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# School culture as the predictor of teacher leadership\*

Mevlüt Kara<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between school culture and teacher leadership based on the perceptions of teachers working in primary schools. The study was designed with a predictive correlational model. The sample consisted of 625 teachers who were determined through a simple random sampling technique. The data were collected through the *School Culture Scale* and the *Teacher Leadership Scale*. In data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to reveal the participants' level of perception. Additionally, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and multiple regression analyses were performed. As a result, it was revealed that the teachers have relatively higher levels of perception about the task culture, success culture, and support culture while their perceptions of bureaucratic culture are moderate. Moreover, it was concluded that the participants' overall perceptions of teacher leadership are partially high. It was found that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between teacher leadership and the sub-dimensions of the task, support, and success cultures, and a low level of positive and significant relationship with the sub-dimension of bureaucratic culture. Finally, it was yielded that task culture, support culture, success culture, and bureaucratic culture predict teacher leadership significantly. Therefore, it is suggested to develop informal relationships, create an environment of trust, promote horizontal organizational structures, support teacher autonomy, and appreciate teacher achievement to develop teacher leadership at schools.

## Keywords:

School culture, Teacher leadership, Primary schools, Teacher.

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\*The approval of the ethics committee regarding the compliance of the research with the ethical rules was obtained from the Gaziantep University Ethics Committee with the decision dated 05/04/2022 and numbered 36.

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## INTRODUCTION

As open social systems, schools are dominated by values depending on interpersonal relationships. Values, norms, and beliefs of individuals at schools can cause differentiation in communication and interaction among them. These may result in schools having a unique cultural structure. While Şahin and Öztürk (2017) pointed out that institutions should have a strong and positive culture to increase their effectiveness and efficiency, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2013) noted that school culture affects the leadership roles that teachers will display. Furthermore, Şişman (2014) emphasized that leadership is important in motivating individuals effectively in line with the organizational goals, shaping the school culture, and making it sustainable. Thus, it can be inferred that there is a close relationship between the existing culture in schools and the leadership roles. Atay (2001) indicated that the leader is effective in shaping the culture and the culture is also important in shaping the individuals and that there is a very important link between the two. Each organization has its own unique and distinctive cultural structure. However, schools have a special place in terms of both being institutions that produce culture on their own and transferring social culture to new generations (Recepoğlu, 2014). Topçu (2019) asserted that the most influential factor in school culture is leadership. Although there are different definitions and classifications of leadership, the necessity of leadership skills for teachers has started to be emphasized as a result of the understanding of strengthening the roles of teachers not only inside but also outside the classroom within the scope of organizational change and development in this day and time (Harris & Muijs, 2005). It can be alleged that principles, beliefs, ideals, and values can be transferred to other individuals through effective leaders in schools and effective school culture can be created (Çelik, 2002). In line with this understanding, it can be argued that the leadership skills of teachers are highly important in the cultural development of schools. Öztürk and Şahin (2017) affirmed that teacher leadership is effective in the formation of school culture and that school culture should also encourage the emergence of teachers' leadership skills. Ensuring effective communication, participation, and cooperation in schools, supporting teacher leadership, and providing a trust-based working environment are vital for an effective school culture (Demir, 2014). Thus, the examination of the relationship between teacher leadership and school culture was considered a major problem of the study, and the perceptions of the teachers about the relationship between the two were attempted to be investigated. In this regard, the conceptual framework for school culture, teacher leadership, and the relationship between teacher leadership and school culture would be included in the ongoing part of the study.

### School Culture

School culture is a holistic phenomenon created collectively by the stakeholders and environment of the school (Kaysılı, 2020). Hudley and Annette (2008) explained school culture as the beliefs, values, and goals injected by individuals who are members of the school environment. In this regard, the beliefs, habits, abilities, and values provided by teachers, administrators, and all stakeholders in the school are the major constituents of school culture (Tosun, 2022). The formation of an organizational identity through all these factors that make up the culture may not be sudden and spontaneous. Balcı (2013) voiced that school culture makes sense over time and has become a way of life.

Deal and Peterson (2009) remarked that school culture expresses itself in the school's vision and values, rituals and ceremonies, history and stories, human relations, the school's architectural environment, artifacts, and symbols. Kalkan (2020) concluded that organizational commitment is high, facilitating values are prominent, the development of human resources is important, effective communication is concerned, cooperation and trust are important, high motivation and productivity are provided, internal control is common, job descriptions of individuals are clear, teacher development and student achievement are prioritized, democratic management and participation are ensured, and the leadership understanding that shapes the school culture is dominant in schools with strong school culture. On the other hand, it is highlighted that in schools where weak culture is in question, communication and interaction between individuals are limited, common values and goals could not be reached, resistance

to change is prevalent, and there are serious differences between thoughts and ideas (Deal & Peterson, 2009).

It is observed that different definitions and classifications are suggested in studies on school culture. While Rozenholtz (1989) classified the school culture as stuck or bustling, Stoll and Fink (1996) mentioned the bustling school, the cruise school, the touring school, the sinking school, and the struggling school cultures, and Deal and Peterson (2009) listed supportive and toxic school cultures (cited in Yurttas, 2022). This study adopted the classification by Terzi (2005) including support culture, task culture, success culture, and bureaucratic culture as follows. Success culture is the school's focus on the predetermined goals and objectives, support culture is the support and trust atmosphere among the stakeholders, the bureaucratic culture is the dominancy of official procedures and rules, and the task culture is based on the fulfilment of tasks by humane and material resources.

### **Teacher Leadership**

It can be argued that the administrative processes at school and associatively the school leadership have mostly been monopolized by the school principals beginning from the classical management approaches till the emergence of contemporary theories. However, traditional leadership approaches, which conceptualized leadership as the role and responsibility of the school principal, have lost their validity in terms of school effectiveness and goal attainment (Araşkal & Kılınc, 2019), and the phenomenon of school leadership has become increasingly complex together with the changes by the age (Harris, 2002). Factors such as developments in information and communication technologies, differentiation of people's expectations from education and school leaders, new roles and responsibilities for school administrators, and the transformation of administrative processes in organizations towards a more democratic and participatory structure have increased the need for administrators to cooperate and share responsibilities with other stakeholders in the school. Therefore, the idea that teachers who do not have an official administrative position can and should assume leadership roles has often become a current issue in recent years (Bozkuş, Taştan & Turhan, 2015). The change of leadership understanding in the direction of sharing the leadership with the employees from the leader-followers axis to the influencer-cooperation axis also has begun influential in the field of education and brought the concept of teacher leadership to the agenda (Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2012). With this approach, the concept of school leadership has been handled with a more collective perspective and it has become more participatory and democratic by getting rid of the monopoly of school principals. Scientific interest in the concept of teacher leadership has increased continuously since the early 1980s and a considerable knowledge base has been created (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This concept, which has attracted the attention of scientists for decades, continues to be used as an umbrella term that mostly emphasizes vested rights related to the teaching profession and school administration (Grant, 2019).

Definitions of teacher leadership offer the reader different perspectives on the scope and content of the phenomenon. Although there are numerous definitions, it is observed that there is no consensus as the concept can be handled in its way in each school context and it is believed to be related to a wide variety of activities, roles, and behaviours (Harris, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Teacher leadership is defined as "a model in which teachers at different levels have the opportunity to lead" (Harris & Lambert, 2003). According to this model, the leadership opportunity offered to each teacher should positively affect the school climate and increase the willingness of school members to stay where they work. In this regard, teacher leadership can be described as "actions that bind members together to improve the life of each member in the school, and accordingly, expand teachers' presence beyond the classroom" (Pineda-Báez, Bauman & Andrews, 2020). While the traditional understanding mostly emphasizes the in-class duties of teachers, the understanding of teacher leadership widens the influence of teachers outside of the classroom and imposes informal responsibilities in addition to formal ones. Thus, Struyve, Meredith and Gielen (2014) indicated that teacher leadership sometimes emphasizes a role with official duties and

authority (school coordinator, head teacher, mentor, etc.), and, it has the potential to influence other teachers' behaviours by communicating without any official duties for their professional development. Expressing that they can practice leadership both formally and informally implies the existence of strong relationships between teacher leaders (Sawalhi & Chaaban, 2022). Teacher leaders can reflect their leadership characteristics as long as they can influence them by establishing strong relationships with in-school and out-of-school stakeholders (student, teacher, administrator, parent, etc.). Finally, Kara and Bozkurt (2022) discussed the concept of teacher leadership from a broader perspective and portrayed it as "improving the learning outcomes of students by carrying out high-level instructional practices in the classroom and sharing them with other teachers, contributing to the professional development of other teachers through good relationships and cooperation, and thus leading the creation of a culture based on learning at school". Wenner and Campbell (2017) examined the definitions of teacher leadership in the literature and found that there are five themes: (a) Teacher leadership goes beyond classroom walls, (b) Teacher leadership includes promoting professional learning, (c) Teacher leadership includes shared policy and decision making, (d) The purpose of teacher leadership is to improve student learning and achievement, and (e) Teacher leadership is the process of facilitating overall school change and improvement.

Teacher leadership has many benefits and advantages for the school, students, teachers, administrators, and teacher leaders. Teacher leadership aims to build capacity in schools, maximize the intellectual and social capital of the school (Frost & Durrant, 2002), and contribute to the quality of education in the school through the individual and collective activities of each member of the school (Harris & Lambert, 2003). In line with school improvement efforts, this concept imposes new roles and responsibilities on teachers for the students in their classrooms and their colleagues outside (Wenner & Campbell, 2017). Teacher leadership primarily enables teachers to realize and develop their potential. When teacher leaders realize their potential, they become more effective in student learning and more successful in their profession (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2013). In addition, teacher leaders who participate in various professional development activities to provide professional development in theory and practice are in a continuous learning process. In addition to their development, teacher leaders also influence their colleagues at school in terms of professional development and drag them. Teacher leaders, who are important sources of expertise and knowledge, mediate for teacher development in terms of resources and expertise if needed (Harris, 2003). These teachers have the skills and habits to share their professional knowledge and skills with other teachers, especially novice ones, and make them effective teachers (Gonzales & Lambert, 2001). Teacher leaders' cooperation with their colleagues, sharing their activities, and contributing to their professional development has a positive effect on their professional satisfaction. Organizational commitment and desire to stay in the organization increase if teacher leaders feel appreciated in their school, participate in important decisions, and establish good relationships with administrators and teachers. Teacher leaders, who realize the shortcomings in the school more quickly and communicate with the administrators to eliminate them, also act as a bridge in the school (Ustaoğlu & Tekin Bozkurt, 2022). To sum up, it is of great importance for the development of schools as teacher leaders are experts in their field, make exemplary and innovative practices in their classrooms and have a positive effect on the learning of their students, share their classroom practices with their colleagues, contribute to the professional development of their colleagues, and enhance in-school communication by acting as a bridge between teachers and administrators. Teacher leaders lead school development with their roles and responsibilities inside and outside the school and make important contributions to the school's attainment of the predetermined goals.

The examination of the literature yielded that teacher leadership is divided into different dimensions in studies from the past to the present. A study by Muijs and Harris (2006) revealed that teacher leadership has five dimensions. The first dimension is the *collaborative decision-making process*, in which teachers are given the responsibility of making important decisions on behalf of the school related to school development. The second dimension is *cooperation* in which the school operates jointly for the main educational purposes. The third dimension is *active participation*, which refers to the participation of



teachers in the school development process. The fourth dimension is *professional learning*, which refers to the learning process of teachers individually and with their colleagues. The last and fifth dimension is *leadership*, where teachers deal with problems on behalf of the school to directly affect change and development. On the other hand, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2013) discussed teacher leadership in four dimensions namely “developing organizational capacity, creating a democratic school environment, developing teachers and ensuring their participation in school decisions, and enhancing teacher professionalism”. Hairon, Goh and Chua (2015) listed three dimensions: “establishing collaborative relationships among colleagues, encouraging teacher development and learning, and creating change in teachers’ teaching practices”. In the present study, the three dimensions of teacher leadership put forward by Beycioğlu (2009) were adopted. The first one is *institutional development* which is the dimension where the managerial responsibilities that usually belong to the principals are shared with the teachers and they are involved in various administrative activities and decision-making processes. The second dimension, *professional development*, emphasizes the professional development of teachers and their impact on their students and colleagues by exhibiting exemplary behaviours. The third and last dimension, *collaboration with colleagues*, means that teachers guide trainee teachers, lead the cooperation with their colleagues in line with their and the school’s needs, and strive to increase the quality of education at school.

### **The Relationship between School Culture and Teacher Leadership**

The examination of the literature on teacher leadership indicates that various factors affect the emergence or development of teacher leadership in schools. Frost and Harris (2003) classified the leadership of teachers in schools under the dimensions of “building the professional roles of teachers, organizational environment and personal capacity” and divided the organizational environment title into the sub-dimensions of “organizational structure, organizational culture, and social capital”. Harris and Muijs (2005) listed the factors that will affect the development of teacher leadership in schools as “supportive culture, strong leadership, innovative professional development, high level of teacher participation, shared professional practices, collective creativity, supportive structure, appreciation and rewarding”. Özdemir and Kiliç (2015) pointed out that teacher leadership is affected by the factors of “organizational structure, time, school culture and administrator support”. Finally, in the study conducted by Araşkal and Kiliç (2019), it was revealed that teacher leadership was affected by the school principal’s leadership, school climate, and school culture. It is clear that one of the common factors affecting teacher leadership is “school culture”.

For teacher leadership to flourish, a school culture that encourages teachers’ professional development and leadership is extremely important (Danielson, 2006). For teacher leaders to work comfortably in a school, the school culture must have clear cultural norms that encourage the emergence of teacher leadership (Kabler, 2013). If the norms and values in a school encourage continuous learning and development, all members of this culture will focus on learning, teachers will be expected to participate in this process, and teacher leaders will be accepted as role models in the profession (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). For this attitude to become widespread at schools, administrators need to create a culture that respects teachers who go beyond their traditional roles and take on leadership roles (Wagner, 2006). The creation of positive and democratic school culture in the school will contribute to the emergence and development of the leadership characteristics of teachers, and in this way, the emergence of new leaders. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2013) defined the characteristics of a healthy school culture that supports teacher leadership as a focus on professional development, respect for their contributions, professional autonomy and solidarity, participation in decision making, effective communication, and a positive environment in which teachers support each other. In schools where teacher leadership is supported, great importance is attached to the relations between colleagues, a participatory environment is created at the school through learning communities, and educational experiences are shared (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017). In addition, the focus on learning, questioning, and reflective practices at school, encouraging initiative taking, sharing responsibilities, decision making and leadership, being



appreciated as positive examples by teacher leaders, and being accepted as role models for teachers are other cultural factors that support teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Teacher leadership practices, which are of central importance in terms of both school and classroom development, have various benefits for schools, teachers, and students (Demir, 2020). In this respect, it is believed that investigating the concepts related to teacher leadership may have various practical benefits. In the present study, the relationship between teacher leadership and school culture was examined. In the relevant literature, various quantitative (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Kabler, 2013; Öztürk & Şahin, 2017; Wynne, 2004; Yusof, Osman, & Noor, 2016) and qualitative studies (Araşkal & Kılınç, 2016; Savaş, 2019) have revealed the relationship between teacher leadership and school culture. However, it can be claimed that the number of studies conducted especially in primary schools is limited and inadequate. In this regard, further studies are needed to reveal the correlation between school culture and teacher leadership in primary schools. It is hoped that the present study will contribute to the relevant literature in this respect. Moreover, this study is also important in terms of determining which cultural structure predicts teacher leadership behaviours. Scientific data may give clues about the cultural structure needed for the development of teacher leadership in schools. It is thought that these findings and results will be guiding especially for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. It can be asserted that this study will serve as a bridge between research and practice based on these contributions. In this regard, the present study aimed to examine the relationship between school culture and teacher leadership based on the perceptions of teachers working in primary schools. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- ✓ What is the level of teachers' perceptions of school culture and its sub-dimensions?
- ✓ What is the level of teachers' perceptions about teacher leadership and its sub-dimensions?
- ✓ Is there a significant relationship between school culture and teacher leadership based on teacher perceptions?
- ✓ Does school culture significantly predict teacher leadership based on teacher perceptions?

## METHOD

### Research Model

This study, which examines the relationship between school culture and teacher leadership, was designed with a predictive correlational model. In these studies, the relationships between the variables are investigated and one of them is attempted to be predicted based on the others (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2020). According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012), the variable which is to be predicted is called the predictor variable (predictor), and the one which is to be determined is called the criterion variable. While school culture is the predictor variable, teacher leadership is the criterion variable in the present study.

### Population and Sample

While the population consists of 23431 teachers working in the central districts of Gaziantep, the sample included 625 teachers who were determined by a simple random sampling technique and by voluntary participation. Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan (2004) indicate that a sample of 378 participants would be sufficient in a population of 25000 people with a sampling error of .05. In this vein, it is believed that the number of the study sample is sufficient. Of the participating teachers, 303 (48%) were female and 322 (52%) were male; 529 (85%) had undergraduate and 96 (15%) had graduate degrees; 385 (62%) worked in primary schools, 240 (38%) were in secondary schools; 51 (8%) were preschool teachers, 317 (51%) were primary school teachers, and 257 (41%) were branch teachers. In addition, 148 (28%) of teachers were between 20-30 ages, 282 (45%) were between 31-40 ages, and 195 (31%) were 41 and over. In terms of professional seniority, 243 (39%) had between 1-10 years, 253 (40%) had between 11-20 years, 110 (18%) had between 21-30 years, and 19 (3%) had 31 years or more seniority. By working time at school, 366 (59%) had 1-5 years, 155 (25%) had 6-10 years, and 104 (17%) had 11 years or more seniority.

### **Data Collection**

During the data collection procedure, the *School Culture Scale* and the *Teacher Leadership Scale* were used together with the *Personal Information Protocol* which was designed to determine the demographic characteristics of teachers. In the data collection form, the respondents were provided information about the purpose and scope of the study and the confidentiality of participant information. The scales of the study are introduced below.

*Teacher Leadership Scale*, the "*Teacher Leadership Scale*" developed by Beycioğlu and Aslan (2010) was used to measure the teacher leadership perceptions of the participants. The scale consists of three dimensions: institutional development (9 items), professional development (11 items), and collaboration with colleagues (5 items), and a total of 25 items. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were determined to be .90 for collaboration with colleagues, .92 for institutional development, .92 for professional development, and .96 for the overall scale within the scope of the present study. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis performed to test the construct validity of the scale, we estimated acceptable levels for the goodness of fit indices by  $\chi^2/df= 2.87$ , RMR= .034, RMSEA= .054, GFI= .91, AGFI= .88, CFI= .960, IFI= .96 (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu & Büyüköztürk, 2012).

*School Culture Scale*, the "*School Culture Scale*" developed by Terzi (2005) was used to determine the perceptions of participating teachers about the school culture in their schools. The scale consists of four 29 items: task culture (6 items), support culture (8 items), success culture (6 items), and bureaucratic culture (9 items). The high scores obtained from each factor of the scale indicate that the organizational culture feature of that dimension is high. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were computed to be .63 for task culture, .89 for support culture, .80 for success culture, and .80 for bureaucratic culture within the scope of the present study. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis performed to test the construct validity of the scale, we estimated acceptable levels for the goodness of fit indices by  $\chi^2/df= 2.81$ , RMR= .073, RMSEA= .054, GFI= .90, AGFI= .87, CFI= .91, IFI= .91 (Çokluk et al., 2012).

### **Data Analysis**

Research data were analysed using SPSS and AMOS software packages. Before analysing the data, the outliers were erased for normal distribution. After the outliers, it was observed that skewness ranged between -.585 and .330, and kurtosis was between -.165 and .541. As skewness and kurtosis estimates varied between -2 and +2, the research data were found to be normally distributed (Byrne, 2010). The skewness and kurtosis estimates were given in the findings section (Table 1). After the test of normality, it was decided to perform parametric tests, and statistical analyses such as mean and standard deviation were reported to determine the participants' perceptions of teacher leadership and school culture. In calculating the teachers' level of perception, the mean scores for school culture between 1.00 and 1.79 were graded with "Never", those between 1.80 and 2.59 were with "Rarely", those between 2.60 and 3.39 were with "Sometimes", those between 3.40 and 4.19 were with "Mostly", and those between 4.20 and 5.00 were with "Always". For teacher leadership, the mean scores between 1.00 and 1.79 were accompanied by "Never", those between 1.80 and 2.59 were with "Rarely", those between 2.60 and 3.39 were with "Sometimes", those between 3.40 and 4.19 were with "Often", and those between 4.20 and 5.00 were with "Always". Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis was used to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, and multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive power of the independent variable on the dependent one. To conduct multiple regression analysis, some assumptions (multicollinearity, covariance, normal distribution) must be met. Regarding multicollinearity, it was revealed that the binary correlations between the independent variables were less than .80, the VIF estimates were between 1.00 and 1.27, the tolerance limits were 1.00, and the CI index was between 1.00 and 12.16 (VIF<30; Tolerance >.02; CI index<30). All these imply the absence of multicollinearity (Büyüköztürk, 2003).



### Ethical Considerations

The approval of the Ethics Committee was obtained for the application of the data collection instruments, and the authors who developed the measurement tools were asked for permission via e-mail. Data were collected face-to-face and online from teachers who voluntarily participated in the study in the academic year 2021-2022. In addition, online scales were delivered to teachers through school administrators and they were asked to fill in the forms based on voluntary participation.

## FINDINGS

The mean and standard deviation were estimated to determine the perception levels of teachers regarding school culture and teacher leadership. Additionally, Table 1 introduced skewness and kurtosis estimates performed to test the normal distribution of research data.

**Table 1.** The Mean and Standard Deviation Estimated of the Variables and the Kurtosis-Skewness Coefficients

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	SD	Mean
<b>Task culture</b>	625	-.28	.01	.51	4.01
<b>Support culture</b>	625	-.39	.12	.68	3.71
<b>Success culture</b>	625	-.49	.43	.67	3.73
<b>Bureaucratic culture</b>	625	.33	.42	.62	3.11
<b>Organizational development</b>	625	-.14	-.16	.78	3.57
<b>Professional development</b>	625	-.74	.54	.64	4.14
<b>Collaboration with colleagues</b>	625	-.58	.13	.73	4.00
<b>Teacher leadership</b>	625	-.40	.13	.65	3.90

Table 1 demonstrates that teachers' perceptions of the dimensions of duty culture ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.01), support culture ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.71), and success culture ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.73) are at the degree of mostly while it is sometimes for the bureaucratic culture ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.11). For teacher leadership, it was observed that the perceptions of institutional development ( $\bar{X}$ =3.57), professional development ( $\bar{X}$ =4.14), collaboration with colleagues ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.00), and overall teacher leadership ( $\bar{X}$ =3.90) are at the level of often.

The findings regarding the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between the variables were submitted in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Correlation Coefficients between the Variables

	Organizational development	Professional development	Collaboration with colleagues	Teacher leadership
<b>Task culture</b>	.40**	.41**	.37**	.44**
<b>Support culture</b>	.54**	.57**	.57**	.61**
<b>Success culture</b>	.52**	.57**	.52**	.59**
<b>Bureaucratic culture</b>	.14**	.09*	.05	.11**

\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$

According to Table 2, there is a moderate level of positive and significant relationships between teacher leadership and task culture ( $r = .44$ ;  $p < .01$ ), support culture ( $r = .61$ ;  $p < .01$ ), and success culture ( $r = .59$ ;  $p < .01$ ). On the other hand, it was determined that there is a very low positive and significant relationship between teacher leadership and bureaucratic culture ( $r = .11$ ;  $p < .01$ ). One of the salient findings of the study was that there is a very low significant relationship between bureaucratic culture and the organizational development ( $r = .14$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and professional development ( $r = .09$ ;  $p < .05$ ) dimensions of

teacher leadership. There is no significant relationship between collaboration with colleagues and bureaucratic culture ( $p > .05$ ).

Multiple regression analysis was performed to test whether the independent variables were significant predictors of the dependent variable, and the findings were given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Multiple Regression Analysis to Predict Teacher Leadership

Variables	B	Se	$\beta$	t	p	Partial	Part
(Constant)	.67	.17		3.85	.00		
Task culture	.23	.04	.18	5.27	.00	.21	.16
Support culture	.36	.05	.38	6.66	.00	.26	.20
Success culture	.19	.05	.20	3.50	.00	.14	.10
Bureaucratic culture	.08	.03	.08	2.40	.02	.10	.07

\*\* $p < .001$ ;  $R = .66$ ;  $R^2 = .43$ ;  $F_{(4/620)} = 122.44$ ; Depended variable: Teacher leadership

Table 3 yielded that all the sub-dimensions of school culture, namely task culture, support culture, success culture, and bureaucratic culture, are significant predictors of teacher leadership. As a result of the analyses, a significant regression model ( $F_{(4/620)} = 122.44$ ;  $p < .001$ ) is created and the task culture, support culture, success culture, and bureaucratic culture explain 43% of teacher leadership. Accordingly, the order of importance and effect sizes ( $pr^2$ ) were found to be; support culture ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $pr^2 = .06$ ), success culture ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $pr^2 = .02$ ), task culture ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $pr^2 = .04$ ) and bureaucratic culture ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $pr^2 = .01$ ). The regression equation is as follows:

$$\text{Teacher leadership} = .67 + .23 \cdot \text{task culture} + .36 \cdot \text{support culture} + .19 \cdot \text{success culture} + .08 \cdot \text{bureaucratic culture}$$

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between school culture and teacher leadership based on the perceptions of teachers working in primary schools. For this purpose, teachers' levels of perception of school culture were initially examined. As a result of the study, it was revealed that the perceptions of the teachers working in primary schools about the task culture, success culture, and support culture are partially high while they have moderate levels of perception of bureaucratic culture. Furthermore, it was determined that the most dominant cultural dimension in primary schools is task culture. Similarly, a great many studies on school culture in Turkey (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Kılınç, 2014; Koşar & Çalık, 2011; Özdemir, 2012; Sezgin, 2010; Terzi, 2005) concluded that the dominant culture in schools is the task-oriented culture. In schools where the task culture is predominant, the work is emphasized and the primary goal is to reach organizational goals. In these kinds of organizations, it is expected that the structure, functioning, and activities will all serve the organizational goals (Kılınç, 2014). As task culture implies a cultural structure that is somewhat more difficult to control and coordinate, important tasks are assigned to those who can carry out that job properly (Handy, 1993). Therefore, field experts should be brought together for the predetermined organizational tasks to be achieved. This result of the study implies that teachers have a professional approach to their profession and they try to fulfil their professional requirements. However, it also shows that teachers attach more importance to the goals and objectives of the schools rather than theirs. On the other hand, it was concluded that the cultural dimension in which the teachers have the lowest level of perception is the bureaucratic culture. In organizations with a bureaucratic culture, rules and standards are highlighted, and managers exercise strict control over practices (Korumaz, Kılıç & Kocabaş, 2020). The division of labour, a clearly defined

hierarchy, and impersonal relationships (Şahin & Tabak, 2022) are other prominent elements of this cultural structure. However, in schools, which are educational organizations, it is necessary to cooperate and act together to achieve determined goals among the stakeholders. Therefore, it can be claimed that the horizontal organization, in which personal relationships are more intense, is more effective than the superior-subordinate relationship in educational organizations. In schools, teachers and administrators often take responsibility and carry out jobs outside of their job descriptions, and schools continue to exist in this way. In this regard, it is expected that teachers' perception levels of bureaucratic culture are low. In various studies on school culture (Balçık & Ordu, 2019; Demirtaş, Aksoy, Balı & Çağlar, 2019; Yılmaz & Erol, 2023), it was revealed that teachers' perception of bureaucratic culture is low, in line with our findings.

The perception levels of teachers regarding teacher leadership and its sub-dimensions were secondarily examined in the study. As a result, it was found that the overall perceptions of teachers about teacher leadership are partially high. It implies that teachers are in the belief that they contribute to increasing student achievement and school success by taking informal responsibilities in and out of the classroom as well as their formal responsibilities. In addition, it can be alleged that the participating teachers take an active role in educational activities by collaborating with other teachers and administrators, supporting teachers' professional development and motivating them for instructional practices, and participating in administrative processes by taking part in decision-making mechanisms. The relevant literature is full of studies (Aslan, Çalık & Er, 2019; Dağlı & Kalkan, 2021; Ergül, 2020; Kara & Bozkurt, 2022) with similar findings and results. When the perception levels for the sub-dimensions of teacher leadership are examined, it has been determined that teachers have a partially high level of perception in all three dimensions. Among these, professional development is the dimension in which teachers have the highest level of perception. This result of the study means that the participating teachers are both in a constant effort about their professional development and they lead professional development by influencing their colleagues in this vein. Both formal and informal professional development activities are needed to improve teachers' conceptual development, understanding and classroom practices (İlğan, Çelik-Çalı, Sevim & Bolat, 2021). Accordingly, Harris and Muijs (2005) emphasized the professional development of teachers and the roles and responsibilities of leading teachers in terms of supporting the academic achievement of students. Moreover, Ayvalı and Koşar (2021) argued that following the innovations in professional development and motivating colleagues by cooperating with other teachers are salient teacher leader roles. A great many studies on teacher leadership (Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2012; Bozkuş et al., 2015; Gülbahar, 2017; İbiş & Çalışkan, 2021) reported similar findings and results to the current one. Contrarily, in the research conducted by Öntaş and Okut (2017) in private primary schools, professional development is the dimension with teachers' lowest level of perception. The difference between the perceptions of private and public-school teachers may be related to the fact that teachers working in public schools work under the Ministry of National Education, which has a deep-rooted institutional structure and regularly trains teachers in various ways. On the other hand, it was determined that the teacher leadership dimension in which teachers have the lowest level of perception was institutional development. It indicates that the expectations of teachers in terms of taking part in administrative processes at school, participating in school development studies, and contributing to the teaching capacity of the school have not been fully met. In many other studies (Akın Kösterelioğlu & Demir, 2014; Cansoy & Parlar, 2018; Kara & Bozkurt, 2022; Kılınç & Recepoğlu, 2013), teachers have the lowest perceptions of teacher leadership in the dimension of institutional development in support of the present study. This result also indicates that school administrators do not share the lead as much as expected by teachers and they do not sufficiently participate teachers in the decisions.

The third sub-question of the study tested whether there is a significant relationship between school culture and teacher leadership based on teacher perceptions. As a result, it was determined that there is a moderate, positive, and significant relationship between teacher leadership and the dimensions of the task culture, support culture, and success culture. Support culture is the dimension with the highest relationship with teacher leadership. This result shows that teachers exhibit much more leadership

behaviours as a result of being respected, approved, rewarded, satisfied in terms of their social identity needs, cared for their ideas, and supported in every work or non-work issue (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli & Lynch, 1997; Özdevecioğlu, 2003). For teachers to exhibit their leadership behaviours more effectively, it is important for teachers to express themselves comfortably in school, to know that they have credit for making mistakes, and to feel that the school they work for and their stakeholders are behind them in good or bad times. In the study conducted by Cansoy and Parlar (2017), it was determined that there was a moderate and significant relationship between support culture and the sub-dimensions of teacher leadership in parallel with our results. On the other hand, it was concluded that there is a very low positive and significant relationship between teacher leadership and bureaucratic school culture. This result means that teachers cannot exhibit their leadership behaviours much in schools with a hierarchical organizational structure, an authoritarian management approach, official relations, strict rules, and strict supervision. It does not seem possible to exhibit teacher leadership behaviours in such schools where the fulfilment of the given orders is important, there is a strict and high level of control, and the flow of power and communication is one-way and top-down (Hoy & Miskel, 2012).

The present study finally examined whether school culture significantly predicted teacher leadership. Accordingly, the findings regarding the variance in which task culture, support culture, success culture, and bureaucratic culture explain teacher leadership has been reached. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2013) noted that effective teacher leadership is related to a great many factors, including peer attitudes, relationships with administrators, and interpersonal relationships. This study focused on the relationship between school culture and teacher leadership. As a result of the analyses, it was concluded that task culture, support culture, success culture, and bureaucratic culture are the variables that predict teacher leadership significantly. It has been observed that support culture is the variable that explains teacher leadership at the highest rate. This result implies that teachers may exhibit teacher leadership behaviours more in a school that has a culture where they are valued, loved, in solidarity, express themselves comfortably, share their joys and sorrows, support their professional development, and have strong cooperation and communication. Similarly, Harris and Mujis (2006) pointed out that teacher leadership will also develop in schools where a supportive school structure is dominant, professional practices are shared and professional development opportunities are provided. Can (2006) also uttered that unreliable, unconstructive, and unsupportive school environments may hinder teacher leadership. In the study by Cemaloğlu and Savaş (2018), it was found that the more supportive behaviours of school administrators are, the more teachers display teacher leadership behaviours. It can be asserted that it is in conformity with our result. On the other hand, it was observed that bureaucratic culture is a factor explaining teacher leadership at the lowest rate. Thus, it can be alleged that teacher leadership behaviours will be exhibited in a limited way in schools where superior-subordinate relations are emphasized, rules are strictly enforced, formal relationships are more common, and strict supervision and authority are in question. In support of our result, Araşkal and Kılınç (2019) mentioned that limitation of teachers by laws and regulations, insufficient support of administrators, and excessive emphasis on the hierarchy may restrict teacher leadership. It can be expected that teacher leadership behaviours will be exhibited more in schools that have a culture where cooperation and communication among colleagues are realized effectively, the professional development of teachers is supported, a participatory understanding is dominant, and the development of students and all stakeholders is supported, and an environment of trust is established between individuals. Moreover, it was yielded that the four dimensions of school culture explain teacher leadership by 43%. This result indicates that although school culture is a very important factor in terms of teacher leadership, different factors may affect teacher leadership. When the literature on teacher leadership is examined, teacher autonomy (Kara & Bozkurt, 2022), perceptions of political skills (Aslan et al., 2019), teachers' levels of individual innovativeness (Akin Kösterelioğlu & Demir, 2014), and supportive behaviours of school administrators (Cemaloğlu & Savaş, 2018) appear to affect leadership.

### Limitations and Recommendations

It can be asserted that there are some limitations to the study. The first limitation is the instrument of study. Both scales used for data collection were developed in line with the opinions of teachers working in primary schools. Therefore, the sample of the present study is limited to teachers working in primary schools. The issue can also be addressed at other educational levels by adapting existing scales or developing newer ones. Another limitation of the study is related to its sample. The present study was conducted in two central districts of Gaziantep province. Research can be extended to cultural environments with different characteristics. Another limitation of the sample is that only teachers' opinions were consulted. Different research can be conducted in which the opinions of school administrators are consulted regarding the relationship in question. It was determined that institutional development is the teacher leadership dimension with the lowest perception level of teachers. For teachers to contribute more to institutional development, mechanisms should be established to ensure their participation in administrative processes. Therefore, school administrators may create digital and technological infrastructures in their schools. In addition, it can be recommended to hold collective and individual meetings at schools at regular intervals, where the opinions of the teachers are sought. On the other hand, the present study concluded that the dimension of school culture with the highest relationship with teacher leadership is support culture and the dimension with the lowest relationship is bureaucratic culture. In this regard, it can be recommended to conduct quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method studies on the relationship between "perceived organizational support and teacher leadership" to reveal the relationship between support culture and teacher leadership more clearly. Moreover, it can be suggested that practices and behaviours should be put into effect to develop informal relations, provide an environment of trust, extend horizontal organization, support teacher autonomy, and appreciate teacher success for improving teacher leadership in schools.

### Statement of Researchers

**Researchers' contribution rate statement:** The first author's contribution rate is 100%.

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