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(ПСИХОЛОГИЈА И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ)

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ИСТОК - ЗАПАД
ПСИХОЛОГИЈА И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ

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EARLY YEARS LEADERSHIP AS A BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL COMPETENCE

ABSTRACT: One of the characteristics of competence is development, which does not occur spontaneously, instead it implies a purposeful action with appropriate methods, means and content from an early age. Considering that learning largely depends on prior knowledge, it is best learned by applying knowledge towards problem solving from an early age. In this paper we would be able to determine the possibilities for development of leadership as an important component of social competence. The goal is to show how leadership develops at an early age through the concept of bricolage. Thereby, it is concluded that the effects of leadership on learning are indirect, as well as that among all factors that refer to school, leadership in terms of its contribution to school learning is immediately after the quality of instruction. The conclusions show that everyone should be able to develop their own leadership theory in order to create an authentic style to meet the needs of the community.

KEYWORDS: leadership, social competence, motivation

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a skill that needs to be practiced and developed over time. Something that numerous definitions of leadership have in common is its basic characteristic: that it is a process, rather than an ultimate goal. The interest in leadership can be found in Plato's works, who specifically studied the characteristics of leadership, while in recent times, the knowledge of Sigmund Freud has been used, who developed theories of behavior. Leadership implies that the individual should learn to be a leader and to be led. The foundation of leadership is the idea of continuous learning. Leadership within a group is sought after by many. The idea of a leader who is at the top and who creates changes aimed at solving existing problems, is no longer acceptable. Group members should be allowed to recognize and solve problems on their own, and learn to accept responsibility. Leaders must learn to relinquish their power, to trust their associates, to develop new skills, and transcend personal interest (Derek, 2004)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Leadership is a multidimensional phenomenon, and in addition to social intelligence (SQ), emotional (EQ) and academic intelligence (IQ) are also important traits for leadership (Chin, 2006).

The social identity theory, proposed by Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), is the first theory that systematically studies the concept of social identity and places it at the center of leadership interests. The theory deals with membership in a group, group processes, and intergroup relationships. The basic assumption is that the very membership in a group is already a sufficient requisite to develop a sense of belonging in the individual. According to Tajfel and Turner, social identity is defined as a

part of the self-concept that arises from a person's awareness of being a member of specific groups, but also from the emotional importance of the membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Different authors agree that a person's social identity depends on two processes: the process of recognizing their own resemblance to members of their group and the perception of differences in relation to members of other groups. It is important to point out that a person may have as many social identities as there are groups to identify with. According to the social identity theory, social identity is based on the membership in specific groups, and consists of those aspects of one's self-image that arise from the groups that the person belongs to. Thus, when a person begins to think of himself as a member of a specific social category, one can say that social identity is awakened in the person (Brown, R. 2006). Social identity, as mentioned, refers to the way an individual sees himself/herself as a member of the group he/she belongs to. It is important to note that a person may have as many social identities as there are groups to identify with.

Social competence is a complex of all personal abilities and attitudes that contribute to transforming one's personal behavior from individual towards social action. Competent social behavior connects individual action goals with the attitudes and values of a group. Educators who work with younger children dedicate many of their activities on encouraging positive social behavior. In this context, it should be considered that competencies can be improved in the interaction between developmental processes and learning, having in mind personality traits and motivation.

The development of an individual's social competence is an assumption for his/her successful coping in the society. Social competence can be encouraged during daily educational activities through the realization of contents that imply better understanding of social reality, teaching children to focus their attention on other people's feelings and interests, orientation of children towards discovering common characteristics with other children, supporting the skills of assertive communication (fostering verbal and non-verbal communication), encouraging the ability for constructive cooperation and developing empathy between children.

LEADERSHIP AT AN EARLY AGE

Since the eighties of the 20th century, within a sequence of scientific disciplines, there has been a debate regarding the child as a social subject, as an active participant in the creation of the society and the culture. A key question that arises in this context is: how actively children shape their environment and themselves, and to what extent and are they a "product" of their environment and educational influences at all (Hurelmann, 1988). It is important to emphasize that the task of pedagogical action is not to "educate" rather it is necessary to "enable the child to learn", and educators in this case are professional helpers in learning. Thereby pedagogical action does not refer to the whole personality of the child, rather to those aspects that need to be changed with learning. The responsibility for building one's own personality is conveyed as early as in childhood. In this case educators offer only appropriate contents for learning and at the content-subject level, interventions are made in the process of learning and socialization of children.

The reason for the interest in leadership in early childhood stems from the fact that it is the basis for the development of lifelong learning in children, but also a social investment, especially for children from socio-economically deprived communities.

Claude Lévi-Strauss in his work "The Savage Mind" explains the development of leadership in early childhood as a basis for the development of social competence through the concept of bricolage. In its original meaning, the verb bricoler applied to ball games, billiards, hunting and riding and usually represents the idea of unexpected movement such as a bounced ball. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss in today's sense of the word, a bricoler is someone who creates everything, independently, using the available means, as opposed to the means used by a professional. From technical aspect, the concept of bricolage may lead to intellectually brilliant and unpredicted results. In terms of its nature, the concept of bricolage is a "raw" or "naïve" art.

Namely the so-called Bricoler is capable of performing a wide range of tasks. During the game, the child always solves everything by means of "improvised means", at any moment the child disposes of imaginary tools and materials that he/she can use. This means that the tools used by the bricoler are not determined by the project, rather they are the result of its instrumental use, in other words, the elements are collected and stored according to the principle that "they can always be used for something". Each element in this concept simultaneously reproduces an integral set of relationships, both specific and potential, that are suitable for each type of operation.

The elements are always positioned halfway between perceptions and concepts. Perceptions cannot be separated from the specific situation in which they appear, while concepts require thinking. (Lévi-Strauss, C. 1966)

In this case, educators should enable children responsible and competent leadership, whereby they will be able to take responsibility for their own actions and will be able to connect the contents and activities that will enable them to establish a responsible relationship on the basis of which they will develop their own competencies.

CONCLUSION

The encouragement of social development of children is primarily related to the encouragement of the development of their social competence. Social competence is an extremely important aspect for the process of adaptation in the psychosocial, teaching-educational and professional spheres. Competent children are the ones who smoothly engage in different relationships and interactions with their peers, other children as well as adults, and through those relationships they develop and improve their own social competence. The encouragement of the development of social competence is one of the basic tasks of modern teaching-educational institutions (Mikas & Roudi, 2012). The motivation for social interaction is also conditioned by the child's personality, the repertoire of social skills that the child possesses as well as his/her previous experience in social relations. Social competence is an important development area that deserves complete attention by all pedagogical workers. The basic factor that in the context of kindergarten can aid in the development of the child's personality and provide conditions for progress, is the educator. The educator can recognize and understand the feelings, thoughts and needs of other people and help build close relationships that are full of trust.

A child today has much more space to check his/her own abilities and participation in social life in which a status of a social actor and a participant in decision-making is imposed on him/her.

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