



Asian Journal of Distance Education

Teachers' Views on Leadership in the New Normal

Seher Yıldız Şal, Ahmet Göçen

Abstract: During the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been radical changes in people's habits. These changes have caused uncertainties and crises in organizations, many of which brought various leadership characteristics to the fore. This article examines teachers' opinions about leadership behaviors in these turbulent times. The study that formed the basis of this article is crucial since it reveals the leadership characteristics needed in educational organizations' management in the new normal. The researchers used phenomenological design, a qualitative research method. Twenty teachers working in public schools in southeast Turkey participated in this study during the 2020-2021 academic year. The participants were selected by the criterion sampling method. Research data were collected in a semi-structured interview format. The views of the participants were analyzed using content analysis. According to the study's results, the qualities that a leader should have in the new normal are categorized under four themes: "technological, transformational, agile, and human-centered management." To that end, thirty-eight leadership qualities are needed to adjust to the new normal. In this context, a leader's technological competence, foresight, openness to innovation, and communication skills come to the forefront. In addition, today's leaders should form a culture of learning in the digital age, take initiatives when required, and lead developments with collaboration and reflection.

Keywords: Covid-19, New Normal, Leadership, Crisis, Change

Highlights

What is already known about this topic:

- Throughout history, traditional leadership characteristics become ineffective in times of crisis like pandemics, economic crises, wars, and natural disasters. The leadership style exhibited in these periods is important in overcoming the crises and chaos with the least damage and to ensure the continuity of the organizations.
- The period of uncertainty and rapid change brought about by Covid-19, a global pandemic, has shaped the new normal. This period of uncertainty and rapid change is a period when effective leadership skills of leaders should be rethought and reflected in the managerial practice.
- In the new normal, the schools need leaders that are bound to bring in new solutions and practices against the increasing problems and changing habits of instruction and learning.

What this paper contributes:

- This article focuses on teachers' views about the characteristics that an educational leader should have in the new normal. It presents readers with what leadership qualities are needed to maintain the mission and vision of educational organizations in times of unexpected large-scale changes.
- This article explains teachers' views about leadership in the new normal under the themes of "agile, transformational, technological, and human-centered leadership styles". In the new normal these leadership styles need to be on the agenda of stakeholders managing educational institutions so they can better adapt to larger changes within the educational organizations.



- This article emphasizes the leader's technological competence, foresight, openness to innovation, communication, innovation management, agility, and crisis management skills as some of the needed personal characteristics in the new normal.
- This article indicates that inspection, which is one of the traditional leadership roles of leaders, comes to the forefront as "virtual inspection" in accordance with the new normal requirements.

Implications for theory, practice and/or policy:

- Crisis is a good opportunity to test the resilience of organizations and reveal their shortcomings. During periods of crisis, leaders, who recognize technological transformation required by the age, respond to the change proactively and quickly, transform their members' attitudes and habits to new settings with a human centered approach, will be most successful in realizing the organization's goals.
- Leaders that want to be successful in the new normal should be agile, aware of the rapidly changing world, follow the innovative developments and have ICT competence. In addition to these competencies, it is recommended to adopt a leadership style that prioritizes human values, which has an important role in increasing work efficiency and facilitating adaptation to changing conditions in every field where humans are involved.

Introduction

Humanity has witnessed major crises and ruptures that have affected every community in different periods (Karakas, 2020). In some periods of history, people encountered pandemics, which were impactful on a continental or global scale. Some of these include the Black Plague, Smallpox, HIV/AIDS, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Spanish Flu, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Ebola (Cebi, 2007). In recent years, Covid-19 emerged, leading to unprecedented problems in many countries affecting everything from health to education sectors.

Covid-19 is the most important crisis in the last 50 years and has greatly affected societies (Carroll & Conboy, 2020). It has brought about global change (Karakas, 2020). The most important feature that distinguishes Covid-19 from other outbreaks or pandemics is the rate of transmission among humans; because today's transportation and interaction opportunities are more developed than in the past (Seker, 2020).

Covid-19 has been described as a "disaster of uncertainty" (Everly et al., 2020). Combating this outbreak requires dealing with elements such as complexity, volatility, ambiguity, uncertainty, and contradiction (Skerlavaj, 2020). According to data from the World Health Organization (2021), more than 5 million people died in the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide, and more than 251 million cases occurred. In addition to the restriction of international travel with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, economic growth has been severely damaged, and education disrupted worldwide (Harris & Jones, 2020). Thus, a spark in one part of the world triggered important events in another part of the world (Vernon, 2017).

In order to prevent the interruption of education during the crisis, states resorted to distance education methods and tools like radios, TV channels, online learning programs for teaching (UNESCO, 2020). The whole world was introduced to non-physical learning spaces becoming one of the new normals of this century. Thus, Covid-19 provided the opportunity for people to observe the shaping of a new normal emerging in all areas of life (Cebi, 2020). With the change in traditional discourse, the effects of digital transformation, which has become a global necessity, started to be discussed (Ozer & Suna, 2020). In addition to mandatory digital transformation, social, political, and economic developments that occur in the new normal have required leaders to come to the forefront with their different characteristics and take on different roles and responsibilities (Bozkurt, 2020). In this respect, this research aims to examine the leadership characteristics and behaviors that are expected to be prominent in the new normal in the context of educational organizations.

The New Normal

Although the new normal is a popular concept today, it has a longer history. Take the example of Renaissance, Industrial Revolution, or World War II (Francisco, Sagcal, & Nuqui, 2020) and the results of these events on a global scale when introducing the new norms in military, economic, and social life by replacing the old ones accepted for centuries. As for education, the new normal on a global scale, in recent history, started with the gradual and consecutive introduction of Web 1.0, Web 2.0, and Web 3.0 tools for educational purposes. This shift brought about terms like blended and flipped learning and signaled the replacement of physical education environments, which people have considered an inevitable part of education and teaching for a longer time. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic made the concept of the new normal crystal clear by forcing countries to adapt to changes from homes to schools.

Pandemics cause social uncertainty, disorder, and various other problems (Skerlavaj, 2020). Accordingly, the Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected the economy, health systems, employment, education, and many other areas of life while , re-introducing the concept of a "new normal" (Aguiling & Racelis, 2021). In its broadest definition, the "new normal" can be defined as a shift in society's accepted behaviors, procedures, habits, and replacement of these with new ones (Gocen, 2021a). The new normal came into existence with a global health problem that afflicted everyone, regardless of age, gender, or social standing. As all businesses shut down, the world came to a halt and the economies crumbled. To stop the virus from spreading, most countries closed schools, colleges, and institutions (Gocen, 2021b). The crisis was a problem not only for the health and economy sectors, but also for the education sector (Ancheta & Ancheta 2020).

In the new normal period that emerged with Covid-19, new knowledge and experiences will create a new universal system (Bozkurt, 2020). The ensuing system will be shaped by the developments and changes in global, financial, political, individual, and social dimensions that occur in different parts of social life (Karakas, 2020). With Covid-19, methods such as flexible, remote, and hybrid work have been applied in order to prevent the spread of the virus and reduce the damage caused by the virus. Masks and social distancing rules have been introduced around the world, as well as measures such as curfews, quarantine periods, and isolation (Bozkurt, 2020). In the new normal period, the foundations of the world economy and social order were shaken and unprecedented changes were made in education systems (Harris, 2020).

The New Normal in Education

The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted student life in many ways, not only their course of study, but also the point they reached in the program (Daniel, 2020). The pandemic resulted in school closures and postponement of exam schedules, as well as extended social isolation for children. The school closures revealed the fact that schools are not only a place of learning, but also provide socialization; thus, the implicit purposes of education are well understood (Egeli & Ozdemir, 2020). The new normal in education brought change to learning evaluations, teacher-student interactions, creation of individualized and differentiated learning opportunities, and a shift from public space to personal space by moving learning to non-physical environments and helping individuals take responsibility for their own learning (Francisco et al., 2020).

In the new normal, changes in the education system have become inevitable (Basit, Khotimah, & Hartono, 2020) as face-to-face education has been suspended globally, and the teaching continues at a distance using hybrid methods (UNESCO, 2020; Toran, 2021). During the pandemic, educational activities have been mostly limited to the "screen-based learning" method (SBL), which is one of the distance and online learning methods (Harris & Jones, 2020). In line with this new normal trend, educational leaders and teachers need to be reinforced with new methods of e-teaching. It's necessary

to organize training programs that include basic components of education such as goals, content, implementation, and evaluation in line with new developments (Chapay, 2020).

In the new normal, online learning applications have an important and facilitating function in education (Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh, & Althunibath, 2020). While there are various restrictions and partial or full closures, online learning methods are considered a solution for continuing education processes without interruption (Ancho, 2020). However, it is an undeniable fact that with the spread of distance education methods throughout the world in the new normal, the lack of distance education materials could deepen the inequality of opportunity in education (Harris, 2020; Gocen, 2021b). Students do not have the same ability to access online education and this is one of the biggest disadvantages of the new normal in education (Motala & Menon, 2020). This is one of the main issues policy makers and educational leaders should take into immediate consideration.

Leadership in the New Normal

From a holistic perspective, leadership is the ability of people with different qualifications to equip the members of the organization with the necessary knowledge and skills to realize the goals and objectives of the organization, to ensure that the members focus on organizational goals, work in cooperation, and provide organizational motivation (Winston & Patterson, 2006). With the personal, social, and organizational characteristics, the views and expectations attributed to leadership affect and change the definition of leadership (Ercetin, 2000). Each leadership style has its own distinct feature and operates well within expected conditions. The leadership style adopted in turbulent times, as in Covid-19 pandemic, should be shaped according to the conditions as the period of stability, continuity, and relative calm is gone, and not any standard, framework, benchmark, precedent, or blueprint is present (Harris, 2020).

In times of such uncertainty and crisis, the essential qualities that distinguish a leader from a manager become more evident. Leadership in the new normal is very difficult as uncertainty, rapid change, and digital transformation increase the expectations of organizations from the leader. Leadership styles exhibited in times of crisis have an important function in building emotional resilience in societies (Stern, 2013). Leadership types play a significant role in dealing with the confusion and discontinuities caused by the coronavirus pandemic (Chacko, 2020). In times of change and crisis, demanding perfection is the biggest obstacle to progress (Neolicky, 2020). The important thing is to control the process and be able to resist (Välíkangas & Lewin, 2020), and that is what new normal leaders should consider.

In the new normal, leaders with the ability to make a difference and show no fear are of great importance; they need to make realistic statements, make quick decisions, do what they preach, and inspire confidence (Sarı & Sarı, 2020). The need for leaders, in the new normal, who are far from the usual hierarchical structure and who can meet the needs of the changing world has come to the fore (Buheji & Sisk, 2020). In this period, it has revealed the need for leadership characteristics and attitudes with deeper focus than those of conventional leaders who were at the forefront in the past.

Instilling trust and respect, vigilance, sharing knowledge, helping others solve problems, and recovering from difficulties are leadership qualities which are apparent in the new normal. (Aguiling & Racelis, 2021). In the new normal, leaders must have creative solutions and be assertive (Ancho, 2020; Buheji & Sisk, 2020). Agility, foresight, being able to evaluate possible risks, and taking responsibility are qualities that a good leader should have (Netolicky, 2020). Leaders that share authority, are responsive, and connected are more successful in adapting to the new normal using a distributed leadership mentality (Harris, 2020).

Considering conditions in the new normal, the success of organizations depends on leaders adapting to change and having the characteristics required by the period they are in. In such times, leadership

qualities that come forward due to the inadequacy of traditional leadership are an important element for the realization of the necessary transformation and the continuity of the success of the organizations. This study is important in terms of revealing the leadership characteristics that come to the forefront in the new normal, which is characterized by change and uncertainty.

Methodology

This part includes the research design, participants, data collection methods, data collection tools and data analysis methods.

Research Model/Design

The research was carried out with the phenomenological design, which is a qualitative research design. Phenomenology is an approach that focuses on the lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of this design is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomena (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of using phenomenology in the research is to reveal the thoughts and experiences of teachers about the new normal leadership styles based on their opinions about what they experienced in their school during the Covid-19 pandemic during the new normal process.

Data Collecting Tools

While some of the interviews with the teachers participating in the research were carried out face-to-face, some of the interviews were carried out through online platforms (zoom, google meet, etc.) After the necessary information was given to the teachers participating in the research, the questions were posed: "What do you think the new normal is? What are your views on the new normal?", "What are the problems you are experiencing in the new normal?" and "What are the leadership characteristics that the new normal leader should and should not exhibit?". With the consent of the participants, audio recordings were taken during the interview, and the interviews were transcribed verbatim. In addition, the names of the participants were not written to ensure that the information provided was impartial and sincere, and the persons were coded as "P1-20".

Participants

The number of participants is limited as detailed interviews are required in phenomenology research (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). For this reason, the research was carried out with twenty teachers. Participants were selected using the criterion sampling method, which is a purposive sampling method. In the criterion sampling method, the participants are determined in line with the criteria required for the research (Yildirim, 2019). The reason for choosing the criterion sampling method in this study is to collect more detailed data from the desired sample. It is thought that the participants who have knowledge and experience in the relevant field - by theory or service- will have the ability to make more accurate observation and analysis. For this purpose, "having or pursuing a master's degree in educational administration" or "having been a school administrator for at least three years" were determined as criterion sampling criteria. The study group consists of twenty teachers working in schools in the central districts of Şanlıurfa (in Southeast of Turkey) in the 2020-2021 academic year. Participants in the study group were coded with the letter "P" and numbered between "P1-P20". Demographic characteristics of the study group are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants

Variable	Subgroup	f	%
Gender	Female	9	45

	Male	11	55
Age	20-30	10	50
	31-40	4	20
	41-50	4	20
	51 and above	2	10
Seniority	0-5 year	7	35
	6-10 year	7	35
	11-15 year	4	20
	15 year and above	2	10
Education Level	Bachelor's degree	6	30
	Postgraduate	14	70

Table 1 shows that 45% of the teachers in the study group are female (f=9) and 55% are male teachers (f=11). 50% of the teachers are in the 20-30 age range (f=10), 20% are in the 31-40 age range (f=4), 20% are in the 41-50 age group (f=4), 10% are while they are 51 years old and over (f=2). When evaluated in terms of professional seniority, 35% of the teachers are in the range of 0-5 years (f=7), 35% of them are in the range of 6-10 years (f=7), and 20% are in the range of 11-15 years (f=4). and 10% have served for 16 years or more. When the education level is examined, 30% of the teachers (f=6) have a bachelor's degree, while 70% have received or continue their postgraduate education (f=14).

Data Analysis

The most important part of qualitative research is the data analysis phase (Flick, 2013), in which content analysis is employed. Holsti (1969, p. 14) defines content analysis: "*any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages*". All data collected from the participants were transcribed. As it should be in the content analysis method, word-level codes were created from the answers given by the participants to the questions, and then these codes were associated with each other and themes were created (Cirak-Kurt, 2019). The frequencies for all codes are tabulated. While coding the transcribed sentences, it was not tried to integrate similar sentences under more general codes; for example, the code of "Openness to innovation" also refers to the code of "Being open to different ideas" (See, Table 3); however, some participants just referred to one of these codes, making the intended meaning distinct from the other one. So, it was preferred to leave some intertwined codes verbatim in line with the researchers' interpretation of thick description (Ponterotto, 2006).

Validity and Reliability

The two main factors that enable the scientific evaluation of research are validity and reliability (Cirak-Kurt, 2019). It is possible to say that there are different opinions about validity and reliability criteria in qualitative studies and there is conceptual confusion (Arastaman, Ozturk Fidan, & Fidan, 2018; Yildirim, 2010). In qualitative research, features such as trustworthiness, credibility, and accuracy of results should be considered instead of validity and reliability (Krefting, 1991). In qualitative research, the researcher's objective reflection of the data collected ensures the essence of the research (Yildirim, 2016). To enable a trustworthy process, the interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants, and the data obtained were reported in full detail without any changes. In order to ensure the internal validity of the research, confirmation was obtained from the participants after the data were reported and direct quotations were made from the collected data. In order to ensure reliability in the research, the data were re-coded by the same coder and the compatibility between the two coders were considered (Krippendorff, 1980, as cited in Cirak-Kurt, 2019).

Findings

In this study, findings regarding the opinions of teachers about the characteristics that an educational leader should have in the new normal period are included. In line with the questions asked to the participants, the leadership characteristics expected from a leader in the new normal period were coded and frequency values were determined by categorizing them. The themes created by grouping the codes are shown in Figure 1.

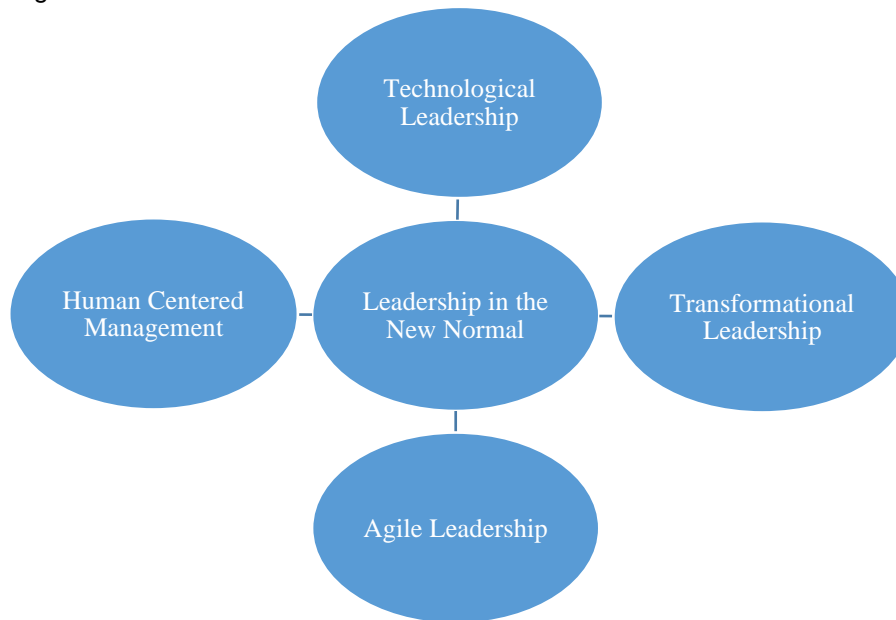


Figure 1. Participants' Views on Leadership in the New Normal

Figure 1 shows the leadership characteristics and behaviors that participants expect from the leader in the new normal. Related themes were schematized after the participants' views were analyzed. Participants' views on the new normal leadership mainly include “technological leadership, transformational leadership, agile leadership, and human-centered management”. Table 2-3-4-5 presents all the findings in order, followed by direct quotations from the participants:

Table 2. Findings Regarding the Technology Dimension of Leadership in the New Normal

Codes	f
Having technological competence	10
Keeping up with technological developments	9
Virtual inspection	8
Being a model for using technology	7
Supporting the use of technology	6
Technological guidance	6
Providing technological equipment	6
Creating a culture of learning in the digital age	4

When the characteristics that a leader should have in the new normal are examined in the dimension of technology, the most expressed code or topic is the technological competence ($f = 10$) of their leaders, while the least expressed leadership feature is creating a learning culture in the digital age ($f = 4$). In the new normal, the leader is expected to follow technological developments, make virtual inspections, be a model for technology use, support technology use, guide teachers and provide equipment for students and school use.

The opinions of the participants P4, P7, P8, P14 and P20 are expressed below, respectively.

“During the distance education process, I observed that our school administration did not have the necessary technological competence. For this reason, our school administration could not help and support us during the times when we had problems with the use of technology.” (P4, Having technological competence, technological guidance)

“Although it is difficult to follow up in this process, inspections should be made in order to ensure order in distance education. Yes, mutual trust is important, but it's very prone to abuse. Therefore, the supervision of the lessons should be at the forefront. When teachers are aware that they will be supervised, their lessons become more planned and more regular. In addition, teachers are preparing more for lessons. We hear that there are teachers who do not teach because few students attend live classes. This situation should not be left to the conscience of the teacher.” (P7, Virtual inspection)

“The school administration has opened support rooms at the school for students who have technological problems. Children can go and attend classes there. At the same time, they took the list of children who did not have internet, tablets, etc., and tried to make up for the deficiencies through philanthropists.” (P8, Providing technological equipment)

“They should be knowledgeable about distance education tools, follow the developments and inform us as well.” (P14, Being a model for using technology)

“There are also teachers who have technical difficulties. In this process, they should also be supported, and if necessary, a suitable environment should be provided in the school so that they progress themselves” (P20, Technological guidance, supporting the use of technology)

Table 3. Findings on the Transformational Dimension of Leadership in the New Normal

Codes	f
Openness to innovation	12
Have innovative management skills	12
Being aware of change	11
Adapting to change	11
Being aware of changing needs	10
Ability to update yourself	8
Being open to different ideas	7
Leading the development	6

The most expressed behavior in the transformational dimension, which is one of the characteristics that the new normal leader should have, is openness to innovation. Having innovative management skills, being aware of change, adapting to change, being aware of changing needs, being able to update oneself, being open to different ideas and leading development are other characteristics expressed by the participants.

P3, P5 and P11 coded participants expressed their opinions, respectively, as follows.

“...they should follow the developments and update themselves in line with these developments. They should not be closed to different opinions and innovations.” (P3, Openness to innovation, being open to different ideas)

“It is important to follow the latest developments in the field of education and to share them with teachers and ensure their development.” (P5, Being aware of change, leading the development).

“They don't get hung up on traditional methods. Although they take very few courses, they have a good command of new methods and techniques. Obviously, this motivates me a lot. I feel the need to improve myself.” (P11, Ability to update yourself, leading the development).

Table 4. Findings Regarding the Agility Dimension of Leadership in the New Normal

Codes	f
Having foresight	14
Making decisions quickly	12
Having crisis management skills	12
Being solution oriented	11
Risk-taking	11
Preparedness	10
Being wise	10
Being discreet	9
Taking initiative	7
Being transparent	7
Being flexible	6
Sharing authority	6
Collaboration	5

When teachers' views on leadership in the new normal are examined in the dimension of agility, the most expressed code is foresight and quick decision making, while the least expressed behavior is cooperation.

The opinions of the participants - P9, P11, P12 and P17- were expressed as follows.

“They have to be flexible. The rules come like this: “this is the official letter”.. this should not be said. I work in a village school where transportation is a problem. We go by teacher bus. In this period, it was said that teachers had to go to school one day (a week). Those who do not have a personal car to go to school really suffered in this period. There was no point in insisting that you come to school (as there was no student), they had to take initiative. (P9, Being flexible, taking initiative)

“When corona cases started to be seen in the world, it was not difficult to predict that it would spread to our country. While there was no case (at that time), those who thought about what to do in case of detection of coronavirus and took precautions accordingly, were 1-0 ahead.” (P11, Having foresight, preparedness).

“In this period, the leader must be competent in crisis management.” (P12, Having crisis management skills).

“... should be leaders who cooperate with other units in the institution, care about their ideas, and consult while making decisions. They should produce solutions that are calmer and faster.” (P17, Collaboration, making decisions quickly).

Table 5. Findings Regarding Human-Centered Management in the New Normal

Codes	f
Having communication skills	11
Having problem solving skills	11
Being savvy/understanding	9
Being humble	8
Being equal	8
Being fair	8
Having the ability to reflect	7
Being empathetic	7
Being reliable	5

When teachers' views on leadership in the new normal are examined in the dimension of human-centered management, it is found that the most expressed behavioral characteristic is communication and problem-solving skills of the leaders. In addition, being savvy, humble, equal and fair, having the ability to reflect, being able to empathize, and reliability are other characteristics expressed by the participants.

The views of the participants -P4, P12 and P20- were expressed as follows.

“They should guide us in making up for our shortcomings and mistakes in many issues over time.” (P4, Having the ability to reflect)

“His patience and his constant effort to provide convenience for us has been a good support for what we can do. (P12, Being savvy/understanding).

“However, they should have put themselves in our shoes and understood our concerns.” (P12, Being empathetic)

“There should be a good communication environment in the school; the solution of the problems in the school can only be possible with communicating. Let it be talked (aloud) so that everyone can realize their mistake or shortcoming and make up for it.” (P20, Having communication skills)

Discussion

In this article, the views of teachers from public schools about leadership in the new normal are examined. Depending on the opinions of the participants about the characteristics that the leader should have in the new normal, four main categories were determined: technological leadership, transformational leadership, agile leadership, and human-centered management. Leadership characteristics in these categories can be visualized as follows based on the findings:

Technological Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Agile Leadership	Human Centered Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having technological competence • Keeping up with technological developments • Virtual inspection • Being a model for using technology • Supporting the use of technology • Technological guidance • Providing technological equipment • Creating a culture of learning in the digital age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness to innovation • Have innovation management skills • Being aware of change • Adapting to change • Being aware of changing needs • Ability to update yourself • Being open to different ideas • Leading the development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a foresight • Making decisions quickly • Having crisis management skills • Being solution oriented • Risk-taking • Preparedness • Being wise • Being discreet • Taking initiative • Being transparent • Being flexible • Sharing authority • Collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having communication skills • Having problem solving skills • Being savvy /understanding • Being humble • Being equal • Being fair • Having the ability to reflect • Being empathetic • Being reliable.

Figure 2. The New Normal Leadership Qualities

As shown in Figure 2, the expected and desired leaders' characteristics during and post pandemic period (the new normal) are built around four cornerstones of leadership from technology leadership to human centered management. In order to enable continuity of the mission and vision of an organization, the new normal leaders- in times of uncertainty and crisis, should operate on these four premises.

Technological Leadership: According to the participants, one of the characteristics that an education leader should have in the new normal is the ability to use, foster, and guide technology in educational settings. In the age of digital learning, it's become an essential requirement for school managers to acquire technology skills for themselves and their organizations to demonstrate effective leadership (Bulut, 2021). Leaders who want to make progress during the pandemic period must be experienced and knowledgeable in technology (Harris & Jones, 2020).

The dynamics of leadership in the world have changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, and practices such as distance education, and flexible working bring the technological competence of leaders to the forefront (Akbari & Pratomo, 2021). In this process, school administrators have an important role in integrating teachers and students with technology tools (Gocen, 2021b). In the new normal, education leaders have assumed the role of providing technological competence to teachers who do not have the skills to use technology (Hamzah, Nasir, & Wahab, 2021). Using and ensuring the use of technology at school and creating a culture of distance education are among the main duties of the leader in the new normal (Turan, 2020). In line with these findings in the literature and this study, it has been concluded that an educational leader should create a digital learning culture and be a pioneer in developing the digital skills of the members of the organization. In addition to having these skills, "inspection", which is one of the traditional leadership skills, re-emerges as "virtual inspection" in accordance with the new normal requirements. It is important for the education leader to participate in the online classes from time to time, to reveal and correct the deficiencies and to increase the quality of education (Cemaloglu, 2020).

Transformational Leadership: One of the most important characteristics that an educational leader should have in the new normal is openness to innovation, which is one of the leadership qualities to transform the organization. Transforming the school, based on the participants' opinions, are related to

awareness of the change, innovation, and the desire to develop by the leaders. In detail, having innovation management skills, being aware of and keeping up with change, being aware of changing needs, being able to update oneself, being open to different ideas and leading development are other characteristics expressed by the participants. According to Harris (2020), some of the characteristics that a leader should have in the new normal are openness to innovation and embracing change. Strong inter-organizational communication, openness to innovations, keeping up with changes and updating organizational goals in the light of changes are characteristics that a leader should have in the new normal (Skerlavaj, 2020). It is necessary for each stakeholder of the school to adapt to the change in order to adopt the new roles defined for them in the new normal (Bozkurt, 2020).

Agile Leadership: According to the research findings, some of the characteristics that an education leader should have can be listed as being foresighted, making decisions quickly, having crisis management skills, being prepared, and being solution-oriented. In the new normal, the leader should have foresight when sudden changes occur, be prepared for these changes, and be able to take and implement the necessary measures (Ancho, 2020). Anyone can make decisions, but effective decisions necessitate razor-sharp discernment (Olcott, 2020a). A leader is one who can make decisions in an institutional sense, plans by considering changing conditions and pioneers in implementation (Francisco & Nuqui, 2020). Leaders must learn to move quickly, respond effectively with solid judgment, and lead in unexpected situations (Olcott, 2020a).

According to the research findings, the value with the highest frequency in the theme of agile leadership is having foresight. Foreseeing the possible outcomes and events could be accepted as one of the basic qualities that the new normal leader should have. As a matter of fact, it is seen that countries such as Germany, Taiwan, New Zealand, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Hong Kong, stand out with their success in the fight against Covid-19, are more insightful and quicker to respond to possible outcomes of Covid-19 (Wittenberg-Cox, 2020). Turkey could be another example of early responders to Covid-19 in terms of educational services since online education initiatives by the Ministry of National Education were already in practice. Turkey was swift to employ online and broadcasting options doing so in only seven days after the nationwide school closure. However, large challenges related to rural and disadvantaged areas and socio-economic status of the families made it hard to reach desired quality and learning in online education (2021b).

Human-Centered Management: It was stated by the research participants that having communication skills and problem-solving skills, understanding, being humble, being equal, being fair, having the ability to reflect, being able to empathize and being reliable are the characteristics that an education leader should have in the new normal with Covid-19 crisis. In the human-centered management approach, leaders are people who care about ethical values, are sensitive, consider the feelings and needs of the members of the organization, are solution-oriented and guide the members of the organization (Majluf & Abarca, 2021). In the new normal, a leader should have effective communication skills, be a facilitator, respectful of different ideas, reliable and tolerant (Fleming & Millar, 2019). It is possible to say that leaders who understand the feelings, thoughts and needs of the members of the organization are successful in times of crisis (Wooten & James, 2008). The leader's empathy and confidence to other members are leadership characteristics that should be prevalent in the fight against the crisis (Jamaludin et al., 2020).

Parallel to the research findings, the Covid-19 pandemic serves as a stark reminder that education's primary goal is to conserve, protect, and honor humanity (Olcott, 2020b). Care- and empathy-centered approaches should be the basic blocks in education, as well as in the Covid-19 and post-Covid-19 world. Such efforts should be guided by the premise that we cannot unlock the gates of the mind until we first open the gates of the heart (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). No matter how useful technologies there are, organizations still require solid human judgment and reasoning to ensure that they are not ineffective (Olcott, 2020a). Technology's significance to education is undeniable; but it isn't a cure-all for all educational issues (Xiao, 2021). So, it can be stated that the "human" element, which is the focal point

of the postmodern leadership approach, should be blended with the new normal and the digital transformation.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The Covid-19 outbreak is not the first and not the last global crisis. Indeed, the coronavirus pandemic has been more than a disaster; it has served as a global wake-up call to shift the mindsets and perspectives on the world, including re-evaluating what leadership means (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). The article shows that in a period when uncertainty still exists and variants of the coronavirus emerge, a leader must have foresight and be prepared in order to ensure the continuity of organizational success and to overcome current and future crises with the least damage. In addition, it is recommended that leaders who want to be successful in the new normal should be aware of the innovative, rapidly changing world and have ICT competence. The four-quadrant (see, Figure 1 and 2) proposed in this study (*technological leadership, transformational leadership, agile leadership, and human-centered management*) should be taught to educational leaders who struggle in the transition between old and new norms. Each quadrant is equally significant and required for educational institutions in adaptation to the new normal.

In times of change and the way towards the new normal, it is recommended to adopt a leadership style that prioritizes technology, transformation, agility, and human values. All these together have an important role in increasing efficiency and facilitating adaptation to changing conditions in every field. All in all, leaders must be inclusive as well as collaborative and rational in the solutions they produce in the new normal. It should be a basic tenet that the leader should ensure the mental, physical, and emotional resilience of the members of the organization as well as maintaining the success of the organization in times of crisis.

The crisis and changing norms force policy makers or managers to undertake a great responsibility. They need to evaluate imminent changes with the top-down and the bottom-up approaches. Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, said, “*there is no individual to be sacrificed in education*”. Thus, all changes due to the new normal, or various crises, should be put in force after careful planning under the leadership of new normal leaders so that they help disadvantaged regions as well as all parts of the community. According to Xiao (2021), the standard in education, whether new or old, should prioritize care, inclusion, and equity; and technology is merely a means to a goal, even though education would be incomprehensible without it.

References

- Aguilin, M. A., & Racelis, A. (2021). Virtuous Leadership for the New Normal: Identifying Leadership Virtues in a Philippine Leadership Program. *Philippine Academy of Management*, 4(1), 23-34.
- Akbari, T.T. & Pratamo, R.R. (2020). The new normal leadership: How technology alter communication style in contemporary organization. *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia*, 6(1), 1-12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v6i1.523>
- Almaiah M. A, Al-Khasawneh A & Althunibat, A. (2020). Exploring the critical challenges and factors influencing the e-learning system usage during covid-19 pandemic. *Educational Information Technology*, 1(20). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10219-y>
- Ancheta, R., & Ancheta, H. (2020). The new normal in education: A challenge to the private basic education institutions in the Philippines. *International Journal of Educational Management and Development Studies*, 1(1), 1-19.
- Ancho, I. V. (2020). Old Mind-set, Values and Ethics, and Stakeholder Partnership and Accountability: Inputs to School Leadership in the New Normal. *Jayapangus Press Books*, 17-32. <https://jayapanguspress.penerbit.org/index.php/JPB/article/view/463>

- Arastaman, G., Ozturk Fidan, I., & Fidan, T. (2018). Validity and reliability in qualitative research: A theoretical analysis. *YYU Journal of Education Faculty*, 15(1), 37-75.
- Basit, A., Khotimah, H., & Hartono, R. (2020). Madrasah principal's leadership in the face of an era new normal. *Educational Technology Perspective*, 5 (9), 1308- 1311.
- Bozkurt, A. (2020). Educational technology research patterns in the realm of the digital knowledge age. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 1, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.570>
- Bozkurt, A., & Sharma, R. C. (2020). Education in normal, new normal, and next normal: Observations from the past, insights from the present and projections for the future. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(2), i-x. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4362664>
- Buheji, M. & Sisk, C. W. (2020). *You and the New Normal: Jobs, Pandemics, Relationship, Climate Change, Success, Poverty, Leadership and Belief in the Emerging New World*. AuthorHouse.
- Bulut, M. A. (2021). Teknoloji Liderliği [Technology leadership]. In A. Gocen (Ed.). *Eğitimde Yeni Normal: Liderlik Yaklaşımları [The New Normal in Education: Leadership Approaches]* (pp. 217-230). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.
- Cahapay, M. B. (2020). Rethinking education in the new normal post-covid-19 era: A curriculum studies perspective. *Aquademia*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.29333/aquademia/8315>
- Carroll, N. & Conboy, K. (2020). Normalising the “new normal”: Changing tech-driven work practices under pandemic time pressure. *International Journal of Information Management*, 55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102186>
- Cebi, E. (2020). Covid-19 salgını döneminde “normal” ve “yeni normal” yaşam üzerine bir araştırma [A research on "normal" and "new normal" lives during the covid-19 epidemic period]. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 13(73), 582-593.
- Cemaloglu, N. (2020, November 28). Çevrim içi eğitimin yönetimi ve denetimi [Management and supervision of online education]. *Kamudan Haber*. <https://www.kamudanhaber.net/cevrim-ici-egitimin-yonetimi-ve-denetimi-makale,4058.html>
- Chacko, J. R. (2020). Leadership for the new normal. *Jurnal Refleksi Kepemimpinan*, <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/jrk/article/view/9891>
- Cirak-Kurt, S. (2019). Nitel veri analiz teknikleri [Qualitative data analysis techniques.] In Şen, S. and Yıldırım, I. (Eds.), *Eğitimde Araştırma Yöntemleri [Research Methods in Education]* (pp.439-462). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among the five approaches*. SAGE Publications
- Daniel, S. J. (2020). Education and the covid-19 pandemic. *Prospects*, 49, 91–96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09464-3>
- Eddles-Hirsch, K. (2015). Phenomenology and educational research. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 3(8), 251-260.
- Egeli, S. & Ozdemir, M. B. (2020). Koronavirüs (Covid-19) pandemi sürecinin KKTC eğitim sistemine yansımalarına genel bir bakış, [An overview of the reflections coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic process on the TRNC education system]. *21. Yüzyılda Eğitim ve Toplum Eğitim Bilimleri ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 9(27), 779-804.
- Ercetin, S. (2000). *Lider Sarmalında Vizyon [Vision in the Leadership Cycle]*. Nobel Akademi.
- Everly, G. S., Wu, A. W., Cumpsty-Fowler, C. J., Dang, D., & Potash, J. B. (2020). Leadership principles to decrease psychological casualties in COVID-19 and other disasters of uncertainty. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2020.395>
- Fleming, K. & Millar, C. (2019), Leadership capacity in an era of change: The new-normal leader, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 32(3), 310-319. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-05-2019-492>
- Flick, U. (Ed.). (2013). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*. SAGE.
- Francisco, C. D., & Nuqui, A. V. (2020). Emergence of a situational leadership during covid-19 pandemic called new normal leadership. *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research* 4(10), 15-19.

- Francisco, C. D., Sagcal, N. C., & Nuqui, A. V. (2020). Development and validation of new normal leadership competency scale: An offshoot of emerging type of situational leadership in the new normal education. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 4(11), 51-55.
- Gocen, A. (2021a). Preface. In A. Gocen (Ed.). *Eğitimde Yeni Normal: Liderlik Yaklaşımları [The New Normal in Education: Leadership Approaches]* (pp. V). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.
- Gocen, A. (2021b). Technology Leadership in Times of Crisis: Covid-19 and School Closures. In H. Gülerce, V. Nimehchisalem, V. Bozkurt, G. Dawes, & S. Rafik-Galea (Eds), *Society in the Covid-19 pandemic: Inequalities, Challenges, and Opportunities* (pp. 163-184). Pegem Akademi.
- Hamzah, N. H., Nasir, M. K. M., & Wahab, J. A. (2021). The Effects of Principals' Digital Leadership on Teachers' Digital Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia. *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research*, 8(2), 216-221.
- Harris, A. & Jones, M. (2020). Covid-19 school leadership in disruptive times. *School Leadership & Management*, 40, 243-247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2020.1811479>
- Harris, A. (2020). Covid-19 – school leadership in crisis? *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 3(4), 321-326. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPC-06-2020-0045>
- Jamaludin, S., Azmir, N. A., Ayob, A. F. M., & Zainal, N. (2020). Covid-19 exit strategy: Transitioning towards a new normal. *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*, 59, 165-170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amsu.2020.09.046>
- Karakas, M. (2020). The multi-sociological aspects of the covid-19 pandemic and the new normal. *Istanbul University Journal of Sociology*, 40(1), 541-573.
- Kilic, O. (2020). Tarihte Küresel Salgın Hastalıklar ve Toplum Hayatına Etkileri [Pandemics throughout history and their effects on society life]. In Seker, M., Ozer, A. & Korkut, C. (Eds.), *Küresel Salgının Anatomisi: İnsan ve Toplumun Geleceği [Anatomy of the Global Pandemic: In the Future of Human and Society]* (p.13-55). TDV Yayın Matbaacılık.
- Majluf, N., & Abarca, N. (2021). *Sensible Leadership: Human Centered, Insightful and Prudent*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003091844>
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-1.2.1089>
- Motala, S. & Menon, K. (2020). In search of the “new normal”: Reflections on teaching and learning during covid-19 in a South African University. *Southern African Review of Education* 26(1), 80-99.
- Netolicky, D. M. (2020). School leadership during a pandemic: Navigating tensions. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPC-05-2020-0017>
- Olcott, Jr. D. (2020a). In Search of Leadership: Practical Perspectives on Leading Distance Education Organisations. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(2), 48-57. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4293194>
- Olcott, Jr., D. (2020b). Going online: Life in the online fast lane or so the story goes. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(1), 180-184. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3881634>
- Ozer, M. & Suna, H. E. (2020). Covid-19 Salgını ve Eğitim [Covid-19 Pandemic and Education] In M. Seker, A. Ozer. & C. Korkut (Eds.), *Küresel Salgının Anatomisi: İnsan ve Toplumun Geleceği [Anatomy of the Global Pandemic: In the Future of Human and Society]* (p.171-192). TDV Yayın Matbaacılık.
- Ponterotto, J. G. (2006). Brief note on the origins, evolution, and meaning of the qualitative research concept thick description. *The qualitative report*, 11(3), 538-549.
- Sarı, E. & Sarı, B. (2020). Education management in time of crisis: the case of covid-19. *International Journal of leadership studies: theory and practice* 3(2), 49-63.
- Skervlavaj, M. (2020). New normal, new leaders? Time for resilience and post-heroic leadership. In Domadenik, P., Koman, M. & Redek, T. (Eds.) *The virus after-math: A socio-economic twist?* (pp.347-366). Časnik Finance.
- Stern, E. (2013). Preparing: the sixth task of crisis leadership, *Journal of Leadership Studies* 7-3 <https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.21298>

- Stogdill, R. M. (1974). Handbook of leadership: a survey of theory and research. *Free Press*.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220612.1975.10778712>
- Toran, M. (2021). Yeni normalde erken çocukluk eğitimi ve bakımı: Eleştirel bir değerlendirme [Early childhood education and care in the new normal: A critical evaluation]. *Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 68, 80-85.
- Turan, S. (2020). Technological leadership of school principals during the covid 19 period. *National Education*, 49(1), 175-199. <https://doi.org/10.37669/milliegitim.788133>
- UNESCO. (2020). Learning through radio and television in the time of COVID-19. <https://en.unesco.org/news/learning-through-radio-and-television-time-covid-19>
- Välakangas, L., & Lewin, A. (2020). The Lingering New Normal. *Management and Organization Review*, 16(3), 467-472. <https://doi.org/10.1017/mor.2020.32>
- Vernon, J. L. (2017). Understanding the butterfly effect. *American Scientist*, 105(3), 130.
- Winston, B.E. & Patterson, K. (2006). An integrative definition of leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*. 1(6), 6-66.
- Wittenberg-Cox, A. (2020, April 13). What do countries with the best coronavirus responses have in common? Women leaders. *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/avivahwittenbergcox/2020/04/13/what-do-countries-with-the-best-coronavirus-reponses-have-in-common-women-leaders/>
- Wooten, L. P. & James, E., (2008). Linking crisis management and leadership competencies: the role of human resource development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 10(3), 352-379.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422308316450>
- World Health Organization. (2021, November 10). *Coronavirus (covid-19) dashboard*.
<https://covid19.who.int/>
- Xiao, J. (2021). Decoding new normal in education for the post-COVID-19 world: Beyond the digital solution. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 16(1), 141-155.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4818369>
- Yıldırım, A., & Simsek, H. (2013). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri* [Qualitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences]. Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Yıldırım, K. (2020). Raising the quality in qualitative research. *Elementary Education Online*, 9(1), 79-92.
- Yıldırım, M. (2019). Örneklem ve Örnekleme Yöntemleri [Sampling and Sampling Methods]. In S. Şen, & İ. Yıldırım, (Eds.), *Eğitimde Araştırma Yöntemleri* [Research Methods in Education] (pp.61-92). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

About the Author(s)

- Seher YILDIZ ŞAL (Corresponding author); sehryldz@hotmail.com; Harran University, Turkey; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0489-0541>
- Ahmet GÖÇEN; ahmetgocen35@gmail.com; Harran University, Turkey; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9376-2084>

Suggested citation:

Yıldız Şal, S., & Göçen, A. (2022). Teachers' views on leadership in the new normal. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 17(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5979709>

