

A study on identifying leadership behaviors and styles of prospective kitchen chefs

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Abstract: Leadership involves setting common goals within a group, influencing others' behaviors, and directing them toward a target. Leadership behaviors and styles can vary depending on the individual and professional characteristics of the leaders. Kitchen organizations are structured in a way that requires division of labor due to their inherent nature, with sections such as cold, hot, pastry, bakery, soup, breakfast, and butchery. Therefore, individuals working in various positions within the kitchen, such as head chefs, sous-chefs, section chefs, and line cooks, must possess leadership qualities. This study aimed to determine the leadership behavior tendencies and leadership styles of students studying gastronomy and culinary arts at Artvin Çoruh University. Consequently, the study group comprised students in gastronomy and culinary arts programs at Artvin Çoruh University. The saturation (complete enumeration) technique was applied during sampling, and 128 candidate students were included in the study. It was found that participants demonstrated higher participation in “people-oriented leadership” behaviors. Significant differences in leadership behavior tendencies and leadership styles were observed only between genders. Male participants indicated higher adherence to structural and political leadership styles than did female participants. In conclusion, adopting a people-oriented leadership style by students of gastronomy and culinary programs could be an advantage in their careers, as they are likely to lead many people throughout their professional lives.

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Introduction

Leadership is one of the concepts that has existed and been studied since the dawn of humanity. Leaders can be defined as individuals who set a group's goals, influence members' behaviors, and guide them (Reşitoğlu et al. 2023). Therefore, it can be said that leaders hold a significant position within organizations due to their responsibilities and their role as models for group members. It is impossible to assert that broad and comprehensive leadership theories encompass all the dimensions of leadership. Theories related to leadership appear to attempt to explain specific aspects of this concept (Köseoğlu 2019). One of the newer approaches to organization and leadership, the Four Frames Model developed by Bolman and Deal (2003), presents a multifaceted view of organizations and leadership through four frames. In their management theory, Bolman and Deal examined organizations from four perspectives: structural, human resource, political, and cultural symbols (Tanrıöğen et al. 2014).

In recent years, extensive international studies in the field of leadership have shown that leadership behavior is crucial for organizational success (Kumar & Kaptan 2007). In terms of businesses, leadership skills are needed in terms of bringing together culture, technology, organizational structure, human resources and processes (Oğan 2022). Leadership significantly impacts employee productivity, profitability, and performance in public and private sector organizations (Okorie & Kennedy 2017). Consequently, leadership styles have become an essential topic in management studies, with many researchers viewing them as a critical variable influencing how members function within an organization (Yahaya et al. 2016). Numerous studies have been conducted on leadership within the context of kitchen organizations. Upon reviewing relevant research in this context, topics and sample groups include positive leadership, organizational climate and leadership styles, people management and leadership, job satisfaction related to leadership style, perceptions of organagerial support, leader-member interaction, and “leadership moments” enacted by kitchen managers, head chefs, and employees (Ekşili & Alparslan 2021; Güngör & Atay 2019; Güngör et al. 2022; Delekovcan 2013; Aykaç & Buyruk 2024; Lortie, Cabantous & Sardais 2022). However, the literature contains only a limited number

of studies that examine the leadership qualities of culinary students. This study contributes to the literature by investigating the leadership behaviors and styles of chef candidate students in higher education.

This study was conducted to identify the leadership behaviors and styles of students studying gastronomy and culinary arts at Artvin Çoruh University. Considering the likelihood of these students working in the industry, they hold potential as chef candidates for professional kitchens. Leaders in various sections manage professional kitchens, such as head chefs, sous-chefs, and section chefs (e.g., cold, hot, pastry, soup, and butchery). Thus, leadership qualities are crucial for students studying gastronomy and culinary arts because of their positions they may hold. Accordingly, this study's aim to determine the attitudes and leadership styles of chef candidates studying gastronomy and culinary arts underscores its significance. Therefore, examining the leadership behaviors and styles of chef candidates pursuing culinary education at a higher education level is important in the field of gastronomy. This study is expected to contribute to the literature by highlighting the positive effects of leadership qualities and behaviors on organizational performance, job satisfaction, and motivation levels.

Conceptual framework

Leadership is vital for achieving efficient team management in businesses and organizations, enhancing work motivation, contributing to teamwork, inspiring employees, and achieving goals. A team leader fosters an environment in which team members continuously develop in their professional fields, maintaining high morale and motivation, realizing their potential, and creating a space of mutual respect and trust. Teamwork ignites innovation and creativity, and guides important decision-making (Oğan 2021). It promotes good communication within the organization, shared responsibility, and a commitment from everyone to strive for success (Henry 1998). Working as a team rather than as an individual has a distinct advantage in generating more effective and higher-quality solutions (Ingram & Desombre 1999). Furthermore, a team leader possessing a range of skills, such as listening, communicating, foreseeing, intervening, negotiating, learning, and teaching, will fulfill a facilitative role more effectively and significantly contribute to the team's success (Donellon 1998). Consequently, employees with leadership qualities play a crucial role in both organizations and other employees.

Individuals work within their knowledge, experience, and abilities. In reality, each person has certain limitations, in that they may try to conceal. Through teamwork, members cover each other's weaknesses and strive to create a perfect whole (Scarnati 2001). Teamwork and team leaders are critical to ensuring the effective existence of an organization. This approach enables employees to enjoy their work and be satisfied with it. Thanks to team leaders, employees increase their performance, while organizations raise their success rates and become more resilient. Team leaders prefer to keep up with global competition, as their roles enhance harmony, performance, quality, and innovation (Çakiroğlu 2014). So much so that today, new leadership styles have emerged due to the development of technology. Oğan & Çetiner (2024) listed these leadership styles as visionary, business-oriented, development-supportive, transformational, interactive and full freedom-granting. A leader's ability to minimize the status barrier between themselves and their team members is the most crucial element in building an effective team and ensuring its success. In this regard, an effective leader should be perceived as one of the groups and help all members feel comfortable within the group (Gordon 2002).

Food and beverage establishments require many stages of kitchen operations, including planning, organizing, menu development, and product preparation. These tasks must be conducted in accordance with hygiene and sanitation rules and guest satisfaction (Harbalioğlu & Ünal 2014). Various professional groups work within kitchen organizations, including apprentices, journeymen, cooks, section chefs, head chefs, interns, and dishwashers. A profession encompasses skills acquired through income training within a specific field and following established rules (Aykaç & Buyruk 2024). Therefore, individuals with leadership qualities must perform duties associated with the requirements of each occupational group. Owing to the inherent nature of the work and the profession's demands, trained personnel are essential in kitchens. The culinary profession can be defined as the work of a skilled person who, independently and within a specified time, prepares breakfasts, soups, vegetable dishes, appetizers, pastries, salads, sauces (hot and cold), meats (red meat, poultry, offal, game), seafood, legume dishes, rice, pasta, desserts, and beverages (MEGEP 2007, 12). Yılmaz and Tanrıverdi (2017) described qualified kitchen workers as individuals who have received both theoretical and practical training, who love their profession, and who continuously

strive to improve themselves. Bişiren and Gençer (2023) note that culinary training begins with a master-apprentice relationship, progressing through high school, associate degrees, and undergraduate levels. Nowadays, culinary training is also available in private academies and postgraduate studies. Thus, vocational training has made significant progress in kitchen organizations, where leadership qualities of employees are valued.

The growing competition in recent years has made it essential for restaurants to have strong kitchen management to ensure competitive success. Being skilled in cooking does not necessarily equate to being a successful manager of the kitchen. While individuals with innate leadership skills are often assumed to succeed in management, various studies have shown that education and training can develop or even establish these skills if they are not naturally present (Güngör et al. 2023). Although the high-level culinary field includes many actors (chefs, cooks, critics, etc.), head chefs are primary figures. Elite head chefs, seen as guiding leaders, are often portrayed as charismatic, technically skilled, inspirational, and innovative “star” artists focused on creating gastronomic masterpieces (Lortie et al. 2023). The performance and workplace motivation of kitchen personnel are directly related to the leadership style of kitchen managers.

Methodology

This study aims to identify the leadership behaviors and styles of students receiving gastronomy and culinary arts education at Artvin Çoruh University. This research is a quantitative study, with a population consisting of gastronomy, culinary arts, and culinary students at Artvin Çoruh University. For sample selection, saturation (complete enumeration) sampling technique was employed, in which every unit in the population was included in the sample (Ergin 2013). Thus, this study intended to ensure the voluntary participation of all gastronomy and culinary students at Artvin Çoruh University.

A survey technique was used to collect research data. In social sciences research, quantitative and qualitative data collection is primarily conducted through surveys. Consequently, the scientific rigor and suitability of survey techniques are often scrutinized (Arıkan 2018). Bolman and Deal's (1990) “Leadership Orientations Survey” was administered to students in the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts and Culinary Departments at Artvin Çoruh University to achieve the study's purpose. This quantitative study used complete enumeration

sampling, so the survey was conducted face-to-face with the students. The survey included all students attending classes or exams, of which 128 students completed it.

The survey consisted of three sections, the first section addresses demographic characteristics, the second examines leadership behaviors, and the third focuses on leadership styles. The first section of Bolman and Deal's leadership orientation survey included 32 items, with eight statements for each of the four leadership types (structural, human resources, political, and symbolic). Respondents were asked to rate these items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). In the second section, six questions were designed to help participants describe themselves, with each offering four statements representing different leadership styles. Participants were asked to rank these statements, with "1" indicating the statement that best describes them and "4" indicating the least representative statement. Thus, students' leadership behaviors and styles were scored based on their level of agreement.

The data collected from the surveys were entered into SPSS 19, and descriptive statistics, homogeneity tests (Levene's test), variance analysis, and Duncan's tests were performed. The first test conducted on the data was reliability analysis. The reliability analysis results for the survey data were 0.812, 0.835, 0.852, and 0.787 for the four sections, respectively. These results indicate the high level of reliability of the survey data.

Finding

A total of 128 participants were included in this study. Of the participants, 25.8% were male, and 74.2% were female. Students from the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department constituted 64.8% of the sample, whereas those from the Culinary Department comprised 35.2%. First-year students accounted for 43.8%, sophomores for 39.8%, and juniors for 16.4%.

Findings on leadership behaviours

In the first section of the scale evaluating the leadership behaviors of the participating students according to leadership style, the average scores for the four leadership styles are compared in (Table 1).

Leadership Styles	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Structural Leadership	128	1.88	4.88	3.6543	.6313
Human-Centered Leadership	128	2.00	5.00	3.9805	.5892
Political Leadership	128	1.38	4.75	3.3617	.7402
Symbolic Leadership	128	1.88	5.00	3.5519	.6646
Valid Surveys	128				

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation Values of Responses to Leadership Style Behaviors

As shown in Table 1, students displayed the highest engagement with human-centered leadership style. The differences in the means among these leadership styles were tested for significance using variance analysis. First, the homogeneity of variances was examined, as shown in the Levene test results (Table 2).

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.798	3	508	.147

Table 2. Homogeneity of Variances Test for Leadership Behaviors

As seen in Table 2, the variances in the mean responses for leadership styles in the first section are equal. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results for equal variances are presented in Table 3. This analysis indicates that the mean values differ significantly across leadership styles.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.801	3	8.600	19.836	.000
Within Groups	220.251	508	.434		
Total	246.051	511			

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Leadership-Related Behaviors

The ANOVA results in Table 3 indicate statistically significant differences in the mean responses of the four leadership styles. To determine which leadership styles had higher or lower mean scores, Duncan’s post-hoc test was conducted. As shown in Table 4, the average score for the human-centered leadership style was higher than that for the other styles. Structural and symbolic leadership styles were statistically similar, falling into the same subset, while political leadership had the lowest mean score. This suggests that the students in this study generally favor a human-centered leadership style.

Leadership Styles	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Political Leadership	128	3.3641		
Symbolic Leadership	128		3.5544	
Structural Leadership	128		3.6572	
Human-Centered Leadership	128			3.9833
Sig.		1.000	.212	1.000

Table 4. Grouping Mean Scores for Leadership-related Behaviors via Duncan Test

In the section above, the Likert scale average scores for the responses in the first part of the survey were examined. Table 5 provides the mean of the total scores (sum of Likert-scale values) for each leadership style (Table 5).

Leadership Styles	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Structural Leadership	128	15.00	39.00	29.2344	5.0501
Human-Centered Leadership	128	16.00	40.00	31.7891	4.7780
Political Leadership	128	11.00	38.00	26.8672	5.9266
Symbolic Leadership	128	15.00	40.00	28.3125	5.3547
Valid Surveys	128				

Table 5. Mean Scores for Leadership-Related Behaviors by Total Value

The values in Table 5 can also be interpreted as the sum of the average scores in Table 1. Following Bolman and Deal's approach, which assesses responses as a total score for each behavior, a similar comparison was conducted in this study.

Findings on leadership styles

Participants were asked to identify their leadership style in the second part of the study. This section contains statements reflecting the four leadership styles across the six situations. Participants were instructed to rank these statements by assigning a value of "4" to the statement that best described them, followed by "3" for the next best and "1" for the least descriptive. The average scores generated from participants' rankings are presented in (Table 6).

Leadership Styles	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Structural Leadership	113	7.00	24.00	15.2389	2.8576
Human-Oriented Leadership	112	7.00	24.00	16.3750	3.4852
Political Leadership	112	3.00	23.00	12.0357	3.4743
Symbolic Leadership	111	3.00	22.00	15.4865	3.2161
Valid N (listwise)	111				

Table 6. Descriptive Data for Leadership Styles

As seen in Table 6, participants tended to identify statements reflecting a “human-oriented leadership” style, aligning with the findings from the first part of the study. This is consistent with the results of similar studies using the same scale (e.g., Yıldırım et al. 2020; Frazier et al. 2007; Joo et al. 2014; Tan & Adams 2018). A variance analysis was conducted to determine whether the differences in ranking scores among leadership styles were statistically significant. The results of the variance analysis are presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.779	3	444	.150

Table 7. Homogeneity of Variances Test for Leadership Styles

As shown in Table 7, the ranking scores of the leadership styles that best represented the participants had homogenous variance (Sig. > 0.05). The ANOVA results for these homogeneous variances are presented in Table 8.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	30.373	3	11.458	10.538	.000
Within Groups	127.510	444	.287		
Total	161.882	447			

Table 8. Variance Analysis Results of Leadership Style Rankings

The ANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences in the mean ranking scores among the four leadership styles. Table 9 shows the grouping of these averages based on Duncan’s test.

Leadership Styles	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Political Leadership	112	2.0504		
Structural Leadership	113		2.6011	
Symbolic Leadership	111		2.6029	
Human-Oriented Leadership	112			2.7907
Sig.		1.000	.980	1.000

Table 9. Grouping of Leadership Style Averages

According to the Duncan test results, participants, similar to their responses in the “behaviours” section, identified more strongly with a human-oriented leadership style and least strongly with a political one.

Findings on demographic characteristics of participants

To date, the study has evaluated the overall results of all participants. This section assesses the findings based on the demographic characteristics of the participants and examines whether there are significant differences between them. The results related to the leadership style preferences of the students in different departments are presented in Table 10.

Department		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Culinary Department	Structural Leadership	45	2.13	4.75	3.6639
	Human-Oriented Leadership	45	2.00	4.75	3.9290
	Political Leadership	45	1.63	4.75	3.3778
	Symbolic Leadership	45	1.88	4.88	3.6603
	Valid N (listwise)	45			
Gastronomy & Culinary Arts	Structural Leadership	83	1.88	4.88	3.6491
	Human-Oriented Leadership	83	2.00	5.00	4.0084
	Political Leadership	83	1.38	4.75	3.3531
	Symbolic Leadership	83	1.88	5.00	3.4931
	Valid N (listwise)	83			

Table 10. Responses to Leadership-Related Behaviors by Department

As shown in Table 10, students from both departments predominantly identified with behaviors reflecting a “human-oriented leadership” style, similar to the initial stage of the study. A variance analysis was

conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in leadership style preferences across demographic characteristics, as summarized in Table 11.

Demographic Characteristic	Leadership Style	F	Sig
Age	Structural	0,820	0,630
	Human-Oriented	0,678	0,770
	Political	0,676	0,772
	Symbolic	0,848	0,601
Department	Structural	0,016	0,900
	Human-Oriented	0,569	0,452
	Political	0,047	0,828
	Symbolic	1,824	0,179
Grade	Structural	2,637	0,076
	Human-Oriented	0,032	0,968
	Political	0,280	0,757
	Symbolic	0,845	0,432
Gender	Structural	9,415	0,003*
	Human-Oriented	0,575	0,450
	Political	5,984	0,016*
	Symbolic	2,039	0,156

Table 11. ANOVA Results for Demographic Characteristics and Leadership Style-Related Behaviors

Table 11 shows a statistically significant difference only between genders regarding leadership-related behaviors. Responses concerning structural and political leadership styles varied significantly by gender. As shown in Table 12, male students reported higher inclinations toward “structural” and “political” leadership styles than did female students.

Gender		Structural	Political
Male	Mean	3.9356	3.6250
	N	33	33
	Std. Deviation	.50498	.64726
Female	Mean	3.5566	3.2703
	N	95	95
	Std. Deviation	.64355	.75150

Table 12. Relationship Between Gender and Leadership Styles

Conclusion

Leaders can be described as individuals who establish the goals of a group, guide members around these shared goals, and influence their behavior. Based on insights from studies in the literature, leaders are found to significantly impact productivity, profitability, and employee performance within various organizations, including the public and private sectors (Kaiser et al. 2008, 96; Judge et al. 2002, 765). Thus, leadership is the key to ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of enterprises and institutions. Culinary-related organizations involve various procedural steps, including planning, organizing, menu development, and product preparation. These organizations feature multiple occupational groups such as apprentices, journeymen, chefs, section heads, executive chefs, interns, and dishwashers. Given the specific characteristics and natural demands of work in kitchen environments, examining leadership behaviors in kitchens is critical. The performance and workplace motivation of kitchen employees are related to kitchen managers' leadership behavior.

Considering that students pursuing gastronomy and culinary arts at the higher education level are potential chef candidates, this research aims to determine students' leadership behavior tendencies and leadership styles in gastronomy and culinary arts programs at Artvin Çoruh University. Professional kitchens are managed by leaders of various sections, such as head chefs, sous chefs, and section heads (e.g., cold, hot, pastry, soup, and butchery). The study reveals that participants generally favor "people-oriented leadership" behaviors. In a survey by Beck-Frazier et al. (2007), who employed the same scale as education faculty deans, "people-oriented leadership" behaviors were highlighted. Another study using this scale by Joo et al. (2014) reported that subordinates working with deans tend to prefer structural leadership behaviors. Similarly, Yıldırım et al. (2020) found that nursing students adopted people-oriented leadership behaviors when studying university students.

Significant differences in leadership behavior tendencies and leadership styles were found only between genders among the participants' demographic characteristics. Differences in structural and political leadership styles were observed between men and women, with men showing a higher preference for these styles than women. While Joo et al. (2014) did not find gender-based differences in leadership styles, Tan and Adams (2018) reported that male middle and high school students emphasized structural and political leadership

styles more than their female counterparts did. Adopting people-oriented leadership styles may be advantageous for students in gastronomy and culinary programs, because they are likely to lead numerous individuals throughout their careers. This style is beneficial because it requires employees to work closely with their subordinates in confined kitchen spaces.

This study contributes to the literature by revealing the leadership styles adopted by gastronomy and culinary arts students and examining the influence of leadership behaviors on the performance and motivation of kitchen staff. People-oriented leadership behaviors can enhance motivation and improve organizational performance by fostering the development of human relations among employees. It is recommended that this research be applied to different businesses or sectors, with participants possessing varying personality traits in other regions, because the demographic characteristics of individuals in various industries are likely to produce diverse results.

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