THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES IN FORMING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Today, the introduction and development of inclusive education in the education system plays an important role in ensuring equal opportunities for all segments of society. An inclusive environment is an educational space that is comfortable, safe, and supportive for all learners, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, or other characteristics. In creating such an environment, the professional and personal competencies of the head of an educational institution play a decisive role.

Inclusive education is the process of involving all children in the general education system while taking into account their individual needs. It is based on the principles of eliminating discrimination, social justice, and equality. The success of inclusive education largely depends on the attitude of the institution's leader toward inclusive values and their management style.

Leadership competencies represent a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal qualities necessary for effective institutional management, uniting the team around a common goal, and making strategic decisions. In forming an inclusive environment, the following competencies are of particular importance:

Strategic thinking competence – the ability to define long-term goals and plans for the development of inclusive education.

Communicative competence – effective communication with teachers, parents, students, and public organizations.

Social and emotional competence – the ability to demonstrate tolerance, empathy, and create a healthy psychological climate within the team.

Managerial and organizational competence – proper allocation of resources, formation, and support of a professional team.

Legal and regulatory knowledge – understanding and implementing legislation and regulatory documents related to inclusive education.

By supporting inclusive values, the leader serves as a role model for teachers. Through their initiatives, professional development of teachers is enhanced, and cooperation with specialized professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists, and special educators is established. Moreover, the creation of a favorable material and technical base by the leader contributes to the sustainable development of an inclusive environment.

The formation of an inclusive environment is not limited to organizational measures alone but is also closely connected with the leader's personal views, values, and leadership style. By deeply understanding the ideas of inclusion, the leader fosters a culture of tolerance and mutual respect within the institution. This positively influences teachers' professional activities, relationships among students, and cooperation with parents.

The effectiveness of inclusive education largely depends on the level of preparedness of the teaching staff. From this perspective, the leader's competence in human resource management is especially important. The leader should regularly organize professional development courses, seminars, and training sessions for teachers, as well as encourage the implementation of innovative pedagogical technologies. Such an approach helps to form a positive attitude and confidence among teachers toward inclusive education.

Cooperation with parents and the wider community is also crucial in building an inclusive environment. The leader should systematically establish this cooperation, ensure transparency, and involve all stakeholders in the educational process. This facilitates students' adaptation to education and strengthens social integration.

For an inclusive environment to be effective, appropriate material and technical resources must be available. The leader should take the initiative in equipping the educational institution with specialized equipment, adaptive learning tools, and accessible infrastructure. In addition, introducing organizational mechanisms aimed at individualizing the educational process is one of the leader's key responsibilities.

Based on the above considerations, it can be concluded that forming an inclusive environment in educational institutions requires a comprehensive approach. In this process, the leader's professional competencies, personal example, and strategic thinking are of decisive importance. In institutions led by a competent leader, inclusive education develops sustainably, the quality of education improves, and the principles of social justice are strengthened within society.

In conclusion, the formation of an inclusive environment in educational institutions is closely linked to the leader's professional competencies, personal stance, and management culture. A competent leader views inclusive education not merely as a requirement, but as a means of improving educational quality and ensuring social stability. Therefore, developing inclusive competencies among educational leaders is one of the priority tasks of the modern education system.

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