

Teacher Leadership

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Abstract: As a result of the invention of knowledge and rapid spread of it, men have demanded more of it and have needed to update it continuously. Today named as space age, they employ various ways to obtain information. Yet, they should learn to select what kind of information they are in need and to develop best and shortest and easiest means to obtain it. At this phase, teacher is the companion who guides learning. Then, in this age, teacher is accounted for not only transferring knowledge but also expected to develop himself professionally and be a model in sharing skills. He, furthermore, isn't a source of information, but he is to be the channel providing the access to information and even be the model guiding learner into how to reach the modern information rapidly and accurately. The contemporary or modern and responsible teacher profile is that he guides learners having access to the internet composed of millions blogs, social networks and databases into the accurate information of the world. Under such a risky and vulnerable condition, the teacher is expected to shoulder many social responsibilities and tasks difficult to fulfill. A teacher leader who accepts working with such a new generation should have the characteristics of leadership, have the content knowledge, be aware of recent updates in his field, is good at influencing people with his speech, be a model and be accountable for the information technologies. The goal of this study is to figure out teacher responsibilities in this new order. For the study, literature survey was implemented and through the data obtained, some suggestions for difficulties a teacher leader faces were put forward.

Key words: Leader • Teacher • Teacher Leader

INTRODUCTION

When the historical development of leadership is examined, it can be claimed that the emergence of teacher leadership has been recently. Also, teacher leadership is a new approach in education. In fact, teacher leadership is a diverted form of the leadership in this new age [1]. For teacher, it is a new identity. The core of teacher leadership is enhancing students' success at school and learning since the teacher has the influence on these student activities. Then, teacher leadership is indispensable for a qualified life [2].

Teacher is the leader of all experiences in classroom [3]. Therefore, the responsibilities of leader teacher can be counted like that teacher leader observes the classroom interaction effectively; he is aware of each student and their personal developmental differences and organizes them in line with their features; he motivates students to participate in any activity willingly in the classroom and to take responsibilities of their actions and behaviors.

As a leader, teacher has the role that helps students motivate themselves to learn and improve effective ways to deal with challenging issues. The teacher, for this role, has a great influence and power on arranging learning-teaching environment and atmosphere. He has intimate relationships with students and tries to have empathy with them. Depending on his observations, he foresees the important points and finds possible or alternative ways for students to reach the goal. Teaching, therefore, is assumed to be a holy task and there is great respect of people for teaching and learning whose meaning and value are internalized the students.

Teacher leaders, contrary to common teacher actions, provide new situations and encourage student to participate. However, stereotype teachers prefer common actions [4]. If one sees himself as stereotype teacher, he cannot assume himself as leader teacher. Power of teacher leadership doesn't exist in this type of individuals and doesn't develop as well. On the other hand, teacher leaders can alter the dynamism of school by using their power and influence. Therefore, there is one leader teacher in this condition and others are just the followers.

It can be claimed that how much of his time a teacher spends in the classroom indicates how appropriate to be a teacher leader since trying altering both the classroom and the school to teacher more to students or make learning easier for students can be an evidence for teacher leaders and their enthusiasm to teach.

Leader oriented learning is the major feature of teacher leadership. In the center of teacher leadership is the student achievement and it is not limited to classroom only. These leaders don't follow their missions and vision only in the classroom. They set a democratic atmosphere and they have interactions with colleagues in other schools or institutions. Teacher leaders don't take their responsibility as working like a staff, but their main goal is to trigger revolutions in education system [5]. Education for them has no limits or endpoints and they aim achieving success and try to raise leading citizens Hook and Vass, [6]. Another goal of teacher leaders is helping student become modern social learners and self motivated for their goals.

Depending on the results and data obtained from many researches, these can be concluded: teachers are leaders according to their students in their classrooms; therefore, they have to act carefully: A teaching explaining the content and reason of an action should reflect this through his behaviors as well: The responsibility of a teacher leader is to create new opportunities and conditions for learning and enhance the components of learning: It is both the teacher and school's duty to contribute greatly to student's understanding of democracy. Looking at the issue from a different perspective, both parties have the responsibility of helping students improve their understanding of democracy and become contributor citizens and active in shaping their own future. Teacher leadership has a positive structure centering on quality level of the interaction between teaching and teacher-learner. Quality here is essential for school's professional development.

Another aspect of teacher leadership that is clear and observable is that leader teachers assume themselves as leaders and part of their schools and institutions. They feel they have to improve themselves constantly. They try to make all their students and colleagues and directors and every foundation stones of their school active.

Teacher leaders also bring energy and motivation into the classroom and they feel they have reached their

goals when they observe their students' learning and progresses. Their experiences have undeniable influence on their students when shared.

Teacher leaders are models and guides for their colleagues with their teaching methods. They should be able to observe and follow changes in their learners and environment since differences in school's success are dependent on teacher leader's control of abovementioned changes. Furthermore, they have to model for keeping a large archive, making reforms in the school and introducing personal responsibility [7].

Teacher leaders are not teachers only, but they are the person triggering developments and positive changes in the school. They can also influence students and change how they study.

As many teachers don't have the characteristics of teacher leadership, or as these characteristics are not developed properly, they don't feel comfortable in the classroom and students don't approve them.

Teacher leadership is the skill adapting instructional activities in the classroom to students' development levels and leading them to develop themselves willingly and collaboratively. Teacher leaders are persons who can share their instructional vision and improve their plans involving the requirements of this behavior. Supporting formal educational process with informal one, teacher, as a leader, should perform the roles like a guide, a coordinator and counselor who make students trust him [8].

Teacher leadership is the proficiency that a teacher has to take up responsibilities in school and classroom within formal and informal educational activities and processes, to produce independent projects, to affect the people around and to support colleagues with professional development and creation of a trustworthy atmosphere. In the future, if renovations are needed to be carried out, before all, innovative and creative teacher leaders will be needed [9].

Teacher leader is the person that contributes to school's mission, supplies sources and professional development, guiding instruction and related sources, setting communicative environment and forms the positive school atmosphere [10].

A leader sometimes helps the person to act, or he provides direct support to him to act. In the end, he has the goal of having person standing on his feet. No matter he undergoes, moving from the definitions and the term itself, he achieves his goals.

- Leader Type; he commands the person to act independently. He motivates with the positive result of what the person does following his words. Authoritative leaders have the tendency to look down on others and they want the inferiors not to question his commands. These leaders are proud of their actions, but they never approve what others do or suggest. Moreover, they mean to judge everyone inferiors.
- Leader Type; This type of leaders try every possible way to win his workmates. When what he did isn't enough, he motivates them, or he gives provides direct support to them to act. Democratic leaders value the persons they work together and care for them. They sometimes don't approve what they have done, but they agree upon what others have suggested or done. They are open to change and innovations.
- Leader Type; These type of leaders try to win the person. They lead him to be brave enough to try new things. They don't aim to have a similar person like them, but they want the individuals to be themselves and more than them. They try their best to improve this person. Charismatic leaders don't judge people, but they follow a reasonable path. They value what others have in their minds and they mostly don't approve their ideas and others are always more important for them.

Those leader teachers whose opinions have been taken are responsive to fact that they feel less isolated or excluded owing to chance they have to work with others together out of class [11].

Leader teachers develop themselves professionally and constantly; they take over the specialist roles in education to share what they know with their colleagues; they focus on the best for their students in their studies; they are interested in educational researches and they work with colleagues, parents and experts in the fields when it is needed. They guide the new beginners and they support academic training programs. Then, they are highly socialized and they are interested in educational policies and ready to take risk when necessary. They also actively participate in the process of school's decision making process [12].

According to Gehrke [13], teacher leadership is taken over as a fundamental role in instructional environments; development of teacher leadership program is included in problem solving and the importance of teacher leadership is emphasized more and more at schools [14].

Though the teacher chooses instructional strategy, methodology and technique according to the goals of lesson, he cannot create an effective atmosphere unless he possesses characteristics of leadership. That means he can create such an atmosphere only when he plays the leadership role [15].

Today, time devoted to children by their parents is limited due to that they start to work together. Parents' aim to invest in a bright future for their off-springs leads them to send their children to private educational institutions.

Children raised in villages contribute to family's economic conditions through working and this situation paves the way for losing the effective childhood period when children have the chance to be leaders. Due to this fact, the teacher has much responsibility. He should discover the person that is bored with difficulties of daily life and that doesn't enough attention and love from his parents and he has to pay attention to him and give love to him. The teacher should leave what he has as problems and challenges in his life aside before entering the classroom and he should work for his students and on their futures. If an effective leader wants to be a teacher who dedicated himself to his job and students, he should act in this way. In other words, these are the duties and tasks of a self-actualized and optimistic teacher having all characteristics of leadership.

According to Şişman [9], besides micro policies determined in reconstructing the society and education, at macro level school biased policies with localization and empowering in education should be comprised. At this macro level, school leadership is essential. When it is assumed that leadership is consisted of learning and teaching aspects, teacher leaders will be required sooner or later to make vital reforms in education.

Fundamental features of teacher leader are as follows [12];

- Well understanding the difficulties and problem students have,
- Abolishing the feelings like hatred students have to their parents,
- Helping them understand how much their parents love them,
- Teaching them to be indulgent,
- Assuming each as individuals, helping them act individually,
- Helping them decide on what is good or evil freely
- Leading them to participate in decision making process and telling them how worthy they are.

Teacher Leadership Strategies: As a leadership, teaching is a role that helps students get the encouragement to learn and strategies to tackle with possible problems. According to Can [8], four main strategies have been put forward to improve teachers' leadership features.

- Playing teacher leadership role both in and out of the classroom. Besides creating an effective and willing atmosphere, activities of leadership also involves supporting managerial groups and various learning activities and working with the society and parents on different projects.
- Sharing positive experiences with colleagues to improve leadership features. He should take the risk of rejection and humiliation for this behavior. However, a visionary teacher leader is aware of his strengths and weaknesses and can take this risk.
- Being aware of his colleagues' strengths and weaknesses. Leader teachers don't feel irritated by his colleagues' strengths; on the contrary, they respect their knowledge and value it.
- Active involvement in management programs. They also take part in school activities because they are expected to reflect their teacher leadership skills out of the classroom.

Features of a Leader Teacher's Students (What Is Expected from this Student?): There expected much from the class of a teacher who has developed himself professionally well and has the features of leadership. Some of them can be listed as follows;

- Students with high level of self-esteem,
- Positive relation between students and the teacher in classroom,
- A well built cooperation between parents, school and environment,
- A peaceful classroom atmosphere,
- Students sharing the feeling of togetherness,
- Teacher being aware students' capabilities,
- Students having a wide vision
- Teacher showing deep empathy,
- Teacher and students participating in class willingly,
- Students having the autonomy to study on their owns,
- Students find solutions to their personal problems,
- Students encouraged to learn something new,
- Students having positive perspectives to life,
- Teacher reflecting the real life out of classroom to students,

- Classroom where each person has freedom of thought and speech,
- Students having a healthy socialization,
- High level of success,
- Students suggesting and willingly implementing new ideas,
- Students having the feeling of family in class,

These and more of them can be listed as expected results. Such classrooms where success isn't coincidental have a mutual relationship between the teacher and students and a healthy generation can be educated and raised here.

All these mentioned above cannot be expected to come out in a classroom; however, it is clear that the more a teacher has, the better the classroom is.

METHOD

For this study, literature survey was carried and while doing that survey it was taken into consideration that teacher leadership is a new term or concept in education and therefore, mostly resources in other languages were preferred and some of the translation tasks were done by the author.

RESULTS

Problem Teacher Leaders Face: Some problem that teacher leaders face can be listed as follows.

- Lack of confidence is one of the problems that a teacher has to face in the process of pedagogical development [2]. A teacher can achieve anything where there is a complete trust on him.
- Most of the teacher leaders work not to lose their position; however what they are expected to do is to share the position when necessary [16].
- To develop features of teacher leadership, professional development and managerial seminars are getting required within appropriate and plenty of time [17].
- Teachers don't have responsibilities only in the classroom but also out of the classroom and these out of classroom responsibilities restricts him to act or move freely.
- Teacher leader have to accomplish much within a limited time, which is a challenging task.
- Teacher loses much time when they are in a discussion with colleagues; therefore, they cannot cooperate and collaborate with other in educational process at expected level.

- Teachers' professional development can be restricted when school directors don't value them enough, or when they are perceived as only performer of the tasks which they have to do in educational process, or when they are not involved in other educational processes.
- When school principles and rules are always brought on to remind teachers, they feel restricted. When necessary, these principles should be put in the second place; and moreover, sometimes they should be adapted to teachers' goals.
- School principles should not be more than guides or suggestion for teachers.
- School directors should set environments in which teachers can share what they know and cooperate with others as professional development is prerequisite for school's achievement.
- School principles should cover the opportunities to help teacher leaders devote themselves with their full energy for their students and for school's success.
- As many teachers don't have the characteristics of teacher leadership, or as these characteristics are not developed properly, they don't feel comfortable in the classroom and students don't approve them.

Suggestions

The Suggestions Can Be Made for Such Problems (What Should Be Concern about Development Teacher Leadership?):

- On the focus of teacher leadership should be only learning and teaching, anything restricting this process should be eliminated.
- Teacher at first must believe in the success for school's success and leader teacher should be a model for his students. Then, they have to take the environment into consideration before taking up this responsibility.
- Leader teacher have to take risks even when he asks a question with many unexpected interpretations to further student understanding in the classroom.
- Teachers should be careful about both the conditions they are actually in and the classroom environment and progress of the school.
- As school directors may have various principles and values, the leadership feature may vary from one to another school. Therefore, there should be a continuous cycle for these staff.
- Both teacher leadership and directors are vulnerable to the influences from the environment. Therefore, they should identify the environment

and the conditions they are in so as to that they could have effective team work to enhance common benefits and goals and that they get to know the ideal environment for their goals.

- Leader teacher has great influence on students to get democratic and participatory citizens. Therefore, teachers should have the authority to make radical changes to get this output, which means that school directors should support them. In fact teacher leadership doesn't have a direct influence on students, but when combined with school environment and educational policies, it gets more influential. To raise democratic and participatory citizen, teachers are always the ideal leaders.
- Democracy doesn't occur itself, but a leader is to support it. The term can be defined as supporting an independent society with innovations [18]. Moving from this point that creating and supporting a democratic environment, students and the teacher should have the right to share their thoughts can be stated. In fact, change in thought and believes is a must for democracy. Then, teachers must feel comfortable with sharing their leadership ideas and to achieve that both teachers and directors should work collaboratively.
- Leader teachers should know how they should behave in any situation and therefore, they, with colleagues, directors and school environment, should have an intimate relationship which will shape how he will behave. If teacher, students, directors and parents have effective communication, students can internalize democracy and grow in line with it.
- Teacher should be given enough time to perform their leadership roles because they don't time to play that role. Therefore, the workload can be reduced if necessary.
- Some factors like centralization of management and not requiring teachers' opinions on the educational process make the instructional process monotonous. Teachers involved in the processes should be asked for their opinions and their suggestions should be taken into consideration.
- Without help of the directors, teacher may not reflect their leadership roles; therefore, both parties should be in constant interaction and directors also should not have the total authority, but should share it with teachers.
- Directors should be models for teachers who are the models for their learners and they should support teachers with the organizations and work load.

- Both teacher leadership and school's achievement go together as the more comfortably and freely a teacher can express himself, the more positive attitudes he has towards the class and his job.
- Seminars and other studies should be held so as to develop teacher leadership and concepts and term should be focused. The participants of these studies should not be only teachers and directors, but authorized staff should also join these studies.

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