Assessing Future Teacher Leaders: An Analysis Of Leadership Skills in Pre-Service Teachers Using A Multi Domain Self-Assessment

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Abstract. Teacher leadership is critical in shaping the educational environment and promoting positive change within schools. Teacher leadership fosters educational innovation and creates supportive learning environments. This study investigates the self-perceived leadership qualities of pre-service teachers, focusing on essential domains of teacher leadership, including self-awareness, leading change, communication, diversity, instructional proficiency, continuous improvement, and self-organization. Utilizing a structured survey instrument adopted and adapted from TLSA (Teacher Leadership Self-Assessment) by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009). Data was gathered from a sample of teacher candidates to assess their competencies in these domains. The teacher candidates were the final-year Primary Teacher Education Program students at Esa Unggul University. The findings indicate varying levels of readiness among the participants. The categorical analysis provides insights into specific areas where future teachers demonstrate potential and highlights domains where further development may be beneficial. This research contributes to the understanding of teacher leadership in the context of teacher preparation programs and underscores the importance of targeted support in nurturing well-rounded teacher leaders. Implications for curriculum adjustments and the integration of leadership training in teacher education programs are discussed.

Keywords: Teacher Leadership, Self-Assessment, Teacher Candidates

Abstrak.Kepemimpinan guru sangat penting dalam membentuk lingkungan pendidikan dan mendorong perubahan positif di sekolah. Kepemimpinan guru mendorong inovasi pendidikan dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung. Studi ini menyelidiki kualitas kepemimpinan yang dirasakan oleh guru masa jabatan, dengan fokus pada domain penting kepemimpinan guru, termasuk kesadaran diri, memimpin perubahan, komunikasi, keragaman, kemahiran pengajaran, perbaikan berkelanjutan, dan pengorganisasian diri. Memanfaatkan instrumen survei terstruktur yang diadopsi dan diadaptasi dari TLSA (Teacher Leadership Self-Assessment) oleh Katzenmeyer dan Moller (2009). Data dikumpulkan dari sampel calon guru untuk menilai kompetensi mereka dalam domain tersebut. Calon guru tersebut merupakan mahasiswa tingkat akhir Program Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar Universitas Esa Unggul. Temuan ini menunjukkan tingkat kesiapan yang berbeda-beda di antara para peserta. Analisis kategoris memberikan wawasan mengenai bidang-bidang tertentu di mana calon guru menunjukkan potensinya dan menyoroti bidang-bidang yang mungkin dapat dikembangkan lebih lanjut. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman kepemimpinan guru dalam konteks program persiapan guru dan menggarisbawahi pentingnya dukungan yang ditargetkan dalam membina pemimpin guru yang berwawasan luas. Implikasi terhadap penyesuaian kurikulum dan integrasi pelatihan kepemimpinan dalam program pendidikan guru dibahas.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Guru, Penilaian Diri, Calon Guru

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher leadership plays a pivotal role in advancing educational practices and fostering positive change within schools. As educators increasingly assume responsibilities beyond the classroom, their leadership capacity significantly impacts their ability to inspire colleagues, innovate instructional methods, and enhance student outcomes. This critical aspect of the teaching profession underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of how leadership qualities are cultivated and assessed among teacher candidates.

In the context of teacher preparation, pre-service teachers represent a unique group with the potential to become future leaders in education. Their self-awareness, ability to lead change, effective communication, and understanding of diversity are essential traits for navigating the complexities of modern educational environments. However, these competencies are often underexamined during teacher education programs, leaving gaps in the preparation of well-rounded teacher leaders.

This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the self-perceived leadership qualities of pre-service teachers enrolled in a Primary Teacher Education Program. By employing a multi-domain framework based on the Teacher Leadership Self-Assessment (TLSA) developed by Katzenmeyer and Moller (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), this research seeks to provide insights into the readiness of future teachers to assume leadership roles. The findings will inform curriculum adjustments and advocate for the integration of leadership training in teacher education programs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Leadership: Definitions and Significance

The concept of teacher leadership has evolved to encompass a wide range of roles and responsibilities, reflecting the dynamic nature of educational settings. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) define teacher leadership as the capacity to lead within and beyond the classroom, influencing peers and contributing to the overall improvement of teaching and learning. Teacher leaders not only excel in instructional practices but also serve as catalysts for change, fostering a culture of collaboration and professional growth (Yaacob & Don, 2018). These roles are vital in addressing challenges such as educational equity, curriculum innovation, and student achievement.

Research highlights the multifaceted nature of teacher leadership, with studies emphasizing the importance of self-awareness, communication, and the ability to lead change (Doraiswamy et al., 2016). Effective teacher leaders exhibit a deep understanding of instructional practices, engage in reflective dialogue, and advocate for policies that enhance teaching and learning outcomes. These qualities align with the TLSA framework, which provides a comprehensive lens for assessing leadership competencies in educators.

Domains of Teacher Leadership

Research highlights several key domains of teacher leadership that are instrumental in developing effective educators. Self-awareness is foundational, enabling teachers to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth. Leading change involves the ability to initiate and sustain improvements in teaching and learning, while effective communication is crucial for building relationships and fostering collaboration. Understanding diversity ensures that teacher leaders can create inclusive learning environments that address the needs of all students.

Additional domains, such as instructional proficiency and continuous improvement, reflect the technical and reflective aspects of teaching that drive excellence. Finally, self-organization underscores the importance of time management and strategic planning in balancing multiple responsibilities. Collectively, these domains provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating teacher leadership potential.

Teacher Leadership in Pre-Service Education

Despite the recognized importance of teacher leadership, its integration into pre-service teacher education programs remains inconsistent. Studies suggest that many teacher preparation curricula focus primarily on pedagogical skills, with limited emphasis on leadership development (Harris & Muijs, 2002). This gap highlights the need for targeted interventions to nurture leadership capabilities among teacher candidates.

The preparation of pre-service teachers as future leaders is a critical aspect of teacher education programs. Studies indicate that leadership development should be an intentional component of these programs, integrating opportunities for self-assessment, mentorship, and experiential learning (Jackson et al., 2010).

Self-assessment tools, such as the TLSA by Katzenmeyer and Moller, have been instrumental in evaluating leadership qualities in educators. These tools provide valuable insights into how pre-service teachers perceive their competencies across various leadership domains. For example, recent research by Wenner and Campbell (2017) suggests that self-assessment can serve as a starting point for developing personalized professional growth plans. The TLSA framework, adapted for use in various educational contexts, serves as a valuable tool for evaluating leadership readiness among teacher candidates(Yaacob & Don, 2018)

In the Indonesian context, the emphasis on teacher leadership is particularly relevant given the ongoing efforts to reform and enhance the quality of education. Pre-service teachers must be equipped to address diverse classroom needs, navigate cultural complexities, and implement evidence-based practices. This study contributes to the discourse by examining the

self-perceived leadership competencies of teacher candidates, offering a foundation for targeted interventions and curriculum enhancements.

By exploring these dimensions, this research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications, ultimately supporting the development of well-rounded teacher leaders.

Gaps in Research

While existing literature acknowledges the importance of teacher leadership, there is limited empirical research focusing on pre-service teachers in the Indonesian context. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the leadership skills of final-year Primary Teacher Education Program students at Esa Unggul University. By exploring their self-perceptions through a structured self-assessment, this research contributes to the broader understanding of teacher leadership and its implications for teacher preparation programs.

In summary, this study underscores the necessity of equipping future educators with leadership competencies that align with the demands of 21st-century education. By identifying areas of strength and opportunities for growth, the findings aim to inform strategies for enhancing teacher leadership development within pre-service education programs.

3. METHODS

Participants

Minimum number of participants for descriptive research is 10% of the population(Gay et al., 2012). Participants were 35 students (3 males and 32 females), randomly selected from 184 students, consisting of sophomore and final year students. Freshman students were not the target of the respondents. The sample was selected through random sampling. The students voluntarily fill out the surveys.

Instrument and Data Collection

The data of this study were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire of the study was adopted and adapted from the Teacher Leadership Self-Assessment (TLSA) by Ketzenmeyer (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). The TLSA has seven dimensions, including (a) self-awareness, (b) leading change, (c) communication (d) diversity (e) instructional proficiency and leadership (f) continuous improvement, and (g) self-organization. The questionnaire is a self-reflection instrument, in the form of a Likert scale tool (1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4-often, 5-always) and some of the statements were adapted and altered

accordingly toward the students' contexts; from teaching to studying. For example, the statement "I reflect on what I do well and also how I can improve as a classroom teacher" becomes "I reflect on what I do well and also how I can improve as a future teacher", "I act with integrity and fairness when working with students or adults" becomes "I act with integrity and fairness when working with classmates", etc. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire have been run and checked.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data were also organized and presented in tables and graphics to provide a brief summary of the findings and described more detailed in a particular findings, including the tendency in every domains. For the correctness and accuracy of the data, the descriptive statistics is processed and computed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 22. The score students gained from the survey is also interpreted into categorical range as follows:

Table 1. Score interpretation of Self-Assessment

Range	Categories
90% - 100%	Outstanding
75% - 89%	Very Potential
60% - 74%	Potential
40% - 59%%	Emerging Potential
below 40%	Need Development

4. RESULTS

Data collected has been tabulated and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 22. Demographically, female students dominated the respondents, and more than 50% of respondents were in their final year. Table 2 presents the comparison between the self-assessment scores of teacher leadership skill domains.

Table 2. Comparison of Domain Scores

	Self-Awareness	Leading Change	Communication	Diversity	Instrc Profic	Cont' Impro	Self-Org
Mean	34.11	24.89	29.94	25.14	24.57	24.74	24.86
Standard Error	0.51	0.44	0.47	0.40	0.47	0.41	0.38
Standard Deviation	3.01	2.58	2.80	2.38	2,78	2.43	2.24
Sample Variance	9.05	6.63	7.82	5.66	7,72	5.90	5.01
Kurtosis	-0.75	0.06	-0.60	-0.26	0,77	0.35	0.22
Skewness	0.61	0.51	0.28	0.36	-0,02	0.75	0.59

Range	10.00	10.00	10.00	9.00	13,00	10.00	10.00
Minimum	30.00	20.00	25.00	21.00	17,00	20.00	20.00
Maximum	40.00	30.00	35.00	30.00	30,00	30.00	30.00
Sum	1194.00	871.00	1048.00	880.00	860,00	866.00	870.00
Count	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00	35,00	35.00	35.00

Based on the statistics, the domains of self-awareness (M=34.11, SD=3.01), communication (M=29.94, SD=2.80), and diversity (M=25.14, SD=2.38) have higher scores than the other domains. This means that students have potential and strength in these areas. The lowest score students earn is in the instructional proficiency domain (M=24.57, SD=2.78). This means that the domain needs to be prioritized in developing students' teacher leadership skills.

Domain self-awareness. The highest score is about their understanding of how their strengths and needs for development will impact their role as future teacher leaders, while the lowest score is about how they meet their expectations in learning. This means that they have never met the expectations they set.

Domain leading change. In this domain, the highest score is that the future teacher leaders understand the importance of culture in improving their achievements. However, they do not realize that their activities also take part in improving the culture of the faculty.

Domain Communication. Since the future teacher leaders are gen-Z, communication using technology has the highest score. Yet, they often miss the ideas or perspectives of others, as the lowest score. This means that future teacher leaders do not understand what people think.

Domain Diversity. In this domain, the highest score is about respecting other beliefs. Working with people who have different backgrounds has the lowest score.

Domain instructional Proficiency. From the assessment, the future teacher leaders think that they do not have any competency although they believe that they will succeed.

Domain Continuous Improvement. The future teacher leaders score the highest in setting goals. Yet, they have scored the lowest in participating in activities of self-development. This could happen because the students do not understand where to start the improvement.

Domain self-Organization. Future teacher leaders show initiative and spirit to accomplish the goal, but they still panic and feel stressed in their confidence facing the difficult situation.

Based on the data of self-assessment, future teacher leaders perceive their teacher leadership as summarized in table 3.

Table 3. Future Teacher Leadership skills

Range	Categories	# Students	%
90% - 100%	Outstanding	3	9%
75% - 89%	Very Potential	29	83%
60% - 74%	Potential	3	9%
40% - 59%	Emerging Potential	0	0%
below 40%	Need Development	0	0%
		35	

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the teacher leadership skills of future teacher leaders, highlighting both their strengths and areas for improvement. These results are analyzed through the lens of contemporary teacher leadership theories and supported by recent research.

Strengths in Key Domains of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is widely recognized as the ability of teachers to inspire and influence others to improve student outcomes and school culture (Harris & Jones, 2019). In this study, self-awareness, communication, and diversity emerged as key strengths among respondents, aligning with the idea that teacher leaders must possess strong interpersonal skills and self-reflective abilities to excel in their roles.

1. **Self-Awareness**: High scores in self-awareness indicate that future teacher leaders are cognizant of their strengths and developmental needs. This finding supports the view that reflective practices are foundational to effective teacher leadership (Wenner & Campbell, 2020). However, the lower scores in meeting personal learning expectations reveal a gap in aligning aspirations with tangible achievements. This is consistent with the challenges highlighted by Collie et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of goal-setting and self-regulation in leadership development.

2. **Communication**: Respondents excelled in technology-based communication, a hallmark of Generation Z educators. This aligns with research by Trust et al. (2022), which notes the pivotal role of technology in enabling teacher leaders to collaborate and innovate. However, the difficulty in understanding others' perspectives underscores the need for empathy and active listening skills, as these are critical for fostering collaboration and mutual understanding in diverse teams.

3. **Diversity**: The ability to respect differing beliefs reflects a readiness to lead inclusively, a vital trait in multicultural education settings (Gupta & Möller, 2021). However, the

challenge of working effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds highlights the need for enhanced training in cultural competence, an area increasingly emphasized in leadership development programs.

Challenges in Instructional Proficiency and Other Domains

Instructional proficiency, a cornerstone of teacher leadership, was the weakest domain among respondents. Instructional leadership involves guiding peers and improving classroom practices, a role that requires deep pedagogical expertise (Harris & Jones, 2022).

1. **Instructional Proficiency**: The low scores in this domain reflect a lack of confidence in applying instructional strategies, despite a belief in eventual success. This finding aligns with Pont et al. (2020), who noted that many teacher leaders feel underprepared for pedagogical leadership due to insufficient practical training. This suggests the need for greater emphasis on experiential learning and mentorship in teacher preparation programs.

2. **Continuous Improvement**: While respondents showed strength in setting goals, their lower participation in self-development activities mirrors findings from Clarke and Hollingsworth (2020), who argued that teacher leaders must engage in sustained professional learning to maintain their effectiveness. Providing structured opportunities for growth, such as professional learning communities, could address this gap.

3. **Self-Organization**: The difficulties in managing stress and confidence in challenging situations highlight the importance of resilience and emotional intelligence in teacher leadership. Recent studies, such as those by Day and Gu (2022), emphasize the growing need for leadership training that incorporates strategies for stress management and emotional regulation.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

The results of this study point to specific areas where teacher education programs can enhance their support for future teacher leaders:

1. **Strengthening Instructional Proficiency**: Provide more opportunities for practical teaching experiences, such as microteaching and school-based internships, to build pedagogical confidence.

2. **Fostering Cultural Competence**: Integrate training on diversity and inclusion to prepare future leaders for multicultural environments.

3. **Enhancing Communication Skills**: Offer workshops on empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution to complement technological communication strengths.

4. **Encouraging Continuous Improvement**: Establish professional learning communities and provide mentorship programs to guide students in their self-development journey.

5. **Building Resilience**: Include modules on stress management, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence in leadership courses to prepare students for the challenges of their roles.

6. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the strengths and challenges of future teacher leaders, providing actionable insights for teacher education programs. By leveraging students' existing strengths in self-awareness, communication, and diversity, while addressing gaps in instructional proficiency, continuous improvement, and self-organization, teacher preparation programs can better equip their graduates to meet the demands of teacher leadership in diverse educational contexts. These findings also contribute to the growing body of research on teacher leadership, reinforcing the need for holistic, evidence-based approaches to leadership development.

LIMITATION

While this study provides valuable insights into the self-assessed teacher leadership skills of future teacher leaders, several limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the findings and inform future research.

1. **Self-Assessment Bias**

   The reliance on self-assessment data poses a potential limitation due to subjective biases. Respondents may have overestimated or underestimated their abilities, influenced by their self-perception or lack of experience in real-world leadership roles. This limitation aligns with concerns raised in teacher leadership literature, which emphasizes the importance of triangulating self-assessment data with peer reviews or observational measures (Collie et al., 2021).

2. **Sample Demographics**

   The sample was dominated by female respondents and comprised predominantly final-year students. While this reflects the gender and academic composition of many teacher education programs, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population, particularly male teacher candidates or those in earlier stages of their training.

3. **Domain-Specific Assessment**

The assessment focused on specific domains of teacher leadership, such as self-awareness, communication, and instructional proficiency. While these domains are critical, other dimensions of teacher leadership, such as collaborative leadership or advocacy, were not included. The exclusion of these areas may have provided an incomplete picture of the respondents' overall leadership potential.

4. **Limited Contextual Factors**

The study did not consider contextual factors, such as the respondents' teaching practice experiences, the institutional culture, or mentorship opportunities, which may significantly influence the development of teacher leadership skills. Including such factors in future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to teacher leadership development.

5. **Focus on Quantitative Data**

The study primarily employed quantitative methods (e.g., mean scores, standard deviations) to analyze leadership skills. While this approach identifies strengths and weaknesses, it does not capture the nuanced perspectives or experiences of respondents. Incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could enrich the findings by exploring the reasons behind the observed trends in greater depth.

6. **Short-Term Assessment**

The study captures a snapshot of respondents' self-assessed skills at a single point in time. Teacher leadership is a developmental process, and a longitudinal study could better reveal how these skills evolve over time and under varying circumstances.

7. **Potential Overemphasis on Instructional Proficiency**

The results highlight instructional proficiency as the lowest-scoring domain, suggesting it as an area for improvement. However, the focus on this domain might overshadow the importance of developing other equally critical leadership skills, such as fostering collaboration or leading innovation. Future studies should aim to balance the evaluation of instructional and non-instructional leadership dimensions.

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