

Role of Teacher Leaders in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The teachers in higher education have to impart not only knowledge but also inculcate good values among the students. They have to pay their attention not only on brilliant students but on poor students also. Teachers should act as philosophers also. They have to mould the personality of the students and motivate them towards the bright future. In other words every student should be made as a career oriented one. Besides these, teachers have to provide counselling whenever the students have physiological, psychological and sociological problems. Because teachers are next to parents. Thus, the role of teachers in higher education is a challengeable one. At this juncture a study in this regard has been undertaken. The term academic leaders refer to the teachers. These Teachers even though differ from corporate leaders have to fulfill the expectations of the students, that is consumers. A judgement delivered by a District consumer forum in Andhra Pradesh against the National Institute of Fashion Technology has clearly spelt out that the students are defined as consumers under the Consumer Protection Act. These academic leaders are rendering their services to the student community (consumers) to a greater extent by shaping the personality of the students, imbibing good culture among them, pinpointing the right path for their bright future. Even though allegations are levelled against the teaching community. At this juncture it is necessary to elicit the opinion of the students community on the teacher leadership style. Keeping this in mind an attempt is made in this article to assess the pulse of the students community towards the teachers. For this purpose the study has been conducted among 100 students of different colleges located in the Kanchipuram Taluk. The primary data have been collected with the help of structured questionnaire adopting convenience sampling method. In order to make the study more efficient and effective, trained investigators have been appointed to collect the relevant data from the students community. The collected data have been processed and analysed with the help of SPSS package. The data have been analysed with the help of simple percentage. Also Chi- square test has been used to prove or disprove the relationship between different teaching learning variables. The authors believe that the findings and suggestions given at the end of this research work will be fruitful for the college administration, the academics, both the state and central governments, students and also the members of the public.

Keywords: Higher education, psychological and sociological problems, student, teachers, Leadership style, Teacher, Student, Consumer, Consumer forum, sampling

Alma Harris and Daniel Muijs (2002) have conducted a study under the title "Teacher Leadership: A review of the research". They have made an attempt to explore the concept of distributed or teacher leadership. They have found that teachers need support in developing the leadership roles, including professional development, which extends their skills in mentoring and teaching adults.

Hollis Lowery, Robin M.Latimer and Vanessa

M.villate (2016) in their article "The essence of Teacher Leadership: A phenomenological inquiry of professional Growth" have stated that most of the teachers in their study did not want to move informal administrative roles, but instead, they sought to lead from inside the classroom and be change agents as more knowledgeable teachers.

Abbas Pourhosein Gilakjani (2012) in a study titled "A match or mismatch between learning styles of

the Learners and Teaching styles of the Teachers” has concluded that each teacher is unique and can use his or her style to be as effective and educator as possible. He has also added that teachers can incorporate learning styles into their classroom by identifying the learning styles of each of their students, matching teaching style to learning style for difficult tasks, strengthening weaker learning styles through easier tasks and drill, and teaching students, learning -style selection strategies.

Objectives of the Study

The sole objective of the present study is to elicit the opinion of the students who are pursuing their higher education in the various Arts and Science colleges located in Kanchipuram Taluk.

Research Methodology of the Study

Kanchipuram District is adjacent to the headquarters of Tamil Nadu, India that is Chennai. Keeping this in mind the authors have conducted this study among 120 students who are pursuing their higher education in various Arts and Science colleges located in Kanchipuram Taluk. The data relating to this study has been collected among the students who gathered at Kanchipuram bus stand on different days. Since no educational institution will come forward to give permission to conduct a research among its students, the authors have made this different attempt. It is to be noted here that during the study period there were around 12 Arts and Science colleges in the study area. For collecting the primary data the authors had employed some trained investigators. The study was conducted by the end of February; 2019. The authors have adopted convenience sampling method to collect the primary data. The primary data were collected by using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained closed-end questions only. Both dichotomous and multiple choice questions were also included. Besides this a five point scaling technique has also been employed in the questionnaire. The collected data have been processed, analysed and tabulated with the help of SPSS package. Simple percentage method has been used to analyse the data. Furthermore chi-square test has been used to prove or disprove the relationship between different teaching variables.

Limitations of the Study

1. The opinion elicited from the students in the sample area may or may not be applicable to other areas.
2. The study has been conducted only among the students of Arts and Science colleges and not among Engineering, Medical, Education and Other colleges in the study area.

Analytical Part of the Study

It is assumed that there is an inter relationship between the profile of the students and their perceived opinion. Keeping this in mind, in this part an attempt has been made to present the profile of the sample students in Kanchipuram Taluk and is given in the following table.

Table 1: Profile of the Students

Sl. No	Department	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Tamil	12	10.0
2	English	17	14.2
3	Commerce	49	40.8
4	Business Administration	19	15.8
5	Computer Science	19	15.8
6	Computer Application	4	3.4
UG/PG			
7	UG I - year	13	10.8
8	II – year	38	31.7
9	III – year	34	28.3
10	PG I – year	14	11.7
11	II - year	21	17.5
Total		120	100.0

Source: *Primary data.*

Department:

From the table 1, it is very clear that out of the 120 sample students, 40.8 percentage of them belongs to commerce department. Similarly 15. 8 percentage, another 15.8 percentage, 14.2 percentage, 10 percentage and 3.4 percentage of the sample students belong to Business administration, Computer science, English, Tamil and Computer application departments respectively.

UG /PG Degree Course

The above table clearly exhibits that out of the 120 sample students 85 of them (70.8 percentage) are pursuing their UG degree courses and 35 of them (29.2 percentage) are pursuing their PG degree courses. Out of the 85 students who are doing their UG course degree course 31.7 percentage of them are in their second year. Out of the 35 PG students, 17.5 percentage of them belong to second year category. The occupational status and level of education of the parents may also have an impact over the learning style and personality traits of the students. Hence, an attempt has been made to present the profile of the parents in the following table.

Table 2: Profile of Parents

Sl. No	Occupational Status	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Home maker	4	3.4
2	Self Employed	13	10.8
3	Agriculturist	33	27.5
4	Daily wage earner	6	5.0
5	Businessman	6	5.0
6	Govt. Employees	14	11.7
7	Private Employees	25	20.8
8	Corporation Employees	1	0.8
9	Others	18	15.0
Educational Qualification			
10	Illiterate	3	2.5
11	School Level Education	69	57.5
12	College Level Education	32	26.7
13	ITI/Diploma	7	5.8
14	Certificate Courses	2	1.7
15	Others	7	5.8
Total		120	100.0

Source: Primary data.

The occupational status related statistical information reveals that a considerable number of parents (33) belong to 'Agriculturist' category. In this same manner 20.8 percentage, 15.0 percentage, 11.7 percentage, 10.8 percentage, 5.0 percentage another 5.0 percentage, 3.4 percentage and 0.8 percentage of

the parents belong to 'private employees', 'Others', 'Government employees', 'self-employed', 'Daily wage earners', 'Businessman', 'Home maker', 'Corporation employees' categories respectively. The above table also indicates that majority (57.5 percentage) of the parents fall in the school level education' category.

In the following table the residential area of students (whether they belong to village or Town) and the native area of them are portrayed.

Table 3: Residential Area

Sl. No	Residential Area Type	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Village	57	47.5
2	Town	63	52.5
Native Area			
3	Kanchipuram Surrounding Area	77	64.2
4	Kalavai Surrounding Area	7	5.8
5	Cheyvar surrounding Area	6	5.0
6	Vanthavasi Surrounding Area	4	3.3
7	Arakkonam Surrounding Area	21	17.5
8	Uthiramerur Surrounding Area	5	4.2
Total		120	100.0

Source: Primary data.

From the above table it is crystal clear that out of the 120 sample students, majority (52.5 percentage) of them are coming from urban areas. The remaining that is 47.5 percentage of them are from rural areas. Furthermore the above table also indicates that majority of the sample students (64.2 percentage) are coming from Kanchipuram and its surrounding areas. Next to it a considerable percentage of sample students (17.5) are from Arakkonam and its surrounding areas. The table also expresses that 5.8 percentage, 5.0 percentage, 4.2 percentage and 3.3 percentage of the sample students are coming from Kalavai, Cheyyar, Uthiramerur and Vanthavasi surrounding areas.

The following table contains the perceived opinion of the sample respondents on some vital issues.

Table 4: Perceived Opinion of the Sample Students

Sl. No.	Issues	Yes	No	No Idea	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	First Generation Degree Holder	69 (57.5)	48 (40.0)	3 (2.5)	120	100.0
2	Attending the Classes Regularly	111 (92.5)	5 (4.2)	4 (3.3)	120	100.0
3	Goal setting	96 (80.0)	6 (5.0)	18 (15.0)	120	100.0
4	Moulding towards future Goals	79 (65.8)	22 (18.3)	19 (15.9)	120	100.0

Source: Primary data.

1. First generation degree holder

There is a General notion that the parents educational qualification may have an impact over their children’s learning style. Keeping this in mind, the sample students were asked a question relating to the above mentioned heading. The above table reveals that 57.5 percentage of the sample students are the first generation degree holders.

2. Attending the classes regularly

Students shall attend the classes regularly. Then only they can grasp the concepts easily. Not only that students should also have sufficient attendance percentage to write the University examination and get the scholarship provided by Government of Tamil Nadu and the Government of India their classes.

3. Goal setting

The students while pursuing their higher education have to set their future goals in their mind. Students who have not set their goals before their completion period may not get the right employment opportunities or they may have under employment after their course completion period. Hence the sample consumers (students) were asked whether they have set their goals in their minds or not? Their responses reveal that 80 percentage of them have set their future goals in their mind. Since the social media, Internet have shrunk the world as

a global village, students of these days have become knowledge- conscious and this has led them to decide their future in advance.

4. Moulding towards future goals

Teaching is the key role of the academic leaders. Even though as a guide, philosopher they have the responsibility to mould the students towards their bright future. They should provide counselling to the students for their career guidance. They have to guide the students on vital matters such as how to overcome examination phobia? How to face an interview? How to behave during an interview? In short a teacher has these responsibilities in addition to teaching. The above table reveals that 65.8 percentage of the sample students are being moulded by their teachers. Only 18.3 percentage of them have stated that they are not moulded by their teachers.

The number of students who skip the classes is tabulated below.

Table 5: Skipping Classes

Sl. No.	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	34	28.3
2	No	79	65.8
3	No Idea	7	5.9
Total		120	100.0

Source: Primary data.

Out of the 120 sample consumers 65.8 percentage of them have stated that they never skipped their classes. Contrary to this, 28.3 percentages of them have expressed that they have skipped their classes.

A number of reasons may influence the students to skip their classes. In the following table some four reasons have been listed out and the students were asked to tick the appropriate reason to skip the classes. The four reasons incorporated in the questionnaire include: ‘when the subject is a bored one’ ‘when I hate the teacher’, ‘when I have physical /mental problem’ and ‘when my friends compelled me to skip the classes’. The responses of the sample students have been tabulated below (Table 6).

The table 6, clearly indicates that 44.1 percentage of the students have skipped their classes ‘when they have some physical /mental problems’. Another

44.1 percentage of them have skipped their classes 'when the subject is a bored one'. 8.9 percentage and 2.9 percentage of the students have skipped their classes 'when their friends compel them to skip the classes' and 'when they hate their subject teachers' respectively.

Table 6: Reasons that Influence to Skip the Classes

Sl. No	Influencing Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	When the Subject is a Bored One	15	44.1
2	When I hate the Teacher	1	2.9
3	When I have Physical /Mental Problem	15	44.1
4	When my Friends Compel me to Skip	3	8.9
Total		34	100.0

Source: Primary data.

Some students may show their interest in theory classes and some may be interested in practical classes. When the students have interest in a particular subject whether it is theory or practical they will not skip the classes. The responses of the students for the question relating to this one are given below.

Table 7: Classes Used to Skip

Sl. No	Class	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Theory Class	46	38.3
2	Practical Class	6	5.0
3	Both Theory and Practical Class	6	5.0
4	No Idea	62	51.7
Total		120	100.0

Source: Primary data.

The above table clearly exhibits that 38.3 percentage of the students have skipped the theory classes, 5.0 percentage of them have expressed that they have skipped both theory as well as practical classes, another 5.0 percentage of them have skipped their practical classes and 51.7 percentage of them have stated that they do not want to comment on this one.

The doubts of the students should be clarified by their subject teachers. Unless the students get clarified, then they may not have in depth subject

knowledge. In this regard the students were asked whether they are allowed by their subject teachers to raise questions or not? and the responses of them have been tabulated below.

Table 8: Allowing students to raise questions

Sl. No	Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	96	80.0
2	No	14	11.7
3	No Idea	10	8.3
Total		120	100.0

Source: Primary data.

It is crystal clear that out of the 120 sample students 80.0 percentage of them have been allowed by their subject teachers to raise questions and get clarified. Only a meagre percentage (11.7) of the sample students have given the negative answer. It is also to be mentioned here that 8.3 percentage of them have not commented on this question.

The responses for the question 'How often does the student is allowed by the teacher to raise questions?' is given below.

Table 9: If yes how often does he allow you?

Sl. No	Raise Question	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very often	58	60.4
2	Rarely	28	29.2
3	Never allowed	3	3.1
4	No idea	7	7.3
Total		96	100.0

Source: Primary data.

Out of the 96 students who had stated that they were allowed to raise questions, 60.4 percentage of them have stated that they have been allowed very often by their teachers to raise questions, 29.2 percentage of them have stated that they have been rarely allowed to raise questions and 7.3 of them have stated that they do not want to comment.

In this part, a five point scale has been constructed to assess the influence of the teacher leaders among the students community. The five point scale contains 15 statements and the students were asked to indicate their level of agreement against each statement.

Table 10: Influence of the Teacher leaders

Sl. No	Statements	Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral Agree	Disagree	strongly disagree	Total
1	Gender of the Teacher Leaders does have influence on the Teaching Learning process	54 (45.0)	28 (23.3)	28 (23.4)	9 (7.5)	1 (0.8)	120 (100)
2	My Teacher bridges the subject contents with the current employment opportunities	45 (37.5)	46 (38.3)	22 (18.3)	7 (5.9)	—	120 (100)
3	My Teachers provide additional Information (needed relating to current employment opportunity apart from syllabus)	46 (38.4)	48 (40.0)	18 (15.0)	7 (5.8)	1 (0.8)	120 (100)
4	My Teacher interacts with me while teaching subjects.	45 (37.5)	40 (33.3)	24 (20.0)	7 (5.8)	4 (3.4)	120 (100)
5	My Teacher gives a brief introduction about the subject before delivering his lecture.	48 (40.0)	42 (35.0)	24 (20.0)	6 (5.0)	—	120 (100)
6	My Teacher is punctual in his Duty.	50 (41.6)	51 (42.5)	14 (11.7)	5 (4.2)	—	120 (100)
7	My Teacher teaches with some practical examples.	41 (34.2)	35 (29.1)	32 (26.8)	7 (5.8)	5 (4.1)	120 (100)
8	My Teacher has good communication skill.	49 (40.8)	46 (38.3)	17 (14.2)	5 (4.2)	3 (2.5)	120 (100)
9	I respect the dedicated Teachers.	46 (38.3)	55 (45.8)	13 (10.9)	6 (5.0)	—	120 (100)
10	My Teacher possess good qualities.	51 (42.5)	43 (35.8)	18 (15.0)	6 (5.0)	2 (1.7)	120 (100)
11	I expect Teachers with pleasing personalities.	47 (39.2)	42 (35.0)	19 (15.8)	8 (6.7)	4 (3.3)	120 (100)
12	A Teacher should have good sense of humour.	45 (37.5)	40 (33.3)	27 (22.5)	2 (1.7)	6 (5.0)	120 (100)
13	My Teacher teaches us with ICT tools.	21 (17.5)	26 (21.7)	40 (33.3)	26 (21.7)	7 (5.8)	120 (100)
14	A Teacher often should give piece of advice for students future.	58 (48.3)	40 (33.3)	16 (13.4)	4 (3.3)	2 (1.7)	120 (100)
15	My teacher is my role model.	38 (31.7)	28 (23.3)	31 (25.8)	8 (6.7)	15 (12.5)	120 (100)

The above five point scaling technique reveals that out of the 15 statements, except the statement ‘My teacher teaches us with ICT tools’, all other statements have been ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’ by majority of the students community. The statements ‘My teacher teaches with ICT tools’ and ‘My teacher is my role model’ have been agreed (when the responses under the heads ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ are put together) 39.2 percentage and 55.0 percentage of the sample students respectively. Similarly 63.3 percentage, 68.3 percentage, 70.8 percentage, another 70.8

percentage, 74.2 percentage, 75.0 percentage, 75.8 percentage, 78.3 percentage 78.4 percentage and 79.1 percentage of the sample students have agreed with their statements ‘My teacher teaches with some practical examples’, ‘Gender of the teacher leaders does not have influence over the teaching learning process’, ‘A teacher should have good sense of humour’, ‘I expect teachers with pleasing personalities, my teacher gives a brief introduction about the subject before delivering his lecture, my teacher bridges the subject contents with the current employment opportunities, my teachers posses

good qualities, my teachers provide additional information apart from syllabus, my teacher has good communication skill respectively. It is to be noted here that 84.1 percentage and another 84.1 percentage, 81.6 percentage of the sample students have agreed and strongly agree with the statement my teacher is punctual in his duty I respect the dedicated teachers a teacher should give piece of advice for the students feature

Findings of the Study

1. 40.8 percentage of the sample students belong to commerce department.
2. 70.8 percentage of the sample students are pursuing their UG degree course.
3. 52.5 percentages and 47.5 percentage of the sample students are from urban and rural areas respectively.
4. Majority of them (64.2 percentage) are from Kanchipuram and its surrounded areas.
5. 57.5 percentage of the sample respondents are first generation degree holders.
6. 92.5 percentage of the students are attending the classes regularly.
7. 80.0 percentage of the students have set their goals in mind before their course completion period.
8. 65.8 percentage of them believe that their teachers mould them towards their future goals.
9. Only 34 students (28.3 percentage) of the students have rarely skipped their classes. Out of them 44.1 percentage and another 44.1 percentage of them have cited that they have skipped the classes 'when the subject is a bored one' and 'when they have some physical/mental problem respectively. Furthermore 38.3 percentage of them stated that they skipped theory classes.
10. 80 percentage of the sample students have expressed that their teachers allow them to raise questions and clear their doubts. Out of them 60.4 percentage have stated that they have been permitted to raise questions very often.
11. 84.1 Percentage of the sample students have agreed that their teachers are punctual in their duties.

12. 81.6 percentage of the students in the study area have stated that their teachers often should give piece of advice for the students future.
13. Only 39.2 percentage of the students have expressed that their teachers teaches with ICT Tools.
14. 50 percentage of the students have agreed that their teachers are their role model.

Suggestions

1. Since 20.0 percentage of the sample students have expressed that they have not fixed their future goals in their mind the teachers of the higher education should apprise and persuade them to set their goals in advance.
2. 18.3 percentage of the students have stated that they do not believe that that their teachers do not mould them towards their future goals. Even though it is the duty of the students to approach their teachers for their future advice, the teachers should also persuade the students listen to them and monitor whether the students are following the piece of advice given to them.
3. Teaching the theory subject is a skill which differs from a teacher to another teacher. Some may explain the concerned theory subject with the practical examples, some may explain it with the sense of humour and some may seriously concentrate in delivering a lecture. Since 38.3 percentage of the sample students have stated that they skip the theory classes the teachers handling theory subject should keep this in mind and try to retain the students in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Students of these days are expecting a stress- free, conducive atmosphere in the classroom. Keeping this in mind, the teachers may make the classrooms as an interesting one. Findings of the study also confirm that the students are expecting standing, practical examples, sense of humour, a small break during the lecture. By doing this, the students can be retained in the classroom to a greater extent. Besides this the teacher leaders may emphasize their students to become a career oriented one. Because

some students may have Inferiority complex, stage fear and home sick. Some students may be chicken hearted. The teacher leaders may identify those students and offer counselling for them. This surely will have an impact over the future of the students and the teachers will definitely be remembered as good teacher leaders forever by their students.

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