

## English Instructors' Leadership Styles (The Sample of Dokuz Eylul University)

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### Abstract:

Today, since teachers, students as well as parents are included in the process of leadership, school principals are not considered the sole leaders any longer. Distributed leadership which requires the involvement of various people in school leadership has paved the way for teacher leadership which is defined as "having effective teaching leadership within the classroom, playing leadership roles out of the classroom, becoming a role model both for the students and colleagues in terms of education and school development processes, working cooperatively with them, influencing them and contributing to the transformation of the school community in terms of the school targets that will improve the school according to the needs of the modern time. The purpose of this study is to determine the English instructors' teacher leadership style in terms of McGregor's X and Y Theory and to reveal whether their teacher leadership style varies according to such personal and professional factors as their gender and teaching experience. The data were collected from 80 English instructors employed at Dokuz Eylul University, School of Foreign Languages in Izmir, Turkey via "Teacher Leadership Styles Scale" developed by Deniz and Hasançebioğlu (2003). The data were analysed with SPSS 22 packet program and the results have revealed that the instructors have a semi-democratic leadership style although they tend to be autocratic as well.

**Keywords:** Leadership, English instructors, teacher leadership, X and Y theory

### 1. Introduction

Leadership, mostly associated with the concept of management, has been an attractive issue discussed in many fields. Described and explained in several ways with its different components by various researchers, it is possible to define leadership simply as the power of influence on other people which leads them to follow the leader voluntarily and eagerly on the way to a set target (Kort, 2008; Paksoy, 1993). Because of this precious function for any organization, it is valued to be able to understand leadership and to train people to become effective leaders accordingly (Izgar, 2005; Bolden, 2004). Education is one of the fields where leadership plays a critical role in creating high quality schools (Izgar, 2005; Şişman and Turan, 2004). Balcı (2011) states that due to the rapid changes and transformations experienced globally since 1980s, educational leadership has inevitably adopted a more democratic and contemporary approach in school administration. In contrast to the

classical theories which attribute leadership to some particular individuals, the contemporary leadership theories point out a much more democratic, inclusive and participatory understanding which lets leadership be shared by different members of the community or the organization in different contexts or situations (Balcı, 2011; Izgar, 2005; Bolden, 2004). Today, since teachers, students as well as parents are included in the process of leadership, school principals are not considered the sole leaders any longer. Distributed leadership which requires the involvement of various people in school leadership has paved the way for teacher leadership which is defined by Beycioğlu (2015, p. 163) as "having effective teaching leadership within the classroom, playing leadership roles out of the classroom, becoming a role model both for the students and colleagues in terms of education and school development processes, working cooperatively with them, influencing them and contributing to the transformation of the school community in terms of the school targets that will

improve the school according to the needs of the modern time.

X and Y Theory developed by McGregor has the traces of classical and behaviouristic theories of administration, but still it puts the emphasis on the crucial role human relations play in administration which reflects the tenets of neo-classical approaches (Turan, 2014; Deniz and Hasançebioglu, 2003). Rather than developing a brand-new theory, McGregor provides a new way of looking at the previously proposed models and places them on a continuum which represents the transition between the two opposing perspectives: X and Y. Theory X which represents the classical perspective assumes that human beings are innately lazy and passive creators who do not like working or who are unwilling to take any responsibilities. Consequently, this theory suggests forcing people to work and so argues that people must be directed, controlled and threatened with punishment. This theory considers the administrator as the authority. All the staff is informed about their responsibilities in detail, strictly controlled for their performance and punished for their irresponsibility. Transference of authority is not favoured, and employees are motivated with fear. However, Theory Y which represents the neo-classical perspective regards working as a natural deed like eating for human beings. Therefore, this theory argues that people cannot be labelled as lazy creatures. On the contrary, they demand to work and become willing to take responsibility when proper conditions are created for them. So, they should be valued and respected (Turan, 2014; Çelik and Doğan, 2011; Aydın, 2007; Deniz and Hasançebioglu, 2003; Sağsan, 2002).

Leadership can be undertaken by different stakeholders like teachers in educational contexts as well. Obviously, their perspective will influence the way they lead other people which makes it important to understand their tendency. Therefore, this study aims to determine the English instructors' teacher leadership style in terms of McGregor's X and Y Theory and to reveal whether their teacher leadership style varies according to such personal and professional factors as their gender and teaching experience. With this purpose in mind, the answers to the following research questions were sought throughout the study:

1. What is the leadership style adopted by English instructors employed at Dokuz Eylul University, School of Foreign Languages?
2. Does their leadership style vary in terms of
  - a. their gender,
  - b. their age,
  - c. their teaching experience,
  - d. the language level they teach mostly,
  - e. their graduation degree and
  - f. whether they are employed permanently or on a contract?

## 2. Method

This is a descriptive study with a survey model. Descriptive survey research aims to reveal a large group of people's opinions, perceptions or beliefs about an issue; therefore, it is more suitable for exploratory or explanatory purposes and it enables the researcher to describe a large population which would be impossible to do directly (Rubin and Babbie, 2011; Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler, 2006).

### 2.1. The Sample of the Study

The sample was determined with the total population sampling technique which requires all the members of the population to be included in the study (Karagölge and Peker, 2002). Because the number of the English instructors working at the language school during 2016-2017 academic year was already small, it was decided to include the entire population within the study without sampling any group and so the scale was delivered to all the instructors. However, 80 out of 133 English instructors returned the scale after completing it appropriately. Table 1 presents detailed information about the participants of the study.

**Table 1. Participants of the study**

Groups		N
Gender	<i>Female</i>	61
	<i>Male</i>	19
Employment type	<i>Permanent status</i>	65
	<i>With a contract</i>	13
Age	<i>Up to 40</i>	42
	<i>40+</i>	37
Level they teach mostly	<i>Elementary</i>	40
	<i>Intermediate</i>	38
Graduation degree	<i>BA</i>	42
	<i>MA and PhD</i>	37
Teaching experience	<i>0-10 years</i>	17
	<i>11-20 years</i>	34
	<i>21 years +</i>	28
<b>Total</b>		80

### 2.2. Data Collection Instrument

The data were collected via "the Teacher Leadership Styles Scale" developed by Deniz and Hasançebioglu (2003) considering McGregor's X

and Y Theory. This is a five-point Likert scale consisting 17 items, seven of which are negative. The items were rated as follows: 1: Completely disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Indecisive, 4: Agree and 5: Completely agree. The negative items were transformed before the analysis. The Cronbach alfa reliability coefficient was calculated as .88 for the scale. According to Deniz and Hasançebioglu (2003), the mean scores gained from the scale are interpreted as the following:

- 1.0-3.7: This score shows that this teacher adopts an autocratic and oppressive leadership style.
- 3.8-4.4: This score indicates a teacher with a semi-democratic style.
- 4.5-5.0: This is the range for a teacher with a participatory and democratic style.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed via SPSS 22 Packet Program. At the first stage, the data were tested to check the distribution for normality. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Results for Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Carried out to test the normality of the data**

Values		Teacher Leadership Styles Scale
N		80
Normal Parameters	x	3.77
	ss	.478
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.064
p		.200*

\*p>.05

As can be seen in Table 2, the data gathered for this study show normal distribution (p=.200) which means parametric tests can be utilized in the analysis. Therefore, parametric tests were implemented to get an answer for the research questions; but non-parametric tests were preferred with the groups under 20 people because of the small sample size. As a result, the tests used in this study included the t-test, Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test. Means, frequencies and standard deviations were also calculated, and the results were accepted statistically significant at the level of p<.05.

### 3. Findings

The findings of the study are presented in this section in accordance with the research questions. The first research question was stated as “What is the leadership style adopted by English instructors employed at Dokuz Eylul University, School of

Foreign Languages?”. English instructors’ mean score for the Teacher Leadership Styles Scale is given in Table 3.

**Table 3. English instructors’ mean score for the Teacher Leadership Styles Scale**

Scale	n	x	ss
Teacher Leadership S Scale	80	3.8	.47

Table 3 shows that the mean score for Teacher Leadership Styles Scale is 3.8 and according to Deniz and Hasançebioglu (2003), this score indicates that the participant instructors have a semi-democratic leadership style. However, it is also possible to claim that the instructors have a tendency for a rather autocratic and oppressive style since the mean score is the boundary value for this type of leadership and they would be considered under this category if the score were .1 point lower.

The second research question was stated as “Does the instructors’ leadership style vary in terms of their gender and whether they are employed permanently or on a contract?”. Mann Whitney-U test results carried out to answer this question are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Results for the Mann Whitney-U test carried out to reveal whether the instructors’ score for Teacher Leadership Styles Scale varies significantly in terms of their gender and employment type**

\*p<.05

Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Gender	Female	61	38.87	2371	480	-1,126
	Male	19	45.74	869		
	Total	80				
Employment type	Permanent status	65	37.36	2428.50	383.50	-1,865
	With a contract	13	50.19	652.50		
	Total	78				

According to Table 4, the English instructors’ teacher leadership styles score does not vary significantly in terms of their gender (p=.260) or their employment type (p=.062). This means that there is no statistically significant difference between female and male instructors as well as the ones who are employed permanently and on a contract.

Another research question was formulated as “Does the instructors’ leadership style vary in terms of their age, the level they teach mostly and their graduation degree?”. T-test results carried out to test

whether the instructors' score for Teacher Leadership Styles Scale varies significantly in terms of their age, the level they teach mostly, and their graduation degree are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Results for the t-test carried out to reveal whether the instructors' score for Teacher Leadership Styles Scale varies significantly in terms of their age, the level they teach and their graduation degree**

Groups		N	$\bar{X}$	SS	$t_{Test}$		
					$t$	df	$p$
Age	Up to 40	42	3.80	.427	.422	7	.674*
	40+	37	3.75	.531		7	
Level they teach mostly	Elementary	40	3.67	.502	-	7	.050*
	Intermediate	38	3.88	.441	.989	6	
Graduation degree	BA	42	3.74	.441	-	7	.542*
	MA and PhD	37	3.80	.525	.613	7	

\* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 5, the English instructors' teacher leadership styles score does not vary significantly in terms of their age ( $p = .674$ ), the language level they teach ( $p = .050$ ) or their graduation degree ( $p = .542$ ). These findings indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the instructors up to 40 years and the ones older in terms of their leadership styles. Also, it does not make any significant difference whether they teach elementary or intermediate level learners or whether they have an BA, MA or PhD degree.

Finally, the last research question was expressed as "Does the instructors' leadership style vary in terms of their teaching experience?" and Kruskal Wallis-H test results carried out to determine whether the instructors' score for Teacher Leadership Styles Scale varies significantly in terms of their teaching experience are displayed in Table 6.

**Table 6. Results for the Kruskal Wallis-H test carried out to reveal whether the instructors' score for Teacher Leadership Styles Scale varies significantly in terms of their teaching experience**

Groups		N	Mean rank	$\chi^2$	sd	$P$
Teaching experience	0-10 years	17	42.12	.713	2	.700*
	11-20 years	34	37.50			
	21 years	28	41.75			
	+					

\* $p < .05$

Table 6 presents that the English instructors' teacher leadership styles score does not vary significantly in terms of their teaching experience ( $p = .700$ ), which means that there is no significant difference between the leadership styles of the novice and experienced instructors. However, when the mean ranks for each group are considered, it is seen that the instructors with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience tend to have a less democratic style than the ones with less and more experience.

#### 4. Results, Discussion and Conclusion

In this part, the results of the study are briefly summarized and discussed in terms of the related literature. Firstly, it is seen that the participant instructors have a semi-democratic leadership style with a tendency for a rather autocratic and oppressive style. Bakan and Büyükbeşe (2010) have found that administrators tend to adopt an autocratic leadership style both in governmental and private institutions in Turkey. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participant instructors reflect the realities of the context in which they work. However, with the effect of the transition from the traditional teaching approaches to more contemporary and learner-centred ones, it can be suggested that they are altering their perspective to a more democratic one accordingly (Arslan and Özpınar, 2008).

Secondly, it is seen that there is no statistically difference in the instructors' leadership styles in terms of their gender, age, teaching experience, graduation degree or the language level they teach mostly and whether they are employed permanently or on a contract. However, the findings have revealed that the female instructors tend to be more autocratic than the males though this difference is not statistically significant. This finding is inconsistent with the results of many other studies in the literature since female leaders are perceived as more democratic than males in general (Durmuş, 2001). Likewise, the novice and highly experienced instructors have a more autocratic style than the ones in the middle of their teaching career. The novice teachers might prefer being stricter with students in order to compensate for their inexperience which causes them to be less democratic. On the other hand, the highly experienced teachers tend to have a traditional point of view which results in an autocratic style. Another striking result is that the instructors who are employed on a contract have a more democratic style than the ones employed permanently. There is a circulation among the staff employed on a contact



since the most qualified ones are hired for that academic year. So, this group usually consists of the instructors with recent and updated professional knowledge and skills as well as the ones who are keen on their personal development. Consequently, they are expected to have a rather contemporary and democratic style than the ones who are employed permanently which may cause them to ignore getting updated since they already have their job security.

In conclusion, the English instructors' leadership style is influenced by other factors than their personal and professional qualities. This study can be conducted in different contexts with larger populations to test the generalizability of the results to other language school in the country. Moreover, there is no doubt that qualitative studies which will reveal the factors behind the instructors' adopted leadership styles will contribute to the understanding of teacher leadership in practice.

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