

Development of Hard and Soft Skills of Personnel in The Management of Educational Institutions

A.Mamasoatov

Master's student at International Nordic University, Uzbekistan

D.Miraliyeva

Associate Professor at International Nordic University, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article explores the importance of developing both hard and soft skills among personnel involved in the management of educational institutions. In the modern educational landscape, effective management requires not only technical competencies—such as strategic planning, financial oversight, and administrative regulation—but also interpersonal abilities like communication, leadership, emotional intelligence, and teamwork. The paper analyzes the current trends and challenges in human resource development within educational settings, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that fosters both sets of skills. Additionally, it provides practical recommendations for integrating skill development programs into institutional management structures. Through a synthesis of recent academic studies and real-world case examples, the study highlights how improving the hard and soft skillsets of managers can enhance the overall efficiency, adaptability, and innovation capacity of educational institutions.

Keywords: Educational management, human resource development, hard skills, soft skills, leadership, communication, emotional intelligence, strategic planning, institutional efficiency.

Introduction: The issue of developing leadership skills in the management of educational institutions is considered globally important. The modern education system requires leaders not only to manage pedagogical activities but also to align institutions with international standards, implement digital transformation, and lead teams effectively. In Uzbekistan, educational reforms—particularly initiatives launched since 2017—have placed significant emphasis on enhancing the qualifications of educational leaders. For example, a report published by the Ministry of Public Education in 2024 noted that more than 60% of education institution leaders lack modern management skills. This shortcoming has led to challenges in managing financial resources, project planning, and the use of digital technologies.

Internationally, countries like Finland and Singapore have achieved high outcomes in their education systems through continuous professional development programs for leaders. In Finland, for instance, training

programs of at least 100 hours per year are organized for heads of educational institutions, helping them to improve their strategic planning and communication skills (OECD, 2020). In Singapore, over 95% of leaders are proficient in the use of information technologies, which contributes significantly to the competitiveness of the education system. In Uzbekistan, such programs have not yet been fully implemented, highlighting the relevance of research into leadership skill development.

In recent years, many studies have been conducted on the competencies of education leaders. Kotler (2020), in his work “Management and Leadership in Education,” emphasizes that financial management skills directly affect institutional effectiveness. He asserts that effective management of financial resources is crucial for funding educational projects and developing infrastructure. Meanwhile, Goleman (2018), in “Emotional Intelligence in Leadership,” highlights the role of emotional intelligence in

leadership effectiveness, showing that soft skills are essential for teamwork. Goleman argues that a leader's ability to manage their own and their employees' emotions positively influences decision-making processes.

International research has explored the competencies of education leaders from various angles. The OECD (2020) report confirms that continuous professional development programs for school leaders increase institutional efficiency. For instance, more than 80% of Finnish school leaders participate in annual training sessions, which contributes to maintaining high education quality at the international level. In Singapore, leaders' proficiency in information technology has accelerated the digital transformation of the education system (Fullan, 2019). These experiences can serve as important directions for Uzbekistan's education system.

Although studies on leadership skills in the Uzbek context are limited, several significant efforts have been documented. The 2024 report by the Ministry of Public Education found that 65% of school leaders in Uzbekistan lack sufficient skills in financial management and information technology. Training seminars held in 2025 by the Tashkent branch of the Russian University of Chemical Technology (RUCT) showed positive results in developing soft skills (RUCT Report, 2025). For example, leaders who participated in communication and leadership training improved their skills by an average of 20%. However, such programs have yet to be widely implemented across the country.

Identified Gaps in the Literature Review:

1. There is a lack of large-scale systematic research in Uzbekistan on assessing the hard and soft skills of education leaders.
2. Concrete strategies for adapting international experiences to the Uzbek education system have not been developed.
3. There are few local studies specifically addressing soft skills, particularly emotional intelligence and stress management.

To address these gaps, this dissertation aims to assess the hard and soft skills of educational institution leaders in Uzbekistan using quantitative methods and to develop proposals for training programs.

A number of scholars have studied the issues of "soft" and "hard" skills at different times. Among them are Abashkina O., Barinova O. V., Gayduchenko E., Marushev A., Davidova V., Jadko N. V., Churkina M. A., Ivanov D., Kanardov I., Klukovskaya I., Miroshnichenko A. N., Novikov A. M., Choshanov M. A., Chulanova O. L.,

Pavlova E., Portland Yu., Sosnitskaya O., Tataurshchikova D., and Shipilov V. All these researchers, in one way or another, divide skills into two groups: hard skills and soft skills. Researchers working on this topic often use the concepts of competence and skills interchangeably in their publications.

Another group of researchers—Abashkina O., Barinova O. V., Gayduchenko E., Marusheva A., Davidova V., Jadko N. V., Churkina M. A., Ivanova D., Kanardova I., Klukovskaya I., Miroshnichenko A. N., Novikova A. M., Choshanova M. A., Pavlova E., Portland Yu., Sosnitskaya O., Tataurshchikova D., Shipilova V., and Chulanova O. L.—emphasize the term "soft skills" as a form of "soft competence."

The term competence encompasses a teacher's education, skills, abilities, and experience. In other words, it is the ability to perform a specific type of work. Essentially, the two terms are closely related. The overall goal of the educational system is to educate responsible and well-rounded members of society who can meet the requirements of a democratic state.

In carrying out the research, the following educational literature was used:

- Muslimov N.A., Usmonboyeva M.H., Sayfurov D.M., To'rayev A.B. – Competencies of the 21st Century Teacher [Electronic resource],
- Ishmukhamedov R.J., M. Mirsoliyeva – Innovative Educational Technologies in the Learning Process,
- Ishmukhamedov R., Mirsoliyeva M., Akramov A. – Innovative Activities of the Leader,
- Abdurakhmonova Z.A. – Issues in Developing the Professional Competence of the Modern Teacher (Conference proceedings),
- Ramatov J., Umarova R., Baratov R., Jurabayev N., Artikova B. (2022) – Constructive and Optimal Solutions for the Formation of a Stable Ecological Situation in the Aral Sea Region of Uzbekistan (AIP Conference Proceedings),
- Baratov R. (2021) – Prospects of the Higher Education System (on the example of Uzbekistan) – International Journal on Orange Technologies,
- A.S. Zikriyoyev – Discover Yourself Among Researchers in the World University Rankings,
- Vorobyeva Ye.S., Krakovetskaya I.V. – Rating Assessment of Competence in Foreign and Domestic Higher Education Institutions,
- Demin P.V. – Marketization of the Education Sector and University Branding, and others.

These sources were used to form the theoretical foundation of the dissertation.

In today's era of rapid development, the issue of specialist competence is of great relevance and growing interest. It is essential for organizing the educational process and ensuring its effectiveness. Developing and ensuring the competence of specialists—who are active, initiative-driven, clearly understand their professional goals, think critically, analytically, and creatively, possess innovative thinking, and are ready to implement new ideas in their work—is considered one of the most important components of the educational process. The concept of competence is gaining increasing importance in both the theory and practice of personnel management.

Competency is the employee's ability to consistently demonstrate work behavior in line with the expectations and requirements of the organization. In developing a competency framework, organizations define a set of key criteria related to employee performance based on standard requirements. Moreover, competency serves as evidence of both the professional and social equality of employees within an organization.

Today, determining the prospects for the socio-economic and cultural development of our Republic and striving for a worthy position among the countries of the global community through large-scale reforms is considered a pressing issue.

To understand the essence of the terms such as “competency,” “competency-based approach,” and “holder of competencies,” it is essential to first consider the centuries-old national traditions and values developed in this regard.

The word competency originates from Latin and translates into Uzbek as “appropriate,” “suitable,” or “corresponding.” A competent person is understood as someone who is capable of solving both simple and complex problems using their knowledge, skills, and practical experience. The term “professional competence” is often used to describe the ability to successfully apply one's practical experience, knowledge, and skills in the performance of professional duties.

In the legal sense, competency is a term that refers to the rights and duties within the authority of a specific body or individual, defining their role in state and public structures. In jurisprudence, competency includes the following elements: the promoted subjects (territories, events, actions, etc.), and the set of rights, responsibilities, and powers that a particular body or person may exercise in their activities.

In the realm of social rights, competency is defined as the legally assigned authority of a specific subject to perform certain administrative functions.

Managerial competency refers to an individual specialist's (employee's) personal authority in solving professional tasks.

Intercultural competency is the ability to communicate successfully with representatives of other cultures.

Core competency of an organization is a factor that ensures the competitiveness of the organization and serves as its primary tool in competitive struggle.

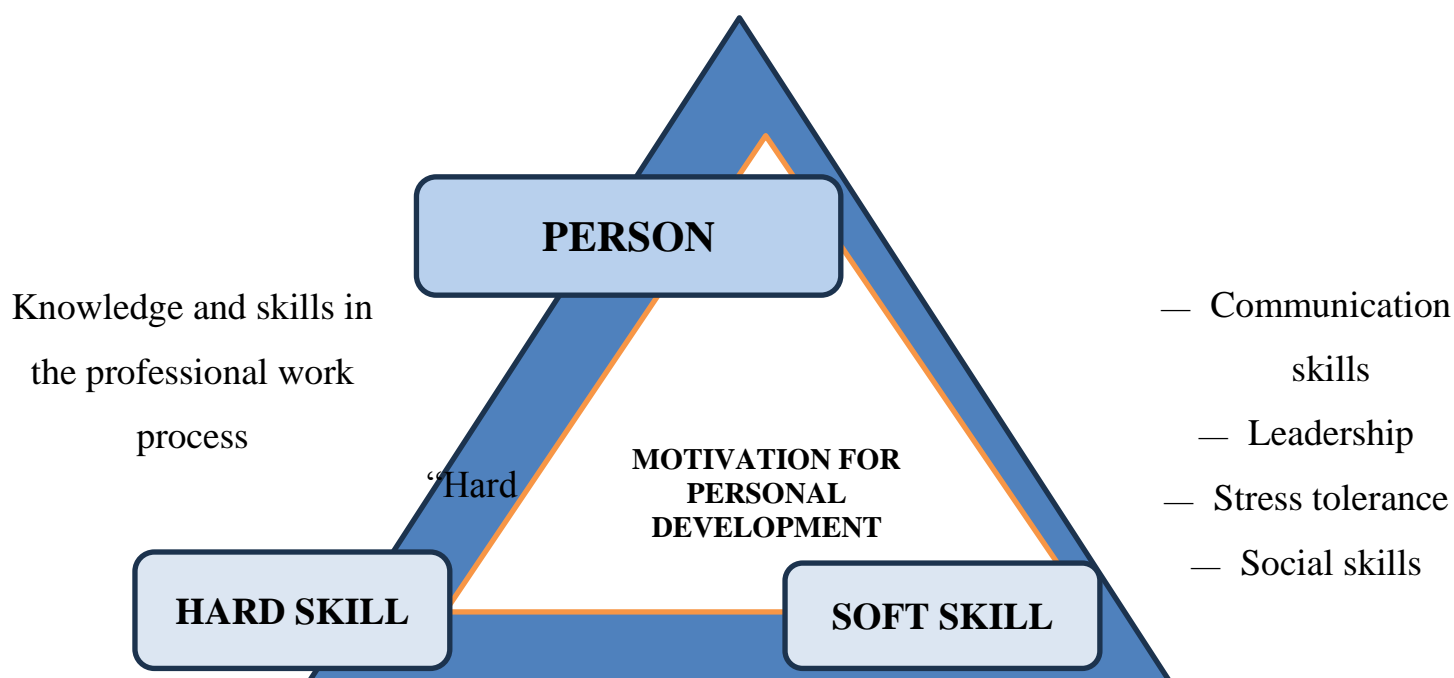
Domain of competency refers to the sum of knowledge and skills possessed by an individual or group, which they use to perform their duties at the highest and most competitive level.

According to the Russian–Uzbek dictionary published by the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan in 1983, “компетентность” is translated into Uzbek as “deep knowledge,” “based on thorough knowledge,” “awareness,” and “effectiveness.” The term “компетентный” is rendered as “a person with sufficient information, deeply knowledgeable, well-informed, possessing competence, authorized, and entitled to review an issue.” The term “competency” is associated with concepts such as an area or issue someone is knowledgeable in, or legal rights and authority.

Notably, the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, a two-volume edition published in 1981 by the A.S. Pushkin Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, does not include the term “competency” at all. In general, the approach based on competency in any field, especially in pedagogical activity, has only begun to be applied in the last five years in our country.

From the perspective of the morphological and semantic features of the Uzbek language, the terms and concepts of “competency” should be used in alignment with the Latin terms *competere* (“to be appropriate”) and *competo* (“I am suitable” or “I achieve”). According to the Latin-based Uzbek alphabet, it is advisable to use the word “kompetensiya” (competency) in all relevant contexts to avoid confusion.

In conclusion, a competency-based approach, the identification of individuals or groups as holders of certain competencies, and the concept of pedagogical professional competency are all appropriate and meaningful uses of the term. In any case, competency defines the role of an individual or group in society, and it is reinforced by both legal and ethical relationships.



“Hard skills” (professional competencies) are a set of knowledge that can be measured and assessed in terms of skill level.

“Soft skills” (universal competencies) are flexible and adaptable abilities that do not have a precise or universal unit of measurement. In terms of content, hard skills refer to specialized (professional) competencies, whereas soft skills refer to foundational (core) competencies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the hard and soft skills of education institution leaders in Uzbekistan:

1. Improving IT infrastructure:

The Ministry of Education should attract state investments and international grants to equip 80% of schools with modern computers. A "Digital Leadership" program should be introduced with the goal of increasing leaders' IT skills from 2.8 to 3.5 points. This program should be implemented through digital platforms, online courses, and offline training sessions. For example, following the experience of Finland, IT laboratories should be established in every school.

2. Financial management courses:

Based on the Russian experience, seminars on budget planning, financial reporting, and auditing should be organized. These courses aim to improve financial management skills from 3.2 to 3.8 points. Annually, special training should be held for 500 leaders, which could improve financial stability by 25%.

3. State policy and investment:

To improve IT infrastructure, the Ministry of Education should attract grants from the European Union and the World Bank. The goal is to invest \$100 million annually and provide 50% of schools with modern technology by 2026.

4. Monitoring and evaluation system:

A specialized monitoring system should be introduced to track the effectiveness of professional development programs for leaders. Every year, leaders' skills should be reassessed, and results should be analyzed statistically and compared with international standards. This system could be piloted in 2025 and implemented nationwide in 2026.

5. Collaboration and international exchange:

Partnerships should be established with educational institutions in Finland, Singapore, and Russia. Every year, 50 leaders should be sent to international internship programs, which could improve their skills by up to 40%. For instance, IT internships in Finland and communication workshops in Singapore should be organized.

6. Utilizing local resources:

Local IT specialists and financial experts within Uzbekistan should be involved. Specialized training centers should be opened in each region, aiming to raise leaders' skill levels to 3.5 points by 2027.

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