

The cover features a dark blue night sky with a prominent galaxy. A telescope is positioned in the lower center, its lens pointing towards the galaxy. The background is overlaid with several diagonal, semi-transparent bands in shades of green and blue. The title 'REVISTA INCLUSIONES' is centered in a large, bold, white sans-serif font.

REVISTA INCLUSIONES

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**CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS THROUGH SOCIOCULTURAL
ACTIVITIES: ANALYSIS AND EMPIRICAL STUDY**

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Abstract

Authors examine factors, psychological and pedagogical conditions, objective and subjective factors for student leadership development. Main methods and techniques for cultivating student leadership have been identified. These are interactive methods, case studies, masterclasses, formative techniques, innovative techniques, educational techniques. The article presents an empirical study of student leadership levels in the Astrakhan State University and the Astrakhan State Medical University. To meet the objectives, mathematical-statistical data-processing methods were applied, including calculation of descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample test, the Student's test for dependent and independent samples, the Mann-Whitney test, the Wilcoxon test. The main results of the experiment are that the students' leadership level in the experimental group has changed as a result of the students' participation in business games, teamwork, role plays, discussions, engagement in the university public activities, and through students' enriching their own leadership experience via extracurricular activities. Summing up the results, we consider it necessary to note the following: the complexity of the leadership phenomenon, and the multivariety of its components, factors, and conditions of its dynamics, require to select methods for each of its components separately.

Keywords

Leader – Student – Conditions – Factors – Sociocultural means

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Introduction

Emerging new economic and social paradigms, evolving knowledge society, the need to respond to present-day cultural and global crises lead to the fact that the modern society has a growing need for leaders. At the same time, youth engagement in the man-made sociocultural reality deepens the youth socialization crisis ever more¹. All of the above calls for new quality requirements in higher education which normally focuses on training qualified performers.

In her article, V. Bedina examines the personality attributes of a leader, i.e. individually personal attributes, organizational and managerial attributes, sociopsychological attributes, and perceptive leadership attributes².

Analyzing the problem of leadership, R. Bales and F. Fiedler identified two leadership styles: emotional (adjusts interpersonal relations within a group) and instrumental (manages activity on group's achievement of goals)³.

These studies show that manifestation of one or the other style may be conditioned on the one hand, by individual characteristics of a leader (character, temperament, talents, system of values), and on the other hand, by internal group environment, as well as wider sociocultural context where specific means of sociocultural activity are performed.

Aims and goals of the study

The aim of this study is the theoretical analysis and empirical study of the problem of leadership formation of the high school student by means of sociocultural activity.

The main aims of the study

1. The elaboration of the leadership concept.
2. The analysis of the formation of the leadership formation of the high school student in the space of sociocultural activity.
3. The diagnosis of the facts and conditions of the formation of high school student's leadership.

Methods/Methodological basis

The concept of leadership has been studied both in foreign and Russian pedagogics and psychology. In their works, A. Makarenko, B. Parygin, and A. Ershov focus on stating the problem of leadership. A. Makarenko studied the problem of leadership in close relation to the group characteristics, to its goals, in the first place. B. Parygin defines leadership as one of the processes for organizing and managing a small

¹ S. Kryuchkova; S. Khrapov; Y. Mironova; N. Tyrnova and O. Leonova, "The Russian Public Consciousness Metamorphoses in Conditions of Technogenic Sociocultural Reality", *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, Vol: 6 num 4 (017): 1365-1373. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1194>

² V. Yu Bedina, "Valuable and semantic model of influence of the young leader on the intra collective relations", *Social and economic phenomena and processes*, Vol: 6 num 9 (2014): 85-90.

³ S. O. Bulgarevich, "Formation of the leader in the course of vocational training of future teacher of physical culture". *Theory and practice of physical culture*, num 7 (2010): 89-92.

social group. A. Ershov understands the concept of leadership as “a phenomenon definitely close to authority, but not the same”.

The research of G. McCall and J. Simmons sees evolvment of team spirit as a result of the leadership process⁴. J. Gardner sees leadership as a process of persuasion or an example that a person or a leadership team uses to encourage a group to achieve goals, both set by a leader and mutually supported by a leader and their followers⁵.

R. Heifetz claimed that the concept of leadership includes our own perceptions and moral codes⁶.

Sociologists conder leadership an important attribute of a group’s structure⁷.

M. Belbin, in particular, underscores the emotional maturity of a leader and their readiness to direct and lead⁸.

The review of Russian and foreign psychological and pedagogical literature demonstrates the need to cultivate student leadership by developing a set of psychological and pedagogical conditions A. Yudina suggests that at the moment one of the most pressing issues of present-day society is to develop conditions for youth’s positive socialization⁹. Moreover, leadership talent noted by biographers of prominent political leaders can manifest itself only under certain social conditions¹⁰. In our research, university pedagogical conditions shall be understood as a set of necessary measures that contribute to the efficient cultivation of students’ leadership attributes within the process of education.

It is the pedagogical interaction in a university that serves as the main condition for an efficient process of education.

University sociocultural environment that enables students to unveil their creative and leadership talent influences the cultivation of students’ leadership attributes. A university creates pedagogical conditions to develop students’ talents and cultural intelligence. These include university music bands, choirs, music classes, clubs. University sociocultural environment is what enables students to unfold their creative and leadership potential. V. Samartseva supposes that a leader emerges within a group in a gradual manner. The selection of a leader within a group is impacted by objective and subjective factors.

Objective factor: a group member showing their best during the activity of a group emerges as its leader.

⁴ G. J. McCall and J. L. Simmons. *Social Psychology: A Sociological Approach* (New York: 1982).

⁵ J. W. Gardner, *On Leadership* (New York: 1990).

⁶ R. A. Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge: Mass, 1998).

⁷ J. C. Coleman and C. L. Hammen. *The Individual and the Group. A Study of Organizational Leadership* (Harrisburg: 1976).

⁸ M. Belbin, *Team Roles at Work* (Oxford: London/Boston, 1993).

⁹ A. I. Yudina and A. S. Telmanova, “Pedagogical potential of the welfare environment of the modern industrial city”, *Modern problems of science and education*, num 6 (2013).

¹⁰ P. D. Bathory, *Leadership in America. Consensus Corruption and Charisma* (New York: 1978).

Subjective factor: a person that emerges as a leader has to possess personality attributes necessary to perform a leading role within a group (active, energetic, willful, decisive, intelligent, knows how to bring others under command). Main methods and techniques for cultivating student leadership include interactive methods (round tables, discussions, debates, brainstorming, business games and role plays), case studies (analyzing specific situations, situational analysis), masterclasses, formative techniques, innovative techniques (socio-pedagogical projects), educational techniques (lectures, placements, conferences, guided tours)¹¹.

Engagement in various situations is what helps to cultivate students' organizational and leadership skills and abilities necessary for future professional activities.

Diagnostic assessment of factors and conditions for cultivating student leadership

Lack of clearly defined requirements towards content and result of cultivating professional behavior, lack of methods and means to assess communication activity and motivation activity make it necessary to develop criteria for students' leadership assessment.

A criterion is an indication, a ground, a rule for decision making at the core of the assessment process.

In our study, we suggest using the following parameters to assess the criteria of students' leadership level:

- communication parameter (rate of communicative aptitude is assessed);
- application parameter (abilities and skills to apply leadership development strategies within and outside curriculum activities and ability to apply one's professional qualifications in non-standard situations are assessed);
- motivation parameter (assesses the rates of students' motivation towards success, internal preparedness to take decisions, willingness to perform a leading role, interest towards the activity of a leader, willingness to act).

The experimental study took place between September 2016 and April 2017. It was conducted according to a designed model of student leadership cultivation within the domain of sociocultural activity. The study included three stages: *diagnostic assessment* (defining student leadership level), *process and substance* (carrying out activities), and *analysis and prognosis* (drawing and analyzing results). Diagnostic assessment and experiment were conducted in the Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education Astrakhan State University and the Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education Astrakhan State Medical University. 172 students participated in the study. The experimental sample included first-year students. The experimental study was conducted for two groups of students: experimental group (86 students of the Astrakhan State University) and control group (86 students of the Astrakhan State Medical University). The experiment was conducted in two different groups in order to define whether specially organized activities impact student leadership cultivation within the domain of sociocultural activity. Empirical

¹¹ G. V. Palatkina and E. A. Zaychenko, "Innovative technologies of formation of leadership of students of higher education institution in space of welfare activity". Psychology and Psychoequipment, num (2016): 290-297.

study data was processed using mathematical-statistical data-processing methods, including calculation of descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample test, the dependent sample Student's test, the non-parametric Wilcoxon test, the Pearson and Spearman correlation. All calculations were performed via the IBM SPSS Statistics 21 computer program. Where r stands for correlation coefficient, and p describes significance level $p \leq 0,05$ – valid results $0,05 < p \leq 0,1$ – tendency towards connection. Mathematical-statistical methods, including calculation of descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample test, the dependent and independent sample Student's test for dependent and independent samples, Mann-Whitney test, Wilcoxon test were used to meet the objectives.¹² All calculations were performed via the IBM SPSS Statistics 21 computer program.

Results and discussion

Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov one-sample test we validated distribution normality of quantitative variables (Table 1). Distribution normality of “motivation towards success” variable after validation number I and II corresponds with the normal law.

Variables	Z – value of the test	Significance level
Self-management (before the experiment)	1,756	0,004
Sense of purpose (I know what I want) (before the experiment)	2,202	0,000
Problem-solving skills (before the experiment)	1,462	0,028
Creativity (before the experiment)	2,043	0,000
Influencing others (before the experiment)	1,671	0,008
Familiarity with organizational work standards (before the experiment)	1,540	0,017
Organizational skills (before the experiment)	1,692	0,007
Teamwork skills (before the experiment)	2,106	0,000
Motivation towards success (before the experiment)	1,040	0,229
Self-management (after the experiment)	1,756	0,004
Sense of purpose (I know what I want) (after the experiment)	2,202	0,000
Problem-solving skills (after the experiment)	1,462	0,028
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Organizational skills (after the experiment)	1,692	0,007
Teamwork skills (after the experiment)	2,106	0,000
Motivation towards success (after the experiment)	1,040	0,229

Table 1
Validation of distribution normality

¹² S. V. Merzlyakova, Bases of scientific research: statistical analysis of data (Astrakhan: 2015).

We used the independent sample Student's test (motivation towards success) and the Mann-Whitney test (other variables) in order to assess the validity of differences between the control and experimental groups before the experiment. Table 2 shows that no valid differences were found.

Variables	Average value		Test value	Significance level
	CG	EG		
Leadership level (before the experiment)	7,2791	7,8721	U = 3217,000	0,134
Communicative-organizational skills (before the experiment)	3,0000	3,3140	U = 3263,000	0,173
Self-management (before the experiment)	15,1395	14,0581	U = 3104,500	0,068
Sense of purpose (I know what I want) (before the experiment)	16,1047	15,3372	U = 3230,000	0,149
Problem-solving skills (before the experiment)	17,3721	16,3372	U = 3269,500	0,188
Creativity (before the experiment)	15,7326	16,3023	U = 3288,000	0,206
Influencing others (before the experiment)	14,5814	14,2442	U = 3395,500	0,352
Familiarity with organizational work standards (before the experiment)	14,4535	14,9419	U = 3410,000	0,376
Organizational skills (before the experiment)	15,6628	14,8488	U = 3147,000	0,090
Teamwork skills (before the experiment)	16,5581	15,9884	U = 3199,000	0,124
Motivation towards success (before the experiment)	18,5116	18,3023	t = 0,361	0,719

Table 2
Assessment of the validity of differences before the experiment

We used the dependent sample Student's test (motivation towards success) and Wilcoxon test table 3 in order to assess the validity of the shift in the experimental group before the experiment. Differences in statistical significance were found for such variables as leadership level, communicative aptitude, self-management, problem-solving skills.

Variables	Average value		Test value	Significance level
	Before the experiment	After the experiment		
Leadership level	7,8721	8,3023	T = - 3,508	0,000
Communicative-organizational skills	3,3140	3,5465	T = - 2,724	0,006
Self-management	14,0581	14,7674	T = - 2,680	0,007
Sense of purpose (I know what I want)	15,3372	15,4302	T = - 1,854	0,064
Problem-solving skills	16,3372	17,0349	T = - 2,032	0,042

Creativity	16,3023	16,3605	T = - 0,921	0,357
Influencing others	14,2442	14,4767	T = - 1,826	0,068
Familiarity with organizational standards work	14,9419	15,1977	T = - 1,826	0,068
Organizational skills	14,8488	15,0581	T = - 1,604	0,109
Teamwork skills	15,9884	16,3140	T = - 1,841	0,066
Motivation towards success	18,3023	18,4651	t = - 1,691	0,094

Table 3
The assessment of the validity of the shift in the experimental group

We assessed the validity of the shift in the control group in the same way table 4. Differences in statistical significance were found for such variables as sense of purpose, problem-solving skills.

Variables	Average value		Test value	Significa nce level
	Before the experiment	After the experiment		
Leadership level	7,2791	7,3023	T = - 0,577	0,564
Communicative- organizational skills	3,0000	2,9535	T = - 1,633	0,102
Self-management	15,1395	15,0814	T = - 0,816	0,414
Sense of purpose (I know what I want)	16,1047	16,8372	T = - 3,076	0,002
Problem-solving skills	17,3721	18,0116	T = - 2,060	0,039
Creativity	15,7326	15,6860	T = - 0,535	0,593
Influencing others	14,5814	14,4767	T = - 1,342	0,180
Familiarity with organizational standards work	14,4535	14,4419	T = - 0,447	0,655
Organizational skills	15,6628	15,6279	T = - 0,816	0,414
Teamwork skills	16,5581	16,5233	T = - 1,342	0,180
Motivation towards success	18,5116	18,5233	t = - 0,199	0,843

Table 4
The assessment of the validity of the shift in the control group

After the experiment, we compared the control and experimental groups. Table 5 shows that valid differences were found for such variables as leadership level, communicative aptitude, sense of purpose (I know what I want) (after the experiment).

Variables	Average value		Test value	Significance level
	CG	EG		
Leadership level	7,3023	8,3023	U = 2671,500	0,001
Communicative-organizational skills	2,9535	3,5465	U = 2898,000	0,012
Self-management	15,0814	14,7674	U = 3527,000	0,599
Sense of purpose (I know what I want)	16,8372	15,4302	U = 2890,500	0,013
Problem-solving skills	18,0116	17,0349	U = 3262,000	0,180
Creativity	15,6860	16,3605	U = 3177,500	0,109
Influencing others	14,4767	14,4767	U = 3593,000	0,746
Familiarity with organizational work standards	14,4419	15,1977	U = 3230,000	0,150
Organizational skills	15,6279	15,0581	U = 3272,500	0,190
Teamwork skills	16,5233	16,3140	U = 3416,500	0,385
Motivation towards success	18,5233	18,4651	t = 0,101	0,92

Table 5

Assesment of the validity of the differences after the experiment

The experiment had an impact on such variables as leadership level and communicative aptitude.

Conclusion

Based on the results, we can draw the following conclusions:

The leadership activity level and the communicative level in the experimental group increased.

There were no qualitative or quantitative changes in the control group (compared to the results in the first stage of the experiment).

The students' leadership level in the experimental group has changed as a result of the students' participation in business games, teamwork, role plays, discussions, engagement in the university public activities, and through students' enriching their own leadership experience via extracurricular activities.

Summing up the results, we consider it necessary to note the following: the complexity of the leadership phenomenon, and the multivariety of its components, factors, and conditions of its dynamics, require to select methods for each of its components separately (communication, motivation, activity).

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