

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Leaders are making differences; they are leaders because of having different characteristics than others. In the literature, definite leadership styles were described which were arising from these different structures of leaders. Studies on women's leadership styles began in the mid-1970s. In the 1990s researches focused on leadership style which was most suitable for women or men.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether any leadership style has convenient for women in distance education and how women assess themselves as a distance education leader and to assist in improving the leadership capabilities of distance education leaders by identifying women's perceptions of leadership characteristics of distance education leaders. By choosing one of the most focused leadership styles in the literature, an appropriate leadership style has asked to participants (132 women staff of distance education institutions in Turkey) for defining themselves, then the demographic and personal attributes (age, appellation, duty, management status, distance education experience) of these women were compared with their own leadership styles defined by them.

Then thirty-seven leadership attributes identified by Leadership Attributes Inventory (LAI) have been asked to participants to describe the characteristics of distance education leaders. This study is also drawn an attention to the lack of women managers in especially senior managements of distance education institutions.

Keywords: Women, distance education, leadership, Turkey