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**Jiexia Zhong,**
2st year of master's degree student in 011 Educational, pedagogical sciences, educational professional program «Management of educational institutions», West Ukrainian National University
**Scientific supervisor – Iryna Bilous**
PhD in Economics, Associate Professor of the Department of Educology and Pedagogy, West Ukrainian National University

## CHARACTERISTICS AND ESSENCE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONCEPT: THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Educational leadership is a core theme in educational management, which is related to the realization of educational organization goals and the improvement of its operating efficiency. Its essence is a kind of influence, which achieves the common goals of educational institutions through the collaboration of organizational members.

However, the complexity and diversity of educational leadership make its theoretical connotation diversified. This paper will focus on the characteristics and essence of educational leadership and deeply analyze its core concepts and academic significance from a theoretical perspective [1].

Educational leadership is a management activity that is people-centered and goal-oriented. The transformational leadership theory proposed by Burns emphasizes that leaders achieve organizational change by stimulating the potential of subordinates, which provides a theoretical basis for educational leadership. Bass further expanded this theory, emphasizing that the influence, motivation and personalized support of leaders are the core elements of educational leadership [2].

The essence of educational leadership is a dynamic and collaborative process, whose purpose is to achieve the goals of educational organizations by influencing the behavior and attitudes of others. It is different from traditional authoritarian management and reflects more attention to individual growth and organizational development.

Core characteristics of educational leadership:

1. Goal orientation. Educational leadership always focuses on educational goals, including the all-round development of students, the improvement of educational quality and the satisfaction of social needs. Leaders need to formulate a clear vision and guide the optimal allocation of educational resources.

2. Humanism. Educational leadership focuses on teachers, students and other educational participants, and emphasizes attention to individual needs. Gardner's (1995) theory of multiple intelligences points out that leaders need to adjust leadership strategies according to the abilities and potential of different individuals to achieve the maximum educational effect [3].

3. Innovation. In the context of globalization and the rapid development of information technology, educational leadership requires innovation and the ability to adapt to changes in the educational environment. Leaders need to promote the innovation of educational models through new technologies and new methods, such as introducing ICT technology to support educational decision-making and teaching activities.

4. Collaboration. The implementation of educational leadership requires multi-party collaboration, involving multiple participants such as managers, teachers, students and parents. Fullan's (2001) theory of change points out that educational change requires leaders to coordinate multiple forces to form a common vision and action plan [4].

5. Cultural sensitivity. Educational institutions are located in different cultural and social backgrounds, and leaders need to have cross-cultural sensitivity to understand and respect diversity. Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimension theory provides a reference for understanding leadership practices in different cultural backgrounds [5].

Educational leadership is not only the management and organization of educational institutions, but also the deep guidance of educational processes and educational goals. Its essence lies in the following points:

1. Influence. The core of educational leadership is to stimulate the intrinsic

motivation of organizational members through influence, rather than relying solely on authority and system. The values, beliefs and behaviors of leaders have a subtle effect on subordinates.

2. Situational. Educational leadership is not a fixed model, but a dynamic process that is constantly adjusted according to situational and environmental factors. Leaders need to be good at identifying the needs of different situations and adopt appropriate strategies.

3. Morality. The practice of educational leadership cannot be separated from the guidance of morality and ethics. Leaders need to shape a healthy and inclusive educational environment based on fairness, integrity and responsibility.

Educational leadership is the key to educational management practice, and its characteristics and essence show rich connotations in theory. Future research should pay more attention to the practice of educational leadership in different cultural, technological and social contexts, and explore the combination of its theory and practice to promote the sustainable development and innovation of educational institutions. Through a deep understanding of its characteristics and essence, leaders can more effectively respond to challenges in educational management and promote educational equity and quality improvement.

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**Jiexia Zhong,**
2st year of master's degree student in 011 Educational, pedagogical sciences, educational professional program «Management of educational institutions», West Ukrainian National University
**Iryna Bilous,**
PhD in Economics,
Associate Professor of the
Department of Educology and Pedagogy,
West Ukrainian National University

## THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE FORMATION OF LEADERSHIP QUALITY

A good educational environment can not only promote the development of leadership quality, but also shape the core values and practical ability of leaders [1].