



Leadership Quality and Its Impact on Quality of Teaching and Academic Achievements of Students in the Post-Pandemic Period

Dhurata Lamçja

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Abstract

Effective educational leadership plays a critical role in shaping classroom learning, yet its direct impact on teaching quality and student academic achievement remains an area that warrants deeper exploration. While research has consistently highlighted the significance of expert teachers in driving student success, school leaders face a formidable challenge: how to identify, attract, and retain highly skilled educators who can transform even the most challenging school environments. This study examines the role of leadership in fostering high-quality teaching, improving student outcomes, and ensuring sustainable school success. Particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions have been forced to reevaluate and adapt their leadership approaches to navigate unprecedented disruptions. As schools emerge from this crisis, the need for innovative, adaptable, and transformational leadership has never been more urgent. The findings emphasize that leadership is not confined to formal administrative roles; rather, it is a shared responsibility that extends to teachers, staff, and the wider school community. By adopting collaborative and dynamic leadership strategies, schools can create an environment that supports teacher development, enhances student learning, and promotes long-term academic success.

Keywords: teaching, leadership, education, pandemic, student, teacher

1. Introduction

Educational leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping teaching effectiveness and student academic achievement. However, while leadership's influence on institutional organization has been extensively studied, its direct effect on classroom instruction and student learning remains less explored. Recent research increasingly highlights that expert teachers—not just administrators—are the true drivers of student success. However, school leaders face a pressing dilemma: how to recruit, develop, and retain these high-impact educators, particularly in schools facing socioeconomic challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges, requiring both teachers and school leaders to adapt rapidly to remote instruction. This period underscored the need for strong, flexible leadership—not only at the administrative level but also among teachers themselves. Educators had to lead from behind screens, ensuring student engagement and academic integrity under unprecedented conditions.

This study explores the relationship between leadership quality, teaching effectiveness, and student academic performance, particularly in the post-pandemic context. It seeks to answer key questions: How can educational leaders create environments that foster high-quality teaching? What leadership strategies are most effective in improving student achievement? And, most importantly, how can leadership be reformed to address the evolving challenges of modern education?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Encouraging Teacher Leadership and Its Impact on Student Performance

Encouraging teachers to take on leadership roles fosters a culture of innovation, responsibility, and risk-taking—ultimately enhancing student perceptions and academic performance. Research strongly supports the idea that transformational leadership, in particular, yields the highest levels of student achievement (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

A study by Andrews and Crowther (2002) characterizes leading teachers as individuals who believe in a “better world,” pursue authenticity in their teaching and assessment practices, facilitate learning communities, overcome obstacles in school culture and structures, and translate ideas into sustainable systems of action. York-Barr and Duke (2004) further define teacher leadership as the ability to influence peers and other stakeholders to improve teaching and learning practices, with the ultimate goal of enhancing student outcomes.

Danielson (2006, 2007) emphasizes that a school’s effectiveness is directly tied to the quality of its teaching and student achievement. He asserts that a successful school must provide an excellent curriculum, and at the heart of such a curriculum is the quality of teaching and learning. However, modern school leadership faces increasingly complex demands. School administrators are expected to be visionaries—setting institutional strategies and fostering a sense of purpose among staff—while also managing operational challenges such as budgeting and infrastructure. Furthermore, they are expected to be instructional leaders with expertise in curriculum and pedagogy.

A potential solution to this growing burden is the empowerment of teachers as leaders within their schools. Teachers who serve as instructional leaders bring their expertise into professional learning communities, mentoring their colleagues and promoting best practices in the classroom. This model not only strengthens teaching quality but also translates directly into improved student academic outcomes.

2.2 Effective Academic Leadership in Times of Crisis: The Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Period

The qualities of effective academic leadership did not diminish during the COVID-19 pandemic; rather, they became even more crucial. The crisis underscored the importance of distributing leadership across the school structure. In this context, the role of academic leaders was not just to set institutional priorities but also to empower teachers with the autonomy needed to make decisions relevant to their specific subjects and roles.

This decentralized leadership approach proved to be highly effective in improving the quality and speed of decision-making, enhancing team motivation, and addressing the evolving needs of students—who were among the most affected by the disruptions of online learning. Given the complexities of the pandemic, school leaders had to delegate authority to teachers as a means of ensuring academic continuity and student success. Institutions that had already established distributed leadership models before the pandemic were better positioned to navigate the crisis successfully (Dumulesku & Mutiu, 2021).

Beyond structural adaptations, the crisis also brought immense psychological strain and uncertainty. Leadership during this period was not just about decision-making but also about fostering trust, accountability, and emotional resilience. Teachers had to balance their own pandemic-related challenges while remaining empathetic and supportive toward students. By building strong teacher-student relationships and demonstrating emotional stability, educators helped create a sense of community and commitment to learning, even in the face of adversity.

3. Conclusion

There remains much to learn about the impact of effective leadership in schools, how best to harness its benefits, and how to ensure that talented leaders are not undermined by flawed systems. The greater the challenge, the greater the impact that leadership can have on learning outcomes. While existing research shows that leadership actions have a measurable effect on student achievement, the impact is significantly greater in schools that are not facing severe socio-economic difficulties. This underscores the need for leadership strategies tailored to different school environments, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of evolving leadership skills as part of broader school improvement efforts, especially in the post-pandemic landscape. Effective academic leadership must be dynamic, empowering individuals at all levels, and aligning decision-making processes with the adaptive needs of modern education.

A key takeaway from this study is the necessity of empowering teachers as leaders in the classroom and within the

broader school structure. Teachers should be given more autonomy in decision-making, and their leadership roles should be actively nurtured. This requires targeted professional development programs that enhance leadership skills, foster innovation, and enable educators to respond effectively to crises.

Moving forward, educational institutions must embrace new leadership mentalities, attitudes, and practices, drawing from the lessons learned during the pandemic. The experience gained during this period provides a foundation for building a more resilient, adaptive, and student-centered education system—one where leadership is not just a top-down process but a collaborative effort that empowers every stakeholder to contribute to academic success.

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