



**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
FENERBAHÇE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT**

**THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL &
TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON ENGLISH TEACHERS'
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, EMPLOYEE
TURNOVER, AND JOB SATISFACTION**

Master's Thesis

**Mohadeseh ARZHANGI
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**Advisor
Assistant Professor Dr. Çiğdem ASARKAYA**

Istanbul, 2025



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**FENERBAHÇE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
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The work titled The Impact of Transformational & Transactional Leadership on English Teachers' Organizational Commitment, Employee Turnover, and Job Satisfaction by Mohadeseh ARZHANGI was successful at the thesis defense exam held at [Date of Defense Exam] day and was accepted as a master's thesis by our jury.

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I declare that all the information and documents I have obtained in this work is within the framework of academic rules, that I present all the visuals, audio, written information, and results in this work is in accordance with scientific methods. I declare that I have not falsified any data, that I have referred to the sources I have used in this work complies with scientific norms, and that the work is original, except for the citations. I declare that this work was produced by me under the supervision of Assistant Professor Dr. Çiğdem ASARKAYA, and was written according to the Fenerbahce University Graduate School Term Project and Thesis Writing and Printing Guide.

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Title of Thesis: The Impact of Transformational & Transactional Leadership on English Teachers' Organizational Commitment, Employee Turnover, and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates how English language teachers in Tehran and Istanbul, two culturally different urban centers, integrate the impact of leadership styles on their work experiences. The study examines the effects of transformational and transactional leadership models on employee turnover, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction in private language schools. The study, which is based on in-depth interviews with 20 teachers and draws on hermeneutic phenomenology, provides rich narrative insights into the institutional and relational dynamics at work.

Findings indicate that transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, emotional support, and personalized guidance, positively shapes teacher engagement, morale, and institutional loyalty. Conversely, institutions dominated by transactional approaches emphasizing control, performance monitoring, and contingent rewards; often contribute to emotional fatigue, professional disengagement, and higher turnover intent. The cross-cultural dimension reveals that while leadership expectations are deeply shaped by sociocultural norms, teachers in both cities favor leadership that fosters trust, mentorship, and ethical reciprocity. The study concludes that effective leadership in language education must be both contextually responsive and emotionally intelligent, particularly in diverse and high-pressure teaching environments.

Keywords: Educational leadership, employee turnover, English language teachers, Istanbul, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, Tehran, transactional leadership, transformational leadership

Tezin Başlığı: Dönüştürücü ve Takasçı Liderliğin İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Örgütsel Bağlılığı, Çalışan Sirkülasyonu ve İş Doyumu Üzerindeki Etkisi

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ÖZET

Bu nitel çalışma, kültürel olarak farklı iki kentsel merkez olan Tahran ve İstanbul'daki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, liderlik stillerinin iş deneyimlerine etkisini nasıl entegre ettiklerini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma, özel dil okullarında dönüştürücü ve işlemci liderlik modellerinin çalışan devri, örgütsel bağlılık ve iş tatmini üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Çalışma, 20 öğretmenle yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanan ve yorumlayıcı fenomenolojiden yararlanan, kurumsal ve ilişkisel dinamiklere dair zengin anlatı içgörülerini sunmaktadır.

Bulgular, ilham verme, duygusal destek ve kişiselleştirilmiş rehberlik ile karakterize edilen dönüştürücü liderliğin, öğretmen katılımını, moralini ve kurumsal bağlılığını olumlu yönde şekillendirdiğini göstermektedir. Tersine, kontrol, performans izleme ve koşullu ödüllere vurgu yapan işlemci yaklaşımlarının hakim olduğu kurumlar; genellikle duygusal yorgunluğa, mesleki kayıtsızlığa ve daha yüksek işten ayrılma niyetine katkıda bulunur. Kültürlerarası boyut, liderlik beklentilerinin sosyokültürel normlar tarafından derinden şekillendirildiğini ortaya koyarken, her iki şehirdeki öğretmenler de güven, mentorluk ve etik karşılıklılığı teşvik eden liderliği tercih etmektedir. Çalışma, dil eğitiminde etkili liderliğin hem bağlamsal olarak duyarlı hem de duygusal olarak zeki olması gerektiğini, özellikle çeşitli ve yüksek baskılı öğretim ortamlarında, sonucuna varmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çalışan sirkülasyonu, dönüştürücü liderlik, eğitsel liderlik, İngilizce öğretmenleri, İstanbul, iş doyumunu, örgütsel bağlılık, takasçı liderlik, Tahran

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

It is commonly accepted that leadership is one of the most important factors affecting an organization's performance and efficacy, especially in educational settings where interactions between administrators, teachers, and students have a significant impact on the general learning environment. Leadership is the fundamental force that determines important elements like curriculum delivery, teacher motivation, organizational culture, and ultimately, student accomplishment. It goes well beyond simple management duties like managing daily operations or supervising employees. Education leadership has become a crucial strategic element in the face of persistent global difficulties, such as the quick speed of digital innovation, the growing cultural and linguistic variety of pupils, and the rising rates of burnout among educators. It is now a crucial force that can direct revolutionary change within educational systems and is no longer just an administrative supervision issue (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Fullan, 2016).

It is even more clear that leadership is required while teaching languages. Teaching English has unique pedagogical, institutional, and professional issues that necessitate leadership that is cautious and adaptable. Unlike many other areas, teaching English often involves cross-cultural interactions, quickly changing curricula, and a variety of student motivations. To maintain high levels of efficacy and student engagement, English teachers are constantly under pressure to modify their teaching methods. Thus, teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention are directly impacted by the caliber of leadership in these settings (Nguyen, 2018; Harper & Schmidt, 2021).

Educational institution administrators are responsible for motivating their employees, settling disputes, and fostering an environment where teachers may flourish in addition to carrying out policies. Due to high personnel turnover, inadequate institutional support, and employment contracts that frequently lack the long-term security offered by public schools, this difficulty becomes even more critical in private and semi-private language schools (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). In linguistically and culturally

diverse settings like Tehran and Istanbul, English teachers are under increased pressure to address the communication demands of pupils from a variety of backgrounds. The leadership style has a major impact on the work environment and the emotional resilience of teachers in these situations (Chen, 2019; Shields, 2010).

The last three decades have seen a significant amount of research in education that has demonstrated the importance of leadership in enhancing teacher effectiveness satisfaction and professional development (Day and Sammons 2016 Hargreaves & Fink 2006). At the same time fresh viewpoints on leadership have surfaced moving away from rigid hierarchical structures and toward more flexible relational and transformative approaches. These modifications are the outcome of a greater awareness of the value of offering administrative psychological and professional support to educators. Leadership is therefore becoming a relational values-based profession that requires emotional intelligence cultural sensitivity and the ability to adapt to the shifting needs of educators (Goleman 2000 Berkovich & Eyal 2020).

The shift away from traditional authoritarian leadership and toward more participatory and empowering approaches has led to the rise in popularity of transformational and transactional leadership paradigms in educational research. Due to its focus on transformational change personalized support and motivation transformational leadership is frequently praised (Bass & Riggio 2006). However, transactional leadership provides the structural discipline and goal clarity needed for institutional stability, especially in highly standardized or performance-oriented organizations (Bush 2021 Avolio & Yammarino 2013). The interplay of these two techniques has a substantial impact on how English teachers perceive institutional support, feel about their workplaces, and make career decisions.

This study expands on these fundamental concepts by investigating how different leadership philosophies—in particular, transformational and transactional philosophies—affect the real-world experiences of English teachers working for urban language schools. Understanding the interaction between leadership and instructors is crucial and relevant given the importance of English language instruction in regional and international educational practices as well as the growing worries about teacher dissatisfaction and attrition. Additionally, in order to go beyond abstract measurements

and investigate the fundamental meanings and implications of leadership as experienced in context, this study focuses on qualitative insights that were directly collected from instructors in Tehran and Istanbul.

To sum up, educational leadership has the power to change institutional trust teacher involvement and educational quality. Rather than being a static idea it is a dynamic context-sensitive activity. The importance of having capable leadership in educational institutions and language centers to fulfill the demands of 21st-century learning cannot be overstated, especially when that leadership is cognizant of the objectives and requirements of language teachers.

1.2 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN A CROSS-CULTURAL AND GLOBALIZED CONTEXT

In the last two decades, educational systems worldwide have undergone profound transformation, driven by globalization, increased linguistic diversity, and shifting workforce expectations (Schleicher, 2012). These dynamics are particularly visible in urban centers such as Istanbul and Tehran, where language education—especially English—has become both a pedagogical imperative and a socio-economic tool. The role of leadership in managing these complex, multilingual educational environments has never been more critical.

Language schools, unlike traditional public institutions, frequently operate within a market-oriented framework. They face unique leadership challenges: inconsistent policy frameworks, limited institutional stability, and staff recruited on short-term or non-standardized contracts (Nguyen, 2018). These conditions demand leadership that is not only administratively competent but also emotionally intelligent and culturally responsive. As Day and Sammons (2016) point out, leadership that fails to consider the emotional and cultural context of teachers risks exacerbating burnout, attrition, and disengagement.

Transformational leadership, in particular, has been identified as a potential remedy to these challenges. It emphasizes individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and the development of shared vision—all of which are especially relevant in environments characterized by pedagogical innovation and intercultural complexity

(Bass & Riggio, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). In Tehran and Istanbul, where educators often contend with limited institutional support and diverse learner profiles, leadership practices that foster trust, inclusivity, and a sense of purpose are vital for sustaining motivation and reducing turnover (Chen, 2019; Harper & Schmidt, 2021).

However, local cultural norms have an impact on how effective different leadership styles are. Although Iran and Turkey share collectivist values and a relatively high-power distance (Hofstede, 2001), they differ in the ways that mentorship and authority are exercised in educational settings. For instance, research by Berkovich and Eyal (2020) shows that transformational leadership needs to be balanced to respect traditional expectations while promoting innovation in environments where hierarchy is highly respected. Particularly when overseeing a culturally diverse teaching staff, leaders in these settings must balance the conflict between formal authority and interpersonal engagement.

This study contributes to the understanding of how such leadership styles are interpreted by language teachers in these specific cultural contexts. It addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on private, urban language institutions rather than public schools or general education systems, and by prioritizing teacher narratives over institutional performance metrics. In doing so, it seeks to answer an urgent question in contemporary educational research: what kind of leadership fosters sustainable teaching practice in rapidly changing, culturally layered environments?

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 CONCEPTUALIZING TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP

In conclusion teacher involvement institutional trust and educational quality can all be impacted by education leadership. It is not a static idea but rather a dynamic context-sensitive activity. It cannot be emphasized enough how crucial it is for educational institutions and language centers to have competent leadership in order to meet the demands of 21st-century learning particularly when that leadership is aware of the goals and needs of language teachers.

The fundamental tenet of transformational leadership is that effective leadership requires more than just routine task delegation and oversight. Rather, it envisions a scenario where the leader motivates followers to transcend their own personal and professional boundaries, so igniting transformation. Bass and Avolio (2004) define transformational leadership in terms of four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and customized concern. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) and Day et al. (2016), these components all work together to promote a culture of creativity, reflection, and mutual growth—qualities that are essential for instructors in complex, multicultural, and frequently underfunded environments like English language schools in big cities.

The phrase "idealized influence" refers to a leader's role as a visionary and moral role model who fosters trust and provides a paradigm of moral behavior that educators can emulate. Inspiring motivation helps teachers connect with the greater institutional mission and discover a sense of purpose in their teaching methods. Intellectual stimulation encourages innovation by challenging instructors to properly reassess traditional teaching methods and think of creative ways to meet the students' needs. Finally, individualized consideration shows that the leader is committed to adjusting professional development, mentoring, and support to the atypical challenges and capabilities of each educator (Shields, 2010; Moolenaar et al., 2010).

Since teachers frequently work in classrooms with a variety of cultural backgrounds and must constantly adapt their teaching strategies to account for shifting language

competencies, transformational leadership offers an empowering approach in the context of English instruction. It not only validates teacher autonomy but also fosters resilience and adaptability, which are essential traits for educators working in multicultural, multilingual, high-demand environments like Tehran and Istanbul (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020; Nguyen, 2018).

Conversely, transactional leadership is characterized by an exchange-based relationship in which leaders set expectations, track performance, and set measurable goals utilizing a system of incentives and penalties. According to this method, which is usually founded on classic management theory, job completion and compliance are critical to an organization's ability to function (Burns, 1978; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). In general, transactional leaders prioritize upholding stability and order, ensuring that employee behavior aligns with company policies, and implementing corrective measures when performance falls short of objectives (Bush, 2021).

Dependent pay and management-by-exception are the two main tenets of transactional leadership. The use of incentives to promote desired behaviors and results, such as praise for well-prepared lessons, efficient classroom management, or student accomplishment, is known as contingent rewards. However, management-by-exception includes both active and passive measures when teachers do not fulfill predefined norms or benchmarks (Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Transactional leadership has been criticized for failing to consider teachers' motivation, inventiveness, and mental health, even though it may work well in businesses that demand distinct hierarchies and operational consistency. This is especially troublesome in educational contexts since, in addition to teaching knowledge, teachers are supposed to foster critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and student-centered learning.

According to research, an excessive dependence on transactional methods is linked to teacher burnout, low morale, and higher turnover, especially in educational settings where effectiveness depends on responsiveness and creativity (Goleman 2000 Wang et al., 1997).

It is crucial to remember that transformational and transactional leadership styles are not mutually exclusive. The advantages of both approaches are combined in a hybrid leadership approach, per recent research. This approach recognizes the value of structure and accountability while promoting trust, creativity, and professional growth (Day & Sammons 2016; Fullan 2016). For instance, a school administrator may use transactional tactics to make sure that academic schedules and institutional standards are followed while simultaneously utilizing transformational concepts to mentor and empower staff members. Because the relationship between relational dynamics and performance measures is often more delicate and complex than in other professions, this contradiction is particularly relevant to English language training.

Lastly, by examining leadership from the perspectives of both transformational and transactional models, academics and professionals can gain a better knowledge of how different strategies affect institutional culture and teacher experience. These frameworks are especially helpful for shedding light on the different ways that educators see, comprehend, and respond to leadership on a daily basis when analyzing qualitative data, such as teacher narratives and reflections. The present study is grounded on these theoretical frameworks, which enable us to examine leadership outcomes and experiences. In qualitative educational research, this distinction is important.

2.2 LEADERSHIP IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION CONTEXTS

Among the more general issues of educational leadership, language instruction leadership is a particularly difficult field. Language education, especially English language instruction, adds pedagogical and cultural complexity to general school management, which includes overseeing personnel, curriculum, student results, and institutional goals. More than just a subject, English serves as a worldwide opportunity gatekeeper, a cultural medium, and a cross-border communication tool. Therefore, in addition to the academic and operational facets of school management, leadership in English language schools must attend to the emotional, cultural, and professional needs of teachers navigating increasingly diverse classrooms and changing institutional expectations (Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Shields, 2010).

English teachers frequently face a variety of challenges outside of their typical duties in the classroom. These include integrating students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, providing cognitive, social, and intercultural competencies all at once, and staying current with communicative language teaching techniques. Language instructors must also continuously interact with students who are learning English for a range of reasons, including personal growth, immigration, academic aspirations, or financial necessity. Because of the variety of learning objectives, language instructors play a pedagogically challenging and emotionally complicated job that is extremely sensitive to institutional culture and leadership styles (Nguyen, 2018; Moolenaar et al., 2010).

Additionally, there are notable variations in the types of language education provided by different establishments, particularly among private language academies, international education centers, and public schools. English teachers are frequently hired temporarily by privately controlled or franchised companies that prioritize market competition and client happiness over long-term professional development, especially in major cities like Istanbul and Tehran. Higher rates of work unhappiness and turnover are caused by these environments' typical absence of formal mentoring programs, defined career pathways, or enough institutional support (Harper & Schmidt, 2021; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Leadership becomes even more important in these situations. Leaders can serve as more than simply managers for teachers in unsafe settings; they can also serve as sources of inspiration, security, and professional validation.

According to research, having a thorough awareness of pedagogical complexity and cultural diversity is essential for effective leadership in language instruction. Because of its focus on emotional intelligence, tailored support, and a common goal, transformational leadership seems to be especially appropriate for language learning contexts (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020). In organizations that might otherwise seem transactional or divided, transformational leaders can create inclusive settings that support collaborative efforts among linguistically diverse workers, encourage teacher autonomy, and strengthen a feeling of community.

Teachers who receive this kind of leadership are more invested and dedicated to the

school because they feel appreciated and respected (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Day & Sammons, 2016).

However, businesses with strict administrative structures, external testing requirements, or standardized curricula might benefit more from transactional leadership techniques. Clear standards, well-defined objectives, and incentive-based programs provide the framework that teachers need to meet institutional needs in these circumstances. However, instructors may feel limited, devalued, and alienated when transactional leadership takes control without the counterbalancing effect of transformational principles. This is especially true when their work requires them to be adaptable, empathetic, and creative all the time (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Bush, 2021).

In multicultural and multilingual settings, the leadership style duality is more apparent. For instance, teachers in Tehran and Istanbul usually deal with students from a variety of national, ethnic, and social backgrounds. These conditions necessitate a leadership approach that is supportive of the profession and culturally sensitive. Leaders need to show that they can handle cultural conflicts, understand language sensitivity, and help employees from different backgrounds create their personal and professional identities (Chen, 2019; Shields, 2010). Because they can establish trust, create a sense of community, and provide specialized support, transformational leaders are particularly well-suited for these responsibilities.

In addition, language instruction is becoming more and more integrated into a digital and international society. Teachers are facing increasing pressure to incorporate technology into their lessons, encourage online or hybrid learning, and adjust to the quickly evolving requirements of their students. A change from traditional top-down authority to more participative and adaptive leadership models is required due to the additional constraints this evolution has placed on leadership (Nguyen et al., 2021; OECD, 2019). Language school directors need to be knowledgeable about educational technology and understand how to help their teachers by providing them with tools, encouragement, and training. For middle-aged educators who are already finding it difficult to manage their technical and instructional obligations, a lack of such leadership can worsen stress and burnout.

Thus, a thorough and adaptable strategy that takes institutional variation, cultural complexity, and instructional variance into account is required for effective leadership in language education.

It demands approaches that are not just financially advantageous, culturally aware, and emotionally intelligent, but also give educators' objectives and experiences first priority. It goes beyond just not paying attention to what is being taught. The success of English teachers and, by extension, language learners is greatly influenced by the tact and strategic emphasis of their institutional leaders. This study highlights how important it is to thoroughly assess leadership styles, particularly when taking educators' viewpoints and experiences into consideration.

2.3 LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

A key component of educational quality and school effectiveness is teacher job satisfaction. It illustrates the degree to which teachers believe their work is durable rewarding and consistent with their pedagogical and personal values. Job satisfaction in the context of teaching English is influenced by a number of factors including student engagement workload balance classroom autonomy institutional support and above all, leadership style. As learning environments become more dynamic and demanding, examination of leaders' capacity to influence job satisfaction through supportive and responsive behaviors has become increasingly important (Nguyen, 2018; Zhu, 2013).

Job satisfaction serves as a mediator for other significant constructs such as organizational commitment, teacher retention, and instructional success, in addition to being an outcome variable. Teachers who are content with their employment are more likely to stay with them, seek professional development, collaborate with others, and genuinely care about their students' achievement, claim Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011). Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to attrition, emotional exhaustion, disengagement, and absenteeism. Because instructional consistency is essential to learners' success, these results are particularly harmful in language schools (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Harper & Schmidt, 2021).

A growing body of data supports the idea that transformational leadership increases

job satisfaction. Transformational leaders establish environments where teachers feel valued, understood, and in charge. By fostering a shared vision, providing individualized support, and recognizing professional achievements, these leaders enhance the mental and emotional well-being of their staff members. For example, Judge and Piccolo (2004) found that two elements of transformational leadership—personalized attention and inspiring motivation—were significantly linked to greater teacher satisfaction across a range of educational situations. Similarly, by satisfying teachers' core psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, transformational leadership increased job satisfaction and professional motivation, as demonstrated by Eyal and Roth (2011).

Teachers typically deal with a variety of learner profiles, curricular restrictions, and high expectations in language teaching settings. For this reason, leaders that can offer support and flexible assistance are quite beneficial. To improve intrinsic motivation and satisfaction, transformational leaders enable teachers to engage in reflective practice, try out new teaching techniques, and adapt their pedagogical approaches to their students' needs (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2022). Teachers are better able to handle pedagogical challenges and institutional requirements when their supervisor acknowledges and encourages their efforts. This improves one's sense of emotional fortitude and professional effectiveness.

However, it is unclear how transactional leadership and work satisfaction are related. On the one hand, some educators may find comfort in the clarity, consistency, and structure that transactional leaders provide when responsibilities and expectations are clearly articulated (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Establishing predictable work environments with conditional rewards and regular feedback may lead to short-term performance gains and anxiety reduction.

However, studies show that an overemphasis on transactional mechanisms can hinder creativity, restrict professional autonomy, and reduce affective engagement, all of which can lead to teacher dissatisfaction (Goleman 2000 Bush 2021). The institutional culture of English language schools, which frequently follow standardized curricula and are subject to commercial pressure, may be dominated by transactional leadership.

Even though this style of leadership may maintain educational uniformity, it usually ignores the requirements of teachers in terms of relationships and professional growth. For instance, an overemphasis on administrative compliance and performance measurements may mask the emotional labor involved in teaching languages, leaving teachers feeling misunderstood or undervalued. Teachers may view their work as monotonous, robotic, and unrelated to their professional ideals if transactional leaders do not offer them real acknowledgment and emotional support (Dong 2023 Wang et al. 1997).

Zhu (2013) discovered that in addition to leadership behaviors teachers job satisfaction is influenced by their views of justice trust and inclusivity. These opinions have been influenced by past experiences with power dynamics and cultural norms in a range of contexts, such as Istanbul and Tehran. Because they place a higher value on qualities like empathy, moral leadership, and inclusive decision-making, transformational leaders are better able to handle these difficulties and establish settings where all educators are valued and respected. However, if transactional leaders prioritize control and rule enforcement, they might struggle to build the trust necessary for long-term teacher satisfaction (Shields 2010 Berkovich and Eyal 2020).

The use of different leadership theories by educators to explain their experiences is an important area of qualitative study. These anecdotes often demonstrate that professional validation, motivation, and recognition have an equivalent effect on job happiness as workload or compensation. Transformational leaders, according to teachers, are those who walk with them, pay close attention, and inspire faith in the field. These explanations highlight a deeper emotional aspect of leadership that is crucial for maintaining job satisfaction in settings with high emotional strain, poor resources, and rapid change.

The leadership style of a teacher ultimately affects their level of job satisfaction particularly when it comes to teaching English. Even though transactional leadership may offer operational consistency, transformational leadership consistently increases teachers' emotional involvement and sense of fulfillment in their job because it lays a heavy emphasis on empowering support and a shared objective. To create leadership

strategies that advance institutional goals and educators overall well-being it is essential to comprehend these dynamics from the perspectives of teachers themselves.

2.4 LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Many people agree that one of the maximum extensive indicators of long-term instructor effectiveness, retention, and institutional durability is organizational commitment. Commitment in academic situations, in particular in colleges and language facilities, refers to the feel of loyalty, identification, and emotional attachment that teachers should their organization and its goals. Strong organizational commitment increases the likelihood that teachers will invest in student success, participate actively in school development programs, and persevere in the face of obstacles like resource constraints, regulatory changes, or curriculum modifications (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Eyal & Roth, 2011). As such, organizational commitment serves as a fundamental component of institutional stability and success in addition to being a measure of teachers' well-being.

The growth and sustainability of teachers' organizational commitment are significantly impacted by leadership. Leaders influence the relational atmosphere in which instructors work, model expectations, and set the tone for the institution's culture. Several studies show that transformative leadership in particular is positively connected with affective commitment which is characterized by an emotional connection and deliberate alignment with establishment objectives (Nguyen 2018 Judge et al. [2001]). Transformational leaders who build trust provide opportunities for professional growth and offer meaningful recognition encourage teachers to view their workplace as a community rather than a place of employment. A helpful framework for investigating the different ways that leadership style influences commitment is provided by the three elements of Meyer and Allens (1997) model of organizational commitment: affective continuation and normative. Affective commitment is shown by educators who find personal fulfillment in supporting the goals and values of their institution. What encourages continuity commitment is the perceived cost of quitting the organization such as the loss of benefits contacts or one's professional identity. A sense of duty to stay in the organization because of

moral or cultural expectations is known as normative commitment. The actions and viewpoints of institutional leaders influence each of these aspects.

By fostering an environment at work that values ethical participation, respect, and inspiration, transformational leadership directly fosters emotional and normative commitment. Leaders are more likely to inspire staff loyalty and long-term dedication if they have a compelling vision, exhibit honesty, and show genuine concern for the well-being of teachers (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Day et al., 2016). "Part of something bigger," "respected for who they are," and "emotionally invested" in the institution's mission are common sentiments expressed by teachers working under transformational leaders. These feelings support organizational resilience and cohesiveness in addition to personal fulfillment.

By focusing on defined roles, explicit expectations, and reward-based compliance, transactional leadership, on the other hand, mostly influences continuance commitment. Such leadership may not promote the stronger emotional and relational ties connected to long-term commitment, even though it may be successful in upholding order and achieving short-term objectives (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Antonakis et al., 2003). Due to contractual responsibilities or the lack of better choices, teachers under primarily transactional leadership may continue in their positions out of necessity rather than choice. Although this could offer short-term stability, over time it frequently results in disengagement, less innovation, and increased vulnerability to burnout or attrition (Bush, 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

In situations where instructors deal with heavy workloads, institutional uncertainty, or little opportunity for professional growth, the influence of leadership on commitment becomes even more crucial. For instance, English language teachers in private schools frequently deal with unstable employment agreements, erratic administrative assistance, and limited chances for curriculum influence or leadership positions. Transformational leadership can serve as a counterbalance in these settings by providing professional and emotional validation that strengthens a teacher's bond with their work and the organization's overarching goal (Ghosh & Swamy, 1979; Cohen, 2007).

Furthermore, it is necessary to take into account the cultural context of commitment and leadership. Forms of commitment that are normative and affective may be especially prominent in nations like Iran and Turkey that have significant collectivist traditions. Social ties, respect for one another, and moral leadership are frequently valued by teachers in these settings. Stronger loyalty and lower turnover rates are likely to result from leaders who involve their employees in decision-making processes that involve participation, relational transparency, and moral accountability (Shields, 2010; Chen, 2019). This emphasizes the significance of culturally sensitive leadership styles that meet educators' social and cultural standards in addition to institutional requirements.

These conclusions are supported by qualitative research examining teacher narratives. Rather than merely adhering to a contract, teachers usually use language that reflects emotional resonance and ethical congruence when describing their organizational commitment. They remember times when leaders heard them, stood up for them, or recognised their challenges as people and professionals. These occasions frequently act as turning points in terms of strengthening dedication and creating enduring bonds with their educational institutions. However, even when there are no better options, decisions to leave are usually preceded by feelings of betrayal, neglect, or disrespect from leadership.

Lastly in educational settings organizational commitment is significantly influenced by leadership style. Transformational leadership consistently cultivates the moral and emotional bonds necessary for long-term teacher involvement whereas transactional leadership can preserve structural integrity. For English language teachers working in culturally and institutionally diverse environments, long-term organizational commitment requires leadership that respects their professional identities, values their contributions, and fosters relational trust.

2.5 LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

A prevalent issue in educational institutions is employee turnover, which has been especially severe in the English language teaching sector. A high turnover rate among English teachers lowers student achievement, interferes with curricular

coherence, lowers instructional continuity, and raises recruitment expenses. Educator turnover is frequently linked to burnout, discontent, and a feeling of professional displacement. Understanding the leadership components that either raise or lower turnover is therefore essential for academics studying education and those making institutional decisions (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Harper & Schmidt, 2021).

In education, turnover is more than just a statistical result; it is a phenomenon that is intricately linked to both institutional processes and individual experiences. A slow decline in job satisfaction, feelings of exclusion, unfulfilled expectations, or a break from the school's mission and leadership are frequently its precursors (Jha, 2009; Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). These experiences are rarely the same and often differ depending on the leadership style, the level of autonomy and respect granted to teachers, and the institutional framework. Teacher turnover is particularly high in private or commercialized language schools, where contract-based employment is typical and administrative assistance may be limited (Klein et al., 2021; Ghosh & Swamy, 1979).

Leadership has a significant impact on whether instructors decide to stay or depart. Transformational leadership is increasingly being seen as a turnover prevention strategy. Leaders who provide emotional support, establish inclusive workplaces, and include teachers in decision-making processes foster a sense of belonging and loyalty, reducing turnover. Teachers who see their leaders as sympathetic, visionary, and development-oriented are more likely to stay engaged, especially under difficult circumstances (Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Judge et al., 2001).

One important strategy by which transformational leadership minimizes turnover is the creation of psychological safety—the belief that one may express ideas, take risks, and be vulnerable without fear of repercussions. For English teachers, who are usually expected to innovate, customize instruction, and handle emotionally charged relationships with students, this is especially crucial. Teachers are more resilient and professionally motivated in an atmosphere created by leaders who show trust and offer constructive criticism (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2022). This psychological safety lowers the perceived need to look for other employment while simultaneously boosting morale.

Notwithstanding its efficacy in upholding order and conformity, transactional leadership may result in increased turnover if it predominates in settings that demand a significant degree of emotional effort and inventiveness. Extrinsic rewards, performance evaluation, and following procedures are usually given top priority by transactional leaders. While these tactics may provide short-term gains, they often fail to address more basic motivating needs and may deter educators seeking opportunities for recognition, professional growth, and job satisfaction (Goleman, 2000; Bass & Avolio, 2004). Several studies have found that when transactional leadership is not matched with transformational elements, it is associated with higher stress levels and inclinations to leave. Teaching and other creative and service-oriented occupations are particularly affected by this (Dong, 2023; Antonakis et al., 2003).

The fact that turnover is not always voluntary should not be forgotten. The turnover of some institutions, particularly in markets for privatized education, may be a sign of structural instability brought on by things like changing management, enrollment swings, or financial limitations. However, even in these situations, leadership can be a hindrance. Leaders who communicate clearly, involve teachers in planning, and provide both practical and emotional support throughout transitions can help prevent the feelings of betrayal and abandonment that often precede leave (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Cohen, 2007).

In addition, turnover choices are rarely made in a vacuum.... Organizational commitment and work satisfaction have been found to act as mediators between leadership style and turnover intentions. Teachers who are content and dedicated are far less likely to consider leaving, particularly in the face of institutional difficulties. This underscores the significance of integrated leadership models that consider multiple facets of the teaching experience (Nguyen et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). A leader who fosters organizational loyalty and improves teacher satisfaction not only boosts morale but also strategically reduces attrition.

In heterogeneous environments like Tehran and Istanbul, turnover is also influenced by cultural norms and expectations. Teachers may experience cognitive dissonance when institutional policies or leadership practices conflict with their cultural norms

for hierarchy, communication, or respect. Leaders who lack cultural sensitivity risk inadvertently alienating staff members or fostering toxic work situations. However, transformational models, which are often linked to culturally responsive leadership, can lessen these tensions and increase retention (Chen, 2019; Shields, 2010).

Finding the nuances of turnover experiences has been made easier with the help of qualitative research. Studies based on interviews show that cumulative experiences of neglect, contempt, or lack of opportunity frequently influence people's decisions to quit rather than isolated incidents. A perceived injustice, such as being left out of decision-making processes, denied recognition, or receiving contemptuous treatment from superiors, is often cited by educators as their tipping point. According to Zhu (2013) and Ghasabeh et al. (2015), these emotional narratives provide important insights into how leadership behaviors are perceived and how such perceptions influence career paths.

Finally, leadership has an important role in teacher turnover, especially in the emotionally and professionally taxing sector of English language instruction. Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on empathy, development, and empowerment, is the most long-term answer to attrition, even if transactional leadership maintains institutional protocols. Universities that wish to keep qualified instructors and build strong teaching communities must invest in transformative leadership development.

2.6 CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN LEADERSHIP (ISTANBUL & TEHRAN)

The approach to instructive authority is established in culture. In spite of the fact that essential speculations of authority, such as transformational and value-based administration, offer widespread conceptual systems, their application and viability are intrinsically affected by the organizational, verifiable, and social settings in which they are utilized. Given that educators' administration desires, behaviors, and translations are impacted by complicated social standards and regulation conventions, typically particularly apparent in cross-cultural or universal settings (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). The study's center on English instructors in

Tehran and Istanbul empowers an investigation of authority hones in two unmistakable but related sociocultural settings.

Rich cultural backgrounds, communal ideals, and robust educational systems are shared by Iran and Turkey. Over the past few decades, they have also experienced substantial social, political, and educational transformations. Competing expectations of authority, teamwork, professionalism, and creativity have been brought about by these changes, and these concerns have a significant impact on how leadership is performed and viewed. English language instruction is essential to preparing pupils for engagement in the global community in both cities, resulting in settings where institutional requirements frequently conflict with established cultural hierarchies and teacher autonomy (Shields, 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Istanbul, a multicultural city spanning Europe and Asia, offers a wide range of educational options, including franchise-based language centers, state-run public schools, and upscale private academies. Teachers in these institutions are often under tremendous performance pressure to meet global standards, use digital pedagogy, and serve a diverse student body. Leadership in this context usually entails finding a balance between more progressive, team-based methods and conventional top-down control.

Some institutions continue to function under strict hierarchies that may stifle teacher autonomy and voice, while others promote teacher agency and participatory decision-making (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020; Northouse, 2018).

Transformational leadership in Istanbul is frequently associated with younger, internationally minded educators that value mentorship, innovation, and personal development. These educators often appreciate leaders that devote to professional development, promote teamwork, and demonstrate ethical behavior. However, in more bureaucratic or traditionally organized schools, transformational leadership may face limitations due to institutional culture or administrative pushback. In such settings, transactional leadership may prevail, focusing on adherence to curriculum standards, student assessments, and institutional branding. While this approach can provide structure, it may also result in disengagement and increased turnover,

especially among educators in search of professional significance and a voice (Bush, 2021; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Tehran, the capital of Iran, exhibits a distinct yet similar dynamic.

The government closely monitors the Iranian educational system, which is heavily regulated and emphasizes the delivery of uniform information. However, English teaching frequently functions in a somewhat autonomous way, allowing for some pedagogical and leadership innovation, especially at private institutions. Tehrani teachers frequently deal with high student-teacher ratios, institutional instability, and a lack of resources; therefore, leadership support is crucial for retention and work satisfaction (Harper & Schmidt, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021).

Iranian educators place a high cultural importance on leaders who exhibit stability, respect, and moral behavior. When transformational leadership is culturally aware, respects traditional standards of seniority and modesty, and encourages diversity and empowerment, it is valued. Teachers in Tehran frequently express greater engagement with leaders who exhibit a dedication to both professional achievement and human development, as well as who strike a balance between structure and empathy. On the other hand, leadership styles that are simply transactional or dictatorial could be perceived as condescending or alienating, which would lower morale and increase turnover (Goleman, 2000; Chen, 2019). More details regarding the ways in which cultural variables like power distance, collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance influence leadership expectations may be found in the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004). Teachers in Turkey and Iran may initially tolerate hierarchical leadership, but they expect leaders to act with integrity, fairness, and moral commitment to the group. These countries both have quite high-power distance and collectivism. These concepts are supported by transformational leadership displayed via relational trust, shared vision, and mentoring. Long-term loyalty from employees is more likely to come from leaders who are seen as equitable, culturally sensitive, and emotionally sophisticated (Ghasabeh et al., 2015; Shields, 2010).

It is also important to note that language instructors in both cities operate in environments characterized by cultural fusion. Due to their international training, use

of global teaching resources, and interaction with a wide variety of students, many English teachers are more receptive to leadership styles that embody global standards of empowerment and cooperation.

Therefore, transformational leadership techniques might be particularly useful for balancing conventional expectations with contemporary demands. What works in North America or Europe might not translate to Istanbul or Tehran without adjustment, therefore careful cultural calibration is necessary for the successful use of these models (Hofstede, 2001; Fullan, 2016).

The significance of leader-teacher relationships is emphasized by qualitative research in both settings. Teachers frequently use personal examples to explain effective leadership, such as times when leaders supported staff members emotionally during emergencies, fought for their rights, or organized professional learning communities. These interpersonal encounters have a significant impact on how leadership is viewed and whether it fosters opposition or loyalty. While transformational leaders who comprehend and interact with local cultural expectations are typically more successful, transactional leaders who only use formal authority may be unable to establish these kinds of relationships (Nguyen, 2018; Day & Sammons, 2016).

In conclusion, cultural background is inextricably linked to leadership in Tehran and Istanbul. The interaction of institutional norms, cultural values, and individual leadership behaviors determines how transformational and transactional leadership models are interpreted locally, even though they provide valuable analytical tools. Effective leadership requires not only competence but also cultural responsiveness for English language teachers managing the demands of contemporary education in culturally complex situations. Teachers in these cities are more likely to be satisfied, committed, and retained when leaders combine global leadership concepts with local sensitivity.

2.7 QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS FROM PRIOR RESEARCH

By documenting the lived experiences, emotional realities, and contextual nuances often absent in quantitative studies, qualitative research plays a vital role in enhancing our comprehension of leadership within the educational sector. While

substantial statistical correlations between various leadership styles and outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover have been identified in survey-based research, qualitative studies are essential for grasping how educators perceive, interpret, and embody these connections. Building on this history, the current study, which is based on a qualitative methodology, investigates how English teachers in Tehran and Istanbul interpret their work experiences under transformational and transactional leadership.

The ability of qualitative research to prioritize teacher input is one of its main advantages in educational leadership. Researchers can investigate how teachers create meaning around their profession, their leaders, and their institutions using techniques including focus groups, interviews, and narrative inquiry. For instance, Givens (2008) highlights that understanding transformational leadership requires looking at how it is perceived relationally, specifically how teachers view empowerment, authenticity, and trust in their interactions with school leaders. Givens contends in her analysis of recent leadership studies that teacher narratives provide crucial context for understanding how leadership translates into psychological engagement or disengagement.

Similarly, a qualitative study investigating the impact of transformational leadership in Iranian schools was carried out by M. Moradi Korejan and H. Shahbazi (2016). According to their findings, educators who experienced the support of visionary leaders were more inclined to share creative practices, participate in professional development, and stick with their schools in the face of outside pressure. Teachers referred to their leaders as "mentors" and "role models," in addition to managers, implying that emotional connection was just as crucial as managerial effectiveness. These results emphasize the significance of interpersonal dynamics, which are crucial for academic success even though they are frequently hard to measure.

Hay (2006) goes on to criticize the leadership literature's propensity to romanticize transformative leadership while ignoring its possible drawbacks. Based on teacher interviews, Hay observes that although inspiration and vision are valued by many educators, they must be counterbalanced by tangible assistance and sincere participation in decision-making. In other words, teachers are active interpreters

whose perspectives might differ greatly depending on environment, culture, and personal values rather than passive beneficiaries of leadership. This reaffirms the necessity of qualitative research that is nuanced, context-sensitive, and does not presume that people react uniformly to leadership methods.

The capacity of qualitative research to investigate cultural viewpoints on leadership is another significant contribution. In diverse, multilingual contexts like Tehran and Istanbul, teachers may have different cultural perspectives on the same leadership action. Shields (2010) asserts that in addition to institutional requirements, leaders in transformative leadership environments must be cognizant of social histories and cultural dynamics. Researchers have discovered through interviews and reflective journals that, particularly when they feel alone or alienated at work, English instructors in culturally hybrid institutions frequently look for leadership that validates their identities and professional expertise (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020).

Based on teacher interviews conducted in Middle Eastern educational institutions, Givens (2008) offers a useful taxonomy of transformative leadership attributes. Educators consistently emphasized the importance of leaders who create safe spaces for creativity, actively listen, and provide emotional support during times of crisis. These recurrent themes in earlier research demonstrate that teachers value relational presence in leaders more than abstract strategy. The best methods for capturing this quality are qualitative ones that take into account narrative depth and emotional complexity.

Research also demonstrates the detrimental consequences of ineffective leadership, according to teacher interviews. Institutions with distant or harsh administrators exhibited a pattern of "emotional disengagement," according to a 2009 study on employee turnover intentions by Jha. Along with a decline in pedagogical effort, teachers also reported feeling overworked, invisible, and underappreciated in addition to quitting. The best way to access these emotional dynamics—which are often subtle or unsaid—is through in-depth qualitative approaches that emphasize empathy, trust-building, and interpretive analysis.

Transformational leadership has emerged as a solution to structural rigidity in post-

authoritarian educational institutions, according to Ghasabeh, Soosay, and Reaiche (2015). They make the case that effective leaders are those who question the current quo by encouraging discussion, critical reflection, and group accountability, based on their interviews with educators in emerging environments. In transitional cultures like Iran and Turkey, where historical trends of centralized authority coexist with rising calls for democratization and professional agency in education, these attributes are especially pertinent.

The interpretive richness of qualitative data is also demonstrated by studies on teacher turnover, such as those conducted by Al-Suraihi et al. (2021) and Ongori (2007). Teachers usually express a strong need for a sense of purpose and belonging inside the institution, which is sometimes undermined by leadership behaviors viewed as exploitative or contemptuous. Teachers' interviews reveal sentiments of moral disillusionment, emotional exhaustion, and professional stagnation—elements that are crucial to comprehending the reasons for teacher turnover but are rarely included in statistical models. These revelations highlight the importance of qualitative approaches in documenting not only what occurs but also why it matters to people who are most impacted.

All things considered; the corpus of qualitative literature demonstrates the importance of studying leadership through educators' real-world experiences. The complex emotional and cultural underpinnings of leadership, education, and institutional life are made clear through case studies, theme analysis, and interviews.

English teachers working in highly attractive, culturally diverse locations such as Tehran and Istanbul face educational obstacles as well as the application and embodiment of leadership. The current study strives to illuminate the complex realities of leadership from the ground up, building on and contributing to this qualitative legacy through the voices, emotions, and views of educators themselves.

2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING THIS STUDY

A strong theoretical framework serves as the foundation for any scholarly study, directing research questions, defining analysis, and providing a structure for evaluating outcomes. This study is conceptually grounded in two well-known and

complementary leadership models: transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Both frameworks offer helpful analytical tools for comprehending how leadership behaviors impact teacher experiences, namely turnover, job happiness, and organizational commitment. In contrast to purely quantitative research, this qualitative study looks into how English teachers in culturally distinct context's view, interact with, and experience these models while also attempting to validate theoretical predictions.

2.8.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Bass and Riggio (2006) state that the central tenet of transformational leadership theory is that effective leadership entails encouraging, empowering, and inspiring followers to surpass expectations and accomplish common objectives. This concept goes beyond basic administrative oversight. This leadership style works especially well in settings that call for flexibility, emotional investment, and personal development—all of which are common in language acquisition. Teachers in this sector are typically expected to maintain emotional connections with pupils, manage diverse classrooms, develop innovative teaching strategies, and work within institutional limits.

Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are the four main behaviors of transformational leaders (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Each of these elements plays a crucial role in cultivating a constructive work atmosphere:

- Idealized influence fosters trust and moral authority, motivating educators to align with the institution's vision.
- Inspirational motivation invigorates teachers by linking their efforts to broader, significant goals.
- Intellectual stimulation promotes creativity and encourages the adoption of innovative teaching strategies.
- Individualized consideration acknowledges each educator's distinct strengths

and facilitates personal growth.

In qualitative research, transformational leadership has been consistently associated with increased job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and reduced turnover rates (Nguyen, 2018; Givens, 2008). Educators characterize transformational leaders as "mentors" rather than "managers," highlighting the relational and motivational dimensions that enhance emotional and professional engagement in their roles.

2.8.2 Transactional Leadership Theory

The foundation of transactional leadership, on the other hand, is a more practical, exchange-oriented paradigm. To guarantee compliance and productivity, leaders set clear expectations, keep an eye on performance, and impose rewards or penalties (Burns, 1978; Bush, 2021). Transactional leadership is frequently necessary in environments that demand structure, responsibility, and procedural consistency, despite occasionally being characterized as inflexible or uninspired.

Operational clarity is offered by the two primary components of transactional leadership: management by exception and contingent incentive.

In educational settings, this could entail establishing explicit guidelines for how lessons should be delivered, assessing compliance with curriculum requirements, or providing rewards depending on achievement. Although this strategy might be useful for achieving short-term objectives, it frequently lacks the developmental and relational components that encourage sustained dedication or creativity (Wang et al., 1997; Goleman, 2000).

According to qualitative research, overemphasis on transactional leadership, particularly in emotionally taxing situations such as English instruction, can lead to sentiments of professional isolation, stagnation, or resistance. Teachers report feeling "monitored but not mentored," particularly in organizations that prioritize student performance or institutional branding over teacher development (Dong, 2023; Jha, 2009).

2.8.3 Toward a Hybrid Leadership Approach

The combination of transformational and transactional approaches into a hybrid leadership style is currently supported by an expanding body of research. According to this perspective, inspiring and accountable leadership in education necessitates both structure and vision (Day et al., 2016; Fullan, 2016). These methods have been particularly helpful in demanding or stressful learning settings where institutional rigor and emotional support must coexist.

The hybrid model provides a helpful framework for examining the subtleties of the teacher experience in this study. It helps to explain why some educators report feeling inspired and content when they collaborate with leaders who provide both professional direction and human understanding, while others report feeling let down when they deal with leaders who are either overly bureaucratic or too idealistic. This study uses an integrated lens to analyze the stories of English teachers in order to investigate not only the presence of leadership behaviors but also how those behaviors are understood in relation to personal expectations, institutional norms, and cultural values.

2.8.4 Conceptual Linkages

This theoretical underpinning is used in the study to investigate three key teacher outcomes:

1. Job Satisfaction: Influenced by leadership that values teachers' intrinsic drive, autonomy, and feeling of purpose (Zhu, 2013; Berkovich and Eyal, 2020).
2. Organizational Commitment: Influenced by the emotional, moral, and structural relationships formed by educators and institutions (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Eyal & Roth, 2011).
3. Employee Turnover: Recognized as a behavioral and emotional effect of the teacher-leader interaction, influenced by leadership style and institutional culture (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Harper & Schmidt, 2021).

It is believed that these relationships are neither linear nor ubiquitous. Instead, the goal of this qualitative study is to examine how these links appear in actual teacher narratives within the different educational and cultural contexts of Istanbul and

Tehran.

In conclusion, the theories of transformational, transactional, and hybrid leadership offer a versatile yet exacting framework for the examination of this research. For a qualitative design that aims to prioritize teacher voice, cultural context, and lived experience, they provide conceptual clarity while allowing for interpretive richness. These models enable the study to better understand how leadership is experienced, absorbed, and meaningfully reacted to, as well as to characterize its impacts.

2.9 SUMMARY AND RESEARCH GAP

This chapter has investigated the nuanced and multifaceted role of leadership in English language instruction, focusing on the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles on teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and attrition. This review has underlined the role of leadership in shaping teacher experiences, particularly in culturally diverse and pedagogically demanding places such as Tehran and Istanbul. It accomplished this by merging a wide range of theoretical and empirical literature with qualitative insights from previous research.

An overview of the fundamental significance of leadership in educational settings opened the chapter. Leadership practices are not only administrative duties but also crucial mediators of teacher well-being and institutional effectiveness in the context of English language education, where teachers work under tremendous pressure and high expectations. Using this basis, a thorough analysis of the characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of the transformational and transactional leadership models was carried out. Transactional leadership guarantees structure, consistency, and accountability, whereas transformational leadership prioritizes vision, emotional support, and professional growth.

Each leadership style's unique implications on teachers' job satisfaction are discussed in the sections that follow. Transformational leadership emerges as a particularly strong predictor of teacher engagement, creativity, and career fulfillment. This chapter also discussed the role that leadership plays in building organizational commitment, particularly affective and normative forms that support long-term teacher loyalty and institutional alignment. It was demonstrated, nevertheless, that

transactional leadership was more strongly associated with both short-term compliance and sustained commitment. These tendencies were further supported by the staff turnover debate, which showed that leadership has a significant impact on whether teachers decide to remain in their positions, become disillusioned, or quit entirely.

This review's incorporation of cross-cultural perspectives on leadership, which highlighted the contextual variety in how leadership is enacted and perceived, was one of its main strengths. Teachers' perceptions of leadership actions in Tehran and Istanbul are influenced by societal expectations, institutional histories, and regional cultural norms. This implies that leadership approaches need to be tailored to the unique requirements of the teaching community and implemented with cultural sensitivity. For examining these intricate, contextualized experiences, qualitative research in particular provides tremendous resources.

The incorporation of qualitative data into the theoretical framework is another significant contribution of this chapter. The emotional complexity and relational depth of leadership-teacher interactions have been uncovered by earlier interview-based and case study research; these aspects cannot be adequately conveyed by survey data alone. These studies repeatedly demonstrate that transformational leadership fosters trust, professional identity, and emotional stability, but transactional leadership, when used alone, may demotivate teachers and increase turnover.

The leadership experiences of English instructors in numerous worldwide contexts remain largely unknown, despite the abundance of studies on educational leadership. Since most of the existing research focuses on public schools or general education settings, there is relatively little research on private language schools, particularly in regions like the Middle East. Additionally, few studies examine these dynamics using thorough qualitative methods, especially in cross-cultural settings where expectations and views of leadership might vary greatly.

This study addresses that knowledge gap for English instructors in Tehran and Istanbul by conducting a qualitative investigation into the experiences of

transformational and transactional leadership with regard to organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and decisions to stay or leave their institutions. By concentrating on teacher narratives and shedding light on the lived realities that serve as the foundation for leadership theory, the study seeks to assist the creation of more emotionally intelligent and culturally sensitive leadership practices in the classroom.



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A thorough explanation of the methodology employed in this qualitative study is given in this chapter. The study examines how English language teachers in Tehran and Istanbul view and comprehend transformational and transactional leadership styles. It also examines how these perspectives affect their decisions to stay with or leave their institutions, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. The methodology, which is based on phenomenological inquiry and an interpretivist perspective, is acceptable because it focuses on rich, subjective experience. In order to gain a nuanced understanding of how leadership is embodied, performed, and accepted in language learning environments, the research will employ in-depth testimonies and firsthand observations to uncover meaning rather than generalizable facts or causal correlations.

The leadership experiences of teachers are not isolated or unbiased. It is deeply intertwined with institutional culture, sociocultural expectations, emotional labor, and daily work patterns. These facts are difficult to communicate through structured surveys and numerical measures. Depending on their beliefs, past experiences, and cultural norms, teachers interpret, compromise, and sometimes oppose leadership behaviors. They don't just react to these actions in predictable ways. Qualitative research, especially phenomenological research, is therefore in a unique position to study these dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Furthermore, this study's cross-cultural component—comparing teachers in two large cities with different but overlapping educational and cultural traditions—requires a methodological framework that can handle complexity and context. Despite the fact that both Istanbul and Tehran are urban areas with quickly changing educational systems, there are significant differences between their sociopolitical contexts, educational regulations, and professional standards. These variations influence how leadership is exercised and viewed, and a qualitative method enables the researcher to investigate these variations both within the micro-context of each participant's experience and across contexts.

This chapter starts by explaining the philosophical presumptions that underlie the research and why a qualitative approach was chosen. The particular study design—phenomenology—and its suitability for examining subjective experiences are next described. The research environment, sample techniques, and participant selection standards are then thoroughly explained. Finally, in order to ensure transparency and scientific rigor throughout the research process, the chapter will go into detail on the processes employed for data collecting, transcription, analysis, and ethical review.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND DESIGN

The present study is in line with the interpretivist paradigm, which maintains that social interactions and context-specific meanings co-create knowledge (Schwandt, 2015). Unlike positivist or post-positivist paradigms, which emphasize objectivity, generalization, and reproducibility, interpretivism acknowledges that understanding is influenced by the unique experiences of all research participants, including the researcher. This orientation is particularly relevant in educational research, where interpersonal relationships, emotional factors, and cultural expectations significantly influence outcomes such as job satisfaction, job commitment, and employee turnover.

Constructivist epistemology, the foundation of interpretivism, maintains that reality is not a static entity but is instead shaped by shared social and cultural events (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this sense, rather than being a direct reaction to external behaviors, a teacher's experience of leadership is shaped by personal interpretations influenced by cultural background, professional history, gender, age, and emotional climate. Therefore, understanding educational leadership, including its transformational or transactional nature, requires hearing firsthand accounts and examining how those it affects perceive and understand leadership.

The study employs a phenomenological research methodology, specifically the hermeneutic phenomenology outlined by van Manen (1990) and Moustakas (1994), in accordance with this interpretive framework. Instead of reducing experiences to quantifiable variables, this approach focuses on how people interpret their own experiences. As hermeneutic phenomenology further emphasizes, meaning is created

through the interaction between the participant and the researcher, and interpretation is always influenced by the researcher's background.

Since experiences in language education are influenced by moral and affective factors that are sometimes missing from conventional leadership models, this design is especially suitable for studying leadership in this field. Depending on their personal identities, cultural norms, and emotional needs, teachers' conceptions of transformational or transactional leadership are not consistent or simple to categorize. Focusing on teacher narratives, the study investigates how leadership is experienced in authentic contexts like professional development, informal feedback, classroom observations, and institutional communications—contexts that also impact employee turnover, job satisfaction, and commitment to the field.

3.3 RESEARCH SETTING AND CONTEXT

Four reputable private language schools—two in Tehran, Iran, and two in Istanbul, Turkey—were used for this study. These schools were specifically picked because of their similar programs and organizational structures, as well as their prominent position in the local education scene. Each center offers comprehensive English language instruction that can help young people, college students, professionals, and foreign nationals getting ready for exams like the TOEFL and IELTS.

Both cities' urban language schools are able to strike a balance between local cultural values and international educational standards. The academic demands of a diverse student body, global competition, and European quality standards serve as the compass for many Istanbul-based institutions. Teachers must strike a balance between cultural sensitivity, standardized curricula, digital competency, and flexible teaching strategies. Teachers' job commitment and satisfaction may be impacted by the leadership styles used in these settings, which range from centralized management systems to more cooperative, team-based approaches.

On the other hand, more strict policy limitations and cultural considerations affect English language instruction in Tehran, even though private institutions usually operate with some autonomy. Despite regulatory barriers, there is a growing demand for English instruction. The many responsibilities that leaders in these settings

usually assume, such as academic coordination, administrative management, and ethical leadership, can have a significant impact on teachers' experiences with support and leadership. In these circumstances, transformational leadership may improve teacher morale, reduce turnover, and boost commitment, whereas transactional leadership may be associated with more rigid expectations and less professional agency.

This research compares two institutions in two distinct but comparable cultural contexts to investigate how leadership practices—particularly those linked to transformational and transactional models—affect teachers' perceptions, affective reactions, and work experiences. Recurring themes such as the need for mentoring, recognition, and fairness are highlighted, and it also demonstrates how cultural factors impact whether or not these needs are met, which in turn impacts employee retention, job satisfaction, and professional engagement.

3.4 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

A purposive sampling technique was employed in light of the study's qualitative and phenomenological methodology in order to find participants who could provide deep, thoughtful, and varied perspectives on their experiences with institutional leadership (Patton, 2015). The selection criteria were designed to make sure that participants had the training and breadth of experience needed to make a significant contribution to the research questions about leadership styles, such as transformational and transactional leadership, and associated outcomes, such as organizational commitment, employee turnover, and job satisfaction.

Individuals had to fulfill the following requirements in order to be eligible to participate:

currently hold full-time positions as English language instructors; have taught continuously for at least a year at their current institution; have been under the direct supervision of at least one designated leader, such as the department chair, academic coordinator, or director;

Be prepared to share their work experiences honestly and be open to participating in a videotaped interview.

To allow for meaningful cross-cultural comparison and guarantee a strong dataset for thematic analysis, a total of twenty participants were chosen, evenly divided between ten from Tehran and ten from Istanbul. A variety of demographic and professional backgrounds were represented by the participants, including age (from teachers in their twenties to those in their fifties), gender, years of experience teaching English, and academic credentials. The purpose of this deliberate diversity was to capture a wide range of viewpoints on how leadership is viewed and experienced in institutional settings.

Educator groups on social media platforms, English teaching networks, and a snowball sampling technique—in which current participants recommended colleagues who fit the eligibility requirements—were used to first contact participants. An information sheet outlining the study's goals, ethical standards, and participants' rights including the ability to withdraw at any moment, was given to each participant prior to the start of interviews. Written informed consent was acquired before any data was collected.

Depending on participant convenience, interviews were arranged and conducted either in-person at the participants' respective institutions or, if preferred, through secure video conferencing tools. Conversations ranged in length from 45 to 70 minutes and used a semi-structured interview style that let one pursue developing themes while yet allowing consistent inquiry across cases.

All things considered, this sampling strategy provided the depth and diversity of narrative needed for a robust phenomenological investigation while ensuring credibility and relevance. The voices of these educators, placed within their individual organizational and cultural contexts, provide the empirical foundation for this study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In qualitative research, data collection involves more than just obtaining information; it also involves establishing rapport, observing power relationships, and fostering an atmosphere where participants feel free to express themselves honestly. The primary technique for gathering data for this study was in-depth semi-structured interviews

designed to elicit detailed accounts of participants' interactions with institutional leadership. These interviews served as the main source of information, and they were supplemented by researcher memos and contextual field notes that recorded nonverbal cues and the setting of each encounter.

To ensure adherence to international guidelines for research involving human subjects, the study was officially approved by the university's research ethics board prior to the start of interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Every participating institution provided administrative consent, and all interviewees provided written informed consent. Complete confidentiality was guaranteed, and participants were told that all personally identifiable information would be eliminated and substituted with pseudonyms in publications and transcripts.

Over the course of ten weeks, ten interviews were conducted in Tehran and ten in Istanbul. Participants' availability determined the flexible scheduling. Face-to-face interviews were held in private offices to minimize disruptions, while Zoom was used for remote interviews, guaranteeing participant security through end-to-end encryption. If it was more comfortable for them, participants could choose to leave their cameras off. Since English was the working language of all participants and the medium of instruction in their respective institutions, it was used for all interviews. Because of the reduced need for translation, there was less chance of misunderstandings or data distortion (Patton, 2015).

Within 48 hours of each session, the researcher verbatim transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews with the participants' express consent. The researcher was able to preserve data immediacy and include thoughtful memos that captured emotional tone, pauses, emphases, and other subtleties that aren't always visible in text because of the quick transcription timeline. The researcher was able to remain reflexively aware of their own interpretive lens and spot emerging patterns thanks to these analytical memos (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

While allowing for spontaneity and depth, the semi-structured format offered a framework for consistency across interviews. To maintain comparability, the same core questions were asked in each interview, but there was still plenty of room for

narrative elaboration. Many follow-up questions were modified in real time to reflect the direction of the conversation, and probing questions were employed to elucidate or deepen insights. This adaptable strategy improved the data's contextual richness and authenticity.

Following each session, participants were asked to express their opinions, offer comments on the interview procedure, and ask questions about the broader study. Several participants highlighted the empowering potential of qualitative research by stating that the experience had given them a unique opportunity to carefully consider their career path. These informal conversations also suggested areas for future study and provided different viewpoints on the institution's culture.

Strong consideration was given to ethical obligations during the data collection process, especially with regard to participant autonomy, voluntariness, and confidentiality. Every digital recording, transcript, and note was safely kept on a password-protected, encrypted server that the researcher alone could access. To preserve participant privacy, identifying information was changed or removed from transcripts during the transcription process, making them anonymous. Throughout the research's analysis, writing, and distribution stages, the trust established during the interviews was maintained as an ethical commitment.

3.6 INTERVIEW DESIGN AND PROTOCOL

A thorough analysis of the research on organizational commitment, employee turnover, transformational and transactional leadership, and teacher job satisfaction led to the development of the interviewing technique. Conceptual principles including Goleman's (2000) framework on emotional intelligence in leadership, Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model of organizational commitment, and Bass and Riggio's (2006) four dimensions of transformational leadership served as its foundation. These theoretical frameworks impacted the creation of open-ended questions meant to elicit thorough, contextually grounded responses.

The interview guide was structured around six theme categories:

1. Perceptions of Leadership: How would educators describe the leadership style or styles they have experienced?

2. Professional Relationships: How do interactions with leaders affect teachers' sense of belonging and collaboration?
3. Job Satisfaction: What factors enhance or diminish teachers' satisfaction in their current roles?
4. Institutional Commitment: What elements affect teachers' loyalty to or disengagement from their schools?
5. Turnover Intentions: Have participants considered leaving? Which qualities of a leader influenced that decision?
6. Cultural Reflections: How do they view leadership in relation to cultural values or conventions?

Core questions and optional prompts were used to examine each of these themes, enabling the interviewer to modify the conversation's direction in response to participant responses. For instance, the question "Can you remember a time when your supervisor encouraged or discouraged you professionally?" can be posed to participants. or "In what ways do you feel most appreciated or underappreciated at work as a leader?"

Two instructors who were not part of the main participant pool participated in pilot interviews to evaluate the interview questions' emotional accessibility, flow, and clarity. The phrasing and order were slightly modified in response to pilot feedback. In order to keep a constant thematic structure across interviews, the researcher was able to follow participants' narratives wherever they led using the final version of the protocol, which was designed to be both comprehensive and flexible.

Throughout, the development of rapport and psychological safety was emphasized. The interviewer used active listening techniques like summarizing, mirroring, and allowing silence for introspection while maintaining an empathic, nonjudgmental demeanor. In addition to sharing great experiences, participants were urged to be open and honest about their disappointments, uncertainties, and challenging times. The hermeneutic-phenomenological objective of eliciting deeper emotional and interpretive implications rather than merely surface-level descriptions is reflected in this method (van Manen, 1990).

Examples of mentorship, miscommunication, inspiration, burnout, and transformation were among the many narrative data that emerged from the ensuing interviews. These narratives serve as the study's empirical core and will be subjected to thematic analysis to show how leadership is experienced by English teachers in Tehran and Istanbul as a lived and culturally mediated reality.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The study's analytical approach is based on theme analysis, a popular technique for finding, examining, and deciphering meaningful patterns in qualitative data. The study specifically uses the six-phase paradigm put out by Braun and Clarke (2006), which enables a methodical but adaptable approach to interpreting narrative data. Because it values participant voices and recognizes the researcher's involvement in co-constructing meaning through interpretation, this method is consistent with the study's interpretivist and phenomenological viewpoint.

Research that examines how people interpret their lived experiences, particularly in relational and institutional contexts like schooling, is ideally suited for thematic analysis. Thematic analysis enables the researcher to investigate semantic and latent meanings within participants' stories—meanings that reflect not only what is stated but also what is implied, felt, or assumed—in contrast to discourse analysis, which concentrates on language use, or grounded theory, which aims to generate theory. Examining how educators experience leadership in culturally complex situations requires this dual approach.

Getting to know the data was the initial step in the analysis process. Following each interview, the associated researcher memo and the exact transcription of the audio tape were examined in their entirety. Immersion—reading and rereading transcripts to gain an instinctive grasp of each narrative's tone, rhythm, and content—was the aim at this point. To document first impressions, conflicts, and emotional clues that could guide further categorization, memoranda and analytical reflections were composed.

Using the qualitative data analysis program NVivo 14, preliminary codes were created in the second stage. While many of the codes (such as "feeling invisible,"

"emotional support," and "lack of voice") were directly derived from participant language and framing, other codes were influenced by theoretical constructs like transformational leadership dimensions (such as "idealized influence," "inspirational motivation") or commitment models (such as "affective connection," "continuance fear"). Because the coding process was recursive and iterative, codes could be improved as new patterns appeared.

By combining linked codes into more general categories that captured recurrent patterns of meaning among participants, the third phase entailed looking for themes. Codes like "trust," "respect," and "being heard," for instance, were classified under the Relational Leadership theme, whereas codes like "compliance," "superficial rewards," and "performance monitoring" were placed under the Transactional Pressure topic. The objective was to map the emotional and interpretive landscape of leadership as experienced by teachers, rather than to restrict the data to a set of strict categories.

In order to assess each theme's coherence and uniqueness, the researcher went back to the raw data for the fourth and fifth phases, which involved reviewing and defining themes. To better convey their essential meanings and connections to the study objectives, themes were reworked, renamed, and reorganized. Some themes—such as "being appreciated" and "affirmation"—were combined into Recognition during this phase, while others were separated to account for subtleties (like Supportive Leadership, which was split into Emotional Support and Professional Development).

Choosing striking and representative passages from the transcripts to highlight each theme was part of the last stage, which was creating the report. Analytical commentary placed these passages in perspective and connected them to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 1. The objective was to go beyond description to interpretation, investigating how participants' experiences mirror larger organizational, psychological, and cultural processes in addition to what they stated.

The researcher's reflexivity was taken into consideration during the entire analytical procedure. To record presumptions, feelings, and possible biases, the researcher kept a reflexive journal. In order to maintain interpretations based on participant

viewpoints rather than the researcher's predictions, this journal acted as a tool for self-examination and analytical honesty.

The study aims to shed light on the many, context-sensitive ways that English teachers in Istanbul and Tehran perceive, comprehend, and respond to leadership by using thematic analysis in an open and methodologically sound manner.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study's foundation was ethical integrity, which guided every stage from data distribution to recruitment. It was crucial that participants' rights, autonomy, and dignity were always upheld because of the delicate and intimate nature of the subjects covered, which included discontent, burnout, and disagreements with institutional leadership.

The study was authorized by the Graduate School of Education Research Ethics Committee at Fenerbahçe University and carried out in accordance with the American Educational Research Association's ethical principles (AERA, 2011). Four main mechanisms—*informed consent, secrecy, voluntary participation, and researcher responsibility*—were used to resolve ethical issues.

A thorough information sheet detailing the study's objectives, research questions, methods, dangers, advantages, and data protection procedures was given to each interviewee prior to their participation. This paper made clear that participation was completely voluntary and that there were no consequences for declining to answer any questions or leaving the study at any point. Each participant gave written informed consent prior to the commencement of data collection. The study was conducted with strict confidentiality. Transcripts were anonymized during the transcribing process, and all interviews were audio recorded with encrypted equipment. Each participant was given a pseudonym, and any institutional references that may be used to identify them were either hidden or eliminated. Only the researcher had access to the password-protected drive containing the transcripts and other data. Two-factor authentication was used to safeguard the cloud storage where backup copies were stored.

Throughout the whole research process, the importance of voluntary participation was highlighted. After the interview, a number of participants were called to check that they were comfortable with their data being used in the final analysis, and they were reminded that participation was completely voluntary. No one opted to withdraw or voice any displeasure.

As an interpreter of experience, the researcher also understood their ethical obligation. It was crucial to adopt a stance of respect, humility, and care because of the power imbalance that can occur in research partnerships, particularly when talking about negative experiences or vulnerabilities. Participants were invited to guide the discourse in ways that they felt were meaningful, and interview settings were created to foster psychological safety. Although participants rarely experienced emotional difficulty, when they did, the interviewer offered to halt or end the session, but none of them asked.

Finally, ethical distribution was taken into consideration when reporting the results. All narratives were carefully contextualized to avoid sensationalism and the implication of blame. The objective was not to evaluate organizations or individual leaders, but rather to understand how those closest to instructional practice perceive and experience leadership.

The study guarantees both methodological integrity and moral accountability because ethical considerations are incorporated into each step of the research process. Any study involving human subjects must have this, especially in delicate and formal fields like education.

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND LIMITATIONS

Methodological rigor in qualitative research is assessed based on standards that ensure credibility rather than validity or statistical reliability. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four fundamental components of the framework that Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed. These standards were carefully considered and integrated into the research design to enhance the study's utility and integrity.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is a measure of the study's internal validity, or how well the results represent the meanings and experiences of the participants. Several tactics were used to increase credibility. Prolonged participation was initially achieved by maintaining regular contact with participants over a few weeks, which enabled the researcher to build rapport and provide more candid, in-depth reports.

Second, member checking was used sparingly. After transcription, participants were asked to review a few selected interview passages and provide edits or comments. By elaborating on earlier remarks or providing clarification on terminology, several people deepened the final analysis.

The researcher also recorded assumptions, emotions, and interpretations during the study using reflexive journaling. This reflexivity reduced bias by guaranteeing that interpretations were grounded in participant voices rather than the researcher's presumptions.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability is the capacity of outcomes to be used in many contexts. Although generalizability in the statistical sense is not the aim of qualitative research, rich and detailed dense description was used to enhance contextual depth. By offering a thorough explanation of the Istanbul and Tehran contexts, participant demographics, institutional structures, and cultural peculiarities, the study helps readers determine whether the conclusions are relevant to their own situations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability has to do with how transparent and consistent the research method is. A thorough audit trail, comprising documentation of interview procedures, coding procedures, theme development, and analytical memoranda, was kept up to date throughout the study to guarantee reliability. In order to enable others to follow the methodological process from raw data to final interpretations, all decisions—including changes to the interview guide, code mergers or refinements, and revisions to analytical categories—were recorded.

Peer debriefing was also included in the analytical stage. Two seasoned qualitative researchers were asked for their opinions on the draft codes and preliminary themes. Their queries and criticisms strengthened the findings by challenging the researcher to defend interpretive decisions and improving the topic organization.

3.9.4 Confirmability

The degree to which the research findings are influenced by participant narratives rather than researcher bias is known as confirmability. The triangulation of data sources in this study improved confirmability: field notes, analytical memoranda, and reflexive diaries were used as additional sources for interpretive validation, while interviews were the primary data source.

The findings chapter makes considerable use of participant quotes to show that themes emerged from real-world, contextualized narratives. The reader can evaluate the relationship between data and interpretation because each theme is supported by exact quotes.

3.9.5 Limitations

This study contains limits that should be noted, just like any qualitative investigation. First, although the sample size is suitable for phenomenological research, it restricts the applicability of the results to larger groups of language teachers. Participant selection from private institutions alone may also leave out experiences that are exclusive to educators in the public sector.

Second, interviews were done in English, which might have influenced how participants conveyed complicated emotions or cultural references even if it was their professional language. Particularly for participants who use English as a second language, some subtleties might have been lost or reduced during translation.

Third, there may be interpretive bias due to the researcher's twin roles as an analyst and interviewer. Complete objectivity is neither feasible nor claimed, despite the fact that reflexivity and peer debriefing were employed to lessen this.

Finally, while enlightening, the cross-cultural comparison complicates interpretation. Institutional history, power dynamics, and cultural norms may all have an impact on

participants' willingness to share sensitive leadership experiences. These factors must be considered when comparing the differences or similarities between the Tehran and Istanbul data sets.



4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the key findings from 20 English language teachers experiences with transformational and transactional leadership gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 10 from Tehran and 10 from Istanbul. The results show that leadership has a significant impact on teachers' intentions to remain or leave their jobs institutional loyalty emotional well-being and professional happiness. The study uses theme analysis to look at these narratives and uncover the nuanced and culturally based ways that leadership is experienced and perceived in language teaching institutions.

The results are arranged according to six main themes:

1. Appreciation and Support on an Emotional Level
2. Pedagogical Independence and Professional Development
3. Transactional control, pressure, and monitoring
4. Leadership Norms and Cultural Expectations
5. Identity, Belonging, and Commitment
6. Exit Storytelling and Turnover Choices

The transformational and transactional leadership theories are used to explain each subject, which is supported by several quotes. The chapter also highlights culturally specific elements that impact leadership experiences in Tehran and Istanbul even though trends are seen in both study locations.

4.2 THEME ONE: RECOGNITION AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

The need of verbal and behavioral acknowledgment as a fundamental component of effective leadership emerged as a recurring theme in almost all of the interviews. Teachers frequently reported feeling inspired, valued, and devoted to their organizations when administrators recognized their work, demonstrated compassion, and conveyed gratitude. These stories are in line with the idealized impact and

personalized attention elements of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), in which leaders provide moral role models and personal support.

4.2.1 Emotional Labor and the Need for Human Acknowledgment

Many participants underlined that teaching English, particularly at urban private institutions, requires a great deal of emotional work. This includes managing ongoing institutional changes, inspiring resistant students, and adjusting to a variety of classroom demands. In these situations, being recognized was seen as a psychological requirement rather than a luxury.

"Sometimes it just takes a simple thank you after a stressful week or a hard class. When my director looks me in the eye and says, 'You handled that very well,' it stays with me. It makes me feel like a human, not a machine."

(Sara, Istanbul, 7 years' experience)

"In this job, you pour a lot of yourself into your students. When the leadership notices it, even small things like an encouraging message, it gives you a reason to stay."

(Mehran, Tehran, 4 years' experience)

These observations show how emotionally supportive leadership increases intrinsic drive and develops affective commitment, which Meyer and Allen (1997) define as an emotional bond with an organization that transcends contractual duty.

4.2.2 The Absence of Recognition as a Demotivator

On the other hand, when acknowledgment was lacking, many educators reported feeling emotionally disengaged. Some described institutional cultures where only faults were acknowledged or where the default response to effort was silence. Leadership philosophies that were seen as transactional, centered on control and compliance, were often linked to this lack of affirmation.

"They only talk to you when you make a mistake. No one sees the extra work you do, staying late, making materials. It's like we're invisible unless something goes wrong."

(Leonardo, Istanbul, 3 years' experience)

"Our supervisor never praises anyone. You deliver ten good lessons, no comment. One student complains, and suddenly it's a crisis. It's exhausting."

(Minoo, Tehran, 9 years' experience)

According to these reports, teachers who lack acknowledgment may become normatively disengaged, losing their sense of moral or emotional obligation to the educational institutions, in addition to having their morale weakened. They keep teaching, but their dedication becomes brittle and commercial.

4.2.3 Culturally Framed Expectations for Respect

Different situations have different interpretations of recognition. Drawing on cultural traditions of formality and seniority, a number of Iranian educators interpreted acknowledgment in terms of institutional hierarchy and moral respect.

"In our culture, respect is shown in small gestures—inviting us to speak at meetings, acknowledging our opinions. When a leader just makes decisions and informs us later, it feels disrespectful, even if they're polite."

(Ali, Tehran, 10 years' experience)

In contrast, teachers in Istanbul often described recognition in more collaborative or egalitarian terms.

"What I value is when my coordinator asks for my input, not just says thank you, but genuinely wants my ideas. That's when I feel respected as a professional."

(Elif, Istanbul, 6 years' experience)

These observations are consistent with Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions of individualism and power distance, indicating that expectations that are influenced by culture have an impact on how people perceive and understand leadership behaviors. In a variety of institutional contexts, a one-size-fits-all recognition paradigm is unlikely to be effective.

4.2.4 Recognition and Retention

Lastly, it was discovered that recognition was a crucial component of retention. Teachers who had emotional support from their supervisors, especially in high-stress situations, frequently reported feeling less prone to burn out and more inclined to stick around.

"I had offers from other schools, but I stayed here because of how my director treated us during the pandemic. She was present, she was kind, and she understood we were scared. That meant everything."

(Melike, Istanbul, 12 years' experience)

On the other hand, instances of emotional exit, in which teachers talked of psychologically withdrawing years before formally resigned, often mentioned a lack of acknowledgment.

"By the end, I stopped caring. I did my job, but nothing more. There was no feedback, no appreciation—just pressure. Eventually, I left, but honestly, I left emotionally long before that."

(Shirin, Tehran, 8 years' experience)

These stories highlight the value of acknowledgment as a retention tactic as well as a leadership quality. Leaders who recognize and support their instructors foster a feeling of purpose, loyalty, and trust; all of which are essential components of long-lasting educational establishments.

4.3 THEME TWO: PEDAGOGICAL AUTONOMY AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The importance placed on instructional autonomy and access to chances for professional development was another major theme that came out of the interviews. Teachers in Tehran and Istanbul stressed the need of having a sense of empowerment and trust in their teaching methods, and they also expected leadership to offer worthwhile development opportunities. This theme is highly compatible with two

essential components of transformative leadership: intellectual stimulation and personalized attention (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Although most participants agreed that administrative control and uniformity were necessary, they were irritated when leadership became unduly directive or limited their ability to be creative in their training. On the other hand, they expressed gratitude and allegiance to leaders who supported their growth and gave them the freedom to try out, develop, and hone their teaching identities.

4.3.1 Autonomy as Professional Trust

For many educators, autonomy was synonymous with trust. Teachers felt respected as experts when leaders allowed them to create lessons, modify existing techniques, or provide new resources.

"I am not asking to rewrite the curriculum. I just want the freedom to adjust activities based on what works in my class. When leaders let me do that, I feel respected. I feel like a real educator."

(Ezgi, Istanbul, 5 years' experience)

"We are not robots. We know our students. When my supervisor lets me modify things, even slightly, it shows she trusts me. That trust makes me want to do better."

(Hamidreza, Tehran, 6 years' experience)

These statements emphasize the connection between motivating commitment and autonomy, with teachers striving for excellence because they feel appreciated and empowered rather than under pressure from others. According to participants, transformational leaders frequently made such environments possible by promoting creativity and refraining from micromanaging the delivery of lessons.

4.3.2 Restrictions and the Erosion of Ownership

Participants who worked under strict transactional leadership, on the other hand, frequently expressed dissatisfaction and disengagement. Teachers felt deprived of their professional agency when instruction was confined to rigorous adherence to predetermined curricula or micromanaged classroom practices.

"Everything is standardized—lesson plans, materials, even the jokes we're supposed to use. It's dehumanizing. I came into this field to teach, not to recite scripts."

(Niloufar, Tehran, 3 years' experience)

"You get evaluated not on whether your students are learning, but whether you follow the checklist exactly. It makes you feel like you're not trusted to think."

(Berk, Istanbul, 8 years' experience)

Reduced job satisfaction and an increasing sense of alienation were often associated with this loss of autonomy. Teachers in these settings frequently talked about merely following the rules or putting up the bare minimum of effort required to avoid criticism—actions that are consistent with withdrawal cognition, which comes before turnover (Jha, 2009).

4.3.3 Growth Beyond the Classroom

Participants indicated a high desire for continued professional development in addition to classroom autonomy. Participation in curriculum design, coaching, mentoring, and workshop opportunities were all cited as indicators of leadership that supports its teachers.

"Our manager encourages us to attend webinars and even covers some of the costs. He also shares articles and asks for our thoughts. It feels like he cares about our growth, not just our productivity."

(Araz, Istanbul, 4 years' experience)

"Last year, I was given the chance to lead a teacher training session. It boosted my confidence and helped me see myself differently—as a contributor, not just an employee."

(Shahrouz, Tehran, 11 years' experience)

This focus on growth is a reflection of institutional investment that strengthens commitment as well as transformational principles. Teachers who have access to development pathways are more likely to stay engaged and loyal because they view their jobs as opportunities for professional growth rather than stagnation.

4.3.4 Developmental Leadership as Retention Strategy

Teachers generally related the availability—or absence of—professional development to their long-term goals. Several participants stated that restricted development possibilities, particularly in institutions with high teacher turnover, resulted in sentiments of frustration and professional plateauing.

"You reach a point where you feel you've learned all you can here. Without new challenges or development, it's just repetition. That's when people start looking elsewhere."

(Amirreza, Tehran, 9 years' experience)

"There's no ladder to climb here. The leadership focuses only on student enrollment. We're never asked what we need to grow. That's why people leave."

(Nurhan, Istanbul, 6 years' experience)

These studies reinforce findings by Givens (2008) and Adeoye et al. (2025) that demonstrate the close relationship between leaders' support of professional development and teacher retention. Teachers are driven by a sense of growth—the potential to progress in their careers—in addition to compensation and workload.

4.3.5 Balancing Structure and Freedom

Interestingly, some participants stressed the importance of balance and expressed gratitude to leaders who allowed for creativity while maintaining a clear structure.

"What I like about my current school is that we have a structure to fall back on, but we're not punished for being creative. It's like they give us a road but let us choose the vehicle."

(Canan, Istanbul, 10 years' experience)

This type of hybrid leadership, which combines transactional consistency with transformational empowerment, was repeatedly mentioned as the most successful in promoting both institutional objectives and autonomy. It supports adaptive leadership models in education that integrate vision, strategy, and responsiveness, as advocated by Fullan (2016).

4.4 THEME THREE: MONITORING, PRESSURE, AND TRANSACTIONAL CONTROL

Transactional leadership, often perceived as institutional pressure, overzealous performance monitoring, and punitive accountability measures, was equally prevalent as transformational leadership, which emerged as a desired and motivating force across many participants' accounts. Participants characterized this leadership style as placing less emphasis on emotional intelligence, trust, or growth and more on rules, compliance, and outcome-based assessments. This method led to psychological exhaustion and departure decisions for many teachers in addition to their discontent.

These results are consistent with earlier studies that criticize excessively transactional leadership for lacking intrinsic motivation or creativity and having a short-term focus (Tavanti, 2008; Dong, 2023). Such strict control was frequently seen as detrimental in the context of English language instruction, where teachers must be flexible in response to changing student demands.

4.4.1 The Burden of Surveillance

Participants highlighted rigorous performance monitoring, which includes regular reviews, surprise visits, and rigorous adherence to protocol, as a crucial example of transactional leadership. Many educators compared their job to a regulated setting devoid of trust, using language of monitoring.

"We're constantly watched—camera in classrooms, spot checks, feedback forms, evaluation grids. It's hard to relax. It feels like you're always on trial."

(Derya, Istanbul, 5 years' experience)

"In our school, there's a checklist for everything—how you greet students, how long you write on the board, how fast you go through material. It's exhausting and honestly insulting."

(Saeed, Tehran, 7 years' experience)

These settings were seen as policing rather than encouraging, which led to tension, performance anxiety, and even animosity. Teachers talked about changing their

methods to "perform" compliance on assessments rather than to enhance learning outcomes, frequently at the price of true pedagogical innovation.

4.4.2 Compliance Over Creativity

It was frequently mentioned by participants that transactional leaders valued regularity and order over adaptability or instructor discretion. For less experienced teachers, this offered structure and clarity, but for more seasoned educators, it was frequently restrictive.

"They care more about whether I followed the script than if my students understood the material. There's no room for creativity, and over time, that kills your passion."

(Farnaz, Tehran, 12 years' experience)

"I used to enjoy lesson planning. Now I just follow the handbook. If you deviate, you get flagged in your review."

(Yusof, Istanbul, 6 years' experience)

A compliance culture is promoted in this setting, when instruction becomes transactional and more concerned with following the rules than with learning, initiative, or student involvement. In these institutions, educators frequently referred to themselves as technicians rather than experts.

4.4.3 Pressure to Perform and Burnout

Quantitative goals and metric-based assessments, such as test scores, customer reviews, and student retention rates, were also used to convey transactional pressure. Participants resented the reduction of their work to numbers, even if they agreed that accountability was necessary.

"Everything is measured. Attendance, feedback scores, and test results. We're told it is business, but it doesn't feel like education anymore. It's demoralizing."

(Pariya, Tehran, 4 years' experience)

"We get weekly reports comparing us to other teachers. If your student feedback is even slightly low, you're called in for a meeting. It's like working in a call center."

(Kadir, Istanbul, 8 years' experience)

Teachers' narratives of burnout, which included chronic stress, sleep issues, and emotional disengagement from their profession, demonstrated the psychological toll of this system.

"I started having anxiety attacks before evaluations. I was always second-guessing myself, wondering what I did wrong. Eventually, I just stopped caring."

(Simin, Tehran, 6 years' experience)

These reports are consistent with study by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011), who discovered that high levels of external pressure and a perceived loss of autonomy are major causes of teacher burnout.

4.4.4 Punishment Over Encouragement

The prevalence of punitive leadership, where feedback concentrated on mistakes and disciplinary action was given precedence over encouragement, was another facet of transactional control mentioned by participants. This discouraged taking risks and produced fear-based motivation.

"Mistakes are punished harshly. One bad class, and you're reprimanded in front of others. It kills morale."

(Gozde, Istanbul, 9 years' experience)

"Our manager gives no praise, only warnings. It's a toxic cycle—you're always afraid of doing something wrong."

(Alireza, Tehran, 10 years' experience)

These kinds of environments run counter to transformational ideas that prioritize encouragement, acknowledgment, and a growth-oriented culture. Rather, they result in emotional disengagement, in which educators stay physically present but lose their mental focus.

4.4.5 Transactional Consistency as a Partial Strength

It is significant to note that a tiny percentage of participants, particularly younger teachers, recognized the advantages of transactional clarity, especially in the early phases of their careers.

"As a new teacher, I appreciated having clear rules and checklists. It gave me confidence when I didn't know what I was doing."

(Zeynep, Istanbul, 2 years' experience)

This supports Bush's (2021) assertion that transactional leadership can be helpful in high-turnover organizations where consistency and predictability are essential. But as they developed professionally, even these participants finally wanted a change to more empowered leadership.

4.5 THEME FOUR: CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS AND LEADERSHIP NORMS

Beyond the actual leadership behaviors, the cultural setting in which they took place had a significant impact on teachers' opinions. Participants regularly used culturally ingrained lenses influenced by communication, authority, hierarchy, and professionalism norms to understand the acts of their leaders. Anything perceived as encouraging or nice in one situation could be construed as authoritarian or uninterested in another. This topic aligns with Hofstede's (2001) cultural traits, such as power distance and individuality versus collectivism, and highlights the importance of cultural competency in leadership within diverse educational institutions.

Teachers' definitions of fairness, interpretations of silence, comprehension of decision-making procedures, and reactions to criticism were influenced by cultural norms in both Tehran and Istanbul. A leadership approach's efficacy was frequently determined more by how well it aligned with the institution's cultural norms than by the conduct itself.

4.5.1 Expectations Around Hierarchy and Authority

In Tehran, teachers often saw leadership through the lens of hierarchical respect, where a strong, authoritative leader was not only acceptable but sometimes also preferred—as long as that power was exercised fairly.

"We are used to top-down structures. It's not a problem if the manager decides alone, but how he treats us while doing it matters. If he is respectful, we accept it."

(Mobin, Tehran, 5 years' experience)

"I don't expect to be asked for every decision. But when we're just informed without explanation, it feels like we're outsiders in our institution."

(Ebi, Tehran, 10 years' experience)

These answers show a culture with a high-power distance, where relationships are still important but hierarchy is respected. In addition to exercising decisive leadership, leaders are obliged to uphold the dignity of their followers.

Teachers in Istanbul, on the other hand, prioritized teamwork and consultation above hierarchy, though they were not wholly opposed to it.

"It's not about rejecting authority. We just want to be part of the conversation. When a coordinator listens and includes us, that's real leadership."

(Aylin, Istanbul, 6 years' experience)

"We're adults. When decisions are made behind closed doors, it feels like we're being parented, not led."

(Baris, Istanbul, 7 years' experience)

These opinions are indicative of a setting with a considerably shorter power distance, where collaborative leadership is respected and seen as a sign of contemporary professionalism and trust.

4.5.2 Communication Styles and Interpretation of Silence

Teachers' interpretations of communication—or lack thereof—also showed cultural disparities. Open communication and frequent updates were seen as crucial to preserving organizational transparency and morale in Istanbul.

"When leadership is silent, people start gossiping. We need open channels; otherwise, rumors fill the gap."

(Selen, Istanbul, 3 years' experience)

Participants in Tehran frequently accepted leadership silence, but they understood it more according to tone and body language than substance. Silence wasn't necessarily bad, but it needed to be accompanied by respectful nonverbal clues.

"Even if our supervisor doesn't speak much, we read how she looks at us, if she nods, if she makes eye contact. Those small signs mean a lot here."

(Hosseini, Tehran, 8 years' experience)

These observations are consistent with high-context cultures, in which relational and nonverbal clues, rather than overt words, convey meaning (Hall, 1976). Regardless of what they stated, leaders in Tehran were frequently seen as cold or contemptuous if they did not demonstrate warmth or attention.

4.5.3 Feedback and Face-Saving

Feedback, a key leadership tool, was another area shaped by culture. Teachers in Tehran expressed strong aversion to public criticism, which was seen as humiliating and disrespectful.

"Even if I make a mistake, I expect it to be addressed privately. Public criticism is shameful here—it ruins trust."

(Fatemeh, Tehran, 9 years' experience)

Although they also detested public humiliation, Istanbul instructors were often more receptive to candid criticism as long as it was delivered politely and in a constructive manner.

"Tell me what I can do better, but don't humiliate me. Be honest, but human."

(Can, Istanbul, 4 years' experience)

These differences show how crucial face-saving communication is in Iran and how Turkey is a little more individualist when it comes to being receptive to productive discourse. In order to maintain dignity while addressing problems, effective leaders in each situation modified their feedback style appropriately, picking the appropriate words, context, and tone.

4.5.4 Cultural Perceptions of What Makes a "Good Leader"

Finally, a question about their ideal leader was posed to the participants. Their answers demonstrated leadership models that went beyond theoretical boundaries and were culturally aware.

In Tehran, ideal leaders were described as authoritative but empathetic, firm but morally grounded.

"The best leader I had was strict but fair. She never raised her voice, but we knew where she stood. She protected us from unnecessary stress."

(Kamran, Tehran, 7 years' experience)

In Istanbul, participants favored leaders who were collaborative, inclusive, and communicative.

"My ideal leader is someone who listens, doesn't pretend to know everything, and respects the team's input. Someone you can talk to."

(Ezgi, Istanbul, 5 years' experience)

Despite reflecting varying cultural norms, these preferences agree that relationships are more important to leadership than decisions alone. Teachers want leaders that are attentive, personable, and present, whether they work in egalitarian or hierarchical environments.

4.6 THEME FIVE: COMMITMENT, IDENTITY, AND BELONGING

The significance of having an emotional, professional, and ideological bond with the organizations where teachers worked emerged as a recurring theme in the interviews. In addition to discussing their responsibilities and leadership philosophies, participants discussed if they felt a sense of belonging, belief, and want to contribute to the growth of their schools. Their professional identity and organizational devotion were formed by their sense of belonging—or lack thereof. The three components of commitment—*affective, continuation, and normative*—as well as the part that leadership plays in fostering emotional loyalty were reiterated by Meyer and Allen (1997).

Teachers' perception of institutional alignment was found to be facilitated and hindered by leadership practices. Long-term commitment was thought to be facilitated by transformational leaders who fostered inclusion, trust, and a common goal. It was believed that transactional leaders who just paid attention to performance results were eroding emotional bonds and creating a more utilitarian, disengaged engagement with the work.

4.6.1 Affective Commitment: Belonging Through Shared Values

Numerous participants recounted instances in which they were honored to work for their organization; these were typically connected to leaders who placed an emphasis on inclusive objectives and shared values.

"When my coordinator says, 'We're building something important here,' it reminds me that I'm part of something bigger. It motivates me beyond salary."

(Sevil, Istanbul, 4 years' experience)

"Our director believes in empowering teachers, and you can feel it. We're not just executing orders—we're shaping the school's direction. That gives you a reason to stay."

(Zahra, Tehran, 6 years' experience)

According to research, positive performance, well-being, and retention are most closely linked to high levels of affective commitment, which these teachers demonstrated (Ghosh & Swamy, 1979; Cohen, 2007). A key component of this commitment was leadership that conveys a feeling of purpose, inclusivity, and congruence.

4.6.2 Continuance Commitment: Staying Because of Circumstance

Some participants, on the other hand, stayed at their universities out of necessity rather than loyalty—for example, because of limited options, financial limitations, or visa status.

"I do not feel any attachment to the school, but the pay is regular, and finding a new job would be hard. So, I stay—for now."

(Hamed, Tehran, 8 years' experience)

"There's no real emotional bond. It's just convenience. If a better offer comes, I'm gone."

(Yusuf, Istanbul, 5 years' experience)

A transactional, cost-benefit perspective on work is reflected in this kind of dedication to continuity. The perception that work was a commercial transaction rather than a common goal was strengthened by the fact that participants in this group frequently characterized their supervisors as aloof, indifferent, or unduly control-focused.

It is interesting to note that after experiencing transformative leadership, several participants who had originally enrolled in a school out of need grew more dedicated. In many situations, the pivotal moment that transformed passive continuation into active engagement was leadership.

"At first, it was just a job. But my manager kept checking in, offered support, and gave me space to grow. Over time, I started caring about the place."

(Nazanin, Tehran, 3 years' experience)

4.6.3 Normative Commitment: Loyalty and Moral Obligation

When leadership aligned with their moral and educational beliefs, some educators talked about staying out of a sense of obligation or moral alignment. These members spoke of an almost family devotion to their organizations, which was strengthened by leaders who exemplified justice, compassion, and sustained investment.

"We've been through tough times, but I've seen how hard my director works to protect the teachers. You don't walk away from that kind of leadership."

(Emine, Istanbul, 11 years' experience)

"I feel a responsibility to give back. This school gave me my first break, and the leadership has supported me every step of the way."

(Mohammad, Tehran, 5 years' experience)

Those who perceived leadership as relational and imaginative were most likely to exhibit this type of normative commitment. Their devotion became an ethical decision that transcended reason and feeling.

4.6.4 Identity as a Teacher: Being Seen and Valued

A number of individuals connected how their bosses viewed and handled them to their feeling of professional identity. A positive self-concept was facilitated by leadership that presented educators as innovators, mentors, and co-creators.

"When my principal introduced me as a mentor to new teachers, I felt seen. That's when I stopped feeling like just an employee—I started seeing myself as a leader too."

(Rana, Istanbul, 7 years' experience)

On the other hand, some participants described identity erosion when leadership reduced them to functionaries.

"Sometimes I feel like a delivery system for lessons. No one asks what I think. It makes me question my worth as a teacher."

(Kourosh, Tehran, 6 years' experience)

In these situations, leadership serves as a mirror, reflecting either invisibility or worth. Teachers more fully absorb these roles when they are viewed as experts, change agents, or esteemed professionals, which strengthens their sense of self and institutional dedication.

4.6.5 Institutional Belonging and Emotional Climate

Lastly, a number of participants characterized their organizations' general emotional atmosphere—which is frequently influenced by leadership—as either hospitable or alienating. Stronger senses of belonging were correlated with open communication, respect for one another, and a sense of community.

"We have disagreements, but there's a real sense of team here. Our leaders listen, and that creates a healthy environment."

(Selda, Istanbul, 10 years' experience)

On the other hand, teachers reported feeling alone and emotionally estranged in establishments with cold or hierarchical environments.

"I come, I teach, I leave. There's no spirit. No sense of family. It's like being in a factory."

(Behzad, Tehran, 4 years' experience)

Participants stated that such environments were frequently indicative of significant turnover, not because the job was intrinsically poor but rather because the culture felt disconnected. The findings of Harper and Schmidt (2021) that leadership style and school culture are the main predictors of teacher retention are corroborated by this.

4.7 THEME SIX: EXIT NARRATIVES AND TURNOVER DECISIONS

Although not all of the participants had left their prior institution, almost all of them either recalled times when they thought about leaving or shared anecdotes of coworkers who had. These exit stories provided insightful information on the trigger events that cause instructors to leave their organizations, and how leadership behaviors—or lack thereof—frequently act as the cause.

Recurring experiences of feeling unsupported, unappreciated, or constrained led to a gradual accumulation of turnover decisions, which were rarely sudden or isolated. Teachers talked about a "slow emotional slide," which frequently starts with disengagement and ends with resignation. A significant factor in this process was leadership, with transactional or absentee leadership speeding up turnover and transformational leadership protecting against it.

4.7.1 Accumulated Disengagement

Several educators talked about how unsupportive or uncaring leadership caused their drive and excitement to progressively wane. Despite early enthusiasm, this eventually resulted in a disengagement from the organization and career.

"When I started, I was excited. But the constant pressure, no appreciation, no growth—it wears you down. I stopped caring. Then I left."

(Haleh, Tehran, former teacher, now freelance tutor)

"It wasn't one incident. It was years of being told how to teach, being evaluated unfairly, and never being asked for feedback. Eventually, I knew I had to leave."

(Orhan, Istanbul, 9 years' experience)

This emotional deterioration is a reflection of what Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found to be a major contributor to attrition: leadership neglect and institutional atmosphere, not pay or workload.

4.7.2 Breaking Points and Sudden Exits

Participants described a few instances of abrupt departures brought on by a leadership choice that seemed to be a betrayal of respect or trust. These were frequently public humiliations, unjust appraisals, or punitive measures.

"My supervisor criticized me in front of students. I had had enough. I resigned that evening. No one deserves to be treated that way."

(Fatih, Istanbul, 5 years' experience)

"They cut my hours without warning after one complaint. I felt betrayed. I left within a week."

(Mahsa, Tehran, 3 years' experience)

According to Lee and Mitchell's (1994) theory, turnover shocks are times when human dignity and organizational principles clash, resulting in actions that cannot be undone. In these situations, poor leadership communication was crucial.

4.7.3 Staying Despite Dissatisfaction

It's interesting to note that a number of educators reported remaining at their universities in spite of their discontent for pragmatic reasons, such as fear of starting yet again, job scarcity, or visa restrictions. But they were clearly psychologically withdrawn.

"I need the job, but I'm not growing here. I just do what I have to and go home. It's sad because I used to love teaching."

(Simin, Tehran, 6 years' experience)

"It's stable, and the hours are good. But if a better opportunity came, I'd leave without looking back."

(Burak, Istanbul, 4 years' experience)

This "staying with one foot out the door" reflects continuance commitment without affective attachment. It's not sustainable and often leads to burnout and eventual exit.

4.7.4 Retention Through Leadership

On the other hand, participants who expressed strong institutional loyalty and work satisfaction frequently connected their retention to the caliber of their leaders, especially those who were present, empowered, and responsive.

"I've had better offers, but I stay because of my principal. She supports us like a real mentor. That matters more than money."

(Derya, Istanbul, 12 years' experience)

"Even when things get hard, I feel like we're in it together. Our coordinator doesn't just lead—she listens. That's why I've stayed seven years."

(Babak, Tehran, 7 years' experience)

These observations support the findings of Klein et al.'s (2021) study, which highlights that leadership is one of the best indicators of teacher retention, frequently surpassing monetary rewards or institutional standing.

4.7.5 Lessons from Those Who Left

Lastly, a few of individuals mentioned former coworkers whose departures made an influence. These tales provided insight into the cultural understanding of turnover, or how those who stay perceive departures.

"When the best teacher left last year, it sent a message: even the committed ones can't survive bad leadership forever."

(Seda, Istanbul, 5 years' experience)

"She loved teaching, but she said the pressure was affecting her health. When she left, we all started rethinking our paths."

(Amir, Tehran, 6 years' experience)

Thus, turnover is not merely a personal choice rather it is a collective signal that frequently prompts introspection and possible spread among different employees. If leaders do not address the causes of turnover, they run the risk of losing not just one teacher but also the teams morale.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research findings are thoroughly summarized in this last chapter, which also examines the consequences for language education leadership practices. The study looked into the effects of transactional and transformational leadership styles on the organizational commitment, satisfaction with their jobs, and turnover intentions of English teachers in language schools in Tehran and Istanbul. Based on 20 instructors' qualitative interviews, the study demonstrated how leadership is perceived as a highly relational, emotional, and context-bound reality that influences teacher motivation, retention, and well-being rather than as an abstract model.

The main conclusions from each of the results' topic areas are initially outlined in this chapter. It then offers specific suggestions for institutional officials, school administrators, and creators of leadership development programs. Lastly, it lists the study's shortcomings and makes recommendations for future avenues of inquiry.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 Leadership and Teacher Motivation

Emotional appreciation, inclusive visioning, and professional encouragement are examples of transformational leadership behaviors that have become effective motivators. Higher levels of satisfaction, a greater sense of belonging, and a deeper connection to their institutions were stated by teachers who encountered this style. On the other hand, instructors reported stress, disengagement, and eventually the desire to quit when transactional leadership was demonstrated by overzealous monitoring, strict regulations, or a lack of empathy.

5.2.2 Organizational Commitment

The three aspects of organizational commitment and leadership style were found to be clearly correlated by the study:

- **Affective Commitment:** Under transformational leadership, it is reinforced by inclusion, trust, and a common goal.

- **Continuance Commitment:** More prevalent in highly transactional or bureaucratic institutions, this commitment is frequently motivated by outside limitations or a lack of choices.
- **Normative Commitment:** Strengthened when leaders showed equity, guidance, and sustained dedication to teacher development.

These results highlight the value of moral and emotional ties in keeping instructors on staff and are consistent with Meyer and Allen's (1997) commitment model.

5.2.3 Job Satisfaction and Professional Identity

Leadership that encouraged instructional independence, collaboration, and advancement had an impact on teachers' positive professional identities and happiness. Lower levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and creativity have been linked to transactional workplaces, which place an emphasis on norms, assessments, and outputs. It was found that instructors' perceptions of themselves as empowered educators or as replaceable labor were significantly influenced by leadership.

5.2.4 Turnover Decisions

Leadership strategies were a major theme in exit narratives. Teachers who quit institutions usually cited stress, carelessness, or contempt from administrators as their primary reasons. However, some individuals were able to persevere under challenging circumstances because of strong, supportive leadership. As a result, leadership was both a risk and a protective factor for teacher retention.

5.2.5 Cultural Mediation of Leadership Perceptions

Cultural norms had a big impact on how people saw leadership. While open communication and cooperative decision-making were highly appreciated in Istanbul, hierarchical deference and relational warmth were crucial in Tehran. Successful leaders don't use a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, they adjust to these expectations.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

As pedagogical adaptation cultural variety and emotional labor are particularly evident in the field of language instruction the study's findings offer valuable insights into the practical effects of leadership styles in educational settings. The implications for how leaders should approach and carry out their responsibilities are numerous.

5.3.1 Leadership as a Relational Practice

According to the findings effective education leadership is fundamentally relational and not merely a managerial or technological undertaking. In addition to authority and results teachers evaluate their leaders based on their communication empathy trust and inclusion. Leaders who see teachers as whole individuals rather than just content providers encourage greater engagement and loyalty.

5.3.2 Transformational Leadership as a Retention Strategy

Job satisfaction and teacher retention were consistently associated with transformational leadership characteristics, such as academic stimulation, emotional support, and a shared vision. These actions not only enhance the culture of the institution but also act as buffers against teacher attrition and fatigue. Resilient teaching communities are the result of leaders who support teacher growth, acknowledge hard work, and grant autonomy.

5.3.3 Risks of Over-Transactionalism

According to the study, a solely transactional leadership paradigm has drawbacks, particularly in dynamic, multicultural, or student-centered learning environments. Although responsibility and structure are crucial, placing too much focus on control, monitoring, and rewards and penalties causes disengagement, less innovation, and eventually turnover. A transactional-only approach ignores the intellectual and emotional aspects of teaching and reduces it to compliance.

5.3.4 Cultural Sensitivity in Leadership Style

The study's cross-cultural component highlights the importance of culturally sensitive leadership. In one setting, something that is seen as courteous and inclusive

(like open meetings in Istanbul) could be ineffectual or even disruptive (like Tehran's propensity for indirect communication). Local values, power structures, and communication conventions must all be understood by effective leaders. Even with the best of intentions, culturally insensitive leadership runs the danger of alienating employees.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The following suggestions are put out for school administrators, teacher educators, and institutional management looking to enhance teacher engagement and lower turnover in language learning environments in light of the findings and consequences mentioned above:

5.4.1 Foster Emotional Recognition and Support

- Conduct individualized feedback sessions and frequent check-ins.
- In private and in public, acknowledge the accomplishments of educators. Educate supervisors and intermediate managers on appreciative communication and emotional intelligence.

5.4.2 Encourage Professional Autonomy and Growth

- Permit instructors to modify their lesson plans in response to the demands of their students.
- Provide access to chances for professional growth, such as joint workshops and mentorship positions. Engage educators in discussions about policies and curriculum issues.

5.4.3 Employ Monitoring Not as a Weapon, But as a Tool

- Convert from disciplinary assessments to developmental observations.
- Involve educators in creating positive, as opposed to punitive, assessment instruments.
- Put student participation and learning objectives ahead of strict procedural adherence.

5.4.4 Create Leadership Programs with Context Awareness

- Include cultural studies in leadership development courses.
- To get leaders ready for international learning environments, use case studies from many cultural contexts.

- Give people a place to think about how their own cultural prejudices could affect their leadership style.

5.4.5 Policy Planning with a Retention Focus

- Consider leadership development to be essential to efforts for keeping teachers on staff. Analyze the causes of teacher attrition and establish institutional procedures for exit interviews.
- Make use of teacher input to inform leadership performance reviews and advancement opportunities.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study, like all qualitative research, is influenced by its interpretive frameworks, methodological decisions, and contextual boundaries. To properly place the findings, it is imperative to acknowledge these limitations.

5.5.1 Scope and Sample Size

Twenty English language teachers from four private schools—two in Tehran and two in Istanbul—were the subject of the study. This sample did not allow for generalization to all language teachers in either country or across educational systems, even if it was adequate for thematic saturation in a qualitative study. Furthermore, the leadership structures, working conditions, and cultural norms of private institutions may be very different from those of public institutions.

5.5.2 Language and Interview Medium

Although the participants utilized English professionally throughout all of the interviews, this may have hindered their ability to convey certain complex feelings or culturally specific ideas. When talking about difficult emotional or cultural subjects, some participants might have toned down or used simpler language.

5.5.3 Researcher Positionality and Interpretation

The researcher's background, presumptions, and positionality invariably affect how the data is interpreted, just like in any qualitative study. Journaling and peer debriefing were examples of reflexivity used throughout, but the results are still the

result of interpretative interaction and are not "objective truths." distinct researchers could highlight distinct patterns in the data or find different themes.

5.5.4 Institutional Diversity

The participating institutions were all urban, quite well-resourced, and comparable in organizational scale, despite efforts to incorporate participants from a range of age groups, teaching experience levels, and educational environments. Teachers that work in public, rural, underfunded, or extremely hierarchical settings may have very different viewpoints.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Building on the findings and constraints of this investigation, the following lines of inquiry are suggested for further research:

5.6.1 Expand to Public Institutions and Broader Geographic Areas

To evaluate how leadership works in situations with various restrictions and governance structures, future research should involve a wider range of institutions, especially public schools and rural areas. Comparative cultural understanding might also be obtained by expanding to other cities or nations in the area.

5.6.2 Longitudinal and Mixed-Methods Research

Deeper understanding of the relationship between leadership and commitment and turnover at various career stages would be provided by a longitudinal study that tracks teacher experiences across time. Quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews together may improve the body of knowledge and enable more widespread generalizability.

5.6.3 Leadership Training Interventions

To find out what kinds of training result in quantifiable increases in teacher satisfaction and retention, experimental or evaluative studies evaluating the efficacy of leadership development programs—especially those emphasizing emotional intelligence, inclusivity, or culturally responsive leadership—would be helpful.

5.6.4 Teacher Perspectives on Hybrid Leadership Models

Although the contrast between transformational and transactional leadership was examined in this study, many educators expressed a preference for hybrid or balanced approaches. Future studies could look at the conception, application, and practical evaluation of such hybrid models.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – TURNITIN SIMILARITY REPORT

final vers2

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Title of Study:

The Impact of Transformational and Transactional Leadership on English Teachers' Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover: A Qualitative Study

Interview Objectives:

To explore English language instructors' lived experiences and perceptions of leadership in relation to their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions.

Interview Format:

- Semi-structured, in-depth interviews
- Duration: Approximately 45–60 minutes
- Medium: Zoom or in-person
- Recording: With prior consent

Introductory Script:

"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to explore your experiences and perceptions as an English language instructor working under different types of leadership. Your identity will remain confidential, and your honest responses are highly valued. This is a safe space—there are no right or wrong answers."

Interview Questions:

1. Can you tell me a bit about your background and how long you've been teaching English?
2. How would you describe the leadership style of your current school director or supervisor?

3. What specific actions or behaviors from your leader have impacted your work experience the most?
4. Have you ever felt motivated or empowered by your leader? Can you describe that moment?
5. Have there been times when leadership practices made your job more difficult or stressful?
6. How would you describe your emotional connection to your current institution?
7. Have you ever considered leaving your job? What role did leadership play in that decision?
8. In your view, what makes a “good” educational leader in your context?
9. Are there any leadership practices you think should be changed or improved?
10. Is there anything else you’d like to add about your experiences as a teacher in relation to school leadership?

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Research Title:

The Impact of Transformational and Transactional Leadership on English Teachers’ Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover

Researcher:

Mohadeseh Arzhangi

MBA Candidate, Fenerbahçe University Graduate School of Education

Supervisor:

Assitant Professor Dr. Cigdem ASARKAYA

Purpose of the Study:

This research explores how different leadership styles affect English instructors' professional experiences in language institutions.

What Participation Involves:

- A voluntary 45–60 minute interview
- Audio/video recording (with permission)
- Anonymity and confidentiality guaranteed
- Option to withdraw at any time without penalty

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept confidential. Responses will be anonymized and used for academic purposes only.

Consent Statement:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I understand the purpose of the study and voluntarily agree to participate. I am aware that I can withdraw at any point.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (EXCERPT)

Participant Code: T04 (Istanbul)

Gender: Female

Experience: 6 years

Date: March 5, 2025

Mode: Zoom

Segment Length: 7 minutes

Interviewer: How would you describe your manager's leadership style?

T04: Hmm, I would say it's very task-oriented, almost rigid. We have weekly targets and everything is measured. There's not much space for flexibility.

Interviewer: Does that impact your teaching or motivation?

T04: Yes, definitely. I sometimes feel like I'm just following orders, not teaching in a way that fits my students' needs. It gets demoralizing.

Interviewer: Have there been any positive leadership moments?

T04: Actually, yes. When our previous manager was around, she used to ask for our input. Even small things, like, "How do you feel about this new material?" It made a huge difference. We felt respected.

Interviewer: Have you ever thought of leaving because of leadership?

T04: Many times. I even started applying for other jobs last year. But then, some changes happened in management, and things slightly improved. So I stayed—for now.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information

Name Surname: Mohadeseh ARZHANGI

Phone / E-mail: 05060460600/ mohadeseharzhang2024@gmail.com

Educational Background

Associate/ Bachelor's Degree: English Language Education

Master's Degree: 1. English language Education 2. MBA

Doctorate / Proficiency in Art: PhD Candidate in English Language Education

Foreign Language Proficiency

Language (Please specify the foreign language you wish to mention.)	Exam Name	Exam Score and Year (Highest exam score in the last 5 years)	
		Exam Score	Exam Year
English	IELTS	7.5	2025

Work Experience

1. English Language Teacher (Live London Course Centre)
2. English Language Teacher (Birebir Ingilizce)
3. Educational Supervisor (Ariyana International Complex)

Scientific / Artistic Works

1. The Impact of Game-Based Learning on EFL Learners' Buoyancy, Directed Motivational Currents, and Language Learning (International Journal of Instruction)

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