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Investigation of Instructional and Distributed Leadership Behaviors of School Administrators

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to examine the instructional and distributed leadership behaviors of school administrators based on teacher perceptions and to determine whether these behaviors differ according to selected variables. The study population consists of teachers working in public primary schools in Ankara during the 2024-2025 academic year, with a sample of 375 teachers selected via random sampling. Data were collected using the Personal Information Form, the Instructional Leadership Scale, and the Distributed Leadership Inventory. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA were employed for data analysis. The findings indicate that school administrators exhibit distributed leadership behaviors at a "very high" level and instructional leadership behaviors at a "high" level. While female teachers rated distributed leadership functions significantly higher than male teachers, no significant difference was found based on gender regarding instructional leadership behaviors. Furthermore, no statistically significant differences were observed in either leadership style regarding teachers' length of service or marital status. Consequently, it is concluded that while administrators are effective in executing leadership functions, "leadership team cohesion" scores were relatively lower, suggesting a need for improvement in collaborative dynamics.

Keywords. School Administrator, Instructional Leadership, Distributed Leadership, Teacher Perceptions, Educational Administration

Introduction

Teacher job satisfaction is one of the primary factors determining the efficiency of the education system and the effectiveness of the school. While this satisfaction is sometimes achieved through salary, status, and recognition, it is generally an emotional state stemming from self-actualization and is directly linked to working conditions and the relationships established with administrators (Bota, 2013). Teachers are more willing to work in organizations where these psychological and social needs are met, and this situation ensures an increase in job satisfaction. Conversely, in institutions that cause stress, anxiety, depression, and fatigue for their employees, where working conditions are negative and administrator attitudes are oppressive, it is observed that teachers' job satisfaction decreases and disengagement from the organization begins (Koruklu et al., 2013).

When research regarding the stress and job dissatisfaction experienced by teachers is examined, it is observed that the concepts of organizational culture and organizational

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commitment are determinants in shaping these situations. While Güçlü (2003) defines organizational culture as the set of values that shape the behaviors and relationship styles of people within the organization; organizational commitment is expressed as an individual's desire to remain in the organization, adoption of organizational goals, and willingness to exert voluntary effort for the benefit of the organization. The stronger the bond and sense of loyalty individuals feel towards the school they work for, the higher their performance in educational processes (Bayram, 2005).

When factors affecting organizational commitment are examined; organizational justice, trust, participation in decision-making, and especially leadership behaviors come to the forefront (Bayram, 2005). Research conducted indicates that leadership styles exhibited by school administrators have a medium to high level of effect on teachers' organizational commitment. In this context, two leadership approaches stand out in modern educational management: Distributed Leadership and İnstructional Leadership. While distributed leadership is based on the spreading of leadership functions to stakeholders within the organization rather than gathering them in a single person and prioritizes participatory collaboration (Özdemir, 2012); instructional leadership is a type of leadership that focuses directly on the school's academic goals and supports learning and teaching processes (Coşkun & Katıtaş, 2022).

However, the effect of these leadership behaviors exhibited by school administrators on teachers does not display a homogeneous structure. The perception level of leadership behaviors may differ according to demographic variables such as teachers' gender, length of service, and marital status. For example; the "instructional support" or "power sharing" expected from a school administrator by a novice teacher versus a senior teacher may show differences. Similarly, gender and marital status variables are significant parameters shaping the communication teachers establish with their managers, their ways of meeting school expectations, and their leadership perceptions. Therefore, before discussing the effect of leadership on organizational commitment or other outcomes, it is necessary to determine the level at which school administrators exhibit instructional and distributed leadership behaviors and how these behaviors change according to teachers' demographic characteristics.

Although there are many studies in the literature on instructional and distributed leadership and variables such as organizational commitment, trust, or climate (Taşkın & Dilek, 2010); it is important that studies where these two leadership styles are handled together and compared in depth according to teachers' demographic characteristics maintain their currency.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the instructional and distributive leadership behaviours of school administrators in relation to selected variables. To achiave this aim, following questions were asked;

1. What is the level of school administartors' enactment of instructional and distributive leadership behaviours based on teachers' perceptions?
2. According to teachers' views, is there a significant difference in the level at which school administrators perform instructional and distributive leadership behaviors in terms of teachers;
    2.1. gender,
    2.2.length of service,
    2.3.marital status.

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Methods

Population and Sample

The population is the largest group from which the research sample is selected and which includes the findings related to the study. By limiting clusters within the population that share common characteristics, the researchers can form groups that are suitable for the study. These groups are referred to as the sample (Büyüköztürk, 2011). The study population of this research will consist of teachers working in public primary schools affiliated with the Ankara Provincial Directorate of National Education during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Table 1. Distribution of Population

	Total Number of Primary Schools	Total Number of Teachers
Ankara	636	15.155

$$n = \frac{Nt^2pq}{d^2(N-1)+t^2pq/2} = \frac{\mathrm{Nt^2pq}}{\mathrm{d^2(N-1)+t^2pq}}$$

The meaning of symbols;
n: Sample Size
N: Population Size
t: t value
p: Probability of occurrence
q: Probability of npn-occurrence
d: Sensitivity

In determining the sample size, if there is no estimate of *p* for the population, *p* and *q* can be taken as 0.5. For the phenomenon under investigation, at a 95% confidence interval and with a sampling error of *d* = 0.05, the theoretical *t* value corresponds to 1.96 (Büyüköztürk, 2011).

N=15.155
T=1,96
p=0,5
q=0,5
d=0,5

$$n = \frac{15155\mathrm{x}\ (1{,}96)^2x0{,}5\mathrm{x}0{,}5}{(0{,}05)^2x(15155-1)+(1{,}96)^2x0{,}5x0{,}5}$$

$$n = 374{,}68$$

Table 2. Distribution of Sample

District	Total Number of Primary Schools	Total Number of Teachers	Target number of teachers
Mamak	76	1.872	155
Çankaya	76	1.677	120

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Altındağ	56	1.347	100

As seen in the table, there are a total of 4,896 teachers in these three districts. According to the result of the formula, the targeted number to be reached is 375 teachers randomly selected from these districts.

Data Collection

In this research, surveys were chosen as the data collection tool. For the questionnaires intended to be administered to teachers, the Personal Information Form, the İnstructional Leadership Scale, and the Distributed Leadership Scale were used.

Personal Information Form

The Personal Information Forms include details such as the teacher's gender, age, length of service, marital status, field, and school level. It was developed to obtain data on the personal information of the teachers participating in the study.

The İnstructional Leadership Scale

The "İnstructional Leadership Scale," developed by Sönmez and Cemaloğlu (2024), consists of two sub-dimensions and 28 items. The first factor consists of items 1–11 and represents the Professional Development dimension, while the second factor consists of items 12–28 and corresponds to the İnstructional Management dimension. There are no reverse-coded items in the scale. The scale was developed as a 5-point Likert type, and teachers were asked to indicate one of the following options: 1–Almost never, 2–Rarely, 3–Sometimes, 4–Often, and 5–Almost always.

Table 3. Reliability Analyses of İnstructional Leadership and Its Subdimensions

	Number of Items	Cronbach Alfa
İnstructional Development	17	.99
Professional Development	11	.98
General Scale of İnstructional Leadership Behaviors	28	.98

The Distributed Leadership Scale

In order to determine the distributed leadership behaviors of school administrators, a review of the literature led to the decision to use the "Distributed Leadership Inventory," which was adapted into Turkish by Özdemir (2012). This inventory is unidimensional and includes two subscales. The first subscale, the "Leadership Functions Scale," consists of 13 items, while the second subscale, the "Leadership Team Cohesion Scale," consists of 10 items. Thus, the Distributed Leadership Inventory includes a total of 23 items. The scale was developed as a 5-point Likert type, and teachers who participated in the administration of the scale were asked to indicate one of the following options: "Disagree (1), (2), (3), (4), and Agree (5)."

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Table 4. Reliability Analyses of Distributed Leadership and Its Subdimensions

	Number of Items	Cronbach Alfa
Leadership Team Cohesion Scale	10	.97
Leadership Functions Scale	13	.97

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to reach the sample determined in the study, teachers working in schools designated by the Ministry of National Education were contacted. The scales were administered to these teachers either face-to-face or via Google Forms. The targeted number of teachers was reached. The analysis of the obtained data was conducted using SPSS. During the data analysis process, it was first examined whether the data exhibited a normal distribution. The determination of normality was carried out using skewness, kurtosis values, and the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (Büyüköztürk, 2011).

Findings

Findings Related to the First Sub-Problem

Table 5 presents the descriptive analyses of the sub-dimensions 'distributed leadership function'' and 'distributed leadership team'' included in the Distributed Leadership Scale employed in the study.

Table 5. The minimum, maximum, standart deviation and mean values of Distributive Leadership sub-dimensions

Scale/Sub-dimension	n	Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	S
Distributed leadership function	375	1,00	5,00	4,2821	,95508
Leadership team cohesion	374	1,00	5,70	4,2342	1,05162
Overall	372	1,00	5,00	4,2562	,96381

An examination of Table 5 indicates that within the distributed leadership dimension, the highest mean score was observed in the "distributed leadership function" subdimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28) found to be at a "very high" level. The lowest mean score was recorded for the "Leadership team cohesion" subdimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.23), which likewise reflects a "very high" level. An analysis of the standard deviation values reveals that the most homogeneous evaluations were obtained in the "distributed leadership function" subdimension (S = 0.95), whereas the most heterogeneous evaluations were observed in the "Leadership team cohesion" subdimension (S = 1.05). In other words, teachers perceive that school administrators demonstrate distributed leadership behaviors at a high level in terms of both support and supervision.

Table 6 presents the descriptive analyses of the sub-dimensions 'instructional management' and 'professional development' included in the İnstructional Leadership Scale employed in the study.

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Table 6. The minimum, maximum, standart deviation and mean values of İnstructional Leadership sub-dimensions

Scale / Sub Dimensions	n	Min	Max	$\bar{x}$	S
İnstructional Management	377	1.00	5.00	4.13	1.06
Professional Development	377	1.00	6.67	4.11	1.07
Overall	377	1.00	6.68	4.12	1.04

An examination of Table 6 shows that the instructional leadership dimension reached its highest mean in the "instructional management" subdimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4.13), which corresponds to a "high" level. The lowest mean score was recorded in ''professional development'' sub-dimension ($\bar{x}$ = 4,11) which corresponds also ''high level. Although no substantial differences were observed among the subdimensions in terms of standard deviation values, the "instructional management" subdimension (S= 1.06) was found to exhibit a relatively more homogeneous distribution whereas the most heterogeneous evaluations were observed in the ''professionel development'' subdimension (S=1,07). In other words, teachers indicate that school administrators display instructional leadership behaviors at a high level.

Findings Related to the Second Sub-Problem

This section presents the statistical analysis conducted to determine the second sub-problem that is the differencesin the level at which school administrators perform instructional and distributive leadership behaviors in terms of teachers; gender, lenght of service, marital status, and school level.

Findings on Distributed Leadership and Demographic Variables

An Examination of the Distributed Leadership Dimension by Gender

Table 7. Comparison of Distributited Leadership and Its Sub-dimensions According to Gender (t-test result)

	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	S	df	t	P<.05
Distributed leadership function	Female	314	4,2989	.90815	373	.773	**.033***
	Male	61	4,1955	1,17238			
Leadership team cohesion	Female	314	4,2545	1,00640	372	.851	**.028***
	Male	60	4,1283	1,26680			

An examination of Table 7 reveals that, according to teachers' perceptions, school administrators demonstrate the "distributed leadership functions" subdimension of distributed leadership at the highest level as reported by female teachers, at a "very high" level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.29).

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In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed in the "distributed leadership team" subdimension, as reported by male teachers, at a "high" level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.12). Based on the standard deviation values, the most homogeneous evaluations were made by female teachers in the "distributed leadership functions" subdimension (S = 0.90), whereas the most heterogeneous evaluations were observed among male teachers in the "distributed leadership team" subdimension (S = 1.23). According to the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether school administrators' distributed leadership behaviors differ based on teachers' gender, statistically significant differences were found for both the distributed leadership functions subdimension [$t_{(375)}$=,773; p≤.05], and the distributed leadership team subdimension [$t_{(375)}$=,851, p≤.05]. In other words, male and female teachers do not hold similar views regarding the extent to which school administrators demonstrate distributed leadership behaviors.

An Examination of the Distributed Leadership Dimension by Length of Service

Table 8. Comparison of Distributited Leadership and Its Sub-dimensions According to Length of Service (ANOVA)

Puan	Group	n	x	S	Var.K.	df	F	*p*
Distributed leadership function	1- 10 yıl	63	4,3516	,73155	Intergroup	3	1,451	,228
	11-20 yıl	117	4,3702	,91083	Intragroup	371		
	21-30 yıl	144	4,2612	,99576	Overall	374		
	31+	51	4,0528	1,14886				
	Total	375	4,2821	,95508				
Leadership team cohesion	1- 10 yıl	62	4,2306	,93941	Intergroup	3	,641	,589
	11-20 yıl	117	4,3171	1,07015	Intragroup	370		
	21-30 yıl	145	4,2248	1,04579	Overall	373		
	31+	50	4,0720	1,16234				
	Total	374	4,2342	1,05162				

An examination of the ANOVA analyses presented in Table 8 regarding the levels at which school administrators demonstrate distributed leadership behaviors according to teachers' length of services indicates that the "distributed leadership functions" subdimension of distributed leadership at the highest level as reported that teachers with 11-20 years proffessional experience at a "very high" level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.37).). In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed in the "distributed leadership team" subdimension, as reported that teachers with 31+ years Professional development at a "high" level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.12). Based on the standard deviation values, the most homogeneous evaluations were made by teachers with 1-10 years

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professional experience in the "distributed leadership functions" subdimension (S = 0.73), whereas the most heterogeneous evaluations were observed among teachers with 31+ years professional experience in the "leadership team cohesion" subdimension (S = 1.23). According to the ANOVA analyses conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in teachers' views regarding the levels at which school administrators demonstrate distributed leadership behaviors based on teachers' professional seniority, statistically no significant differences were found for either the leadership functions subdimension [$F_{(375)}$=1,451,p≤.05], or the leadership team cohesion subdimension [$F_{(375)}$=,641; p≤.05]. In other words, opinions regarding school administrators' distributed leadership behaviors do not vary according to teachers' seniority.

An Examination of the Distributed Leadership Dimension by Marital Status

Table 9. Comparison of Distributited Leadership and Its Sub-dimensions According to Marital Status (t-test result)

	Marital Status	N	$\bar{x}$	S	t	df	p
Distributed leadership function	Married	307	4,2826	,98309	,025	373	,286
	Single	68	4,2794	,82334			
Leadership team cohesion	Married	306	4,2353	1,05414	,042	372	,483
	Single	68	4,2294	1,04796			

An examination of Table 9 reveals that, according to teachers' perceptions, school administrators demonstrate the "distributed leadership functions" subdimension of distributed leadership at the highest level as reported by married teachers, at a "very high" level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28). In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed in the "leadership team cohesion" subdimension, as reported by single teachers, at a "very high" level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22). Based on the standard deviation values, the most homogeneous evaluations were made by single teachers in the "distributed leadership functions" subdimension (S=0.82), whereas the most heterogeneous evaluations were observed among married teachers in the "leadership team cohesion" subdimension (S = 1.05). According to the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether school administrators' distributed leadership behaviors differ based on teachers' marital status, statistically no significant differences were found for both the distributed leadership functions subdimension [$t_{(375)}$=-0,007; p>.05], and the leadership team cohesion subdimension [$t_{(375)}$=,025; p>.05]. In other words, married and single teachers share similar views regarding school administrators exhibiting distributive leadership behaviors.

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Findings on Instructional Leadership and Demographic Variables

An Examination of the İnstructional Leadership Dimension by Gender

Table 10. Comparison of İnstructional Leadership and Its Sub-dimensions According Gender (t-test Result)

	Gender	**N**	$\bar{x}$	**S.S.**	**t**	**Df**	**p**
İnstructional Management	Female	316	4,1525	1,02377	,969	375	,333
	Male	61	4,0087	1,23981			
Professional Development	Female	316	4,1299	1,04373	,679	375	,498
	Male	61	4,0283	1,19774			
General Scale of İnstructional Leadership Behaviors	Female	316	4,1436	1,00568	,873	375	,383
	Male	61	4,0164	1,21449			

An examination of Table 10 reveals that, according to teachers' opinions; female teachers state that school administrators perform the "instructional management" sub-dimension most frequently at the "high" level ($\bar{x}$=4.152), while male teachers perform the "instructional management" sub-dimension least frequently at the "very" level ($\bar{x}$=4.008). Based on the standard deviation values, the female teachers (S=1.005) made the most homogeneous evaluation in the general scale of instructional leadership behaviors, while male teachers (S=1.239) made the most heterogeneous evaluation in the "instructional management" sub-dimension. According to the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether school administrators' instructional leadership behaviors differ based on teachers' gender, statistically no significant differences were found for both the instructional leadership functions subdimension "instructional management" [$t_{(375)}$=,969; p>.05], ''professional development'' [$t_{(375)}$=,679; p>.05], ''general scale'' [$t_{(375)}$=,873; p>.05] . In other words, male and female teachers have similar views about school administrators' instructional leadership behaviors.

An Examination of the İnstructional Leadership Dimension by Length of Service

Table 11. Comparison of İnstructional Leadership and Its Sub-dimensions According Length of Service (ANOVA)

	Lenght of Service (year)	**n**	$\bar{x}$	**S**	**Var.K.**	**Sd**	**F**	***P***
Instructional Management	1- 10	63	4,1208	,90603	Intergroup	3	,668	,572
	11-20	118	4,2338	1,05640	Intragroup	373		
	21-30	145	4,0905	1,10097	Overall	376		

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	31+	51	4,0081	1,14160				
	Total	377	4,1293	1,06121				
Professional Development	1- 10	63	4,0058	,93438	Intergroup	3	1,184	,316
	11-20	118	4,2346	1,15027	Intragroup	373		
	21-30	145	4,1235	1,04021	Overall	376		
	31+	51	3,9376	1,10409				
	Total	377	4,1135	1,06909				
General Scale of İnstructional Leadership Behaviors	1- 10	63	4,0755	,89430	Intergroup	3	,826	,480
	11-20	118	4,2341	1,06121	Intragroup	373		
	21-30	145	4,1034	1,06462	Overall	376		
	31+	51	3,9804	1,10151				
	Total	377	4,1230	1,04158				

An examination of the ANOVA analyses presented in Table 11 regarding the levels at which school administrators demonstrate instructional leadership behaviors according to teachers' length of services indicates that the "professional development" subdimension of instructional leadership at the highest level as reported that teachers with 11-20 years proffessional experience at a "very high" level ($\bar{x} = 4.23$).). In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed in the "professional development" subdimension, as reported that teachers with 31+ years professional experience at a "high" level ($\bar{x} = 4.12$). Based on the standard deviation values, the most homogeneous evaluations were made by teachers with 1-10 years professional experience in the "general scale" subdimension (S = 0.89), whereas the most heterogeneous evaluations were observed among teachers with 31+ years professional experience in the "professional development" subdimension (S = 1.15). According to the ANOVA analyses conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in teachers' views regarding the levels at which school administrators demonstrate distributed leadership behaviors based on teachers'lenght of service, statistically no significant differences were found for either the instructional management leadership functions subdimension [$F_{(375)}$=,668; p>.05], the professional development subdimension [$F_{(375)}$=1,184; p>.05] , general scale of instructional leadership behaviors [$F_{(375)}$=,826; p>.05]. In other words, teachers with different levels of seniority share similar views about the instructional leadership behaviors of school administrators.

An Examination of the İnstructional Leadership Dimension by Marital Status

Table 12. Comparison of İnstructional Leadership and Its Sub-dimensions According Marital Status (t-test)

	Marital Status	**n**	**Ortalama**	**S**	**t**	**df**	**p**
	Married	309	4,1298	1,07473	,022	375	,983

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İnstructional Management	Single	68	4,1267	1,00508			
Professional Development	Married	309	4,1225	1,08746	,351	375	,726
	Single	68	4,0722	,98785			
General Scale of İnstructional Leadership Behaviors	Married	309	4,1269	1,05604	,156	375	,876
	Single	68	4,1052	,98040			

An examination of Table 12 reveals that, according to teachers' perceptions, school administrators demonstrate the ''instructional management'' subdimension of instructional leadership at the highest level as reported by married teachers, at a "high" level ($\overline{x}$ = 4.13). In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed in the "professional development" subdimension, as reported by single teachers, at a "high" level ($\overline{x}$ = 4.07). Based on the standard deviation values, the most homogeneous evaluations were made by single teachers in the "professional development" subdimension (S=0.98), whereas the most heterogeneous evaluations were observed among married teachers in the "professional development" subdimension (S = 1.08). According to the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether school administrators' distributed leadership behaviors differ based on teachers' marital status, statistically no significant differences were found for instructional management subdimension [$F_{(375)}$=,668; p>.05], the professional development subdimension [$F_{(375)}$=1,184; p>.05], and general scale of instructional leadership behaviors [$F_{(375)}$=,826; p>.05]. In other words, married and single teachers share similar views regarding school administrators exhibiting instructional leadership behaviors.

Discussion

This study analysed teacher perceptions regarding the extent to which school administrators exhibit instructional and distributed leadership behaviours, and whether these behaviours vary according to demographic variables. The findings provide significant data on the transformation of administrative roles within changing educational management paradigms. Findings related to the first sub-problem reveal that school administrators exhibit distributed leadership behaviours at a 'very high' level. High averages in distributed leadership functions and the distributed leadership team sub-dimensions indicate these practices are actively and visibly demonstrated. As Spillane (2006) emphasises, distributed leadership is an interaction-based process rather than a solitary act; thus, effective execution of these functions is vital. Low standard deviation values suggest teacher views are homogenous, meaning leadership practices are evaluated through a consistent, shared institutional understanding. However, the 'distributed leadership team' dimension scored relatively lower than 'functions'. This implies that whilst leadership functions are executed, participation in decision-making mechanisms is not yet experienced equally by all teachers; the practice may still retain a somewhat manager-centric character. Gronn (2002) argues that distributed leadership is conjoint agency rather than simple task sharing, whilst Leithwood and Mascall (2008) link leadership effectiveness directly to the distribution of roles and active participation. The high perception of distributed leadership identified here aligns with numerous studies (Cai et al., 2023; Şerefoğlu Kaya, 2024). Conversely, 'medium' levels reported in research such as Akdemir and Ayık (2017) highlight

diversity in the literature, likely stemming from a lack of transparent observation or insufficient participatory climates in different contexts.

Regarding instructional leadership, administrators reportedly exhibit behaviours at a 'very high' level generally, with the 'instructional management' dimension dominating. This demonstrates that administrators take active roles in teaching-learning processes, strongly adopting the goal of 'improving instructional quality' emphasised by Hallinger (2005). Low standard deviation confirms this positive perception is consistent across the teaching staff. This 'very high' perception parallels recent studies (Koç, 2025). Hallinger (1983) supports this, noting that instructional leadership tasks often possess higher averages than other administrative duties. Administrators appear effective in sharing school goals, establishing a regular learning climate, and rewarding success (Taşçınar, 2025). However, divergent findings exist; Kurt (2013) found 'medium' levels, whilst Şişman (2016) reported 'occasional' or 'low' levels. Some studies (Yaman & Ezer, 2015) highlight that while 'goal setting' is successful, 'supervision' and 'teacher development' often lag. Consequently, the current study's high results suggest a stronger awareness and motivation regarding instructional processes in this sample compared to others. Yet, the dominance of 'instructional management' suggests a need for a more holistic approach to match high standards in 'teacher professional development' and 'supervision' (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008).

A statistically significant difference was found in distributed leadership regarding gender. Female teachers perceive administrators' distributed leadership functions more positively than their male counterparts. This suggests gender determines how leadership sharing is perceived, with women possessing higher awareness of the process. This aligns with Şişman (2016), and Yaz (2025), the latter noting women's higher perception of 'defining school mission'. Higher scores among women may stem from a greater sensitivity to organisational collaboration, team cohesion, and stakeholder participation. This contrasts with Arıkan (2025), who found no gender-based differentiation, arguing for a competence-based approach independent of gender.

Regarding instructional leadership, no significant difference was observed based on gender. Both female and male teachers perceive administrative behaviours similarly. This aligns with results from Taşçınar (2025), and Koç (2025), implying that administrators in this study exhibit an equal professional approach regardless of gender, and teachers evaluate management processes through a professional, gender-neutral lens.

No statistically significant difference was found regarding professional seniority for either leadership style. Novice teachers and those with over 30 years of experience perceive leadership behaviours similarly. For distributed leadership, this is consistent with Arıkan (2025), as task sharing relies on 'volunteering' and 'competence' rather than tenure (Özdemir, 2012). However, the lack of difference in instructional leadership contrasts with literature (Koç, 2025; Taşçınar, 2025) which often finds higher perception among teachers with lower seniority. The absence of differentiation here suggests administrators effectively communicate with and engage senior teachers in professional development, not just novices.

Finally, marital status did not create a significant difference in perception. This differs from Koç (2025) who suggest married teachers perceive less support due to family responsibilities limiting time for extra-curricular professional development. The lack of difference here may be attributed to institutional culture; professional development and leadership sharing likely occur within working hours, allowing married teachers to focus on leadership processes and opportunities as much as their single colleagues without compromising work-life balance.

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Conclusion

- Distributed Leadership Level: According to teachers, administrators exhibit distributed leadership at a 'very high' level. Administrators scored higher in 'distributed leadership functions' compared to 'leadership team cohesion'.
- İnstructional Leadership Level: Teachers perceive instructional leadership at a 'high' level. Perceptions of 'instructional management' are relatively higher than 'professional development'.
- Distributed Leadership and Gender: Teacher views differ significantly by gender. Female teachers rated administrators more positively in both 'distributed leadership functions' and 'leadership team cohesion' than male teachers.
- Distributed Leadership and Other Demographics: No significant differences were found based on seniority or marital status regarding distributed leadership.
- İnstructional Leadership and Demographics: No significant differences were detected in instructional leadership perceptions (instructional management and professional development) regarding gender, seniority, or marital status. Teachers evaluated performance similarly regardless of these traits.

Recommendations for Practitioners

- Enhancing Male Teacher Participation: Since male teachers perceive distributed leadership lower than females, administrators should develop inclusive strategies to ensure men play active roles in delegation, committee work, and decision-making processes, ensuring gender balance in task distribution.
- Strengthening Team Spirit and Cohesion: As 'leadership team cohesion' scored lower than 'functions', administrators should move beyond purely functional delegation. Greater emphasis is needed on social and professional activities (team building) that strengthen cooperation, collective consciousness, and group dynamics.
- Prioritising Professional Development Support: With 'professional development' lagging behind 'instructional management', administrators must go beyond supervising the curriculum. They should analyse teachers' personal and professional needs, actively encouraging participation in in-service training, seminars, or postgraduate education.
- Maintaining Fairness: The lack of significant difference based on seniority and marital status indicates an egalitarian approach. Administrators should maintain this standard, professional attitude, operating independently of teachers' experience levels or private status.

Recommendations for Researchers

- Investigating Causes of Gender Disparity: Qualitative research using interview techniques is required to explain *why* male teachers perceive distributed leadership levels as lower, a finding established quantitatively in this study.
- Comparative Studies: As this study was limited to Ankara with high leadership perception results, similar studies should be conducted in different geographical regions or private schools. Comparing 'public vs private' or 'regional culture' contexts would contribute significantly to the literature.

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