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ARAŞTIRMA

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The Relationship Between Female School Principals' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Power Distance Perceptions*

Kadın Okul Müdürlerinin Liderlik Stilleri ile Öğretmenlerin Güç Mesafesi Algıları Arasındaki İlişki

Demet Tozlu, Tuğba Hoşgörür

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the leadership styles of female school principals and teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance. The sample of the study consists of 378 teachers working in schools managed by female principals in the province of Muğla. Data were collected using the School Administrators' Leadership Style Scale and the Organizational Power Distance Scale. The findings indicate that teachers perceive female school principals' transformational leadership style as high, transactional leadership style as moderate, and laissez-faire leadership style as low. The results related to organizational power distance reveal that teachers' perceptions of acceptance of power and acquiescence to power are high, while their perceptions of instrumental use of power and justification of power are low. Teachers' perceptions of female school principals' leadership styles significantly differ based on gender and educational background, whereas their perceptions of power distance significantly differ based on seniority and employment type. The results of the regression analysis show that transactional leadership is a significant predictor of teachers' perceptions of instrumental use of power and acquiescence to power.

ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı, kadın okul müdürlerinin liderlik stilleri ile öğretmenlerin örgütsel güç mesafesi algıları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmanın örneklemi, Muğla ilinde, kadın okul müdürleri tarafından yönetilen okullarda görev yapan 378 öğretmenden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, Okul Yöneticilerinin Liderlik Stili Ölçeği ve Örgütsel Güç Mesafesi Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Bulgular öğretmenlerin; kadın okul müdürlerinin dönüştürücü liderlik stilini yüksek, sürdürücü liderlik stilini orta ve serbest bırakıcı liderlik stilini düşük düzeyde algıladıklarını göstermektedir. Çalışmanın örgütsel güç mesafesi ile ilgili sonuçları, öğretmenlerin gücü kabullenme ve güce razı olma algılarının yüksek; gücü araçsal kullanma ve gücü meşrulaştırma algılarının düşük olduğunu göstermiştir. Öğretmenlerin, kadın okul müdürlerinin liderlik stillerine yönelik algıları, cinsiyet ve eğitim durumuna göre; güç mesafesi algıları, kıdem ve kadro tipine göre anlamlı farklar göstermiştir. Çalışmanın regresyon analizinden elde edilen sonuçları, sürdürücü liderliğin, öğretmenlerin gücü araçsal kullanma ve güce razı olma algılarının anlamlı birer yordayıcısı olduğunu göstermiştir.

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Introduction

Before the Industrial Revolution, elements such as gender roles and cultural norms in social life limited women's participation in the workforce in most societies and did not encourage them to work outside home. The Industrial Revolution marked a significant turning point in women's participation in working life. The demand for labor in factories encouraged women to start working in factories and other industrial areas. During this period, women often found work at low wages and under poor working conditions. Especially from the second half of the 19th century onwards, existing living and working conditions led women to come together to fight for political and legal rights, as well as for equality in areas such as education and job opportunities. During this period, known as the first wave of feminism, women fought for the right to vote, access to higher education, and opportunities to pursue professional careers (Rendall, 1985; Walters, 2005). This movement contributed to women's gaining more visibility in political and social spheres and increasing awareness of gender inequality. Parallel to these struggles, in the early 20th century, women's education levels and participation in the workforce began to rise. During the First and Second World Wars, as men went to war, women found more job opportunities and worked in many industries. In the 1970s and 1980s, the second wave feminist movement advocated for women's participation in the workforce and equal job opportunities. During this period, women achieved higher education levels and more professional career options were opened to them (Molyneux et al., 2021). Today, while women participate in the workforce more than ever before and assume leadership roles in various sectors, they still face barriers such as gender inequality and the glass ceiling (Jackson, 2001; Acker, 2006; Ganiyu et al., 2018).

According to the World Economic Forum's 2023 Gender Inequality Report, Türkiye ranks 129th out of 146 countries. In the scoring, which is calculated based on four sub-indices—economic participation and opportunities, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment—Türkiye ranks 133rd, 99th, 100th, and 118th, respectively (World Economic Forum, 2023). When comparing Türkiye's position of women in society with other countries, these data reflect a disadvantaged position, which is also evident in the context of women working in managerial positions. Although the number of female teachers in educational institutions is relatively high compared to many other organizations, the number of female teachers serving as school principals is significantly lower. The underrepresentation of women in senior management positions compared to men is a long-standing issue, and it has been discussed in the literature in various ways. The most well-known concept developed to explain this situation is the "glass ceiling" metaphor, which refers to the barrier of bias and discrimination that often excludes women from higher-level leadership positions. This concept is depicted as a transparent and invisible barrier—like glass—since it is not based on a written rule, yet it obstructs women when they aspire to climb the upper rungs of their careers in organizations (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Studies on the reasons why women cannot reach top-level leadership positions have shown that this issue is related more to various cultural, social, organizational, and individual factors than to the qualifications of women (Ganiyu, Oluwafemi, Ademola, & Olatunji, 2018).

Especially in educational organizations, creating a strong institutional culture in schools is necessary to develop women's leadership skills and increase their representation in managerial positions. One of the variables to be investigated in this study is the leadership characteristics exhibited by female managers. This study aims to contribute to the practices that will enable women to take on more active roles in the management levels of educational organizations. The research will make inferences about the types of leadership exhibited by female managers and the factors influencing their

development. Numerous studies on leadership have proposed various classifications of leadership types. Among these, the most common categorization includes transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The first classification of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership types was made by the American sociologist and political scientist James MacGregor Burns in 1978. In his book "Leadership," published in 1978, Burns defined these leadership styles.

Transformational Leadership. Burns (1978) defines transformational leadership as a reciprocal process between the leader and their followers, characterized by an inspiring and motivating leadership style. This leadership style aims to enhance the motivation and moral development of followers. These leaders present an appealing and inspirational vision to their followers. Additionally, they serve as role models by exhibiting ethical behaviors. They encourage innovative thinking and develop the problem-solving abilities of their followers. Transformational leaders also prioritize the individual needs and professional development of their followers. Bernard M. Bass (1985), who further advanced Burns' work, developed the transformational leadership theory. Bass (1985) argued that transformational leaders not only create an ethical and moral impact but also enhance performance and organizational efficiency. Research on this topic underscores that this leadership style plays a significant role in the change and development processes of organizations. It increases employees' motivation, leading them to show greater commitment to their work, and it encourages innovative thinking and problem-solving skills (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Riggio & Bass, 2006; Yammarino & Bass, 1990).

Transactional Leadership. Burns (1978) defines transactional leadership as a leadership style based on transactions and agreements between the leader and their followers. This leadership style aims to motivate employees through rewards and punishments. Employees who perform well are rewarded, while those who do not meet expectations are punished. Leaders actively monitor processes and intervene immediately to correct errors or deviations. Studies have shown that transactional leadership is an effective leadership style, especially when short-term goals and specific tasks need to be accomplished. It provides a structured system for monitoring employee performance and intervening when necessary. However, it may be insufficient for long-term goals, such as fostering innovative thinking or personal development of employees (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Riggio & Bass, 2006; Yammarino & Bass, 1990).

Laissez-faire Leadership. This leadership style emphasizes non-intervention by the leader and self-management by employees. Laissez-faire leaders grant considerable freedom to employees and do not interfere. The leader delegates responsibilities and decision-making authority to employees and exercises minimal control over their performance (Burns, 1978). Studies on this topic have shown that, in some cases, this leadership style can encourage creativity and enhance the performance of independent employees. However, it generally negatively affects organizational performance and leads to adverse outcomes such as a lack of guidance and support for employees, uncertainty, and low motivation (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985; Riggio & Bass, 2006; Yammarino & Bass, 1990).

Burns' work on these leadership styles has provided a foundation for later research and leadership theories. Another variable examined in the study is the power distance perceptions of female school principals and the teachers working with them. Hofstede (1980, p. 45) first introduced this concept, defining power distance as "...the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally." Hofstede developed the concept of power distance as part of his cultural dimensions theory, based on extensive research conducted on IBM employees worldwide. His book "Culture's Consequences: International

Differences in Work-Related Values," first published in 1980, analyzed the cultural dimensions of many countries, including Türkiye. The studies highlighted Türkiye for its high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 2010). A similar study by Aycan et al. (2000) emphasized that in Turkish work culture, subordinates show great respect towards their superiors and challenging authority is not common. Another study by House et al. (2004) examined how leadership styles and organizational behaviors differ across 62 countries. In this study, Türkiye is noted for its high power distance and collectivist cultural structure. The study indicated that charismatic and paternalistic leadership dimensions stand out in Turkish leadership styles. In Turkish culture, leaders are expected to take on an inspiring and protective role. House et al. (2004) demonstrated that leadership styles are influenced by cultural contexts, and these contexts shape the structure and effectiveness of organizations. For example, authoritarian leadership is more common in societies with high power distance, while participative and democratic leadership is more preferred in societies with low power distance (House et al., 2004).

This study aims to investigate the concept of power distance, an important variable in combating inequalities within organizations, and whether this situation differs in organizations with female school principals. Additionally, identifying the predictive relationship between the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals and teachers' power distance perceptions can provide a more comprehensive contribution to the literature on female managers. The concept of power distance in the research is examined through four dimensions, as discussed in Yorulmaz et al.'s (2018) work: legitimizing power, instrumental use of power, acceptance of power, and acceptance of power as a given. These concepts will be clarified in the following paragraphs.

This study aims to explore the concept of power distance, an important variable in combating existing inequalities in organizations, and to determine whether this situation differs in organizations with female school principals. Additionally, examining the predictive relationship between the leadership styles of female school principals and teachers' perceptions of power distance can provide more comprehensive contributions to the literature on female leaders. In the study, the concept of power distance is examined through four dimensions: justification of power, instrumental use of power, acquiescence of power, and acceptance of power, as discussed by Yorulmaz et al. (2018). The following paragraphs will clarify these concepts.

Justification of Power. The justification of power refers to the situation where employees rationalize power inequalities within the organization, accepting power imbalances and authority differences as legitimate and natural. Employees may believe that the organizational structure and hierarchical order are necessary for organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and/or the cultural values and beliefs held by employees may play a role in legitimizing these power inequalities (Schein, 1992; Yorulmaz, 2021).

Instrumental Use of Power. The instrumental use of power involves employees evaluating organizational dynamics and authority relationships to serve their own interests. In this process, employees use various strategies to gain individual benefits from power relations within the organization (Yorulmaz, 2021). In this dimension, individuals may develop strategic relationships with those in powerful positions within the organization to place themselves in a more advantageous position. They can use political skills to communicate effectively within the organization and turn power relations to their advantage (Fuchs et al., 2016; Lukes, 2005).

Acquiescence to Power. Employees' acceptance of the current situation as unchangeable makes acquiescence and compliance more likely (Tyler & Lind, 1992; Yorulmaz, 2021). Especially in times of economic uncertainty and high unemployment rates, employees may acquiesce to power to protect their jobs. Concerns about job security are among the primary reasons driving employees to adapt to the existing order (Loi, Lam, & Chan, 2012).

Acceptance of Power. Acceptance of power means employees accept the existing power relations and hierarchy within the organization without questioning or resisting. In this dimension, employees view the organizational hierarchy as a natural and inevitable order (Pfeffer, 1992). Accepting the authority of superiors without questioning and complying with their decisions is often a result of individuals feeling powerless against the power dynamics within the organization and believing they lack the capacity to create change (Yorulmaz, 2021).

This research aims to examine the relationship between the leadership styles of female school principals and teachers' perceptions of power distance in state schools (preschools, primary schools, middle schools, high schools) in Muğla Province. In line with this purpose, the following questions were sought to be answered.

1. How do teachers perceive the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals?
2. Do teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals show significant differences in terms of the variables of gender, education level, seniority, and employment status?
3. What is the level of teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance in schools where female school principals work?
4. Do teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance in schools where female school principals work show significant differences in terms of the variables of gender, education level, seniority, and employment status?
5. Do teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals predict teachers' perceptions of power distance?

Although there is substantial research on the leadership characteristics of female managers, this study will provide insights into how female school principals and their teachers perceive power distance within their organizations. The following section presents information on the research methodology.

Method

This study, designed to determine the relationship between the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals and teachers' perceptions of power distance, is based on a relational survey model. The population of the research consists of 1982 teachers working in public schools (preschools, primary schools, middle schools, high schools) managed by female school principals in Muğla Province. The sampling technique used is disproportionate cluster sampling. For a 95% confidence level, the required sample size was determined to be at least 322 individuals. Given the possibility of incomplete responses on the scales, data collection aimed at 400 teachers. Out of the scales administered, 22 were excluded from the analysis due to careless and incorrect completion, and the analysis was conducted with data collected from 378 teachers. Data on the demographic characteristics of the participating teachers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentage Distributions of Teachers by Demographic Variables

| Variable | Group | n | % |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|------|
| Gender | Male | 104 | 27.5 |
| | Female | 274 | 72.5 |
| Employment Type | Paid | 18 | 4.8 |
| | Contractual | 24 | 6.3 |
| | Permanent | 336 | 88.9 |
| Education Level | Associate's | 3 | .8 |
| | Bachelor's | 333 | 88.1 |
| | Graduate | 42 | 11.1 |
| School Type | Preschool | 27 | 7.1 |
| | Primary School | 73 | 19.3 |
| | Middle School | 122 | 32.3 |
| | High School | 156 | 41.3 |
| Age | 20-29 | 77 | 20.4 |
| | 30-39 | 115 | 30.4 |
| | 40-49 | 130 | 34.4 |
| | 50 and above | 56 | 14.8 |
| Seniority | 1-5 years | 68 | 18.0 |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 15.6 |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 19.3 |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 20.1 |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 15.6 |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 11.4 |

Data for the study were collected using the Leadership Styles Scale and the Organizational Power Distance Scale. The School Administrators' Leadership Style Scale, developed by Akan, Yıldırım, and Yalçın (2014), is used to determine the leadership styles of female school administrators. The scale consists of three subscales: transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, and laissez-faire leadership style, and includes 35 items. It uses a 5-point Likert-type rating, with scores ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale explains 54.19% of the variance, with the transformational, laissez-faire, and transactional leadership dimensions explaining 37.4%, 12.45%, and 4.3% of the variance, respectively. The measurement model encompassing all three dimensions of

leadership styles showed acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2/sd = 2.34$ AGFI = .85, GFI = .87, NFI = .97, NNFI = .98, CFI = .98, RMR = .075 SRMR = .065 RMSEA = .052). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scale were found to be within acceptable limits, ranging from .82 to .96. For this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated as .98 for transformational leadership, .77 for transactional leadership, and .90 for laissez-faire leadership.

The Organizational Power Distance Scale, developed by Yorulmaz, Çolak, Altinkurt, and Yılmaz (2018), is used to determine teachers' perceptions of power distance. It includes four dimensions: acceptance of power, instrumental use of power, justification of power, and acquiescence to power, and comprises 20 items. The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type rating, with scores ranging from never (1) to always (5). The four-factor structure of the scale explains 56.58% of the variance. Fit indices for the scale ($\chi^2/sd = 2.29$, GFI = .90, AGFI = .86, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .07, CFI = .95, NFI = .92, NNFI = .95) confirm the validity of the four-factor structure. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the scale were found to be .79 for acceptance of power, .77 for instrumental use of power, .74 for justification of power, and .80 for acquiescence to power. For this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .75 for acceptance of power, .82 for instrumental use of power, .81 for justification of power, and .77 for acquiescence to power.

Descriptive analyses, including percentages, frequencies, standard deviations, and means, were used in the data analysis. Additionally, t-tests and ANOVA were used to compare means. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive relationship between two variables.

Ethical Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with the approval of (editör tarafından kapatıldı) Ethics Committee, dated 14.06.2021 and numbered 261.

Findings

In this section, we first present the findings regarding teachers' views on the leadership styles of female school principals and their perceptions of power distance. Following that, we present the findings of the research conducted on the relationship between these two variables. The findings related to the views of the teachers participating in the study about the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of female school principals are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' Perceptions of Female School Principals' Leadership Styles

| Leadership Style | n | \bar{X} | S. |
|------------------|-----|-----------|-----|
| Transformational | 378 | 3.68 | .98 |
| Transactional | 378 | 2.79 | .27 |
| Laissez-faire | 378 | 2.29 | .35 |

In Table 2, it can be seen that teachers believe female school principals possess a high level of transformational leadership, a moderate level of transactional leadership, and a low level of laissez-faire leadership style. The findings regarding how teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals differ based on the gender variable are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Differentiation of Views on Leadership Styles Exhibited by Female School Principals in terms of to the Gender Variable

| Leadership Style | Gender | n | \bar{X} | S. | Sd | T | P | η^2 |
|-------------------------|--------|-----|-----------|------|-----|--------|--------|----------|
| Transformational | Male | 104 | 69.46 | 20.5 | 376 | -2.586 | .010* | 02 |
| | Female | 274 | 75.27 | 19.1 | | | | |
| Transactional | Male | 104 | 20.31 | 5.7 | 376 | 1.907 | .057 | |
| | Female | 274 | 19.12 | 5.3 | | | | |
| Laissez-faire | Male | 104 | 20.28 | 7.0 | 376 | 3.457 | .001** | 03 |
| | Female | 274 | 17.55 | 6.8 | | | | |

*p < .05, **p < .01

When examining teachers' perceptions of female school principals' transformational leadership characteristics, it is seen that the mean scores of female teachers (\bar{X} =75.27) are significantly higher than those of male teachers (\bar{X} =69.46) [t(376) = -2.586, p<.05]. On the other hand, when examining teachers' perceptions of female school principals' laissez-faire leadership characteristics, it is observed that the mean scores of male teachers (\bar{X} =20.28) are significantly higher than those of female teachers (\bar{X} =17.55) [t(376) = 3.457, p<.05]. However, when examining teachers' perceptions of female school principals' transactional leadership characteristics, the differences between the mean scores were not found to be statistically significant [t(376) = 1.907, p>.05]. The findings regarding how teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals differ in terms of the variable of educational status are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Variance in Teachers' Perceptions of Female School Principals' Leadership Styles in terms of Educational Status

| Leadership Style | Education level | n | \bar{X} | S | U | P | Cohen r |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------|------|---------|-------|---------|
| Transformational | Bachelor's | 333 | 73.97 | 19.6 | 6054.00 | .156 | |
| | Graduate | 42 | 69.86 | 19.4 | | | |
| Transactional | Bachelor's | 333 | 19.31 | 5.3 | 5542.00 | .028* | .11 |
| | Graduate | 42 | 21.17 | 5.4 | | | |
| Laissez-faire | Bachelor's | 333 | 18.18 | 6.9 | 6062.00 | .158 | |
| | Graduate | 42 | 19.81 | 7.5 | | | |

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 4 reveals that the difference between the mean rank of teachers with a bachelor's degree and those with a postgraduate degree is not statistically significant U for transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles [U=6054.00, p>.05; U=6062.00, p>.05], [U=6054.00, p>.05; U=6062.00, p>.05], [U=6054.00,p>.05; U=6062.00,p>.05]. However, when examining teachers' perceptions of the transactional leadership characteristics of female school principals, it was found that the mean rank of

teachers with a postgraduate degree is significantly higher than that of teachers with a bachelor's degree [U=5542.00, $p < .05$], [U=5542.00, $p < .05$], [U=5542.00, $p < .05$].

The findings related to how teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals differ in terms of the seniority variable are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Differences in Perceptions of Female School Principals' Leadership Styles in terms of Seniority

| Leadership Style | Seniority | n | \bar{X} | S. | Sd | F | P |
|-------------------------|--------------|----|-----------|------|-----|------|------|
| Transformational | 1-5 years | 68 | 73.06 | 16. | 5 | .932 | .460 |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 73.54 | 19.7 | 372 | | |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 73.19 | 21.8 | | | |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 71.16 | 19.3 | | | |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 74.41 | 22.9 | | | |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 79.05 | 15.2 | | | |
| Transactional | 1-5 years | 68 | 19.65 | 4.8 | 5 | .531 | .753 |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 20.02 | 5.8 | 372 | | |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 19.74 | 5.8 | | | |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 19.46 | 5.5 | | | |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 18.61 | 5.8 | | | |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 19.00 | 4.4 | | | |
| Laissez-faire | 1-5 years | 68 | 17.26 | 5.9 | 5 | .829 | .530 |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 19.03 | 7.8 | 372 | | |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 18.88 | 7.7 | | | |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 18.89 | 6.8 | | | |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 17.98 | 7.5 | | | |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 17.35 | 5.4 | | | |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The differences in teachers' perceptions of female school principals' transformational, laissez-faire, and transactional leadership characteristics in terms of their seniority were not found to be statistically significant [F(5,372)= 0.932, $p > .05$; F(5,372)= 0.531, $p > .05$; F(5,372)= 0.829, $p > .05$]. The findings related to how teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals differ in terms of the employment type variable are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Differences in Perceptions of Female School Principals' Leadership Styles in terms of Employment Type

| Leadership Style | Employment Type | n | \bar{X} | S. | χ^2 | P |
|------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------|------|----------|------|
| Transformational | Paid | 18 | 74.06 | 21.3 | .846 | .655 |
| | Contracted | 24 | 73.58 | 9.7 | | |
| | Tenure | 336 | 73.65 | 20.1 | | |
| Transactional | Paid | 18 | 17.17 | 5.5 | 2.542 | .281 |
| | Contracted | 24 | 9.63 | 4.0 | | |
| | Tenure | 336 | 19.56 | 5.5 | | |
| Laissez-faire | Paid | 18 | 17.56 | 5.9 | 1.510 | .470 |
| | Contracted | 24 | 16.63 | 5.5 | | |
| | Tenure | 336 | 18.46 | 7.1 | | |

*p < .05, **p < .01

When examining teachers' perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by female school principals in terms of their employment type, the perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles in female principals do not show statistically significant differences based on employment type; [$\chi^2(2)=.846, p>.05, \chi^2(2)=2.542, p>.05; \chi^2(2)=1.510, p>.05$].

Descriptive statistics on teachers' views regarding organizational power distance in schools where female principals work are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Organizational Power Distance Perceptions of Teachers Working in Schools with Female Principals

| Organizational Power | n | \bar{X} | S. |
|----------------------|-----|-----------|-----|
| Acceptance | 378 | 3.08 | .38 |
| Instrumental Use | 378 | 2.14 | .92 |
| Justification | 378 | 1.92 | .50 |
| Acquiescence | 378 | 2.65 | .94 |

Upon examining Table 7, it can be said that in the schools where female principals work, teachers' perceptions of power acceptance and acquiescence to power are high, while perceptions of instrumental use of power and justification of power are low.

Findings regarding how teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance vary by gender in schools with female principals are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Variation in Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Power Distance by Gender

| Organizational Power | Gender | n | \bar{X} | S. | Sd | T | P |
|----------------------|--------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|--------|------|
| Acceptance | Male | 104 | 18.37 | 4.1 | 376 | -.319 | .750 |
| | Female | 274 | 18.51 | 3.8 | | | |
| Instrumental Use | Male | 104 | 10.72 | 4.4 | 376 | .004 | .997 |
| | Female | 274 | 10.72 | 4.7 | | | |
| Justification | Male | 104 | 6.17 | 2.8 | 160.84 | 1.894 | .060 |
| | Female | 274 | 5.58 | 2.3 | | | |
| Acquiescence | Male | 104 | 15.62 | 4.7 | 376 | -0.699 | .485 |
| | Female | 274 | 15.99 | 4.7 | | | |

In schools where female principals work, there is no statistically significant difference in the average scores of power acceptance, instrumental use of power, justification of power, and acquiescence to power among teachers based on gender [t(376)= -.319, p>.05], [t(376)= .004, p>.05], [t(160.84)= 1.894, p>.05], [t(376)= -.699, p>.05].

Findings on how teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance vary by educational background in schools with female principals are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Analysis of Variance for Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Power Distance by Educational Background

| Organizational Power | Education Level | n | \bar{X} | S. | U | P |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------|-----|---------|------|
| Acceptance | Bachelor's | 333 | 18.55 | 3.9 | 6307.00 | .298 |
| | Graduate | 42 | 17.64 | 3.7 | | |
| Instrumental Use | Bachelor's | 333 | 10.72 | 4.7 | 6639.00 | .591 |
| | Graduate | 42 | 10.93 | 4.2 | | |
| Justification | Bachelor's | 333 | 5.73 | 2.5 | 6702.00 | .656 |
| | Graduate | 42 | 5.69 | 2.8 | | |
| Acquiescence | Bachelor's | 333 | 15.80 | 4.7 | 6465.00 | .424 |
| | Graduate | 42 | 16.45 | 4.7 | | |

*p < .05, **p < .01

When examining teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance in schools where female principals work, there is no statistically significant difference in the average scores for power acceptance, instrumental use of power, justification of power, and acquiescence to power based on teachers' educational levels; [U=6307.00, p>.05], [U=6639.00, p>.05], [U=6702.00, p>.05], [U=6465.00, p>.05].

Findings on how teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance vary by tenure in schools with female principals are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Analysis of Variance for Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Power Distance by Seniority

| Organizational power | Seniority | n | \bar{X} | S. | d | F | P | 2 | Meaningful Difference |
|-------------------------|--------------|----|-----------|-----|-----|-------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| Acceptance | 1-5 years | 68 | 19.04 | 4.1 | 5 | .933 | .460 | | |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 18.97 | 3.6 | 372 | | | | |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 18.16 | 3.8 | | | | | |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 18.14 | 3.4 | | | | | |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 17.95 | 4.2 | | | | | |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 18.67 | 4.2 | | | | | |
| Instrumental Use | 1-5 years | 68 | 11.81 | 4.4 | 5 | .952 | .085 | | |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 11.12 | 4.7 | 372 | | | | |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 10.08 | 4.2 | | | | | |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 10.84 | 5.2 | | | | | |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 9.53 | 3.9 | | | | | |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 10.95 | 5.3 | | | | | |
| Justification | 1-5 years | 68 | 6.47 | 2.3 | 5 | 3.718 | .003** | 05 | 1-5 |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 6.19 | 2.5 | 372 | | | | 11-15 |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 5.22 | 2.3 | | | | | 1-5 |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 5.96 | 2.7 | | | | | 21-25 |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 4.92 | 2.3 | | | | | |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 5.65 | 2.4 | | | | | |
| Acquiescence | 1-5 years | 68 | 16.85 | 4.9 | 5 | 1.839 | .104 | | |
| | 6-10 years | 59 | 16.00 | 4.2 | 372 | | | | |
| | 11-15 years | 73 | 15.47 | 4.7 | | | | | |
| | 16-20 years | 76 | 15.78 | 4.7 | | | | | |
| | 21-25 years | 59 | 4.68 | 4.5 | | | | | |
| | 26 and above | 43 | 6.79 | 4.8 | | | | | |

*p < .05, **p < .01

When examining teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance by tenure in schools with female principals, it is observed that the average scores for the justification of power show statistically significant differences [F(5,372)=3.718; p<.05, η^2 =.05]. Specifically, teachers with 1-5 years of tenure perceive power justification significantly higher than teachers with 11-15 and 21-25 years of tenure. However, there are no statistically significant differences in the average scores for power

acceptance, instrumental use of power, and acquiescence to power by tenure [F(5,372)=.933; p>.05], [F(5,372)=1.952; p>.05], [F(5,372)=1.839; p>.05].

Findings on how teachers' perceptions of organizational power distance vary by type of employment in schools with female principals are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Analysis of Variance for Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Power Distance by Employment Type

| Organizational power | Employment type | n | \bar{X} | S. | χ^2 | p | η^2 | Meaningful difference |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------|-----|----------|--------|----------|-----------------------|
| Acceptance | Paid | 18 | 19.56 | 4.3 | 3.249 | .197 | | |
| | Contracted | 24 | 19.46 | 3.6 | | | | |
| | Tenure | 336 | 18.34 | .39 | | | | |
| Instrumental Use | Paid | 18 | 11.33 | 5.1 | 2.656 | .265 | | |
| | Contracted | 24 | 11.92 | 4.4 | | | | |
| | Tenure | 336 | 10.60 | 4.6 | | | | |
| Justification | Paid | 18 | 6.50 | 2.6 | 9.396 | .009** | .02 | S-K |
| | Contracted | 24 | 7.00 | 2.5 | | | | |
| | Tenure | 336 | 5.62 | 2.5 | | | | |
| Acquiescence | Paid | 18 | 17.44 | 5.3 | 2.863 | .239 | | |
| | Contracted | 24 | 15.88 | 5.4 | | | | |
| | Tenure | 336 | 15.81 | 4.6 | | | | |

*p < .05, **p < .01

When examining the organizational power perceptions of teachers in terms of the type of employment in schools with female principals, it is observed that the differences in average scores for power acceptance, instrumental use of power, and acquiescence to power are not statistically significant [$\chi^2(2)= 3.249$; p>.05; $\chi^2(2)= 2.656$; p>.05; $\chi^2(2)= 2.863$; p>.05]. However, there is a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of power justification based on the type of appointment [$\chi^2(2)= 9.396$; p<.05; $\eta^2 =.02$]. When examining the differences between the types of appointments, it is observed that the average perception score of power justification for contract teachers ($\bar{X} =7.00$) is significantly higher than that of tenure teachers ($\bar{X} =5.62$).

The relationship between teachers' perceptions of power distance and the leadership styles exhibited by female principals is presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Correlation between Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Styles and Organizational Power Distance

| Correlation | Transformational | Transactional | Laissez-faire |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Acceptance | .039 | -.050 | -.038 |
| Instrumental Use | -.094 | .149** | .071 |
| Justification | .002 | -.047 | -.021 |
| Acquiescence | -.053 | .162** | .063 |

Upon examining Table 12, it is evident that there is a low-level, positive, and statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of transactional leadership and their perceptions of instrumental use of power ($r=.15$, $p<.05$) and acquiescence to power ($r=.16$, $p<.05$).

The findings of the regression analysis, which explores how teachers' perceptions of power distance in schools with female principals was predicted by their perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by these principals, are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Prediction of Organizational Power Distance Perceptions by Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Styles

| Variable | B | Standard Error B | β | T | p |
|--|--------|------------------|---------|--------|-------|
| Constant | 18.777 | 2.319 | | 8.098 | .000 |
| Transformational | .003 | .018 | .016 | .177 | .860 |
| Transactional | -.032 | .054 | -.045 | -.605 | .546 |
| Laissez-faire | .005 | .055 | .008 | .084 | .933 |
| Acceptance | | | | | |
| R= .051 R ² =.003 F (3.374) = .325 p=.807 | | | | | |
| Constant | 10.253 | 2.752 | | 3.725 | .000 |
| Transformational | -.017 | .022 | -.070 | -.768 | .443 |
| Transactional | .165 | .064 | .192 | 2.589 | .010* |
| Laissez-faire | -.083 | .066 | -.124 | -1.257 | .210 |
| Instrumental Use | | | | | |
| R= .162 R ² =.026 F (3.374) = 3.380 p=.018* | | | | | |
| Constant | 7.143 | 1.500 | | 4.763 | .000 |
| Transformational | -.008 | .012 | -.064 | -.691 | .490 |
| Transactional | -.034 | .035 | -.074 | -.987 | .324 |
| Laissez-faire | -.007 | .036 | -.020 | -.204 | .839 |
| Justification | | | | | |
| R= .061 R ² =.004 F (3.374) = .473 p=.701 | | | | | |
| Constant | 11.784 | 2.770 | | 4.254 | .000 |
| Transformational | .012 | .022 | .049 | .535 | .593 |
| Transactional | .213 | .064 | .246 | 3.328 | .001* |
| Laissez-faire | -.049 | .066 | -.073 | -.738 | .461 |
| Acquiescence | | | | | |
| R= .181 R ² =.033 F (3.374) = 4.210 p=.006* | | | | | |

In Table 13, the multiple regression model predicting teachers' perceptions of instrumental use of power from their perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles demonstrated by female school principals was found to be significant as a whole; $F(3, 374) = 3.380$, $p<.05$.

Collectively, teachers' perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles account for approximately 3% of the total variance in the perception of instrumental use of power ($R^2 = .026$). According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), the relative order of importance of the predictor variables on the perception of instrumental use of power is transactional, laissez-faire, and transformational leadership perception. Examining the t-test results concerning the significance of regression coefficients reveals that only the perception of transactional leadership is a significant predictor of the perception of instrumental use of power ($p < .05$). Accordingly, a one standard deviation increase in teachers' perceptions of transactional leadership leads to a 0.19-point increase in the perception of instrumental use of power.

The multiple regression model that predicts teachers' perceptions of acquiescence to power from their perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles demonstrated by school principals was found to be significant as a whole; $F(3, 374) = 4.210, p < .05$. Collectively, teachers' perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles account for approximately 3% of the total variance in the perception of acquiescence to power ($R^2 = .033$). According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), the relative order of importance of the predictor variables on the perception of acquiescence to power is transactional, laissez-faire, and transformational leadership perception. Examining the t-test results concerning the significance of the regression coefficients reveals that only the perception of transactional leadership is a significant predictor of the perception of acquiescence to power ($p < .05$). Accordingly, a one standard deviation increase in teachers' perceptions of transactional leadership leads to a 0.25 point increase in the perception of acquiescence to power.

The multiple regression model predicting teachers' perceptions of acceptance of power based on their perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles exhibited by female principals is not found to be significant as a whole; $F(3, 374) = .325, p > .05$. Similarly, the multiple regression model predicting teachers' perceptions of power justification based on their perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles demonstrated by female principals is also not found to be significant as a whole; $F(3, 374) = .473, p > .05$. Accordingly, it can be said that teachers' perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership are not predictors of teachers' perceptions of acceptance of power and power justification.

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

This section presents the conclusions of the study conducted to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of female school principals' leadership styles and their perceived power distance in state schools in Muğla, as well as discussions and recommendations based on these findings.

The results of the study regarding the leadership styles of female school principals indicate that the principals exhibit a high level of transformational leadership, a moderate level of transactional leadership, and a low level of laissez-faire leadership. This suggests that female school administrators in schools are open to innovations and changes, competent in anticipating any necessary organizational developments for their schools by continuously monitoring their organization and environment, and effective in guiding teachers toward school goals and motivating them. Additionally, they are perceived as valuing the professional and personal development of their teachers. Camcı and Güvenç (2022) also concluded in their study that female school principals are innovative, entrepreneurial, and possess high communication skills. Mert (2021) found that female school principals are perceived as leaders who can effectively manage crises, are productive, and solution-oriented. Zacharakis (2017) reached the

conclusion in his research that female school principals exhibit transformational leadership characteristics, with the highest average scores in personal and interpersonal skills. However, the current study reveals that teachers perceive female school principals to exhibit low levels of laissez-faire leadership behaviors. In fact, studies in the literature have concluded that female administrators predominantly exhibit transformational leadership, while male administrators tend to exhibit transactional and laissez-faire leadership characteristics (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003; Khan, Abdullah & Zada, 2023). Furthermore, research has shown a higher level of relationship between transformational leadership characteristics and job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Voon, Lo, Ngui & Ayob, 2011; Veliu, Manxhari, Demiri & Jahaj, 2017; Silva & Mendis, 2017). In this context, the results can be interpreted to suggest that teachers working with female school principals who exhibit high levels of transformational leadership characteristics may also have higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the school.

The findings regarding the gender variable of teachers indicate that male teachers perceive female school leaders as having more laissez-faire leadership qualities compared to female teachers, while female teachers perceive female school leaders as having more transformational leadership qualities compared to male teachers. A study with implications regarding the influence of gender on the evaluation of leaders concluded that female leaders' characteristics are relatively more negatively assessed when the evaluators are male (Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992). Indeed, transformational leadership qualities are associated with more positive characteristics compared to laissez-faire leadership. When examining the results related to the educational level variable, it was found that teachers with a postgraduate degree perceive female school leaders as having more transactional leadership qualities compared to those with a bachelor's degree. The increased expectations of teachers who have pursued postgraduate education from school leaders may have led them to evaluate school principals' leadership styles more as transactional rather than transformational. It was observed that the differences between teachers' tenure and employment types did not create a significant difference in their perceptions of the leadership styles of female school principals. Therefore, it can be said that educational level, rather than professional experience, is influential in evaluations regarding the leadership qualities of school principals.

When examining the perceptions of teachers working with female school principals regarding organizational power distance, it was found that teachers have a high level of acceptance of power and compliance, as well as a low level of instrumental use of power and legitimation of power. In their study, Çolak, Yılmaz, and Altinkurt (2022) also found that teachers' perceptions of power distance reached the same results regardless of the gender of the manager. Teachers' high power distance perception in terms of acceptance of power indicates that they accept, normalize, and internalize the unequal distribution of power in the organization without questioning it. This points to a high level of organizational power distance in schools and its structuralization. It is concerning that teachers, who should represent the enlightened segment of society by having at least a bachelor's degree and preparing individuals for the future, do not differentiate from the general trend of society despite Turkish society being among those with a high power distance. As Yorulmaz (2021) also noted, it is thought that this situation may have been caused by the fact that the culture in higher education institutions has similar characteristics and that teachers are brought up under the influence of this culture. The fact that faculty members in higher education institutions draw on their academic competencies as a source of power to influence and guide students' behaviors (Hoşgörür & Yorulmaz, 2016) can serve as a starting point for pre-service teachers to develop competence-based value judgments and begin to question power inequalities. Another

worrying situation is related to the inverse relationship between high power distance and job commitment (Rafiei & Pourreza, 2013). A decrease in teachers' commitment to their work will directly result in schools not being able to effectively fulfill their societal functions.

Perceptions of organizational power distance among teachers working in schools led by female administrators do not vary significantly based on gender or educational level. However, significant differences have been found in the perceptions of legitimation of power concerning seniority and employment status variables. It is observed that teachers with 1-5 years of seniority perceive the legitimation of power significantly higher than those with 11-15 and 21-25 years of seniority. Similarly, contract teachers perceive the legitimation of power significantly higher than permanent teachers. These groups share similar characteristics regarding seniority. This suggests that teachers in the early years of their careers, who work under relatively insecure conditions due to not being permanently appointed, tend to rationalize the inequalities they perceive in power usage as necessary for effective management. The limited experience of newly appointed teachers regarding schools may lead them to perceive the negative aspects of observed power relations as normal. The lack of organizational experience may thus result in a greater tendency to legitimize power compared to other age groups. However, this type of legitimation, which teachers in educational organizations gravitate toward, can lead to the structuring of inequalities and thus increase organizational power distance (Yorulmaz, 2021). Çiçek Sağlam and Göl Dede (2020) also found similar results in their study regarding the seniority variable. In Ziblim's (2020) study, however, no significant difference was found regarding seniority. The differences in results are thought to have arisen from the relatively broad categorization of 1-14 years.

The results regarding the relationship between teachers' perceptions of power distance in schools with female administrators and their perceptions of the leadership styles exhibited by these administrators indicate that there is a low positive and significant correlation only between teachers' perceptions of transactional leadership and their perceptions of instrumental use of power and compliance with power. Multiple regression models examining the relationship between teachers' perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of female administrators and their perceptions of instrumental use of power and compliance with power were found to be significant as a whole. However, when examining the t-test results related to the significance of regression coefficients, it is found that only perceptions of transactional leadership are significant predictors of perceptions of instrumental use of power and compliance with power. In their study, Çiçek Sağlam and Göl Dede (2020) concluded that instrumental use of power and compliance with power are among the dimensions that are significant predictors of acquiescent silence. Although the objectives differ, both dimensions involve an acceptance of the existing power inequality. In transactional leadership, there is a focus on effectively performing daily tasks and achieving short-term goals. It can be said that this leadership style, which emphasizes the use of rewards as a motivational tool, may cause teachers to position themselves close to power to achieve their set goals or remain silent to avoid harm. Okçu (2011) found in his study that the transactional leadership behaviors of school administrators increased the level of mobbing experienced by teachers, supporting comments that this type of leadership may have destructive consequences in the long run.

This study, conducted to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of female school principals' leadership styles and the perceived power distance, has certain limitations. Primarily, the study is limited to the data collected from teachers working in the Muğla province. Considering that cultural codes in different regions may affect the research results, similar studies can be conducted in

other provinces known for their distinct cultural characteristics. Additionally, this study is limited to the opinions of teachers working in public schools. Given that the organizational culture of private schools may differ from that of public schools, similar research could be carried out for private schools.

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Yazarların Katkı Oranı Beyanı

Yazarların çalışmanın her aşamasında çalışmaya sundukları katkı oranı eşittir.

Çatışma Beyanı

Araştırmacıların çalışma ile ilgili birbirleri arasında ya da diğer kişi ve kurumlarla yaşanabilecek herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

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