Nastava i vaspitanje, 2026, *75*(2), 339-353
https://doi.org/10.5937/niv75-62148

ISSN 0547-3330
eISSN 2560-3051
Originalni naučni rad

Povezanost liderskih veština i akademskog postignuća studenata pedagogije: implikacije za razvoj kurikuluma

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Apstrakt *Cilj ovog istraživanja je ispitivanje relacija između liderskih veština i akademskog uspeha kod studenata pedagogije, s namerom da se identifikuju strategije za razvoj liderstva u okviru programa inicijalnog obrazovanja budućih pedagoga. Dodatno, ispituju se razlike u razvijenosti liderskih veština između studenata različitih godina studija kako bi se utvrdio potencijalni uticaj akademskog napredovanja na ove veštine. Uzorak čini 194 studenta pedagogije sa Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Novom Sadu. Liderske veštine u osam domena (organizacija i planiranje, svest o različitostima, samoupravljanje, samopouzdanje, upotreba tehnologija, kognitivni razvoj i kritička analiza, interpersonalna komunikacija, rešavanje problema i donošenje odluka) procenjene su adaptiranom verzijom inventara ishoda studentskog liderstva, dok je akademsko postignuće mereno prosečnom ocenom na studijama. Rezultati Pirsonovog koeficijenta korelacije pokazuju značajnu povezanost akademskog postignuća sa ukupnim skorom na inventaru ishoda studentskog liderstva, kao i sa specifičnim domenima – organizacija i planiranje, svest o različitostima, samoupravljanje i samopouzdanje. Razlike u razvijenosti liderskih veština u zavisnosti od godine studija nisu pokazale statističku značajnost. Na osnovu dobijenih rezultata, predložene su intervencije za unapređenje liderskih veština kroz kurikulum studija pedagogije. Istraživanje pruža doprinos razumevanju odnosa između liderskih veština i akademskog postignuća, otvarajući prostor za dalja istraživanja i praktičnu primenu u kontekstu obrazovanja i profesionalnog razvoja budućih pedagoga.*

Ključne reči: *akademsko postignuće, liderske veštine, pedagogija, razvoj kurikuluma.*

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Uvod

Liderstvo je neizostavan činilac u društvenom i profesionalnom kontekstu, a njegova univerzalna funkcija prepoznata je još početkom 20. veka. To potvrđuje i Mumford (Mumford, 1906) koji ističe da liderstvo prožima sve oblike udruživanja, od najjednostavnijih zajednica do najsloženijih organizacija, čime se naglašava njegova sveprisutnost i značaj. Univerzalnost liderstva prisutna je i u shvatanjima savremenih autora (Northouse, 2021; Yukl & Gardner, 2020) koji naglašavaju njegovu ključnu ulogu u profesionalnom razvoju pojedinaca i unapređenju organizacione efikasnosti. U današnjem društvu, koje karakterišu ubrzane promene i potreba za adaptacijom, poslodavci sve češće prepoznaju liderske veštine kao ključne determinante konkurentnosti pojedinaca na tržištu rada (Cottrell, 2021). S tim u vezi, sve veći broj istraživanja ukazuje na značaj i potrebu za razvojem liderskih veština kroz formalne obrazovne programe, kako bi se omogućilo uspešno integrisanje mladih u dinamično profesionalno okruženje (Dugan et al., 2009; Elmuti et al., 2005; Kezar et al., 2006). Uprkos tome, formalno obrazovanje i dalje ne pruža doslednu i sistematsku integraciju liderstva (Cottrell, 2021). Pojedini autori primećuju da liderstvo postaje sve prisutnije u visokoškolskim programima, ali da se često tretira kao dodatak kurikulumu, a ne kao njegov sastavni deo (Elmuti et al., 2005). Ovakav pristup dovodi do nesistematičnog razvoja liderskih veština, što može umanjiti njihovu primenjivost u profesionalnom kontekstu (Dugan, 2024).

Pitanje razvoja liderskih veština kroz formalno obrazovanje je naročito značajno u profesijama koje podrazumevaju visoku odgovornost i interakciju sa različitim akterima, među kojima profesija pedagoga zauzima važno mesto. S obzirom na to da pedagog ima ključnu ulogu u oblikovanju vaspitno-obrazovnog procesa, njegovo liderstvo nije samo stvar lične kompetencije, već faktor koji utiče na širu obrazovnu zajednicu. U tom kontekstu, neophodno je preispitati kako se razvoj liderskih veština može sistematski integrisati u formalno obrazovanje budućih pedagoga.

Savremene teorije naglašavaju da liderstvo nije isključivo vezano za formalne pozicije moći, već da uključuje niz interpersonalnih karakteristika i etičkih vrednosti (Brown et al., 2005; Tannenbaum et al., 2013). Shodno tome, autorka Van (Vann, 2000), čiji je koncept liderstva poslužio kao teorijski okvir ovog rada, posmatra liderstvo kao dinamičan i višedimenzionalan proces razvoja ličnih i profesionalnih kapaciteta studenata. Ovaj model podrazumeva razvijanje niza međusobno povezanih karakteristika: svesti o različitostima, samopouzdanja, interpersonalne komunikacije, organizacije i planiranja, samoupravljanja, kritičkog mišljenja, rešavanja problema i donošenja odluka, kao i osposobljenosti za upotrebu savremenih tehnologija. Prema Van (Vann, 2000), liderske veštine se posmatraju kao potencijali koji se mogu oblikovati kroz iskustvo i obrazovne programe. Takvo shvatanje odgovara savremenim pedagoškim tendencijama, koje teže razvoju celovite ličnosti – lidera koji promišlja, komunicira i deluje odgovorno u složenim društvenim kontekstima. U odnosu na dominantne modele liderstva, poput transformacionog ili transakcionog, koji su prevashodno usmereni na ulogu lidera u organizacionom kontekstu i njegov uticaj

na sledbenike (Northouse, 2021), model autorke Van je posebno pogodan za obrazovni kontekst, jer polazi od razvojnih potencijala studenata kao budućih profesionalaca. Za razliku od distribuiranog liderstva, koje naglasak stavlja na raspodelu liderskih uloga unutar sistema (Spillane, 2006), Van se fokusira na unutrašnji razvoj pojedinca i sticanje veština relevantnih za akademski i profesionalni uspeh (Vann, 2000). Upravo ova razvojna orijentacija i funkcionalnost u kontekstu visokog obrazovanja predstavljaju ključni razlog izbora pomenutog modela kao teorijskog okvira istraživanja.

Značaj liderskih veština za profesiju pedagoga ogleda se u njihovoj neposrednoj povezanosti sa kvalitetom stručnog delovanja i sposobnošću za koordinaciju složenog vaspitno-obrazovnog procesa. Kako pojedini autori ističu (Brown et al., 2005), etička dimenzija liderstva podrazumeva odgovorno donošenje odluka i usklađivanje ličnih vrednosti sa profesionalnim normama, što je od posebnog značaja u radu pedagoga. Savremeni pedagog deluje ne samo kao stručni savetnik, već i kao lider koji utiče na razvoj odnosa i organizacionu kulturu u školi (Tannenbaum et al., 2013). Pored teorijskog i metodičkog znanja, pedagog mora posedovati razvijene veštine samoupravljanja, komunikacije i planiranja, jer one omogućavaju efikasno usmeravanje drugih, kao i unapređivanje kvaliteta vaspitno-obrazovnog procesa (Harris & Jones, 2019). Posebno su značajne veštine koje se odnose na rešavanje problema, kritičko promišljanje i uvažavanje različitosti, jer one omogućavaju konstruktivno reagovanje u složenim i nepredvidivim situacijama (Komives et al., 2013). U tom smislu, liderske veštine predstavljaju pokazatelj profesionalne zrelosti i spremnosti za samostalno i odgovorno delovanje u praksi. Van (Vann, 2000) naglašava da se one razvijaju kroz iskustvo, refleksiju i obrazovne programe, te da su merljive i podložne sistematskom unapređivanju.

Analiza načina na koji se ove veštine mogu razvijati tokom studija, kao i faktora koji na to utiču, od suštinskog je značaja za razumevanje kvaliteta obrazovanja budućih pedagoga. Odatle proizlazi potreba da se empirijski ispita njihova povezanost sa akademskim postignućem studenata pedagogije, što je osnovni cilj ovog rada. Dodatno, ispituju se razlike u razvijenosti liderskih veština u zavisnosti od godine studija. U tom kontekstu, ovo istraživanje je usmereno na davanje odgovora na pitanja da li su i u kojoj meri liderske veštine povezane sa akademskim uspehom studenata pedagogije, kao i da li i u kojoj meri akademsko napredovanje doprinosi njihovom razvoju? Na osnovu dobijenih rezultata i relevantne literature, teži se formulisanju preporuka za unapređenje kurikuluma koje bi mogle doprineti efikasnijem razvoju liderskih veština u okviru formalnog obrazovanja budućih pedagoga.

Pregled relevantnih istraživanja

Iako su istraživanja o liderskim veštinama studenata relativno retka, postoje studije koje naglašavaju njihovu važnost u kontekstu profesionalne pripreme. Jedno takvo istraživanje, sprovedeno među studentima socijalnog rada u Ukrajini, pokazalo je da studenti postdiplomskih studija poseduju viši nivo razvijenosti liderskih veština u poređenju sa stu-

dentima osnovnih studija (Horishna et al., 2019). Takođe, u istom istraživanju je utvrđeno da studenti koji su uključeni u dodatne nastavne aktivnosti i koji imaju radno iskustvo poseduju razvijenije liderske veštine u poređenju sa studentima koji nisu aktivno uključeni u vannastavne ili radne aktivnosti (Horishna et al., 2019). Ovi nalazi sugerišu da različiti oblici praktičnog angažmana mogu pozitivno uticati na razvoj liderskih veština kod studenata.

Dalje, istraživanja ukazuju na postojanje pozitivne veze između angažovanja učenika u liderskim ulogama i njihovog akademskog uspeha (Bakar et al., 2018; Cheong, 2020). Učestvovanje u liderskim ulogama doprinosi razvoju motivacije, odgovornosti i samopouzdanja, što se dalje odražava na bolje akademsko postignuće (Bakar et al., 2018; Baker & McCarthy, 2019). Samopouzdanje kao prediktor akademskog uspeha navodi se i u drugim studijama (Morony et al., 2013). Osim toga, studenti koji preuzimaju liderske uloge često uspostavljaju snažnije odnose sa nastavnicima i vršnjacima, čime ostvaruju lakši pristup dodatnoj podršci i resursima, što može doprineti njihovom uspehu u učenju (Cheong, 2020). Nalazi još jednog istraživanja (Abbas et al., 2024) ukazuju na to da angažovanje studenata u liderskim ulogama pozitivno utiče na njihov akademski uspeh. Studenti koji preuzimaju liderske odgovornosti pokazuju viši nivo razvijenosti veština koje su karakteristične za liderstvo, a koje se istovremeno identifikuju kao ključni prediktori akademskog postignuća, što uključuje upravljanje vremenom, efektivnu komunikaciju, kritičko mišljenje i timski rad(Abbas et al., 2024).

Slično tome, El Morabit (El Morabit, 2024) ističe da studenti koji zauzimaju liderske pozicije razvijaju izraženije veštine timskog rada, rešavanja problema i uspešne komunikacije, kao i veće samopouzdanje. Učešće u ovakvim aktivnostima doprinosi pozitivnoj dinamici među studentima, podstiče lični razvoj i ima povoljan uticaj na akademski uspeh. I drugi autori (Deng et al., 2020) navode da lidersko iskustvo studenata može unaprediti akademska postignuća, pri čemu se primećuje manji vremenski angažman u učenju, ali veći stepen autonomije i samostalnog upravljanja učenjem. Studenti sa izraženim liderskim karakteristikama imaju više samopouzdanja, istrajniji su i postižu bolje akademske rezultate. Preuzimanje liderskih uloga pruža studentima mogućnost da donose samostalne odluke, grade mreže i proširuju profesionalne odnose, što dodatno doprinosi doslednosti u studijama i istrajnosti u postizanju akademskih ciljeva.

Ipak, pojedina istraživanja ukazuju na drugačije nalaze. Istraživanje Pansakale i saradnika (Pansacala et al., 2024) nije pokazalo statistički značajnu vezu između liderstva i akademskog postignuća. Autori, međutim, naglašavaju da tip liderske pozicije i stepen odgovornosti koji ona podrazumeva mogu značajno uticati na akademski uspeh, što sugeriše da nije sama liderska uloga presudna, već se moraju uzeti u obzir i njen kvalitet i sadržaj. Slično tome, Čen (Chan, 2023) nije pronašao značajne razlike u akademskim performansama između studenata sa transformacionim, transakcionim i pasivno-izbegavajućim stilovima liderstva, što dodatno ukazuje na kompleksnost odnosa između liderskih karakteristika i akademskih ishoda. Dodatno, rezultati istraživanja Ganunija i Ramboarison-Lalao (Gannouni & Ramboarison-Lalao, 2016) ukazuju na mogućnost da, iako ne postoji direktna korelacija između liderstva i akademskih rezultata, učešće u liderskim aktiv-

nostima doprinese unutrašnjih psiholoških resursa, poput samopouzdanja i motivacije, koji studentima pružaju unutrašnju snagu da istraju, teže visokim ciljevima i uspešno ih ostvare, što posredno može uticati na akademski uspeh. Ovi nalazi naglašavaju da liderske uloge imaju značajan razvojni potencijal čak i kada ne dovode neposredno do poboljšanja akademskog postignuća.

Iako većina navedenih istraživanja ukazuje na postojanje pozitivne povezanosti između liderskih veština, liderskog angažovanja i akademskog postignuća studenata, nalazi u ovoj oblasti nisu u potpunosti jednoznačni. Dok pojedine studije naglašavaju direktan uticaj liderskih uloga i povezanih veština na akademski uspeh, druga istraživanja ukazuju na posrednu ulogu psiholoških resursa, ili pak na značaj konteksta, tipa liderske uloge i stepena odgovornosti koju ona podrazumeva. Ovakva nedoslednost rezultata ukazuje na složenost odnosa između liderskih veština i akademskog uspeha, kao i na potrebu za daljim empirijskim ispitivanjima u specifičnim obrazovnim kontekstima. Naročito je uočljiv nedostatak istraživanja usmerenih na studente pedagogije, kod kojih razvoj liderskih veština ima poseban značaj kako u kontekstu akademskog postignuća tako i u okviru pripreme za buduću profesionalnu ulogu. Upravo taj istraživački jaz predstavlja polazište i opravdanje za sprovođenje istraživanja prikazanog u ovom radu.

Metodološki okvir istraživanja

Cilj istraživanja

Cilj ovog istraživanja je da ispita povezanost liderskih veština i akademskog postignuća kod studenata pedagogije, s namerom da se pruži osnova za razvoj liderstva u okviru programa inicijalnog obrazovanja stručnih saradnika – pedagoga. Osim toga, pažnja se posvećuje i analizi razlika u razvijenosti liderskih veština kod studenata različitih godina studija, čime se ispituje uticaj akademskog napredovanja na ove veštine. Imajući u vidu polazne teorijske osnove istraživanja, pretpostavlja se da će rezultati ukazati na pozitivnu povezanost liderskih veština sa akademskim postignućem kod studenata pedagogije. Istovremeno, očekuje se da će studenti viših godina studija pokazati viši nivo razvijenosti liderskih veština, kao posledicu akumuliranog obrazovnog iskustva.

Varijable i instrumenti

Liderske veštine operacionalizovane su preko seta varijabli specifikovanih u okviru modifikovane verzije inventara ishoda studentskog liderstva (eng. *Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory* – SLOI) autorke Van (Vann, 2000). Reč je o osam varijabli koje se odnose na: svest o različitostima – razumevanje i uvažavanje kulturnih i socijalnih razlika; samopouzdanje – poverenje u sopstvene liderske sklonosti; interpersonalna komunikacija – veštine jasne i efikasne komunikacije sa drugima; organizacija i planiranje – veštine organizovanja zadataka i strateškog planiranja; samoupravljanje – veštine samoorganizacije i

samovođenja u složenim situacijama; kognitivni razvoj i kritička analiza – veštine kritičkog mišljenja i analize problema; rešavanje problema i donošenje odluka – efikasno rešavanje problema i donošenje strateških odluka; upotreba tehnologija – korišćenje savremenih tehnologija u liderstvu. Modifikacija instrumenta obuhvatila je jezičku i kulturološku adaptaciju, kao i redukciju broja stavki u odnosu na originalnu verziju instrumenta, pri čemu su zadržane ključne dimenzije i izvorna konceptualna struktura instrumenta (Letić Lungulov i Radujkov, 2024; Vann, 2000). Modifikovana verzija instrumenta konstruisana je kao skala Likertovog tipa, sačinjena od 30 stavki sa četiri nivoa slaganja sa svakom od njih. Zaokruživanjem određene numeričke vrednosti na skali, ispitanik procenjuje u kom se stepenu određena tvrdnja odnosi na njega (od 1 – uopšte se ne slažem do 4 – u potpunosti se slažem). Primenom eksplorativne faktorske analize (metod glavnih osa), proverena je latentna struktura inventara ishoda studentskog liderstva, pri čemu je potvrđenaosmofaktorska struktura upitnika kao u originalnom istraživanju (Vann, 2000) i utvrđene su dobra pouzdanost i validnost instrumenta. Kronbahova alfa instrumenta u celini iznosi .86, dok se pouzdanost pojedinačnih domena kreće u rasponu od .61 do .75 (Letić Lungulov i Radujkov, 2024).

Akademsko postignuće izraženo je prosečnom ocenom u periodu studiranja do trenutka realizacije istraživanja.

Godina studija obuhvata četiri kategorije – prva, druga, treća i četvrta.

Uzorak

U istraživanju je učestvovalo 194 ispitanika koji pohađaju studije pedagogije na Filozofskom fakultetu Univerziteta u Novom Sadu. Uzorak je bio prigodan i uključivao je studente osnovnih akademskih studija. Struktura uzorka, te njegova ujednačenost u pogledu relevantnih varijabli, vidljive su iz Tabele 1.

Tabela 1
Struktura uzorka

Varijable		Frekvencije	Procenat
Prosečna ocena	6.50 – 7.50	16	8.2
	7.50 – 8.50	91	46.9
	8.50 – 9.50	76	39.2
	> 9.50	11	5.7
Godina studija	Prva	49	25.2
	Druga	45	23.2
	Treća	50	25.8
	Četvrta	50	25.8
	Ukupno	194	100.0

Imajući u vidu da uzorak čine ispitanici sa samo jednog fakulteta u zemlji, dobijeni nalazi pre svega odražavaju karakteristike ove grupe, dok bi primenljivost rezultata na studente pedagogije sa drugih fakulteta mogla biti predmet budućih istraživanja.

Analizom etičkih aspekta istraživanja ustanovljeno je da ono ni na koji način ne narušava prava učesnika, niti odstupa od utvrđenih etičkih standarda. Tome u prilog govore podaci da je istraživanjem obuhvaćen relativno mali broj pitanja koja se tiču opštih karakteristika ispitanika, te da je učešće bilo potpuno dobrovoljno, uz mogućnost odustajanja u bilo kom momentu. Shodno tome, procenjeno je da istraživanje ne uključuje nikakav rizik po psihološko blagostanje ispitanika.

Rezultati istraživanja

Povezanost liderskih veština i akademskog postignuća

Kako bi se ispitala povezanost liderskih veština i akademskog postignuća ispitanika, primenjen je Pirsonov koeficijent linearne korelacije.

Tabela 2
Povezanost liderskih veština i akademskog postignuća

Skala		Prosek
Inventar ishoda studentskog liderstva	Ukupno	.17*
	Organizacija i planiranje	.18*
	Svest o različitostima	.15*
	Samoupravljanje	.15*
	Samopouzdanje	.15*
	Upotreba tehnologija	.01
	Kognitivni razvoj i kritička analiza	.07
	Interpersonalna komunikacija	.12
	Rešavanje problema i donošenje odluka	.05

*Napomena. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05*

Kao što se vidi iz Tabele 2, prosečna ocena studenata je u značajnoj pozitivnoj korelaciji sa ukupnim skorom na inventaru ishoda studentskog liderstva, kao i sa prve četiri subskale: organizacija i planiranje, svest o različitostima, samoupravljanje i samopouzdanje. Korelacije su niskog intenziteta i pozitivnog smera, što ukazuje na to da veći rezultati na jednoj varijabli prate veće vrednosti na drugoj. Drugim rečima, ispitanici koji imaju viši prosek ocena imaju i razvijenije liderske veštine u pomenutim domenima. Iako su ove korelcije statistički značajne, njihov nizak intenzitet ukazuje na ograničen praktični značaj

efekta, što implicira da se akademski uspeh studenata istovremeno oblikuje pod uticajem šireg skupa individualnih i kontekstualnih faktora.

Generacijske razlike u nivou razvijenosti liderskih veština

Rezultati jednofaktorske analize varijanse pokazali su da ne postoje statistički značajne razlike u ukupnom skoru na inventaru ishoda studentskog liderstva između studenata različitih godina studija. Kao što prikazuje Tabela 3, razlike nisu značajne ni na pojedinačnim subskalama instrumenta ($p > .05$). Drugim rečima, studenti prve, druge, treće i četvrte godine se ne razlikuju značajno u nivou razvijenosti liderskih veština.

Tabela 3
Razlike u liderskim veštinama u odnosu na godinu studija

	Godina studija	*AS*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p* - nivo
Ukupno	Prva	99.91	9.94	.39	3(191)	.75
	Druga	101.07	10.62			
	Treća	99.54	11.98			
	Četvrta	101.48	8.24			
Organizacija i planiranje	Prva	3.40	.43	2.05	3(191)	.10
	Druga	3.47	.39			
	Treća	3.25	.52			
	Četvrta	3.33	.41			
Svest o različitostima	Prva	3.65	.47	2.38	3(191)	.07
	Druga	3.84	.31			
	Treća	3.82	.43			
	Četvrta	3.80	.24			
Samoupravljanje	Prva	3.35	.50	.93	3(191)	.42
	Druga	3.35	.48			
	Treća	3.20	.54			
	Četvrta	3.32	.45			
Samopouzdanje	Prva	3.22	.54	.19	3(191)	.94
	Druga	3.14	.55			
	Treća	3.21	.54			
	Četvrta	3.20	.55			
Upotreba tehnologija	Prva	3.17	.70	.74	3(191)	.52
	Druga	3.34	.54			
	Treća	3.26	.63			
	Četvrta	3.30	.50			
Kognitivni razvoj i kritička analiza	Prva	3.52	.47	1.40	3(191)	.24
	Druga	3.63	.38			
	Treća	3.46	.51			
	Četvrta	3.47	.32			

	Godina studija	*AS*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p* - nivo
Interpersonalna komunikacija	Prva	2.93	.72	2.14	3(191)	.09
	Druga	3.01	.78			
	Treća	2.88	.75			
	Četvrta	3.22	.58			
Rešavanje problema i donošenje odluka	Prva	3.38	.48	2.45	3(191)	.06
	Druga	3.53	.53			
	Treća	3.59	.55			
	Četvrta	3.64	.39			

Napomena. *AS* – aritmetička sredina; *SD* – standardna devijacija; *F* – vrednost testa analize varijanse; *df* – stepen slobode; *p*-nivo – nivo statističke značajnosti.

Ovakav nalaz ukazuje na to da se nivo liderskih veština ne menja značajno tokom studija, što može biti pokazatelj nedovoljne sistemske podrške njihovom razvoju u visokoškolskom obrazovanju. Dobijeni rezultati time potvrđuju nalaze drugih autora, koji ističu da liderstvo, iako prepoznato kao važna komponenta akademskog i profesionalnog uspeha, još uvek nije adekvatno integrisano u nastavne programe (Cottrell, 2021). Stoga bi u budućem razvoju kurikuluma bilo važno uključiti inovativne pristupe koji podstiču razvoj liderskih veština.

Diskusija

Rezultati sprovedenog istraživanja omogućavaju dublje razumevanje odnosa između liderskih veština i akademskog postignuća studenata pedagogije, ali i načina na koji se ove veštine formiraju u okviru univerzitetskog obrazovanja. Dobijeni podaci pružaju osnov za promišljanje o kvalitetu kurikuluma i njegovom doprinosu razvoju profesionalnih kompetencija budućih pedagoga. Diskusija koja sledi usmerena je na tumačenje ključnih nalaza, njihovo poređenje sa relevantnim istraživanjima i na identifikovanje mogućih pravaca unapređenja kurikuluma studija pedagogije u cilju osnaživanja liderskih potencijala studenata.

Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da su sa akademskim postignućem studenata značajno povezane one dimenzije liderstva koje se odnose na samoregulaciju, organizaciju i ličnu efikasnost, konkretno: organizacija i planiranje, svest o različitostima, samoupravljanje i samopouzdanje. Iako su ove korelacije niskog intenziteta, njihov pozitivan smer ukazuje na to da studenti sa višim prosekom ocena istovremeno pokazuju i razvijenije oblike samousmerenog ponašanja, bolje upravljanje vremenom i veću veru u sopstvene sposobnosti. Takvi nalazi sugerišu da akademski uspešniji studenti češće poseduju sposobnost postavljanja realnih ciljeva i planiranja njihovog ostvarivanja. Istovremeno, oni reflektuju o sopstvenom napretku i prilagođavaju svoje strategije učenja, što predstavlja suštinske elemente liderskog delovanja (Abbas et al., 2024; Baker & McCarthy, 2019; Komarraju &

Nadler, 2013). Posebno je zanimljivo što se među značajnim faktorima akademskog uspeha našla dimenzija svesti o različitostima, koja podrazumeva otvorenost prema drugačijim mišljenjima, uvažavanje kulturnih, socijalnih i individualnih razlika i sposobnost razumevanja drugih (Denson & Chang, 2009). Ova veština ima izrazito razvojnu i refleksivnu funkciju: ona doprinosi ne samo kvalitetu interpersonalnih odnosa već i sposobnosti studenata da kritički preispituju sopstvene vrednosti, stavove i postupke. Istraživanja pokazuju da je visoka svest o različitostima povezana sa većom akademskom angažovanošću i višim stepenom metakognitivnog učenja (Gurin et al., 2002). Ova korelacija se dovodi u vezu sa razvojem intelektualne fleksibilnosti, tolerancije na višeznačnost i samorefleksije. U tom smislu, razvijenija svest o različitostima može doprineti akademskom uspehu posredno, kroz unapređivanje socio-emocionalnih i refleksivnih aspekata učenja, koji su sastavni deo samoregulativnog funkcionisanja. Ovakav nalaz je u skladu sa ranijim istraživanjima koja potvrđuju da samoregulacija, sposobnost planiranja i samoprocenjivanja kompetencija čine ključne prediktore akademskog uspeha (Al-Abyadh & Abdel Azeem, 2022; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). Istraživanja takođe ukazuju na to da samopouzdanje, kao centralna komponenta samoevaluacije, utiče na postavljanje ciljeva i motivaciju za učenje, a time i na akademska postignuća (Stankov et al., 2014). U tom smislu, dimenzije liderstva koje su intrapersonalne prirode, kao što su samopouzdanje, samoupravljanje i organizacija, mogu delovati kao posrednici između motivacionih i kognitivnih procesa u učenju, što objašnjava njihovu jaču povezanost sa akademskim postignućem u odnosu na interpersonalne dimenzije.

S druge strane, dimenzije koje se odnose na interpersonalnu komunikaciju, upotrebu tehnologija i rešavanje problema nisu pokazale statistički značajnu povezanost sa prosekom ocena. Moguće objašnjenje leži u činjenici da se ove veštine ne odražavaju neposredno na formalne akademske pokazatelje, kao što su ocene, već na više doprinose razvoju širih socijalnih i profesionalnih kapaciteta (Chan, 2023). Na primer, komunikacione veštine, iako ključne za timski rad i saradnju, često nisu predmet eksplicitne evaluacije u akademskom kontekstu, dok se veštine vezane za rešavanje problema i upotrebu tehnologija češće manifestuju u praktičnim i projektno orijentisanim oblicima rada koji ne ulaze u tradicionalne metrike akademskog uspeha. Slično, Pansakala i saradnici (Pansacala et al., 2024) ističu da kvalitet liderske uloge i stepen odgovornosti mogu imati veću važnost od same učestalosti preuzimanja liderskih aktivnosti, što dodatno potvrđuje složenost odnosa između liderskih i akademskih dimenzija studentskog funkcionisanja.

U celini, rezultati ovog istraživanja potvrđuju da intrapersonalne dimenzije liderstva imaju snažniju povezanost sa akademskim uspehom od interpersonalnih. Ovaj odnos može se razumeti u kontekstu specifičnosti akademskog okruženja, u kojem se uspeh u većoj meri oslanja na individualne nego na socijalne aspekte liderskog delovanja. Intrapersonalne veštine deluju kao unutrašnji mehanizmi upravljanja učenjem, omogućavajući studentima da efikasnije organizuju svoje akademske obaveze, održe kontinuitet u učenju i prilagode strategije rada zahtevima nastavnog procesa. Nasuprot tome, interpersonalne dimenzije liderstva svoju punu funkcionalnost ispoljavaju pre svega u pro-

fesionalnom kontekstu, koji podrazumeva interakciju, zajedničko donošenje odluka i preuzimanje odgovornosti unutar grupe, što nije uvek direktno reflektovano u formalnim akademskim pokazateljima uspeha. Stoga se može zaključiti da je jača povezanost intrapersonalnih liderskih veština sa akademskim postignućem studenata u skladu sa srtukturom i kriterijumima vrednovanja u visokom obrazovanju. To implicira da razvoj samoregulativnih, refleksivnih i organizacionih kompetencija treba da zauzme centralno mesto u programima inicijalnog obrazovanja budućih pedagoga. Uvođenje obrazovnih pristupa koji podstiču samostalnost, samoevaluaciju i preuzimanje odgovornosti za učenje može doprineti istovremenom razvoju liderskih potencijala i akademske efikasnosti.

Dobijeni nalazi takođe pokazuju da se nivo razvijenosti liderskih veština studenata pedagogije ne razlikuje značajno između godina studija, što ukazuje na odsustvo progresivnog razvoja ovih veština tokom akademskog obrazovanja. Ovakav rezultat može se tumačiti kao odraz činjenice da programi osnovnih studija pedagogije još uvek ne sadrže dovoljno elemenata koji bi sistematski podsticali razvoj liderskih kapaciteta. Iako se kroz pojedine predmete, projekte i oblike rada implicitno razvijaju veštine saradnje, organizacije i odgovornosti, aktivnosti kojima se te veštine possšešuju nisu dovoljno strukturisane. Zbog toga programi osnovnih studija ne dovode do značajnih razlika u razvijenosti liderskih veština između generacija. Ovaj nalaz potvrđuje zapažanja autora koji naglašavaju da razvoj liderskih veština u kontekstu obrazovanja nije spontani proces, već rezultat planskog kurikularnog oblikovanja i refleksivnog iskustvenog učenja (Komives et al., 2005; Northouse, 2021). U skladu s modelom razvoja liderskog identiteta (Komives et al., 2005), formiranje liderskih kapaciteta zahteva dugotrajan proces samospoznaje, interakcije i povratne informacije. Pri tome, refleksija ima ključnu ulogu u povezivanju iskustva sa razvojem svesti o sopstvenom liderskom potencijalu. Ukoliko obrazovni programi ne nude dovoljno prilika za ovakva iskustva, liderstvo ostaje latentna, a ne formativna komponenta profesionalnog identiteta studenata pedagogije.

Posebno je značajno što su dimenzije organizacija i planiranje, svest o različitostima, samoupravljanje i samopouzdanje pokazale povezanost sa akademskim postignućem, iako se njihov nivo ne menja tokom studija. Ova pojava može ukazivati na to da pomenute veštine predstavljaju stabilne individualne karakteristike koje doprinose akademskom uspehu, ali koje visokoškolsko okruženje ne uspeva dalje da osnaži. Slično tumačenje nalazimo kod autora koji ističu da je razvoj liderskih veština u visokom obrazovanju uslovljen kontekstualnim faktorima – kvalitetom nastavnog procesa, klimom podrške i mogućnostima za aktivno učešće studenata u zajedničkom odlučivanju (Dugan & Komives, 2010; Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). U tom smislu, ovi rezultati otvaraju prostor za preispitivanje postojećih kurikularnih rešenja i predlažu potrebu za sistematičnijim pristupom razvoju liderskih veština budućih pedagoga. Integracija elemenata poput servisnog učenja (eng. *service learning*), timskih projekata, studija slučaja i refleksivnih dnevnika mogla bi doprineti dubljem razumevanju liderske uloge pedagoga kao facilitatora promena. Takvi oblici rada omogućavaju studentima da povežu teorijska znanja sa praktičnim iskustvima, pri čemu razvijaju refleksivnu funkciju – sposobnost kritičkog sagledavanja sopstvenih po-

stupaka, vrednosti i profesionalnog delovanja u kontekstu društvenih odnosa i obrazovnih ciljeva (Mezirow, 2000).

Završna razmatranja i kurikularne implikacije

Polazeći od nalaza istraživanja koji ukazuju na to da su pojedine liderske veštine značajno povezane sa akademskim postignućem, ali da njihov razvoj tokom studija nije izražen, nameće se potreba za osmišljavanjem i implementacijom kurikularnih intervencija koje bi sistematski podsticale formiranje i jačanje liderskih veština kod budućih pedagoga. Prvi korak podrazumeva integrisanje ishoda učenja koji eksplicitno obuhvataju liderske dimenzije, poput sposobnosti organizovanja zajedničkog rada, donošenja odluka, preuzimanja odgovornosti i refleksivnog samoupravljanja (Komives et al., 2006). Takvi ishodi mogu biti deo postojećih predmeta kroz uvođenje problemski orijentisanih zadataka i timskih projekata. Drugi vid intervencija obuhvata uvođenje iskustvenih i participativnih metoda učenja, kao što su servisno učenje, projektna nastava i vršnjačko mentorstvo (eng. *peer mentoring*), koje omogućavaju studentima da kroz realne situacije razvijaju i testiraju svoje liderske kapacitete (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). U okviru takvih aktivnosti, studenti preuzimaju različite uloge, uče da planiraju, koordiniraju, rešavaju konflikte i vrednuju rezultate zajedničkog rada. Na taj način se liderske veštine transformišu iz individualnih u funkcionalne kvalitete. Posebno važnu ulogu ima refleksivna praksa, koja omogućava studentima da prepoznaju sopstveni stil vođenja i njegovo etičko utemeljenje (Day et al., 2014). Takva refleksija doprinosi razvoju samosvesti, ali i svesti o različitostima – razumevanju i uvažavanju drugačijih perspektiva, kao i kulturnih i individualnih razlika, što je od posebne važnosti za pedagošku profesiju. Treći pravac intervencija odnosi se na razvijanje institucionalne kulture koja vrednuje i prepoznaje liderstvo studenata kroz podršku studentskim organizacijama, inicijativama i istraživačkim projektima u kojima studenti preuzimaju odgovornost za planiranje i realizaciju aktivnosti (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Na taj način se liderstvo ne posmatra kao kvalitet pojedinca, već kao proces zajedničkog delovanja i profesionalnog sazrevanja u akademskoj zajednici. Sve navedene intervencije ukazuju na potrebu da se liderstvo u obrazovanju budućih pedagoga razume kao dinamičan i razvojni proces. Takav pristup zahteva pažljivo kurikularno planiranje, interakciju teorije i prakse i kontinuiranu refleksiju. Na taj način bi budući pedagozi bili osposobljeni da prepoznaju, usmeravaju i inspirišu razvoj potencijala u drugima.

Iako je istraživanje pružilo relevantne uvide u povezanost liderskih veština s akademskim postignućem studenata pedagogije, potrebno je istaći određena ograničenja koja utiču na mogućnost generalizacije rezultata. Prvo, uzorak od 194 ispitanika obuhvata studente samo jednog fakulteta, što ograničava reprezentativnost i mogućnost uopštavanja nalaza na širu populaciju studenata pedagogije u Srbiji. Drugo, primenjeni instrument je zasnovan na samoproceni liderskih veština, pa postoji rizik od subjektivnih pristrasnosti i socijalno poželjnih odgovora (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Treće, istraživanje je imalo transverzalni karakter, što onemogućava zaključivanje o uzročno-posledičnim odnosima između

akademskog uspeha i razvijenosti liderskih veština. Konačno, nisu uzeti u obzir spoljašnji faktori koji bi mogli imati uticaj na razvoj liderstva, poput učešća studenata u vannastavnim aktivnostima, prakse, volontiranja ili prethodnog radnog iskustva. U budućim istraživanjima bi bilo korisno primeniti longitudinalni dizajn i kombinovati kvantitativne i kvalitativne metode, čime bi se omogućilo dublje razumevanje procesa formiranja liderskih veština tokom studiranja.

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Primljeno: 14.10.2025.
Korigovana verzija primljena: 13.01.2026.
Prihvaćeno za štampu: 20.01.2026.

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Studies in Teaching and Education, 2026, *75*(2), 471-485
https://doi.org/10.5937/niv75-62148

ISSN 0547-3330
eISSN 2560-3051
Original research paper

The Relationship between Leadership Skills and Academic Achievement among Pedagogy Students: Implications for Curriculum Development

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Abstract *The aim of this study is to examine the relationships between leadership skills and academic achievement among pedagogy students, with the intention of identifying strategies for developing leadership within the framework of initial education programs for future pedagogues. In addition, the study explores differences in the development of leadership skills across different years of study in order to determine the potential impact of academic progress on these skills. The sample consisted of 194 pedagogy students from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. Leadership skills across eight domains (organization and planning, awareness of diversity, self-management, self-confidence, use of technology, cognitive development and critical analysis, interpersonal communication, problem-solving and decision-making) were assessed using an adapted version of the Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory, while academic achievement was measured by students' grade point average. The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis indicate a significant relationship between academic achievement and the overall score on the Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory, as well as with specific domains – organization and planning, awareness of diversity, self-management, and self-confidence. Differences in the level of leadership skill development by year of study were not statistically significant. Based on the results obtained, interventions are proposed for enhancing leadership skills through the pedagogy curriculum. This study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between leadership skills and academic achievement, opening avenues for further studies and practical applications in the context of education and the professional development of future pedagogues.*

Keywords: *academic achievement, leadership skills, pedagogy, curriculum development.*

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Introduction

Leadership is an indispensable factor in both social and professional contexts, with its universal function acknowledged as early as in the beginning of the 20th century. This was confirmed by Mumford (Mumford, 1906) who emphasized that leadership permeates all forms of association, from the simplest communities to the most complex organizations, thereby underscoring its ubiquity and significance. The universality of leadership is also reflected in the views of contemporary authors (Northouse, 2021; Yukl & Gardner, 2020), who highlight its key role in the professional development of an individual and improvement of organizational effectiveness. In present-day society, characterized by rapid changes and the need for adaptation, employers increasingly recognize leadership skills as key determinants of individual competitiveness in the labor market (Cottrell, 2021). In this regard, a growing body of research points to the significance and necessity of developing leadership skills through formal educational programs, which would enable young people to successfully integrate into dynamic professional environments (Dugan et al., 2009; Elmuti et al., 2005; Kezar et al., 2006). Nevertheless, formal education still does not provide a consistent and systematic integration of leadership (Cottrell, 2021). Some authors note that leadership is becoming more present in the programs of institutions of higher education, but is often treated as an addition to the curriculum rather than its integral part (Elmuti et al., 2005). Such approach leads to unsystematic development of leadership skills, which may reduce their applicability in a professional context (Dugan, 2024).

The issue of developing leadership skills through formal education is particularly significant in professions that involve high levels of responsibility and interaction with diverse stakeholders, among which the profession of a pedagogue occupies an important place. Given that pedagogues play a key role in shaping the formative and educational process, their leadership is not merely a matter of personal competence, but also a factor that influences the broader educational community. In this context, it is necessary to reconsider how the development of leadership skills can be systematically integrated into the formal education of future pedagogues.

Contemporary theories emphasize that leadership is not exclusively tied to formal positions of power, but rather encompasses a range of interpersonal characteristics and ethical values (Brown et al., 2005; Tannenbaum et al., 2013). Accordingly, Vann (Vann, 2000), whose concept of leadership served as the theoretical framework for this study, conceptualizes leadership as a dynamic and multidimensional process of developing students' personal and professional capacities. This model involves cultivating a set of interconnected characteristics: awareness of diversity, self-confidence, interpersonal communication, organization and planning, self-management, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making, as well as competence in the use of modern technology. According to Vann (Vann, 2000), leadership skills are seen as potentials that can be shaped through experience and educational programs. Such an understanding corresponds to contemporary pedagogical tendencies that aim at fostering the holistic development of individuals – leaders who think critically, communicate effectively, and act responsibly within complex social contexts. In contrast to dominant leadership models, such as transformational or transactional approaches, which primarily focus on the leader's role in organizational

settings as well as on their influence on followers (Northouse, 2021), Vann's model is particularly suitable for educational contexts, as it is grounded in the developmental potentials of students as future professionals. Unlike distributed leadership, which emphasizes the allocation of leadership roles within systems (Spillane, 2006), Vann focuses on the internal development of an individual and the acquisition of skills relevant to academic and professional success (Vann, 2000). This developmental orientation and functionality within the context of higher education represent the key reasons for selecting Vann's model as the theoretical framework of this study.

The importance of leadership skills for the pedagogue's profession is reflected in their direct connection with the quality of professional practice and the ability to coordinate the complex formative and educational process. As some authors emphasize (Brown et al., 2005), the ethical dimension of leadership implies responsible decision-making and the alignment of personal values with professional norms, which is particularly important in the work of pedagogues. The contemporary pedagogue functions not only as a professional advisor, but also as a leader who influences relationship-building and the organizational culture within the school (Tannenbaum et al., 2013). In addition to theoretical and methodological knowledge, pedagogues must possess well-developed skills of self-management, communication, and planning, as these enable effective guidance of others and the improvement of the quality of the formative and educational process (Harris & Jones, 2019). Particularly important are skills related to problem-solving, critical thinking, and respect for diversity, as they enable constructive responses in complex and unpredictable situations (Komives et al., 2013). In this sense, leadership skills represent an indicator of professional maturity and readiness for independent and responsible acting in practice. Vann (Vann, 2000) emphasizes that they are developed through experience, reflection, and educational programs, and that they are measurable and subject to systematic improvement.

Analyzing the ways in which these skills can be developed during one's studies, as well as the factors that influence them, is of essential importance for understanding the quality of education of future pedagogues. This results in the need to empirically examine their relationship with the academic achievement of pedagogy students, which represents the primary aim of this paper. Additionally, differences in the development of leadership skills are examined depending on the year of study. In this context, the study is directed toward answering the questions of whether, and to what extent, leadership skills are related to the academic success of pedagogy students, and whether, and to what extent, academic progress contributes to their development. Based on the obtained results and relevant literature, the study aims to formulate recommendations for such curriculum enhancement that could contribute to a more effective development of leadership skills within the framework of the formal education of future pedagogues.

Review of Relevant Research

Although research on students' leadership skills is relatively rare, there are studies that emphasize their importance in the context of professional preparation. One such study, conducted among social work students in Ukraine, showed that graduate students possess a higher level of developed leadership skills compared to undergraduate stu-

dents (Horishna et al., 2019). Furthermore, the same study found that students who were engaged in additional academic activities and who had work experience demonstrated more developed leadership skills compared to students who were not actively involved in extracurricular or work activities (Horishna et al., 2019). These findings suggest that different forms of practical engagement may have a positive impact on the development of leadership skills among students.

Research further indicates the existence of a positive relationship between students' engagement in leadership roles and their academic success (Bakar et al., 2018; Cheong, 2020). Participation in leadership roles contributes to the development of motivation, responsibility, and self-confidence, which in turn is reflected in improved academic achievement (Bakar et al., 2018; Baker & McCarthy, 2019). Self-confidence as a predictor of academic success is also reported in other studies (Morony et al., 2013). Furthermore, students who assume leadership roles often establish stronger relationships with their teachers and peers, thereby gaining easier access to additional support and resources, which may contribute to their learning success (Cheong, 2020). Findings from another study (Abbas et al., 2024) indicate that students' engagement in leadership roles positively influences their academic success. Students who take on leadership responsibilities demonstrate a higher level of skills which are characteristic of leadership, such as time management, effective communication, critical thinking, and teamwork, which are simultaneously identified as key predictors of academic achievement (Abbas et al., 2024).

Similarly, El Morabit (El Morabit, 2024) emphasizes that students who occupy leadership positions develop more pronounced skills in teamwork, problem-solving, and effective communication, as well as greater self-confidence. Participation in such activities contributes to positive dynamics among students, fosters personal development, and has a favorable impact on academic success. Other authors (Deng et al., 2020) also note that students' leadership experience can enhance academic achievement, with less time investment in studying, but a greater degree of autonomy and self-directed learning. Students with pronounced leadership characteristics have more self-confidence, show greater persistence, and achieve better academic results. Taking on leadership roles provides students with the opportunity to make independent decisions, build networks, and expand professional relationships, which further contributes to consistency in their studies and persistence in achieving their academic goals.

However, some studies point to different findings. The study by Pansacala and associates (Pansacala et al., 2024) did not show a statistically significant relationship between leadership and academic achievement. The authors, however, emphasize that the type of leadership position and the degree of responsibility it entails can significantly affect academic success, suggesting that the leadership role itself is not decisive; its quality and content must also be taken into account. Similarly, Chan (Chan, 2023) found no significant differences in academic performance among students with transformational, transactional, and passiveavoidant leadership styles, which further indicates the complexity of the relationship between leadership characteristics and academic outcomes. Additionally, findings from Gannouni and Ramboarison Lalao (Gannouni & Ramboarison-Lalao, 2016) indicate that, although there is no direct correlation between leadership and academic results, participation in leadership activities can contribute to the development of internal

psychological resources, such as selfconfidence and motivation, that give students the inner strength to persist, pursue ambitious goals, and achieve them successfully, which can indirectly affect their academic success. These findings underscore that leadership roles have significant developmental potential, even when they do not directly lead to improvements in academic achievement.

Although most of the cited studies indicate a positive association between leadership skills, leadership engagement, and students' academic achievement, findings in this area are not entirely consistent. While some studies emphasize the direct impact of leadership roles and related skills on academic success, other research points to the mediating role of psychological resources or to the importance of context, the type of leadership role, and the degree of responsibility it entails. Such an inconsistency in results highlights the complexity of the relationship between leadership skills and academic success, as well as the need for further empirical investigations in specific educational contexts. There is a particularly noticeable lack of research focused on pedagogy students, for whom the development of leadership skills is especially important both in terms of academic achievement and in preparation for their future professional role. It is precisely this research gap that constitutes the starting point and justification for conducting the study presented in this paper.

Methodological Framework of the Study

Study Aim

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership skills and academic achievement among pedagogy students, with the intention of providing a basis for leadership development within initial education programs for professional associates - pedagogues. In addition, attention is also devoted to analyzing differences in the development of leadership skills among students in different years of study, thereby examining the impact of academic progression on these skills. Given the theoretical foundations of the study, it is assumed that the results will indicate a positive association between leadership skills and academic achievement among pedagogy students. It is also expected that students in higher years of study will demonstrate a higher level of leadership skill development due to accumulated educational experience.

Variables and Instruments

Leadership skills were operationalized via a set of variables specified within a modified version of the *Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory* (SLOI) by Vann (Vann, 2000). The instrument comprises eight variables covering: awareness of diversity – understanding and respecting cultural and social differences; selfconfidence – trust in one's own leadership tendencies; interpersonal communication – skills for clear and effective communication with others; organization and planning – taskorganization and strategic planning skills; selfmanagement – selforganization and selfleadership skills in complex situations; cognitive development and critical analysis – critical thinking and problemanalysis skills;

problem solving and decision making – effective problem solving and strategic decision making; and use of technology – application of modern technology in leadership. The modification of the instrument included linguistic and cultural adaptation, as well as a reduction in the number of items compared to the original version, while retaining the key dimensions and the original conceptual structure of the instrument (Letić Lungulov i Radujkov, 2024; Vann, 2000). The modified version of the instrument was constructed as a Likerttype scale, consisting of 30 items with four response levels. Respondents indicate the extent to which each statement applies to them by circling a numeric value on the scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). Through exploratory factor analysis (principal axis factoring), the latent structure of the Students Leadership Outcomes Inventory questionnaire was examined and confirmed as an eightfactor model, consistent with the original study (Vann, 2000), while demonstrating satisfactory reliability and validity of the instrument. *Cronbach's alpha* for the overall instrument is .86, while the reliabilities of the individual domains range from .61 to .75 (Letić Lungulov i Radujkov, 2024).

Academic achievement was expressed as the grade point average over the study period up to the time of data collection.

Year of study includes four categories: first, second, third, and fourth year.

Sample

The study included 194 respondents enrolled in pedagogy studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. The sample was a convenience sample and it included undergraduate pedagogy students. The sample structure and its uniformity with respect to relevant variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Sample structure

Variables		Frequences	Percentage
Grade point average	6.50 – 7.50	16	8.2
	7.50 – 8.50	91	46.9
	8.50 – 9.50	76	39.2
	> 9.50	11	5.7
Year of study	First	49	25.2
	Second	45	23.2
	Third	50	25.8
	Fourth	50	25.8
	Total	194	100.0

Given that the sample consists of respondents from a single faculty in the country, the findings primarily reflect the characteristics of this group, while the applicability of the results to pedagogy students at other faculties could be the subject of future research.

By analyzing the study's ethical aspects, it was established that it in no way violates participants' rights nor departs from established ethical standards. Supporting this are the facts that the study included a relatively small number of questions concerning respondents' general characteristics, and that participation was entirely voluntary with the option to withdraw at any time. Accordingly, it was assessed that the study does not involve any risk to the psychological wellbeing of the respondents.

Results of the Study

Relationship Between Leadership Skills and Academic Achievement

Pearson's linear correlation coefficient was applied to examine the relationship between leadership skills and respondents' academic achievement.

Table 2
Correlation between leadership skills and academic achievement

Scale		Average
Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory	Total	.17*
	Organization and planning	.18*
	Awareness of diversity	.15*
	Selfmanagement	.15*
	Selfconfidence	.15*
	Use of technology	.01
	Cognitive development and critical analysis	.07
	Interpersonal communication	.12
	Problem solving and decision making	.05

Note. ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.

As shown in Table 2, students' grade point average is in a statistically significant positive correlation with the total score on the Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory, as well as with the first four subscales: organization and planning, awareness of diversity, selfmanagement, and selfconfidence. The correlations are low in intensity and positive in direction, indicating that higher scores on one variable are accompanied by higher values on the other. In other words, respondents with higher mean grades also exhibit more developed leadership skills in the aforementioned domains. Although these correlations are statistically significant, their low intensity points to limited practical significance of the effect, implying that students' academic success is simultaneously shaped by a broader set of individual and contextual factors.

Generational Differences in the Level of Leadership Skill Development

The results of the one-way analysis of variance showed that there are no statistically significant differences in the overall score on the *Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory* among students from different years of study. As presented in Table 3, the differences are not significant on the individual subscales of the instrument either ($p > .05$). In other words, first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students do not differ significantly in the level of leadership skill development.

Table 3
Differences in leadership skills by year of study

	Year of study	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p* - value
Total	First	99.91	9.94	.39	3(191)	.75
	Second	101.07	10.62			
	Third	99.54	11.98			
	Fourth	101.48	8.24			
Organization and planning	First	3.40	.43	2.05	3(191)	.10
	Second	3.47	.39			
	Third	3.25	.52			
	Fourth	3.33	.41			
Awareness of diversity	First	3.65	.47	2.38	3(191)	.07
	Second	3.84	.31			
	Third	3.82	.43			
	Fourth	3.80	.24			
Selfmanagement	First	3.35	.50	.93	3(191)	.42
	Second	3.35	.48			
	Third	3.20	.54			
	Fourth	3.32	.45			
Selfconfidence	First	3.22	.54	.19	3(191)	.94
	Second	3.14	.55			
	Third	3.21	.54			
	Fourth	3.20	.55			
Use of technology	First	3.17	.70	.74	3(191)	.52
	Second	3.34	.54			
	Third	3.26	.63			
	Fourth	3.30	.50			
Cognitive development and critical analysis	First	3.52	.47	1.40	3(191)	.24
	Second	3.63	.38			
	Third	3.46	.51			
	Fourth	3.47	.32			

	Year of study	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*df*	*p* - value
Interpersonal communication	First	2.93	.72	2.14	3(191)	.09
	Second	3.01	.78			
	Third	2.88	.75			
	Fourth	3.22	.58			
Problem solving and decision making	First	3.38	.48	2.45	3(191)	.06
	Second	3.53	.53			
	Third	3.59	.55			
	Fourth	3.64	.39			

Note. M – arithmetic mean; *SD* – standard deviation; *F* – ANOVA test value; *df* – degrees of freedom; *p*-value – level of statistical significance.

Such a finding indicates that the level of leadership skills does not change significantly during the studies, which may be an indicator of insufficient systemic support for their development in higher education. The obtained results thereby confirm the findings of other authors who emphasize that leadership, although recognized as an important component of academic and professional success, has not yet been adequately integrated into curricula (Cottrell, 2021). Therefore, in future curriculum development it would be important to include innovative approaches that foster the development of leadership skills.

Discussion

The results of the conducted research provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between leadership skills and the academic achievement of pedagogy students, as well as the ways in which these skills are formed within university education. The obtained data offer a basis for reflecting on the quality of the curriculum and its contribution to the development of the professional competencies of future pedagogues. The following discussion is directed toward interpreting the key findings, comparing them with relevant research, and identifying possible directions for improving the pedagogy curriculum with the aim of strengthening students' leadership potential.

The results of the study show that those dimensions of leadership related to self-regulation, organization, and personal efficacy – specifically organization and planning, awareness of diversity, self-management, and self-confidence – are significantly associated with students' academic achievement. Although these correlations are low in magnitude, their positive direction indicates that students with higher grade point averages simultaneously demonstrate more developed forms of self-directed behavior, better time management, and greater belief in their own abilities. Such findings suggest that academically more successful students are more likely to possess the ability to set realistic goals and plan their attainment. At the same time, they reflect on their own progress and adjust their learning strategies, which represent essential elements of leadership practice (Abbas et al., 2024; Baker & McCarthy, 2019; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). Particularly noteworthy is

the finding that awareness of diversity emerged as a significant factor of academic success, encompassing openness to different opinions, respect for cultural, social, and individual differences, and the ability to understand others (Denson & Chang, 2009). This skill has a distinctly developmental and reflective function: it contributes not only to the quality of interpersonal relationships but also to students' ability to critically examine their own values, attitudes, and actions. Research shows that high awareness of diversity is associated with greater academic engagement and higher levels of metacognitive learning (Gurin et al., 2002). This correlation is linked to the development of intellectual flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, and self-reflection. In this sense, a more developed awareness of diversity may indirectly contribute to academic success through the enhancement of socio-emotional and reflective aspects of learning, which are integral to self-regulatory functioning. Such a finding is consistent with previous research, which confirms that self-regulation, the ability to plan, and self-assessment of competencies constitute key predictors of academic success (Al-Abyadh & Abdel Azeem, 2022; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). Studies also indicate that self-confidence, as the central component of self-evaluation, influences goal setting and motivation for learning, thereby affecting academic achievement (Stankov et al., 2013). In this respect, leadership dimensions of an intrapersonal nature – such as self-confidence, self-management, and organization – may act as mediators between motivational and cognitive processes in learning, which explains their stronger association with academic achievement compared to interpersonal dimensions.

On the other hand, the dimensions related to interpersonal communication, use of technology, and problem solving did not show a statistically significant association with students' grade point average. A possible explanation lies in the fact that these skills are not directly reflected in formal academic indicators, such as grades, but rather contribute to the development of broader social and professional capacities (Chan, 2023). For example, although communication skills are essential for teamwork and collaboration, they are often not subject to explicit evaluation in the academic context, while skills related to problem solving and the use of technology are more frequently manifested in practical and project-oriented forms of work, that are not included in traditional metrics of academic success. Similarly, Pansacala and associates (Pansacala et al., 2024) emphasize that the quality of the leadership role and the degree of responsibility may be more important than the mere frequency of assuming leadership activities, which further confirms the complexity of the relationship between leadership and academic dimensions of student functioning.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the intrapersonal dimensions of leadership show a stronger association with academic achievement than the interpersonal dimensions. This relationship can be understood in the context of the specific nature of the academic environment, where success depends more on individual aspects than on social aspects of leadership practice. Intrapersonal skills act as internal mechanisms of self-regulating learning, enabling students to organize their academic responsibilities more efficiently, maintain continuity in their studies, and adapt their study strategies to the demands of the instructional process. By contrast, interpersonal dimensions of leadership fully manifest primarily in professional contexts that involve

interaction, joint decision making, and shared responsibility within a group, which are not always directly reflected in formal academic indicators of success. Thus, the stronger link between intrapersonal leadership skills and students' academic achievement is consistent with the structure and evaluation criteria of higher education. This implies that the development of self-regulatory, reflective, and organizational competencies should occupy a central place in initial education programs for future pedagogues. Introducing educational approaches that foster autonomy, self-assessment, and responsibility for learning can contribute to the concurrent development of leadership potential and academic effectiveness.

The findings also indicate that the level of leadership skill development among pedagogy students does not differ significantly across years of study, suggesting an absence of progressive development of these skills during academic training. This result can be interpreted as reflecting the fact that undergraduate pedagogy programs still lack sufficient elements that would systematically promote the development of leadership capacities. Although certain courses, projects, and forms of instructions implicitly foster collaboration, organization, and responsibility, these activities are not sufficiently structured. Therefore, undergraduate programs do not lead to significant differences in leadership skill development between student cohorts. This finding corroborates observations by authors who emphasize that development of leadership skills in educational contexts is not a spontaneous process, but the outcome of deliberate curricular design and reflective, experiential learning (Komives et al., 2005; Northouse, 2021). According to the leadership identity development model (Komives et al., 2005), building leadership capacities requires a long-term process of self-discovery, interaction, and feedback, with reflection playing a key role in linking experience to awareness of one's leadership potential. If educational programs do not provide enough opportunities for such experiences, leadership remains a latent component of pedagogy students' professional identity rather than a formative one.

It is particularly noteworthy that the dimensions of organization and planning, awareness of diversity, self-management, and self-confidence showed association with academic achievement, even though their levels did not change over the course of study. This pattern may indicate that the mentioned skills are stable individual characteristics that contribute to academic success but are not further reinforced by the higher education environment. A similar interpretation is offered by authors who emphasize that the development in leadership skills in higher education is conditioned by contextual factors – the quality of instructions, a supportive climate, and opportunities for active student participation in shared decision making (Dugan & Komives, 2010; Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). In this respect, the results invite a reappraisal of existing curricular solutions and suggest the need for a more systematic approach to developing the leadership skills of future pedagogues. Integrating elements such as service learning, team projects, case studies, and reflective journals could foster a deeper understanding of the pedagogue's leadership role as a facilitator of change. Such instructional methods enable students to connect theoretical knowledge with practical experience while cultivating the reflective capacity – ability to critically examine their own actions, values, and professional practice in the context of social relations and educational goals (Mezirow, 2000).

Concluding Considerations and Curricular Implications

Based on the study's findings, which indicate that certain leadership skills are significantly associated with academic achievement, while their development is limited during the course of study, there is a clear need to design and implement curricular interventions that would systematically promote the formation and strengthening of leadership competencies in future pedagogues. The first step involves integrating learning outcomes that explicitly encompass leadership dimensions, such as the ability to organize collaborative work, make decisions, assume responsibility, and engage in reflective self-management (Komives et al., 2006). These outcomes can be embedded within existing courses through the introduction of problembased tasks and team projects. A second type of intervention includes experiential and participatory learning methods, such as service learning, projectbased instructions, and peer mentoring, which allow students to develop and test their leadership capacities in reallife contexts (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). Within such activities, students assume diverse roles, learn to plan and coordinate, resolve conflicts, and evaluate collective outcomes; in this way leadership skills are transformed from individual traits into functional competencies. Reflective practice plays a particularly important role: through portfolios, reflective journals, and supervised discussions, students can identify their leadership style and its ethical foundations (Day et al., 2014). Such reflection fosters both selfawareness and awareness of diversity – understanding and valuing different perspectives, cultural and individual differences – which is especially important for the pedagogue profession. A third line of intervention concerns cultivating an institutional culture that values and recognizes student leadership by supporting student organizations, initiatives, and research projects in which students take responsibility for planning and implementing activities (Dugan & Komives, 2010). In this way, leadership is seen not as an individual attribute, but as a process of collective action and professional maturation within the academic community. All these interventions point to the need to understand leadership in the education of future pedagogues as a dynamic, developmental process that requires careful curricular planning, interaction between theory and practice, and ongoing reflection. Such an approach would better equip future pedagogues to recognize, steer, and inspire the development of potential in others.

Although the study provided relevant insights into the relationship between leadership skills and academic achievement among pedagogy students, several limitations, affecting the generalizability of the findings, should be noted. First, the sample of 194 participants included students from a single faculty, which limits representativeness and the ability to generalize the results to the broader population of pedagogy students in Serbia. Second, the instrument relied on selfassessment of leadership skills, introducing the risk of subjective bias and socially desirable responding (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Third, the transversal character of the study prevents any conclusions about causal relationships between academic success and leadership skill development. Finally, external factors that might influence leadership development, such as participation in extracurricular activities, internships, volunteering, or prior work experience, were not taken into account. Future research would benefit from employing a longitudinal design and combining quantitative and qualitative methods to enable a deeper understanding of how leadership skills develop over the course of study.

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Article received: 14.10.2025.
Updated version received: 13.01.2026.
Accepted for publishing: 20.01.2026.

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