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The Tendencies of Pre-primary Children's Leadership in Musical Activities

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Abstract

Leadership, as research area, has been more and more visible in the process of education, not excluding pre-school education, which is a relevant period for an individual, when foundation for his/her successful lifelong learning is laid. It is relevant to identify, which leadership qualities are characteristic of pre-primary children, how important they are and whether they may be developed during musical activities of pre-primary children. The article presents the theoretical-empirical model for leadership expression of pre-primary children through musical activities, which provides with a possibility of identifying features of leadership qualities and revealing trends in leadership expression among pre-primary children.

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1. Introduction

The problems of leadership have been very popular and comprehensively studied in scientific research both by Lithuanian and foreign researchers (Northouse, 2012; Antonakis et al., 2012). According Harris (2008), educational environment has changed so strongly and for so long that it is necessary to reconsider anew how leadership and leadership practice are perceived. The expression of leadership qualities is observed in activities of pre-primary children as well. The researchers (Monkeviciene, Stankeviciene, 2011) argue that children of this age are able to adapt to environment, to feel free in it; they are receptive, curious and proactive as well as interested in everything and able to absorb information fast. They are already able to persistently pursue the goal even when nobody praises their efforts; they are positive and friendly trusting and communicating with close to them adults as well as with other grown up acquaintances. The authors point out that at pre-primary age children further build up their

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emotional competency, i.e., ability to perceive own world of emotion and to control their expression, to appropriately respond to emotions of other people. Communicating with their peers, a pre-primary child already consults and makes attempts to identify rules of activities or game and, therefore, is able to lead activities. They are also very active as well as able to concentrate, to maintain attention and to self-control.

However, potential of musical activities developing leadership features of pre-primary children through musical activities has not been fully theoretical and practically revealed (Frampton, 2010). The research in influence of musical activities on musical and moral culture of children and youth (Joniliene, 2007), on their musical abilities (Seckuviene, 2004), creativity (Girdzijauskiene, 2004) and on development of value-based orientations (Rauduvaite, 2009) has been available. However, leadership qualities of pre-primary to be developed at this age have been hardly analysed in the works by Lithuanian and foreign scientists. Seeking to reveal the factors, which have lately predetermined direction of pre-primary children's personality, it is necessary to identify what leadership qualities are prioritised by them in musical activities. The leadership qualities, which will be acknowledged as underlying ones by the young generation (pre-primary children), will accompany them in their life and, thus, will determine what our society and its leaders will be like.

1.1. Problem statement

This substantiates relevance of research on leadership and allows to formulate the problem of the research: how leadership of pre-primary children is expressed through musical activities; what influence musical activities may have on leadership expression and to what extent this influence may be optimised.

1.2. Purpose of study

The purpose of study is to highlight the tendencies of pre-primary children's leadership in musical activities.

2. Methods

2.1. Theoretical and empirical model

Since a unified conception of leadership has not been determined yet (leadership is a complicated, integral personality feature), insights of different approaches were analysed and integrated while creating the theoretical model for leadership expression of pre-primary children through musical activities (The Draft of the Programme of Pre-Primary (Self-)education, 2013; Silingiene, 2012; Northouse, 2009; Butvilas, 2008). The pilot investigation (questionnaire survey of parents, teachers and heads of educational institutions) helped to highlight more characteristic qualities of children's leadership, to revise and approve the methodological foundation of research, conditions for its organisation (Virganaviciene, 2014).

On the basis of the aforesaid theoretical ideas and empiric experience seven elements of pre-primary children's leadership were singled out: 1) activity expressed through *initiative* and *independence* of musical expression. The leaders involve into musical activities, suggest ways and forms of activities, decide on them and finish work independently; 2) *self-confidence and trust in others* expressed through non-avoidance of challenging tasks, consideration of other people's opinion; 3) *communication and collaboration* as ability to organise musical activity in partnership as well as ability to motivate peers to involve in various musical activities, to assume responsibility for leadership in a group, to ensure quality completion of tasks; 4) *creativity* expressed through originality of music performance, specifics of evaluation and intensity of experiences; 5) *self-control* as ability to gain control of oneself and to resist negative emotions (anger, fear, sorrow), to complete the task through to the end, to control own movements; 6) *responsibility* as responsible involvement in joint musical activities and continuing improvement of own musical activities are characteristic of a leader; 7) *solidarity* as ability to consider others (their wishes, interests), to get along with teachers and peers. These qualities make up the foundation for expression of pre-primary children's leadership through musical activities (see: Table 1).

It was planned to investigate children's leadership through musical activities at two levels: activities (singing, instrumental performance of music, improvisation) and evaluation (listening to music). These musical activities are

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