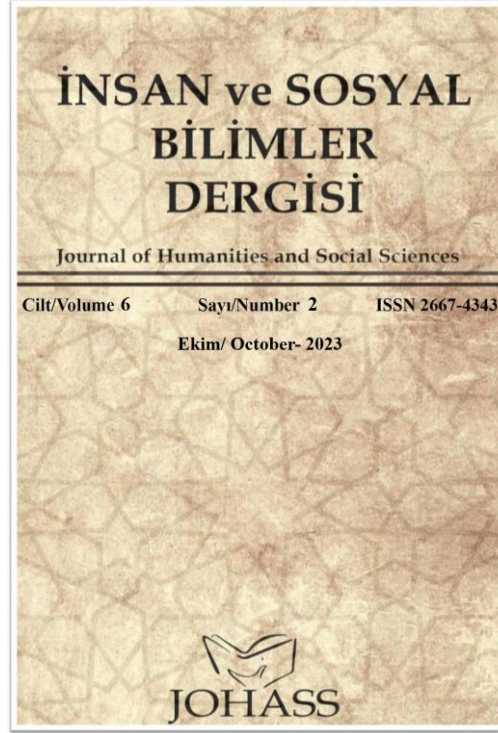


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**Leadership Concern: Its Causes, Consequences and The Coping Strategies\***

\* This research was presented as an oral presentation at the International Education Congress EDUCongress held at Ankara University on 20-23 September 2023.

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## **Leadership Concern: Its Causes, Consequences and The Coping Strategies\***

**Metin IŞIK<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

### **Research Article**

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This study aims to explore the leadership perceptions and leadership-related worries of educational administrators within the context of their own perspectives. This research was conducted as a phenomenology pattern, one of the qualitative research methods. Participants of this study include 30 school administrators and deputy principals working in schools of various types and levels. A semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher was used as the data collection tool in the study. The final form of the interview form, used as the data collection tool in the research, was given in line with the opinions of two educational science experts and two school administrators. The data obtained from the participants, chosen using criterion sampling, were collected using a semi-structured interview form and analyzed with content analysis. Participants stated that the fear of failure, according to their leadership perceptions in the context of leadership, hindered their actions. As a result of the analysis of the data regarding the concerns experienced by school administrators in the research, the theme of "Leadership Concern" and the categories of "Perception", "Leadership", "Competence" and "Bureaucratic Obstacles" and their codes were obtained. It is stated that the desire to be a leader of school administrators with the characteristics of openness to innovation, responsibility, compatibility, willingness, and balance in work-private life will increase, and their concerns related to leadership will also decrease. They also expressed the assumption that the reluctance they experienced about being a leader in their choices in schools negatively reflected in their applications.

**Keywords:** Education management, leadership, leadership concern, work-life balance, fear of failure

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## **Introduction**

The influence of leaders on society is undoubtedly great (Giessner, Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2008). One of the important factors in the development of societies is trained manpower. Education, especially leaders, contribute to their institutions in meeting the need for qualified manpower and bringing them into society (Peddleton ve Furnham, 2012). In today's global competitive environment, organizations need competent and effective leaders in order to increase their effectiveness (Yılmaz & Çevirgen, 2010). Leadership in the 21st century is accepted as one of the important factors affecting the adaptation to the competitive environment with the developments in information technologies as a result of globalization trends (Özbezek & Paksoy, 2018). Constantly changing conditions and requirements are reflected in the approaches of leaders. Leadership can be understood through the management of continuous change and the response of leader behaviors to change (Peddleton & Furnham, 2012). Understanding the changing needs of leaders and their reactions to change can reduce their anxiety in management processes. It can be predicted that the fear of failure will be as effective as the desire for success in the leaders' being effective in education. Therefore, it is necessary to know the causes of fear and anxiety in order to eliminate the anxieties of individuals who want to be leaders. Allen (2019), predicts that leaders should be brave enough to seek success in order to cope with the fear of failure, not be afraid to try, and see failure as a stage for success. Therefore, the fear of failure, which should be taken into account in the education system, makes it difficult for the school leader and school leaders, who have an important role in the education system, to focus on the management processes and functions. The future is in the youth who grow up in schools run by successful leaders who deal with and manage their fears and anxieties. However, according to Hogan, Curphy & Hogan (1994) leadership is to direct people towards goals that are important to their well-being and responsibility by allowing people to put their individual concerns aside for a while. However, the anxiety of being a leader is based on the assumption that people's preferences to be or not to be a leader are shaped by being influenced by their emotions (Aycan & Shelia, 2019). It means that employees avoid their leadership roles and avoid the responsibilities of being a leader. Successful and talented individuals refuse to take on being a manager and leader in the context of coming forward. This leads to the transformation of leadership into a task that is often felt lacking in working life (Epitropaki, 2018). The fact that the laws regulating the rights and responsibilities of the employees ensure the private life of the

leaders, allow them to spend time with their family and surroundings and regulate the relations between them and their colleagues also reduce the concerns of leadership (Öztürk, 2021). In this context, it should be considered important to understand the reasons for concern about being a leader and the obstacles to the choice of being a leader in order to meet the need for leaders with the qualifications expected especially in educational institutions. For this reason, the research aims to examine the perceptions of education administrators about being a leader and their views on the causes of leadership concerns.

### **Leadership Concern**

Although leadership is seen as an important position that everyone wants as an individual choice, it can be brought to an undesirable or even avoided position by the majority of society due to the weight of the responsibilities of leadership and its effect on private life. Therefore, the decision-making process to becoming a leader can be challenging and long-lasting (Öztürk, 2021). Being a leader requires taking on a formal role within the hierarchy of the organization. Although leadership is encouraged, it is expressed as leadership concern that employees stay away from leadership roles. Employees are escaping leadership roles, avoiding responsibilities to become leaders.

Being a leader requires taking on a formal role within the organization's hierarchy. Although leadership is encouraged, it is expressed as a leadership concern that employees stay away from leadership roles (Aycan & Shelia, 2019). The literature presents the fear of failure and different fears and anxieties as reasons for those who work as leader candidates do not tend to be leaders for different reasons (Giesner, Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2008; Anderson, Brien, McNamara, O'Hara & McIsaac, 2011; Brue, 2018; Epitropaki, 2018; Aycan & Shelia, 2019). But leaders also have fears and concerns. Leaders may give up because of fears and concerns of being criticized for their desire to be a leader, failing, not communicating well, and making difficult decisions (Waytosay, 2021). Individuals who stay away from being leaders and act reluctantly have concerns about;

- Concern of failure
- Concern about a work-life imbalance
- Concern about harming yourself and other people

The work of leaders in different fields and the failures they experience do not satisfy both themselves and their employees. It even causes leaders to question their competence. Even people who are far from anxiety in daily life may be concerned about the possibility of

becoming a leader (Gieesner, Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2008). Leaders' concern that their decisions and practices will harm themselves and others also reinforces concerns about the negative consequences of a leadership role (Aycan & Shelia, 2019). Individuals who have leadership qualities and are eager to become a leader can anticipate possible conflicts that may arise. Openness to innovation, responsibility, adaptability, extroversion, and emotional balance should be found as personality traits in leadership. While these features increase the desire to be a leader, they also reduce the concern about being a leader. (Judge, Bono, Hies & Gerdhart, 2002). The possibility of not being able to balance work-private life can also be seen as a cause for concern in preferring leadership. Leadership limits private life and can increase the autonomy of working life. The possibility of not being able to spare time for family and private life reduces the preferability of leadership (Brue, 2018). The followings may be the causes of unwillingness and concern of leadership for employees: (Anderson, Brien, McNamara, O'Hara & McIsaac, 2011);

1. Problems with leader image
2. Workload
3. Personality
4. Prejudgement
5. Feeling of inadequacy
6. The restriction of the institutional environment
7. Environmental uncertainty

Probably one of the most distinctive features of leaders is their motivation to achieve success. However, their past experiences cause them to take responsibility for the tasks necessary to succeed or to stay away from taking responsibility. Management experience makes it easier to manage management processes. Individuals with previous managerial experience are likely to be worried about failing because they have experienced working processes (Araç Ilgar, 2019). Employees who have high self-confidence, want to be a manager and make career planning are likely to have low anxiety about being a leader. Because they think they can reach the leadership role they want and plan and their career goals. This situation may highlight willingness rather than concern (Günay & Özbilen, 2018; Araç Ilgar, 2019). A leader needs to act calmly and understand the problems he faces (Erçetin, 2000).

School administrators are expected to exhibit their leadership characteristics while fulfilling their managerial responsibilities and achieving their goals without highlighting their

characteristics such as fear of success (Birekul, 2018). Therefore, leaders in today's educational institutions should have sufficient knowledge and skills (Rigby, 2014). It is substantially important to determine the worries and fears experienced by the principals and vice principals, who manage schools as leaders in education and determine their reasons and solutions in line with their own opinions. This study aims to examine the leadership perceptions and concerns of education administrators. In this context, the following research questions are ingested in this study:

1. What do school administrators think about leadership and leadership concerns?
2. What fears and concerns do school administrators experience?
3. What are school administrators' approaches to establishing a balance between work and private life?
4. What do school administrators think about the personal and professional competencies that leaders should have?
5. What are the tendencies of school administrators towards the solution of management problems?

## **Method**

### **Model**

The study was carried out using qualitative research method.

This research was conducted as phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods. Qualitative method and phenomenological design were used in the research in order to reveal in depth the common meaning of the leaders' concerns, their causes and effects. In the phenomenological pattern, the researcher aims to reveal and describe a specific phenomenon (Christensen, Johnson ve Turner, 2011). This study can be described as phenomenology in terms of revealing the concerns and effects experienced by school administrators, who are accepted as leaders in the educational environment while performing their school administration responsibilities. The purpose of phenomenology, as a type of qualitative research, is to understand human experience (van Manen, 2007). In this study, the perceptions of the leader and leadership, the opinions of the leaders regarding their personal and professional competencies and problem-solving attitudes, and their concerns and methods of coping with them were examined in the context of their managerial experiences.

## Sample and Population

The study group of the research consists of 18 school principals and 12 vice principals working in different types and levels of schools in the Beylikdüzü district of Istanbul. Criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used while determining the study group. In this sampling method, the cases that meet the criteria determined by the researcher were studied (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, working in different types of schools (Public Education Centers, Science High School, Anatolian High School, Vocational High School, Secondary School, and Primary School) and having been a manager in schools for at least 5 years were determined as criteria. The criteria of school administrators' type of school where they work and having completed their appointment period (5 years) were chosen to describe the differentiation of concerns they experience. It is thought that detailed information will be obtained in understanding the causes and consequences of the concerns that the administrators feel in school management and education life. At the saturation point, when the most information on the subject is obtained and there is no new information coming from the new sample units, sampling is stopped; the repetition of information is the first criterion (Shenton, 2004). In case of repetition, data collection should be stopped and the sample size should remain where the repetition was first seen (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The sample size was limited to 30 people, as the data obtained from the interviews with 30 participants interviewed in the research were understood that the information was repeated. Demographic information about the school administrators participating in the study is given on the board below.

**Table 1**

### *Demographic Information of the Participants*

Participant	Gender	Marital Status	Branch	Education	Professional Seniority	School Management Seniority	Number of School Teachers	Number of School Students
P 1	M	M	History	Master	21 and above	11-15	43	548
P 2	M	M	Literature	Master	21 and above	16-20	43	548
P 3	M	B	Class Teacher	Master	21 and above	16-20	49	1.350
P 4	M	M	Religion culture	Master	21 and above	6-10	49	1.350
P 5	M	B	Science Technology	License	16-20	16-20	79	1.598
P 6	M	M	Social Studies	License	21 and above	11-15	79	1.598
P 7	M	M	IT	Master	11-15	6-10	4	200
P 8	M	M	Mats	Master	21 and above	21 and above	70	1.250
P 9	M	M	Literature	Master	21 and above	11-15	47	932

P 10	M	M	Class Teacher	License	21 and above	21 and above	34	640
P 11	M	M	Class Teacher	Master	21 and above	21 and above	44	1.160
P 12	M	M	Mats	Master	21 and above	21 and above	62	774
P 13	M	M	Social Studies	Master	21 and above	11-15	52	1.100
P 14	M	M	Class Teacher	Master	16-20	16-20	51	1.470
P 15	F	M	Science Technology	Master	16-20	6-10	42	980
P 16	M	M	Physical	Master	21 and above	11-15	42	980
P 17	M	M	Technology Design	Master	11-15	6-10	42	980
P 18	M	M	Class Teacher	Master	16-20 Yıl	6-10	33	820
P 19	M	M	Class Teacher	Master	21 and above	11-15	33	820
P 20	M	M	Class Teacher	Master	16-20	16-20	26	685
P 21	M	M	Social Studies	Master	21 and above	16-20		69.500
P 22	F	B	English	License	11-15	6-10	37	850
P 23	F	B	Turkish	License	11-15	6-10	29	620
P 24	F	M	Social Studies	License	16-20	11-15	47	1220
P 25	F	B	Religion culture	Master	16-20	6-10	24	460
P 26	F	B	Mats	License	11-15	6-10	54	1185
P 27	F	B	Chemical	License	16-20	11-15	42	746
P 28	F	M	Physical	License	11-15	6-10	50	828
P 29	F	M	Literature	License	11-15	6-10	50	828
P 30	F	B	Science Technology	Master	16-20	11-15	32	596

When Table 1 is examined, the participants, consisting of 18 principals and 12 assistant principals, are 20 male and 10 female, 8 single and 22 married. The type of schools in which school administrators work is 30, including 8 in primary school, 10 in middle school, 11 in high school, and 1 in the public education center. While the professional seniority period of 14 of the 20 participants with a master's degree and 2 participants with a bachelor's degree is 21 years or more, it is seen that 5 of them are 16-20 years and the remaining 2 managers are 11-15 years. It is seen that there are 4 people with management seniority of 21 years and above, 6 people between 16-20 years, 9 people who are managers between 11-15 years and 11 people who are managers between 6-10 years.

### **Data Collection Tools**

In the study, data were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. While preparing the interview questions, they were formed by reading the literature on leadership and taking the opinions of the experts. For the content validity of the questions, the questions were written using the literature. Two experts from the field of educational administration, two school administrators, and an expert in the field of qualitative research were asked for regulation suggestions. The opinions of the experts on the clarity of the questions and the opinions of a language expert were also sought to ensure structural validity. Draft interview questions, which were formed after receiving expert opinions in terms of scope and language validity, were tested in the preliminary interviews held separately with 3 school principals and 3 deputy principals. A pilot application consisting of



one or two interviews will enable to develop the research materials and make necessary corrections, to define the framework of the questions, and to adapt to the research process (Creswell, 2013). After the preliminary interviews, it was decided that the interview form was suitable for the purpose and that the questions were understandable. The interview form consists of 6 interview questions and 6 demographic questions. For the school administrators who participated in the research voluntarily to conduct the interviews at any time and at a place where they feel comfortable, voice recordings were kept in their own administrators' rooms within an average of 30 minutes.

During the research process, the researcher directed the research questions to the participants without prejudgement and personal opinions. The researcher managed the interviews, data analysis, and interpretation of the findings impartially during the research process. Written permission was obtained from the relevant institution for the research, and written and verbal consent was obtained from the participants regarding their volunteering. The names of the participants were kept hidden and not shared with third parties, instead of names, the Interviewer: G letter and interviewer numbers (such as G1, G2) are given in the statements of the school administrators.

### **Collection of Data and Analysis**

In the analysis of the data, the coding and categorization of the data, the development of the themes, and the interpretation of the findings are carried out (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The content analysis method was used in the analysis of this research data. The 38-page document of audio recordings of the interviews with the school administrators, which lasted an average of 10 hours, was examined in detail. The data obtained from the forms were transferred to the MAXQDA program, read several times and coding was created for this. Then, content analyzes were made by bringing together the codes and revealing the themes that would form the main lines of the research findings. After the coding, categorization, and theming processes were completed, direct quotations were used in the presentation of the findings. Coding processes allow researchers to make sense of the facts about the concerns of education administrators and to understand their behaviors in school administration processes. (Saldana, 2009). To present the findings, direct quotations from the interviews were used and interpreted in line with the relevant literature.

In the research, measures were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the data, such as presenting the research questions in a clear and understandable way, determining the

role of the researcher clearly, and checking the consistency between the codings. To ensure reliability, the research question must be clear and the role of the researcher clear, data collected from appropriate participants, and free from bias (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). To increase the external reliability of the research data, the position of the researcher, the school administrators who are the data source in the research, the literature used in the data analysis, and the research processes are explained. In the analysis of research data, the internal reliability of the research data has been increased following a predetermined and defined conceptual framework. To ensure confirmability in a study, the processes followed by the researcher in the study, data collection, analysis, and findings should be clarified (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). The interview coding key was prepared by the interview questions, and the interview transcript forms of the two participant school administrators and the interview coding key were evaluated independently by two experts to ensure the reliability of the key. As a result of the evaluation, the final form of the interview coding keys was given. Finally, expert opinion was sought on the suitability of themes, sub-themes, and codes, and opinions on the suitability of the analyzes were received.

### **Confirmability**

In order to ensure the credibility of the research, support was received from two field experts in content and measurement and evaluation during the development of the data collection tool and data analysis process. In addition, the credibility of the study was ensured by including the statements of the participants in the findings section.

### **Transferability**

In order to ensure the transferability of the research, direct quotations were made regarding the themes and sub-themes reached as a result of the data obtained from the participants' opinions. The identities of the research participants were kept confidential and coding was done for each participant (G1, G2...).

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

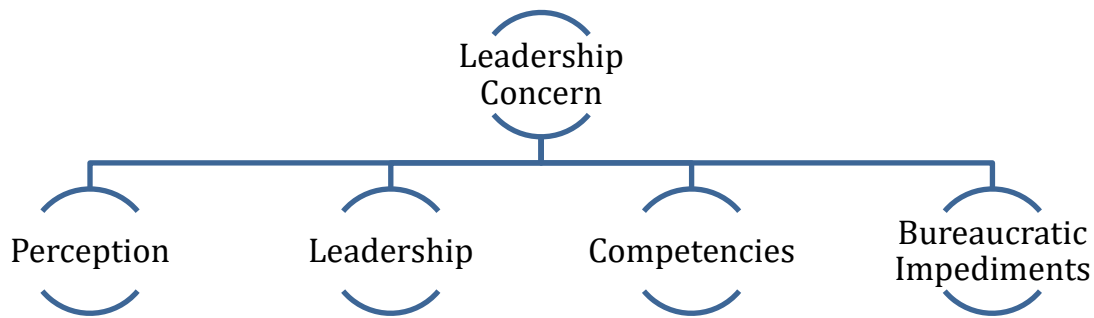
Kırşehir Ahi Evran University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee decided that this research was ethically appropriate with the approval dated 14/06/2023 and numbered 2023/05/05.

## Findings

Within the scope of the research, school administrators' perceptions of leaders and leadership, leadership fears and concerns, personal and professional competencies of leaders, and their problem-solving attitudes are discussed below. In this study, as a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the in-depth interviews conducted to understand the concerns of school administrators in the context of leader and leadership perceptions, the theme of "Leadership", "Perception", "Competence" and "Bureaucratic/Legal Impediments" and their categories were reached.

### Model 1

*Theme of "Perception", "Leadership", "Competencies" and "Bureaucratic/Legal Impediments" and Categories*

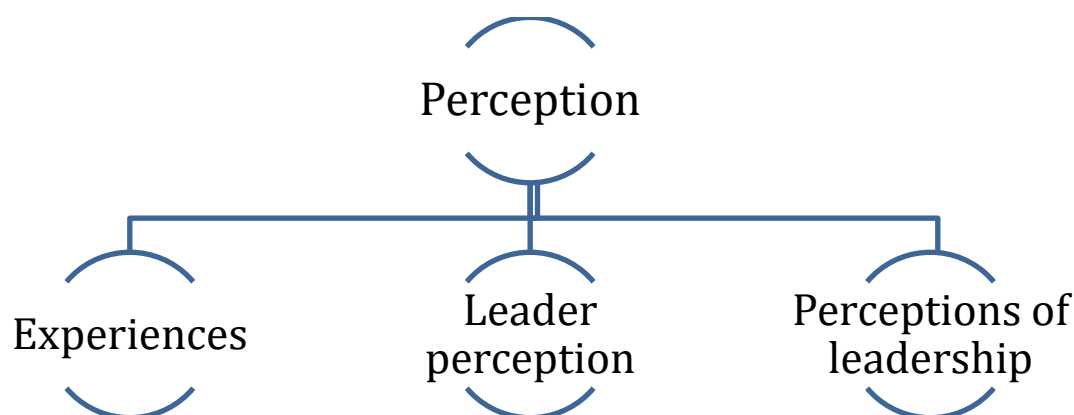


#### 1. Perception

Four themes emerged as a result of the analysis of school administrators' opinions on leader and leadership; "Perception", "Leadership", "Competence" and "Bureaucratic/Legal Impediments". "Perception" theme, "Leadership Perception, Leader Perception, Experiences" categories were reached.

## **Model 2**

*Perceptions of participants*



### ***Perception of Leadership***

According to the participant school administrators, leadership is described as a phenomenon and process that can be developed through family, society, education and administrative experiences. Some of the opinions of school administrators expressing their leadership perceptions are as follows:

*“Leadership is a mechanism that directs and drags the society, adds value to the institution, and enables some things to develop spontaneously.” (G2).*

*“This process work must be developed later with some innate features. Leadership and being a leader are different, leadership is a process, and being a leader is about the person.” (G5).*

*“Leadership is a task in which a person develops his abilities later and can progress by learning. Leadership is not born as a leader, it is the development of leadership-prone talents through experience and other tools in the leadership process.” (G7).*

### ***Leader Perception***

According to the participant school administrators, the leader is described as a role model for the followers, motivating them, setting an example with his attitudes and behaviors, ideas and practices, organizing the institution he manages, an expert in his field, open to communication and innovations, fair, having a mission and vision. Some of the opinions of school administrators that some leadership characteristics are innate and some leadership characteristics are acquired through family, education and environment are as follows:

*“The leader is the leader who sets an example in the first place, like a lighthouse with his actions, decisions and ideas. A fair leader is a person who knows and applies the regulation.” (G 17).*

*"I see the leader as a person who is open to communication, organizes his organization well, has a good interaction with students and teachers, and is open to their development." (G 19).*

*"A leader is a person who can get the masses behind him, motivate them on the path he believes in, and walk with them" (G 20).*

*"Leadership is not entirely innate. Innate characteristics need to be combined with professional qualifications and general culture, I believe that it can be developed." (G 3).*

*"A leader can become a leader by developing some innate characteristics. Not everyone can be a leader." (G 4).*

*"It also has an innate structure, and the family has a great influence. People are affected by the culture of the family they grow up in." (G 6).*

### **Experiencies**

Participants stated that past administrative experiences in school administration and all kinds of experiences in school administration are important for their future; they state that their managerial experience reduces their concern by contributing to their development and competence. Some of the opinions of school administrators about their experiences are as follows:

*"Some experiences were needed to translate, manage, direct some of the works in the school and to ensure the workflow." (G1).*

*"Leadership is experience, the biggest thing is experience. I draw my strength from experience. Let the leaders forget the past, forget the bad examples they saw, and keep themselves open to improvement." (G3).*

*"... Our old experiences hinder us in new environments as well. The environment is very important, it facilitates our work in balancing." (G16).*

*"Because of the obstacles and walls you encountered during your inexperienced years, you see every issue by experiencing it." (G27).*

It may be necessary to combine individual differences and various leadership behaviors with managerial experiences in the effectiveness of leaders in schools. The desire to be a leader is seen as a factor that can reduce the anxiety experienced by the administrators in schools.

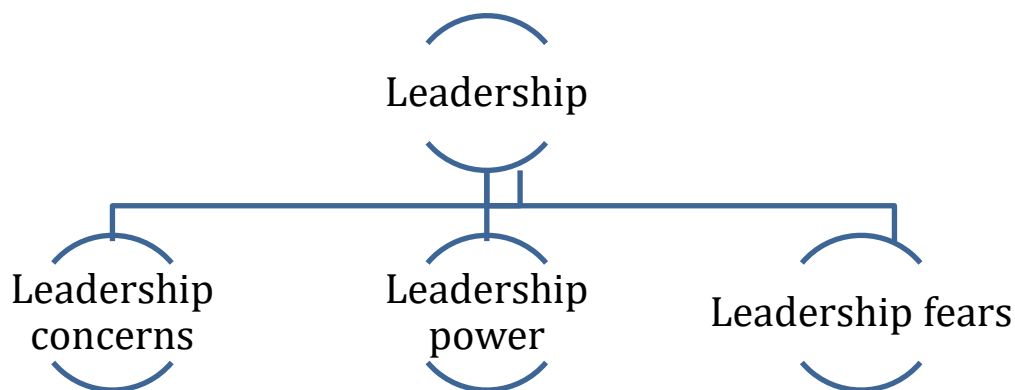
## **2. Leadership**

Educational administration is a field that requires expertise, and it is necessary for school administrators who direct the education system to have certain competencies and to experience concern in order to be successful with the power they receive from the laws while managing schools, which is very important for the individual and society. As a result of the analysis of the opinions of school administrators, the opinions on the categories of

"Leadership power, bureaucratic/legal impediments, leadership fears and leadership concerns" related to the theme of Leadership are given below.

### **Model 3**

#### *Leadership Perceptions of Participants*



#### ***Leadership Power***

All of the school administrators stated that some of the characteristics required for leadership were learned from birth and some of the characteristics were learned later through factors such as experience, family, social environment, education, and colleagues. The participants stated that they derive their leadership power from themselves, their knowledge and skills, their experiences, personal characteristics, family and social environment, not from authority or status. Some of the opinions in order to be a successful and strong leader, plans, leadership goals, and desires for self-improvement are as follows:

*"Experience is my leadership power, the greatest thing is experience. I take my strength from my experiences." (G30).*

*"In the institution, I take my strength from expert information and communication, outside of the institution I take it from being effective in the region and having good relations with people. The position you are in or the non-governmental organizations you belong to do not give me strength, I do not feel stronger with them." (G20).*

*"I take my strength from myself, I take it from my knowledge. I get it from my self-confidence." (G6).*

*"I take all my power from myself. I think that I did not do anything by using the authority given by the school principal, hiding behind the given title and using it." (G28).*

### ***Fears of Leadership***

All of the participating school administrators stated that they are afraid of experiencing external situations such as complaints, insults and threats, slander, misunderstanding, being wronged, being in trouble, accident, NGO and political pressure, and being wrong and injustice, failure, loss of control, different personal situations, such as harming teachers and their families. Some of the opinions of school administrators regarding the fears they experienced are as follows:

*"Complaint is our biggest fear. My biggest fear is whether or not we fulfill our responsibility." (G 15).*

*"I have a fear that something will happen to me" (G 20).*

*"I have different fears, such as making mistakes and failing." (G 16).*

*"I have political fears, I am afraid of NGOs. Uncertainties scares me." (G 17).*

### ***Concerns of Leadership***

All of the participating school administrators are worried about the negative situations they have experienced and will experience in the future due to legal gaps. Personality traits, uncertainties, inexperience, parents, legal gaps, wrong decisions and practices, failure, failure to meet expectations, falling below the success shown, and situations related to the health and safety of students were expressed as the sources of concerns experienced by school administrators. Some of the opinions of school administrators regarding the concerns they experience are as follows:

*"I'm worried about what people will suffer if I can't open them up." (G 19).*

*"As a leader, we are worried that there is a regulation that still does not fit in our system, and an unsettled appointment order. There is uncertainty." (G 9).*

*"The feeling of embarrassment to my environment, parents and teachers, thinking about the possibility of continuing what I have done or being ashamed of them, worries me." (G 11).*

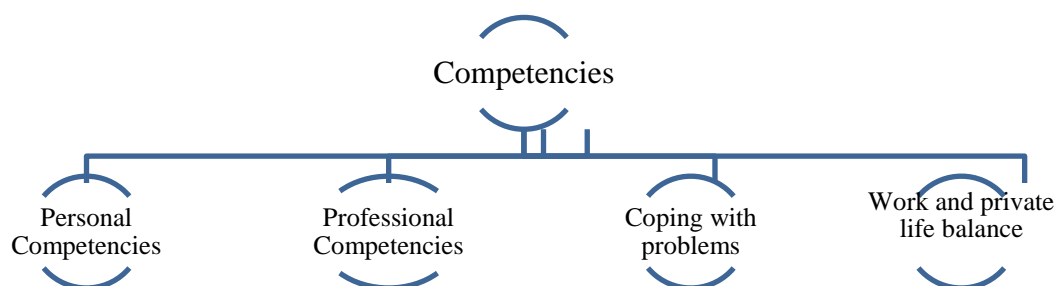
*"It may be necessary to put it higher after you have had a certain amount of success. I'm worried about falling down." (G 13).*

## **3. Competencies**

In education administration, which is accepted as a field of specialization, school principals and assistant principals are expected to have certain competencies in order to be successful. The views on the categories of "Personal competencies, professional competencies, work and private life balance and coping with problems" related to the "Competences" theme related to the analysis of school administrators' opinions are as follows:

## **Model 4**

### *Participants Perceptions of Competence*



### ***Personal Competencies***

According to the participant school administrators, the weight of the responsibilities undertaken in school administration, the difficulty of the school administration task, in order to reveal the desired and expected administrator performance, it is necessary to have personal competencies such as taking initiative, problem-solving, quick decision making, being open to innovations, criticism and communication and following innovations, being fair and honest, being compassionate, patient and understanding, high persuasion and communication skills. Here are some participants views on the personal competencies required for school management:

*"Must have the ability to make decisions in difficult conditions and to use initiative. It should be innovative, in the teachers' room, in cooperation and solidarity. When there are difficult conditions, he should solve the problems in a short time by keeping his calmness." (G 8).*

*"Leadership is taking the initiative, it is the power to interpret events according to that moment, it is to dominate the era." (G 27).*

*"The leader should be able to influence students and teachers, be open to communication, be a role model." (G 19).*

*"The leader must play their role correctly to balance." (G 17).*

### ***Professional Competencies***

Participating school administrators consider it necessary to have professional competencies in school administration, which is their area of expertise, to be successful in the management process and to eliminate the concerns felt by the leaders. Some of the participants opinions regarding the professional competencies that school administrators should have to be a leader are as follows:

*"Having a command of technical knowledge in terms of professional competence, being at a level that can drag people " (G 2).*



*"Professionally, the leader should improve himself and master his field. He should have a good command of not only the field but also current events. Should follow the developments." (G 26).*

*"He follows world facts, watches scientists, and sees his future. Also follows technological developments." (G 10).*

### ***Work and Private Life Balance***

According to the participants, the fears and anxieties experienced in the desired leadership as an individual choice, the responsibilities are undertaken, inexperience, legal gaps and concessions in private life for personal reasons cause leaders to be unable to balance. Some of the views of school administrators on balancing work and private life are as follows:

*"Leaders find it difficult to balance work life and private life, managers balance better." (G 21).*

*"I don't think it's possible to balance. It is very difficult to establish this balance in the conditions of Turkey." (G 7).*

*"I could not balance before, I have not had a balance problem for the last two years. Because I have seen by experience that my taking on everything brings me more harm than good and that it is not valued." (G 15).*

*"The balance cannot be established inevitably, these are the negativities brought by the profession." (G 18).*

### ***Coping with Problems***

The problem-solving skills, ways and methods of the education administrators, who undertake the task of setting goals and directing the employees to these goals, differ according to their past experiences. Here are some of the participants' opinions that the principals and vice principals, who are leaders in schools, find solutions to their problems by making use of their experiences, communicating, consulting, sharing thoughts and suggestions, being understanding and tolerant, giving time, researching, and cooperating:

*"I use brainstorming in problem-solving, I talk, test the problem and ask everyone's opinion, I solve the problem by combining the thoughts in my head with others." (G 16).*

*"I consult my opinion with my colleagues, I write something about my own opinion. I ask what is caused by me... First, I measure myself and see what my involvement is." (G 10).*

*"I think that I can solve the problems that may arise with myself. I'm also trying to convince." (G 20).*

*"I try to listen to the other person and to understand exactly what they want." (G 30).*


#### **4. Bureaucratic Impediments**

The participants stated that they had difficulties in decision-making processes in school administration, their responsibilities were many and their authorities were limited, the laws did not protect them, and the concerns they felt in courage, taking initiative, and problem solving reduced their productivity.

Legal legislation regarding school management processes and duties-related responsibilities cause school administrators to worry.

#### **Model 5**

*Perceptions of Participants on Bureaucratic/Legal Impediments*



Perceptions of participants on Bureaucratic/Legal Impediments

Some of the views of school administrators on the bureaucratic structure regarding the concern of performing a duty that is not protected by the law and the fulfillment of administrative responsibilities are as follows:

*"It's because of the gaps in the regulation. Regulation does not protect teachers and administrators" (G6).*

*"When you are restricted by certain laws within the Ministry of Education, your work on leadership is subject to restrictions. Because it is restricted, many people do not want to be managers, and leaders cannot stand out." (G4).*

*" Too much responsibility, little authority. You cannot do anything independently, and when you do, you do not know what will come your way." (G23).*

*"Due to the different issues of bureaucracy, mobility is limited." (G1).*

#### **Discussion and Results**

This study was conducted to determine the concerns that school administrators feel while fulfilling their leadership duties and responsibilities. According to the participant school administrators, leadership is a phenomenon that can be developed through family, society, education and administrative experiences. According to the participants, the needs of

colleagues, social environment and the institution they work for are effective in being a manager, but this does not strengthen their desire to be a manager. Zaccaro (2007) also defines the leader as a person who combines personality traits with knowledge and skills acquired in management processes. According to the participants, the needs of colleagues, social environment and the institution they work for are effective in being a manager, but this does not strengthen their desire to be a manager. Employees who have the desire to be a manager are expected to have a low level of anxiety about being a leader. Because, thinking that they will have the opportunity to achieve their desired positions and career goals thanks to leadership will increase willingness instead of worry (Araç Ilgar, 2019; Günay & Özbilen, 2018).

According to the participant school administrators, a leader should be a role model to the followers, motivate them, set an example with his attitudes and behaviors, ideas and practices, organize the institution he manages, be an expert in his field, and open to communication and innovations, fair, have a mission and vision. These features show compatibility with the literature. The personalities of the leaders are different from each other. Personal characteristics such as having personal authority, being able to see ahead, having various personality traits, certainty, courage, truthfulness, and intelligence ensure leadership (Genç & Demiröğen, 2000).

According to the results of the research, they differ from each other in terms of leadership characteristics that are innate and developed with education and experience in fulfilling their administrative responsibilities at schools. Personality traits are one of the reasons why leaders' solutions and perceptions of the same events are different. The needs and expectations of individuals with different personality traits may differ in the face of problems (Erkuş & Tabak, 2009).

According to school administrators, managerial experiences contribute to the development and competencies of leaders and reduce their worries; experiences gained through managerial life increase their self-confidence and desire to succeed. According to similar research findings; Employees who have been managers before, know the organizational structure better with their previous experiences, have more self-confidence, and worry less (Araç Ilgar, 2019; Günay & Özbilen, 2018). In some studies, (Ural, 2012; Karabudak, 2015) it is seen that the increase in managerial time also increases the concerns of leaders. In this research, school administrators stated that they received the power required for their administrative duties from themselves, their characteristics, knowledge, and skills, and

their family and social environment, not from the positions of a school principal or vice principal. In our country, school management is not a profession legally, and there are no professional qualifications and professional ethical principles. School principals and vice principals are evaluated as teachers in the National Education Basic Law No. 1739; and evaluated as Civil Servants Law No. 657 (Karataş, Radmard, Öksüz Gül, Varol & Dağ, 2019). Opportunities to be provided to employees in return for being leaders can increase their desire to be a leader (Araç Ilgar, 2019). It is common for school administrators to have certain competencies and to experience anxiety to be successful with the power they get from the laws. School administrators stated that they have difficulties due to legal restrictions, their responsibilities are high and their authority is less; they stated that the laws do not protect them and that their concerns increased due to the feeling of not being successful in solving problems, and that the laws have a negative effect on them by increasing rather than decreasing their concerns. Legislation that limits the work environment of public institutions also increases the leadership concerns of employees. (Şahin & Gül, 2011). Participant school administrators stated that they are worried about making mistakes, injustice, failure, and loss of control, and worried about students, teachers, and their families being harmed due to external factors such as complaints, insults, threats, slander, misunderstanding, being in trouble, accident, non-governmental organizations, and politics effects. Elmuti, Minnis, and Abebe (2005) stated that education provides self-confidence by improving leadership skills and reduces the concern of failure. In this study, the majority of participants thinking their concerns prevent them from being successful despite their postgraduate education differs from the literature. It can be expected that school administrators' postgraduate education level will reduce their concerns (Elmuti vd., 2005).

The participant school administrators stated that the concerns they experienced resulted from their personality traits, uncertainties, inexperience, student parents, legal gaps, wrong decisions and practices, failure, failure to meet expectations, falling below the level of success, and factors that threaten students' health and safety. School principals' anxiety levels are higher because the slightest possible problem in the school will be asked about by the principal (Ural, 2012). Concerns about taking on a leadership role are due to individual factors such as lack of knowledge and self-confidence (Anderson vd., 2011). According to the participants, to be able to assume the weight of school administration responsibilities for leadership, and to reveal the desired and expected managerial performance, it is necessary to have personal competencies such as taking initiative, problem-solving, quick decision

making, being open to innovations, criticism and communication and following innovations; being fair and honest, compassionate, patient and understanding, being a high persuasion and communication skills. According to Gündoğar (2010), the proficiency level of the leader directly affects the success of the practices. The leader, who plays an important role in the achievement and success of the institutions, in motivating the employees, is expected to have self-confidence and courage to be the pioneer of change, be able to take risks, communicate effectively and correctly, and create motivation (Eraslan, 2004; Tahaoğlu & Gedikoğlu, 2009). Participants consider it necessary to have the knowledge and skills required by the profession, to have knowledge of legislation and management, to follow current developments, and to have professional competencies related to technical knowledge and equipment to be successful in school administration and to eliminate the concerns felt by the leaders. Since leadership is not a learned or acquired position, and individuals who do not have the necessary characteristics to cope with change cannot be leaders, professional characteristics are as important as personal characteristics for leadership (Sertoğlu, 2010; Robbins, 2012).

Participants see that concerns, responsibilities, legal gaps, inexperience, and inability to spare time for private life due to personal reasons are the main reasons for leaders' inability to balance. Work and private life balance are being at work when they are at work and being at home when they are at home (Sharma & Nayak, 2016). Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities expected from teachers and administrators depends on establishing a balance between work and living areas (Polat, 2018). In the research on work-life balances in the related literature (İzki, 2019; Ödemiş, 2018; Tuğsal, 2017; Turna, 2017; Güteryüz, 2016), it has been concluded that the establishment of work and private life balance positively affects work performance. The fact that the laws regulate the rights and responsibilities of the employees, ensure the private life of the leaders, allow them to spare time for their family and environment, and regulate their relations with their colleagues, reduces leadership concerns (Öztürk, 2021). The participant school administrators stated that they solved the problems by making use of the past experiences of the principals and vice principals in schools, by communicating, sharing their thoughts and suggestions, behaving with understanding and tolerance, allowing time, researching, and cooperating with all parties concerned. The success of institutions requires leaders to be receptive to challenges and criticism and to demonstrate a shared vision with their employees (Yeşil, 2016). Employees may feel anxious and worried during a crisis, but leaders can calmly turn this environment into an opportunity and put

forward new ideas (Uğur & Uğur, 2014). According to the results of the research, the participant school administrators are worried even though they have the necessary personality traits and professional competencies to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. Although they developed their innate leadership through their education and experience, they worry about reasons such as legal gaps, wrong decisions and practices, complaints, slander, misunderstanding, being in trouble, factors that threaten the health and safety of students, falling under the success shown, acting unfairly, losing control, harming students, teachers and their families. They worry about failing, not meeting expectations, making mistakes, uncertainty, and harming others. Personal competencies such as taking initiative, problem-solving, quick decision-making, being open to criticism and communication, following innovations, being fair and honest, being compassionate, patient, and understanding, having high persuasion and communication skills in school management, as well as the knowledge and skills required by the profession, having knowledge of legislation and management, keeping up with current developments, having professional competencies such as technical knowledge and equipment enable leaders to be successful by eliminating their worries.

### **Recommendations**

Leadership is about guiding people to goals for their well-being and happiness by letting go of their worries. Managers who can't cope with their worries should not be expected to lead. In light of these findings, the following recommendations were made to practitioners and researchers;

Training should be given to training school administrators who will meet the needs of the changing education systems with the rapid technological developments experienced today.

It should be ensured that the leaders are protected from all kinds of internal and external worrying factors by making legal arrangements to eliminate their concerns.

Practical studies should be conducted to eliminate the fear of failure, which is one of the most important causes of leadership concern.

Awareness studies should be conducted to encourage and increase the desire of education administrators to be leaders.

Leadership concerns of educational administrators should also be examined with quantitative or mixed research.

Comparative studies should be carried out on the leadership concerns of education administrators working in public and private schools.

There is a need for studies to determine the effect of the expectations arising from the needs of the age on the fear of failure of educational administrators.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

Kırşehir Ahi Evran University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee decided that this research was ethically appropriate with the approval dated 14/06/2023 and numbered 2023/05/05.

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