



Leadership and Functional Competence Development in Teachers: World Experience

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Teacher leadership is closely related to the level of professional competence. However, at the present development stage of the education system, this concept is not always fully understood and taken into account. The purpose of our research is to study the level of leadership of Russian school and university teachers, as well as to identify problems and suggest possible solutions. The survey involved 111 school teachers and university lecturers. The selection criterion is explained by the fact that leadership may vary depending on the level of education. This sample will allow us to consider the issue more widely. In the course of our research, the authors identified the following problems: the concept and importance of teacher leadership are not fully understood; consequently, teacher leadership is not fully implemented. This fact negatively affects professional competence development. These problems can be solved by the creation of special courses, the exchange of experience, the encouragement of teacher leaders and the introduction of the idea of teacher leadership in pedagogical universities.

Keywords: educational leadership, teacher education, professional competence, teacher leadership, professional development

INTRODUCTION

Over the past fifty years, leadership has been one of the most popular subjects in business schools around the world (Zorina et al., 2018). Recently, the importance and influence of leadership research in business school curricula has grown. There is no uniform way to define or study leadership. However, there is a variety of ways to teach leadership theory (Collinson & Tourish, 2015; Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016). Scientists in different business schools support different theories and approaches often

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based on their own research interests and problems. They also use a variety of teaching methods, including classroom lectures, leadership programs, case studies, experiential learning, coaching, feedback sessions, team projects, modeling and self-analysis (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Educational leadership has long been studied in terms of educational management. Various constructions of this phenomenon have also been described in the literature (Leithwood et al., 2000). Different leadership models (for example, “political”, “cultural”, “educational”, etc.) were conceptualized to suggest “correct” leader/follower relationship in modern educational organizations (Stoll & Temperley, 2009). Nowadays, the approaches to educational leadership that are based on equality and growth are very popular (Earley & Weindling 2004). Teacher leadership is regarded as a possible tool to reform education and improve teaching through the continuous professional development of teachers. School teachers organize teacher unions to solve problems before contacting a governing body (for example, a director) (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010).

Teacher leadership is not only the result of professional development. It also promotes an effective growth within a school context. Teachers who become leaders contribute to the effective professional development of their fellow teachers by creating leading communities of specialists who collectively explore and improve teaching practices through constant demands (Smeets & Ponte, 2009). In addition, the leadership of teachers and lecturers encourages participation in self-education programs. This improves professionalism. In fact, these teachers are guided by themselves (MacBeath & Dempster, 2008). In this regard, the training obtained as a result of teacher leadership can be used to improve the educational institution, its educational practice, as well as student performance. In general, teacher leadership can be defined as “the process by which teachers or lecturers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, management and other members of the teaching staff to improve teaching and learning practices in order to improve education quality and student performance” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This definition emphasizes an important aspect of the concept. Teacher leadership is focused on the leadership based on influence and interaction, rather than on power and authority (Printy, 2008). There is a close relationship between teacher leadership and professional development, because professional development is both a cause and a result of teacher leadership. Teachers have an important role in creating and transferring professional knowledge. This cause and effect link is currently established through empirical research (Huerta et al., 2008, Watt et al., 2010). Despite the fact that many teachers can hold key positions for a long time, the term “teacher leadership” is better understood and more applicable at the moment. As school reform encourages management to shift to the model of distributed leadership (Leverett, 2002), in which teachers share leadership and actively participate in decision making, the need for leader teachers who are ready to take on these roles must keep up with the requirements. There are some current trends in shifting the leadership model in educational institutions. They include communicative and cooperative shifts, new ways of learning (for example, webinars), adapting the program to specific goals and objectives, as well as personal development (Huber, 2004).

Leadership always involves some influence on other people. Development program participants must be sensitive to this. They should cultivate the awareness for the importance of a cautious and responsible attitude to power. Their educational goal should be to help students develop their skills and become independent thinking, self-sufficient and socially responsible, mature citizens who grow beyond being led. Principles such as self-autonomy, respect of oneself and others, and cooperation play an important role in the learning processes of not only children, but also adults. Thus, it is possible to single out several basic issues concerning the leadership of teachers and lecturers: What is the role of the teacher leader in the educational process organization and the functioning of the educational institution? How does leadership affect the professional competence of the teacher, as well as the professional competence of their colleagues? What role does a leader teacher play in the life of students? What professional development activities can be held? Russian educators also interact with the idea of teacher leaders; this is evidenced, for example, by creating school methodological unions or supporting young teachers by more experienced colleagues. This suggests that the topic of teacher leadership and its development is relevant in Russia. Thus, it is possible to identify the purpose of our research: to study the level of leadership of Russian school teachers and university lecturers; to identify the main difficulties and limitations associated with teacher leadership; to develop recommendations to expand the practice of teacher leadership.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The broader literature on teacher leadership posits the notion that school leadership involves the interaction of all participants working toward a shared vision of quality learning for all students (Fullan, 2011; Donaldson 2007; Muijs and Harris, 2007). Teachers are internally driven to expand their professional knowledge and skills, experiment, take risks, collaborate, seek feedback from colleagues and question their own or others' practices, all because of their strong interest in improving the conditions and outcomes of student learning. Some teachers focused on improving teaching and learning within their own classrooms, while others moved beyond their classrooms to influence broader change in their schools (York-Barr and Duke, 2004).

There exists a great deal of literature on teacher quality and effective teaching, including (a) complete instructional frameworks, notably, Pianta, La Paro & Hamre (2006); (b) collections of teaching strategies, such as those advocated for by Lemov (2015); and (c) research demonstrating the impact of effective teaching by numerous scholars, such as Day, Sammons & Stobart (2007) and Green (2014). The apparent consensus among education and research scholars is that teacher quality is the single most important in-school factor contributing to student learning. Indeed, Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) make the case that this is the most abused finding in educational research, whilst Christodoulou (2014) takes this 'abused' finding further by identifying what she terms other 'evidence-less' myths such as teaching knowledge is a form of indoctrination.

Methods for improving teacher quality are also increasingly prevalent in the literature. Some of these methods include: an effort to identify the features of effective professional development that have an impact on teaching practice and student

outcomes as highlighted by Garet et al. (2001) and Wei et al. (2009); instructional leadership practices, notably by Knight (2007); and teacher performance evaluation systems as investigated by Marzano (2013). However, there is a critical need for enhanced understanding of how to make professional development mechanisms, with demonstrated efficacy in supporting individual teachers to improve their use of evidence-based practices, scalable for a system-wide effort. Indeed, it is this systemic approach to enhancing teacher quality that characterises the world's most successful educational systems, such as Singapore and Finland (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012). Teacher leadership is one approach with empirical evidence demonstrating its viability as a solution for sustaining systemic teacher quality and school improvement efforts.

Achieving changes in instructional practice and student achievement requires professional development that is collaborative (Cordingley et al., 2005), coherent, based on content matter, focused on instructional practice (Borko, 2004), and sustained over time (Yoon et al., 2007). These conclusions regarding effective professional development were corroborated by a recent international review conducted on behalf of the National Staff Development Council (Wei et al., 2009). Beyond confirming the qualities of effective professional development, the report confirmed that relatively few American teachers receive professional development that embodies these characteristics. It pointed to substantial investments made by countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, and Switzerland, which support teachers' professional learning and incorporate teacher development and collaboration into teachers' regular schedules.

METHOD

Research Design

A quantitative research method was used in the first part of the research to collect and analyze the interpretations and meanings of educational leadership taken from the survey. The second part of the research was a mini-survey related to the teacher leadership.

Participants

The surveys involved both school teachers and university lecturers in order to evaluate the development of the leadership among the teaching staff of secondary and higher education. A total of 111 people took part in the survey. Forty (29 women and 11 men) school teachers of various subjects were surveyed. The average age of the respondents was 35.6. In addition, 50 lecturers from five Russian universities were surveyed. They also teach various specialties, from the humanities to the technical ones. The sample consisted of 31 women and 19 men. The average age of the respondents was 42.3.

Table 1
Respondents from Universities

Educational institution	People surveyed
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia	15
Higher School of Economics	10
Moscow State University	22
Elabuga Institute of Kazan Volga Region Federal University	11
Moscow University of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia	8

The participant's selection criterion

The survey involved school teachers and university lecturers (Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Higher School of Economics, Moscow University of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, Moscow State University, Elabuga Institute of Kazan Volga Region Federal University). This selection criterion is explained by the fact that leadership may vary depending on the level of education. This sample will allow us to consider the issue more widely. In addition, the results of the surveys in schools and universities will help us to compare the attitude towards the idea of a teacher leader in higher and secondary education, as well as to determine the difference and similarities.

Validity and Reliability

This study can be considered valid and reliable, as the respondents are qualified educators. This suggests that they are fully aware of the topic presented. In addition, the research tools were chosen in accordance with its objectives.

Research Instruments

The first survey consisted of ten questions aimed at clarifying the attitudes of teachers and lecturers to the idea of leadership and its place in the educational process. The first question was aimed at finding out whether the teaching staff accept the fact that not only the principal can hold a key position in a team. In a narrower sense, this question was aimed at finding out whether employees believe that some redistribution of duties is necessary. Further, the purpose of the survey was to find out whether there are groups of proactive teachers or lecturers in educational institutions who take certain responsibilities for managing educational and work processes. The ability to learn continuously is one of the most important qualities of a leader, since leadership requires a great outlook. In addition, in educational institutions continuous learning and raising qualifications can characterize the employee as the most suitable. That is why the third question was aimed at finding out whether the respondents consider continuous staff training to be mandatory. Further training is directly related to the readiness to use additional materials in the framework of the curriculum that can improve and deepen the educational process. The respondents had to evaluate the importance of this practice in the fourth question.

Modern educational activities are characterized by the exchange of experience. It helps to expand professional opportunities, as well as to reassess the effectiveness of the educational process. In addition, the ability to share experience can also be regarded as a leadership quality. Thus, the following questions were associated with the exchange of professional experience and participation in events related to it. As it is known, more experienced teachers support their young colleagues in educational institutions. This is also directly related to the teacher leadership, that is why the respondents are asked to assess the importance of such initiatives. The ability to assess one's own grades and drawbacks can also be regarded as one of the leadership qualities. In the eighth question, the teachers and lecturers were asked to answer if there was a need to hold such events in educational institutions. Innovation in education is an important topic of modern education. It is also related to leadership. The ninth question was associated with the need to put forward innovative ideas that can be implemented in the educational

process. The last question was aimed at identifying the relationship between the leadership qualities of a teacher (lecturer) and their connection with professional competence. The second part of the survey was a mini-survey including some qualities that a leader teacher may have. The respondents were asked to rate their importance from 0 to 3, where zero means “not at all important” and three means “very important.” The qualities presented in the survey can be conditionally divided into two categories: personal and professional. Some of these qualities (for example, “putting forward new ideas”) can fall into both categories. Personal qualities include: proactive, not prone to conflict, respected, able to make decisions, ready for innovation, ready to express their opinion, putting forward new ideas. Professional qualities include: interested in work, ability to work in a team, able to share experience, organizational skills, ready to learn and develop. This survey will show what qualities the respondents consider the most important for a teacher leader.

Data Analysis

After collecting the necessary information, the analysis of the research data was carried out in the STATISTICA system. This Microsoft Windows software allows visualization of data in a statistical analysis. The results of some studies were presented in the form of diagrams. The margin of error is 5%, about 5 questionnaires were incorrectly filled in (some respondents did not answer all the questionnaire questions or chose more than one option).

Research Limitations

The survey involved only Russian teachers and lecturers. This fact does not allow us to judge about the level of the idea of a teacher leader in other countries. In addition, all respondents live in one city, which is one of the most developed in Russia. This does not allow us to assess the situation in less developed cities and rural schools. Moreover, the data obtained in the quantitative analysis can be quite general.

FINDINGS

It has already been mentioned that the purpose of the first survey was to find out how close the idea of a teacher leader is to the teachers and lecturers. The first question showed that 70% of teachers agreed that not only the principal can hold a key position in a team. At the same time, only 47% of university lecturers supported the idea of leadership not only from the head of university. This may indicate that the practice of teacher leadership is more acceptable and developed in secondary education. With regard to the second question, a larger percentage (82%) was also received from the school teachers. Only 45% of the teachers who participated in the survey noted that there is a certain group of proactive employees who perform various functions in their educational institution. This also suggests that leadership among school teachers can be more developed. As for the next question, the representatives of secondary and higher education showed high results (89% and 92%). This suggests that both school teachers and lecturers are aware of the need for continuous professional development, which increases their competence and improves the quality of education.

On the next question, the results were also expectedly high (93% and 95%). In the framework of modern education that provides a lot of extra material that can positively

affect the educational process, it is very important to make a timely decision on their use. This characteristic plays an important role, as it is directly related not only to leadership, but also to professional competence. The issue of the exchange of professional experience was also almost unanimously recognized as necessary (78% and 74%). This suggests that the respondents are ready not only for continuous development, but also for sharing the fruits of their professional activities. This indicates a possibility to take a leadership role. Despite the fact that the respondents recognized the importance of the exchange of experience, the results were not very high (58% for teachers and 64% for lecturers). This may indicate that educational institutions do not support such initiatives and the respondents do not want to be directly involved into them.

The initiative to guide young employees was supported by 64% of teachers and 55% of university lecturers. This indicates that the practice may be more developed in schools. The answers to the next question gave unexpectedly low results from both groups of the respondents (37% and 33%). This may be explained by several factors, including the fact that the respondents are completely satisfied with the performance of their educational institution. However, such low results can also indicate that the majority of the respondents are not ready to take leadership positions in such serious matters. The next question, on the contrary, gave rather good results. Sixty-three per cent of school teachers and 65% of university lecturers agreed that educators should be proactive in coming up with new educational practices. This means that they are ready to become leaders and innovators. It also indicates their high professional competence, which allows us to judge about the need to transform the educational process.

The opinions on the last question were also nearly equal (57% and 54%). The obtained results can be considered quite low. This indicates that the respondents do not see a direct relationship between leadership and professional competence. However, based on the results of previous questions, it can be assumed that they are subconsciously aware of it. The purpose of the second survey was to determine what qualities the respondents consider to be the most important for the leader. For convenience, the qualities presented in the questionnaire were divided into two categories: personal and professional. Then the results were presented in diagrams. The data from the questionnaires of teachers and lecturers were combined for this survey.

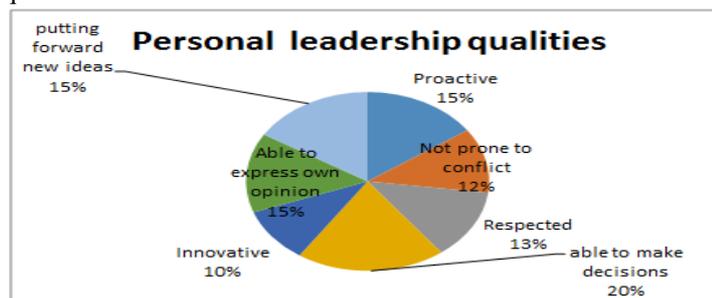


Figure 1
The Importance of Personal Qualities of a Teacher Leader



Figure 2

The Importance of Professional Qualities of a Teacher Leader

It can be concluded that according to the respondents, the most important personal qualities are the ability to make decisions, express one's own opinion and put forward new ideas. It means that most of the respondents believe that a teacher leader is the person who holds a leadership position and makes any changes in the educational process. It is quite strange that the characteristic "not prone to conflict" was given a rather low degree of importance. As for professional qualities, the highest results were given to such qualities as "ability to work in a team" and "organizational skills". The option "ready to share experience" is considered to be slightly less important. The professional qualities most favored by the respondents partially overlap with the personal ones. They confirm the assumption that the respondents define a leader as a person able to lead others. This suggests that the surveyed teachers and lecturers have a common definition of leadership, which may partly exclude personal leadership that affects professional competence.

To sum up, the problem is multidimensional. The problem is in the fact that modern Russian teachers are not fully aware of the idea of a teacher leader. Despite the fact that they presented the qualities and aspects corresponding to the characteristics of a teacher leader, some of them were chosen unconsciously and are not connected with the idea of leadership. Such a misunderstanding may hinder the development of leadership, as well as the development of professional competence.

Recognition of the importance of teacher leadership

According to the survey results, educators may not fully understand the concept of a teacher leader. This may impose some restrictions on their professional development. To eliminate this barrier, it is necessary to give a clear explanation of who a leader teacher is and what positive influence a leadership position has on professional competence. To do this, special further training should be organized and the concept of teacher leadership, its main provisions and development paths that can improve the quality of the educational process by increasing professional competence should be studied in more detail.

Encouraging the idea of a leader teacher

Teacher leadership can be maintained at different levels, from methodological unions to the groups of proactive employees who have certain responsibilities affecting the performance of an educational institution. This can create a favorable environment in the team by getting more employees involved into the activities of the educational institution. It also gives impetus to professional development, since new responsibilities may require new knowledge. The support of leader teachers will help to more fully use the resources of proactive employees.

Exchange of experience

It is known that the exchange of professional experience is very important in many spheres of activity, including the education system. Educational management should pay special attention to the exchange of professional experience. It should organize events to exchange experience and ensure the participation of their employees in them. Such events not only allow teachers and lecturers to express themselves, but also make a positive contribution to the educational process. This happens both at the personal level – the opportunity to learn something new and put this knowledge into practice, as well as at the level of an educational institution – the experience of other organizations can trigger positive changes.

Organization of courses for teachers

It has already been proposed to organize special courses explaining the importance of teacher leadership. However, it is also possible to organize additional courses where teachers would be “trained” in leadership. Within the framework of such courses the strongest qualities that can be used and developed by leader teachers can be identified through special testing.

Information for students

The formation of a teacher starts as a student when the necessary information and professional techniques are assimilated. Then it is very important to explain the importance of leadership for the educational process and professional development. That is why the promotion of the idea of a leader teacher must begin in universities. This will allow future specialists to more fully understand it and apply it earlier and more effectively in practice. Leadership development can be presented as an additional element during classes.

Support of young teachers

Support of young teachers is another important component of the performance of an educational institution. It can be both methodical and psychological. The development of this initiative should be encouraged. It positively affects all its participants. More experienced teachers improve their professional skills by supporting young colleagues, who can adapt to work faster. This will contribute to greater productivity and ability to improve the educational process.

DISCUSSION

A study of the relationship of professional development and leadership among teachers was conducted in the United States of America (Beacher, 2012). It was conducted at a large urban pedagogical college located in the northeastern United States. Forty masters in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), teaching ESL at New York public schools, were invited to participate in the study in the period of 2009-2010. Twenty-four people agreed to take part in the study. It should be noted that these teachers were the participants of NYC teacher certification program, which recruits strong academic college graduates and finances a two-year master's degree course. They finish this course working as full-time teachers. Therefore, although participants had completed one or two years of study, they were in their third or fourth year.

The development of teachers as leaders is understood as the combination of a number of organizational, cultural, interpersonal and personal characteristics (Ash & Persall, 2000). A variety of qualities from both the teacher and the school principal can increase teacher leadership. Both sides must have these qualities, because if a teacher has many of them and the school principal does not have any, leadership will be suppressed. On the other hand, if the school principal has many of these qualities, but there are no teachers fitting these descriptors, leadership will not be able to grow (Phelps, 2008). Since the definition of teacher leadership has been expanded to include many teacher activities and the conditions for emerging leadership are well documented, are there any conditions for relatively new teachers to assume these roles? One suggestion may be that teacher leaders must be experienced professionals looking for new challenges in their careers. However, significant staff turnover, school reorganization and early retirement can make newly qualified teachers more involved in the activities beyond their classroom instruction. A questionnaire was developed for the survey. It was based on subject areas specified in Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium 2010) and distributed through an online survey. Anonymous responses were originally coded according to a constant benchmarking process. The first stage of coding corresponded to domains in the standards of teacher leaders who defined log issues. After this, the second stage of coding was carried out to understand how those teachers who identified themselves as leaders obtained their positions. After this stage, the self-description leaders were invited to take part in an in-depth interview to learn more about how they evolved into their roles. The five teachers who had previously participated in the online questionnaire were then individually interviewed and recorded; their answers were also coded and classified (Gabriel, 2005).

Only two surveys out of the 24 conducted indicated a lack of participation in any of the seven teacher leadership areas compiled by the Teacher Leadership Consortium (2010). Twenty-two of the teachers were involved in at least three of the seven areas of teacher leadership, five teachers were involved in at least five of them, and three were involved – in all seven areas. Coordination of the actions presented in these seven areas indicates that most professional activities of the study participants are joint educational planning, professional development for colleagues and participation in data collection groups. Thus, it can be concluded that almost all of the interviewed teachers show leadership. It

has a positive impact on their professional activities and the professional activities of their colleagues. Teachers are called upon to take a leadership role in their first years of work. Therefore, professional development should be performed according to their needs (Hargreaves, 2008). There was a study in Tel Aviv dealing with the relationship between leadership and working experience (Oplatka & Tako, 2009). The study was based on a qualitative research methodology to collect and analyze interpretations and meanings of educational leadership taken from semi-structured interviews with thirty school teachers. The average age of teachers was 40.75 and their work experience in the education system ranged from three to thirty-nine years. The sample consisted of four men and twenty-six women. Ten respondents were primary school teachers and the rest worked in the secondary school system. They teach a wide range of subjects (Hebrew grammar, History, Civil law, PE, the Bible, English, Mathematics, Literature and Electronics). The questions were selected based on “snowball sample” (Paton, 2002), according to which each participant was asked to provide the researcher with the names of other teachers who met the criteria for working as a teacher for two or more years. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers during the 2007-2008 school year. This tool was chosen to allow the researcher to collect data more accurately reflecting personal views of individual participants, as well as to make the interview with different people more systematic (Hargreaves, 2005, Tikhomirov, 2016). The data analysis of the interviews followed four stages described by Marshall and Rossman: “organizing data”, “creating categories, themes and templates”, “testing any hypothesis” and “searching for alternative explanations”. This analysis is aimed at identifying central themes in the data and search for repetitive events. The study showed that the perception of leadership by teachers and the relationship between the leader and the teacher seem to be dynamic and are directly related to the work experience. Teachers’ work experience and previous interactions with principals and teacher leaders have a great influence on their idealized conceptualization of leadership. In addition, the teacher’s position at school (for example, vulnerability to maturity, dependence on experience) to a certain extent determines his or her subjective idea of preferred leadership and the desire to take this role (Oplatka, 2009).

Another study of teacher leadership was conducted in the Yukon, a province of Canada with a large proportion of indigenous people (Blakesley, 2008). Leadership in education has not been studied thoroughly in the Yukon due to historical reasons. This can be explained by the specific nature of the population, which hampers the development of this concept. Due to the mixing of cultures, including the culture of indigenous peoples, this area has its own development path, which also influences the idea of teacher leadership (Blakesley, 2008). In rural areas the enrollment rate is much lower than in other areas of the province. There are seven students in the smallest school in this area. It provides educational services from nursery school to grade 9. In such small schools, one teacher can work hard to cover as many aspects of the curriculum as possible. The curriculum requires a very high level of organization, innovation and adaptability (Walker & Dimmock, 2000).

The study showed that the intersection of educational leadership and culture, the schools and communities that they serve, is very complex. It demonstrates the differences

between other parts of British Columbia and the Yukon. Therefore, in order to maintain quality and ensure the relevance of Yukon education for wider communities it is necessary to conduct research, make systemic changes and pay attention to cultural and contextual leadership development in education in the near future. Due to the specific nature of the population, educational leadership should be understood from the cultural perspective (Ottman, 2005). Eurocentric ideas prevail in educational leadership. These ideas are contrary to the indigenous ideas of leadership in the Yukon. This dominance is also the reason to limit understanding and include other perspectives in wider debates about leadership. In the Yukon there are not enough educational researchers. Despite technological advances, the area is isolated from secondary educational institutions that have necessary knowledge and experience to conduct extensive and thorough research. Therefore, given the current lack of specific research on educational leadership in the Yukon, studies that reveal the views of the indigenous population can be very useful for the education in northern Canada and other countries with developing communities (Stacketal, 2006).

CONCLUSION

In order to identify the problems of educational leadership, a survey, which involved Russian schoolteachers and university lecturers, was conducted. The sample made it possible to address the issue with a broader perspective, since the position of teacher leaders may differ at different levels of education. On the basis of the obtained results, it is possible to formulate further recommendations for eliminating modern problems related to teacher leadership. The research can be expanded and improved in order to provide special courses for teachers or additional information for students of pedagogical universities.

The research showed that modern Russian teachers may not fully realize and accept the idea of teacher leadership. Such a misunderstanding may hinder the development of leadership, as well as the development of professional competence. In our research several possible solutions to the problem are identified. Based on the obtained results, it is possible to develop further recommendations to eliminate current problems in intercultural communication. Further development can be used by both Russian and foreign teachers to form their own methods, as well as to prepare classes. This may positively affect the educational process and allow modern educators to fully understand the idea of a teacher leader and its importance in the educational process. To achieve this goal, special courses can be created. They should promote the importance of teacher leadership and teach its basic principles, which will allow developing the necessary qualities in teachers.

In addition, it is important to talk about the importance of teacher leadership as early as possible. It should be done at the level of university education. The introduction of additional elements that form and develop leadership qualities in existing disciplines may also bring a good result. The exchange of professional experience is also important for the development of teacher leadership. It can be held at special events organized by educational institutions. Participation in such initiatives improves professional skills of educators. It also promotes leadership development. The results our research can be

used for further studies. For example, in order to conduct research in rural schools or consider the idea of teacher leadership in terms of professional experience. The materials of our research can be applied in other countries, since the issue and importance of teacher leadership are international and crucial for the development of education systems around the world.

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Questionnaire sample

Table 1

General Teacher Leadership Provisions

No.	Question	Answer
1.	Do you think that only the principal can hold a key position in an educational institution?	Yes, no, not sure
2.	Is there a group of proactive teachers (lecturers) who perform certain functions in your educational institution?	Yes, no
3.	Do you think that continuous staff training is important for the development of their professional skills?	Yes, no, not sure
4.	Do you use additional materials in order to improve the educational process?	Yes, no
5.	Do you think that professional experience exchange is important?	Yes, no, not sure
6.	Have you ever participated in experience exchange events?	Yes, no
7.	Do you think that it is necessary to support young teachers?	Yes, no, not sure
8.	Do you think that an educational institution should analyze its performance in order to correct mistakes and improve its results?	Yes, no, not sure
9.	Do you think that a teacher (lecturer) should come up with new educational practices?	Yes, no, not sure
10.	Do you think that leadership qualities of a teacher (lecturer) positively affect professional competence?	Yes, no, not sure

Table 2

Leadership Qualities

No.	Quality	Assessment			
1.	Proactive	0	1	2	3
2.	Interested in work	0	1	2	3
3.	Not prone to conflict	0	1	2	3
4.	Able to work in a team	0	1	2	3
5.	Respected	0	1	2	3
6.	Putting forward new ideas	0	1	2	3
7.	Ready to share experience	0	1	2	3
8.	Able to make decisions	0	1	2	3
9.	Ready for innovations	0	1	2	3
10.	Organizational skills	0	1	2	3
11.	Able to express own opinion	0	1	2	3
12.	Ready to learn and develop	0	1	2	3