PERSPECTIVE DIFFERENCES OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN TEACHER EDUCATION
UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRE-SERVICE PHYSICAL EDUCATION MAJORS AND OTHER CONTENT AREAS

A Thesis
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Master of Science

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The purpose of this study was to determine if pre-service physical education teachers (PEPT, n=38) viewed leadership, and more directly, teacher leadership, differently than pre-service teachers who were not enrolled in a preparatory physical education program (NPEPT, n= 105). A second goal of the study was to determine if the concept of teacher leadership was receiving substantial attention in pre-service teacher education programs; and to highlight any differences between the aforementioned groups. Surveys were administered to 143 college students currently enrolled in a teacher education program. Limited evidence was observed indicating ambivalence in the conceptualization of leadership, and a lack of discourse on teacher leadership in Non-physical education curriculum. Conversely, ample evidence was observed in support of the hypothesis that physical education programs possess a greater focus on teacher leadership. Considerable evidence was also reported noting a stronger desire in PEPT to take on various avenues of leadership. Lastly, clear evidence was displayed for support of the null hypothesis suggesting that training in leadership responsibilities in teacher education curriculum may potentially increase future desire to take on such roles. Further delineation of the major findings is presented in discussion of each dependant variable.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Journey Toward Teacher Leadership

In general, leadership (as an all encompassing entity), has long been viewed as vital to any and all established organizations. It is often inferred as the lifeblood and prime navigator of any organized group of individuals, who in conception, share distinctive and collective mental constructs. Naturally, the salience placed on the topic, for the betterment of organizational function and production, has instigated academic investigation and analysis into leadership theory and practice (Judge & Bono, 2000). Despite an overwhelming theme of ambiguity with respect to clarification, leadership has been discussed and interpreted in a variety of contexts. Societal sectors and academic disciplines such as Business, Sports, Politics, Military Studies, Psychology, Philosophy and Education have taken on unique perspectives and implications regarding the subject (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Beattie, 2002; Burns, 1978; Huber, 2004; Judge & Bono, 2000; Schembechler, 2007; Scott, 1999; Wooden, 2005). Until recently, the majority of aforementioned segments displayed a proclivity towards hierarchical conceptualizations of leadership (Lambert, 2005). Education, from both the academia and practitioner standpoint, has been no exception (Danielson, 2005).
The educational leadership (traditionally consisting of administrators, principles, superintendents, and school board members), having the most power and control over schools and districts, have long been viewed as prime agents in the development of school culture. Concurrently, contemporary concerns in education have created a heightened awareness, and more robust examination of school cultures and their relationship with leadership theory. Kruse and Louis (2009) introduce six constituents or subcultures, several of which directly noting educational leadership, (i.e. Student, Teacher, School Administrator, Parent, District, and Community) intertwined within a more singular and dominant one. For the purposes of this inquiry, an understanding of the traditional norms attributed to the more dominant school culture is sufficient. This singular or holistic culture is customarily fostered and maintained through a top-down or hierarchical organizational framework (Danielson, 2005; York-Barr, & Duke, 2004). The results of such a framework are insidious school norms that limit and impede school reform and improvement.

Teacher *isolation* and *individualism* is frequently mentioned in literature regarding school culture (Johnson, & Donaldson, 2007; Kruse & Louis, 2009; York-Barr, & Duke, 2004). In many schools teachers see their professional role as “positioned on an island.” In this scenario the classroom acts as the island. Teachers focus on what takes place in their classrooms and display little concern for those of other teachers. Likewise, they expect their colleagues to do the same. In this case, perceptions of accountability and responsibility do not address, nor permeate to, the broader school functions and goals. As a consequence, teachers become accustomed to, and comfortable in, an isolated and autonomous workplace. In turn, they become more reluctant to accepting
outside viewpoints and assistance from their peers (Johnson, & Donaldson, 2007). The existence of isolation and individualism is maintained through egalitarianism and seniority within the faculty.

For years teaching has been associated with an egalitarian culture (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Harris & Muijs, 2003). Teachers view colleagues as equals. In doing so they “question the premise that a peer could possess expert knowledge” (Johnson, & Donaldson, 2007, pg. 11). When teachers take on positions of leadership they challenge this ideal and risk fracturing collegial relationships of equality. Teacher leaders’ peers can potentially resent them for working with administrators and principles, or coming off as authoritative and overly ambitious (Johnson, & Donaldson, 2007).

The longer teachers are enveloped in an environment of isolation, individualism, and egalitarianism, the harder it is for them to break their habitual patterns. Those within the school culture often view it as static, and any change or deviation, taboo (Phelps, 2008). The perennialists and senior teachers institute and preserve traditional norms through their informal authority amongst fellow teachers. Younger and less experienced teachers who might undertake leadership roles often feel deterred and dismissed by the more senior educators (Johnson, & Donaldson, 2007). In this school structure, power is distributed from the top down, first with those in formal leadership roles, then informally to those with longer tenure. This demarcation and distribution of power draws a connection to previously noted conceptualizations of leadership, and its evolution into a more pragmatic one.
In early years, the term and the theme of *power* dominated the leadership literature (Burns, 1978; Lashway, 1997). However, the limitations that omnipotence creates in hierarchical based leadership has set in motion the reevaluation of leadership’s role in education. Yet, when mutually exclusive, both top-down and bottom-up approaches have fallen short of educational modernity needs (Huber, 2004). The idea of power, particularly in respect to contemporary leadership views, has shifted to the approach of *empowerment* (Huber, 2004). In this depiction, effective leaders possess the ability to empower teachers and other members of the school community to take active roles in additional responsibilities and avenues of influence and authority. Out of empowerment stems: the notion of *teacher leadership*, the ideas of collaboration, cooperation and consideration in decision making, and ultimately more substantial school improvement (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006; Harris & Muijs, 2003). The starting point of any type of discourse on leadership must begin by approaching a uniform understanding of what leadership means to those raising the issues, and how various interpretations of its understanding may deviate from one another.

Approaching a Definitive Conceptualization

One of the most influential hindrances to cultivating substantive, efficacious, and progressive teacher leadership is the lack of solidarity in understanding and defining the nature of leadership itself. In many cases leadership has been viewed in connection with managing; in other instances the ideas have been thought of as mutually exclusive (Kruse & Louis, 2009). Similarly, researchers and theorists have traditionally looked at leadership in the context of individual attributes leaders’ posses, rather than the roles and
responsibilities they take on, or the benefits they can contribute (Bennis & Nanus’ 1997; 
Bowman, 2004; Treslan, 2006; Wuest & Bucher, 2003). However, publications from the 
past few years have displayed a paradigm shift in the value orientation of teacher 
leadership (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Harrison, & Killion, 2007; Kezar, 
Lester, Carduci, Gallant, & McGavin, 2007; Quinn, Haggard, & Ford, 2006). Perhaps this 
inconsistency with regards to the focus of leadership has allowed for equivocation in 
presenting a definitive conceptualization (Fullan, 1995). With its primordial state being 
characterized by ambiguity, how can scholars and educators ever expect to come to an 
accurate understanding of teacher leadership, or how to foster and improve it? Rational 
thought then suggests that delineated and coherent definitions of the term leadership, as 
well as other terms that fall under its educational umbrella, are apropos.

As mentioned, leadership is generally looked at in societal terms from a 
hierarchical standpoint whereby the leader is positioned at the apex, and any and all 
followers are situated in the subsequent ranks below (Danielson, 2007; Frost, & Durrant, 
2003; Lovely, 2005). From this conceptualization it can be assumed that all beliefs, 
ideas, and policies originate from leader positions and then trickle down to their 
subordinates. The creation of these beliefs, ideas, and policies is where many theorists 
begin their description of leadership. Phelps (2008) posits that the first step in becoming 
a leader is “formulating ones’ vision” (pg. 120). This view is derived from Barth’s 
(2001) definition of leadership “making happen what you believe in” (pg. 119). This 
description of leadership suggests two things: first, that leaders are cognizant of their 
ideals and values (a philosophical stance and position of the world, and/or their 
profession, both as it is, and as they believe it should be), and second, that they have the
efficacy necessary to facilitate the achievement of this vision. This *achievement of vision* concept establishes the framework of other leadership definitions as well. Frost and Durrant (2003) begin their definition of leadership with the assumption that leadership is characterized and distinguished by: values, vision, and strategy:

“Leadership is a concept that can be illuminated using three words: values, vision, and strategy. The exercise of leadership rests on the clarification of values and the articulation of a vision underpinned by those values….In addition, the exercise of leadership necessarily entails strategic action intended to realise those values in practice and narrow the gap between that vision and the current reality of professional practice.” (pg. 174)

If this definition were to stop here then it would establish the presupposition that the values and vision the leader possesses align with those beliefs and ideals held by the organizational members beneath them. Similarly then, the strategies and tactics proposed and implemented in order to achieve this perceived vision would be feasibly well received. However, if this organizational structure is maintained, and the leader’s values, vision, and strategy, deviate from the organizations members, what happens to the leader’s ability and capacity to lead? Viewing leadership only in the hierarchical sense does little for promoting or examining the values, vision, and strategies held by those not in official leadership roles. It raises questions and concerns relating to ideological symmetry, leadership capacity, appropriate organizational adaptation and change, and leader competency. These concerns have been the antecedents for educational researchers and reformists’ new definitions and interpretations of leadership.

Recent research has lead to a paradigm shift in the construct of educational leadership (Ackerman, & Mackenzie, 2006; Anderson, 2004; Beattie, 2002; Danielson,
Donaldson (2007) defines leadership as a relationship that “mobilizes other people to improve practice” (pg. 27). This definition highlights several differences with the aforementioned ones. To begin with, it notes the existence of a unique relationship. Moreover, it discusses not simply the facilitation of an ideal, but the dissemination of one that will improve the functioning of the organization. This could plausibly be viewed as the establishment of a more unified vision. The relationship based mobilization of organization members inherently implies an ideological symmetry between leaders and followers, whereby ideological symmetry refers to the solidarity between leaders and organization members with regards to the values, vision, and strategy of the organization. Donaldson (2007) continues even further by postulating that the power of leadership lies in the strength of relationships. If this theory is the case, then what types of relationships are propitious?

Lambert’s (2005) definition of leadership draws from the context of one of leadership’s fundamental concerns: leadership capacity. In many ways the two concepts could actually be viewed as one in the same. For Lambert, leadership capacity from an educational standpoint is “broad based, skillful participation in the work of leadership that leads to lasting school improvement.” The mention of school improvement displays a correlation with Donaldson’s (2007) view involving the improvement of practice. Likewise, Lambert views leadership itself as “reciprocal, purposeful learning together in community.” By using the term community, this narrative focuses almost exclusively on the establishment of a relationship, one with a unified vision and purpose. Additionally, it adds in the concept of mutuality. The word reciprocal implies that leadership is not a
responsibility of only those in official positions of leadership. To Lambert leadership is exhibited and practiced (shared) by teachers as well as administrators and principles.

This “shared” responsibility is the most dominant theme in recent literature with regards to defining leadership (Donaldson, 2007; Frost, & Durrant, 2003; Lovely, 2005). Treslan (2006) defines leadership as:

“The actions of an individual acting in a group which has common interests, purposes, or goals, and who influences the efforts of the group in the achievement of its goals. In other words, leadership is a relationship between an individual and a group built around some common interest.” (pg. 58)

This description reinforces the “shared” concept in a number of ways. First, Treslan notes the common interests, purposes and goals shared between and among members of the group. Second, Treslan acknowledges that there is a relationship, which involves interacting and influencing, between one person and a group. However, the shared leadership concept is more than just the sharing of responsibilities that leadership positions entail, and the organizations proverbial path towards the future. Shared leadership includes multiples facets of reciprocity such as trust, mutual respect, expectations, and honesty (Treslan, 2006). In its most authentic construct it represents the sharing of ideas. Furthermore, Treslan states that leadership results in constructive change. This means that everyone can and should be a leader because everyone must take on the responsibilities of improvement. This begins to promote the sharing of leadership itself, and thus the distribution of it. It reinforces the reciprocal nature of this relationship between leader and group, which in turn sets the stage for the constructs of teacher leadership and distributive leadership. Administrators and principals are no
longer viewed as the sole providers of leadership in schools. Teacher leadership has become the contemporary, and possibly most ideal, way to manifest innovative and effective school reform (Danielson, 2005; Dozier, 2007; Lovely, 2005; Olson, 2007).

To fully understand, and accurately define teacher leadership, one must first understand its origin. The emergence of the term teacher leadership, and the concepts associated with it, appear to stem from the long standing belief that constant school reform creates the most ideal school environment for student learning (Frost, & Durrant, 2003; Webb, Neumann, & Jones, 2004). Anderson (2004) affirms that notion by suggesting:

“The change context and school improvement process resulted in increased sharing of decision making with teachers, and teacher leadership became a means of coping with change more meaningfully and successfully.” (pg. 98)

To Anderson, the constant striving (changing, adapting, and evolving) towards a more perfect form of education, has acted as the impetus for the development of teacher leadership. More specifically, this arduous and assiduous attempt to improve the functioning of schools has placed overwhelming responsibilities on principles and administrators (Danielson, 2007). Formal school leaders now have an ethical responsibility to the students, the staff, and the school as an organizational whole, to delegate (Lovely, 2005). Teacher leadership allows for meaningful, efficient, and effective delegation. It offers not only additional support to those holding said leadership positions; it puts forward an alternative conceptualization of quality leadership in schools,
as well as leadership itself. In their conceptualization, Harris and Muijs (2003) note the connection between positive collegial relationship and positive school reform:

“the concept of teacher leadership is powerful because it is premised upon the creation of collegial norms in schools that evidence has shown contributes directly to school effectiveness, improvement, and development. Research has consistently underlined the contribution of strong collegial relationships to school improvement and change.” (pg. 16)

Once again the importance of relationships is established. However, with this leadership description a specific type of relationship (collegial) is discussed. This then raises the question: What are the attributes of a collegial relationship with respect to teacher leadership? Harris and Muijs’ view of teacher leadership parallels Treslan’s (2006) leadership perspective by mentioning the importance of “mutual trust, recognition, empowerment, and support” (pg. 16). They continue by saying, “teacher leadership reclaims school leadership from the individual to the collective, from the singular to the plural and offers the real possibility of distributed leadership in action” (pg. 17). In this viewpoint, teacher leadership is a form of distributed leadership, one specific for educational organizations.

Distributed (or shared) leadership is positioned in opposition to the traditional hierarchical structure of leadership. Frost and Harris (2003) define it as an emphasis on “collective responsibility and collaborative working,” reinforcing the idea that leadership is for everyone involved, not simply those at the top (pg. 480). This idea is not intended to suggest that everyone could or necessarily should take on leadership roles. Distributed leadership theory draws attention to unconventional forms of leadership, the roles of
leaders (both formal and informal), and provides a portion of the foundation of teacher leadership (Harris, 2003).

Teacher leadership represents the duality of formal and informal responsibility in organizational structure (Danielson 2005; Danielson, 2007; Frost, & Durrant, 2003). Formal leaders are those individuals that hold official promulgated positions with precise tasks and duties designed to foster and promote school improvement. Informal leadership represents those teachers who, while not holding a recognized leadership role, take on additional responsibilities that help to improve the overall function of the school. However, this broad-based involvement characteristic of distributed leadership is only half of the teacher leadership puzzle.

Where distributed leadership represents one aspect of the foundation of teacher leadership, *Transformational leadership* represents the other. Transformational leadership was first looked at in juxtaposition with *Transactional leadership* by Burns (1978). Transactional leadership refers to leader-centered organizational maintenance whereby the leader outlines tasks to subordinates, and then acquiescently monitors the subordinates performance (Rowold, 2006; Webb, Neumann, & Jones, 2004). For sufficient or acceptable performance tangible rewards are received. In contrast, transformational leadership accepts subordinates participation in the decision making process, and promotes reflection and self-awareness (Treslan, 2006). Transformational leaders play a dramatic role in developing their organizations motives and goals, and influencing and motivating its members with regards to the achievement of said goals (Webb, Neumann, & Jones, 2004). Beyond that, transformational leadership affords subordinate members opportunities to reach outside their designated roles in an attempt to
discover innovative improvement practices (Leithwood & Poplin, 1992). The desire to improve practice, and the members’ personal connection to the organizations mission, provide intangible rewards. Rowold (2006) underscores this concept by specifying:

“transformational leaders have the ability to inspire followers to go beyond expected levels of commitment and contribution. This inspirational process relies on emphasizing task-related values and a strong commitment to a mission. Mission statements communicate the transformational leader’s long term vision which is rooted in common-shared values” (pg. 313)

This definition has strong implications when looked at through an educational lens. Transformational school and teacher leaders have the ability to inspire their colleagues to improve district, school, and individual teaching practices. A long term vision might include improving student learning and affording opportunities for academic success and achievement. Common shared values in teaching can represent: the importance of education (from an individual or societal standpoint), a need for continuous professional development, and an understanding that teaching makes a difference in students’ lives. Most importantly, informal teacher leaders take on leadership roles from a subordinate context, thus it is imperative that formal leaders create an educational environment that fosters the branching out of teacher commitments and contributions.

An alternative definition of transformational leadership notes the importance of an adaptive aspect to effective leaders. Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003) state:

“The pace of change confronting organizations today has resulted in calls for more adaptive, flexible leadership. Adaptive leaders work more effectively in rapidly changing environments by helping to make sense of the challenges
confronted by both leaders and followers and then appropriately responding to those challenges.” (pg. 207)

With new legislation periodically being passed, and contemporary methods of school reform being continuously developed, it is essential that educators have the ability to adapt to ever-changing educational settings. In a sense, the educational environment of a school is inevitably engulfed in the process of transformation. It then seems self-evident that transformational leaders are the most propitious for schools unique needs.

Yet, while transformational leadership does provide a catalyst for a conceptualization of teacher leadership, its literary focus being limited primarily to the attributes of effective leaders, and not necessarily the roles and responsibilities they take on, causes it to fall short of fully explaining and articulating true teacher leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000; Treslan, 2006).

Recent teacher leadership literature is replete with two major reoccurring themes: inconsistent and individualized definitions of “teacher leadership,” and the acknowledgement of this inconsistency (Frost & Durrant, 2003; Frost & Harris, 2003; Harris, 2003; Harris & Muijs, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Additional, less constant themes can also be found. Quinn, Haggard & Ford, (2006), Frost & Durrant, (2003), and Dozier, T. (2007), all solidify a connection to Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson’s (2003) definition of transformational leadership by using the term change agents in describing teachers. This is centered on the notion that teachers are not only forced to deal with an ever-changing school environment; they are in the best position to facilitate significant change in the school. Teachers who take on leadership roles (either formal or informal) have a unique potential for fostering school improvement that administrators and
principles may not. Teacher leaders, approaching faculty members free from an authoritative or managerial context, may be better equipped for galvanizing their colleagues towards substantive change. Teacher leaders are those educators who accept not just their role in promoting instructional and policy based reform, but the challenges that stem from implementing such change as well. Fullan (1995) underpins this by arguing:

“Knowing about the change process means knowing that there will be all kinds of barriers and knowing that there will be many struggles along the way. Knowing about the change process also means knowing that the choice is between striving to create the conditions for personal intellectual growth necessary to make a difference in the lives of teachers and students versus being passive objects and perennial victims of change.” (pg. 121)

With this statement Fullan suggests that teacher leadership begins with a decision to be an agent for change. Teachers either take part in the unavoidable process of change, or force themselves into acquiescence. Where the former allows teacher leadership to flourish even further, and in turn broadens the scope of effective educator influence; the latter limits the potentiality for collaborative school cultures and innovative ideas.

Another theme in the literature notes the dissipation of demarcated leadership. Harris (2003) and Frost and Harris (2003) both define teacher leadership as the “exercise of leadership,” apart from definitive and established positions (pg 316; 482). In integrating the concept of teacher exercised leadership (the distribution of leadership) with the desired outcome of improved professional practice (a long term vision founded on common-shared values), York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) delineation provides the most complete and coherent definition of teacher leadership:

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“Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principles, and other members of the school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.” (pgs. 287-288)

The combination of distributed leadership responsibilities, and transformational leadership characteristics comprise the conceptualization of teacher leadership. Teacher leadership, in its most authentic theoretical form, is the sharing of values, visions, strategies, ideas, roles, and tasks within the school culture. More than that, it is the collegial sharing of trust, authority and accountability. Together these shared concepts equal more than the sum of all their parts. They nurture and develop a superlative school culture. One that Kruse and Louis (2009) attribute with professional communities, organizational learning, trust (PCOLT), and intensified leadership. Nonetheless, the existence of these fundamental school traits is directly dependent upon the exhibition of said traits by teachers, administrators, and all other community stakeholders. To then fully comprehend teacher leadership in its most authentic tangible form, one must look explicitly at what teacher leaders do to improve schools.

Teacher leaders take on a variety of roles (Dozier, 2007). As alluded to earlier, York-Barr and Duke (2004) discuss three intentional development foci that teacher leaders employ their leadership in: individual development, collaboration or team development, and organizational development. Teacher leaders can act as instructional or curriculum specialists (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Teachers typically have specific areas of specialty, some are experts in problem based learning, while others have extensive experience involving cooperative learning or content standards integration. With these
types of roles teachers utilize individual areas of expertise to help their colleagues improve practice. When teachers horde their expert knowledge, they limit the professional development of their colleagues. Teacher leaders understand that sharing their areas of expertise with other teachers and administrators improves not only individual classrooms, it improves the whole school.

A large amount of teacher leadership is focused on professional development facilitation. Teacher leaders can act as professional development coordinators, classroom observers (for their colleagues) or mentor teachers; they can also take on larger more policy based responsibilities such as: acting as a committee or board member, acting as department or grade level chair, or acting as stewards for new school and district initiatives (Harrison & Killion, 2007, Phelps, (2008). Teacher leaders’ reach does not stop their. They can act as a liaison to neighboring universities and student teacher programs; publish department or district wide newsletters; sit on community, state and professional development boards; and publish and present research at the state and national level (Danielson, 2007). Yet, teacher leaders’ roles don’t necessarily require large scale, time consuming efforts. Teacher leadership can also be exhibited through reviewing research, grant writing, or simply modeling the characteristics of a teacher learner (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Danielson (2007) proposes that teacher leaders benefit schools in three distinct ways: through school wide policies and programs, through teaching and learning, and through communication and community relations. Regardless of the roles teacher leaders decide to take on, the ultimate outcomes of teacher leadership remains the same: Improved student learning and development, and efficacious professional practices. While the previous statement alone could be viewed
as enough justification for the promotion of teacher leadership, further discussion into its rationale is beneficial.

The Teacher Leadership Raison d'être

When utilized in an ideal and appropriate manner, teacher leadership can have tremendous benefits to the overall function of schools. As alluded to earlier, teacher leaders possess a unique educational perspective that administrators and principles do not (Donaldson, 2007; Dozier, 2007). They understand better than anybody, the needs of the teacher and the realities of the classroom (Danielson, 2005). Furthermore, through preexisting collegial relationships they can be more efficacious in influencing fellow teachers. Bowman (2004) touches on the previously mentioned benefits by stating:

“Successful teachers as leaders are adept at influencing constituencies over which they admittedly have no formal authority. These teachers as leaders are effective in doing so because they draw on diverse sources of power beyond formal authority.” (pg. 187)

In approaching other teachers from an informal standpoint, one free of judging or assessing competence, they galvanize their peers towards change, and cultivate stronger collegial relationship than before (Donaldson, 2007). As peer relationships grow and develop, so does the sharing of instructional strategies and innovative teacher practices.

Another major benefit of teacher leadership is substantive professional development. Where there is quality teacher leadership, there is almost always a quality professional development program. When looking at the identifiable characteristics of either construct, the reason for such a correlation is conspicuous. There is an inherent
relationship between teacher leadership and professional development. Miller (2003) discusses the U.S. Department of Education’s (1995) identified characteristics of an effective professional development program which includes:

“-Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement

-Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principles, and others in the school community

-Reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning and leadership” (pg.4)

The first bullet is nearly identical to the three foci discussed in York-Barr and Duke’s (2004) definition of teacher leadership (discussed on pg. 17). The second bullet is not only characteristic of an environment that promotes teacher leadership (Ballek, O’Rourke, Provenzano, & Bellamy, 2005), it is characteristic of effective teacher leadership itself. The third bullet implies a correlation between leadership and research based practices. In integrating these three constructs, teacher leadership can be thought of as more then just necessary to the facilitation of professional development. The relationship between teacher leadership and professional development is reciprocal in nature. In a pragmatic recognition the two are individual, yet connected concepts, each reliant on the other in existence and application.

Such an inter-dependent homogeneity encourages professional learning communities. Similarly then, professional learning communities breed effective teacher leadership (Berry, Johnson & Montgomery, 2005; Danielson, 2007; Frost & Durrant,

“Recent research has highlighted that an organization's ability to improve and sustain improvement largely depends upon its ability to foster and nurture professional learning communities” (pg. 7)

Syllogistically thinking, teacher leadership is a compulsory component to any long term school-improvement initiative’s vitality.

In addition, empirical evidence exists linking statistically significant relationships to leadership responsibilities and student achievement (Miller, 2003). Responsibilities that include: incorporating teachers in the design and implementation of broad based decisions and policies, and monitoring the effectiveness of school decisions and policies on student achievement. Broadening the scope of the aforesaid responsibilities to reach further than administrators, to teachers as well, creates relationships based in reciprocity, and conceivably, larger augmentations in student achievement.

Several researchers posit noteworthy arguments supporting the construct of teacher leadership. For instance, Danielson (2007) begins the case for teacher leaders by depicting teaching as a “flat profession” (pg. 14); flat meaning a profession where those with long tenures have basically the same amount of responsibilities as their novice colleagues. For the most part, senior teachers have very little influence in decisions made beyond their individual classrooms. Normally, the only accessible way for teachers to exercise ubiquitous influence is to step beyond the role of the teacher into an administrator position. Teacher leadership boosts job satisfaction, increases teacher self-esteem, and provides an outlet for those educators who seek to contribute to the schools
broader concerns, but do not wish to leave the teacher role (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Olson, 2007).

Administrator concerns provide several assertions for widening leadership roles in schools. Danielson (2007) contends that because “teachers’ tenure in schools is typically longer than that of administrators,” they have a better understanding of the school history and the existing school culture, and are better outfitted to implement and monitor prolonged initiatives (pg. 14). Danielson continues by noting that the contemporary demands of principles and school administrators are almost impossible to meet; and that they have “limited expertise” (pg 15-16). School leaders are not experts in every educational issue they must address, nor should they be expected to be. They must delegate duties and authority; and collaborate with all the various members of the school community by tapping into each of their special areas of expertise.

Frost and Durrant (2003) underscore several of the aforementioned arguments in their postulation of four categorical rationales for an educational evolution towards teacher leadership. Their first justification, the school effectiveness argument, centers on the belief that effective schools contain within them consistent practice and ideological symmetry. This ties in the definitions of leadership by Treslan (2006) and Donaldson (2007). Frost and Durrant believe that ideological symmetry, or as they term it “coherence in values” is a “product of critical discourse” (pg. 175), an idea that goes beyond merely combining personal values. They view critical discourse as “stepping back from everyday concerns and subjecting them to scrutiny through inquiry, discussion, and reflection” (pg. 180). In this type of school culture, the ideological
symmetry is conceived out of a Socratic and judicious dialogue that affords every voice an opportunity to not only be heard, but sufficiently considered.

Frost and Durrant’s second and third rationales, the school improvement argument and the teacher morale and retention argument, have both been discussed earlier in considerable detail. The former, acknowledged in facilitating professional development and fostering professional communities (Harris & Muijs, 2003; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Miller, 2003), and the latter mentioned in countervailing the propensity towards teaching as a flat profession (Danielson, 2007; Harris & Muijs, 2003).

The final justification that Frost and Durrant pose is the democratic and educational values argument. In many ways this argument is analogous to their first one. It follows the belief that in a democratic society, school communities have a responsibility to model and adhere to democratic principles. As Lumpkin (2008) puts it “Society is best served when teachers teach and model” (pg. 49). Schools in the U.S. (and any democratic government) not only prepare students for expected integration into a democratic society, they expect their students to hold up, improve upon, and pass on democratic values and ideals. At the core of any true democratic ideology is a belief in the affordance and acceptance of opportunities for all opinions and ideas to be heard. Frost and Durrant state:

“there is a need to develop schools as communities in which all members have a voice and are allowed the space to fulfill their human potential and exercise leadership” (pg. 176)
Educators and school communities must do their best to uphold and model a democratic ideology. If such principles are not perceived as “of value” in the school community, then it seems unlikely that they will be modeled by teachers and administrators; or what’s worse, passed on to students.

With a more explicit understanding of the term teacher leadership, and its potential benefits, subsequent concerns in bridging the gap between theory and practice arise. Where do teacher leaders come from? What makes teachers choose to take on a leadership roles? Where should the preparation for teacher leadership begin? The content area of Physical Education (P.E.) may offer one potential answer to the first question. More importantly, it may provide unique insight into the latter two.

Teacher Leadership Potential in PETE Programs

Physical education as an academic discipline is inescapably entangled with sports and athletics (Pangrazi, 2004; Wuest & Bucher, 2003). The governing body of national P.E. standards, NASPE (National Association for Sport and Physical Education), reinforces the parallel in their title (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2004). Additionally, alternative terminology such as Sport Pedagogy used in referencing the scholarly study of physical education further emphasizes this correlation (Wuest & Bucher, 2003). Similarly, there is an inherent relationship between sports and leadership. Research on leadership in sports and athletics has looked at everything from individual athlete leadership, to leadership in coaching, as well as leadership in sports organizations and programs (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Loughhead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006; Scott, 1999). Yet, the majority of the literature has focused mainly on the
coaching component (Loughhead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006). In physical education, coaching provides opportunities for teachers to exhibit leadership outside of the classroom.

Coaching as a professional construct, presents many similarities to the concept of leadership. Wuest and Bucher (2003) make several connections to great coaches either being great leaders, or possessing the traits of great leadership. When juxtaposed in context, generalized leadership and coaching seem almost interchangeable. The role of coach is a natural leadership position. They are the leaders of athletic organizations and teams. They maintain the overall focus of the group, help to create a more unified vision, facilitate the goal setting process, develop strategies to achieve the team’s goals, oversee the implementation of said strategies, and continuously reflect upon those strategies efficacy and organizational performance. Several elite coaches have gone as far as to publish their own books which illustrate analogies to broader leadership conceptualizations and their individualized coaching styles (Schembechler, 2007; Wooden, 2005). In his book, legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden highlights business applications to nearly all of the coaching strategies and philosophies on which he based his career. Like many elite coaches, John Wooden began his career coaching at the K-12 level.

K-12 educational settings retain a variety of opportunities for coaching. These roles are natural transitions for physical education teachers who often specialize in sports and athletics. In many cases P.E. teachers were athletes in high school or college. Moreover, undergraduate physical education teacher education (PETE) programs typically include content courses for sports played at the middle and high school level such as (but not limited to): soccer, basketball, lacrosse, and tennis (Ayers & Housner,
2008). Some physical education teachers enter the profession with the primary intention to coach athletics (Wuest & Bucher, 2003).

With coaching clearly resembling a leadership role, and physical education and coaching having such a long-standing association, it seems plausible to think that pre-service physical education teachers would hold different views on teacher leadership than pre-service teachers from other content areas. Many pre-service P.E. teachers have already expressed a desire to take on coaching responsibilities before even entering the professional field. Such an early expression of aspirations to take on leadership roles outside the classroom may be an indication of those teachers who decide to engage in future teacher leadership, or at the very least, provide a window into what motivates pre-service teachers to hope for and seek out areas of leadership.

To the authors' knowledge no research exists examining the relationship between teacher leadership and the discipline of physical education. Furthermore, there is very little discussion in the teacher leadership literature on teacher education programs and curriculum. The vast majority of the research relating to the cultivation of teacher leadership is discussed from the in-service or practitioner context (Ackerman, & Mackenzie, 2006; Ballek, O’Rourke, Provenzano, & Bellamy, 2005; Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Dozier, 2007; Phelps, 2008). As a whole the teacher leadership literature is lacking. Several studies have called for more examination into the topic (Harris 2003; Harris & Muijs, 2003; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Frost and Harris (2003) underpin this need by concluding: “The time has come for some substantial research into teacher leadership” (pg. 494).
CHAPTER II
METHODS

This chapter initially highlights the primary focus of the study. Hypotheses and rationales for their genesis are acknowledged. Further, sample population characteristics, procedures used in the data collection process, and the format and structure of the data collection instrument, are provided in explicit detail (survey questions are described in Table 1). Lastly, the research design and accompanying variables, as well as the statistical analysis used, are identified.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is threefold. Initially, the study aims to expose potential differences in generalized leadership perspectives between pre-service physical education teachers and pre-service teachers from other academic content areas. Specifically, the inquiry looks at whether pre-service teachers view leadership from a hierarchal structure or from a more distributed one. The substantial equivocation associated with reaching a definitive conceptualization of leadership in the professional field of education creates a need for inquiry into the primordial perspectives of leadership (i.e. teacher education programs participants). Therefore, I hypothesized that:
Disparity and confusion exists amongst pre-service teachers’ conceptualizations of leadership, especially across physical education and classroom content areas. (Hypothesis 1, HP1)

Additionally, the existence of attitudes in physical education pre-service teachers and professionals that are more inclined to seek out leadership roles such as coaching, provides useful insight into preparation techniques for leadership roles in teacher education curriculum. Pre-service P.E. teacher programs are designed in a way that the instruction covered in courses becomes applicable to future leader positions (coaching). Conversely, most teacher leadership development ideas are rooted in practitioner based school initiatives, not teacher education programs. It seems plausible to then assume that a lack of special concentration on teacher leadership in teacher education programs would substantially hinder the cultivation of teacher leadership.

Therefore, I hypothesized that:

Teacher leadership will be a topic scarcely covered in non P.E. academic content areas of teacher education programs. (Hypothesis 2a, HP2a)

And that:

Pre-service P.E. teachers will have had a greater focus on leadership responsibilities external to teaching in the curriculum of their coursework than non P.E. pre-service teachers. (Hypothesis 2b, HP2b)
Further, I hypothesized that:

Pre-service physical education teachers have more of a proclivity towards accepting teacher leadership and the responsibilities that it entails than pre-service teachers from other academic content areas. (Hypothesis 3a, HP3a)

Finally, I hypothesized that:

Both groups of pre-service teachers would either feel more comfortable, or be more inclined to actually take on future teacher leadership roles, if they were given specific training in teacher leadership responsibilities in their teacher preparation programs. (Hypothesis 3b, HP3b)

Participants

A total of 143 participants took part in this study (males n = 47, females n = 96). The subjects ranged in ages from 19 to 50 years-old ($M = 24.23$, $SD = 5.69$). Two participants omitted their age on their surveys. Of all the individuals who participated in the study, 27.3% were undergraduate juniors (n = 39), 65% were seniors (n = 93), and 7.7% were second year graduate students (n = 11) enrolled in a teacher education program at one of two universities from the northeast region of Ohio. Class status was defined by credit hours completed at time of survey distribution. It should be noted that although there were a small number of graduate students present in the sample, the coursework they were enrolled in was undergraduate teacher education curriculum. Participants were divided into 2 groups: Pre-service Teachers (PEPT, n = 38), and Non Physical Education Pre-service. Teachers (NPEPT, n = 105). Subjects from the NPEPT group came from all
different teaching content areas (18 different content areas total). Ethnical breakdowns for the sample population went as follows: Caucasian, (n=135); African-American, (n=5); and self-reported Multi-Racial/other, n= 3). Subjects were recruited via convenience sampling.

Data Collection

After receiving Institutional Review Board approval from The University of Akron (Ohio), and permission from the cooperating universities, the questionnaire was administered in pen-paper form and distributed in person to students in their teacher education courses. Those who filled out a survey were informed that the purpose of the study was to analyze teacher leadership perspectives in undergraduates majoring in education. They were also read a definition of teacher leadership that went as follows:

“For the purpose of this study, the term teacher leadership refers to any type of leadership role or responsibility, external to the classroom, that a teacher may choose to take on. This may or may not be a paid position.”

They were then instructed to complete the demographic information, answer the Likert style questions to the best of their knowledge, and return their completed questionnaire to the researcher proctoring the survey. Additionally, subjects were made aware that participation was optional, refusal to participate would have no affect on the outcome of their course grade, no personal identification was needed (other then the informed consent form signature, which would in no way be linked to the survey responses), and individual answers would be kept confidential (only amalgamated results would be
disclosed in publications or presentations). The Survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Surveys were collected and recorded over a period of two weeks in February of 2009. Of the 143 surveys distributed, 143 were collected yielding a 100% return rate.

Instruments

To the author’s knowledge, no empirically validated survey examining pre-service teachers’ perception of teacher leadership existed at the time of the study. Therefore, the Pre-service Teacher Leadership Questionnaire (PTLQ) was created for the study. The PTLQ consisted of twelve questions labeled as follows: Question 1 = Q1, Question 2 = Q2, etc. A breakdown of four questions for Perceptions of Leadership in Education (PLE), four questions for Prevalence of Teacher Leadership Discourse (PTLD), and four questions covering Desire to Take on Leadership Roles (DTLR) were used to categorize and illuminate the variables. Each question was written with the attempt to highlight specific aspects of the larger variable it was associated with. A list of all 12 questions, as well as their variable demarcation has been displayed in Table 1.

Demographic information requested included: Gender, Age, Ethnicity, and Class Status (at the university). Questions asked subjects to answer statements based on a 5-point Likert (1932) scale. Original intention was to maintain the 5-point scale throughout the interpretation process; however, analysis revealed more substantive data when the two extreme points on the scale (Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree) were conjoined respectively with the responses Agree and Disagree. While implementing the Likert scale, a statistical tool frequently associated with attitudinal analysis in psychological and educational research, provided validity to the questionnaire format; no formal research
was performed to validate the questionnaire as a whole. Moreover, the subjective nature of the self reported responses limited the veracity of the results. The instruments usability was based on the acknowledgement of and adherence to respondent anonymity, as well as the practicality of its cost and distribution.

Research Design and Statistical Methods

The framework of this study correlated with criterion defined as quasi-experimental research, distinctively, an Ex-Post Facto design (Thomas & Nelson & Silverman, 2005). Two categorical independent variables (PEPT), and (NPEPT), and three continuous dependent variables: (PLE), (PTLD), and (DTLR) were identified. In using this design structure we were able to control as many threats to internal validity as possible, while maintaining viability within real world settings. This model provided for the most feasible implementation of the study while still considering logistical limitations. Collected data were input into SPSS 16.0.0 software and analyzed. Initially, descriptive statistics were run to gain a further understanding of the distribution of data across different variables. From there, independent t-tests were implemented to highlight the disparities between categorical variables across the continuous variables. Overall, statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$. 
Table 1. Survey Questions.

Likert Scale (Subjects answered on a scale from 5 to 1)

5 - Strongly Agree   4 - Agree   3 – Neutral   2 - Disagree   1 – Strongly Disagree

**Perceptions of Leadership in Education (PLE)**

1. Effective Leadership is a skill that can be taught.
2. Anyone can be an effective leader.
3. It is the responsibility of a leader, and theirs alone, to develop their organization’s vision.
4. Leadership in schools should be reserved only for those in formal and/or official positions of leadership (i.e. principles, administrators, superintendents).

**Prevalence of Teacher Leadership Discourse (PTLD)**

5. I have been introduced to the term teacher leadership in at least 1 of my teacher preparation courses.
6. The topic of teacher leadership has been included in the curriculum of at least 2 or more of my teacher preparation courses.
7. I have received instruction in at least 1 of my teacher preparation courses that was aimed specifically at preparing me for future school leadership roles outside of teaching and/or coaching.
8. I have received instruction in at least 1 or more of my teacher preparation courses that was aimed directly at preparing me for future athletic or academic coaching responsibilities.

**Desire to Take on Leadership Roles (DTLR)**

9. I currently hold a position of leadership related to some aspect of K-12 or collegiate academics (i.e. student body president, any formal position of a student organization, chair of a student committee, coach, tutor, sport or academic camp counselor).
10. I currently have a desire to take on additional leadership roles beyond those of classroom teaching or coaching when I enter the professional setting.
11. I currently have a desire to take on some type of coaching position when I enter the professional setting.
12. Receiving specialized training on various teacher leadership responsibilities in my teacher preparation program would increase my desire to take on additional leadership roles when I enter the professional setting.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Aggregate Population Results

An initial descriptive analysis of the population as a whole revealed several unique findings. Total subject population means and standard deviations for each survey question are presented in Table 2. In responding to Q1, 72.7% of the surveyed population marked either a 4 or 5, indicating a belief that “effective leadership is a skill that can be taught.” However, when asked whether or not they thought that “anyone could be an effective leader” in Q2, 52.5% answered 1 or 2, noting a disagreement with the statement; and 17.5% marked a 3 acknowledging uncertainty. This potentially acknowledges a level of veracity to the first statement noted in Hypothesis 1: “Disparity and confusion exists amongst pre-service teachers’ conceptualizations of leadership.”

The remaining two questions referencing PLE (Q3 and Q4), both yielded large percentages for answers marked either 1 or 2 (Q3=75.5%, and Q4=89.5%). The former demonstrating a belief that everyone should be involved in the development of an organization’s vision, and the latter highlighting an even stronger belief that leadership in schools should not be reserved for only those in formal positions of leadership.

The four questions concerning PTLD also displayed aggregate population findings worth mentioning. While 63% of the total sample responded either 4 or 5 to Q5, indicating being at least introduced to the term Teacher Leadership in their teacher
education program, when summat ing responses 1, 2, or 3 to the additional three questions for the *PTLD* variable, a 58% or higher response rate was observed with each (Q6=58.7%, Q7=60.1%, Q8=66.4%). While not directly related, these percentages may hold possible implications for Hypothesis 2a.

The remaining four questions for the *DTLR* variable were similarly characteristic to the *PTLD* variable. Question 9 (“I currently hold a position of leadership…”) yielded a 56.7% response rate for answers 4 or 5. Concurrently, the final three questions all displayed larger percentages for answers 4 or 5 (Q10= 82.6%, Q11= 63.7%, Q12= 81.1%). This noted a considerable desire for taking on future roles of leadership, especially when additional training in leadership was posited (Hypothesis 3b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.32</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Independent t tests were administered to determine the effect of the treatment (the distinguishing P.E. teacher preparation programs) on various perspectives of leadership as defined by mean scores for each question (the dependent variables). Such a separation of the sample population into the two categorical groups: P.E. Pre-service teachers (PEPT), and Non P.E Pre-service teachers (NPEPT) reported multiple significantly comparable means. A complete list of means by categorical variables and survey questions are presented in Table 3.

### Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Individual Questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>PEPT</th>
<th>NPEPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3*</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>1.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q5*</td>
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<td>.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q6*</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7*</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q8*</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q9*</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10*</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11*</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant Items t-test Between PEPT and NPEPT, p’s < .05
Perceptions of Leadership in Education

The only significant $p$ value reported from the questions covering PLE was observed in Q3 ($t(141) = 2.60, \ p < .010$). PEPT reported a higher mean score ($M = 2.58, SD = .85$) than NPEPT ($M = 2.19, SD = .76$). P.E teachers were more likely to view the development of an organizations vision as the sole responsibility of the leader, and thus no one else’s in the group, then their non P.E. counterparts. This finding adds some justification to H1, however, the remaining three questions (Q1, Q2, and Q4) all lacked significant differences between PEPT and NPEPT.

Prevalence of Teacher Leadership Discourse

The greatest number of statistically significant $p$ values was observed in the PTLD variable. All four questions in the survey regarding the PTLD variable displayed significance: Q5 ($t(141) = 2.76, \ p < .007$), Q6 ($t(141) = 3.39, \ p < .001$), Q7 ($t(141) = 4.55, \ p < .000$), and Q8 ($t(141) = 7.18, \ p < .000$). In examining whether or not one categorical group was more likely then the other to be introduced to the term teacher leadership, data revealed higher mean scores for the PEPT group ($M = 3.92, SD = .81$) compared to the NPEPT group ($M = 3.34, SD = 1.20$). Further, means exhibited for Q6 noted PEPT ($M = 3.58, SD = 1.03$) being more likely then NPEPT ($M = 2.87, SD = 1.13$) to have the “topic of teacher leadership included in the curriculum of at least 2 courses” in their specific teacher education program. P.E. teachers were not only more likely to be introduced to the topic of teacher leadership; they were more likely to “have received instruction aimed specifically at preparing them for future school leadership roles outside of teaching and/or coaching.” This was represented in mean scores for Q7 (PEPT $M$
=3.66, \(SD = 1.12\); NPEPT \(M = 2.72, SD = 1.07\). This trend was consistent with respect to the existence of coaching specific instruction in teacher education programs. Mean scores for PEPT (\(M = 3.79, SD = 1.01\)) and NPEPT (\(M = 2.24, SD = 1.81\)) in Q8 were indicative of physical education teacher preparation programs having a greater propensity for preparative athletic and/or academic coaching specific instruction in at least 1 or more courses.

It is worth noting that out of all the categorical variable questions, Q7 and Q8 (along with Q11) accounted for the most salient \(p\) values. PTLD was the only broad variable to illustrate two questions with \(p\) values < .000, plausibly providing considerable validity to Hypothesis 2a as well as Hypothesis 2b. Furthermore, Q8 revealed the largest difference in mean scores between the two groups (1.55); while not as dramatic, Q6 and Q7 also displayed large mean differences with (.712) and (.934) respectively.

**Desire to Take on Leadership Roles**

Three of the four survey questions (Q9, Q10 and Q11) attributed to the DTLR variable displayed significant differences in mean scores. Q9 (\(t(141) = 3.08, p < .002\)), referencing surveyed individuals current status of participation in any form of leadership, highlighted PEPT (\(M = 3.89, SD = 1.24\)) as more likely to be currently holding some type of leadership position then NPEPT (\(M = 3.08, SD = 1.45\)). Yet, this may only be viewed as being partially supportive of HP3a. Further support of HP3a was observed in Q10 (\(t(141) = 2.09, p < .038\)), which examined participants’ specific desire to take on leadership roles beyond those of classroom teaching or athletic/academic coaching. Once again, a higher PEPT mean score (\(M = 4.37, SD = .78\)) was exhibited. Similarly,
the disparity in mean scores for PEPT ($M = 4.61$, $SD = .71$) and NPEPT ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.21$) in Q11 was significant ($t(141) = 5.80$, $p < .000$), noting for PEPT a greater proclivity towards taking on future coaching specific positions. To underscore this, Q11 observed the second highest difference in mean scores with respect to all variables analyzed. As well, the null hypothesis for HP3b was again in part supported, this time by Q12, which yielded no significant difference between the categorical groups.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if pre-service physical education teachers viewed leadership, and more directly, teacher leadership, differently than pre-service teachers who were not enrolled in a preparatory physical education program. The study first attempted to identify the collective perspectives that pre-service teachers held regarding generalized leadership conceptualizations. Inquiry into this concept was aimed at determining whether pre-service teachers viewed leadership from a hierarchical construct, or a more distributed one; and then if these perspectives differed when examined across the juxtaposed teacher education content areas. The aforementioned research questions were illuminated through Hypothesis 1 (as measured by the PLE variable and corresponding survey questions).

A second goal of the study was to determine if the concept of teacher leadership was receiving substantial attention in pre-service teacher education programs (established in HP2a). Beyond this, a hypothesis was made (HP2b) that PEPT would report having a greater focus on leadership responsibilities in their teacher education curriculum then NPEPT (as measured by the PTLD variable and corresponding survey questions). Finally, hypotheses (as measured by the DTLR variable and corresponding questions) were made positing that PEPT would have a stronger proclivity towards accepting
teacher leadership responsibilities than NPEPT (HP3a); and that regardless of content area, if given specific training in teacher leadership responsibilities in their teacher preparation program, all pre-service teachers would feel more inclined to take on such roles (HP3b).

Overall findings from the study are, if not completely supportive, at least partially supportive, of all of the hypotheses postulated. Limited evidence was observed indicating ambivalence in the conceptualization of leadership, and a lack discourse on teacher leadership in Non-physical education curriculum. Conversely, ample evidence was observed in support of the hypothesis that physical education programs possess a greater focus on teacher leadership. Considerable evidence was also reported noting a stronger desire in PEPT to take on various avenues of leadership. Lastly, from both the descriptive statistics and the independent t-tests, clear evidence was displayed for support of the null hypothesis (HP3b) suggesting that training in leadership responsibilities in teacher education curriculum may potentially increase future desire to take on such roles. Further delineation of the major findings is presented in discussion of each dependant variable.

Perceptions of Leadership in Education

In order to have a truly substantive discussion on teacher leadership, one must begin by attempting to understand what educators’ views of leadership actually are. That is to say that teachers’ actions in professional settings, and thus the educational philosophies and leadership views which instigate said actions, begin to develop in their pre-service years. The PLE variable analyzed in this study attempted to demonstrate the
primordial beliefs that pre-service teachers had on leadership. The descriptive statistics appear to have highlighted confusion amongst pre-service teachers as to the trainability and potentiality of effective leadership.

Initially, nearly 75% the aggregate subject population demonstrated agreement with the statement “Effective leadership is a skill that can be taught” (Q1). However, when asked in the very next question (Q2) if they thought that anyone could be an effective leader, 70% responded with either uncertainty or disagreement to the statement. One potential explanation for this contradiction in responses may be the context that leadership is viewed in. If one thinks of leadership from an attributal standpoint, which as recognized in Q1 and the literature (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Bowman, 2004; Treslan, 2006; Wuest & Bucher, 2003), some do, then believing that attributes are teachable would presumably inherently imply a belief that anyone could be developed into an effective leader. However, if that view is connected to the “heroic” personae of educational leadership often displayed in popular culture, then those attributes may be seen as existing only in those rare and “Special” leaders, and thus not just “Anyone.” Similarly, viewing leadership from a structural or hierarchical concept may allow for the belief that effective leadership attributes are teachable, and yet still accept the view that only certain people can be leaders. Leadership in this case would be interpreted as “positions” that are either realistically speaking, unattainable for those at the very bottom of the hierarchy; or “positions” that are too limited in number to allow for a fantasized notion of anyone being one. The attributal and hierarchical contexts both provide plausible explanations for the dissonance in responses from Q1 and Q2, largely because each contains dissonant viewpoints for their respective constructs.
From the results of the data, the extrapolation of a hierarchical viewpoint existing in pre-service teachers does seem acceptable, especially considering the well documented prevalence of such an outlook in the professional sector (Danielson, 2007; Frost, & Durrant, 2003; Lovely, 2005; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). If then the hierarchical assumption was made, then it would seem plausible to think that leadership (and the responsibilities associated with it) would be seen as a reservation for only those in formal positions. However, the questions fitted to display such beliefs (Q3 and Q4) were not supportive of this explanation. The participants tended to view leadership in schools, as well as the development of an organizational vision, as the possibility and responsibility of every position (formal and informal) in an organization. The confusion between the responses may be an indication that pre-service teachers possess both viewpoints and in turn, support for Hypothesis 1. They acknowledge leadership in schools as hierarchical, and yet at the same time maintain the idea that quality leadership is defined through leadership attributes. When no real critical discourse is used to work through conflicting (or at the very least, divergent) conceptualizations, and the future educators are not forced within their teacher education program to come to a definable understanding of leadership in education, the result is confusion. Further along, this ambivalence may manifest into a teacher leader inhibitor.

Comparisons between the PEPT and the NPEPT revealed that, for the most part, their views on generalized leadership paralleled one another; and thus provided minimal support for the second part of HP1. The development of an organization’s vision (Q3) was the only observed difference between groups with respect to the PLE variable. The fact that PEPT were more likely to view the development of the organization’s vision as
the sole responsibility of the leader may be related to coaching. In athletics it is often the head coach who develops the values, vision, and strategies of the team. This construct is supported in Bloom’s (2002) discussion and overview of research on coaching by affirming:

“The most important subcomponent of organization for team sports was labeled as “the vision.” All team sport coaches felt very strongly about beginning any season or championship quest by clearly outlining the mission for their team and the steps necessary to achieve success. Without an explicit plan or vision from the coach, the team is unlikely to excel.” (pg. 452)

It is then assumed that the coach’s primary responsibility is to get the team to buy into this philosophy. Considering that coaches view the development and clarification of such a vision as vital to the success of the team, they rarely let athletes assist in defining the team’s vision. These leadership components unique to athletics, as well as the long connection that coaching has had to physical education, may offer explanations as to the lone statistically significant difference observed in Q3 (Wuest & Bucher, 2003).

Prevalence of Teacher Leadership Discourse

Data from the PTLD variable raised a variety of issues in need of discussion. From the descriptive statistics, it appears that about 60% of the total subject population had been introduced to the term teacher leadership. What was most striking was the relatively minimal follow up conversation or preparatory training being given to the pre-service teachers after being introduced to the topic. Nearly the same percentage of pre-service teachers who reported an introduction to the term also reported either not getting
discourse on the topic in more than one course in their program, or being uncertain if they
did. In this case uncertainty may be regarded in the same manner as not receiving the
instruction. If the pre-service teachers cannot remember the instruction they received on
teacher leadership while still in the teacher education program, it seems highly doubtful
that they will take any sort of value for the topic with them when they enter the
professional field.

Moreover, similar percentages (approximately 60%) indicate that teacher
education programs contain limited (if any) focus on instruction geared specifically at
handling the responsibilities of a leadership role from a teacher context. It seems self-
evident to think that if teacher leadership is as salient and necessary as the literature
suggests it to be (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006; Bowman, 2004; Danielson, 2007; Frost & Durrant, 2003; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Harrison, & Killion, 2007; Phelps, 2008; Webb, Neumann, & Jones, 2004; York-Barr & Duke, 2004) then discussion on it and
preparation for it, should begin during the process of teacher preparation. Generously
speaking, if half of those students who leave a teacher education program and matriculate
to school systems have not received preparation for teacher leadership, nor its inherent
responsibilities, it then seems unlikely to think that they would be enthusiastic about (or
adequately prepared for) the literature supported school necessity of teacher leadership.
The minimalistic coverage of teacher leadership in teacher education programs may be a
result of the daunting accountability associated with pedagogical training and licensure
examination preparation. It is well recognized in academia that the complete
development into a high quality educator takes time to achieve. For those given the
responsibility of preparing future educators, time is truly a valuable and scarce
commodity. It is understandable then to think that time limitations, accompanied by comprehensive curricula, impede the opportunity for teacher leadership discourse. However, this thought doesn’t take away from (or compensate for) the resultant possibility that an apathetic consideration for teacher leadership during the formative stages of career development yields an indifference to teacher leadership in the subsequent ones.

Underscoring the aforementioned interpretations to the variable are the disparities observed between categorical groups. In addition to providing partial support for HP2a, the observance of four statistically significant disparities between groups presents considerable support for HP2b through assumedly clear evidence that pre-service physical education curriculum includes a greater emphasis on leadership specific instruction than non physical education teacher preparation curriculum. This study displayed data indicating that PEPT were more likely than NPEPT to: be introduced to the term teacher leadership, be given instruction on the topic in two or more courses, to be given specific instruction related to some type of coaching responsibility (academic or athletic), and to be given instruction focused directly on managing responsibilities of leadership external to classroom teaching and/or coaching. These findings may be explained by the fact that, within the discipline of physical education, the engagement of external leadership is assumed.

The basic decision to go into the field of physical education may be done so with the underlying intent to coach, and therefore an accompanying acceptance of leadership duties beyond those reserved strictly for classroom teaching. Wuest and Bucher (2003) suggest that the very distinction of “physical education” in affect limits career
opportunities to teaching and coaching. Furthermore, Wuest and Bucher highlight an intrinsic relationship between physical education and coaching by stating: “Typically, professional preparation curriculums were oriented toward preparing individuals for careers in teaching and coaching” (pg. 409). Likewise, the higher mean scores detected for PEPT in the PTLD variable may be additionally advantageous in understanding and interpreting statistically significant differences between groups in the DTLR variable.

Desire to Take on Leadership Roles

Descriptive data form the DTLR variable yields two major constructs worth mentioning. The first being the detail that, collectively, pre-service teachers reported larger percentages establishing a desire for leadership roles then the percentages indicating current leadership positions actually retained. Several justifications for this gap could be presented. One possibility may be that at as college students, the pre-service teachers are overwhelmed with requirements necessary for their degree. In addition, they may have to manage the completion of school with holding a job (either part-time or full time). While desired, leadership opportunities that do not offer monetary compensation, in this sense may seem less pragmatic. Equally, one may argue that the lower percentages indicative of leadership positions currently held by the surveyed population, despite a leadership desire, is the result of individuals lacking leadership specific training and instruction. This would be to argue the assumption that a desire to lead does not inevitably result in the acquisition of leadership positions, and consequently the need for teacher leadership training in pre-service teacher education curriculum.
The second noteworthy component exhibited in the DTLR descriptive statistics is the conspicuously strong desire that pre-service teachers displayed for teacher leadership. This was especially true when leadership specific training was incorporated in the survey question (81.1% responded agree or strongly agree to Q12). In Q 10, 82.6% of the entire population reported a desire to be a teacher leader after entering the professional field (more so than a desire to coach in Q11, 62.7%). If such a strong desire to take on leadership roles exists at the pre-service level, then what happens in the transition from theory to practice that leads to the teacher leadership literature exhibiting an in-service based value orientation (Ackerman, & Mackenzie, 2006; Ballek, O’Rourke, Provenzano, & Bellamy, 2005; Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Dozier, 2007; Phelps, 2008)? Do teachers lose a desire to assume teacher leadership roles, or do researches feel school based initiatives are simply more affective? Perhaps the idea of teacher leadership inclusion into teacher preparation curriculum has not received sufficient examination.

In discussion of differences between groups with respect to the DTLR variable, both HP3a and HP3b are supported. PEPT were more likely than NPEPT to currently hold some type of leadership position related to academics. Further, the PEPT displayed a stronger desire for both acquiring future teacher leadership positions, as well as future coaching positions (support for HP3a). When the DTLR variable is looked at together in analysis with the t-test findings from the PTLD variable, inferences could be made that the greater focus on leadership in the pre-service physical education curriculum is influential in both the decision and the desire that pre-service teachers have to taking on leadership positions. This is not to assume that there is a cause-and-effect relationship present in the findings. The implication posited is simply that there may be a correlation
between leadership training and a positive disposition toward leadership (in perspectives and actual practice), which would again support a need teacher leadership curriculum inclusion.

Lastly, the null hypothesis postulated in HP3b was supported by an inability to find a statistically significant difference between the categorical groups in Q12. Both groups reported high mean scores for said question. Pre-service teachers appear to hold the perspective that, regardless of the teacher education major they are enrolled in, they would be more inclined to taking on positions of teacher leadership if they received instruction specifically aimed at preparing them for such positions. Again, this seems plausibly supportive for the beneficiality of teacher leadership training at the pre-service level.

Implications

The research presented in this study attempts to shed new light on the issue of teacher leadership. More importantly, it may assist in validating a paradigm shift with respect to the focus and cultivation of teacher leadership. At the very least, it appears to acknowledge the possibility that a reevaluation of leadership (in both theory and practice) would be advantageous to education professionals and scholars. Two major implications were drawn from the offered findings.

The first major conclusion is: that the existent confusion and inconsistency involved with the development of a definitive conceptualization of leadership, in both academic and professional sectors, does little to establish a consistent conceptualization of teacher leadership. This correlates with meta-analysis findings discussed by York-
Barr and Duke (2004). Accordingly, such an inconsistency does little to foster or promote the execution of teacher leadership. The potentiality of this “confusion in conceptualization” acting as an inhibitor of teacher leadership meets suggested aims of future research proposed by Frost and Harris (2003). Specifically, Frost and Harris state:

‘The research would aim to…examine the factors that inhibit or support the exercise of leadership on the part of teachers.” (pg. 494)

This prospective inhibiting factor may be especially worth noting considering that it is pre-service based, and that Phelps (2008) and Johnson and Donaldson, (2007) both lack the suggestion of such a factor in explicit (and solely practitioner based) mention of obstacles to teacher leadership.

The second implication posited is: that the unique aspects associated with pre-service physical education curriculum, most notably, future leadership focus and preparation, offer exclusive insight and plausible justification for teacher leadership training at the pre-service level. 8 of the 12 survey questions displayed a statistically significant difference between categorical groups. The previous finding, coupled with the fact that higher mean scores for pre-service physical education teachers were observed in every survey question yielding a significant difference, provides for justifiable consideration and further examination into related teacher leadership phenomena. Teacher leadership, examined from the alternative (and albeit overlooked) context of physical education, supplies a perspective of leadership that is both substantive and sagacious. A need for understanding leadership in a variety of contexts is concluded by Webb, Neumann, and Jones (2004):
“We are at a time of great professional change in education that requires dynamic models of decision making…..Understanding leadership from multiple perspectives provides leaders with several specific tools, strategies, and practices to respond effectively to complex and competing demands on schools.”

Accordingly, the benefit that the discipline of physical education may hold to furthering the understanding of teacher leadership is not exclusive. The findings presented in this leadership examination strongly suggest the potential benefit of inquiry into additional teacher leadership perspectives external to in-service foci. At the very least, the results of this study indicate further need for critical discourse and Socratic dialogue concerning teacher leadership inclusion in pre-service teacher education curriculum.

Limitations

Based on the research design, certain threats to validity were implicit in the study. In its basic structure, this inquiry meets criteria descriptive of applied research. It is then assumed that while certain limitations are conspicuous, any external validity established is done so based on its immediate social significance to the field of education, and concurrently, its real-world applicability. The sample utilized for the data collection was a sample of convenience. Further, the sample taken was meant to reflect the larger population of pre-service teachers enrolled in teacher education programs. It is worth noting that the disparity between the number of PEPT and NPEPT with respect to sample size, and thus the limitation associated with the disparity, was a product of the total enrollment for the larger populations that each surveyed sample was intended to reflect. The numbers reported for the PEPT group represent nearly the entire enrollment of
upperclassman for physical education majors at both universities included in the study. Consequently, there were just fewer PEPT than there were NPEPT available.

Although face validity was established, the survey used to collect data was created for the study, and thus lacked empirically supported construct validity. The decision to create the measurement instrument was a delimitation resulting from the dearth of any usable survey tool existing in the teacher leadership literature. Similarly, as with all self-report survey research, the acceptability of results is limited to the veracity of the participants’ responses.

Suggestions for Future Research

Several areas of future research can be recommended from the outcomes attributed to this study. To begin with, teacher leadership researchers would benefit from some type of empirically validated survey instrument; one that looks not only at the perspectives individuals hold on leadership, but one that highlights factors that either promote or inhibit teacher leadership. Research could also be conducted examining the construct validity of the PTLQ. Inquiries into teacher leadership in practice may also shed light on issues discussed in this study. It would be beneficial to establish what content areas teacher leaders come from. Further, it would be valuable to this study to determine if P.E. teachers (based on their perspectives discovered in this investigation) are more likely than other teachers to actually become teacher leaders. Lastly, further examination into teacher leadership preparation and instruction, especially at the pre-service level, would add to the existing body of knowledge for educational leadership and teacher education curriculum development. In addition, research parameters utilizing
larger sample sizes and longer durations of observation may add considerable weight and
discernment to the findings discussed in this thesis.
REFERENCES


Lovely, S. (2005). Making the leap to shared leadership: The first step to creating a championship school is to match teacher leaders to tasks that suit their talents and interests. *Journal of Staff Development, 26*(2), 16-21.


APPENDIX

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: January 23, 2009

To: Christopher Carpenter
    1569 Northland Avenue
    Lakewood, Ohio 44107

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator

Re: IRB Number 20081210 “Perspective Differences of Teacher Leadership in Teacher Education Undergraduate Curriculum: A Comparative Analysis of Pre-Service Physical Education Majors and Other Content Areas”

Thank you for submitting your Exemption Request for the referenced study. Your request was approved on January 23, 2009. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

☐ Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.

☒ Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.

☐ Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

☐ Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.

☐ Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.

☐ Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study’s design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact me to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Cc: Sean Cai - Advisor
    Stephanie Woods - IRB Chair

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☐ Approved consent form/s enclosed