

International Study of Teacher Leadership (ISTL)

Exploring Cross-cultural Perspectives of Teacher Leadership among ISTL Researchers: A Phenomenographic Study

Presenters:



Janet Okoko (University of Saskatchewan)

Catherine Arden (University of Southern Queensland)



Focus of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a 'touchstone' for the larger ISTL project by illuminating the diverse conceptions and experiences of teacher leadership among the membership of the ISTL research team representing 10 countries. Using a phenomenographic approach, we set out to explore, capture, map and share these diverse perspectives and consider how the findings might inform our work as a research team.

Research Questions

1. What are the qualitatively different ways that ISTL researchers experience teacher leadership?
2. How might we draw on insights gained from this study to inform our work as a research team?

Referential and structural components of awareness

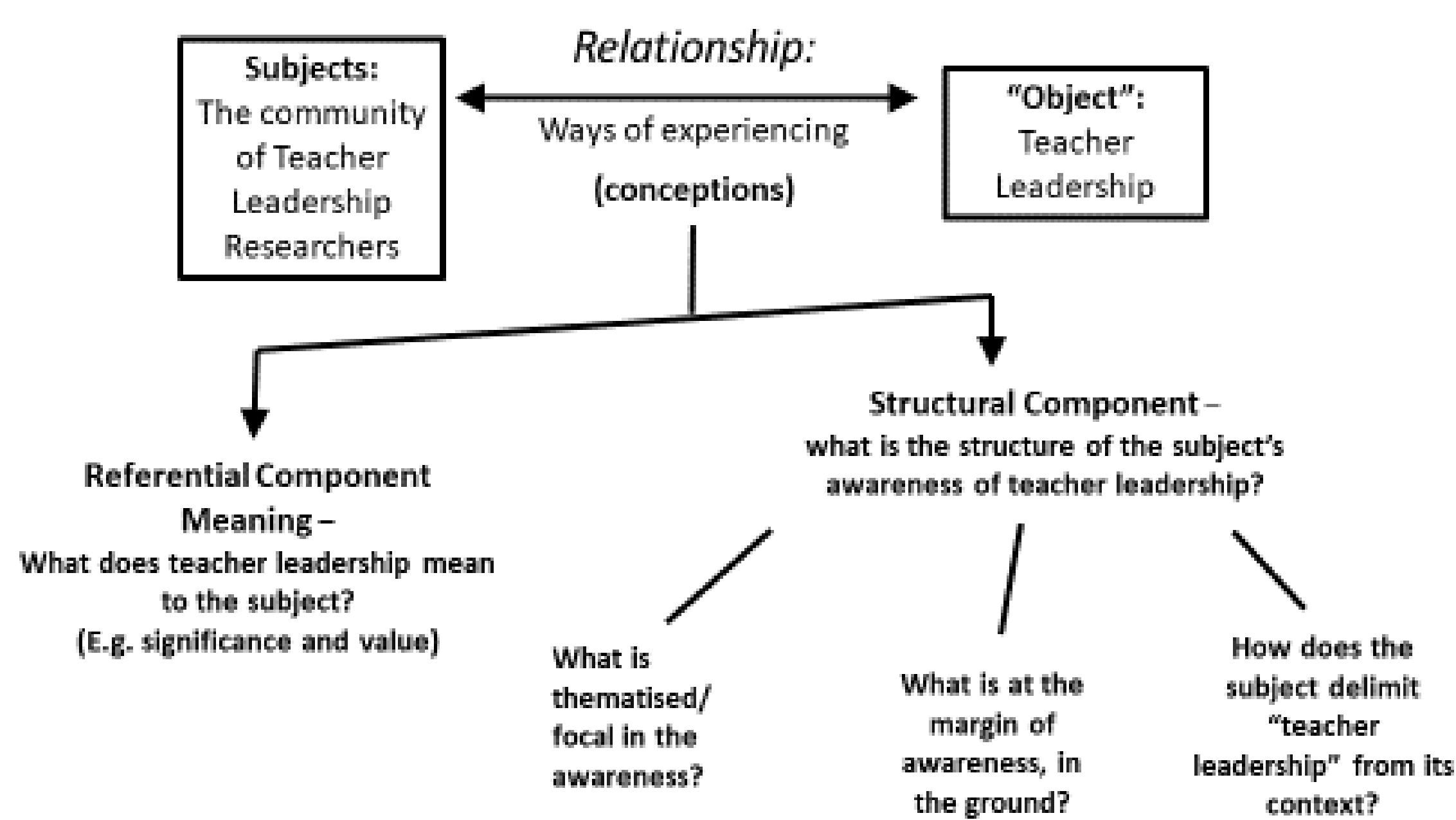


Figure 1: Analytical Framework

Research Design

Through phenomenographic interviews with 12 members of the ISTL team, the co-researchers explored the relationship between the subjects (ISTL researchers) and the object of interest (teacher leadership) (see Fig 1)

Data collection

- ❖ **STEP 1:** Pre-interview mind mapping activity – *What does "teacher leadership" mean to you?* Mind maps served as stimulus material for interviews
- ❖ **STEP 2:** Participants 'talked through' their mind maps with researchers in an individual 45 minute online interview. Researchers probed understandings and experiences of teacher leadership.

Data Analysis

Interview artefacts (mind maps, recordings and researchers' annotations) were subject to iterative phenomenographic analysis to discover diverse conceptions of teacher leadership evident in the data, identify dimensions of variation and devise categories of description (Table 1) in the outcome space (Figure 2)

Research Findings

Table 1: Categories of Description

<i>Teacher leadership is experienced as...</i>
1. <i>Leaving a legacy (the organisational conception)</i>
2. <i>A teacher's choice (the informal conception)</i>
3. <i>Daring to try new approaches (the pedagogical conception)</i>
4. <i>Working with and for others (the collaborative-enabling conception)</i>
5. <i>Doing things for the right reasons (the ideal conception)</i>
6. <i>A life's work (the vocational conception)</i>
7. <i>Reaching out; changing lives (the social pedagogical conception)</i>
8. <i>Disrupting the status quo: a voice for the profession (the political conception)</i>
9. <i>An exciting new idea; trying to make it real for our context (the academic conception)</i>

Outcome Space

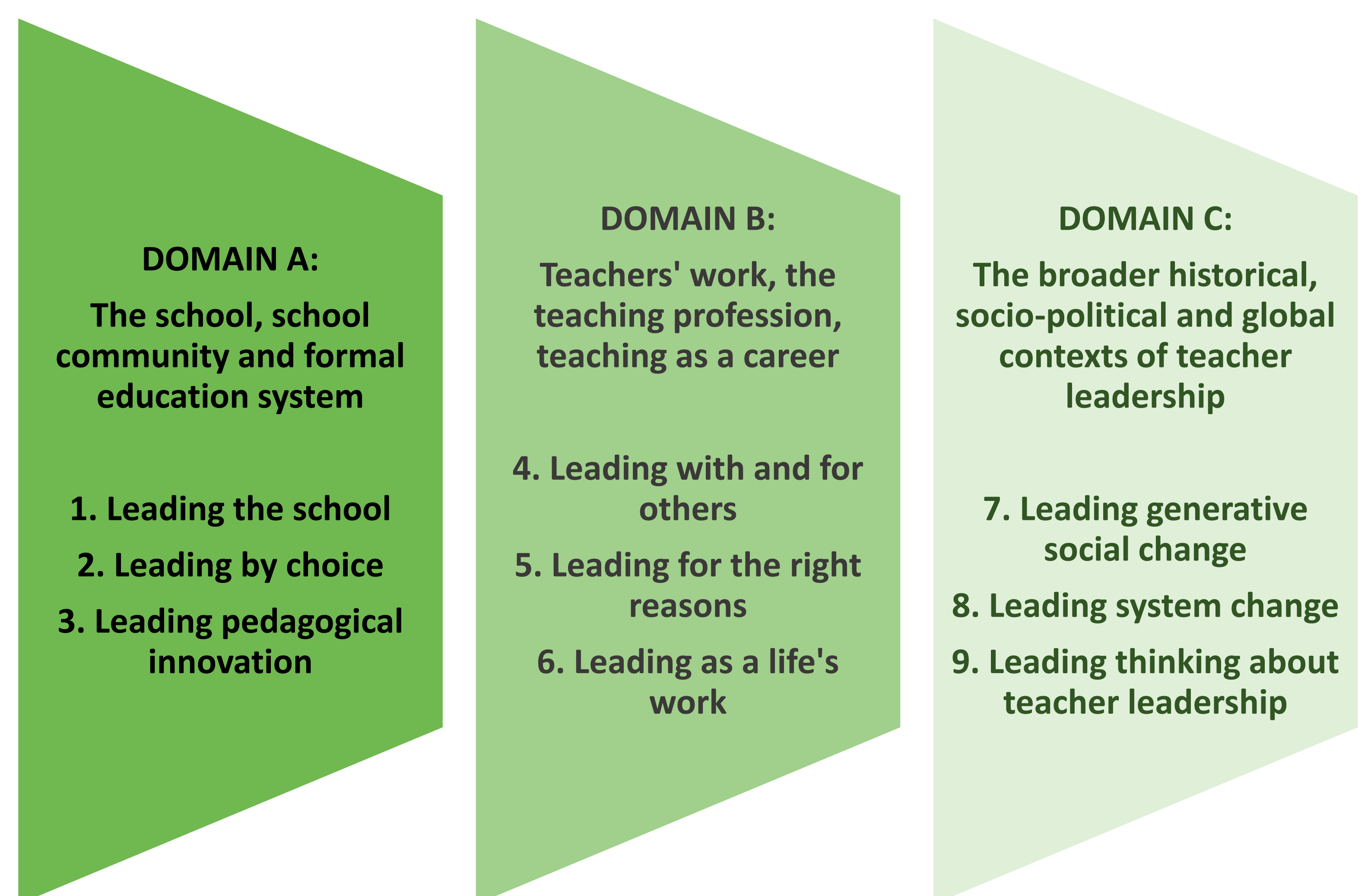


Figure 2: Expanding awareness of the cross-cultural contexts of teacher leadership across three broad domains

Publications

Arden, C., & Okoko, J. (2019). Exploring cross-cultural perspectives of teacher leadership among the members of an international teacher leadership research team: A phenomenographic study. In Y. Kondakci, S. Emil and K. Beycioglu (Eds.). Proceedings of the 14th International Congress on Educational Administration (EARDA), held 2-4 May, Cesme, Izmir, Turkey, pp. 709-15