

# Transformational Leadership: The New Wave for Teacher Leaders

## Abstract

This paper is purely conceptual and is based on available literature in this area. It focuses on effect of teacher leadership on students' performance. The concept of teacher leadership is gaining importance as a powerful strategy for improving performance of teachers and students in classrooms and in creating a strong bond between teachers and taught. Out of two approaches- instructional and transformational- literature review shows positive contribution of transformational leadership in enhancing effectiveness of teacher leader. Also, concept of inclusive leadership can be effectively applied to the organizations imparting education. Impact of emotional intelligence for the same was also evident in literature. A teacher not only imparts education but also focuses on holistic development of students. This becomes more important in today's digitized age where the teacher has to constantly focus on rapid changes taking place in the environment to prepare students for the future. Two prepositions have been presented based on literature review which can be validated by further empirical studies.

**Keywords:** Teacher Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence.

## Introduction

"We find indispensable the role of teachers as purveyors of knowledge and values and as community leaders responsible for the future of our young. We should do everything in our power to support them and to learn from them" (UNESCO, 2003). With in the ambit of on ground situation of our educational institutions, the efforts of furthering the cause of education to all the bright minds reminds us of the challenges related to the role of teachers and education providers (UNESCO, 2004).

Serving the current needs of the organizations requires educational institutes to accurately predict the future needs of these organizations vis-a-vis the quality and types of human resource required and develop their students based on these predictions. Educational institutes should understand the needs of organizations and respond accordingly. In this manner they will be able to address the industry institute gap in an effective way. This is more important in management education because whatever is taught in class is directly converted to the job performance.

Also, the current business environment is very dynamic and involves lot of job stress. Therefore we need individuals who are innovative, mature, and emotionally stable with effective decision making ability. Hence the role of teachers becomes important in developing individuals with these qualities who would be facing the challenges once they enter corporate environment. Now-a-days students have to compete globally. The focus has shifted from thinking locally to being global citizen. Due to advancement in technology accessibility to huge amount of information through internet, websites, emails, networking etc. has become easy. This has changed the equation between teachers and students. Teacher student interaction has become a two way process where the teacher too has become a learner. The role of a teacher has been enhanced to being a leader also.

A question arises here, i.e. what makes a teacher effective enough to deal with these paradigm shifts and develop students into competent individuals. One of the critical factors identified by researchers is leadership, apart from other required skills, more so transformational leadership.

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Leadership effectiveness is a measure of successful influence exerted by one or more people that are in pivotal role, in accomplishing shared objectives at the end of the process in a way that is beneficial and personally satisfying for all those involved (Fenimore, 2012). For the the institutes, industry and the teaching profession in itself engaged in serving the needs of students, leadership role of the teachers is essential. This can be done by teacher leaders as they can influence the various processes involved in teaching. This in turn will lead to increased student achievement, better institute-teacher-student relationship, improved decision making skills and gear up the teaching profession for the future.

#### **Aim of The Study**

The aim of this study is to explore the role of Teacher Leadership attributes and emotional intelligence on overall effectiveness of a Teacher and suggest a theoretical foundation for subsequent empirical studies.

#### **Appreciating Leadership Trait of a Teacher**

The scope of the term 'Teacher Leadership' in various literatures is often overlapping and competing. To explain teacher leadership (Wasley, 1991) has focused on the ability of teacher to encourage colleagues to attempt those thing which they probably would not consider to do in normal course when the influence of leader is not available. (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001) observed that the teachers who identify themselves among the community of learners, who lead from within and beyond the scope of a classroom and contribute towards the cause of influencing others, thereby they work to improve educational practices, are actually the teacher leaders. Unlike traditional notions of leadership, a contrasting approach has been adopted by (Boles & Troen, 1992) to define teacher leadership. Teacher-leadership has been defined by them as a subset of collective-leadership in which a teacher develops skills and expertise by working in collaboration with peers.

(Iordanoglou, 2007) Collaborative teaching practices in educational institutes can be effectively promoted by Teacher leadership and such institutes are more likely to produce improved decision making and even higher achievement by students. The Teachers can bring about the holistic development of their students. To become an agent of change, the teacher leaders should not limit themselves on the development of the Intellectual capabilities of a child, they should also attempt to make their students imbibe social skills and emotional abilities.

The reforms are happening all across the globe pertaining to education have recognized the role of teachers as leaders as central and critical to any attempt of achieving desired result. It has been observed that the emotionally sound teachers are effective as teacher leaders because of their ability to assess and managing their own emotions as well as their students' emotional requirements. They can effectively deal with the feelings of frustrations, anger and have better adaptability traits to tackle different situations aptly.

It is highly likely that a skilled and committed teacher leaders can help shape better teaching and learning by creating and sustaining high-quality learning environment.

Teacher leadership can be studied as a set of behaviors and characteristics. These may include exemplary classroom instruction, sound pedagogical knowledge and research based knowledge about teaching (Sherrill, 1999). A teacher leader should be "open to new ways of doing things" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Besides focusing on the students, a good teacher leader should also "mentor and coach other teachers", engage in "professional development and review school practice" and be involved in "school level decision making" (Berry & Ginsburg, 1990).

Teacher-leaders are "individuals acclaimed not only for their pedagogical excellence, but also for their influence in stimulating change and creating improvement in the schools and socio-economically disadvantaged communities in which they work" (Crowther, 1997).

#### **Transformational Leadership**

Two major approaches concerning the concept of educational leadership are instructional and transformational leadership. Recent trend is focused on reforming educational organizations through by empowering them with qualities of shared leadership skills in a organizational setup. It has shifted from instructional to transformational. "Transformational leadership focuses on developing the organization's capacity to innovate." The transformational approach is focused on nurturing a collective approach and shared vision among learners for adapting to a change (Hallinger, 2010).

The question that arises is - who are transformational leaders and how can we identify teacher leaders? What are the set of characteristics and behaviour that are exhibited by such teachers? Various researches related to leadership show that transformational-leadership style has an affirmative impact on followers' (learners') satisfaction and efforts (Bass & Avolio, 1990) which in turn will lead to enhanced performance. This is so because teacher leaders are able to inspire others, raise the expectation levels that the students have of themselves, instill enthusiasm in them, build trust and rapport and promote their growth. The subjects then become open to new ideas and are encouraged to pursue new ways of doing things, may be by questioning the existing processes. They are resourceful and are able to build a support system from all the levels in the organization, be it college management, colleagues or the students. The leadership qualities possessed by teacher leaders automatically lead to excellent performance in classrooms as they are readily accepted by their followers. Therefore, teacher leaders command respect because they are good classroom performers. (York-Barr & Duke, 2004)

In a detached researches conducted by (Ojode, Walumbwa & Kuchinke 1999), (Walumbwa & Ojode 2000) and (Pounder, 2004) points towards a positive relationship for a teacher leader between

“transformational leadership exhibited” and the “exemplary performance” in a classroom setup.

Among the various factors that impact leadership effectiveness, emotional intelligence has emerged as a crucial component for predicting leadership effectiveness in various contexts.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be called as a skill which enables one to identify, assess, and manage emotions of oneself, others and that of group. EI has been undertaken by (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) as an ability of a person to perceive, understand, and integrate emotions to facilitate thinking and promote personal growth. EI is composed of constructs like self awareness, ability of managing moods, self-motivation, and social skills such as empathy, cooperation and leadership. An individual with high EQ will be able to decipher the emotions and feelings and use them to facilitate his cognitive abilities like problem solving and can adjust his task priorities according to his moods. Such people have the ability to understand how emotions evolve over the lifetime as they are sensitive to emotional changes that take place with different experiences.

Travers & Cooper (1996) have mentioned that emotional intelligence as the ability to effectively apply creativity, trust, information, the acumen and emotions as the source of human energy to sense, understand and influence others. According to Kalyanasundaram & Iyer (2015) the positive association between emotional-intelligence and effectiveness of a style of teacher-leadership has been demonstrated by sufficient number of researches in an education setup. Ironically, given the

**Preposition 1:** Transformational Leadership among teachers positively impacts students’ performance

**Preposition 2:** Emotional intelligence has an association with transformational leadership effectiveness.

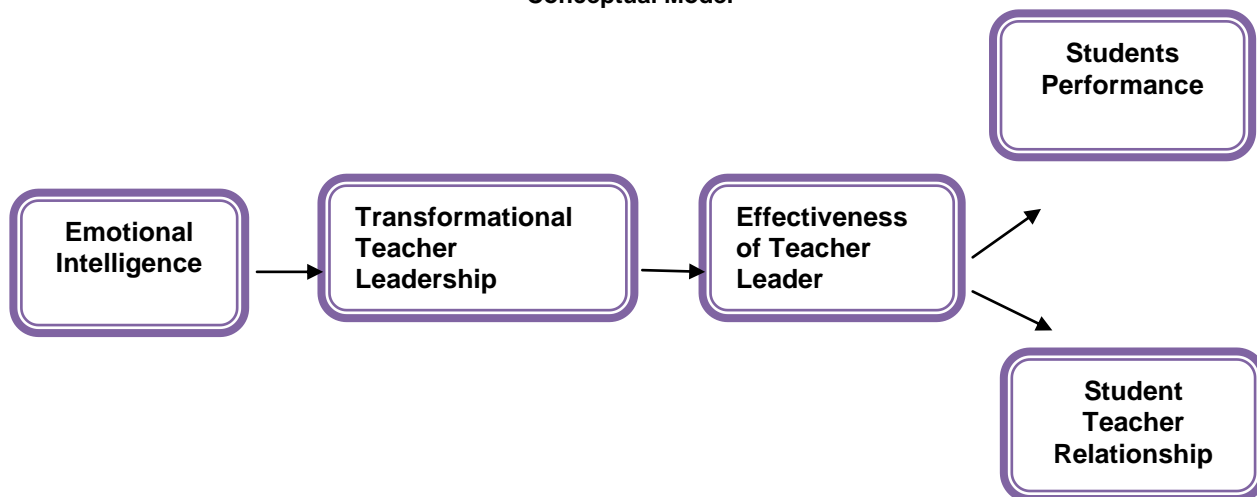
evidences which support the growing incidences of teachers intents to resign, due to stress and psychoogical burnout, there is a need felt to examine the influence of emotional-intelligence on teachers.

In the area of education, (Raju and Srivastava 1994) observed that the factors such as self-motivation and inner control pertaining to the intra-personal dimension of emotional-intelligence were able to distinguish the teachers at secondary level on the basis of their commitment towards their teaching profession. (Raju & Srivastava 1994) further found that a teacher who manages to forge and sustain appreciable relationships with colleagues, students, and management usually feel more attached to their institution. There are studies to indicate that organizational commitment which is in turn manifestation of Organisational environment has conclusive association with varied outcomes, such as lower absenteeism rate, decreased turnover, increased job performance, and increased organizational citizenship behavior. (Rastogi & Renu, 2009) Individuals with high emotional intelligence exhibit behaviour which leads to higher involvement, commitment, innovativeness, resourcefulness and are good team players, possess better ability to handle/control situations, have better understanding of followers, themselves and the organisational environment. These qualities lead to better and effective performance of the individual.

**Preposition**

Two prepositions have been presented on the basis of literature review.

**Conceptual Model**



**Implications**

This study aims at understanding the transformational aspect of leadership and emotional quotient of a teacher which would help in explaining the differences among effectiveness of teachers in terms of their leadership qualities and capability to deal maturely with students at emotional level.

For practitioners (provided prepositions get empirical support) this study would help to identify and

screen teacher leaders on the basis of characteristics possessed by them and the type of behaviors exhibited by them in different situations over a period of time. The process of recruitment, selection and promotion of teachers may be revised to incorporate such measures which would help in identifying better prospective candidates. Since studies on transformational leadership have shown that the transformational qualities can be developed in an

individual to a certain extent, institutes can accordingly design the training programs for their teachers to become teacher leaders and enhance their leadership capabilities that would in turn result in enhanced performance of the student as well as the teacher himself. Also it would in result in better student teacher relationship.

This becomes all the more important as the time and amount of interaction between teacher and student has drastically reduced. If we go back to our 'Gurukul' system of teaching, the role of a Guru was like that of a parent. He was responsible for all round development of the 'shishya'. Also, as the students had to leave their home and stay at their Gurus' ashram, they were in constant interaction with each other. This resulted in strong bonding between the two. But now with advent of technology, especially communication technology and digitization, this interaction has been drastically reduced and it will be further reduced in coming times. So the teachers should be able to create strong impact on students within a short span of contact time. Hence the role of being transformational leaders has assumed greater meaning for teachers in today's digitized era.

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