EURASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

www.eurasianpublications.com

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AS AN IMPETUS FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP TO LEAD SCHOOLS: A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY

Berhane Aradom Tedla (iD)
Corresponding Author: Eastern University, USA
Email: berahen@yahoo.com

Ephrem Habtemichael Redda (iD)
North-West University, South Africa
Email: Ephrem.Redda@nwu.ac.za

Abstract

Teaching encompasses leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Teachers, as professionals, draw their leadership power from competencies, influences, relationships, or expertise, but current leadership models position teachers as followers, not as leaders. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that teachers, whatsoever their situation, position, or belief may be, are leaders of classrooms and schools without stepping up to formal roles. The Toulmin method of argument was employed to support and reason out the main claim. The findings of the study suggested that leadership is not a special role of a particular person; it includes all facets of schools and communities, particularly teachers. The author argued and identified a number of leadership attributes exhibited by teachers, and subsequently discussed teacher professionalism to show whether it is the only source for teachers to demonstrate leadership. Eventually, it has been concluded and corroborated that teachers, by their very profession, are leaders of classrooms and schools; though teachers may not be aware. Programs of teacher leadership are essential not to make teachers leaders, as teachers are already leaders of their schools, but to make them more conscious of their leadership functions and improve upon them on a daily basis.

Keywords: Teacher Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, Teacher Barriers, Pedagogues

1. Introduction

Nowadays, more is expected of principals than ever before – essentially, when it comes to instructional leadership. The role of a school principal as a leader, manager, and change agent is substantial because a principal is responsible for what happens in the entire school spectrum (Mangin, 2007). In this day and age, however, school principals, as many researchers disclose, do not have plenty of time to deal with instructional leadership. Thirty-one years ago, a study revealed that school principals spent only 11% of their time on instructional leadership (Stronge, 1988). Similarly, a recent study showed that principals spend only 13% of their time on instructional leadership-related activities (Grisso *et al.* 2019). Principals display instructional leadership behavior on a daily basis, but it is not commendable (Mitra, 2015). This simply

suggests that principals do not engage adequately in the pervasive and substantial teaching-learning process to improve instruction or employ measures of student achievement for program assessment.

Who is, then, leading schools? You might be wondering to spot a certain leader in schools apart from a principal. We are going to demonstrate miniscule experimentation here. I want you to close your eyes briefly and apply your erst while knowledge to envisage a professional leader whom you might trust the most or count on in schools. Open your eyes now! Perhaps, one of these persons popped up on your mind: the school manager who executes or passes paper-works and plans school events; the school administrator who handles the overall non-academic tasks; the school principal who every morning shows up and reminds students and teachers about school etiquette; an official from the ministry of education who rarely appears and summits school educators; or you might have guessed someone else. Every one of them could be a leader in their fields, but did you envision teachers as leaders? Maybe you did, but let's face it. I initiated also a diminutive social experiment among my students and associates, and I found that none of them did consider teachers as leaders of their schools. Similarly, when I probed my friends from other fields, they envision principals as the only leaders in schools. Where are teachers?

Even teachers, in the casual or informal social experiment, did not ascertain themselves as leaders of their schools. They seem to be ensnared in the notion of authority figures. Teachers believe that in order to perform as leaders, someone from a higher echelon should sanction them as leaders, not otherwise (Greenier and Whitehead, 2016).

Teachers, however, exhibit leadership comportment in many ways; most of them are overlapping though. Teaching encompasses multiple and complex issues, but certainly, when a teacher ponders how to identify, prioritize, synthesize and act on those issues, he or she certainly demonstrates leadership behavior.

In the past, principals were proclaimed to be undisputed school leaders, but in this day and age, the position is challenged so much and as a result, principals are forced to exhibit leadership distribution, among other stakeholders, particularly teachers. When a principal's pot is running over, another ingredient is added to the position, that is, the teacher-leader. It might sound as if teacher-leaders are ancillaries to the position, but actually, they are front-liners or leaders in action.

The magnitude of teachers as educators or leaders in schools is prodigious, particularly in the 21st century (Box *et al.* 2015). We could look at it from different angles. It is indisputable that the prime objective of education, among other things, for instance, is to prepare learners for the unfamiliar future. Pedagogues endeavor to realize the aims of education and lead students purposely from the known to the unknown world. In doing so, they empower students with ardency to pursue knowledge deliberately and enter the future market well accoutred with specialized skills (Hrnjic, 2016). In a nutshell, teachers exhort students to learn, follow, question, speak out, answer, produce, create and ultimately change.

In one very real sense, teachers are leaders who challenge students to accomplish instructional goals in a limited time (James, 1997).

Teaching and leading are inseparable terms. The assumption that teaching is for teachers and leading is for principals is a false misconception. Great leaders are teaching and great teachers are leading (Gardner, 1993). By the virtue of teacher professionalism, teachers are endowed with leadership possibilities to lead classrooms and schools. Leadership is viewed as a potential of both teachers and administrators (York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

Teachers can lead in a variety of ways, and assume a wide range of responsibilities to support student success and develop overall school programs (Boylan, 2016). There is evidence that teachers' influence or impact on schools is far greater than socioeconomic factors (Box *et al.* 2015). For instance, Ruth was a successful math teacher in Kenya before she went to the United States to pursue her education. She said that the teaching profession rendered her a number of alternatives to demonstrate leadership practices. In addition to teaching, she also worked as a school improvement team, department chair, student councillor, resource provider, instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, classroom supporter and many more informal practices.

As a *resource purveyor*, Ruth would offer novice teachers professional assistance, such as instructional materials, articles, books, unit plans and assessment tools. On top of that, Ruth

used to aid co-workers, particularly new staff, as an *instructional specialist* to execute effective strategies by providing a novel approach to differentiate instructional methodologies, thereby ensuring a plain content delivery in classrooms. Since Ruth has more than ten years of teaching experience, she would assist fellow neophytes and experienced teachers as a *curriculum specialist* in explaining content standards, and how various components of the curriculum related to one another. She believes that such leadership behavior would summit school teachers as teamwork and bring about a common understanding. "At times," she said, "particularly at the commencement of every semester, I would work as a *classroom supporter* to enhance novice teachers' self-efficacy by co-teaching, implementing new ideas, demonstrating real events and offering feedback." The result was astounding, where trainees would develop a stout belief in the profession and a sense of occupation contentment. As a classroom supporter, Ruth was also working as a mentor, data coach and change agent to expedite a professional learning milieu that directly ameliorates the teaching-learning process. In spite of all her leadership functions, Ruth had never presumed herself a leader. Why did Ruth not consider herself a teacher-leader?

There might be barricades in schools. There has always been a fallacy that school principals or administrators are the only personalities who can display leadership talents (Hosgbur and Yorulmaz, 2015). The reason for this is that leadership has been associated with an authority figure. Historically, leadership roles were concocted and controlled by the powerful or privileged folks and directed toward the relatively unpowerful one (Chavez, 2017). On top of that, school principals claim the credits that teachers earned. A long time ago, the battle line between leadership and teaching has been drawn falsely when principals exercised a peremptory order over teachers. Hierarchical school organization controlled by autocratic principals blunts teachers' activities (Grant, 2006) because it focuses on hierarchical management protocols and bureaucratic ties (Sergiovanni, 2001). In addition to hierarchical school organization and poor education policies, teachers also bear psychological barriers and traditional mythologies. There are people, particularly the fundamentalists, who view teaching as a vocation. In the old days, vocation was common and sturdily associated with religious or spiritual journeys (Gibson, 2014). Great teachers are born, not made or trained. This implies that pedagogues are pre-wired with the necessary aptitudes to teach. This supposition might overrate teaching and overlook instructional leadership training. In contemporary education, however, the teaching profession undergoes an inexorable enhancement through professional development programs: pre-service and in-service programs, or via a personal initiated improvement.

In an academic culture, every year, we also hear a number of misconceptions about teaching. The most erroneous opinion is that teaching is very easy (Stephenson, 2011). Some people think that teaching is an easy job; it is a woman's profession (Chavez, 2017). There is also a belief that, particularly among college students, only students with average talents choose teaching as a profession. These misconceptions allude to the fact that there is no creativity in teaching – one follows a blueprint and teaches accordingly.

The last barrier could be personal, yet the worst thing. Teachers believe that leadership is merely linked to a formal position (Grant, 2006). This results in a restrained experience due to a wrong personal belief. Some scholars also argue that teacher-leadership cannot be imposed by school management (Mujis and Harris, 2003). This suggested that teachers need to brush off the barriers, myths or limitations so that they can be effective leaders. Academically, teachers would like to be acknowledged as educational scientists, but those stereotypes underrate the teaching profession, and that teachers might not earn the mindfulness of their day-to-day leadership responsibilities (Boylan, 2016).

2. Purpose and research method

The major objective of the work is to demonstrate that teachers, whatsoever their situation, position or belief may be, are leaders of classrooms and schools without stepping up to formal roles; though they might not be aware. The Toulmin method of argument was employed to support and reason out the main claim. In providing evidence, the author first defined leadership, identified attributes of leadership qualities demonstrated by teachers and the causes behind unconscious

leadership behavior, and finally discussed teacher professionalism if it is the only powerhouse of teacher leadership.

3. Retrospective findings of teacher leadership
3.1. What is leadership?

Leadership is a cultural construct whose definition changes over time based on cultural contexts (Bordas, 2007). This definition may serve to fathom how teachers make sense of leadership within a particular cultural context. Leadership is also conceived as a group quality (Gronn, 2000), which helps the internal management of schools become more collaborative by including teachers in the process (Grant, 2006).

Leadership is seen as central and essential in delivering change and performance for all organizations, including schools (Dinham and Scott, 2000; Alexander, Nadine and Max, 2021). Because of its perceived importance, leadership has been the subject of focus from many angles. Researchers, for instance, put a great deal of time in understanding the nature and importance of leadership in handing a better school service (Madzimure, 2020).

Leadership is abstruse, but it opens up leeway for all teachers to become leaders (Gronn, 2000). The definition of leadership might be abstruse somehow, but fundamentally, leadership is all-inclusive and can be demonstrated by any person at any level irrespective of background, position, experience or qualification (Lipscombe *et al.* 2021). In line with supposition, some scholars state that leadership influence can come from everywhere in a school (Heller and Firestone, 1995). Although leadership has an indirect effect on teaching and student outcome (Openakker and Van Damme, 2007), it is a major predictor of teachers' satisfaction with school-based phenomena, such as supervision, communication and decision-making (Dinham and Scott, 2000). This suggests that it is the individual teacher who has the most influence on student achievement (Dinham and Scott, 2000).

Influence is primarily a leadership outcome (Olushola and Adewum, 2021). Leadership, as it is defined differently by different scholars, encompasses a number of flexibilities for practice to influence. Essentially, leadership is neither about a leader's position nor about the experience (Mujis and Harris, 2007). In addition, it is not circumscribed by certain circumstances or levels in schools (Usher, 1993), and most remarkably it does not draw a borderline between a leader and follower (Gronn, 2003). This suggests that leadership is not constrained to one figure, usually the principal, but rather equally diffused and made available to school stakeholders (Gronn, 2000), and therefore teachers, as a result of practical consequence, one way or another, act as leaders in a particular area (Goleman, 2002), because teachers are capable of becoming leaders (Emira, 2010). Besides, leadership, in principle, bestows professional autonomy for teachers (Day and Harris, 2002), and as a result, teachers may have a tremendous opportunity to exercise leadership without actual promotion or attached formal roles.

The above statements suggest that leadership, like energy, is not finite or restricted by formal positions; it pervades a school culture and is undertaken by whoever seeks and sees an opportunity (Lambert, 1995). Since it is a contagious and universal energy, school community members, including teachers, share the cloth of leadership (Harris, 2002), and consequently, everyone is responsible and accountable within his or her area (Spillane *et al.* 2001).

3.2. Teachers and leadership

Leading a school anywhere in the world is a daunting issue (Rena and Tedla, 2017). It requires the participation, involvement or contribution of teachers. This is so because to build a nation of high-caliber education is fundamentally a matter of good leadership and teaching from teachers.

Teaching and leadership are not disparate things, but rather overlapping constituents. Traditionally, school leadership puts a great deal of focus on principals, but today it is recognized that there can be many leaders in a school concurrently (Dinham and Scott, 2000). Gardner (1993) stated that teaching and leading overlap and can be performed by the same person. Teaching and leading are concurrent acts. If one is teaching, for instance, he or she is leading, too; it is an inevitable act.

Research put a great deal of focus on influence processes versus formal roles. Spillane (2009), for instance, argues that leadership is not necessarily located in formal positions, but it is distributed across school organizations through social interactions. The teaching profession privileges teachers with social interactions as a locus of leadership practice (Spillane *et al.* 2001). In effect, teachers have been transforming from technicians to professionals, from prescribed to constructed, from defensive to responsible, from direction-takers to decision-makers, from solo players to collaborators, from lesson planners to school improvement planners, from reactive to reflective, from implementers to initiators, from followers to empowered and from research consumers to action researchers (Moore and Suleiman, 1997).

Teaching students by its very nature is about positive effects. Teachers employ their position to inspire or instill an appetite in students to learn and explore new ideas. Actually, the basic philosophy of education is rooted in the idea to bring about something new, which, in other words, implies that students are not empty vessels, but rather human beings who have the capacity to germinate, grow and blossom under the umbrella of teacher leadership.

Teachers are also pastors in disseminating information and knowledge while implementing a curriculum. Teachers, however, are not merely disseminators of information and knowledge, but also curriculum monoliths and leading teaching with all the concomitant barriers and misconceptions (Badley, 1986). Teachers are the driving forces of schools, and only leaders can prompt change, influence and transform. As part of their effort, teachers manage, change, mentor, and impart knowledge and noble values to children. The art of teaching, as in leading, involves mission accomplishment. The ultimate goal of teachers, like leaders, is to enthuse students to become self-reliant by honing specific skills, acquiring knowledge and cultivating the right attitudes (James, 1997).

3.3. Attributes of leadership exhibited by teachers

There are two types of teacher-leadership: formal and informal (Emira, 2010). Formal teacher-leadership adverts to the attributes, such as motivating, supervising and monitoring colleagues from positional leaders, while informal teacher-leadership includes practices such as taking initiatives for suggesting new ideas as well as communication skills (Law and Glover, 2000). In this report, the emphasis is, however, only on leadership features or skills demonstrated by teachers within a normal or natural context without teachers being empowered to any position. Some scholars or researchers may call this *informal teacher leadership*, but teachers in a normal sense, if not all, are certified formal professionals who are presciently anticipated somehow to execute school curriculum or preordained expectations.

The teaching profession, by its very nature, bequeaths teachers with a leadership potential to develop and demonstrate it subsequently. Teaching is a complex enterprise that is replete with thought-provoking situations (Stone, 1992). In approaching challenging situations, teachers behave as leaders and heavily draw on their experience to seek out new information and display leadership solutions in teaching.

Leaders have values, goals, morals and vision – so do teachers (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997). Similarly, Emira (2010) expounds that what teachers do may not be different from those of leaders, because teaching and leading overlap (Gardner, 1993). This surmises that the axioms that teachers and leaders adhere to are fundamentally the same. Apparently, teachers and leaders appear different as their names suggest, but the underlying principle bonds them to a similar goal or vision; both are meant to realize the same mission.

Teachers, as leaders, are also decision-makers. It is not disputable that, teachers, on a daily basis, plunge themselves into issues that require exigency and judicious decision-making processes. The level of decision-making ranges from a classroom to a much higher level (Hargeaves, 1979), but they cannot obviate it whatsoever, for they are pedagogy experts, curriculum leaders and developers, and action researchers (Ghamrawi, 2010). Congruently, Lai and Cheung (2014) elucidate that teachers are inquirers, engaging invariably in a first-hand investigation of their teaching problems. Similarly, Mujis and Harris (2007) reported that teachers have been observed taking initiatives and leading school improvement.

When teachers exhibit leadership, they manifest a number of leadership qualities or attributes. First and foremost, they demonstrate a simpatico relationship and appreciate a collaborative setting (Little, 2000). Equally, teachers demonstrate leadership characteristics, such as a strong personality, the ability to deal with issues and decision-making (Emira, 2010). Teachers also exhibit other leadership capacities and qualities, such as values and beliefs (Goddard, 2003), participative skills (Mastrangelo *et al.* 2004), power influencing approach (Yukl, 1998), set themselves as models for others (Bolam, 1990) and eventually they could serve as team leaders, department chairs and curriculum developers (Moore and Suleiman, 1997).

3.4. Teacher professionalism

Teachers derive leadership qualities or attributes not from the programs of teacher leadership, but rather from within their profession. Teacher professionalism is a mitochondrion or powerhouse where teachers draw their leadership qualities or attributes. Bolam (1990) expounds that professional competence in teaching signifies the power to demonstrate leadership behavior.

What is teacher professionalism, anyway? First of all, the terms – profession and professor – are etymologically rooted in Latin to mean *profess,* which means to claim to be knowledgeable in a certain area. In today's work conditions, the need to develop certain standards and benchmarking criteria for all professions has become important for high operational quality, best practice, viable systems, policies and procedures (Krishnaveni, 2007).

In business, professionalism is generally synonymous with success. Generally, professionalism is an ambiguous concept to delimit; its sphere is unqualified and almost applicable to every field. As many pundits note, professionalism is synonymous with occupation, yet occupation is also another broad term, which cannot contain the boundaries of professionalism. Initially, the term professionalism was marginal and held in a reserve for members of churches, governments, militaries and sports. Evetts (2013) affirms that professionalism is reserved for highly trained individuals, such as lawyers, doctors, clergies and teachers. Nowadays, however, we hear it often applied to anyone who has specialized knowledge or someone who endeavors to pursue a full-time occupation.

Some scholars seek to identify the vital nature of professionalism by what professionals do. Downie (1990), for instance, views professionalism as a skill or expertise based on broad knowledge, service, legitimized authority and probity. In education, professionalism is often considered as vocational or a calling, which requires specialized knowledge about a subject matter by intensive academic preparation and self-development.

There is no blueprint for teacher professionalism, however. This is because educational practices do change continuously, but teachers recognize common-sense guidelines to professionalism in certain qualities: competence, commitment and appropriate boundaries, trust and confidentiality, and respect for diversity (Evetts, 2013).

The teaching profession is a social issue and political strategy to promote the status of the teaching profession and revitalize the rapidly changing work environment (Sachs, 2003). Some scholars state that teacher professionalism mainly focuses on respectability and quality service (Hoyle, 2001), achievement of the highest standard (Boyt, 2001), self-control (Barber, 1965) and professional autonomy (David, 2000).

We might use teacher professionalism loosely, but its meaning has a heavyweight, particularly in teacher education. When we say, for instance, someone is a teacher, we mean a number of things: responsibility, accountability, competency, probity, emotional intelligence and life-long learning, among others. These qualities or attributes, in part, define teacher professionalism or create a sense of good image for someone to be named as a teacher-leader. Barber (1965) identified three professional behaviors: a high degree of specialized knowledge, a high degree of self-control and community interest rather than individual self-interest. Similarly, Andy (2000) identified four key stages or features of teacher professionalism. 1) The stage of pre-professional: refers to marginally demanding, but technically simple, and teachers are only expected to carry out the directives of their knowledgeable superiors. 2) The stage of autonomous professionalism: at this stage, teachers have pedagogical freedom and claim an independent practice, and in effect, they choose the methods they thought best for teaching. 3) The stage of a

collegial profession: refers to a strong professional and cultural collaboration to develop a common purpose to cope with uncertainties, complexities and rapid changes. 4) The stage of post-professional: refers to the stage where teachers struggle to maintain professional learning and redefine teacher professionalism.

Teachers as professionals have a great passion for their work, excel at creating exciting classroom environments, connect exceptionally well with students, know what to teach, how to teach, and how to improve, challenge students to reach their full potential, which typically overlaps or signifies a leadership function or work (Stephenson, 2011). Extraordinary teachers find teaching deeply satisfying, and as a result, generate a great zeal to stretch out their capacity and eventually behave as leaders.

Teachers are perceived as true professionals if they exhibit a professional reputation. Ill repute might cost them their job. Conventionally, teachers are preservers of tradition. Communities expect teachers to act professionally, or exhibit certain standards of behavior. So, what makes teachers look like professionals? Is it how they dress, communicate, act, relate or is it only about the mastery of subject matter? There are no stipulations that spell out clearly what a professional teacher should look like, but how they organize, handle, act or relate themselves say a number of things.

Teachers live in a different time zone from the rest of us (Evetts, 2013). To be a professional, one needs a unique approach. Generally, commoners plan or make a New Year's resolution in January. Teachers, on the other hand, go through the same process, but not in January. Every new semester or term, teachers get a fresh start, a new beginning and more challenges to develop personally as well as professionally. On the job site, for instance, teachers come to know who is who. Actually, as novice teachers, there are many things to know ranging from places to people. On top of that, teachers review basic instructional textbooks, plan units, review students' portfolios, consider innovative programs, attend staff development programs, and get to know their communities, among others. Most interestingly, teachers are expected to be well organized in three things: organizing the curriculum, classrooms and materials. Curriculum implementation requires more than just teaching. Creating a user-friendly milieu in classrooms and instructional skills about curriculum planning, school year plan, assignment calendar, and lesson plans, is indispensable for teachers as professionals (Evetts, 2013).

Teachers as competent professionals show up a number of attributes in a classroom, a school and beyond. In this report, a number of competencies were identified and discussed within the teaching profession that ultimately promote teachers as leaders without designated leadership positions. Based on critical analyses and syntheses of theory and prior empirical studies conducted on the subject, we have developed a model for teacher professionalism as illustrated in Figure 1.

3.5. Subject matter mastery

Teacher professionalism is related to proficiency by meeting certain standards in education (Demirkasmoglu, 2010). It is not a stress-free task; it takes a number of years to develop. It is also the composite of many skills that are concocted together. Mastery of subject matter is, for instance, one of the competencies or skills, and yet the starting quality of the rest. Barber (1965) explained mastery as a high degree of specialization and systematic knowledge that ultimately leads to confidence and expert power. Mastery of subject matter is one of the standards related to competence for a successful exercise of an occupation (Englund, 1996).

Subject mastery, however, undergoes a relentless process of differentiation over time; it is not a one-time event or it does not develop overnight. It needs years of training and experience. Teachers as professionals realize that they have just mastered a fraction, and therefore they keep studying, researching, reading scholarly journals, attending conferences, and discussing important ideas to stay up-to-date.

Every time teachers discover something new, they continue to explore the subject matter. Teaching becomes life-long learning. In the long run, as a corollary, teachers assume a leadership position, not by holding a big office, but rather through mastery, otherwise expert power.

3.6. Pedagogical expert

Teachers are primarily leaders in practice or expert leaders (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). They put theories into practice, and interpret curricula for implementation. In classroom situations, for instance, teachers set goals, implement procedures, instruct, guide, facilitate, mobilize, motivate, inspire learners and model behaviors (Grant, 2006).

The course outline spells out the roadmap of a classroom journey. Teachers as leaders are entertainers through a number of teaching methodologies because mastery of subject matter ignites passion in teachers. Pedagogically, teachers embrace the phrase: "show and tell". In doing so, they employ a blend of methods or approaches: presentation, discourse, stories, drama, examples and wits, among others. Teachers, as leaders, model synthesis of philosophy, beliefs and actions to encourage spontaneity, and realize that teaching is learning or vice versa.

Since teaching is learning and learning is teaching, teachers are always part of the learning process. The learning process, in turn, helps teachers and students explore mutually. Such a mutual milieu is conspicuous proof that teaching is making connections to students and future generations by solicitous methodologies. Eventually, however, the whole learning process results in making a connection to the self. More meaningful learning occurs when teachers plan and are immersed into content and deliver it plainly. Orchestrated immersion, active professing and relaxed alertness are to learn and internalize information in a personally meaningful and organized way (Caine and Caine, 1994). Scholarly, teacher-researchers model excitement and commitment to excellence both in research and teaching, and therefore the integration of research and teaching with an application is fundamental to personal commitment, and further emboldens teaching philosophy, methodology and practices.

3.7. Synthesis of subject mastery and pedagogical organization

Combining professional knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in a classroom requires more than a certificate. The fruit of teacher professionalism, as a result of mastery and pedagogical organization that is engendered by pragmatic teaching and research, is delicious, yet characterized by delicacy, as it requires a continuous evolution. Passion, for instance, is a valuable attribute when teachers explode with enthusiasm while teaching. Passion, in other words, is a celebration of academic discipline through teaching. If teachers, however, do not improve upon it in the long run, they may easily lose animation, and thereby burn out or become demoralized. Elements of passion may include good posture, lively facial expression, marvelous voice (tone), a surge of energy and intensity. If that zeal is lost, monotonous and frozen classrooms are the imminent reality.

Effective teaching, otherwise mastery-pedagogical organization, characterizes itself by self-improvement, rapport, communication, rigor, relevance, networking, enjoyment and commitment, among others as depicted in Figure 1. It is a matter of fact that passionate teachers model leadership capacity.

3.7.1. Relevance

Genuine teachers have the propensity to update the teaching material timely and make it significant to students (Nkosi and Adebayor, 2021). Most often, effective teachers ask an important question: do the teaching materials at hand fit students in terms of relevance and connectedness to broader values in a society? They work industriously to connect textbooks to the real world so that students can see beyond the walls of classrooms and the horizon of schools. In other words, teachers labor to examine their respective disciplines from a practical vantage point and assist students to see the outside world. They integrate theories and practices seasoned with other first and vicarious experiences.

3.7.2. Rigor

Good teachers presumably dismiss the cynical conclusion that easy teachers get the highest recognition, adulation, and evaluation from students. Teachers as leaders demand much from their students by challenging and drawing them into reading, tough quizzes, presentations, dialogues and role-playing to work harder. Initially, students may flounder when dealing with tough tasks or assignments, but eventually, with true guidance from teachers, students may attain higher achievement.

3.7.3. Rapport

Teachers as leaders are concerned with relationships and connections among individuals (Mujis and Harris, 2007). Students need a conducive learning atmosphere where they feel secure enough to explore together, try new content, make mistakes, learn from mistakes and develop their own personal style of learning.

Rapport is a relationship term based on common and purposeful influence. Jovial teachers have an affinity to understand, connect, bond and empathize with students and colleagues both professionally and as informal dialogues. In a class, teachers take time to develop rapport through eye contact, moving around a little, asking questions, watching developments, encouraging questions, group discussions, etc. As rapport is an interpersonal relationship, teachers go out of their way to demonstrate leadership capacity within the school, even beyond.

3.7.4. Communication and listening

Teacher professionalism is not about wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase, but rather conducting oneself with effective communication skills, responsibility, accountability and integrity. Responsible teachers are invariably good communicators and listeners. Unfortunately, many teachers tend to dominate the entire classroom session: teaching without listening. Good teachers, however, play a leading role as leaders to share expertise in a timely fashion and view students not as empty vessels as many teachers might think.

Teachers as leaders always find a better way to communicate. They communicate in a two-way process to ensure both internal and external communications. Teachers as leaders are social constructivists and challenged to create a framework of communication in which students are encouraged to think and explore (Brooks and Brooks, 1999).

3.7.5. Networking

The best teachers are consummate leaders. Teachers as leaders engage in school-community relations, that is, to include all school stakeholders, parents and community members in the teaching-learning processes. Networking supplemented by a two-way communication process helps teachers to build an alliance with interested individuals both inside and outside of their schools. It stimulates a fresh and purposeful cerebral connection. In other words, teachers develop a collegial experience towards teaching. At the classroom level, for instance, teachers engage in team teaching, and in effect, students can have more than one perspective about learning a subject matter.

3.7.6. Commitment and self-improvement

Teachers' sense of self-efficacy appeared to be the most motivational factor for explaining learning and teaching practices (Thoonen, 2011) because leadership by teachers is a purposeful effort to maintain a sustainable and auspicious school.

Teachers as leaders are powerful and their commitment to teaching is a lifetime process. Like Olympic athletes, committed teachers are determined and purposeful. Since effective teaching is not an end in itself, their commitment or aim is wide and high. It is true that passionate teachers, most often than not, are open to improvement, and have a plethora of energies to

envisage beyond the horizon. They do not see an end to self-improvement. They weed out archaic approaches to teaching and replace them with fresh and down-to-earth practice. They find it insightful to evaluate past practices and accept constructive criticism, not only from colleagues but also from students.

3.7.7. Enjoyment

Nowadays, we hear constantly about teachers' burnout or demoralization for a number of reasons. Many teachers consider a career change. It is a complicated issue, and there is no particular answer or solution that can suffice. The grounded purpose is, however, the panacea for teachers' problems. Since teaching is purposeful, teachers stop being too serious to relax and embrace the highest meaning. Each time, teachers remind themselves that everything in classrooms and schools is complementary; nothing stands in contraposition. They can see that the whole picture without difficulties. As a result, teachers remain ebullient even under stressful situations. The best qualities of teachers reflect the characteristics of joyful leaders (James, 1997).
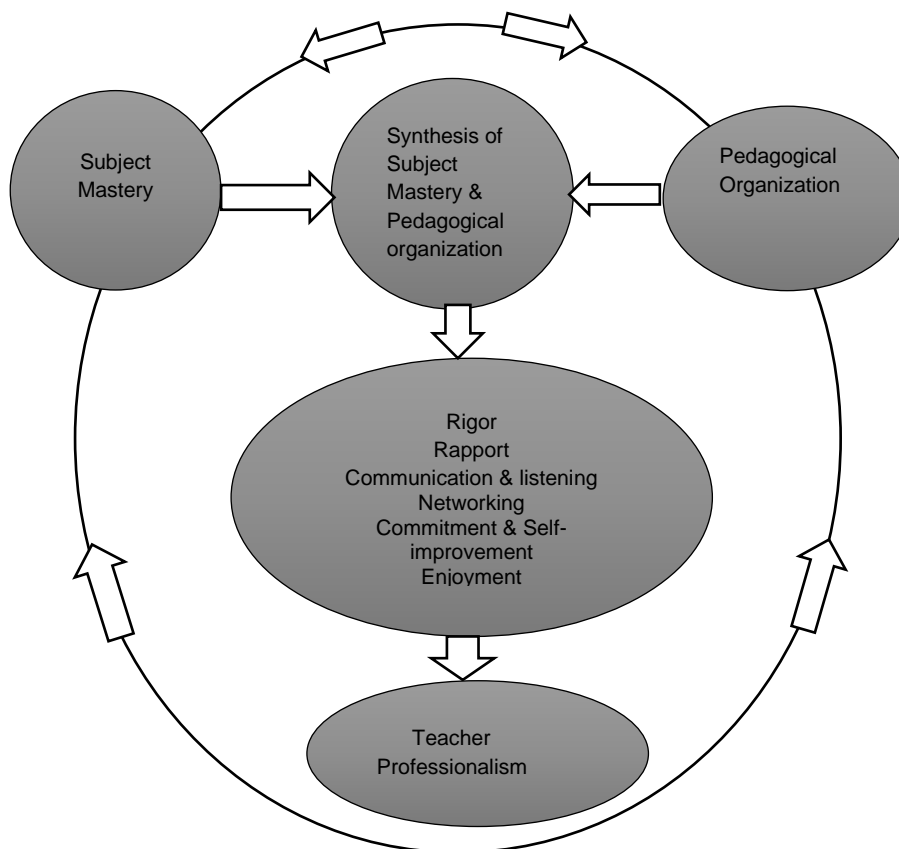

Figure 1. Model of teacher professionalism
Source: Author's own preparation

4. Conclusion

Many of the predominant leadership models acknowledge the need to support teachers' work, particularly in leadership roles, but in general, teachers are self-initiated leaders of their classrooms and schools (Mitra, 2015). On top of that, although in the 1980s and early 1990s, the field of education experienced a push toward decentralization and professionalization of teaching to bring about greater teacher capacity and recognition, teachers have been long participating in important decision-making processes. Childs-Bowen, Moller and Scrivner (2000) assert that

principals are leaders of leaders, in other words, he suggests that teachers are also leaders in schools.

Teachers who are not formally designated as leaders are more accepting and recognized as leaders (Wesely, 1991), because teacher-leadership is more embedded in tasks and roles that do not create artificially, imposed, formal hierarchies and positions (Darling-Hammond *et al.* 1995). In demonstrating their leadership responsibilities, teachers become resource providers, curriculum specialists and catalysts of change in addition to modeling, mentoring, managing and monitoring learning.

Teacher professionalism begets a power of influence (MacCay *et al.* 2001). The teaching profession inherently empowers teachers to influence, solve instructional problems, encourage parent participation, model reflective practice and articulate a vision for improvement, and of course, it formally empowers them to serve as union representatives, department heads and curriculum specialists (York-Barr and Duke, 2004), and this implies that teaching, learning and leading are inseparable (Knight, 2015). Teachers' influence is not only instructional, but also organizational. A teacher as a professional is a pedagogy expert, and has subject mastery and communication skills, and demonstrates qualities of commitment, networking, rapport, rigor, relevance and many more, where most, if not all, are qualities of a good leader.

Scribner and Bradley-Levine (2010) state that teachers, regardless of their position or title, relentlessly influence one another as teaching itself is a particular kind of social relationship. Teachers who engage in sustained collaboration with school stakeholders often function as informal leaders. Processes and products of social interactions are invariably purposeful human acts (Watson and Scrinber, 2007). From their classroom experience, teachers bring strong teaching, organizational and interpersonal skills (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). If teachers are developing professional faculty identity within schools, setting high professional expectations, creating a positive and demanding climate, they are one way or another demonstrating leadership responsibility (Dinham and Scott, 2000). In conclusion, teachers, by their very profession, are leaders.

Programs of teacher leadership may have little impact on teacher authority, but authentic teacher-leadership is inextricably linked to informal influences and changes rather than controlling people (Darling-Hammond *et al.* 1995). Teacher educators and researchers agree that externally driven, isolated workshops and conferences have produced a little impact on teachers' capacity to influence schools (Knight, 2015).

Teacher-leadership is a concept, but professionalism as teaching is practical. Programs of teacher leadership, of course, give teachers more awareness or the mindset to lead in their profession consciously (Gunter, 2003), but it is not operational or functional without restructuring schools, because it can negate support or a culture of collaboration from teachers (Mujis and Harris, 2007).

The best approach to bring about greater teacher consciousness as leaders is, however, to encourage teachers to change instruction, stimulate intellectual consideration, co-construct practices among teachers, facilitate teachers' network, strengthen beliefs, pursue knowledge, refine expertise, develop philosophy, and of course challenge the hierarchical leadership structure (Mitra, 2015).

Developing teachers as leaders is, therefore, an evolutionary process supported by personal understanding, skills and knowledge, and unrestricted practices. On top of that, leadership needs to be invitational based on trust and respect to build supportive school culture (Stoll and Fink, 1995). For teacher-leadership to be successful, it has to be planned deliberately and orchestrated carefully with the fundamental cultural shift in the vision and values of school practice. Mujis and Harris (2007) argued that for teacher-leadership to be practical, it has to be deeply embedded in the culture of schools and persistently rethought and reformed, particularly in relation to teacher education. A failure to do so, however, may result in a dysfunctional school governance and poor performance.

References

Alexander, F., Nadine, K., and Max, L., 2021. Leadership Styles and Leadership Behaviors in Family Firms: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 12(1), pp. 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfbs.2020.100374

Andy, H., 2000. Mixed emotions: teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(8), pp. 811-826. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00028-7

Badley, G., 1986. The Teacher as Change Agent. *Journal of In-service Education*, 12(3), pp. 151-158. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305763860120305

Barber, B., 1965. *Some Problems in the Sociology of the Professions.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Bennis, W., and Goldsmith, J., 1997. *Learning to Lead: A workbook to Becoming a Leader*. London: Nicholas Brealey

Bolam, R., 1990. Recent development in England and Wales. In: B. Joyce, ed., 1990. *Changing school culture through staff development, the 1990 ASCD yearbook.* Minesota: ASCD. pp. 147 –167.

Bordas, J., 2007. *Salsa, soul, and spirit: Leadership for multicultural age.* San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1002/ltl.255

Box, C., Skoog, G., and Dabbs, J. M., 2015. A case study of teacher personal practice assessment theories and complexities of implementing formative assessment. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(5), pp. 956-983. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215587754

Boylan, M., 2016. Deepening system leadership: Teachers leading from below. *Educational Management and Leadership,* 44(1), pp. 57-72. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213501314

Boyt, T., 2001. The role of professionalism in determining job satisfaction in professional services: a study of marketing researchers. *Journal of Service Research*, 3(4), pp. 321-330. https://doi.org/10.1177/109467050134005

Brooks, J. G., and Brooks, M. G., 1999. *In search of understanding: The case for constructivist classroom.* Alexandria, VA: Association For Supervision And Curriculum Development.

Caine, R., and Caine,G., 1994. *Making connections: Teaching and the human brain.* Menlo Park, N.J.: Addison-Wesley.

Chavez, C. I., 2017. Teaching leaders to lead themselves: An emerging leader exercise. *Management Teaching Review*, 2(1), pp. 80-91. https://doi.org/10.1177/2379298116678202

Childs-Bowen, D., Moller , G., and Scrivner, J., 2000. Principals: Leaders of leaders. *NASSP Bulletin*, pp. 27-34. https://doi.org/10.1177/019263650008461606

Darling-Hammond, L., Bullmaster, M. L., and Cobbs, V.L., 1995. Rethinking teacher leadership through professional development schools. *Elementary School Journal*, 96, pp. 87-106. https://doi.org/10.1086/461816

David, C., 2000. *Professionalism and ethics in teaching.* London: Taylor and Francis Books Ltd.

Day, C, and Harris, A., 2002*. Teacher leadership, reflective practice and school improvement.* In: K. A., Leithwood, and P., Hallinger, eds. 2002. *Second international handbook of educational administration.* Dordrecht: Kluwer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0375-9_32

Demirkasmoglu, N., 2010. Defining teacher orofessionalism from different perspectives. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, pp. 2047-2051. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.444

Dinham, S., and Scott, C., 2000. Moving into the third, outer domain of the teacher satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(4), pp. 379-396. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230010373633

Downie, R. S., 1990. Professions and professionalism. *Journal of Philosophy of Education.* 24(2), pp. 147-159. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.1990.tb00230.x

Emira, M., 2010. Leading to decide or deciding to lead? Understanding the relationship between teacher leadership and decision making. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 38(5), pp. 591-612. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143210373738

Englund, T., 1996. Are professional teachers a good thing? In: I. F., Goodson, A., Hargreaves, eds. 1996. *Teachers' professional lives.* London: Falmer Press.

Evetts J., 2013. Professionalism: Value and ideology. *Current Sociology*, 61(5-6), pp. 778-796. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392113479316

Gardner, J., 1993. *On leadership.* New York: Free Press.

Ghamrawi, N., 2010. No teacher left behind: Subject leadership that promotes teacher leadership. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 38(3), pp. 304-320. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143209359713

Gibson, A., 2014. Principals' and teachers' views of spirituality in principal leadership in three primary schools. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 42(2), pp. 520-535. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213502195

Goddard, J., 2003. *Leadership in the postmodern era.* London: Sage

Goleman, D., 2002. *The new leaders: Transforming the art of leadership into the science of results.* London: Little Brown.

Grant, C., 2006. Emerging voices on teacher leadership: Some South African View. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 34(4), pp. 511-532. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143206068215

Greenier, V. T., and Whitehead, G. E. K., 2016. Towards a model of teacher leadership in ELT: Authentic leadership in classroom practice. *RELC Journal*, 47(1), pp. 719-95. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631203

Grissom, J. A., Baranen, B., and Mitan, H., 2019. Principal sorting and the distribution of principal quality. *AERA Open*, 5(2), pp. 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419850094

Gronn, P., 2000. Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership. *Educational Management and Administration*, 28(3), pp. 317-381. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X000283006

Gronn, P., 2003. *The new work of educational leaders: Changing leadership practice in an era of school reform.* London: Sage.

Gunter, H., 2003. Teacher leadership: prospects and possibilities. In: M, Brundrett, N. Burton, and R., Smith, eds, 2003 . *Leadership in education.* London: Sage. pp. 118-131.

Hargeaves, H. D., 1979. *Phenomenological approach to classroom decision making.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Harris, A., 2002. *Distributed leadership: leading or misleading?* Keynote Address, Annual Conference, BELMAS, Aston University.

Heller, M. and firestone, W., 1995. Who is in charge here? Sources of leadership for change in eight schools. *Elementary School Journal*, 96(1), pp. 65-86. https://doi.org/10.1086/461815

Hosgbur, T., and Yorulmaz, Y., 2015. The relationship between teachers' leadership behaviors and emotional labor. *Journal of Educational Science Research*, 5(2), pp. 165-190. https://doi.org/10.12973/jesr.2015.52.9

Hoyle, E., 2001. Teaching: prestige, status and esteem. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 29(2), pp. 139-159. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X010292001

Hrnjic, A., 2016. The transformation of higher education: evaluation of CRM concept application and its impact on student satisfaction. *Eurasian Business Review*, 6, pp. 53-77. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40821-015-0037-x

James, D., 1997. Teachers and leaders. *The Journal of Leadership Studies,* 4(4), pp. 141-144. https://doi.org/10.1177/107179199700400411

Katzenmeyer, M., and Moller, G., 2001. *Awakening the sleeping giant. Helping teachers develop as leaders.* 2nd eds. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Knight, S. L., 2015. School-based teacher learning. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66(4), pp. 301-303. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487115596828

Krishnaveni, R., 2007. Educators' professional characteristics. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 15(2), pp. 149-161. https://doi.org/10.1108/09684880710748910

Lai, E., and Cheung, D., 2014. Enacting teacher leadership: The role of teachers in bringing about change. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, pp. 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214535742

Lambert, L., 1995. *Towards a theory of constructivist leadership*. New York: Teacher College Press.

Law, S., and Glover, D., 2000. *Educational leadership and learning: practice, policy and research*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Lipscombe K., Tindall-Ford S., and Lamanna J., 2021. School middle leadership: A systematic review. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220983328

Little, J. W., 2000. Assessing the prospect for teacher leadership. In: the Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership, Chicago, IL: Jossey-Bass. pp. 390-415.

MacCay, L., Flora, J., Hamilton, A., and Riley, J., 2001. Reforming schools through teacher leadership: a program for classroom teachers as agents of change. *Educational Horizon Spring*, pp. 135-142.

Madzimure, J., 2020. Higher education leadership practices and challenges in a changing world: the case of a university of technology. Eurasian Journal of Business and Management, 8(4), pp. 282-291. https://doi.org/10.15604/ejbm.2020.08.04.001

Mangin, M. M., 2007. Facilitating elementary principals' support for instructional teacher leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(3), pp. 319-357. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X07299438

Mastrangelo, A., Eddy. E. R., and Lorenzet, S. J., 2004. The importance of personal and professional leadership. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 25(5/6), pp. 435-451. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730410544755

Mitra, D. L., 2015. One size does not fit all: differentiating leadership to support teachers in school reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 51(1), pp. 96-132. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X14521632

Moore, R., and Suleiman, M.,1997. Active leadership in schools: teachers as leaders. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 4(1), pp. 122-131. https://doi.org/10.1177/107179199700400110

Mujis, D., and Harris, A., 2007. Teacher Leadership- improvement through empowerment? An overview of the Literature. *Educational Management and Administration*, 31(4), pp. 437-448. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X030314007

Nkosi, T. P., and Adebayor, R. O., 2021. Teachers' perceptions of parental involvement among selected secondary schools in the pinetown district, Durban. *Eurasian Journal of Business and Management*, 9(1), PP. 61-70. https://doi.org/10.15604/ejbm.2021.09.01.005

Olushola, A. A., and Adewumi, S. A., 2021. The impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on teachers' performance: evidence from selected tvet colleges in Lagos, Nigeria. *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(3), pp. 176-188. https://doi.org/10.15604/ejss.2021.09.03.004

Openakker, M-C., and Van Damme, J., 2007. Do school context, student composition and school leadership affect school practice and outcome in secondary education? *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(2), pp. 179-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701208233

Rena, R., and Tedla. B., 2017. Teachers and their Educational Leadership in Organizational Change and Development: An Eritrean Case Study. *Indian Journal of Science & Technology*, 10(44), pp. 1-15. https://doi.org/10.17485/ijst/2017/v10i44/117679

Sachs, J., 2003. *The activist teaching profession*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Scribner, M. P., and Bradley-Levine, J., 2010. The Meaning(s) of teacher leadership in an urban high school reform. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 46(4), pp. 491-522. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X10383831

Sergiovanni, T. J., 2001. *Principalship: A reflective practice perspective*. 4th eds. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Spillance, J. P., 2006. *Distributed leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Spillane, J., Halverson, R., and Diamond, J., 2001. Investigating school leadership practice: a distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 30(3), pp. 23-28. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X030003023

Stephenson, R., 2011. *Extraordinary teachers: The essence of excellent teaching*. Andrews McMeel Publishing.

Stoll, L., and Fink, D., 1995. *Changing our schools: Linking school effectiveness and school improvement*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Stone E., 1992. *Quality teaching: A sample of cases*. London: Routledge.

Stronge, J. H., 1988. The elementary school principalship: a position in transition? *Principal*, 67(5), pp. 32-33.

Thoonen, E. J., 2011. The role of teacher motivation, organizational factors and leadership practices. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(3), pp. 496-536. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11400185

Usher, R., 1993. *Experiential learning or learning from experience: does it make a difference?* In: D., Boud, R., Cohon, and D., Walker, eds., 1993. Using experience of learning. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Watson, S. T., and Scrinber, J. P., 2007. Beyond distribute leadership: Collaboration, interaction, and emergent reciprocal influence. *Journal of School Leadership*, 17, pp. 443-468. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460701700404

Wesely, P. A., 1991. *Teachers who lead: The rhetoric of reform and the realities of practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

York-Barr, J., and Duke, K., 2004. What do we know about teacher leadership? findings from two decades of scholarships. *Review of Education Research*, 74(3), pp. 255-316. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074003255

Yukl, G., 1998. *Leadership in organizations.* 2nd eds. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.