

**EdCW 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference Education in a Changing World: Global Challenges and National Priorities****SELF-CONFIDENCE AS A PART OF CONCIOUS LEADERSHIP  
IN PEDAGOGICAL COMMUNITIES**

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(a) Irkutsk State Agrarian University named after A.A. Ezhevsky, Irkutsk, Russia, [psychologist-irgau@igsha.ru](mailto:psychologist-irgau@igsha.ru)**Abstract**

Leadership traits are considered to be inherent. It is true if people do not strive to nurture those ones within themselves. Leadership is partly dependent on genetic. There are professions whose representatives have to possess leadership potential. It is the occupation of an educator, as well. Leading pupils is one of the most challenging aspects of leadership. Teachers cannot afford to make decisions and act with distracted minds. They need mindful leadership which involves making conscious choices about not just how they work but how they connect with their current school teams. Mindful leader somebody leadership presence by deeply listening to others and to themselves. It is necessary to realize that leadership really starts internally, with self-leadership. Self-leadership refers to a reflective mental process which consciously helps to control own thoughts and actions. Children are sensitive and catch if the teacher does not feel like a leader inside. Only after reaching a high level of self-leadership he or she will be recognized and supported by them. The indicator to gauge self-leadership is developed self-confidence of a teacher. Self-confidence belongs to essential skills and can be cultivated. Self-confidence is an intra-psychological variable. Self-confidence is a complex construct consisting of multiple components. The most comprehensive model is divided into personal, cognitive, emotional, motivational and behavioral components. This model of self-confidence can be specified and expanded by the following main items: self-awareness, self-compassion, self-acceptance, self-reflection, self-assessment, self-esteem, self-assertion. Adopting of these components into regular practice contributes self-leadership and hence it, conscious leadership.

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*Keywords:* Complex construct of self-confidence, conscious leadership, essential skills, internal mental processes, self-leadership, transformation psychological games



## 1. Introduction

There is a common opinion that true leaders are born rather than made. Would be leaders are assumed to come into the world with a natural capacity to lead. Some people really may be naturally predisposed to leadership. But it does not mean that others cannot work on nurturing the critical for leadership traits in their jobs, especially it occurs in teaching careers. The profession of an educator requires the application of leadership abilities. The quality of education can increase or decrease in proportion to whether the teacher is able to influence and inspire or to impact and discourage, to be a strong or a weak leader, to be accepted or just tolerated by students' team as a leading person. If only leadership abilities are not innate by a particular teacher they are to be cultivated and developed.

As "the literature has generated countless lists of supposedly universal leadership attributes" (Global Definitions of Leadership and Theories of Leadership Development, 2017, p. 3), the article is aimed at finding such attributes which make leadership mindful. Conscious leadership in relation to the teachers' community is especially important because teachers as leaders are responsible not for themselves only but also for their students. The purpose of pedagogical leadership is not just to develop certain competencies and to transfer up-to-date academic knowledge to apprentices in order they surpass their tutors. It is to be socially conscious in this continuously changing world, be ready to adapt itself and to broadcast confidence the pupil show those could adapt to new realities. It is essential, "what do teachers communicate to their students, apart from the subjects they teach" (Ilyushin & Azbel, 2017, p. 51).

## 2. Problem Statement

Pedagogical communities concerning leadership is one of the communication competencies that teachers need to learn. Due existing researches, "teachers have clear ideas about communicative competencies and the standards of conduct necessary for effective pedagogical practice" (Glotova, & Wilhelm, 2014, p. 108). "Communication competencies include communication models, interaction among teachers, students, social environment and learning topics, ... communication skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing" (Selvi, 2010, p. 172). Unconditionally, this interaction is determined by pedagogical activity and teaching subject because a leader-teacher has to demonstrate the pedagogical competence - a sufficient level of professional abilities and fluency in the specialty.

The skill set of a trained teacher consists of two groups of skills which are traditionally called hard and soft. True leadership properties mark mastery both of them.

Hard skills are gained through formal education; they are specialized, subject-specific knowledge, technical qualifications that can be proven and measured by certificates, work experience and performance indicators. Hard skills of a teacher include lifelong learning, methodical competence in teaching, available explaining of the training material for students in different academic standing, using of modern educational technologies, professional and digital expertise, etc.

Soft skills are known as people skills. "People skills are ... the various attributes and competencies that allow one to play well with others ... these attributes come in the form of effective, accurate and persuasive communication" (Parnell, as cited in Smith, 2013, para. 2). Soft skills are reflective in nature,

universal and unrelated to a particular specialty; they beyond academic knowledge. These are “personality traits and habits including interpersonal and intrapersonal communication” (Schulz, 2008, p. 6). Soft skills concern mind and behaviour of a person that enable his or her self-identity and interaction with other people. They reflect personal internal mental processes and social skills– skills needed for living in society: self-confidence, motivation, creative thinking, making decisions, undertaking responsibility, team work, social competence, emotional intelligence, etc.

Hard skills are paid by the teachers with proper attention because of their school duties. High school teachers periodically attend refresher courses, get access to webinars, visit seminars and conferences, take part in master classes or conduct them, and publish research papers.

Soft skills are not obligatory at schools. That is why the most teachers do not attach great significance to them and are often not aware of how those ones can be developed. As compared with the hard skills they are considered to be secondary in character. But those minor skills underscore a deeper problem. Their lack of development inhibits the productivity and the achievements of a person. Having advanced soft skills a teacher becomes a recognized leader and a respected authority.

And besides, some experts judge that “a part of the skills are still called soft skills has ceased to be just “a pleasant option”, and suggest renaming it to “essential skills” as it is so necessary now that it may be equated with basic skills like reading and writing” (Tatti, as cited in Mironenko, 2020, para. 6). When applying for a job many soft skills are evaluated not as a differentiating criterion, but as a threshold one. Employers are hardly to hire a specialist who is not able to work in a team, does not get along with the others and has not an ability to resolve conflicts. It concerns occupations within a team where there are personnel only. Teachers’ job involves three teams at once: a teacher deals with an apprentices’ community, a parents’ community and a colleagues’ pedagogical community. According to dealing with these three communities a teacher needs the relevant skills in triple size.

### **3. Research Questions**

- What peculiarities have essential skills and how these ones should be taken into consideration by teachers’ training?
- Which essential skills are defining for pedagogical leadership development?
- What features are these essential skills determined by, how are they structurally arranged, what components do they consist of?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to state essential skills which contribute to conscious leadership.

## 5. Research Methods

For achievement of the purpose the theoretical research has been conducted. By this qualitative psychological research the research findings are not gained by any statistical procedures. It is descriptive and has to present the exploration of the existing certain phenomena. Its main goal is to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied. It is based on words, feelings, emotions and other non-numerical and unquantifiable elements. Analysis and generalization of scientific literature was applied.

## 6. Findings

Essential skills are currently the foundation of any lasting activity and relationship. There is not a uniform generally accepted and approved by all researchers list of essential skills to date. They include what we used to call soft skills, but are not limited to, extend even further. A continuously changing world presents us with more and more up-to-the-minute skills for learning.

The main peculiarity of several essential skills is that they are not so much taught as cultivated, and it causes certain difficulties in grasping. Their development depends on how well and extremely quickly an individual can adapt them to him- or herself, how ready and mature he or she is for internal mindful work.

Leadership is closely interrelated with essential skills. But before people become great leaders for others, they have to first take care of themselves. It is necessary to realize that it really starts internally, with self-leadership. "Self-leadership is an influence-related process through which individuals ... navigate, motivate and lead themselves towards achieving desired behaviors and outcomes" (Manz, as cited in Carmeli et al., 2006, p. 76). Self-leadership refers to a reflective mental process which consciously helps to control own thoughts and actions. After reaching a high level of self-leadership an individual can lead others who will recognize and support him or her.

The first indicator to gauge leadership potential is such a construct among essential skills as self-confidence. Self-confidence is a fundamental basis, on which self-leadership deploys, a necessary requirement for leading others, especially children. Students do not listen to those who are unsure of themselves. Teachers' low self-confidence complicates as relationships within the study group as understanding the lesson topic by the students.

Self-confidence is an intra-psychological variable. Speaking about the role of self-confidence in building leadership the researchers come to a consensus that it is about the inner activities inside an individual, their primacy relative to the outside ones. "There is a difference between the internal and external confidence that leaders transmit to other people and a powerful link between internal confidence and the external results interpreted by others as self-confidence" (Belu, 2020, p.70). Self-confidence has two aspects: general self-confidence, which is a stable personality trait that develops in early childhood, and specific self-confidence, which is a changing mental and emotional state associated with the specific task or situation at-hand. We develop both types of self-confidence through automatic, mostly unconscious, internal dialogues whereby we make judgments about ourselves based on our experiences

and others' feedback (Axelrod, 2017, p. 2). Self-confidence has to do with one's inner perception of his or her ability to fulfill a particular work in society.

Thus, teachers can adapt and enhance their self-leadership skills and thereby improve their work outcomes provided that they have to do a huge internal work on themselves. This intrinsic source named self-confidence is connected with understanding of one's nature and personality through that conscious leadership becomes possible. Self-confidence is understanding that a person trusts his or her own judgment and abilities, values him- or herself and feels worthy, regardless of any imperfections or of what others may think about. It is particularly important as "people feel great discomfort embodying feelings of confidence ... because they believe they ... will appear to others to be over-confident" (Morrison, 2020, para. 1).

In general, many researchers agree that the core of a confident person is a positive assessment of his or her own abilities, as well as belief in his- or herself. So this already testifies that self-confidence is a complex construct consisting of multiple components.

From that point of view the following statement seems to be comprehensive: there are personal, cognitive, emotional, motivational and behavioral components of it (Minakov, 2019, para. 10). The personal component is represented by a high level of self-assessment and self-esteem. High self-assessment forms personal comfort and serves as a source of a person's self-satisfaction. Self-esteem allows feeling capable, significant and prosperous. The cognitive component is a sphere of self-perception, thoughts and mental attitudes towards oneself. Here the person realizes the advantages of confident behavior. The emotional component reflects the positive emotional background, includes the ability to manage emotions. The motivational component is associated with intentions: a dominant motive may be focused on other people (sociocentricity) or on oneself (egocentricity). The behavioral component combines all the components and reflects the external implementation of self-confidence. Each of these components does not exist separately but in interaction and works in a complementary way.

We assume this model of self-confidence can be specified and expanded by the following main items:

### ***Self-awareness #1***

It is more than just collecting information about ourselves. "It is also about watching our inner state with an open heart" (Valencia, 2018, para. 8). Self-aware individuals consciously act instead of responding passively, have a larger depth of life experience and are more inclined to be empathetic to others, as well as themselves.

### ***Self-compassion #2***

It is not a form of self-pity. "Self-compassion provides an island of calm, a refuge from the stormy seas of endless positive and negative self-judgment ... In many ways self-compassion is like magic, because it has the power to transform suffering into joy" (Neff, 2015, p. 12). "Self-compassion is a practice in which we learn to be a good friend to our selves when we need it most - to become an inner ally rather than an inner enemy. But typically we don't treat ourselves as well as we treat our friends" (Neff & Germer, 2018, p. 18).

### ***Self-acceptance #3***

It is an individual's satisfaction, and is thought to be necessary for good mental health. Self-acceptance means a positive self-attitude, acknowledges and accepts all aspects of oneself. "One important aspect of self-acceptance is the ability and willingness to let others see one's true self. Living mindfully entails living daily life without pretense and without concern that others are judging one negatively. The person who lives mindfully is fully "in the moment" and is not worried about how he or she is coming across to others" (Carson & Langer, 2006, p. 4).

### ***Self-reflection #4***

It is a metacognitive process with activation of critical thinking. "Self-reflection is an active and intentional process that can begin with some discomfort with an experience and end with learning and deeper insights" (Dewey, as cited in Belobrov, 2018, p. 3).

### ***Self-assessment #5***

It is the process of looking at oneself in order to assess aspects that are important to one's identity. It is one of the motives that drive self-evaluation, along with self-verification and self-enhancement. The process of self-assessment includes honestly answering a number of questions that are important to help us to judge our characteristic set of skills that show our readiness for the life ahead.

### ***Self-esteem #6***

"The concept of self-esteem must be distinguished from the concept of pride. The two are related, but there are significant differences in their meaning. Self-esteem pertains to a man's conviction of his fundamental efficacy and worth. Pride pertains to the pleasure a man takes in himself on the basis of and in response to specific achievements or actions. Self-esteem is confidence in one's capacity to achieve values. Pride is the consequence of having achieved some particular value(s). Self-esteem is "I can." Pride is "I have." (Branden, 2001, p. 134).

### ***Self-assertion #7***

Or assertive behavior means you are very clear about the idea in your mind, respect it and know how to put it in a way that would not elicit an aggressive response. It means that you respect others as much as yourself. You understand that everyone has an opinion and that you are ready to listen to their reasons, not just for the sake of listening but to improve yourself (Agrawal, 2015).

## **7. Conclusion**

The main goal of this study was to investigate theoretical background on self-confidence. It has been proven that self-confidence is an essential skill with a complex structure of multiple components which can be cultivated by teachers using internal mental processes. Adopting of these components into regular practice helps self-leadership and hence it, conscious leadership.

There is a lack of actual self-confidence training tools description in the study. It should be mentioned that the author considers those ones transformation psychological games to be which give an

opportunity to better understand and transform the ineffective ways a person manifests him- or herself in life. Their potential contribution to pedagogical leadership practices would be the topic of the further researches.

## Acknowledgments

The author thanks the European Commission (EC) project “DeSTT - Development of Skills and Teachers Training for Leadership Project” (Reference Number: 609905-EPP-1-2019-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP). The publication of this article is possible due to EC’s financial support.

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