

Review article

TEACHER AS A LEADER IN MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Aleksandra Milanović, Sanja Anđelković, Aleksandar Stojadinović

Pedagogical Faculty in Vranje, University of Niš, Serbia

Abstract. *Leadership is a complex activity in the education system that can best be described as a way of responding and adapting to the challenges faced by the entire education system. Our paper will emphasize the importance of the role of the teacher as a leader, who is increasingly shifting from a lecturer to a manager of learning and instruction. The goal of this paper is to present the teacher as a leader in the modern age. The research tasks are: 1. To present the types of leadership specific to teaching (transformational, transactional, and adaptable); 2. To identify teacher leadership strategies and competencies; 3. To discuss the impact of teacher leadership activities on student achievement. The reason for the research of the above-mentioned segments of leadership, in the field of teaching, lies in the fact that the education system is complex, flexible and open to change, and therefore in the near future we can expect a time when students will have the main role in organizing and realizing their own learning. A teacher who has the qualities of a good and efficient leader will be able to work effectively with these students.*

Key words: *leadership, teacher, types of leadership, student achievement*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership derives from the theory of complexity, which offers strategies used for stimulating efficient organizational action and enables the research of behavior on social media, which is of great importance for today's way of functioning and acting in all aspects of life and work, including the education system. Therefore, it should be emphasized that leadership rests on the premises of complexity theory as “the science of systems that are in complex interaction... and their influence on the emergence, innovation and their effectiveness” (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001, p. 389).

All segments of human work imply an organized, planned, and collaborative way of functioning of all participants in order to achieve welfare for the entire organization. At the

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Corresponding author: Aleksandra Milanović

Pedagogical Faculty in Vranje, University in Niš, Partizaanska 14, Vranje, Serbia

Phone: +381 17 422 960 • E-mail: aleksandram@pfvr.ni.ac.rs

head of every organization or institution is a leader who monitors, leads and guides its activities, functioning, and movement in accordance with changes and novelties (Mohamed, 2009). The efficiency of the organization and employee efficiency in that institution largely depend on the way of management and therefore also on the personal predispositions of the person at the head of that institution and his attitude towards the employees. Although the aforementioned is characteristic of all spheres of human work, this paper will focus on the role of leaders in the education process, looking at it from a different perspective. Namely, the paper will not deal with the importance of leadership at the level of the school as an institution, i.e., the role of the school principal, but will discuss the need, importance, and qualities of teachers in which we recognize the leadership abilities and influence that the teacher as a leader can have at the school level and above all the students he works with. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to emphasize the importance of the leadership role of teachers in modern education.

The school director, who is most often referred to as a leader in the literature, has the task and obligation to respond to the needs of employees. Likewise, the teacher, as someone who is at the head of the class, should respond to the needs of students (Kin & Kareem, 2019), but also colleagues, all in accordance with the requirements of modern society. Given that a leader with his expertise, interpersonal skills, and access to the necessary resources contributes to the community he leads (Printy, 2008), he must have a vision of how to turn ideas into reality (Mohamed, 2009). This makes school leaders the main agents of change who maintain a balance between external demands and the school needs (Kin & Kareem, 2019). Teacher as a leader is equally important, especially if we take into account that he helps create a link between the students and the community. "The concept of leadership in a teacher's work is rather uncertain" (Printy, 2008, p. 13). Although the importance and need for effective leadership in the education process has been emphasized for a long time, the definitions of the teacher as a leader are quite scarce. For this reason, this paper will analyze the role of the teacher as a leader and look at his leadership contribution to the school community, primarily to the class, i.e., the group of students he "manages".

The teacher plans, organizes, and implements the instruction process, is actively involved in all stages of it, monitors and evaluates student achievements, but also his professional performance, which we recognize as his basic leadership activities. The teacher promotes learning, manages resources in the classroom, motivates and guides students in the process of acquiring knowledge, and all of this, in fact, represents the key elements of leadership behavior. The teacher as a leader is supposed to challenge the students to become active in achieving goals with "rigorous and meaningful tasks, leading students to solve them" (Barkley, et al., 2001). We conclude that innovation, openness to change and creativity are the key qualities of a teacher as a good leader.

Effective leadership facilitates fitting into new situations and adapting work in changed circumstances, which enables the sustainability of the education system. Since the instruction process has undergone numerous changes in the past two years, from organization to the realization and evaluation, it is evident what kind of contribution a teacher can make in his leadership position to the further course of the instruction process, regardless of whether we are talking about traditional education or digital education. The purpose of leadership in the instruction process is to set direction for action and exert influence (Khan, et al., 2009), while the way of achieving this and the personality of the one who leads the instruction process further result in different types of leadership where we can recognize the modern teacher, which will be discussed in the text below.

2. TYPES OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP STYLES

Demands and changes in modern society cause adjustments in all segments of education. The concept of leadership has its categories, types and principles since ancient times. Literature on education explains several types of leadership, including transformational, transactional, adaptive, moral, authentic, authoritarian, laissez-faire leadership, administrative and action-oriented leadership (Antonopoulou, et al., 2021; Putra, et al., 2021; Mirayani, et al., 2019: 172; Baltaci & Balei, 2017; Jovanovic & Ciric, 2016; Khan, 2017; MGGe, Hawort, & Maginture, 2014; Day & Sammons, 2013; Aydin, Sarier & Uysal, 2013, pp. 806-811; Mingaine, 2012; Oğuz, 2010; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2002; Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001).

When it comes to the education process, the division into transformational, transactional and adaptive leadership is significant for the teacher-leader. The transactional leadership style is focused on the past and tradition (Oguz, 2010). This is the most common type of leadership between teachers and students, which is based on a leader-follower relationship. The teacher's role is to assign tasks, give assignments and activities to students, which he/she evaluates at the end. It is well-known that the transactional leadership model significantly motivates students to achieve goals (Khan, 2017). Unlike transactional leadership that provides a routine and stable learning environment, transformational leadership requires a responsible attitude of the leader and an innovative environment (Putra, et al., 2021). The common feature of these two types of leadership is the positive effect on teacher innovation (Putra, et al., 2021). Transformational leadership is focused on arranging and organizing classes in accordance with existing rules and standards (Oguz, 2010). At the micro level, this type of leadership emphasizes the emotional reactions of students to the leader's vision, while at the macro level, it views the leader as a behavior manager, providing a link between the leader's behavior and the organizational culture of the group he leads (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2002), bringing positive changes to the school staff and students, and as such it implies active, insightful and enthusiastic leaders (Mingaine, 2012), in our case teachers. The transformational leadership style is the most effective and suitable for guiding students (Jovanovic and Ciric, 2016), and is characteristic of this current age of intensive use of digital technology in education, both for the organization and guidance of the education process, and for the acquisition of knowledge by students (Halkiopoulus, 2021). Adaptive leadership refers to leadership that adapts to accompanying changes (Baltaci & Balei, 2017). This type of leadership allows institutions to plan changes by taking into account all factors that influence leadership (Khan, 2017), considering the situation and choosing the most appropriate activities (Khan, 2017) and emphasizing the importance of the environment in addition to the leader-follower relationship.

Considering the modern tendencies and numerous changes that took place in education, a separate category of leadership has emerged in the last few years, as a type of educational leadership, and it is called electronic leadership (Khan, 2017; Mohamed, 2009; Klein, 2020; Mingaine, 2012). This type of leadership is extremely important for teachers, and it does not deviate much from the traditional concept of leadership, but it differs from it based on the environment it is organized in and in relation to the way of communication that is mediated by modern technology. It is, therefore, a type of interaction with and leading of a certain group, in our case a group of students, in altered circumstances, by using digital technology. This is supported by the fact that schools are constantly faced with numerous challenges and the influence of new technology (Khan, 2017). Mohamed (Mohamed, 2009) emphasizes that the information age requires leadership to be a complex and adaptable process, and according to

this author, the intensive use of information technology changes the very concept of leadership. The first change, which is also the main feature the digital technology leadership, is the transition from face-to-face interaction to interaction through information technology.

This is a new type of connection between the leader and those he leads through electronic channels, but it still implies the possession of traditional leadership skills, attitudes and knowledge (Mohamed, 2009), therefore, the leader's role and responsibility do not change. The main difference between electronic leadership and traditional leadership is a quick and flexible reaction of leaders in networked structures, that is, communities (Klein, 2020). There is a mutual connection when it comes to leadership and the implementation of information and communication technology (ICT) in the instruction process. Leadership is changed and supplemented by the digital competence of the leader, in our case the teacher, while on the other hand, the way and level of using modern technology for teaching purposes depends on the personal characteristics and attitudes of the leader. Therefore, foreign researchers point to the necessity of daily use of digital technology by school leaders, emphasizing that modern infrastructure and professional development contribute to the leadership skills of teachers (Mingaine, 2012).

The categorization of leadership by Grint (Grint, 2005 according to MGGe, Hawort & Maginture, 2014) is interesting, and it singles out personality-oriented leadership in which the individual's personal qualities come to the fore; leadership as a result, or leadership focused on expected outcomes; leadership focused on structure, system and organizational skills, and leadership as a process related to interpersonal relationships.

Each of the above-mentioned types of leadership contributes to the functioning of the organization, school, and class. During the instruction process, the teacher can certainly recognize the elements of leadership behavior in the relationship with students. In everyday work with students, the role of the teacher is obvious, and it relies on a transactional way of guiding students. However, as teachers are increasingly expected to be innovative, to create an authentic and stimulating learning environment, a transformational way of managing and organizing instruction is an indispensable aspect. And in order for all of the above to be effective and significant for student achievement, the teacher should accept new things and, accordingly, initiate and support students in the learning process. The student is already in a situation where he finds sources of information on his own, chooses the relevant ones, and then recognizes their quality and the need to learn certain content. This is where the importance of adaptive teacher leadership becomes evident. Halkiopoulus (Halkiopoulus, 2021) emphasizes the need and importance of using digital technology for adaptive leadership. We can conclude that a teacher as a leader cannot be strictly characterized as a leader who acts according to one of the given types of leadership. On the contrary, he should and can use in his work all the mentioned types of leadership. In this way, he promotes his professional progress, improves himself and, most importantly, contributes to the increase of student achievement.

3. TEACHER LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND COMPETENCES

More and more efforts are being made to make students more independent in the learning process. The student will need to organize learning by himself, often find the material from which he will learn, and such a student does not need a teacher who will give ready-made knowledge and share information, on the contrary, he needs a teacher who will

teach him how to self-manage the learning process. A modern teacher should know how to support and guide students through the learning process (Nessipbayeva, 2012). A teacher leader in the modern education system sets goals, organizes, manages, monitors and builds relationships with other members of the school community” (Mingaine, 2012). In this we find the need to highlight the leadership strategies that a teacher should possess.

A leader inspires and empowers others (Ossiannilsson, 2018), he should think holistically, outside the framework of the organization he leads in order to achieve stable results, to specify priorities and devise proper activities for their realization, as well as to communicate with the “led“ in real time (Gummerson, 2015). In order for a teacher to be a good leader, he must first of all see himself as someone who instigates changes in the organization, he must act as an advocate for the change he wants to achieve, he must have an interest in the issues that are articulated and have leadership skills to motivate others in the process of change (Ferreira & Davis, 2015, p. 204). A good leader makes a balance between what is required and expected from the institution, between the demands placed before the institution and what would be most beneficial to the institution that he leads (Ossiannilsson, 2018).

Teacher is a leader because he participates in collaborative activities at the school level, and identifies areas that need improvement. The competencies of teacher leaders in the modern age are reflected in assessing student progress, preparing and planning lessons, taking care of the classroom climate and managing student behavior (Nessipbayeva, 2012). Specific leadership competencies of teachers are: management of learning, integrity and responsibility, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and innovation, decision making, problem solving, change management, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, emotional intelligence (Kin & Kareem, 2019).

By addressing the concept of leadership, Bryiman (Bryiman, 2007, pp. 696-704) defines the behavioral characteristics of an effective leader:

1. Strategic vision – the leader gives precise guidelines that the guided individuals should adhere to in order to achieve the goals.
2. Specifies the direction of the desired changes, this is a continuation of the previous form of behavior, which means that the leader shows interest in the level of readiness of the group he leads for inclusion and action in the desired direction.
3. Consideration – implies a caring and close relationship with the group he leads.
4. Fair treatment with integrity – a decent and confidential relationship with the leaders.
5. Trustworthiness and personal integrity.
6. Encouraging open communication – providing opportunities for those led to participate in decision-making and to discuss current topics on an equal footing with the leader.
7. Effective communication about the direction of changes.
8. Exemplary behavior – leaders are role models for guided groups. With their actions, they set an example for the group and reflect credibility.
9. Creating a collaborative and encouraging atmosphere.
10. Improving the goals of the guided group inside and outside the organization.
11. Giving proper feedback on what has been achieved.
12. Provision of resources and adjustment of workload to stimulate learning and research.
13. Getting recognition for what has been achieved.

This author emphasizes that the specified forms of behavior are general, that the personal integrity of the leader comes first, and that they have credibility to be researchers themselves. These types of behavior of leaders in higher education institutions are also important for

teachers working in primary and secondary schools. Primary and secondary school teachers can be seen as leaders who lead classroom communities, and it is no less important to highlight the importance and need for leadership skills and knowledge to these teachers as well.

The qualities of a leader that every teacher should have according to the authors Goolamally & Ahmad (2014) are as follows: integrity, principles, and modesty; looking into the future, predictability, and the motivator role; inspiration; competence in the sense of having the necessary knowledge and skills, orientation to action and sociability and self-efficacy. Based on all of the above, we can add one more characteristic of a teacher leader, which is reflection, where the teacher reviews his actions, thinks about what he has done and successfully plans further steps. A high level of empowerment, reflection, cooperation and flexibility on the part of teachers are important characteristics for good and functional guidance and direction (Snell & Swanson, 2000) of students. In this sense, empowerment implies optimism, determination, self-actualization of teachers and taking risks. Expertise is mastery of course material, pedagogical knowledge and skills, knowledge of students' cognitive and developmental capacities. Reflection is the questioning of one's own actions and expectations, as well as understanding the perspective of others. Collaboration is the willingness to compromise and cooperate, good communication skills and active listening, while flexibility is the ability to be tolerant and adaptable.

Traits of a teacher as a leader and strategies that make leadership effective are:

1. initiating changes and accepting them,
2. good relationship with colleagues,
3. knowledge of how to create and develop the curriculum,
4. accepting the role of a mentor with students, as well as with younger inexperienced colleagues,
5. organizing and guiding lessons,
6. encouraging students to peer assessment,
7. implementing action research, and
8. active participation in making decisions relevant for the functioning of the school where he is employed (Harris, 2002).

Although at first thought we associate the concept of leadership in education with the school principal, it is not the attribute and job of only the school principal, but of every member of the school team, especially the teacher who is the head of the class community. The teacher is a leader inside and outside of the classroom, he reflects his working ways to both students and colleagues, and other teachers (Ibidem). Organizing good lessons, adhering to the prescribed plan and program while providing additional opportunities and support to students, leading and monitoring the classroom climate, monitoring student progress and cooperation with parents and colleagues, are some of the qualities that can be attributed to the teacher and reflect his leadership activities. Accordingly, each of the mentioned activities relies on certain knowledge, skills and competencies that the teacher should have.

4. TEACHER LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The modern education process requires increasingly better management skills, and the leadership role of teachers is a key factor contributing to student success (Augustsson & Boström, 2012, p. 180). The atmosphere and social relations in the classroom depend significantly on the teacher. In addition, teacher behavior, as well as his leadership role,

significantly influence student achievement. The level of student engagement depends on the ways of creating a learning environment, and in that process the key role belongs to the teacher (Bruggencate, et al., 2012). It is obvious from the conceptual definition itself how important teacher leadership is for students' achievement. Namely, the authors (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 257) define leadership as “the process of influencing colleagues, school administration and other interest groups in order to improve instruction and learning methods in order to raise the level of learning and student achievement“. In addition to the above, evidence of the positive effect of teacher leadership on student learning, i.e., the creation of a favorable climate for learning, student motivation and, in general, the success of instruction, can also be found in research that addressed this problem (Sillins & Mulford, 2002; Louis & Marks, 1998; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The teacher's entire work is focused on student achievement. Thus, there are leadership activities that teachers could use and positively influence the development and progress of students. Good classroom management empowers and motivates students to approach the learning process in a different, more innovative and creative way. In order for the teacher to achieve the desired results through his way of organizing and teaching lessons to students, it is necessary for him to be involved in discussions about instruction and potential ways of influencing students, to be involved in the development of the curriculum and systematic monitoring of student progress (Robinson, 2007).

Table 1 The effect of school leadership on student achievement (adapted from Robinson, 2007, p. 14)

Leadership practice	Meaning
Defining desired goals and expectations	Setting and monitoring learning goals, involving other school personnel for the purposes of goals alignment
Strategic resources	Selection and distribution of resources in accordance with the goals
Planning, coordination and evaluation of instruction and curriculum	Direct participation and assistance to teachers in the organization of the instruction process, monitoring the curriculum between classes and aligning them with the school's objectives
Promoting teacher development and learning	Direct participation of school management in formal and informal teacher training
Providing a supportive environment	Creating a stimulating environment for the teacher in terms of reducing or eliminating potential pressure that the teacher may encounter.

It is evident that teacher leadership is important for instruction and learning (MGGee, Hawort, & Maginture, 2014), and thus affects the learning process of both teachers and students. In favor of this, there are 5 dimensions of leadership that influence the learning process of students and teachers:

1. providing educational direction,
2. ensuring strategic alignment,
3. creating a community that learns,
4. initiating constructive discussions and participating in them,
5. selecting and developing smart tools (Robinson & Timperley, 2007, p. 247).

These dimensions speak in favor of how important leadership is for student achievement, but there are also elements that indicate their importance to the professional development of teachers. The leader at the school level, that is, the principal, decides and determines the

direction of learning activities and strategically aligns them with the social community. These roles are not relevant to the teachers, but when it comes to creating a learning community, constructive discussions and choosing the smart tools that will be used for learning and teaching purposes, the role of the teacher is evident.

5. CONCLUSION

Investigating the concept of leadership in education and bearing in mind the expected and unexpected changes that have taken place in recent years, as well as the consequences they have left on the education system, the idea of looking at the role of the teacher as a leader was born. It was established a long time ago that the teacher role within the education system is variable and requires constant and continuous effort by the teacher. It is evident that teachers are more and more associated with leaders, without whom today's and future students will not be able to get a good education. The leadership role of teachers can be seen as a missing link even in the modern age, which is precisely the core of this theoretical research.

For effective leadership in education, it is necessary to understand the current situation (Sethuraman & Suresh, 2014), but also to understand the goals to be achieved and the steps that lead to their achievement. Effective leadership requires reflection on experiences and abilities (Beaudoin, 2003), but also the teachers' desire and motivation to take on the role of leader. It is important to emphasize the factors that hinder teachers in leadership practice: lack of support from the central administration, increased workload, lack of time and non-compliance with current trends (Renihan, 2012). Thus, these factors can be seen as segments which should be addressed in order to reduce the negative impact they have on the teacher's leadership, monitoring and guiding student achievement.

The task of a leader in an education institution is to guide the individuals in the right direction (Antonopoulou, et al., 2021), and as the teacher increasingly assumes the role of a leader in modern education system, it is useful to keep in mind strategies that can improve the leadership skills of teachers: promoting the importance of leadership for their class achievement, additional financial stimulation for teachers, initiation of leadership development and recommendations to continue education at postgraduate studies, alignment of leadership activities with the time teachers spend with students (Renihan, 2012, p. 145).

From this we can see that the leadership role of a teacher can be performed in many different ways. This means that the successful leadership of a teacher does not follow a single formula that applies to all situations. The most important thing to remember, however, is that most of the skills a successful educational leader should possess can be learned and improved. In this sense, thinking about continuous professional development of teachers- leaders should be one of the main topics of scientific and political discourse about quality education in Serbia.

Therefore, in the numerous reforms that the education system in our country has undergone recently, we recognize the need for the government to refocus on teacher leadership, because the effectiveness of instruction and the improvement of the quality of learning depend on their involvement. Leadership is one of the factors under the scope of the education system that affects the quality of learning and instruction. The leadership activities of teachers are reflected in the creation of a stimulating learning environment, the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as other skills of

those who learn. Without developed leadership skills, the teacher would not be able to face the complex demands of the learning group, nor to encourage the development of individual students. This would mean that the traditional views on the teaching profession are not in accordance with the needs and specifics of the modern age, and therefore significant changes are necessary for the initial education of teachers in the direction of their training for effective leadership. Therefore, it is necessary for the faculties that train teaching staff to pay special attention to the training of future teachers for the role of leaders, by introducing new and by innovating existing courses in the field of pedagogical leadership as part of their study programs.

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NASTAVNIK LIDER U SAVREMENOJ OBRAZOVNOJ PRAKSI

Liderstvo je složena aktivnost u obrazovnom radu koja najbolje može biti predstavljena kao način odgovaranja i uklapanja u izazove sa kojima se čitav obrazovni sistem suočava. Radom naglašavamo značaj uloge nastavnika lidera koji od predavača sve više prelazi u rukovodioca učenja i poučavanja. Cilj rada je predstaviti nastavnika kao lidera u savremenom dobu. Istraživački zadaci su: 1. Predstavljanje vrsta liderstva karakterističnih za nastavnikov rad (transformaciono, transakciono i adaptabilno); 2. Identifikovanje nastavnčkih liderskih strategija i kompetencija; 3. Razmatranje uticaja liderskih aktivnosti nastavnika na postignuće učenika. Razlog za istraživanje navedenih segmenata liderstva, u oblasti rada nastavnika, nalazimo u činjenici da je obrazovni rad kompleksan, fleksibilan i otvoren za promene te s toga u bliskoj budućnosti možemo očekivati vreme u kome će učenici imati glavnu ulogu u organizovanju i realizovanju sopstvenog učenja. Sa ovim učenicima efikasno će moći raditi nastavnik koji poseduje odlike kvalitetnog i efikasnog lidera.

Ključne reči: rukovođenje, nastavnik, vrste liderstva, učeničko postignuće