

EdCW 2020**International Scientific and Practical Conference Education in a Changing World: Global Challenges and National Priorities****USING THE POTENTIAL OF LEADERSHIP PEDAGOGY OF THE
1920s-1930s IN MODERN SCHOOL**

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the ideas of scientists, pedagogues and practitioners in the field of children leadership phenomenon study in the 1920s-1930s and their attitude to the leaders and leadership in the children collective as well as the possibility to use the experience of past years in modern education. It is noted that scientists and practicing teachers of the 1920s-1930s repeatedly addressed the issue of educating leaders, tried to identify them in the children's collective. The article discusses approaches to the problem of leadership of famous scientists and practitioners. It is noted that the experience of psychological and pedagogical research in 1920-1930 in the field of children's leadership is relevant, and elements of the best practices can be introduced into a modern school, however, there are a number of limitations and serious risks. The authors of the article note that the potential of leadership pedagogy of the 1920s-1930s can be used in modern education in terms of raising patriotic children who can work in a team and at the same time possess leadership qualities, are not afraid to take the initiative, and think creatively. The article presents a historical and pedagogical research, which potential is still underestimated.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays in Russia people who do not only proclaim ideas, but act by uniting people to achieve socially significant goals, are in great demand. To use the best practices for leadership building among the young generation, it is necessary to turn to the history of the children leadership. In particular the period of 1920s-1930s of the XX-th century seems to be especially relevant for this issue. This is also important in the context of the Decade of Childhood (2018–2027) announced by the President of Russia V.V. Putin on May 29, 2017. Based on the results achieved during the implementation of the National Action Strategy for Children for 2012-2017, the Decree signed on this subject is aimed to improve policies in the field of childhood safety and security. In addition to political initiatives this Decree also activates the scientific research of a child. Taking into account the modernization in the modern Russian education system and the initiatives of V.V. Putin, the problem of past years' experience on the studying a child as a phenomenon of the Childhood becomes urgent.

2. Problem Statement

Russian and foreign scientists studied the USSR pedagogy of 1920s-1930s. So, the events of this period in XXI century are considered by Byford (2016, 2017), Kirschenbaum (2001), Caroli (2004), Hillig (2004), Glushchenko (2015), Kotelnikov and Senchenkov (2019), and others. However, no serious historical and pedagogical research on child leadership was carried out in the period under study. Despite this, the experience of 1920s-1930s in the study of children leadership is relevant today.

3. Research Questions

- What prerequisites for the study of children leadership were in Russia in the 1920s–1930s?
- What were the approaches to the study of children leadership and how were the leadership qualities developed in the pedagogical theory and practice in the 1920s-1930s (on the examples of the ideas of P.P. Blonsky and A.S. Makarenko)?
- How to use the experience gained during the studying period in the modern pedagogy?
- What are the risks in this case?

4. Purpose of the Study

The objective of this paper is to analyze the ideas of scientists and practitioners in the field of children leadership phenomenon and their attitude to the leaders and leadership in the children collective as well as the possibility to use the experience of past years in modern education.

5. Research Methods

The historical and pedagogical direction of the study, its purpose and objectives identified the following methods to be the main ones: historical and structural method, systematic approach, retrospective method, textual analysis of primary sources.

6. Findings

During the formation of the Soviet state, the education system underwent fundamental changes. A contemporary of the events of that time Pistrak (1926) noted: “In 1917 we started by destroying the external attributes of the old school, threw out the regime having been established for many decades. We are still very young in building a new school” (p. 28). The country leaders were also thinking about preparing leaders who could fight the bourgeoisie and ensure the successful development of the Soviet state. Teachers and psychologists in most of their research did not aim to identify and study leaders, however, during the study of children groups, the identification of leaders was inevitable.

In the 1920s -1930s scientists used the term «leader» («vozhak» in Russian) more often describing a leader child. In the USSR a leader was considered as « the leader of a political party, the head of the party», that is he has a status of a formal leader. It should be mentioned that an English word «leader» was translated as «vozhak» (fugleman) in Russian-English dictionary.

At that period a great number of studies of a child were conducted in our country. That time is the period of pedology efflorescence – the science about a child. The leadership phenomenon in a child collective in the 1920s-1930s was studied by Zaluzhny and Lozinsky (1926), Blonsky (1961, 2020), Elkonin (1931), Makarenko (2020), and etc.

An important contribution to the children collectives study was carried out by A.S. Zaluzhny. In the process of his work, he paid considerable attention to the phenomenon of leadership («vozhachestvo» in Russian). In his works the scientist investigated functions and roles of a leader in collective, preconditions for turning a child into a leader in a collective. As a result of his observations, A. S. Zaluzhny detected the following features of leaders: experience, activity and above average mental development (as cited in Zaluzhny & Lozinsky, 1926).

The scientist criticized the idea that some children cannot be leaders «by nature». As an argument he gave an example that made it possible to understand the mechanism of a leader promotion: a child who does not show leadership qualities suddenly becomes a leader, first for a whole day, and in the future he is promoted as a permanent leader by his collective. The reason for being the leader during the day was a trip to the village. There he learned a lot and having returned to the city began to teach his collective to mow, row, etc. Obviously, this fact of leadership was enough to ensure that his importance in the collective increased so much that he became dominant.

A.S. Zaluzhny also noted that experiments on moving a child, who had never been a leader in his collective, into a collective with a lower level of development usually finished with the fact that such a child became a leader in a new group quickly. The scientist came to the following conclusion: in any collective, and especially ... in organized collectives, there are specific requirements for the leader. Thus,

working on the problem of leadership, A.S. Zaluzhny anticipated modern psychological and pedagogical research in this area in many respects. “As the level of a collective grows the requirements for the leader increase, and even the need for a leader disappears” (as cited in Zaluzny, & Lozinsky, 1926, p. 221). In addition, A. S. Zaluzhny proposed to divide leaders into situational and permanent ones (as cited in Chernyshev, 2020, p. 75). Theoretical propositions and practical research of A.S. Zaluzhny can be used in the modern educational process in many ways.

The problem of the leaders typology is considered in detail in the unfairly forgotten study of D. B. Elkonin «Children's collectives» (Elkonin, 1931). First of all, Elkonin in his typology spoke about the leadership. He identified some stages of this phenomenon. The first stage is a passive leadership. “The child becomes the leader in relation to the group not because of his own desire to influence the behavior of other children, but because other children follow him usually on the basis of imitation” (Elkonin, 1931, pp. 81-82). The second stage is an active leadership which is shown at certain moments, to be more concrete “the leader function is passed from one person to the other one” (Elkonin, 1931, pp. 81-82). The third stage is the leadership covering significant parts of the process, but it does not continue during the whole time spent in the group. The fourth stage is the leader during the whole time spent in the group. At the fourth stage, the leader directs all the actions of the group. The difference of the fifth stage from the previous ones is that at certain moments the main leader is assisted by the another one who “is not equal in rights with the main leader». At the sixth stage «two equal in rights leaders” appear (Elkonin, 1931, pp. 81-82).

Elkonin (1931) also described the types of leaders: a dictator leader putting down the children groups; an emotional organizer inspiring children groups with number of bright emotional actions and finally a leader who can be called an intellectual rationalizer or a dried-up mentor (p. 83).

At its core, D. B. Elkonin anticipated the modern classification of leadership including a «dictator leader» (autocrat), an «emotional leader» and an «instrumental leader». D. B. Elkonin’s topology has not lost its relevance today. It allows understanding better what kind of a collective and a leader a teacher faces in his work.

Blonsky (1961) was also seriously engaged in the study of leaders. In his works, Blonsky identifies a special group of children: «a very developed child». Such children are always active with a teacher, they ask various questions. Describing the character of very developed children, Blonsky noted that they are initiative and restrained at the same time, they understand the responsibility for their actions. The scientist emphasized that such children “have the ability to manage people and are often respected by other children. Leaders usually come out of them” (Blonsky, 1961, p. 201). Among all merits of very developed children, Blonsky (1961) also highlighted their demerits: “not at all obligatory, but, nevertheless, quite common – their tendency to dominate others. A developed child sometimes turns from a leader-comrade to a leader-commander. Finally, some developed children are often spoken about as “bright, but lazy”” (p. 222).

We consider that speaking of very developed children P. P. Blonsky primarily meant leaders (vozhaki). At the same time, leadership was understood not as domination over others, but as an assistance of other comrades, prompting. And domination over others was considered a demerit. It can be

said that it did not correspond to the character of a «new» Soviet person at all. These conclusions also confirm P. P. Blonsky further pedagogical research.

So, describing school-age children, the scientist notes, that there are usually leaders in a children collective.

They were repeatedly studied both abroad and in our country, and some of their characteristic features have already been sufficiently identified. First of all, it should be remembered that the leader is the leader of this very collective, and in the other collective he might not be the leader. The leader becomes understandable only within the particular collective. The study of the leader reveals that a leader in general represents a kind of quintessence of the characteristic qualities for a particular collective. (Blonsky, 1961, pp. 270-272)

It is necessary to take into account the fact that the situational leadership theory in management, developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, appeared only in 1960. Blonsky revealed this phenomenon in his research back in the 1920s-1930s.

According to Blonsky (1961),

a collective requires a leader to be a good comrade. A leader who is not a comrade is impossible. With the help of strong fists, etc. any child can command this collective, but children will hate this oppressor, and he, of course, is not and will not be their leader. (pp. 270-272)

The scientist believed that the main condition for being a leader among teenagers is to have wit. But, of course, to have only wit is not enough. The resoluteness, persistence, initiative, physical development play a huge role. Blonsky (2020) also identified the negative quality of a leader in adolescence: authoritativeness.

The topic of leadership in the educational system of A. S. Makarenko is of special interest to us. Having gone through a lot of difficulties, he creates a completely new type of management in the colony named after M. Gorky, which is based on self-government. The system was very well coordinated in which adult educators were given a minimal role. The self-government system included the Council of Commanders, permanent and combined detachments. Commanders were at the head of permanent detachments. The commanders of the permanent detachments formed the Council of Commanders. The Council of Commanders solved the most important tasks for managing the colony. Moreover, A. S. Makarenko tried not to interfere in disputes at the meeting of the Council of Commanders, and no teacher could cancel the decision made by the Council of Commanders. Thus, the children were responsible for the decisions made. The Council of Commanders included recognized leaders.

An active role in the life of the colony was played by the combined detachments, as temporary labor unifications. Such detachments carried out various tasks on seventy tithes of the colony's agricultural land. Combined detachments existed only for a period of work, and then, they were disbanded, and their members could already enter other combined detachments but having changed their functions (for example, a commander could become a subordinate in a new detachment). Thus, Makarenko (2020) put into practice the idea of re-educating for the maximum number of colonists,

attracting them to the leadership of his comrades through the appointment of commanders of combined detachments:

The Council of Commanders always tried to put all the colonists, except the most unfavorable, to the workload of a commander in a combined detachment. It was reasonable, because ruling the combined detachment was associated with great responsibility and concern. Due to this system most of the colonists participated not only in the working function, but also in the organizational one. It was very important, and it was what exactly the communist education needed. (p. 170)

The principle of Makarenko (2020) was as follows: “I have made a decision and I am responsible for it” – and pupils feeling of responsibility worked wonders. The educator believed that it is necessary to trust a person, and at the same time be demanding of this person. According to Makarenko (2020), to emphasize the individual's subordination to the common good does not imply ignoring individuality. He sees no contrast here but regards the collective as the best place for individual growth (Halvorsen, 2014, p. 66).

Makarenko created a system in which pupils developed their personal qualities including leadership. Later, many of the pupils entered working faculties, graduated from the universities, chose socially responsible professions of doctors and teachers. And in their positions, most of them stood out, as they had such leadership qualities as the ability to manage themselves, use their time and energy correctly, and the ability to overcome difficulties.

Makarenko's (2020) quotation confirms the above-mentioned statements:

Burun is at the head of the detachment...Burun is majestically dignified today, especially dignified for me, because I know: this is not only a colonist who is worth seeing, he is, first of all, a real commander who knows who he is leading and where he is leading. (p. 142)

Most of Makarenko's pupils are people of duty, respecting work and collective. Nothing was impossible for them; they knew that hard work would help them to achieve any heights. Many children, left the colony named after Gorky for the adult life, became the commanders of the Red Army, engineers and teachers. All of them, of course, went through the school of «leadership» in the combined detachments and in the Council of Commanders.

Makarenko educational system has not lost its relevance even today. A. S. Makarenko created his own educational system in a collective, through a collective and for a collective. At the same time he paid special attention for moral formation of the leader in a collective, believing that a pupil-leader must be a competent specialist, have high personal characteristics (tact, management, attention to the younger, energy) and to be consciously devoted to the interests of his educational institution.

Without pretending to be complete, let us designate our position:

1. The experience of the psychological and pedagogical studies in the 1920s-1930s in the field of children leadership is relevant and the elements of the best practices can be introduced into the modern school.

2. It is necessary to keep the tendency to individualize child education in terms of educational program (individual trajectories), but in the context of returning the value of children collective united by socially significant goals. The absence of such collectives pushes children and teenagers to the antisocial actions which often end tragically (one of the striking examples is the events in Kerch college). Here, the experience of studying leaders in collectives of the 1920s-1930s, in which collective values were laid, is especially valuable.

3. To put the experience of the research on the leadership phenomenon in the 1920s-1930s of the XX-th century into practice there is a number of restrictions and serious risks:

- Soviet society was socially unified in contrast to the modern society, which is financially, religiously, politically and socially differentiated;
- a Soviet teacher was, to a greater extent, an altruist and a devotee, which does not characterize modern pedagogical stuff on a mass scale;
- a Soviet child was educated within the strict limits of the strongest ideological system, which, fortunately, does not exist in modern Russia.

7. Conclusion

The paper describes large-scale studies for the period of the 20s-30s of the XX-th century carried out as natural experiments both in the material and in the organization of the process. It is noted, that scientists and practicing teachers of the 1920s-1930s repeatedly turned to the issue of leaders upbringing, tried to identify them in the children collective. At the same time, the results of these studies have not lost their scientific significance for modern pedagogy which makes it even more valuable to study the researches in the field of school leadership in the 20s-30s of XX century.

It can be concluded that it is possible to apply positive pedagogical experience of the 1920s-1930s in modern Russia in which the issue of educating patriotic children who can work in a team and at the same time possess leadership qualities, who are not afraid to take the initiative, and who think creatively, are acutely raised.

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