The Effect of Servant Leadership Behaviors of School Principals on Teachers' Job Satisfaction*

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the effect of servant leadership behaviors of school principals on teachers' job satisfaction was examined according to teacher opinions. A total of 434 teachers working in public schools in 12 provinces in different regions of Turkey participated in the research. In this study, casual-comparative and correlational survey models were used. Data were collected by using the "Servant Leadership Scale" and "Job Satisfaction Scale". Descriptive and probative statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. As a result, it was determined that school principals' servant leadership behaviors and teachers' job satisfaction were high. It was also determined that the job satisfaction of teachers with a seniority of 21 years and above was higher than that of teachers with a seniority of 11-15 years. It was revealed that male teachers' servant leadership perceptions were higher than female teachers. In addition, the results showed that there was a positive and moderate relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction. The study also concluded that servant leadership was a significant predictor of teacher job satisfaction. Suggestions were made for practitioners and other researchers considering the results and limitations of the research.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Job Satisfaction, School Principal, Teacher, Regression Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is critical to understanding the success of an organization. Leadership is expressed with the skills that the administrators use to influence followers in organization in line with the specifically defined goals for the common good (Cyert, 2006; Plsek & Wilson, 2001). Great leaders create a shared organizational vision, clarify this vision to their stakeholders, develop a way to achieve the vision and guide their organizations in this direction (Banutu-Gomez & Banutu-Gomez, 2007). In this context, it may be said that there has been a change in the theories of leadership styles. Trivers (2009) emphasizes that the theories of leadership styles have evolved from traditional, autocratic, and hierarchical leadership styles to altruistic and supportive leadership styles over time. One of these altruistic and supportive leadership styles is servant leadership, which has become popular in recent years. Servant leadership is an important leadership model that reflects contemporary and post-industrial perspectives on leadership (Northouse, 2019).

Servant leadership is known to be positively correlated with many desirable employee outcomes. At the organizational level, servant leadership increases team effectiveness (Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving & Longbotham, 2007) and organizational performance (Liden et al., 2014). Servant leadership creates an organizational culture among employees in the organization, where employees help and serve each other (Liden et al., 2014). Servant leadership has a positive and significant relationship with employees' internal job satisfaction (Cerit, 2009) and overall job satisfaction (Mayer et al., 2008).

Servant leadership is a useful leadership approach for educational organizations of which main function is to improve the qualities of people (Taylor et al., 2007). In this context, it is seen that studies on servant leadership in education primarily focus on the servant leadership characteristics of K-12 school principals. Hereupon, the studies on the relationship between personal and school-related factors of behavior and attitude of leaders with servant leadership characteristics (Girard, 2000; Jennings, 2002; Thompson, 2005), student success (Lambert, 2004), school performance (Herbst, 2003), and teachers' job satisfaction levels (Anderson, 2005; Cerit, 2009) draw attention. Although this leadership approach has been widely adopted and applied in organizations today, it may be said that the number of theoretical and empirical studies in this field, especially within the scope of educational organizations, is quite limited in the literature. For this reason, this study, which was conducted to determine the effect of servant leadership behaviors of school principals on teachers' job satisfaction, aims to contribute to fill this gap in the literature. For this purpose, the study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of school principals' servant leadership behaviors perceived by teachers and teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction?
2. Do school principals' servant leadership behaviors perceived by teachers and teachers' job satisfaction show a significant difference according to teachers' gender and professional seniority?
3. Is there a relationship between school principals' servant leadership behaviors perceived by teachers and teachers' job satisfaction?
4. Do school principals' servant leadership behaviors perceived by teachers predict teachers' job satisfaction?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership, which has become increasingly popular in recent years, has not yet been systematically defined in the literature (Eva et al., 2019; Northouse, 2019). The current literature on servant leadership is based on the work of Greenleaf, who in 1964 founded the now named The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (Daubert, 2007). This non-profit center selects best practices in servant leadership and aims to raise awareness about these practices in both individuals and organizations (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014). According to Greenleaf (1970), servanthood precedes leadership. The individuals' desire to serve begins with their natural feeling. For the servant leaders who capture this service orientation, the needs and wishes of their stakeholders come before their own needs. The servant leaders go beyond individual egoism and needs and prioritize the personal development and empowerment of their followers (Greenleaf, 1970).)

In studies of servant leadership to date, researchers have extended Greenleaf's ideas by reflecting their own perspectives and models in their work. Spears and Wagner-Marsh (1998), for example, define the ten characteristics of servant leadership as "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, serving, commitment to people's development, and the ability to build a community". Russell and Stone (2002) combine conceptualization and foresight from these features in a new feature they call vision. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) state that servant leaders see themselves as servants who develop and empower others to reach their potential. Therefore, this model differs from other leadership models in that it focuses on moral development, service, and the promotion of the common good (Graham, 1991). Liden et al. (2008) evaluate the servant leader as someone who empowers, creates value for the community, has conceptual skills, helps others, prioritizes stakeholders, acts ethically, and helps stakeholders develop and grow. According to Johnson (2001), servant leadership is in an advantageous position over other leadership approaches with its focus on altruism, simplicity, and self-awareness. Thus, servant leadership emphasizes the reduction of complexity that results from bringing personal desires into conflict with those of stakeholders, and a moral concern for others.

Servant leadership can be conceptualized as a mindset that summarizes how the leader sees the world (Laub, 2004). In this sense, servant leadership has different aspects from other leadership types such as ethical leadership, authentic leadership, and transformational leadership. Accordingly, while servant leadership focuses on serving others, ethical leadership has a strong emphasis on moral and ethical issues (Reddy & Kamesh, 2019). While servant leaders have the tendency to put others before themselves; authentic leaders try to manage the organization by considering their own values, feelings, and beliefs (Abbas et al., 2020; Harter, 2002). Moreover, servant leaders focus on providing benefits to the members of the organization (Van Dierendonck, 2011), transformational leaders act with a vision of achieving organizational benefits (Andersen, 2018).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be defined as "the mental state determined by the individual's perception of the extent to which his/her job-related needs should be met" (Evans, 1997, p. 328). Job satisfaction is also expressed as the pleasant feelings that employees have about their job (Akehurst et al., 2009). Similarly, Weiss (2002) argues that job satisfaction is a positive evaluation of an individual's job. Job satisfaction is extremely important in organizations because when employees are satisfied with their jobs, they show high organizational

commitment, which can result in lower turnover rates, higher productivity, and better performance (Meyer et al., 2004).

Even in effective schools that consistently perform well academically, it is important for students, teachers, and other employees to meet their physical, mental, and social needs while attending school (McAlpin & Slate, 2021), in other words, to be satisfied with their work. When evaluated within the scope of educational organizations, job satisfaction is closely aligned with the well-being of teachers, the development of students, and the interconnectedness of education systems worldwide (Toropova et al., 2021). Job satisfaction is also associated with the cooperation of school staff (Olsen & Huang, 2019), administrator support (Ansley et al., 2019; Olsen & Huang, 2019), and working conditions (Ansley et al., 2019; Sims, 2020). In general, when teachers' job satisfaction is high, their turnover rate decreases (Ladd, 2011). In other words, teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions are affected by job satisfaction (Kumedzro, 2018).

Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The rate of teachers leaving their jobs or leaving their profession is higher than most other professions (Young, 2018). There are many factors that cause teachers to leave the profession or change school before they retire (Player et al., 2017). These factors can be explained by school environment, organizational characteristics, teacher characteristics (teacher competence, teacher intentions, etc.) or leadership styles in the school. Teacher characteristics include gender, age, professional seniority, openness to professional development, competence (e.g., intrinsic, and extrinsic motivation), and education level (Toropova et al., 2021).

Servant leadership is one of the leadership approaches that affects teachers' job satisfaction and thus their endurance in the profession (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Accordingly, when evaluated in terms of correlational theory, the job may be seen as a fundamental social action and can emphasize established relationships as the main source of inspiration (Blustein, 2011). The most important part of this social aspect is the relationship between the leader and the stakeholders because provides to access the resources they need (Grant, 2008). Servant leaders provide opportunities for stakeholders to express their interests and needs (Eva et al., 2019), and therefore, a reliable relationship is established between leader and followers (Whitener et al., 1998). Servant leaders make their followers feel that they are willing to promote personal development and contribute to their job satisfaction (Chan & Mak, 2014). The relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction can also be explained by the theory of self-determination. This theory claims that followers have three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The follower's need for autonomy can be met by the empowering behavior of the servant leader (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). While relatedness can be satisfied through establishing relationships with followers (Liden et al., 2008), competence is achieved through servant leaders who help employees grow and develop (Greenleaf, 1998).

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, causal comparative research and correlational survey, which are quantitative research methods, were used. In this study, within the scope of correlational survey, the relationship between school principals' servant leadership behaviors and teachers' job satisfaction was tried to be determined. On the other hand, the causal comparative research method was used to examine whether school principals' servant leadership behaviors and

teachers' job satisfaction differ according to teachers' gender and professional seniority. In the study examining the effect of teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership behaviors on job satisfaction, servant leadership was considered as the independent variable and job satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Study Group

The study group consisted of 434 teachers working at public schools (preschool, primary school, secondary school, and high school) from 12 provinces in different regions of Turkey. Convenience sampling method was used to determine the study group. They participated in the study voluntarily in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. Since there were differences between regions in terms of socio-economic level and cultural characteristics, the study was carried out with participants from provinces in different regions. To minimize the problems that may be encountered during the implementation phase, 455 participants were reached at the beginning. However, in the data analysis process, 21 forms, which were considered as extreme values, were excluded. The z-score examination was performed to control the extreme values. In this context, demographic characteristics of the 434 participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Participants

Variables	Group	n	%
Gender	Female	314	72.4
	Male	120	27.6
	Toplam	**434**	**100**
Educational Level	Associate Degree	4	0.9
	Bachelor's Degree	344	79.3
	Master's Degree	79	18.2
	Doctorate Degree	7	1.6
	Toplam	**434**	**100**
Teaching Field	Classroom Teacher (pre-school+primary school)	176	40.6
	Subject Teacher	258	59.4
	Toplam	**434**	**100**
School Level	Preschool	13	3.0
	Primary	180	41.5
	Secondary	155	35.7
	High School	86	19.8
	Toplam	**434**	**100**
Job Seniority	5 years and over	60	13.8
	6-10 years	110	25.3
	11-15 years	110	25.3
	16-20 years	80	18.4
	21 years and over	74	17.2
	Total	**434**	**100**

In Table 1, 72.4% of the study group is female and 27.6% is male. It was seen that 0.9% of the participants have associate degree, 79.3% bachelor's degree, 18.2% master's degree, and 1.6% doctorate degree. 40.6% of the teachers work as classroom teachers and 59.4% as subject teachers. According to school levels, 3.0% of the teachers work in pre-school, 41.5% in primary school, 35.7% in secondary school and 19.8% in high school. 13.8% of the teachers have 5 years and below, 25.3% have 6-10 years, 25.3% have 11-15 years, 18.4% have 16-20 years and 17.2% have 21 years or more job seniority.

Data Collection Tools

The data collection tool consists of three sections. In the first section, there were the questions to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants (gender, branch, professional seniority, etc.). In the second section consisted of the Servant Leadership Scale and the third section consisted of the Job Satisfaction Scale. The validity and reliability study of the scales was presented below.

Servant Leadership Scale

In this study, the Servant Leadership Scale (Liden et al., 2008) was used. This scale was initially developed as a 28-item and 7 sub-dimensions. Later its short form (Liden et al., 2013) consisting of 7 items and one dimension was developed. In this study, a one-dimensional short scale form consisting of 7 items was used. The scale, adapted to Turkish by Kılıç and Aydın (2016). It was arranged in a 5-point Likert type. The scale includes sample items such as "If I have a personal problem, I can ask my principal for help" and "My principal puts my interests before his/her own". As a result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted by Kılıç and Aydın (2016) within the scope of validity and reliability studies, the model fit indices of the scale ($\chi 2/df=2.658$; GFI=.972; IFI=.978; TLI=.967; CFI=.978); RMSEA=,067) was found to be at the desired level. According to the reliability study conducted by Kılıç and Aydın (2016), the Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was found to be high ($\alpha=.870$). In this study, it was concluded that the scale had a highly reliable internal consistency ($\alpha=.912$) according to the calculated Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics.

Job Satisfaction Scale

The Job Satisfaction Scale was developed by Ho and Au (2006). This scale is a 5-point Likert-type five-item scale. The Job Satisfaction Scale was adapted into Turkish by Demirtaş (2010). The Job Satisfaction Scale consists of sample items such as "I am happy to be a teacher" and "I have achieved important achievements so far and I want to stay as a teacher". The CFA result ($\chi 2=5.25$; RMSEA=.061) for the construct validity of the scale, was revealed that the scale supports the one-dimensional structure as in its original form. Demirtaş and Alanoğlu (2015) made a CFA analysis of the same scale. They found that the model fit indices were $\chi 2/df=3.818$; GFI=.985; AGFI=.942; CFI=.989; NFI=.985; RMSEA=.086. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as $\alpha=.862$, and it was concluded that the scale was quite reliable.

Data Collection

The data were collected through an online form containing information about the Servant Leadership Scale, the Job Satisfaction Scale, and the demographic characteristics of participants (gender, branch, education level, etc.). During the data collection process, permission was applied to the school directorates, and the online form was delivered to the participants via WhatsApp and e-mail applications. The data collection process started in October 2021 and finished in December 2021 and took approximately three months.

Data Analysis

SPSS 26 program was used to analyze data. The data analysis was carried out in two stages as the preliminary analysis and basic analysis. Preliminary analyses started with 455 participants who filled out the online form. Missing value and extreme value analysis were performed. No missing data was found, and 21 values determined as extreme values were excluded from the data set. The z-score examination was performed to control the extreme values. Thus, the analysis continued with 434 data. The normality of the data from the assumptions of the regression analysis and the existence of a linear relationship between them

were examined. According to the normality analysis, it was seen that the mode, median and arithmetic mean values of the data were close to each other. Since the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the Servant Leadership (skewness: -0.829; kurtosis: -0.190) and the Job Satisfaction (skewness: -0.807; kurtosis: -0.293) were in the range of -1 to +1, and the scale graphs (histogram, normal Q-Q and box-line) had a normal distribution, it was concluded that the scores show a normal distribution. The linear relationship between the data was tested with the scatter plot. It was observed that there was a linear relationship between the Servant Leadership and the Job Satisfaction (R^2 Linear=.173).

Within the basic analysis, descriptive statistical analyses (frequency, percentage, mean, etc.) were used to determine servant leadership and job satisfaction perceptions of teachers. Whether servant leadership perceptions of teachers and job satisfaction differ significantly according to independent variables (gender and professional seniority) were analyzed with parametric tests (independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance [ANOVA]). To determine from which groups, the difference emerged as a result of the ANOVA test, the Games-Howell Post-Hoc test was used. This post hoc test was used in the study since the number of groups was not equal and the variances did not show equal distribution. The relationship between the data was tested with Pearson Correlation Analysis. Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to examine whether the Servant Leadership Scale predicted the Job Satisfaction Scale or not.

FINDINGS

According to the sub-problems of the research, school principals' servant leadership behavior and teachers' job satisfaction were examined, and the descriptive scores were given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Findings Regarding the Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Scales	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd
Servant Leadership	434	4.02	.90
Job Satisfaction	434	4.17	.78

In Table 2, servant leadership perceptions of participants ($\overline{X}$=4.02, sd=.90) and job satisfaction ($\overline{X}$=4.17, sd=.78) were found to be at the "Highly Agree" level. This finding shows that school principals' servant leadership behaviors and teachers' job satisfaction perceptions are high.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare teachers' perceptions of servant leadership and job satisfaction by gender. Analysis results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction Scores Related to Gender Variable

Scales	Group	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	Df	t	p
Servant Leadership	Female	314	3.95	.95	432	-2.59	.01[*]
	Male	120	4.18	.73			
Job Satisfaction	Female	314	4.21	.77	432	1.69	.09
	Male	120	4.07	.78			

*p<.05

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that teachers' servant leadership perceptions differ significantly according to their genders ($t_{(432)}$=-2.59; p<.05). It was found that male teachers' servant leadership perceptions were higher ($\overline{X}$=4.18) than female teachers' ($\overline{X}$=3.95). On the other hand, there was no significant difference between teachers' job satisfaction perceptions ($t_{(432)}$=1.69; p>.05) in terms of gender variable.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to compare teachers' servant leadership perceptions and job satisfaction according to their professional seniority. Analysis results were given in Table 4.

Table 4. Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction Scores Related to Professional Seniority Variable

Scales	Group	N	X̄	Sd	Df	F	p	Significant Difference
Servant Leadership	(A) 1-5 years	60	3.97	.88	4 429 433	1.858	1.117	-
	(B) 6-10 years	110	3.91	.97				
	(C) 11-15 years	110	4.01	.90				
	(D)16-20 years	80	3.96	.89				
	(E) 21 years and over	74	4.26	.77				
Job Satisfaction	(A) 1-5 years	60	4.31	.74	4 429 433	2.960	0.020	C-E
	(B) 6-10 years	110	4.11	.85				
	(C) 11-15 years	110	4.05	.81				
	(D)16-20 years	80	4.09	.70				
	(E) 21 years and over	74	4.39	.63				

*p<.05

In Table 4, it was seen that teachers' servant leadership perceptions did not differ significantly according to their professional seniority ($F_{(4-429)}$ = 1.858; p>.05). On the other hand, there was a significant difference ($F_{(4-429)}$ = 2.960; p<.05) among teachers' job satisfaction levels according to the professional seniority variable. Accordingly, it was found that the job satisfaction scores of teachers with a seniority of 21 years and above (X̄ =4.39) were higher than those of teachers with a seniority of 11-15 years (X̄ =4.05).

Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between school principals' servant leadership behaviors and teachers' job satisfaction. The results were given in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis Results between Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Variables	Servant Leadership	Job Satisfaction
Servant Leadership	1	
Job Satisfaction	.416** (p =.000)	1

* p<0,05, ** p<0,01

In Table 5, servant leadership and job satisfaction had a statistically significant correlation with each other at the p=.01 significance level. Accordingly, a positive and moderate relationship (r=.416) was found between two variables.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis was conducted to examine whether school principals' servant leadership behaviors predict teachers' job satisfaction according to teacher perceptions. The results were presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Variables	Non-Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	**SE**	**β**		
Job Satisfaction	2.738	.155		17.696	.000
Servant Leadership	.357	.038	.416	9.502	.000
R = .416; adjusted R² = 173; F = 90.287; p = .000					

In Table 6, it is seen that the servant leadership behaviors of the principals significantly predicted the job satisfaction of the teachers ($F_{(1-432)}$ =90.287, p<0.05) and had a positive effect (B =.357, β=.416, t=9.502). However, it was found that 17% of the positive change in teachers' job satisfaction was explained by the servant leadership behaviors of the principals (R=.416; R²= .173).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, the effect of school principals' servant leadership behaviors on teachers' job satisfaction was examined. In this context, the results revealed that there was a positive and moderate relationship between the servant leadership behaviors of the principals and the job satisfaction of the teachers. In addition, it was concluded that servant leadership was a significant predictor of the variability in teachers' job satisfaction. In previous studies, conducted in educational organizations (e.g., Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Harvey, 2018; Latif et al., 2020; Latif & Marimon, 2019; Obasuyi, 2019; von Fischer, 2017) similar results were found. With the current research, it has been revealed that teachers see servant leadership as a supportive administratorial practice for increasing their job satisfaction. Ndoria (2004) states that the effect of servant leadership on job satisfaction is due to the establishment of high-quality relationships and interactions between the leader and the follower according to the Leader-Member Exchange Theory. Dedicated servant leaders consider the well-being of their followers, which leads to higher job satisfaction and job motivation (Ndoria, 2004). In this context, when teachers' high job satisfaction is considered as a factor that both increases organizational commitment and motivation and reduces turnover, it can be said that the servant leadership approach is significant in ensuring continuity in education and increasing quality.

According to teacher perceptions, school principals' servant leadership levels were found to be high. In the literature, there are many studies including similar findings (Beştaş-Marakçı, 2020; Çiçek, 2015; Doğan & Aslan, 2016; İş & Balcı, 2017; Öter, 2021; Uçar & Uğur, 2020). However, there are also studies (Balay et al., 2014; Doğan, 2015; Salameh, 2011; Ünsal & Usta, 2021) that conclude that the servant leadership behaviors of school principals are at a moderate level. The differences between research results may be explained because of using different servant leadership scales in these studies or the inclusion of participants from different educational levels in the determination of sample/study groups. In addition, teachers perceive their principals' servant leadership behaviors at a high level in the current study. This may be interpreted as the fact that the principals within the scope of the research consider their teachers' needs and wishes before themselves, value them, are willing to support their development, and prioritize serving their teachers by putting their personal interests behind.

In this study, teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction were also high. This result overlapped with the results of previous studies (Aşlamacı, 2017; Başaran & Güçlü, 2018; Dilekçi, 2022; İdi, 2017; Kahveci et al., 2019; Kengatharan, 2020; Sevinç & Durmuşçelebi, 2020; Katıtaş et al., 2022). On the other hand, in the studies conducted by Çakmak and Arabacı

(2017), Demirtaş and Nacar (2018), İnce and Şahin (2016), Ertürk (2021), and Köse (2019), it was concluded that the job satisfaction of teachers was moderate. Moreover, in some studies (e.g., Crossman & Harris, 2006; Mora & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2009; Şahin, 2013) it was revealed that teachers have low job satisfaction. Since it is significant in obtaining successful student outcomes and increasing the quality of education, high job satisfaction level of teachers is desirable. However, it is noteworthy that there are different studies in the literature revealing that teacher's job satisfaction is moderate or low. This may be due to the different experiences of teachers on issues such as effective working conditions, feelings and thoughts about work, individual characteristics, school structure, leadership characteristics of administrators, student, and parent profiles.

Significant difference has not emerged between job satisfaction scores of participants in terms of gender variable. In other words, it was concluded that the job satisfaction scores of male and female teachers were similar. There are several studies including similar findings (Kış et al., 2012; Koruklu et al., 2013; Sağır et al., 2014; Telef, 2011). However, there are also studies in the literature that show different results. According to similar research results, female teachers experience more job satisfaction than male teachers (Gligorovic et al., 2014; Kumari et al., 2014; Ogedengbe et al., 2018; Özkan & Akgenç, 2022; Tunacan & Çetin, 2009) in some studies, on the contrary, job satisfaction of male teachers was higher than female teachers (Mennon & Reppa, 2011; Özkan, 2017; Tasnim, 2006). In this context, it is possible to say that job satisfaction cannot be explained only by the gender variable. Consequently, different factors cause differentiation in job satisfaction according to gender, effective physical conditions in the teacher's work life, administrative support, leadership styles, relations with students, parents, and colleagues, etc. Within the scope of this study, it may be explained with different school experiences and different individual experiences in terms of psychological, social, cultural, and economic aspects.

The results showed that, there was a significant difference between teachers' job satisfaction and professional seniority. The job satisfaction of teachers with a seniority of 21 years and above was higher than the teachers with a seniority of 11-15 years. There are similar studies including similar findings in the literature (Duman, 2006; Gündoğdu, 2013; Kılıç, 2011). In these studies, it was emphasized that teachers' job satisfaction increases based on the increase in professional seniority. This may be due to the fact that teachers feel at the peak of their careers with the increase in their professional seniority or that they have adopted the negative conditions they have encountered during their professional life. However, there are also studies (e.g., Erdoğan, 2017; Karakuzu, 2013; Sharma & Jyoti, 2009; Usta, 2015) concluding that there is no significant difference between teachers' professional seniority and their job satisfaction. In some studies (e.g., Bozkurt & Bozkurt, 2008; Meziroğlu, 2005), it was found that teachers experienced high job satisfaction in the first and last years of their profession, they experienced lower job satisfaction in their middle years. These differences between research results may be explained based on the other variables.

The results revealed that the male teachers' perceptions of servant leadership were higher than the female teachers. Similar finding is seen in the research of Kahveci (2012). However, there are studies in literature including different results. In some studies (e.g., Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Doğan, 2015; Ekinci, 2015; Türkmen & Gül, 2017; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012), the servant leadership scores are high in favor of female participants. However, in some of them the researchers did not find a significant difference between the teachers' perceptions about servant leadership characteristics of principals in terms of gender variable (Barbuto & Hayden, 2011; Salameh, 2011; Ünal, 2020; Ünsal, 2018; Yılmaz, 2013). The difference in terms of the gender variable may be explained based on different variables.

Different organizational climate and the socio-cultural characteristics of the regions should be considered in explaining this difference.

The results also showed that, there was no significant difference between the professional seniority of the teachers and the servant leadership behaviors of the principals. In other words, teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership behaviors do not change according to their professional seniority. Similar results (e.g., Kahveci, 2012; Ünal, 2020; Ünsal, 2018) are seen in previous studies. This may be interpreted as the fact that the principals communicate with the teachers at an equal level without considering the differences in seniority, are willing to meet their needs and expectations. As a result, it may be asserted that the teachers feel that they are not exposed to discriminatory administrative practices due to their seniority.

According to this research, principals who show servant leadership behaviors contribute to increasing teachers' job satisfaction. With this study, it was aimed to raise awareness of school leaders about how important their behavior is in increasing the job satisfaction of their followers. Accordingly, principals who want to increase teacher job satisfaction in their schools should employ leadership characteristics such as aiming to serve their teachers before themselves, prioritizing the interests of their teachers over their own, and giving priority to the needs and wishes of their teachers.

Limitations and Recommendations

Some limitations need to be emphasized when interpreting the results of this study. First, this study has a cross-sectional structure that brings limitations in revealing the cause-effect relationship. In this study, only information about the strength of the relationships between the variables is obtained. This limitation can be overcome with the use of longitudinal research designs in the future. As a second limitation, the direct effect of servant leadership on job satisfaction was examined in this study. More research is needed in the future to determine whether different variables (motivation, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational justice, organizational climate, self-efficacy, life satisfaction, etc.) have a mediating effect on the relationship between the two variables. As a third limitation, this research provides a framework for how servant leadership will affect job satisfaction when implemented in K-12 level public schools. In the future, this study may be replicated in other educational institutions, including private schools at the K-12 level. The fourth limitation is related to the size of the study group. Although teachers from 12 provinces from different regions of Turkey participated in this research, it is not possible to generalize the data for all schools in Turkey. For this reason, this limitation may be reduced by expanding the research area and including more provinces from different regions while determining the study group in future studies. Finally, in future studies, the individual and collective effects of different leadership approaches (distributed leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, etc.) on job satisfaction, as well as servant leadership, can be examined.

With this study, it is aimed to give a new perspective to the literature on the effect of servant leadership on teacher job satisfaction. The importance of servant leadership behaviors to be exhibited by school principals in increasing teacher job satisfaction has emerged. Principals should show more servant leadership characteristics to increase the job satisfaction levels of teachers who are directly effective in obtaining successful student outcomes in schools. In this context, it is emphasized that the examination should be the main criterion with a merit-based approach in the selection and appointment of school principals. However, it is suggested that different criteria for professional development such as teaching experience, administratorial experience, postgraduate education in the field of educational administration

and participation in pre-service and in-service training studies on leadership should be considered in the evaluations.

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