TEACHER LEADERSHIP: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

DR. K. RAJASEKAR [1]

ABSTRACT

The concept of teacher leadership and its significance in today's educational Institution is paramount to improve students' abilities and skills. Therefore, this paper explores of the teacher's leadership. In addition, it focuses on the critical role of teacher-student interaction that underlines the effective teacher leadership. Providing insights on teacher's leadership, the paper also illustrates numerous types leadership and how it is relevant to educational empowerment. By investigating the intersection of teacher leadership and teacher-student interaction, the paper aims to provide insights into how educators can cultivate effective leadership practices, improve student outcomes, and enhance the quality of education.

Keywords: *teacher leadership, teacher-student interaction, educational empowerment, effective leadership practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is not independent or dependent but an interdependent factor. Leadership is an ever-evolving subject, adapting to diverse contexts and cultures within society. The emergence of numerous leadership styles underscores the dynamic nature of leadership. Researchers have identified various types of leadership, Leadership style is understood as a leader's characteristic behavior or behavioral patterns practiced in directing, guiding and motivating groups of people, influencing followers' behavior that answer of the question "how do leaders lead?" (Sulej& Iqbal, 2023). Each style reflects the ongoing development and refinement of leadership concepts, highlighting the complexity and nuance of effective leadership (Northouse, 2017).

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[1] Dr. K. Rajasekar MSFS is a catholic priest and researcher currently ministering in Florida. He earned his doctorate in general psychology from Grand Canyon University, USA.

The application of leadership is a complex challenge that varies across diverse contexts. A leadership style that yields success in one organization or setting may not be effective in another, regardless of whether the organization operates for-profit or non-profit. This disparity underscores the importance of contextual consideration in leadership. Therefore, leaders must carefully assess their organization's unique characteristics, needs, and goals to determine the most suitable leadership style. Effective leadership requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay between leadership style, organizational context, and desired outcomes (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Teachers are great leaders who create leaders for future generations. Socrates taught Plato, who later founded the Academy in Athens, one of the earliest institutions of higher learning in the Western world. Aristotle (ancient Greek philosopher) tutored Alexander the Great, who conquered many parts of the world. Confucius educated thousands of students, including many who became prominent leaders in Chinese history. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was an Indian philosopher, statesman, and educationist. He was a renowned teacher and played a significant role in shaping the minds of future leaders. The role of teachers had a vital role in the development of their students to be the great leaders. Therefore, the influence of teacher leadership on student performance, specifically focusing on the role of effective teacher-student interaction in fostering is supreme to educational empowerment.

THE LEADERSHIP MOTIVES: UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT STYLES

There are different kinds of leadership, each with its own focus. Teacher leaders should understand the meaning of each leadership style to relate to their own style of functioning, especially when guiding others. Northouse (2017), in his book, *Leadership: Theory & Practice*, provided several approaches or styles of leadership: trait approach, skills approach, behavioral approach, situational approach, path-goal theory, and transformational leadership. Other leadership styles include authentic leadership, servant leadership, adaptive leadership, inclusive leadership, autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership, charismatic

leadership, and strategic leadership. Each leadership style has its own focus, characteristics, pros, and cons.

There are several definitions within leadership research, delineating the word 'leadership.' every definition has unique words that expound the meaning of leadership. One of the common understandings of the word leadership is that it is a process of influence. "Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve a common goal" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 26). Leadership as a process does not indicate leaders' traits or characteristics. It marks transactional events that happens between leaders and followers. leadership as influence marks leaders' impact on the followers and the communication occurs between them (Northouse, 2017). Many studies revealed sets of a leader's characteristic behaviors which pertained to specific leadership styles and discovered measurement tools to recognize a certain leadership style (Sulej& Iqbal, 2023).

DEFINING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Teacher leadership refers to the process by which teachers take on leadership roles and responsibilities, regardless of their official title or position, to improve student learning, instructional practices, and school culture. Teacher leaders work collaboratively with colleagues, administrators, and students to drive positive change, foster innovation, and promote excellence in education. Teacher leadership is an emerging topic because school systems uncovered that professional development of teachers does not bring changed teacher behavior in the classroom, where are supported and offered coaching (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Teacher leaders are thought to be beyondthe classroom. They contribute tothe growth of students and institution. According to Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001), "Teachers' leaders lead within and beyond classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher leaners and leaders; influence others toward improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership" (p. 6). Teacher leadership is construed as collaboration. Northouse (2017) explicated that teacher leadership happens with the group.

When teachers work with a group it is more of collaboration. Teacher leadership can be improved through partnership, collaboration and networking. It posits that teachers do inherently possess will, skill and abilities work in this way. Through collaboration of schools, the knowledge can be imparted, innovative methods improve in teaching and learning (Harris &Muijs, 2005).

Teacher leadership focuses on the building of a teacher's capacity to lead, innovate, and improve teaching and learning, both individually and collectively" (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). According to Darensbourg (2011), teacher leaders are passionate, driven, and have expertise in instruction. They engage in continuous inquiry, inform, persuade, mobilize, and energize others to do more with their communities. They are willing to take risks and participate in shared decision making. They stay current in the field. Thet are often politically active and aware socially of issues pertaining to their profession and the students they work with (p. 68). Different definitions provide some defining characteristics of teacher leadership. Further it furnishes with knowledge of the teacher's leadership that can be developed by focusingon their qualities, skill, will, and ability to collaborate withing theschool system and across the school system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Leadership theories were developed in response to different contexts. Each style has its unique concept of leadership applicable to multiple contexts. Theories generally expound on the core of a particular leadership approach. Several leadership theories provide a theoretical outlook on teacher leadership. Let's examine some leadership styles that can benefit teachers from a theoretical standpoint. Studying different styles helps teachers identify with the core concept of leadership that aligns with their qualities and skills. By relating to a particular style, teachers can explore its distinctiveness and improve their teacher leadership capacity.

1. Transformational Leadership Theory

Burns (1978), suggests that transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers to achieve a shared vision. In the context of teacher leadership, transformational leaders

empower teachers to take ownership of their professional development and work together to improve student outcomes.

2. Servant Leadership Theory

Robert K. Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership theory emphasizes the importance of leaders serving their followers. In teacher leadership, servant leaders prioritize the needs of their colleagues and students, fostering a collaborative and supportive school culture.

3. Distributed Leadership Theory

This theory, developed by Spillane (2006), suggests that leadership is not solely the responsibility of one individual, but rather is distributed among various members of the organization. In teacher leadership, distributed leadership encourages collaboration and shared decision-making among teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders.

4. Instructional Leadership Theory

This theory, developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), emphasizes the importance of leaders in improving instructional practices and student outcomes. In teacher leadership, instructional leaders focus on developing teacher capacity and improving teaching practices to enhance student learning.

5. Moral Leadership Theory

Sergiovanni's (1992) moral leadership theory emphasizes the importance of leaders in promoting a moral and ethical school culture. In teacher leadership, moral leaders prioritize the well-being and dignity of students, teachers, and the broader school community.

6. Authentic Leadership Theory

Avolio and Gardner's (2005) authentic leadership theory emphasizes the importance of leaders being genuine, transparent, and true to themselves and their values. In teacher leadership,

authentic leaders foster a positive and supportive school culture by being approachable, empathetic, and reliable.

7. Situational Leadership Theory

Blanchard et al. ;(1993) situational leadership theory suggests that leaders should adapt their leadership style to their followers' specific needs and circumstances. In teacher leadership, situational leaders adjust their approach to meet the unique needs of their colleagues and students.

8. Teacher Leadership Theory

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), specifically focused on the role of teachers as leaders. Teacher leadership is essential for improving school culture, teacher development, student achievement, and the broader learning community. There are three reasons which supports to comprehend why teachers do fail to consider themselves to leaders. 1). Teachers feel that becoming leaders depend on the school culture. There should be existing cultures that promote leaders among teachers. If aschool does not provide an opportunity to teachers to grow as leaders, there is lesser chances that teachers would assume the responsibility of leaders 2). Teachers feel that they lack skills to lead. Many teachers' complete degrees to become a qualified teacher. Leadership does not emerge from subjective knowledge. Teachers need to be trained with leadership skills. 3). The egalitarian outlook of the schoolassume that all teachers are equal. Most schools practice principle of egalitarianism to consider all are equal here. There is no room for teachers who are skilled to outshine (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Institutions should consider that teachers can lead by participating in decision-making, improvement planning, and professional development. Successful teacher leadership requires a collaborative school culture, shared vision and goals, administrator support and empowerment, time for leadership responsibilities, opportunities for professional development and recognition and rewards for teacher leaders. By fostering these conditions, schools can promote shared leadership, leading to positive outcomes for students, teachers, and the school community.

Teacher leaders work collaboratively with colleagues to improve teaching practices, develop curriculum, and enhance student outcomes.

TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

Teacher-student interaction behaviors refer to the interaction process between teachers and students during classroom teaching through various situations, forms, and contents that are diverse (Van de Pol et al., 2010). Teachers actively engaging with their students creates a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. This interaction encourages students to participate, ask questions, and express their ideas, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject. Moreover, it helps to build a supportive classroom community where students feel valued and motivated to learn. Students who interact with their teachers gain confidence in their abilities and feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts. This positive reinforcement from teachers encourages students to take risks and challenge themselves academically. As a result, they develop a stronger sense of self-assurance, which can lead to improved academic performance and personal growth.

Research by Pianta et al. (2012) highlights the significant impact of teacher-student interactions on student outcomes, demonstrating that high-quality interactions are associated with increased academic achievement and emotional well-being.We conceptualize teacher-student interactions as proximal processes that drive students' engagement and learning. Evidence demonstrates that interactions can be assessed through observation and improved through professional development interventions (Hofkens et al., 2023).

According to Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, learning is fundamentally a social process, and the interaction between a teacher and a student plays a crucial role in cognitive development. Teachers aim to facilitate each student's more profound understanding and personal growth by fostering a supportive and engaging environment. Research by Johnson and Johnson (2009) supports this approach, highlighting that cooperative learning environments enhance student achievement and interpersonal skills. Additionally, a study by Wentzel (1998)

found that positive teacher-student relationships are linked to higher levels of student motivation and academic success. When students actively participate in class, it indicates their engagement and interest in the material being taught.

Participation can take various forms, such as asking questions, contributing to discussions, or collaborating on group projects, suggesting a positive student-teacher relationship. Engaged students are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and feel more connected to the learning environment. Understanding teacher-student relationship dynamics involves recognizing verbal and non-verbal cues (Smith et al., 2021). Teachers should pay attention to signs such as body language, eye contact, and engagement levels, which can indicate whether students are comfortable and attentive. Additionally, regular feedback and open communication channels help teachers gauge the effectiveness of their teaching methods and adjust accordingly.

INTERACTION-CENTERED LEADERSHIP LEVEL

The level of teacher-student interaction improves students' learning effects on two levels: interactive form and interactive content. In the form of teacher-student interaction, Moore (1989) proposed that online learning interaction includes three types of interactions: "learners and learning content," "learners and teachers," and "learners and learners." According to Anderson and Garrison (1998), the three principal modes of interaction in education are student-student, student-teacher, and student-content. These modes of interaction are found within multiple classroom modalities, including face-to-face, hybrid, and online (synchronous and asynchronous) learning environments. The following figure demonstrates three principal modes of communication.
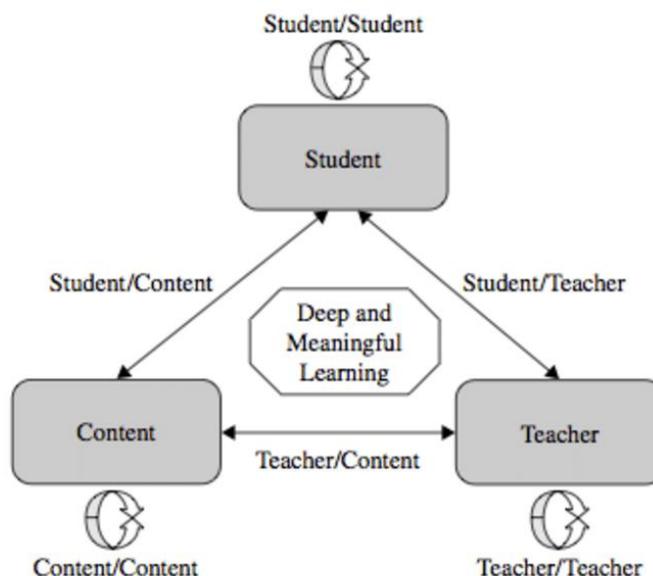
Figure 1. Modes of Interaction (Anderson & Garrison, 1998).

Student-teacher interaction refers to how students and teachers communicate in the learning environment. Formal education often highly emphasizes the importance of student-teacher interaction. Examples of student-teacher interactions include but are not limited to, the following.

Student-content interaction refers to how students interact with the course content through engaging in learning activities—examples of activities that promote student-content interaction.

Student-student interaction refers to the interaction between students in the learning environment in which students ask each other questions, discuss or reflect on a topic, listen to their peers' opinions, and collaborate to accomplish the task. Student-student interaction develops critical thinking and helps students see various perspectives of the same problem.

Incorporating these multiple modes of interaction within the classroom creates opportunities to increase student achievement and learning along with affective factors including increased

students' attitudes and beliefs toward learning, students' attitudes and beliefs toward the subject, and students' identities as learners.

IMPROVING TEACHER'S LEADERSHIP AND MODES OF INTERACTION

Traditionally, education focused primarily on developing students' intellectual abilities. However, modern education recognizes the importance of holistic development, encompassing emotional, social, and personal growth. To support students' overall development, you have identified some essential approaches. The approaches can vary to the teachers and educationist. I provide three approaches that are rampant among the studies.

1. Empathy: The characteristics of empathy isthe dominant skill of a leader. The ability to understand people's feelings is a skill of empathy (Greenleaf, 1977). Leaders must show empathic concern to their followers in order to be understood. Through empathy, teacher understands the difficulties from other – institution or student. It helps the teacher to understand the complexities of today's student environment, including their challenges, pressures, and emotions. Empathy helps teachers build strong relationships and provide personalized support.

2. Optimism: Optimism is a core concept of a positive psychology. Seligman, founder of a positive psychology, in his book, *Learned Optimism*, stated that our schools and workplaces hold a conventional assumption that success is outcome of the talent and desire. Failure happens when there is no talent or desire. He found through his studies that failure occurs even when talent and desire are present in plentitude. The failure of optimism also determines the failure the students. of Looking beyond students' talents and abilities, and focusing on their potential for growth and development. Optimism encourages educators to believe in their students' capabilities and provides opportunities for them to shine.

3. Individual Mindset: Carol S. Dweck (2019) researched with children to understand their mindset. She found that children have two mindsets, Growth mindset and Fixed Mindset. It is vital to recognize importance of a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset. A growth mindset

believes abilities and intelligence can be developed, while a fixed mindset believes they are innate and unchangeable. Educators can foster a growth mindset by providing opportunities for students to take risks, learn from failures, and develop resilience. By incorporating these approaches, educators can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes students' overall development and well-being.

CONCLUSION

Effective leadership is the pillar of a successful educational system. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping young minds, imparting knowledge, and inspiring future generations. However, their responsibility extends far beyond the classroom, as they are entrusted with building a society rooted in value-based culture. As leaders, teachers must continually strive to improve themselves, not only in their subject matter expertise but also in their leadership skills. At the heart of effective teaching and leadership lies the power of relationships. By forming strong, positive bonds with their students, teachers can influence young minds, shape attitudes, and inspire a love for learning. To achieve this, teachers must focus on understanding their students' unique aptitudes and attitudes, tailoring their approach to meet individual needs and foster overall growth. Eventually, the impact of effective teacher leadership can be felt throughout society, as empowered students grow into compassionate, thoughtful, and engaged citizens.

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