

# Teacher Leadership Concept: A Review of Literature

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DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v6-i12/2483 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v6-i12/2483>

## **Abstract**

This article is based on a literature review of teacher leadership studied by local or international researchers. This article was written based on the history of teacher leadership, teacher leadership models and previous studies that have been done locally and internationally. This paper also discusses on the issue pertaining to the teachers' self-awareness on the concept of teacher leadership whereby only teachers who served as principals and headmasters are assumed to have leadership. Further studies are needed to explore the practice of teacher leadership in the school.

**Keywords:** Teacher Leadership, Teacher Leadership Models, Practice

## **Introduction**

The education system in Malaysia is moving towards high quality education. This coincided with the drafting of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025. In order to develop a world-class education system and create a better quality, good intentions should not be ignored by all citizens and society (MOE, 2012). In order to promote excellence in education, teachers themselves need to present themselves in terms of leadership. Teachers need to understand that leadership does not only rest on the shoulders of school administrators only. However, the leadership at the school level is often associated with principals, headmasters, power, authority and control (Muhammad Faisal, Norfariza, Shahril@Charil, & Faisal, 2014). According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), the teacher only focuses on teaching and learning over the management of the school.

However, the leadership of the teacher does not focus on teaching and learning in the classroom, but it actually involves matters within and outside the school. Teachers also play an important role in the leadership of the teachers in the school. Most teachers who practice the leadership role of teachers do not see themselves as leaders because it is assumed that the term leadership of the teacher is a teacher who has a formal job in positions of responsibility such as principals and headmasters (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). Teacher perspectives on teacher leadership should be changed to improve school performance in general. Teachers who show self-confidence can improve teaching practice (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). This coincided with the leadership required by a teacher. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to understand the role of teacher leadership. As in fact, leadership practices could improve the quality of students' learning (Siti Aida, 2011).

## **Literature Review**

In Malaysia, there are a few literature reviews which focus on the role of teacher leadership. However they focus more on leadership within a classroom climate (Rahmad Sukor & Shahrir, 2005). Although the scope of this study is quite different, it showed that leadership of a teacher in the classroom is actually one of the leadership characteristics that are required. The finding showed that classroom leadership practiced by teachers has an impact on all individuals in the classroom other than determined the achievement of a classroom. Discussion in this literature coincided with the study by Gruenert (2005), which also focused on teacher leadership that exists in the classroom.

Based on the research of Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000), there are three waves in the history of teacher leadership. In the first wave, teachers do not have the leadership role of teachers in schools unless they are given the official position that allows them to be responsible for decision-making in schools. This assertion is supported by Sanocki, (2013) which was the role of teacher leadership only exists when teachers were given official responsibility outside the classroom.

In the second wave, the emphasis of teacher leadership is through instructional leadership. However, teachers are still in a formal position as a leader in the organization of teaching, the committee chairman and other roles in school (Silva et al., 2000). In addition, Olson, (2005) has identified the role of teacher leadership whether formal or informal, that teachers can affect colleagues who stated in an action outside the classroom. In conclusion, the leadership of teachers occurs either formally or informally in the school (Sanocki, 2013).

The third wave involves teaching and leadership of teachers whereby they are empowered to make decisions without the need to have an office or official duties at school (Frost & Harris, 2003). This means that the leadership of the teachers formed by improving teaching and learning in schools by encouraging cooperation between teachers, mentors and experts in teaching and professional development among teachers (Silva et al., 2000; Frost & Harris, 2003). However, Pounder (2006), claimed that teachers have the freedom and ability to make changes outside the classroom, in school and outside of the school. He also claimed that to in line with the development of education that is globally increased, there is the addition of another wave of teacher leadership.

The fourth wave of teacher leadership is known as transformational leadership classrooms. This assertion is supported by Crowther, Margaret, and Leonne (2009) which states that the leadership of teachers allows teachers to act as teachers who can affect the school and community in school success.

From the four waves studied by previous researchers, it can be concluded that leadership of a teacher has transformed whereby the role of teachers is expanding. Teachers do not only play their roles in a classroom but in fact, in school organization, with colleagues and with the people within the community. Now, teachers can make a decision with no official position required. By having leadership within themselves and practicing it in the school,

teachers can increase their performance in becoming better teachers. Schools and communities will also gain the benefit from a teacher's leadership.

### Teacher Leadership Model

There are a lot of teacher leadership model pioneered by researchers around the world. However, in this study, the researchers have identified five models of teacher leadership which are Theory of Action (York-Barr & Duke, 2004); Teacher Leadership Model (Danielson, 2006); Conceptual Framework of Teachers as Leaders (Crowther, 2008); Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011) and Teacher Leadership Sphere for Teaching (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014). The table below shows a comparison of the five models made by the researchers in this study.

| <b>Theory of Action<br/>(York-Barr &amp; Duke, 2004)</b>  | <b>Teacher Leadership Model<br/>(Danielson, 2006);</b>   | <b>Conceptual Framework of Teachers as Leaders<br/>(Crowther, 2008);</b>   | <b>Teacher Leader Model Standards<br/>(Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011)</b>                 | <b>Teacher Leadership Sphere for Teaching<br/>(Fairman &amp; Mackenzie, 2014)</b>  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Teachers play the role in various aspects of the individual, the team and the entire focus of the system for the purpose of improving teaching and learning for students. | The components of teacher leadership in this model affect school culture through the creation of new relationships with fellow teachers, schools, and communities to prepare teachers to deal with the 21st century. | Focusing on the role of teacher leaders based on six elements through the study and understanding of the concept of teacher leadership | Focusing on knowledge, skills and competencies that teachers need for the leadership role of school teacher | Components in this model emphasize the teacher to demonstrate leadership to develop professional learning and improve student learning |

Table 1. Comparison of models Teacher Leadership

Based on the comparison of five models of leadership being examined in this study, it can be concluded that teachers not only play their role in the classroom but in the school and outside of school. All five models explicitly indicate one thing in common which is the role of teachers is expanding. In addition, the leadership of the teachers is seen to increase student achievement in school. First, Theory of Action (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) is a theory that focuses on the role of teachers in many areas to improve student learning. Second, the Teacher Leadership Model (Danielson, 2006) also seen that teacher leadership affects the formation of school culture through the relationship between teachers and peers, school and community. Third, the Draft Framework for Teachers as Leaders (Crowther, 2008) focuses on the role of teacher leaders based on six elements through the study and understanding of the concept of teacher leadership. Fourth, the Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011) also focus on knowledge, skills, and competencies that teachers need for the leadership role of teachers in schools. Whereas, Teacher Leadership Sphere for Teaching (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014) focuses on the action of the teacher who can contribute to student learning.

### **Conclusion**

Leadership does not only involve teachers based positions of power and authority formally but tend towards a level of knowledge and skills (Muhammad Faisal et al., 2011). Teacher leadership attributes consist of knowledge, skills and values shown by teachers who have a positive impact on student learning both official and unofficial, in the classroom or outside the classroom (Phelps, 2008; Strengthening Center for the Teaching Profession, 2009). Teacher leadership also helps to improve students' academic achievement.

This study should be conducted as a guide to developing teacher leadership among future teachers. Teacher leadership should be able to produce quality teachers. In addition, this study will bring awareness to the teachers that teacher's own teacher leadership. This is because a leadership of teachers is closely linked to the success of a school (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). To date, the leadership of teachers has become an issue in the world of education. This is because teachers are now able to make improvements the school. Teacher leadership does not just happen in the classroom, but also outside of the classroom, cultural collaboration with colleagues, the school organization, and the community. By implication, there should be an increase in the quality of the teaching profession. These efforts will only be successful if the teachers themselves have awareness on teacher leadership. Hence, this article also suggested that further research to be undertaken to identify the level of teacher leadership being practiced in schools. It aims to enable teachers to understand the teacher leadership that teachers should have within themselves in order to plan and implement teaching and learning more effectively in the future.

### **Acknowledgement**

This study is under the biggest grant of the university, Sultan Idris Education University, Niche Research Grant Scheme (NRGS): 2014-0001-107-82-4 for project 4: Teacher Leadership.

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