Assessing Potential for Teacher Leadership: The Case of Prospective Teachers

[1] Fareeha Nudrat, [2]Muhammad Saeed Akhtar

[1] *PhD Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore*

[2] *Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore*

(Email: fareeha.nudrat@gmail.com)

Teachers who view themselves as leaders can improvise teaching-learning practices, manage their classrooms effectively, and lead towards overall school improvement, irrespective of any formal position or designation. Teacher leadership is the way forward as it can bring that dynamism which is essential for shifting the teaching profession from a passive routine to an exciting endeavor. In order for teachers to emerge as leaders, teacher-education institutions have a major role to play. This paper aims to assess prospective teachers as to whether they have potential to become teacher leaders in their professional endeavors. In addition, the study is an attempt to draw a sketch of the abilities and skills essential for prospective teachers to become teacher-leaders of future. This study was conducted at the pioneer and leading teacher-education Institute in Pakistan. The findings of the study indicate that the prospective teachers have the awareness of their strong teacher-leader potential which is the first step on the ladder of teacher leadership. The prospective teachers perceived most strongly on teaching proficiency while somewhat weaker on initiative-taking facet of teacher leadership. It is recommended that similar studies are replicated at different teacher-education institutions, which could lead to a comprehensive profile of abilities/ skills requisite for teacher leaders.

Keywords: *leadership potential, prospective teacher, teacher leader, teacher education.*

Introduction

Teachers are recognized as educational leaders, who have a vital role in achieving quality educational outcomes. Teachers who view themselves as leaders can improvise teaching-learning practices, manage their classrooms effectively, and lead towards overall school improvement. Education literature emphasizes that the key objective of teacher education is to produce teachers who have the ability to play such leadership roles. Teacher as leader, this notion "has assumed a prominent role in the sustainability of post-modern schooling" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, as cited in Cherubini, 2008, p.81). Krisko (2001) points out that, "teachers are potential leaders who can be instrumental in initiating and implementing a major paradigm shift from a traditional school to an effective learning community." (p.4). According to Lambert (2000, p.7), "teacher leadership is an enrichment of the teaching profession. Teachers may help to lead the school but in a capacity other than Principal or Vice Principal." (p.7). Ash and Persall (1999) underscore the fact that, "there are numerous leadership possibilities and many leaders within the school. Leadership is not role-specific, reserved only for administrators". To Harris (2003), teacher leader "implies that leadership is socially constructed and culturally sensitive. It does not imply a leader/ follower divide, neither does it point towards the leadership potential of just one person." (p.314). This is further endorsed by Harris and Lambert (2003) who are of the opinion that, "teacher leadership is not a formal role, responsibility or set of tasks, it is more a form of agency where teachers are empowered to lead development work that impacts directly on the quality of teaching and learning." (p.43). Helterbran (2010) explains that, "teacher leadership rises from within the teaching ranks and expresses itself in a myriad of ways for the betterment of students, specifically, and school in general." (p.364). Leadership, as advocated by York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, and Montie (2006), "is influence and action, not position --- without teacher leaders, the relationships that are essential for successful change will not be activated." (p.252). The above arguments imply that a teacher can act as leader in different spheres of influence and in a variety of ways, irrespective of any formal position/ designation.

Conceptual Framework

Teacher as Leader

According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), "teachers who are leaders lead within and

beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learner and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice." (p.5). In view of Frost (2010), teacher as leader means "taking the initiative to improve practice, acting strategically with colleagues to embed change, gathering and using evidence in collaborative processes, contributing to the creation and dissemination of professional knowledge" (p.210). Teacher leaders "function in professional learning communities to affect student learning; contribute to school improvement; inspire excellence in practice; and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement" (SERVE, 1999, as cited in Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000, p.28). Based on research, MacGilchrist, Myers, and Reed (2004) reflect that teachers must take the responsibility of change agents. This concept of teachers as the driving force to foster change corroborates with Frost et al. (2000) who emphasized on *teacher-led school improvement* which "enables teachers to make more of a difference in their schools by making a greater contribution to development work which will result in improved learning outcomes for their students." (p.154). Capturing the essence of teacher leadership, Helterbran (2010) expresses that, "[it] involves those informal aspects of leadership, where a teacher sees a need or identifies a problem and takes the reins to address it within his or her means." (p.365). In terms of benefits for teachers who act as leaders, Barth (2001) draws attention to some of these:

> They experience a reduction in isolation; the personal and professional satisfaction that comes from improving their schools: a sense of instrumentality, investment, and membership in the school community; and new learning about schools, about the process of change, and about themselves. And all of these positive experiences spill over into their classroom teaching. These teachers become owners and investors in the school, rather than mere tenants. They become professionals. (p.449)

Teachers can contribute as leaders by taking on diverse roles and functions in different domains. As noted by Lieberman (2006), leadership roles for teachers "are proliferating alongside prescriptions for change". A research by Hewitt-Gervais (1996, as cited in Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p.11) identified 182 leadership roles for teachers. Danielson (2007) suggests *School-wide Policies and Programs* (e.g. work with colleagues towards a better class-schedule, suggest

ways to reduce drop-out rate), *Teaching and Learning* (e.g. conduct action research to improvise teaching-learning, suggest alternative forms of assessment), and *Communication and Community Relations* (e.g. arrange and participate in parent-teacher meetings) as three kinds of functions of teacher leaders. Teacher leadership, according to Youitt (2007), can be classified into four areas: (a) *leading of learning* (e.g. using emerging technologies in the classroom for improved teaching-learning practices, adopting new approaches in pedagogy); (b) *sharing and collaboration* (e.g. sharing and reflecting upon teaching and learning strategies, support teachers who find it difficult to have good discipline in the classroom); (c) *building of a sense of community* (e.g. strengthen the teaching community); and (d) *improving effectiveness* (e.g. planning for a better school climate). In view of Harris and Lambert (2003, p.44), teacher as leader can function in three areas i.e. *leadership of other teachers* (e.g. coach other teachers on the use of computer and internet for effective teaching); *leadership of operational tasks*; and *leadership of pedagogy* by developing and modeling effective forms of teaching. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest three leadership areas for teachers (pp. 11-13):

- *Leadership of Students or Other Teachers*: Teachers may function as facilitator and counselor to the students. Beyond the classroom, teachers may serve as mentors, teacher facilitators, or simply as willing listeners. They may initiate collegial study groups or invite colleagues to observe their lessons.

- *Leadership of Operational Tasks*: Towards effective management of school tasks. Teacher leaders may serve in formal roles such as department head or member of committees. An important activity is action research in collaboration with colleagues. Other functions might include teacher leaders as writers, project managers, or technology experts.

- *Leadership through Decision Making or Partnerships*: Teachers can become members of school improvement team, school advisory councils, or steering committees. Teachers also act as leaders through their partnerships with educational foundations, parent-teacher organizations, and community action groups.

Teacher-Leader Development: The Role of Teacher-Education Institutions

In order for teachers to emerge as leaders, universities and colleges of teacher-education have a major role to play. These institutions need to take lead in encouraging change in content and pedagogy in light of emerging educational trends and issues. The teacher preparation programs must be designed in a way so that leadership skills are seamlessly interwoven into the fabric of teaching instead of looking at teaching and leadership as two separate entities or roles. Smyser (1995, as cited in Murphy, 2007) signifies the need for this redesign:

> With a great need for leadership from teachers, and with lack of training a major obstacle in establishing this leadership, it would seem obvious that there is a need for teacher education programs that specifically train teachers to take on leadership roles. (p.694)

The *Task Force on Teacher Leadership*, however, presents a challenging scenario by reporting that teachers are entering the profession as "unevenly prepared products" of teacher preparation institutions that constitute "a largely change-resistant system." (IEL, 2001, p.10). Fullen (1993) points out that, "on the one hand, schools are expected to engage in continuous renewal, and change expectations are constantly swirling around them. On the other hand, the way teachers are trained, the way schools are organized, the way the educational hierarchy operates, and the way political decision makers treat educators, results in a system that is more likely to retain the status quo." (p.12). Zimpher and Howey (1992, as cited in Sherrill, 1999, p.56) argue that "teachers are expected to assume leadership roles with little or no preparation". In such scenario, Fullen (1993) rightly emphasizes that, "teacher education institutions themselves must take responsibility for their current reputation as laggards rather than leaders of educational reform." (p.14). Teacher education institutions should take the lead by developing and implementing credible and workable models of teacher leadership in their own environment so that prospective teachers can understand and adopt elements of teacher leadership like collaboration, continuous learning, proactive attitude, and collegiality. For teachers to be leaders, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) highlight the crucial role of teacher preparation institutions by saying that:

> The role of the colleges and universities in preparing teacher leaders is significant in the continuum of teacher development. --- Development of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes about teacher leadership begins with the university or college preparation programs for future teachers. --- The leadership skills are as important in these programs as the curriculum and instruction content. After the teacher leaves the university, the goal should be to encourage that teacher to be a leader. (p.16)

The Present Study

It emerges from the above discussion that there is a growing impression to shift from conventional teacher-training courses and programs towards a more leadership-oriented teacher-education aimed at developing leadership abilities among prospective teachers so as to enable them not only to improvise teaching-learning practices and manage their classrooms effectively, but more importantly to play an active lead role for school development and improvement. In advanced countries, teacher leadership programs and initiatives have grown significantly (Harris, 2003). In Pakistan, the universities both in public and private sectors offering teacher-education programs concentrate on educational leadership and management either as compulsory course or as area of specialization or a full-fledged degree. The faculties of education in Pakistan are now in a continuous process of curriculum reforms to better inculcate leadership qualities in prospective teachers. The universities offering teacher education programs are in competition with each other in developing quality teacher education programs in national context and on the basis of global benchmarking with special reference to leadership. As the concept of *teacher as leader* is recognized increasingly by educationists, there is a need to assess whether or not teacher-education institutes focus on leadership facet of teaching in order to groom future teacher leaders; and to appraise prospective teachers as to whether they are eager, confident, and well-prepared to take the responsibility of teacher leaders. As asserted by Helterbran (2010), teachers can not act as leaders "unless and until [they] recognize their own leadership potential" (p.365).

Aim of the Study

This paper aims to emphasize the significance of leadership potential of prospective teachers, and the essential role of teacher-education institution in the development of their leadership capacity. It is based on a quantitative study of prospective teachers' perceptions of their own leadership potential. Based on the related literature, this paper explores seven dimensions that shape the teachers' leadership potential: Leader Ethic, Emotional Stability, Interpersonal Skills, Teaching Proficiency, Learning Prowess, Collaboration, and Initiative-taking. It is hoped, the findings will be useful for prospective teachers for developing their leadership abilities and skills; instrumental in improving the scheme of studies of teacher-education programs particularly in the area of educational leadership; helpful in recommending the leadership abilities for school teachers; and useful for the curriculum planners of teacher-education programs.

Method

Site and Participants

The sampled institute of a leading public sector university is the pioneer and most prestigious teacher-education institution at the post-graduate level in Pakistan. The Institute has so far produced thousands of graduates who have been working in variety of professional domains, mostly in teaching, research, and educational administration.

The participants of the study were final-year female students (N=161) of MA Education program (2-year 66 credit hours), who, except for the thesis, had completed the entire course requirement including teaching practice.

Instrumentation

The review of literature on teacher leadership presented a variety of themes regarding the requisite abilities and skills for teacher leaders as advocated by various authors. Based on the review of related literature, seven aspects of leadership were recognized that shape the making of an effective teacher leader. The seven categories were: Leader Ethic, Emotional Stability, Interpersonal Skills, Teaching Proficiency, Learning Prowess, Collaboration, and Initiative-taking. Three of the categories viz. Leader Ethic, Emotional Stability, Interpersonal Skills represent more generic areas of leadership, while the other four dimensions viz. Teaching proficiency, Learning Prowess, Collaboration, and Initiative-taking can be described as the four pillars of teacher leadership. The identified leadership dimensions along with associated abilities/ skills

are described below in connection to the related literature:

Leader Ethic: Open-minded and respectful of others' views (Danielson, 2007); responsibility, high self-esteem, integrity, honesty (Krisko, 2001); persevering in the face of obstacles (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995); responds to situation with open-mindedness and flexibility; welcomes the perspectives of others (Harris & Lambert, 2003); fair-minded (Cruz, 2003); caring (Wilmore, 2007).

Emotional Stability: Emotional stability will lead to better teacher leaders (Jackson et al., 2010); display optimism and enthusiasm (Danielson, 2007); ability to regulate emotional responses (Frost, 2010); willingness to accept difference and tolerance (Frost, 2010); shows resilience; remains positive even with negative criticism/ lack of support (Youitt, 2007); exercising patience (Boyd-Dimock and McGree, 1995); confidence and self-awareness (Krisko, 2001).

Interpersonal Skills: To be a teacher leader, an essential ability is to build positive interpersonal relationships (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001); mutual collegial working relationships are valuable in strengthening teacher leadership (Lieberman, 1996 as cited in Krisko, 2001); building trust and rapport with colleagues (Lieberman et al., 2000 as cited in Harris & Muijs, 2003); become socially involved (Sledge et al., 2007); building skills and confidence in others (Lieberman et al., 2000 as cited in Harris & Muijs, 2003); providing support and encouragement (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995); emphasis upon collegial ways of working (Harris & Muijs, 2003).

Teaching Proficiency: The first step on the road to teacher leadership is being recognized as a capable teacher (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001); expertise in their fields (Danielson, 2007); demonstrate expertise in instruction (Sledge et al., 2007); competent in the classroom by facilitating students' learning (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Learning Power: As a lifelong learner, a teacher leader is resourceful and uses the resourcefulness of others to remain open to learning (Krisko, 2001); powerful relationship exists between learning and leading (Barth, 2001); continual professional learning and innovation (Helterbran, 2010); consistently on a professional learning curve (Sledge et al., 2007); cooperative learners (Krisko, 2001); works with others to construct knowledge (Harris & Lambert, 2003); teacher leaders are consummate learners who pay attention to their own development and model continuous learning (Katzenmeyer & Moller,

2001); contribute to the construction and diffusion of professional knowledge (Frost, 2010).

Collaboration: Collaboration is the essence of teacher leadership (Harris & Muijs, 2003); Influencing/ motivating colleagues toward improved educational practice (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001); smart listener; ability to promote dialogue for improvement (Youitt, 2007); collaborating meaningfully with colleagues (Helterbran, 2010); collaborate with peers (Sledge et al., 2007); able to get the task done (Youitt, 2007); building a team spirit (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995); recognizing accomplishments of colleagues ---- willing listeners (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Initiative-taking: Teachers taking on a proactive role for their own continuous improvement (Helterbran, 2010); take initiative to reflect on the latest pedagogical trends (Sledge et al., 2007); taking the initiative to improve practice (Frost, 2010); respond proactively (Macdonald, 2011); take the initiative to address a problem (Danielson, 2007); take initiative for group (Njerve, 2005); teacher leader as an ideas person; reflect creatively (Youitt, 2007); taking initiative (Boyd-Dimock & McGree, 1995).

Item Development, Content Validity and Reliability

As the prospective teachers were not yet into the teaching profession, so the items under each category were developed in the context of prospective teachers' experience of student-teaching, the teacher-education program, the classroom dynamics, and learning/ working environment of the teacher-education institution. An initial pool of 46 items was developed for the seven *a priori* dimensions (6 to 8 items under each) in connection to the related literature and the study context. The researchers then carefully reviewed this item bank and removed four items which appeared redundant and rewrote 5 to 10 items for clarity purpose. The revised set of 42 items was then assessed for content validity.

In order to establish the content validity, expert opinion was sought from professors of education (n=6) in the fields of educational leadership; educational research; and educational psychology from three universities. The experts reviewed and advised on improving the instrument, particularly with regards to form and length of items; content of items; ordering of items; clarity and simplicity of items; repetition of item theme etc. The expert panel also recommended limiting the number of items in each category to five, keeping only those items that best capture the essence of each facet of leadership. In light of the advice, the instrument was improved. The instrument was again reviewed by the experts and was finally approved. The final instrument comprised of seven sub-constructs, having five statements under each (total 35 statements) using 5-point Likert rating scale with options: Always, Often, Sometimes, Seldom, and Never. In order to further refine instrument for simplicity and comprehensibility, it was pilot-tested. A small group of 8 students (not part of the sample) was selected for the purpose. The instrument was well-responded, though some students pointed out a few difficult words that were simplified subsequently.

In order to examine the scale for internal consistency and reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient test was applied using SPSS. Ideally, the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha for a scale should be above .7 (DeVellis, 2003). In this study, the reliability coefficient for the instrument was found as 0.897 (N=107), which was considered highly reliable. Table 1 shows alpha values for all the sub-constructs/ dimensions of instrument. "Cronbach alpha values are, however, quite sensitive to the number of items in the scale. With short scales (e.g. scales with fewer than ten items), it is common to find quite low Cronbach values (e.g. 0.5)." (Pallant, 2007, p.95). For the present study, the Cronbach values for sub-scales were in the range of 0.620 to 0.751 which were satisfactory for sub-scales.

Table 1

Cronbach's alpha for all sub-constructs of teacher leadership scale.

No.	Sub-construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Leader Ethic	5	.729
2.	Emotional Stability	5	.629
3.	Interpersonal Skills	5	.751
4.	Teaching Proficiency	5	.637
5.	Learning Prowess	5	.687
6.	Collaboration	5	.620
7.	Initiative-taking	5	.630
	Overall	35	.897

Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers gave a presentation to participants present in different classrooms with the support of the concerned faculty. The researcher administered the instrument to all students. Where required, explanation for certain items was given. Out of 161 prospective teachers who were administered the instrument, 107 responded resulting in 66.46% response rate. Though overall response rate was not 100%, yet 66.46% was considered satisfactory, especially when the senior students were busy in their master's thesis. The data collected were tabulated using SPSS 19.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the ranking based on mean scores. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 19.0 for Windows.

Results and Discussion

Leadership aspects of prospective teachers explored in the study included Leader Ethic, Emotional Stability, Interpersonal Skills, Teaching Proficiency, Learning Prowess, Collaboration, and Initiative-taking. Ranking based on mean scores (table 2) shows that *Teaching Proficiency* is the highest rated category, while *Initiative-taking* the lowest.

Table 2

Ranking of teacher-leadership dimensions based on mean scores.

Leadership dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teaching Proficiency	21.53	2.515
Leader Ethic	21.51	2.567
Interpersonal Skills	21.08	2.802
Collaboration	20.83	2.448
Learning Prowess	19.89	2.921
Emotional Stability	19.30	3.097
Initiative-taking	18.27	3.039

According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), the first step on the road to teacher leadership is being recognized as a capable teacher. Expertise in instruction is an essential aspect of teacher leadership (Danielson, 2007; Sledge et al., 2007; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Initiative-taking which appears to be lacking in the sampled prospective teachers, is a key facet of teacher leadership. Teacher leaders, with or without positions of responsibility, take the initiative to improve practice (Frost, 2010), to address a problem (Danielson, 2007), or to reflect

on the latest pedagogical trends (Sledge et al., 2007). Phelps (2008) declares that "at the pre-service and in-service level, teachers who show initiative should receive appreciation and reinforcement" (p.121). The Initiative-taking facet of teacher leader is, though, lowest in ranking, yet the mean scores reveal that these scores are positively skewed hovering between the Likert scale marks 'Sometimes' and 'Often'. This is an encouraging sign, as for teachers to act as leaders, Helterbran (2010) asserts that it can only happen when "teachers recognize their own leadership

potential" (p.365). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) also emphasize that teachers recognizing themselves as leaders is the foremost step towards realization of school reforms.

Table 3 shows the top five individual leadership abilities for which prospective teachers have strong perceptions. These are giving honest feedback, valuing and respecting students, respectful of classmates (colleagues), caring attitude, and upgrading teaching skills.

Table 3

Stronger teacher-leadership aspects based on mean scores.

Stronger teacher-leadership attributes	Mean	SD
I give honest feedback to my classmates.	4.53	.619
During the student-teaching, I valued and respected my students.	4.51	.589
I respect the opinions of my classmates.	4.50	.620
I am caring to others.	4.43	.715
I tried to upgrade my teaching skills during student-teaching.	4.43	.660

Mangin and Stoelinga (2011) assert that honest feedback is "necessary to facilitate deep and sustainable changes in teachers' practice" (p.49). Honest feedback implies that a teacher leader must issue an "honest critique of classroom practice even though the critique actively challenges the teacher's preferred practice and may lead the teacher to experience some level of professional discomfort" (Lord et al, 2008 cited by Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011, p.49). Being respectful of students is an important mark of teacher leader. According to Wilmore (2007, p.44), optimized student performance can only be achieved if there is sincerity, trust, respect and appreciation between teachers and students. When teacher leaders bring about such qualities towards students, the students feel indebted to respond with sincerity, trust, respect and appreciation through their hard work and good results. One vital ingredient in the recipe to become a teacher leader is respect for colleagues and their views. According to Danielson (2007), "effective teacher leaders are open-minded and respectful of others' views". In view of Wilmore (2007, p.43), the desired success-generating change can only occur when there is respect among all members of the learning community. Teacher leader welcomes the perspectives of others (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Frost (2010) lays emphasis on willingness to accept difference as a must for a teacher leader. Also a quality that is crucial for teacher leaders is care for their students. As asserted by Wilmore (2007), "caring is the basis on which teacher leadership is founded. --- [It] is the under-pinning on which teacher leaders build their classrooms" (p.43). Another essential facet of teacher leader that is exhibited strongly in the present study is the effort to improve as teacher. "Teacher leaders are consummate learners who pay attention to their own development and model continuous learning" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p.8). They work for consistent professional learning (Helterbran, 2010; Sledge et al., 2007; Krisko, 2001) and contribute to the construction and diffusion of professional knowledge (Frost, 2010).

Table 4 shows the leadership abilities which are perceived as comparatively weaker than other abilities. These are knowledge of the latest research on education, strength to keep away from feeling depressed, finding out more about a topic discussed in class, working in groups to construct knowledge, explaining a concept so that others can understand. These are the areas that need more attention and improvement.

Table 4

Comparatively weaker teacher-leadership aspects based on mean scores.

Comparatively weaker teacher-leadership attributes	Mean	SD
I am knowledgeable of the latest research on education.	3.30	1.057
I have the strength to keep away from feeling depressed.	3.42	1.091
I spend time finding out more about a topic discussed in class.	3.59	.990
I like working in groups to construct knowledge.	3.63	1.005
It is easy for me to explain a concept so that others can understand.	3.73	1.074

Being knowledgeable of the latest research on education is an area where prospective teachers seem less focused. This might be due to the inadequate content of the course outlines of teacher-education programs at MA Education level, where there is, probably, less focus on additional readings and critical reviews of research papers. Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (2011) emphasizes the need for a teacher leader to "[keep] abreast of the latest research about teaching effectiveness and student learning". Teacher leaders must also take the initiative to reflect on the latest pedagogical trends (Sledge et al., 2007). Teacher leader should also possess the strength to keep away from feeling depressed. They should display optimism and enthusiasm (Danielson, 2007), have the ability to regulate emotional responses (Frost, 2010), show resilience and remain positive even with negative criticism/ lack of support (Youitt, 2007). Prospective teachers in the present study also lacked the initiative to explore more about a topic discussed in a class session. Although for this study, this point is in the context of studentship, it shows the approach one takes towards having an in-depth understanding of any area related to teaching-learning. This feature to explore and learn beyond the limits of classroom and curriculum is a key quality for a teacher leader as well. Teacher leaders need to improve their learning capacity (Frost, 2010), take on a proactive role for their own continuous improvement (Helterbran, 2010), reflect on the latest pedagogical trends (Sledge et al., 2007), and reflect creatively (Youitt, 2007). Working collaboratively to construct knowledge is another deficient area found in the present study. According to Harris & Muijs (2003), collaboration is the essence of teacher leadership. Teacher leaders need to be resourceful and use the resourcefulness of others (Krisko, 2001), be cooperative learners (Krisko, 2001); work with others to the construction and diffusion of professional knowledge (Harris & Lambert, 2003; Frost, 2010). Another weak point emerging from the study is the lack of communication skills as these prospective teachers found it rather difficult to explain a concept in a way so that others can understand easily.

It can be concluded that the participants of this study, on the whole, had awareness of their strong leadership potential which is the first step on the ladder of teacher leadership; however, there is scope for improvement in some leadership aspects.

Implications

The study has implications for policy-makers, teacher education institutions, heads of schools/ colleges/ universities, and teachers, particularly in the context of Pakistan. Policy-makers need to plan for teacher empowerment and distribution of responsibilities in a way that includes all teachers. They need to implement different forms of teacher leadership in different schools in order to evaluate its impact on teaching quality, student achievement, and school effectiveness. They should investigate benefits and pitfalls of such programs. Heads of schools, colleges, and universities must realize the leadership potential of experienced as well as the beginning teachers regardless of any formal designation. As pointed out by Krisko (2001), "administrators need to realize there is an untapped reservoir of potential directly in front of them, waiting to be unleashed - anxious to be involved in the learning community" (p.3). These heads should view themselves as *leader of leaders*. According to Helterbran (2010), "principal leadership coupled with teacher leadership is a logical, rational, and productive model for school improvement." (p.365). In order to move in this direction, teacher education institutions have a

major role to play. It is essential that these institutions transform into learning organizations and present a practical model of teacher leadership so that prospective teachers can understand and experience the benefits, challenges and opportunities for teacher leaders.

Challenges

The realization of the concept of teacher leadership into practice is not without challenges and barriers, particularly for novice teachers. When teachers begin their careers, they realize, in most cases, that there are certain forces in school that restrict teachers to the margins of classroom, curriculum, and pre-defined teaching methods/ assessment practices. Harris (2003) identifies that, "the fact that schools rely on a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities presents a major barrier to the idea of teachers as leaders" (p.314). The problem, according to Krisko (2001), lies with the notion of leadership as "a statement of power rather than that of responsibility." (p.3). She further states that, "hierarchical-type administrators stifle teacher communication and collaboration, preventing a shift of professional responsibility to initiate change." (p.3). On the attitude of colleagues towards a teacher leader, Helterbran (2010) comments that, "foot-dragging, open opposition to change, the stifling of discussion or problem-solving, or outright subterfuge are common strategies to suppress or subjugate the change process." (p.368). In terms of collegiality, some colleagues might prefer isolation over collaboration and status-quo over change. Such teachers might "feel threatened by the expertise or actions of others" (Helterbran, 2010, p.368). In such scenario, a beginning teacher, who has leadership potential and wants to test some innovative ideas for improving teaching-learning practices in school, must not fall victim to "*I am just a teacher* syndrome" (Helterbran, 2010, p.363). Despite challenges, a novice teacher who wants to be a leader must realize that, "teacher leadership begins with being recognized as a capable teacher" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p.5). Other activities could involve taking initiative to invite colleagues to observe their lessons or to conduct action research projects in the classroom. Another important point is recognizing and congratulating colleagues on their accomplishments; Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest "a brief note recognizing an accomplishment, boasting about a colleague in the community, and a verbal exchange of sincere praise" as acts of sincerity that can go a long way (p.17). These initiatives might open new avenues of leadership for fresh teachers that could lead towards professional growth and overall improvement in teaching-learning process. This might pave the way for teachers to realize their full potential as teacher leader.

Recommendations

In light of the study, some general as well as research plans are recommended. The scheme of studies for teacher education programs in Pakistan needs to be revised and some new courses should be introduced (either compulsory or elective) for enhancing the leadership abilities of the graduates. The proposed courses include: Teacher Leadership, Communication Skills, Action Research, Practicum in Social work, Alternative Assessment Methods, and Stress Management. There should be full semester of student-teaching practice (50% at the institute and 50% at local school) instead of only for a small part of a semester along with the load of other regular theoretical courses (which is the prevalent practice). As the present study is limited in scope, it is difficult to generalize on macro level. It is, therefore, recommended that the study should be replicated at national and international level. Further, to improve the generalizability of the findings, the population should be larger with more diversity. Also a study is needed to understand the gender-based differences regarding leadership abilities of prospective teachers. Further research should be conducted by using qualitative or mixed-method research design for more in-depth analysis. A longitudinal study should also be conducted to assess leadership potential of students at the start of teacher-education program and then at the completion to measure change in different leadership aspects of prospective teachers. In fact, such longitudinal research should be an essential exercise duly initiated and funded every year by the education faculty in collaboration with its intersecting faculties viz. philosophy, psychology, and sociology. The repeated findings could contribute to a consistent improvement in the scheme of studies which might lead to produce competent and resourceful teacher leaders in the future landscape of education across the world.

Conclusion

The present inquiry was a quantitative study of the pioneer and largest teacher-education institution at the post-graduate level in Pakistan. The results of the study lead to the conclusion that the prospective teachers have the awareness of their strong teacher-leader potential which is the

first step on the ladder of teacher leadership. It is imperative that education policy-makers, teacher preparation institutions, and heads of schools/ colleges/ universities should not let this potential go waste and make sure that these students, as they enter the teaching profession, have the freedom to realize their full potential as teacher leader. Although limited in scope, the study is an attempt to draw a sketch of the abilities and skills essential for prospective teachers to become teacher-leaders of future. If similar studies, both quantitative and qualitative, are replicated at a variety of teacher-education institutions at national and international level, it could lead to a comprehensive profile of abilities/ skills requisite for teacher leaders. As asserted by Phelps (2008), "Understanding the various dimensions of teacher leadership is requisite knowledge for encouraging the development of more teachers as leaders" (p.119). This exercise can contribute immensely to teacher-education programs throughout the world to promote preparing and training of teacher leaders. Teacher leadership is the way forward as it can bring that dynamism which is essential for improving teaching-learning process and for shifting the teaching profession from a dull and passive work to an exciting endeavor.

References

Ash, R. C., & Persall, J. M. (2000). The principal as chief learning officer: Developing teacher leaders. *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin, 84*(616), 15–22.

Barth, R. S. (2001). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(6), 443-449.

Boyd-Dimock, V., & McGree, K. M. (1995). Leading change from the classroom: Teachers as leaders. *Issues... about Change, 4*(4). Retrieved January 27, 2012 from http://sedl.org/change/issues/issues44.html.

Cherubini, L. (2008). Teacher candidates' perceptions of principal and teacher leadership: A functional disconnect. *Leadership Review, 8*, 80-101.

Childs-Bowen, D., Moller, G., & Scrivner, J. (2000). Principals: Leaders of leaders. *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin, 84*(616), 27-34.

Cruz, D. J. (2003). Teacher leaders: Middle school mathematics classrooms. *Research in Middle Level Education Online, 26*(2). Retrieved January 27, 2012 from http://www.nmsa.org/Publications/RMLEOnline/tabid/101/Default.aspx

Danielson, C. (2007). The many faces of leadership. *Educational Leadership, 65*(1), 14-19.

DeVellis, R. F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Frost, D., Durrant, J., Head, M., & Holden, G. (2000). *Teacher-led school improvement*. London: Falmer Press.

Frost, D. (2010). Teacher leadership and educational innovation. *Proceedings of the Institute for Educational Research, 42*(2), 201–216.

Fullan, M. G. (1993). Why teachers must become change agents. *Educational Leadership, 50*(6).

Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership: Heresy, fantasy or possibility? *School Leadership & Management, 23*(3), 313–324.

Harris, A., & Lambert, L. (2003). *Building leadership capacity for school improvement*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Harris, A., & Muijs, D. (2003). *Teacher leadership: Principles and practice*. National College for School Leadership.

Helterbran, V. R. (2010). Teacher leadership: Overcoming 'I am just a teacher' syndrome. *Education, 131*(2), 363-371.

IEL. (2001). *Redefining the teacher as leader*. Washington: Institute of Educational Leadership.

Jackson, T., Burrus, J., Bassett, K., & Roberts, R. D. (2010). *Teacher leadership: An assessment framework for an emerging area of professional practice*. New Jersey: ETS (Educational Testing Service).

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2001). *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Krisko, M. E. (2001). *Teacher leadership: A profile to identify the potential*. Paper presented at the Biennial Convocation of Kappa Delta Pi (43rd, Orlando, FL, November 8-10, 2001).

Lambert, L. (2000). Building leadership capacity in schools. *APC Monographs*. http://research.acer.edu.au/apc_monographs/2

Lieberman, A. (2006). *How do teachers learn to lead?* Paper presented at the International Invitational Symposium, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

MacDonald, E. (2011). When nice won't suffice: Honest discourse is key to shifting school culture. *Journal of Staff Development, 32*(3), 45-47, 51.

MacGlichrist, B., Myers, K., & Reed, J. (2004). *The intelligent school* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Mangin, M. M., & Stoelinga, S. R. (2011). Peer? Expert? Teacher Leaders Struggle to Gain Trust While Establishing Their Expertise. *Journal of Staff Development, 32*(3), 48-51.

Murphy, J. (2007). Teacher leadership: Barriers and supports. In T. Townsend (Ed.), *International handbook of school effectiveness and improvement* (pp. 681-706). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Njerve, I. (2005). *Teacher as school leader: A practical survey*. Paper included in the 30th Annual Conference of Association for Teacher Education in Europe (Amsterdam, October 22-26, 2005).

Pallant, J. F. (2007). *SPSS survival manual* (3rd ed.). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Phelps, P. H. (2008). Helping Teachers Become Leaders. *The Clearing House, 81*(3), 119-122.

Sherrill, J. A. (1999). Preparing teachers for leadership roles in the 21st century. *Theory into Practice, 38*(1), 56–61.

Sledge, J. R., Morehead, P. A., & Powers, K. R. (2007). Teacher leadership: An opportunity for charter schools. *The Charter Schools Resource Journal, 3*(Spring), 21-30.

Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. (2011). *Teacher leader model standards*. Accessed May 23, 2012, from http://www.teacherleaderstandards.org/the_standards_domain_2.

Wilmore, E. L. (2007). *Teacher leadership: Improving teaching and learning from inside the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

York-Barr, J., Sommers, W. A., Ghere, G. S., & Montie, J. (2006). *Reflective practice to improve schools: An action guide for educators* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Youitt, D. (2007). Teacher leadership: Another way to add value to schools. *Perspectives on Educational Leadership*. Queensland: Australian Council for Educational Leaders.