

# The Relation between Teachers' Individual Values and Their Perception of Leadership

Ahmet Nalcaci

Dept. of Primary Education, Atatürk University

25240, Erzurum, Turkey

E-mail: nalcaci@atauni.edu.tr

Fatih Bektas

Dept. of Educational Science, Eskisehir Osmangazi University

26480, Eskisehir, Turkey

E-mail: fbektas@ogu.edu.tr

Engin Karadag

Dept. of Primary Education, Eskisehir Osmangazi University

26480, Eskisehir, Turkey

E-mail: enginkaradag@ogu.edu.tr

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## Abstract

*The present study aims to determine how much teachers' individual values predict their teacher leadership behaviors. The population of the research consists of teachers working in elementary schools located in the city center of Erzurum, Turkey. The sample of the research consists of 388 teachers chosen with the random sampling method. Data were obtained from "Individual values" and "Teacher leadership" scales. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis methods were used in analyzing data. Findings showed that teachers' individual values predict their teacher leadership behaviors at the rate of 37%. It was also determined that the most important individual values in teacher leadership are responsibility, candidness, discipline, respect and sharing variables.*

**Keywords:** Individual values, teacher leadership, teacher

## 1. Introduction

Teaching is different from other professions in terms of human relations as it is a profession conducted in communication and interaction with a large mass of people (Çelikten, Şanal & Yeni, 2005). Teachers, as members of the society, are at schools with their values, attitudes, manners, emotional sides, views of world, and behaviors; and, by time the values they have become the values of the society (Memiş & Güney-Gedik, 2010). It can be said that teachers' values have an important effect on the behaviors they display at school and in the classroom.

Such competences as the undertaking of voluntary tasks in formal and informal educational activities and processes, making independent projects, influencing the environment, supporting the development of his/her colleagues and establishing trust are explained as teachers'

leadership behaviors (Can, 2007). With reference to the view that values guide individuals in displaying different manners and behaviors, the purpose of this study is to determine how much teachers' individual values effect their teacher leadership behaviors.

### *1.1 Values*

Values are the beliefs and rules that shape and guide our behaviors (Hökelekli, 2013). While values are defined as tendencies to prefer a certain situation to another, they can be introduced, at the same time, as the views which bring about behaviors and are used to judge them. Values are the standards that foster the adaptation of individuals to the society (Elbir & Bağcı, 2013). Values are criteria that shape and maintain our individual and societal existence; they have the power to guide behaviors and they can be used in both understanding and defining the individual and society (Ersoy, 2010). Therefore, it is of great importance for individuals to effectively integrate into the community they live in and to build a solid identity (Acun, Yücel, Önder & Tarman, 2013). Individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and manners which the social life requires, first, in their families and immediate environments and then in the institutions of education (Yaşar & Çengelci, 2012).

Since values held are the factors that will shape the identity, world view, behaviors, even life of an individual in the future, it is necessary that he/she become aware of some certain values, gain the required values, adopt new values; and make all these values the main features of his/her identity and turn them into behaviors (Yaman, 2012, 18).

Values help individuals to make evaluations and establish attitudes by motivating them to search for and find the objects which are suitable for their values or which help them to satisfy their personal values (Devrani, 2010). In social life, individuals adopt the values of the groups, community, or culture they are in; and, afterwards, use them as the criteria in their decisions and choices (Yıldırım & Güven, 2012). An action in the social life of an individual does not take shape in accordance with just one value standard. There are many value standards which determine actions and these standards also determine the quality of the action (Özensel, 2003).

### *1.2 Teacher leadership*

The schools which are executing so many important functions in society need effective leaders (Balcı, 2007; Yavuz, 2010, Şişman, 2002). Huber (2004) considered leadership to be one of the most important factors in determining the quality of a school; and mentioned the necessity of distributing the leadership power across the entire organization. As a result of this distribution and sharing in an organization, it can be said that leaders who are in director positions must share their authority and responsibilities in organizational works with other personnel. This sharing also forms a basis for an environment of confidence and support among the directors, teachers and other personnel who form the organizational culture (Can, 2006).

Teacher leadership is a concept realized by any teacher automatically rather than determined by a director in studies conducted with colleagues. It is not necessary to give a teacher a leadership role for the practice of teacher leadership to emerge. That is to say, directors have considerable significance; however it is the teachers who make the first moves (Danielson, 2006).

Different forms of the teacher leadership concept are encountered in practices. Teachers work as group teachers; they work in parent-teacher associations and school protection groups, however teachers carry out these roles "as representatives rather than leaders" (Livingston, 1992).

In a school that he visited, after hearing the answer of a teacher who said, “I am only a teacher”, Barth (2001) dealt with the question of what is the difference between “a leader teacher” and “only a teacher” and he referred to some basic teacher leadership behaviors which are necessary for a school to function well. These behaviors are choosing educational materials, organizing programs, creating standards for student behaviors, deciding whether or not students should be directed to special classes, designing personnel development and in-service programs, deciding on the school budget, assessing teacher performances, electing new directors and teachers.

It is thought that all teachers have the potential to carry out the roles mentioned above; and they can provide benefits to their schools, students, directors and colleagues if they adopt and use these competences (Barth, 2001).

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Research Design*

The research was designed in a correlational research design to determine relationship between teacher’s individual values and leadership behavior. In this context, individual values were determined as independent variables and teacher leadership was determined as a dependent variable.

### *2.2 Population and Sample*

The population of the study consists of elementary school teachers working in the Erzurum city center. The sample of the research consists of 388 teachers working at the relevant schools and they were determined with the random sampling method. Of the teachers in the sample, 57.5% are male and 42.5% of them are female; 52.8% of the teachers are classroom teachers and 47.2% of them are in-field teachers. The seniorities of the teachers are as follows: 36.3% has 1-5 years seniority, 23.5% has 6-10 years, 20.1% has 11-15 years, 9.5% has 16-20 years and 10.6% has 20 years or more seniority.

### *2.3 Data collecting instruments*

Individual values scale: The Individual Values Inventory developed by Roy (2003) was readjusted by Asan, Ekşi, Doğan, and Ekşi (2008) by making an explanatory factor analysis. There are five sub categories in the scale (Discipline and Responsibility, Confidence and Forgiveness, Honesty and Sharing, Respect and Candidness, Sharing and Respect). The scale is a 5-grade Likert type scale (1. It never defines me, 2. It rarely defines me, 3. It sometimes defines me, 4. It generally defines me, 5. It always defines me) which consists of 47 items. The Cronbach Alpha value which was used in calculating the reliability value of each sub dimension of the scale ranges between .60 and .71. The Cronbach Alpha value calculated for this study is between .68 and .74.

Teacher leadership scale: Validity and reliability studies were conducted for the scale developed by Beycioğlu and Aslan (2010). According to the result of an explanatory factor analysis, the scale is a 5-graded Likert type scale (1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Sometimes, 4. Often, 5. Always) which consists of 25 items with three sub dimensions: institutional development, professional development and cooperation among colleagues. The Cronbach Alpha value used in the validity calculation ranges between .87 and .92. The Cronbach Alpha value calculated for this study is between .85 and .94. Detailed information about both of the scales is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability coefficients, averages and standard deviations of individual values and teacher leadership scales and their sub dimensions

Scales	Number of items	Alpha	X	SS	n
1-Institutional Development	9	.87	30.90	6.78	388
2-Professional Development	11	.85	46.60	6.03	388
3- Cooperation Among Colleagues	5	.88	19.45	3.44	388
Total [Teacher Leadership]	24	.94	76.2	11.9	388
4-Discipline and Responsibility	16	.72	70.18	7.42	388
5-Confidence and Forgiveness	12	.68	36.46	7.00	388
6- Honesty and Sharing	9	.74	37.39	3.98	388
7- Respect and Candidness	6	.73	20.98	2.92	388
8- Sharing and Respect	4	.71	17.75	2.36	388

### 3. Findings

The results of correlation analysis made for revealing the relation between individual values and teacher leadership are presented in Table 2. It was determined that there was a significant relation between all sub dimensions of individual values and all sub dimensions of teacher leadership in a positive way. It was also determined that there was a significant relation between total grades obtained from the teacher leadership scale and individual values sub dimensions at the levels of discipline and responsibility [ $r=.55$ ], confidence and forgiveness [ $r=.19$ ], honesty and sharing [ $r=.38$ ], respect and candidness [ $r=.36$ ], sharing and respect [ $.43$ ].

Table 2. Correlation matrix between individual values and teacher leadership

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-Institutional Development	-								
2-Professional Development	.55*	-							
3- Cooperation Among Colleagues	.63*	.62*	-						
4-Discipline and Responsibility	.36*	.62*	.45*	-					
5-Confidence and Forgiveness	.27*	.03	.19*	.09	-				
6- Honesty and Sharing	.24*	.44*	.31*	.58*	.15*	-			
7- Respect and Candidness	.34*	.28*	.30*	.32*	.47*	.40*	-		
8- Sharing and Respect	.24*	.51*	.38*	.55*	.12*	.49*	.27*	-	
9-Teacher Leadership [Total]	.88*	.85*	.82*	.55*	.19*	.38*	.36*	.43*	-

$n=388$ , \* $p<.01$

The results of the Multivariate Regression Analysis, which was made in order to determine how much elementary teachers' individual values predict teacher leadership competences in the light of their perceptions, are presented in Table 3. Firstly, individual values were determined as a dependent variable and teacher leadership was determined as an independent variable for making the multivariate regression analysis. Finally, the prediction power of individual values on teacher leadership was found to be statistically significant [ $F(5-382)=44,202$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. According to the analysis results, it was determined that all the individual values sub factors could explain 37% of the changes in teacher leadership scores [ $R=.61$ ,  $R^2=.37$ ]. When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the variables which predict the changes in teacher leadership scores to be significant are discipline and responsibility [ $\beta=.416$ ,  $p<.01$ ], respect and candidness [ $\beta=.165$ ,  $p<.01$ ] and sharing and respect [ $\beta=.150$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. According to the results obtained, all the five sub factors of individual values have a statistically significant prediction power on teacher leadership behaviors; yet, the values such

as discipline and responsibility, respect and candidness, sharing and respect appear to be more effective.

Table 3. Multivariate regression matrix between individual values and teacher leadership

Individual Values	<i>B</i>	<i>SH<sub>B</sub></i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	5.929	6.532		.908	.365
Discipline and Responsibility	.784	.103	.416	7.630	.000
Confidence and Forgiveness	.115	.092	.057	1.240	.216
Honesty and Sharing	-.015	.188	-.004	-.079	.937
Respect and Candidness	.791	.240	.165	3.294	.001
Sharing and Respect	.888	.300	.150	2.957	.003

$\eta=388, R=.61, R^2=.37, F=44,202, p<.01$

#### 4. Discussion

Data obtained in this study which examines the relation between teachers' individual values and leadership perceptions show a significant relation between these two variables in a positive way. It was determined that the leadership behaviors that teachers perceive at the highest level were those related to discipline and responsibility, honesty and sharing, and sharing and respect values. A human being is a creature who thinks, who has emotions, who is aware of these emotions, who shares, creates and conveys these emotions and who has values in common with the society in which he/she lives. For this reason, a person must hold the values which are the basis of common life and which are generally accepted (Akbaba-Altun, 2003). For a teacher, being respected by his/her colleagues; possessing leadership knowledge and skills, being distinguished in school and possessing principles based on an enduring and sharing relationship with other teachers are the values which must be emphasized in relation to teacher leadership and student learning (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Moller (1999) refers to the fact that teachers are willing to take on organizational responsibilities in their relations with their colleagues and school directors in educational services and they tend to have more of a "voice" in cooperation.

With the introduction of teacher leadership roles, the development and capacity for change in schools will increase and a positive effect will be created on teachers' spirits with teachers who create a cooperative environment (Little, 1995). It can be said that the spirits of teachers refers to the satisfaction felt as a result of achieving a work, and taking a role, whether to a greater or a lesser extent, in the work achieved (Chapman, 1999). Haris and Muijs (2003) emphasize that teachers have responsibilities such as the creation of a cooperative environment with their colleagues in order to seek fresh opinions and to devise concepts and educational activities, as well as unhesitatingly undertaking leadership roles in order to achieve high levels of learning and teaching.

According to the results of the multivariate regression analysis made for determining how much teachers' individual values predict their teacher leadership, all the sub dimensions of individual values can explain 37% of teacher leadership behaviors. Moreover, when the sub dimensions of individual values are examined, it is seen that discipline and responsibility, respect and candidness, sharing and respect values are the only significant predictors of teacher leadership behaviors. This result shows that teachers' values are an important factor in the leadership behaviors that the teachers display.

Values are elements most effective in guiding people's behaviors and shaping their lives throughout their lives (Iskan-Demirhan & Senemoğlu, 2009: 2). We create the purpose of life, and devise principles and priorities of behavior primarily in our intellectual world. What we create in this intellectual world is our guiding values. A human being cannot live independently



of values (Turan and Aktan, 2008). From this point of view, it may be said that a teacher's values play a significant role in his/her leadership behaviors. The importance of responsibility, confidence and sharing are especially emphasized in teachers' relations with their colleagues (Silins et al., 2000; as cited by Triska, 2007). Such teacher behaviors as trusting, supporting and assisting colleagues can also help to create a positive culture throughout the entire school (Can, 2007). The explanations and research results above show that certain values that teachers have are highly important for their behaviors. Behaviors of teachers are important aspect in studies about teachers (Çakmak, 2009). In this context, it can be said that value awareness and acquisition should be emphasized while determining education purposes and policies. Accordingly, ministries of education and universities should coordinate and concentrate on the development and regulation of research and plans that cover the education of values.

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