

Foundations Enabling Leadership Potential's Development in Sports Higher Educational Institutions' Students

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Doi:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n6p498

Abstract

The paper includes the information from a questionnaire in graduates of a sports higher educational institution based on which the leader value presence was evaluated in them. One of the guides on leadership skills' development states that leaders cannot be prepared like instant coffee. Leadership qualities development is a lengthy process. The extensive basis for such qualities is formed with education focused on humanities; applying such knowledge in practice should follow further. The practice would allow to acquire the worldly wisdom, experience, sensitivity, determination, intuition, keenness, emotionality, passion for leadership altogether making the person a leader. The latter should be able to see the visions of the desired future and make them attractive for their alumni (students) and in such future, they should see themselves cheerful, healthy, with ideally developed physical and personal qualities, experienced in sports and using the said qualities for attaining their life and professional goals. Sports-teaching leaders should inspire and energize with their ideas, lead the students to form the required level of personality in students. All points mentioned in the conclusion give grounds to suppose that the key competencies for a modern sports teacher should be, alongside with others, the ones requiring leadership skills. The issue of leadership potential's development in the modern context is explained in details.

Keywords: sports higher educational institution, graduate, educational environment, sports educator and leader, leadership qualities.

1. Introduction

Social, economic, political and cultural transformations inherent to the today's society have shifted the focus from the collective, public, state to the individual initiative, an individual's activity, self-organization and self-regulation of all social life's actors.

In the society developing according to democratic principles, the leadership qualities alongside with competitiveness manifesting in the market economy's conditions act as a powerful and efficient tool of social development and progress (Lesina, 2002).

The demand for leaders and leadership as a mechanism of increasing the efficiency of social entities' life sustenance exists virtually in all fields of the Russian society: economics, politics, science, education, culture and sports.

The above-mentioned conditions of the modern social development set new milestones for professional sports education, too, demonstrating the demand for a sports teacher of a new type who is able not only to teach but also to assist to sound development of the rising generation.

Without doubt, leadership skills are necessary for accomplishing the developing education ideas.

According to (Danilyuk, 2010 & Kubarkova, <http://www.emissia.org/offline/2012/1772.htm>, 2012), leader teachers should not only have an increased individual development level and organizational skills, but also be able to generate new ideas and approaches, create new teaching techniques, help accomplish the students' inner potential, initiate their personalities' development.

In connection with the above-said, it would be quite reasonable to begin developing such skills in sports teachers-to-be during their study in universities. But arguments on the necessity of preparing the students of pedagogical and sports higher educational institutions to leaders' social roles still remain purely declarative.

For instance, even in the effective third-generation standard of higher professional education in the sports field, only two competencies aimed at forming leadership qualities as such were included into a list of 52 general cultural and professional competencies which the bachelors-to-be should acquire. The master curricula standards in this field face

roughly speaking the same issues (only 4 competencies of 56 focus on leadership value training).

The teachers of higher education institutions have realized the importance of developing leadership skills in students, but this problem is frequently not solved by the educational contents accomplished and the graduates do not acquire the readiness to use such skills

According to the presently existing interpretations, a leader is a representative of a group (organization) enjoying great authority and the impact expressed as control action normally resulting in efficiency improvement of the group's activity.

According to Zigler's expression (Zigler, <http://www.chidpsy.ru/leb>, 2011), leaders work *with* people, not *above* them. The experience of acquiring leadership should be got through cooperation. The leadership issue, particularly in the educational field, is an issue of the most efficient integration of the persons' activity in their joint activity with other group's members and issues of optimal coordination of the partners' personalities rather than an issue of separate personalities' individual activity.

2. Methodology

The results of professional education in a sports university were the object of our sociological and pedagogical research. This questionnaire's subject were the components of leadership potential characteristic for the university's graduates getting physical culture and sports bachelor and specialist degrees.

The goal of the research was to identify and to justify pedagogic conditions necessary for formation and development of leadership skills of students studying in Physical Education University, where the next generation of managerial staff for the sphere of sports is trained. Only managers having contemporary leadership style are able to assure continuous search for methods of unveiling new abilities of their subordinates, that is, those who will be able to engage and use the entire human resources' potential for the achievement of the goals set for their collective body. All the foregoing keeps up-to-date the demand of the Russian society for formation of the leadership paradigm in higher education (Bespalov, 2013).

The systemic approach to understanding the essence of human personality developed by Lomov (1984) & Lomov (1996), which, in opinion of the authors, is very efficient for studying the problems of group cooperation, was selected as the theoretical and methodological basis for organization of the research and interpretation of the results thereof. Consideration of the problems of arrangement of a collective body from the perspective of the above mentioned approach presupposes that the subjectivity of a collective body is conjugated with strongly pronounced intertwinement of socio-psychological events taking place therein which are based on the nature of person-to-person interactions which are subject to principles and norms generally accepted in a given environment. This is the very way how the system of collective cooperation is formed, for which the unity of interdependent and interconnected elements is inherent. In such case, the leadership appears as a system phenomenon engendered by specific leader's traits influencing the arrangement of collective interaction. The art of persuasion, generosity, detachment, courage, willpower, and honesty are relegated to such traits (Andriyachenko, 2012).

A leader is created by the system (a social group) without which he/she cannot exist. Herewith, a leader is not just a function of interpersonal relations or individual's behavior, but a key process of organization of the activities of the entire group (system).

Recognizing the significance of leadership as a very important social phenomenon, mechanisms and regularities of formation thereof at certain age-specific stages of personality becoming of an individual also have to be considered.

In opinion of the authors, undergraduates are those to whom the ability to efficiently build a strategy of managing the innovative potential of a collective body to the benefit of sustainable development of both the collective body itself and respective industry has to be imparted. In connection with that, there is a need for realization of such a paradigm of professional education, in the conditions of which a student, as a future highly skilled professional, would be able to apprehend and to adopt leadership type of management. For the latter, not authoritarianism and coercion of subordinates are peculiar, but promotion of their creative intentions and personal development.

The sampling of persons under research (respondents) acknowledged by us as representative consisted of 80 full-time fifth-course students finishing study in the Far-Eastern State Sports Academy in 2014.

3. Results and Discussion

The multi-subject questionnaire conducted in the said group showed that only 26.25% graduates consider the study in the university to be the field of a leader's self-actualization. At the same time, sports during the study provided for a leader's

self-actualization in 63.75% graduates. The university's graduates answered the question which leadership qualities should a teacher and a trainer have to take the leading positions in the professional community, as follows:

72.5% respondents consider the ability to take over the initiative to be an indispensable leader's quality.

Further, the following qualities were named in the decreasing order: readiness to take over the responsibility (63.8%); deep professional knowledge (62.5%); organizational skills (60%); zeal and vigour (50%); curiosity and creativity (47.5%); modesty and justice (40%); the ability to look in a decent and attractive way (38.75%).

In some cases, the graduates mentioned the following qualities of a leader: the ability to generate new ideas; produce new unconventional approaches to professional activity (innovativeness); charisma; the ability to provide for the team's vitality (creating the atmosphere of contentment with team membership, pulling it together and preserving it as a single whole).

Based on the above-said, we can assume that the graduates of the sports higher educational institution name a number of qualities characteristic for a competitive leadership model (dominant behavior of a leader straining after individual success, career growth, commercial success, etc.) but not the cooperative leadership model's qualities (for which primarily the social community and organization development, successfulness in social and emotional criteria (true cooperation for attaining common objectives), domination of social intellect (Bendas, http://www.elitarium.ru/2013/07/27/mjdeli_povedenija_lideru.html, 2013) as the priority leadership skills.

The graduates answered the question which leadership qualities were formed in them to a sufficient extent in the course of study as follows:

33.75% respondents admitted that the ability to persuade and inspire was formed in them; 32.5% respondents said that the ability to take over the initiative was formed in them.

65% respondents find themselves to be tactful enough in professional behavior; more than the half graduates tend to think that they have communicative competency (52.5%). Criticalness, accountability, success-orientedness, reasonable vanity are characteristic for 47.5% graduates, in their own opinion.

41.3% respondents consider themselves to be self-disciplined, committed to their principles, modest, just and having enough self-respect. About 48% respondents find that they need further self-cultivation to improve their personal and activity qualities.

Summarizing the above-said data, we can make a note of behavioral mindsets and personal qualities in graduates of the sports higher educational institution showing their tendency to independence and probably leadership.

At the same time, the aspiration to develop their qualities providing for personal progress and interests rather than to the qualities connected with expressing their interest to others, to revealing and taking into account their abilities and possibilities was found out. Confirming the results of research conducted by Lesina (2002) in students of a pedagogical higher educational institution, the graduates of a sports higher educational institution are also not quite ready to fulfilling such important leader's functions as accomplishing the potential of their professional environment, the functions of inspiring motivation and co-participating management.

The modern pedagogical production armed with the efficient management practice is most probably impossible without including such a popular type of organizational environment interaction as a working team. The latter means a small group with pronounced dedication, intensive and complementary interaction of the group's members and high efficiency of their activity.

Only 22.5% respondents of the sports higher educational institution pointed out their ability to organize efficient team activity (be a leader) in a teachers' team and 60.0%, when fulfilling a leader's (educator's) function in a children's sports team.

At the same time, 61.1% of the respondents able to become a team's leader among professionals admit having highly developed interpersonal skills (the ability to build relationships with others efficiently using diverse communication means) and 66.7% graduates admitted having the ability to make responsible decisions and solve problems.

The university's graduates invest efficient leader educators of children's sports teams with, primarily, love for children, charisma, the ability to give reasonable advice, self-restraint and self-possession, tactfulness, justice, and carefulness.

Unluckily, in the survey conducted in the environment of healthy lifestyle adherents, only 3.75% graduates mentioned that excellent health was important for leaders allowing them to be vigorous, sturdy, to successfully cope with difficulties and stress. The analysis of the observation materials prepared by the paper's authors complementing the survey's data shows that the leadership communication style was mostly not demanded for in the course of study process. Most students turn out to be out of the search for the field where they could fulfill themselves. Many of them prefer individual consultations to classes in groups; in communication trainings, they assume authoritarian positions, show intolerance to criticism, are frequently not ready to make decisions independently, to take up responsibility for the

choice made, prefer acting according to clear instructions and approximate problems' plans.

Studying the study process' structure, the profession choice' motivation and the profession's value in addition to comparing diverse personal and professional skills allows to get a more detailed view of forming leadership skills in students. Beyond all doubt, the educational environment of the university where the profession is acquired influences directly the leadership skills' formation. Only 25.0% of the sports higher educational institution graduates were quite content with the professional education's quality; the majority of respondents (52.5%) were partially content and 22.5% were totally discontent. The above-said confirms that the students' requirement level and expectations to the curricula accomplished by the educational institution are quite high.

In the course of additional interviews performed with the graduates, it was also established that the students' expectations were beyond the scope of the curricula's contents to be provided by the university. Obviously, a part of graduates was going either to continue their education after graduation or to work not in accordance with their specialities. They had expected that the higher educational institution would form the competencies required for other types of professional activities.

The level of leadership skills' development in students depends in many aspects from the quality of teaching specific subjects, i.e. from the professionalism of the university's teachers.

One in three graduates was quite content with the quality of classes in the higher educational institution; almost 53.0% were partially content; 7.5% were totally discontent.

60.0% graduates evaluated the knowledge level of the subject taught by university's teachers as high. A significantly lesser number (23,8%) of persons who completed the educational cycle expressed high opinions on the teachers' teaching skills, their ability to stir the interest to the subject's contents, wording the study objectives clearly and build the course process in a technically correct way.

72.5% graduates characterized the higher educational institution's social and cultural environment as comfortable in their answers. The respondents evaluated the communication with their teachers and peers, the growth of individual adaptation to the study group and the personal safety feeling as positive. But only 40% graduates do not dispute the fairness of the examination grades got during the study in the institution and virtually the equal number of respondents (42.5%) think that the specific character of the sports higher educational institution (both study and sports) does not imply the reduction of the willingness to get high grades. The students evaluated the aspects of the university's educational environment which should stimulate their intellectual and professional growth not high, either. A little more than 60% respondents said that study in a sports higher educational institution promoted to intellectual growth. The prestige of the profession in society also influences the forming and expression of leadership potential in university's students.

About 25% of the graduates interrogated have evaluated the sports teacher's profession as one of the best. The greater part of the students has evaluated this profession positively in general but their opinions have distributed as follows: 43.75% of respondents believe that their profession is not worse than the others; 21.25% think that the profession they got is not worse and not better than the others and only one respondent in ten expressed their discontent regarding the profession obtained.

The graduates were asked a traditional question characteristic for such surveys: would they have chosen the same educational institution if they had been given such opportunity once more? The answers' distribution was as follows: 40% of respondents would have chosen the same educational institution; 25% would have studied a supplementary qualification simultaneously in the same institution or in another one and almost 1/3 of the respondents would have chosen other educational institutions and training fields.

Summarizing the data received, the following conclusion may be drawn: the results of the sports higher educational institution's students evaluating its educational environment as the one forming leadership skills shows that the students should most probably be categorized as persons *under wardship* but not as partners in educational interaction acquiring leadership skills in the university's social and educational space.

Sports higher educational institutions form leadership qualities in students subpar although providing for knowledge transfer and teaching specific skills.

4. Conclusion

The demand for leaders emerging in the society has raised the question on necessity of forming the leadership qualities and skills in the course of professional education in any educational institution via regional educational component of the education's contents.

One of the guides on leadership skills' development states that leaders cannot be prepared like instant coffee. Leadership qualities development is a lengthy process. The extensive basis for such qualities is formed with education

focused on humanities; applying such knowledge in practice should follow further. The practice would allow to acquire the worldly wisdom, experience, sensitivity, determination, intuition, keenness, emotionality, passion for leadership altogether making the person a leader.

The latter should be able to see the visions of the desired future and make them attractive for their alumni (students) and in such future, they should see themselves cheerful, healthy, with ideally developed physical and personal qualities, experienced in sports and using the said qualities for attaining their life and professional goals.

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