

# *The Importance and Strategy of Developing Teacher Leadership Capabilities*

Hanwen Zheng<sup>1,a,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of Sheffield, Western Bank, Sheffield, S10 2TN, United Kingdom  
a. chloooeool@163.com

\*corresponding author

**Abstract:** Teacher leadership is an important component of educational leadership. The concept of teacher leadership was created to provide teachers with opportunities for their own development. By working with their colleagues to mutually promote and improve teaching and learning practices, they are able to make contributions to the sustainable development of their schools. This article concludes with a summary of the main theories of teacher leadership in order to better understand how to promote teacher leadership development. Then, it analyzes the importance and current situation of developing teacher leadership and provides suggestions for future promotion. The importance of teacher leadership include: effectiveness of school management, leading other teachers, development of students, professional capacity. In the managerial leadership model, the focus is on school strategies to improve teacher leadership, such as empowering teachers and increasing teachers' awareness of their own leadership role. In the transformational and distributed model, teachers are required to be more active in their development, for example, improving their professional knowledge and consciously developing and implementing plans.

**Keywords:** teacher leadership, theory, importance, development strategies

## 1. Introduction

During the studies at school, the author became interested in teacher leadership due to a course in educational management. Through this study, the author has gained a more professional understanding of concepts such as 'teacher leadership'. While reading articles on leadership, the author found that the study of teacher leadership was becoming a major focus of research in the field of education. Teacher leadership' was first introduced in 1988 by Lieberman, Saxl, and Miles in the article 'Teacher Leadership, Ideology and Practice' [1]. The teacher empowerment movement in the United States created the chance for leadership to emerge. As an important part of the education system and as professionals whose mission is to teach and educate students, the development of the teacher population has a significant impact on schools and their regions. As everyone thinks differently, not all teachers want to be leaders in their schools. However, in classroom management, teachers will still need to use some management methods to help them improve the effectiveness of their lessons. This is why it is so important for teachers to have educational leadership skills.

The aim of this essay is to make teachers aware of the importance and value of having leadership capabilities. It will also provide suggestions and practical strategies for teachers who want to become managers or who want to improve their leadership skills.

The characteristics of teacher leaders are described as people who are 'learning-oriented in their work and who show or are seen to have the capacity to develop leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions' [1]. American teacher leadership experts Katzenmeyer and Moller, in their book 'Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders', point out that developing leadership skills is a prerequisite for teachers to be successful in their leadership work and to engage effectively in leadership activities [2]. As a result, developing teacher leadership skills has become a major practice model for developing teacher leadership out of the emphasis on leadership skills. Teachers play a connecting role between the school and the parents, so their communication skills, and interpersonal skills are particularly important. The good running of a school cannot rely solely on the head teacher but also requires teachers to continually let improve their own skills and advance the management of the school.

This essay will first discuss the definition and related models of teacher leadership. Then, it will discuss the importance and current situation of teacher leadership. Finally, it will suggest some strategies based on different leadership models. The conclusions are based on the search and analysis of relevant information.

## 2. Theory of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is a common name used in Western schools to enhance teachers' capacity by becoming part of the decision-making hierarchy and allowing them to exercise power and influence their colleagues, students, and school administrators to improve teaching and learning practices.

Up to now, the research of scholars on the meaning of teacher leadership has gone through different stages of development. There are nine types of leadership, including managerial leadership, transformational leadership and distributed leadership. There are advantages and disadvantages to the different leadership models. Managerial leadership focuses on the authority of the leader and believes that leadership is assigned in proportion to the position, with more emphasis on the leader making decisions. This model can improve managerial effectiveness with rigorous planning, but the influence is largely due to the authority of the leader, which is more difficult for the leader. Transformational leadership is where the leader manages through words or personal appeal, and advocates the integration of the goals of the leader and the followers, with a harmonious relationship that leads to the convergence of decisions. This model has important implications for the progress of school initiatives and the growth of teachers and students, but is more difficult to implement [3]. Distributed leadership is closely related to the study of teacher leadership. Leithwood's major research in the UK suggests that multiple leaders are much more effective than solo approaches [4]. Different leadership styles can also have different impacts. Teacher leadership is closely related conceptually to distributed leadership but only focuses on the leadership role of teaching staff, and is broader than many of the practical aspects of distributed leadership [5].

Teacher leadership is a rich subject, and formal and informal leadership is one of the research angles. The leadership subjects of formal leadership in schools are mostly school headmasters and team leaders, where teachers use their authority to manage other members. Informal leadership of teachers can be any members of the school staff who have a positive influence on students and other teachers through their knowledge, abilities, and qualities. Teacher leadership can be divided into four areas: teaching leadership, classroom leadership, collegial leadership, and ethical leadership [6].

Teacher leaders may be staff members appointed by the district to fulfill a specific leadership role, or they may be members of a grade level or departmental team who naturally assumes or are asked to lead them.

### **3. Importance**

According to the research of Leithwood and Jantzi, teacher leadership has an impact far beyond that of the main leader, has a significant impact on students, and is a critical part of the management process [7].

#### **3.1. Effectiveness of School Management**

The school is a system that needs the active participation of teachers in its management. Teachers are not only pedagogues but also managers and models. The variety of their roles requires teachers to have strong leadership skills. This helps to motivate teachers to carry out all their work and to improve the effectiveness of school management. If teachers lack leadership capabilities, they will struggle to organize school activities and complete some of the requirements passed on by the school.

#### **3.2. Leading Other Teachers**

Improving the leadership capabilities of teachers can have a direct impact on their colleagues. People who work with people who have high levels of self-efficacy are more motivated than others.

Firstly, teachers can influence their colleagues by sharing ideas or initiatives [8]. For example, teachers can change the way colleagues interact with each other through the creation of grade groups or teaching teams [6]. Secondly, teachers with teacher leadership skills can encourage other colleagues to share their knowledge and skills, and they can help colleagues to improve their professionalism and solve problems in classrooms. This means that teachers with leadership can become role models for other teachers and promote the development of their colleagues through their own development.

#### **3.3. Development of Students**

The role that teacher leadership plays in improving student learning is often overlooked. Teacher leadership can promote collaboration among teachers and ensure quality teaching and learning. Encouraging and enhancing teacher leadership can increase the motivation of teachers to participate in school management, which can contribute to improved student learning. Teachers who can also feel their self-worth is being realized are more likely to accept students and have a more positive attitude.

#### **3.4. Professional Capacity**

Analysis of data from a survey of junior high school teachers in Taiwan shows that both headmaster leadership and teacher leadership influence teachers' own development in direct ways, with teacher leaders having a greater impact. Leadership and decision-making processes are the best learning opportunities for teachers and an effective way to deal with teacher burnout. Involvement in school development increases teachers' recognition and engagement with their work and stimulates their potential. Teacher leadership can also promote reflection and enhance critical thinking methods.

## 4. Current Situation

At present, teacher leadership has become a popular research topic for primary and secondary school leadership issues in recent years in various countries, and the factors affecting teacher leadership and the significance of teacher leadership in school management practices have received more and more attention. School managers are noticing the importance of teacher leadership. As it is still difficult to implement, it leads to some teachers having less opportunity to participate in school decision-making, and good teachers only have high influence among their colleagues.

## 5. Strategies

There are many factors that influence leadership, including the environment, personalities, and behaviors. The development of leadership is influenced by many factors and it is important to pay attention to many aspects of leadership to improve it effectively.

There are different ways of developing leadership in different models. In managerial leadership, teachers have less power and are mostly dependent on the support of the external environment and the development of school leaders. In models of transformational and distributed leadership, which are open and collaborative in nature, teachers have more autonomy and more emphasis is placed on collective collaboration [4].

### 5.1. Managerial Leadership

In this model, school leaders have greater authority. This means that the development of teacher leadership needs to be supported by leaders in terms of systems, environment, and management for teachers. When promoting teacher leadership, there are a number of ways in which school leaders can foster the development of teacher leadership.

To begin with, teachers can take on some of the responsibilities of school management and have some authority, but it is also important to clearly define the responsibilities and scope of their leadership in the school. Give teachers opportunities to make decisions about curriculum and teaching activities to develop and promote their capacity to participate in decision making. Teachers can also be encouraged to take ownership of leadership responsibilities and provide additional teacher leadership roles.

Next, evaluation can improve teachers' awareness of their own leadership abilities. Thus, improved leadership evaluation is important for enhancing the achievement of teacher leadership. In the early stages of teacher leadership development, school managers should carry out a diagnostic assessment of the individual subjective willingness and capacity potential of teachers. Based on the results of the assessment, select candidates for teacher leadership development. To design different types of leadership development activities for them and to create specific leadership tasks. The evaluation will also enable managers to gain a better understanding of teachers' attitudes and thoughts about developing their own leadership.

And then, school provides training opportunities to promote teacher leadership development and offers courses for teachers who wish to take on leadership roles to learn leadership skills. For example, schools can work with each other or with external agencies, and different knowledge and values can be shared between schools. Or there could be club activities, entrepreneurial activities, that consciously integrate leadership development into professional development. Finally, the creation of an effective leadership development system. Schools can develop courses or seminars that provide teachers with regular learning and practice and create a positive school culture.

Finally, teachers interact with different people, such as students, colleagues, and headmasters, in the process of leadership development and receive feedback in the interaction. School managers need to actively provide feedback on teacher leadership development to help teachers improve their

leadership behavior and enhance their leadership capacity. Frequent negative feedback can also discourage teacher leadership development. Therefore, understanding the value of feedback and providing teachers with continuous and rational feedback is an essential way to promote teacher leadership development.

School leaders can use conversation, reflection, and other ways to inspire teachers, use their leadership skills, and help them to change and challenge the current situation. It is also important to provide daily communication and exchanges between teachers and school administrators to improve teachers' leadership skills and awareness of leadership behaviors. It can avoid role conflict and blurring as a result of taking on multiple responsibilities as teachers and leaders.

## 5.2. Transformational and Distributed Leadership

The role of the leader in this model no longer refers simply to the headmaster but is distributed among the members of the school organization. They work together to accomplish educational and teaching activities of varying sizes, complexity, and scope. It can be seen that teachers that want to develop leadership, they rely more on the interaction between teachers and colleagues, and on their own continuous improvement.

First of all, improving teacher leadership requires teachers to take the initiative to improve their own leadership and professional knowledge. For example, teachers can ask experienced seniors for advice, learn more about the methods of others to enrich their knowledge and find out what methods work for them in practice. This method is also more suitable for new teachers.

Furthermore, leadership also involves control and decisiveness. So teachers can consciously make plans and carry them out in the classroom. After the lessons, teachers should reflect on and review the problems that occurred when the plan was implemented in order to help the next plan be developed and implemented. Teachers should also have timely reflection after dealing with some unexpected problems to increase their awareness of how to deal with emergencies when facing difficulties and to help them adopt a more appropriate approach when facing difficulties next time.

The third is active interaction with other teachers. In interaction, teachers are able to show and judge their own leadership capabilities. Teacher leaders need to have certain team-handling skills and the ability to respect their peers. It is also important to make a conscious effort to work with colleagues and develop trusting relationships in daily life.

Finally, teachers can improve their own knowledge by reading each week. Learning about the experiences of others and putting them into practice in their daily lives. Teachers can set positive role models for themselves and encourage them to keep improving.

## 6. Conclusion

This essay has explored the differences between the models and the importance of improving teacher leadership through the teacher leadership model. It also suggests suitable, feasible ways to improve teacher leadership under the different models.

Although the effects of teacher leadership development are difficult to quantify through specific data, it is still able to identify the positive effects of teacher leadership development on schools, colleagues, and students, as well as its significance for the teachers' personal development.

The development of teacher leadership in managerial leadership depends on the support of school leaders and is difficult to achieve with just individual teachers. So most of the strategies in this essay for this model are for school managers. In distributed and transformational leadership, teachers have more space for self-learning and development. Therefore, this essay provides strategies for teachers themselves and for how they and their colleagues can contribute to each other.

Due to time and word limits, this essay cannot show all aspects in detail and has many shortcomings that will need to be improved in the future. Many areas of teacher leadership can be researched, and further exploration of different issues will continue to contribute to our understanding and application of leadership, and to the development of schools.

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