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Researching the Future Pedagogues' Leadership Skills: Validation of the Inventory of Student Leadership Outcomes

Extended summary

The aim of this paper was to examine the factor structure of the adapted version of the inventory of student leadership outcomes, whereby it was assumed that, as in the original research, the eight-factor structure of the instrument would be confirmed. In addition, the reliability and validity of the scale were tested on a sample of 194 respondents attending pedagogy studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. The second aim of the paper referred to the analysis of the leadership skills of the future pedagogues in the area of the following variables: organization and planning, awareness of differences, self-management, self-confidence, use of technologies, cognitive development and critical analysis, interpersonal communication, problem solving, and decision-making. Bearing in mind the initial theoretical basis of the research, it was assumed that the results would indicate the areas and skills in which students can progress, and which require development and improvement through educational programs and experience.

The verification of the factor structure of the inventory of student leadership outcomes was performed by exploratory factor analysis, whereby eight clear, interpretable factors were singled out as in the original research. Cronbach's alpha is .86, which indicates the good reliability.

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2 The paper is a modified and supplemented master paper entitled *Релације лидерских вештина и академскої йосїїїнућа сїуденаїа његаїоїује* [Relationships between leadership skills and academic achievement of pedagogy students], defended on September 13, 2022, at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad (mentor prof. Milena Letić Lungulov, PhD).

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bility and validity of the instrument, which allows the comparison of the results obtained in our educational context with results in other countries. Also, the results indicate that future pedagogues, in general, have leadership potential and that in this sense, their awareness of differences is the most developed, while their interpersonal communication, though still above average, is developed the least. The developed awareness of diversity indicates the tendency of the future pedagogues to understand and respect cultural, social, and individual differences among people. This skill is key to creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment. Leaders who understand the differences can better manage teams and create positive dynamics in their environment. Given that pedagogy is a social science with a pronounced humanistic feature, it is not surprising that the awareness of diversity is developed among the future pedagogues. On the other hand, the findings showing that interpersonal communication skills, although above average, are the least developed ones among the future pedagogues, indicates a potential area for improvement. Bearing in mind the statements of earlier research, it is assumed that the participation of students in practice and in leadership programs could have a positive effect on the development of the mentioned skills. In teaching practice, it is necessary to encourage activities that increase communication and interaction among students (workshops, discussions), while glorifying mutual support in the learning process.

The research results point to the need for continuous professional guidance of pedagogy students through the integration of leadership in the educational process. It is recommended that the question of encouraging participative responsibility and the leadership role of the future pedagogues should be included as a pervasive theme in all academic courses at undergraduate studies. The practical implications of the research refer to the possibility of using a validated and shortened version of the inventory of student leadership outcomes for examining the leadership skills of all students in order to guide educational work in the direction of their improvement and development.

Regarding the limitations of the research, the question arises whether the selection of another instrument would provide a different picture of the future pedagogues' leadership skills. In addition, the aspect of the respondents' self-assessment is identified as a possible limitation, giving rise to a conclusion that the inclusion of assessment by others would complete the data on the researched phenomenon. It is concluded that a qualitative study, which would look at the correlates of leadership in some other spheres, would represent an adequate supplement to these data.

Keywords: leadership skills, students of pedagogy, inventory of outcomes, scale validation

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