| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Transformational and Democratic Leadership in Moroccan EFL Classrooms: Teachers' Perceptions, Practices, and Challenges

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| **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the perceptions of Moroccan high school English teachers regarding leadership, specifically transformational and democratic leadership, teaching practices, and challenges in the provincial directorate of education and training, Sefrou, Morocco. The objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to explore teachers' perceptions of democratic and transformational leadership; (2) to identify teaching practices aimed at enhancing students' leadership skills; and (3) to uncover the challenges that teachers face while exercising their leadership. A quantitative approach and survey design were used to collect data from 56 high school English teachers. The findings indicate that teachers perceive themselves as transformational and democratic leaders in their classrooms. Furthermore, the majority of high school teachers make use of some classroom activities such as classroom presentations, debates, discussions, and team projects to improve student leadership. However, it was surprising that a significant number of teachers rarely or never engage students in leadership activities such as organizing service projects, encouraging journal writing, and assigning case studies. Moreover, the results of this study reveal some serious challenges faced by teachers while practicing their leadership roles, namely the top-down approach of the Moroccan educational system, limited investment in the field of education innovation, and lack of teacher training in the field of teacher leadership. This study concludes with implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further research to find effective ways to improve leadership in the EFL classroom.

1. Introduction

The field of education has undergone many shifts and faced challenges to make schools better places for students where they can realize their full potential and become autonomous learners. However, achieving this is not an easy task that can be accomplished through simple steps or decisions made by ordinary teachers. Therefore, there is a need for teachers who do not perceive themselves as controllers or providers but rather as leaders who guide and inspire their students. In fact, many researchers put much emphasis on the role of leadership in the school setting. For instance, Bush (2007) stated that "there is great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century. This is because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes" (p. 391). Following this point of view, students should be prepared to cope with the challenges of the 21st century because they live in a world that is ever-changing and growing very fast in many domains; it is only through teacher leadership students can be equipped with the necessary skills to improve themselves and to

face their learning challenges. Therefore, teacher leadership becomes the cornerstone of achieving this sophisticated objective, as it empowers teachers to go beyond their traditional teaching practices and assume broader roles and responsibilities.

1.1. Research Problem

Nowadays, English language teachers make great efforts to adopt different approaches, methods, and techniques to help their students use the English language effectively both inside and outside the classroom. However, in a world that is characterized by diversity and ephemerality, teaching a foreign language involves not only making students proficient in using the language communicatively, but also inspiring and leading them to become effective leaders of a challenging tomorrow. Similarly, Augustsson and Boström (2012) claimed that the role of every teacher entails a variety of responsibilities, including planning and supervising instructional activities, offering direction and advice, motivating and inspiring students, and resolving conflicts. In other words, teachers should not perceive themselves as technicians, controllers, or "conduits of knowledge" in the classroom, but rather as leaders who strive to make the classroom a better place that triggers students' curiosity to learn and develop their leadership skills. Therefore, investigating teachers' perceptions of leadership, teaching practices, and challenges can play a vital role in paving the way to enhance both teacher and student leadership skills in EFL classrooms.

1.2. Research Purpose and Rationale of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Moroccan high school English teachers' perceptions of leadership styles, teaching practices, and challenges in the regional directorate of education and training, Sefrou, Morocco. The main reason behind choosing this topic is to make a modest contribution to the research literature on this subject, which might not receive enough attention in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field in Morocco. In addition, it is commonly known that high school students, nowadays, are in dire need of life skills, namely leadership skills. Therefore, Moroccan high school English teachers are expected to design engaging and meaningful activities in which students are invited to work cooperatively towards a common learning goal. In fact, these motivational reasons are the driving force behind conducting this particular research study.

1.3. Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate teachers' perceptions of leadership, specifically, in terms of transformational and democratic leadership models. Moreover, it aims to examine the practices that teachers use to enhance student leadership skills. Finally, it also seeks to explore certain challenges that teachers face while practicing their leadership within their schools. By addressing these research objectives, this study can contribute to a deeper understanding of high school English teachers' perceptions of leadership roles, their teaching practices for boosting student leadership in EFL classrooms, and the challenges they face.

1.4. Research Questions

1) To what extent do Moroccan high school English teachers perceive themselves as leaders in their classrooms, especially in terms of democratic and transformational leadership?
2) What teaching practices do high school English teachers adopt to enhance their students' leadership skills?
3) What challenges do high school English teachers face while exercising their leadership within their classrooms?

1.5. Significance of the study

Leadership education has gained much attention in the last two decades as an inspiring shift in different educational fields and disciplines. Therefore, the significance of this study is to raise Moroccan high school English teachers' awareness of the importance of leadership in their EFL classroom, mainly their perceptions of two significant leadership models in the field of leadership education: transformational and democratic models. Moreover, this study can encourage Moroccan high school English teachers to reconsider their teaching practices by developing well-designed and engaging activities that cater for their students' needs, not only in terms of their academic achievement but also in the development of their leadership skills to become leaders of tomorrow in a very competitive and ever-changing world.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Leadership

Leadership is a complex concept that is not easy to define. Defining such a vague and intangible term is a complex task (Chaibi. 2007). Similarly, many researchers have tried to come up with many different definitions of leadership because, for them, this concept, like other abstract concepts such as democracy, love, and peace, is very relative and can have different meanings for different people (Stogdill, 1974). For example, Lim and Lim (2013) defined leadership as the ability of "making things happen that on their own would not happen. It is fundamentally a matter of bringing about change that is useful for the present and essential for the future" (p.153). Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) concluded that the "efforts to define leadership too narrowly are more likely to trivialize than clarify its meaning" (p. 22). To put it differently, leadership is considered as a dynamic

and situational concept that varies across different contexts. Thus, a narrow definition of leadership may fail to capture the complexity of this particular concept (Owen, 2007).

Despite the complexity of the concept of leadership, one of the definitions that encapsulates its components was given by Peter. G. Northouse in 2016. He defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p.6). This definition has four implications. First, leadership is regarded as a process in which leaders impact and get influenced by followers, not a trait or linear occurrence. Second, leadership involves influence since it does not happen without it. Third, leadership occurs within groups. Fourth, leadership requires reachable team goals. In other words, leaders are to share a mutual goal with followers, and through this kind of mutuality followers might not feel forced to follow their leaders (Northouse, 2016).

2.2. Teacher Leadership

The notion of teacher leadership has traced a long history in the literature of school reform and improvement. This term has been featured greatly in the work of John Dewey, an American philosopher who emphasized the role of democracy in school life (Danielson, 2006). Dewey (1903) stated that "every teacher had some regular and representative way to register judgment upon matters of educational importance, with assurance that this judgment would somehow affect the school system" (p.105). Harris and Lambart (2003) viewed teacher leadership as a method of leadership in which teachers from various disciplines within schools have the chance to lead. Similarly, Danielson (2006) proposed a more precise definition, which states that "the term teacher leadership refers to that set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to other within their own school and elsewhere" (p.12). In fact, all these definitions highlight the role of teacher leadership in improving schools and students' achievement. The research literature has shown that teacher leadership has many positive effects on students' achievement, that is, the more teacher leaders, the greater school improvement (Harris, 2002). More importantly, according to Owen (2007), effective leadership requires teachers to strive to become the best they can be in their classrooms by serving as role models, inspiring, delegating, and prioritizing the needs of their students. This suggests that teachers who perceive themselves as leaders within and beyond the classroom contribute to the growth of educational practices (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Moreover, the concept of teacher leadership views teaching as a professional work in which teachers make sophisticated decisions and exercise autonomy to help students in their learning process (Danielson, 2006).

2.3. Transformational and democratic leadership models

In terms of school improvement, transformational leadership is one of the leadership models that predominates much of the writing in the field of education. This model implies a redistribution of power within an organization, where people work collaboratively to achieve a shared goal (Harris, 2002). Northouse (2016) defined transformational leadership as "the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (p.162). This suggests that being a transformational leader in the classroom is about attending to students' motives and needs and trying to help them reach their fullest potential. Four factors define transformational leaders: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. They expose risks, set an example, boost team spirit, inspire innovation, and create a motivating environment. Mentors, coaches, and advisers support personal differences and help create an innovative and successful culture. Northouse (2016). On the other hand, the democratic leadership was defined as a model or style of leadership that "seeks to enhance the involvement and influence of others in decisions, encourage discussion and debate, and create a sense of identity as co-creators of a community" (Woods, 2021; p.6). Demirtas and Karaca (2020) stated that facilitating negotiation, responsibility distribution, and empowerment are key factors in defining a democratic leader. Simply stated, a democratic leader supports team members' decisions and values their active participation. In terms of the classroom setting, a democratic classroom is an educational setting where students actively participate in decision-making processes, have a voice in shaping classroom rules and procedures, and engage in collaborative discussions (Wraga, 1998).

2.4. Leadership Classroom Activities
2.4.1 Team Projects

Katzenbach and Smith (2005) considered a team project as a collaborative task in which individuals strive to achieve a common goal that cannot be achieved by individuals working alone. These scholars underscored the significance of having a team of individuals with a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to accomplishing the objectives of the team. In this respect, using team projects as regular activities in the classroom helps students set shared objectives, assume responsibilities, and improve their listening and interpersonal skills (Jammal, 2015). In other words, team projects provide students with various opportunities to be flexible in considering their peers' ideas and work with a common goal.

2.4.2 Case Studies

Gill and Mullarkey (2015) viewed case studies as leadership activities that provide students with opportunities to analyze and discuss real-life situations. Similarly, these case studies were considered as an effective teaching method because they encourage

both logical and analogical reasoning, in addition to introspection, creativity, and originality (Callaos, 2017). To put it differently, these kinds of activities represent a valuable learning experience that enhances students' analytical thinking while dealing with controversial topics; therefore, they become more creative, reflective, and innovative in their way of thinking.

2.4.3 Role Playing
According to Fox and Chesler (1966), role-playing enables students to confront and understand their relationships with others, their understanding and expectations of society, their self-evaluation, and the relevance of academic material to their daily tasks. That is, when teachers provide students with dramatic situations, they become able to think of different possibilities to deal with these particular situations. In this vein, Guenthner and Moore (2005) suggested that role-playing can be an effective tool to enhance student leadership, mainly when teachers provide a healthy environment for students to practice their communication and problem-solving skills in simulated scenarios. As a result, "by practicing a variety of behaviors in a series of role-playing exercises and by discussing the effects of each, students may be able to make more realistic choices for their actions than before" (Fox and Chesler, 1996; p.13).

2.4.4 Debates and Discussions
Debates and discussions are also considered as effective activities to improve student leadership. Bell (1982) identified three major benefits of debating and discussing. First, it improves listening and public speaking skills as students are required to communicate their viewpoints clearly while listening to their peers. Second, it leads students to a deep understanding of the complex nature of different controversial topics. Finally, it defies students' prior beliefs and biases because of their exposure to different arguments and evidence that invite them to critically evaluate their own beliefs. Thus, these benefits show the significant role of debates in boosting student leadership in the classroom.

2.4.5 Reflective Journal Writing
Reflective writing is considered a crucial approach that gives students the chance to make sense of the received information and ideas during their learning journey. It plays the role of a learning mirror that provides an opportunity for self-reflection and helps students to better understand and value themselves (Schön, 1983). Thus, this kind of assignment can help improve students' motivation, leadership, and commitment to what they are learning (Schön, 1983). Furthermore, this process of writing helps students to reflect on their points of strength and weakness so that they can promote critical self-reflection during their learning process (Walter and Griffin, n.d.).

2.4.6 Presentations
Assigning classroom presentations can be a valuable way of promoting student learning and leadership skills as well. Firstly, by allowing students to deliver presentations on controversial topics that they are interested in, they feel more motivated to learn new things and make logical connections with their environment. Secondly, this kind of assignment can promote students' sense of responsibility in what they are doing due to the fact that they are required to prepare and deliver their product in front of their peers and teachers. Finally, classroom presentations can also enhance students' creativity. This is because they are given the freedom of choosing different ways of presenting their work, such as relying on the use of multimedia elements. Therefore, this kind of freedom encourages students to think outside the box and come up with creative ways (Thurneck, n.d).

2.4.7 Service Learning Projects
Jacoby (1996) stated that a service learning project is considered as a form of educational experience in which students use academic knowledge and skills to meet and address real-life needs in their communities. To put it simply, such hands-on projects provide students with the right opportunity to make meaningful contributions to their communities as well as develop a sense of civic responsibility during their learning experience. Moreover, service projects or volunteer opportunities provide students with the chance to develop their leadership skills, discover their talents, and get a comprehensive understanding of their identities and goals. Through this kind of community involvement, students get the opportunity to grow as leaders within their environment and improve their collaboration skills (Ejiwale and Posey, 2020).

2.4.8 Workshops
This type of learning activity involves students in active participation and engagement. It requires them to be engaged in hands-on activities and implement their acquired skills to achieve the desired objectives. Organizing workshops is often favored as it allows students to gain practical experience and develop a deeper understanding of the material being presented by their teachers (Fatumo, Shome, and Macintyre, 2014). Thus, workshops can be tailored to specific areas of leadership development, such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and team building. By organizing these workshops, students can learn new strategies and techniques that can help them become more effective leaders.

2.4.9 Conflict Resolution
Conflict resolution activities have a positive impact on student leadership development. These types of activities provide students with opportunities to practice several communication skills, including active listening and self-expression that are vital for effective leadership. Moreover, collaborating in teams to find solutions to problems motivates students to make use of collaboration and critical thinking skills (Jammal, 2015). Therefore, creating situations that involve conflict resolution helps students become more effective in dealing with their own learning and life problems.

2.5. Barriers to Teacher Leadership
2.5.1 Organizational Structure
School structure greatly affects teacher leadership. It covers school management and how administrators, instructors, and other personnel share duties and decision-making power (Murphy, 2007). The organizational structure might inhibit teacher leadership. Teachers have limited say in hierarchical school systems since administrators make most decisions. They lack the authority and support to lead and improve schools (Murphy, 2007). According to Durias (2010), schools resistant to change may prevent teacher leadership. Teachers may lack the support and resources to implement innovative projects in a top-down decision-making institution. Similarly, bureaucratic school systems can hamper cooperative teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Such systems reinforce teachers' misconceptions about some professional values, such as privacy and autonomy, which may discourage them from sharing their innovative teaching practices with their colleagues (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). As noted by Wasley (1991), teachers' conceptions of autonomy and privacy are the most harmful to teacher leadership. In reality, bureaucratic systems and institutional resistance to change can hinder shared teacher leadership.

2.5.2 Professional and Organizational Culture
The occupational structure of teaching can impede teacher leadership development in schools. Teachers' leadership abilities may be limited by their workloads, time constraints, and classroom tasks (Murphy, 2007). Wenner and Campbell (2016) noted that many teachers lack time to accomplish their usual teaching tasks, which explains why they often try to lead without time constraints. Thus, without set time allowances for these great teachers, their potential to collaborate and lead is severely limited. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) stated that followership norms encourage teachers to follow processes rather than lead. Lack of training and professional development is another research-cited hindrance to teacher leadership. Teachers may struggle to lead and encourage students and colleagues without planned training programs, reducing their potential to improve schools (Wilson, 2015). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) argued that teachers think partiality is utilized to choose colleagues rather than competence and expertise. This may make other teachers dislike them and doubt their abilities. Teacher leadership is also hindered by separation from colleagues. Troen and Boles (1992) mentioned that teachers sometimes experienced a sense of disconnection from their peers when they engaged in teacher leadership activities. This isolation can spring from two factors. Assuming leadership roles requires teachers to change their classroom habits, which might distance them from their colleagues. Teacher leadership obligations might also hinder casual connections and productive talks with colleagues. Sanders (2006) noted that teachers may be reluctant to collaborate or lead when they feel their professional development efforts are not appreciated.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach and Design
This study was conducted through a quantitative approach in order to answer the abovementioned research questions. In this vein, Bryman (2012) defined the quantitative approach as "a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (p.35). That is, such kind of approach puts much emphasis on quantified data to reach objective and reasonable results in a given study. Concerning the research design, this study was based on a survey design due to the nature of the research questions and objectives of this study. This type of design is usually adopted by researchers to "provide a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or tests for associations among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell, 2018, p. 207). Since this study aimed at investigating teachers' perceptions of leadership, their teaching practices, and their challenges in the classroom context, the use of a survey design was most fit for this research.

3.2 Research Context and Sampling
Kumar (2011) defined research sampling as "the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group" (p.193). To this end, this study was conducted on Moroccan English high school teachers in the provincial directorate of Sefrou. The total number of high school English teachers in the provincial directorate of Sefrou is 72. However, only 56 responses of English teachers were collected from the total number of participants in this study, which is in fact quite representative of the entire target population. Concerning the type of sampling design, this study used convenience sampling as a strategy to reach the study participants. In this type of non-probability sampling, "the researcher selects participants because

they are willing and available to be studied" (Creswell, 2012; p.145). Moreover, the selection process in this type of sampling is often based on particular practical criteria such as availability, willingness and geographical proximity (Dornyei, 2007).

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

This study made use of questionnaires as a research instrument. Questionnaires were administered to high school English teachers to collect data on their perceptions of leadership, their teaching practices, and their challenges. To this end, this instrument was divided into four major parts. The first part included two types of questions: one dichotomous question about teachers' gender and one multiple-choice question about teachers' institutions in the directorate. In the second part, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to measure teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership and democratic leadership. This questionnaire was created by Walumbwa (2008), Bryman (1992) and Bass and Avolio (1994). It is worth mentioning that the included items were modified slightly for a classroom setting. The third part explored the activities teachers use to enhance student leadership. In the last part, 12 items were designed to highlight the challenges that teachers face in exercising leadership within the school. To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was sent to my supervisor and my colleagues in the field to get their feedback and suggestions before administering the final refined version to the target participants. Similarly, the reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The following table (1) shows the results of Cronbach's alpha, indicating a significant level of consistency among all the items in the questionnaire. This implies that approximately 90% of the variability in the scores can be attributed to reliable measurement.

Table 1.The result of Cronbach's alpha

Questionnaire Test	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	,920	42

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The data was analyzed via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This study used descriptive statistics to organize and categorize data into graphs and tables. Furthermore, these graphs and tables were used to describe and interpret the data to better understand the objectives of this study. Furthermore, no inferential statistics, such as correlations or regressions, were used in this study.

4. Results
4.1 Demographic information

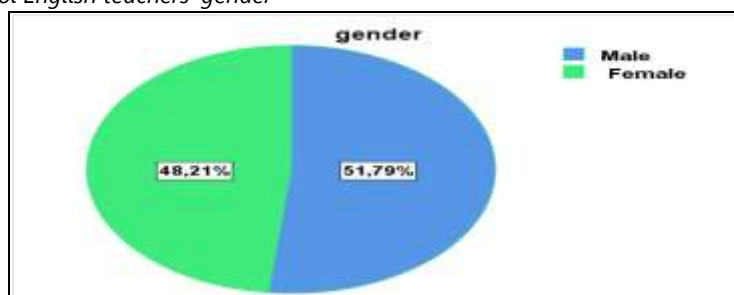**Figure 1**. *High school English teachers' gender*

Table 2. *Number of respondents and non-respondent English teachers.*

Total number of English teachers	Number of respondents	Number of non-respondents
73	56	17

Figure (1) shows the percentage distribution of Moroccan high school teachers' gender in the provincial directorate of education and training, Sefrou, Morocco. It reveals that 51.79% of participants were males, whereas 48.21% of English teachers were females. On the other hand, table (2) shows that 56 high school English teachers were able to take part in this study by filling out

questionnaires, while only 17 of these teachers did not participate in this study. This indicates that 77% of these teachers in the provincial directorate of education and training Sefrou participated in the success of this quantitative study, which is a good sign of teachers' active participation.

4.2 . High School English Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Models
4.2.1 High School English Teachers' Perceptions of Transformational Leadership

Table 3. *The mean scores of transformational leadership factors*

Descriptive Statistics			
Factors	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*
Intellectual stimulation	*56*	*4,1429*	*,77553*
Individualized consideration	*56*	*4,3095*	*,71875*
Inspirational motivation	*56*	*4,3690*	*,59519*
Idealized influence	*56*	*4,5357*	*,59519*

Table (3) presents the mean scores of each factor of transformational leadership as perceived by high school English teachers. The first factor, intellectual stimulation, has a mean score of 4.14 [SD:0,77553]. The second factor, individualized consideration, has a higher mean score of 4.31[SD:0,71875]. The third inspirational motivation factor has a significant mean score of 4.37[SD:0,59519]. Finally, the fourth factor, idealized influence, has the highest mean score of 4, 54[SD:0, 59519].

4.2.2 High School English Teachers' Perceptions of Democratic Leadership

Table 4.*The mean scores of democratic leadership factors*

Descriptive Statistics			
Factors	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Facilitating negotiation	56	4,2560	,68458
Responsibility distribution	56	4,4940	,53178
Empowerment	56	4,5040	,60286

Table (4) shows the mean scores of each democratic leadership factor as perceived by Moroccan high school English teachers in the provincial directorate of education and training, Sefrou. For the first factor, the mean score rates 4.26 [SD:0.684]. On the other hand, the second factor of democratic leadership, responsibility distribution, has a significant mean score of 4.49 [SD:0.531]. Finally, the third factor, empowerment rates4.50 [SD:0.602].

4.3 . High School English Teachers' Teaching Practices

Figure 2. *Descriptive statistics for English teachers' use of team projects.*
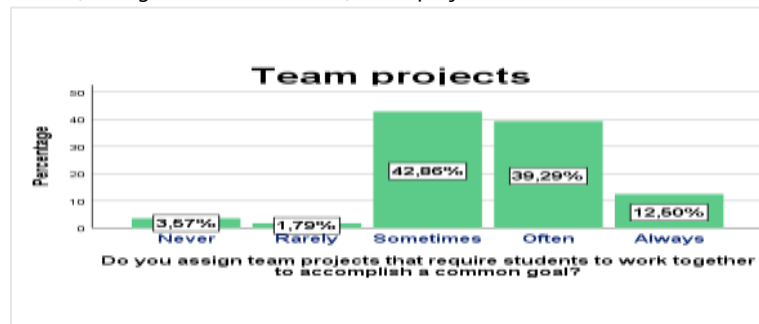
This figure (2) above presents the extent to which high school English teachers assign team projects that require their students to work together to achieve a shared learning goal. In this regard, 42.9% of English teachers reported that they sometimes assign team projects to students, 39.3% of these teachers stated that they often make use of team projects in their classroom, 12.5% of teachers reported that they always assign team projects to their students. On the other hand, only a few English teachers (3.6% and 1.8%) claimed that they never or rarely assign team projects to their students, which indicates that a small portion of English teachers do not frequently use collaborative or team projects in their classrooms.

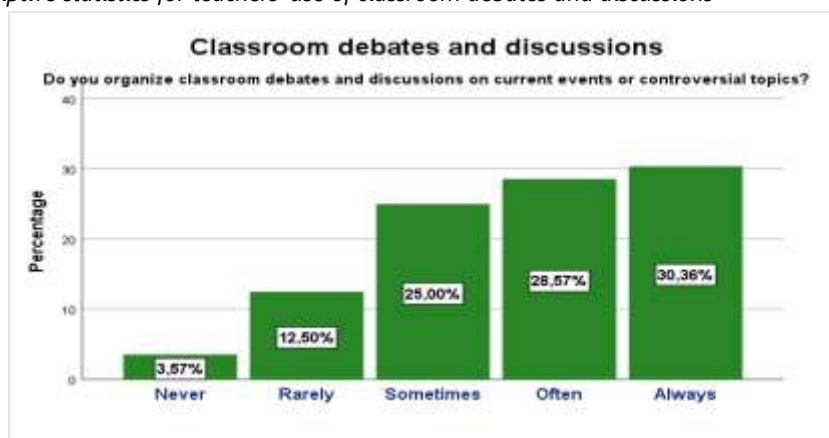**Figure 3.** *Descriptive statistics for teachers' use of classroom debates and discussions*

Figure (3) shows the percentage distribution of English teachers' responses to the use of debates and discussions in EFL classrooms. It is observed that 30.4% of teachers reported that they always organize classroom debates and discussions, while 28.6% of teachers claimed that they often organize such activities in their classrooms. However, the data obtained also reveals that a significant number of high school English teachers still do not prioritize the use of such activities on a daily teaching basis. Nearly 38/1% of teachers reported organizing classroom debates and discussions infrequently ("sometimes", "rarely", or "never").

Table 5. *Descriptive statistics for teachers' use of role plays*

Do you assign role-plays that require students to take on leadership roles in simulated scenarios?			
		Frequency	**Percentage**
Valid	**Never**	1	1,8
	Rarely	7	12,5
	Sometimes	26	46,4
	Often	12	21,4
	Always	10	17,9
	Total	56	100,0

As shown in table (5), 46.4% of teachers' responses, the highest percentage, fall into the category of using role-plays from time to time in the classroom. 21.4% of English teachers stated that they often assign role-plays to their students. Moreover, 17.9% of teachers reported that they always use this kind of activity in their classroom. On the other hand, approximately 14.3% of teachers stated that they do so "rarely" or "never" in their classrooms.

Table 6.*Descriptive statistics for teachers' organization of service projects*

Do you organize service projects or volunteer opportunities that allow students to work together to make a positive impact in their community?				
		Frequency	**Percentage**	
Valid	**Never**	25	44,6	
	Rarely	14	25,0	
	Sometimes	9	16,1	
	Often	8	14,3	
	Total	56	100,0	

Table (6) shows that 44.6% of high school English teachers never plan service projects or volunteer opportunities. On the opposite side, 16.1% of teachers claimed that they sometimes organize service projects with students, while 14.3% of teachers said that they often organize such activities with their students.

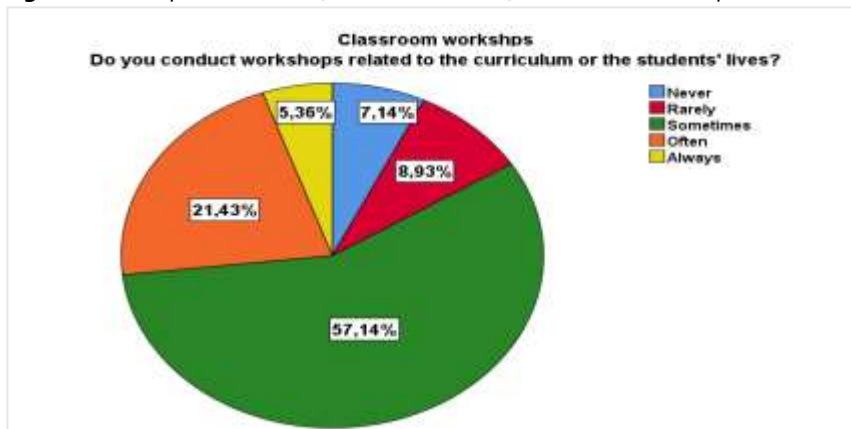**Figure 4**. *Descriptive statistics for teachers' use of classroom workshops*

Figure (4) presents the percentage of teachers' responses concerning organizing classroom workshops. 57.1% of English teachers acknowledged that they sometimes conduct classroom workshops. In addition, 21.4% of teachers reported that they often conduct classroom workshops, while a very small percentage of teachers (5.4%) claimed that they always organize classroom workshops with their students. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of teachers indicated that they rarely (8.9%) or never (7.1%) organize classroom workshops with their high school students.

Figure 5. *Descriptive statistics for teachers' use of classroom presentations*
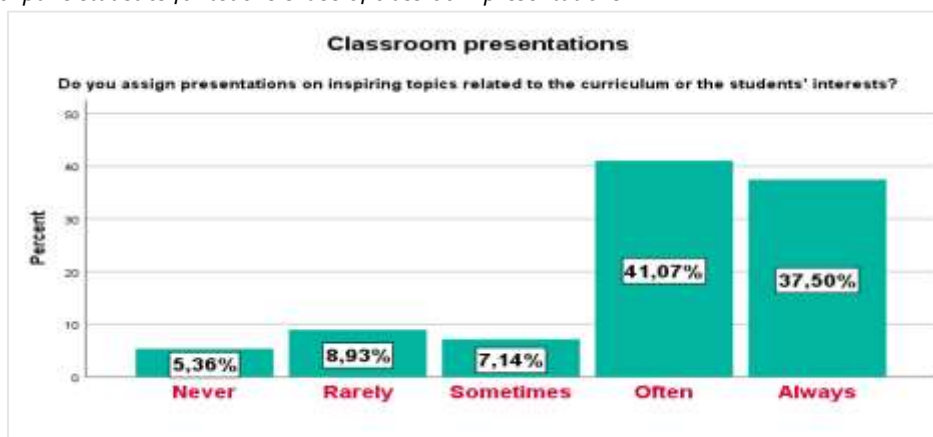
As shown in figure (5), a very small percentage of English teachers reported assigning classroom presentations rarely (8.9%), sometimes (7.1%), or never (5.4%) to their students. In contrast, 41.1% of teachers prescribe classroom presentations, while 37.5% of teachers always invite students to develop presentations they are interested in.

Table 7.*Descriptive statistics for the use of case studies in the classroom*

Do you assign case studies such as talking about historical figures or contemporary business leaders?			
		Frequency	**Percentage**
Valid	**Never**	8	14,3
	Rarely	20	35,7
	Sometimes	22	39,3
	Often	4	7,1
	Always	2	3,6
	Total	56	100,0

According to the statistics shown in table (7), the majority of teachers responded they assign case studies either rarely (35.7%) or sometimes (39.3%). A lower proportion of teachers, on the other hand, reported assigning case studies often (7.1%) or always (3.6%).

Figure 6. *Descriptive statistics for teachers' use of conflict resolution activities*
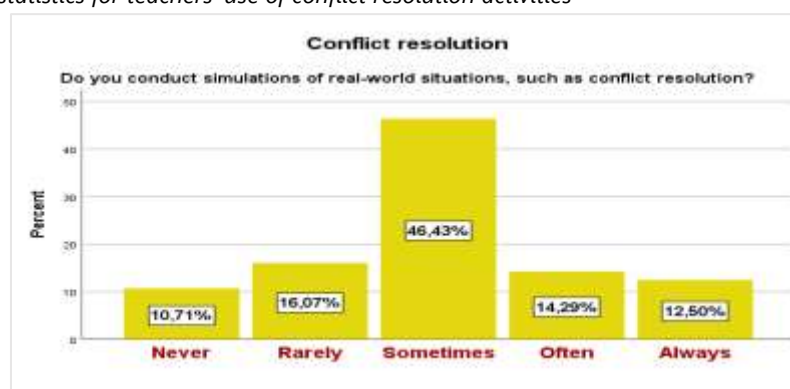
A closer examination of the statistics, shown in figure (6), reveals that a significant number of teachers actively employ activities that require conflict resolution skills into their teaching practices, with the majority indicating that they either implement such activities sometimes (46.4%) or rarely (16.1%). Additionally, some teachers use these activities either often (14.3%) or always (12.5%).

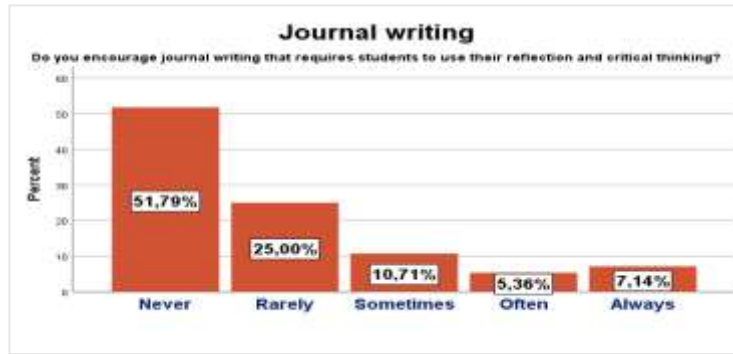**Figure 7**. *Descriptive statistics for journal writing*

Figure (7) displays the percentages of teachers' responses concerning their encouragement of journal writing in their classrooms. 51.8% of these teachers stated that they never encourage journal writing among their students, followed with a substantial proportion of teachers (25%) indicated that they rarely assign students with journal writing, and finally a very limited number of teachers reported that they encourage students' journal writing sometimes (10.7%), often (5.4%), or always (7.1%).

4.4 Teachers' Challenges to Teacher Leadership

Table 8. *Challenges related to the Moroccan educational context and policy*

Descriptive Statistics			
Items	**Valid**	**Mean**	**S.D**
1. The top-down approach of the Moroccan educational system hinders teacher leadership	56	4,07	,850
2. Lack of vision from education policymakers	56	4,34	,745
3. Resistance to change from government officials.	56	4,46	,785
4. Lack of investment in the field of educational innovation	56	4,62	,620

Table (8) presents the mean scores of four statements related to the challenges faced by high school English teachers at the level of the Moroccan educational context and policy. The first statement has a mean score of 4.07 [SD:0.850]. The mean score of the second statement is 4.34 [SD:0.785]. The third statement has a mean score of 4.46 [SD:0.745]. Finally, the fourth statement has a mean score of 4.62 [SD:0.620].

Table 9. *Challenges related to school principals and resources*

Descriptive Statistics			
Items	**Valid**	**Mean**	**S.D**
1. Some school principals show favouritism in their support of certain teachers' contributions.	56	3,36	,962
2. Some school principals do not appreciate teachers' efforts in adopting leadership	56	3,35	,960
3. Some school principals still believe in autocratic leadership while dealing with teachers.	56	4,14	,923
4. Schools have limited resources.	56	4,64	,672

As shown in table (9), the mean scores of all these statements reflect the extent to which teachers perceive the challenges related to school principals and resources. The mean score (3.36) of the first statement highlights a moderate level of disagreement among teachers. Similarly, the second statement has a mean score of 3.35 [SD:0.960]. On the other hand, the mean score (4.14) of the third statement. Finally, the last statement has a mean score of 4.64[SD:0.672].

Table 10. *Challenges related to teachers*

Descriptive Statistics			
Items	Valid	Mean	S.D
1. The fear of losing the support of colleagues and being accused of siding with the administration in organizing leadership activities.	56	3,11	,910
2. Teachers' resistance to change to adopt leadership roles in their classroom.	56	3,99	,844
3. Teachers may lack the necessary training to be engaged in teacher leadership roles.	56	4,20	,749
4. Teachers find the balancing of leadership roles and classroom obligations very challenging.	56	4,30	,711

Table (10) displays the mean scores of the challenges related to teachers. The mean score (3.11) of the first statement. The mean score of the second statement is 3.99 [SD:0.844]. The third statement has a mean score of 4.20 [SD:0.749]. The last statement has a mean score of 4.30[SD:0.711].

5. Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that Moroccan high school English teachers perceive themselves as both transformational and democratic leaders in their classrooms. This indicates that teachers show a sense of dedication and commitment to fostering a positive learning atmosphere in which students are encouraged to learn, inspired to focus on their learning process, and respected as individuals. Moreover, these English teachers perceive themselves as classroom leaders who make their students responsible for their learning outcomes and empower them to express their opinions freely. The results of this study align with other research studies' findings. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) found that teachers who adopt a transformational leadership model in their classrooms boost their students' academic achievements by creating an inspiring and engaging learning environment. On the other hand, Onu (2021) concluded that teachers are to embrace the democratic leadership model so as to create an inviting and healthy learning environment in which students' viewpoints are accepted and appreciated. Although English teachers perceive themselves as leaders in their classrooms, this study identified a gap between their perceptions and teaching practices. Activities like team projects, journal writing, and service projects were underutilized. This implies that students are often deprived of opportunities in which they can develop their leadership skills such as self-reflection and critical thinking. In fact, adopting these activities can play a crucial role in shaping and enhancing students' leadership skills (Katzenbach and Smith, 2005; Ejiwale and Posey, 2020; Schön, 1983). Therefore, addressing this gap through organizing pedagogical training programs can help teachers integrate these significant activities into their classrooms. In addition, this study highlighted that there are some systematic challenges that face teachers when adopting leadership activities, including the top-down approach of the educational system, limited school resources, unclear vision from education policymakers, and the lack of investment in the field of educational innovation. In this respect, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argued that hierarchical educational systems often negatively influence teachers' creativity. Similarly, York-Barr and Duke (2004) noted that the shortage of training programs and resources further limits teachers' abilities to be effective leaders. The identified challenges can pave the way for new educational reforms to create an inviting and inspiring environment for teacher leadership. As a result, the findings of this study are important as they highlight both some areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the field of teacher leadership in Morocco.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that the mean scores obtained to measure high school English teachers' perceptions of leadership, particularly transformational and democratic leadership, were significantly positive. That is, these teachers do perceive themselves as transformational and democratic leaders in their classroom, suggesting that they tend to create a democratic and inspiring learning environment where students feel empowered, motivated, and appreciated. These perceptions confirmed the only research hypothesis, which states that Moroccan English high school teachers, in the provincial directorate of Sefrou, perceive themselves as democratic and transformational leaders in their classrooms. More importantly, most English teachers recognize the need for experiential leadership opportunities such as team projects, presentations, and debates. However, many teachers never or rarely incorporate leadership activities like case studies, service projects, and journal writing. Furthermore, this study reveals some areas of concern for high school English teachers while practicing their leadership roles, including the top-down approach of the educational system, insufficient educational innovation investment, lack of training, and exam-oriented culture.

6.1 Pedagogical Implications

This study's findings end up with important pedagogical implications for English language teaching in the provincial directorate of Sefrou, Morocco. It is worth noting that, nowadays, teaching English as a foreign language does not only revolve around teaching the subject matter in a communicative or interactive way, but it is also about guiding, motivating and inspiring students to acquire the necessary skills, such as leadership skills, that can help them during their learning journey. This study has three major implications. Firstly, it can contribute to the enrichment of pedagogical knowledge in the field of education in the provincial directorate of Sefrou, particularly by shedding light on the perceptions of high school English teachers regarding transformational and democratic leadership. Secondly, this study can hopefully raise high school English teachers' awareness towards the lack of incorporating certain essential leadership activities into their teaching practices such as journal writing, case studies, and service projects. Finally, this study can pave the way for taking serious and supportive measures and interventions to address particular challenges faced by high school English teachers to create a helpful and encouraging learning environment. Overall, all these implications can serve as a stepping stone towards the improvement of teacher leadership.

6.2 Recommendations

This study concluded that high school English teachers consider themselves transformational and democratic leaders; however, these findings also emphasize the need to invite teachers to participate in active leadership development programs. Moreover, this research reveals a serious gap in the adoption of key classroom activities, such as service projects and journal writing, which are essential for cultivating leadership skills in students. Therefore, teachers should opt for these activities to encourage students to reflect on their abilities. Additionally, this study identifies certain challenges that teachers face, which necessitate an urgent shift towards a collaborative and participatory educational approach. This approach invites teachers to voice their pedagogical concerns and suggestions and engages them in educational policy development. Finally, providing teachers with modern and adequate teaching materials is also regarded as a crucial opportunity to embrace leadership roles within Moroccan high schools.

6.3 Research Limitations

This study sheds light on significant research limitations that shape its findings. The generalizability of results cannot be achieved due to the limited sample population. Furthermore, the unavailability of teachers and time constraints restrict the use of other data collection methods, such as interviews and class observations, which could have enriched the findings of this study. The use of cross-sectional design hindered the ability to track participants' responses over time, which suggests the need for longitudinal research on this particular topic.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study concentrated solely on high school English teachers' perceptions of leadership in the provincial directorate of education and training, Sefrou, Morocco, leaving out the perceptions of other key participants such as students and school principals. Exploring these suggested participants' perceptions and challenges could provide useful insight into the significance of leadership in the EFL classroom. Additionally, it is advisable for other research in this field to adopt a mixed methods approach to obtain crucial data and to get a more comprehensive understanding. Finally, future research studies could delve into investigating teacher leadership by incorporating other significant variables such as teacher personality, job satisfaction and teaching experience. Examining these variables can help to extend the study literature in the Moroccan educational context, offering a more comprehensive analysis and knowledge of teacher leadership and its impact on students' outcomes.

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