Journal of Education and Educational Research
ISSN: 2957-9465 | Vol. 8, No. 1, 2024

Teaching Leadership and Students' Autonomous Learning Ability

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Abstract: The globalization of education has put forward new requirements for teachers' teaching leadership and students' autonomous learning ability. Based on the analysis of the literature, this paper conducts a questionnaire survey on the current situation of teachers' teaching leadership and students' autonomous learning ability. On the one hand, this paper analyzes how teaching leadership affects students' autonomous learning ability; On the other hand, this paper puts forward some strategies on how to improve teachers' teaching leadership and students' autonomous learning ability. This study provides theoretical basis and practical reference for teaching reform, improving teachers' teaching leadership and promoting students' all-round development.

Keywords: University Teachers; Teaching Leadership; Autonomous Learning Ability.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, with the development of the Times and the continuous progress of society, education is ushering in the era of globalization. Modern college students face a new era. They are no longer limited to traditional classroom teaching and the way teachers impart knowledge. University teachers need to shoulder the responsibility of leading students to the future and creating the future. They are more eager to learn learning skills and self-study ability under the guidance of teachers, to actively broaden their knowledge. Therefore, how to better serve students, how to better impart knowledge and how to improve the quality of university education have become the key issues that bring new challenges to the teaching leadership of university teachers.

2. Literature Review

With the different requirements of The Times for talents, the research content of teaching leadership in each stage is different too. Wang Min and Zhu Yongxin (2020) point out that according to the previous literature review, relevant research on teacher leadership has experienced a development stage from the initial focus on the leadership of school principals to the leadership of ordinary teachers, and from the focus on the leadership of position leaders to the leadership of ordinary teachers. Long Baoxin (2022)pointed out that with the increasing popularity of "student-centered" teaching concept, teachers' curriculum leadership must be realized through the participation and reshaping of students' learning space. Zhou Weijia and Ding Zhenghou (2023) pointed out that teachers' classroom leadership has an impact on students as individuals and can improve the quality of classroom teaching. Therefore, teachers' teaching leadership has a certain impact on students' autonomous learning. Liu Xingguo, Chang Tingting (2023) said that the teaching leadership of college teachers has a sustained influence on the growth of students and is the advanced stage of teaching leadership development.

Yang Mei (2011) believed that the fundamental guarantee of students' autonomous learning is to improve students' autonomous learning ability. Teachers' teaching leadership is a process in which teachers and students jointly promote and develop each other. Li Zijian and Qiu Defeng (2017) conducted research on the cultivation of college students' independent English learning, pointing out that students' independent learning should not only pay attention to the principal role of students, but also pay attention to the guiding and supervising role of teachers. This shows that students' independent learning is not carried out independently, but needs to learn actively under the guidance of teachers.

According to the previous research, the research on the improvement of teaching leadership and students' autonomous learning ability is different. In this paper, teaching leadership is mainly embodied in teachers' classroom teaching activities. Therefore, teachers should have corresponding teaching strategies to improve students' autonomous learning ability, so as to promote the reform of teaching system.

3. The Current Situation of Teaching Leadership and Students' Autonomous Learning Ability among University Teachers

Table 1. Overall Teaching Leadership

Domains	Mean	Interpretation
Teacher's Pre-Class Planning Activity	3.77	Excellent
Classroom Teaching Activity Guidance	3.73	Excellent
Classroom Environment Driving Force	3.77	Excellent
Teacher Classroom Influence	3.76	Excellent
Overall	3.76	Excellent

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Excellent, 2.51-3.50 Good, 1.51 -2.50 Poor, 1.00 -1.50 Very Poor

This study looked into the leadership dimension of teachers as an essential tool to find out its impact on the students' autonomous learning ability. The study was very importance as it heightened the relationship between the teaching leadership of school teachers and the autonomous status of the students. 308 teachers were selected at random at Shao Yang University to participate in the survey. The basic requirement

was to ensure that the sampling unit had sufficient representativeness for all samples. The respondents are mostly female (61.7%). The majority age group is 31-35 years old (50.0%). In terms of teaching experience, the largest group is the combined 6-10 years (36.4%) and 11-15 years of teaching (30.5%). On the other hand, most of the respondents have master's degree (75.3%).

Table 1 sums up the evaluation of the different domains of teaching leadership. As shown in the table, teacher's pre-class planning activity, and classroom environment driving force got the highest mean with 3.77 each. On the other hand, classroom teaching activity guidance got the lowest mean of 3.73. Despite the differences in the means of the four domains, all were actually assessed as excellent. This reflect in the overall assessment of teaching leadership which was rated with a mean of 3.76. The finding implies that Chinese teachers demonstrate teaching leadership.

Table 2 sums up the respondents' assessment of their students' autonomous learning ability. It can be seen that planning goals, self-monitoring, and self-regulation are on top of this category with the highest mean of 3.69. At the bottom is learning strategies with a mean of 3.66. This shows that there is a great opportunity for improvement in students' ability in using learning strategies. Overall, the autonomous learning ability of the respondents' students is excellent with a mean of 3.68. The teachers may have exerted great efforts in enhancing their students' abilities in autonomous learning because they knew how important it is.

Table 2. Overall Autonomous Learning Ability

Domains	Mean	Interpretation
Planning Goals	3.69	Excellent
Learning Strategies	3.66	Excellent
Self-monitoring	3.69	Excellent
Self-evaluation	3.67	Excellent
Self-regulation	3.69	Excellent
Overall	3.68	Excellent

Legend: 3.51-4.00 Excellent, 2.51-3.50 Good, 1.51 -2.50 Poor, 1.00 -1.50 Very Poor

4. Correlation between Teaching Leadership and Student Autonomous Learning Ability

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

	Planning Goals	Learning Strategies	Self-Monitoring	Self-Evaluation	Self-Regulation	Autonomous Learning Ability
Teacher's Pre-Class Planning Activity	r = 0.779 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.704 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.743 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.722 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.765 p = .000 Significant High	
Classroom Teaching Activity Guidance	r = 0.829 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.756 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.776 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.765 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.803 p = .000 Significant High	
Classroom Environment Driving Force	r = 0.787 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.693 p = .000 Significant Moderate	r = 0.708 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.695 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.752 p = .000 Significant High	
Teacher Classroom Influence	r = 0.818 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.728 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.748 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.720 p = .000 Significant High	r = 0.738 p = .000 Significant High	
Teaching Leadership						r =0.845 p = .000 High Significant

Legend: Very Low (r =0.00 -0.25), Low (r = 0.26-0.49), Moderate (r =0.50 -0.69), High (0.70-0.89), Very High (r =0.90 – 1.00)

The correlations between the different domains of teaching leadership and autonomous learning ability are shown in table 3. Almost all correlations are high and significant except for the correlation between classroom environment driving force and learning strategies where r is 0.693 and is interpreted as moderate but significant association. The overall correlation of the teaching leadership and autonomous learning ability is also high and significant with r =0.845 and p =.000. The correlation results imply that a strong positive association exist between the two variables. This association is also true in every domain of both teaching leadership and autonomous learning ability. Given this result, the null hypothesis about the correlation between teaching leadership and autonomous learning ability is rejected. The finding is similar to the result of the study conducted by Erdel et al. (2019) in a Turkish university. They found out that teachers' transformational and active transactional leadership in the classroom are significantly correlated with learner autonomy. The researchers also hinted that the support given by the teacher to the students, the guidance and facilitation could be factors in the development of autonomous learning.

5. Conclusion

The study has shown that teachers have an excellent level of teaching leadership. One particular domain of teaching leadership, however, has a big opportunity for further improvement. This is the domain of classroom teaching activity guidance which got the lowest rating from the teachers. The study also revealed that students, as perceived by the teachers demonstrate excellent autonomous learning abilities. The domain of learning strategies, however, needs to be improved further because it got the lowest assessment in the study. Both classroom teaching activity guidance and learning strategies are important in attaining quality education. Moreover, these two variables have been proven to be

strongly and positively associated. It means that enhancement in one variable will also show on the other.

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