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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER LEADERSHIP STYLES AND STUDENTS' PERCEIVED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN EFL CLASSES
MA thesis

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ABSTRACT

One of the main concerns for both beginning and active teachers is undoubtedly how to approach their students and build a positive environment for learning. Little attention has previously been paid to how a teacher's leadership style affects the learning environment, especially in a foreign language classroom. However, it has been acknowledged that teacher leadership influences the psychological learning environment and the social climate of a classroom. The aim of this MA thesis is to identify the relationship between teacher leadership styles and the classroom environment in the EFL classes in the school chosen for the case study.

The thesis consists of an introduction, two main chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and one appendix. In chapter one, the essence of teacher leadership, its styles and the classroom environment are discussed. In addition, an overview of previous studies on these topics is given. The second chapter provides a description of the methodology which includes semi-structured interviews with teachers and two separate surveys, one carried out among teachers and the other among students. Next, the data collected on teacher leadership styles and students' perceived classroom environment is analyzed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the results.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL - English as a foreign language

MLQ - Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

VLS - Vannsimpco Leadership Survey

WIHIC - What Is Happening In This Class?

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INTRODUCTION

Classroom management, ensuring discipline, preventing student brinkmanship and creating a positive learning environment are central parts of the teaching process in general. Teacher trainees, who often have minimal experience in working in educational environments, are likely to be especially vulnerable to backlashes from failing to successfully manage a classroom (Macias 2018: 154). Their wish and ability to teach could be affected by student misconduct as they might feel unrecognized as figures of authority in class, which, in turn, results in further frustration and loss of self-esteem (Macias 2018: 160).

Considering the importance of classroom management for working teachers, it is interesting that systematic research on the topic did not begin until the 1950s (Brophy 2006: 23). In the previous decades, research took place in settings other than classrooms and addressed topics not directly related to classroom management but instead, management in general (Brophy 2006: 23). Brophy himself (1996: 5) has defined classroom management as "actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction", including physical environment, rule establishment and maintaining attention to lessons.

Brophy (2006) additionally highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships with students in successful classroom management. Positive interpersonal relationships include teachers' individual approaches to students such as discussing the students' values with them, helping them think for themselves, preventing them from being led into trouble by their companions, and making mutual agreements. The basis for negative relationships is anger, frustration and punishments

(Brophy 2006). Marzano (2003, as cited in Macias 2018: 154) solely focuses on the psychological and behavioral aspects when defining classroom management, leaving aside the relevance of the physical environment. Scholars who have written on this topic seem to agree that effective classroom management influences classroom climate and, consequently, student learning (Cheng 1994a). As Macias (2018: 154) concludes in his review of studies on classroom management, most conceptions of classroom management focus on constructing a suitable learning environment in the classroom for teaching and learning.

Building a positive environment is a key objective of classroom management. Bucholz and Scheffler (2009: 1) claim that a warm classroom environment can lead to increased academic achievement and a sense of pride and belonging in the school. The same idea can also be seen in Estonian national curricula. Both the Secondary (§7) and Middle School (§6) National Curricula in Estonia have a whole paragraph dedicated to the topic of learning environment, describing it as a combination of mental, social and physical environments where students develop and learn. Although conducted among middle school teachers already in 2007-2008, the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) found that in Estonia, teachers see students as lacking input for creating a positive learning environment which eventually results in poor teacher self-efficacy (Ruus 2009: 78-79). The report implied that classroom discipline seems to be established by teachers and support from students appears to be insufficient (Ruus 2009: 79). This leads to the understanding that teachers themselves have to contribute more to designing such an environment in the classroom.

Since the end of the 1990s, teachers have been encouraged to take responsibility for improving teaching and learning more as leaders rather than purely

instructors (Day and Harris 2003, as cited in Kale and Özdelen 2014: 228). This indicates that the essence of teaching is no longer seen as merely transmitting knowledge and skills to students, but a teacher has a much more diverse role. Greenier and Whitehead (2016: 80) claim that, in addition to transmitting information, the ability to motivate and lead the class cannot be discarded when aiming for classroom success. They further state that regardless of the perfection of a lesson plan or the overall dedication of the teachers, without projecting leadership qualities they will not get the most out of students (Greenier and Whitehead 2016: 80). Leaders in all organizations are expected to create an environment where their team feels comfortable and is able to produce the best results. The same notion can be transferred to an educational setting and more precisely to a classroom because as Cheng (1994b: 54) emphasizes, a classroom of students and a teacher is in itself a small organization. This suggests that leadership and the classroom environment could be linked.

Leadership is an intriguing topic in many fields of life and has different connotations depending on the context. The author's personal experience suggests that leadership in the military is likely to be considered more rigid and hierarchical than in child-centered environments, such as schools. The approach to leadership and its impact on students' behavior, achievement and the overall learning environment are likely aspects for a future teacher to ponder upon. The main personal motivation for writing this thesis is to understand whether different teacher leadership styles could be related to the classroom environment, so when the author once becomes a teacher, he knows which leadership characteristics to pursue to be able to build a positive environment for learning.

Leaders can be very different in their approach and conduct, as we most likely all know, either from personal experience or by looking at the current and past political figures and heads of state. Each leader employs a style of leadership and this is also the case with teachers. Unfortunately, not many studies can be found on how classroom environment is related to leadership style and the author could not identify any such research on foreign language classes in Estonian schools at the time of writing. In addition to the author's personal motivation, the current thesis hopes to make teachers aware of which leadership styles to avoid and which to encourage when building a positive classroom environment, while keeping in mind the specificities of language studies. With the help of this information, teachers would hopefully be able to adjust their style accordingly.

The current thesis aims to analyze relations between teacher leadership styles and the perceived classroom environment in English language classes on the example of an Estonian secondary school. The analysis is based on three separate data collection methods, starting with a survey about teacher leadership styles among secondary school level English teachers in Harjumaa county. It is followed by a case study where semi-structured interviews were carried out among three teachers of secondary school level English classes, as well as a survey about the classroom environment among students of the same teachers.

Lim and Fraser (2018) note that not much research has been done on learning environments in English language studies. The same could be said about leadership in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) (McGee et al. 2015). In addition to the main motivation of writing this thesis, the low number of previous

studies on the topic is another factor that is taken into account. This thesis is based on a case study and aims to answer the following research questions:

- According to the teachers' self-description, which teacher leadership styles are predominant among English language teachers in the secondary school level in the school studied?

- How do students perceive their classroom environment in English language classes?

- What is the relationship between teacher leadership styles and students' perception of the classroom environment in secondary school level English language classes?

The current thesis is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter of the thesis gives an overview of the theoretical background and research in the field of teacher leadership and classroom environment. The second chapter focuses on the empirical study, providing information on the participants, data collection and methodology. The thesis ends with an overview of the main findings, suggestions for further research and discussion.

1 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP STYLES AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, leadership can have different connotations depending on the context. The role of a classroom leader has changed over time, just as learning theories have evolved throughout many decades. To better understand the meaning of leadership in an educational environment, the term 'teacher leadership' needs to be explained. However, it is equally intriguing to identify the different ways a teacher can approach the teaching process.

A teacher can affect multiple factors in a classroom, including the overall learning environment. A positive learning environment is essential for creating a basis for the main purpose of educational organizations - students' success in acquiring new knowledge and skills. The learning environment might sound like a vague term but its importance came to scholarly attention more than 40 years ago (Aldridge et al. 1999: 48) and research on the topic has focused on both actual and preferred learning environments (Byrne et al. 1986: 10).

1.1 What is teacher leadership and how is it categorized?

Cheng (1994a) argues that classroom management is shaped by teacher leadership, although he does not define it. The term 'teacher leadership' is anything but clear and is addressed in various ways in academic literature. Many researchers construe teacher leadership as activities beyond the classroom setting. York-Barr and Duke (2004) state that teacher leadership includes different conceptions of leadership but is more often built on trust and collaboration, rather than establishing one's

authority over colleagues and students. It is believed that teacher leadership is about teachers looking for additional challenges outside the classroom, such as taking part in the school's decision-making process, policy-making, supporting other teachers, and seeking to fulfill other management-related roles in the organization (Cosenza 2015; Crowther 1997; Thornton 2010; Muijs & Harris 2007; Bangs & MacBeath 2012). However, teacher leadership can also be limited to the classroom environment. Bangs and MacBeath (2012) even claim that teacher leadership is most often related to classroom management and pedagogy, that is, teachers' activities and interactions with students inside the classroom. This notion is supported by Erdel and Takkaç:

> Eventually, classroom leadership research, in a broad sense, is concerned with teacher-student relationships largely taking place in classroom setting and more specifically with interactional and interpersonal teacher actions that have effects on the students in cognitive, affective and social aspects (Erdel & Takkaç 2020: 468).

Therefore, to narrow down the concept of teacher leadership into a classroom setting, classroom leadership might be considered a more precise term. The social and cognitive aspects that Erdel and Takkaç refer to likely involve social behavior and students' attitudes towards learning which are affected by teacher leadership (Cheng 1994b: 56). Social behavior can be seen as a situation where two or more people influence each other in large structures, including a classroom (Homans 1958: 597). A teacher leader is also expected to be pedagogically competent, which includes awareness of the theory of learning and other practices in the classroom (Sherrill 1999). In this regard, teacher leadership which deals with teacher-student relations and affects both the social climate in the classroom and student behavior, and eventually their performance, is closely tied to classroom management in general.

Teacher leadership depends on the teacher's conduct in class, the way they choose to relate with their students and exercise their power. It is claimed that each teacher is able to choose the specific teacher leadership style they intend to apply in the classroom (Krull 2018: 495) since it is not a trait but rather a process (Fish 2016: 13). This means that leadership style is not rigidly tied to a teacher's personality. The claim is also supported by the tests carried out by Lewin et al. (1939; discussed below) where teachers applied certain leadership styles in the classroom that were assigned to them. Nevertheless, it is not clear to what extent a leadership style can be acquired. It is claimed that teachers should go through leadership training and although some characteristics of a leader - such as charisma - are congenital personality traits, leadership styles can generally be developed (Sherrill 1999; Isaac 2011).

Krull further emphasizes that one leadership style in an ideal form is most likely not possible and a symbiosis of two or more is necessary (Krull 2018: 495). When discussing teacher leadership styles, Krull refers to the approach by Lewin et al. (1939). Similarly to the concept of teacher leadership, the notion of its styles does not have a generally accepted definition, although a leadership style seems to be viewed across various disciplines as a manner of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Devine and Alger 2011). Different researchers have approached the matter in various ways, focusing on describing the leadership styles, rather than providing a conclusive definition.

One of the foundational and somewhat exceptional studies was conducted by Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939), where teachers experimented with different leadership styles in classes of 10-year-old male students. An experiment of this kind

would likely be considered unethical today because teachers were assigned a leadership style to approach the class, disregarding the well-being of students and their learning outcomes. The study discussed the following teacher leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic, and *laissez-faire* (Lewin et al. 1939). An authoritarian teacher determines all class policies, activities, techniques, and work groups, whereas a *laissez-faire* teacher provides help when students ask for it but otherwise does not participate and provides complete freedom in developing class policies. A democratic teacher encourages a democratic discussion on policies, provides alternative techniques and activities, and gives freedom in choosing work partners (Lewin et al. 1939: 273).

The authors concluded that students' aggression towards their peers was eight times more frequent under an authoritarian than a democratic leader. They also found that 19 out of the 20 boys liked the democratic leader better than the authoritarian and seven out of ten preferred a *laissez-faire* leader to an authoritarian one (Lewin et al. 1939: 298-299). Therefore, the choice of leadership style can affect students' social behavior as well as their motivation to learn under the guidance of a teacher, considering the obvious preferences shown by the students.

The authoritative style was added to that list by Diana Baumrind in 1987, noting that it should replace the democratic style to better reflect the actual situation in schools because democracy in its traditional meaning is not implemented in the classroom. This means that the teacher is by nature similar to a democratic leader but does not base the classroom management on the majority's wishes. Instead, an authoritative teacher establishes classroom rules after careful consideration, ensuring

that all students understand the necessity of accepting them (Krull 2018: 494). A shortcoming of Lewin et. al's study is that it was conducted more than 80 years ago, thus the approaches to the socio-psychological aspects of teaching, use of power and teacher-student relationships in class, have likely changed in time.

Rather than diversifying the spectrum of leadership styles, contrasting concepts emerged during the next few decades. Despite the early study of Lewin and his colleagues, systematic research on the topic of teacher leadership styles and classroom climate did not start until the middle of the 20th century. These studies were often based on the contrast between reward/praise *vs* punishment/blame when influencing student behavior. These contrasting apprehensions were defined in various ways: autocratic *vs* democratic, demanding *vs* permissive, dominative *vs* integrative, teacher-centered *vs* learner-centered, and direct *vs* indirect (Brophy 2006: 23-24). Each side of the scale was somewhat similar in nature to the authoritarian or democratic style described by Lewin et al. in 1939.

A significant contributor to leadership theories in the following decades was Bernard Bass who talked about transformational and transactional leadership and developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) together with Bruce Avolio (Bass et al. 1999; Isaac 2011; Ratican 2020). Interestingly, transactional and transformational leadership styles, together with the *laissez-faire*, have had the most recognition in recent studies of teacher leadership. Contemporary approach to teacher leadership styles is somewhat more diverse but also includes the transformational, transactional and *laissez-faire* leadership styles described above. Francisco (2020) points out seven styles in his doctoral dissertation - autocratic, transactional,

transformational, democratic, *laissez-faire* and situational leadership - consistent with Vann et al. (2014) who designed a leadership identification survey based on the same styles.

The author of the MA thesis decided to focus on the most contemporary approach to teacher leadership styles and use the classification provided in that study, where transformational leadership is most associated with teachers' ability to motivate and inspire students, instilling loyalty and admiration in them (Erdel & Takkaç 2020; Zagorsek, et al. 2009; Vann et al. 2014). Transactional leadership is more centered on reward *vs* punishment and *quid-pro-quo* approaches to achieve the completion of tasks (Zagorsek, et al. 2009; Vann et al. 2014). Transactional leadership is closely related to autocratic leadership, in which leaders concentrate all decision-making on themselves, apply micro-management and set a strict organizational hierarchy (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020). Democratic leadership, according to Vann et al. (2014) and Francisco (2020), portrays shared management between teachers and students, where the former seek advice and input from the latter, thus challenging the organizational hierarchy.

The concept of *laissez-faire* leadership has seen little modifications over time. Francisco (2020) sees it as a passive-avoidance style and Vann et al. (2014) add that such leaders apply a 'hands-off' approach, with teachers trusting their students' decisions. Situational leadership is based on the understanding that different situations require various leadership styles. Therefore, situational leadership is not a style *per se* but rather a fluid conception, based on the choice of the teacher and depending on different factors, such as the situation and types of students (Vann et al. 2014; Ahmed

Khan et al. 2016; Francisco 2020). Due to the diversity and contemporaneity of the seven-leadership approach, the author chose it as the basis of this thesis.

Contemporary approaches to language teaching favor the transformational leadership style which is more concerned with students' personal needs and effective learning (Webrinska 2009, as cited in Erdel & Takkaç 2020: 469). Many traits of language studies, such as the need for active participation, discussions, creativity, openness, and less focus on textbook-based knowledge do not support the more teacher-centered traditional and authoritarian leadership roles.

Theorists have come to the conclusion that leaders base their leadership function on two major categories, where one is more focused on interaction with the audience and interpersonal relationships (person-oriented), and the other on achieving the ultimate goal (task-oriented) (Cheng 1994b). This approach is not limited to an educational setting but describes broader power relations in any organization. To tie this distinction to classroom climate, Ho (1989, as cited in Cheng 1994b) states in a simplified manner that studies in the Western world have found students to be enthusiastic and learn more under positive democratic teacher leadership. An autocratic leadership style contributes to a negative climate, more passive learning activities and lower academic performance. The current thesis attempts to determine if these trends are also present in the sample from the school studied.

Leithwood et al. (2004) claim that leadership can play a significant role in student learning. As can be seen above, the impact might not be direct. A teacher's leadership style primarily influences the psychological aspects of students' learning process, such as social behavior, attitudes and motivation and not their academic

achievement (Cheng 1994b: 56). Only after these conditions are met, the psychological aspects affect the learning process and students' success.

All of the discussion above leads to a different, more philosophical question of whether teaching can be seen as leading. It is an outdated perception that teachers who do not fulfill roles outside the classroom have nothing to do with leadership. Collay (2013) argues that effective teaching is leadership because teachers have to deal with much more than just transmitting knowledge and skills. They have to skillfully maneuver between acknowledging successful students, disciplining the misbehaving and motivating the ill-motivated. Collay (2013: para. 3) also states that teaching itself is a profession that requires everyday acts of leadership. As already mentioned above, a classroom of students and a teacher could be considered a small organization where the teacher is regarded as the leader, but further research is required before we can equate leading adults with guiding children (Cheng 1994b: 54). Nevertheless, we can see that teaching is considered in itself leading which shows how important it is for a teacher to choose an appropriate leadership style.

1.1.1 Teacher leadership in language classes

Research on the relationship between classroom management and language teaching (Macias 2018: 154), as well as leadership and language teaching, has been limited up until now (Greenier and Whiteland 2016; McGee et al. 2015). Greenier and Whiteland (2016) studied whether the model of authentic leadership - a combination of both transmitting knowledge and the ability to engage and motivate students - applied to language teaching. They found that this, in fact, will help teachers better manage the challenges of being an EFL teacher. McGee et al. (2015: 109) investigated

leadership practices that would support teaching and learning for primary school EFL students in New Zealand. They determined four practices that applied in the context - establishing goals and directions for EFL classes, enabling leaders to be role models with credibility through knowledge of EFL, providing professional EFL learning for teachers, and empowering EFL teaching and learning by introducing necessary conditions.

There are several key features of language instruction that distinguish it from general teaching. The use of target language and the students' potential unwillingness to communicate in it, lack of interest in foreign languages and the presence of native speakers of the target language could all impact classroom management (Macias 2018: 161). Evans' (2012: 232) research indicated that native speakers get bored in class and might start correcting other students' language mistakes in a way that does not support the teacher's approach. Although the number of native English speakers in Estonian schools is low, the widespread use of English among Estonian youngsters means that there are students whose language proficiency is high enough to get bored, start interrupting others and not consider their teacher an authority. Macias (2018: 153) concludes that there is a need for further research on the relationship between classroom management and the aforementioned aspects. These indications support the author's aim to focus on teacher leadership styles in EFL classes.

1.1.2 Studies on teacher leadership

To better understand which teacher leadership styles are preferred among teachers and how they affect different aspects related to educational settings, a glimpse at previous research on the matter is pertinent. Different instruments have been used in

the history of leadership studies of which the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was predominant in the middle of the 20th century (Cheng 1994b). From contemporary instruments, the MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) - developed by Bernard M. Bass and Bruce J. Avolio in 1995 - and its subsequent modifications are the most commonly used surveys to assess leadership styles, but they also have several disadvantages (Fish 2016; Mews 2019; Vann et al. 2014). The MLQ is not designed specifically for educational environments and would require quite a few alterations to be applicable in a school setting. Many researchers have indicated that the MLQ has a narrow scope and only defines three leadership styles (Mews 2019; Vann et al. 2014). Isaac (2011) has also suggested that the MLQ is not the most suitable instrument for assessing situations in a classroom.

A more recent and relevant instrument for identifying leadership styles is the Vannsimpco Leadership Survey (VLS). It is a reliable and valid instrument that has the potential to be used in a variety of business and organizational settings (Vann et al. 2014: 33). One major advantage of this survey is its hybridization - it allows to identify cross-categorical leadership styles (Fish 2016: 12) which is not the case with the MLQ (Vann et al. 2014). The VLS incorporates ideas from several disciplines and focuses on capturing the blending of styles (Vann et al. 2014: 29). Remarkably, the VLS distinguishes more leadership styles than the MLQ while having a smaller number of statements to be rated. From a voluntary participant's point of view, it is clearly more convenient to complete a survey that demands less time.

Despite numerous studies about different leadership styles and their efficacy, little focus has been put on the preferences of those who are being led (Fish 2016: 3), a

deficiency that can likely be extended to research on the classroom environment. Nevertheless, a few examples of such studies are described below. Research on teacher leadership has predominantly focused on the connection between teacher leadership style and student learning or performance (Cheng 1994b; Yildirim, et al. 2008).

In his doctoral dissertation, Anthony Francisco (2020) examined which teacher leadership styles are preferred among both school leaders and teachers. His sample consisted of 2,161 educators who were randomly selected from a Rhode Island school district in the USA (Francisco 2020: 68). Francisco applied the VLS to determine the preferred leadership styles from nine different dimensions (Francisco 2020: 69). He found that school leaders preferred and expected teachers to practice transformational, democratic and situational leadership, a hybrid form of the two. At the same time, teachers themselves preferred the democratic teacher leadership style and disliked the autocratic-transactional and *laissez-faire* styles (Francisco 2020: 105). It is important to note that his findings imply the desired, not the actual leadership styles of teachers.

Mews (2019) also carried out a study using the VLS, concentrating on the leadership style preferences of faculty and staff of higher education institutions. His sample size was 146 volunteering employees from various colleges and universities throughout the USA (Mews 2019: 62). The results of the survey showed that the democratic-transformational hybrid leadership style together with the democratic and transformational styles were the most preferred, whereas the *laissez-faire* was less desired (Mews 2019: 67). These findings are similar to those of Francisco, implying that school leaders and staff of higher education institutions want teachers to treat their

students fairly, involve them in classroom decisions and motivate them. Yet again, this study focused on assessing preferred, not actual teacher leadership styles.

In her doctoral dissertation, Susan Isaac (2011) examined whether teachers' classroom leadership styles affected student performance in a beginners' mathematics course at a community college in the US. Although this study focuses on students of mathematics, similar methods might be applicable for studying the effect of teachers' leadership styles on the EFL students' performance. The MLQ was used to determine how students perceive their teachers' leadership styles. She later compared the results to the change in students' performance in a mathematics course (Isaac 2011: 50). The study was carried out among 64 student participants. Isaac did not find a significant correlation between teachers' leadership styles and student performance in mathematics class. Thus, it could not be concluded that the perceived leadership style of a teacher had a direct effect on how a student performed. More importantly,(the study concluded that an instrument focused on educational environments should be developed and used instead of the business-focused MLQ (Isaac 2011: 92).

Vîşcu and Rosu (2012) based their study on Lewin, Lippitt and White's approach on teacher leadership styles, investigating how students' perceptions of these styles impacted their psychosocial development. Vîşcu and Rosu used a survey of seven questions about teacher conduct in class and a description of the ideal teacher. The sample consisted of 300 high school students in Romania. They concluded that students mainly saw their teachers as using the democratic leadership style. They also saw their ideal teacher as a good communicator, patient, calm and pedagogically competent (Vîşcu and Rosu 2012). Unfortunately, the validity and reliability of the

survey are questionable, as no references to its author nor to previous testing of the method were given.

Proceeding to language studies, Erdel and Takkaç (2020) identified effective and ineffective classroom leader characteristics in the tertiary-level English language teaching context in Turkey. They applied both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods among students and instructors at one specific university. Classroom Leadership Instrument (CLI) - a modified form of the MLQ that identifies transformational, transactional and avoidant/passive styles - was used as the questionnaire, whereas separate semi-structured interviews were developed for instructors and students (Erdel and Takkaç 2020: 471). The findings of both qualitative and quantitative results among teachers and students indicated that transformational instructors displayed more effective classroom leadership than others (Erdel and Takkaç 2020: 495-496). This again shows that motivation, personal relationships with students and innovative approach to teaching have a positive impact on the learning process.

The studies analyzed above did not address the relationship between leadership styles and classroom environment but indicated that students favored teachers who demonstrated the characteristics of a democratic leader. The teachers preferred to implement the democratic and transformational styles, and avoid the autocratic-transactional and *laissez-faire* approaches. School leaders and staff members had similar preferences of their subordinates' and fellow colleagues' leadership trends. This supports the aim of the present study: to determine whether

leadership styles as rated by teachers themselves corroborate these findings of preferred styles.

The described preferences were determined by collecting data with the VLS, originally designed for that purpose. The one study that focused on actual classroom activities did not find a significant correlation between teachers' leadership styles and student performance in mathematics. That study employed the MLQ instrument, which is used to determine actual leadership styles but is assessed not to be the best tool for educational settings. Therefore, the newer VLS instrument that identifies a wider spectrum of leadership styles is used in the present study.

1.2 Understanding the learning environment

There is a clear connection between the classroom environment and the learning process. According to Bucholz and Scheffler (2009: 1), the classroom environment affects the well-being of students, making them feel either safe and comfortable or insecure and upset. These tendencies may facilitate or hinder the process of learning. Understanding the learning environment is important due to its strong associations with students' achievement (Alzubaidi et al. 2016), as students tend to learn better when they perceive the classroom environment more positively (Dorman et al. 2006: 907). Byrne et al. (1986: 10) also claim that an ideal classroom environment is conducive to maximum learning and achievement.

For a positive learning environment to occur, learners' needs and interests must be addressed (McCombs 1997, as cited in Yildirim, et al. 2008: 74). For example, teachers are expected to set clear goals and expectations, and provide sufficient

feedback for students to successfully complete their tasks (Alzubaidi et al. 2016: 145). It would be reasonable to assume that the style of leadership a teacher implements and how they address these aspects influences the classroom environment.

The learning environment is considered to comprise social, psychological and pedagogical conditions where actual learning occurs (Lim and Fraser 2018: 433). According to Cheng (1994a: 224), it consists of physical and psychological environments, although he claims that at the time of writing his article, there were very few studies that had integrated these components into a more comprehensive conception of a classroom environment.

To avoid confusion, it has to be clarified that the notions of learning and classroom environments are often used interchangeably. This is an observation that the author of this study repeatedly made when reviewing academic literature. A classroom environment is seen to be more precisely restricted to a physical room. The notion of a learning environment has a broader connotation of any setting, such as the outdoor or other environments outside of school facilities, where teaching and studying might take place (The Glossary of Education Reform: para. 1). Previous research also distinguishes classroom and broader school-level environments, where the former focuses on relationships between teachers and students, whereas the latter is more concerned with relationships between different teachers and other employees of the school (Aldridge and Laugksch 2006: 126). The ecological perspective understands that when we talk about person-environment relations in a classroom setting, the conditions created by teachers, students, and possibly some third parties have to be taken into account in addition to the physical aspects (Brophy 2006: 27).

The author of this MA thesis aims to focus on the social and behavioral aspects of the classroom environment and set aside the influence of physical characteristics. This is supported by the understanding that teacher leadership styles and classroom management are psychosocial dimensions, combining psychological and social factors in the surrounding environment. Social psychology can be interpreted as students' own feelings, thoughts and manner of expression in relation to social factors that surround them, such as other students and the teacher.

Dorman et al. (2006: 906) claim that previous research on classroom environments has mainly concentrated on their psychosocial measures. Dorman (2003: 234) states that Rudolf H. Moos' conception of human environments that involves interpersonal relationships and personal growth dimensions has been part of the classroom environment theory since the 1970s. The complexity of precisely defining the learning environment lies in the observation that the terms of psychological environment, atmosphere, social climate and social relationships are used interchangeably (Cheng 1994a).

Although it seems that researchers have given little attention to how teacher leadership styles directly affect the learning environment, Cheng (1994a) acknowledges that teacher leadership has some sort of influence on the psychological learning environment. Teacher leadership is viewed as shaping the social climate of the psychological learning environment, which includes such factors as teacher-student relationships, students' relationships with each other, teachers' communication styles and behaviors (Allodi 2010). The teacher-student relationships are based on how well

students perceive their teacher's help in acquiring the required material, showing care and support, and encouraging mutual respect (Joe et al. 2017).

Cheng (1994a: 223) added that teachers' use of power is another factor influencing the psychological learning environment. As stated in subchapter 1.1, the use of power is also considered when categorizing teacher leadership styles as it is an important component of teachers' approach to leading the learning process in the classroom. It is not clear whether power use should be considered an independent factor that affects the learning environment. Lim and Fraser (2018) determined in their study that factors like the nature of the curriculum and respect shown by students towards their teachers also affect the learning environment. The latter could also be tightly connected to the leadership style a teacher applies in the classroom.

Cheng (1994a) found that teacher leadership styles highly correlated with the social climate. This is unsurprising because teacher leadership is closely tied to teachers' relationships with their students. As we saw beforehand, transformational leaders wish for close personal relationships with their students and democratic leaders see their students as equals in their classroom which presupposes a warm and accepting relationship between the two counterparts. Autocratic and transactional leaders are more controlling and rigid in their approach to students which also affects their mutual relationships. Therefore, the author of this thesis agrees that teacher leadership mostly affects the factor of social climate which could be well measured using a psychological learning environment instrument.

1.2.1 Studies on classroom environment

Previous studies have attempted to determine how students themselves perceive their learning environment and how these perceptions might differ depending on various factors, such as age and gender. In his review of previous studies on the topic, Fraser (1998) has come to the conclusion that classroom environment varies according to school type, grade level and subject area. He also adds that various instruments have been used in the past which differ in their construction. These differences are reflected in whether the actual or preferred learning environments are studied and whether students are asked to evaluate how they perceive the class as a whole or more specifically their role in it.

The instruments used in these surveys and questionnaires include the Individualized Classroom Environment Questionnaire (ICEQ), Science Laboratory Environment Inventory (SLEI), Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) and Constructivist Learning Environment Survey (CLES). As the names and titles suggest, these instruments are designed to measure specific classroom environment features or certain subjects. For that reason, they are not well suited for assessing the general classroom settings (Khine 2001; Aldridge et al. 1999). The most frequently used questionnaire for evaluating the classroom environment is the 'What Is Happening in This Class?' (WIHIC). One of the advantages of the WIHIC is its applicability to any school subject, focusing on how students perceive themselves as part of the classroom (Lim and Fraser 2018).

Lim and Fraser (2018) note that, as with classroom management and teacher leadership, research on learning environments involving English language teaching is scarce. However, some studies have been carried out on the matter. Lim and Fraser themselves conducted their study on learning environments in English language classes in Singaporean schools. Their sample consisted of 441 grade 6 students and they applied a modified version of the aforementioned WIHIC questionnaire (Lim and Fraser 2018: 434). The modification meant that the authors replaced two items in the questionnaire to better fit the specifics of Singapore. They used just six of the seven WIHIC scales (namely student cohesiveness, teacher support, involvement, task orientation, cooperation and equity) and conducted a validity check (Lim and Fraser 2018). Their findings suggested that the classroom environment perception varies depending on student ethnicity and gender. They found that the Chinese students perceived it less positively than the Malay students. This factor could be equally considered in the Estonian context but the current case study is carried out in a fairly monoethnic school and differences among ethnicities are therefore irrelevant. Gender, on the other hand, is an important factor in analyzing which teacher leadership styles might better suit male and female students.

Alzubaidi and colleagues' (2016) study in Jordan focused on students' perception of different socio-psychological aspects of the learning environment in the classes of English as a second language. Their study aimed to determine if the perceived classroom environment influenced students' motivation and self-regulation in learning EFL at the university level (Alzubaidi et al. 2016: 133). They too used the WIHIC questionnaire to determine the perceived environment, modifying and translating it into Arabic. They used the back-translation technique by an independent

person to retain its validity (Alzubaidi et al. 2016: 136). The study showed, on the example of 994 university students, that almost all seven aspects of the psychosocial environment were likely to influence students' motivation, self-efficacy and self-regulation in EFL classes (Alzubaidi et al. 2016: 145). Although conducted at the university level and in a different culture setting, this study provides a good example of learning environment research in EFL classes.

Rhiannon M. Giles' (2019) doctoral dissertation focused on the associations between perceptions of the classroom environment and attitudes to the subject of mathematics. She collected data among 221 grade 9 students in Australia, using the WIHIC questionnaire which she modified by omitting the Investigation scale (Giles 2019: 70). She found that female students perceived the mathematics learning environment more positively than males. Females' attitudes towards mathematics, on the other hand, were less positive than their male classmates' (Giles 2019: 128-129). This dissertation shows that the WIHIC questionnaire has been successfully used to determine the perceived classroom environment at the middle school level, despite not addressing English language studies. Gender differences in perceiving the classroom environment were also once more apparent.

Another instrument for determining the perception of learning environments - the Learning Environment Inventory (LEI) - was used by Newman and Licata (1986). They studied the relationship between student brinkmanship and the factors of teacher leadership, classroom environment and teacher's pupil control ideology. The sample included both teachers and students from four US secondary schools (Newman and Licata 1986: 104). The authors found that there was a significant negative correlation

between three and a significant positive correlation between six LEI subscales, as well as the frequency and hostility brinkmanship subscales (Newman and Licata 1986: 104). These results indicate that the higher the cohesiveness between students and the more students like their class, the less frequent and hostile their brinkmanship. The more friction between students and the more favoritism the teacher shows towards some students, the more frequent and hostile student brinkmanship is in class (Newman and Licata 1986: 106).

Dorman et al. (2006) employed the Technology-Rich Outcomes-Focused Learning Environment Inventory (TROFLEI) instrument with a sample of 4,146 Australian secondary school students to establish a typology of classrooms. It is interesting to note that seven of the 10 TROFLEI scales are taken from the WIHIC questionnaire and one objective of this study was to validate the 10-scaled instrument (Dorman et al. 2006: 907-908). The authors determined five different clusters of learning environments and came to the conclusion that TROFLEI has very sound psychometric properties.

Different learning environment instruments have been used for research over the years, but many contemporary studies employ the WIHIC questionnaire, which seems well suited for determining how students perceive their classroom environment. These studies successfully investigated the relationships between classroom environments at both public school and university levels in different cultures. Other aspects were taken into account, such as attitude towards the English language, academic efficacy, students' motivation and self-regulation. Two of those studies demonstrated how male and female students perceived the classroom environment

differently, so that is something to consider in the data collection and analysis of the current research.

Many of the studies focused on cultural influence. The differences in classroom environment perceptions between Chinese and Malay students are thought to be linked to the former's cultural peculiarity of a greater focus on achievement, rather than the surrounding environment (Lim and Fraser 2018). Aldridge et al. (1999) identified that Australian students perceived their classroom environments more positively than the students in Taiwan, whereas the latter had a more positive attitude toward their science classes. In Jordan, language teaching is traditionally teacher-centered and based on repetitive drills which are common in Arab cultures (Alzubaidi et al. 2016). In the case of Estonia, the general orientation towards the Western world in recent decades is also likely to impact the teaching practices and therefore supports a comparison to the perceptions of the learning environments in countries such as Australia, the USA and the United Kingdom.

2 CASE STUDY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER LEADERSHIP STYLES AND STUDENTS' PERCEIVED ENVIRONMENT IN EFL CLASSROOM

The empirical part of this thesis includes a case study of teachers' leadership styles, as well as their students' perception of their English classroom environments. The author decided to apply the term 'classroom environment' since the learning process in this school takes place in physical classrooms. Prior to the case study, the author carried out a more generalizable data collection to identify different leadership styles that teachers attribute to themselves. The first subchapter gives an overview of the sample as well as the different methods used to gather data for this research. The data collected about teacher leadership styles and classroom environment is analyzed in the second subchapter. Finally, the findings of the case study are discussed in the last subchapter.

2.1 Methodology and Participants

In order to reach the aims of this thesis, the author used different data collection methods: surveys and semi-structured interviews. The participating underage students and their legal guardians received a prior notice of the study procedures and gave their consent for the data to be used for the purposes of this study.

Teachers' leadership styles were measured by both quantitative and qualitative methods, whereas classroom environment perceptions were established by quantitative methods only. First, a questionnaire based on the VLS was compiled to identify which teacher leadership styles were predominant among the secondary school level English

language teachers in Harjumaa county. The reason for choosing the VLS is that many other leadership surveys used in previous research were either not attainable or did not fit the specificities of the current study. The VLS is well suited for educational environments, distinguishes a variety of leadership styles and requires little time to complete.

The participants of the first survey were secondary school level English language teachers of Estonian and Estonian-Russian based schools in Harjumaa county. These schools and their contact information were found on Estonia's national website[1]. A letter of request together with the link to the questionnaire was sent to representatives of all these schools at the end of September with a set deadline of one week. The questionnaire - in English with the assumption that the target group is competent enough to fully understand the statements presented to them - was submitted in Google Forms. 35 responses were received from English teachers of Harjumaa county schools.

To determine whether the number of respondents formed a representative sample, a power analysis was conducted. A request for information was sent to the Ministry of Education and Research to determine the total number of all secondary school level EFL teachers in Estonian and Estonian-Russian schools in Harjumaa county. The response from the ministry indicated that the number of such teachers at the time was 229 (excluding the teachers whose contract was temporarily suspended). A power analysis (with the confidence level of 95%) showed that 144 respondents would have formed a representative sample of the total. The sample of 35 respondents is thus too small to make valid generalizations about leadership styles in the region.

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[1] www.eesti.ee/est/kontaktid/koolid

However, the results indicate some trends that will be explored closer in the case study.

At the beginning, participants were asked to fill in background information - their home school, gender, age, teaching experience, level of education and the class levels at which they were teaching. These introductory questions were formulated in Estonian because they were not part of the original VLS. The electronic answers were automatically stored in the Google Drive cloud storage. The author used the PSPP software for quantitative analysis, a freeware program similar to the renowned SPSS.

The survey itself consisted of 27 statements that teachers had to rate on a five-point Likert response scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree ('1') to Strongly Agree ('5'). These numerical values had already been assigned by the creators of the questionnaire. The VLS identifies nine different leadership styles where each of those is described by three statements. For this research, the author modified the wording of statements to fit the specificities of the school environment and the profession of teaching. The conditional 'should' was replaced with an indicative form to describe teachers' actual approach to teaching, instead of their ideals. The third-person version of the grammatical agent, such as 'supervisor', was replaced with the pronoun 'I' to make the questionnaire more personal.

The author acknowledges that respondents might be more open to describing their ideals and more conservative or wishful in their thinking when reflecting on their actual approaches. Assessing oneself could also provide more subjective results compared to evaluating someone else. Therefore, the validity of the modified questionnaire cannot be ensured by the author. However, other than the changes mentioned above, the questionnaire retained its original form. Also, since the data are

not used to make generalizations but to create the groundwork for the case study, this is not seen as a major limitation.

An example from the original questionnaire compared to its modified version can be seen below:

- Original: *Supervisors should let staff members know what to expect as rewards for achieving goals.*

- Modified: *I let students know what to expect as rewards for achieving goals.*

For the case study, the author decided to turn to the school where he had previously carried out his mandatory teaching practice. The school had three secondary school level English language teachers who all agreed to participate in the study.

The data collection began with semi-structured interviews with three EFL teachers, based on the model of the VLS (Vann et al. 2014) and the theory of Francisco (2020). Each interview was arranged and carried out separately by the author. The interviews started off with introductory questions to gain background information about the interviewees and build rapport. The main body of the interview consisted of nine to 12 open-ended questions with additional clarifications where needed. The eventual number of questions for each teacher depended on the course of the interview. It is also worth noting that two of the three interviews were conducted in Estonian and one in English. The latter was decided after a request from one of the teachers.

All interviews were audio-recorded for further transcription and analysis. The author used two different automatic online transcriptors for the audio, one for either language. The Estonian speech transcription system, designed by the scientists of the

Tallinn University of Technology, is focused on the semi-spontaneous speech from conversations, lecture recordings and interviews (Alumäe et al. 2018: 1). For transcribing the audio file of the English interview, the Otter Voice Meeting Notes webpage was used. In all cases, the transcription had to be read and modified because the systems did not identify all the words, phrases and sounds correctly but they saved the author time from manually transcribing the interviews in full.

The QCAmap - designed by Philipp Mayring (2014) for qualitative content analysis - was used for coding the interviews. The main characteristics of teacher leadership styles in the studies by Vann et al. (2014) and Francisco (2020) were taken as the basis for coding. Certain words and phrases in the interviews were matched with those characteristics and eventually the respective leadership styles. Some examples of the words and phrases used to describe their alleged approach to their students, teaching and classroom management in general included '/…/ flexibility and compliance /…/' (democratic leadership style); 'I give homework all the time and I expect students to come to class prepared' (transactional); '/…/ sometimes you see that someone [a student] is really exhausted, they are unable to lift their head from the table for whatever reason, then I just don't pick on them, I let them sleep in class' (*laissez-faire*); 'I force them to write by hand. I force them, precisely force them, because they don't like it, to be honest' (autocratic); 'I consider myself a bit of a confidant that if they [students] want to talk about /…/ what's bothering them, or what's in their heads, then this is a space for them to do that without judgment' (transformational). The interviews were double-coded which means that the author carried out two separate coding procedures for each interview to increase the reliability of the data analysis. The words and phrases that were identified as

representing one style in the first, and another in the second coding, were considered as examples of hybrid leadership styles.

Next, the author carried out a survey among students of secondary school-level English classes. These classes are divided into 18 separate language learning groups with one teacher managing eight groups, another managing seven and the third teacher being responsible for three. The total number of students in these groups is 208 and as many as 156 completed the survey, taking the participation rate to 75%. A number of students were excluded because their parents did not give consent for participation. Others decided not to participate or were absent from class that day.

The questionnaire was based on the WIHIC survey developed by Fraser, Fisher and McRobbie in 1996, meant to evaluate how students perceive their classroom environment (Khine 2001: 55). A series of studies conducted in various countries confirm the reliability of the instrument and show associations between the classroom environment, students' attitudes and learning outcomes (Khine 2001: 59). Unlike some other questionnaires used in educational research, the WIHIC can be used in any classroom and is not specific to a particular discipline (Giles 2019). The WIHIC survey 'incorporates scales that have been used and proven to be significant predictors of learning outcomes' (Khine 2001: 55). The author of this thesis also took into account the fact that the WIHIC has previously been used in classroom environment research in English classrooms, both at university and general school levels (Lim and Fraser 2018).

The original survey is divided into seven scales ('Student Cohesiveness', 'Teacher Support', 'Involvement', 'Investigation', 'Task Orientation', 'Cooperation' and 'Equity') but for the current research, the author has omitted two of them.

Similarly to Giles (2019), the author came to the conclusion that the scales of 'Student Cohesiveness' and 'Investigation' were not well applicable to the current study. 'Student Cohesiveness' evaluates a student's broader relationships and blending with their classmates, and is therefore not relevant within English language studies alone. The 'Investigation' scale consists of statements that are more suitable for sciences and do not adequately rate the environment in language classes.

Out of the retained scales, 'Teacher Support' describes the extent to which the teacher helps, befriends, and is interested in students. The scale of 'Involvement' assesses the extent to which students have attentive interest, participate in class and are involved with other students in assessing the implementation of new ideas. 'Task Orientation' specifies the extent to which it is important to complete planned activities and stay on the subject matter. The scale of 'Cooperation' describes the extent to which students cooperate with each other during activities. 'Equity' determines the extent to which the teacher treats students equally, including distributing praise, asking questions and providing opportunities to be included in discussions (Khine 2001: 56).

Other than omitting two scales, the structure of the original survey was retained, including the order of questions. The questionnaire eventually consisted of five scales with eight statements each, totaling 40 statements (instead of the original 56) which students had to rate on a five-point Likert scale, where the values range from Almost Never ('1') to Almost Always ('5'). The total score for a particular scale is the sum of values for the eight items that belong to the specific scale. The higher the scale score, the more a classroom practice occurs in that environment (Khine 2001: 57).

Thanks to its specificity for the school environment, the wording of the questionnaire did not require any alterations, although the author saw a need for it to be translated into Estonian to avoid possible misinterpretation due to lack of students' language proficiency. The back-translation method was used, meaning that the author translated the questionnaire into Estonian and an independent individual, previously not familiar with the questionnaire, translated it back to English. Two examples of original statements from the WIHIC together with their Estonian equivalents are hereby given:

- Original 1: *The teacher considers my feelings.*

- Translation 1: *Õpetaja arvestab minu tunnetega.*

- Original 2: *I am treated the same as other students in this class.*

- Translation 2: *Mind koheldakse tunnis samamoodi kui teisi õpilasi.*

There were two options for completing the survey - electronically on Google Forms or on paper. A link to the survey and its paper versions were handed out to students by their respective teachers, who briefly introduced the study. A written description of the study together with instructions were also provided at the beginning of the form.

An issue with the data collected via both the VLS and WIHIC questionnaires is the way Likert scale values are interpreted in this study. It has been a matter of debate for some time whether a Likert scale, originally consisting of ordinal data, can be construed as interval. Many scholars have treated the Likert as an interval scale in case there is an equal distance between each value and they are symmetric (Wu and Leung 2017). Therefore, although controversial in terms of basic statistical assumptions,

interpreting Likert scales as intervals is common in educational research because the findings are in that case more meaningful (Wu and Leung 2017; Harwell and Gatti 2001).

The author of this thesis approached the five-point Likert scales of the VLS and WIHIC surveys similarly to those described by Wu and Leung (2017). Both of the questionnaires automatically provide numerical equivalents to each worded value and their validities have been tested. Previous researchers who have used either the VLS (Francisco 2020; Fish 2016) or WIHIC (Giles 2019; Lim and Fraser 2018; Alzubaidi et al. 2016) in their studies have interpreted the data on an interval scale by default.

2.2 Results

The results of this study are displayed based on the three data collection methods applied. First, the data gathered with the VLS questionnaire among EFL teachers in the county of Harjumaa is described and analyzed. Then, the transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews conducted among the EFL teachers in the studied school are analyzed and some examples from these interviews are given to answer the first research question. The data collected with the WIHIC questionnaire among the students of those teachers is presented and analyzed to answer the second research question. Finally, the results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses are compared to determine the relationship between teacher leadership styles and students' perceived classroom environment in the school studied.

2.2.1 Teacher Leadership Styles among EFL Teachers in Harjumaa

Only 35 out of a total of 229 active EFL teachers in Estonian and Estonian-Russian language-based Harjumaa county secondary schools filled in the

VLS. Although valid generalizations cannot be made about teacher leadership styles in Harjumaa county, the responses point to some trends that can be further explored in the qualitative part of this study. The results indicated that the mean age of respondents was 44.49 (*SD* = 11.71) with the youngest being 24 and the oldest 68 years old. The mean working experience as an English language teacher was 16.63 (*SD* = 10.72) with the most experienced teacher having worked in the field for as long as 43 years. The most novice teacher has been active for only two years (shown in Table 1).

Out of the 35 respondents, 31 were women and only four teachers were men, which means that the proportion of male English language teachers was 11% as opposed to 89% of females. This is similar to, although somewhat lower than the overall gender distribution in Estonian schools, wherein 2020 men accounted for nearly 15% of all teachers in compulsory schools (Statistics Estonia). Out of the 35 respondents, 32 had a master's degree, only two still had a bachelor's degree but were currently studying in a master's program, and one participant held a doctoral degree.

Table 1. Age and Experience of Respondents in Years

	Age	*Experience as EFL Teacher*
Mean	*44.49*	*16.63*
Minimum	*24*	*2*
Maximum	*68*	*43*

The author used the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine associations between the self-assessing VLS statements and both the age and working experience of teachers. The Pearson correlation coefficient is calculated between two groups of quantitative variables to determine a linear correlation between them. Three of the 27 statements correlated with the age of respondents. There was a moderate negative

correlation between the statement depicting a transactional leader '*I set deadlines and clearly state the positive or negative consequences of students not meeting defined goals*' and the respondents' age ($r = -0.39$; $p < 0.05$) which shows that the younger a teacher, the more eager they are to set specific boundaries in their classroom. As shown above, a transactional leader approaches the classroom in a rigid manner, basing it on rewards, punishments and firm rules. There was also a moderate negative correlation between the same statement and teachers' experience ($r = -0.40$; $p < 0.05$).

A moderate positive correlation occurred between the age and two statements that describe a transformational leader: '*I rely on personal influence and relationship building rather than my position as a teacher to get students to perform the tasks assigned to them*' ($r = 0.34$; $p < 0.05$) and '*I develop strategies to develop students' competence and commitment*' ($r = 0.37$; $p < 0.05$). This, in turn, shows that the older the teacher, the more they see themselves as focusing on interpersonal relationships with the students and have the tendency to promote certain strategies for students' development. This is an interesting discovery, considering that the previous statement showed that older teachers focused more on task fulfillment, rather than having interpersonal relationships with students.

The aggregate results for each leadership style were calculated to determine which styles teachers seem to implement in the classroom according to their own judgment. The findings in the previous paragraph were supported by a Pearson correlation coefficient test which showed that there was a significant positive correlation between the transformational leadership style and teachers' age ($r = 0.38$; $p < 0.05$). This again indicates that the older a teacher, the more qualities of a transformational leader they demonstrate. No significant correlation could be found

between a teacher's age and other leadership styles and, more interestingly, neither between their experience and any of the styles. The Bonferroni correction method was also used with these variables but significant differences could not be identified.

The author used the Kruskal-Wallis test to measure the significance of differences in the teachers' gender and the leadership style applicable to them and the results can be observed in Table 2. The effect size was also calculated - using an online calculator[2] - to identify the strength of the relationship between the variables. As Tomczak and Tomczak (2014) state, relying on the p-value (significance) alone does not allow an evaluation of the importance of the results. The eta-squared measure should be used to calculate the effect size for the Kruskal-Wallis test (Tomczak and Tomczak 2014).

The major difference between males and females occurred in the transformational leadership style (χ^2 (1) = 4.18; $p < 0.05$; $\eta^2 = 0.10$) but a noteworthy difference between genders could also be identified in the *laissez-faire* leadership (χ^2 (1) = 3.35; $p = 0.07$; $\eta^2 = 0.07$), although with a somewhat weaker statistical significance than considered acceptable. Both eta-squared values indicate a medium to large effect. On a five-point Likert scale, the mean value attributed to the transformational style by females was 4.17 ($SD = 0.51$) and 3.50 ($SD = 0.58$) by males. All in all, it has to be yet again emphasized that extensive conclusions should not be made due to the small number of respondents and the unequal proportions of male and female groups.

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[2] www.psychometrica.de

Table 2. Significant Difference in Teachers' Gender and Leadership Style

Leadership Style	χ^2	DF	Asymp. Sig.
Transactional	0.09	1	0.765
Autocratic	1.58	1	0.208
Democratic	0.49	1	0.482
Autocratic-Transformational	0.62	1	0.431
Autocratic-Transactional	0.58	1	0.445
Democratic-Transformational	0.00	1	1.000
Democratic-Transactional	0.03	1	0.870
Transformational	4.18	1	0.041
Laissez-faire	3.35	1	0.067

χ^2 - Chi-square; *DF* - degrees of freedom; *Asymp. Sig.* - statistical significance of the relationship between the variables

The most recurring teacher leadership style (shown in Table 3) among the Harjumaa county secondary school level EFL teachers according to their own opinion was the transformational style (*M* = 4.10; *SD* = 0.55). The hybrid democratic-transformational style came out to be the second most popular (*M* = 4.06; *SD* = 0.45). These findings imply that teachers tend to think they are innovative, considerate, able to motivate their students, have good interpersonal relationships with them and treat them as equals (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020). The least implemented leadership style among the respondents was the *laissez-faire* style (*M* = 2.50; *SD* = 0.76) - based on the 'hands-off' approach - which is consistent with what Francisco (2020) found in his study on leadership style preferences. This indicates that English language teachers tend to think they avoid delegating leadership in the

classroom and rather see themselves as actively participating in the teaching and learning process (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020).

Table 3. Teacher Leadership Style Assessments on a 5-point Likert Scale

Leadership Style	Mean values	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Transactional	*4.00*	*0.46*	*2.67*	*5.00*
Autocratic	*3.92*	*0.62*	*2.33*	*5.00*
Democratic	*3.70*	*0.41*	*2.67*	*4.67*
Autocratic-Transformational	*3.90*	*0.52*	*2.67*	*5.00*
Autocratic-Transactional	*3.42*	*0.74*	*2.00*	*5.00*
Democratic-Transformational	*4.06*	*0.45*	*3.00*	*5.00*
Democratic-Transactional	*3.77*	*0.42*	*3.00*	*5.00*
Transformational	*4.10*	*0.55*	*3.00*	*5.00*
Laissez-Faire	*2.50*	*0.76*	*1.00*	*4.00*

SD - Standard deviation

2.2.2 Teacher Leadership Styles among EFL Teachers in the school studied

The results of the semi-structured interviews with the EFL teachers in the school studied indicated somewhat different trends. Out of the three teachers interviewed, two (Teacher A and Teacher B) had been active for less than five years, whereas one had more than 20 years of experience as an EFL teacher (Teacher C). In their answers, both Teacher A and Teacher B mostly demonstrated characteristics of a democratic leader, although Teacher A showed a greater proportion of such attributes than Teacher B. From the 27 statements by Teacher A that could be ascribed to leadership styles, 18 had the characteristics of the democratic leadership style.

For example, she claimed to involve her students in deciding on classroom activities, to express growing signs of empathy towards them and to sympathize with students when they were having a difficult day. She stated that she tried to resolve conflicts in a diplomatic way, discussed the issues with students in depth, and did not act according to rigid rules, but maintained good relationships with them. These characteristics coincide with those of a democratic leader: considerate, concerned with the maintenance of good working relations and seeking advice and input from their followers (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020).

Teacher A also demonstrated traits of a transformational leader. She showed clear enthusiasm towards her students (Vann et al. 2014: 31) by stating: 'I sometimes just [positively] sigh, how fabulous and good they [students] are!'. She also described how students often showed interest in her personal life, such as what type of car she was driving or if she had had a good apple harvest that year. This coincides with Vann et al.'s (2014: 31) description of a transformational leader whose students are interested in building personal and close relationships with their teachers.

Teacher B used six statements that could be considered descriptive of the democratic leadership style. She considered herself a facilitator, claimed to be an equal to the students and suggested she involved them in building the classroom environment and setting classroom rules. Three of her expressed ideas coincided with each of the transformational and the *laissez-faire* styles. Interestingly, Teacher B reflected characteristics of the largest variety of leadership styles among the teachers. One of the reasons for such diversity could be the teacher's limited experience - she has been an active teacher for merely three years. As Tiene and Buck (1987: 261) claim, it is of utmost importance for a novice teacher to figure out how authoritarian to

appear in front of the class. This might, in fact, result in testing different methods when managing a classroom, varying in leadership styles from autocratic to *laissez-faire.*

In one example of the *laissez-faire* leadership style characteristics, Teacher B stated: '/.../ because when I am faced with conflict [with a student], I shut down. It is a part of me that I am trying to work on.' This indicates that she allegedly tends to retreat from inconvenient situations with students, showing signs of passive-avoidance as Francisco (2020) calls it, but nonetheless realizes the need to improve herself regarding that feature.

Teacher C demonstrated more conservative views to teaching, a fact which she also repeatedly pointed out herself. Although reflecting six characteristics of a democratic leader, she also displayed five qualities of a transactional and four attributes of an autocratic leader. As noted in the theoretical part of this study, the last two are somewhat similar to each other in some of their characteristics and may have overlapping interpretations. These results differ from those of Teachers A and B who were both more inclined towards the democratic leadership style.

Teacher C stated that she preferred to set her own classroom rules concerning student behavior, at least with groups that she met for the first time. She claimed to have strict rules about student conduct. When a student misbehaved and used improper words at her, she sent them out of the classroom to see the head of study (*õppejuht*) and did not allow them to return to the lesson that day. She also saw herself as the leader in a classroom of new students. She stated: 'If I do not know anything about them, then I am definitely a teacher who stands in front of the class, a leader /.../'. These described examples refer to an autocratic leader - controlling, power-oriented

and coercive. On the other hand, adapting her stance depending on how well she knew her students refers to an approach of a situational leader whose conduct depends on the circumstances (Francisco 2020).

Teacher C also demonstrated traits of a transactional leader: instilling a reward-punishment system, focusing on task orientation and monitoring her students closely (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020). She claimed that rewarding students was very important but at the same time, punishment in the form of remarks was as necessary. She also tended to give homework - something that Teacher B claimed to avoid - and expected all students to come into class prepared, claiming that she should monitor more closely whether students have completed their home tasks.

In addition to the aforementioned transactional and autocratic leadership traits, Teacher C also demonstrated many characteristics of a democratic leader. She claimed to be making collective decisions with her students regarding some major tasks, such as the number of home-reading assignments during the school year. Another characteristic of a democratic teacher included admitting to her mistakes in a situation of conflict for the purpose of pursuing a decent relationship with students. Even on occasions when a student is upset about something, she allegedly tries to find a peaceful solution without marking them absent. She tends to send them to a different environment instead, where they can calm down. Concluding from that, Teacher C also demonstrates considerate and consultative behavior to a certain level, concerning herself with good relationships with students (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020).

None of the teachers demonstrated characteristics of a single leadership style but showed a combination of many. The statements of Teacher A showed most clearly that her dominant leadership style was democratic whereas the majority of Teacher B's

claims also coincided with traits of a democratic leader. Compared to Teacher A, her styles were somewhat more vague. Teacher C showed almost equally the characteristics of the democratic, autocratic and transactional leaders. These findings do not exactly corroborate the results obtained from Harjumaa schools where the democratic, autocratic and their hybrid forms were not among the top three styles. Only the transactional leadership style was the third most frequent among Harjumaa county teachers.

The presumed reasons for such a discrepancy between the interviewed teachers and the respondents to the questionnaire could be many. The mean experience of the respondents to the VLS was remarkably bigger ($M = 16.63$) than that of the EFL teachers in the school studied ($M = 10.00$). Although no significant correlation was found between teacher leadership styles and teachers' experience, it was still quite close to the acceptable rate in the case of the democratic-transactional style ($r = 0.31$; $p = 0.07$). Despite the lack of a significant correlation, a vague trend of more experienced teachers demonstrating more traits of a democratic-transactional could still be seen. The given indication coincides with the fact that the more experienced Teacher C displayed similar characteristics. Unfortunately, differences between leadership styles and teachers' gender could not be analyzed in the school studied because all three interviewed teachers were female.

2.2.3 Students' perceptions of classroom environment

As much as 75% of the EFL students at the secondary level of the studied school filled in the WIHIC questionnaire. The age of respondents varied from 15 to 19 but as many as 151 students from a total of 156 were aged between 16 and 18 years.

The percentage of male respondents was slightly higher than that of females with 55.8% and 44.2%, respectively. The number of boys was predominant only in the age groups of 15 and 16 (Figure 1).
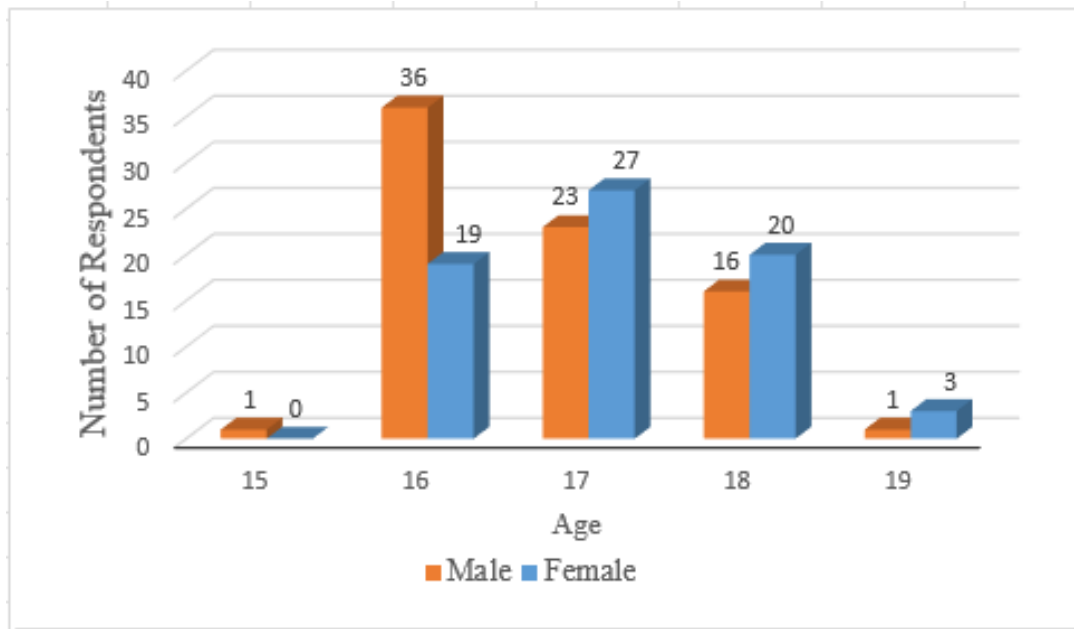

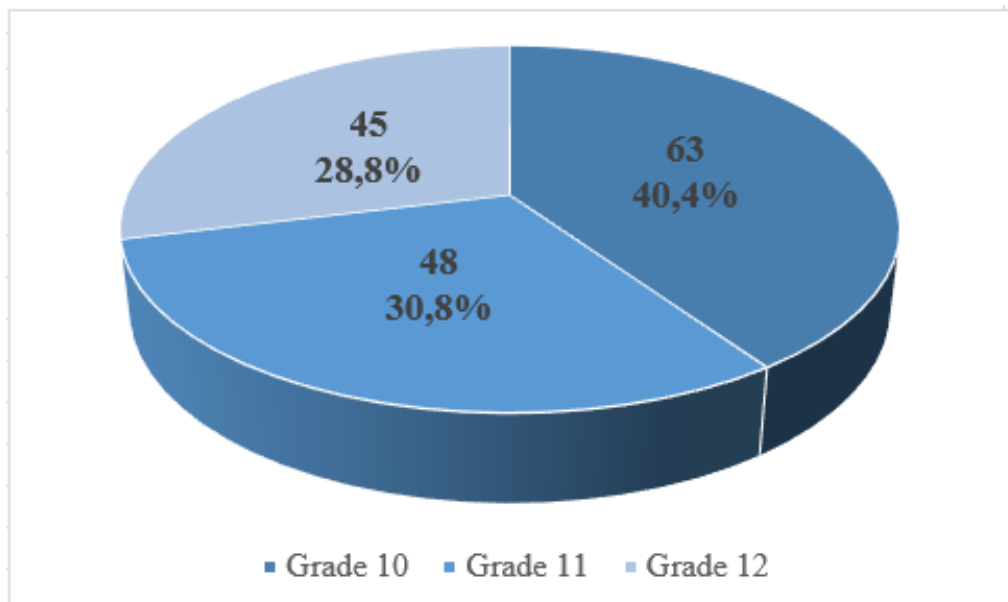*Figure 1. Respondents by Gender and Age*

Figure 2. Respondents by Grade Level

Proportionally, 10th grade had the most respondents whereas the smallest number of responses came from grade 12 (Figure 2). Teacher C had the highest number of students filling in the questionnaire because she had more students in total than Teacher A and B. The highest percentage of participation was among the students of Teacher B, (90% of all her students) (Table 4).

Table 4. Respondents per Teacher

Teacher	N of Students	N of Respondents	% of Teacher's Students	% of All Respondents
Teacher A	*42*	*31*	*73.8%*	*19.9%*
Teacher B	*54*	*49*	*90.0%*	*31.4%*
Teacher C	*112*	*76*	*67.9%*	*48.7%*
Sum	*208*	*156*	*-*	*100%*

N = Total Number of Individuals

The students of teachers A, B and C rated their classroom environment somewhat differently in the five given scales of the WIHIC survey (described in Chapter 2.1). The scale of 'Teacher Support' received the highest mean rating on a five-point Likert scale from the students of Teacher B (M = 4.16; SD = 0.53). The scales of 'Task Orientation' (M = 4.11; SD = 0.57) and 'Equity' (M = 4.73; SD = 0.45) also received the highest mean rating from the students of the same teacher. This indicates that the teacher provides sufficient support to her students, and at the same time, the students tend to focus on task completion.

The scales of 'Involvement' (M = 3.52; SD = 0.71) and 'Cooperation' (M = 3.90; SD = 0.56) received the highest mean rating from the students of Teacher A (*Figure 3*). Teacher C's students provided the lowest mean ranking in all but one

environment scale ('Task Orientation') which indicates that those students might not perceive teacher support, involvement in classroom discussions, cooperation with other students and equal treatment as positively as the students of other teachers.

'Equity' was by far the most highly rated scale by students of all teachers, which means that the three of them, as seen by their students, put a lot of focus on treating their pupils equally. On the other hand, the mean level of the 'Involvement' scale was rated the lowest of all, meaning that students did not feel their participation in class as very active and did not perceive involving themselves with other students in assessing new ideas.
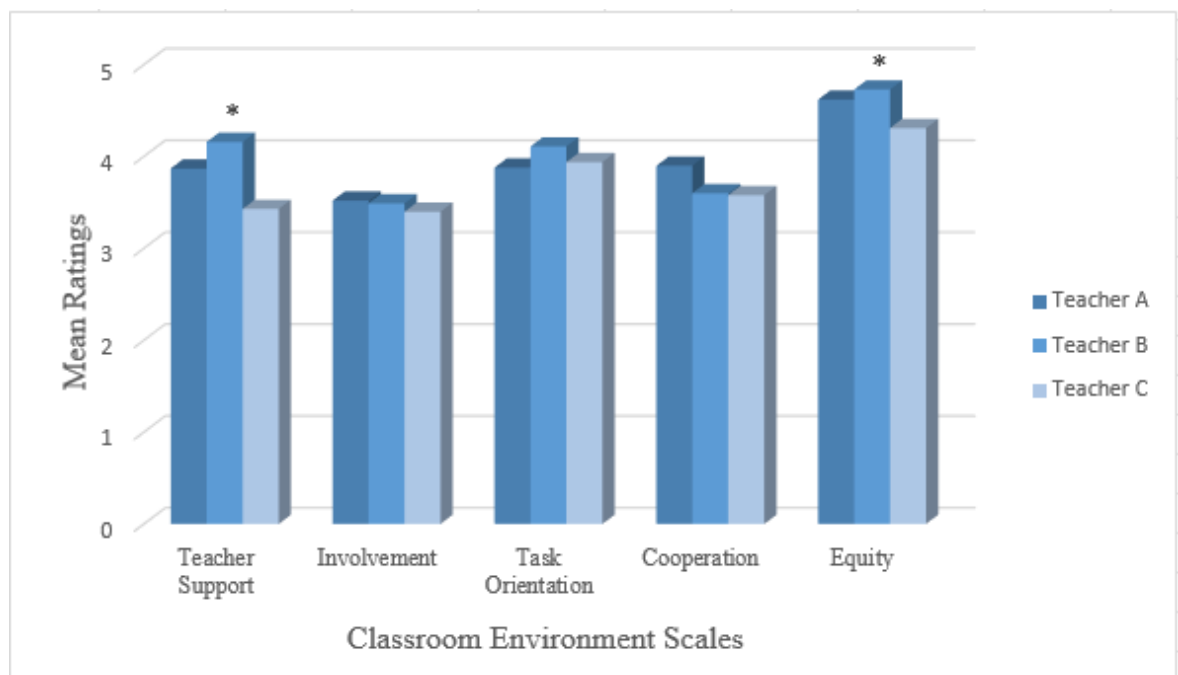

Figure 3. Students of Different Teachers and Classroom Environment Scales
* - Significant Difference Between Groups (p < 0.05)

Interestingly, all scales received a higher mean rating from female students compared to males (Figure 4). The difference was particularly evident in 'Task

Orientation' where female students (M = 4.20; SD = 0.47) were apparently more determined to complete their planned activities and stay focused on the subject than their male counterparts (M = 3.80; SD = 0.71). A notable difference could also be seen in the mean values of the 'Cooperation' scale, indicating that girls (M = 3.77; SD = 0.61) were more eager to cooperate with other students in given tasks compared to boys (M = 3.55; SD = 0.75). This coincides with the findings of Giles (2019), and Lim and Fraser (2018) who also learned that females perceived their learning environment more positively than males in mathematics and English language classrooms, respectively.
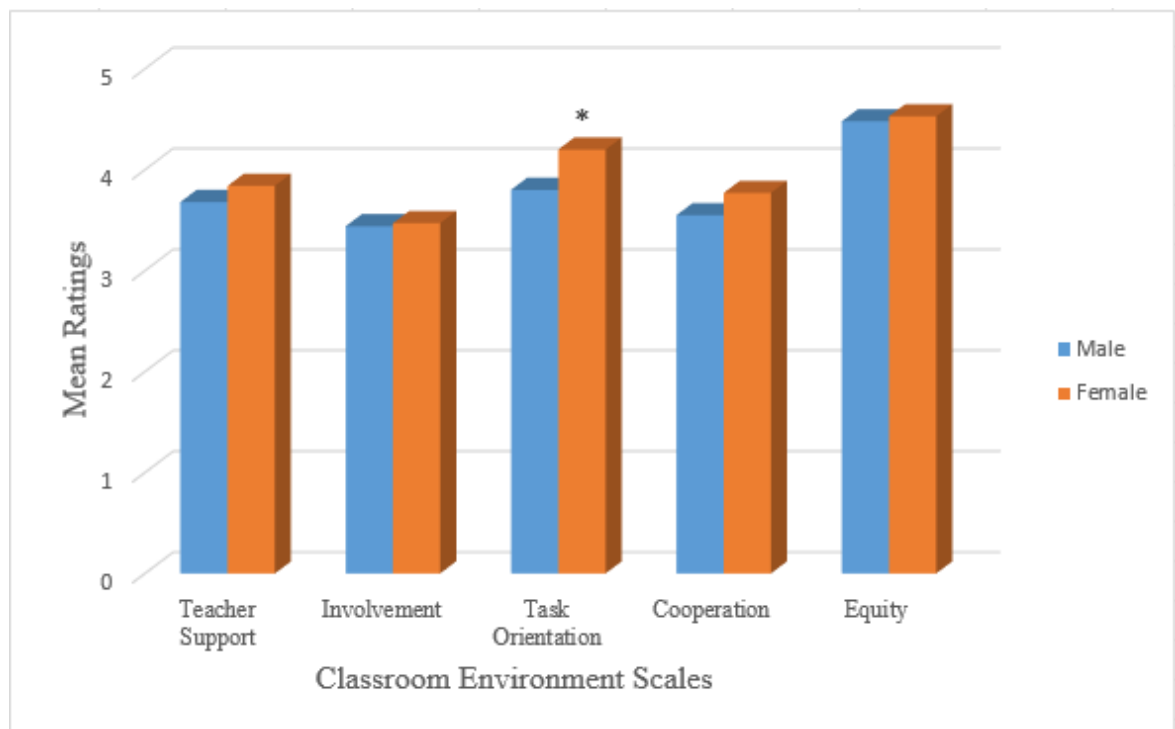

Figure 4. Student Gender and Classroom Environment Scales

* - Significant Difference Between Groups (p < 0.05)

As the gathered data turned out to be nonparametric, the author used the Kruskal-Wallis method to determine whether significant differences occurred between

students of different teachers and their perception of classroom environment. The eta-squared measure was also used to determine the effect sizes. Significant differences were found between two scales of classroom environment and students of different teachers: 'Teacher Support' (χ^2 (2) = 29.50; $p < 0.05$; $\eta^2 = 0.18$) and 'Equity' (χ^2 (2) = 16.22; $p < 0.05$; $\eta^2 = 0.09$). The effect size value of 0.18 for 'Teacher Support' is considered to indicate a large effect and 0.09 shows a medium to large effect. Statistically significant differences in those two scales seem to occur between the students of Teachers B and C by looking at the mean rankings of the respective scales (Figure 3). The difference between student gender and the 'Task Orientation' scale was also found to be statistically significant (χ^2 (2) = 13.97; $p < 0.05$; $\eta^2 = 0.08$) as females perceived their orientation on task fulfillment more positively than their male counterparts. The eta-squared value of 0.08 indicates a medium to large effect.

The significant differences in the perception of classroom environment among students of different teachers could be explained by the differing leadership styles that those teachers have allegedly chosen to implement. As witnessed, teacher leadership deals with interactional and interpersonal actions by the teacher that affect students' social and emotional aspects in the classroom. The 'Equity' and 'Teacher Support' scales focus on exactly those factors. 'Task Orientation' that had significant differences between male and female students is largely based on students' motivation which is also dependent on the leadership style a teacher projects (Krull 2018: 495). This creates the basis for determining how the self-reported leadership styles of the three teachers are related to how their students perceive the classroom environment.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was once again used to determine significant correlations as age, class level of the respondents and the classroom environment scales could be projected on an interval scale, a prerequisite for applying such a method. No significant correlation could be found between the classroom environment scales and either the age or class level of the respondents. Although the degree of correlation in each case was quite low, a significant positive correlation was found between students' age and the statements '*The teacher moves about the class to talk with me*' ($r = 0.18$; $p < 0.05$), '*I discuss ideas in class*' ($r = 0.19$; $p < 0.05$) and '*Students discuss with me how to go about solving problems*' ($r = 0.23$; $p < 0.05$).

The first finding shows that the older the student, the more they perceive their teachers approaching them personally. The second observation indicates that the older the student, the more they tend to discuss their ideas and solve problems with their peers according to their own perception. A significant negative correlation was additionally found between students' age and the statement '*I pay attention during this class*' ($r = -0.20$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that the older the student, the less attention they allegedly pay in the class. The Bonferroni correction test was again conducted but no significant correlations could be identified.

2.2.4 The relationship between teacher leadership styles and the classroom environment

As seen in subchapter 2.2.2, all three teachers projected somewhat different leadership styles. The predominance of one specific leadership style (democratic) was most evident in the case of Teacher A. Compared to the students of Teachers B and C, the students of Teacher A rated their involvement in various classroom activities the

highest ('Involvement'), and also saw themselves cooperating well ('Cooperation') with their peers. Considerate, participative and student-focused approach is common to democratic teachers (Vann et. al 2014; Francisco 2020).

Most of the characteristics expressed by Teacher B were also consistent with the democratic leadership style. Her students perceived the support provided by teachers ('Teacher Support'), the focus set on task completion ('Task Orientation') and equal treatment ('Equity') more positively on average than their counterparts of other teachers. Democratic teachers seek equal treatment by orienting on group decision-making and treating both students' and their own ideas as equals (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020). Democratic teachers are also relationship-oriented (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020) which coincides with the learning environment scale of 'Teacher Support' that is based on interpersonal relations. Teachers A and B also showed many characteristics of a transformational leader. Some of the main specificities of such a leader are related to their charm, charisma and personal relationships with their students (Vann et al. 2014; Francisco 2020). These traits can yet again be associated with the classroom environment scale of 'Teacher Support' where teachers' interest in their students, provision of assistance and the level of friendship are assessed.

Teacher C projected the characteristics of democratic, transactional and autocratic leaders almost equally. The proportion of transactional and autocratic traits in her responses to the interview questions was significantly higher compared to the other two teachers. At the same time, the students of Teacher C perceived the classroom environment less positively in all but one of the five scales. Only when

assessing the importance of completing planned activities ('Task Orientation'), the students of Teacher A provided a lower mean rating. It is also important to note that statistically significant differences were found between the assessments of the students of Teacher B (mainly democratic in style but to a lesser extent transformational and *laissez-faire*) and Teacher C (almost equally democratic, autocratic and transactional) for the scales of 'Teacher Support' and 'Equity'. These findings indicate that students of a teacher with autocratic or transactional approaches are likely to perceive their classroom environment less positively than those of democratic and democratic-transformational teachers.

2.3 Discussion

No identical studies from the past about the relationship between teacher leadership and the classroom environment were found, but some similarities in results of the current thesis to various academic research emerged. Some prior studies have found that the more preferred leadership styles among teachers are the democratic and transformational, whereas the autocratic, transactional and *laissez-faire* styles have gathered less support (Mews 2019; Francisco 2020). The survey carried out among the EFL teachers in Harjumaa county as part of this thesis did not seek for teachers' preferences, but their own assessment of actual leadership styles. Although the transformational and democratic-transformational leadership styles were assessed to be the most recurring, characteristics of autocratic and transactional styles were also more common than those of the distinct democratic style.

These results differ to some degree from previous studies reviewed in Chapter 1. Several reasons for such discrepancies could be named. The studies by Mews

(2019) and Francisco (2020) focused on leadership style preferences, whereas actual styles were sought for in the current thesis. The opinions and approaches to leadership styles of American and Estonian teachers could vary due to cultural specificities and a difference in teaching methods. The results may also be affected by the limited number of respondents and the fact that the survey was carried out only in the Estonian and Estonian-Russian language-based secondary schools in Harjumaa county.

The first research question was about predominant leadership styles among English language teachers in the secondary school level in the school studied. Two teachers more clearly expressed characteristics of democratic and transformational teachers in their interviews, whereas the third also showed many traits of transactional and autocratic leaders. It is worth mentioning that the more senior and experienced teacher claimed to be more conservative and rigid in her approach to teaching, compared to her younger and less experienced, equity- and openness-seeking colleagues. The issue with designating leadership styles to teachers on the basis of interviews is that one specific style might not emerge and the author's assessment of words and phrases relevant to the styles can be subjective.

One of the explanations for these differences could be related to the shift in learning concepts in the Estonian educational environment since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The less experienced teachers who have acquired their pedagogical education in the last 10 or 15 years have likely been taught to approach the teaching process differently from their more experienced counterparts. However, these are only assumptions due to the limited number of teachers interviewed, which does not allow

firm conclusions to be drawn. Another limitation is the fact that teachers expressed their own views, which might not correspond to their actual classroom behavior.

In the case of the second research question which aimed to determine how students perceived their classroom environment in English language classes, the students of the studied school rated 'Equity' the highest among the scales of the classroom environment and 'Involvement' the lowest. These findings indicate that the secondary school-level EFL students perceive that their teachers treat them equally, praise them and provide opportunities to be included in classroom discussions. The low ratings of the 'Involvement' scale - focusing on students' own wish to participate in classroom activities and their interest in being involved with their peers - show that the students' initiative is somewhat dubious and they might need teachers' guidance and leadership to create a positive learning environment.

Student perceptions of the classroom environment can depend on the culture, disciplines, gender and students' individual preferences (Singh and McNeil 2013; Lim and Fraser 2018). The current study focused specifically on English language studies and was carried out in a highly monoethnic and -cultural school, so comparisons to other disciplines and cultures are not applicable. In the current thesis, gender differences in learning environment perceptions could be seen. Female students were found to be more positive about the classroom environment in all of the five WIHIC scales which coincides with the findings of both Lim and Fraser (2018) and Giles (2019). This is supported by the understanding that female and male students have different learning styles which, in turn, require different teaching techniques (Pahlke et al. 2014; Lim and Fraser 2018).

CONCLUSION

Teaching has long ceased to be seen as merely transmitting information. A teacher is expected to be a leader and a motivator in the classroom because without showing leadership qualities, they will not get the most out of their students (Greenier and Whitehead 2016). Researchers have claimed that novice teachers and trainees are likely to be especially concerned about the way to approach their classroom and build a positive environment for studying (Macias 2018; Tiene and Buck 1987). Building a positive environment is a key objective of classroom management and can help the students to learn better and increase their academic achievement (Alzubaidi et al. 2016; Bucholz and Scheffler 2009; Dorman et al. 2006; Byrne et al. 1986).

The aim of this thesis was to determine which leadership styles are predominant among the EFL teachers in the school studied, how students perceive their classroom environment in those classes and eventually, what the relationship between teacher leadership styles and the classroom environment is. The main motivation for this research was personal, so when the author once becomes a teacher, he knows which leadership styles to try and implement for a positive classroom environment to occur, although the ability to choose your leadership style remains unclear. The author also sought to provide active teachers with an understanding of how their leadership styles might impact the learning environment in the classroom so they could change their approach if necessary.

Chapter 1 of the thesis provided an overview of previous studies on teacher leadership styles and the classroom environment, together with its theoretical background. Chapter 2 focused on the methodology of the study, introducing the

gathered data and its analysis. The empirical part of the thesis consisted of three separate data collection methods, beginning with a survey about teacher leadership styles among secondary school level English teachers in the county of Harjumaa. The first survey was followed by a case study where semi-structured interviews were conducted among three teachers and a questionnaire was carried out about classroom environment among students of the same teachers.

The thesis sought to determine the relationship between teacher leadership styles and the classroom environment. The analysis revealed that in the school studied, the students of teachers who mostly project the democratic and transformational leadership styles, and avoid the more rigid and rules-based transactional and autocratic styles, perceive their classroom environment more positively in most scales assessed. These findings imply that students value considerate, motivating and consultative teachers who are oriented to building a good working relationship with their pupils and see them rather as equals than subordinates. Based on the findings, it can be assumed that teachers who wish to build a positive environment for learning in EFL classrooms should seek to evoke characteristics of more person-oriented democratic and transformational leadership styles and not strive for task-oriented transactional and autocratic styles.

These findings coincide with contemporary approaches to language teaching that consider the transformational leadership style to be the most effective (Webrinska 2009, as cited in Erdel & Takkaç 2020: 469). Since a positive learning environment is likely to enhance student achievement, these observations provide an important matter for teachers to consider. However, it cannot be conclusively claimed that a relationship between teacher leadership styles and the classroom environment occurs because the

present study is based on teachers' self-assessments, not their actual classroom behavior.

As studies on the relationship between teacher leadership styles and the classroom environment are few, further research on the topic is recommended. The current thesis focused on a case study that does not provide generalizable data but gives a direction for future studies. In Estonia, these studies should include a broader sample of teachers and students from schools all over the country. Quantitative data collection methods should be used for identifying both the actual teacher leadership styles and students' perceived classroom environments to be able to determine the relationship between them more conclusively.

Similar research should be considered about EFL classes at middle school level. It can be assumed that teachers are required to approach their classroom differently depending on the school level, due to students' age-specific peculiarities and greater versatility of pupils in middle schools. The topic is intriguing because teacher leadership styles are seen to influence the psychological learning environment, specifically its social climate (Cheng 1994a). Based on the assumption that the leadership style a teacher pursues is not only congenital, research in this area is necessary for selecting the appropriate style.

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APPENDIX - Semi-Structured Interview Questions

I: Introduction:

1. For how long have you been working as an English language teacher?
2. From which college or university have you graduated? Which field of study?
3. How would you rate the general learning environment at your school?
4. How many different groups or classes do you currently teach?

II: Teacher leadership style:

1. How would you rate your relationship with your students overall? Give examples.
2. How do you see your role in the classroom? How does it differ depending on the group you teach? Why?
3. How much do you take into account the wishes and recommendations of your students? How much decision-making power do you enable your students?
4. How much do you involve your students in establishing classroom rules?
5. How do you encourage your students in class? Which methods do you use?
6. When you have a conflict with a student, how do you resolve it? Give examples.
7. When there is a conflict between students in the classroom, do you usually resolve it and how? Give examples.
8. How do you correct students' mistakes in writing assignments? Oral assignments? How does it affect your relationship with students?
9. How important is it for you to recognize students for their achievements? Punish them for failure to perform a task? Give examples of recognition and punishment.

III: Conclusion:

1. How much have you previously learned or read about leadership in general? About teacher leadership styles?

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Hans Karelsohn

The Relationship Between Teacher Leadership Styles and Students' Perceived Learning Environment in EFL Classes.
Õpetajate juhtimisstiilide ja õpilaste tajutud õpikeskkonna vaheline seos inglise keele tundides.

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Lehekülgede arv: 75

Annotatsioon:
      Nii alustavad kui ka tegevõpetajad peavad analüüsima, kuidas suhestuda oma õpilastega ja luua õppimiseks positiivne keskkond. Varasemalt on võrdlemisi vähe tähelepanu pööratud sellele, kuidas õpetaja juhtimisstiil võib õpikeskkonda mõjutada, seda eriti võõrkeeletunnis. Siiski on tõdetud, et õpetaja juhtimisstiil mõjutab mingil määral psühholoogilist õpikeskkonda ja klassiruumi sotsiaalset kliimat. Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks on hinnata seost õpetaja juhtimisstiilide ja klassiruumi keskkonna vahel juhtumiuuringuks valitud kooli inglise keele tundides.

      Lõputöö koosneb sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist, kokkuvõttest, kirjanduse loetelust ja ühest lisast. Esimeses peatükis käsitletakse õpetaja juhtimise, selle stiilide ja klassiruumi õpikeskkonda olemust. Lisaks antakse ülevaade varasematest teadustöödest samadel teemadel. Teises peatükis kirjeldatakse metoodikat, mis sisaldab poolstruktureeritud intervjuusid õpetajatega ja kahte eraldiseisvat küsitlust, millest üks viiakse läbi õpetajate ja teine õpilaste seas. Seejärel analüüsitakse õpetajate juhtimisstiilide ja õpilaste tajutava klassiruumi kohta kogutud andmeid. Peatükk lõpeb aruteluga.

      Tulemused näitavad, et koolis, kus juhtumiuuring läbi viidi, tajuvad vastastikustele suhetele orienteeritud ja koostööaltid demokraatlike ja transformatiivsete (*transformational*) õpetajate õpilased oma klassi õpikeskkonda positiivsemalt kui ülesannetele orienteeritud ja hierarhilisemate transaktsionaalsete (*transactional*) ja autokraatlike õpetajate õpilased.

Märksõnad: õpetaja juhtimisstiilid, õpikeskkond, sotsiaalne kliima, motivatsioon, inglise

keele õpetamine

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