

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**AN ANALYSIS ON LANGUAGE TEACHER IMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT
OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A RETRODICTIVE QUALITATIVE
MODELLING**

BY
Zekeriya DURMAZ

Supervisor-Head of Examining and Thesis Monitoring Committee:

Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

Member of Examining and Substitute Thesis Monitoring Committee:

Dr. Senem ZAIMOĞLU

Member of Examining Committee and Substitute Thesis Committee:

Dr. Kahraman KIRAL

Member of Examining Committee and Substitute Thesis Committee.

Prof. Dr. Cem CAN (Çukurova University)

Member of Examining Committee and Substitute Thesis Committee.

Prof. Dr. Hasan BEDİR (Çukurova University)

Ph.D. THESIS

MERSİN/JUNE 2025

APPROVAL
REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY
DIRECTORSHIP OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

We certify that the thesis under the title of “An Analysis on Language Teacher Immunity in the Context of Educational Leadership: A Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling” which was prepared by our student Zekeriya Durmaz with number 2021007003 is consensus for the award of the degree of Ph.D. in the Department of **English Language Education**.

(The Original Copy Hold in Institute Directorate is Signed.)

Uni. Inside Supervisor-Head of Examining Committee-Member of Examining and Thesis monitoring Committee- Regular Member: Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

(The Original Copy Hold in Institute Directorate is Signed.)

Uni. Inside- Member of Examining and Thesis Monitoring Committee:
Dr. Senem ZAIMOĞLU

(The Original Copy Hold in Institute Directorate is Signed.)

Uni. Inside – Substitute Member of Examining and Thesis Monitoring Committee
Regular Member: Dr. Kahraman KIRAL

(The Original Copy Hold in Institute Directorate is Signed.)

Uni. Outside -Member of Examining Committee- Regular Member:
Prof. Dr. Cem Can (Çukurova University)

(The Original Copy Hold in Institute Directorate is Signed.)

Uni. Outside - Member of Examining Committee- Regular Member:
Prof. Dr. Hasan Bedir (Çukurova University)

I confirm that the signatures above belong to the academics mentioned.

(The Original Copy Hold in Institute Directorate is Signed.)

20 /06 / 2025

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saadet SAĞTAŞ TUTKUNCA
Director of Institute of Social Sciences

Note: The uncited usage of the reports, charts, figures and photographs in this thesis, whether original or quoted for mother sources is subject to the Law of Works of Arts and Thought. No: 5846.

DEDICATION

*To my wife, the heart of our home,
and
my two sons, the bright lights of my life,*



ETHICS DECLARATION

Student' s	Name & Surname:	Zekeriya DURMAZ
	Number:	202100703
	Department:	English Language Education
	Program:	Ph.D. Thesis
	Thesis Title:	An Analysis on Language Teacher Immunity in the Context of Educational Leadership: A Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling

I hereby declare that;

I prepared this Ph.D. thesis in accordance with Çağ University Institute of Social Sciences Thesis Writing Directive,

I prepared this thesis within the framework of academic and ethics rules,

I presented all information, documents, evaluations and findings in accordance with scientific ethical and moral principles,

I cited all sources to which I made reference in my thesis,

The work of art in this thesis is original,

I hereby acknowledge all possible loss of rights in case of a contrary circumstance. (in case of any circumstance contradicting with my declaration)

20/06/2025

Zekeriya DURMAZ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many remarkable individuals, both in my professional and personal life.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ, for her invaluable guidance with her immense field knowledge throughout every stage of this process. Her positive attitude, prompt responses to my numerous inquiries, and fully constructive feedback were instrumental in helping me stay focused, keep on track and complete this study. I truly feel distinguished to have her as my supervisor. I am confident that her future students will be fortunate to have her mentorship.

I am also deeply thankful to the members of my thesis committee, Prof. Dr. Cem CAN and Prof. Dr. Hasan BEDİR, Asst. Prof. Dr. Kahraman KIRAL for their expert recommendations and constructive feedback, and specifically, Asst. Prof. Dr. Senem ZAİMOĞLU, who guided me like an honorary supervisor. Their practical insights significantly shaped the direction of this research. And my heartfelt thanks go to my lecturers, Prof. Dr. Jülide İNÖZÜ, and Asst. Prof. Dr. Seden TUYAN, for their exceptional teaching, subject-matter expertise, and continuous encouragement.

I owe special thanks to my PhD squad, Ceyda ÖRÜK, Ecem EKER UKA, and Tuğçe BİLGİ ÇİMEN. Your resilience and fight against the challenges as a parent, teacher, administrator and a PhD student motivated me to sustain and keep on track.

I am especially grateful to my director, colleague, and brother, Asst. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Salih YOĞUN, as well as my esteemed colleague and brother, Ahmet KONUKOĞLU, for their consistent support, understanding, and encouragement throughout this journey.

My deepest thanks are reserved for my dearest wife and my two amazing sons. Thank you for being my anchor, my cheerleader, and my joy. Your love, laughter, and understanding through the long hours and challenging days of this endeavour have made all the difference. This thesis is as much yours as it is mine. It was a joy to serve me coffee and cookies every time I started studying for this thesis. They surely enhanced my resilience and boosted my academic immunity.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the participant educational leaders. My special thanks go to my colleagues who joined in the second phase of the study and generously volunteered their time, providing the invaluable, rich data that made this research possible.

Zekeriya DURMAZ

ABSTRACT

An Analysis on Language Teacher Immunity in the Context of Educational Leadership: A Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling

Zekeriya DURMAZ

Ph.D. Thesis English Language Education Department

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

June 2025, 132 Pages

This study investigates the dynamic phenomenon of language teacher immunity within the framework of educational leadership using a Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (RQM) approach informed by Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST). The research aims to identify distinct teacher immunity archetypes of educational leaders and uncover the underlying trajectories, and contextual influences that shape their professional trajectories over time. The study was carried out through an integrative research design (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2019). For the first phase of the study, a purposive sampling approach was utilised. In this initial phase, the Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ), developed by Hiver (2016), was applied to 62 administrative members at universities in Türkiye to reveal the distribution of the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) management team members across the immunity types (e.g. productively-immunized, maladaptively-immunized). The collected quantitative data was subjected to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. Depending on the mean scores, four participants were selected for the subsequent phase of the study, using a mix of purposive sampling (Dörnyei, 2007) and convenience sampling methods, considering their availability, willingness, and ease of access (Charmaz, 2017). In the second phase of the study, in-depth rich data were collected through semi-structured interview questions, and narratives (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008) of the administrators on adaptation to the managerial role, reaction to administrative challenges, the effect of the process on the managerial skills, coping strategies applied to deal with the dynamic nature of teaching environment, and pursuing an equilibrium between occupational burdens of teaching and administrative roles. All qualitative data were collected in two intervals, and the data were subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and subsequently to narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Quantitative findings indicated that 62 participant administrative members clustered around 4.16, so they demonstrated a productively immunized managers archetype. Additionally, the qualitative data generated several themes

referring to educational leaders' early career trajectories as EFL teachers, transition to leadership within a higher education context, adapting to challenges, and current and future perspectives as administrators. Despite administrative constraints, each participant was empowered by key affordances such as supportive higher management, collegial support, and institutional familiarity. The significance of administrators' resilience, the pivotal role of collegial support, the influence of institutional culture, and the coping mechanisms employed during critical incidents of the participant educational leaders all shaped the psychological immunity of the educational leaders. Finally, the findings found that all participants demonstrated progress from early overwhelm or burnout risk to resilience and forward-looking leadership, namely, from halfway-immunised leaders to productively immunised leaders. Through a novel perspective, this study offers significant implications for teacher development, institutional policy-makers and related stakeholders such as CoHE and THEQC, advocating for leadership training and school cultures that prioritise emotional support, professional agency, and collaborative engagement to enhance educational leaders' resilience and long-term professional sustainability in the higher education EFL context.

Key words: Complex Dynamic Systems Theory, Educational Leadership, Language Teacher Immunity, Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling

ÖZET

Eğitim Liderliği Bağlamında Dil Öğretmeni Bağışıklığı Üzerine Bir Analiz:

Retrodiktif Nitel Bir Modelleme

Zekeriya DURMAZ

Doktora Tezi, İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

Haziran 2025, 132 Sayfa

Bu çalışma, eğitim liderliği çerçevesinde, Karmaşık Dinamik Sistemler Kuramı'ndan (Complex Dynamic Systems Theory, CDST) beslenen Retrodiktif Nitel Modelleme (Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling, RQM) yaklaşımını kullanarak yabancı dil öğretmeni bağışıklığı olgusunu dinamik bir fenomen olarak incelemektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, eğitim liderlerinin özgün öğretmen bağışıklığı arketiplerini tanımlamak ve mesleki gelişim süreçlerini zaman içinde şekillendiren temel seyirleri ve bağlamsal etkenleri ortaya çıkarmaktır. Çalışma, Hiver ve Al-Hoorie (2019) tarafından önerilen bütünleştirici bir araştırma deseniyle yürütülmüştür. Araştırmanın ilk aşamasında amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu ilk aşamada, Hiver (2016) tarafından geliştirilen Dil Öğretmeni Bağışıklığı Ölçeği (Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire, LTIQ), Türkiye'deki üniversitelerde görev yapan 62 idari personele uygulanmış ve Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu (YDYO) yönetim kadrosunun bağışıklık türleri (ör. yapıcı bağışıklık geliştirmiş, uyumsuz bağışıklık geliştirmiş) bakımından dağılımı incelenmiştir. Toplanan nicel veriler, SPSS yazılımı ile analiz edilmiştir. Ortalama puanlara bağlı olarak, ikinci aşama için dört katılımcı, amaçlı örnekleme (Dörnyei, 2007) ve kolayda örnekleme (Charmaz, 2017) yöntemleriyle, erişilebilirlikleri, gönüllülük ve ulaşımındaki kolaylık dikkate alınarak seçilmiştir.

Araştırmanın ikinci aşamasında, yöneticilerin yönetsel role uyum süreçleri, idari zorluklara verdikleri tepkiler, sürecin yönetsel becerilere etkisi, öğretim ortamının dinamik doğasıyla başa çıkma stratejileri ve öğretimle idari görevler arasındaki dengeyi sürdürme çabaları gibi konulara odaklanan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve anlatılar (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008) aracılığıyla derinlemesine nitel veri toplanmıştır. Tüm nitel veriler iki aşamada toplanmış ve önce tematik analiz (Braun & Clarke, 2006), ardından anlatı analizi (Polkinghorne, 1995) ile çözümlenmiştir.

Nicel bulgular, 62 yöneticinin ortalama 4.16 puanla “yapıcı bağışıklık geliştirmiş yönetici” arketipi etrafında kümелendiğini göstermiştir. Nitel veriler ise, eğitim liderlerinin erken kariyer dönemlerine, yükseköğretim bağlamında liderliğe geçişlerine, karşılaştıkları zorluklara uyum süreçlerine ve mevcut ile geleceğe yönelik yönetsel perspektiflerine dair çeşitli temalar ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcılar, idari kısıtlılıklara rağmen, üst yönetimin desteği, meslektaş dayanışması ve kurumsal aşinalık gibi önemli olanaklar sayesinde güçlenmişlerdir. Yöneticilerin psikolojik bağışıklığını şekillendiren temel etkenler arasında dayanıklılık, meslektaş desteğinin önemi, kurumsal kültürün etkisi ve kritik olaylar sırasında kullanılan başa çıkma stratejileri öne çıkmıştır. Sonuç olarak, tüm katılımcıların, başlangıçtaki tükenmişlik riski ya da kırılğan durumlarından dirençli ve vizyoner liderliğe, yani yarı bağışık liderlikten yapıcı bağışıklık geliştirmiş liderliğe doğru bir gelişim gösterdikleri belirlenmiştir.

Bu çalışma özgün niteliğiyle dikkat çekmekte olup, öğretmen gelişimi, kurumsal politika yapıcılar ve YÖK ile YÖKAK gibi ilgili paydaşlar için önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır. Çalışma, eğitim liderlerinin dayanıklılığını ve uzun vadeli mesleki sürdürülebilirliğini desteklemek amacıyla, duygusal desteği, mesleki özerkliği ve iş birliğine dayalı katılımı önceleyen liderlik eğitimi ve okul kültürlerinin geliştirilmesini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eğitim Liderliği, Karmaşık Dinamik Sistemler Kuramı, Retrodiktif Nitel Modelleme, Yabancı Dil Öğretmeni Bağışıklığı.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER.....	i
APPROVAL.....	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ETHICS DECLARATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
ÖZET	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF APPENDICES	xvi

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	1
1.3. Purpose of the Study	3
1.4. Significance of the Study	4
1.5. Literature Review	7
1.6. Motivation.....	7
1.6.1. Teacher Motivation.....	8
1.7. Language Teacher Immunity.....	9
1.8. Educational Leadership and Educational Management at Language Schools ...	10
1.8.1. Formation of Administrative Team at Higher Education Language Schools in Türkiye.....	12
1.8.2. Experiencing the Transition from Language Teacher into Management and Leadership.....	13
1.9. The Complex Dynamic Systems Perspective	13

CHAPTER II

2. METHODOLOGY	15
2.1. Introduction.....	15
2.2. Researcher's Role in The Study	15
2.3. Research Design	16
2.3.1. Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (RQM)	16
2.3.2. Phase I: Identifying Teacher Archetypes.....	17
2.3.2.1. Context and Participants	17
2.3.2.2. Data Collection Instruments.....	19
2.3.2.2.1. Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) ..	20
2.3.2.3. Data Analysis	21
2.3.3. Phase II: Narrative Inquiry	21
2.3.3.1. Context and Participants	23
2.3.3.2. Data Collection Instruments.....	23
2.3.3.2.1. Narrative Frames Templates	24
2.3.3.2.2. Open-ended Questions	25
2.3.3.3. Data Analysis	25

CHAPTER III

3. FINDINGS.....	29
3.1. Introduction.....	29
3.2. Findings Related to Defining Language Teacher Immunity Archetype.....	29
3.3. Findings Related to Factors Contributing to Immunity State	30
3.3.1. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 1	34
3.3.1.1. Early Career Trajectories of P1 as an EFL Teacher.....	36
3.3.1.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context	37
3.3.1.3. Adapting to Challenges	40
3.3.1.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P1 as an Administrator	44
3.3.2. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 2.....	47
3.3.2.1. Early Career Trajectories of P2 as an EFL Teacher.....	48
3.3.2.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context	49
3.3.2.3. Adapting to Challenges	54
3.3.2.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P2 as an Administrator	57
3.3.3. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 3	60

3.3.3.1. Early Career Trajectories of P3 as an EFL Teacher.....	62
3.3.3.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context	62
3.3.3.3. Adapting to Challenges	66
3.3.3.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P3 as an Administrator	70
3.3.4. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 4.....	74
3.3.4.1. Early Career Trajectories of P4 as an EFL Teacher.....	76
3.3.4.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context	76
3.3.4.3. Adapting to Challenges	79
3.3.4.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P4 as an Administrator	81
3.4. Overview of Findings	84
3.5. Verification of Findings through Member Checking	84

CHAPTER IV

4. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS.....	87
4.1. Introduction.....	87
4.2. Summary of the Study	87
4.3. Discussion of the Findings of Research Questions.....	89
4.3.1. Discussion for Research Question 1	89
4.3.2. Discussion for Research Question 2	90
4.4. Implications for Practice	100
4.5. Future Recommendations and Limitations.....	102
4.5.1. Limitations of the Study	102
4.5.2. Recommendations for Future Research.....	103
REFERENCES	105
APPENDICES	113

ABBREVIATIONS

CDST	: Complex Dynamic System Theory
CoHE	: Council of Higher Education
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
EL	: Educational Leadership
ELT	: English Language Teaching
LTI	: Language Teacher Immunity
RQM	: Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling
SFL	: School of Foreign Languages
THEQC	: Turkish Higher Education Quality Council



LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. <i>Typology of management and leadership models (Bush, 2003)</i>	11
Table 2. <i>The Research Design Table of the Study</i>	15
Table 3. <i>Distribution of University Type and Ongoing Administrative Duty of the Participants</i>	17
Table 4. <i>Frequency and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics of Participants at the First Data Collection Stage</i>	18
Table 5. <i>Demographic Information of Four Participants Selected for Phase II</i>	23
Table 6. <i>Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)</i>	25
Table 7. <i>Descriptive Statistics of the Subscales</i>	30
Table 8. <i>Overarching Themes and Corroborated Sub-Themes Based on the Thematic Analysis</i>	31
Table 9. <i>Description of the Themes</i>	32
Table 10. <i>The Common and Distinctive Trajectories of the Participants</i>	86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. <i>Evolution of scientific production on EL (García-Carmona et al., 2022)</i>	10
Figure 2. <i>A Three-dimensional, Multiscalar Narrative Space (Barkhuizen, 2016)</i>	28
Figure 3. <i>Three Interconnected Stories: A Revised Framework Adapted from Barkhuizen (2008)</i>	33
Figure 4. <i>Three-level narrative overlay of P1</i>	35
Figure 5. <i>Retrodictive Pathway of P1</i>	47
Figure 6. <i>Three-level narrative overlay of P2</i>	48
Figure 7. <i>Retrodictive Pathway of P2</i>	60
Figure 8. <i>Three-level narrative overlay of P3</i>	61
Figure 9. <i>Retrodictive Pathway of P3</i>	74
Figure 10. <i>Three-level narrative overlay of P4</i>	75
Figure 11. <i>Retrodictive Pathway of P4</i>	83

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A. <i>Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ)</i>	113
Appendix B. <i>Semi-structured Interview Questions (Open-Ended questions)</i>	115
Appendix C. <i>Sentence Starters on the Four Narrative Frames Templates</i>	116



CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This dissertation aims to reveal the distribution of the management team members working in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Preparatory Programs, which are nested in Higher Education institutions in Türkiye, across language teacher immunity teacher archetypes. It also aims to identify factors that might have contributed to their current psychological immunity types by revealing the causal mechanisms with regard to their trajectories. The types of immunity under investigation are researched backwards through a Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (henceforth RQM) approach, which was first suggested by Dörnyei (2014) as a research model for the second language acquisition literature. This chapter reviews the background of the study, states the statement of the problem, explains the purpose of the study, and provides the literature review with the aim of a greater understanding related to the issues under investigation.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language is a complex, adaptive, and emergent endeavour (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017; Larsen-Freeman, 1997, 2015). Considering that managerial team members of language schools at higher education are composed of the language teachers selected among the school's academic staff, educational management is not less complex, less adaptive or less emergent. If this is the case, the educational leaders of EFL programs are required to be resilient, open to change, adaptive to new conditions, and adopt a high level of management skills to sustain an equilibrium in the course of effective external and internal factors causing perturbations (Hiver, 2016). Depending on students' needs as well as teachers' needs, requirements, regulations and decisions taken by the higher management in line with the policy makers' instructions, the educational leaders are forced to (co)adapt to the planned or unplanned changes, and manage the emergent adversities before these complex trajectories turn into complicated experiences. Sudden changes in politics, global and local chaos-level adversities like COVID-19 pandemics (Khan et al., 2025), natural disasters like quakes, and wars resulting from/in national and international conflicts also necessitate educational leaders to be resilient, proactive and productively immunised (Hiver et al.,

2015) to be able to cope with adversities so that they can sustain the educational facility. Given that educational leaders at language schools of higher education psychologically challenge the adversities of the profession and the position, this requires a protective mechanism against the regular emotional and intellectual demands of the job, and the interruptions they encounter at the workplace. Recent research conducted in the Turkish universities' context (Yoğun, 2025) found that foreign language school leaders are expected to meet personal and institutional needs, and the school leaders need to be trained in certain management fields before and after their appointment. He recites similar challenges and the fields of training as “being an agent of change, fostering a culture of collaboration, creating vision and inspiration, mediation, school improvement, policy-making, quality-oriented and continuous cognitive labour, checking and ensuring policies, paper works and system, quality assurance, mediation, participative approach, and change management” (p. vii). In the process of meeting all these needs, a kind of professional equilibrium may be preserved thanks to psychological immunity. This suggests that psychological immunity of some kind is necessary for the survival of the educational leaders of language schools as well as of the language teachers. Although the roles of educational leaders vary across certain language programs, the rewards, challenges, and total workload are similarly nested around motivation, performance management, delegating tasks, conflict management, and legislation.

Through this approach, the study aims to make a significant contribution to the area of English language education at higher education by promoting a deeper comprehension of the complex link between educational leadership and language teacher immunity.

As to the reflection of teacher immunity research on the management of the school of foreign languages (SFL), some research results are proposed to educational leaders since research in this field is rare. Lack of research on language teacher immunity in relation to educational leadership in the context of English language teaching provides an opportunity to fill a void in the field as follows:

1. The language teacher immunity concept is studied in a novel context, which is educational leadership in EFL preparatory programs at Higher Education of Türkiye. Therefore, the concept of teacher immunity is revisited in relation to educational leadership at language schools.

2. Including the assisting directors and the coordinators, the EFL program administrative team members' psychological immunity level is investigated in relation to the adversities they have challenged.
3. This study is assumed to provide rich empirical evidence about the affordances provided and constraints faced in the process of managing a language program. The methods educational leaders utilise to sustain the educational facility effectively despite adversities can encourage other teachers who hold an administrative role in another context.
4. Finally, referring to the empirical results, the challenges that language school leaders at EFL programs are considered, and better teaching and managerial conditions can be encouraged by the higher management of the universities, policymakers and all other related stakeholders.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to utilise a comprehensive analysis of language teacher immunity within the framework of educational leadership at English language preparatory schools in universities under the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) of Türkiye (YÖK in Turkish). The first stage of the study is targeted to reveal the different categories of teacher immunity (productively-immunized, maladaptively-immunized, immunocompromised, partially immunized) of educational leaders and their salient characteristics under each category to outline the primary categories of teacher immunity and their key traits in a new setting; the Turkish higher education context, using a sample of language school administration team. The aim here is to reveal the distribution of the management team members working in the School of Foreign Languages across the teacher immunity types (productively-immunized, maladaptively-immunized, immunocompromised, partially immunized) in reference to Hiver et al.'s (2015) novel conceptualisation. In their study, they categorise language teachers under the aforementioned teacher immunity types. In this study, we categorised educational leaders according to their teacher immunity levels. After defining the prototypical members of the management, in the second and main stage, we aimed to investigate individual pathways of "language leader immunity" through qualitative data tools (e.g. semi-structured interviews, narratives, critical incidents etc.) by applying to individual administrative members who joined the research on a voluntary basis. The aim of the interviews was to identify factors that might have contributed to respondents' current

psychological immunity types they possess, to reveal the causal mechanisms with regard to trends and trajectories through an RQM approach.

By examining the challenges, stressors, and perceptions of language school leaders, this research aims to identify the challenges and the constraints encountered by the school management team and to offer evidence-based suggestions to policymakers, educational leaders, and other stakeholders on how to improve institutional support and leadership practices in order to increase language school management team's performance and sense of well-being as professionals. Considering the purpose of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: How are the teacher immunity types proposed by Hiver (2016) distributed among educational leaders in EFL preparatory programs?

RQ2: What are the factors contributing to educational leaders' current immunity state?

- a. How do the professional trajectories of educational leaders shape their immunity development?
- b. How do educational leaders respond to constraints and affordances across micro, meso, and macro levels?
- c. In what ways do educational leaders actively shape their immunity through leadership strategies and adaptive practices?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Scholars have studied psychological immunity within the learner and teacher motivation frameworks, and educational leadership (EL) concepts for decades, and these concepts have so far been investigated by their various dimensions. The earliest research on motivation was done in the 1930s, and it was believed that understanding motivation required an understanding of the unconscious forces that shape cognition and behaviour. Contemporary motivational studies have evolved since studies by prominent scholars such as Gardner and Lambert (1959), who constituted one of the earliest motivational studies. Researchers have so far studied student and teacher motivation through several theories like integrative motivation (Gardner, 2001), process model (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998), self-determination theory (Ryan, 2009), and L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009). In this regard, in his contemporary study, Hiver (2016) investigated Language Teacher Immunity in relation to motivation from the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) perspective. Recently, MacIntyre et al. (2015), Hiver and Dörnyei (2017), and Hiver and Larsen-Freeman (2020) have emphasised the complex,

dynamic and adaptive aspects of motivation. Elaborating on language teacher motivation, Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) delved into language teacher immunity (LTI) as “a robust armouring system that emerges in response to high-intensity threats and allows teachers to maintain professional equilibrium and instructional effectiveness” (Hiver, 2017, p. 669) by laying emphasize on the complex, dynamic, adaptive, and iterative principles of CDST. In terms of teacher and learner motivation, it has been represented as a driving force to act with the purpose of reaching the target (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). In the L2 context, learner motivation refers to the endeavour to learn a second or foreign language through an internal or external source (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), which drives learners to learn a new language in an intrinsic or extrinsic source of motivation. Taking teacher motivation into account, the studies were conducted later with a greater number than studies on learner motivation (e.g. Doyle & Kim, 1999; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Erkaya, 2013; Richardson & Watt, 2010; Watt et al., 2012). The initial teacher motivation research focused on mostly the motivation of novice teachers. However, recently, more research has focused on in-service teachers’ motivation from the positive psychology view to sustain their profession despite the contemporary challenges of teaching (Han & Yin, 2016).

Besides language teacher motivation and language teacher immunity, a considerable number of studies have been done on educational leadership. Robertson and Webber (2002), with the purpose of highlighting the complexity of educational leadership, advocated that “educational leaders today are compelled to practice in complex politicised diverse conditions to a greater degree than ever in the history of education” (p. 520). Therefore, educational leaders need to be creative and innovative in their applications (Ingleton, 2013) and embrace the practice of adaptive leadership in such a complex environment (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004). Also, educational leaders are expected to be equipped with adaptive skills as the “problems facing schools face today are adaptive problems...and require adaptive leadership concepts and techniques” (Owens & Valesky, 2014; p. 271). Also, research highlights how school leaders faced the challenging tasks of adapting to and navigating through the internal and external influences of ups and downs. With the aim of providing the best possible outcome for students and the school community during periods of extreme change, complexity, and uncertainty, school leaders’ openness to changes and adaptive skills to the new perturbations is another vital point (Dunn, 2020).

To elaborate more on the research on educational leadership, the primary findings point out that while research on educational leadership has been carried out since the 1920s, it was not until 2004 that it significantly reached a point (García-Carmona et al., 2022). Additionally, Leithwood and Slegers (2006) advocate that educational leadership is thought to have a significant impact on school improvement, and it is attributed to the director, manager or all managerial members of the institution. Several types of educational leadership such as learning leadership, teacher leadership (Harris, 2003), and distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005) have been studied by various researchers mostly at the primary and secondary school levels. Contemporary research has also approached the challenges that department heads, department chairs, deans, and vice-rectors (Hacifazlioglu et al., 2022) of higher education institutions encounter in the process of professionalising (Dimici et al., 2016) and has come up with some solutions to meet those challenges of management and leadership (Chen, 2009). However, studies approaching the concept of educational leadership from tertiary-level language school leaders' perspectives are rare. To illustrate this, Harris (2004) wrote that 'while a few research studies have focused on leadership practices in higher education, little research has focused on effectiveness or on the means for increasing effectiveness, particularly at the departmental level' (p. 4). Given that a language school is taken as a serving department of a university, this study will particularly concentrate on language schools as a department of the higher education institutions, and form its design accordingly. This approach is aligned with the particularity aspect of CDST (Larsen-Freeman, 2015) as tertiary-level preparatory programs have their particular challenges which require particular solutions.

As for the current exploratory study, educational leadership is associated with EFL preparatory program managers, administrators, directors; assisting directors, as well as the vice-directors, namely all members of the school management who fulfil the academic and administrative issues of the schools of foreign languages at higher education institutions. To the best of my knowledge, no empirical study has linked language teacher immunity to educational leadership. This link, however, is significant as motivation is assumed as the predictor of staff satisfaction: not only of the teachers, but also of the administrative staff (Kantabutra, 2010). Bridging between language teacher immunity (LTI) and educational leadership, this study aims to investigate the immunity archetype educational leaders embody in the process of managing language programs at higher education institutions, and trace backwards to find out the causal

mechanisms that emerge from the archetype they embody, and trajectories they have experienced in the process of managing the school they have been responsible for.

1.5. Literature Review

In order to underpin the current state of the English language teaching field, this section, which is a review of the literature, is devoted to discussing major theories, key concepts related to positive psychology concepts, educational leadership, and language teacher immunity by referencing the well-known research studies related to the contemporary concepts in language teaching institution contexts.

1.6. Motivation

The study of motivation has gained a contemporary meaning with studies done on motivation through the proposed theories in psychology in relation to physical needs and goals (McDougall, 1923). Since then, motivation has been accepted as an act which is open to change and manipulation. In 1998, Dörnyei and Ottó argued that motivation is rooted in *Social Psychology*, which means human attitudes are characterised by motivational and social psychology. In the same year, Seligman (1998) introduced positive psychology. This approach advocated focusing more on the positive aspect of issues, rejecting any evaluation of individuals by their deficits. Through this view, he claimed a change in the discipline's emphasis on human flourishing and well-being (Linley et al., 2006). Rather than focusing on the weaknesses, they advocated highlighting the productive and skilful aspects of individuals. In addition to this argument, in their recent study, MacIntyre et al. (2015) approached motivation by identifying the characteristics of motivation. They suggested that “motivation has adaptive and self-organising properties, with feedback loops that continuously integrate internal and external contexts” (p. 423). The studies (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017; Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020) done in the following years highlighted the complex, dynamic, and adaptive aspects of motivation.

1.6.1. Teacher Motivation

As the research (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017; Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020) suggests for the overall concept of motivation, motivation for teachers is also a complex and multifaceted concept that refers to the enthusiasm and drive that pushes them to pursue their careers (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). It involves the motivation behind people's

decision to become teachers as well as the amount of work and resilience they put forth in their teaching professions. Various components of teacher motivation were identified by researchers, such as the social contextual impacts, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, and demotivating variables. Studies on the motivation of pre-service and in-service teachers to teach have found that extrinsic, altruistic, and intrinsic motivators are important drivers. The motivation of in-service teachers to maintain teaching has also been investigated with an emphasis on the variables affecting their desire to teach, the connection between their motivation and their efficacy, and the influence on student motivation (Sinclair, 2008). Also, various factors that influence teacher motivation have been investigated. These factors include teachers having the autonomy to choose teaching materials and methods, professional relationships and development opportunities, social values and norms, working environment and colleagues, and personal and professional variables (Watt et al., 2012).

Intrinsic motivation, such as a passion for teaching, is also important for teacher motivation, while extrinsic factors like financial benefits may play a role as well. On the other hand, there are demotivating factors that can undermine teacher motivation, such as high levels of professional stress and a lack of interest due to negative experiences or some other external factors (Kızıltepe, 2008). Teacher motivation is closely related to teaching effectiveness. Research shows that motivated teachers are more likely to enhance classroom effectiveness. Additionally, teacher motivation can also impact student motivation through the use of motivating strategies and creating a supportive learning environment. Overall, teacher motivation is a complex and pivotal factor in the field of EFL education.

1.7. Language Teacher Immunity

As coined by Hiver and Dörnyei (2017), and sustained the momentum with Hiver and Dörnyei's (2015) studies, Language Teacher Immunity (LTI) has become an attention-gathering topic of language teacher motivation studies with its constructs: teachers' burnout, resilience, openness to change, attitudes toward teaching and classroom affectivity. Language teacher immunity, as a novel concept, functions as a robust armouring system in adversities faced in the process of teaching. Hiver (2016) based this term on the biological science meaning, with an analogy between physical immunity and psychological immunity and conceptualised the term within the English

language teaching context. Teacher immunity functions as a defence system that develops when exposed to adversities. It involves a dual process, manifesting either productively as adaptive strategies enhancing effectiveness in a task or maladaptively as resistance to change and low motivation (Hiver et al., 2015). In light of this argument, Hiver (2016) supports that positively immunised teachers demonstrate resilience and motivation, even during global troubles like the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, negatively immunised teachers experience burnout and decreased teaching quality (Ordem, 2017). As emphasized by Hiver (2018), despite its similarities to resilience, LTI is distinct in its global integration of identity, motivation, and self-efficacy.

Besides Hiver's studies, LTI has also been studied in the Turkish context (Durmaz & Kahyalar-Gursoy, 2021; Ordem, 2017; Sarıçoban & Kırmızı, 2021; Saydam, 2019) and Iranian context (Haseli Songhori et al., 2018; Rahimpour et al., 2020; Rahmati et al., 2019) as well as a comparative study by Canbay and Sönmez (2023). While comparatively fewer researchers (Attaran et al., 2018; Gürsoy, 2018; Samavarchi et al., 2019) examined psychological immunity in relation to students, teachers' psychological immunity has been the focus of most researchers. For instance, Rahimpour et al. (2020) argued in their study that "there exists a gap in the factors which can predict LTI." Also, Hiver (2017) concluded in his study that "teacher immunity has the potential to bridge individual and situative concerns in second language teacher education and the psychology of language teaching and learning." (p.669), and Ordem (2017) concluded that language teachers "did not reach equilibrium and a stable state as a result of external factors that caused perturbation" and "developed maladaptive immunity because she refused to produce a new method or approach" (p.5). A comprehensive study done at a Turkish university by Saydam (2018) revealed that the demographics of the Turkish university instructors has no effect on their state of immunity. All these studies that approach psychological immunity from diverse aspects make a great deal of contribution to the language teacher immunity concept, functioning as a base for further immunity-related research.

As for the theoretical components of LTI, as suggested in a comprehensive study conducted by Hiver (2016), teacher self-efficacy plays a prominent role since it is advocated that teachers need to feel emotionally and psychologically "comfortable" in their teaching environment in order to teach well, feel empowered in their work, and feel confident enough to change their students' lives. Nested under the concept of Language

Teacher Immunity, attitudes towards teaching, coping, classroom affectivity, state of burnout, the ability of resilience, and characteristics of openness to change constitute other theoretical components of LTI. These components explain LTI as a novel multifaceted concept.

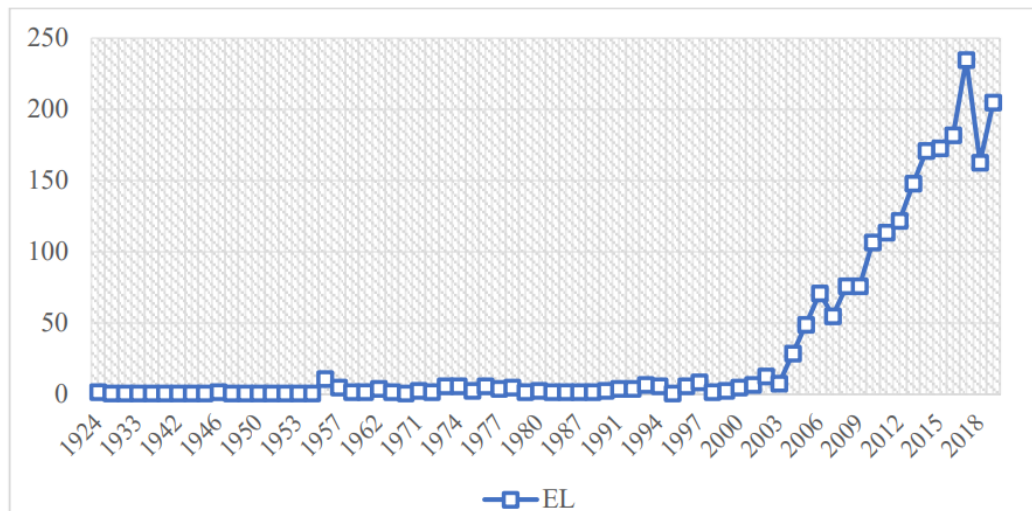
1.8. Educational Leadership and Educational Management at Language Schools

The comprehensive definition of educational leadership (EL) refers to “the professional practice of a leader (or leaders) in an administrative role(s) working with, guiding, and influencing educators in a particular context toward improving learning and other educational processes” (Santamaría, 2016, p.1). Some researchers distinguish leadership from management (Bush, 2003), while some of them use these two terms interchangeably, and blend these two terms respecting each of the concepts’ private domains and types. For instance, Day et al. (2001) advocate that educational management and educational leadership differ in application; the former is more related to paperwork and regulations, and the latter is more related to the professional development of the staff. In addition, Barnett (2019) highlights the inseparable whole aspect of these two concepts and quotes “Leadership without management is empty; management without leadership is blind”. Considering their concentric meaning, for the sake of consistency, I will use “administrators” in this study to refer to school directors, managers, vice/assisting directors, school leaders, and educational leaders, namely all having an administrative role at a school of foreign languages. As the distinguishing meaning is not the concern of this study, the terms like “management team member”, “participant language school administrator”, and “participant educational leaders” that we use in this study all refer to the administrators at SFLs at universities.

The pioneering EL studies started in the 1920s and gained significant interest in the 2000s. In the last two decades, researchers approached the concept of educational leadership from a variety of perspectives (García-Carmona et al., 2022). Figure 1 demonstrates the number of studies on EL in a century and how it has gained momentum in the last two decades.

Figure 1

Evolution of scientific production on EL (García-Carmona et al., 2022)



In the course of managing a school, managers adopt a particular model or a blend of management models intentionally or unintentionally. Bush (2003) proposes nine leadership models associated with six managerial models that educational leaders adopt.

Table 1

Typology of management and leadership models (Bush, 2003)

Management Model	Leadership Model
Formal	Managerial
Collegial	Transformational
Political	Participative
Subjective	Interpersonal
Ambiguity	Transactional
Cultural	Postmodern
	Contingency
	Moral
	Instructional

In line with this, the arguments proposed by Leithwood et al. (1999) base these propositions on providing administrators and leaders distinct perspectives for managing the school in diverse circumstances. Table 1 highlights these perspectives by demonstrating the management and leadership models.

This typology offers a thorough framework for comprehending the complex nature of management and leadership in schools. School leaders can critically examine their own methods and modify their tactics to suit particular institutional situations by seeing how different leadership models fit different management approaches. In the end, Bush's typology is a useful tool for educational leaders who want to make well-informed, context-sensitive decisions to discuss the challenges of school administration.

1.8.1. Formation of Administrative Team at Higher Education Language Schools in Türkiye

The term “managers”, with its broader meaning, embodies all management team members such as directors, principals and directors of studies or heads of department, as well as those with assistant manager or coordinator responsibilities (Rossner, 2013). Likewise, Santamaria (2016) identifies educational leaders as the “school site leaders, principals, assistant or associate administrators” serving as “center director, head of school, department chair, academic dean, provost, or president” (p.1). In this study, in line with these definitions, educational leaders and administrators refer to all administrative team members such as heads of language schools, SFL program directors, and the vice directors managing EFL preparatory programs at higher education institutions. Also, termed “ESL program directors” or “ESL administrators” by Pennington and Xiao (1990), educational leaders at language schools are “associated more with the role of manager than with the role of educator.” (p.3) and managing an SFL is different from the administration of other departments at higher education because of its unique nature.

In Turkey, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) do not offer a structured preparatory programme for educational leaders. For this reason, the training process for school leaders, the selection and appointment criteria have been complicated and unsystematic (Beycioğlu & Wildy, 2015, Kılınç et al., 2021). Kılınç et al. (2021) analysed the historical formation of educational leadership in Türkiye, and they came up with three phases: The Ottoman Era, the Early Years of the Turkish Republic, and the 1950s Onwards. They found that educational leaders have been selected by referring to their personal properties rather than providing a well-structured professional development programme. In line with this, educational leaders at SFLs in Turkish higher education institutions are selected by the rectorate among the academic staff regardless of having an official certificate or competence in administration. As it translates “SFL directors are selected from among the academic staff. ...”, the rector appoints one of the academic members as the school director for three years. Upon selection of the director to the SFL, the director appoints the vice/assisting director(s) among the SFL academic staff to serve for three years. The vice directors are not required to hold a major in management, either. However, the administrative team members are expected to be hardworking, committed, and devoted

to moral norms and ethics in leadership (Beycioglu et al., 2018). Neither CoHE nor the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) assert the contrary. The purpose of the THEQC, a public legal body with administrative and financial autonomy, is to assess the quality of research and teaching activities as well as administrative services provided by higher education institutions in compliance with national and international quality standards. Considering this is the case for selection, the transition from teaching to managing turns into an inevitably challenging process for the school directors.

1.8.2. Experiencing the Transition from Language Teacher into Management and Leadership

Educational leaders adopt a renewed role when they transform from an academic position to an administrative one. This transition brings a process of novel challenges such as reconstructing the relationship with the academic staff, adjusting to the new responsibilities, and all other unexpected management duties (Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989). Gmelch (2000) argues that newly appointed educational leaders experience this new role in three phases: separation, transition, and incorporation. Although this is the way of appointing an educational leader in Turkish higher education institutions, a limited number of studies have so far been done on this issue of transition (Çelik, 2007; Erçetin & Baskan, 2000; Hacifazlioglu, 2010; Özkanlı and White, 2009). The research shows that while some institutions recruit administrators through external appointment, others utilize an inbreeding process.

1.9. The Complex Dynamic Systems Perspective

Dianne Larsen-Freeman (1997) first introduced the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) to applied linguistics by highlighting the interacting components of the whole. This physical world analogy was conceptualized as “the theory of change”. In line with this, Larsen-Freeman (2015) proposed that “change and emergence are central to any understanding of complex dynamic systems.” (p.11). In addition to Larsen-Freeman, Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019) claimed that the Complexity Theory has introduced a novel paradigm for thought especially in EFL research. So, they proposed the CDST perspective as a novel perspective to applied linguistics studies by claiming that language learning and teaching are complex, dynamic, and are developed in a non-linear pattern. The research field of complexity theory has also contributed to the understanding of educational institutions and their transformation as well as, possibly, the nature of

learning itself (Byrne, 2014). The phenomenon under investigation is relational (everything counts and is connected) and adaptive (everything changes). Significant insights have been gained via methodological innovation in the study of complex systems for two decades because this discipline addresses more challenging concerns (Hiver et al., 2022). On the other hand, educational leadership has a functional base of complex, dynamic and non-linear because of its changing nature. Given that educational leadership has the components argued within the CDST framework, research makes clear links between complexity theory and other well-established fields (e.g. leadership theories, organisational learning and organisational dynamics) of educational leadership study (Morrison, 2002). Taking this link into consideration, we adopted the CDST perspective to conduct this research comprehensively.



CHAPTER II

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

This study used an integrated approach to collect, analyse, and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data as part of a nonexperimental, descriptive research process. Table 2 overviews the research design. As the details highlight, this chapter provides an overview of the study's methodology and the research procedures, and it covers the following topics: research design, setting and participants, methods and instruments for collecting data, and data analysis.

Table 2

The Research Design Table of the Study

	Phase I (Quantitative)	Phase II (Qualitative)
Data Collection Tools	The Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire, a 6-point scale with 39 items (Hiver, 2016)	Narrative Frames Templates (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008), Open-ended Questions
Setting & Participants	62 administrative members at universities in Türkiye	4 administrative members at 4 universities in Türkiye
Data Analysis	SPSS	Atlas.ti
Test & Analyses	Descriptive statistics to define the archetype (RQM)	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), Narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995, Barkhuizen, 2016)
Reliability & Verification	Cronbach's Alpha (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Büyüköztürk, 2020)	Member Checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

2.2. Researcher's Role in The Study

The researcher of the study is himself a member of the administration at a School of Foreign Languages in a foundation university in Türkiye with ten years of administration experience as the assistant director and more than ten years of teaching experience in the EFL context.

Also, the researcher has an MA degree in Education Management and Supervision. In other words, the researcher experienced the process of transitioning from a teacher to an administrator with similar and unique affordances and challenges, and he was appointed with the same regulations as the cases of the study. Therefore, the researcher of the study can empathize with the cases of the study.

2.3. Research Design

School of Foreign Languages (SFL) is the sampling of the study. The study was carried out through an integrative research design (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2019). We collected in-depth information on the cases using a variety of data collection techniques over a period of time (Creswell 2014). With this purpose in mind, the Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ), developed by Hiver (2016), was applied to the primary research participants with the aim of revealing the distribution of the SFL management team members across the immunity types (e.g. productively-immunized, maladaptively-immunized) referring to Hiver et al.'s (2015) comprehensive study that defines teacher immunity archetypes.

In the second phase of the study, in-depth rich data were collected through semi-structured interview questions, narratives (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) of the administrators on adaptation to the managerial role, reaction to administrative challenges, the effect of the process on the managerial skills, coping strategies applied to deal with the dynamic nature of teaching environment, and pursuing an equilibrium between occupational burdens of teaching, administrative roles and private life. The participating administrative members had some commonalities as well as key differences, which were unique in their context. In other words, each of them had unique "life stories", explicit trajectories, and particular propositions to challenges. Thus, considering this particularity (Larsen-Freeman, 2015), each administrator was regarded as a case. Therefore, a multiple case study approach was adopted.

2.3.1. Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (RQM)

As a cutting-edge method of research, Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (RQM) was first proposed by Dörnyei (2014) by drawing attention to CDST in SLA research. This model allows a researcher to reverse back the typical way of research so that the researcher has the opportunity to trace the causal mechanisms of an outcome that are associated with the salient archetype (Chan et al., 2014; Hiver, 2017).

To investigate the phenomenon under investigation, we adopted the RQM assuming that teaching English as a foreign language and management of language school are also complex, and a reversed investigation is likely to provide the opportunity to trace the causal mechanisms, and the trajectories related to their experiences.

2.3.2. Phase I: Identifying Teacher Archetypes

As the RQM approach suggests, to proceed with the narrative inquiry into the participants' life stories, we first needed to determine the salient archetype of the participants. Therefore, in the first phase of the study, we used LTIQ as the data collection tool. The ensuing parts highlight the details of Phase I.

2.3.2.1. Context and Participants

The participants of the study constituted the SFL management team members (language school directors and vice-directors) of the volunteer teachers working at state and foundation universities in Türkiye. For the first phase of the study, a purposive sampling approach was utilised considering the purpose of the research, the representatives of the typical attributes, such as the managerial role, teaching knowledge, and administrative experience of the population (Dörnyei, 2007).

Table 3

Distribution of University Type and Ongoing Administrative Duty of the Participants

University Type (Workplace)	Ongoing Administrative Duty			Total
	Director/Acting Director	Vice-director	Other	
State University	8	24	6	38
Foundation University	9	9	6	24
Total	17 (27.4 %)	33 (53.2%)	12	62

The participants of the first phase of the study constituted EFL directors and assistant directors at SFLs in the selected Turkish state and foundation universities.

The demographic data presented in Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the 62 respondents in the study. The information is categorised by age, gender, academic qualifications, positions, workplace affiliations, teaching and administrative experience, and involvement in professional development activities.

The age distribution of respondents indicates a balanced representation across different age groups. The majority fall within the 31-40 and 41-50 age groups, with the same percentage (38.7%). A smaller proportion of participants are aged 51 or above (16.1%), and the least represented group is those under 30 (6.7%). Gender distribution among respondents is nearly balanced, with female teachers constituting 51.6% and males 48.4%. This distribution reflects a relatively equitable gender representation in the sample.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentages of Demographic Characteristics of Participants at the First Data Collection Stage

Descriptors	Sub-descriptors	Frequency (N=62)	Percentage (%)
Age	<30	4	6.7
	31-40	24	38.7
	41-50	24	38.7
	51>	10	16.1
Gender	Female	32	51.6
	Male	30	48.4
	BA	5	8.1
Degree	MA	18	29.0
	PhD	39	62.9
Academic Position	Professor	2	3.2
	Associate Professor	3	4.8
	Assistant Professor	11	17.7
University (Workplace)	Instructor/Lecturer	46	74.2
	State Univ.	38	61.3
	Foundation Univ.	24	38.7
Teaching Experience (years)	<1	2	3.2
	1-4	3	4.8
	5-9	7	11.3
	10-15	21	33.9
	16-20	12	19.4
Experience in the Current Institution	21 >	17	27.4
	<1	2	3.2
	1-4	10	16.1
	5-9	15	24.2
	10 ≥	35	56.5
Administrative Duty (Duration by Years)	<1	6	9.7
	1-4	19	30.6
	5-9	21	33.9
	10 ≥	16	25.8
Ongoing Administrative Duty	(Acting) Director	17	27.4
	Vice-Director	33	53.2
	Other	12	19.4
	1-4	16	25.8
Total Teaching Hours	5-9	20	32.3
	10-14	15	24.2
	15-20	11	17.7
Extra Duties	Yes	37	59.7
	No	25	40.3
Received PD Support	Yes	35	56.5
	No	27	43.5

In terms of academic qualifications, the majority of the respondents hold or are pursuing a PhD (62.9%), while 29% possess or are pursuing an MA degree. Only a small percentage of them (8.1%) hold a BA degree. This distribution shows that administrative members at SFLs are composed of academics with a degree and teaching experience at

varied levels. The distribution of academic positions shows that a substantial proportion of respondents are instructors or lecturers (74.2%). Assistant Professor positions are held by 17.7% of the respondents. Associate Professors account for 4.8 %, and Professors for 3.2%. Regarding workplace affiliations, the majority of respondents are employed at State Universities (61.3%), followed by Foundation Universities (38.7%). The respondents' teaching experience is varied, with a notable concentration in the 10-15 years range (33.9%). Other significant groups include those with more than 21 years (27.4%) and those with 16-20 years of experience (19.4%). The least represented categories are those with 1-4 years (4.8%). Experience within the current institution also varies, with the largest group having over 10 years of experience (56.5%) and 5-9 years (24.2%). A smaller portion of respondents has 1-4 years of experience (16.1%), while the smallest group has less than one year (9.7%). In terms of administrative duties, a considerable number of respondents have held such roles for 5-9 years (33.9%), followed by those with 1-4 years of administrative experience (30.6%). A slightly smaller segment has over 10 years of experience (25.8%). Only 9.7% of the participants has less than 1 year of administrative duty. Among those with ongoing administrative duties, directors and acting directors represent 25.8%, and assistant directors 29%. The rest of them serve in roles other than director, acting director, or vice-director (19.4%). Teaching hours among respondents predominantly range between 5-9 hours (32.3%), with a smaller group engaged in 1-4 hours of teaching per week (25.8%). The least represented category is those with 15-20 teaching hours a week (17.7%). Finally, a significant portion of respondents are involved in extra duties (59.7%), and over half have received professional development support (56.5%).

Overall, the data portray a diverse and experienced group of academics, primarily affiliated with state universities and holding significant teaching and administrative responsibilities. The representation across various demographic categories suggests a well-rounded sample for the study.

2.3.2.2. Data Collection Instruments

Following permission from the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Çağ University and approval of the Ethics Committee, the data collection process was initiated through the Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) as the initial data collection tool. Under the participants' consent, the targeted data in the first phase of the study was collected by using a web-based survey, Google Forms, in order to collect

the data and submit the results to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in an electronic format. To analyse the data, in the first phase of the study, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilised after collecting the quantitative data through an online Google Form questionnaire software. To be able to define the demographic information and measure the mean and standard deviations, the descriptive measures of the study were defined by applying them to the quantifiable data. Through this, what teacher archetype the participating teachers embody was defined (Hiver et al., 2015).

We reached 305 individual educational leaders from 208 universities in Türkiye. We contacted them through the “SFL Türkiye” WhatsApp group, which includes SFL directors, vice-directors, heads and coordinators. We also asked for their responses by sending the questionnaire link to their personal or institutional emails. Finally, we joined the XVIth Platform Meeting of the Administrators of Schools of Foreign Languages hosted by Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University on 16-18 May 2024. In this annually held 3-day meeting, we had the chance to contact the majority of the target population who joined the meeting (n=248) in person, and we got their responses to the questionnaire and their invaluable feedback on our ongoing research. As a result, we got 62 responses to the online questionnaire. Table 4 identifies the distribution of participants’ roles in their institutions.

2.3.2.2.1. Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ)

Language teacher immunity and educational leadership concepts both inherit a complex and versatile nature (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017; Morrison, 2012). Therefore, a multifaceted strategy for data collection was adopted due to the intricacy of the issues investigated in this research. As the initial data collection tool, we used Hiver et al.’s (2015) Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ), which has 39 items on a 6-point scale (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 6) divided into seven factors; teaching self-efficacy, burnout, attitudes toward teaching, resilience, openness to experience, classroom affectivity, and coping. The questionnaire has so far been used to collect data on language teacher immunity, mostly in Iranian and Turkish contexts. Also, some joint or individual studies have been done in other countries. Although all participants were experienced in EFL, and had high proficiency in English language use, the questionnaire was translated into Turkish to make the items more understandable and

get fully meaningful responses, and consultation on the translation was requested from an impartial colleague who was a graduate and an academic in the Translation and Interpretation Department. LTIQ was tested to ensure validity and reliability, especially because LTI is still a new scale that has been carried out by a small number of researchers (Durmaz, 2021; Hiver, 2016; Rahimpour et al., 2020; Saydam, 2019) in an EFL context.

2.3.2.3. Data Analysis

Within the requirements of the Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling approach, the initial aim of the study was to define the archetype that language school administrative team members embody. To define the salient archetypes, we used the Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ) for data collection, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysing the collected quantitative data. In the ensuing process, we selected four participants based on the mean scores of the 6-point Likert scale results. Also, Cronbach's Alpha calculations were utilised to ensure the reliability coefficient. By adopting a mix of purposive and convenient sampling approaches, therefore, we continued with the qualitative phase of the research. We did not intend further analysis of the scale because we only intended to see the archetype language school leaders embody.

2.3.3. Phase II: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry, as an umbrella term for researching stories, was used in the second phase of this study. Narrative inquiry makes use of stories of personal experiences for sense-making out of the narrated qualitative data. As proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), "experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively" (p.19). Also, they demonstrate narrative inquiry "both phenomena under study and method of study" (p.4). Similarly, the contemporary researchers (Barkhuizen, 2011, 2014; Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008; Benson & Nunan, 2002; Pavlenko, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1995) favoured narrative research methods in applied linguistics. Narratives, as individual and context-specific aspects of stories of individuals, also called "life records", have recently gained ground in applied linguistics research. For the narrative research approach, while Polkinghorne (1995) proposes two identifications, which are *narrative analysis* and *analysis of narratives*, Benson (2018) proposes three of

them, which are listed as *content analysis of narratives*, *discourse analysis of narratives*, and *narrative analysis*.

When it comes to data analysis and findings reporting, storytelling has a significant role. As a “universal human activity” (Riessman, 1993, p. 3), storytelling functions as a tool for making human experiences meaningful (Polkinghorne, 1988). Barkhuizen (2011) uses “narrative knowledging” as the process of “meaning-making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co)constructing narratives, analysing narratives, reporting the findings, and reading/watching/listening to research reports” (p.395). Writing or retelling a story is only one aspect of narrative writing. At this point, storytelling within narrative analysis differs from simply retelling a story because meaning-making out of the narratives is the fundamental intention.

After identifying the teacher archetype within the RQM approach, we proceeded with our research with four participants for an in-depth investigation. In this step, we adopted a narrative inquiry approach to be able to collect retrodictive data about each case individually. It was aimed to delve into the factors contributing to educational leaders’ current immunity state and try to find out how their trajectories influence the type and level of immunity. Finally, we preferred narrative analysis because we valued and were interested in storytelling to make meaning. So, we could access to long-term experiences (from teacher to admin) of each case.

2.3.3.1. Context and Participants

The participating EFL administrative team members of the second phase included the EFL teachers who taught, who currently teach, and who deal with the educational administration of the school simultaneously. This group of participants was selected conveniently from among the ones who participated in the first phase voluntarily.

Through the quantitative data analysis in the first phase of the study, we could reveal the distribution of the SFL management team members across the immunity types (e.g. productively-immunized, maladaptively-immunized), referring to Hiver et al.’s (2015) comprehensive study that defines teacher immunity archetypes. We selected four participants (see Table 5) among the ones who participated in the first phase voluntarily using a mix of purposive sampling (Dörnyei, 2007) and convenience sampling methods, considering their availability, willingness, and ease of access (Charmaz, 2017). This

sample size was assumed to be pragmatic and work well for this research (Dörnyei, 2007). Language teacher immunity and educational leadership concepts are complex and dynamic; therefore, the results of the applications are unpredictable. Therefore, a small-scale study is thought to be most suitable for the research on this complex phenomenon (Sudman, 1976), so we selected four participants who provided rich data for the study. A detailed introduction of these participants is given in Table 5.

Table 5

Demographic Information of Four Participants Selected for Phase II

Participants	Qualification	Duty	Gender	Affiliation	Region	Mean	Archetype
P1	PhD Candidate	Director	Male	Foundation	South-Eastern	4,71	Productively Immunised (Spark Plug)
P2	PhD Candidate	Vice Director	Female	State	Mediterranean	4,76	
P3	PhD	Director	Female	Foundation	Mediterranean	4,17	
P4	MA	Vice Director	Male	Foundation	Marmara	4,33	

2.3.3.2. Data Collection Instruments

As for the qualitative data collection tools utilised in the second phase, multiple instruments were used to be able to collect in-depth data regarding the selected participants' administrative trajectories. Open-ended interview questions and framed narratives constituted the main instruments of the study. The participants were individually and cordially invited to take part in the second phase of the study, and they were encouraged to share their 'coherent story...according to their own experiences and their reflections' (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 45).

The qualitative data collection instruments were shared via participants' institutional email addresses. First, narrative frames (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008) were shared, and the responses were collected in two months. Afterwards, the open-ended interview questions were sent via their mail addresses, and similarly, another two months' time was spared to collect the responses to the questions. After collecting all qualitative data in two intervals, all the data were subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and subsequently to narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995).

2.3.3.2.1. Narrative Frames Templates

As mentioned earlier, narratives as the stories of experience constituted one of the data collection tools since “stories are particularly suited as the linguistic form in which human experience as lived can be expressed” (Polkinghorne, 1988., p. 6). As we aim to understand the experience of the educational leaders in their particular context (Barkhuizen, 2008), we reckon that narratives provide the research with in-depth personal and contextual data. We chose the narrative method of investigating personal stories (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) for the sake of research because it enabled us to better comprehend the participants’ experiences from their own viewpoints in a historical manner, as well as the individuals and contexts associated with these experiences.

Also, we were able to find out their identity as managers. Subsequently, in order to guide, support, and scaffold the participants to make up their minds, the participants were provided with some narrative frames based on Barkhuizen’s (2008) proposition, so that the content was connected to the research aims. Therefore, upon their (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008) permission, the *Sentence starters on the four narrative frames templates* were used after adapting the narrative frames to educational leaders to serve the research purposes.

2.3.3.2.2. Open-ended Interview Questions

The interview questions were adopted from Hiver’s (2017) study and they were adapted considering the investigation on language school leaders. This set of 13 questions was composed of four main categories, which sought the initial thoughts about teaching and educational leadership, the identification of characteristics as an educational leader, future thoughts as an EFL teacher and administrator, and questions related to the transition from a teacher to an administrator. Additionally, the narrative frames templates (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008), included questions related to language program administration, constraints, language teaching and professional development, and program evaluation.

2.3.3.3. Data Analysis

As a result of the data collection process, eight separate electronic files were gathered, and all were uploaded on the coding software Atlas.ti for analysis. In addition to the thematic analysis, the narrative analysis of the in-depth rich data collected through semi-structured interview questions and narrative frames (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) was

finalised. In addition to the quantitative data analysis, the qualitative data collected in the second phase of the study were imported into the Atlas.ti software program to code the raw texts, define the categories and the themes, and identify the relationships. We adopted the inductive approach of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2017) as we aimed to unearth the meanings that influence the participants' behaviours and identify the patterns, themes and relationships in the findings without any concern of proving an existing theory. The Atlas.ti software program was used for coding and defining the themes in order to assess and make sense of the dense text data (Creswell, 2014). Before starting to code, we got into the data by reading participants' responses. As Corbin and Strauss (2015) propose, this approach allowed us to "enter vicariously into the life of participants, feel what they are experiencing, and listen to what they are saying through their words or actions" (p.218), and be familiarized with the dense data, which assisted to analyze all data in an organized way and compel extract examples (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 6

Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for Themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis, the proper coding and categorization techniques were used to increase the reliability of the study's findings, so we decided upon the codes and the overarching themes. The six phases conceptualised by Braun and Clarke are given in Table 6. Specifically, we adopted their approach because this approach is different from other proposed thematic analysis approaches in terms of procedure and underlying philosophy, in that it is flexible, the phases are identified clearly and comprehensively, it suggests a non-linear but recursive investigation, and the themes do not passively "emerge" from the data, but they are

actively “generated” out of the data by the researcher. Those items are considerably aligned with the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), which rejects linearity, assumptions, generalisations, and predictability. Therefore, considering the particularity of the cases, the thematic analysis went through the six iterative phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

As for narrative analysis, Benson (2018) advocates “narrative analysis as an approach within narrative inquiry” (p. 606). As Polkinghorne (1995) suggests, we aim “to configure the data elements into a story that unites and gives meaning to the data as contributors to a goal or purpose” (p. 5).

In qualitative research, thematic analysis and narrative analysis are related approaches. Finding and examining themes in qualitative data—which may include narratives—is the main goal of thematic analysis. Narrative analysis, on the other hand, focuses on the stories and their telling. While narrative analysis digs deeper into the structure and performance of the narrative to provide a greater understanding of the context and meaning behind the stories, thematic analysis may be used to extract overarching themes from narratives. Depending on their study topics and the type of data they have, researchers may decide to employ one or both approaches (Benson, 2018).

In brief, narrative analysis followed by a thematic analysis was utilised in this study because “narrative analysis usually requires another method of data analysis that helps the researcher reduce the data to manageable proportions, while maintaining the integrity of the storyline to be developed.” (Benson, 2018, p. 604).

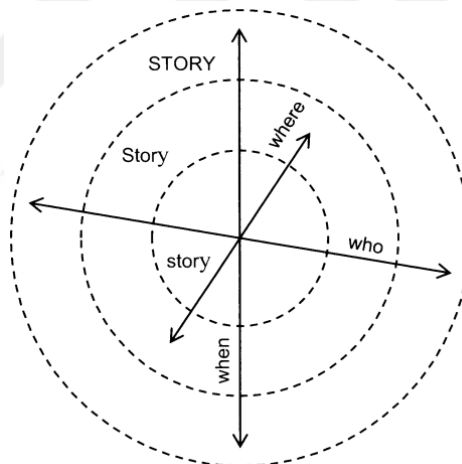
As our data already had a rudimentary narrative structure with plot and storyline, we did not need to reorder or rewrite it in a narrative format. Using these narratives, we adopted Barkhuizen’s (2008) three interconnected levels of story (story-Story-STORY) approach for the sake of meaning-making through storytelling and narrative knowledging. Barkhuizen conceptualised this approach with the image of interconnected circles. According to Barkhuizen (2008), the inner circle (*story*) comprises personal thoughts, emotions, and ideas; the context, the middle circle (*Story*), comprises a learning context such as the school, classroom or natural language learning environment. Finally, the broader sociopolitical context (*STORY*) involves national policy in language learning, curricula developed by the Ministry of Education (Council of Higher Education in our context) or socioeconomic circumstances of the region. In subsequent studies,

Barkhuizen (2016) elaborated on these three interconnected dimensions and identified the multiscalar narrative space with a focus on *who*, *when*, and *where* components in a narration.

In the reporting process, two methods were used to report the study's findings. Respecting Barkhuizen's (2011) "narrative knowledging", which identifies the character (who), the place (where), and time (when) to make meaning, first, each case's narrated experiences were exhibited in isolation and in a detailed way. Here, both responses to open-ended questions and the ones given through narrative frames were combined for each case since both data collection tools were complementary. The second step, in the cross-case analysis process, was to compare the four cases and present the similarities and the differences in their trajectories.

Figure 2

A Three-dimensional, Multiscalar Narrative Space (Barkhuizen, 2016, p. 664)



For the sake of the trustworthiness of the study and to make the thematic and narrative analysis processes more reliable, the initial rounds of thematic analysis were conducted by the author of the dissertation. Subsequently, a peer debriefing was implemented, and an impartial colleague with a PhD in ELT was asked to peer debrief. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define peer debriefing as "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (p. 308). Moreover, the generated codes and the themes were verified by the doctoral supervisor of the study. Finally, in the process of analysing the findings, in order to ensure that the research findings accurately reflect participants' viewpoints

and enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the narratively analysed data, we initiated a member-checking process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through this cross-examination process, we aimed to provide a biased investigation, enhance the validity, reliability and credibility of the findings and the analysis, and enhance reflexivity.

In order to ensure methodological rigour, aligning research with ethical concerns:

1. Respect for the dignity of participants was prioritised.
2. Full consent was obtained from the participants before taking part in both phases of the study.
3. Confidentiality of the research data and anonymity of the participants were ensured.
4. Necessary permissions were taken, and the participants consented to participation voluntarily and could withdraw from the study at any stage. A written permission and approval of the Ethics Committee with 09.03.2021 date and E-81570533-050.01.01-2100001828 issue number were taken from the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Çağ University (See Appendix A).

In the ensuing section, the findings of the data collected with these ethical concerns are presented.

CHAPTER III

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter consists of the comprehensive findings obtained through quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. The purpose of this paper is to identify the distribution of management team members across language teacher immunity teacher archetypes in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Preparatory Programs, which are nested in Higher Education institutions in Türkiye. By exploring the causal mechanisms with respect to their trajectories, it also seeks to determine factors that may have led to their current types of psychological immunity. In this two-phase research, which was conducted in an integrative research approach, we applied both quantitative tools and two different qualitative data collection tools: Open-ended interview questions and narrative frames templates.

This section is organised into two subsequent parts. Firstly, this section represents the results of the quantitative tool (LTIQ) with the aim of defining what teacher immunity archetype the participant language school administrators have. Secondly, this section offers a thorough analysis of the results by carefully examining the qualitative data derived from the narratives of four selected participants with the aim of delving into the factors contributing to their immunity state.

3.2. Findings Related to Defining Language Teacher Immunity Archetype

Aligning with the initial aim of the study, language school administrators' overall immunity level was investigated, and the immunity type they embodied was defined accordingly. Language teachers' immunity is categorised into four distinct profiles as described by Hiver (2016): immunocompromised, maladaptively immunized, halfway immunized, and productively immunized. In order to demonstrate our language teacher immunity global types and the corroborated sub-types, we used Hiver's four outcomes. According to these outcomes, the *overcompensator teacher* is immunocompromised at points 0-0.99, the *sell-out and fossilized teacher* is maladaptively immunized at 1-1.99, the *defeated teacher* is halfway immunized at 2-3.99, and the *spark plug and the visionary* ones are productively immunized at 4+. Studies using the same scale in

different contexts (Saydam, 2019; Durmaz & Gürsoy, 2021) also used the same intervals to cluster teachers.

Therefore, we accepted these mean scores to identify the archetype. Depending on the mean scores of the 6-point Likert scale results, 62 participant administrative members cluster around 4.16, so they can be accepted as productively immunized managers. Additionally, to ensure the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's Alpha calculations were utilised. A reliability coefficient of .70 or higher for a test is considered sufficient for the reliability of test scores (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Büyüköztürk, 2020). As stated in Table 7, Cronbach's Alpha calculations indicated that internal consistency was acceptable for the subscales ($n=7$, $\alpha=.762$) and for the scale overall ($n=39$, $\alpha=.844$).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of the Subscales

Subscales	N of Items	Mean	SD	α
Self-Efficacy	7	4.23	.49	.722
Burnout	5	3.78	.37	.671
Resilience	5	4.73	.63	.779
Attitudes towards Management	5	3.63	.62	.873
Openness to Change	6	3.55	.47	.509
School Affectivity	6	4.65	.60	.676
Coping	5	4.53	.52	.209
Total	39	4.74	.528	.762

3.3. Findings Related to Factors Contributing to Immunity State

In the subsequent step of the study, the thematic analysis and narrative analysis were utilised by delving into the in-depth rich data collected through semi-structured interview questions and narratives (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Furthermore, the causal mechanisms were identified based on the responses of the administrators regarding adaptation to the managerial role, reaction to administrative challenges, effect of the process on the managerial skills, coping strategies applied to deal with the dynamic nature of the teaching environment, and pursuing an equilibrium between occupational burdens of teaching, and administrative roles. Ultimately, we got the opportunity to trace backwards the causal mechanisms of an outcome that are associated with the salient archetype (Chan et al., 2014; Hiver, 2017).

Additionally, the in-depth qualitative research data were subjected to Atlas.ti software program (Smit, 2021) to initiate thematic analysis, in which the themes, which

are connected to the codes, were generated and the relations between codes were identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 8

Overarching Themes and Corroborated Sub-Themes Based on the Thematic Analysis

Themes	Sub-themes
Affordances	Collegiality
	Assisting Assets
	State of being unprepared as a leader
Constraints	Operational and Regulatory Constraints
	Affective Constraints
Transitioning to Administration	Facilitative Agents for a Smooth Transition
	Learning Management by Trial and Error
Adopted Leadership Model	Managerial approach
	Administrative Initiatives
Characteristics as an Educational Leader	The Current Leadership Characteristics
	Characteristics the Prospective Leaders Should Embody
School Climate and Culture	Defining the Current and Ideal School
Solution-oriented Mindset	Dealing with the Obstacles
Feelings and Emotions	Positive Emotional Experiences
	Development of Motivation in Management

Through a rigorous process of thematic analysis, 79 codes were generated out of the rich qualitative data under eight overarching themes, and 15 sub-themes (see Table 8). In reference to the second research question, these themes were identified as the factors contributing to the administrative members' current immunity state.

In order to clarify the meaning that each theme refers in the study, the descriptions of the overarching themes are given in Table 9. In line with the propositions provided by Braun and Clarke (2021), we clarified the essential characteristics of each theme by defining what each theme refers to.

The analysis of these factors was showcased in a story form to make meaning out of the narrated data (Barkhuizen, 2008). The stories included the fluctuating feelings and emotions of the educational leaders, the descriptions of the school they managed, the leadership models they embodied, their personal traits, their mindset, and the affordances and constraints faced in the process of transitioning to the administrative role.

Table 9*Description of the Themes*

Themes	Description
Affordances	The theme "affordances" refers to the opportunities, resources, traits, and support systems or individuals that educational leaders obtain for enhancing teaching, learning, and overall school effectiveness.
Constraints	This theme represents the emotional, official, physical and structural constraints experienced with appointment. These constraints often limit the administrator's managerial power which causes them to strive to perform administrative duties.
Transitioning to Administration	This theme stands for both the assistance obtained, and the limitations faced, such as initial insecurity, adjustment challenges, role ambiguity, and early leadership experiences when a teacher is appointed as an administrator.
Adopted Leadership Model	This theme includes the salient typology of management and leadership models (Bush, 2003) they embody throughout their managerial practices.
Characteristics as an Educational Leader	This theme presents the personal traits that four participants hold or the ones an ideal language school leader should embody to be able to navigate the stated challenges of administration.
School Climate and Culture	The term "school climate" describes the overall quality and nature of the educational setting, including the beliefs, actions, and attitudes of the staff, teachers, and students. The "school culture" represents the unwritten rules for acceptable behaviour and how things should be done.
Solution-oriented Mindset	This theme refers to the administrator's mindset and approach to the solutions to the challenges they face while managing the school, with a reference to whether they take these obstacles as "puzzles" or "problems".
Feelings and Emotions	This relates to sustaining motivation under stress and finding a balance between professional and personal well-being. This theme also relates to how feelings and emotions evolve during a managerial role.

Accordingly, the *story* level analysis of the narratives of the cases, with the aim of meaning-making (Barkhuizen, 2011), included the *micro* level outcomes reflecting four educational leaders' inner thoughts, emotions, and ideas as well as suggestions regarding the storied challenges that are associated with the School of Foreign Languages at universities. The second level of the *Story* involved reflections of the cases regarding their experiences as language school administrators in a setting where broader interactions with upper management (such as the rectorate, personnel directorate, etc.) occur outside of the participants' immediate environment. Finally, as the primary decision-makers, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) constituted the *STORY* level context of the participants of the study. As stated earlier, the School of Foreign Languages are bound to the regulations set by CoHE and THEQC. So, their *STORY* at macro level comprised constraints and affordances connected with CoHE and THEQC; the institutions that function as the ultimate decision-makers and the policymakers on behalf of all universities in Türkiye.

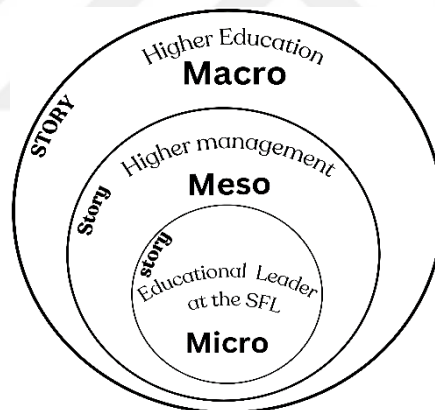
Therefore, this versatile narrative analysis includes these three interconnected stories narrated by the participants. Pavlenko (2007) highlights the multifaceted nature of narrative analysis as follows:

Narrative analysis in sociolinguistic studies has to consider larger historical, political, social, and economic circumstances that shape the narratives and are reflected in them, and, last but not least, the setting where particular versions of narrative experience are produced and the audience they are produced for (p. 176).

In line with this, in this story form of the analysis process, we adopted Barkhuizen's (2008) approach of 'restorying', which includes collecting stories and conducting narrative analysis of the data derived from experiences of individuals as three interconnected stories at micro, meso, and macro levels.

Figure 3

Three Interconnected Stories: A Revised Framework Adapted from Barkhuizen (2008)



In sum, while the thematic analysis allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and factors influencing psychological immunity, the narrative analysis added an additional layer of depth by capturing the temporal trajectories and contextual shifts experienced by each participant. This dual approach enabled a richer understanding of how micro-level experiences, meso-level institutional dynamics, and macro-level policy influences intertwine to shape the evolution of their immunity states over time.

In the following part of the findings section, the factors influencing four educational leaders' immunity states are presented at these three interconnected dimensions, following brief demographic information about the cases, which aims to

contribute to meaning-making (Barkhuizen, 2008). Based on the findings, the analysis of the immunity trajectories of the participants is given considering their immunity development in phases: early career trajectories as EFL teachers, transition to leadership within a higher education context, adapting to challenges, and current and future perspectives as administrators.

3.3.1. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 1

In order to understand the factors that have contributed to the psychological immunity of our first case (P1) with details, this part highlights the findings at *story* (Micro), *Story* (Meso), and *STORY* (Macro) levels in the aftermath of an overall introduction to Participant 1. These findings at three levels are illustrated in Figure 4.

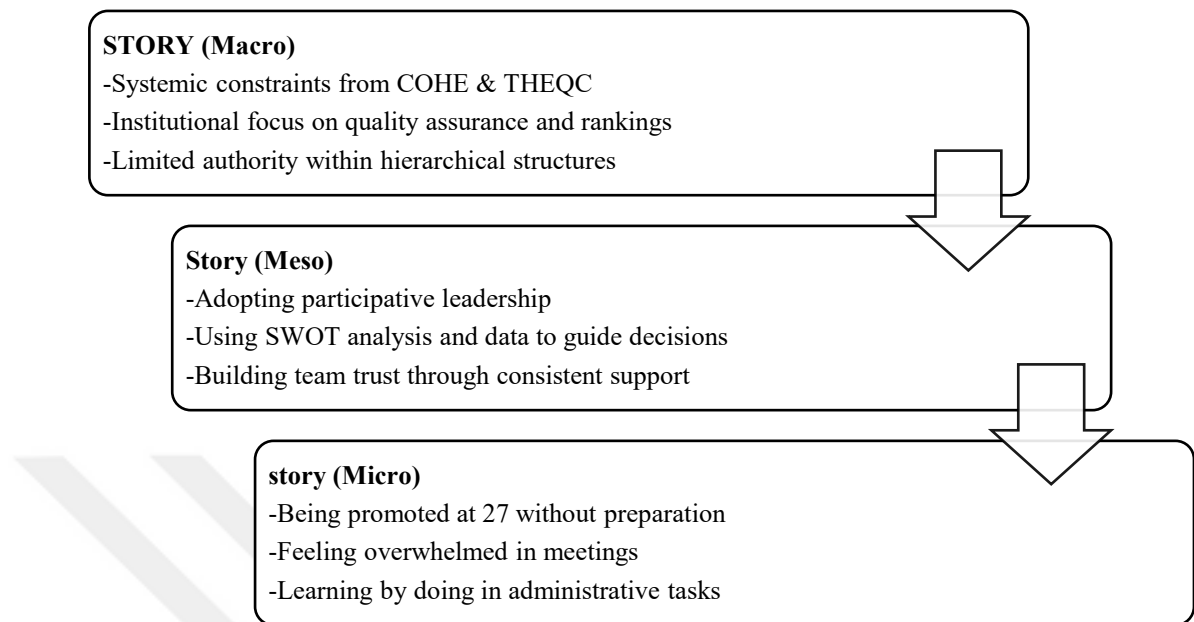
P1 participated in this study while he was the director of a School of Foreign Languages, where about four hundred students were instructed to learn general English by 11 EFL instructors. The medium of instruction in their departments is partially (30%) or fully (100%) in English. He worked for a foundation university located in the south-eastern part of Türkiye. The context-specific qualities of the school provided some affordances for administrators and decision-makers, and also some constraints that were faced.

With 14 years of teaching experience in the same institution, he used to be on duty as the assistant director for one year, and he had been the director of the same school for 11 years. Regarding academic investments, he pursued a PhD degree in ELT after some experience as an EFL practitioner. He made a commitment to lifelong professional development, ongoing research engagement, and consistently producing academic works despite the demanding administrative and instructional workload.

His story started with his journey as a novice teacher, and he pursued a role as an administrative leader. Additionally, besides regular challenges of teaching and managing, his trajectory included administrative challenges during some nationwide disturbances like the Covid-19 pandemic (Khan, 2025), political conflicts, and catastrophic quakes that occurred recently in the region. These disturbances are quoted in his narratives.

Figure 4

Three-level narrative overlay of P1



In addition to this general introduction of Participant 1, he recites his context in which he strives to fulfil the managerial role as follows:

The place where I now manage consists of students and faculty members from different cultures, cities, and countries. Of course, there are some challenges that come with being an administrator at a foundation university. Providing a quality language education program, ensuring stakeholders are satisfied with the services provided, implementing all administrative and academic activities smoothly, finding quick and effective solutions when a problem arises, meeting the needs and expectations of the upper management, faculties, and faculty members, and managing this process, along with handling communication issues, make managing in such an environment a very challenging job. We have a group of nearly 400 students each year, and our classes run from 9 am to 5 pm. Our campus is far from the city centre but is safe and green.

The participant's thoughts and experiences align with a number of accepted theories and conclusions in the fields of psychological immunity, teacher identity, and educational leadership. His experience serves as an example of how context-specific influences, professional roles, and personal values interact dynamically.

Considering the context in which P1 utilised his duties as a teacher and consequently as an administrator, the following part includes the immunity trajectories of P1.

3.3.1.1. Early Career Trajectories of P1 as an EFL Teacher

The early career phase of the P1 as an English language teacher started with his experience at a middle school, where he felt quite motivated and eager to teach as a novice teacher.

In the year following my graduation, I worked at a middle school under the Ministry of National Education... During that time, I had the opportunity to exchange ideas with my colleagues there and benefit from their experiences. The teachers were highly motivated, eagerly waiting for the renovations to be completed so they could reunite with their students and begin lessons. I felt incredibly lucky to be working at such an educational institution.

Shortly after the teaching period started, he faced very initial challenges of teaching and fluctuations in his emotions as a teacher.

However, within a week, all the factors that had motivated me seemed to vanish suddenly. I found myself surrounded by a staff that constantly complained, got frustrated over incidents caused by students, and longed for the day to end so they could go home.

Consequently, his negative views towards working in a secondary school context encouraged and compelled him to replace it with the higher education context, in which he envisioned he would find himself as an effective teacher. P1 reflected his thoughts as follows:

After analysing the experiences, I gained during that year and reflecting on my thoughts about life, I decided that I needed to transition to the higher education system as soon as possible...

After a short period of time, he felt fluctuations in his teaching motivation. Owing to his alignment to continuing the profession within the higher education system, his story of teaching turned into the idea of a significant transition in his teaching context. P1 questioned his sense of belonging to the initial context, and he clearly stated his emotions and future plan, so a significant shift occurred in his professional life:

...everything I observed showed me one clear truth: I did not belong there.... Summoning all my courage, I decided to transition to the higher education system. This turned out to be the most important decision that brought me to where I am today.

His initial endeavour as an EFL teacher at secondary school level ended with a transition to higher education system as an EFL instructor because of being discontent with the initial context, demotivating work environment, and the need for professional alignment.

3.3.1.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context

Soon after his transition to the university context in another city, he took over various duties such as head of Integrated Skills Committee, and Head of Testing Office within the university's School of Foreign languages, where he started working as an EFL instructor. After a few years, he was appointed as a member of school administration, and his administrative story was initiated.

In this process, he was affected by the leadership applications of the rector of the university he started working at. Confidence and trust from a superior role model reinforced his self-belief and shaped his leadership aspirations. The leadership inspiration was reflected as follows:

The person who had the greatest impact on me and inspired me on this journey was the rector who appointed me as the director. When he entrusted such a heavy responsibility to someone so young, I asked him why he made that decision. He told me he trusted me, that I would develop my leadership skills through experience over time, and that he would always be there to support me.

However, his initial thoughts related with his appointment were dominated by challenges and concerns regarding having no prior experience as an educational leader.

When I was first appointed as the director of the School of Foreign Languages, I was only 27 years old and had no managerial experience apart from a one-year term as an assistant director.

P1 faced several limitations in the immediate environment during this process. These limitations were mostly related to the phase when he was first appointed to an

administrative role in the school without any prior knowledge or training. Lack of preparation and absence of formal training or orientation posed significant constraints. These constraints were reflected in his narratives:

My appointment was made without any prior training or orientation, which left me in significant need of support in certain areas. Additionally, I faced challenges related to budget management, legal and regulatory knowledge, and certain qualities expected of an administrator. In that sense, I felt like someone who didn't know how to swim being thrown into the ocean.

The narratives consistently reflected the emotional burden of the profession and the duty. The emotional labour (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018) caused by the high expectations from educational leaders is accompanied by some other constraints in the process of sustaining the leadership role, which makes it more challenging for administrators. It is clear that there were high expectations from him; he needed to excel in many skills, knowledge, and experience to meet them. High expectations caused an emotional labour besides the natural burdens of the leadership at the language school in the higher education context. P1 recites his opinion about how he felt once he first learned about his appointment:

I think the most challenging moment was when I first learned about my appointment. I discovered that I had been assigned the role through a confidentially labelled file, with no prior discussion or expectations shared. At that moment, I couldn't feel happy or proud of myself for taking on such a position. My worries and uncertainties outweighed any joy I might have felt. When I first started as a member of the administration, I was very anxious because I felt my knowledge and experience were insufficient to manage the responsibilities required by my role.

Although he had no managerial experience when he was appointed, his stories showed that he was aware of the requirements that he had to meet as the director of the school. In his story, it was evident that starting this process without any prior experience or training in certain administrative areas naturally created a very stressful and anxious environment for him at that time. P1 listed these requirements:

My current position requires me to be knowledgeable in areas such as developing language training programs, determining educational outcomes, assessment and evaluation, recruitment, monitoring and managing continuous professional development, understanding laws and regulations, managing administrative processes smoothly, ensuring the well-being of all stakeholders and planning and using the budget efficiently

The initial feelings regarding the managerial role were followed by reciting the affordances that assisted P1 to deal with the requirements that are listed above. These affordances functioned as the facilitators of the transition process from a teacher to a manager:

When I transitioned from teaching to administration, my biggest advantage was having worked at my institution for five years. During this time, I was actively involved in many academic and administrative processes, which gave me a strong understanding of the institution's vision, mission, and strategic goals. Coming from the "kitchen" of the organization, I had a deep understanding of the internal dynamics and was well aware of both students' and academic staff's needs.

Also, being familiar to the school showed up as another affordance in this tough process. Familiarity with institutional processes and strategic goals enabled smoother role adaptation.

I was selected from within the institution. Since everyone already knew me and was familiar with my personality and approach, the transition was smoother for all parties involved.

In his immediate environment (story level), he pointed out the importance of collegiality as another facilitating factor in the process of transitioning from a teacher to a manager and also in the process of sustaining the managerial role:

The individuals who provided me with the most support and strength during this process were my assistant directors, who stood by me through all circumstances. They supported me both professionally and as wonderful friends, helping me on my path to becoming a better educational leader.

Most notably, the role model effect on P1 is also evident, which emerged as another affordance to fulfilling the management role in the process of alignment (Hiver et al., 2015) with the role:

The person who had the greatest impact on me and inspired me on this journey was the rector who appointed me as the director... His confidence in me gave me a sense of belief and motivation, and I worked tirelessly to improve both myself and the institution. I took him as a role model of exemplary leadership, continuously seeking his advice and exchanging ideas, which greatly supported my journey

3.3.1.3. Adapting to Challenges

Over time, thanks to the facilitating factors, P1 was able to adapt to the challenges that emerged due to the unique nature of the administrative duty. In line with this, as the director to the school, he felt responsible for the teachers and the students under his management:

The responsibility to ensure that the instructors have the skills and knowledge to achieve the pre-determined goals and objectives, and the students receive a high-quality language education that foster their learning process and abilities.

Alongside his duty as an administrator, he experienced a shift to a more adaptive immunised state. For instance, his power as an administrator reinforced his positive view regarding the development of the learners in parallel with institutional development. Such a reinforcement normally requires more commitment and results in more administrative workload. Nevertheless, he embraced the challenges, and ultimately, this power to change turned into an affordance, and is the best thing about his management role:

The best thing about my position was that I had the opportunity to create a vision by considering the institution's mission, strategic goals, the needs and expectations of my students, and the programs they would be enrolled in. This allowed me to focus on ensuring a better future for the institution and supporting our students' learning processes, equipping them with the knowledge, experience, and skills to respond to the needs and expectations of a changing world.

P1 also strived to learn from the discrepancies between what people express and their actual practices.

Although all my teachers have stated that they value professional development and are open to learning during my time as a manager, I do not see the same level of commitment when it comes to implementation. People are reluctant to step out of their comfort zones.

Additionally, P1 gradually established the foundations of his adopted managerial model. He emphasised the mutual benefit for sustainable success. Accordingly, he stressed that working with people who prioritise only their personal interests appeared to be another constraint for him as an administrator, and he claimed that those people are caught between institutional benefit and individual benefit. This kind of conflict of interest may require a shift in the managerial model. Making changes to the adopted administrative approach may not be an expected practice, yet it sometimes becomes necessary due to the significance of the issues that the administrators face and the potential consequences of those issues. In a similar case, P1 admitted that he abandoned the adopted management model, and he advocated an institutional benefit:

I actually have a management approach that is participatory, transformative, and values relationships, and I do not prefer to act alone based solely on my authority. My observation is that when individuals' personal interests conflict with the institution's interests, they tend to focus on their own benefits, even though they know it is wrong to neglect institutional interests. When faced with these situations, I may again find myself deviating from my general management practices, as it is impossible to unite around a shared vision when institutional interests are sacrificed for personal gains...I always prioritize institutional benefit over the individual benefits of my instructors.

A gradual transformation from an early halfway immunised state to an adaptive state of immunity was observed when P1 demonstrated his solution-oriented mindset. The fact that educational leaders are required to come up with certain solution-oriented approaches to their problems appeared as another constraint that P1 faced at the *micro* level. As an administrator who was in the initial period of management experience, he asserted that he attempted to find solutions to a variety of context-specific problems with

a “trial and error” or “groping in the dark” approach, which means he had to find a way to the administrative problems without receiving any or very limited professional support. The writings of P1 demonstrated that he was not exempt from this:

I tried to gain experience by adhering to the principle of learning by doing... The place where I now manage consists of students and faculty members from different cultures, cities, and countries. Of course, there are some challenges that come with being an administrator at a foundation university. Providing a quality language education program, ensuring stakeholders are satisfied with the services provided, implementing all administrative and academic activities smoothly, finding quick and effective solutions when a problem arises, meeting the needs and expectations of the upper management, faculties, and faculty members, and managing this process, along with handling communication issues, make managing in such an environment a very challenging job.

Over time, initial apprehension evolved into assured decision-making initiatives. Despite all the challenges experienced in the immediate environment, P1 developed some distinctive coping strategies (Hiver et al., 2015), and he represented growth and solution-minded characteristics in his *stories*. He highlighted the change in his initial feelings and implementations after he was appointed as the director of the school. A particularly striking moment in his narratives occurred when P1 stated that he embraced the challenges as opportunities to develop as an administrator:

The contrast between the initial apprehension brought by inexperience when I was first appointed and the confidence I now possess as a result of my experiences is beyond anything I could have imagined... Everything I have gone through has taught me invaluable lessons.

As the director to the school, he gradually valued collective wisdom in the decision-making process, so he adopted a data-driven decision-making approach. This approach indicated a promising spark plug (Hiver, 2016) administrative type.

After being appointed... we first decided to conduct a SWOT analysis of the school to identify our strengths and areas for improvement, and then we aimed to determine the opportunities and threats awaiting us. This way, we intended

to collect data related to all our academic and administrative processes, analyze the data systematically, and create a roadmap.

In time, P1 also narrated the challenges he faced at *STORY* (Macro) level. He considered that his power was limited by the CoHE and THEQC as the decision-makers. When he felt this kind of limitation, he considered the humanistic aspect while making his decisions. Therefore, with the feeling of having limited power, he felt he needed to strike a good balance, which could be challenging since he was aware that some issues were beyond his power.

The quote that follows makes this clear:

...there are numerous laws and regulations we are bound by and must comply with when making decisions. However, from a human perspective, there are instances where I feel the need to act beyond what is written in the regulations.

However, P1 underlines the fact that he was constrained by the limited power he had as an educational leader.

I would like to highlight that there are instances where my authority to make decisions is insufficient, and certain situations are beyond my power. When such circumstances lead to issues, I believe the full responsibility should not fall on me.

When such cases happened, P1 expected empathy and understanding as the issues were clearly beyond his power. The following quote corroborates these expectations:

In this regard, I think it's important for the people I work with to understand that I expect understanding when it comes to matters beyond my authority and responsibility.

Additionally, P1 exemplified how school directors, as the practitioners of the regulations, were affected by one-way decision-making processes, and he pointed at the contradictions that were evident in the implementations of CoHE:

From the perspective of the Higher Education Council, decision-making should involve consultation with all stakeholders instead of implementing policies that affect everyone without input. A recent example highlights this issue: previously,

we could hire talented new graduates with a bachelor's degree for instructor positions.

By referring to his experience regarding overnight regulation changes, P1 elaborated on an example of this case, so he demonstrated what challenges educational leaders faced:

However, we woke up one day to find that the instructor position had been abolished and replaced by lecturer positions, which now require at least a thesis-based master's degree. This change meant that individuals who were eligible to work in higher education yesterday are now ineligible even to apply.

All these utterances showed that P1 had experienced some unique and some common challenges during his transition from teacher to administrative service, and he adapted to those challenges by applying context-specific solutions to the limitations. This transition reflects P1's shift from an early vulnerability state to a more productively immunised state.

3.3.1.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P1 as an Administrator

Eventually, the limitations and affordances that were experienced overtime demonstrated the growth in managerial skills through managerial experiences. With an emphasis on lessons learned from crises, his current leadership capacity has evidently been strengthened through overcoming challenges such as political instability, pandemics, and natural disasters.

...the difference between the person I was when I was first appointed and the person I am now is remarkable. The experiences I have gained over the years, including navigating challenging periods such as the coup attempt, the pandemic, and earthquakes on both global and regional scales, have taught me a great deal.

Alongside the narrated challenges that hindered P1 from sustaining the management role smoothly, and the circumstances that assisted P1 as an educational leader, he came up with some particular suggestions for the challenges he had experienced throughout his immediate administrative trajectory, and also suggestions for any educational leader

who is likely to experience similar difficulties, if not the same. For instance, referring to the challenges experienced in the process of transitioning from teaching to administration, he highlighted the importance of communication skills as well as soft skills that were inherited from the teaching experience. P1 writes:

...possessing effective communication skills, classroom management expertise, experience in curriculum development related to language education, assessment, and evaluation, as well as soft skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork, can all aid in this transition from teaching to administration.

Additionally, he underlined the importance of professional development initiatives as a possible solution to the problems experienced within the immediate context. He also made an explicit connection between the mere “amateur spirit” and professional initiatives. P1 states:

Based on my many years of teaching and managing experience, I can say that the most positive outcomes for the success and future of the school are achieved by organizing educational activities that consider the ongoing professional development needs of the teachers. Even though we are engaged in a professional endeavour, I believe it is important to also consider the "amateur spirit" of individuals. Actions and decisions that touch people's hearts enhance their sense of belonging and show that they are valued and crucial for fostering unity and achieving sustainable success.

As the final suggestion that P1 proposed for coping with the administrative obstacles, he underscored the significance of understanding and showing empathy to the generation of teachers who were performing teaching practice under his responsibility.

As an administrator in a language school, I recognize that the generation of people I work with is changing. This requires me to adopt a more adaptable leadership model to collaborate effectively with individuals who may think differently, prioritize different things, or hold views that differ from mine.

He underscores his current perspective as an educational leader with a focus on taking initiative in the process of decision-making. The productive change in his

immunity state was reflected in his approach to the adopted leadership model, which he consistently shifted when it was necessary for the sake of institutional benefit.

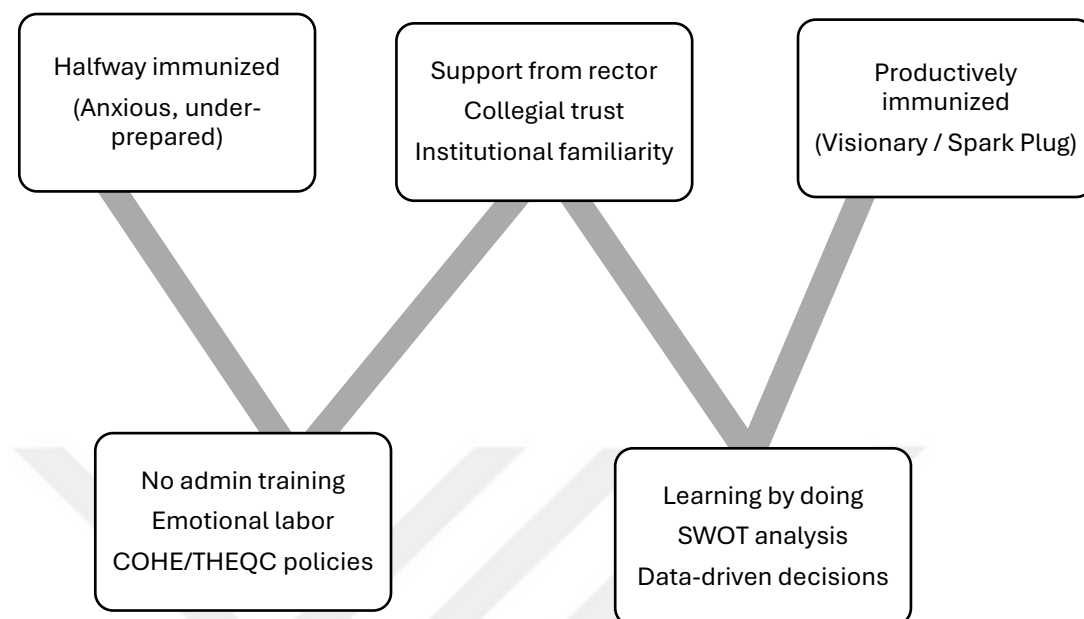
...in cases where I anticipate that collectively made decisions might lead to problematic outcomes in the future, I may have to set aside collective wisdom. My 9 years of management experience have taught me that just because a decision is made collectively doesn't necessarily mean it is the right one.

Additional narratives supported his current notion of a solution-oriented mindset. In his *story*, the enhanced immunity state was evident in that he accepted the problems as “puzzles” that were prone to be solved by adopting a participative management approach and delegating the duties and responsibilities within the institution, which reshaped the future of the immediate environment at the SFL as well as his personal growth in the future. This is also another indication of a shift from a vulnerable immunity state to a forward-looking, and productive one.

In the future, I am going to try to minimize my own and my assistants' involvement in the academic planning process as much as possible and to involve the members of the relevant units more in the process...I also feel the need to contribute more to society and my field by focusing on publications, projects, and patents, thereby enhancing my impact through scientific work.

To summarise the trajectories of P1 in the interconnected contexts (*story*, *Story*, *STORY*), the trajectories of the participant illustrate that P1 initially had a halfway state of immunity, and eventually, he reached a state of productively immunised, adaptive and solution-oriented administrator despite and thanks to all challenges. A transition from initial struggles with independence and feelings of isolation during problem-solving to a more collaborative, participative, and solution-oriented approach is witnessed. This change reflects a form of adaptive psychological immunity, where challenges are viewed as opportunities for personal growth.

Key factors such as adaptability, openness to change, and emotional resilience emerge as vital components that enable P1 as an educational leader to effectively navigate the demands of administrative roles. Figure 5 demonstrates the psychological immunity process flow of P1.

Figure 5*Retrodictive Pathway of P1*

All in all, key factors contributing to P1's psychological immunity include a strong sense of institutional belonging, mentorship from senior administrators, and proactive coping strategies such as participative leadership and data-driven decision-making. Despite initial emotional overwhelm and lack of formal administrative training, P1's resilience was fostered by collegial trust, institutional familiarity, and a solution-oriented mindset. Over time, these factors supported the transition from a vulnerable early state to an empowered leadership identity.

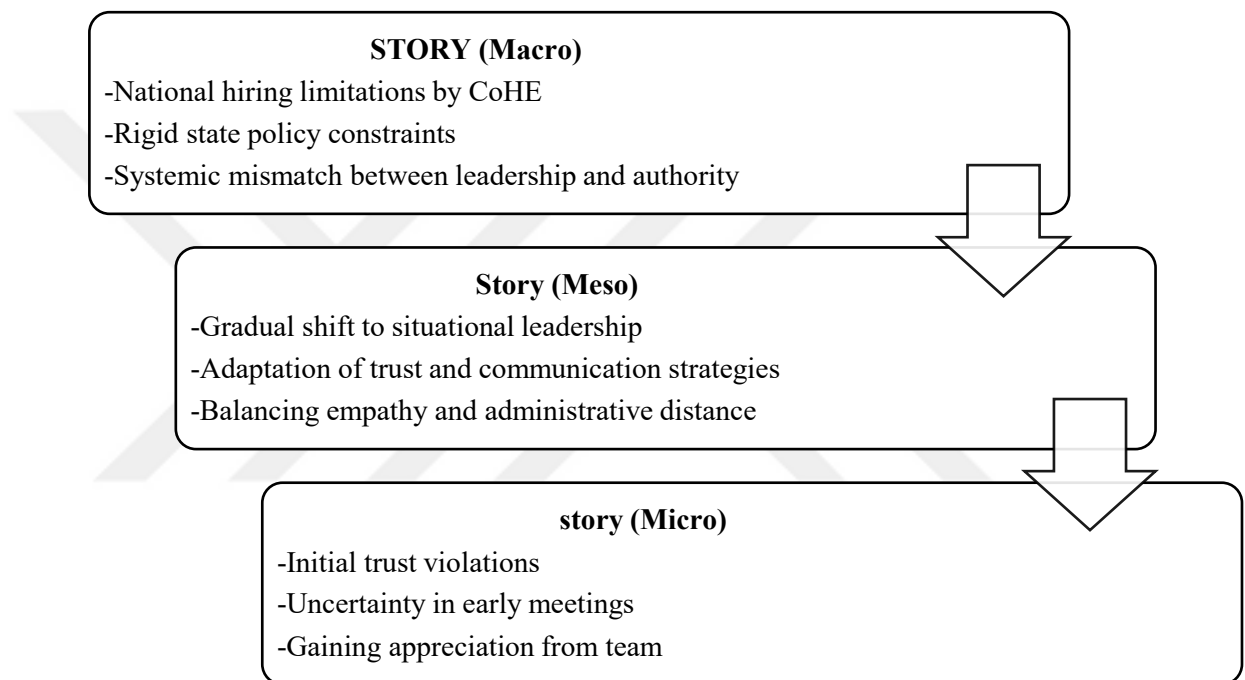
3.3.2. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 2

P2 contributed to the study with her managerial experiences as an assistant director to a School of Foreign Languages at a technical state university located in the Mediterranean region of Türkiye. The university of the P2 is located in a metropolis city, which is relatively more developed and more populated than the one where P1 resides. As the university bears a technical university identity, she manages more than one thousand students with more than forty instructors. She had had seven years of experience as the vice director to the SFL when she participated in the study. She started as a translator at a university, and then, with a career path change, she switched to ELT because of her desire to interact with people. She roughly narrated her story starting with her experiences as a novice EFL teacher, and continued with her experienced teacher

stories. Consequently, P2 shared her detailed stories as a coordinator at her school, and finally as an administrator to the school. Throughout her trajectories, she experienced fluctuations in her emotions. Overall, following a burnout risk due to job-related stress, she demonstrated a productive immunity state despite the ups and downs in her feelings. What affected these fluctuations at the macro, meso, and micro levels is demonstrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Three-level narrative overlay of P2



3.3.2.1. Early Career Trajectories of P2 as an EFL Teacher

P2's story started with her experiences as a high school graduate and as a translator at a foundation university right after she graduated from university. Soon after that, her initial interest in psychology evolved into education because of some conditions. Therefore, her career path changed over time. Her career reorientation ended with a shift to having a profession as an EFL teacher.

Since my childhood, I have always had an incredible interest in psychology. However, due to some unpleasant events I experienced during the exam year, I followed my father's guidance... When I finished university, I started to work as a translator at a foundation university, but there was always a part of me that felt I

should be in a profession where I could interact with people and make a difference.

Initially, alignment to the profession functioned as the source of motivation for her, and this alignment resulted in a gradual immersion into ELT. Consequently, she found fulfilment in teaching. She never regretted this decision, thanks to her desire to make a difference in people's lives. Their passion for teaching laid the foundation of her productive immunity.

There was always a part of me that felt I should be in a profession where I could interact with people and make a difference....After working as a translator for 4 years, I decided to complete my pedagogical formation training and become an English teacher because sitting in an office all day long without any interaction was not for me... I have never regretted this decision because what makes me happiest in this profession is being able to interact with people and make a difference in their lives.

3.3.2.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context

Following her appointment as a vice director, her administrative story was initiated, and she faced more or less similar challenges along with several facilitating opportunities.

Initially, the limitations she faced during the transition to the leadership phase made it challenging to sustain her profession as an administrator. Lack of preparation, having no prior experience in management, and having no experience within the institution led to some initial apprehension. Especially, being unfamiliar with the institution made her feel insecure.

When I first started as a member of the administration, I didn't know exactly what my responsibilities were because it was my first week at the school; I was completely a stranger...I didn't know anyone or the system of state universities which made me feel incredibly insecure and nervous.

After a while, the initial feeling of insecurity and the adjustment challenges were followed by self-doubt and role ambiguity, which caused fluctuations in her emotions. These experiences of P2 show how challenging it was to transition into management.

I even tried to turn down the position and convince the director that it would be better if he gave the position to someone who had worked in the institution longer and knew the school system better than me.

In time, she managed these challenges, which contributed to her immunity state positively. For instance, in her early professional adjustment, the state of discontent with the context in which she was performing her duty was negatively influenced by the attitude changes toward her.

The most disappointing and challenging thing for me was recognizing that people with whom I previously had good relations changed their attitude toward me, failing to understand the effort and responsibilities I had undertaken.

She proposed solutions to these kinds of challenges she faced at the meso level. So, rather than feeling discouraged, she sought a way to overcome this constraint. She demonstrated a resilient administrator profile at this stage. Therefore, she developed some coping strategies in the process. Induction programs and getting to know all stakeholders in the institution were foregrounded as the main solutions to cope with the aforementioned challenges.

Try to know the people you will be working with and understand the administrative operations of the institution (a good orientation program where you can learn about the stakeholders and the operations)

During these ups and downs in her feelings and struggling period, she got assistance at meso level, she was challenged by micro level figures and experiences on the other hand.

When I consider the university's higher management and the administrative staff we work with, I feel lucky as an administrator because both the upper management and the administrative staff consist of people who respect our work and support the decisions we make. However, I cannot say the same for the students and some of our colleagues we work with. I think their selfishness hinders their ability to empathize.

This state of selfishness and lack of empathy that was asserted by colleagues compelled her to change attitudes. In time, her attitude toward her colleagues changed,

too. She retreated from the approaches she used to adopt when she was just appointed as an administrator. Her trust in colleagues evolved. She did not give up, but she learned through the challenges she experienced at micro level. Eventually, she demonstrated resilience, which is a vital component of productive immunity. Her focus on empathy and handling violations of trust indicated a growing psychological immunity that helped her navigate and manage difficult interactions without compromising her leadership integrity.

Before I became an administrator, I believed that all my colleagues shared my dedication and respected their job as much as I did. Therefore, at first, I had unconditional trust in all my colleagues. However, as time passed and I gained more experience, I discovered that some of them chose this profession casually. Unfortunately, they lack respect for both their work and the students they teach. Therefore, my unconditional trust evolved into a conditional one. I learned that it is essential to carefully choose whom you trust by observing their actions over time.

Similarly, a lack of empathy emerged as another leadership challenge for her. Her vision for an ideal school, where empathy and mutual understanding are prioritized, echoes the role of emotional intelligence in leadership, particularly in creating a psychologically supportive and resilient work environment.

... trying to reach everyone and simultaneously meet their unique needs and expectations is very difficult, especially in an environment that sometimes lacks empathy and mutual respect, which can be challenging... I believe the most important thing is that every stakeholder should be able to empathize with one another and try to understand each other. From my point of view, in an environment where empathy and mutual understanding exist, there is no challenge that cannot be overcome or resolved.

Finally, macro (STORY) level challenges like limited authority (e.g. hiring qualified teachers), some structural constraints (e.g. the number of teacher-student mismatch), and bureaucratic barriers (e.g. teacher contracts) limited the administrator's official power.

In my school, I have the power to do many things, but at the same time, I might have no power....In terms of official or legal rights, in state schools, the power

of the administrators is highly determined and restricted by laws and regulations. Therefore, when you want to change or adapt things, you may face extreme difficulties and even feel powerless in overcoming them.

P2 faced a shortage of instructors, which is not relative to the number of students. This mismatch led to excessive workloads and burnout among instructors. Even when solutions such as hiring contractual teachers are proposed, bureaucratic or administrative obstacles (e.g., insurance issues) prevent effective implementation, reflecting structural inefficiencies in educational management.

For example, our biggest problem is the imbalance between the number of instructors and students. Our instructors are exhausted due to heavy teaching loads. As administrators, we are trying to find a solution and suggest hiring contractual teachers. But then another department blocks this, saying there are issues related to insurance for contractual teachers.

P2 was also burdened with the fact that there was a misalignment between national-level decision-making (CoHE policies) and the actual capacities and contextual realities of individual institutions, which led to operational stress. Despite a solution-focused mindset, the educational leader felt constrained by macro level higher authorities, which limited her agency and contributed to demotivation in an ongoing cycle of burnout and resource shortages.

At a higher level, another example might be that YÖK (CoHE) determines student quotas or program capacities based solely on the number of faculty members in the department, without considering factors like classroom capacity. We are a school where all departments are in English. Because they ignore our actual capacity, we are currently struggling with resource shortages. As a result, our faculty members are experiencing burnout, which in turn creates other administrative problems. It's a vicious cycle. What I'm trying to say is that, even though we try to be solution-oriented, sometimes YÖK or even the university's top management creates obstacles that prevent us, as administrators, from overcoming certain problems.

Despite all these limitations, on the other hand, her personal virtues as an administrator, her adaptability skills as well as her solution-oriented mindset helped her

to cope with these challenges. She was afforded by facilitating applications and figures in the process of transitioning to administration. For instance, some qualities of teaching experiences at micro level aided her in the administrative process. These qualities facilitated the P2's experience of transitioning from teaching to administration.

I have always been someone who communicates well with people. However, when I first started teaching, being overly idealistic as I was taught had prevented me from establishing this communication with the students. Over time, by observing my more experienced colleagues and exchanging ideas with them, I realized that for the sake of positive relationships, you need to be patient and sacrifice your idealism when it is necessary. When I was first assigned as the coordinator of the departmental English lessons, I thought that it would not be so difficult for me because I knew that I had good communication skills.

Similarly, this approach aided her at a meso level during her early professional adjustment.

During my time as a coordinator, I did not have any problems with the administrative staff in the departments because, as an instructor, I already established good relationships with them, which comprise respect and love.

This approach appeared as a criterion for appointment, thanks to which she recognised her strengths, and over time, she got over the initial negative emotions of being appointed. In this phase, she felt empowered by the trust of her manager, so she felt self-confident, which contributed to her productive immunity state.

After my small talk with him, I understood that the position was offered to me because of my good interpersonal skills and ability to get along with everyone without any difficulty. Noticing my strength gave me the power to overcome my insecurity and nervousness, and I guess I used my strength in the best way to learn about my new environment.

Moreover, when she was first appointed to the management position, she was afforded the opportunity to sustain a managerial role by powerful figures in her environment. One of the affordances in this process appeared to be her rector as a role model in management. This assistance at meso level had an influence on her adopted managerial model. Therefore, she appreciated the value of respect and care.

I believe the rector of the foundation university where I used to work as a translator is one of the people who had an influence on me as an administrator. One of the most important things I have learned from observing his leadership is to respect whoever you work with and to show that you care for them... This feeling, which I felt as an employee before, was so important for me...

In this phase, she was aware of her responsibilities and of the importance of the administrative role she held because she felt like a mediator between teachers under her responsibility and the higher management. Functioning as a bridge, enhanced fulfilment and job satisfaction, which led to positive attitudes toward administrative roles despite the challenges.

As an administrator, my primary responsibility is, of course, to handle administrative tasks and to organize the school's operations in the best possible way. On the other hand, while doing this, it is also crucial for me to make the lives of the people I work with easier and support them as much as I can. In general, since what is happening in the School of Foreign Languages is not understood much in the higher management of the universities, being in a position to say a little bit in that sense and explain it to the people there is actually an opportunity to solve the problems...having an opportunity to make your voice heard.

3.3.2.3. Adapting to Challenges

In the process of fulfilling the administrative duties, P2 demonstrated noteworthy adaptive attitudes toward the profession. Her attitude stood out with bearing administrative power, which afforded her in the process of adapting to the duty.

Your power as a person, in other words, your strengths stem from your character, values, virtues, and abilities, can help you manage many things as an administrator. I believe that kind of power is more critical since, in many situations, it would help you to overcome difficulties and find unique solutions to problems.

Similarly, the facilitating factors, such as collegial support and having a supportive team, assisted her in the process of handling challenges, which reinforced her to sustain her administrative role despite all the burdens of the role.

I think one of the most important things for an administrator to overcome and handle the challenges they face is the personalities of the people they manage together. When the people you work with truly understand you and support and assist you during critical moments, it becomes much easier to continue in your role. It is very important to have friends around you who appreciate your effort, understand you, and unconditionally support you.

Despite this, P2, as an administrator, experienced some particular limitations resulting from factors such as unmotivated instructors under her responsibility, the negative school climate and culture, and dealing with teachers with diverse archetypes. She stated that teachers were categorised into distinct archetypes (supportive, conditional, resistant), which influenced her leadership strategies. She proposed a metaphoric description of those teachers: The ones who appreciate the effort, the ones who provide a conditional collaboration, and finally, the resistant teachers who exhibit resistance to change.

The instructors under my responsibility are like branches of the same tree at different heights. A tiny group of them are like branches close to the tree's trunk... respect your work and efforts, and prefer to support rather than hinder...the ones that are like the branches in the middle of the tree require more effort to be reached...on the other hand, those like the branches at the top of the tree, oppose you no matter what you do, believe that they already know everything, are close to change, have no empathy, and ... proper rapport while communicating.

Her description aligns with the psychological immunity archetypes framework (Hiver, 2016), where the ability to adapt and handle professional obstacles, such as challenges with colleagues. So, this state contributed to her emotional resilience and leadership efficacy.

It is obvious that P2 felt fluctuations in her motivation. Despite this, she managed to sustain her duty, and she stood resilient, which functions as a key requirement of the position.

I know that even in moments when I felt psychologically exhausted and drained, I did my best to help and assist them and approached them with Patience, tolerance, and empathy.

As she adopted a solution-oriented mindset, she proposed solutions to experienced difficulties. Her conflict resolution and mediation skills assisted her in striking a balance in management by maintaining the amateur spirit in the process of solutions to experienced difficulties at micro level.

...it is crucial to get to know the people you work with and determine to what extent you will show your friendship and managerial side to them. Throughout my seven-year experience in management, small coffee talks or break time chats helped me a lot in sustaining that balance between me and the people I manage.

Moreover, being patient and the commitment exhibited by P2 assisted her in handling the obstacles raised by her micro level environment.

I realized that for the sake of positive relationships, you need to be patient and sacrifice your idealism when it is necessary. I believe realizing this helped me during my administrative role a lot and, most of the time, saved me from giving impulsive reactions to people I manage, which could damage my relationship with them in the long run.

In the course of time, she shifted her managerial model and she adopted a different managerial approach which was particular to particular conditions and people. This also indicates that she learned through conflict management applications, and so she reached professional maturity in time.

Regardless of my role as an administrator, I like people to feel comfortable talking to me. However, I understood that not everyone I work with shares the same maturity as I do, and I shouldn't treat everyone in the same way. I realized that it is important to assess those who might take advantage of the closeness and sincerity you offer and approach them with a different administrator identity.

Gradually, she exhibited effective leadership, which required navigating the complexity of leadership by recognising individual differences, embracing openness, and

involving stakeholders, while balancing constraints through situational leadership, fostering a solution-oriented mindset, and applying particularity in management to gain insight into team dynamics and drive success. She embodied honing the administrative craft and applied a reflexive practice in the process.

I find it necessary to make changes to my administrative practice. I believe leadership and management require you to have many faces. You cannot treat and manage everyone around you similarly, and a system that works for some students and teachers may not work for others. Therefore, as an administrator, I question myself often, try to get feedback from others, and do not hesitate to make the necessary changes... This is probably because I learned to be a team player and, when necessary, lead a team long ago.

3.3.2.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P2 as an Administrator

In the process of adapting to challenges, P2 exhibited a reflective and adaptive leadership approach, which suggested that she gradually developed her psychological immunity. By reflecting on her past experiences and preparing for future growth, she enhanced her act of particularity and adaptability skills, which are two critical components of both transformational leadership (Bush, 2018) and psychological immunity (Hiver, 2016). As general qualities of administrators, she advocates that these two components have some impact on others.

The best thing about my position is that I can make a difference in students' and my colleagues' lives and help and assist them whenever needed.

Eventually, she reached a state of professional growth and psychological resilience by embracing the challenges of her duty and finding solutions to those challenges, considering her power as an administrator. It is obvious that currently she has acknowledged that she has gained experience, so that she can handle the limitations of her position. So, she feels more empathetic, adaptive, flexible and resilient to the burdens of management.

This process taught me some of the skills I have today as a leader, such as the ability to work with people with different characters, listen and show empathy for others, organize things and solve problems together with others, and most importantly change and adapt myself according to the team I am working with.

Moreover, she now feels more responsible towards her students and the teachers under her responsibility. She values the total well-being of the institution, and she prioritises institutional interests and concerns despite some resistance by teachers.

...as an administrator, I must ensure that no student suffers because of the irresponsible acts of teachers. Sometimes, this can be a little frustrating because teachers often do not like their performance to be evaluated. When an administrator warns them about it, they perceive it as a threat and take a direct stance against the administration. As their vice director, I have a responsibility to ensure that all teachers in my school are supported professionally and psychologically because the well-being of teachers in all terms means the well-being of the students and the program in general.

In line with her approach to assisting students and teachers in her environment, her current perspective as an administrator includes a variety of applications depending on the circumstances. She suggests this particularity as follows:

...how you manage depends on the qualities of the institution and the people you work with. However, people who will do this job should first be able to dedicate themselves and be self-sacrificing when necessary. Being a good observer and approaching both the events and people calmly and cautiously will always help them while executing this role.

In light of this feeling of executing management role efficiently, she envisions her future as an administrator who feels encouraged enough to be open to change(s), self-confident in her applications, and resilient despite fluctuations in her motivation to lead, job-related stress, and burnout risk. Her reflections point to continuous growth and the integration of multiple perspectives in future leadership roles.

In the future, I would like to participate in different trainings that would help me to empower my psychology and well-being, as the burden that this duty puts on your shoulders may sometimes bring you to the edge of psychological collapse. Although I know I am resilient enough to keep doing this duty and can motivate myself, I also know that getting extra help will always help me.

She continued sharing her future perspective by stating her perception of administration and highlighting the flexible, adaptive, and complex aspects of educational leadership.

I find it necessary to make changes to my administrative practice. I believe leadership and management require you to have many faces. You cannot treat and manage everyone around you similarly, and a system that works for some students and teachers may not work for others. Therefore, as an administrator, I question myself often, try to get feedback from others, and do not hesitate to make the necessary changes.

For a future perspective, she also envisions her future as an educational leader, who prioritises delegation, justice, and equality among all stakeholders in her environment.

As an administrator, I would like people to recognize how much I value and prioritize justice and equality for everyone because appreciating the effort I put into achieving this in my work is one of the key factors that motivates me in my role... the most important thing I do at my school is to organize the work by establishing communication between the sub-units within the school of foreign languages as an administrator, my priority is always to make the people I work with feel respected and valued, and delegating the work to people who can manage it.

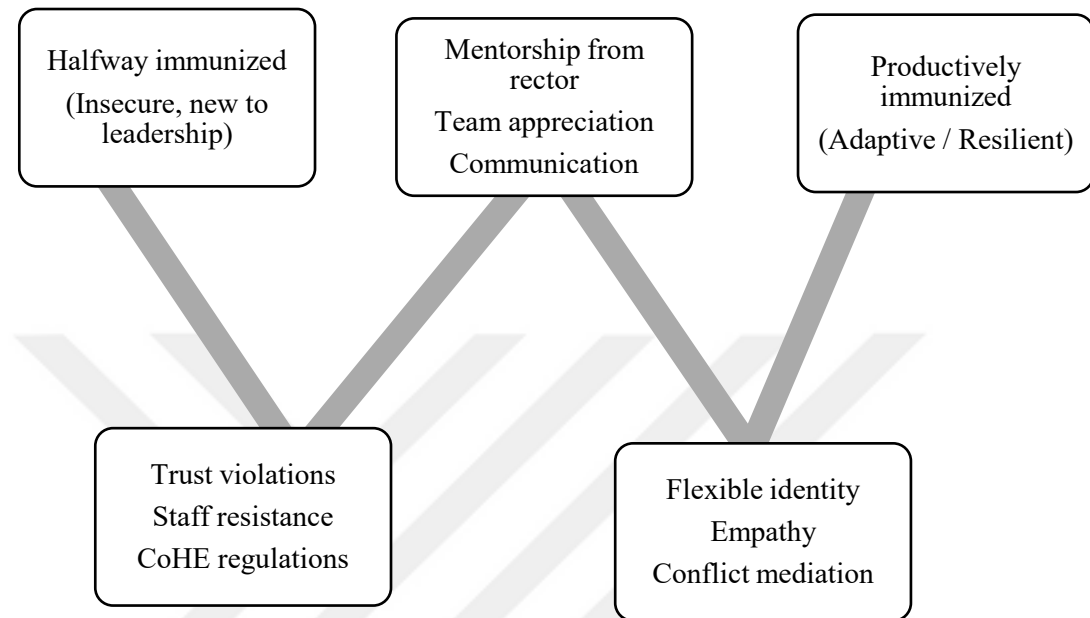
To sum up, P2 evidently passed through a leadership evolution. She exhibited growth from initial insecurity to empowerment and expertise as an educational leader. Her responses provided valuable insights into her professional development as an EFL administrator and leader. Her journey as an EFL administrator reflected a blend of personal growth, adaptive leadership, and an evolving sense of psychological immunity. It is also clear that her leadership was both shaped by and contributed to the development of her psychological resilience. Her journey illustrated the dynamic interplay between personal values, professional roles, and environmental influences at micro, meso, and macro levels of interactions.

The participant's experiences and reflections resonate with several established frameworks and findings in educational leadership, teacher identity, and psychological immunity. By situating these insights within theoretical and empirical contexts, we can

better understand the causal mechanisms influencing their psychological immunity and leadership archetype. Figure 7 displays the retrodictive pathway of P2.

Figure 7

Retrodictive Pathway of P2



As a whole, P2's psychological immunity was shaped by early professional insecurities, relational challenges within the institution, and macro-level systemic constraints. Critical affordances such as mentorship, team appreciation, and the development of flexible, situational leadership practices played a pivotal role in strengthening their resilience. Through gradual adaptation, emotional self-regulation, and trust recalibration, P2 transitioned from initial vulnerability to an adaptive and empathetic and adaptive leadership identity grounded in relational balance and reflective practice.

3.3.3. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 3

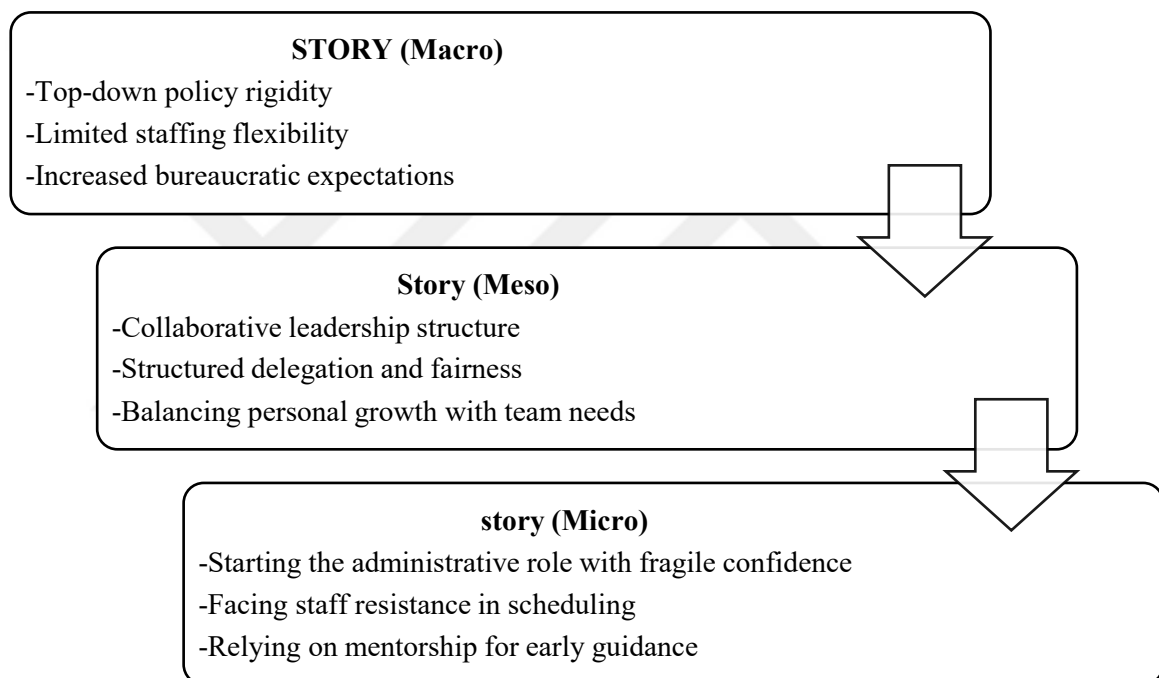
Starting with an overall introduction to the third case of the study, this part showcases the findings related to Participant 3 (P3) at *story* (Micro), *Story* (Meso), and *STORY* (Macro) levels. P3 works as the director of the School of Foreign Languages at a foundation university. After some time following her PhD degree, she was appointed as the director of the school, where she administered more than thirty instructors who were teaching the English language to around 1000 students in preparatory classes. Figure 8 illustrates the experiences of P3 at macro, meso, and micro level.

Holding the Assistant Professor Doctor degree in ELT, she divides her career into three major stages: Master's, Ph.D., and Postdoctoral periods. She defines her master's degree as an apprenticeship period.

It was one of the periods when I learned the most, as I faced numerous challenges and worked hard to solve them as a new and idealistic teacher. This stage taught me an invaluable lesson: theory and practice don't always align perfectly.

Figure 8

Three-level narrative overlay of P3



Secondly, she identifies her PhD stage as “the transformational stage”.

My Ph.D. years were both challenging and intellectually enriching. They allowed me to gain insights and perspectives that I couldn't have acquired solely through years of professional practice. While experience plays a significant role in any career, this period showed me the power of combining practical experience with academic inquiry.

Finally, the postdoctoral period was positioned as the professional maturity stage for her.

This stage has been about transitioning into professional maturity in both my academic development and career. With the knowledge I gained from my academic journey and the experience I acquired as a practitioner.

The P3's overall trajectory highlights a transition from early struggles with isolation and self-reliance in problem-solving to a more collaborative and solution-oriented approach. This shift reflects an adaptive psychological immunity, where challenges are viewed as opportunities for growth. Additionally, emotional resilience and adaptability to professional challenges emerged as key components of her immunity state, enabling her to handle the complexities of administrative roles effectively.

3.3.3.1. Early Career Trajectories of P3 as an EFL Teacher

The early aspirational desire of P3 to become an English teacher and her passion for the field suggest intrinsic motivation as a foundation for her psychological immunity. These initial feelings influenced her *story* at micro level.

From the very beginning of my school life, being an English teacher was my dream job.

As an external factor, role models also had an influence on her early career trajectories. Early exposure to positive role models, such as her first English teacher, seems significantly influenced her educational leadership style and her professional choice.

I guess my first English teacher has had great influence on me. I remember being afraid of the school on the first day. Our first class was English, and so, I met my English teacher first. Her approach and the way she represented the topic were very salient, and as a child, she could take my attention to her class.

3.3.3.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context

When she was selected as a member of the school management, she experienced job-related difficulties in the early stages of her administrative role. Initially, she demonstrated a fragile archetype because she found those initial challenges overwhelming and demotivating. Although she demonstrated enthusiasm, she was easily overwhelmed by challenges arising from the unique nature of the managerial role.

When I first started as a member of the administration, I was overwhelmed by the heavy workload and responsibilities of the position.

Additionally, in the early stages of her leadership role, she challenged key operational processes like scheduling and resource allocation. These meso level constraints were rooted in macro level implementations of the decision-makers, which negatively influenced micro level practices. Namely, her leadership role was accompanied by resource limitations and operational challenges caused by the upper management and the CoHE. Therefore, insufficient resources created frustration and necessitated prioritisation of needs.

Perhaps the most pressing constraint was resource limitations. I remember once in my school I had a very difficult time trying to put together a class schedule... In some cases, it was simply not feasible to meet all demands due to insufficient resources. This sometimes resulted in frustration, as I had to prioritize certain needs over others.

At this point, she also felt the limited authority as a school director, and she addressed the decisions made by the higher management members who based their arguments on global and local disturbances.

The main reason for this problem was that due to changing circumstances such as the pandemic and earthquake, the university administration limited face-to-face classes to two days per week for each faculty, and there were also significant restrictions on online teaching. It would have been very helpful if they consulted with the relevant departments, conducted a comprehensive evaluation, and then made and announce the decision before making such binding decisions.

She believed that these kinds of decisions caused an unfair state. So, she proposed a solution to this issue.

It would also be good to get help from upper management in collaborating with other faculty administrations and ensuring that rules are applied equally to all employees.

On the other hand, she appreciated the affordances provided, so that she was able to survive her managerial role and showcase a robust psychological immunity. For instance, her leadership philosophy was likely influenced by the positive example set by

her early mentor, who used to adopt a collaborative, supportive, and compassionate approach. Her mentor had focused on fostering a team-oriented environment, emphasising shared responsibility and trust over authority. This perspective demonstrates how effective leadership styles can influence not only administrative processes but also the psychological resilience of team members as prospective administrators. In other words, this state suggests that positive leadership has a prolonged influence on subordinates.

There is a significant individual who has greatly influenced me as an educational leader: My first supervisor and director when I started working at the Preparatory School. He was a compassionate and supportive leader who always prioritized creating a safe, stress-free, and productive work environment. Many, including myself, stayed in the same institution for years, valuing the positive atmosphere over financial considerations. His positive, considerate, and disciplined leadership style continues to guide me in my own journey as an educational leader.

As mentioned earlier, she stated the limited authority she had at macro level decisions. However, having a meso level authority was demonstrated as a significant power that she had as an administrator.

One of the most significant affordances of stepping into a leadership position was the authority to make decisions... In my school, I have the power to re-organize nearly everything.

Also, familiarity with the institution assisted her to fulfil the managerial needs. As she had already been acknowledged by the institutional needs, she did not waste her time on getting to know the staff, student profile, and institutional operations.

As I had been working there for more than 15 years when I was first appointed as a manager, I already had a deep understanding of the department's needs, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. After spending so many years in the same environment, I know the department inside and out—the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This experience is crucial as I move into an administrative position, because I can

make decisions based on a true understanding of what the school and its people need.

Additionally, as an external factor, the supportive work environment emerged as another affordance. Experiences with empathetic leadership shaped her own leadership philosophy and approach to fostering collaboration. In this process, she obviously received strong collegial support.

The instructors under my responsibility are also my colleagues and we all co-operate... Another key advantage was the support I received from my colleagues. Many staff members, most of them my friends as well, were eager to collaborate and share their insights, which created a sense of shared responsibility. This collaborative spirit was instrumental in fostering a positive work environment.

Connected with collegiality, a positive school climate and school culture contributed to her enjoyment in her managerial role.

What I really enjoy doing at my school is socializing. The high level of participation and motivation shown by our employees in every celebration or party we organize makes me extremely happy as a manager. Such events strengthen the bonds between our employees and create a more positive work environment.

Her alignment to an administrative role functioned as another affordance for P3. In line with her administrative alignment, she addressed the workload imbalance, and she advocated fairness in task allocation, and delegation of workload for the sake of enhancing team efficacy.

To me, being an educational leader is less about exercising authority and more about fostering a collaborative environment where everyone feels empowered and involved in the decision-making process... As an educational leader, I prioritize collaboration and effective communication... When I think about my own management style, I realize that the most important thing I do at my school is defining units and the duties of the teams within the School of Foreign Languages. This is because I've observed that there is an uneven

distribution of workload, with some employees taking on additional tasks and responsibilities, while others are involved in fewer processes.

Finally, the accumulation of teaching and mentoring experience over the years aided her in the process of transitioning from teaching to administration.

I have worked in many different positions from teaching to mentoring learners/ teacher trainees and I believe that this diverse experience has given me a deep understanding of the dynamics of the classroom and the needs of both students and educators ... Having worked as a teacher for over 15 years, I feel that the most valuable aspects of my teaching experience that will help me transition into an administrative role are my deep understanding of the department, strong communication skills, and collaborative mindset.

3.3.3.3. Adapting to Challenges

The position came with notable constraints that were the results of macro level implementations. For instance, staffing limitation was a frequent concern, particularly in terms of recruiting and assigning qualified teachers. This constraint reveals systemic challenges in EFL preparatory programs, including limited resources and the need for strategic balancing of priorities. P3 also had to challenge this by adapting to the available situation.

Balancing the availability of qualified staff with institutional needs required careful planning and negotiation. Class size allocation posed another persistent challenge. Determining appropriate class sizes within the constraints of available resources often necessitated difficult trade-offs. Similarly, scheduling complexities, such as aligning course hours with teacher availability and student needs, demanded flexibility and adaptability.

While she was striving to perform the managerial duty, she felt psychologically drained by these restricted staffing circumstances.

As their director, I have the responsibility to ensure that we have the personnel who has the necessary skills to apply the educational and teaching methods we have adopted. Sometimes this can be a little frustrating.

Moreover, she initially faced challenges as she had to handle similar problems alone. This indicates that she had to deal with her early career struggles with isolation. In time, she adopted a solution-oriented and collective problem-solving approach, and she demonstrated confidence and maturity in her administrative role. Her ability to innovate and adapt indicated that she moved beyond the fragile archetype phase through experience and self-development, highlighting a robust psychological immunity.

Initially, I used to try to solve problems on my own, often struggling under the weight of my workload and feeling emotionally drained... Acknowledging that we don't have to handle everything alone has made me more resilient and better equipped to deal challenges with a clear and balanced mood. ... I am now in my most productive phase.

With intrinsic motivation, she recovered from isolation, and she demonstrated a state of early professional adjustment and growth through experience, which reflects a shift towards resilience and constructive problem-solving. So, she took up any challenge as a puzzle, but not as a problem.

There were times when I would spend days trying to handle everything myself. However, over time and with experience, I learned that every problem has a potential solution. I gradually convinced myself that rather than focusing on the problem itself, it was more important to focus on finding a solution.

To survive the initial challenges, she valued the importance of collaboration. Therefore, she attempted to initiate the delegation and involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making processes at micro level.

My primary focus as a leader is to create a workspace where collaboration thrives, and individuals are given the autonomy to take initiative. I believe in including team members in the management process to cultivate a sense of self-autonomy and ownership over their work. During a particular period, we decided to give the teams more autonomy, allowing them to manage their own communication, schedule meetings, prepare exam questions, and set deadlines according to their preferences.

However, these kinds of initiatives may not work as desired, and they may even lead to unforeseen challenges. Consequently, as happened in this example, rather than sharing the control and giving some autonomy, she had to take the initiative to be able to manage the conflicts.

There was a lack of coordination, confusion around deadlines, and an overall breakdown in communication. It became clear that, in certain situations, the need for direct, clear instructions and deadlines from administration is crucial to maintaining order and preventing chaos.

This attempt turned into a limitation to her as an administrator. However, she learned through these kinds of challenges. She exemplified one of them as follows:

One of the most memorable events in my role as an administrator happened when we attempted to implement a more collaborative approach within our team. Although we had emphasized the importance of open communication, shared decision-making, and striving for consensus, this experience taught me that there are boundaries to this approach.

Quite similarly, she challenged to encourage the resistant teachers who found novelty a burden. However, she acted as a decisive administrator who prioritised institutional interests, which is one of the key requirements of the position.

There are some aspects of my management situation that I find very challenging. For example, ... employees often react negatively to new tasks or rule changes, perceiving them as punishments rather than necessary adjustments. I'm not sure what to do about this. But one possibility might be for me to...keep in mind that being a manager requires me to make tough calls and sometimes, I have to make clear and decisive decisions, while may not please everyone... Sometimes, effective leadership requires taking decisive action to steer things back on course, ensuring that the overall goals are achieved smoothly.

In this process, she exhibited a definite growth mindset. So, she embraced all these challenges in the field of learning. Her emphasis on learning from challenges and continuously seeking improvement indicated a resilient and adaptive mindset.

Well, in the beginning, my primary focus was simply learning the job and adapting to the administrative processes. It was a challenging period, and there were times when I felt overwhelmed by the heavy workload... over time, I've been able to identify the key aspects that need to be learned and applied, and I've developed a more structured approach to managing my tasks. I now focus on organizing my work by prioritizing the most important tasks and creating an efficient workflow. This approach has allowed me to be more proactive and organized, ensuring that I can anticipate potential challenges and be prepared to address them.

Considering the unique nature of administration, she realized in time that challenges will always arise as they are a natural part of the job, but what truly matters is how an educational leader approaches them. This indicated that she was transformed from a vulnerable figure to a spark plug leader who was more resilient and open to changes at macro level.

There are always unexpected changes in the process. So, as an administrator we should stay calm and resilient, and open to new changes as language education is a dynamic process which often requires adapting to shifting trends, policies, or technological advancements.

In the cases that she felt the limited power as a manager, she advocated that flexibility and adaptability could be the keywords in this position.

Another key quality I bring to this new role is adaptability. I've learned over the years that not everything goes as planned, and sometimes things need to be left to unfold naturally. This flexibility is something I've learned to embrace, and I think it's vital in leadership. When I can't immediately act, I'm comfortable waiting and then responding based on how things develop.

Additionally, she faced limitations at macro level, but thanks to her crafting skills, she learned the ropes in the process. Also, she learned how to rise above the macro level obstacles because the demands of leadership required her to refine her skills in

communication, strategic planning, and conflict resolution. These experiences not only enhanced her capabilities but also deepened her understanding of the multifaceted nature of educational leadership. Once, for instance, she could not resolve a quest despite her talks with the higher management, but she preferred to let it flow.

Open communication with upper management was pivotal. Whenever I encountered issues that I could not resolve, I ensured clear and honest discussions with decision-makers, explaining the limitations of the resources available to me. Throughout this process, I learned that striving for perfection at all times isn't always the best approach and that sometimes it's better to let things take their course. No matter how much you plan, things often fall into place naturally.

Finally, P3's utterances showed how honing the craft and involving stakeholders in decision-making processes contributed to her decision-making abilities and her ability to adapt to the challenges.

One of the most important lessons I've learned is to avoid making emotional or impulsive decisions. It's essential to consider both sides of an issue and engage in thoughtful discussions before taking action. I've come to understand the immense value of asking for help when needed. Early on, I hesitated to ask for assistance, but I've come to realize that consulting others and gathering their perspectives is a valuable practice...

3.3.3.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P3 as an Administrator

Currently, she obviously feels efficacious and empowered through her experience as an educational leader.

I can confidently say that I am now in my most productive phase. I'm able to bring together theoretical knowledge and practical expertise to make meaningful contributions to my field.

Also, she mostly contends with the context. Her insights reflect the optimistic and forward-thinking nature of the school staff. She also displays a strong commitment to continuous improvement, innovation, and support for professional growth. At this level, there is a clear sense of pride in the progress made and a belief that they are moving in the right direction to empower teachers and stay aligned with technological innovations.

The place where I now manage is experiencing a period of change and adaptation to align with the demands of the modern era. I can say we are much more proactive than before in keeping up with technological advancements. Additionally, we actively support our teachers by keeping them informed about the latest developments in the field, providing relevant training, and encouraging them to engage in academic research and professional development opportunities. This shows that we are on the right path in terms of innovation and empowering our educators.

Despite her positive attitude towards her current managerial role, she feels discontent with her context in some respects. For instance, she voiced her displeasure at the school climate and the culture adopted by the teachers at her school.

I think the instructors at our school believe that their only duty is to go into the classes and teach!

Additionally, P3 uttered her honest and reflective dissatisfaction with the overall progress of the school. It acknowledged that while progress had been made, there were still key areas in need of development. She expressed a clear awareness of current limitations and a desire to enhance through expanded programs and global opportunities, indicating a thoughtful and aspirational mindset.

There are still areas where we are at the very beginning of the journey. For example, we have not yet been able to extend the duration of language programs to provide students with a more comprehensive learning experience. Similarly, incorporating globalization into the curriculum, such as offering students international exposure, remains a desire rather than a reality.

The advice of P3 for aspiring administrators and her own aspirations reflect a deep understanding of the multifaceted nature of language education administration. She emphasized the need for expertise, emotional resilience, and flexibility, highlighting how these qualities were essential for navigating the dynamic challenges of the role. Her focus on global competence and sustainability reflected a desire to leave a lasting impact of meaning.

For me, an educational leader's role is about inspiring motivation, building trust, and creating a space where individuals feel supported and enthusiastic about contributing to a shared vision...I see education as a collaborative process, where mutual respect and shared goals lead to more meaningful and impactful learning experiences for everyone involved...My leadership is rooted in a balance of empathy and accountability, where I strive to support staff and students while maintaining high standards.

P3 shared valuable suggestions for prospective administrators, emphasizing both the benefits and challenges of the role. Her insights highlighted the importance of a strong foundation in language education, a clear and inclusive vision, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

To be honest, as well as being rewarding, it is really a challenging role. To excel in this position, I would first recommend an administrator to develop a strong understanding of language education. It is really important to know the theories and the methodologies of how languages are learned, the challenges that students may face, pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, curriculum design, integration of technology, and etc. You need to have a clear vision for the school with identified needs taking teachers, students, and staff all into account.

Additionally, through her reflections, she outlined the qualities and strategies that could support effective leadership, with a particular focus on professional development, readiness for occupational challenges, and using quality assurance procedures to make significant advancements.

Supporting continuous learning is another invaluable issue... an administrator should be prepared for challenges, as I have mentioned at the beginning, and ready for disputes...The best way to know how successful their teaching has been is the feedback from students. I know I have done a good job when... the improvements in teaching practices and student achievements are clearly reflected in the program's evaluation reports, and when teachers express confidence in the management strategies and resources provided.

Regarding envisioning the future as an administrator, Participant 3 envisions an ideal language school that balances technological advancement, teacher development, and global integration. Her emphasis on sustainability and innovation suggests a forward-looking mindset.

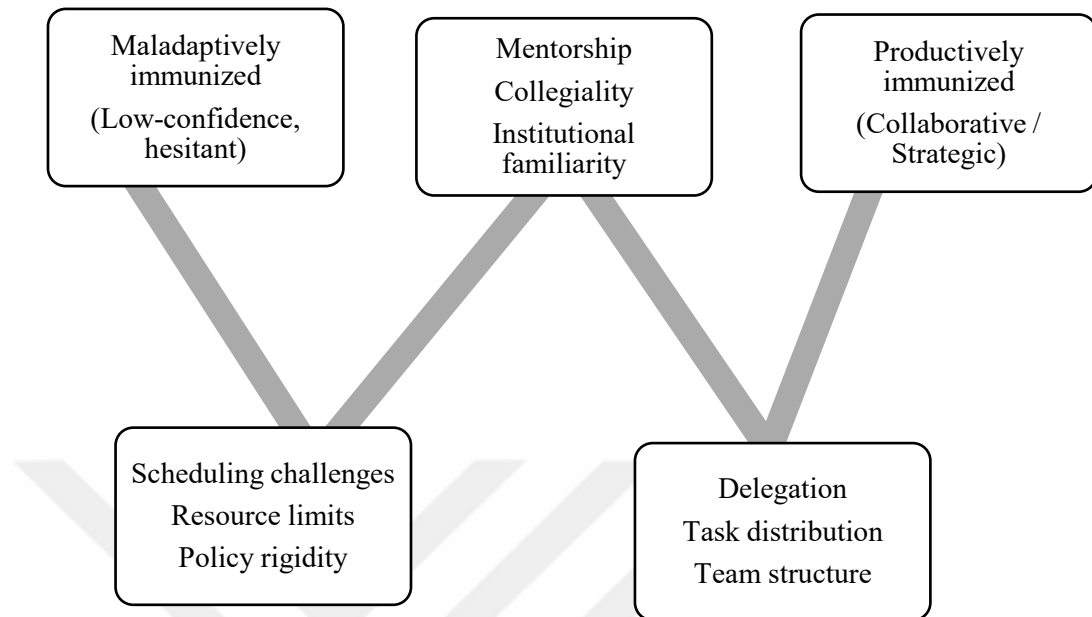
I would like to enhance global opportunities like international workshops, exchange programs, or projects for the teachers, and lastly, building a sustainable framework that balances operational efficiency with academic excellence to be able to more adaptable to future changes.

Finally, she exhibits an introspective and self-aware characteristic as an administrator. In accordance with this, she feels encouraged to change as an administrator and to initiate delegation and a more collective decision-making process for the sake of school effectiveness.

Making changes to my administrative practice is something that I really need to think about. This is probably because it requires a deep reflection on my leadership style and practices... In the future, I am going to try to involve the staff more into the decision-making process and enhance professional development opportunities.

In summary, the career trajectory of P3 reflects clear progression through distinct phases, marked by learning, growth, and ultimately professional maturity. Early influences, such as her first English teacher, inspired a foundational desire to teach. Later, the division of her career into three stages highlights the systematic nature of her growth: an apprenticeship-like stage during her master's degree, a transformational phase during her PhD, and eventual professional maturity along with post-PhD, as a period when she displayed a clear adaptation to the challenges and an openness to change characteristics.

This progression, as stated in Figure 9, underscores the interplay of external influences like role models and internal motivation in shaping career paths.

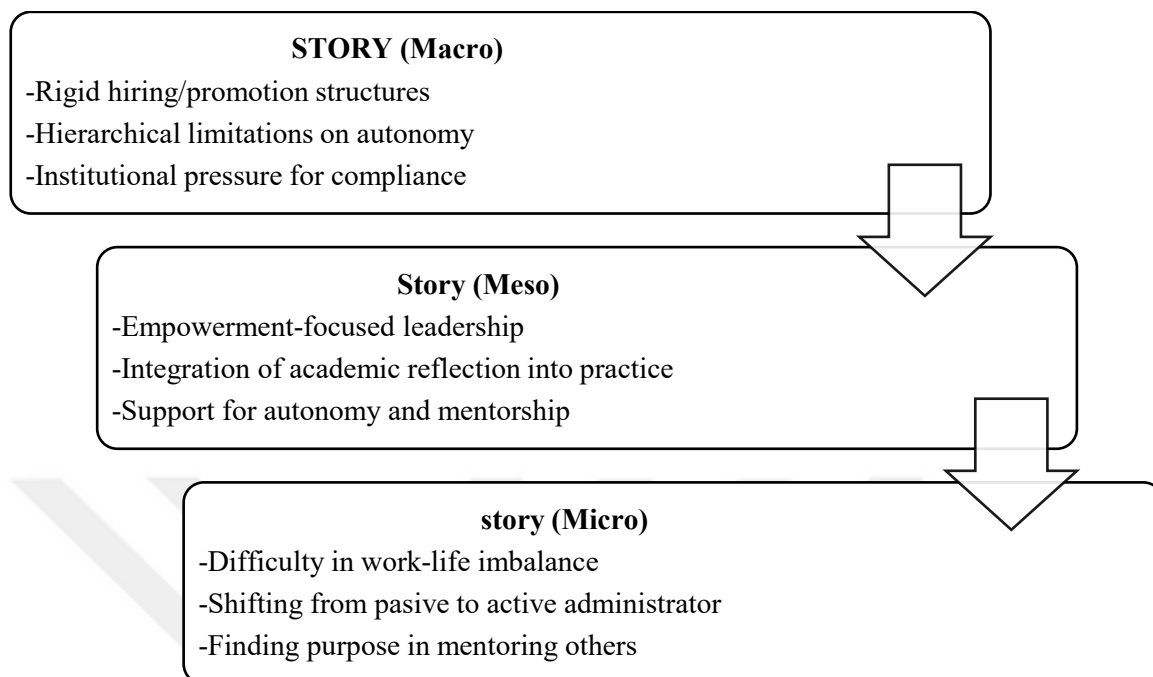
Figure 9*Retrodictive Pathway of P3*

On the whole, P3's psychological immunity development was influenced by an initially fragile self-confidence, compounded by scheduling challenges and institutional inefficiencies. Supportive mentorship, collegial relationships, and long-term institutional familiarity acted as critical affordances that strengthened her resilience. By adopting structured delegation practices and promoting teamwork, P3 evolved from a hesitant novice into a collaborative and strategic leader, demonstrating an emotionally mature and solution-focused leadership identity.

3.3.4. Immunity Trajectories of Participant 4

As the final case who provided rich data for the study, Participant 4 (P4) took part in the study when he was on his managerial duty as the vice director of a School of Foreign Languages at a foundation university located in the Marmara region in Türkiye. He pursued a gradual immersion into the English Language Teaching (ELT) field, and his professional journey in ELT reflects a dynamic evolution shaped by both personal exploration and purposeful transitions into language education.

Figure 10 highlights the trajectories of P4 at macro, meso, and micro level.

Figure 10*Three-level narrative overlay of P4*

Although he officially entered the field as an EFL teacher in 2010, his narrative traces the foundations of his ELT identity back to his graduation from university in 2000. The subsequent period was marked by a period of intermittent engagement with teaching, which suggests a phase of exploration and hidden professional alignment. It was a critical moment for him when he got a CELTA in New York City, in 2010. Consequently, he maintained a commitment to the ELT and preferred an international move to İstanbul. He frames his professional development in distinct phases: “learning the ropes” (2010–2014), “honing the craft” (2014–2017), and a formative shift into leadership during 2017–2020. This progression highlights a trajectory of increasing responsibility and identity transformation from teacher to educational leader. The following chapter includes his trajectories and transformation in those distinct phases.

I became an EFL teacher in 2010 when I moved to Istanbul, but my journey started ten years before that when I graduated from university with a degree in English education. So, for nearly fifteen years I’ve been working on my career as an ELT professional. During the years 2000-2010 I was pursuing other interests but also occasionally sticking my foot into the water of ELT. Then, in 2010 I earned my CELTA degree in New York City and then moved to Istanbul shortly after.

3.3.4.1. Early Career Trajectories of P4 as an EFL Teacher

The early career phase for P4 as an EFL teacher started in a new country in a “dershane”, a kind of language course centre known in Turkish as an educational institution operating outside the formal school system, primarily aimed at preparing students for examinations. In the context of educational classifications, they fall under a non-formal education context. At this language centre, he learned the ropes through positive teaching experiences.

I worked in the dershane system here in Turkiye and I had lots of fun with my Turkish students. Many of them were professionals who needed to advance their careers by learning English. Others were students who needed to prepare for the university entrance exam, part of which was in English. Others, not many though, were just learning for the fun of learning a language.

Following an enjoyable teaching experience in a non-formal teaching context, he transitioned into a formal one in a higher education institution, where he developed and refined his teaching abilities in this early professional adjustment period. Indeed, this transition paved the way for educational leadership afterwards.

I worked at the university as an English teacher, teaching pre-freshman year students English so that they could handle their classes in an EMI environment. They were delighted to have an American teacher who cared for them and was genuinely interested in their well-being.

3.3.4.2. Transition to Leadership within Higher Education Context

The very early management growth of P4 was initiated by managing a small group of teachers within a higher education context. His experience involving a transition from a teacher to a leader started as a coordinator.

I began to oversee the faculty English courses (101 and 102) in 2017 and began to manage people at that point.

He took over an administrative responsibility with no prior experience in management. The uncertainty in the early journey of P4 as an educational leader was

eliminated by a supportive environment, involving mentorship with guidance from a manager and learning from a predecessor. Also, having a good role model in management assisted P4 at the micro level.

When I first started as a member of the administration, I didn't quite know what to expect, but my manager was very supportive of me and I learned a lot from her and from the previous person whose position I moved into. I had learned a lot about managing people from my manager. She was professional: she was knowledgeable and kind; she focused on bringing the best out of people and helping them to do their job well and with intention.

Additionally, a willingness to assist and feeling of responsibility mediated a smooth transition from teaching to administration, and to sustain the managerial role.

The instructors under my responsibility are responsible, hard-working, and open to feedback...I am an English language program administrator. The best thing about my position was that I can help my teachers find fulfilment in their occupations.

Besides this, sustaining the administrative role under supportive higher management aided P4 in the process of transitioning from teaching to administration. Being provided with autonomy and being surrounded by understanding upper management constituted the meso level affordances for P4. Namely, P4 was not left alone in his early managerial experiences.

I was given a lot of support on making decisions and I was given a lot of leniency to make decisions... I want understanding more than I want power... Plus, I was given a project (managing the 101 and 102 classes) which had been managed well by the previous manager. So, when I took over I had clear boundaries (we teach this, not that; we use this system, not that one; we have to work this many hours, etc.).

Delegating and reflecting classroom practices to the managerial issues also aided P4 in the process of transition.

Distributing power is better than hoarding it. This reality is true for the classroom and also true in management contexts.

P4 painted a picture of a leader who values support and problem-solving. His management style was centred on encouragement, driven by satisfaction in being a source of guidance. At the same time, his passion for dealing with challenges indicates a forward-thinking mindset and a positive approach to leadership. This approach also aided him to adapt to a transition from teaching to administration.

I am interested in improving our program. If a managee has an idea that will improve the program, I'm all ears... I don't like complaints without offering suggestions for improvement. I believe the essential elements for long term achievement as an administrator are patience and being able to articulate what is the big picture and the details. The teachers must see the trees in the forest, but they also must see the forest. Getting them to do both takes patience.

P4 emphasized embracing a shared vision in line with the school's mission during challenging moments. This indicates that, in time, he adopted a leadership model grounded in active listening and mutual understanding. The notions of collegial support and encouragement were recognized by the teachers under his responsibility. These moments not only fostered current professional satisfaction of P4 but also brought personal enjoyment to him.

When there is a challenge, or a stressful situation, I must listen to my teacher and get his/her perspective on the matter. Then I should remind them of some certain details or the big picture (as the case may be) to realign them with our vision and mission... I love it when my teachers and I review their job plans at the end of the year meetings. The teachers regularly acknowledge the joy in the work they've done, and the support I've given. It makes me feel incredibly satisfied to know that I've had a part in their success.

Finally, undergoing a quality assurance process, being content with the context, and a positive school climate and culture afforded P4 for his micro level practices.

The language school I'm speaking of would be accredited; it would have taken a deep dive into its systems and policies and quality assurance

systems... We are not far from this description because we have a clear mission and vision which we are pursuing and we have been accredited. The perfect language school is the one we have. We have a clear purpose and vision for what it is we desire to do with our students. We have a clear division of labor.

3.3.4.3. Adapting to Challenges

At some point, P4 exhibited a moment of vulnerability and self-awareness in his managerial applications. While confident in many areas, he openly acknowledged a gap in his practice like following up teachers' classroom practices and students' progress. However, rather than seeing this as a fixed weakness, he viewed it as a growth opportunity thanks to both formal training and collegial support that he received. So, he demonstrated an adaptive trait to challenges through openness to learning from others, developing a collaborative spirit and a willingness to change.

There are some aspects of my management situation that I find very challenging. For example, I'm not as good with checking in on my teachers' progress with their students. I'm not sure what to do about this. But one possibility might be for me to get some training on how to properly follow up with my students. It would also be good to get help from my peers who are better at doing this aspect of their work than I am.

In the process, however, he obviously experienced fluctuations in his motivation. His feelings and emotions were negatively influenced by the macro level disturbances like Covid-19 pandemic.

I feel that during Covid my management skills declined a bit. I still had meetings, but my motivation was not quite as high as earlier times.

After a while, micro level demotivating factors, such as lack of teacher motivation, resulted in frustration. However, P4 demonstrated great commitment to applying effective managerial implementations to foster not just competence but enthusiasm among his teachers. Despite his commitment, he confronted the reality that

not all teachers were that willing to go for the better. Rather than judging this state of unwillingness, he took the responsibility of growth.

I know I have done a good job when my teachers are excited about visiting the classroom, excited about teaching their students, and excited about researching new ways of enabling learning. Sometimes this can be a little frustrating because some teachers might not want to thrive; they may want to only survive. As their vice director, I have the responsibility to ensure that they are given the resources that they need to not only survive in their classrooms but thrive.

Similarly, P4 experienced some micro level instructional challenges in the process. For instance, he had some problems with the LMS system at his school. With a similar approach, he valued independent problem-solving, and he highlighted adaptability, and a willingness to cope with obstacles by trying.

I remember once in my school I had a very difficult time trying to figure out how to show our videos on our LMS and at the same time keep the quiz available. The main reason for this problem was that some of the features of the LMS were new to me and so it took me a while to figure it out. I tried to solve the problem by experimenting with different ways to publish the video on the LMS.

Finally, he learned in time how to deal with the troubles that came up with the administrative role. Collegial support, embodying a solution-oriented mindset and trying to rise above the obstacles when necessary aided him to adapt to the challenges and cope with those troubles.

I remember Sally and I had a conversation about a student's email. The student was quite rude. I responded in kind. I showed Sally my email (before I sent it) and she advised me to switch my tone in the email. She influenced me by helping me to see that rising above the petty back and forth of frustrated people was going to help solve problems.

3.3.4.4. Current and Future Perspectives of P4 as an Administrator

Currently, P4 is obviously thriving in the management role. His current professional satisfaction is mainly rooted in supportive administrators and committed colleagues. The micro level support functions as another factor contributing to his psychological resilience as an administrator.

I feel like I am thriving in my management role. I have fellow managers who are supportive and a group of people under my management care who know their roles and who trust me to help them in their roles.

At this level, P4 demonstrates a clear evolution in the understanding of his leadership role, which involves being a manager and also a mediator for transformation through encouragement. As a leader, he connects teacher motivation and performance with broader impacts on job satisfaction and openness to change. Also, as a proactive administrator, he advocates a shift from individual encouragement to systemic empowerment of the collective wellbeing.

When I think about my own management style, I realize that the most important thing I do at my school is encourage my teachers in their efforts. When they perform well in teaching, they have higher job satisfaction and are more amenable to making small changes in their teaching. Through motivating them and encouraging them and showing them the possibilities, we can provide them the engineering to go from unmotivated and unmotivating to motivated and motivating.

In his context, P4 feels that administrative power is an opportunity for growth and experimentation. This micro level empowerment is rooted in his passion for confronting the evolving challenges regarding technology and pedagogy, which indicates a forward-thinking mindset and a dynamic approach to leadership.

The place where I now manage is a wonderful place to experiment and grow in my management life. In my school, I have the power to experiment with technology and curriculum issues. What I really enjoy doing at my school is solving new problems connected to my work: problems with tech,

problems connecting pedagogy to our situation and the latest developments within the tech world.

Regarding his future perspective as a manager, P4 feels encouraged to innovate. A micro level encouragement from his managers entails being open to change for the better. Thanks to supportive higher management, he feels satisfied in his role.

Making changes to my administrative practice is something that comes naturally because from the beginning we have been encouraged to experiment and research to find new and better ways of doing things.

Regarding envisioning the future as a manager, P4 desires to improve interpersonal management skills by displaying commitment to personal growth and believing that understanding people more deeply and acting as a guide are the key points to effective team management.

In the future, I am going to try to better my understanding of human nature so that I can manage my team better. This is because I enjoy making people look to me for support.

Finally, P4 comes up with some suggestions by highlighting the general qualities of administrators. As a promising manager, he stresses the importance of interpersonal communication, expertise, resource management, and the initiative role of a member of the management team for the sake of collective success.

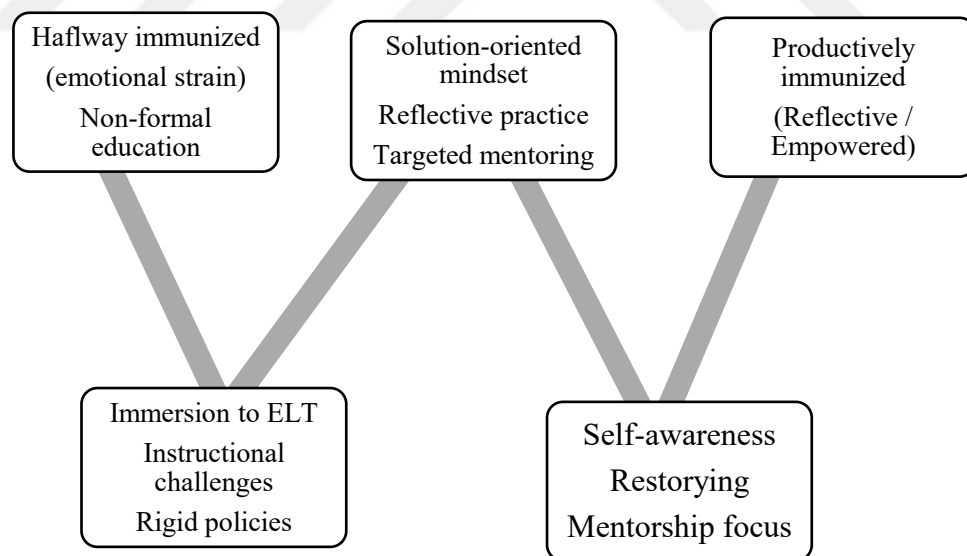
I need to understand three items: (1) leaders communicate well because they understand the communication event (sender-encoder-channel-decoder-receiver); (2) leaders lead: they know the way, they go the way and they show the way; they aren't afraid of helping other people to journey with them; (3) finally, leaders distribute resources; they give their time, expertise, and material resources so that the people they manage can flourish. I would say that they should work on their people skills, making sure that they can tell someone a compliment without sounding gratuitous and a criticism without sounding harsh or mean-spirited. Further, they should know how to help people embrace a shared goal and how to help

them reach that goal together so that all parties contribute to the success of the team.

All in all, Participant 4 demonstrates a nuanced trajectory of psychological immunity shaped by gradual immersion into English Language Teaching (ELT) and a steady transition into educational leadership. As illustrated in Figure 11, beginning with exploratory engagements in the post-graduation period, his formal commitment to ELT emerged following an assured qualification, marking the start of a structured professional evolution. P4's adaptive leadership style is characterised by a strong emphasis on mentorship, collegial support, and reflective practice. Despite challenges, including motivational fluctuations and limitations in managerial practices, he displays resilience through openness to learning and collaborative problem-solving. Supportive school culture and autonomy have further reinforced his psychological strength. Currently, P4 envisions leadership as a tool for collective empowerment and innovation, aiming to strengthen interpersonal understanding and systemic support.

Figure 11

Retrodictive Pathway of P4



All things considered, P4's psychological immunity trajectory was marked by early experiences of emotional strain, inexperience, and work-life imbalance. Key affordances such as reflective practices, academic grounding, collegial support and selective mentoring fostered gradual empowerment. Through self-awareness building and identity

affirmation, P4 transitioned from vulnerability to a reflective, purpose-driven leadership identity that emphasises autonomy, mentoring, and holistic team support.

3.4. Overview of Findings

In brief, the participants' trajectories demonstrated that they all passed through an evolving process of administration. All four participants expressed complex trajectories in educational leadership. While P1 and P2 both began with halfway immunization, which was marked by insecurity and adjustment challenges, P3 experienced an initially fragile state and P4 developed productive immunity in the process. At the micro level, all faced emotional burdens and institutional setbacks such as role ambiguity, lack of support, and demanding workload. Meso-level challenges were also consistent, primarily centred on collegial resistance, while the nature and impact varied slightly because of their particular contexts. Macro-level constraints indicated a similar struggle with bureaucratic rigidity and restricted authority imposed by national policymakers. Despite these constraints, each participant was empowered by key affordances such as supportive rectors, collegial support, and institutional familiarity. Leadership development of the participants ranged from P1's rapid, minimally prepared transition to others' more gradual evolutions. Emotionally, all participants demonstrated progress from early overwhelm or burnout risk to resilience and proactive leadership. Ultimately, they embarked on a state of productive immunity, each embracing a forward-looking, and adaptive leadership archetype within their individual administrative journeys. Table 10 summarises the commonalities and the distinctions nested under overarching themes and dimensions.

3.5. Verification of Findings through Member Checking

With the aim of ensuring whether the research findings accurately reflect participants' perspectives and enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the narratively analysed data, we initiated a member-checking process as “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). So, we returned the findings to the participants of the study separately to verify accuracy and resonance with their trajectories. The results of member-checking demonstrated that the member-checking responses strongly verify the credibility and authenticity of the study's findings. The

participants affirmed that their experiences, emotional shifts, and professional growth were accurately and delicately portrayed. They expressed strong agreement with the narrative interpretations, especially regarding the overarching themes of affordances, constraints, leadership development, psychological trajectories, and forward orientation, which validate that these themes genuinely reflected their stories. For instance, Participant 1 echoed the portrayal of his transition from initial vulnerability to adaptive leadership, particularly emphasizing how the support from his rector functioned as a crucial affordance during his early administrative challenges. Also, Participant 2 resonated with the representation of her resilience and fluctuations in her emotions. She especially appreciated how her gradual shift from unconditional to conditional trust in colleagues, despite institutional resistance, was depicted as a sign of evolving psychological immunity. Similarly, Participant 3 admitted the authentic depiction of her journey from an isolated problem-solver to a collaborative leader. She also underlined the accuracy of the narrative that captured her change toward adopting staff autonomy, while identifying the limitations of shared decision-making. Finally, Participant 4 confirmed the accuracy of his narratives by emphasizing his immersion into English language teaching, and then to a reflective leader who embodies administrative power to promote innovation and support for his teaching team. He specifically highlighted the importance of involving others in decision-making processes and underlined his growth through collegial support. These pivotal examples verify the thematic coherence and interpretive depth of the study. Additionally, the member-checking process served as a validation tool and as a confirmation that the narrative representations aligned with the participants' trajectories. All in all, this process strengthened the analytical rigour and interpretive credibility of this research.

Table 10*The Common and Distinctive Trajectories of the Participants*

Themes	Dimension	P1	P2	P3	P4
Early Immunity	Initial teaching context	Middle school teaching, disillusionment, transition to higher education	From a translator to ELT, driven by desire for human interaction	Teaching English dream, influence by early role models	Non-formal school teaching, initial enthusiasm followed by administrative challenges
	Early immunity state	Halfway immunized	Halfway immunized (initial self-doubt and insecurity)	Initially fragile, overwhelmed by administrative workload	From halfway immunized to productive immunity
	Key constraints (Micro Level)	Lack of training, emotional burden, role ambiguity	Insecurity, lack of institutional familiarity, trust violations	Resource limitations, scheduling and staffing	High workload, institutional setbacks, emotional strain
Challenges & Constraints	Key constraints (Meso Level)	Isolation, limited peer understanding	Collegial resistance, attitude changes from peers, classroom capacity	Collegial resistance, faculty conflicts during autonomy initiatives	Collegial resistance, emotional burden of administrative role
	Key constraints (Macro Level)	Rigid CoHE/THEQC regulations, lack of authority	Legal limitations of state institutions, restricted authority, bureaucratic or administrative obstacles	Limited authority due to macro-level decisions (pandemic, regulations)	Bureaucratic restrictions, lack of institutional flexibility
Affordances & Support System	Key Affordances	Collegial support, role model rector, institutional familiarity	Communication skills, support from rector, team appreciation	Collegial support, positive school culture, institutional familiarity	Supportive rector, trust-based environment, positive leadership models
Leadership Development & Adaptation	Leadership Transition	Rapid, at age 27 with minimal preparation Learning by doing, SWOT analysis, participative, maintaining amateur spirit	Gradual, from coordinator to assistant director Use of interpersonal skills, conditional trust, flexible identity	Gradual; promoted after long-term service, gained trust and experience Delegation, promoting autonomy, reflection, learning from challenges	Progressive: evolved from coordinator, built administrative capacity Conflict mediation, soft skills, maintaining amateur spirit
	Leadership Model	Participative, adaptive, sometimes top-down when necessary	Situational, adaptable, reflexive, varied by person/context	Collaborative, reflective, but also decisive when autonomy fails	Situational, empathy-driven, emphasis on respect and trust
	Emotional Trajectory	From anxious and overwhelmed to empowered and visionary	From nervous and idealistic to resilient and self-aware	From overwhelmed and isolated to collaborative and confident	From emotional fluctuations to stable state, emotionally resilient leader
Emotional Trajectory	Current Immunity State	Productively immunized – visionary/spark plug	Productively immunized – adaptive/resilient leader	Productively immunized, collaborative yet firm	Productively immunized – resilient, adaptive, empathetic
Vision & Forward Orientation	Future Outlook	More data-driven, socially impactful, participative, delegation-focused	Reflective, justice-oriented, open to training, flexible and empathetic	Growth-oriented, empowerment-focused, embracing innovation	Inclusive leadership vision, ongoing learning, equity-driven

CHAPTER IV

4. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the findings of the study in light of the existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The discussion is structured around the two primary and three follow-up research questions that guided this research, with an emphasis on understanding the distribution and development of language teacher immunity among educational leaders in EFL preparatory programs in Türkiye. The chapter also suggests the implications for practice, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

4.2. Summary of the Study

To explore the psychological immunity of language school administrators in Turkish higher education institutions, this study adopted a Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (RQM) approach framed within Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST). The research followed an integrated method design, conducted in two successive phases.

In Phase I, the Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ), a 39-item, 6-point Likert-type scale that was developed by Hiver (2016), was administered to 62 participants. The participants of the study constituted administrative team members (directors, assistant/vice-directors, and other administrative staff) working in a School of Foreign Languages (SFL) at state and foundation universities across Türkiye. Participants were selected through purposive sampling through professional networks, emails, and in-person interactions. In order to identify the participants' immunity archetypes based on Hiver's typology (e.g., productively-immunized, maladaptively-immunized), the quantitative data obtained were analyzed using SPSS as a descriptive statistics software.

After defining the archetypes that the educational leaders embody, Phase II focused on a qualitative narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen, 2008), involving four participants selected from the ones who participated in Phase I, based on their questionnaire results, availability, and willingness to provide in-depth insights related to their trajectories.

These participants represented varied regions in Türkiye, roles, and archetypes. Two main instruments were used in this phase of data collection: Narrative frames (adapted from Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008), and open-ended interview questions (inspired by Hiver, 2017 and adapted to suit the study's context).

Over the course of four months, participants completed the narrative frames and answered the interview questions that they had received via personal or institutional email addresses. Their responses included in-depth accounts of their lives, career trajectories, leadership challenges, and coping and leadership strategies. The qualitative data were subjected to Atlas.ti software for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). This dual-level analysis facilitated meaning-making (Barkhuizen, 2008) both within individual cases and across cases.

To find out how language school leaders develop or sustain psychological immunity in the face of leadership challenges, the study retrodictively traced the pathways of the language school administrators from their current immunity states back to the influencing personal, institutional, and extended factors.

The findings of the LTIQ revealed that the majority of the 62 participating administrators were classified as productively immunized, which indicates high levels of resilience, self-efficacy, and positive attitudes toward teaching and leadership in a higher education EFL context. The overall mean score clustered around 4.16, which aligns with Hiver et al.'s (2015) framework for productive immunity archetypes such as "spark plug" and "visionary".

Consequently, the narrative inquiry with four selected participants provided deeper insights into the variables shaping their immunity development. As a result, key themes such as teaching experiences, adaptation to managerial roles, coping strategies during institutional or personal challenges, and the influence of professional identity on leadership style were generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Participants' narratives demonstrated how personal traits, collegial support, nationwide disturbances, and dynamics of institutional culture interacted to either reinforce or challenge their psychological immunity over time.

4.3. Discussion of the Findings of Research Questions

4.3.1. Discussion for Research Question 1

How are the teacher immunity types proposed by Hiver (2016) distributed among educational leaders in EFL preparatory programs?

The findings from the quantitative phase of the study, which utilised Hiver et al.'s (2015) Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ), indicate that the majority of administrative members in EFL preparatory schools in Türkiye are productively immunized, clustering around a mean score of 4.16. This distribution aligns with Hiver et al.'s (2015) typology of the “spark plug” and “visionary” teacher archetypes. According to this dominating archetype, educational leaders generally possess a robust psychological defence system enabling them to sustain professional equilibrium and instructional effectiveness (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017) despite the multifaceted challenges of their administrative roles. This is a promising finding in the context of Complex Dynamic Systems Theory. The dominance of productive immunity indicates that the participants have developed adaptive skills through their lived experiences in teaching and administration. This supports the idea that immunity is not a static trait but rather a dynamic, developmental process shaped by the unique trajectories of individuals (Hiver et al., 2015). This finding may be interpreted through the lens of Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), which underscores the dynamic, non-linear, and adaptive nature of human systems such as teacher motivation and professional development (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). The productively immunized educational leaders appear to have navigated through professional adversities in a manner that allowed them to develop internal coping strategies and self-sustaining motivational patterns, resonating with the “attractor states” described in Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling (RQM) (Dörnyei, 2014).

By highlighting the interconnectedness and interdependence of system elements, complexity theory highlights the complexity of sociocultural phenomena and human behaviour (Mitleton-Kelly, 2003). In line with this, the participants' developmental trajectories reflected how personal, institutional, and socio-political factors interactively shaped their immunity profiles. The results reflect the contextual specificity emphasised in CDST, where individual traits and behaviours are deeply connected with

environmental, organisational, and socio-political dynamics. Given the lack of formal training for educational leadership roles in Türkiye (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Beycioğlu & Wildy, 2015), the emergence of productively immunized archetypes may also be a reflection of a form of professional resilience that has been developed through informal learning and experiential adaptation.

In contrast, the small proportion of educational leaders found in maladaptive, immunocompromised, or halfway immunized categories echoes the findings of Saydam (2019) and Ordem (2017), who argued that external constraints, institutional inflexibility, and resistance to change often lead to psychological stagnation or burnout. The relative dominance of productive immunity may also reflect a selective process within institutions as resilient, adaptive individuals are more likely to continue their teaching career as a member of school administration so that they are more involved in the decision-making processes of the institution.

Thus, the first research question reveals a primarily adaptive and robust immunity profile among educational leaders in the Turkish university-level EFL context, suggesting that these administrative members have developed a “psychological armouring system” (Hiver et al., 2015) in response to leadership challenges. This psychological armouring not only sustained participants' leadership effectiveness but also promoted their long-term emotional resilience within complex institutional systems. This finding is consistent with existing literature emphasising the adaptive, self-organising nature of effective leadership within complex educational systems.

4.3.2. Discussion for Research Question 2

What are the factors contributing to educational leaders' current immunity state?

This research question was explored through narrative inquiry and thematic analysis. The responses generated several themes that align with CDST principles and support the explanatory power of RQM in tracing immunity development. By tracing the factors influencing educational leaders' immunity state backwards, the RQM approach illuminated the complex dynamics of language teacher immunity among educational leaders. The application of RQM in this study successfully captured the nuanced developmental trajectories of educational leaders' immunity, providing a dynamic lens

to trace backwards from current psychological states to the professional experiences that formed immunity. The method's strength lies in its capacity to illuminate signature dynamics, such as recurrent response patterns, coping mechanisms, and the trajectories (re)shaping the administrative identity within complex educational systems (Gillies, 2014; Bambirra, 2016).

Furthermore, by identifying salient archetypes through quantitative measures and then exploring their lived experiences through narratives, the study explored causal pathways within non-linear characteristics of CDST. Those pathways might otherwise remain obscured in linear or variable-centered approaches (Larsen-Freeman, 2012). For instance, the productively immunized participants demonstrated attractor states characterized by high openness to change, resilience, and strong professional identity of educational leaders at language schools, which are some of the elements that are interwoven and mutually reinforced over time. This methodological exploration confirms Dörnyei's (2014) argument that RQM facilitates holistic understanding by integrating data fragments into emergent system representations. It also supports Larsen-Freeman's (2012) argument that new qualitative paradigms are essential for modelling the evolving and situated nature of teacher development. She asserts the paradigm of complex dynamic systems as a new transdisciplinary theme for applied linguistics. In light of this modelling, the qualitative findings revealed that the formation of psychological immunity in educational leaders is the result of a complex interaction of past professional trajectories, leadership strategies, and contextual affordances and constraints.

In summary, across the cases, several themes were generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006): early career trajectories as EFL teachers, transition to leadership within higher education context, adapting to challenges, and current and future perspectives as administrators as well as the significance of administrators' resilience, the pivotal role of collegial support, the influence of institutional culture, and the coping mechanisms employed during critical incidents of the participant educational leaders. For our study, the RQM approach proved instrumental in contextualizing and theorizing the dynamics of teacher immunity, validating its relevance for future research in language teacher psychology and educational leadership.

a. How do the professional trajectories of educational leaders shape their immunity development?

The narrative data illuminated that participants' early teaching and consequently administrative experiences, especially those involving overwhelm-level stress and uncertainty, as well as the affordances like collegiality, role models, familiarity with the institution, and positive school culture all acted as a "training ground" for developing adaptive skills, and as a field of "learning the ropes". Consistent with Hiver et al.'s (2015) argument that immunity develops in response to high-intensity threats, participants demonstrated transformative phases such as handling the teaching staff's resistance to novelty, administrative overload, overnight policy changes, or limited authority. Aligning with this, it has been found that the trajectories of the educational leaders of the study influenced their immunity level, and they showed a development in their psychological immunity. Similarly, this argument is well supported by Csikszentmihalyi (1997), asserting that people often experience flow when they face challenges that match their skill level. These challenging moments were not only disturbing but also critical incidents for the development of psychological robustness.

In addition to the immunity development through difficulties, participants' professional trajectories played a foundational role in shaping their immunity states. Those participants who were identified as productively immunized frequently narrated critical but transformative incidents, such as taking on unexpected leadership roles without any experience, or managing institutional conflicts, which served as a motive for reflective practice and administrative identity reconstruction. These findings echo Hiver et al.'s (2015) assertion that immunity develops through iterative interactions with environmental perturbations. This cycle of iteration and the metaphor of "perturbations" are compatible with the CDST approach, which was adopted in this research. Likewise, consistent with the work of Day and Gu (2007), the resilient leaders exhibited a sense of career path and emotional commitment to teaching and administration, which guarded them against burnout and facilitated sustaining continuous growth.

In contrast, the ones who were identified as halfway immunized leaders in the first phase of the study displayed a career story marked by uncertainty, being discontent with the context they reside, or experiencing a stagnation phase, which led to

psychological breakdowns and failed coping mechanisms that inhibit growth (Ordem, 2017). These findings reinforce the concept of “fossilization” in immunity, where emotional negativity prevents teachers from evolving in their professional contexts (Hiver et al., 2015).

The participant’s experiences and reflections resonate with several established frameworks and findings in educational leadership (Bush, 2003), teacher identity (Barkhuizen, 2016), and psychological immunity (Hiver et al., 2015). By situating these insights within theoretical and empirical contexts, the causal mechanisms influencing their psychological immunity and leadership archetype could be better understood.

The participants’ professional trajectories, from novice teacher to coordinator and then to administrator, reflect phases outlined in the career cycle model, such as exploration, stabilisation, and diversification. These cycles are well supported by the extensive body of research (e.g. Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993), which argues that while a negative atmosphere might negatively affect a teacher's career phase, a supportive personal or organisational environment can help teachers maintain a favourable career growth. This growth influences their immunity by shaping their coping mechanisms and professional identity over time. As highlighted by Fullan and Hargreaves (2012), the emotional and relational challenges, particularly the tension between fairness and personal relationships, which were experienced during the transition into leadership, further impact their resilience. The participants also provided insights into their struggle to manage demanding expectations, which contribute to their overall immunity development.

b. How do educational leaders respond to constraints and affordances across micro, meso, and macro levels?

Participants demonstrated differentiated responses based on their experiences related with personal (*story*), institutional (*Story*), and systemic factors (*STORY*). These factors, which are characterised as affordances provided and constraints faced, include micro level (*story*), meso level (*Story*), and macro level (*STORY*) qualities. In terms of the affordances and constraints at the micro level, classroom practices and peer interactions influenced emotional labour and coping strategies. At the meso level,

institutional culture and collegial relations were the key in that leaders in supportive environments displayed a greater trace of productive immunity. Finally, at the macro level, national policies, bureaucratic burdens, and unforeseen incidents (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, earthquakes, and political conflicts) acted as external stressors. The participant educational leaders displayed adaptive responses (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2019) to those setbacks since they interpreted these factors as opportunities for growth rather than constraints. For them, those factors were just “puzzles” to be solved, but not problems without solutions.

At the micro level, individual traits such as emotional regulation skills (Gkonou et al., 2020), alignment to the profession, communication skills, and solution-oriented mindset of the administrators emerged as primary affordances. Leaders who embody these traits reported being able to embrace challenges, drawing strength from personal agency and earlier teaching experiences. Additionally, taking on an administrative identity and internal motivation to sustain the profession constituted the micro-level affordances. Research by Day and Gu (2010) highlights how intrinsic motivations, such as making a difference in students’ lives, contribute significantly to teachers’ professional identity and resilience. The participants’ narratives reflect these intrinsic motivations as they sought fulfilment through students’ success and teachers’ well-being (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020).

At the meso level, institutional support, or the lack of such support, significantly influenced the immunity states of the participants. Those productively immunized leaders reported positive relationships with colleagues and access to professional development opportunities, but limited authority in decision-making. Within the circumstances, they advocated delegation of responsibilities as an indication of distributed leadership. These findings are in line with Fullan’s (2001) argument that distributed leadership and professional collaboration enhance organisational resilience, which enhances educational leaders’ resilience, too. However, limited autonomy in the decision-making process and having a limited word to say about the issues that are somehow related to the upper management led those leaders to deal with the challenges resulting from these one-way decision-making processes. In such cases, they had to seek a way to cope with these limitations. Indeed, findings indicated that such a coping strategy enhanced their immunity state.

In addition to the institutional support, early interest in participants' interactions and their career reorientation decisions resonate with Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Within this theory, Deci and Ryan (1985) emphasise the significant role of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and relatedness. For instance, the decision of one of the participants to switch from translation to teaching was rooted in a desire for personal interaction and making a meaningful impact on people. This desire to impact aligns with the SDT framework, where individuals are more motivated when their work meets psychological needs for connection and autonomy. On one hand, this kind of career reorientation can be evaluated at the micro level, and it can be discussed at a meso level impact on teachers' immunity. Additionally, the autonomy and the initiative to cope with the challenges at the meso level resulted in the enhancement of the teachers' self-determination. Similar to Deci and Ryan, Hiver (2017) proposes that adapting to challenges strengthens psychological immunity, enabling leaders to maintain efficacy despite adversities. In line with this, the participants' evolution to productive immunity was reinforced by their abilities to reorient their career decisions and the autonomy of dealing with the administrative setbacks in their context.

Furthermore, the participants' responses align with the psychological immunity archetypes framework, where the ability to adapt and handle professional setbacks, such as challenges with colleagues, contributes to emotional resilience and leadership efficacy and hence to their immunity state. For instance, in occasions of interaction with colleagues, their focus on fairness, empathy, and dealing with violation of trust indicates a growing psychological immunity that enables them to handle challenging situations without sacrificing their leadership integrity. Research provides strong support for this claim. For instance, Gu and Day (2013) assert that support from trusted colleagues emphasises the role of supportive relationships in fostering resilience, particularly during stressful situations.

Adopting flexibility in administrative implementations and developing an adaptive leadership style also facilitated meso-level challenges. Therefore, they applied particularity (Larsen-Freeman, 2020) during their managerial initiatives. Namely, they preferred fairness to equality among their academic staff in the process of distributing of tasks at school. Similarly, they prioritised institutional benefits over personal interests, or they deviated from their general management practices when it was

necessary to ignore collective decision-making without involving others in the decision-making processes. This aligns with arguments by Heifetz et al. (2009) that discuss the importance of flexibility and contextual adaptation in leadership, aligning with the participants' realisation that different approaches are required for different individuals.

Finally, at the macro level, systemic constraints such as sudden changes in higher education policies, rigid CoHE and THEQC regulations, legal limitations, and limited authority were common stressors at macro-level. Despite this, the commitment to come up with a solution in those times contributed to their resilience and hence to the immunity state of the educational leaders. They rose above the difficulties by embracing their own techniques and proposed solutions to the obstacles that were particular in their context. For instance, in the case they were not provided with recruitment opportunities of new staff, they crafted on scheduling, initiated a hybrid teaching method, or optimised the total teaching hours considering the number of instructors in the teaching team. So, a solution-minded approach also contributed to their immunity state. This aligns with Hiver's (2017) suggestion that such challenges can contribute to a teacher's psychological immunity, shaping their resilience and coping mechanisms.

c. In what ways do educational leaders actively shape their immunity through leadership strategies and adaptive practices?

The findings of the study indicated that leadership strategies played a central role in shaping immunity. Among Bush's (2008) six major management models (see Table 1), educational leaders of the study mainly adopted a collegial management model, including transformational, participative, and interpersonal leadership models, which had an impact on their immunity development. Educational leaders who participated in this study dominantly adopted transformational and participative leadership models (Bush, 2003; Leithwood et al., 1999). They reported increased professional satisfaction and emotional regulation (Bandura & Wessels, 1997; Gkonou et al., 2020) despite the challenges of administrative responsibility at a higher education language school. This aligns with findings from Heifetz and Linsky (2004), who argue that adaptive leadership helps leaders remain productive in times of disturbance and uncertainty. Notably, in this study, all participants emphasised reflection and self-regulation as core practices contributing to their professional growth and psychological resilience.

Linked to the collegial management model, transformational leadership asserts that higher personal commitment to organisational goals and increased ability to achieve those goals would lead to more effort and increased productivity (Leithwood et al. 1999). In line with this, the participant leaders appear to be practising reflectively and experiencing a transformative process, considering their changing roles as administrators from EFL teachers. As the participants demonstrate an archetype that is open to novelty, they favour a projection of continuous improvement in their institution. Moreover, participants' narrative responses underscored a range of adaptive leadership strategies, including delegation of tasks, mentorship (Bardakçı & Yoğun, 2023), conflict management, mediation, and vision-building as a long-term perspective. Such practices appear to contribute to the self-organising dynamics of immunity, fostering the development of personal and collective efficacy (Bandura & Wessels, 1997; Leithwood et al., 2008). Importantly, the recursive nature of these leadership strategies indicates the presence of iteration, which is one of the main principles of CDST. This iteration means that a successful adaptation in one context enhances preparedness for future challenges that any prospective educational leader may experience. This assertion is well-supported by the work of Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) that teacher immunity is a dynamic construct shaped by iterative feedback between the individual and the environment. These archetypes, openness and being adaptive in particular, align with the research in educational leadership (Bush, 2003; Leithwood et al., 1999), and language teacher immunity (Hiver et al., 2015; Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017).

Likewise, it is proven that the participants are actively enhancing their psychological immunity through this introspective and adaptive leadership style. Through the lenses of thinking back on their past experiences and planning for future developments, they are also improving their emotional intelligence and adaptability, two essential components of transformational leadership and psychological immunity.

An undeniable impact of supportive colleagues on administrators' psychological immunity can be observed. Their leadership strategies to enhance collegiality are well reflected in the leader-member exchange (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) theory, which emphasises the relationship between leaders and their team members, where high-quality exchanges lead to greater trust, support, and job satisfaction. The participants' reflections that having supportive colleagues makes it easier to overcome administrative challenges reflect this theory.

Moreover, despite the selfish and conditional behaviours of some less mature colleagues, they preferred a flexible leadership approach, which implies the participants' ability to adapt to different challenges and individuals contributing to their psychological immunity. For instance, the participants' shift in approach with certain colleagues reflects a form of flexibility and patience, which are central to effective leadership, thus increasing their psychological resilience over time.

To elaborate on transformational leadership, Bass (1999) identifies idealised influence and individualised consideration as traits of transformational leaders. For instance, the behaviours of the role models, like the rectors and their influence on the participants' leadership philosophy, result in fulfilment through connection. This level of fulfilment aligns with transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), which stresses the importance of leaders fostering positive relationships with followers. What is more, transformational leaders are described as motivating and inspiring individuals through personal connections. This is reflected in the participants' emphasis on making a difference in others' lives through interactions, unconditional support, sensitive understanding, and empathy towards students and teachers. This indicates the participants adopted a transformational leadership approach as a strategy to deal with the administrative obstacles, including management of the school and the staff. In other words, the participants of the study seem to embody a transformational leadership style, aiming to inspire and support teachers and students through meaningful interactions, which helps build psychological immunity.

Psychological immunity can be strengthened in an environment where empathy is cultivated and nurtured. The participants' aspiration for empathy in leadership aligns with the interpersonal leadership model and emotional intelligence theories (Mayer & Salovey, 2001), suggesting that an empathic leader can contribute to fostering psychological resilience and a more emotionally supportive work environment. The administrators in the study emphasised the importance of empathy, and they frequently narrated that they expected empathy and understanding not only from the teachers under their management but also from the higher management board. However, their expectations were not fully met in this regard. Despite this disappointment, they did not give up, but they struggled to sustain their role. This indicates they have developed a productive immunity by embracing an adaptive leadership approach in such cases. Moreover, as the administrators take empathy as a pillar, the emphasis on understanding

and mutual respect across stakeholders (teachers and the higher management in our context) strongly aligns with Empathy in Leadership theory (Goleman, 1998). According to Goleman, empathy is a key component of emotional intelligence, which plays a central role in effective leadership. The participants' vision for an ideal language school, where empathy and mutual understanding are prioritised, echoes the role of emotional intelligence in leadership (Mayer & Salovey, 2001) and empathy in leadership theory (Goleman, 1998), particularly in creating a psychologically supportive and resilient work environment.

In addition, the educational leaders prioritised fairness and ethical behaviour in their administrative applications. This state reflects their focus on trust, justice and equality. Underlying the significance of mutual trust in organisations, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) describe trust as central to effective leadership, but they also note its conditional nature based on experiences. This condition was well-echoed in the participants' evolution from unconditional to conditional trust after some time in their administrative role.

Drawing from theories like transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Leithwood & Slegers, 2006; Xun & Barkhuizen, 2025), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 2001), the administrators' emphasis on fairness, empathy, and adaptation reflects an ongoing process of learning, influenced by past experiences and mentors, and a deep commitment to personal and professional growth. These theoretical frameworks help illuminate the causal mechanisms behind the administrators' evolving psychological immunity and leadership trajectories.

Overall, the data support the notion that language teacher immunity in educational leaders is not merely a reaction to stressors but a constructive, agentic, and developmental outcome (Hiver & Larsen-Freeman, 2020), sustained by contextual navigation, reflective practice, and embodied leadership models.

In conclusion, in the light of the fact that language teacher immunity interacts with educational leadership practices in the context of EFL preparatory programs, the narratives in this study suggest that language teacher immunity and the concept of educational leadership are interdependent phenomena, co-constructed through dynamic engagement with institutional and interpersonal environments. Leaders who

demonstrated higher levels of psychological immunity were more capable of enacting strategic visions, maintaining morale among staff, and navigating change with optimism and purpose. This mirrors the claims of Robertson and Webber (2002) that educational leadership in contemporary contexts necessitates a high degree of complexity management and emotional resilience.

In short, the data reaffirm that the leadership practices of the participant teachers both influence and are influenced by the psychological immunity of the leaders. Immunity enables leaders to sustain the administrative role in the face of adversity, while leadership responsibilities further reinforce or challenge one's immunity. In other words, the state of immunity may end in whether productive or a maladaptive form. This reciprocal interaction highlights the value of conceptualising teacher immunity as a core psychological construct that reinforces sustainable leadership in EFL higher education contexts.

4.4. Implications for Practice

The findings of this study, situated at the intersection of language teachers' psychological immunity and educational leadership within the Turkish EFL context at the university level, carry significant implications for a range of stakeholders, including educational leaders, teacher educators, institutional administrators, university rectors, and the policymakers (e.g. Council of Higher Education and Turkish Higher Education Quality Council in our context).

Regarding some implications for educational leaders, the findings assert that educational leaders have a high degree of productive immunity, which implies that these people are actively turning administrative setbacks into learning experiences rather than merely managing micro, meso, or macro level adversities. Recognising psychological immunity as an adaptive system (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017), it becomes essential for leaders to engage in self-reflection, professional development, and collaborative practices that reinforce individual and institutional resilience. Therefore, institutional support mechanisms should be designed to sustain and cultivate adaptive leadership behaviours. These behaviours may include structured mentoring programs where experienced leaders or experts guide novice administrators in developing adaptive coping strategies. Also,

professional development opportunities could be provided before appointment and throughout their service. For instance, emotional regulation practices within positive psychology could be provided to enhance the resilience of the administrators. Such practices would help minimise the risk of maladaptive immunisation, particularly in times of systemic buoyancy or institutional transformation.

Additionally, this study proposes implications for teacher educators and leadership preparation programs. As the participants indicated, many educational leaders take on leadership roles without adequate preparation, often relying on trial-and-error learning. This points to a significant gap in current teacher education and leadership training paradigms in the Turkish context. This gap is rigorously highlighted by Yoğun's (2025) recent comprehensive research. He found that language school directors need to be trained in their areas of responsibility before their appointment. He also suggests that school leaders' professional development needs should be met after their appointment. Highlighting the challenges that are faced in the process of transitioning from teaching to administration and throughout the administrative service, the findings underscore the critical role of early teaching experiences and contextual constraints in shaping future leadership immunity. To address this, teacher education programs must incorporate educational leadership as a core component, especially at the postgraduate and in-service levels. Another recommendation regarding education programs includes embedding CDST-informed modules in teacher education programs that flourish adaptive skills, emotional self-regulation, and collaborative thinking with a focus on educational leadership. This kind of support would flourish empathy and empower teachers with both the psychological and pedagogical tools required for thriving in leadership positions, especially within multifaceted environments like EFL preparatory programs.

Finally, the findings underscore the need for a novel approach to educational leadership within the higher education context. The administrators' well-being matters as their well-being is connected with student, staff and upper management well-being (Butt & Retallick, 2002). Therefore, besides developing leadership competence, there is a need to monitor and enhance the emotional and psychological well-being of the selected administrators as a primary concern of any educational institution. In light of this need, national and institutional policymakers should promote well-structured comprehensive induction programs for newly appointed leaders, which include stress management,

institutional navigation, and resilience building, as well as financial management, application of regulations, staffing, and scheduling. Participants of the study narrated the feeling of isolation in the early period of their administrative role. Policymakers, therefore, should also encourage participatory management models to reduce isolation and support distributed leadership practices through delegation that shields from burnout and maladaptive immunity. Aligning such a novel approach to educational leadership with contemporary psychological insights would cultivate more sustainable and humane educational institutions.

4.5. Future Recommendations and Limitations

4.5.1. Limitations of the Study

The first limitation involves the sample size and representation. Although the quantitative phase involved a statistically sufficient sample, including a larger and more diverse group of language program administrators could capture greater variability in immunity trajectories and leadership styles, thus enhancing the representativeness of the findings.

Besides, the study is context-specific. The study's focus on EFL preparatory programs in Türkiye limits the transferability of the findings to broader educational leadership contexts, such as faculty-level leadership roles or K-12 school administration, both nationally and internationally.

As the study relied heavily on self-reported narratives and retrospective reflections, the findings are subject to inherent biases, including selective memory and limited critical self-assessment. Participants, being in leadership roles, may have unintentionally minimised or overlooked certain challenges or shortcomings in their reflections.

Although RQM allows for the tracing of dynamic development, this study was cross-sectional. A longitudinal approach would further enrich the understanding of how immunity evolves in real-time and in response to ongoing changes. Future research incorporating longitudinal designs could offer richer insights into how psychological immunity evolves in real-time and in response to institutional, personal, and policy-level changes.

Despite these limitations, the study's in-depth, contextually grounded analysis offers valuable insights and practical recommendations for administrative leaders seeking to foster adaptive resilience and sustainable leadership practices within educational institutions.

4.5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

For future research, the findings of the study present valuable recommendations for more comprehensive and in-depth insights regarding educational leadership. First of all, this study included administrators from Turkish universities, the context and applications of which are pretty much similar. However, cross-cultural comparison can be done. Leaders from other regions in Türkiye or from other parts of the world could be included in the narrative phase in particular.

Additionally, longitudinal studies offer an opportunity to track leaders' language learning trajectories over time. Therefore, the trajectories of the newly appointed or experienced administrators could be traced by implementing interventions over time.

Moreover, this study traced the trajectories of the productively immunised administrators. Further research could be initiated with the aim of exploring negative outcomes (e.g. maladaptive or halfway immunity). Such prospective research could intentionally target administrators who struggle (e.g., burnout, stagnation, maladaptive, coping) to understand how maladaptive immunity develops, or how it might be prevented or reversed.

Furthermore, our study adopted an integrated method of research, mainly qualitative. Scholars can conduct mixed-methods studies with observation or the 360-degree feedback method (Atwater & Waldman, 1998; London & Beatty, 1993). For this, self-report data such as interviews and questionnaires can be combined with observations of real leadership practices, such as meetings, crisis management, decision-making, including feedback from teachers, peers, and supervisors, or higher management.

Finally, since it wasn't the study's primary focus, we did not distinguish between novice and experienced administrators. Studies comparing the leadership entry points could explore how immunity develops differently. In such research, scholars could

compare administrators who began their roles early (within the first five years of teaching) with those who entered later (after five years).

In conclusion, this study sheds light on important aspects of educational leadership through the lens of administrator experiences in Türkiye. While it makes valuable contributions to the field, it also paves the way for additional research. Future studies may benefit from cross-cultural comparisons, tracking leadership development over time, and investigating various types of negative immunity. Also, incorporating mixed-methods designs and real-world observations could enhance our comprehension of educational leadership and language teacher immunity. Additionally, differentiating between novice and experienced administrators could provide nuanced insights into the developmental trajectories of leadership immunity. Overall, these suggestions emphasise the need for more dynamic, context-sensitive, and comprehensive research to enrich our understanding of immunity and growth in educational leadership contexts.

REFERENCES

- Atwater, L., & Waldman, D. (1998). 360 degree feedback and leadership development. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 9(4), 423-426.
- Bambirra, R. (2016). A snapshot of signature dynamics in an English class in Brazil: from a motivational attractor basin towards an attractor state. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching*, 1(1), 20-32.
- Bandura, A., & Wessels, S. (1997). *Self-efficacy* (pp. 4-6). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bardakçı, M., & Yoğun, M. S. (2023). An analysis of shifting EFL teachers' perceptions on continuing professional development through lesson observation: EFL teachers' perceptions on continuing professional development. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 15(3), 1497-1522.
- Barkhuizen, G. (2008). A narrative approach to exploring context in language teaching. *ELT journal*, 62(3), 231-239.
- Barkhuizen, G. (2011). Narrative knowledging in TESOL. *TESOL quarterly*, 45(3), 391-414.
- Barkhuizen, G. (2016). A short story approach to analyzing teacher (imagined) identities over time. *Tesol Quarterly*, 50(3), 655-683.
- Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research*. Routledge.
- Barkhuizen, G., & Wette, R. (2008). Narrative frames for investigating the experiences of language teachers. *System*, 36(3), 372-387.
- Barnett, R. (2019). Leadership and critical thinking: Oxymoron and a feasible utopia. In *International Perspectives on Leadership in Higher Education* (pp. 20-30). Routledge.
- Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European journal of work and organizational psychology*, 8(1), 9-32.
- Bellibaş, M. Ş., Kılınç, A. Ç., & Polatcan, M. (2021). The moderation role of transformational leadership in the effect of instructional leadership on teacher professional learning and instructional practice: An integrated leadership perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 57(5), 776-814.
- Benson, P. (2018). Narrative analysis. *The Palgrave handbook of applied linguistics research methodology*, 595-613.

- Beycioglu, K., Şahin, I., & Kesik, F. (2018). Analysis of maladministration of selection and assignment of school principals in turkey: a critical perspective. In *International Perspectives on Maladministration in Education* (pp. 137-150). Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of educational leadership and management*. Sage.
- Butt, R., & Retallick, J. (2002). Professional well-being and learning: A study of administrator-teacher workplace relationships. *The Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 3(1).
- Byrne, D. (2014). Thoughts on a pedagogy of complexity. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, 11(2), 40-50.
- Canbay, M. O., & Sönmez, G. (2023). A Comparative Study on Language Teacher Immunity: Samples from Qatar and Turkey. *SN Social Sciences*, 3(3), 44.
- Chan, L., Dörnyei, Z., & Henry, A. (2014). 16. Learner Archetypes and Signature Dynamics in the Language Classroom: A Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling Approach to Studying L2 Motivation. *Motivational dynamics in language learning*, 238-259.
- Charmaz, K. (2017). Constructivist grounded theory. *The journal of positive psychology*, 12(3), 299-300.
- Chen, S. (2009). *Academic administration: A quest for better management and leadership in higher education*. Nova Science Publishers, Incorporated.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. L. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research techniques and procedures for developing Grounded Theory* (4th Ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention. *HarperPerennial, New York*, 39, 1-16.
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2007). Variations in the conditions for teachers' professional learning and development: Sustaining commitment and effectiveness over a career. *Oxford review of education*, 33(4), 423-443.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). The general causality orientations scale: Self-determination in personality. *Journal of research in personality*, 19(2), 109-134.

- Dimici, K., Seggie, F. N., Hacifazlıoğlu, Ö., & Caner, A. (2016). Challenges of the Professionalization of Department Heads in Higher Education: A Qualitative Study in Turkey. *Education & Science/Eğitim ve Bilim*, 41(184).
- Doyle, T., & Kim, Y. M. (1999). Teacher motivation and satisfaction in the United States and Korea. *Mextesol Journal*, 23(2), 35-48.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self-system. *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*, 36(3), 9-11.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2014). Researching complex dynamic systems: 'Retrodictive qualitative modelling' in the language classroom. *Language Teaching*, 47(1), 80-91.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation*.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ottó, I. (1998). Motivation in action: A process model of L2 motivation (Vol. 4, pp. 43-69). *Thames Valley University: Working Papers in Applied Linguistics*.
- Dunn, R. (2020). Adaptive leadership: Leading through complexity. *International studies in educational administration*, 48(1), 31-38.
- Erkaya, O. R. (2013). Factors that motivate Turkish EFL teachers. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 2(2), 49-61.
- Fessler, R., & Christensen, J. (1992). The teacher career cycle: Understanding and guiding the professional development of teachers. (No Title).
- Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (2012). Reviving teaching with 'professional capital'. *Education week*, 31(33), 30-36.
- García-Carmona, M., Guerrero, A. J. M., & García, A. M. R. (2022). Retrospective and prospective analysis on educational leadership: Indicators of productivity, dispersion, and content. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 7(2), 320-356.
- Gardner, R. C. (2001). Integrative motivation and second language acquisition. *Motivation and second language acquisition*, 23(1), 1-19.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1959). Motivational variables in second-language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology/Revue canadienne de psychologie*, 13(4), 266.

- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). Attitudes and motivation in second-language learning.
- Gillies, H. (2014). Researching complex dynamic systems: Retrodictive qualitative modelling in the Japanese EFL classroom. *The Tsuru University Review*, (80), 59-70.
- Gkonou, C., Dewaele, J. M., & King, J. (2020). Introduction to the emotional rollercoaster of language teaching. *The emotional rollercoaster of language teaching*, 1-12.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam.
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The leadership quarterly*, 6(2), 219-247.
- Hacifazlioglu, O. (2010). Entry and transition to academic leadership: Experiences of women leaders from Turkey and the US. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 10(4), 2257-2273.
- Hacifazlioglu, O., Kuyumcu, I., Kalkavan, B., & Cheung, R. (2022). Traversing in Waters of Uncertainty During COVID-19: The Voices of Academic Leaders From Turkey. In *International Perspectives on Leadership in Higher Education* (pp. 237-253). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Han, J., & Yin, H. (2016). Teacher motivation: Definition, research development and implications for teachers. *Cogent education*, 3(1), 1217819.
- Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership and school improvement. *Effective leadership for school improvement*, 72-83.
- Harris, A. (2004). Distributed leadership and school improvement: Leading or misleading?. *Educational management administration & leadership*, 32(1), 11-24.
- Heifetz, R., & Linsky, M. (2004). When leadership spells danger. *Educational Leadership*; 61 (7), 33 – 37.
- Hiver, P. (2017). Tracing the signature dynamics of language teacher immunity: A retrodictive qualitative modelling study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(4), 669-690.

- Hiver, P. V. (2016). Tracing the signature dynamics of language teacher immunity (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nottingham).
- Hiver, P., & Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2019). *Research methods for complexity theory in applied linguistics* (Vol. 137). Multilingual Matters.
- Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., & Evans, R. (2022). Complex dynamic systems theory in language learning: A scoping review of 25 years of research. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 44(4), 913-941.
- Hiver, P., & Dörnyei, Z. (2017). Language teacher immunity: A double-edged sword. *Applied Linguistics*. doi:10.1093/applin/amv034.
- Hiver, P., Dörnyei, Z., MacIntyre, P. D., & Henry, A. (2015). Once burned, twice shy: The dynamic development of system immunity in teachers. *Motivational dynamics in language learning*, 4(3), 214-237.
- Hiver, P., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (2020). Motivation: It is a relational system. *Contemporary language motivation theory*, 60, 285-303.
- Ingleton, T. (2013). College student leadership development: Transformational leadership as a theoretical foundation. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3, 219 – 229. DOI: 10.6007/IJARBS/v3-i7/28
- Kantabutra, S. (2010). Vision effects: a critical gap in educational leadership research. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 24(5), 376-390.
- Khan, M. A., Ghafoor, M. M., Mukaram, A. T., Zubair, S. S., & Bokhari, S. Z. (2025). A New Age of Leadership in Academia: Need for Change and Innovation During COVID-19. *SAGE Open*, 15(1), 21582440241304901.
- Kılınç, A. Ç., Er, E., & Beycioğlu, K. (2021). Mapping the terrain of training and appointment of educational leaders in the turkish context: An historical perspective. In *Internationalisation of Educational Administration and Leadership Curriculum: Voices and Experiences from the 'Peripheries'* (pp. 139-157). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1997). Chaos/complexity science and second language acquisition. *Applied linguistics*, 18(2), 141-165.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2015). Ten 'lessons' from complex dynamic systems theory: What is on offer. *Motivational dynamics in language learning*, 11, 19.

- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2019). Thoughts on the launching of a new journal: A complex dynamic systems perspective. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 1(1), 67-82.
- Leithwood, K., & Slegers, P. (2006). Transformational school leadership: Introduction. *School effectiveness and school improvement*, 17(2), 143-144.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
- Linley, P., Joseph, S., Harrington, S., & Wood, A. M. (2006). Positive psychology: Past, present, and (possible) future. *The journal of positive psychology*, 1(1), 3-16.
- London, M., & Beatty, R. W. (1993). 360-degree feedback as a competitive advantage. *Human Resource Management*, 32(2-3), 353-372.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., & Henry, A. (2015). Conclusion: Hot enough to be cool: The promise of dynamic systems research. *Motivational dynamics in language learning*, 419-429.
- Mayer, D. R. C. J. D., & Salovey, P. (2001). Emotional intelligence and emotional leadership. In *Multiple intelligences and leadership* (pp. 69-89). Psychology Press.
- McDougall, W. (1923). Purposive or mechanical psychology?. *Psychological Review*, 30(4), 273.
- Mercer, S., & Gregersen, T. (2020). *Teacher wellbeing*. Oxford University Press.
- Mercer, S., & Kostoulas, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Language teacher psychology* (Vol. 1). Multilingual Matters.
- Mitleton-Kelly, E. (2003). Ten principles of complexity and enabling infrastructures. *Complex systems and evolutionary perspectives on organisations: The application of complexity theory to organisations*, 1, 23-50.
- Morrison, K. (2012). *School leadership and complexity theory*. Routledge.
- Ordem, E. (2017). A Language Teacher's Reflection on Maladaptive Immunity, Possible Selves and Motivation. *International Education Studies*, 10(9), 1-8.
- Owens, R. G., & Valesky, T. C. (2014). *Organizational behavior in education: Leadership and school reform* (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Pennington, M. C., & Xiao, Y. (1990). Defining the job of the ESL program director: Results of a national survey.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 8(1), 5-23.

- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Suny Press.
- Ragin, C. C. (2009). Reflections on casing and case-oriented research. *The Sage handbook of case-based methods*, 31, 522-534.
- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2013). Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics. Routledge.
- Richardson, P. W., & Watt, H. M. (2010). Current and future directions in teacher motivation research. In *The decade ahead: Applications and contexts of motivation and achievement* (pp. 139-173). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Robertson, J. M., & Webber, C. F. (2002). Boundary-breaking leadership: A must for tomorrow's learning communities. In K. Leithwood, & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration* (pp. 519-553). Kluwer, Netherlands: Springer.
- Rossner, R. (2013). The management of language teaching operations. *Language Teaching*, 46(3), 394.
- Ryan, R. (2009). Self determination theory and well being. *Social Psychology*, 84(822), 848.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). The darker and brighter sides of human existence: Basic psychological needs as a unifying concept. *Psychological inquiry*, 11(4), 319-338.
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. sage.
- Santamaría, L. J. (2016). Theories of Educational Leadership. *Oxford Bibliographies*.
- Seligman, M. E. (1998). Building human strength: Psychology's forgotten mission.
- Smit, B. (2021). Introduction to ATLAS. ti for Mixed Analysis. In *The Routledge Reviewer's Guide to Mixed Methods Analysis* (pp. 331-342). Routledge.
- Spillane, J. P. (2005, June). Distributed leadership. In *The educational forum* (Vol. 69, No. 2, pp. 143-150). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Sudman, S. (1976). Sample surveys. *Annual Review of sociology*, 2(1), 107-120.
- Watt, H. M., Richardson, P. W., Klusmann, U., Kunter, M., Beyer, B., Trautwein, U., & Baumert, J. (2012). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: An international comparison using the FIT-Choice scale. *Teaching and teacher education*, 28(6), 791-805.
- Xun, X., & Barkhuizen, G. (2025). Institutional leaders and teacher research: Roles, interactions, and impacts. *System*, 103616.

Yoğun, M. S. (2025). *School of foreign languages directors' views on leadership and management, qualifications for appointment, and continuing professional development needs: A qualitative study in Turkish context*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Çukurova University.]



APPENDICES

Appendix A. Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire (LTIQ)

LANGUAGE TEACHER IMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

We would like you to answer how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by choosing a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Please do not leave out any items.

1 (kesinlikle katılmıyorum) ile 6 (kesinlikle katılıyorum) arasında bir sayı seçerek aşağıdaki ifadelere ne oranda katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtiniz. Lütfen maddeleri boş bırakmayınız.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Example: If you strongly agree with the following statement, write this:					Your opinion	
I like coffee very much.					1	2 3 4 5 6
					☐	☐ ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐
1	As an administrator, I prefer the familiar to the unknown. (Bir yönetici olarak, bilineni bilinmeyene tercih ederim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
2	I regularly feel inspired at school or in the classroom. (Okulda veya sınıfta kendimi hep heyecanlı/yaratıcı hissedirim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
3	When problems arise at work, I accept what has happened and learn to live with it. (Okulda sorunlar çıktığında yaşananları kabul ederim ve o sorunlarla yaşamayı öğrenirim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
4	I have confidence in my professional ability to help teachers learn. (Öğretmenlere yardımcı olma noktasında mesleki becerilerime güvenirim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
5	When I am under a lot of stress, I just avoid thinking or doing anything about the situation. (Çok fazla stres altındayken yaşanan durumu sürekli düşünmekten ve bu durum ile ilgili bir şeyler yapmaktan kaçınırım.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
6	I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times. (Zor zamanlardan sonra hemen toparlanırım.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
7	I feel I am positively influencing the teachers' lives at my school through my management. (Yönetimim ile okulumdaki öğretmenlerin hayatlarını olumlu yönde etkilediğimi düşünüyorum.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
8	I have enough training and experience to deal with almost any administrative problem at the school. (Okulda yaşanacak neredeyse her türlü yönetimsel problem ile baş edecek kadar tecrübeye ve eğitime sahibim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
9	The "tried and true" ways of educational leadership are the best. (Eğitimsel yönetim alanında "denenmiş ve doğru" yöntemler en iyi yöntemlerdir.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
10	When things get really stressful, I try to come up with a strategy about what to do. (İşler gerçekten stresli ve zor olmaya başladığında ne yapmam gerektiği konusunda bazı stratejiler geliştirmeye çalışırım.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
11	At school or in the classroom I often feel upset. (Okulda veya sınıfta kendimi sıklıkla mutsuz hissedirim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
12	I am emotionally drained by managing. (Duygusal olarak yöneticilikten soğudum.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
13	Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me at school than bad. (Genel olarak, okulda başıma kötü şeylerden çok iyi şeylerin gelmesini beklerim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
14	Managing brings me very little satisfaction. (Yöneticilik bana çok az doyunluk/memnuniyet veriyor.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
15	There are days when I feel insecure at school. (Bazı günler okulda kendimi güvende hissetmiyorum.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
16	If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated teachers. (Eğer gerçekten uğraşırsam, en zor ve motivasyonu en düşük öğretmen ile bile baş edebilirim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6
17	I am tempted to leave management. (Yöneticiliği bırakma eğilimindeyim.)					1 2 3 4 5 6

Bu anketin etik izni Çağ Üniversitesi Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etik Kurulunun 06.05.2024 tarih ve 3674 sayılı kararıyla alınmıştır.

18	While managing, I regularly feel depressed. (Yönetimsel süreçlerde genelde kendimi bunalmış hissedirim.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	Managing is my life and I can't imagine giving it up. (Yöneticilik benim hayatımdır ve bırakmayı düşünmüyorum.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	I am not certain that I am making a difference in the lives of teachers at my school. (Okulumdaki öğretmenlerin hayatlarına dokunduğumdan emin değilim.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I feel that I can deal with whatever comes my way. (Yoluma çıkan her sorunla baş edebileceğimi düşünüyorum.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	At school I feel burned out from my work. (Okulda kendimi tükenmiş hissediyorum.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	I always look on the bright side of things. (Her zaman olayların olumlu yönlerine bakarım.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I get frustrated when my work is unfamiliar and outside my comfort zone as an administrator. (Bir yönetici olarak yaptığım iş bilindik değilse ve konfor alanımın dışında ise gerilirim.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	Trying my best at school really pays off in the end. (Okuldaki gayretim sonunda hep karşılık bulur.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I deal effectively with the problems of my teachers. (Öğretmenlerimin sorunlarıyla etkili bir şekilde baş ederim.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I get impatient when there are no clear answers or solutions to my problems as a administrator. (Bir yönetici olarak sorunlarıma net bir çözüm veya cevap alamadığımda huzursuz olurum.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I can get through difficult times because I've experienced difficulty before. (Zor durumlar ile baş edebilecek kadar tecrübem var.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	If I could choose an occupation today, I would not choose to be an administrator. (Eğer bugün bir meslek seçseydim yöneticiliği seçmezdim.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	When all factors are considered, I am a powerful influence on my teachers' success at school. (Tüm etkenler düşünüldüğünde, okuldaki öğretmenlerimin başarısı üzerinde güçlü bir etkim var.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	I have a hard time making it through stressful events. (Stresli olayların üstesinden gelmekte zorlanıyorum.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I like it when things are uncertain or unpredictable. (Bir şeylerin belirsiz ve tahmin edilemez olmasından hoşlanırım.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	I find it hard to give up on something that has worked for me in the past, even if it is no longer very successful. (Artık çok fazla etkisi olmasa da, geçmişte benim açımdan işe yaramış bir yöntemden vazgeçmekte zorlanırım.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	I feel that managing is hardening me emotionally. (Yöneticilik beni duygusal olarak güçlü hissettiriyor.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	I hardly ever expect things to go my way at work. (Okulda işlerin istediğim gibi gitmesini çok nadiren beklerim.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	It is hard for me to recover when something bad happens. (Kötü bir şey olduğunda toparlamakta zorlanırım.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	There are days at school when I feel vulnerable. (Kendimi okulda savunmasız hissettiğim günler olur.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
38	When I encounter a bad situation at school, I look for something good in what is happening. (Okulda kötü bir durum ile karşılaştığımda yaşanan olaydan iyi bir pay çıkarmaya bakarım.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	I enjoy working as an administrator because it brings me pleasure. (Yöneticilik yapmayı seviyorum çünkü bu meslekten keyif alıyorum.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
If you would like to take part in the interview phase of the study, please write your email address below. Email address:							

Appendix B. Semi-structured Interview Questions (Open-Ended questions)

Initial Thoughts about Teaching and Educational Leadership

1. To begin with, could you share your ideas about how you came to be an EFL teacher?
2. Could you divide your career so far into major stages? Could you share a story from each of the primary stages of your career to provide some context for the experiences you've had?
3. Is there a significant occasion or any individuals in your professional life that have influenced who you are as an educational leader? What was the event? Who were they? How did they influence you?
4. What does it mean to you to be an educational leader? Why?

The Characteristics as an Educational Leader

5. What are some essential details about you as an educational leader that people need to know to understand you?
6. As an educational leader, how are you similar or different now compared to when you just began teaching?
7. Many administrative team members face professional challenges. How do you deal with stressful situations at work? In your opinion, what are the essential elements or techniques for long term achievement as an administrator?
8. Can you describe a perfect language school within a higher education context? What would your perfect school be like considering the stakeholders: students, teachers, higher management, and support staff? How far is your actual context from the perfect language school you described? Why?
9. Can you tell about one of your most memorable events in administration role? How did you feel at the time? What did you learn from this experience?

Future Thoughts

10. What advice would you give someone who is thinking about becoming an administrator at a SFL?
11. If I ask you to think or project ahead into the future, how do you think you will change as an EFL teacher and administrator at a SFL?

Transition from a Teacher to an Administrator

12. What were the affordances and the constraints you experienced when you first appointed to the management position?
13. Which fundamental components of your teaching experience, in your opinion, have most helped or will help you in your move from teacher to administrator?

Appendix C. Sentence Starters on the Four Narrative Frames Templates

Sentence Starters on the Four Narrative Frames Templates (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008)

Language Program Administration

1. I am an English language program administrator. The best thing about my position was that...
2. When I first started as a member of the administration,
3. The place where I now manage is...
4. The instructors under my responsibility are...
5. In my school, I have the power to...
6. Making changes to my administrative practice is something that...
7. This is probably because...
8. In the future, I am going to try to...

Constraints

9. I remember once in my school I had a very difficult time trying to...
10. The main reason for this problem was that...
11. I tried to solve the problem by...
12. It would have been very helpful if...
13. In relation to this difficulty, the type of research I'd like to do would...
14. The aim of the research would be to...
15. A major constraint, though, might be that...

Language teaching and professional development

16. When I think about my own management style, I realize that the most important thing I do at my school is...
17. This is because...
18. What I really enjoy doing at my school is...
19. I think the instructors at our school believe that...
20. There are some aspects of my management situation that I find very challenging. For example, ...
21. I'm not sure what to do about this. But one possibility might be for me to...
22. It would also be good to get help from...

Program Evaluation

23. The instructors at our school are in the process of teaching English. If they do not do well, they will
24. As their director/vice director I have the responsibility to ensure that...
25. Sometimes this can be a little frustrating because...
26. However, ...
27. When they perform well in teaching, they...
28. The best way to know how successful their teaching has been is...
29. And what about my management? I know I have done a good job when...