





## Challenges and Facilitators in the Implementations of Teacher Leadership: A Comparative Study on Turkish and Palestinian Teachers<sup>1</sup>

### Öğretmen Liderliği Uygulamalarındaki Engeller ve Kolaylaştırıcılar: Türkiyeli ve Filistinli Öğretmenler Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma

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**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to examine the challenges faced by teachers in implementing teacher leadership practices, as well as the factors facilitating this leadership, among primary school teachers in Palestine and Turkey. Adopting a qualitative research approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 teachers from primary schools in Izmir, Turkey, and Gaza, Palestine, during the 2022-2023 academic year. The data obtained were analyzed using content analysis. The factors hindering teacher leadership were categorized under the themes of "personal barriers", "principal's relationship style barriers", "principal's management style barriers", "inter-teacher relationship barriers", and "teacher-parent relationship barriers". Conversely, facilitators were grouped under the themes of "personal facilitators", "principal's facilitative attitude", "inter-teacher facilitative relationships", and "teacher-parent facilitative relationships". By presenting a comparative analysis of these themes, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of teacher leadership dynamics in diverse cultural and educational contexts. The findings offer practical implications for teachers, administrators, and policymakers aiming to enhance teacher leadership practices in primary schools. Teachers in both regions face unique and shared challenges, and facilitators play a critical role in overcoming these obstacles. Recommendations include targeted training and workshops to develop teacher leadership skills, as well as providing necessary resources and fostering community and parental support.

**Key Words:** Teacher leadership, Teacher, Elementary school, Qualitative research, Comparative study.

**Öz.** Bu çalışmanın amacı, Filistin ve Türkiye'deki ilkokullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerinin öğretmen liderliği uygulamalarında karşılaştıkları engeller ve bu liderliği kolaylaştıran unsurları incelemektedir. Nitel araştırma yönteminin benimsendiği çalışmada, 2022-2023 eğitim öğretim yılında Türkiye'nin İzmir ili ve Filistin'in Gazze ilinde yer alan ilkokullarda görev yapan 12'şer öğretmenle derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmış ve elde edilen veriler içerik analiziyle çözümlenmiştir. Öğretmen liderliğini engelleyen unsurlar "kişisel engeller", "müdürün ilişki tarzından kaynaklanan engeller", "müdürün yönetim tarzından kaynaklanan engeller", "öğretmenler arası ilişki engelleri" ve "öğretmen-veli arasındaki ilişki engelleri" temaları altında toplanmıştır. Buna karşılık, kolaylaştırıcılar "kişisel kolaylaştırıcılar", "müdürün kolaylaştırıcı tutumu", "öğretmenler arası kolaylaştırıcı ilişkiler" ve "öğretmen-veli arasındaki kolaylaştırıcı ilişkiler" temaları altında toplanmıştır. Araştırmada bu temaların karşılaştırmalı analizi sunularak, farklı kültürel ve eğitimsel bağlamlarda öğretmen liderliği dinamiklerine dair detaylı bir anlayış sunulmaktadır. Her iki ülkedeki öğretmenler, kendilerine özgü ve ortak zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalmakta olup, destekleyici unsurlar bu engelleri aşmada kritik bir rol oynamaktadır. Araştırma; öğretmen liderliği uygulamalarını ilkokullarda geliştirmek isteyen öğretmenler, yöneticiler ve politika yapıcılar için pratik öneriler sunmaktadır. Öneriler arasında öğretmen liderliği becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik hizmet içi eğitim ve atölye çalışmaları, gerekli kaynakların sağlanması ve toplum ve veli desteğinin teşvik edilmesi de bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öğretmen liderliği, Öğretmen, İlkokul, Nitel araştırma, Karşılaştırmalı çalışma.



## Genişletilmiş Özet

**Giriş.** Günümüzde öğretmenler, okul ortamlarını şekillendiren ve öğrenci başarısını destekleyen liderlik sorumluluklarını üstlenerek geleneksel sınıf öğretiminin ötesinde roller üstlenmektedir. Öğretmen liderliği; ekip liderliği, bölüm başkanlığı ve müfredat geliştiriciliği gibi rolleri içermekte olup okul yöneticilerinin tüm liderlik ihtiyaçlarını tek başlarına karşılayamayacağı giderek daha fazla kabul görmektedir (Greenlee, 2007). York-Barr ve Duke (2004), öğretmen liderliğini meslektaşları, yöneticileri ve diğer paydaşları öğretim ve öğrenimi geliştirmek amacıyla etkileme süreci olarak tanımlamaktadırlar. Bu yaklaşım, hem eğitimcilerin etkinliğini hem de öğrenci başarısını artırarak işbirliğini ve yansıtıcı uygulamaları desteklemektedir (Lambert, 2003). Öğretmen liderliğinin eğitim sistemlerindeki artan önemine rağmen, bu alanda birtakım önemli zorluklar bulunmaktadır. Bu zorluklar arasında öğretmenlere verilen yetersiz liderlik eğitimi, geleneksel yönetici merkezli yapılar, yüksek iş yükü ve mesleki özyeterlik algılarının düşük olması yer almaktadır (Alegado, 2018; Zydziunaite vd., 2020). Yapıcı iletişim ve düzenli mesleki gelişim, öğretmen liderliğinin desteklenmesinde hayati öneme sahiptir (Szeto ve Cheng, 2017). Destekleyici yöneticiler ise açık diyalog, rehberlik ve karşılıklı geri bildirim teşvik ederek öğretmen liderliği için elverişli bir okul kültürünün oluşturulmasında önemli bir rol oynarlar (Hulpia vd., 2009; Mangin, 2007). Ancak, kayırmacılık ve yetersiz geri bildirim, adaletsizlik algısına ve öğretmen liderler arasında potansiyel çatışmalara yol açabilir (Edwards, 2015).

Bu çalışma; Türkiye ve Filistin'deki öğretmen liderliği deneyimlerinin karşılaştırmalı bir analizini sunarak, öğretmenlerin bu konuda karşılaştıkları zorlukları ve bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmelerini sağlayan faktörleri incelemektedir. Araştırma, bu özgün bağlamları analiz ederek farklı eğitim ortamlarındaki öğretmen liderliği dinamiklerinin daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasını ve bu liderliğin etkililiğinin ve etkisinin artırılmasına yönelik iç görüşler sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu araştırma şu sorulara yanıt aramaktadır:

- Türkiyeli ve Filistinli öğretmenlerin görev yaptıkları okullarda öğretmen liderliğinin uygulanmasında karşılaştıkları engellere ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?
- Türkiyeli ve Filistinli öğretmenlerin öğretmen liderliği rollerini gerçekleştirmelerini kolaylaştıran etmenlere ilişkin görüşleri nedir?

**Yöntem.** Bu çalışmada, Filistin'in Gazze ve Türkiye'nin İzmir illerindeki ilkokullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerden görüş olarak öğretmen liderliğinin uygulanmasındaki engeller ve kolaylaştırıcılar incelenmiştir. Nitel araştırma yönteminin kullanıldığı çalışmada, her iki ildeki ilkokullarda ders veren toplam 24 öğretmenden yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığıyla derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılarak veri toplanmıştır. Bu görüşmeler, öğretmenlerin okullarında liderlik rollerini yerine getirirken karşılaştıkları engeller ve onları destekleyen faktörler hakkındaki deneyimlerini anlamayı amaçlamıştır. Yanıtlar, içerik analiziyle çözümlenmiştir. Bu yolla, iki ülkedeki öğretmenlerin öğretmen liderliği uygulamalarını zorlaştıran ve kolaylaştıran unsurlar konusunda kapsamlı bir karşılaştırma yapılmaya, öğretmenlerin farklı kültürel ve eğitim bağlamlarında yaşadığı farklı ve ortak deneyimlere dair iç görüşler sunulmaya çalışılmıştır.

**Bulgular.** Bulgular, Türkiyeli ve Filistinli öğretmenlerin öğretmen liderliği rollerini yerine getirirken karşılaştıkları engeller ve kolaylaştırıcılar konusundaki bakış açıları arasında hem benzerlikleri hem de farklılıkları ortaya koymuştur. Zorluklar açısından, her iki grup da ekonomik ve kaynaklarla ilgili sorunları önemli engeller olarak tanımlamışlardır. Farklılıklar olarak, öğretmen liderliği rollerini yerine



getirme konusunda Filistinli öğretmenler özellikle sistemik ve yapısal zorluklarla karşılaştıklarını belirtirken, Türkiyeli öğretmenler politik görüşleri engeller olarak değerlendirmişlerdir. Öğretmen-müdür ilişkilerinde, her iki grup da destek ve teşvik eksikliğini ana zorluklar olarak vurgulamış ve otoriter yönetim yaklaşımlarına dair endişelerini paylaşmışlardır. Öğretmenler arası ilişkilerde, destek ve iş birliği konusunda ortak zorluklar ortaya çıkarken, Filistinli öğretmenler etik olmayan rekabetin, Türkiyeli öğretmenler ise siyasi davranışların altını çizmişlerdir. Öğretmen-veli ilişkilerinde, her iki grup da çatışma ve şikayetleri ana zorluklar olarak belirtirken, Filistinli öğretmenler velilerden gelen takdir eksikliğini dile getirmişlerdir.

Kolaylaştırıcılar açısından, hem Türkiyeli hem de Filistinli öğretmenler mesleki beceri ve bilgiyi önemli kişisel kolaylaştırıcılar olarak tanımlamış, ancak bazı farklılıklar da ortaya çıkmıştır. Kolaylaştırıcılar açısından, hem Türkiyeli hem de Filistinli öğretmenler mesleki beceri ve bilgiyi önemli kişisel kolaylaştırıcılar olarak tanımlamış, ancak bazı farklılıklar da ortaya çıkmıştır. Filistinli öğretmenler meslekteki liderlik sürecinde dış görünüş özellikleri ve çalışma koşullarını vurgularken, Türkiyeli öğretmenler kişisel koşulları ana kolaylaştırıcılar olarak belirtmişlerdir. Yöneticilerin kolaylaştırıcı tutumları açısından destek ve motivasyon, her iki grup için de en önemli faktörler olarak öne çıkmış, Filistinli öğretmenler bunu daha sık dile getirmişlerdir. Filistinli öğretmenler, ayrıca sosyal etkinliklere katılımın önemini belirtirken, Türkiyeli öğretmenler müdürlerin kişisel niteliklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenler arasındaki ilişkiler açısından iş birliği ve destek, en önemli kolaylaştırıcı faktör olarak ortaya çıkmış, Filistinli öğretmenler ayrıca sosyal etkinliklerin özel bir kolaylaştırıcı faktör olduğunu vurgulamışlardır.

Bu bulgular, her iki grubun ortak zorluklarla karşılaştığını ve kolaylaştırıcı faktörler konusunda benzer bakış açılarına sahip olduğunu gösterirken, her iki ülkenin özel bağlamı (özellikle Filistin'deki zorlu koşullar) öğretmen liderliğinin nasıl tezahür ettiğini ve okullarda nasıl desteklendiğini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir.

**Sonuç ve Tartışma.** Bu çalışma, Türkiye ve Filistin bağamları arasındaki öğretmen liderliği uygulamasında önemli farklılıklar ve benzerlikler ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, Filistinli öğretmenlerin daha şiddetli ekonomik ve kaynakla ilgili zorluklarla karşılaştığını, bunun yanı sıra elektrik kesintileri, maaşların düşüklüğü (toplam maaşın %40'ı) ve yüksek öğrenci sayısı ile müfredat yükü gibi koşulların bu zorlukları daha da artırdığını göstermektedir. Her iki grup kişisel zorluklarla karşılaşsa da, Filistinli öğretmenler psikolojik engeller ve geleneksel öğretim uygulamalarından kaynaklanan sınırlamaları daha fazla bildirmektedir. Türkiyeli öğretmenler ise daha az yapısal engelle karşılaşmakta, ancak siyasi görüşler ve sendika ilişkileriyle ilgili Filistinli öğretmenlerden farklı zorluklar yaşamaktadırlar. Müdür-öğretmen ilişkileri açısından, her iki grup da destek eksikliği ve iletişim sorunlarıyla önemli zorluklarla karşılaştıklarını ifade etmektedirler. Ancak, Filistinli öğretmenler müdürlerden gelen haksız muamele ve profesyonellikten uzak tutumlar konusunda daha fazla örnek bildirirken, Türkiyeli öğretmenler sendika üyelikleri ve kişilik çatışmalarıyla ilgili zorluklara vurgu yapmaktadırlar. Müdürlerin yönetim tarzı, önemli bir faktör olarak öne çıkmakta; Filistinli öğretmenler, Türkiyeli öğretmenlere kıyasla daha geleneksel ve otoriter yaklaşımlar bulunduğunu bildirmektedirler.

Kolaylaştırıcı faktörler açısından, hem Türkiyeli hem de Filistinli öğretmenler, liderlik rollerini güçlendirmede profesyonel beceri ve bilginin önemini vurgulamaktadırlar. Türkiyeli öğretmenler sürekli öğrenme ve akademik uğraşlara daha fazla odaklanırken, Filistinli öğretmenler iletişim becerileri, etik değerler ve çalışma koşullarını iyileştirmeyi vurgulamaktadırlar. Müdürlerin desteği her iki ülkede de kritik bir rol oynamakta; ancak Filistinli öğretmenler, daha zorlayıcı bir çalışma ortamına



sahip olduklarından, motivasyon ve moral desteğine daha fazla önem vermektedir. Öğretmenler arası ilişkiler ilginç bir model sergilemekte; her iki grup da iş birliği ve desteğin önemini kabul etmektedir. Ancak, Filistinli öğretmenler, akran gözlemleri ve yapılandırılmış destek sistemleri aracılığıyla daha formel bir yaklaşım benimserken, Türkiyeli öğretmenler kişiler arası destek ve gayri resmi iş birliğini vurgulamaktadırlar. Öğretmen-veli ilişkileri açısından, Filistinli öğretmenler daha aktif ebeveyn katılımı, özellikle anlayış ve finansal destek talep ederken, Türk öğretmenler etkili iletişime odaklanmaktadır. Bu bulgular, Harris ve Muijs (2004), Katzenmeyer ve Moller (2001), Finster & Lamitie's (2022) ile Leithwood vd. (2007) tarafından yapılan önceki araştırmalarla uyumlu olup, öğretmen liderliğini desteklemede müdür desteği ve meslektaş iş birliğinin kritik rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma; ekonomik koşullar, siyasi ortam ve kültürel normlar gibi farklı bağlamsal faktörlerin öğretmen liderliği rollerinin uygulanmasını ve gelişimini önemli ölçüde etkilediğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, Türkiyeli ve Filistinli öğretmenler, öğretmen liderliği uygulamaları hususunda benzer zorluk ve kolaylaştırıcılarla karşılaşsalar da her iki ülkenin özel bağlamı, öğretmen liderliğinin nasıl tezahür ettiğini ve okullarda hangi açılardan desteklendiğini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Araştırma bulgularından yola çıkarak öğretmen liderliğinin başarılı bir şekilde uygulanmasında, bağlamsal faktörlere dikkat edilmesi ve farklı eğitim ortamlarında öğretmenlerin karşılaştığı benzersiz zorlukları ele alan hedeflenmiş destek sistemlerinin geliştirilmesi gerektiği söylenebilir.



## Introduction

In the education field, the role of teachers extends far beyond traditional classroom instruction, encompassing significant leadership responsibilities that influence school dynamics and foster student success. Understanding the challenges and facilitators faced by teachers in these leadership roles is crucial for enhancing educational practices and promoting effective school management.

The concept of teacher leadership is well-established, with educators serving in various leadership capacities, such as team leaders, department heads, association leaders, and curriculum developers (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Since the late 1990s, there has been increasing emphasis on teachers taking on greater responsibilities to improve teaching and learning, reflecting a recognition that school administrators alone cannot and should not be the sole leaders within educational institutions (Greenlee, 2007). York-Barr and Duke (2004) define teacher leadership as "the process of influencing colleagues, school administrators, or other school stakeholders to improve teaching and learning methods to raise student achievement." Teacher leaders engage in reflective practices that enhance their colleagues' qualifications and foster a supportive atmosphere (Lambert, 2003). Strengthening teacher leadership can significantly impact educational practices and student achievement, enabling schools to better meet their objectives through shared leadership (Kale & Özdelenb, 2014).

Despite the recognized importance of teacher leadership, several challenges persist. Alegado (2018) highlights a predominant focus on principal-oriented leadership, the teaching position within schools, and a lack of leadership training. Gumede (2011) emphasizes the need for opportunities for teachers to practice various approaches in their roles. Sawalhi and Chaaban (2022) identify barriers such as insufficient courage, knowledge, and skills. Additional research explores the role of ICTs in leadership (Laferrrière & Breuleux, 2002) and the stress teachers experience from inadequate feedback on leadership (Gordon & Solis, 2018). Alsalahi (2014) notes issues of teacher disempowerment, while Zydziunaite et al. (2020) point to workload, time allocation, and self-esteem as significant challenges. Constructive communication and professional development opportunities are crucial for teacher leadership development (Szeto & Cheng, 2017). Supportive principals who foster an enabling school culture through regular communication, coaching, training, and mutual feedback significantly support teacher leadership development (Hulpia et al., 2009; Lambert, 2003; Mangin, 2007; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). However, Edwards (2015) found that favouritism in leadership opportunities created a hostile environment where some teacher leaders were perceived as bullies by their colleagues. This comparative study explores the unique contexts of Turkish and Palestinian teachers, examining the complexities and facilitators of teacher leadership in each country. By highlighting the specific challenges and facilitators in these distinct educational settings, this research aims to address the gap in understanding how contextual factors influence teacher leadership. Cross-cultural studies provide valuable insights into the universality and cultural specificity of educational phenomena (Hofstede, 2011).





## Education systems overview

The education system in Palestine is structured into three levels: Primary Education (grades 1-4), Middle Education (grades 5-9), and Secondary Education (grades 10-12). After completing Secondary Education, students sit for the Tawjihi examination, which determines their eligibility for college and university admission (MoEHE, 2017). The system faces considerable challenges due to financial instability, inadequate salaries, and resource shortages, exacerbated by the prolonged siege on Gaza City (Ramahi, 2019; Danil et al., 2023; Zaidan & Diwa, 2023). Overcrowded classrooms, shortages of educational materials, and political instability further compound difficulties in teacher leadership. Palestinian education includes public schools overseen by the Ministry of Education (MoE), private schools operated by various organizations, and schools administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees (MoEHE, 2017).

In Palestine, teachers face numerous challenges that hinder their professional growth and job satisfaction. According to the 2015 report by the Higher Committee for the Review of the Educational Process in Palestine and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2017-2022), issues such as low salaries, declining social status, and difficult working conditions contribute to burnout and reduced motivation. Efforts are being made to reform the supervision system and shift teachers' roles from information providers to facilitators of student skills development. However, insufficient support and conflicting training programs remain major obstacles.

The Turkish education system has undergone significant reforms aimed at improving quality and access. Overseen by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the system follows a 4+4+4 structure of primary, middle, and secondary education (Balbay & Kilis, 2018). Despite progress, teachers face challenges such as heavy workloads, limited professional development opportunities, and administrative constraints (Özyilmaz, 2020; Kara, 2020; Demir & Ari, 2013). The system includes formal education from pre-school to higher education and informal education activities. Despite improvements, issues like frequent system changes and insufficient teacher support persist (Demir & Ari, 2013; Kara, 2020).

The Turkish Education Vision 2023 document emphasizes the central role of teachers in achieving national educational goals, focusing on training, development, and collaboration. Efforts aim to reduce bureaucratic workloads, support professional development, and promote digital and vocational skills. These initiatives highlight the pivotal role of Turkish teachers and align with the broader theme of teacher leadership explored in this study.

By examining these varied educational contexts, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher leadership in Izmir, Turkey, and Gaza City, Palestine. It seeks to identify and compare the challenges and facilitators of teacher leadership in these diverse settings, offering actionable recommendations to support teacher leaders and foster positive educational transformation globally.

Previous studies have identified various challenges such as a lack of professional development and administrative support in Turkey, and political instability and resource limitations in Palestine



(Gündoğan & Kiliç, 2017; Zülfizade, 2020). Facilitators common to both contexts include community support and professional networks. Arslan and Özdemir (2015) found that while teachers generally hold positive attitudes towards leadership, current practices are insufficient to develop these skills due to individual, school, and administrative obstacles.

Ultimately, this study seeks to uncover both commonalities and differences in teacher leadership experiences, providing insights that can inform policy and practice to enhance educational leadership in primary schools. By comparing the experiences of Turkish and Palestinian teachers, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on teacher leadership development and offer valuable recommendations for supporting teacher leaders in diverse educational settings. In this context, this research seeks answers to the questions:

- What are the views of Turkish and Palestinian teachers on the obstacles they encounter in implementing teacher leadership in their schools?
- What are the views of Turkish and Palestinian teachers on the factors that facilitate the implementation of their teacher leadership roles?

## Method

This section provides details on the methodology, including the research model, target group, data collection tools, and procedures used in the study.

### Research model

The study adopts a qualitative research design, specifically employing the phenomenology model, to delve into the lived experiences and perceptions of Turkish and Palestinian teachers regarding teacher leadership challenges and facilitators. Following the phenomenological approach, which focuses on understanding the essential structures of lived experiences within a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

### Target group

The study focuses on a selected group of 12 teachers from Gaza City, Palestine, and 12 teachers from Izmir, Turkey. The researchers chose Turkish teachers from Izmir because both researchers resided there, while the first author, originally from Gaza, had experience working as a teacher in that area. Participants were drawn from both public primary schools and private schools during the 2022-2023 academic year. A maximum diversity sampling method was applied to ensure broad representation, considering factors such as gender, educational background, years of experience in the profession, years at the current school, as well as the faculty and area of expertise from which they graduated. This deliberate selection process aims to capture a rich and diverse range of perspectives within the teacher populations in both locations, enhancing the study's ability to explore the nuances of teacher leadership challenges and facilitators. We coded the participant's names; for the Turk participants, the names were coded to start with the letter "T". For the Palestinian participants, the names are coded to start with the letter "F", as shown in the next two tables.





Table 1.  
Profile of Turkish Teacher Respondents

Teacher Code	Gender	Education Level	Graduated Faculty	Branch	Service Years Profession	Service Years Current School	School Type
Tuğba	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	16	15	Private
Türkan	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	28	18	State
Tülin	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	10	3	State
Tarik	Male	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	34	20	State
Tijen	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	28	26	State
Tufan	Male	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	32	2	State
Tülay	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	11	10	Private
Tuna	Female	Ph.D	Education	Class T.	28	22	State
Tutku	Female	Bachelor	Education	Special Education	16	6	State
Tahir	Male	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	24	16	State
Tuğçe	Female	Master	Science-Biology	English Teacher	4	4	Private
Tayfun	Male	Master	Education	Class T.	29	9	State

As seen in Table 1, among the participants, eight are female, and four are male. 9 of the participants have a bachelor's degree, two have a master's degrees, and one has a PhD degree. All of them graduated from the education faculty except one teacher who graduated from the science faculty. Five participants have been teaching for 16 years or less, five for 24-29 years and two for 30-34 years. Nine teachers work in state primary schools, and three work in private schools. Ten of the participants are a class teacher, one is a special education teacher, and one is an English teacher.

Table 2.  
Profile of Palestinian Teacher Respondents

Teacher Code	Gender	Education Level	Graduated Faculty	Branch	Service Years Profession	Service Years Current School	School Type
Fatma	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	15	6	State
Fatih	Male	Master	Education	Arabic Education	3	1.5	Private
Fahmy	Male	Master	Education	Science T.	12	4	Private
Faten	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	2	1	State
Fares	Male	Bachelor	Education	Math T.	6	2	State
Fardus	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	5	1	State
Fadi	Male	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	17	17	State
Fedaa	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	15	3	State
Fadwa	Female	Master	Education	Class T.	2	1	State
Farah	Female	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	12	6	State
Fayroza	Female	Master	Education	Class T.	10	7	Private
Fuad	Male	Bachelor	Education	Class T.	9	9	State



As seen in Table 2, among the participants, seven are female, and five are male. Eight of the participants' education level is a bachelor's degree, and 4 are master's degrees. All of them graduated from the education faculty. Seven of the participants have been teaching for 10-17 years, three for 5-9 years and two for 1-4 years. Nine teachers work in state primary schools, and three work in private schools. Nine of the participants are a class teacher, one is a math teacher, one is an Arabic teacher, and one is a science teacher.

### **Data collection tool and process**

A semi-structured interview form, one of the basic data collection tools of the qualitative research method, was used to collect the data for this study. Büyüköztürk et al. (2018) pointed out that interviews in qualitative research provide researchers with flexibility and interaction to uncover meanings and experiences related to phenomena while also offering the opportunity to obtain more detailed information through probes. The final form of the questionnaire was prepared based on the opinions of three academic researchers working in the field of education sciences, a Turkish language education academic, and two elementary school teachers. The final form of the questionnaire was shaped according to their opinions.

The interview template was translated into Arabic by the primary researcher, with input from experts, including an Arabic language specialist from Palestine and a Turkish academic specialist in the Arabic language from the Faculty of Theology. The interview template was then modified by the primary researcher to align with the experts' opinions. Interviews were conducted with a pilot sample consisting of three elementary school teachers from Turkish schools and three elementary school teachers from Palestinian schools. The interviews with Turkish teachers were conducted face-to-face in a comfortable setting, such as a café, while interviews with Palestinian teachers were conducted online. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes, and participants agreed to audio recording, being assured that it would be used for research purposes only, and their identities would not be disclosed anywhere but would code their names. After transcribing the participants' responses, the written content was sent to their email addresses. Participants were asked to review the text and make any changes, deletions, or additions if they wished.

To analyze the interviews, a coding process was applied to each interview. Common themes that emerged from the coding were then utilized to streamline the presentation of results and formulate recommendations and conclusions. Taking into consideration the time and availability of the specified participants, the primary researcher conducted a total of 12 face-to-face individual interviews with Turkish teachers and 12 online individual interviews with Palestinian teachers. The interviews lasted between 25 and 40 minutes each. During the interviews, two open-ended questions were posed.

One of these questions is, "What are the situations that make it difficult or prevent you from being a teacher leader in your school?". To obtain an answer to this question, we discussed the obstacles that may prevent them from assuming their leadership roles in their schools in terms of the following topics: "Personal Obstacles," "Principal-Teacher Relationship Style," "Principal's Management Style," "Teacher-Teacher Relationships," and "Teacher-Parent Relationship." The



participants' interviews were audio recorded. The audio recordings were analyzed, and the raw data was converted into written text.

In this study, it was observed that the participation of the primary researcher, who conducted the interviews in the same role as the participants, contributed positively to establishing communication before the research, building trust, and understanding the participants' subjective perceptions. This situation led participants to express their positive and negative statements about the phenomenon without hiding them. However, there is also the possibility that some meanings may not have been expressed, assuming the researcher already knew them. The interview notes, converted into written text, were emailed to the participants for confirmation. All of the participants confirmed the text via email, while there was no response indicating a need for changes from the others. Additionally, to enhance the credibility of the study, the research underwent expert examination in various dimensions, and the obtained data were presented to the readers in a manner consistent with their essence in terms of concepts and themes.

## Findings

The results of the research presented below and focused on two dimensions:

### 1. Challenges faced by teachers in implementing leadership roles

To explore the various challenges teachers face in implementing leadership roles, several key themes were addressed during the interviews with participant teachers. These included: 1) Personal barriers, 2) principal's relationship style barriers, 3) principal's management style barriers, 4) inter-teacher relationship barriers, and 5) teacher-parent relationship barriers.

The subsequent analysis will present a synthesis of the Turkish and Palestinian teachers' perspectives on these key themes, accompanied by illustrative quotes to provide depth and context to their viewpoints.

#### **Theme 1. Personal challenges**

The study explored the personal barriers faced by Turkish and Palestinian teachers in their willingness to assume leadership roles in their schools. The most common barrier identified was the "Economic and Resource-Related Challenges" category, which was a significant concern for nine Turkish teachers and 12 Palestinian teachers. The "Psychological and Emotional Challenges" category was cited by seven Palestinian teachers and four Turkish teachers. Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers (five each) highlighted "Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Challenges" and "Social and Personal Responsibilities" as barriers to assuming leadership roles effectively. "Health and Age-Related Challenges" were mentioned by one Turkish teacher and two Palestinian teachers. Two teachers from both countries also mentioned "Personal Attitudes and Traits" as a challenge. One Turkish teacher and four Palestinian teachers considered "Classroom and School Environment" challenging. "Traditional Teaching Practices" and "Systemic and Structural Challenges" were mentioned only by Palestinian teachers. Lastly, Political Views were noted as a challenge by two Turkish teachers.



Turkish teachers mentioned that economic limitations affect their personal development, especially in terms of technology. One Turkish teacher stated: *"I have a deficiency in technology... If I had the money, I would pay to attend a course to improve myself."* (Tahir). Tahir teacher highlights that financial resources are crucial for teachers to access consistent professional development, particularly in technology, impacting their ability to take on leadership roles effectively.

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In Palestine, the lack of resources and infrastructure were major issues. Farah explained: *"The economic situation hinders the teacher's leadership roles. With a financial budget, I would have a large display screen in my classroom... Power outages complicate many tasks, and while the school library has a large display screen, it's often booked by other teachers. This makes it challenging to use the library for lessons."* This, along with limited materials, emphasizes the struggles Palestinian teachers face in accessing resources necessary to fulfil leadership roles effectively.

## **Theme 2. Principal's relationship style challenges**

The analysis of teachers' responses from both Turkey and Palestine highlights several challenges related to the principal's relationship style. In Turkey, eight teachers felt that their principal's relationship with them was a barrier to assuming leadership roles, with two teachers noting that their principals made it difficult to fulfil these roles. Similarly, seven Palestinian teachers reported that their principal's relationship with them obstructed their leadership roles, and two teachers experienced difficulties due to their principals.

A key issue is the "Lack of Support and Encouragement", with nine Turkish teachers and twelve Palestinian teachers highlighting principals' obstructive behaviour, disrespect for their ideas, and lack of encouragement. Concerns about "Unprofessional Attitude" were also prevalent, as four Turkish teachers and nine Palestinian teachers reported issues such as principals being moody, lacking experience, and mixing personal and professional relationships. Additionally, "Poor Communication Skills" were identified by five Turkish teachers and six Palestinian teachers as a significant barrier, including principals' failure to listen, lack of openness, and poor relationship management, which hinder effective collaboration and mutual understanding. Lastly, "issues related to Fairness and Equality" were mentioned by four Turkish teachers and seven Palestinian teachers as further barriers to constructive relationships. The Turkish teacher Tuğçe expressed her opinion on this theme by saying:

Turkish teacher Tuğçe described the challenges related to the principal's relationship style: *"The relationship with the principal was obstructive to assuming leadership roles.... Additionally, the principal expected constant communication outside of school hours and viewed me as an extra burden due to my master's studies. He did not respect teachers' opinions, leading to a lack of harmony that hindered leadership roles."*

The Palestinian Teacher Fatih highlights the negative impact of poor Principal's relations with teachers on teacher motivation and workload. *"The administrator has a poor relationship with the teaching staff regarding administrative relations. However, personally, the administrator has a good personality. For example, the teachers at the school do not feel respected by the administration, so the workload at the school becomes a burden for them, and they ask themselves, "Why should I exert*



*myself? If I am not appreciated and respected by the administration, there is no benefit to any extra work".(Fatih)*

It illustrates how a perceived lack of respect and appreciation from the Principal can demotivate teachers, leading to reluctance to exert extra effort or take on leadership responsibilities within the school.

### **Theme 3. Principal's management style challenges**

A significant number of teachers from both countries identified the "Authoritarian Approach" as a major obstacle. In Turkey, 11 teachers, and in Palestine, 10 teachers pointed to principals' overly controlling and authoritarian behavior. Additionally, two Turkish teachers and nine Palestinian teachers expressed concerns about the use of a "Traditional Management Style". "Competition Over Leadership" was highlighted by one Turkish teacher, who noted that their principal competed with teachers for leadership roles, making it challenging for them to take on such responsibilities; no Palestinian teachers reported this issue. Meanwhile, two Palestinian teachers faced difficulties due to the principal's "Frequent and Continuous Administrative Decisions", which disrupted their ability to assume leadership roles within the school.

Turkish teacher Tutku noted the impact of authoritarian leadership on teacher collaboration, stating, "Due to the principal's authoritarian nature, communication is task-oriented, and expressing opinions becomes futile, leading to individualistic efforts instead of collaboration." Similarly, Palestinian teacher Fares pointed out how selective and authoritarian leadership hindered broader teacher participation, explaining, "The principal's authoritarian style limits teachers' leadership roles, with an inner circle of select teachers being favoured, causing confusion and exclusion."

These responses illustrate how authoritarian and traditional management styles create barriers to teacher leadership, affecting morale, collaboration, and overall participation.

### **Theme 4. Inter-teacher relationship challenges**

The analysis of Turkish and Palestinian teachers' responses reveals several challenges related to inter-teacher relationships, highlighting issues that impede collaboration and leadership among educators. One of the primary concerns was Challenges in "Support and Collaboration", with eight Turkish and nine Palestinian teachers reporting difficulties in working together effectively, citing issues such as lack of peer support, low motivation, and critical or unconstructive attitudes. "Jealousy" was also noted as a significant challenge, with four Turkish and eight Palestinian teachers acknowledging how these feelings negatively impacted their relationships and teamwork.

In Palestine, "Unethical Competition" emerged as a specific issue for six teachers, while no Turkish teachers mentioned this concern. "Favoritism and Exclusive Relationships" with the principal were highlighted by one Palestinian teacher as an obstacle, with no mention of this issue by Turkish teachers. "Fear and Inhibition" were noted by four teachers in both countries, indicating that some teachers felt hesitant to express their ideas or take on leadership roles. In Turkey, "Political Behaviors"





were reported by three teachers, whereas no Palestinian teachers mentioned this. Additionally, "Group Dynamics and Division" were raised as concerns by three Turkish teachers and one Palestinian teacher, with the formation of "Cliques and Groups" noted by one teacher from each country. Finally, "Union Divisions" were highlighted as a challenge by three Turkish teachers, with no mention of this issue from Palestinian teachers. Turkish teacher Tutku pointed out the lack of support for professional development efforts like pursuing a master's program: *"After starting the master's program, I often hear comments like, 'Why are you doing this? What's the point? You should do something that brings more money.' Unfortunately, these attitudes discourage rather than support, and they don't just stop with themselves but try to hinder others as well."* Similarly, Palestinian teacher Fadwa shared, *"Some teachers at my school discourage me, especially after I receive recognition for my initiatives from the Ministry of Education. They say things like, 'You're not required to do that!' or 'You shouldn't spend your own money!' In the end, I do this out of personal desire, not for a certificate. I'm also striving for a better future."*

These statements reflect a common challenge faced by teachers in both contexts peer discouragement that undermines professional growth and collaboration.

#### **Theme 5. Teacher-parent relationship challenges**

The analysis of responses from Turkish and Palestinian teachers reveals several key challenges in teacher-parent relationships. "Lack of Cooperation and Support" was reported by eight Turkish and five Palestinian teachers. "Conflict and Complaints from Parents" emerged as a significant issue for eight Turkish and ten Palestinian teachers. "Communication and Relationship Issues" were highlighted by seven Turkish and four Palestinian teachers. "Socio-Economic Factors" were noted by three teachers from each country. "Parental Interference" was cited by four Turkish and two Palestinian teachers, while "Lack of Boundaries" between parents and teachers was reported by one Turkish and two Palestinian teachers. Additionally, "Lack of Appreciation for Teachers" was identified by four Palestinian teachers, though not mentioned by Turkish teachers. Finally, "Cultural Barriers" were raised by one Turkish teacher, with no Palestinian teachers reporting this issue.

Turkish teacher Tülin expressed how the lack of cooperation, particularly in the form of complaints, can be overwhelming: *"Parents who complain about the teacher, who don't want to solve problems with the teacher, who try to handle things from the top down, make it difficult for the teacher to become a lead teacher. This situation tires the teacher. It exhausts them physically and especially mentally."* Tülin's comment highlights the toll that such negative interactions take on teachers' physical and mental well-being, complicating their ability to take on leadership roles.

Such frequent and unjustified complaints, as Fahmy, the Palestinian teacher, noted, can inhibit teachers from effectively assuming leadership roles. *"The relationship between the teacher and the parent can be an obstacle for the lead teacher when parents frequently voice their complaints. For example, the parent can be an obstacle when the student is not diligent, yet the father comes to school to complain about the teacher!"* Frequent and unjustified complaints from parents, as noted by Fahmy, can undermine teachers' leadership roles by creating unnecessary obstacles and shifting blame from student issues to teachers.



Figure 1 below summarizes the classification of challenges related to teacher leadership roles, derived from the analysis of interviews conducted with both Turkish and Palestinian teachers who participated in this research.

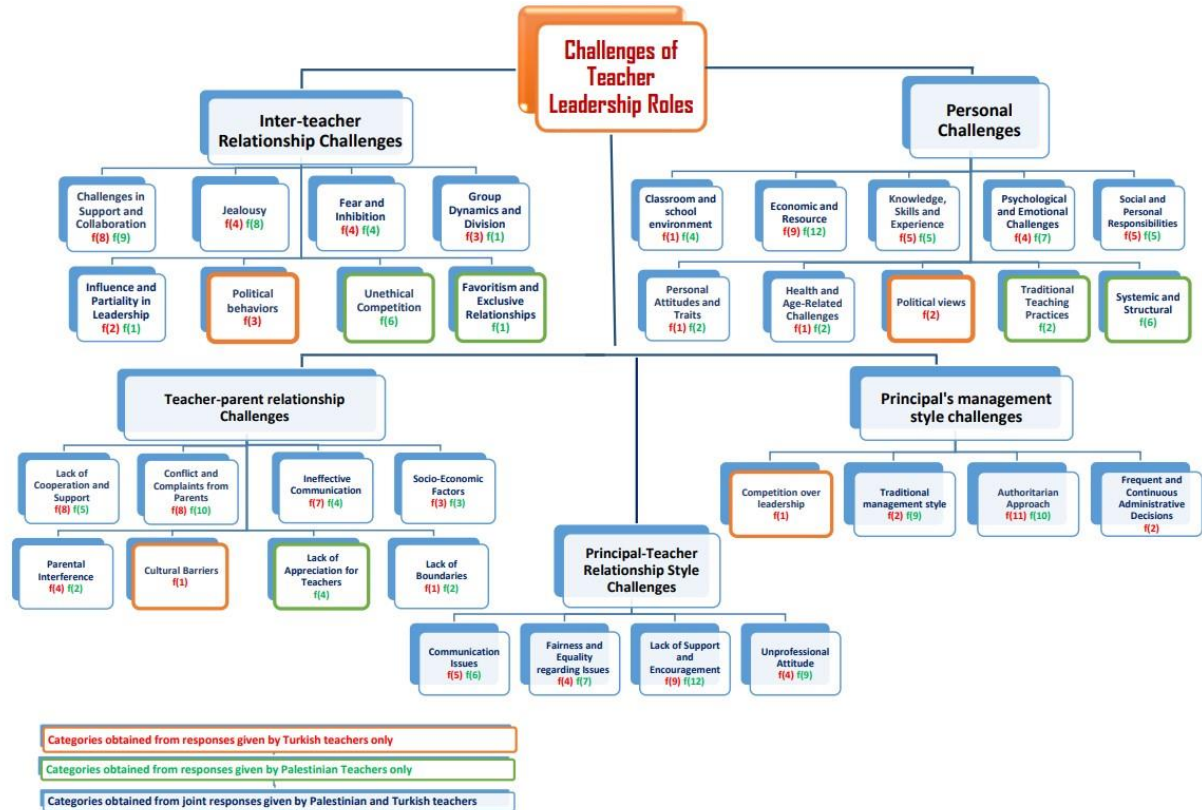


Figure 1. Comparative analysis of Turkish and Palestinian teachers' perceptions of leadership challenges

Figure 1 compares the perspectives of Turkish and Palestinian teachers on the challenges to teacher leadership roles, revealing both agreements and differences. In the theme of personal challenges, both groups identified "Economic and Resource-Related Challenges" as a significant category, while only Palestinian teachers mentioned "Systemic and Structural Challenges," and only Turkish teachers noted Political Views. For the theme on teacher-principal relationships, both groups largely agreed on the "lack of Support and Encouragement". Regarding principal management style, the "Authoritarian Approach" was a shared concern. In the theme of Inter-teacher relationships, both Turkish and Palestinian teachers emphasized Challenges in "Support and Collaboration", with Palestinian teachers also mentioning "Unethical Competition" and Turkish teachers noting "Political Behaviors". Finally, in teacher-parent relationships, "Conflict and Complaints" from Parents was the most cited challenge by both groups, while Palestinian teachers highlighted "Lack of Appreciation for Teachers" a challenge not mentioned by Turkish teachers.



## 2. Factors facilitating teacher performance in leadership roles

To explore the factors facilitates teacher leadership roles, several key themes were addressed during the interviews with participant teachers. These included:

1) Personal facilitators, 2) Managerial attitudes, 3) Relationships among teachers, and 4) Facilitative relationships between teachers and parents.

The subsequent analysis will present a synthesis of the teachers' perspectives on these key themes, accompanied by illustrative quotes to provide depth and context to their viewpoints. We will start with analyzing the views of Turkish teachers and then the views of Palestinian teachers.

### **Theme 1. Personal facilitators**

The analysis of responses from Turkish and Palestinian teachers regarding personal facilitators for leadership roles identifies several key factors. "Professional Skills and Knowledge" were emphasized by six Turkish and eight Palestinian teachers. "Leadership Qualities" were noted by five Palestinian and three Turkish teachers. "Emotional and Mental Flexibility" was identified by five Turkish and three Palestinian teachers. "Self-enhancement" was more frequently noted by seven Palestinian teachers compared to five Turkish teachers. "Strong Personality" was mentioned by two Turkish and four Palestinian teachers. "Physical Appearance" was cited by one Palestinian teacher but not by Turkish teachers. "Team and Community Involvement" was highlighted by four Palestinian and two Turkish teachers. "Values and Ethics" were recognized by three Palestinian teachers but not mentioned by Turkish educators. Finally, "Work Conditions and Responsibilities" were seen as facilitators by five Palestinian teachers but not by Turkish teachers.

For example,, the teacher Tuğçe, the Turkish teacher, said: *"The teacher assuming the leadership role must consistently be open to learning and self-improvement. They should continuously renew themselves to explore new ideas, guide students effectively, and contribute to the school's development."* Tuğçe emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and self-improvement for teachers in leadership roles, highlighting that staying updated and open to new ideas is crucial for effective student guidance and school development. Similarly, Faten, a Palestinian teacher, stressed: *"A teacher aiming for leadership should possess personal qualities such as self-confidence, courage, energy, and the ability to think quickly in spontaneous situations. The ability to adapt to challenging conditions is also crucial. Additionally, effective collaboration and communication skills with the school principal and colleagues are necessary."* Faten's insights further illustrate how personal traits such as confidence, adaptability, and collaboration are integral to overcoming challenges and taking on leadership roles in schools.

### **Theme 2. Manager's facilitating attitude**

The analysis of principals' facilitating attitudes towards teacher leadership reveals several key findings. "Support and Motivation" from principals were most frequently noted, with four Turkish and nine Palestinian teachers highlighting this factor. "Openness and Innovation" were emphasized by six Turkish and five Palestinian teachers. The "Provision of Resources and Opportunities" was limited, with



only two Turkish and six Palestinian teachers reporting this support. "Empowerment and Autonomy" for teacher leaders were noted by one Turkish and three Palestinian teachers. "Building Effective Relationships" with teachers and the community was mentioned by two Turkish and three Palestinian teachers as a positive influence on teacher leadership. "Personal Attributes and Characteristics" were acknowledged by just one Turkish teacher, with no Palestinian teachers noting this aspect. "Engagement in Extracurricular and Social Activities" was reported exclusively by two Palestinian teachers.

For example, the Turkish teacher Tijen highlights that her principal's supportive and open-minded attitude significantly facilitates teacher leadership by encouraging and assisting teachers in various ways. "Yes, the principal always facilitates. She is always open to all kinds of ideas, always supporting teachers, and always helping in every way. I mean, she supports us in every way.". Tufan has the same ideas saying that: "A supportive relationship encourages sharing of ideas and resources, leading to motivation and success.". Tufan emphasizes that a supportive managerial relationship fosters idea-sharing and motivation, which are crucial for successful teacher leadership.

Palestinian teacher Fatma also underscores the importance of principal support: "The principal plays a significant role in facilitating a teacher's leadership. This includes encouraging, motivating, and allowing them to take initiative. For example, empowering teachers by granting them authority, to organize workshops for parents on how to communicate with their children for example.". Fatma emphasizes that principals should empower and motivate teachers, involve them in decision-making, and provide resources and opportunities to facilitate their leadership roles.

### **Theme 3. Relationships among teachers**

The relationships among teachers play a crucial role in facilitating teacher leadership. "Collaboration and support" emerged as the most significant factors, with ten Turkish teachers and twelve Palestinian teachers highlighting these aspects as key facilitators. "Motivation and development" were noted by four Turkish teachers and three Palestinian teachers. "Respect and harmony" within the teaching staff were reported as a facilitator of teacher leadership by four Turkish teachers and six Palestinian teachers. "Social activities," although less emphasized, were reported by one Palestinian teacher. Overall, strong collaborative practices and mutual respect among teachers are essential for nurturing effective teacher leadership.

The Turkish teacher Tahir, for example, said: "Of course, it makes things easier. If someone likes and respects you, they're more likely to listen. But let's say your relationship with someone isn't good, you're not close or intimate; no matter how much you strive to be a leader, it won't happen. For instance, if I have a project when I make a call to complete this project, the ones I'm close to coming to me, but the ones I'm not close to, no matter how good the project is, some of them won't come. They say, "I'm not close anyway, what's the point?"(Tahir). Tahir suggests that strong, positive relationships among teachers are essential for effective teacher leadership; without them, support and collaboration for initiatives are likely to be limited. Similarly, Fatih, the Palestinian teacher noted, "The relationship among teachers at our school is characterized by collaboration. When the education supervisor visits, we assist by preparing necessary materials like educational cards. We support each



*other in lesson preparation and the use of educational materials. Additionally, I seek guidance from experienced teachers, who offer advice and direct me towards suitable activities that won't conflict with the principal's directives."*(Fatih). Fatih highlights that the collaborative relationships among teachers, including sharing resources and seeking guidance from experienced colleagues, facilitate their ability to become lead teachers.

#### **Theme 4. Facilitative relationships between teachers and parents**

Several key factors emerged when exploring how the relationships between teachers and parents facilitate teacher leadership. "Effective relationships and communication between teachers and parents" were highlighted by six Turkish teachers and five Palestinian teachers. "Support for teachers from parents" was noted by three Turkish teachers and five Palestinian teachers. "Appreciation of the teacher" was mentioned by six Turkish teachers and four Palestinian teachers. "Participation and collaboration with parents" were emphasized by six Turkish teachers and twelve Palestinian teachers.

Turkish teacher Tuğba believes that positive relationships with parents enhance teachers' leadership roles: "*Many of them do make it easier, yes. When appreciated by parents, I believe your role as a leader teacher becomes easier, as the relationship with the parents with whom you've developed a good relationship makes it easier to direct them.*"

Palestinian teacher Fares notes: "*In my experience at a private school, I found that parent-teacher relationships were invaluable. Parents showed more interest and provided greater support in private schools. They might even offer financial assistance. Supportive comments from parents on my Facebook page have motivated me to continue my role as a teacher and leader. The praise and support from parents enable the teacher to fulfil their leadership responsibilities.*" Fares argues that strong parent-teacher relationships, characterized by active interest, support, and financial contributions, are essential for effective teacher leadership.

The following figure 2 summarizes the classification of facilitators for teacher leadership roles, based on the analysis of interviews conducted with both Turkish and Palestinian teachers who participated in this research.

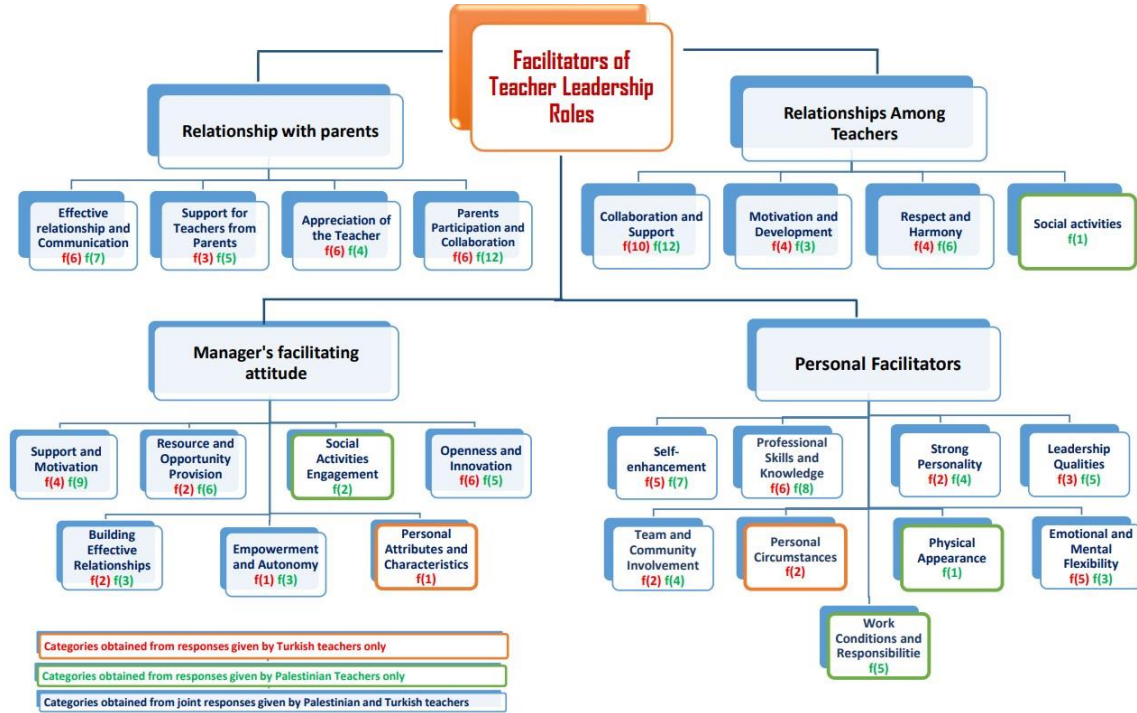


Figure 2. Comparative Analysis of Turkish and Palestinian Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership facilitators

Figure 2 compares the perspectives of Turkish and Palestinian teachers on the facilitators of teacher leadership roles, highlighting both agreements and differences. Both groups identified nine categories in the "Personal Facilitators" theme, with "Professional Skills and Knowledge" being a significant factor. Palestinian teachers also emphasized "Physical Appearance" and "Work Conditions and Responsibilities," while Turkish teachers highlighted "Personal Circumstances" as key facilitators for teacher leadership roles. Seven categories were noted in the "Manager's Facilitating Attitude" theme. The most significant factor for both Turkish and Palestinian teachers was "Support and Motivation," which was more frequently mentioned by Palestinian teachers. Additionally, only Palestinian teachers mentioned "Extracurricular and Social Activities Engagement," whereas Turkish teachers referred to "Personal Attributes and Characteristics." In the "Relationships Among Teachers" theme, four categories emerged, with "Collaboration and Support" being the most relevant. Palestinian teachers also highlighted "Social Activities," a factor not mentioned by Turkish teachers. In the "Relationship with Parents" theme, four categories were identified with agreement between Turkish and Palestinian teachers. The most significant category was "Parents' Participation and Collaboration."





## Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Based on the previous analysis of both Palestinian and Turkish teachers' perceptions about the challenges and facilitations of implementing teacher leadership roles in primary schools, we will compare these contexts in the next discussion.

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### 1. The challenges face teachers in implementing teacher leadership

Building on the earlier analysis of the five themes regarding Palestinian and Turkish teachers' perceptions of the challenges in implementing teacher leadership roles in primary schools, we will next compare these contexts within the discussion for each theme.

#### **Personal challenges**

The analysis of teacher leadership challenges in both Turkey and Palestine reveals several common barriers, particularly in the realm of "Economic and Resource-Related Challenges." Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers reported that economic limitations and a lack of resources significantly impede their ability to effectively implement leadership roles. However, Palestinian teachers highlighted these issues more intensely, given the unique and severe conditions they face. The economic instability in Gaza, compounded by the ongoing war, has drastically impacted educational infrastructure. This has led to government employees, including teachers, receiving only 40% of their salaries, further limiting the resources available to schools. These economic hardships are exacerbated by frequent power outages, which hinder technology-based educational initiatives and complicate efforts to implement effective teacher leadership. In contrast, Turkey, particularly in Izmir, benefits from a relatively stable political and economic environment, which provides a more conducive setting for educational leadership. In a broader context, the economic challenges faced by teachers are not unique to Palestine. For example, a U.S. Department of Education study (Granger et al., 2022) revealed that 52% of public school teachers in the United States expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries, which in turn diminished their passion for teaching and prompted some to consider leaving the profession for better-paying opportunities.

This study, which was conducted before the onset of the October 2023 war, provides critical insights into the challenges faced by Palestinian teachers, which were already severe due to the blockade and the region's economic instability. The situation worsened dramatically following the war, further deepening the educational crisis. The war has devastated Gaza's educational system, with over 625,000 students and 22,564 teachers directly affected. As of August 2024, reports from the OCHA and the Ministry of Health indicate that the death toll in Gaza has surpassed 40,000, including 10,627 children and 411 teachers (OCHA, 2024).

The impact of this war on education has been catastrophic. Between October 2023 and July 2024, nearly all school buildings in Gaza were either fully or partially destroyed due to war (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2024). Furthermore, the war has displaced millions, with an estimated 1 million people taking refuge in UNRWA facilities, including schools, exacerbating the crisis in Gaza's education system (UNRWA, 2024). The displacement, combined with the destruction of Alnakhala, N.J.F. ve Sahin Firat, N. (2024). Teacher leadership challenges and facilitators: A comparative study of Turkish and Palestinian teachers. *Western Anatolia Journal of Educational Sciences*, 15(3), 3425-3458. DOI. 10.51460/baebd.1580614





infrastructure, has made it increasingly difficult for teachers and students to maintain any semblance of normalcy in education.

A notable difference is that Palestinian teachers cited "Systemic and Structural Challenges," which were not mentioned by Turkish teachers. Palestinian teachers face issues such as "Successive supervisor visits," "The huge volume of the curriculum," "High student numbers in class," and "Extra activities and prioritizing quantity over quality." They are also expected to participate in numerous events organized by the Activities Department, the Ministry of Education, school principals, and educational supervisors. In contrast, Turkish teachers at the basic stages generally do not have an educational supervisor assigned to them. These formal leadership roles, while necessary, hinder the informal leadership initiatives that teachers wish to undertake. Implementing all of these activities requires significant time and effort, which most Palestinian teacher's lack. Many reported having only one free period per week, insufficient for assuming additional leadership roles. Studies by Barfield (2011) and Ramahi (2016) also highlighted time constraints as a major barrier to teacher leadership beyond the classroom.

"Political views" were cited as a barrier by two Turkish teachers but not by Palestinian teachers. This suggests that political tensions may influence teacher leadership in Turkey, while in Palestine, more immediate concerns like occupation and economic hardship take precedence over political factors.

In both Turkey and Palestine, social and personal responsibilities, including caring for family and handling other jobs, significantly hinder teacher leadership. These findings are consistent with Barth (2001), who noted that such external responsibilities impact teachers' ability to take on leadership roles.

Palestinian teachers face more significant challenges related to their classroom and school environment compared to Turkish teachers. Issues such as noise, inadequate facilities, and external disruptions, like students from neighbouring schools intruding or noise from nearby areas, hinder their ability to lead effectively. These challenges are exacerbated by Gaza's economic instability and conflict, which impacts school infrastructure and resources.

Traditional teaching practices are a barrier for Palestinian teachers but not for Turkish teachers. In Gaza, entrenched methods and resistance to change limit teachers' ability to implement innovative leadership roles. This contrasts with Turkey, where more stable conditions may allow for greater flexibility and adoption of modern practices.

Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers face issues with knowledge and skills. Turkish teachers reported more difficulties with inadequate knowledge and technology skills, while Palestinian teachers struggled more with communication skills. This suggests that while both groups recognize the importance of knowledge and skills for leadership, Palestinian teachers might experience greater difficulties in communication, affecting their leadership capabilities. Personal traits like ego and social skills affect leadership. Palestinian teachers noted weak personality traits more frequently than Turkish teachers.



Palestinian teachers report greater psychological and emotional barriers, such as a lack of motivation and professional burnout, compared to Turkish teachers. This disparity can be linked to the socio-economic and political challenges faced in Palestine, which impact teachers' motivation and well-being. Zinn (1997) supports this, noting that internal factors, including intellectual and psychological traits, influence teachers' willingness to take on leadership roles. Both groups equally cited health-related barriers, but age-related challenges were mentioned only by one Turkish teacher with 28 years of experience, suggesting that age affects long-serving teachers in Turkey. According to Wokorie-Anajemba (2010) and Aliakbari & Sadeghi (2014), leadership is not necessarily tied to age.

### ***Principal-teacher relationship style challenges***

The analysis examines the principal's relationship style challenges faced by Turkish and Palestinian teachers, several common categories emerge, but there are also notable differences in the specific issues highlighted by each group.

A critical factor highlighted by participants from both countries is the "Lack of Support and Encouragement". Teachers emphasized that insufficient material support from principals obstructs the implementation of initiatives. For example, Fedaa explained that *"without the principal's material support, initiatives are challenging to implement"*. Similarly, Fadi noted that *"the lack of necessary resources for educational activities or external projects hinders their leadership roles"*. Tarik supported this by sharing that a significant project proposal failed due to the principal's refusal to provide material support, making it financially unfeasible for him to proceed. This finding agrees with (Araşkal & Kiling, 2019).

Both Turkish and Palestinian participants identified "Communication Issues" as significant barriers to assuming leadership roles. Participants reported that school principals often disregard and disrespect teachers' ideas, hindering their ability to contribute meaningfully to school leadership. This lack of engagement leads to feelings of undervaluation and frustration, negatively impacting their motivation and relationships within the school. Teachers such as Fadwa, Fardus, and Fatih described these relationships as *"bad,"* while Tahir characterized them as *"unhealthy,"* and Tuğçe mentioned that the principal's treatment is *"not good."* Another teacher noted that the relationship between teachers and the principal was *"closed"*.

"Issues regarding Fairness and Equality" was another common issue among teachers, with Palestinian participants reporting this more frequently than their Turkish counterparts. Teachers explained that school principals often give extra points to close teachers and maintain a close circle of favoured teachers. For instance, Fayroza mentioned that *"principals treat these close teachers better, even giving them higher annual evaluation scores, thereby preventing outstanding teachers from assuming leadership roles"*. Interviews revealed that teachers closer to the principal felt that others were not proactive, whereas those outside the principal's circle believed favouritism was at play, impacting their opportunities for leadership. Similar to Edwards's (2015) study found that favouritism by the school administration, limiting leadership opportunities to certain teachers, created a hostile environment where teacher leaders were perceived as bullies by colleagues. Turkish participants highlighted issues related to union relationships, where principals favour teachers from their own



unions. Türkan noted that "*principals' attitudes could be influenced by union membership, leading to injustice and discrimination*". Tayfun added that "*discriminatory principals are unlikely to assist other teachers, suggesting that fair treatment is a prerequisite for teachers' willingness to contribute to school leadership*". Unfair evaluations and the denial of full rights also emerged as significant barriers. Teachers like Fardus, Fayroza, and Fedaa mentioned that unfair treatment and evaluations by principals hinder their leadership roles. In private schools, teachers such as Fahmy reported not receiving their full rights and being required to work on public holidays, further demotivating them from taking on leadership roles. One of the obstacles mentioned in Can's (2006) study was the lack of administrative support. In Can's study, teachers strongly agree that the lack of principal support, insufficient democratic participation, and inadequate evaluation of achievements are the most significant challenges. And these results agreed with the results of our study.

Unprofessional attitudes were identified as significant barriers to teacher leadership, with Palestinian teachers reporting them more frequently than Turkish teachers. Palestinian teachers highlighted issues such as mixing personal and professional relationships, ego, and disregarding teachers' boundaries. Additionally, both groups noted moodiness and strict attitudes, though these were more frequently mentioned by Palestinian teachers, reflecting leadership inconsistencies that hinder teacher initiative. Turkish teachers, on the other hand, focused more on personality conflicts, suggesting that interpersonal issues disrupt collaboration and trust between teachers and principals. Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers expressed concerns about principals' inconsistent behaviour ("moody"), which further complicates the teacher-principal dynamic. Moreover, the lack of leadership experience was primarily mentioned by Palestinian teachers, while both groups equally emphasized principals' failure to take responsibility in fostering leadership. This suggests that while Palestinian teachers face more structural challenges due to systemic instability, Turkish teachers contend more with interpersonal dynamics.

These findings underscore the challenge of unprofessional leadership, which negatively affects teacher motivation and leadership development. This findings align with (Araşkal & Kiliç, 2019). As Barfield (2011) noted, principals must create an environment where teachers feel comfortable offering suggestions, asking questions, and providing feedback. Principals must better understand their role in fostering and supporting teacher leadership. For this to happen, school administrators should maintain a professional approach in all areas of school management, ensuring they create an environment that empowers teachers to lead.

### ***Principal's management style challenges***

Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers encounter significant barriers to leadership due to their principals' management styles, though the nature of these challenges differs between the two groups. Palestinian teachers report facing a more traditional and authoritarian management style, characterized by strict and harsh practices where principals make independent decisions without consulting teachers. These principals often resist school improvement initiatives and enforce rigid interpretations of rules, limiting teacher autonomy. On the other hand, Turkish teachers primarily highlight issues related to an authoritarian and overly controlling approach but emphasize the lack of democratic leadership as a more pressing concern. They also mention instances where principals



interpret rules independently, although not to the same extent as Palestinian teachers. Competition over leadership within Turkish schools further complicates teacher leadership roles, a challenge not reported by Palestinian teachers. Additionally, frequent and continuous administrative decisions create added difficulties for Palestinian teachers, signalling a more unstable and top-down leadership environment compared to their Turkish counterparts.

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Some studies agreed with these results, like Barfield (2011), who observed that school administration fails to offer leadership opportunities, discourages leadership, and lacks collaborative efforts, then teachers are deficient in leadership skills. Additionally, Saucedo (2014) emphasized that cultivating teacher leaders necessitates a supportive environment.

### ***Inter-teacher relationship challenges***

The findings from Turkish and Palestinian teachers bring to light several challenges in their relationships with fellow teachers that hinder collaboration and leadership. A major issue both groups face is a lack of support and teamwork. Many teachers mentioned difficulties in working together, citing things like (low motivation, unhelpful attitudes, and criticism that isn't constructive) from peers, all of which make it harder to collaborate and grow professionally. Jealousy also stood out as a significant problem, especially among Palestinian teachers, who brought this up more frequently than their Turkish colleagues. These feelings create division and make it difficult to build strong teams. In Palestine, unethical competition was an additional concern, something that Turkish teachers didn't mention, pointing to a more competitive and less cooperative environment in Palestinian schools. On top of that, one Palestinian teacher noted favouritism and exclusive relationships with the principal as a barrier to healthy collaboration with peers, a challenge that Turkish teachers didn't report.

Another common issue was fear and inhibition, with teachers in both countries feeling hesitant to voice their ideas or take on leadership roles. This hesitancy can prevent them from stepping up and contributing meaningfully to the school community. In Turkey, some teachers reported that political behaviours also added complications, whereas this wasn't something Palestinian teachers highlighted. Turkish teachers also mentioned division caused by union affiliations, creating yet another layer of complexity in their relationships, which wasn't noted by their Palestinian counterparts.

Personal stories from teachers like Tutku in Turkey and Fadwa in Palestine really highlight the toll these dynamics take. Tutku shared how she was discouraged from pursuing her master's degree, with peers saying things like, "Why are you doing this? You should focus on things that make money." These negative attitudes, rather than encouraging professional growth, only created obstacles. Similarly, Fadwa recounted how her colleagues discouraged her after she was honoured by the Ministry of Education for her efforts and initiatives by giving her a certificate, saying things like, "You're not required to do that," or "You shouldn't spend your own money." Despite this, Fadwa continues to pursue her goals for personal fulfillment, not for certificates.

These stories reflect a broader issue in both countries: peer discouragement and negativity. Instead of fostering an environment of growth and collaboration, these dynamics hold teachers back, preventing them from taking on leadership roles and stifling their professional development.



### **Teacher-parent relationship challenges**

Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers face significant challenges in their relationships with parents, which affects their ability to assume leadership roles effectively. Common challenges are categorized under Conflict and Complaints from Parents, Lack of Cooperation and Support, Communication and Relationship Issues, Socio-Economic Factors, and Parental Interference in Teachers' Work and Decisions.

Turkish teachers frequently report difficulties with parents, who often focus on problems rather than solutions, leading to conflicts. A significant issue for Turkish teachers is a Lack of Cooperation, with many reporting a Lack of Parental Involvement in the Education Process and that Non-Supportive Parents hinder their leadership efforts. Turkish teachers also highlight that some parents do not respect their profession, and a Low Education Level among Parents exacerbates these challenges.

Palestinian teachers share similar frustrations, with many citing Interference and Resistance from Parents. Negative attitudes, indifference, and poor communication affect their ability to build strong, supportive partnerships. Additionally, Unethical Behavior, such as Principals Limiting Direct Interactions with Parents, further hinders their ability to form productive relationships. While both groups face parents disregarding professional boundaries, Palestinian teachers report unique difficulties like Negative Attitudes from Parents toward Teachers and Threatening Behaviors.

Across both contexts, fostering better cooperation and communication between teachers and parents is crucial for effective leadership. For teachers to take on leadership roles, they need a collaborative, respectful, and supportive relationship with parents, something that remains a significant barrier in both Turkey and Palestine.

The results of Gölezlioğlu & Ünal (2023) further support these findings by identifying six parental behaviors that significantly impact teachers' motivation: recognition and appreciation, involvement and support, communication, trust in teacher expertise, valuing holistic development, and providing support in terms of resources and materials. Teachers observed that their motivation increased when parental attitudes and behaviors aligned with their expectations and decreased when they did not.

## **2. The Factors facilitate teacher leadership roles**

Following the earlier analysis of four themes on Palestinian and Turkish teachers' perceptions of the factors facilitating the implementation of teacher leadership roles in primary schools, the upcoming discussion will compare these contexts for each theme.

### **Personal facilitators**

The analysis reveals that both Turkish and Palestinian teachers emphasize the importance of professional skills and knowledge in enhancing their leadership roles. Turkish teachers highlight





continuous learning and academic pursuits, while Palestinian teachers stress strong communication skills and experience. Both groups recognize the value of technological proficiency, though it is slightly more emphasized among Palestinians.

Emotional and mental flexibility is valued by both groups, with Turkish teachers focusing on open-mindedness and patience and Palestinian teachers highlighting flexibility and patience as crucial. Regarding teamwork and community involvement, Turkish and Palestinian teachers acknowledge the significance of collaboration and supportive networks. Turkish teachers emphasize fostering a sense of belonging, while Palestinian teachers stress assisting colleagues and working with a team spirit.

Unique to Palestinian teachers is their emphasis on values, ethics, and work conditions, including being a good role model, moral responsibility, reducing workload, and having a passion for teaching.

Personal circumstances, such as being young or single, are mentioned by Turkish teachers as facilitators due to fewer personal commitments, which allows for greater focus on leadership. However, this does not guarantee leadership potential, as experience and personal growth are also crucial.

Additionally, the analysis includes the categories of "Strong Personality" and "Physical Appearance." "Strong Personality" was highlighted by both Turkish and Palestinian teachers as significant in leadership roles. In contrast, "Physical Appearance" was mentioned less frequently. Turkish teachers focus more on continuous learning and personal belief systems, while Palestinian teachers highlight communication skills, ethical values, and managing work conditions.

Findings align with Arslan & Özdemir (2015), who identified essential leadership qualities such as acting within a common understanding framework, sharing responsibility, role modelling, planning, communication skills, subject matter expertise, and professional development.

The importance of knowledge of teaching is central to teacher leadership, as highlighted by King (2017), who states that teachers must exemplify excellent practices to share their expertise effectively. This finding aligns with other research emphasizing the role of expertise in problem identification (Herijden et al., 2015). Bond (2011) further supports these findings, asserting that teacher leaders should exhibit a positive disposition, be trustworthy, reliable, confident, resilient, and, importantly, have a sense of humor. These attributes and skills collectively contribute to the ability of teachers to lead effectively, fostering an environment where continuous improvement and collaboration thrive.

### ***Manager's facilitating attitude***

The analysis of the managers' facilitating attitudes reveals significant differences and similarities between Turkish and Palestinian teachers in terms of support, openness, resource provision, and other factors. "Support and Motivation" is a prominent category across both contexts. Palestinian teachers notably value principals that motivate teachers and praise/moral support more





than their Turkish counterparts. This strongly emphasizes emotional encouragement and moral support as vital for facilitating leadership.

“Openness and Innovation” is a key theme where Turkish and Palestinian teachers show comparable levels of emphasis. Both groups demonstrate a strong inclination towards the principal's supporting new ideas and leadership initiatives. Turkish teachers exhibit a greater focus on the principal's openness to new ideas and giving initiative to teachers to lead, suggesting a supportive environment for innovation. Palestinian teachers also value the openness of the principal but place a slightly greater emphasis on the principal's organizing training courses and workshops and inviting experienced experts, indicating a structured approach to fostering innovation. Despite these differences in approach, the overall emphasis on innovation is similar between the two groups.

Resource and Opportunity Provision shows a distinct contrast between Turkish and Palestinian teachers. Although Turkish schools are generally better equipped, Turkish teachers report less support regarding additional resources and opportunities than Palestinian teachers. This suggests that while Turkish managers might not provide as much proactive support, the availability of physical resources in Turkish schools is relatively higher. Conversely, Palestinian teachers face significant challenges due to the economic situation in Gaza, including a small budget for schools and frequent electricity problems. The limited resources available often result in teachers struggling to implement leadership initiatives effectively. Palestinian teachers, such as Fardus, Farah, and Fadwa, have reported spending their own money to fund their initiatives, highlighting the severe lack of institutional support. Their personal contributions reflect a strong commitment to their roles despite the challenging conditions.

In the category of Empowerment and Autonomy, Turkish teachers report some level of shared management and collaboration in decision-making, though this is less pronounced compared to Palestinian teachers. Palestinian teachers value democratic management and giving authority to teachers, highlighting a more formal approach to empowering educators.

Building Effective Relationships is noted by both groups, with Turkish teachers emphasizing good relationships with teachers and Palestinian teachers also focusing on communicating with the local community. This suggests that while both groups value interpersonal connections, Palestinian teachers place additional importance on engaging with the broader community.

Personal Attributes and Characteristics category, such as being young and humble, are mentioned exclusively by Turkish teachers. This indicates that personal traits are seen as part of a manager's facilitating attitude in Turkey, whereas Palestinian teachers do not emphasize these attributes.

Extracurricular and Social Activities Engagement is a less prominent category, with Palestinian teachers noting the organization of entertainment activities and monitoring student achievement. This suggests that engaging in extracurricular activities is more recognized in Palestine as part of a manager's facilitating role.



These findings are consistent with the research by Leithwood et al. (2007), which highlights the paradoxical role of principals in advancing teacher leadership. Similarly, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) emphasize that principals are crucial in this dynamic, as they can either foster professional development or perceive teacher leadership as a threat. A distributed perspective of teacher leadership posits that principals act as delegators and facilitators, enabling teachers to lead school improvement and enhance student learning (Harris, 2003; Spillane, 2006). Additionally, Szeto and Cheng (2017) suggest that principals can support early-career teachers' professional development through in-school learning opportunities. Principals need to foster a culture of continual learning within and beyond the school environment to facilitate teacher leadership development. By sharing expectations and encouraging professional development, principals help build teachers' competence, capacity, and confidence for leadership (Szeto & Cheng, 2017). According to Jones (2007), principals can build leadership capacity at schools by first establishing a culture of trust, honesty, and professionalism between themselves and the teachers. Subsequently, school leaders can provide and support opportunities for leadership by aligning teacher strengths and roles. In his research on transforming teachers into teacher leaders, Awadzi (2015) concluded that high levels of trust-based relationships between school administration and teachers are crucial for realizing teacher leadership, with collaborative teamwork and a shared vision necessary to sustain it.

### ***Relationships among teachers***

The analysis of Relationships among Teachers highlights key similarities and differences between Turkish and Palestinian educators. Both groups emphasize Collaboration and Support, with all Palestinian teachers agreeing on its importance. Turkish teachers focus on "Good relationships" and "Being supportive" while engaging in practices like sharing ideas and forming subject committees. Palestinian teachers, however, emphasize "Helping each other," "Good relationships," and formal peer observations, such as exchange lessons. Novice Palestinian teachers like Fadwa, Faten, and Fahmy found peer observation particularly beneficial, as Fahmy noted: "Classroom peer observations enhance expertise and improve teaching skills, helping teachers apply new methods in their own lessons." This findings in line with (Szeto & Cheng, 2017) study: "Mentoring can help establish collegial relationships that assist new teachers in adapting to the school environment". Additionally, other studies have highlighted key aspects of teacher leadership, including conducting action research (Ash and Persall, 2000), initiating peer classroom observations (Little, 2000), and fostering a collaborative school culture (Lieberman et al., 2000).

Both groups place moderate importance on Motivation and Development, with Palestinian teachers showing slightly less emphasis on motivation. In the Respect and Harmony category, both groups value "Love and respect" among colleagues, but Palestinian teachers highlight "Understanding, harmony," and "Trust" more. Social Activities are mentioned minimally, especially among Palestinian teachers.

Overall, both Turkish and Palestinian teachers value collaboration, support, and respect, though Palestinians take a more formalized approach, while Turkish teachers emphasize interpersonal support. Motivation and social activities receive less attention in both contexts.



These findings align with research by Harris and Muijs (2004), which shows that teachers are most effective when they receive support from their peers and engage in collegial collaboration. Effective teacher leaders collaborate with colleagues, observe each other's lessons, and discuss pedagogy. Additionally, York-Barr and Duke (2004) indicated that teacher leaders must possess teamwork skills to bring about positive changes in a large learning community.

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In conclusion, while both Turkish and Palestinian teachers recognize the importance of relationships, support, and the exchange of ideas in facilitating teacher leadership roles, Palestinian teachers place a stronger emphasis on solidarity, cultural norms like love and respect, and formal organizational structures such as subject committees. While acknowledging similar factors, Turkish teachers tend to focus on more generic aspects like good relationships and supportive attitudes without as much emphasis on specific cultural or formal organizational elements.

### ***Relationships between teachers and parents***

The comparative analysis of factors that support teacher leadership through teacher-parent relationships reveals similarities and differences between Turkish and Palestinian teachers. Turkish teachers highlight the importance of "Effective communication between parents and teachers" and maintaining long-term relationships with parents. On the other hand, Palestinian teachers emphasize the value of parental interest, support, and empowerment in the learning process. The category "Parents' Participation and Collaboration" is notably more prevalent among Palestinian teachers, with twelve mentions compared to six from Turkish teachers. In Palestine, active participation in school meetings and events is a significant factor, while in Turkey, this is less emphasized. Palestinian teachers also report more frequent parental financial contributions to school activities, reflecting a higher level of parental involvement in daily school operations and decision-making. This aligns with Harris and Muijs (2005), who noted that teacher collaboration and support foster a collaborative culture crucial for teacher leadership.

Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers value "Recognition and Appreciation from parents," though this is slightly more emphasized by Turkish teachers. Palestinian teachers, however, place higher importance on respectful behaviour towards teachers, indicating cultural differences in how respect is expressed. Snuggs (2021) supports this, noting that technology enables teacher leaders to build relationships and share information with peers, parents, and other stakeholders, overcoming geographical barriers.

In conclusion, while both Turkish and Palestinian teachers acknowledge the importance of strong parent-teacher relationships for leadership, the nature of parental involvement varies. Palestinian teachers seek more active engagement, including moral and financial support and direct participation in school activities. Conversely, Turkish teachers focus on effective communication with parents to enhance their leadership, though they may encounter less direct involvement in terms of participation and collaboration.



## Conclusion

The comparative analysis of teacher leadership roles and challenges in Turkey and Palestine reveals both commonalities and distinct differences, reflecting the unique contextual and cultural factors influencing each setting.

**Challenges to Teacher Leadership:** Economic and resource-related challenges are significant for both groups, with Palestinian teachers facing more severe obstacles due to economic instability and war-related disruptions, while Turkish teachers benefit from greater economic stability. Issues with principal-teacher relationships include a lack of support and communication problems, with Palestinian teachers experiencing more pronounced issues related to unprofessional attitudes and favoritism, whereas Turkish teachers face complexities from union relationships and political influences. Principal management styles also differ, with Palestine exhibiting a more authoritarian and rigid approach, limiting teacher autonomy, while Turkish teachers encounter less rigidity and more competition. Inter-teacher relationships show challenges in collaboration and support for both groups, with Palestinian teachers also dealing with unethical competition and favouritism, while Turkish teachers face issues related to political behaviours and union affiliations. Finally, teacher-parent relationships reveal challenges with parental involvement, communication, and respect in both contexts, with Turkish teachers reporting difficulties in cooperation and support, while Palestinian teachers experience more interference and resistance from parents.

**Facilitators of Teacher Leadership:** Both Turkish and Palestinian teachers recognize the importance of professional skills, effective communication, and emotional flexibility in enhancing leadership roles. Turkish teachers place a greater emphasis on continuous learning and personal belief systems, whereas Palestinian teachers highlight communication skills, ethical values, and managing work conditions. These findings align with existing literature on essential leadership qualities and the critical role of expertise in teaching. Managers in both contexts are valued for their support and motivation, though Turkish teachers benefit from better-equipped schools and greater openness to new ideas, while Palestinian teachers face more significant resource constraints but show strong personal commitment to their roles. The emphasis on collaboration among teachers is evident in both groups, with Palestinian teachers engaging more formally in peer observations and mentorship compared to the more informal approach in Turkey. Regarding teacher-parent relationships, Turkish teachers focus on effective communication and long-term relationships, while Palestinian teachers seek more active parental involvement and support.

Overall, addressing these challenges and leveraging the facilitators requires tailored strategies that consider the specific needs and cultural contexts of each country. Enhancing support, improving communication, and fostering collaboration are crucial for effective teacher leadership in both Turkey and Palestine.

According to Can (2006), obstacles to teacher leadership include issues related to school culture, insufficiencies in professional development processes, lack of administrative support, shortage of time, teachers' formal duties, lack of collaboration among teachers, inadequate training and development environments, and insufficient democratic participation and reliance. Among these



obstacles, teachers strongly agree that the lack of principal support, insufficient democratic participation, and inadequate evaluation of achievements are the most significant challenges.

## Recommendations

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To enhance teacher leadership roles in both Turkish and Palestinian primary schools, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Improve Economic Support:** Governments and educational authorities should provide adequate financial resources and support to address the economic challenges faced by teachers, particularly in conflict-affected regions like Gaza.
- **Enhance Professional Development:** Establish comprehensive professional development programs that focus on leadership skills, technological proficiency, and effective communication tailored to the specific needs of teachers in different cultural contexts.
- **Foster Supportive Principal-Teacher Relationships:** Principals should develop better communication skills, ensure fair and transparent practices, and foster supportive environments that encourage teacher leadership. Training programs for principals on democratic leadership and collaborative management styles should be implemented.
- **Promote Collaborative School Culture:** Schools should cultivate a culture of trust, support, and collaboration among teachers. Initiatives such as peer mentoring, team-based projects, and professional learning communities can help build strong inter-teacher relationships.
- **Engage Parents Actively:** Schools should actively involve parents in school activities, emphasizing the importance of their role in supporting teachers. Communication channels should be established to facilitate regular, constructive dialogue between teachers and parents.
- **Address Workload and Time Management:** Educational authorities should address issues related to heavy workloads by providing adequate planning time and reducing administrative burdens. This can help teachers focus more effectively on their teaching and leadership roles.
- **Tailored Policy Interventions:** Recognize and address the unique cultural and contextual factors affecting teacher leadership in different regions. Policies should be context-specific and involve input from local educators to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.





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