Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională
ISSN: 2066-7329 | e-ISSN: 2067-9270
Covered in: Web of Science (WOS); EBSCO; ERIH+; Google Scholar; Index Copernicus; Ideas RePeC; Econpapers; Socionet; CEEOL; Ulrich ProQuest; Cabell, Journalseek; Scipio; Philpapers; SHERPA/RoMEO repositories; KVK; WorldCat; CrossRef; CrossCheck

2024, Volume 16, Issue 1, pages: 16-29 | https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/16.1/809
Submitted: July 20th, 2023 | *Accepted for publication:* January 16th, 2024

Participation in the Context of Developing Pupils' Leadership Qualities on a Humanistic and Democratic Basis

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Abstract: *How can the leadership qualities of students be developed on a humanistic and democratic basis so that the next generation of citizens can continue the democratic development in Ukraine? This question is at the center of the presented article.*
The literature shows that a democratic leadership style has a positive impact on working atmosphere and coexistence if it is characterized by the skills of emotional intelligence such as teamwork and cooperation, conflict resolution and if a leader is characterized by active listening as a key strength based on a respectful attitude towards human rights and democracy. Leaders do this in order to achieve outcomes in the process of interpersonal interaction that are mutually beneficial to the social group. In order to underpin this foundation, the article goes on to discuss the concept of participation, a principle that forms the basis of democratic leadership and which must therefore be taken into account and placed at the center of the education of children and young people in formal and non-formal education. The literature makes it clear: democracy has no reason to exist without participation, but at the same time participation must be presented in a very differentiated way. A specially developed diagram illustrates that the transfer of power simultaneously means the assumption of responsibility by the person being led. The consequence for the school is that future leaders must have the opportunity to experience active participation experiences. This has an impact on the selection and further training of teachers already addressed in Ukraine.

Keywords: *leadership; democratic leadership; democratic style of leadership; leadership qualities; participation; pupils; school education; humanistic and democratic principles.*

How to cite: Hrynova, M., Gollob, R., & Yahodnikova, V. (2024). Participation in the context of developing pupils' leadership qualities on a humanistic and democratic basis. *Revista Românească pentru Educație Multidimensională, 16*(1), 16-29. https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/16.1/809

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Introduction

Evolutionarily, the concepts of "leadership" and "leader" have significantly transformed and penetrated into all types of social activity. The evidence of the great public interest in leadership includes the fact that, as a result of international studies, it is defined as a strength of character and a virtue a person needs for a successful, happy, and meaningful life in the classification of strong character traits and personality virtues VIA Institute of Character (The 24 Character Strengths), and, next to social influence, it has appeared on the list of skills all people will need for work in 2027 (The Future of Jobs Report 2023, 2023). It should be noted that the inclusion of the desire for personal and professional leadership as one of the general competencies in the professional standards is characteristic (Information about professional standards) of today's Ukraine.

We write from the perspective of Ukraine, the country that has experienced significant democratic transformations in all spheres of society over the past 30 years. These positive changes became possible thanks to democratic leadership as a factor in revealing the humanistic potential of the development of Ukrainian society.

Therefore, in response to society's demand and on the basis of scientific developments in leadership studies, the process of accentuation of all forms and levels of education regarding the cultivation of leadership qualities of an individual is actively taking place in Ukraine.

A number of scientific studies have been dedicated to the issue of training and education of leaders at different age stages of personality development. Thus, the American experts in the field of leadership as Covey et al. (2014) in the work "The Leader in Me. How Schools and Parents Around the World are Inspiring Greatness, One Child at a Time" emphasizes three ways in which schools can contribute to the acquisition of leadership qualities by children, viz.: give pupils leadership duties and responsibilities, value their opinion, and help pupils find their voice.

In the analyzed aspect, one should refer to the work of the American scientist Amber (2021), who also emphasizes that pupils are formed as leaders when they are given an opportunity to practice leadership, namely an opportunity to "work together, form relationships, solve problems, and experience difficult situations".

It is also worth noting that the rethinking of the essence and meaning of universal human values in the public consciousness and deeper understanding of their dignity by people contributes to the formation of a new attitude towards the personality of the leader and his role, and,

therefore, determines the need for developing such leadership qualities that could ensure the ability of the individual to lead following humanistic and democratic principles.

Undoubtedly, one of the most prominent signs of individual leadership is its style, which determines approaches to the interaction between the leader and his followers on the way to attainment of goals. Thus, referring to the three styles of behavioral leadership distinguished by Levin et al. (1939): democratic, authoritarian, and liberal, and taking into account the democratic and humanistic vector of leadership, we will focus on the democratic style of individual leadership. And a more detailed study of participation as a characteristic of the democratic style of leadership seems promising with a view to determining personality qualities essential for the humanistic and democratic direction of leadership, the cherishing of which should be promoted by school education.

Therefore, **the aim of our article** is to analyze and characterize the essence of the concept of "participation" in the context of developing pupils' leadership qualities on a humanistic and democratic basis.

Participation in the interaction of the leader and his followers as a characteristic of the democratic style of leadership

Resorting to the works by Tannenbaum and Schmidt (2009), it should be emphasized that three groups of key factors that will determine the ability of the leader and followers to apply democratic leadership style are distinguished, viz.: the factors affecting the leader (value system, trust in followers, own leadership tendencies, sense of security in the conditions of uncertainty); the factors affecting followers (high needs for independence, readiness to take responsibility for the decision-making process, relatively high tolerance for uncertainty, interest in the problem, understanding and solidarity with the assignment, availability of relevant knowledge and expertise for problem-solving, skills of engagement in the decision-making); and the factors affecting the situation (values and traditions of the community, group effectiveness, the problem as such, lack of time).

The analysis of scientific sources has proven that the founders of the theory of emotional leadership, Goleman et al. (2019), have made a significant contribution to the development of the understanding of the essence of the democratic leadership style. Thus, according to the scientists, a democratic leader creates a resonance among followers, valuing people's opinions and contributing to the emergence of a sense of belonging and attachment via a special contribution. Noting that democratic leadership style positively affects the atmosphere, the researchers note that such

leadership is based on the triad of emotional intelligence skills, namely teamwork and cooperation, conflict resolution and influence, and listening constitutes its main strength.

It should be noted that in the studies of Ukrainian researchers (Nakonechnyi & Yushkish, 2016; Holoveshko, 2017; Polysayev, 2018; Haponenko, 2020; Dandekar, 2021; Nestulia, 2021; Shlyakhtina, 2021; etc.), dedicated to the democratic style of leadership, special attention is paid to the theoretical and methodological foundations of this style of leadership, the genesis of its development, the factors and personal qualities of the leader that ensure effective application of the democratic style of leadership in practice.

The results of the review of the views on the democratic style of leadership as the interaction of the leader and the followers (communication and cooperation) in the process of joint problem-solving give us the grounds to single out such *procedures of democratic leadership* as self- and mutual reflection, transparent and broad informing, participation in the decision-making, delegation of powers, constructive resolution of conflicts. Let us note that the outlined procedures of democratic leadership are manifested in practice in synergetic unity, mutually complementing and reinforcing each other, and are based on respectful attitude to human dignity and human rights as the highest values of democracy.

Thus, on the basis of the analysis of scientific sources, we propose to consider the *democratic style of leadership* as a valuable phenomenon based on respectful attitude to the principles of human rights and democracy and focused on empathic communication where the leader encourages broad and interested participation of the followers in performing the tasks necessary to achieve results that are mutually significant for the social group throughout the process of interpersonal interaction.

Taking into account the main aspects of democratic leadership we have identified, as well as the fact that in the scientific literature, democratic leadership is often called joint or participatory leadership, there is every ground to conclude that participation is one of its fundamental characteristics. In order to substantiate our position, we consider it expedient to reveal the essence of this concept in greater detail.

Participation in the interaction of the decision-making subjects as empowerment and shared responsibility

The definitional analysis of the concept of "*participation*" shows that this term (from the Latin participatio (from the words: "pars, partis" – part, partaking and "capere" – to take, accept); English “participation”; German “partizipation”; French “participation”; Ukrainian “partysypatsiya”,

“partytsypatsiya”) in the broadest sense means "partaking in some activity with other people." Most obviously, the closest Ukrainian equivalents of the concept of "participation" are "spivuchast′" or "spivprychetnist′", however, in the authentic Ukrainian-language and translated materials, the concept of "uchast′" is quite widespread.

It should be noted that in the international scientific practice, participation has got a variety of shades of meaning and is actively used in philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, management, theology, art studies, cultural studies, and other human and social sciences. Thus, according to the conclusions made in Surina's (2017) research, participation has gained "wide popularity in the sense of effective participation" and manifests the following generalized features in all its definitions: "relation to possible behavior in the expansion of powers, conscious engagement of at least two people in a common cause, open interaction for all its participants, for interaction, access to information and the decision-making process, bringing to an agreement, consensus between people and groups of people, the right of the communication participant to express his/her own opinion”.

In our opinion, the above features of participation are synergetic with the core manifestations of democratic leadership. Also, in the analyzed aspect, it should be noted that in the current practice the concepts of "democracy" and "participation" in individual scientific works are used as fully or partially the same, which is manifested in their interchangeable usage in the texts of scientific discourses. Given the primary meaning of these two concepts, we maintain the position that in the applied aspect, participation is the embodiment of the values of democracy, therefor, in our opinion, partial identification of the concepts of "democracy" and "participation" is justified.

At the same time, to better understand the essence of participation and its relationships with democracy and democratic leadership, it is worth paying special attention to the opinion of the German expert in the field of children's and youth participation V. Shtanhe (2020) who notes that participation is about "sharing power, authority, sharing the right to make decisions and the responsibility". In addition, this definition singles out the object of participation, viz. the issue on which decisions are made, outlines its subjects who have different levels of power and influence on the decision-making, and indicates that in the concept of "participation" attention is focused on the efficiency and culture of participation.

So, on the basis of the results of scientific analysis, we have arrived at the conclusion that participation is a manifestation of democracy and a characteristic of the democratic style of leadership, the unifying concept of which is the right to participate (see Fig. 1) and is interpreted by us as

engagement in the decision-making characterized by expansion of powers and shared responsibility.

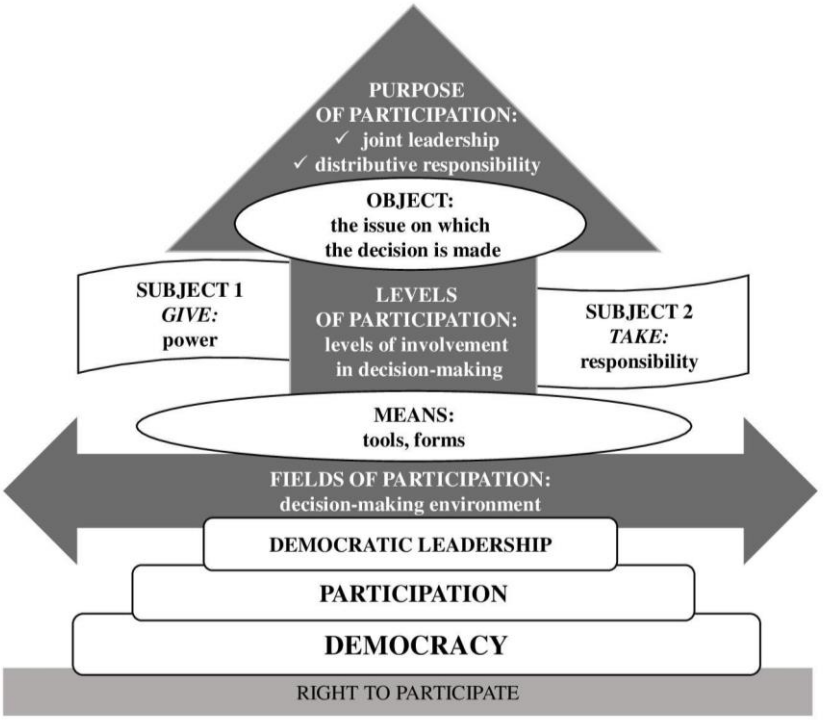


Fig. 1. Participation as a manifestation of democracy and a characteristic of the democratic leadership style [author's development by Mariia Hrynova]

As we can see from the scheme, the essence of participation as a manifestation of democracy and a characteristic of the democratic style of leadership (Fig. 1.) is revealed through its components, which include:

- *subjects of participation* – individuals or social groups who have different levels of power in the decision-making process;
- *object of participation* – the issue on which a decision is made, which concerns the rights and interests of one of the subjects of participation and is within the competence of the decision-making of another subject of participation;
- *spheres (fields) of participation* – the environment where participation takes place;
- *levels of participation* – degree of involvement in the decision-making;
- *means of participation* – forms and tools that determine the methods of participation, depending on its spheres and levels;

- *purpose of participation* – shared (distributive) responsibility for the decision passed and joint leadership.

Let us note that certain components require a more thorough analysis, so let us focus on some of them separately.

The analysis of scientific works has proven that the phenomenon of participation is studied from different positions. This has led to the appearance of different typologies of participation. On the basis of the results of the studies done by researchers Gaventa and Valderrama (1999), Stange (2016), Surina (2017), Levchenko et al. (2018), we have distinguished the following *types of participation by the spheres of manifestation*: political, civil, social, organizational, project, professional, routine life, organizational. Each of them has its own characteristics depending on the purpose of the activity in a certain field. Valuable for our research are the conclusions made by Stange (2016) who singles out youth and children's participation among the types of participation. Therefore, it is possible to observe a certain synergy between leadership and participation in the field of their manifestations.

On the basis of the analysis of the works by Arshtein (1969), Hart (1992), Dlugosz and Wygnanski (2005), Rowe and Frewer (2005), we can claim that participation is also characterized by different levels of involvement.

At the same time, taking into account the fact that the considered models of participation levels mainly concern political and civil spheres of its manifestation, we consider it expedient to develop a unified model based on them. Judging by the fact that participation is, on the one hand, characterized by the expansion of rights, and, on the other, by the distribution of power and taking responsibility during the decision-making process, in our model "L" denotes a person, group of persons (social group) or institution which in the process of participation delegates a certain a share of power "P" to a person, group of persons (social group) or institution that assumes a certain share of responsibility.

Considering the above, we suggest *four levels of participation*:

- *informing* – "L" informs "P" about the decision made on a certain issue related to "P";

- *consultation* – "L" consults "P" when making a decision on a certain issue related to "P";

- *joint decision-making* – "L" together with "P" jointly makes a decision on a certain issue related to "P";

- *delegation of authority* – "L" delegates the authority to "P" for it to independently settle a certain issue related to "P".

Let us note that as the result of the theoretical analysis and practice, we have come to the conclusion that the levels of information and consultation regarding all possible areas of participation constitute the basis of basic. In addition, the issues related to the same sphere may envisage a different level of involvement in the decision-making, and this level is determined by the normative fixation of the right to be engaged in a certain sphere of participation, development of the democratic culture of the subjects of participation, as well as by the specific situation.

The analysis of different approaches to the determination of the levels of participation has shown that the issue of the correlation between the concepts of "participation" and "self-governance" is debatable in the scientific opinion, and this is primarily caused by the lack of clarity in their interpretation.

Thus, sharing Stange's (2020) opinion on the distinction between participation and self-governance and taking into account the fact that the same social group or institution can perform a dual task at the same time and act within the dimension of participation on some issues, while in others - within the dimension of self-governance, we believe that self-governance is a possible result and promising consequence of the successful implementation of the fourth stage of participation, namely the delegation of powers to make independent decisions.

The theoretical analysis of spheres and levels of participation and positive participatory practice allows us to single out the means (forms, tools) that ensure the effectiveness of participation. Thus, they can be distinguished by the following characteristics:

- *institutional implementation* (normatively fixed, informal);
- *spheres of participation* (political, institutional, project, routine life, etc.);
- *levels of participation* (informing, consulting, joint decision-making, delegation of powers);
- *approaches to participation* (spontaneous or standardized, one-time or systemic, etc.);
- *forms of use* (offline, online, remote);
- *the number of participants* (at least two persons, social groups, institutions, etc.);
- *duration of implementation* (short-term, long-term).

Thus, the essence of the concept of "participation" is revealed through its components that ensure shared responsibility in the decision-making process, and therefore joint leadership or democratic leadership.

Participation in the interaction of children and adults as a precondition for the development of leadership qualities required for the implementation of democratic leadership procedures

In our opinion, the above actualizes the demand for increased attention to the development of leadership qualities of pupils in school practice, with due account of the spheres, levels, and means of participation available to them.

Focusing on the school as an environment for nurturing leadership qualities, we will consider participation in several contexts:

- *as a fundamental principle of the development of leadership qualities*, which determines the essence of relationships between the subjects of the educational process;

- *as an end-to-end approach to the development of leadership qualities*, which should be reflected in educational technologies;

- *as one of the preconditions for the development of leadership qualities*, which must be ensured in the educational and management processes of the school;

- *as one of the results of the development of leadership qualities*, which contributes to increased capacity of the individual for democratic leadership.

In the considered context, it is worth emphasizing that the effectiveness of participation is influenced by the level of development of the culture of democracy, that is transparency, cooperation, and responsibility in the relations between the participants of the educational process. In our opinion, this is due to the developed general (civic, social, cultural, leadership) and professional competencies, such as psychological, pedagogical partnership, organizational, projective, reflective, and lifelong learning ability, among pedagogical workers (Pro zatverdzhennya profesiynoho standartu za profesiyamy "Vchytel' pochatkovykh klasiv zakladu zahal'noyi seredn'oyi osvity", "Vchytel' zakladu zahal'noyi seredn'oyi osvity", "Vchytel' z pochatkovoyi osvity (z dyplomom molodshoho spetsialista)", 2020).

Therefore, in Ukraine, special attention is paid to the promotion of the professional development of pedagogical workers of various categories on the relevant issues, in particular through:

- conducting professional development courses for teachers, principals, deputy principals for educational work, teacher-organizers, and class teachers;

- the organization of various scientific and methodological events which not only aim to draw attention to the problem of educating leaders in

school practice through the development of student subjectivity in the educational and management processes but also provide an opportunity to exchange successful experiences;

- inclusion of the disciplines in educational and scientific programs for students of the second (master's) level of higher education, which involve mastering the pedagogical toolkit for educating leaders and expanding the teacher's perception of the leader's own potential for further personal and professional development.

The integration of the best European practices of non-formal education of children and adults into the school educational space plays an important role in this process. So, for example, in recent years, a number of educational projects have been implemented in Ukraine, in particular the international project "We can do more! For the development of civic participation of young people in Eastern Europe", the Swiss-Ukrainian project "DECIDE - Decentralization for the development of democratic education", the Polish-Ukrainian project "We are building a community for the development of student self-government in Ukraine", which strengthen the capacity of the educational process participants to apply participatory procedures in school and community democratic leadership.

Conclusions

Taking into account the humanistic and democratic direction of the development of the leadership philosophy as well as the prevalence of its researches through the prism of interpersonal interaction of the leader and the followers, it is the democratic style that receives close attention in scientific discourses. It is characterized by the appreciation of human dignity and human rights and, in its various manifestations, focuses on setting up positive relationships between the leader and the followers, as well as encouraging the followers' initiative through sharing of responsibilities and empathic communication. This style of leadership is based on the subject-subject relationship of the leader and the followers, which gives reason to single out participation as one of its key characteristics. We draw attention to the fact that a democratic leadership style can be learned only by experiencing it in the learning process.

Therefore, in the context of the humanistic and democratic demand of society for school education for the education of leaders, participation should be considered from three positions:

- *"about"* (participation in the interaction of decision-making subjects as an extension of powers and shared responsibility);

- *"through"* (participation in the interaction of children and adults as a precondition for the development of leadership qualities required for the implementation of leadership procedures on a democratic basis);
- *"for"* (participation in the interaction of the leader and the followers as a characteristic of the democratic style of leadership).

Our article only indirectly takes into account (by mentioning different levels of participation, for example) the differentiations that arise in the area of participatory democracy learning. There is no doubt that democratic education concepts have been experiencing an upswing in all democracies in recent years, with democracy being emphasized as a way of life and the core business of schools and education. There is no doubt that a democratic system of government requires appropriate education, as future leaders should assume their role as leaders, but not fall back into patterns of autocratic leadership. However, there is disagreement in the international debate as to how democratic competence can be achieved. On this issue, democracy education is in tension with political didactics, with the latter focusing on imparting knowledge while the former is characterized by experiential learning.

Democracy education is analyzed by contrasting different, primarily reform pedagogical concepts. Self-determination and the dialectic of self-determination and heteronomy, already emphasized by Kant, are two central themes that also illustrate the main differences between the concepts. It is shown that, ultimately, teaching staff are in control everywhere and that the idea of self-determination was sometimes implemented in questionable, deceptive ways. The dialectic of self-determination and heteronomy is reflected in the concepts to very different degrees. The contrast allows the explication of important elements of democratic education.

Central to the concepts of democratic education, as we have mentioned several times, is the appropriation of democracy through experience. The argument that the pedagogical focus on democracy as a way of life is even detrimental to its later realization at the system level is countered by the fact that experiences of assuming roles and responsibilities represent a developmental stimulus for a differentiated ability to make judgements. It is therefore not productive to pit knowledge transfer and stimulation of cognitive-structural development against each other. For Ukraine, this discussion needs to be given even more importance so that no naïve form of participatory learning at school fuels false hopes.

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