

# Exploring the Characteristics of a Good Teacher-Leader in Moroccan EFL Contexts

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## Abstract

The present research study has attempted to present insight into the evaluation and perspectives of Moroccan EFL students toward the characteristics of a good teacher as a leader. The codes of the good teacher as a leader that have come out in this study had two broad categories: 1) Skills category and 2) Affective category. The questionnaire has been used in an attempt to collect data for the study. Four days were spent collecting data. The population sample for the study is 60 EFL students (27 males and 33 females) across three levels of study (1, 2, and 3 years). All the subjects have filled in the questionnaire. The data has been analyzed using the SPSS and Excel packages, employing the statistical tool of frequencies and percentages to tally up the most frequent category. The results indicated differences in weight as far as students' appreciation of a good teacher as a leader was concerned. The result reported that items that belonged to the affective category attracted more weight.

**Keywords:** Moroccan EFL students, good teacher as a leader, skills category, affective category, questionnaire, SPSS, Excel

## 1. Introduction

This study is about students' evaluations of the traits of a good teacher as a leader. These ratings are obtained from students affiliated to Mohammed V-Souissi University. The purpose is to throw light on the kind of leaders we desire for the 21st century. As we know, industrialized countries rely largely on the development of education. Nowadays, we are absolutely in need of an education which is characterized by quality and quantity. We need to strengthen our education, especially in a time defined by globalization and a rapid increase of information technology. So, scholastic education has gradually been supplanted by an approach that emphasizes the development of competencies as the ultimate goal of any school. Being a teaching leader is a necessity to developing leadership students. This opportunity was utilized to offer greater weight in research to the contribution of students' opinions which had been and still are disproportionately overlooked despite their fundamental relevance. In this study, it is claimed that if greater attention is paid to students' evaluations regarding how they see a good teacher as a leader, this would undoubtedly constitute a significant contribution to teaching. Students' ratings could assist teachers improve their approaches and take the role of leadership in teaching. The idea in this piece of study is that what students say about effective instructors as leaders is seen as a foundation for thinking about ways of enhancing teaching and for being conscious of the kind of leadership we need nowadays. According to Mohammed Mellouk (2007), education leadership is not merely a matter of demonstrating the attributes of a teacher leader but rather aim at encouraging leadership in students. Professional conduct and teaching behavior are classified under educational, moral, and ethical values. Leadership styles vary according to

individuals and the circumstances, so developing and enhancing leadership traits is a lifetime work of the individual in his/her community. Then, we may conclude that leadership is a continuum process that requires leaders and followers to go hand in hand, aiding each other and being flexible according to the circumstances. More than that, leadership is norms, beliefs, principles, and actions.

### 1.1 The rationale

The main focus of this study is largely a desire to improve the efficiency and quality of education in a changing world characterized by globalization and the rapid spread of information technology. Since education is the most efficient way of growth, we are in genuine need of leaders who can shoulder this responsibility and keep pace with this changing world. So, both students and teachers are the main interest in the educational process. Teachers have great effects on their students in the sense that they orient, instruct, aid, and guide them. These efforts demand competent leaders who care for the current generation and lead them to be leaders as well in the future. Moreover, this study is also driven by the goal of finding Moroccan University students' judgments of the characteristics of good professors as leaders. Finally, this study is justified by the scarcity of research in this crucial topic in the Moroccan educational system.

### 1.2 Objectives

The present research tries to determine the traits of an excellent teacher as a leader. A second purpose is to provide kids an opportunity to talk and share their thoughts about how teacher leaders should be. To fulfill these aims, a questionnaire will be presented to a sample of EFL students at the university level.

### 1.3 Research questions

As was mentioned earlier, this current paper tries to study students' opinions regarding a good teacher as a leader. Based on that, the research will try to answer the following inquiries:

What are the characteristics that the students recognize as the characteristics of a good teacher leader?

Do Moroccan students prioritize any characteristics over others?

Are there some characteristics that promote better learning outcomes better?

In what ways can student evaluations of their instructors contribute to the development of teaching strategies and teacher training programs?

### 1.4 Hypotheses

**H1:** Students identify effective teacher leadership with affective characteristics (e.g., empathy, fairness, and approachability) and professional characteristics (e.g., subject matter knowledge and communication skills), with greater emphasis on affective qualities.

**H2:** Moroccan students place more significance on affective qualities (e.g., fairness, understanding, and supportiveness) than technical capabilities (e.g., subject matter expertise and classroom management) in evaluating teacher leaders.

**H3:** Teacher leader affective qualities (e.g., empathy, motivation, and fairness) are more effective in improving students' learning outcomes than skills-based qualities.

**H4:** The assessment of students plays a pivotal role in determining best practices to teach and maintain teacher training courses current by instilling student-focused teaching.

## 2. Literature review

Leadership is a complex, dynamic phenomenon that cannot be defined by any single definition. It is not only technical or managerial in its focus but also encompasses ethical values, educational principles, and professional standards. As Grace (2005) explains, leadership cannot be separated; it must be examined in the social, cultural, political, and historical environment. In educational settings, leadership exceeds

management. It is a matter of values, norms, politics, and behavior that make up schooling environments. Effective school leadership, Grace argues, requires one to consider such general societal considerations because leadership is practiced differently across diverse cultural and political environments. Leadership is not a destination but an ongoing dynamic process, and one that is affected by teacher and student effort. Without effective leadership, the teacher's role can turn into that of a passive practitioner with no authority to influence and motivate. School leadership therefore requires clear goals, objectives, and resource management to make educational activities meaningful and effective (Cotton, 2003).

At the education level, leadership has far-reaching effects on curriculum development, teaching, and thus student performance. Cotton speculates that educational leadership is not one-way but a dialogue where teachers themselves participate in decisions about the curriculum and instructional strategies to meet the changing needs of students. Without such leadership that provokes teacher participation and focus on student performance, schools can fall behind. Leadership is also not a concept that can be applied everywhere and is uniformly defined. Stogdill (1974) categorizes leadership from various points of view, e.g., personality, behavior, influence, and roles, but with emphasis on the two-way aspect of leadership. Leadership is a process of influence, in this case, where the followers, e.g., students, and the leaders, e.g., teachers, influence each other's experiences.

The universal thread that runs through all leadership is that of influence. Organizational, political, or educational leaders influence, direct, and inspire those that they are leading. A teacher leads students in schools not just by educating them, but by guiding, serving, and molding their development. Leadership is not then a born trait; a person requires certain traits that enable them to influence and prepare others to be leaders themselves. Successful educational leadership is grounded on an alignment of set standards that can be divided into three broad categories:

**Knowledge Standards:** Mastery of content, research into human development, and emotional sensitivity to comprehend diversity.

**Pedagogical Standards:** Effective planning, provision and delivery of instruction and provision of suitable learning environment, and effective functioning appraisal processes.

**Professional and Human Standards:** Excellent communication, collaboration, reflective practice, professional growth, and adherence to ethical conduct and leadership (Mellouk, 2007).

These standards are crucial for educational leaders to be able to handle the complexities of the profession and direct their schools toward success. Ultimately, leadership is merely about establishing a climate in which teachers and students may succeed, working for the greater educational good and responding to the demands of the community.

## 2.1 Historical Perspective of the Study of Leadership

Scientists, over time, have tried to understand leadership and how individuals can become more effective leaders. The idea that knowledge of the traits widely shared by effective leaders would enhance leadership effectiveness has been in vogue. However, here it must be taken into perspective that overemphasizing such traits may not be the wisest or most practical approach to leadership development, at least in our current state of knowledge (Stogdill, 1974).

Contrary to Carlyle's Great Man Theory that history is made by great, exceptional individuals with inherent great traits, authors such as Marx and Engels by the late 1800s asserted it was the large historical, social, and economic forces and not greatness as a personal force but these forces shape changes in history. Under this influence, leadership was a dynamic instead of innate process, not a set of inborn characteristics. Carlyle believed that it is individuals like these whom he called heroes who make history.

with their unique qualities, which include intellect, leadership, and even divine inspiration (Carlyle, 1897). This situationist theory, as put forward by Stogdill (1974), argues with the notion that leadership effectiveness is a result of mere individual charisma or personal characteristics. Instead, it speculates that the setting one is leading within is a much more determining aspect of how effective the leader will be. Leadership is also depicted as being dynamic, in that it varies with the challenge, opportunity, and situation at hand, and focuses on the interaction between the leader's characteristics and the environment they are in.

It is reasonable to believe that certain leaders are more effective in certain situations than in others. While individual traits and abilities are important, leadership effectiveness is frequently a function of how these characteristics fit the specific demands of the situation at hand.

## 2.2 Leadership studies

In the early years of the 21st century, it was generally assumed that not everyone could be a leader. Leadership was thought to be a rare trait, which existed in a limited number of selected individuals who possessed certain, hard-to-identify attributes. Professionals, particularly university people, were thought to be best suited to identify such attributes and even to instill them in others. This perspective arose in a world that was still struggling to recover from the devastation of two world wars, where the need for leadership to establish a new world order was more pressing than ever. However, during the 1940s and 1950s, management development was a higher priority than leadership. Still, behavioral psychologists and academics were extremely interested in understanding what made a leader.

There were numerous studies carried out in the early 20th century that aimed to define the traits of great leaders. These studies leaned towards traits such as intelligence, but the difference between the non-leaders and the leaders was not sufficient enough to define comprehensively what constituted a great leader (Stogdill, 1948). As a result, researchers shifted away from looking at traits and toward behaviors and asking not who leaders are, but what they do. This shift spawned two particularly influential studies.

The first was the work of Bennis (2004) who looked at individuals in leadership roles and emphasized the importance of vision and the ability to articulate that vision. Bennis was of the opinion that great leaders are those who can inspire others by painting a clear picture of the future and getting people to move towards a common goal. The second study was done by James Kouzes and Barry Posner (2013), where they surveyed a large sample of managers and developed assessment tools and training programs to help people know and enhance their leadership skills. While their work provided insight, it remained largely confined to the business school world and failed to have a significant influence on more universal conceptions of leadership.

Outside of the corporate world, a different conception of leadership began to gain traction, diverging from visions of old-fashioned concepts of power and authority. In the 1930s, Mary Parker Follett declared that leadership was not an issue of individual power but of the power of the group. She believed that leadership could originate from any group member, regardless of their designated position or role, depending on the situation and the kind of skill needed. Follett emphasized that followers were not mere recipients of leadership but active collaborators in the process of leadership, working together with leaders to achieve mutual goals. To her, a successful leader was not independent of a team's performance since she stressed the dependence of leaders and followers on one other. This collaborative form of leadership, where followers and leaders trade responsibilities and places all the time, is distinct from the hierarchical top-down paradigm (Tonn, 2008).

This collaborative model of leadership is particularly relevant to schools. In schools, the teacher is not

alone as a leader, but the collective effort of the whole faculty is leadership. A good teacher at one school is not necessarily one at another, which helps to underline context and teamwork. The 21st century has also witnessed the move toward more collective, as opposed to individualistic, leadership based on Follett's understanding that leadership is a collective power rather than an individual characteristic. Leaders and followers are equally placed under this model and work collectively in pursuit of collective success. Leadership is then recast as collaboration in which the power lies with the group, and values are put into action, stressing the interdependence of leaders and followers (Burns, 1978).

Leadership, from this perspective, goes beyond typical definitions of leading, inspiring, or guiding others. It encompasses enabling people, organizations, and communities to not just solve but shape the future. Leadership here is greater than change management; it is vision building and cooperation to produce transformative impacts. As Follett and Burns have established, leadership is not for the elite few but can emerge anywhere, underscoring the power of groups and the necessity of shared values and shared purposes.

### **2.3 Leadership competence**

In the ever-evolving world of education, genuine leadership is essential to initiate change and promote development. At the 27th Annual MATE (Moroccan Association of Teachers of English) Conference in 2008, Ahmed Chaibi, Central Inspector Coordinator at the Ministry of National Education, gave valuable information on the complexities of leadership. Speaking to a group of educators and policymakers, he emphasized that leadership is by no means a simple process. It requires more than power—it requires a mix of practical skills, deep knowledge, and the agility to deal with changing circumstances. True leadership, Chaibi explained, is about building the right competencies to lead with purpose and resilience, no matter what issues arise.

Chaibi stated that a good leader should have some key skills. First, effective communication is highly essential; leaders should be able to communicate in simple and emotive language so that others can identify and be motivated by their message. This means being able to motivate oneself and others, taking into account their values, lifestyles, and work methods. Effective leadership is also the ability to handle unexpected issues and keep calm in times of pressure, having an even head when things do not work out. They should be convincing and bold, not afraid to speak out while at the same time developing an environment in which everyone feels valued and heard. Encouraging a culture of partnership and trust is at the heart of leadership, and so is being receptive to hearing others' problems and listening to their views. Being comfortable with letting go of power—to colleagues as part of passing on responsibility, for example, or to students and other elements of the organization and allowing them to be leaders in turn, is also critical.

A good leader never loses sight of their mission—be it leading a team or a school. They remain committed to their goal and work hard to achieve it. But task-oriented is not all about leadership; it also has an integration of creativeness, thinking time, and emotional stability. Leaders have to be "cool" under pressure and yet stay connected with the people they lead, even during the worst of times.

Chaibi's summation is that leadership is really about moving forward people, motivating them in a true sense, and fulfilling their needs in a world of so much change and limitation. But all of this can only be achieved if the leader clearly knows his or her own values. To know what you believe in allows you to trust and work together, and to have one platform of success. Therefore, leadership becomes a collaborative developmental process whereby leaders and followers become engaged in an endeavoring endeavor.



Conclusively, Chaibi presents leadership as a lifetime journey—of self-knowledge, of people skills, of the ability to adapt to persons and circumstances with the resultant advancements in progression, and building on a flourishing collaborative setting.

#### **2.4 Teachers' contribution to effective educational leadership**

Effective educational leadership depends on educators who not only possess the traits of great leaders but are actively embodying these qualities in practice. The impact of leadership in education is not possible without the active engagement of educators in continually evolving educational practice. According to Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001), leadership of schools is a distributed process, and by that, it is implied that leadership is not one individual's prerogative but a collective responsibility of the entire school community. Teachers must perceive their students as co-participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Just as learning is a key to the advancement of society, teacher leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing improved teaching practice and collaboration. Under this model of distributed leadership, respect and cooperation among all the stakeholders in the campus community are paramount in developing an effective education environment.

For education reform to be effective and student achievement outcomes to rise, it is essential that all of the constituents of the campus—students, faculty, and administrators—feel as if they are important contributors to decisions. If any one of these groups feels disenfranchised from the community, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to initiate and make decisions that will foster sustainable change. This is particularly so when seeking to improve pedagogy and student outcomes.

#### **2.5 Teachers as Leaders**

The role of the teacher is not only to model leadership in the classroom but also to actively cultivate leadership in students. To be an effective teacher-leader, one requires not only self-awareness but also student and possibility awareness. Leadership development is a complex activity that goes beyond the teaching of academic content; teachers must navigate through three areas of concern. First, teachers must develop self-awareness of themselves, their values, their behaviors, and their leadership styles. Second, they must develop awareness of others, particularly their students, and recognize the individual strengths, weaknesses, and potential for development. Third, teachers must learn how to apply leadership intentionally and courageously to influence positive change, not only in the classroom, but in the world at large. By excelling in these fields, teachers can change both themselves and their pupils, fostering the growth of future leaders (Owen, 2006).

Leadership, as Owen describes it, is a question of teachers becoming the best version of themselves in the classroom, leading by example with their behavior at all times. Inspiring, creating, delegating, and serving are all things that teachers do to send a positive message to students. Good teaching, as Owen describes it, is based on respect, encouragement, and building a sense of community. Leadership is less a function of what teachers teach but more of how they think and put things into action, requiring changes in personal practice and conceptual thinking.

#### **2.6 Characteristics of a good teacher as a leader**

In the 21st century, successful educational leadership needs to appreciate that schools are miniature representations of society and hence need leadership strategies that include cooperation with students and parents. This guarantees that the learning process is inclusive and consistent with the larger needs of the community. Teacher leaders, as such, need to take into consideration the views of all the stakeholders involved—both within and outside the school—when making decisions. Such a participatory process is crucial in ensuring that decisions not only validate school goals but also recognize the aspirations and nee-

ds of the larger community (Harris, 2003; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015).

Education leadership needs to recognize itself as a collaborative venture rather than a hierarchical, bureaucratic endeavor. Teacher leaders should focus on empowering others, and in facilitating collaboration between students and parents in the decision-making process. Here, authority does not stem from position hierarchy but from the school community's respect and support (Harris, 2003; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). This model of shared leadership emphasizes that teacher leaders are decision-makers but not only as decision-takers but, instead, are collaborators in student learning experience to make their voice heard in determining what education feels like (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015).

Exceptional teacher leadership involves consideration of the particular needs and conditions of those individuals and groups that are affected by the decisions. This entails direct consideration of the school environment and student body, such that leadership choices are realistic and pertinent (Day et al., 2011). Teachers must engage students as co-actors in learning, focusing on their well-being and learning achievement. One of the key elements of this is developing motivation and sustaining students' self-esteem. Teacher leaders are capable of identifying and resolving problems—internal and external—that are barriers to students' learning, fostering a caring and inclusive climate (Robinson et al., 2008; Day et al., 2011).

Teacher leaders must also foster and value the diversity of students. The differentiated treatment should be professional performance and effectiveness of instructional strategies, not personal predilections or personal relationships. Knowing that learning extends beyond the classroom, teacher leaders should also value extracurricular activities such as sports, music, and the arts as a vital vehicle of the students' holistic growth. These activities enhance not only students' learning process but also help them develop emotionally and socially, enhancing the school climate in general (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015).

To maintain such values, teacher leaders must be dedicated to professional development, keeping in touch with current research, literature, and open communication in the school community. Listening to the voices of all the stakeholders—parents, students, and peers—is required while creating a responsive, inclusive, and stimulating learning climate (Day et al., 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015). Implementing these practices enables teacher leaders to create an education climate in which individual students' needs are met and collaboration and inclusivity become the priority.

Finally, effective teacher leadership is founded upon a student-oriented, collaborative method, appreciation for diversity, and ongoing dedication to professional development. The methodology utilized in this research to examine students' perceptions of effective teacher leadership in the Moroccan EFL university setting will be presented in the next section.

### **3. Methodology**

Based on the theoretical foundations addressed in the literature review, this study adopts a student-centered approach in exploring the identity of effective teacher leaders within Moroccan EFL university contexts. The methodology was designed in such a way as to yield direct data from the students, centralizing their voices in this study. I present below the research design, in terms of objectives, research questions, selection of participants, research tool, and data analysis procedure, all of which were tailored to meet the objectives of the study.

#### **3.1 Participants**

The research included 60 undergraduate students from the English Department of Mohammed V-Agdal University in Rabat. The participants were divided equally among three levels of study: 20 second-

semester, 20 fourth-semester, and 20 sixth-semester students. This stratified sampling guaranteed an equal representation of students at various levels of their studies. The sample consisted of 33 female and 27 male students, which was representative of the student population.

The subjects were randomly selected in such a way that all members of the target population stood an equal chance of being picked. This process not only enhanced the representativeness of the findings but also minimized prejudice, allowing the research to capture a wide range of viewpoints.

### 3.2 Research Instrument

The principal data collection tool was a standardized questionnaire, chosen for its success in gathering introspective data regarding students' beliefs, perceptions, and experiences. The questionnaire was built on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very important" to "not important at all" so that students could mark the importance of various teacher-leader characteristics.

The questionnaire contained three key sections: demographic information, teacher leader traits, and open-ended suggestions. The demographic component gathered data on participants' gender, age, and academic level. In the teacher leader characteristics section, students judged such traits as competence, enthusiasm, sense of humor, and problem-solving skills. The open-ended section provided space for students to leave more comments or suggestions for deeper qualitative findings. Questionnaire preparation was guided by insights from academic literature, student feedback, and supervision. A pilot test on 15 students enrolled in the Faculty of Education assisted in determining validity and reliability; comments from them informed the clarity and pertinence of questions and ruled out ambiguity.

### 3.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered over four days in late October, coinciding with the university's academic schedule. Students were told about the study and promised confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The study was conducted in the university library, providing a quiet and comfortable environment for participants to complete the questionnaire at their own pace. Clarifications were made when needed to ensure students understood the questions fully.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The results collected were analyzed using the SPSS and Excel to obtain the frequency, percentage, and other corresponding statistical values. The results are tabulated and graphed, giving students' perceptions on teacher leadership in clear and visual form. This quantitative analysis was complemented by qualitative observation through the use of the open-ended suggestions, which was aimed at providing a deeper insight into the findings.

By combining the quantitative and qualitative methods, this study not only identifies the characteristics of effective teacher leaders but also highlights the importance of listening to students' voices in shaping education practice. The findings are of value to teachers, policy makers, and teacher education programs, and they serve to emphasize the need for a more collaborative and student-centered mode of leadership in schools.

## 4. Data presentation and analysis

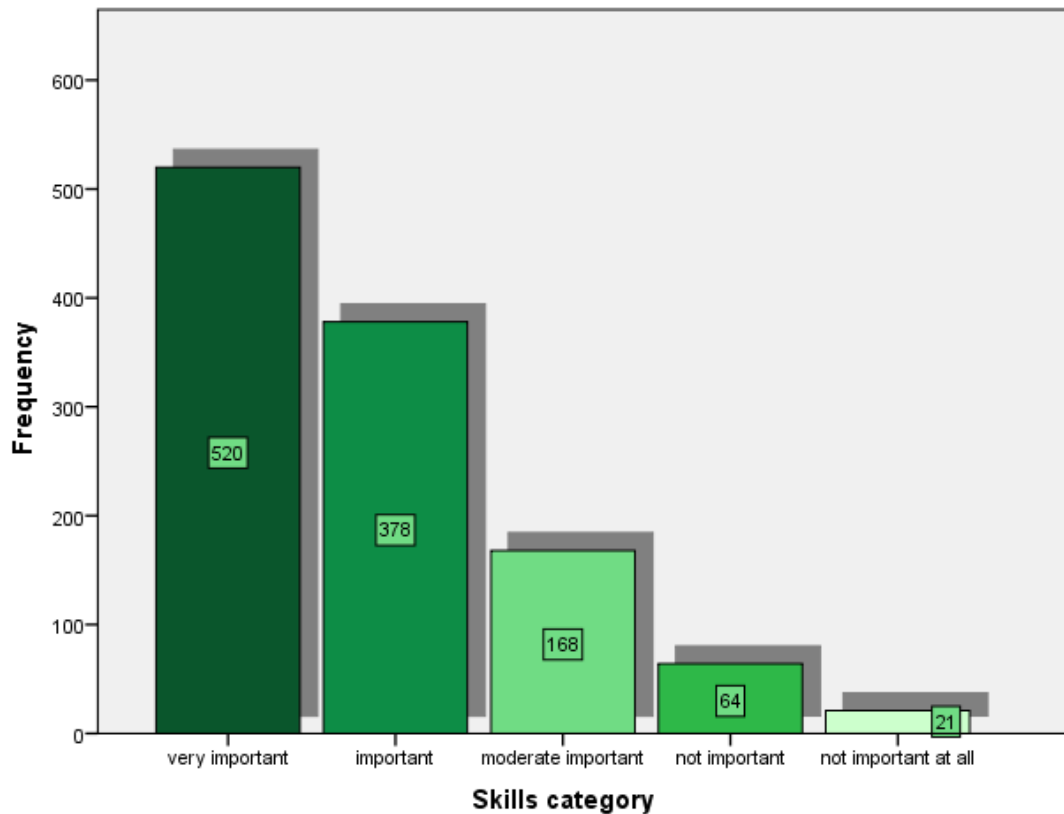
This part discusses the key results of the study, which were concluded based on data analysis collected through a student-focused questionnaire. The answers were processed in a systematic manner using SPSS and Excel programs to identify patterns and trends among students' understanding of effective teacher leaders. Results presented here are recorded through a combination of tables, charts, and elaborate discussion, providing an evident and fascinating picture of what students most value in their teachers.



#### 4.1 Students' responses about the main categories

**Table 1: Skills category**

		Skills category			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very important	520	45.2	45.2	45.2
	important	378	32.8	32.8	78.0
	moderate important	168	14.6	14.6	92.6
	not important	64	5.6	5.6	98.2
	not important at all	21	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	1151	100.0	100.0	

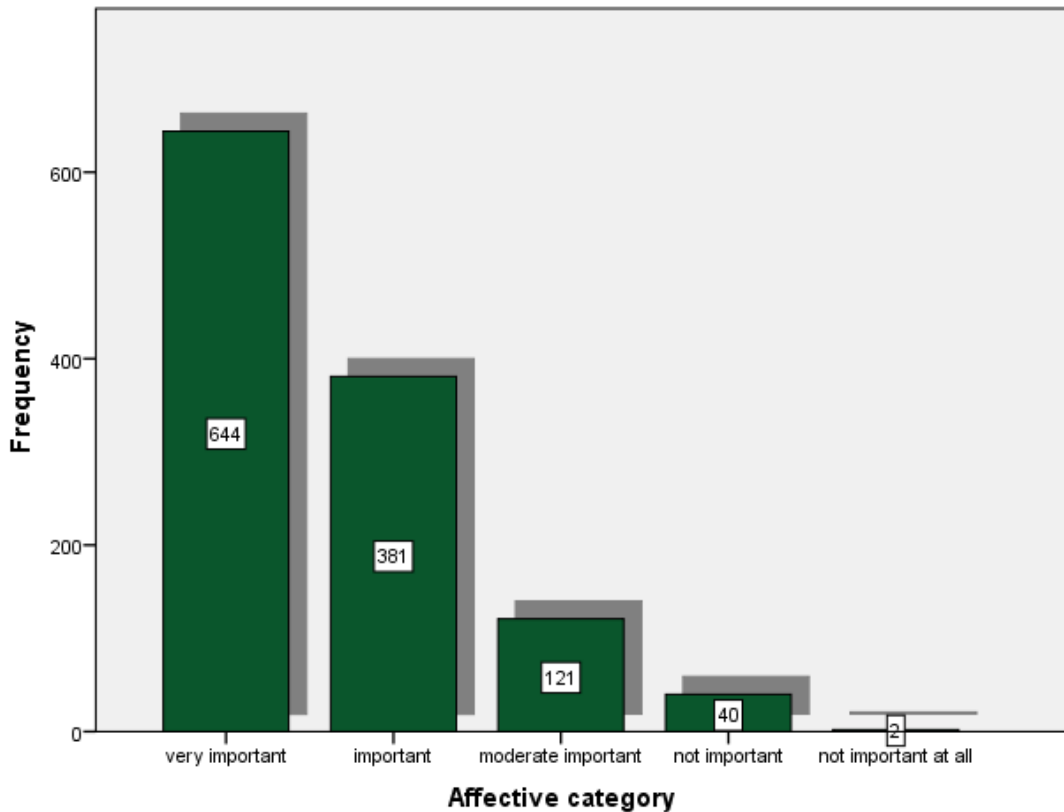


The bar graph indicates the frequency distribution of responses in five categories of skill importance: very important, important, moderately important, not important, and not important at all. The "very important" category has the highest frequency with 520 responses, followed by "important" with 378 responses. "Moderately important" has 168 responses, and "not important" has 64 responses. The "not important at all" category has 21 responses.

all" option has the least frequency, a paltry 21 responses. This indicates that most of the respondents consider the skills to be very important and that there is a general consensus on their being important and hence considered to be essential in the given context.

**Table 2: Affective category**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	644	54.2	54.2	54.2
important	381	32.1	32.1	86.3
moderate important	121	10.2	10.2	96.5
not important	40	3.4	3.4	99.8
not important at all	2	.2	.2	100.0
Total	1188	100.0	100.0	



The bar chart illustrates the frequency of students' responses to the affective category on a Likert scale ranging from "very important" to "not important at all." The majority of the students had "very important"

as 644 responses, and then "important" as 381 responses. "Moderately important" had 121 responses, while "not important" and "not important at all" had 40 and 2 responses, respectively. This distribution indicates that the greatest number of students perceive the affective category as highly significant, with hardly any percentage seeing it as of lesser importance.

**Table 3: Responses about the two categories**

Main Categories	Frequencies and percentages				
	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Not Important	Not Important at All
<b>Skills Category</b>	<b>520</b> <b>(43.3%)</b>	<b>378</b> <b>(31.5%)</b>	<b>168</b> <b>(14.0%)</b>	<b>64</b> <b>(5.3%)</b>	<b>21</b> <b>(1.8%)</b>
<b>Affective Category</b>	<b>644</b> <b>(51.1%)</b>	<b>381</b> <b>(30.3%)</b>	<b>121</b> <b>(9.6%)</b>	<b>40</b> <b>(3.2%)</b>	<b>2</b> <b>(0.2%)</b>

The figures provide a clear and compelling picture of what the respondents prize most. Starting with the Skills Category, 520 responses (43.3%) deemed these skills "very important," and a further 378 (31.5%) rated them as "important." Combined, nearly 75% of the respondents view the skills as greatly vital, while fewer than a dozen—64 (5.3%) and 21 (1.8%) responses—dismissed them as "not important" or "not important at all." This unequivocal consensus emphasizes the sharp significance these skills hold in the respondents' mind. Gazing into the Affective Category, the applicability of such attributes as empathy, enthusiasm, and emotional intelligence becomes even more critical. An overwhelmingly important 644 (51.1%) of the answers rated these qualities as "very important," and another 381 (30.3%) characterized them as "important." Over 80% of the participants emphasized the importance of affective characteristics, while only 40 (3.2%) and 2 (0.2%) responses negated their importance. What one discovers in this data is a powerful message: while technical skills are certainly valued, it's the human traits—how we connect, motivate, and engage, that resonate most deeply. This balance of skills and affective qualities is proof of an integrated understanding of what truly matters in leadership, teaching, and life.

**4.2 Students’ responses about the individual items**

**Table4: Skills category**

Items	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Teacher leader needs to have a good knowledge of teaching methods.	52	88.3	6	10	2	1.7	0	0	0	0
2. He/she needs to possess a deep knowledge of the subject he /she teaches.	48	80	8	13.3	2	3.3	2	3.3	0	0
3. They must have a wide knowledge of the language and culture.	15	25	38	63.3	6	10	1	1.7	0	0

4. They need to be competent.	49	81	7	11.7	2	3.3	2	3.3	0	0
5. They give their students a lot of choice in their assignments.	12	20	26	43	16	26.7	3	5	3	5
6. They need to know the psychology of learning.	25	41.7	26	43.3	8	13.3	0	0	1	1.7
7. They should be productive and effective employing information gaps, games, songs, and problem-solving.	26	43	21	33.3	10	18.3	2	3.3	1	1.7
8. They need to know how to develop the receptive and productive skills of their students.	28	46.7	27	45	5	8.3	0	0	0	0
9. They need to know how to adapt specific teaching techniques to their teaching needs.	32	53.3	17	28.3	9	15	1	1.7	1	1.7
10. They need to know how to deal with the emotions of students.	26	43.3	21	35	4	6.7	7	11.7	2	3.3
11. They have to understand and apply instructional planning systematically and coherently.	25	41.7	25	41.7	6	10	3	5	1	1.7
12. They must speak at the level of students.	34	56.7	19	31.7	6	10	0	0	1	1.7
13. They need to possess a native-like accent in language teaching.	15	25	12	20	19	31.7	7	11.7	7	11.7
14. They must evaluate students' performance daily.	29	48.3	19	31.7	9	15	3	5	0	0
15. They should have access to social networking sites.	9	15	5	8.3	28	46.7	16	26.7	2	3.3
16. They need to be ICT literate.	17	28.3	18	30	14	23.3	7	10	5	8.3
17. They need to use extracurricular activities like singing, and theatre to develop speaking and listening skills in their students	23	38.3	14	23.3	13	21.7	7	11.7	3	5
18. They have to be risk-takers. They not only follow the curriculum given to them closely but they also invest in learning new things	20	33.3	28	46.7	10	16.7	2	3.3	0	0
19. They need to be hardworking.	36	60	24	40	0	0	0	0	0	0

This table presents an extensive assessment of the most important skills that students view as relevant to teacher leaders, with the characteristics they value most in the skill category. An extremely high percentage of students emphasize that teacher leaders must have good practice knowledge (88.3%) and deep subject matter knowledge (80%), indicating pedagogy and content mastery are highly desired. Competence is also considered a core skill (81%), then knowledge of learning psychology (43.3%) and the ability to create

receptive and productive skills among learners (45%). Support is extensive for teacher leaders using active and effective pedagogical methods, such as games and problem-solving (43%), and providing students with choice in work (43%). However, individuals differ regarding more specialized qualities: merely a small percentage of students believe that sounding native-like is required for language teaching (31.7%), and still fewer that being present on social networking websites (46.7%) is required. Teacher leaders need to be flexible too, able to tailor instruction strategies to unique requirements (53.3%), and emotionally intelligent, with the ability to identify and control student feelings (43.3%). In addition, the majority of students view ICT literacy (53.3%) and the use of extracurricular activities, including theater, to foster language skills (38.3%), as being important qualities of a teacher leader. The majority of students also view risk-taking (46.7%) and hard work (60%) as being important leadership qualities. Last, this table illustrates the skills that are considered vital to teacher leadership according to the students, and it identifies a mix of skills, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and creativity as well as indicates areas of difference, such as the use of native-like accent and the contribution of social media to learning.

**Table 5: Affective category**

Items	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Teacher leaders should create an atmosphere where students feel s belonging to a group.	42	70	14	23.3	4	6.7	0	0	0	0
2. They should create a group spirit in the classroom.	32	53.3	24	40	3	15	1	1.7	0	0
3. They should take into consideration the feelings and emotions of their students in the learning process.	26	43.3	21	35	10	16.7	3	5	0	0
4. They should allow students to evaluate themselves.	28	46.7	22	36.7	8	13.3	2	3.3	0	0
5. They should enhance the student’s self-confidence.	35	58.3	21	35	3	5	1	1.7	0	0
6. They should use sense of humor in the class.	24	40	20	33.3	12	20	2	3.3	2	3.3
7. They should have a contagious enthusiasm for teaching.	27	45	22	36.7	9	15	2	3.3	0	0
8. They should make the learning environment comfortable for students.	36	60	19	31.7	5	8.3	0	0	0	0
9. They should help their students develop autonomy, helping them to be cognitive problem solvers rather than giving them answers.	40	66.7	14	23.3	5	8.3	1	1.7	0	0
10. They should design more effective lessons based on what students need, feel, and care about.	29	48.3	23	38.3	4	6.7	4	6.7	0	0



11. They should be acquainted with their student's ethnic and gender differences.	24	40	25	41.7	8	13.3	3	5	0	0
12. They should treat their students fairly.	49	81.7	7	11.7	2	3.3	2	3.3	0	0
13. They should lead students towards autonomy.	39	65	16	26.7	4	6.7	1	1.7	0	0
14. They should create a non-threatening classroom environment.	33	55	20	33.3	7	11.7	0	0	0	0
15. They should treat their students equally regardless of sex, race, and social status.	50	83.3	7	11.7	3	5	0	0	0	0
16. They should understand that students differ in their approaches to learning and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.	38	63.3	17	28.3	3	5	2	3.3	0	0
17. They must have a great passion for teaching and working with students.	34	56.7	24	40	2	3.3	0	0	0	0
18. They should be at the service of their students at school.	24	40	17	28.3	9	15	10	16.7	0	0
19. They should be acquainted with the economic and social situations of the surrounding environment.	6	10	28	46.7	17	28.3	9	15	0	0
20. They should be intuitive, anticipate potential problems in the classroom, and be able to solve them.	28	46.7	21	35	9	15	1	1.7	1	1.7

This table indicates a set of characteristics students perceive as applicable to teacher leaders in the affective domain, which emphasizes emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationships, and the ability to create a positive and supportive classroom environment. The majority of students believe that teacher leaders should foster a sense of belonging in the classroom (70%) and a climate of group spirit (53.3%). These are seen as critical to the creation of a supportive classroom climate where students feel included and appreciated. Of comparable importance under this category is emotional regard of the students. The majority (43.3%) believe teacher leaders should show regard for students' feelings and emotions during learning, while 58.3% anticipate that teachers will strengthen students' self-confidence. Secondly, students enjoy the provision of self-evaluation (46.7%), which boosts their sense of autonomy and personal growth. On creating a comfortable and stimulating learning environment, 40% of students think that teacher leaders should employ humor, and 45% desire teachers to be infectious in their enthusiasm for teaching. Creating the learning environment as comfortable (60%) and facilitative is another key affective quality because it is considered central to enabling positive emotional experience. Affective characteristics like fairness, inclusiveness, and emotional support are also greatly valued. A huge majority (81.7%) concur that students should be treated equally and fairly by teachers irrespective of sex, race, or social class.

Additionally, 63.3% think that teacher leaders should cater to the different learning styles of students by showing sensitivity to diversity in emotional and learning needs. Teacher leaders should also create a non-threatening environment (55%) where students will feel safe and encouraged to participate. Commitment to teaching (56.7%) and sensitivity to students' personal and affective needs (40%) are also considered necessary in facilitating the establishment of an effective affective climate. While the need to be familiar with the students' economic and social situation (46.7%) is less well supported, it is nonetheless considered necessary. In essence, this table emphasizes the relevance of affective qualities in teacher leadership in terms of emotional intelligence, empathy, equality, and the ability to create an environment where students are emotionally cared for, confident, and driven to learn. These attributes are viewed as being crucial in forging strong, trustworthy relationships between teacher leaders and emotionally healthy and academically growing students.

If the two tables are compared and their corresponding categories, skills and affective qualities, it is apparent that students favor the affective category. Although both categories refer to significant aspects of effective teaching, students attach greater significance to the emotional and interpersonal qualities that establish a friendly, inclusive, and interactive classroom environment. The affective domain, dealing with feelings of belongingness (70%), school spirit (53.3%), and respect for the feelings of the students (43.3%), emphasizes emotional intelligence, fairness, and a positive teacher-student relationship. Competencies like building confidence (58.3%) and fostering autonomy (66.7%) are highly desirable among the students, who enjoy the teacher who liberates them to practice autonomy and grow up at their level. On the other hand, while the skills category emphasizes cognitive and technical skills like teaching methods (88.3%) and content knowledge (80%), these abilities are considered necessary but secondary to care and emotional bonding which students require. The emphasis of the affective category on creating an unthreatening, relaxing learning climate (60%) and treating all students equally, regardless of sex, race, or status (83.3%), clearly places student concern with feeling safe, being respected, and valued as top priority. Lastly, students favor the affective dimension of teaching, viewing emotional support and a favorable classroom climate as being paramount to their academic and personal success. The difference between the affective and skill sets of teacher leadership traits presents an interesting balance based on student feedback. Traits like inculcating group spirit, being fair to all, and generating a feeling of belongingness are salient in both lists, showing that these are equally highly sought in effective teacher leadership. However, other attributes, like empathy and sense of humor, are more under the area of abilities, while fair treatment and respect for variety are more on the emotional side.

In a word, successful teaching leadership involves more than simply technical expertise; the capacity to connect emotionally is also essential. Students appear to be very focused on a teacher's emotional and interpersonal skills. Emotional intelligence, justice, diversity, and providing an inspiring environment are some of the most crucial requirements for promoting student trust, bonding, and well-being. Although technical skills and emotional sensitivity are important factors, affective concerns are what primarily attract students, making them feel valued and protected while learning.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Moroccan EFL students appreciate affective qualities in teacher leadership more than skill-oriented qualities, supporting the first hypothesis. Fairness, empathy, and being able to create a good classroom environment were the most mentioned qualities, reflecting a high percentage of the responses. This inclination indicates the importance of emotional and social contact

between teachers and students. Students view a successful teacher leader as not only a teacher but also as a mentor who establishes a sense of belonging, emotional support, and fairness in the class, which aligns with conceptions of teacher leadership that emphasize both emotional intelligence and pedagogical skill (Owen, 2006).

This finding also implies the dual roles of teachers—not only as facilitators of learning but also as custodians of students' well-being, a perception echoed in research emphasizing the balance between affective and professional attributes (Owen, 2006). Student feedback captures this dual role, showing that students value both emotional care and professional knowledge in their teachers.

While affective traits dominated the responses, skills-related qualities such as subject knowledge, teaching methodology, and professional competence continued to be important, validating the second hypothesis. This would mean that while technical competence is important, it is the affective qualities that have a larger role to play in good learning outcomes. There has been proof in research that students accomplish more and get more engaged in academic environments where they are emotionally cared for and respected, as has been among the key arguments in educational leadership literature (Mellouk, 2007).

Student-written suggestions also work to make this point, with many urging teachers to be fair, patient, empathetic, and approachable. Some others also described the importance of humor and socioeconomic, gender, and age sensitivity. These are testimonies that attest to the fact that students perceive teacher leadership as a collective process where they have their voices and experiences heard.

The third hypothesis is also evidenced by the evident potential of student feedback to guide teaching practice and leadership decisions. The student feedback provides constructive feedback for the development of more effective and inclusive teaching practices. Through the inclusion of affective and skills-based attributes, teachers are able to build a more nurturing and engaging learning environment. This is in accordance with educational models that foster both emotional intelligence and academic success.

This dual emphasis reflects a student-centered view of teaching as a constant dialectic between care and instruction, one that is well advocated in education research (Owen, 2007). Effective teaching is neither a technical skill nor affective attribute, but a combination of both to offer an integrated learning experience. In the context of Moroccan EFL, with learners exposed to specific problems of language acquisition and cultural adaptation, this approach is highly suitable. By combining care and pedagogy, educators can help their learners overcome such problems through teacher leaders.

Finally, the results are in harmony with distributed leadership theory which considers leadership to be the collective effort of the school community (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). That students emphasize inclusiveness, equity, and co-creation supports the demand for democratic leadership practice wherein students and teachers collectively share goals. It corroborates the fact that effective leadership embraces collective responsibility and respect for each other.

In summary, the research affirms that Moroccan students value affective traits more than skills-related attributes, confirming both the first and second hypotheses. It also emphasizes the important role that student ratings have in guiding teaching practice, in line with the third hypothesis. These results indicate that a successful teacher leader combines professional expertise and emotional concern to produce an open learning environment sensitive to students' intellectual and affective needs. Future studies would be well advised to investigate how these results generalize to other educational contexts and cultures and to examine the long-term impact of affective and skills-oriented pedagogy on student achievement. Lastly,

the research contributes to the overall conversation regarding teacher leadership and points out the necessity of a model that integrates comprehensive emotional, and academic care.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has been helpful in knowing Moroccan students' perceptions of the qualities of an effective teacher as a leader. Based on the questionnaire results, students appreciated the two broad categories differently: skills and affective qualities. Specifically, the affective category prevailed, with students giving priority to the emotional intelligence of a teacher, such as fairness, empathy, and the ability to create a supportive classroom environment. However, this focus on affective considerations should not depreciate the value of skills-related qualities. While affective traits were accorded priority, the value of a teacher's professional expertise, subject matter knowledge, and instructional techniques should still be appreciated as essential to effective leadership.

Like most research, this research also has limitations. One of the primary limitations is the fairly small sample size, which cannot be used to generalize the findings to all university students in Morocco. Second, the range of the investigation, owing to time constraints, was broad, yet not exhaustive. As a result, the results presented here are to be taken as provisional. Follow-up research would then be able to make use of this study, from a larger, more representative population, and use more detailed analysis to examine the areas covered by this study further. Additional experimental studies, using more criteria, and more expansive in scope, are needed in order to be able to contribute more fully to the subject matter.

The significance of this research for educational leadership is significant. The use of students' voices within the education system can be a rich source on which to found the improvement of teaching and learning. Education leaders ought to be capable of recognizing the potential that exists in students in order to lead the education climate and develop teacher leadership. By knowing students' perception of effective leadership, teachers and schools can construct a more participatory, open, and effectual learning community that attends to the academic and emotional needs of students.

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