INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to better understand the instructional leadership styles adopted in Turkey and the USA. This is a quantitative study which used the "Instructional Leadership Inventory" for data collection. Study data was collected from a diverse sample of urban elementary school teachers: 157 in Turkey and 150 in the USA. The general statistical findings indicate that teachers tend to develop a positive perception towards instructional leadership styles adopted by school principals in Turkey and the USA. An analysis of study results in terms of the similarities and differences between the instructional leadership styles adopted in both countries indicated that American teachers scored higher than their Turkish counterparts in terms of subscales as well as the total score.
Key words: *instructional leadership, school improvement, school management, comparative study.*

Introduction

Instructional leadership is unique to the field of education; it differs from other types of leadership in that it is related to students, teachers, curricula and learning-teaching processes (Gümüşeli, 1996b). School principals have to lead instructional improvement, foster effective change efforts, direct the implementation of new standards, and focus on shaping strong and professional school cultures (Deal & Peterson, 1998). The critical role of "being instructional leader" played by the principals can tremendously affect teaching and student achievement (Hart and Bredeson, 1996; Hoy and Hoy, 2003).

According to Johnson and Johnson (1989), the duty of a principal is not to create new instructional methods and techniques, but to take a stand against the status quo and support new opinions and applications. Namely, the instructional leadership directs the debate beyond the traditional categories of instructional, managerial, and transformational practice to a new and more specific conception of creating accountable learning systems in schools. In many schools, evidence is mounting that leaders are currently engaging in new practices to help their schools systematically improve student learning (Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, & Thomas, 2007).

In this context, the essential role of a leader is to establish and maintain the school culture, since it is a powerful symbolic tool for influencing teaching and learning in schools (Hart & Bredeson, 1996; Şahin, 2011). Accordingly, instructional leaders need to legitimately challenge school cultures that preserve loose coupling by demonstrating the value of new practices in an effort to persuade teachers that their old practices are not worth of preserving. Therefore, the heart of the instructional leadership is the ability of leaders to change schools from cultures of only internal accountability to institutions that can meet the demands of external accountability as well (Halverson *et al.,* 2007).

In this cultural context, the principals should first become role models in their school environments. The teacher should ofcourse notice and interpret the principal's important actions (Fullan, 1992). Likewise, teachers should observe the principal for signs of how things are going with respect to experimentation, risk taking, courage, collaboration, and attitudes towards the necessity of change (Deal & Peterson, 2000).

Secondly, collaboration should take advantage of collective brainpower and assist in problem solving (Sergiovanni, 2005). Principals can foster a collaborative culture by applying certain strategies and realising the principles of openness and trust. These goals are at the very core of the relationships in a collaborative school (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996). Instructional leaders who act within the scope of cooperation, collegiality, expertise and teamwork are hallmarks of a successful improvement (Hoy & Hoy, 2003). This type of leader can tremendously enhance the belief that "collaborative practices should be promoted and become a natural part of the daily activities in a school, modelling flexible and diverse teaching methods" (Campo, 1993).

Finally, trust is an integral component of the relationship between the instructional leader and the teachers. Trust grows greater as continuous contact is ensured with another person (Donaldson, 2001). Without trust, efforts to build a collaborative culture and to ensure school improvement will be diminished, relationships will flounder and people may even be confined to cliques or special interest groups (Donaldson, 2001).

In this context, beliefs of school principals about instructional processes and applications are important. Hart and Bredeson (1996) listed the beliefs of instructional leaders as follows: (i) All students can learn. (ii) Teachers and principals can make a difference to the lives of students. (iii) A clear commonly-accepted mission and vision are important for student and school success. (iv) High expectations in academic quality should be upheld by everyone in the school. (v) The time allocated for learning should be maximized. (vi) Instructional programs should be improved over time. From this perspective, student performance and achievement are the products of the coordinated efforts of many individuals, such as, parents, teachers, staff and community members. The principals of these schools should also believe that everyone is a part of the solution (Wagner, 1999).

However, the situation can change in practice. Çelik (1999), Hoy and Hoy (2003) and Şişman (2004) argued that the main aim of schools is to teach, which is an aim accompanied by secondary activities and objectives. Gümüşeli (1996a) suggested that instead of leadership behaviours, the principals take more responsibility due to the bureaucratic and legal barriers, time limitation, different expectations related to the role of a principal, insufficiency of education, visions, determination, courage and insufficiency of source. As a matter of fact, Gökyer (2005) indicated that these factors affect instructional leadership behaviour of principals. Çelikten (2004) explained that the duties of principals frequently change in schools, since they usually divide their time between short-term requests and complaints; a continuous changes occur in their roles, such as instructive leadership. Kaykanacı (2003) emphasized that the duties of planning administrative work, supervising the conduction of lessons, evaluating achievement, dealing with attendance issues and participating in meetings become more important for principals (Gümüşeli, 1996b; Bayrak, 2001; Celep, 2004). According to Şişman (2004) and Can (2007), principals fulfil their duties in supporting teachers and have a limited time for the instructional processes.

Two elements which are extremely important, but often neglected in relation to schools, are the visibility of the principal and the informal visits s/he pays to classrooms. Many principals are busy with daily bureaucratic procedures (such as discipline procedures and paperwork) and telephone conversations. The duties of a principal require her/his presence in the classrooms, hallways, playgrounds and cafeterias, and not only in her/his office. A principal can never develop a real sense of the school until she immerses her/himself in the atmosphere beyond his/her office doors (Whitaker, 1997).

PROBLEMS
OF EDUCATION
IN THE 21ˢᵗ CENTURY
Volume 34, 2011

124

Basic Instructional Leader Behaviours

There are some basic and necessary instructional leader behaviours. For example, provision of resource and material support is one of the essential roles of a school principal (Hoy & Hoy, 2003). Staff improvement is another basic prerogative of the principal (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). Leaders should take risks to achieve innovation and should not hesitate to experiment with the aim of finding new and better ways of instruction, so as to provide opportunities for strengthening the support provided by school (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Blasé& Blasé, 2004). In addition, they should work closely with other educators to support higher achievement for all students and should be visible throughout the school building, in classrooms, in the halls and at curricular events, and should pay frequent short visits to classrooms (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Whitaker, 1997; Blasé & Blasé, 2004).

Three criteria determined by Alig-Meilcarek (2003) offer highly-correlated dimensions and create the basic framework of the present study. These criteria are: 1) developing and communicating shared goals, 2) promoting school-wide professional development, and 3) monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process. These criteria are briefly explained as follows:

Developing and communicating shared goals: Vision, mission and goals are the cornerstones of any school, and constitute the intangible power that motivates teachers and leaders (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Thus, one of the most important responsibilities of an instructional leader is to set a vision for an ideal school and a clear mission to be owned by all school staff. Another responsibility of the instructional leader is to set specific goals to guide staff efforts (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). The principal should enthusiastically and frequently share a clear vision aimed at the best possible instruction and continuous professional development of teachers (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Hoy & Hoy 2003; Palandra, 2010).

Promoting school-wide professional development: Teacher improvement and establishment of professional learning communities constitute a central element of school development (Kelley, Heneman, & Milanowski, 2002). Timperley (2006) argued that "a focus on improvement through professional learning is most effective, when it is achieved on the school site, since learning can then become an integral part of school operations" (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Palandra, 2010).

Instructional leaders should take responsibility for adult growth, learning and development, and should concentrate on the following five elements: peer collaboration, teacher leadership, access to resources, empowerment and constructivist learning. These elements will very likely create a viable professional learning community (Blasé & Blasé, 2004).

Monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process: In the past, instructional supervision was limited to traditional formal and informal classroom observations (Palandra, 2010). Marshall (2005) insisted that traditional principals evaluate an infinitesimal amount of instruction and that the isolated lessons they typically observe are not sufficient to show to what degree curriculum standards are being met. Therefore, supervision is a key part of the principal's role in ensuring that the planned changes are being effectively implemented in the classroom. By observing students in the classroom, both the teacher and the supervisor can determine the success level of the improvements (Palandra, 2010). Leaders create change and a culture that can lead the organization towards improved measurable outcomes (Smith, 2006). To observe and to be observed, to give and receive feedback about one's work in the classroom may serve as one of the most powerful tools for instructional improvement and professional recognition (Palandra, 2010).

Therefore, principals should pay informal and unannounced visits to classrooms, which can be deemed a positive attitude by the teachers. During such visits, principals should typically observe teacher-student interaction and provide positive feedback to both sides of interaction.

In such processes, the principals should talk openly and freely, encourage peer relationship among teachers, and embrace teachers' professional development (Blasé & Blasé, 2004).

Blasé and Blasé (2004) stated that successful instructional leaders usually rely on five basic strategies: Making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions. Instructional leaders have a dramatic effect on the reflective capacities of teachers. These behaviours include modelling, classroom observation, dialogue, making suggestions and praising.

In summary, a principal should directly focus on class activities and design/plan the issues related to class activities together with teachers and work as an effective consultant (Gümüşeli, 1996b; Whitaker, 1997; Palandra, 2010). Accordingly, instructional work and student achievement are the main indicators of the success of a principal (Whitaker, 1997; Çelik, 1999; Şişman, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2005). As a matter of fact, one of the frequently discussed issues in the relevant literature is whether instructional leadership directly affects academic success (For instance; Marcoulides & Heck, 1993; Alig-Mielcarek, 2003; Şişman, 2004; Vislocky, 2005).

Aims of the Research

The changes and transitions in American schools and the Turkish educational system have resulted in the differentiation of the mission and role of school principals. In this process, it was emphasized that the roles and responsibilities of principals, such as responsibility for education and achievement of students (Blasé, and Blasé, 2000; Şişman, 2004, Halverson e*t al.,* 2007). As such, educational quality and the successful implementation of reforms are mainly dependent on the school principals, who manage the tasks and educational activities carried out in schools. For this reason, this study asserts that a principal's instructional leadership style is a significant factor in all efforts to improve school education quality (Fullan, 1992). That is, instructional leaders are more likely to encourage teachers to work toward school goals, invest more effort in their job, and be more willing to exert considerable effort in implementing school reforms and developing student achievement. Therefore, principals are the key factor for the success of school education reforms and school outcomes.

Within this framework, studies on the work of school principals have been carried out in both countries, although the literature is quite limited in Turkey. Balcı (1993) undertook research in Turkey concerning school principals with a focus on their managerial work and pedagogy. Gümüşeli (1996), Şişman (2004), Celep (2004), Can (2007), and Aksoy and Işık (2008) investigated the behaviours of school principals in terms of instructional leadership features, such as, sharing school goals with teachers, visiting classrooms, leading teaching process, participating in teacher meetings, creating appropriate teaching and learning environments, and motivating and supporting teachers. Şahin (2011) also underlined the relationship between school culture and instructional leadership.

In the USA, various researchers (Bovis (1996), Alig-Mielcarek (2003), Blasé and Blasé (2004), Lima (2006), and Halverson e*t al.* (2007) examined various perspectives of instructional leadership. The present study mainly evaluated existence/absence of a relationship between instructional leadership on one hand, and student achievement (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2005), school culture and climate (Bovis, 1996; Blasé and Blasé 2000; Alig-Mielcarek, 2003), teacher motivation and staff improvement on the other hand (Smith 1996).

In another study on Turkish and American school management approaches, Silman and Şimşek (2007) examined schools in terms of school principal's skills in administrative structure, participation and communication as well as in-service training. The researchers suggested that, while the American schools were typical examples of the Anglo-Saxon administrative tradition, Turkish schools tended to continue the Napoleonic administrative tradition. Kurtoglu (2006) found that delegation of power was significantly and positively related to job satisfaction **in** the

USA; however, such a relationship was not found to be statistically significant **in Turkey**.

A review of the literature found no research, which examined and compared the position of school principals on instructional leadership in the context of Turkish and the USA schools.

Research Questions

This study was based on the following research questions: 1) How do the teachers in Turkey and the USA perceive the instructional leadership styles of their school principals? 2) What are the differences between the teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership regarding academic achievement in Turkey and the USA? 3) What are the differences between teachers' perceptions in Turkey and the USA about instructional leadership regarding Social Economic Statue (SES)? 4) What are the differences between the teachers' perceptions in Turkey and the USA on instructional leadership?

Methodology of Research

Design

This was a quantitative research, which used *Instructional Leadership Inventory* (please clarify) that involve demographic descriptors and items on instructional leadership. Teachers with minimum two-years of professional experience were asked to respond to the inventory.

Population and Sample

The research was conducted during the 2005 -2006 academic year in the Midwestern region of the USA and the Western region of Turkey. Data was collected from a diverse sample of urban primary school teachers from the 16 Curriculum Laboratory Schools (CLS) in Izmir and 29 urban schools in the USA. The sample was selected using a stratified sampling design of student achievement and social-economic level. This research instrument was administered to 157 teachers (6 schools) in İzmir, and 150 teachers (6 schools) in the USA. Table 1 reports the demographic information from the schools and teachers in Turkey and the USA. While the sample represented 31.3 of the population in Turkey, it represented 21.8 % of the population in the USA.

Table 1. Demographic information regarding the schools and teachers in Turkey and the USA.

	Turkey (n)		The USA (n)	
Student ach.	Low 99 (63 %)	High 58 (37 %)	Low 71 (47%)	High 79 (53 %)
Education level	BA/BS 143 (90 %)	MA/PhD 14 (10%)	BA/BS 81 (54%)	MA/PhD 69 (46%)
Social-economic. level	Low 27 (17 %)	Med. 64 (41%) High 66 (42%)	Low 45 (30%)	Med 53 (35%) High 52 (35%)

The SES of the schools was measured using average family income based on the state education district statistics in the USA. For the SES index in Turkey, parents` income levels (employment categories) were obtained from information gathered from school principals and

Semiha ŞAHIN. Instructional Leadership in Turkey and the United States: Teachers' Perspectives

PROBLEMS
OF EDUCATION
IN THE 21st CENTURY
Volume 34, 2011

127

inspectors. In Turkey, primary and middle schools are combined and every student attends a 5-year primary school, followed by a 3-year secondary school (the information from USA and Turkey is not comparable).

Research Instrument

In this study, *Instructional Leadership Inventory,* developed by Alig-Meilcarek (2003), was used for data collection. The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree). Three factors were identified from the results of the exploratory factor analysis of the original version of the inventory. All the 23 items loaded on the appropriate factors and items had factor loadings of 0.50 or higher. These consisted of the three dimensions of "promotes school-wide professional development" (7 items), "defines and communicates shared goals" (8 items) and "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" (8 items). Reliability of the total scale items was found to be 0.94. Reliability of each factor ranged between 0.94 and 0.89.

Translate and retranslate and bilingual design were conducted, to evaluate the Turkish version of *The Instructional Leadership Inventory*. First, the researcher and two Turkish graduate students translated the questionnaire into Turkish from English, then a panel of experts revised each item until it correlated as closely as possible with the English version; more specifically, the content validity was checked by three colleagues from. After this process, two more graduate students translated the Turkish version back into English. This validation process was carried out in order to determine whether the items were relevant, clear and understandable (Savaşır, 1994).

Secondly, a bilingual design was used to compare the Turkish and English questionnaires. 23 bilingual Turkish teachers completed versions at the same questionnaire that were then analysed to check the test-retest correlation of the English and Turkish version of the instrument (r= 0.83). Both versions of the questionnaire were administered to Turkish teachers with a waiting period of two weeks. There was a fairly high agreement between the results from English and Turkish versions for this sample. Table 2 shows the results of the exploratory factor analysis of the Turkish version of the inventory.

Table 2. The factor loadings of the Turkish version, the results of the Eigen value and Alpha coefficient.

	Item number	Factor loadings	Eigen Value	Alpha coefficient
Promotes professional development	7	0.346-0.779	11.45	0.87
Defines and communicates shared goals	8	0.330-0.602	1.18	0.88
Monitors and provides feedback	8	0.322-0.827	1.07	0.81

Factor loadings of the Turkish version ranged from 0.32 to 0.82. The internal consistency coefficients of the inventory for the total of the items were 0.95. As seen, the Turkish version corresponds to the original inventory (Büyüköztürk, 2009).

In addition, Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO): the Turkish 916, the USA 924 and Barlett Test: the Turkish 2219.342, df: 253 and *p*: 0.000; the USA 2024,115, df: 253, *p: 0.000,* which were calculated to determine the sampling consistency of the English and Turkish versions of the scale were found to be significant (Büyüköztürk, 2007).

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered after obtaining the approval of the Human Research Protection Program. After this, a letter was sent to the principal of each school in each country with all documentation asking for permission to conduct the proposed study. Teachers in the USA examined the questionnaires before the school board meetings in the USA. Two assistants administered the questionnaires, meeting teachers personally to assure accurate and prompt data collection in Turkey. Participation in this study was voluntary. Questionnaire was administered in a manner to protect individual confidentiality. The questionnaires were administered to 154 teachers (72%) from a total of 212 teachers in the USA and 150 questionnaires (97%) were returned to the researcher. The questionnaire was administered to 198 teachers (84%) from a total of 236 teachers in Turkey and 165 questionnaires (83%) were returned to the researcher. Of the questionnaires returned, 157 were useable for the study (79%) due to incomplete filling of items.

Analysis Procedure

The questionnaire data were analysed using an SPSS program. The arithmetic means and *standard deviation* were calculated, analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) and t-test were used to draw inferences about differences. For all statistical tests, the level of significance was set at $p<0.05$.

Results of Research

The results of this study are drawn from the questionnaire data. The results section begins with a description of the participants' perceptions of instructional leadership. It then describes differences between these perceptions of instructional leadership in relation to academic achievement, education level of the participants and SES. Finally, the section highlights similarities and differences in teachers from Turkey and the USA. Table 3 reports results on descriptive statistics of the instructional leadership in Turkey and the USA.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of instructional leadership in Turkey and the USA.

	Turkey (n): 157		USA (n): 150	
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Promotes professional development	3.64	0.65	3.99	0.58
Defines and communicates shared goals	3.57	0.65	3.99	0.63
Monitors and provides feedback	3.39	0.66	3.53	0.79
Total scores	3.53	0.63	3.83	0.61

In Table 3, the instructional leadership perception scores in 3.40-4.19 ranges were deemed positive and scores in 2.60-3.39 ranges were considered moderate. Table 1 shows that teacher perceptions were in 3.39-3.64 range in Turkey and 3.53- 3.99 range in the USA. The general statistical findings of the study indicated that both Turkish and American teachers had positive perceptions about the instructional leadership style adopted by the principals of the schools in which they worked. However, the strategies of "monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process" were perceived by Turkish teachers as adopted by their principals at a moderate level. Table 4 reports the results of differences among variables regarding academic achievement.

Table 4. T-test results of instructional leadership ascribed by teachers on academic achievement.

Academic Achievement	Turkey				USA			
	M	SD	t	p	M	SD	t	p
Promotes professional development	3.43 3.77	0.64 0.63	3.22	0.002	3.83 4.18	0.62 0.47	3.90	0.000
Defines and communicates shared goals	3.37 3.69	0.62 0.64	3.00	0.003	3.80 4.21	0.67 0.50	4.22	0.000
Monitors and provides feedback	3.09 3.56	0.65 0.61	4.41	0.000	3.29 3.79	0.86 0.62	4.07	0.000
Total scores	3,29 3,67	0.61 0.60	0.72	0.000	3.63 4.06	0.66 0.46	4.49	0.000

Turkey (n): High (58)   Low (99)   the USA (n): High (79)   Low (71)

Table 4 shows that the opinions of Turkish teachers significantly differed in the following items: the principal "promotes school-wide professional development" t (-3.22), "defines and communicates shared goals" t (3.02) and "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" t (4.41). In addition, the total scores of Turkish teachers t (-3.72) differed significantly [table values: 1.97; df: 155].

Differences in the opinions of the American teachers in terms of academic achievement were found to be statistically significant in relation to the statements; "promotes school-wide professional development" t (-3.90), "defines and communicates shared goals" t (-4.22), "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" t (-4.07). Moreover, total scores t (-4.49) of the American teachers differed significantly [table values: 1.97, df: 148]. Mean values indicated that high-achieving schools scored higher than the low-achieving schools according to these subscales and total scores from both countries. Table 5 lists the results concerning different variables regarding teaching.

Table 5. T- test results of instructional leadership ascribed by teachers on education level.

Education Level	Turkey				USA			
	M	SD	t	p	M	SD	t	p
Promotes professional development	3.61 4.01	0.66 0.32	2.20	0.029	3.98 4.01	0.55 0.61	0.37	0.709
Defines and communicates shared goals	3.53 3.99	0.66 0.36	2.51	0.013	3.94 4.05	0.65 0.61	1.05	0.295
Monitors and provides feedback	3.33 4.02	0.66 0.26	3.87	0.000	3.59 3.46	0.76 0.83	0.99	0.323
Total scores	3.48 4.00	0.64 0.21	3.01	0.003	3.83 3.83	0.60 0.63	0.03	0.974

Turkey (n): BA/BS (143)   MA/PhD (n= 14)   the USA (n): BA/BS (81)   MA/PhD (69)

Table 5 shows that the opinions of Turkish teachers significantly differed in the following items: "promotes school-wide professional development" t (-2.20), "defines and communicates shared goals" t (2.51), and "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" t (3.87). In addition, total scores of Turkish teachers t (-3.01) differed significantly [table values: 1.97; df: 155]. Mean values indicated that teachers holding MA/Ph.D degrees in education had higher scores than those who had B.A. and B.Sc degrees in all subscales and the total scores.

There were no differences between the opinions of the American teachers in any of the following subscales or in total scores relating to their education levels; **"promotes school-wide professional development"** t (-0.37), "defines and communicates shared goals" t (-1.05), "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" t (0.99) and total scores t (-0.03) [table values: 1.97, df: 148]. Table 6 shows the results concerning differences in variables related to SES.

Table 6. One-way variance analysis result of instructional leadership as SES ascribed by Turkish and American teachers.

	Turkey				USA			
SES	**M**	**SD**	**f**	**p**	**M**	**SD**	**f**	**p**
Promotes professional development	3.07	0.68	33.02	0.000	4.03	0.62	14.09	0.000
	4.03	0.47			3.65	0.58		
	3.50	0.55			3.50	0.61		
Defines and communicates shared goals	2.99	0.71	35.74	0.000	4.01	0.60	22.14	0.000
	3.98	0.48			3.76	0.52		
	3.42	0.52			3.73	0.60		
Monitors and provides feedback	2.86	0.75	39.04	0.000	3.84	0.60	17.42	0.000
	3.83	0.47			3.83	0.45		
	3.17	0.51			3.55	0.54		
Total scores	2.97	0.69	40.62	0.000	4.04	0.52	21.43	0.000
	3.94	0.44			3.78	0.39		
	3.36	0.49			3.76	0.43		

Turkey (n): low (27) med. (64) high (66)   the USA (n): low (45)   med. (53)   high (52)

Table 6 shows that there were statistically significant differences in the instructional leadership styles adopted by both Turkish principals (F=3.06, df=2/154) and the American principals (F=3.06, df=2/147).

In Turkish schools, as the Scheffée Multiple Comparison Analysis results demonstrated, differences by SES were found to be statistically significant (P<0.05). Scores from the items of "Promotes school-wide professional development", "defines and communicates shared goals", "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" as well as the total score were perceived to be more significant by medium SES schools than by the low and high SES schools. On the other hand, high SES schools had higher scores than low SES schools in terms of the items "promotes school-wide professional development", "defines and communicates shared goals", "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" as well as the total score.

In the USA, the items "promotes school-wide professional development", "defines and communicates shared goals", "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" as well as the total score were perceived to be more significant in low SES schools than high ones. The item "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process" was perceived to be more significant in low SES schools than medium ones. Table 7 shows the results of the differences and similarities between schools in Turkey and the USA.

Table 7. T- test analysis result of instructional leadership ascribed by Turkish and American teachers.

	Countries	M	SD	t	p
Promotes professional development	Turkey	3.64	0.65	4.95	0.000
	USA	3.99	0.58		
Defines and communicates shared goals	Turkey	3.57	0.65	5.71	0.000
	USA	3.99	0.63		
Monitors and provides feedback	Turkey	3.39	0.66	1.63	0.102
	USA	3.53	0.79		
Total scores	Turkey	3.53	0.63	4.22	0.000
	USA	3.83	0.61		

df=305   table values=1.96   n: Turkey=157   USA=150

Table 7 indicates that there were statistically significant differences in terms of the instructional leadership styles adopted by principals in Turkey and the USA in two subscales and total scores. The mean values indicated that the American schools scored higher than the Turkish schools in items of "promotes school-wide professional development" t (-4.95) and "defines and communicates shared goals" t (-5.71) as well as in total scores t (4.22). However, there were no statistically significant differences between the two countries in the results of the item "monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process".

Discussion

School principals' behaviour and applications of instructional leadership are assessed positively in the cultural context of both countries. It is clear that there are concerns about the understanding and application of development efforts in Curriculum Laboratory School. This result from the fact that teachers and principals working with extremely traditional routines were suddenly faced with various innovations in the development process and it was found that insufficient in-service training caused problems in this process (Dönmez, 2000; Şahin, 2006). However, in spite of these problems and concerns, the expectation was that these schools would create a difference as pioneering schools. As a matter of fact, Şahin (2004) found that principals were assessed more positively in CLS in comparison with formal schools. In this respect, study results cannot be generalised to all Turkish schools and the results should be evaluated within the scope of CLS.

Accordingly, the findings of the present study comply with several different aspects of the findings recorded in more quantitative studies in Turkey by Tanrıöğen (2000), Aksoy and Işık (2008). Gümüşeli (1996) revealed that school principals included in his study adequately addressed to the concerns such as "coordinating curriculum", "setting goals and sharing these goals with subordinates" and "teacher motivation".

However, some results of the present study conflicts with those of previous studies: for example, Can (2007) and Aksoy and Işık (2008) revealed that the principals they interviewed did not pay visits to the classrooms, did not follow and monitor teachers' work and implementations adequately, and did not spend enough time in teaching-related activities, such as visiting classrooms or participating in teacher meetings. According to Balcı (1993), the main duty of a principal was perceived to be fulfilment of managerial obligations. Celep (2004) and Şişman (2004) stated that the principals in their studies did not sufficiently support teachers.

In the USA, DuPont (2009) reported that school principals were assessed as being good at defining and conveying objectives, but as being at a medium level in the providing feedback and supervision dimensions. This finding is consistent with the present study. In addition, the results of the quantitative research carried out by Brown (1998) and Wagner (1999) in the USA are consistent with the results of the present study. Also, some qualitative research has provided

similar results. For example, Lima (2006) revealed that instructional leaders ensured a friendly, dedicated and supportive school climate and that the teachers participating in the study reported that they were willing to learn more to support their students' academic progress. According to Bovis (1996) and Alig-Mielcarek (2003); instructional leadership had greater influence on teachers' motivation to "collaboratively develop and implement a school reform program". In the schools which participated in these studies, there were cooperative school communities and higher student achievement. Blasé and Blasé (2004) stated that an instructional leader exercised a dramatic influence on teachers' reflective capacities.

One of the important findings of this study is the positive effect of instructional leadership on student achievement in both countries. Thus, this study once more verified existing research on the positive effect of instructional leadership on student achievement (Marcoulides and Heck, 1993; Alig-Mielcarek, 2003; Şişman, 2004, 1997; Vislocky, 2005; Clark, 2009).

As can be concluded from the information given above, principals are the cornerstones of student achievement (Whitaker, 1997; Sergiovanni, 2005). Thus, the principals' administrative activities have an important impact on student achievement, these include the following items; "to provide personal feedback on teacher and student effort", "to make teacher assessments to ensure improvement of instructional practice", "to plan professional in-service development together with teachers", "to monitor classroom practices to ensure compliance with the school curriculum", "to provide useful professional materials and resources for teachers", "to encourage teachers to understand data analysis about students' academic progress", "to inform the faculty about the school's academic goals" and "to set achievable standards for all students". Enhancing student achievement requires the principal to adopt effective leadership behaviours and an instructional leadership style.

According to the results of the present research, Turkish teachers with graduate degrees evaluate their principals' instructional leadership styles more positively. However, the opinions of American teachers did not change according to their level of education. This can be explained by the qualities of assignment criteria in American school and in-service training. Bovis (1996) and Brown (1998) showed that the level of American teachers' education did not change their ideas about their principals' instructional leadership styles. However, Bovis (1996) found that holders of a B.A. degree perceived a higher level of instructional leadership than those with masters and Ph.D. degrees.

One of the other important findings of the study is that SES is an effective determinant in school efficiency and success. According to popular wisdom and evaluating schools in respect to some other criteria, schools that have a high level of SES can be assessed more positively. As a matter of fact, instructional leadership in Turkey was assessed more positively in the schools having a high and medium level of SES. According to some research (for example, Springer 1996 and O' Donnell 2005), instructional leadership is evaluated more positively in high SES schools. As a matter of fact, according to Kuitunen (2004), there was a strong democratic leadership and both principals and teachers were goal-oriented, competent, motivated and committed to their work in high-quality Turkish schools, furthermore, students, teachers and the principal had an open relationship. In addition, Kannapel, Taylor and Hibpshman (2005) suggested that high-performing and high-poverty schools had devoted staff that cared deeply about the community and made great efforts to establish a culture of high expectations, high performance, collaboration and mutual respect. On the other hand, Stroud (1989), Alig-Mielcarek (2003) and Şişman (2004) stated that concerning the instructional leadership, there was no difference among schools as SES.

However, the results of this study showed a great difference among American schools as well as medium level and high level Turkish schools. The principals of the medium SES schools in Turkey and low and medium SES schools in the USA exhibited greater instructional leadership characteristics. Similarly, Townsend (2010) determined that student achievement in

the schools having low and medium level SES was higher in comparison to schools with high SES.

The present study revealed that the principals of the low and medium SES schools exerted more effort to cope with the limitations resulting from their schools' status. As long as they have a leader who undertakes adequate responsibility for instructional processes, poor and moderately poor schools can be more successful. This finding shows that schools need something beyond economic elements (wealth-poverty), such as sharing the vision and mission, giving feedback and promoting teacher development, and supporting teachers and their efforts. Finally, instructional leaders in high-poverty schools should have the willingness and determination to collaborate with teachers and other school leaders so as to identify their strengths and weaknesses, to create and realise a shared vision and to be positive and approachable. In these circumstances, it can be possible that the disadvantages of poverty can be overcome by demonstrating some skills and competencies. In fact, Wagner (1999) observed that high-poverty school principals should be continuous learners and reflect their learning outcomes on their work as they seek ways to improve educational experience of the students.

Except for the item "monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process", American schools scored higher than Turkish schools in terms of all subscales as well as the total scores. In keeping with this finding, Silman and Şimşek (2007) commented that the American schools were more effective when compared to Turkish schools due to the embedded decentralized structure, participatory understanding approach, principals with effective communication strategies and various available in-service training options. Thus, American schools may have higher levels of accountability and professional development requirements (Halverson *et al.* 2007; Borman, Hewes, Overman and Brown, 2003). However, it is important to emphasize that the socio-economic circumstances of the schools in Turkey and America are different and these schools are not equal in many ways, in-service training, physical conditions of the schools, financing, parent concern and the number of students (Balkar, 2009; Silman and Şimşek 2008; Kavak, Ekinci and Gökçe 1997).

Principals' behaviours and applications did not show difference in terms of cultures of two countries in the following dimension: Monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process. When compared to other dimensions, this one showed a lower average score. In addition, DuPont (2009) also found a similar result in his (her) research in the USA. This result is not surprising for Turkey. It can also be said that this result is even more positive according to some studies (Dağlı, 2000; Taş, 2003).

Conclusions

The principals in the USA have more involvement in the teaching and learning processes and are more positive in terms of professional development and sharing vision and objectives in comparison to principals of Turkish schools. Despite the differences between the results from the two countries, it is clear that there is a need for principals in Turkey and the USA to fulfil their responsibilities of supervision and provide feedback and to ensure that they are more visible and accessible to their staff.

This research has shown that instructional leadership has a positive impact on school and classroom culture and consequently a positive effect on student achievement, despite the difference between the cultures. Study results indicated that if principals adopted instructional processes and applications in the school, the success of those schools with lower economic and social conditions could be better than other schools. Therefore, it is necessary for leadership training programs to be organised, which, in turn, will encourage the development of instructional leadership behaviours of future principals, especially in Turkey.

Since there has been a limited number of comparative studies on school leadership different cultures and an equally limited number of studies carried out in Turkey especially those using qualitative methods there is a need for further work on this issue. Thus, different concepts of instructional leadership in Turkey should be examined using different methods. Furthermore, additional comparative studies should be carried out between countries and between developed and developing countries. It would be useful to use qualitative research method along with quantitative methods in these studies.

Notes:

1) The manuscript was presented at the International Conference on Educational Sciences 2008 (ICES'08-21-24 June), Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, North Cyprus.
2) In Turkey this study was carried out in CLS are pilot schools that were leading the educational development process-in 1994-2005.
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