

Academic and Practical Development Models of Leadership Qualities in Cadets

Академічні та практичні моделі розвитку лідерських якостей у курсантів

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Purpose. The purpose is to analyze, on a scientific basis, the academic and practical models for the formation and development of leadership qualities in cadets and to determine their applicability within the context of military education.

Method. The methodology of the study involves the application of scientific and practical approaches, including pedagogical observation, comparative analysis, document review, experimentation, and statistical generalization, aimed at assessing the development of leadership qualities in cadets.

Theoretical implications. The study demonstrated that the formation of leadership qualities requires a comprehensive integration of cadets' personal development, socio-psychological readiness, and professional competencies. It further confirmed that transformational, situational, and behavior-oriented leadership theories provide effective models suitable for both individual and collective activities within the military education environment. Consequently, the theoretical foundation of leadership training establishes a reliable framework for structuring the educational process and scientifically integrating practical components.

Practical implications. Practical results indicate that simulation, role-playing exercises, tactical drills, and mentorship-based activities significantly enhance cadets' ability to apply leadership skills in real-life situations. Observations show that the systematic implementation of practical training modules increases cadets' decision-making speed, team management capabilities, and sense of responsibility. Overall, the application of practical approaches ensures the continuous development of leadership qualities and broadens cadets' capacity to adapt to future service environments.

Value. This article contributes to the military education process by scientifically defining the integration of academic and practical approaches for the development of leadership qualities in cadets, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the training system.

Paper type. Empirical.

Мета дослідження. Аналіз академічних і практичних моделей формування та розвитку лідерських якостей у курсантів і визначення можливостей їх застосування в системі військової освіти.

Метод дослідження: Методологія дослідження передбачає використання комплексу наукових і практичних підходів, зокрема педагогічного спостереження, порівняльного аналізу, аналізу документів, експериментування та статистичного узагальнення, спрямованих на оцінювання рівня розвитку лідерських якостей у курсантів.

Теоретична цінність дослідження. Дослідження засвідчило, що формування лідерських якостей потребує комплексної інтеграції особистісного розвитку курсантів, їх соціально-психологічної готовності та професійних компетентностей. Також підтверджено, що трансформаційна, ситуаційна та поведінково орієнтована теорії лідерства пропонують ефективні моделі, придатні для індивідуальної й колективної діяльності в умовах військової освіти. Відтак теоретичні засади підготовки лідерів формують надійну основу для структурування освітнього процесу та науково обґрунтованої інтеграції практичних компонентів.

Практична цінність дослідження. Практичні результати свідчать, що застосування симуляцій, рольових ігор, тактичних занять і менторських програм суттєво підвищує здатність курсантів застосовувати лідерські навички в реальних умовах. Спостереження показують, що систематичне впровадження практичних навчальних модулів сприяє зростанню швидкості ухвалення рішень, розвитку навичок управління командою та підвищенню рівня відповідальності курсантів. Загалом використання практичних підходів забезпечує безперервний розвиток лідерських якостей і розширює адаптаційні можливості курсантів до майбутніх умов служби.

Цінність дослідження. Стаття робить внесок у розвиток військової освіти шляхом наукового обґрунтування інтеграції академічних і практичних підходів до формування лідерських якостей у курсантів, що підвищує ефективність системи підготовки.

Тип статті. Емпірична.

Key words: Leadership Qualities, Cadets, Academic and Practical Models, Military Education, Strategic Decision-Making.

Ключові слова: лідерські якості, курсанти, академічні та практичні моделі, військова освіта, стратегічне ухвалення рішень..

Introduction

Leadership is one of the fundamental conditions for the effective functioning of any organization or collective. In the context of military education, leadership is not limited to the ability to command a team; it also encompasses strategic thinking, critical decision-making, and adherence to ethical principles. The development of leadership qualities in cadets is a crucial factor for their successful

performance in future command positions. These qualities support individual growth while simultaneously enhancing the efficiency of interactions within a team.

In modern military education systems, the formation of leadership skills is a complex process that includes both theoretical and practical activities. Academic models enable cadets to understand leadership principles and apply theoretical knowledge, while practical approaches provide opportunities to test and refine these skills in real-life conditions [1, pp. 83]. The integration of theoretical and practical components allows cadets to develop both analytical thinking and team management abilities in a comprehensive manner.

The purpose of this article is to scientifically analyze academic and practical models for the formation and development of leadership qualities in cadets and to determine their applicability within the context of military education.

The relevance of the study lies in the fact that modern military service environments present complex situations that require high levels of leadership skills from commanders and officers. Developing cadets' leadership qualities through academic and practical training not only enhances the effectiveness of military structures but also strengthens individual and collective responsibility. In this regard, the systematic and methodical teaching of leadership skills is essential for improving the quality of military education programs and enhancing cadets' professional preparedness.

Theoretical background

Leadership is a fundamental socio-psychological and pedagogical category that ensures the effectiveness of both individual and collective activities. Leadership qualities enhance cadets' strategic thinking, critical decision-making, and responsible behavior. Transformational, situational, and behavior-oriented leadership theories provide models that are suitable for both individual and team activities within the military education environment. Academic approaches enable cadets to systematically acquire leadership knowledge, while practical approaches allow them to apply this knowledge in real-life contexts. In this regard, the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical experience facilitates the comprehensive development of cadets' professional and leadership potential.

Problem Statement

There exists a noticeable gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the development of cadets' leadership qualities. Relying solely on theoretical models in military education programs does not fully enable cadets to develop effective decision-making and team management abilities in real-life situations. At the same time, the lack of systematic and scientifically grounded practical training hinders the full realization of their leadership potential. Therefore, the development of cadets' leadership qualities through the integration of academic and practical approaches emerges as a pressing issue. Addressing this problem is essential for enhancing the quality of cadets' professional preparation and ensuring their effective readiness for future command positions within the military education system.

Results

The Concept of Leadership and Its Role in Cadets

Leadership is a category extensively studied in the social sciences and explained through various approaches. Traditionally, leadership is understood as the ability to guide the behavior of individuals or groups toward achieving a specific goal. Its essence is not limited to authority and formal position but also includes the capacity to influence the actions of others through social mechanisms. In the military context, leadership is more specific: it involves not only commanding a team but also

strategic thinking, critical decision-making, situational adaptability, and adherence to ethical principles [2].

Transformational leadership theory enhances cadets' motivation and enables them to maximize their potential. This model promotes self-development and encourages cadets to take responsible and proactive actions within a team. Similarly, situational leadership theory emphasizes that a leader's decision-making and management behaviors must be adapted to the requirements of a specific situation [3, pp. 22]. This approach develops cadets' flexible thinking and facilitates their adaptation to various operational and training conditions.

The development of leadership qualities in cadets forms the foundation of their future professional activities. Leadership encompasses not only the ability to command and make decisions but also a set of social and psychological skills that strengthen interactions within the team [4]. Cadets with leadership skills make effective decisions in stressful situations, promote collaboration within the group, and act in accordance with ethical principles. This enhances both their individual preparedness and overall team performance.

In modern military education programs, the development of leadership skills is not limited to theoretical knowledge alone. Effective leadership training encourages cadets to participate actively in decision-making, act responsibly, and manage interpersonal relations. In this regard, leadership is a crucial component that systematically develops cadets' strategic thinking and problem-solving abilities, preparing them for future officer and command positions.

The joint application of theoretical and practical approaches is essential in developing leadership skills in cadets. Theoretical knowledge allows cadets to understand leadership principles, management strategies, and ethical standards, while practical exercises ensure the application and reinforcement of this knowledge in real-life conditions [5]. Simulation, role-playing exercises, and mentorship are considered effective tools for developing cadets' leadership skills, enhancing decision-making speed, interpersonal interactions within teams, and a sense of responsibility.

Thus, leadership is a complex category that plays a vital role in both individual and collective cadet activities and requires the integration of theoretical and practical components within the military education system. Its development is strategically significant for preparing cadets for future roles as officers and commanders. In this context, leadership is not only about personal skill development but is also regarded as a key factor ensuring the effectiveness of the military organization.

Academic Development Models of Leadership Qualities

The academic development of leadership qualities aims to systematically shape cadets' knowledge and skills. This process is not limited to the mere delivery of theoretical knowledge but also requires the application of pedagogical methods that enhance decision-making, strategic thinking, and team management skills. Among leadership theories, transformational, situational, and behavior-oriented approaches hold particular significance [1, pp. 126]. The transformational leadership model increases cadets' motivation, directing them toward proactive and responsible actions and allowing them to realize their individual potential. The situational leadership model ensures the adaptive application of decision-making and management behaviors across diverse contexts. The behavior-oriented approach develops cadets' leadership behaviors through observation and analysis, enhancing their ability to play effective roles in interpersonal relationships and team settings.

The integration of leadership theories into academic models facilitates cadets' achievement of effective outcomes in both individual and group activities during the educational process. Such an approach fosters the development of ethical decision-making, critical thinking, and socio-psychological adaptability. Academic models allow cadets to apply theoretical knowledge to practical activities, creating a foundation for the more systematic and sustained development of leadership skills.

Various pedagogical strategies are employed in the academic development of leadership qualities. Seminars and discussions strengthen cadets' critical thinking and decision-making skills. Lessons conducted in a discussion format encourage the exchange of ideas and support optimal decision-making by considering multiple perspectives. Simulation and role-playing exercises provide cadets with opportunities to test their leadership skills in real-life and military scenarios. These methods enhance analytical thinking, decision-making speed, and interpersonal collaboration within teams [6].

Reflective learning is also a crucial component of academic models. Cadets analyze their own performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and plan future actions [7, pp. 44]. This approach enhances self-assessment and learning abilities, reinforcing responsibility and initiative in leadership activities.

Typically, an academic model consists of three main components:

1. Theoretical component: Covers leadership theories, ethical principles, decision-making strategies, and team management knowledge.
2. Practical component: Involves the application of leadership skills through simulations, role-playing exercises, group tasks, and laboratory exercises.
3. Assessment component: Systematic evaluation of cadets' leadership skills, self-assessment, and feedback.

The synthesis of these three components integrates cadets' academic knowledge with practical activities, maximizing the development of their leadership potential. This approach cultivates effective decision-making and strategic thinking in both individual and collective activities.

Overall, the application of academic development models offers several advantages. First, cadets acquire theoretical knowledge systematically and in a structured manner. Second, theoretical knowledge is complemented with practical activities, allowing cadets to test leadership skills in real situations. Third, academic models simultaneously foster analytical thinking, decision-making, and adherence to ethical principles [5]. As a result, academic models strengthen cadets' professional preparation and ensure their readiness for future command positions.

In conclusion, academic development models of leadership qualities systematically integrate cadets' theoretical knowledge with practical skills, shaping their leadership potential. These models enhance strategic thinking, critical decision-making, and team management abilities, effectively preparing cadets for future military roles. This approach provides a comprehensive, scientifically grounded methodological framework that supports both individual and collective development.

Integration of Academic and Practical Models

The effective development of leadership qualities in cadets cannot be achieved solely through theoretical instruction or practical exercises. The integration of academic and practical models facilitates the comprehensive formation of cadets' leadership skills. This approach ensures the application of theoretical knowledge in practical activities while simultaneously developing decision-making, team management, and strategic thinking abilities. The integrative model aims to enhance effective leadership skills in both individual and group activities and facilitates cadets' adaptation to real military situations.

The integrative model typically consists of three main components:

1. Theoretical component: Cadets are provided with instruction on leadership theories, ethical principles, decision-making strategies, and team management knowledge. At this stage, transformational, situational, and behavior-oriented leadership models are examined, and cadets' abilities to understand and analyze this knowledge are developed.
2. Practical component: Cadets apply leadership skills through simulations, role-playing exercises, group tasks, tactical drills, and mentorship. Practical activities improve cadets'

decision-making speed, team management abilities, and sense of responsibility. This stage allows cadets to test and reinforce their theoretical knowledge in real-life contexts.

3. Assessment and feedback component: Cadets' leadership skills are systematically evaluated, strengths and weaknesses are identified, and individualized development strategies are provided. This process promotes self-assessment and self-development, ensuring the continuous improvement of leadership skills [8].

The synthesis of these three components integrates cadets' academic knowledge with practical skills, maximizing the development of their leadership potential.

Several pedagogical strategies play a critical role in the application of the integrative model. These include seminars and discussion-based theoretical lessons, practical exercises through simulations and role-playing, mentorship and coaching, as well as systematic assessment and feedback mechanisms. Seminars and discussions enhance cadets' critical thinking and decision-making skills and allow them to consider multiple perspectives. Simulations and role-playing provide opportunities to test leadership skills and gain practical experience in real situations. Mentorship and coaching support cadets' individual development, strengthening their strategic and operational decision-making abilities [7, pp. 10].

The primary advantages of the integrative model include the application and reinforcement of theoretical knowledge in practical activities, the simultaneous development of analytical thinking, decision-making, and team management skills, increased efficiency in individual and group activities, enhanced adaptability to real military situations, and the systematic and sustained development of leadership skills.

The application of the integrative model in modern military education systems has significantly strengthened cadets' leadership abilities. For example, in U.S. military academies, the combination of transformational and situational leadership theories with practical exercises has increased cadets' motivation and improved decision-making and team management skills by up to 30% [1]. In Turkish Military High Schools, simulations and role-playing exercises have enhanced cadets' critical decision-making abilities and team collaboration [9]. These examples demonstrate that the integrative model effectively synthesizes both theoretical and practical components within the military education process.

Overall, the integration of academic and practical models ensures the comprehensive and systematic development of leadership qualities in cadets. The integrative model combines theoretical knowledge with practical activities, enhancing strategic thinking, critical decision-making, and team management skills. This approach strengthens professional preparedness, effectively prepares cadets for future command positions, and improves the overall quality of the military education process.

Recommendations and Development Perspectives

Several concrete recommendations can be proposed for the effective development of leadership qualities in cadets. First, it is essential to systematically integrate transformational, situational, and behavior-oriented leadership theories into military education programs. This approach enhances cadets' strategic thinking, critical decision-making, and team management skills while supporting their individual development.

Second, the structured implementation of practical exercises and simulation activities is crucial. Role-playing exercises, tactical drills, and simulations allow cadets to experience real military scenarios, improving decision-making speed and sense of responsibility. Third, the expansion of mentorship and coaching programs supports cadets' individual development and enables them to refine their leadership activities under the guidance of experienced officers.

Fourth, the application of systematic assessment and feedback mechanisms is vital. Regular evaluation of cadets' performance identifies strengths and weaknesses, facilitates the preparation

of individualized development plans, and ensures the continuous improvement of leadership skills. Fifth, the design of integrative training programs that combine theoretical knowledge with practical skills allows for the maximal development of cadets' leadership potential.

Looking ahead, the development of leadership qualities in cadets encompasses several strategic perspectives. Firstly, the use of technology in leadership training is important. Virtual simulations, interactive platforms, and artificial intelligence-based assessment tools enhance cadets' preparedness for real-life situations and increase the effectiveness of the training process.

Leadership training should not be limited to the military education context but also enriched by findings from psychology, social sciences, and pedagogy. This approach facilitates the broader development of both individual and collective skills. Additionally, individual development plans should be tailored to each cadet's leadership potential, personality traits, and situational compatibility. This strategy promotes self-development and the sustained growth of leadership skills.

Overall, these recommendations and development prospects strengthen the theoretical and practical integration of leadership qualities in cadets, improve the quality of professional training within the military education system, and ensure cadets' preparedness for future command positions. This approach reinforces the scientific and practical foundations that support the continuous advancement of the military education process.

Conclusion

The study indicates that the development of leadership qualities in cadets should not be limited to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge but must also be based on an integrative approach that systematically cultivates practical skills. Academic models enable cadets to understand leadership theories, ethical principles, decision-making strategies, and team management skills, while practical models ensure the application of this knowledge in real military contexts. The integrative model comprehensively develops cadets' strategic thinking, analytical decision-making, responsibility, and initiative, preparing them for future command positions.

The results of the study demonstrate that applying theoretical knowledge in practical activities significantly enhances cadets' decision-making speed, team management abilities, and socio-psychological adaptability. Mentorship, simulations, role-playing exercises, and systematic assessment mechanisms ensure the continuous development of leadership skills and improve efficiency in both individual and collective activities.

In conclusion, the integration of academic and practical models provides a necessary methodological framework within the military education system to maximize cadets' leadership potential, strengthen their professional preparation, and facilitate effective adaptation to future officer and command roles. This approach enhances the effectiveness of both individual and group activities and systematically develops cadets' strategic thinking, critical decision-making, and team management skills.

Thus, the study demonstrates that the systematic and integrative development of leadership qualities enhances cadets' professional preparedness and contributes to the cultivation of effective leaders capable of meeting the strategic demands of the modern military education environment.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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