

## Discussion on the Research Value and Definition of Principal Leadership Key Competencies

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**Keywords:** Principal leadership; Key competencies; Meaning; Define

**Abstract.** Without doubt, it is an irreversible call and demand that the knowledge era has been changing to the era of key competencies. The key competencies of students have carried out, applying with the global education revolution, which it is an urgent need to improve our international competitiveness on education. Principals are the teacher's supervisors. Therefore, the responsibility of education is inevitably carried on the main manager of education —— principals. To this day, a growing number of scholars have studied the key competencies of students. However, principal, as the leader, few scholars have been involved in the key competencies of them. In order to improve the cognitive awareness and promote the advancement and development of the research, this paper discusses the meaning and the definition of the conceptual essence of the key competencies of principals' leadership.

With the development and progress of The Times, domestic education is increasingly internationalized. Deepening educational reform has become one of the important influencing factors for national progress and social development. The principal is the direct person in charge of promoting the progress ,who also promote the development of the school and educational reform. That is to say, principals have a direct impact on school effectiveness. Up to now, more and more scholars have conducted researches on the key competencies of students. However, principal as a leader, the key competencies of his leadership are rarely covered by scholars.

### The Significance Research of Principal Leadership Key Competencies

**The Call of the Times: the Inevitable Requirement of the Era of Core Knowledge to the Era of Key Competencies.** Since the early 1990s, the "quality-oriented education" carried out in China has undergone numerous tests in the knowledge-based era, and has been deeply reflected in the theory and practice of China's basic education reform. Recently, Chinese scholars Liu Yunsha professor pointed out that "quality-oriented education" as China's basic education for nearly 30 years one of the key concepts, however, nowadays, on the concept and practice of the extension is a double embarrassment: quality-oriented should be the "entrance education" "exam-oriented education" of "critical weapon", at the same time should be the "opposite" exam-oriented education. This is its practice position. In fact, all the swans are geese. In arousing widespread indignation and profound dissatisfaction with exam-oriented education, the "quality-oriented" to be constructed has a vague appearance, mixed ideas and diverse connotations. In the exploration of quality-oriented education, quality-oriented education is misunderstood as a mode of cultivating talents instead of development the quality of individuals, which makes exam-oriented education replace quality-oriented education in reality, as well as the exam scores replace all-round development of people. In addition, quality education has been formalized in education for a long time. Undoubtedly, deepening education reform has become the top priority of education.

The outline of the national plan for medium - and long-term education reform and development (2010-2020) states: "improving quality is the core task of education reform and development." So what is quality? The outline also mentions: "to establish a scientific concept of quality, promoting the all-round development of people, to meet the needs of society as the basic standard of education. We should set up the educational development concept with improving educational quality as the core, pay attention to the development of educational connotation, and encourage schools to

develop their own characteristics, levels, excellent teachers and talents. On comprehensively deepening the curriculum reform in the ministry of education issued by the implementation of fundamental task of opinion "(teaching base [2014] no. 2), put forward "the ministry of education organization to study and put forward the study period of the system, the development of key Competencies clear students should have the necessary to satisfy the needs of the lifelong development and social development character and key ability ". The focus of the school should not only focus on how to impart subject knowledge, but also focus on discipline research and knowledge and skills research to focus on and cultivate people as a whole.

In September 2016, the overall framework of "Chinese students' development of key Competencies" was officially released. The launch of the key Competencies of students' development conforms to the trend of global education reform and is an urgent need to improve the international competitiveness of China's education. It also means that in the near future, Chinese education will face the long-term and urgent demand of how to cultivate students' core qualities. So, who better to promote the development of students' key competencies, who to implement it? Obviously, the school must bear the main responsibility education, and the principal is "teachers of teachers", but also the key character to promote school educational reform and influence the key of school effectiveness. Obviously, the responsibility education is mainly carried on the shoulders of education main managers - the principal. The principal should turn the responsibility as the driving force, reasonable lead faculty, staff and students to develop the necessary key competencies and acquisition. On the other hand, if it is becoming clear what the key competencies of a student has, principal as the school's leader, what are the key competencies of his/her leadership key competencies? What kind of key competencies should a principal possess to effectively influence the school's effectiveness, effectively connect with students' key competencies, and guide the cultivation and acquisition of students' key competencies? This is the need for educational reform in the new era.

#### **Theoretical Appeal: Keep Improving and Enrich the Theory of Educational Leadership.**

According to the theory of Chinese education management, "Chinese education ranks first in the world in terms of scale, but lags behind in overall quality of management... The reason of the knowledge condition of Chinese education management can not meet the need of management development, which restricts the improvement of the practice level of education management. The knowledge condition of Chinese education management needs to be improved urgently, which is not only the requirement of theory development, but also the requirement of management practice progress.<sup>1</sup>in both domestic and foreign education management, principal leadership plays an indisputable role, and the key competencies is the top priority. When it comes to the research on principal leadership in China, it is undeniable that since the 1980s, there has been a certain degree of research on principal leadership in China. However, most of the researches are carried out on the basis of referring to and citing foreign theoretical achievements, with various viewpoints and speculations, but they fail to satisfy the academic circle and form a complete and systematic theoretical system. In addition, after sorting out the domestic and foreign views, it is found that the current research on key Competencies mainly focuses on students, and mostly focuses on the description of superficial efficacy, with the principal as the research object almost blank. Does this mean, then, that the core qualities of a principal's leadership are not important or worth studying? The answer is little.

There is no doubt that the principal is of vital importance to the development of a school. He plays a decisive role in the process of running a school and even in the educational reform. He has irreplaceable guiding force in the formulation of school philosophy, development direction of running a school, organizational culture and other aspects. He is the gatekeeper of educational reform and also the master of educational reform. Nowadays, the key competencies has become a new hot spot in the field of basic education in China, and has become a key factor in deepening the curriculum reform of basic education and implementing the goal of quality education in the eyes of all.

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<sup>1</sup> zhu hongqi. China education management review [M]. Beijing: education science press, 2003.1

## Definition of Principal's Key Competencies of Leadership

Leadership refers to the actual force exerted by leaders on followers in a specific leadership environment and system in order to form and achieve consensus goals. Accordingly, we define the principal leadership as the actual force exerted by the principal to exert influence on teachers, students and other stakeholders, promoting the realization of the common goals of the school organization under a specific leadership environment and system.

From the Chinese dictionary, we can understand that the term “SuZhi” is a physiological concept, which translated into “temperament” in English. It refers to the innate physiological and anatomical characteristics of human beings, which is psychologically interpreted as the innate characteristics of human nervous system and sensory organs, and also the inherent nature of things. It can be seen that “SuZhi” pays more attention to the innate potential and the nature of things themselves, and it takes its natural attributes as the basic premise. From what has been discussed above we translate “SuZhi” into quality-oriented.

The word "SuYang" can be found earlier in the book of han dynasty, recorded a sentence is “without adequate nutrition, the horse has no strength to gallop on the road. People do not have enough “SuYang”, is not able to make the country strong.” The term " SuYang" has taken on a new meaning in modern times. In the dictionary of modern Chinese, " SuYang" has two meanings: one is the skill or ability acquired through training and practice; the other is the cultivation in daily life. In the Chinese dictionary, "SuYang" means "cultivation and self-restraint" and "ordinary support". It can be seen that "SuYang" pays more attention to acquired practice and cultivation, covering ability, knowledge, attitude and other elements. From what has been discussed above we translate “SuYang” into competencies.

The term "Key Competencies" has been imported from the west in 1979, which is derived from the need of vocational education. Key Competencies may have been translated as the most important ability. In other words, "key Competencies" can be understood as "critical competencies".

At present, the organization for international economic cooperation and development (OECD) is generally recognized by the academic community as the early and systematic explanation of key Competencies. In 1997, the OETE launched the study ,which call " Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations(DeSeCo) ". In 2003,the term of "Key Competencies" was firstly described in the final paper of " Key Competencies for a Successful Life and a Well-Functioning Society". In 2005, Once again the OECD issued The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary, which to promote key Competencies from theory towards educational practice. The OECD identifies nine key competencies in three dimensions: "the ability to use tools interactively"; "the ability to interact in heterogeneous communities"; and "the ability to act autonomously".<sup>2</sup>The project of DeSeCo describe key competencies from the perspective of demand orientation. It is believed that key Competencies should have the characteristics of "helping the society and individuals to obtain valuable output", "helping individuals to meet the important needs of various social life fields" and "having great significance for everyone". key Competencies is not only determined by the nature of individual and social goals, but also includes innovation, autonomy and self-motivation. <sup>3</sup>DeSeCo projects about "key Competencies" in countries around the world had a profound impact. When sorting out DeSeCo project, some scholars believe that it is called " competencies", which can be understood as describing people's inner competencies from a logical perspective. While it is called "key competencies" from the perspective of functionalism. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> OECD. The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies-Executive The Summary [EB/OL]. (2005-05-27).

<http://www.deseco.admin.ch/bfs/deseco/en/index/02.parsys.43469.downloadList.2296.DownloadFile.tmp/2005.dskcexecutivesummary.en.pdf> DeSeCo explain key

<sup>3</sup> OECD. The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies; Executive Summary [EB/OL]. <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf>, 2005-05-27.

<sup>4</sup> zhu hongqi. China education management review [M]. Beijing: education science press, 2003.1

<sup>4</sup> OECD. The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies; Executive Summary[EB/OL].<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf>,2005-05-27.

The term of key Competencies has been a very important concept of the European Union's educational development in the past decade. In December 2006, the European Parliament and the European council adopted recommendations on key Competencies. In this proposal, key Competencies is defined as a collection of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which is necessary for everyone to develop themselves, integrate into society and be competent in work in a knowledge society. They are portable and versatile. These competencies are the necessary for each individual to develop, integrate into society, and perform well in the workplace. Everyone should have these qualities by the time they finish compulsory education and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

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Some Chinese scholars have compared the research of 21st century skills, which started in the United States, with the content of key competencies and found that the two are much the same. Some scholars define the key Competencies as the key competencies that people should have in order to adapt to the changes in the 21st century. In short, key Competencies is "key skills for the 21st century". Some scholars have emphasized that key Competencies is less but better.

To sum up, this paper simply defines the key competencies as the key and indispensable skills that individuals should have in different learning and working fields of social work life. It is the organic integration of knowledge, ability and attitude. Correspondingly, the key competencies of principals' leadership can be defined as the quality that plays a leading, critical and decisive role in the organizational management process of school principals in terms of school effectiveness and the realization of school and individual goals.

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