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The Effect of School Administrators' Instructional Leadership Behaviors and School Culture on Teacher Performance

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of school administrators' instructional leadership (IL) behaviors and school culture on teacher performance (TPE). Two hundred eighty-nine teachers working in public schools in the Eyupsultan district of Istanbul province participated in the study. The relational survey model was used in the study. The data were collected using a personal information form, Instructional Leadership Inventory, School Culture Scale, and Teacher Performance Evaluation Scale. As a result of the study, school administrators' instructional leadership was found to be at a moderate level; bureaucratic culture was found to be at a moderate level; achievement, support, and task culture were found to be at a high level; and teachers' performance was found to be at a very high level. While teacher performance did not differ according to age and education level, it differed according to gender, seniority, and school type. It was found that there was a weak positive relationship between school administrators' IL behaviors and achievement and support cultures. At the same time, there was no significant relationship between school administrators' IL behaviors and TPE. A very weak but significant positive relationship was found between the professional development dimension of instructional leadership (IL) and the preparation of the learning-teaching process, which is one of the sub-dimensions of teacher performance. Support, achievement, and task cultures positively and significantly affect teacher performance.

Introduction

The success of educational institutions largely depends on the leadership qualities of school administrators. Effective leadership is crucial in the restructuring and implementation of educational policies. In this context, it is emphasized that school administrators assume the most critical responsibility in these processes (Kesen et al., 2019). An administrator who fails in leadership duties cannot function as an effective instructional leader. Conversely, a successful school leader should be capable of addressing the expectations and needs of teachers. Instructional leadership (IL) involves not only guiding instructional practices but also requires proficiency in management skills (Çelik, 1999). School administrators must have management skills and instructional leadership qualities (Özdemir & Sezgin, 2002). In educational settings, effective school leadership is not limited to administrative duties but extends to influencing and guiding teachers' professional growth and performance Therefore, school administrators' role in shaping the overall school culture and improving teacher performance is a key factor in achieving long-term educational success.

In organizations, individuals come together around common goals, values, and behaviors and act together to achieve goals (Berk, 2020). Schools should have strong cultures that increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency and ensure lasting success rather than daily success. In schools with strong cultures, interpersonal

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relations are expected to be positive (Akpolat, 2020). Teachers' positive perceptions of school culture, their belief in their schools, and the value they attach to their schools are essential for teachers to exhibit high performance (Kafalı, 2022).

However, establishing a strong school culture is not solely dependent on teachers' individual efforts; school administrators' leadership behaviors play a critical role in creating and maintaining a productive and positive school culture. This interconnectedness highlights the importance of instructional leadership in fostering a supportive school culture, which ultimately influences teacher performance. The managerial abilities expected from school administrators appear as a definition of leadership.

In today's context, the dynamic and evolving nature of the education field, shaped by the demands of the modern age, has heightened the visibility and significance of teachers' performance, since they serve as the key implementers of the education system. Therefore, this study examines the effects of school administrators' IL behaviors and school culture on teacher performance (TPE).

Teacher Performance (TPE)

Teacher performance is central to the success of the educational system. Today, the individual does not accept the information conveyed to him/her without questioning it. On the contrary, they actively create meaning by interpreting the information conveyed. At this point, it is the teacher who interprets the information in the best way and the students who actively participate in the process by making sense of these interpretations. It is possible to see the functionality of the teacher, who is the subject of this understanding and interpretation system, as performance (Dedebali & Süral, 2022). Performance is a concept that describes a predetermined activity's result in quantity and quality to achieve a specific goal. Performance refers to success above the average (Bilgin, 2004). In general, teacher performance is a process formed by factors such as effort, efficiency, competence, and success that the teacher shows individually and in which the teacher's work is evaluated (Akyol, 2008).

There are many factors affecting teacher performance. Individual factors can be listed as teachers' value judgments, beliefs, attitudes, and perception processes, abilities, knowledge, and behavioral factors (Cheng & Tsui, 1996). The harmony and coordination of all these concepts can be defined as parts of a whole that directly affect and even constitute teacher performance. In addition to individual factors affecting teachers' performance, environmental factors are also very effective. The school environment where teachers work, and students' academic levels are among the environmental factors that impact teacher performance (Steinberg & Garrett, 2016). Moreover, the connection between school leadership and teacher performance is evident in how school administrators' instructional leadership styles directly or indirectly create an environment that either supports or hinders teacher effectiveness. A school administrator's leadership approach, therefore, serves as a bridge between environmental factors and individual teacher performance. This study aims to examine how school administrators' IL behaviors and school culture influence teacher performance and contribute to the broader educational landscape.

Instructional Leadership (IL)

Different interpretations have been developed on the distinction between management and leadership for education system managers, who are the carriers of social transformation. According to one view, management is defined as assuming, fulfilling, and executing responsibility, while leadership means guidance, active activities, and appearance in terms of influencing and directing. In this direction, managers in the organizational structure act according to the conditions and rules of the existing system. In this framework, those who maintain the existing system are defined as administrators. However, those who take the necessary actions to realize change and succeed are defined as leaders (Demir et al., 2010).

The concept of instructional leadership is widely discussed in terms of increasing school effectiveness and improving the quality of teaching (Çalık & Kılınç, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2004). Studies have shown that instructional leadership significantly affects student outcomes and teacher performance (Hallinger, 2011; Murphy, 2015). Based on the assumption that more effective teaching will result in stronger student learning, the basis of instructional leadership is leadership behaviors aimed at improving classroom teaching quality

(Leithwood et al., 2004). Today, the conflict between order and disorder in schools is experienced through the concepts of school management and IL. While the concept of school management evokes a responsibility for maintaining order in schools, the term IL requires constant renewal, transformation, and change (Kesen et al., 2019).

Instructional leadership refers to activities aimed at providing more demanding learning conditions for teachers, raising good students, and transforming the school's working environment into a productive and efficient one (Çelik, 1999). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) classified instructional leadership into three main dimensions: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school climate. These dimensions are still widely accepted in the field of educational leadership.

The school administrator, in the role of instructional leader, is the person who represents the school. For this reason, as a visible presence, the administrator can communicate with students and staff in the classroom or the corridor. The instructional leader keeps dialoguing with teachers by attending class meetings (Wallace, 1997). The instructional leader should be able to initiate the process of change and innovation in the school and manage this process effectively to ensure positive development for students and school staff. For the changes and transformations within the school to achieve its goals, the vision determined by all members of the school culture within the school must be adopted and implemented (Şişman, 2004).

Research has shown that effective instructional leadership increases teacher motivation and professional development (Robinson et al., 2008). Similarly, instructional leadership has been linked to improved student outcomes, particularly in underperforming schools (Hallinger, 2011; Murphy, 2015). Therefore, understanding the impact of instructional leadership on both teacher performance and school culture is critical for improving the overall quality of education.

School Culture

School culture plays a critical role in enhancing the overall effectiveness of schools. One of the primary objectives underlying the fast-paced and intensive work environment in schools is the establishment and reinforcement of a strong school culture. The most important element in shaping school culture is the school administrator. The school administrator creating a positive working environment in which everyone can work peacefully is one of the issues emphasized in defining "effective school." Although it is known that many reasons are effective in the creation of a regular school culture, research shows that the leadership behaviors of administrators are an important determining factor in the creation, change, and continuity of school climate and working environment (Şişman, 2004).

School culture consists of traditions and patterns of values and beliefs that are formed within the history of the school (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Heckman (1993) defines school culture as "the beliefs shared by administrators, teachers and students that guide their activities." Research by Stoll (1998) and Fullan (2001) has also shown that strong school culture positively affects student motivation and teacher collaboration.

In the context of institutional belonging, all employees within the school should be able to gather around the same belief system to create a common culture (Cafoğlu, 1995). The positive school culture created enables employees to focus on a renewed process by developing the concept of collegiality, trust, and collaborative relationships among employees (Hopkins, 2000).

Relationships between Teacher Performance, Instructional Leadership and School Culture

Understanding the relationship between instructional leadership, school culture, and teacher performance is essential for improving the quality of education. Previous research has shown that strong school culture increases teacher motivation and student success (Stoll, 1998; Fullan, 2001). Instructional leadership is considered a key factor in establishing a positive school culture and enhancing teacher performance (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008).

Research conducted in different contexts has demonstrated that instructional leadership positively affects teacher collaboration, motivation, and student achievement (Murphy, 2015). Hallinger (2011) emphasized that instructional leadership enhances teacher performance by improving teaching quality and fostering a

supportive learning environment. Robinson et al. (2008) also argued that instructional leadership is one of the most influential factors affecting teacher performance and student achievement.

In the Turkish context, the first study on instructional leadership was conducted by Can (2006). This study showed that elementary school principals largely fulfill the instructional leadership roles expected by teachers. However, most research on instructional leadership has been conducted in Western countries (Hallinger, 2011), highlighting the need for more studies in different cultural settings, including Türkiye. This research combines both international and Turkish perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how instructional leadership and school culture affect teacher performance.

Despite the established link between instructional leadership and teacher performance, the interaction between instructional leadership and school culture in influencing teacher performance remains under-researched, particularly in the Turkish context. By addressing this gap, this study aims to examine the combined effects of instructional leadership and school culture on teacher performance, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge in educational leadership and school management.

Based on the literature review and research gap, the study addresses the following research questions:

a) According to teachers' perceptions, what is the level of school administrators' instructional leadership (IL) behaviors, school culture, and teacher performance (TPE)?

b) Does TPE differ significantly according to gender, age, education level, seniority, and school type?

c) According to teachers' perceptions, is there a significant relationship between school administrators' IL behaviors, school culture, and teacher performance?

d) According to teachers' perceptions, do school administrators' IL behaviors and school culture predict TPE?

Method

This section of the study presents information on the research model, population/sample, data collection tools, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Model

The relational survey model was used in the study. The correlational survey model is a research approach designed to determine whether there is a relationship between two or more variables and the strength of that relationship. This model aims to understand whether the variables change together and, if so, to quantify this change (Büyüköztürk et al., 2021). Studies using the correlational survey model aim to determine the relationship between two or more variables.

Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 289 teachers working in public schools in Eyüpsultan district of Istanbul province during the 2021–2022 academic year. A convenience sampling method was used to select the sample due to its practicality and accessibility. The total population of teachers in the Eyüpsultan district during the 2021–2022 academic year was approximately 1,200 teachers. According to the sample size calculation (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), a sample size of at least 291 participants is recommended for a population of this size with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Therefore, the sample size in this study (n = 289) is close to the recommended value and can be considered adequate for generalizability.

Table 1. Demographic Data on the Study Group

Variables	Identifying Characteristics	n	%
Gender	Female	146	51 %
	Male	143	49 %
Age	20-30 A.	61	21 %
	31-40 A.	92	32 %
	41-50 A.	102	35 %
	50 +	34	12 %
Education Status	Bachelor	213	74 %
	Postgraduate	76	26 %
Professional Seniority	0-5 Year	48	17 %
	6-10 Year	52	18 %
	11-15 Year	40	14 %
	16-20 Year	82	28 %
	21 +	67	23 %
School (S) Type	Primary S.	150	52 %
	Middle S.	79	27 %
	High S.	60	21 %

Out of 289 participants, 146 (51%) were female, while 143 (49%) were male. Regarding age distribution, most participants (35%) were aged between 41 and 50, followed by 32% aged 31–40 and 21% aged 20–30. Educational status indicated that 74% of the participants held a bachelor's degree, and 26% held a postgraduate degree. In terms of professional experience, 28% of the teachers had 16–20 years of experience, while 23% had more than 21 years of experience. Regarding school type, 52% of the teachers worked in primary schools, 27% in middle schools, and 21% in high schools.

Data Collection Tools

The data was collected using personal information forms, the School Culture Scale, the Instructional Leadership Inventory, and the Teacher Performance Evaluation Scale.

School Culture Scale

The School Culture Scale developed by Terzi (2005) consists of 29 items and 4 sub-factors (bureaucratic culture, achievement culture, support culture, and task culture), with reliability coefficients of .90, .60, .78, and .69, respectively. In this study, the reliability coefficients were calculated as .87 for the whole scale. The CFA results showed good model fit (χ^2/df = 2.45, RMSEA = 0.056, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.89, SRMR = 0.048). The scale is graded on a 5-point Likert scale as never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), mostly (4), and always (5).

Instructional Leadership Inventory (ILI)

The Instructional Leadership Inventory (ILI) developed by Alig-Mielcarek (2003) and adapted into Turkish by Şahin (2011) includes 23 items and three sub-factors (professional development, sharing goals, and feedback), with reliability coefficients of .88, .82, .76, and .84 for the whole scale. In this study, the reliability coefficients were found to be .96, .96, .86, and .98, respectively. CFA results showed good fit (χ^2/df = 2.12, RMSEA = 0.052, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.92, SRMR = 0.045). The scale is graded on a 5-point Likert scale as very little (1), minor (2), moderate (3), good (4), very good (5).

Teacher Performance Evaluation Scale (TPES)

The Teacher Performance Evaluation Scale (TPES) developed by Özgenel (2019) consists of 34 items and five sub-factors (preparation of the learning-teaching process, content knowledge, communication, execution of the learning-teaching process, professional attitude, and professional development and values), with a reliability coefficient of .96 for the whole scale. CFA results demonstrated an acceptable model fit (χ^2/df = 2.56, RMSEA = 0.059, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.90, SRMR = 0.049). The scale is graded on a 5-point Likert scale as very low (1), low (2), moderate (3), good (4), very good (5).

All scales used in the study were based on a 5-point Likert-type response format. In determining the levels of instructional leadership, school culture, and teacher performance, an equal-interval measurement approach was adopted. According to this approach, the following cut-off points were used: 1.00–1.80 = Very Low, 1.81–2.60 = Low, 2.61–3.40 = Middle, 3.41–4.20 = High, and 4.21–5.00 = Very High. This classification is consistent with practices outlined by researchers such as Tavşancıl (2002) and Büyüköztürk (2019) regarding the interpretation of Likert-type scale data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before starting the data collection phase, permissions were obtained from the researchers who developed or adapted the scales used in the study, as well as from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education and the Ethics Committee of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (approval number 2023/01, dated 27.01.2023). Participants were informed about the confidentiality of the study and their voluntary participation. After the application of the scales, 15 incomplete or incorrectly filled forms were excluded from the data set. The valid responses of 289 participants were entered into the statistical software for analysis.

Initially, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics and the main study variables. To examine the normality of the data, skewness and kurtosis values were reviewed, and it was confirmed that the data were normally distributed as the values fell within the acceptable range of -1.5 to +1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Subsequently, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare teacher performance scores according to binary variables such as gender and school type, while one-way ANOVA tests were applied for variables with more than two categories, such as age and seniority, with Tukey HSD post hoc tests used when significant differences were found. Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships between instructional leadership behaviors, types of school culture (support, achievement, bureaucratic, and task), and teacher performance dimensions. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis was carried out to assess the predictive power of different school culture dimensions on teacher performance.

The assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were checked prior to interpreting the regression results. All analyses were conducted systematically in line with the research questions, and the significance level was set at $p < .05$.

Ethical Disclosure

Ethics Committee Approval: This research was conducted with the permission obtained by the Istanbul Sabahattin University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Social and Human Sciences Board's decision dated 27/01/2023 and numbered 2023/1.

Results

In this part of the study, the results obtained by analyzing the answers given to the scales are presented.

Findings Related to the First Sub-Problem

The level of school administrators' instructional leadership, school culture, and teachers' performance as perceived by teachers are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings Related to School Administrators' Instructional Leadership Level, School Culture Level and Teachers' Performance Level

Scale and Subscales	N	M	SS	Level
ILS	289	3.38	1.03	Middle
Professional Development	289	3.46	1.16	High
Sharing Purpose	289	3.41	1.10	High
Feedback	289	3.28	0.90	Middle
Support Culture	289	3.94	0.75	High
Success Culture	289	3.84	0.65	High
Bureaucratic Culture	289	3.35	0.63	Middle
Task Culture	289	4.17	0.57	High
TPES	289	4.51	0.41	Very High
Field Knowledge	289	4.32	0.56	Very High
Preparing the Learning Teaching Process	289	4.40	0.59	Very High
Communication	289	4.55	0.47	Very High
Executing the Learning Teaching Process and Professional Development	289	4.40	0.56	Very High
Professional Attitudes and Values	289	4.75	0.34	Very High

Findings Related to the Second Sub-Problem

While teacher performance did not differ according to age and education level, it was found to differ according to gender, seniority, and type of school. The results of the Independent Sample t-test on the differentiation of teacher performance according to gender are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent Sample T-Test Results for the Differentiation of Teacher Performance By Teachers' Gender

Scale and Subscales	Groups	N	Mean	SS	t	p	Cohen's d
TPES	Female	146	4.58	0.38	2.85	.00	.33
	Male	143	4.45	0.42			
Field Knowledge	Female	146	4.35	0.55	1.00	.32	.26
	Male	143	4.28	0.58			
Preparing the Learning Teaching Process	Female	146	4.48	0.54	2.19	.02	.38
	Male	143	4.33	0.63			
Communication	Female	146	4.63	0.45	3.24	.00	.27
	Male	143	4.46	0.48			
Executing the Learning Teaching Process and Professional Development	Female	146	4.47	0.55	2.32	.02	.35
	Male	143	4.32	0.56			
Professional Attitudes and Values	Female	146	4.81	0.31	2.94	.00	.28
	Male	143	4.69	0.35			

According to the data in Table 3, the mean scores of teacher performance differed significantly according to the gender of the teachers. While it was found that the mean scores of the sub-dimensions of the scale for content knowledge did not differ significantly according to the gender of the teachers, the mean scores of the other sub-dimensions differed significantly according to the gender of the teachers The findings indicated that the mean total scale score of female teachers ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58) was significantly higher than that of male teachers ($\bar{x}$ = 4.45). Moreover, female teachers outperformed their male counterparts in several sub-

dimensions. Specifically, their mean scores were higher in preparing the learning-teaching process ($\bar{x}$ = 4.48 vs. $\bar{x}$ = 4.33), communication ($\bar{x}$ = 4.63 vs. $\bar{x}$ = 4.46), conducting the learning-teaching process and professional development ($\bar{x}$ = 4.47 vs. $\bar{x}$ = 4.32), and professional attitudes and values ($\bar{x}$ = 4.81 vs. $\bar{x}$ = 4.69). These results suggest a consistent pattern of higher self-reported competencies among female teachers across all dimensions assessed. The effect size of the difference, calculated using Cohen's *d*, was found to be 0.33, indicating a moderate level of practical significance.The ANOVA results regarding the differentiation of the mean scores of teacher performance according to the professional seniority of the teachers are given in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA Test Results Regarding the Differentiation of Teacher Performance According to Professional Seniority

Scale and Subscales	Groups	N	Mean	SS	KT		F	p	Cohen's d
TPES	a. 0-5 Year	48	4.42	0.46					
	b. 6-10 Year	52	4.57	0.39	G. Bet.	4			
	c. 11-15 Year	40	4.53	0.34	G. Insi.	284	0.98	.41	
	d. 16-20 Year	82	4.52	0.39	Total	288			
	e. 21 +	67	4.53	0.43					
Field Knowledge	a. 0-5 Year	48	4.09	0.66					
	b. 6-10 Year	52	4.33	0.55	G. Bet.	4			
	c. 11-15 Year	40	4.36	0.47	G. Insi.	284	2.49	.04	a<d .25
	d. 16-20 Year	82	4.40	0.52	Total	288			
	e. 21 +	67	4.35	0.57					
Preparing the Learning Teaching Process	a. 0-5 Year	48	4.33	0.64					
	b. 6-10 Year	52	4.42	0.57	G. Bet.	4			
	c. 11-15 Year	40	4.43	0.51	G. Insi.	284	0.38	.82	
	d. 16-20 Year	82	4.45	0.53	Total	288			
	e. 21 +	67	4.38	0.68					
Communication	a. 0-5 Year	48	4.47	0.50					
	b. 6-10 Year	52	4.65	0.42	G. Bet.	4			
	c. 11-15 Year	40	4.60	0.37	G. Insi.	284	1.34	.25	
	d. 16-20 Year	82	4.49	0.49	Total	288			
	e. 21 +	67	4.56	0.51					
Executing the Learning Teaching Process and Professional Development	a. 0-5 Year	48	4.24	0.64					
	b. 6-10 Year	52	4.47	0.55	G. Bet.	4			
	c. 11-15 Year	40	4.45	0.46	G. Insi.	284	1.27	.28	
	d. 16-20 Year	82	4.42	0.49	Total	288			
	e. 21 +	67	4.39	0.63					
Professional Attitudes and Values	a. 0-5 Year	48	4.73	0.38					
	b. 6-10 Year	52	4.81	0.29	G. Bet.	4			
	c. 11-15 Year	40	4.68	0.34	G. Insi.	284	1.25	.28	
	d. 16-20 Year	82	4.72	0.36	Total	288			
	e. 21 +	67	4.79	0.30					

When the data in Table 4 were analyzed, it is indicated that the mean scores of teacher performance in the content knowledge sub-dimension differed significantly according to the professional seniority of the teachers (F=2.49; p=.04). In other sub-dimensions, it is seen that the mean scores of teacher performance do not differ significantly according to the professional seniority of the teachers. A post hoc test was conducted to determine the difference between groups. Before the Post-Post test was performed, the homogeneity of the variances was checked, and the variances were found to be homogeneous. As a result of the Tukey test based on this result, it was found that the mean score of teachers with 0-5 years of professional seniority (x=4.09) was significantly lower than the mean score of teachers with 16-20 years of professional seniority (x=4.40).

The ANOVA results regarding the differentiation of the mean scores of teacher performance according to the type of school where teachers work is given in Table 5. The effect size of the difference was found by calculating Cohen's d score. It was found that the effect size (d= .25) was at a moderate level.

Table 5. ANOVA Test Results for the Differentiation of Teacher Performance By School Type

Scale and Subscales	Groups	N	Mean	SS	KT		F	P	Cohen's d
TPES	a. Primary school	150	4.55	0.38	G. Bet.	2	2.12	.12	
	b. Middle school	79	4.53	0.40	G. Insi.	286			
	c. High school	60	4.42	0.46	Total	288			
Field Knowledge	a. Primary school	150	4.33	0.55	G. Bet.	2	0.27	.76	
	b. Middle school	79	4.33	0.58	G. Insi.	286			
	c. High school	60	4.27	0.58	Total	288			
Preparing the Learning Teaching Process	a. Primary school	150	4.44	0.55	G. Bet.	2	0.96	.38	
	b. Middle school	79	4.40	0.59	G. Insi.	286			
	c. High school	60	4.31	0.67	Total	288			
Communication	a. Primary school	150	4.58	0.45	G. Bet.	2	3.74	.02	a>c .16
	b. Middle school	79	4.59	0.42	G. Insi.	286			b>c .21
	c. High school	60	4.40	0.56	Total	288			
Executing the Learning Teaching Process and Professional Development	a. Primary school	150	4.46	0.52	G. Bet.	2	2.43	.09	
	b. Middle school	79	4.37	0.56	G. Insi.	286			
	c. High school	60	4.27	0.64	Total	288			
Professional Attitudes and Values	a. Primary school	150	4.76	0.33	G. Bet.	2	1.51	.22	
	b. Middle school	79	4.78	0.31	G. Insi.	286			
	c. High school	60	4.69	0.38	Total	288			

According to the data presented in Table 5, a significant difference was observed in average teacher performance scores in the communication dimension based on the type of school in which teachers were employed (F = 3.74; p = .02). However, no significant differences were found in the remaining sub-dimensions across school types. To identify the source of the difference, a post hoc analysis was conducted. Prior to this, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and confirmed. Based on the results of the Tukey test, it was revealed that teachers working in primary schools ($\bar{x}$ = 4.58) and secondary schools ($\bar{x}$ = 4.59) scored significantly higher in the communication dimension compared to those working in high schools ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40). Effect size analysis using Cohen's d indicated a small effect for the difference between primary and high school teachers (d = 0.16), and a low to moderate effect between secondary and high school teachers (d = 0.21).

Findings Related to the Third Sub-Problem

The results of the Pearson Correlation analysis, which was conducted to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the instructional leadership behaviors of school administrators and school culture and teacher performance according to teachers' perceptions, are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Relationships Between Teacher Leadership, School Culture, and Teacher Performance Perceived By Teachers

	ILS	Prof. Dev.	Sharing Purpose	Feedback	Sup. Cul.	Suc.Cul.	Bureaucratic Cul.	Task Cul.
Support Culture	0.27***	0.29***	0.26***	0.23***				
Success Culture	0.29***	0.29***	0.28***	0.28***				
Bureaucratic Culture	-0.16**	-0.19**	-0.17**	-0.11				
Task Culture	0.13*	0.13*	0.14*	0.13*				
TPES	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.34***	0.34***	0.06	0.33***
Field Knowledge	-0.03	-0.02	-0.04	-0.01	0.22***	0.24***	0.12*	0.24***
Preparing the Learning Teaching Process	0.11	0.12*	0.10	0.10	0.36***	0.36***	0.06	0.33***
Communication	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.28***	0.27***	0.04	0.23***
Executing the Learning Teaching Process and Professional Development	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.30***	0.32***	0.09	0.29***
Professional Attitudes and Values	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.00	0.23***	0.18**	-0.07	0.26***

** p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001*

According to the data in Table 6, with the IL behaviors of school administrators, there was a weak positive correlation between support culture (r=.27; p=.00) and success culture (r=.29; p=.00); task culture (r=.13; p=.05) in a very weakly positive direction; bureaucratic culture (r= -.16; p= 01) was found to have a very weak and negative relationship. It was also noted that there was no significant relationship between the IL behaviors of school administrators and teachers' performance. The analysis revealed a very weak but statistically significant positive relationship between the professional development dimension of school administrators (an instructional leadership [IL] sub-dimension) and the preparation of the learning-teaching process dimension (a sub-dimension of teacher performance evaluation [TPE]) (r = .12; p = .05). No significant relationships were identified between the remaining sub-dimensions of the IL and TPE scales.Furthermore, weak yet statistically significant positive correlations were observed between TPE and several cultural dimensions: support culture (r = .34; p < .001), success culture (r = .34; p < .001), and task culture (r = .33; p < .001). In contrast, no significant relationship was detected between bureaucratic culture and overall TPE scores. However, a very weak but statistically significant correlation was found between bureaucratic culture and the field knowledge sub-dimension of TPE (r = .12; p = .05).

Findings Related to the Fourth Sub-Problem

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether teacher culture significantly affected teachers' performance. Stepways were chosen as the model, and the analysis results are given in Table 7.

Table 7. The Effect of School Principals' Empowering Leadership on Teachers' Level of Work Engagement

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	SH	β	t	Sig.
Support Culture	Constant	3.79	.12		31.34	.00
	TPES	.18	.03	.34	6.14	.00
	$R=.34$, $R^2=.12$	F=37.70	p=.00			
Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	SH	β	t	Sig.
	Sabit	3.26	.17		18.84	.00
Support Culture Task Culture	TPES	.13	.03		4.37	.00
		.17	.04	.34	4.10	.00
	$R=.40$, $R^2=.16$	F=16.81	p=.00			

According to the data presented in Table 7, support culture, as one of the dimensions of school culture, has a positive and statistically significant effect on teacher performance ($\beta = .34$, $R^2 = .12$, $p = .00$), accounting for 12% of the variance. When support culture and task culture were considered together, their combined influence on teacher performance remained positive and significant ($\beta = .40$, $R^2 = .16$, $p = .00$), explaining 16% of the variance. However, when support culture, success culture, and task culture were simultaneously included in the model, success culture was not found to have a significant effect on teacher performance.

Discussion and Conclusion

This section discusses the research results, compares them with previous research, and presents the researchers' interpretations. Suggestions for future research and practice are also provided.

Discussion and Conclusion of the First Sub-Problem

In this study, the instructional leadership inventory's mean score and feedback levels were determined to be moderate, while the professional development and goal-sharing dimensions were determined to be high. Similar findings were reported by Tutan et al. (2020), who concluded that school administrators fulfill their instructional leadership roles "most of the time." Likewise, Yağmur and İlğan (2021) found that school principals demonstrated instructional leadership behaviors at a relatively high level. These findings suggest that school principals emphasize the importance of teachers' professional development through guidance and supervision activities. Tabancalı and Cengiz (2018) also reported that principals primarily fulfilled their instructional leadership roles. Other studies have similarly shown that school principals' instructional leadership behaviors are perceived as high by teachers (Bağır et al., 2023; Türmak et al., 2023).

From a researcher's perspective, these results highlight the critical role of instructional leadership in improving teacher motivation and professional development. While previous research confirms the positive impact of instructional leadership, our findings suggest that feedback and goal-sharing dimensions are more influential than other instructional leadership components. This suggests that teachers value constructive feedback and a shared vision within the school. Effective feedback mechanisms and well-defined goals could enhance teachers' professional growth and motivation, leading to improved performance.

Regarding the level of school culture perceived by teachers, high-level results were obtained in the dimensions of support, success, and task culture, whereas bureaucratic culture was perceived at a moderate level. Aköz (2023) similarly found that teachers perceived support and success culture at a high level. A moderate perception of bureaucratic culture may reflect a less hierarchical school environment, which is

generally perceived as favorable for fostering a collaborative and supportive atmosphere. Karagöl and Demirdağ (2023) also reported similar findings, indicating that task and success culture were perceived positively, while bureaucratic culture was rated moderately. Kadıoğlu et al. (2018) found that collaborative leadership, professional cooperation, learning partnership, teacher collaboration, and professional development were high across schools.

Our findings suggest that while instructional leadership positively influences school culture, the moderate perception of bureaucratic culture reflects a possible resistance to hierarchical structures in schools. The alignment between high support and success culture and instructional leadership behaviors indicates that school administrators' leadership style contributes to a positive school climate. This supports the broader literature suggesting that effective instructional leadership enhances school culture and teacher motivation (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008).

Teacher performance levels were also found to be high across all six sub-dimensions. The use of a self-assessment scale in measuring teacher performance may have contributed to this result, as teachers tend to rate their performance more positively when self-reporting. Similar high scores in teacher performance have been reported in other studies (Aktaş & Özgenel, 2020; Akman, 2018; Hatipoğlu & Kavas, 2016; Özdemir & Yirmibeş, 2016). However, Özdemir and Gören (2017) found teacher performance scores at a medium level, indicating that performance perception may vary depending on contextual factors.

Discussion and Conclusion of the Second Sub-Problem

Teacher performance was found to differ according to gender, seniority, and school type but not according to age or educational level. Female teachers perceived their performance higher than male teachers, consistent with findings by Kahveci (2022), who also reported gender-based differences in teacher performance. In contrast, Aktaş and Özgenel (2020) and Deniz and Demirdağ (2020) found no significant gender-based differences in teacher performance.

Teachers with 16–20 years of professional experience perceived their performance in the field knowledge dimension higher than teachers with 0–5 years of experience. This finding is consistent with the idea that professional experience enhances teaching competence and performance perception. Similar patterns were reported by Deniz and Demirdağ (2020), who concluded that professional seniority influences teacher performance. High school teachers perceived their communication skills lower than primary and middle school teachers, possibly due to the age and developmental differences among high school students and the complexity of high school-level communication.

From a researcher's perspective, these findings highlight the importance of experience and professional development in shaping teacher performance. While the literature provides mixed results on gender-based differences, our study suggests that professional seniority and school type are more consistent predictors of teacher performance. This suggests that professional development programs tailored to the needs of different teacher groups could enhance overall performance.

Discussion and Conclusion of the Third and Fourth Sub-Problem

A stronger relationship was found between school administrators' instructional leadership behaviors and support and success culture, while the relationship with task culture was weaker. A weak negative relationship was observed with bureaucratic culture. Şahin (2011) similarly found a positive relationship between instructional leadership and school culture, emphasizing that supporting teachers and setting shared school goals are key components of effective instructional leadership. Tankut (2021) reported a positive and moderately significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership and school culture, particularly in terms of support, success, and task culture. Similarly, Can (2006) highlighted that teachers value motivation and support from school administrators in fostering effective teacher leadership.

Our findings align with existing research, confirming that instructional leadership positively influences teacher performance through its impact on school culture. However, the weaker relationship with task and bureaucratic culture suggests that structural and procedural factors may moderate the effects of instructional

leadership. This finding underscores the importance of balancing formal and informal leadership practices to create a supportive school environment.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

- To increase the performance perceptions of teachers with professional seniority between the ages of 0–5, they can be coached by senior teachers.
- Qualitative research can be conducted on why male teachers' perception of performance is lower.
- Studies to improve the communication performance of high school teachers are recommended.
- It is recommended to spread the culture of success, support, and task in schools.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. First, the sample was limited to teachers in Eyüpsultan district, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Third, the study focused on instructional leadership and school culture as predictors of teacher performance; however, other contextual factors (e.g., school resources, student characteristics) were not considered. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the role of instructional leadership and school culture in shaping teacher performance.

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