasizes the importance of relationship building as a basis for leadership – among individuals, among professions, with groups and teams, and among the whole organizational systems, cultures and communities. Complex change is facilitated when the strengths and contributions of all the stakeholders are openly and genuinely valued.

Upon studying of the problem of shaping leadership we faced the need to solve inconsistencies between:

- the objective social need for experts with professionally conditioned level of social activity; a skill of prompt reaction to changes, data analysis, prediction of further events; an ability to make relevant decisions and act according to them; an ability to interact according to the modern demand of the society – and lack of attention of pedagogic theory and practice towards the problem of student’s personal becoming through development of leadership potential;

- formation (by instructors) of the need for development of leadership potential in a student – and insufficient scientifically grounded pedagogic strategies for activation of this potential within the educational space of a pedagogical university;

- the available potential of the institution’s educational activity, allowing to increase efficiency of personal becoming of a future expert with highly developed leadership skills – and insufficient methodological support of this process. Taking into account the importance of the problem, the idea of our study lies in the search for and choice of pedagogic possibilities promoting development of the student’s leadership potential within the educational space of a pedagogical university.

We carried out an analysis of psychological and pedagogical understanding of leadership as a phenomenon of development of leadership skills in students. The results showed that leadership is a multidimensional phenomenon. From a social and psychological point of view, it is an element of organization of team work and management in the system of interpersonal relations [6]. Leadership skills in students is a complex system formed on the basis of realization of leadership behavior within the educational space of a pedagogical university. Having analyzed the scientific literature dealing with the definition of the leadership phenomenon, we have come up with a group of leadership skills with three categories in it: system skills, communication skills, personal qualities. In this regard we needed to define the basic notions of our research. Among them are the “leadership potential” and “development of leadership potential in students within the educational space of a pedagogical university”. Specification of these notions in the context of the objective-professional specialization presents the academic novelty of the research. To give definitions to the notions,

we drew on modern concepts of the personal professional potential and approaches to identification of mechanisms of its formation and development, which have emerged in psychology and pedagogy in recent years.

Before we move over to considering the components and structure of the leadership potential of an organizational leader, we should distinguish the definitions of the potential and leadership potential. The word “potential” is derived from the Latin “potentia”, which is defined in the dictionary as a possibility, i.e. something existing in a latent form and can manifest itself under certain conditions [8]. In other words, a potential is a certain possibility, or a force including sources and recourses that can be used to solve a certain problem, or to achieve a certain goal.

The students’ leadership potential can be defined as a complex of professional and personal qualities, including interdependent and interrelated components (motivational, cognitive, reflexive) based upon the value orientation towards development of the leadership potential.

Leadership potential development is promoted by possibilities, guaranteed by the specially created educational space of a university. The term ‘educational space of a university’ is defined as an aggregate of interdependent components – the subjects of academic activity, informational and educational environments, and educational processes [4]. These authors distinguished the notions “educational space” and “educational environment” (or informational and educational environment), defining the educational environment as an element of the educational space.

The nature of leadership in medicine has undergone dramatic changes in recent years. As pressure mounts to driving efficiency and operating in a cost-effective manner, so does the demand for dynamic medical leaders with business acumen grow. However, the solution does not lie in simply injecting a “business” way of thinking into health care organizations. Coping with the evolving health care environment, including continually shifting government agendas, demands active and involved leadership of physicians at every level if we are to contribute to long-term improvement of health services in the country. Change in medicine, as in all other fields, is inevitable, and if physicians close their eyes to that inevitability, their role as leaders will diminish.

Nowadays, in the conditions of the rapid pace of life, our society needs to develop more and better leaders in medicine. There are many leadership development programs and experiences available in the marketplace. What can anyone expect from them? Typical outcomes often include enhanced self-awareness, self-confidence, and the ability to view life broadly and systemically:

- the ability to work in social systems;
- the ability to contribute and work in a team;
- the ability to think creatively and adapt evidence-based practices.

Where can physicians interested in acquiring these skills and abilities go, and what does it involve in terms of time and financial commitments? Clinical

education is already an exceptionally long and arduous process, so incorporating leadership into that curriculum is problematic at best.

Removing successful practicing physicians from their practice and income for this kind of professional development is an equally difficult proposition, and probably not the best solution as it takes needed physicians away from their patients. Ongoing clinical practice is needed to maintain their credibility with other practicing physicians in the medical community.

Leadership skills can be developed with experience, practice, coaching, or mentorship and leadership training.

The results of the research revealed the need to prepare a model of leadership potential development within the educational space of a university and to find pedagogical conditions for effective realization of this model. At this we single out four groups of personal qualities based on the components of the model of a professional:

1) general professional qualities: a high level of theoretical and practical training; a consistent view of professional problems; the ability to adapt professionally; the ability to make prognoses; the ability to fulfill functional responsibilities; knowledge of team management methods; the ability to spot the key objective; the ability to split the work among people in the team;

2) creative qualities: a wide area of general thought; a creative approach to work; knowledge of methods of creative work; a high level of knowledge of techniques;

3) social and psychological qualities: the ability to organize efficient interpersonal relationships and communication within a team; ability to take into account individual qualities of persons in the group; exactingness towards subordinates; discernment of character; charisma; ability to inspire confidence; ability to produce educative effect on members of the group via personal example; ability to set vigorous business atmosphere at work; persuasiveness; mental ballast; propensity for observation of people and interest to their needs;

4) social and communicative qualities: ability to advocate the interests of one's group; the ability to organize control and stimulate other members of the group; sociability; ease of establishing contacts; psychological tact; responsibility; commitment; honesty and ethics; normal emotional and psychological excitement; correct articulation; good voice.

The specific features of shaping the leadership potential predetermine the following pedagogical conditions:

– shaping a mindset for development of the leadership potential (in students);

– involving students in specially established diverse activities of the “Leader Club”, allowing students to try on the role of a leader;

– organization of pedagogical contribution to the leadership potential development in students within the educational space of a university.

The conditions defined above are based on the possibilities of university education as it is the most technologically advanced and flexible part of culture. University education promotes devolution of universal human values, which are associated with development of personal qualities needed for leadership skills development.

Conclusions the first pedagogical condition is justified by the fact that leadership shaping is both a process and a result of development of the inner structure of the psychological organization. They are manifested together in personal organizational and communicative readiness for management of communication and activity within a group. At this, dynamic development of leadership skills in future professionals depends on the social and pedagogical conditions and interaction of the students within a training group, as well as on active individual development of leadership skills by the student himself. Development of leadership skills is successful only under the conditions of active and motivated participation of the student in correct execution of leadership roles in group work. This promotes hands-on formation of the main features of the performer, organizer and mentor. Thus, the need for shaping a respective mindset is obvious. The second pedagogical condition is associated with the fact that theoretical and practical knowledge received at the university is not sufficient to connect the knowledge with the practical skills acquired in the course of individual socially important activity. Practice is a crucial aspect of reinforcing the skills needed for fulfillment of a human creation and evolving function. It allows showing the ability to be a leader, to develop certain codes of conduct and communication, values and individual style of “directed and managed activity”. The third condition is associated with the approach to the leadership potential as a pivotal personal feature of a future professional. Its development is impossible without purposeful and qualified help from instructors. We regard pedagogical help as psychological and pedagogical work of an instructor (teacher) in the extra-curricular activity for shaping the students’ leadership potential. From the practical point of view it is creation of conditions enabling students to acquire leadership skills together with professional motives, professional and cognitive consciousness, a steady drive for systematic personal development and find satisfaction in and from the results of their own work.

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