

Öğretmen Algılarına Göre Okul Yöneticilerinin Değer Temelli Liderlik Özelliklerinin İncelenmesi¹

Investigation of Value-Based Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators According to Teachers' Perceptions

Emine TUNÇER GÜNAY^{1@}, Soner DOĞAN²

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AUTHOR(S) INFORMATION:

1: Cumhuriyet University
ORCID: 0000-0002-0131-5077
ROR ID: 04f81fm77

2: Cumhuriyet University
ORCID: 0000-0003-2013-3348
ROR ID: 04f81fm77

@CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Emine Tunçer Günay
Cumhuriyet University
tuncergunayemine@gmail.com

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ÖZET

Bu araştırmada, öğretmenlerin okul yöneticilerinin değer temelli liderlik özelliklerine ilişkin algıları incelenmiş ve bu algıların öğretmene ve okula ilişkin değişkenlere göre farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığı belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada kesitsel tarama deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını, 2022–2023 eğitim-öğretim yılında Sivas il merkezindeki 20 devlet lisesinde görev yapan ve uygun örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenen 368 öğretmen oluşturmıştır. Veriler, evrensel, bireysel, ahlaki ve milli değerler boyutlarından oluşan 31 maddelik Okul Müdürlerinin Değer Temelli Liderlik Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde betimsel istatistiklerden, Mann–Whitney U testinden ve Kruskal–Wallis testinden yararlanılmıştır. Öğretmenler, okul yöneticilerinin değer temelli liderlik özelliklerini hem ölçeğin genelinde hem de dört boyutun tamamında “katılıyorum” düzeyinde değerlendirmiştir. Öğretmenlerin algıları mesleki kıdem, öğrenim düzeyi, okuldaki öğretmen sayısı, daha önce birlikte çalışılan okul müdürü sayısı ve mevcut okuldaki görev süresi değişkenlerine göre farklılaşmamıştır. Evrensel ve milli değerler boyutlarında cinsiyete, milli değerler boyutunda bransa, tüm boyutlarda algılanan okul müdürü performansına, evrensel, bireysel ve ahlaki değerler boyutlarında okul yöneticiliği yapma isteğine, tüm boyutlarda okul memnuniyetine ve evrensel, ahlaki ve milli değerler boyutlarında değerler eğitiminin algılanan önemine göre anlamlı farklılıklar belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, liderlik geliştirme programlarında okul yöneticilerinin evrensel, bireysel, ahlaki ve milli değerleri farklı okul bağlamlarında tutarlı biçimde uygulama kapasitelerinin güçlendirilmesi gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liderlik, Değerler, Okul yönetimi, Okul yöneticisi, Değer temelli liderlik

ABSTRACT

This study examined teachers' perceptions of school administrators' value-based leadership characteristics and determined whether these perceptions differed across teacher- and school-related variables. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The participants were 368 teachers working in 20 public high schools in Sivas city center during the 2022–2023 academic year and were recruited through convenience sampling. Data were collected using the 31-item School Principals' Value-Based Leadership Scale, which comprises universal, individual, moral, and national values dimensions. Descriptive statistics, Mann–Whitney U tests, and Kruskal–Wallis tests were used. Teachers rated their administrators' value-based leadership characteristics at the “agree” level overall and in all four dimensions. Perceptions did not differ by professional seniority, educational level, number of teachers in the school, number of principals previously worked with, or school tenure. Significant differences emerged for gender in the universal and national values dimensions, subject field in the national values dimension, perceived principal performance in all dimensions, willingness to undertake school administration in the universal, individual, and moral values dimensions, school satisfaction in all dimensions, and the perceived importance of values education in the universal, moral, and national values dimensions. The findings indicate that leadership development programs should strengthen administrators' capacity to enact universal, individual, moral, and national values consistently across different school context.

Keywords: Leadership, Values, School Management, School Administrator, Value-Based Leadership



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INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has been characterized by profound political, social, economic, religious, and environmental upheavals. The scale and complexity of these global challenges have underscored the critical need for effective leadership and leadership development across all sectors. Perhaps more than at any other time in recorded history, there is an urgent demand for skilled leadership capable of navigating multifaceted crises with potentially catastrophic consequences. These turbulent and rapidly evolving conditions

necessitate a diverse array of leadership approaches, ranging from strong, results-oriented, and servant leadership to heroic, collaborative, and imaginative leadership styles. Yet, as Hyatt and Ciantis (2012) argue, these varied calls for leadership are each shaped by distinct ideological frameworks, often implying that alternative leadership models are inadequate or even flawed. Central to reconciling these differing approaches is the role of values in guiding leaders toward the most appropriate leadership style for a given context.

In this regard, values serve as a foundational element in shaping leadership behaviors and organizational practices. Turkkahraman (2014) defines values as overarching concepts that encapsulate what is deemed important by individuals or communities, whether groups, societies, or nations. These values often function as "shorthand" expressions of complex ideas, encapsulated in single words or brief phrases such as integrity, transparency, compassion, foresight, and respect for human rights. Effective leadership, therefore, hinges on a leader's ability to articulate these values, cultivate a positive organizational climate, and foster efficient communication among team members.

In the context of education, particularly within schools, the importance of value-based leadership becomes even more pronounced. School administrators, as pivotal figures in educational institutions, play a crucial role in modeling and implementing leadership practices grounded in core values. This approach not only influences the internal functioning of schools but also supports the broader mission of fostering ethical and socially responsible future generations. Specifically, within the framework of the Türkiye Maarif Model, administrators are encouraged to embrace value-based leadership to ensure that students internalize essential virtues and values as outlined in the Virtue-Value-Action Framework.

Against this background, the study examines value-based leadership in public high schools from teachers' perspectives. It focuses on the universal, individual, moral, and national value dimensions reflected in administrators' everyday leadership and considers whether teachers' demographic characteristics and school-related experiences are associated with different evaluations of these dimensions.

Literature Review

The concept of value-based leadership (VBL) has been extensively studied within organizational contexts, where it is defined as a leadership style that aligns members with the organization's core values to foster collective engagement toward a shared mission (Daskal, 2016). In such environments, leaders who embody and communicate these foundational principles help cultivate a culture of trust, cohesion, and ethical responsibility. Clayton (2013) underscores that the effectiveness of an organization is largely determined by the extent to which its members, led by example, internalize and uphold these values.

Within educational leadership, the adoption of a value-based approach extends beyond organizational cohesion, encompassing academic achievement, community engagement, and the cultivation of an inclusive school environment. Leithwood (2021) highlights that effective school administrators exhibit a critical and authentic engagement with their institution's rules, practices, and values, enabling them to foster a culture that reflects the expectations and beliefs of all stakeholders. In this regard, school leaders are not only tasked with administrative duties but also with the moral and ethical development of their school communities.

In increasingly cosmopolitan school settings, value-based leadership also plays a pivotal role in promoting inclusivity and equity. Spradlin and Parsons (2008) note that while educators face numerous challenges related to curriculum and pedagogy, many lack the tools to transform these challenges into opportunities for creating strong, inclusive learning communities. Waggoner (2010) reinforces this notion, suggesting that value-based school administrators, who prioritize diversity and equity, can effectively turn diversity into an asset, fostering respect among all stakeholders.

Although value-based leadership has received increasing attention, much of the literature has addressed corporate or broad organizational settings rather than public schools (Bush & Murdock, 2017; Clayton,

2013; Corte et al., 2017; Çiçek & Deniz, 2017). Educational studies have examined value-based leadership in relation to school culture, organizational climate, distributed leadership, and administrators' personal values (Baloğlu, 2012; Chiroma et al., 2021; Leithwood, 2021; Öz, 2026). However, evidence remains limited regarding how teachers evaluate the universal, individual, moral, and national value dimensions of administrators' leadership and whether those evaluations vary across teacher- and school-related characteristics.

The present study addresses this gap by measuring teachers' perceptions of school administrators' value-based leadership characteristics and comparing these perceptions across gender, professional seniority, educational level, subject field, school size, perceived principal performance, number of principals previously worked with, willingness to undertake school administration, school satisfaction, school tenure, and the perceived importance of values education. Examining these variables together provides evidence about the personal and contextual conditions associated with teachers' evaluations of value-based leadership in public high schools.

METHOD

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine teachers' perceptions of school administrators' value-based leadership characteristics. The study also examined whether overall and dimension-level scores differed according to gender, professional seniority, educational level, subject field, number of teachers in the school, perceived principal performance, number of principals previously worked with, willingness to undertake school administration, school satisfaction, school tenure, and the perceived importance of values education.

Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used because the study aimed to describe teachers' current perceptions of school administrators' value-based leadership characteristics and compare these perceptions across predefined participant and school-related groups without manipulating the study conditions (Karasar, 2011).

Study Group

The study group comprised 368 teachers working in 20 public high schools in Sivas city center during the 2022–2023 academic year. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling on the basis of school accessibility, voluntary participation, and teachers' availability (Patton, 2005).

The participant information form collected the demographic and school-related variables shown in Table 1. The form also included single-item categorical questions concerning perceived principal performance, willingness to undertake school administration, satisfaction with the current school, and the perceived importance of values education. Demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of the teachers participating in the study

Variable	Group	N	%
Gender	Female	186	50.54
	Male	182	49.46
Professional seniority	0–10 years	93	25.27
	11–20 years	119	32.34
	21 years or more	156	42.39
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	258	70.11

Variable	Group	N	%
Subject field	Postgraduate degree	110	29.89
	Social sciences and humanities	226	61.41
	Science and mathematics	92	25.00
	Vocational and technical	50	13.59
Number of teachers	0–15	25	6.79
	16–30	81	22.01
	31 or more	262	71.20
Number of principals worked with	1–3	70	19.02
	4–6	138	37.50
	7 or more	160	43.48
School tenure	0–7 years	202	54.89
	8–15 years	123	33.42
	16 years or more	43	11.68
Perceived principal performance	Low	60	16.30
	Moderate	243	66.03
	High	65	17.66
Willingness to undertake administration	Sometimes	85	23.10
	No	253	68.75
	Yes	30	8.15
School satisfaction	Yes	284	77.17
	No	36	9.78
	Undecided	48	13.04
Importance of values education	Important	95	25.82
	Very important	248	67.39
	Undecided	25	6.79

Table 1 summarizes all participant and school-related variables used in the analyses. The sample was nearly balanced by gender. Most participants had 21 or more years of professional seniority, held a bachelor's degree, and worked in social sciences and humanities. Most worked in schools with 31 or more teachers and had seven years or less of tenure at their current school. Regarding the additional study variables, 66.03% rated their principal's performance as moderate, 68.75% did not wish to undertake school administration, 77.17% were satisfied with their current school, and 67.39% considered values education very important.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using the School Principals' Value-Based Leadership Scale developed by Baloğlu and Bulut (2017). The 31-item instrument comprises four dimensions: universal values (11 items), individual values (9 items), moral values (8 items), and national values (3 items). The original scale-development study reported evidence for its construct validity and internal consistency.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 23. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the total scale and its four dimensions. Group comparisons were conducted using the Mann–Whitney U test for two-category variables and the Kruskal–Wallis test for variables with three or more categories. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Table 2. Normality test results

Dimensions	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	SD	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Overall	0,11	368,00	0,000	0,95	368,00	0,000
Universal Values	0,13	368,00	0,000	0,94	368,00	0,000
Individual Values	0,13	368,00	0,000	0,94	368,00	0,000
Moral Values	0,10	368,00	0,000	0,95	368,00	0,000
National Values	0,21	368,00	0,000	0,86	368,00	0,000

Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests were significant for the total score and all dimensions ($p < .001$). Accordingly, group comparisons were conducted using nonparametric procedures.

FINDINGS

This section first reports descriptive statistics for the total scale and its four dimensions and then presents group comparisons in the same order as the variables listed in the study purpose and participant information form.

Teachers' perceptions were compared by gender, professional seniority, educational level, subject field, number of teachers in the school, perceived principal performance, number of principals previously worked with, willingness to undertake school administration, school satisfaction, school tenure, and the perceived importance of values education.

Table 3 shows the range of scores distributions for the Value-Based Leadership Characteristics Scale (VBLS) for school administrators. To indicate the range of the arithmetic mean obtained, the ranges were set as Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.79), Disagree (1.80 - 2.59), Moderately Agree (2.60 - 3.39), Agree (3.40 - 4.19), and Strongly Agree (4.20 - 5.00).

Table 3. Range of scores coded according to options distribution of teachers regarding the characteristics of VBLS

Dimensions	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Level
Universal Values	368	3,59	0,85	Agree
Individual Values	368	3,72	0,79	Agree
Moral Values	368	3,53	0,87	Agree
National Values	368	4,15	0,71	Agree
Overall	368	3,67	0,77	Agree

According to Table 3, the mean scores of all dimensions and the general average dimensions were found to be “Agree”. The teachers who participated in the study perceived school administrators at the level of 3.59 in the dimension of universal values, 3.72 in the dimension of individual values, 3.53 in the dimension of moral values and 4.15 in the dimension of national values. The emergence of an 'agree' result in all dimensions and in total can be interpreted as that the participants perceive the value levels of school administrators as high.

Analyses and Findings Related to Gender Variable

The results of the test conducted to determine the teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to gender variable are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney U test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to gender variable

Dimensions / Gender		N	Rank Average	Ranks Total	U	P
Universal Values	Female	186	172,42	32071,00	14680	0,027**
	Male	182	196,84	35825,00		
Individual Values	Female	186	178,91	33278,00	15887	0,307
	Male	182	190,21	34618,00		
Moral Values	Female	186	178,44	33190,00	15799	0,268
	Male	182	190,69	34706,00		
National Values	Female	186	170,59	31729,50	14338,5	0,008**
	Male	182	198,72	36166,50		

According to the results of the test conducted to determine whether the value-based leadership characteristics of the school administrator (leader) differ according to the gender variable, a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference was found between gender and the Universal Values and National Values dimensions. No statistically significant difference was found between the other dimensions ($p > 0.05$). According to these results, male teachers' perceptions of the school administrator's VBLS dimensions of universal values and national values are higher than those of female teachers.

Analyses and Findings Related to the Variable of Professional Seniority

The results of the test conducted to examine teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the seniority variable are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to professional seniority variable

Dimensions / Professional Seniority		N	Rank Average	X^2	P
Universal Values	0-10 years	93	178,24	0,517	0,772
	11-20 years	119	188,76		
	21 years and above	156	184,98		
Individual Values	0-10 years	93	180,25	0,238	0,888
	11-20 years	119	184,50		
	21 years and above	156	187,04		
Moral Values	0-10 years	93	185,50	0,540	0,764
	11-20 years	119	189,49		
	21 years and above	156	180,10		
National Values	0-10 years	93	184,40	1,818	0,403
	11-20 years	119	194,01		
	21 years and above	156	177,31		

Examining Table 5, according to the results of the test conducted to determine whether the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (leader) differ according to the professional seniority variable, no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) difference was found between the professional seniority groups.

Analyses and Findings Regarding the Variable of Education Status

The results of the test conducted to determine the teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the educational status variable are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to educational status variable

Dimensions / Education Level		N	Rank Average	Ranks Total	U	P
Universal Values	Bachelor's degree	258	184,97	47721,00	14070	0,898
	Postgraduate degree	110	183,41	20175,00		
Individual Values	Bachelor's degree	258	185,72	47914,50	13876,5	0,737
	Postgraduate degree	110	181,65	19981,50		
Moral Values	Bachelor's degree	258	187,89	48475,50	13315,5	0,348
	Postgraduate degree	110	176,55	19420,50		
National Values	Bachelor's degree	258	187,97	48496,00	13295	0,317
	Postgraduate degree	110	176,36	19400,00		

According to Table 6, no significant ($p>0.05$) difference was found between the educational status groups of the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (leader).

Analyses and Findings Related to Subject Field

The results of the test conducted to determine the teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the branch variable are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to branch variable

Dimensions / Subject field		N	Rank Average	χ^2	P
Universal Values	Vocational and technical	50	169,36	1,182	0,554
	Science and mathematics	92	186,18		
	Social sciences and humanities	226	187,16		
Individual Values	Vocational and technical	50	182,51	0,693	0,707
	Science and mathematics	92	177,16		
	Social sciences and humanities	226	187,93		
Moral Values	Vocational and technical	50	178,13	0,778	0,678
	Science and mathematics	92	192,54		
	Social sciences and humanities	226	182,64		
	Vocational and technical	50	183,07	9,559	0,008**

National Values	Science and mathematics	92	212,36
	Social sciences and humanities	226	173,47

According to the results of the test conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (leader) according to the branch variable, a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference was found between the branch and the national values dimension of the school administrator. No statistically significant difference was found for the other dimensions ($p > 0.05$). Follow-up Mann–Whitney U tests were conducted for the national values dimension. Teachers in science and mathematics had higher national-values rank scores than teachers in social sciences and humanities and those in vocational and technical fields.

Analyses and Findings Related to the Number of Teachers in the School Variable

The results of the test conducted to determine the teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the number of teachers in the school are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to the number of teachers in the school

Dimensions	Number of Teachers	N	Rank Average	χ^2	P
Universal Values	0-15 Teachers	25	206,62	1,208	0,547
	16-30 Teachers	81	185,06		
	31 or more	262	182,22		
Individual Values	0-15 Teachers	25	215,54	3,071	0,215
	16-30 Teachers	81	173,15		
	31 or more	262	185,05		
Moral Values	0-15 Teachers	25	210,84	1,672	0,434
	16-30 Teachers	81	183,98		
	31 or more	262	182,15		
National Values	0-15 Teachers	25	172,10	0,479	0,787
	16-30 Teachers	81	182,59		
	31 or more	262	186,27		

Examining Table 8, according to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test, which was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (principal) according to the number of teachers in the school, there is no statistically significant difference between the number of teachers in the school ($p > 0.05$).

Analyses and Findings Related to Perceived Principal Performance

The results of the test conducted to determine teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the general achievement level of school administrators are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to school administrators' general achievement level variable

Dimensions / The level of success of school administrators in general		N	Rank Average	χ^2	P
Universal Values	Low Level	60	96,66	91,431	0,000**
	Moderate	243	181,24		
	High Level	65	277,78		
Individual Values	Low Level	60	98,13	91,717	0,000**
	Moderate	243	180,52		
	High Level	65	279,09		
Moral Values	Low Level	60	92,68	89,899	0,000**
	Moderate	243	183,57		

	High Level	65	272,72		
	Low Level	60	123,75		
National Values	Moderate	243	180,28	54,182	0,000**
	High Level	65	256,34		

The Kruskal–Wallis results indicated significant differences among perceived principal-performance groups in all four dimensions ($p < .001$). Rank averages increased from the low to moderate and high performance groups in every dimension, indicating that teachers who rated their principals' overall performance more positively also reported stronger value-based leadership perceptions.

Analyses and Findings Related to the Number of Different Principals

The results of the test conducted to determine teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the variable of the number of different principals they have worked with are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. The Results of Kruskal-Wallis test according to the variable of how many different principals the school administrator (leader) works with

Dimensions / Number of Principals Worked with	N	Rank Average	χ^2	P	
Universal Values	1-3	70	190,14	0,472	0,790
	4-6	138	186,34		
	6+	160	180,45		
Individual Values	1-3	70	191,74	0,430	0,807
	4-6	138	183,91		
	6+	160	181,85		
Moral Values	1-3	70	196,79	2,034	0,362
	4-6	138	187,80		
	6+	160	176,28		
National Values	1-3	70	203,10	5,880	0,053
	4-6	138	191,11		
	6+	160	170,66		

When Table 10 is examined, according to the results of the test conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (leader) according to the variable of how many different principals they work with, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups of the variable of how many different principals they work with ($p > 0.05$).

Analyses and Findings Related to Willingness to Undertake School Administration

The results of the test conducted to determine the teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the variable of their level of demand for management are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis test results of the value-based leadership characteristics of the school administrator (leader) according to the level of demand for administration

Dimensions / Demand for managerial positions		N	Rank Average	χ^2	P
Universal Values	Sometimes I want to be a school administrator	85	174,20	8,113	0,017**
	I don't want to be a school administrator	253	181,81		
	I would like to be a school administrator	30	236,35		

Individual Values	Sometimes I want to be a school administrator	85	178,22	6,667	0,036**
	I don't want to be a school administrator	253	180,94		
	I would like to be a school administrator	30	232,30		
Moral Values	Sometimes I want to be a school administrator	85	173,96	9,271	0,010**
	I don't want to be a school administrator	253	181,45		
	I would like to be a school administrator	30	240,05		
National Values	Sometimes I want to be a school administrator	85	186,28	0,925	0,630
	I don't want to be a school administrator	253	182,00		
	I would like to be a school administrator	30	200,55		

According to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (leader) according to the level of administrative demands, a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was found between the level of administrative demands and the universal, individual, and moral values dimension. No statistically significant difference was found between the national values dimension ($p > 0.05$). According to these results, it is seen that those who want to become managers have higher averages in the dimension of universal, individual and moral values. In this context, it can be said that those who want to be managers have higher averages in these dimensions.

Analyses and Findings Related to School Satisfaction

The results of the test conducted to determine teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the variable of school satisfaction are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Kruskal-Wallis test results of the school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to the level of satisfaction with working in this school

Dimensions / I am satisfied working at this school		N	Rank Average	X^2	P
Universal Values	Yes	284	204,64	49,260	0,000**
	No	36	88,03		
	Undecided	48	137,67		
Individual Values	Yes	284	205,62	55,830	0,000**
	No	36	78,85		
	Undecided	48	138,78		
Moral Values	Yes	284	203,82	43,344	0,000**
	No	36	99,82		
	Undecided	48	133,72		
National Values	Yes	284	195,60	16,848	0,000**
	No	36	128,63		
	Undecided	48	160,73		

According to the results of the test conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (head) according to the level of satisfaction with work in this school, a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference was found between the level of satisfaction with work in the school where they are employed and all dimensions. This situation can be interpreted as school administrators with high scores based on universal, individual, moral and national values create a more positive organizational atmosphere and are more effective in organizing the physical environment and establishing positive communication in schools.

Analyses and Findings Related to the Variable of Length of Service at School

The results of the test conducted to determine the teachers' perceptions of VBLS according to the variable of tenure in the school are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Kruskal-Wallis test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to the variable of tenure in the school

Dimentions/ School Tenure		N	Rank Average	χ^2	P
Universal Values	0–7 years	202	187,95	1,276	0,528
	8–15 years	123	175,93		
	16 years or more	43	192,79		
Individual Values	0–7 years	202	186,23	0,429	0,807
	8–15 years	123	179,68		
	16 years or more	43	190,14		
Moral Values	0–7 years	202	188,11	0,662	0,718
	8–15 years	123	178,26		
	16 years or more	43	185,40		
National Values	0–7 years	202	180,07	1,513	0,469
	8–15 years	123	186,09		
	16 years or more	43	200,78		

When Table 13 is examined, according to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (leader) according to the length of service in the school, no statistically significant difference was found between the length of service in the school and all dimensions ($p > 0.05$).

Analyses and Findings Related to Values Education Variable

The results of the test conducted to determine the perceptions of the teachers regarding the DBLS according to the variable of values education at school are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Kruskal-Wallis test results of school administrator's (leader's) value-based leadership characteristics according to values education variable

Dimensions / Values Education for you...		N	Rank Average	χ^2	P
Universal Values	Important	95	156,51	11,915	0,003**
	Very important	248	197,79		
	Undecided	25	159,08		
Individual Values	Important	95	167,87	5,307	0,070
	Very important	248	193,29		
	Undecided	25	160,52		

Moral Values	Important	95	159,51	9,773	0,008**
	Very important	248	196,53		
	Undecided	25	160,16		
National Values	Important	95	156,14	10,925	0,004**
	Very important	248	196,30		
	Undecided	25	175,18		

According to the results of the test conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the VBLS characteristics of the school administrator (leader) according to the values education variable, a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference was found between values education and universal, moral and national values dimension. No statistically significant difference was found between the individual values dimension ($p > 0.05$).

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

Teachers rated school administrators' value-based leadership characteristics at the "agree" level for the total scale and for universal, individual, moral, and national values. The highest mean was observed for national values. This overall pattern indicates that participants generally perceived their principals as enacting values in leadership practice, although the cross-sectional design does not establish how these perceptions developed or whether they correspond to independently observed behavior.

Gender differences emerged in the universal and national values dimensions, whereas individual and moral values did not differ by gender. Subject-field differences were limited to national values, with teachers in science and mathematics reporting higher rank scores than teachers in social sciences and humanities and vocational and technical fields. These differences may reflect variation in professional socialization or in the meanings assigned to national and universal values. Because the study did not directly measure such mechanisms, future qualitative or mixed-method research is needed before substantive explanations can be offered.

Professional seniority, educational level, number of teachers in the school, number of principals previously worked with, and school tenure were not associated with significant differences in any value dimension. The consistency across these variables suggests that teachers' evaluations were not strongly differentiated by length of experience, formal education, school size, or exposure to different principals in this sample. This finding should nevertheless be interpreted within the limits of convenience sampling and a study group drawn from public high schools in one city.

Perceived principal performance differed significantly across all four value dimensions, and rank averages increased from low to high performance ratings. This close alignment is conceptually plausible because teachers may regard fairness, integrity, respect, and responsibility as components of effective leadership. At the same time, both principal performance and value-based leadership were assessed by the same respondents, so common-source perceptions may have strengthened the association. Recent work also links value-oriented leadership with school culture and emphasizes that consistently enacted values can shape organizational practices (Öz, 2026; Snyder et al., 2024).

Willingness to undertake school administration was associated with universal, individual, and moral values but not national values. Teachers who wished to become administrators had higher rank averages in the significant dimensions. School satisfaction, in contrast, differed across all four dimensions, with satisfied teachers reporting the highest rank averages. These findings point to an association between positive evaluations of school leadership and teachers' attitudes toward their work environment, but the design does not permit causal claims about whether leadership perceptions increase satisfaction or satisfied teachers evaluate leadership more favorably.

The perceived importance of values education was associated with universal, moral, and national values, whereas individual values did not differ significantly. Teachers who considered values education very important generally reported higher rank averages. This pattern is consistent with the view that administrators' enacted values contribute to the moral and relational climate of schools (Baloğlu, 2012; Berson & Oreg, 2016; Setlhodi, 2022). It also supports leadership-development activities that help administrators connect values to observable decisions, communication practices, and relationships.

In conclusion, teachers generally perceived their school administrators as demonstrating value-based leadership. Differences were most consistent for perceived principal performance and school satisfaction, while several demographic and experience-related variables produced no differences. The findings extend school-based evidence on value-based leadership by examining universal, individual, moral, and national values together across a broad set of teacher- and school-related variables.

The findings should be interpreted in light of four limitations. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling from public high schools in one city, all variables were based on self-report, several contextual variables were measured categorically with single items, and the cross-sectional design does not support causal inference. Future studies may use probability sampling across different school levels and regions, obtain evidence from multiple stakeholders, combine surveys with observations or interviews, and examine how value-based leadership relates longitudinally to school culture, teacher satisfaction, and organizational outcomes. In practice, professional learning for school administrators may emphasize the consistent enactment of universal, individual, moral, and national values in decision-making, communication, conflict resolution, and staff support.

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Ethics statement: In this study, we declare that the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" are complied with and that we do not take any of the actions based on "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics". At the same time, we declare that there is no conflict of interest between the authors, which all authors contribute to the study, and that all the responsibility belongs to the article authors in case of all ethical violations.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Investigation of Value-Based Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators According to Teachers' Perceptions

Introduction: Values constitute a central foundation of leadership because they guide leaders' decisions, behaviors, relationships, and responses to organizational challenges. In educational institutions, school administrators are expected to perform administrative responsibilities while creating a trustworthy, fair, inclusive, and ethically responsible school environment. Their leadership practices influence communication among school members, teachers' attitudes toward their work environment, organizational culture, and the values conveyed to students. Value-based leadership refers to a leadership approach in which organizational decisions and practices are shaped by clearly articulated and consistently enacted values. School administrators who adopt this approach are expected to model the values they promote, establish respectful relationships with teachers, support fairness in decision-making, and create coherence between the school's stated principles and daily practices.

Value-based leadership in schools can be examined through universal, individual, moral, and national values. Universal values concern principles that are applicable across different social and cultural contexts. Individual values reflect respect for individuals, their needs, and their personal development. Moral values guide ethical judgment and responsible conduct, while national values represent commitments associated with national identity, culture, and shared social principles. Although value-based leadership has received considerable attention in organizational research, studies examining these four dimensions together in public schools remain limited. Further evidence is also needed regarding whether teachers' evaluations of administrators' value-based leadership differ according to their demographic characteristics, professional experiences, and perceptions of the school environment. Accordingly, this study aimed to determine teachers' perceptions of school administrators' value-based leadership characteristics and to examine whether these perceptions differed according to gender, professional seniority, educational level, subject field, number of teachers in the school, perceived principal performance, number of principals previously worked with, willingness to undertake school administration, school satisfaction, school tenure, and the perceived importance of values education.

Method: The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. The participants were 368 teachers working in 20 public high schools in Sivas city center during the 2022–2023 academic year. They were recruited through convenience sampling based on school accessibility, voluntary participation, and availability. The study group included 186 female and 182 male teachers. Most participants held a bachelor's degree, had 21 years or more of professional seniority, worked in social sciences and humanities, and were employed in schools with 31 or more teachers. Most had worked at their current school for seven years or less. In addition, 66.03% evaluated their principal's performance as moderate, 68.75% did not wish to undertake school administration, 77.17% were satisfied with their current school, and 67.39% considered values education very important.

Data were collected using a participant information form and the School Principals' Value-Based Leadership Scale. The 31-item scale consists of four dimensions: universal values, comprising 11 items; individual values, comprising nine items; moral values, comprising eight items; and national values, comprising three items. Data were analyzed using SPSS 23. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the total scale and its dimensions. Because the normality tests produced statistically significant results for the total score and all dimensions, nonparametric tests were employed in group comparisons. The Mann–Whitney U test was used for variables with two categories, and the Kruskal–Wallis test was used for variables with three or more categories. The level of statistical significance was set at .05.

Results: Teachers evaluated school administrators' value-based leadership characteristics at the “agree” level for the overall scale and all four dimensions. The overall mean score was 3.67. The mean scores were 3.59 for universal values, 3.72 for individual values, 3.53 for moral values, and 4.15 for national values. National values therefore received the highest evaluation, whereas moral values had the lowest mean. Nevertheless, all dimension scores remained within the “agree” range, indicating that teachers generally perceived their administrators as displaying value-based leadership characteristics.

Teachers' perceptions did not differ significantly according to professional seniority, educational level, number of teachers in the school, number of principals previously worked with, or school tenure. Gender-based differences were identified in the universal and national values dimensions, with male teachers reporting higher perceptions than female teachers. No gender differences were found in the individual and moral values dimensions. Subject-field differences emerged in the national values dimension. Teachers in science and mathematics had higher rank scores than teachers in social sciences and humanities and those working in vocational and technical fields. Subject field did not produce significant differences in the other dimensions.

Perceived principal performance was associated with significant differences in all four dimensions. Rank averages increased consistently from the low-performance group to the moderate- and high-performance groups. Thus, teachers who evaluated their principals' overall performance more positively also perceived stronger universal, individual, moral, and national value-based leadership characteristics. Willingness to undertake school administration produced significant differences in the universal, individual, and moral values dimensions but not in national values. Teachers who wished to become school administrators had higher rank averages in the dimensions displaying significant differences.

School satisfaction was associated with significant differences in all four dimensions. Teachers who were satisfied with their current schools reported the highest perceptions of administrators' value-based leadership, whereas dissatisfied teachers generally reported the lowest perceptions. The perceived importance of values education also produced significant differences in the universal, moral, and national values dimensions. Teachers who considered values education very important generally reported higher rank averages. No significant difference was identified in the individual values dimension.

Conclusion: The findings demonstrate that teachers generally perceive school administrators as displaying value-based leadership characteristics. The particularly high evaluation of national values suggests that these values are more visible in administrators' leadership practices. Perceived principal performance and school satisfaction generated the most consistent differences across the four dimensions. This pattern indicates a close relationship between teachers' evaluations of administrators' value-oriented behaviors and their broader assessments of leadership performance and the school environment. However, as the variables were evaluated by the same participants and the research was cross-sectional, the findings do not establish causal relationships.

The absence of differences according to professional seniority, educational level, school size, number of principals previously worked with, and school tenure suggests that perceptions were relatively consistent across several demographic and professional groups. Leadership development programs should strengthen administrators' ability to enact universal, individual, moral, and national values consistently in decision-making, communication, conflict resolution, and staff support. Future studies should include different school levels and geographical regions, use probability sampling, obtain data from multiple stakeholders, and combine surveys with observations or interviews. Longitudinal studies could also clarify how value-based leadership relates to school culture, teacher satisfaction, and organizational outcomes over time.

Keywords: Leadership, Values, School management, School administrator, Value-based leadership