Professional Competence of College Leaders in Pedagogical Education

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Abstract: This article examines the impact of the professional competences of teacher training college leaders on the quality of education. Amid ongoing changes and the increasing importance of international educational standards, the role of college leaders in managing and developing educational institutions has become critically important. This paper presents the results of theoretical and empirical analyses on the professional competence of college leaders, highlighting the role these competencies play in the educational process and in interactions with teachers and students. The main task of college leaders is not only to fulfill administrative functions but also to implement innovative approaches, advance the pedagogical skills of staff, and foster a supportive educational environment.

The study employs a mixed-method approach: quantitative data was collected through questionnaires, and the qualitative component included in-depth interviews and observations of college leaders' activities. An analysis of professional competences was conducted with a sample of 17 college leaders, including directors and deputy directors responsible for academic and extracurricular work. Results revealed a high level of strategic and communication skills among college leaders but identified gaps in the application of innovative technologies and approaches. The study emphasizes the need for a systematic approach to enhancing leaders' professional competencies to improve the educational process. Practical recommendations are offered to support the professional development of teacher training college leaders.

Modernizing the training of educational leaders can significantly improve the quality of education, which in turn positively influences the socio-economic development of the country. The study may serve as an important guideline for developing strategies and improving practices in educational institutions, which is anticipated to lead to beneficial changes not only in education but also within a broader socio-economic context. In conclusion, the necessity for new policies and practical solutions to enhance leaders' competencies is stressed, which will allow educational institutions to adapt to current challenges and requirements.

Key words: competence, innovative approach, interactive teaching method, quality of education, college leaders.

Introduction

The quality of education in teacher training colleges undoubtedly depends on various factors, among which the professional competence of the leaders plays an important role. In today's educational environment, the role of college leaders should focus not only on performing administrative duties but also on inspiring educators, enriching the educational process through innovative approaches, and creating a supportive learning environment for students. In this context, the professional competences of leaders in teacher training colleges are a critical factor in determining educational quality. Leaders' decision-making skills, communication abilities, and innovative approaches significantly influence the overall success of their institutions. At the same time, global educational trends and technological changes present new demands for improving the effectiveness of educational institutions.

The relevance of this study is driven by the following factors: educational quality standards are constantly updated worldwide, requiring local institutions to embrace innovation and align with international requirements. In developing countries like Uzbekistan, the flexibility of leaders in adapting global educational quality standards to the local context is gaining increasing importance.

The global changes in education in this century—including experiences with the transition to distance learning during the pandemic and the international integration of education—require new competencies from college leaders. Leadership skills such as managing international cooperation, implementing global educational standards, and adopting foreign educational programs are essential for enhancing educational quality. In Singapore, for example, educational leaders are known for their global approach, which has made their programs competitive internationally. The ability of leaders to foster international collaboration and adapt educational practices from other countries enables international recognition and the integration of advanced educational methods into the operations of educational institutions.

The role of technology in contemporary education processes is also increasing daily. The ability of leaders to effectively implement and manage new educational and digital technologies can be a decisive factor in improving the quality of education. Leaders' technological competencies have made educational processes more efficient and interactive. For example, technological skills among leaders played a crucial role in implementing distance learning during the pandemic, quickly transforming learning methods in colleges and ensuring continuous educational opportunities for students.

There is a substantial body of research on the role of leaders in teacher training colleges and the study of their competencies. In their study, Carvalho, M., Cabral I., Verdasca J. L., and Alves J. M. examined strategic planning skills among leaders and their impact on the overall development of educational institutions. The authors emphasize the importance of setting clear strategic goals and executing them (Carvalho, Cabral, Verdasca, Alves 2021). A review of long-term studies on educational institution leaders has shown that a school director's leadership style affects the quality of school education, school development, and student achievement. Considering leadership in student learning as an interactive process, contemporary experts note that the professional training of leaders in different countries directly influences educational quality and that studying international experiences in this regard can be very useful (Hallinger, Heck 2010). Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe, in their study, identified four key aspects of leadership competence in education: goal setting, resource management, teacher development, and creating a school culture. They show that these factors directly affect the overall quality of the educational process and the institution's standing, and the role of leaders in this regard is highly significant (Robinson, Lloyd, Rowe 2008). Literature analysis shows that improving leaders' professional competencies positively impacts educational quality, highlighting the need for more in-depth study and modernization in this area, particularly in the context of Uzbekistan (Salimov 2023).

This article focuses on analyzing the competencies of leadership personnel in teacher training colleges and their impact on the overall educational quality of these institutions.

Materials and Methods

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to examine the professional competencies of leaders in teacher training colleges and the impact of these competencies on educational quality. Quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire aimed at assessing the competencies of college leaders, while the qualitative component focused on understanding the impact of these competencies on the educational process through in-depth interviews and observations. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions designed to measure professional competencies, such as strategic planning, communication, management skills, as well as the ability to design, create, and implement new approaches in the educational process.

In-depth interviews were conducted with each college leader, allowing for a deeper analysis of their approaches, challenges, and achievements. Observation of the leaders' work processes enabled an assessment of their actual practical competencies and their interactions with teachers and students. The study involved 17 college leaders, holding positions as directors and deputy directors responsible for academic and educational work.

Results and Discussion

The surveys indicated that most college leaders demonstrated highly developed skills in strategic planning and communication, but showed some weaknesses in developing and implementing innovative approaches and applying innovative technologies. During interviews, many leaders emphasized the need for additional resources and improved teacher training to make educational processes more effective. There were notable differences in the leaders' experiences and perspectives on innovation in education, highlighting the need for a systematic approach to further developing their competencies.

Observations assessed the effectiveness of leaders in fulfilling their duties and their ability to manage interactions within the educational institution. This provided accurate insights into the challenges and achievements observed in the practical activities of the leaders.

The study found that the leaders possessed a high level of strategic planning skills. They were able to clearly define their strategies and work effectively towards implementing them, which in turn positively impacted the overall performance of their institutions.

Improving the quality of education in teacher training colleges directly affects the socio-economic development of the country. When the effectiveness of educational institutions increases through the competencies of their leaders, it, in turn, enhances employment levels, economic stability, and the overall well-being of society.

Professional development and the competency of leaders play a critical role in enhancing the teaching skills of educators and the academic performance of students. This, in turn, will contribute to the quality of training highly qualified personnel in the future.

Conclusions

This study provided valuable insights into the professional competencies of leaders in teacher training colleges and their impact on educational quality. Enhancing the professional competencies of leaders is essential for improving the effectiveness of educational institutions, and progressive policies and practical solutions are needed in this regard. The results may serve as a key guideline in developing strategies and improving practices in educational institutions, enabling colleges to significantly raise the quality of education.

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