

# Indonesian Teacher Leadership Practices

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**Abstract**—Teacher leadership has been studied in many countries. However, there are still a few which focuses on Indonesia. This study aims to examine this matter in Indonesia by addressing these questions: (1) What is the definition of teacher leadership from the Indonesians' perspective? (2) How is leadership practised among teachers in Indonesia? (3) What factors influence teacher leadership practices in Indonesia? (4) What are the impacts of teacher leadership on students and schools in Indonesia? This study reviews 18 literatures on teacher leadership in the Indonesian context, consisting of 1 research report, 2 theses, and 14 research articles. The research is limited from 2013 to 2019. The analysis is focused on the perspectives and findings regarding teacher leadership. The findings reveal that teacher leadership is defined as the ability to influence, encourage, assist, guide, and move others, e.g. colleagues and students, to direct and motivate students to study, develop the school, and empower parents to improve student achievement. Teacher leadership is influenced by internal and external factors, and has an impact on student motivation and learning achievement, as well as the quality of school.

**Keywords**— *leadership; teacher leadership*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Studies on teacher leadership have been done by many. Some are based in European countries or the United States [1-3]. The focus of the study involves the practice, preparation, and impacts of teacher leadership, as well as the supporting and hindering factors. Some studies are conducted in Asian countries, such as mainland China [4] and Hongkong [5] with similar focuses of study. Nevertheless, little research has been done on the topic in Indonesia. The current study is especially instrumental as the findings reveal that teacher leadership has a positive impact on student, such as increased academic achievement [6].

Teacher leadership is a set of skills to influence others at school (inside and outside the class) as well as outside of school [7]. Teacher leadership is seen as highly imperative at the moment, due to a new understanding or notion on organizational development and leadership, which demands the active participation of the individuals of all levels and domains in the organization to ensure the success of change [8]. The

education quality improvement in the teaching level, for instance, must involve teacher leadership in the classroom and among the colleagues. The role of teacher leadership, therefore, is extensive, ranging from assisting the school management to offering ideas on education evaluation and facilitating professional learning community [9].

Teacher leadership practice can be either formal or informal. The formal form of teacher leadership practice includes other roles that teachers are assigned to, such as head of association, vice principal, and mentor. On the other hand, the informal forms of teacher leadership can be seen from the way they guide their colleagues, work in a team, and provide a contribution to the improvement of school visions. The focus of the practice can be in the improvement of quality of school, building a democratic and open climate at school, and sharing trusts and visions [10].

Teacher leadership is influenced by a lot of different factors. Some factors may be obstacles, such as excessive workload, poor relationship with administrator or colleagues, hierarchical organization climate, differences between the school's vision and teacher's vision, school climate that is resistant to change, and the teacher's lack of confidence. On the other hand, the supporting factors include training, teacher participation in the professional development of junior teachers, teacher empowerment in decision-making, the principal's open-mindedness, the availability of space and time to collaborate, a full understanding on the responsibility and job description, as well as a clear job description.

In regard to those notions, this study attempts to address the following questions: In regard to those notions, this study attempts to address the following questions:

- What is the definition of teacher leadership from the Indonesians' perspective?
- What are leadership practices performed by teachers in Indonesia?
- What factors influence teacher leadership practices in Indonesia?

- What are the impacts of teacher leadership on students and schools in Indonesia?

## II. METHODS

This study reviewed the literatures published online to examine teacher leadership practice in Indonesia. Literatures were obtained through ResearchGate, Google Scholar, One Search Indonesia, and Crossref with keywords “teacher leadership” and “teacher leadership in Indonesia.” The search yielded 18 literatures consisting of 1 research report, 1 dissertation, 2 theses, and 14 research-based articles. The research was limited from 2013 to 2019. Data analysis focused on the various concepts and views on teacher leadership and the results of the online research on teacher leadership.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Results

#### 1) *Definition of Teacher Leadership from the Indonesians' Perspective*

The definition of teacher leadership in Indonesia has a relatively similar notion with the experts' perspectives from various countries. For instance, Yanuarti and Treagust refer to Katzenmeyer and Moller's, and Wasley's theory on how teacher leadership refer to “those who lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others towards improving their educational practice.” According to Wasley, teacher leadership is “the ability to encourage fellow teachers to change, and to do things they would not ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader” [11].

A similar view is expressed by Poekert, Alexandrou and Shannon who refer to Idochi and Purbakawaca. According to them, teacher leadership is the teacher's readiness and ability in the process of influencing, encouraging, guiding, directing, and moving the students in the learning process [12]. The goal is the achievement of learning objectives in an effective and efficient manner.

Niron, Suyata and Suardiman proposes a similar definition. Teacher leadership is the way teacher influences, inspires, and develops students so that they are willing to listen and do what the teacher says and be active, creative, and independent, at the same time [13]. Teacher leadership is a form of power distribution from the principal to the teachers in the learning process, where teachers are given the authority to direct and influence students [14]. In the learning process, teacher leadership is perceived as a form of instructional leadership where teachers not only give instructions to students, but also influence them to accept and follow the given instructions.

Based on the above notions, it can be summarized that teacher leadership refers to the teachers' ability to influence, encourage, guide, direct, and move others, e.g. fellow teachers and students, to follow their lead. Teacher leadership is the result of the distribution of roles and authority from the principal to teachers.

#### 2) *Teacher Leadership Practices in Indonesia*

The education technical implementing unit groups teacher leadership practices into three dimensions [15]. The first one is the individual development. This relates to the roles and tasks of teacher in utilizing the time in the classroom with the students. At this point, teacher influences students to develop their potential through various manners; for example, by motivating them to improve their learning achievement, as well as providing directions and attention during a group discussion session.

The second dimension relates to team development, which refers to the collaborative effort of helping and influencing the colleagues in exploring and experimenting on new ideas as an effort improving learning quality. This can be done through mentoring, coaching, observation, discussion, and constructive feedback. For example, a senior teacher evaluates and provides feedback and direction to his or her juniors on the learning practice.

The third dimension is the organization development. This refers to the role of teacher in supporting education programs and policies at school or the regional board of education by supporting the principal's leadership in delivering education reform and maintaining the school's sustainability. One example is by supporting the professional learner community development initiated by the principal where teachers can direct, share ideas, and create conducive learning environment. Another instance is by giving examples of teacher leadership for organization development. Moreover, teachers may conduct either formal or informal inquiries, for instance, by conducting a regular home visit to the students' residents to collect information about students' interests and characters to report to the school principal and parents. Teachers and the principal can utilize the results of identification to formulate a policy [16].

These dimensions prove that teacher leadership practices in Indonesia involve various actions aimed at directing and motivating students to study in the learning process, developing the school by formulating school policies with the principal, or developing professional community and empowering parents to improve student learning achievement and learning process. In other words, teacher leadership occurs at school, outside of school, as well as both in formal and informal manners.

#### 3) *Factors Influencing Teacher Leadership Practices in Indonesia*

There are several factors influencing teacher leadership. These factors may come from the teachers, such as their view on leadership. Teachers who think that the leadership role only belongs to the principal tends to be passive, afraid of making decisions, and prefer to wait for the superior's or principal's instruction [17]. On the other hand, teachers who consider themselves as a part of the school leadership system tend to be more assertive in expressing their opinions, participating in the decision-making process, and willing to share innovative learning ideas. Another factor is teacher confidence. Those who lack confidence tend to be more passive and have poor leadership skills.

In addition to the internal factors, there are also contributing external factors on teacher leadership. According to Mappaenre, Sari and Hendro, one of them is the principal's view [18]. Principals who consider leadership to be solely their own responsibility tend to limit teacher's leadership role and make the teaching staff more passive. On the other hand, when the leadership role is shared with teachers, teachers tend to be more active and confident to lead.

#### 4) *The Impacts of Teacher Leadership on Students and Schools in Indonesia*

Teacher leadership has a significant influence on the students' learning motivation [19], which ultimately affects their learning achievement [20]. When teachers provide inspiring examples of advice, action or behavior, students will be motivated to follow the examples. Teachers who provide a clear learning guidance to the students and apply learning methods that are adjusted to the students' characters will also help improve the students' learning achievement.

Teacher leadership also significantly influences the quality improvement and development of the school. The school's quality improves as teachers create a healthy collaborative culture that offers equal opportunities among the school staff to develop their capacities and work together to create a conducive learning environment [21]. An established quality collaborative culture ensures the continuous development of the school.

### B. Discussion

#### 1) *The Definition of Teacher Leadership from the Indonesians' Perspective*

Teacher leadership in Indonesia refers to the teachers' ability to influence, encourage, guide, direct, and move others, e.g. colleagues or students, to follow their lead. This definition is in line with experts who define teacher leadership as a set of skills to influence other people in and out of the school context, including in and out of the classroom setting. In addition, the term also refers to the teacher's role in guiding the colleagues, working in a team, and providing a contribution to the school improvement

Teacher leadership is a result of the distribution of the leadership authority and role from the principal to the teachers. This is in accordance with the current development of teacher leadership in various countries. In the United States and Great Britain, for example, teachers take leadership role as senior teachers assist their junior colleagues, as well as serve as the head of department, head of a team, substitute teacher, and mentor. These roles are a form of distribution of school management toward teachers, as well as a form of recognition on the significance of teacher's role in improving student's achievement. The goal here is to make teachers partners in the school's quality improvement.

#### 2) *Teacher Leadership Practices in Indonesia*

Teacher leadership in Indonesia involves every teacher's action to direct and motivate student in the learning process, develop the school by formulating school policies with the principal, develop a professional community, and empower parents to improve student learning achievement and learning

process. Teacher leadership occurs at school, outside of school, inside and outside the classroom, as well as both in formal and informal manners. Such practices are in line with previous research findings.

Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan identify three types of teacher leadership. The first type is the role of teacher leadership in the school's formal hierarchy; for example, as a vice principal [22]. In this context, the main job of the teacher focuses on the teaching administrations to ensure the effectivity and efficiency of the education programs [23]. The second type is teacher leadership in the formal hierarchy which focuses on pedagogical tasks such as being a leader in a teacher working group or a curriculum developer. Darling-Hammond and Shulman point out that this second type of teacher leadership allows senior teachers to empower junior teachers in a more flexible manner to increase their skills and understanding on teaching [24,25]. The last type of teacher leadership occurs in the learning process in the classroom, such as in team teaching, being a teaching model for junior teachers, or evaluating other teachers' learning [26]. This type of leadership focuses on the quality improvement of the education process at school by promoting professional collaboration among teachers [27].

#### 3) *Factors Influencing Teacher Leadership Practices in Indonesia*

In Indonesia, teacher leadership is influenced by internal factors, namely teacher's view on leadership and their confidence to lead. Literatures in contexts outside Indonesia reveal similar findings. When teachers view leadership role as something that only belongs to the school principal, they tend to be reluctant in taking leadership roles. This also goes to teachers who lack confidence as they prefer to be passive in making initiations and focus in teaching their subjects.

On the other hand, external factors such as the principal's view on leadership also play a role on teacher leadership in Indonesia. In line with previous findings, school principals who understand the importance of sharing leadership roles with teachers can support teacher leadership practices and the school improvement at the same time. A different perspective in Hongkong puts the emphasis on the importance of the government's support in terms of the policies on the technical assistance and standards for teacher leadership practices.

Previous studies have discussed other factors which influence teacher leadership. The first one is the organization structure. The school needs to develop a flexible organization structure which supports collaborative culture. A rigid and bureaucratic organization structure at school can limit the teachers' movements to deliver collaborative teacher leadership [28]. The next factor is professionalism. Teachers who view themselves as not professional enough may take offense when the senior teacher (acting as a leader) provides a feedback on their learning practices. This causes them to be withdrawn and act as the expert. The third factor is the culture. As long as the teacher's job is only associated with classroom teaching, collaborative leadership will not prevail. Finally, it must be noted that material and non-material supports such as incentives, recognition, and appreciations are all important for teacher leadership. Moreover, leadership training and activities

on leadership roles can also support the development of teacher leadership.

#### 4) *The Impacts of Teacher Leadership on Students and Schools*

In Indonesia, teacher leadership has a significant influence on student learning motivation, which ultimately affects improvement on their learning achievement. The result of this study affirms the result of previous studies which state that schools manage to improve student achievement when teachers and stakeholders are given leadership opportunities [29,30].

It is evident that teacher leadership in Indonesia has significant impacts on the school development and quality improvement. Various studies support this finding, as teacher leadership where the teachers act as mentors for their colleagues prove to improve their professional practices and ultimately, student achievement [31,32]. In other words, teacher leadership facilitates continuous learning quality improvement and affects the school's quality improvement.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Teacher leadership is defined as the ability to influence, encourage, assist, guide, and move others, whether colleagues or students, to achieve a particular objective. It is the result of distribution of roles and authority from the principal to teachers. In Indonesia, teacher leadership occurs in and outside of school, in and outside of the classroom, as well as in formal and informal manners. Teacher leadership practice in Indonesia involves all efforts done by teacher to direct and motivate students to study in the learning process, develop the school by formulating school policies with the principal, develop a professional community, and empower parents to improve student learning achievement and learning process.

Factors affecting teacher leadership practices in Indonesia may come from the teacher him/herself, e.g. teacher's view on leadership or from others, e.g. the principal's view on leadership. Teacher leadership has a significant influence on the students' learning motivation, which ultimately leads to increased learning achievement.

Considering the significant contribution of teacher leadership on the improvement of learning achievement and school quality, this study proposes the need for teacher leadership development at school. Moreover, there needs to be further studies on teacher leadership, especially in the Asian context in order to enrich the literatures on this topic, as the current literatures are dominated by the Western context.

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