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The Roles of Empowering Leadership and Work Meaningfulness on Proactive Teacher Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

In order for educational institutions to adapt to the latest change and development processes, proactive teacher behavior is a significant variable. Determining which antecedents positively influence proactive teacher behavior is crucial for the development of organizations. Therefore, this study aims to determine the role of empowering leadership behaviors and work meaningfulness in proactive teacher behaviors. The research design utilized a relational screening model. The research sample comprises of 407 teachers. The research also used descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analyses. In relation to the study's findings, school administrators exhibit high levels of empowering leadership behaviors, while teachers find their work meaningful and exhibit high levels of proactive behaviors. The correlation analyses revealed a significant, poor and positive relationship between teachers' proactive behaviors and empowering leadership behaviors of authority and responsibility, skill development, and coaching for innovative performance, but no significant relationship between self-determination and information sharing behaviors. It was found out that there was a significant and moderate correlation between work meaningfulness and proactive teacher behaviors. In addition, regression analyses conducted with personal variables revealed that while gender, seniority, and school level variables played no role in the proactive behavior of teachers, educational status was a significant predictor of such behavior. In addition, it was concluded that school administrators' empowering leadership behaviors did not explain teachers' proactive behaviors, whereas work meaningfulness was a significant predictor of proactive teacher behavior. In addition, it was determined that the combination of teachers' graduate education and work meaningfulness significantly predicted proactive behavior.

Keywords: Empowering leadership, work meaningfulness, proactive teacher behavior

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Introduction

One of the key factors recognized for determining the effectiveness of an educational organization is the presence of teacher behaviors that foster development and change. Teachers who are willing to ensure the change and transformation of schools, exhibit behaviors beyond their roles, utilize opportunities for the organization's benefit, and assume organizational responsibility are of utmost importance in the light of the accelerating rate of change in the functioning of social systems. In this context, the "proactive behaviors" described in the literature are considered essential for developing educational organizations. According to Bateman and Crant (1993), proactive employees are characterized as individuals who bring about environmental changes despite limitations, pursue opportunities, take initiative, and persist until they achieve the desired outcome. Hatipoğlu (2019) further asserts that an organization's competitiveness is contingent upon proactive employees who concentrate on improving current operations and exhibit innovative and entrepreneurial behaviors. The perseverance of individuals possessing proactive personality traits in creating significant transformations despite impediments (Robbins & Judge, 2013) enhances their value to organizations in the contemporary era. In this regard, Kalkan (2019) stated that proactive behaviors positively impact organizational performance and efficiency, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship and improving leadership capability. Griffin, Neal, and Parker's (2007) research findings indicate that proactive work behaviors contribute to an organization's effectiveness and adaptability. Thomas, Whitman, and Viswesvaran (2010) also found significant relationships between proactive personality traits and various organizational outcomes, including performance, satisfaction, commitment, and social networking. Similarly, Tunca, Elçi, and Murat's (2018) study shows that proactive personality traits are positively associated with task performance. Özdemir's (2019) research with university students reveals that proactive traits are significantly linked to career adaptability and self-development. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of proactive personality traits for both employees and organizations.

The input and output of educational institutions consist of human elements, and the system is subject to various variables and potential unforeseen challenges, thus necessitating proactive behavior from teachers, as argued by Cerit and Akgün (2015). Yücel, Koçak, and Cula (2010) conducted a survey examining pre-service teachers' views on the teaching profession using metaphors and found that the metaphors were mainly related to proactive personality traits. Furthermore, they indicated that teachers with proactive personality traits tend to have a forward-thinking vision, believe in ongoing development, and strive to impart significance to their lives through improvement efforts. Halıcı-Karabatak (2018) indicates that there are significant positive associations between the proactive behaviors of teachers and personality traits such as responsibility, openness to experience, extroversion, emotional stability, and mildness. Further research has shown that teachers with proactive personality traits have higher levels of self-efficacy (Er, 2018; Hatipoğlu, 2019; Kalkan, 2019) and that there are positive correlations between proactive personality traits and levels of optimism, psychological resilience and hope (Hatipoğlu, 2019). Additionally, it has been found out that proactive personality traits play a role in skills such as situation change, emotion management, attention directing, and cognitive direction (Aybatan, 2018). Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that teachers with proactive personality traits will significantly contribute to themselves and their institutions.

Additional research on proactive teacher behaviors has a positive effect on these personality traits for encouraging positive organizational behavior in schools. For instance, Ghitulescu (2018) revealed that proactivity positively correlates with work meaningfulness and

affective commitment while displaying a negative correlation with conflict. Li, Wang, Gao, and You (2017) found that proactive personalities influence teachers' job commitment, self-efficacy, and work meaningfulness. Liu, Li, Liu, and Wang (2017) revealed that a proactive personality plays a role in teachers' innovative work behaviors by mediating certain variables. Bozbayındır and Alev (2018) indicated that proactive personality traits mediate teachers' self-efficacy and their openness to change. These findings suggest that proactive teachers can significantly contribute to organizational changes in schools.

The aforementioned studies highlight the importance of proactive behaviors for educational institutions and suggest that teachers' proactive behaviors should be improved. However, when the studies on the sample of educational organizations are examined, it is seen that there are not enough studies to determine the organizational behaviors that lead teachers to develop proactive behaviors. Based on this gap in the literature, empowering leadership that encourages employees to take responsibility and contribute to their organizations (Yun, Cox, & Sims, 2006) and the effect of employees' levels of perceived work meaningfulness, which determines their attitudes towards their jobs, on proactive teacher behavior was deemed worth examining. Therefore, it is important to reveal organizational behaviors that support teachers' proactive behavior. In this context, this study aimed to determine whether the variables "empowering leadership" and "work meaningfulness," which are among the factors that support teachers' proactive behaviors, play a role in teachers' proactive behaviors. On this basis, it was determined which antecedents were effective in promoting proactive behavior, and it was intended to contribute to the field by offering recommendations in this regard.

Conceptual Framework

Empowering Leadership Behaviors

The conventional management theories neglected the significance of organizational change and development by comparing organizations to inanimate and self-contained mechanisms. This perception predetermined the roles and responsibilities of workers and assigned all decision-making authority to managers (Katz & Kahn, 1977; Konan & Çelik, 2018). However, it was soon recognized that an approach to management that views individuals in organizations as capable of working with internal controls instead of requiring external intervention could lead to enhanced productivity, superior output quality, and a harmonious organizational structure (Manz & Sims, 1987). The empowering leadership approach represents a leadership style that endeavors to distribute responsibility, management power, and decision-making authority among employees and aims to improve them and the organization concurrently (İmamoğlu & Dönmez Turan, 2019). In accordance with Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty's (2000) research, empowering leadership behavior encompasses six sub-dimensions: authorization, responsibility, self-determination, information sharing, skill development, and coaching for innovative performance. Yılmaz (2022) asserts that such a comprehensive, empowering leadership approach facilitates employees to lead decision-making processes by enhancing their management skills. Consequently, employees can assume decision-making responsibilities related to their areas of expertise (Konan & Çelik, 2018). As a result, organizations can attain their objectives more efficiently by exhibiting change and improvement through empowering leadership practices, unlike the traditional management approach. Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) indicate that empowerment behavior has recently become a prevalent management practice due to the advantages of the empowering leadership approach for organizations.

Empowering leadership is a method of leadership that encourages employees to develop characteristics such as initiative, self-management, and assuming responsibility. By delegating authority to employees, leaders aim to foster both their own improvement and the organization's high performance (Yun, Cox, & Sims, 2006). The concept of leadership in today's schools is evolving in an effort to achieve quality outcomes, as is the case with all organizations. This innovative concept aims to establish an effective school by involving instructors and pupils in the management processes of the school. Empowered teachers participate actively in school and classroom-related decision-making processes. This decision-making authority gives institutional authority to teachers in their interactions with other stakeholders (Short, 1998). Decision-making processes in school organizations that involve human inputs can be complex due to the intensity of human relationships. Nonetheless, effective leaders establish an empowering organizational structure that enables efficient and prompt decision-making to overcome this challenge (Martin, 2013). Consequently, the adoption of empowering leadership roles by school administrators can increase teachers' psychological resilience (Soylu & Okçu, 2022), participation in decision-making processes (Töre & Uysal, 2022), psychological contracts (Koçak & Burgaz, 2017), and intrinsic motivation levels (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006), thereby leading to the establishment of effective schools.

Work Meaningfulness

As per the organizational literature, "meaning" and "meaningfulness" are separate concepts (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). The fact that a task has an explicable meaning does not necessarily imply that it has significance for the individual performing it. According to Pratt and Ashforth (2003), "meaningfulness" refers to the significance of something to a person. In the business world, the degree to which individuals find their work meaningful depends on the significance they attribute to the work. Due to individual differences, it is possible for some employees to perceive their jobs as meaningful, while others may not. However, in the organizational literature, job meaningfulness denotes a positive value (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Thus, meaningful work is a determinant of both individual and organizational performance (Neck & Milliman, 1994).

According to Torbert (1994), a meaningful profession for an individual should contribute positively to his or her physical and mental growth. In addition, for individuals to consider their work meaningful, merely benefiting themselves would not be sufficient. According to Chalofsky (2003), the significance of a position for an individual is contingent on his or her contributions to it. In this context, it can be said that for individuals to find their work meaningful, they must contribute to their personal development and enhance their work. According to Neck and Milliman (1994), a person's perception of the significance of their work is contingent on the value they assign to it. According to Chalofsky (2003), the value of work is determined by its compatibility with the individual's ideals and goals. In addition, Rosso, Dekas, and Wrzesniewski (2010) assert that this value encompasses various organizational factors that extend beyond alignment with individual attitudes, influencing the meaningfulness of work for individuals. To establish the concept of work meaningfulness (Mert & Balcı, 2019), which conveys a positive perception for individuals, it is crucial to identify all of these factors.

Research indicates that for people to find their lives meaningful, they must also find their professions meaningful (Steger & Dik, 2009). In this context, it can be anticipated that teachers who perceive their work as meaningful will facilitate the school's development and the production of well-qualified graduates.

Proactive Teacher Behavior

According to Özkan and Çangal (2022), contemporary educational institutions ought to be constantly engaged in communication with their environment and hold a dynamic perspective towards change to meet the demands of the current age. The ability of schools to adapt successfully to these changes is contingent upon their capacity to overcome obstacles and capitalize on opportunities. As such, it can be posited that teachers with proactive personalities who anticipate problems and opportunities (Frese & Fay, 2001) and undertake superior developmental efforts by improving present conditions (Crant, 2000) are indispensable to facilitating the adaptation of schools to the prevailing circumstances.

Individuals exhibiting a proactive personality are characterized by shaping and selecting their work environment to align with their preferences. These individuals demonstrate a strong determination to overcome obstacles encountered in business environments. Proactive individuals take the initiative to create opportunities in business rather than waiting for them to emerge. They persist in their efforts until they achieve a significant change due to their proactive approach (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Additionally, proactive individuals tend to take an active role in social events due to their improved sense of responsibility (Çini, 2014). In the context of schools, the proactive actions of teachers are essential for designing the social future and achieving continued organizational success. Cerit (2017) highlights that proactive teacher behaviors are a vital source of power for the continued success of schools. Moreover, Ghitulescu (2013) notes that proactive teacher behaviors are critical to achieving organizational success through adaptation to change. Therefore, proactive teacher behaviors are regarded as a crucial organizational behavior for schools to achieve success through change adaptation.

The objective of this study is to determine, based on the viewpoint of teachers, the impact of empowering leadership behaviors and work meaningfulness on proactive teacher behavior. The framework of this study explores the correlations between relevant variables and evaluates the degree to which empowering leadership behaviors and work meaningfulness elucidate proactive teacher behavior. In this regard, the study aims to seek answers to the following research questions:

• What is the level of teachers' perceptions of empowering leadership behaviors, work meaningfulness and proactive teacher behavior?

• Is there a significant relationship among teachers' empowering leadership behaviors and perceptions of work meaningfulness and proactive teacher behavior?

• Are teachers' empowering leadership behaviors and perceptions of work meaningfulness a significant predictor of proactive teacher behavior?

Method

This study examined the relationships among empowering leadership behaviors, work meaningfulness, and proactive teacher behavior. The research was designed in a relational screening model, and the data gathered from teachers were analyzed with quantitative techniques.

Participants

The present research was carried out in the province of Uşak, involving teachers from public schools. The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationships among various variables. Consequently, the data were gathered from the study group, and no specific determination was made regarding population and sampling. The research group consisted of 407 teachers. Table 1 presents detailed information on the research participants.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the research group

		Frequency	*Percentage (%)*
Gender	Female	189	46.4
	Male	218	53.6
School level	Primary	298	73.2
	Secondary	109	26.8
Seniority	1-10 years	203	49.9
	11 years and up	204	50.1
Educational Status	Undergraduate	382	93.9
	Graduate	25	6.1
Total		407	

As shown in Table 1, 46.4% of the 407 teachers comprising the research group were female and 53.6% were male. 298 of these teachers were employed in primary education, while 109 were employed in secondary education. 203 of the participating teachers had 1-10 years of experience, while 204 had 11 or more years of experience.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, the "Leader Empowering Behavior Questionnaire (LEBQ)" developed by Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) and adapted into Turkish culture by Aras (2013), was utilized to determine teachers' perceptions of the empowering leadership behaviors of school principals. The "Work as Meaning Inventory (WAMI)" created by Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012) and adapted into Turkish by Akın, Hamedoğlu, Kaya, and Sarıçam (2013) was used to determine teachers' perspectives on work meaningfulness. The "Proactive Work Behavior (PWB) Scale," developed by Parker and Collins (2010) and adapted into Turkish by Uncuoğlu-Yolcu (2017), was used to determine the level of proactive behavior among teachers. Below are the psychometric properties of the Turkish-adapted scales.

Leader Empowering Behavior Questionnaire (LEBQ): The instrument utilized to determine teachers' perceptions of empowering leadership behaviors comprises 18 items and five dimensions. The five dimensions of the Likert-type scale, consisting of five points, are designated as "authority and responsibility, self-determination, information sharing, skill development, coaching for innovative performance." During the scale adaptation phase, Aras (2013) performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), resulting in the following values: [$\chi 2/df$ =2.710 ($p>0.05$); CFI=.908; TLI=.885; RMSEA=0.068]. The dimensions' reliability coefficients were determined to be 0.67 for the authority and responsibility dimension, 0.643 for self-determination, 0.706 for information sharing, 0.768 for skill development, and 0.729 for coaching for innovative performance. This study computed Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the dimensions, which were .94 for the authority and responsibility dimension, .94 for self-determination, .93 for information sharing, .95 for skill development, and .96 for coaching for innovative performance. These coefficients suggest that the scale was a dependable tool suitable for research purposes (Kline, 2011).

Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI): The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI), employed to assess teachers' viewpoints concerning the importance of their profession, comprises three dimensions and 10 items. The dimensions include "positive meaning, meaning added by work, and high motivation," which are rated using a five-point Likert scale. The Turkish version of the inventory was subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and the results yielded the following statistics: [$\chi 2/df$ =1.498 ($p>0.05$); CFI=.98; IFI=.98; GFI=.94; RMSEA=0.057].

Moreover, the overall reliability coefficient of the inventory was calculated to be 0.86 (Akın, Hamedoğlu, Kaya, and Sarıçam, 2013). The reliability analysis conducted for this study indicated an overall reliability coefficient of 0.87. The reliability coefficients suggest that the inventory was a dependable research tool (Kline, 2011).

Proactive Work Behavior (PWB) Scale: The adaptation study of the Proactive Work Behavior Scale (PWBS), utilized to assess teacher perceptions of proactive teacher behavior, determined that a two-factor structure was appropriate for the scale within the Turkish culture. The analysis showed factor loadings ranging from 0.54 to 0.90, indicating that the five-point Likert scale with two factors, "problem prevention/individual innovativeness/taking responsibility" and "expressing," was a valid instrument to use for research purposes. The overall reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated to be 0.90 (Uncuoğlu-Yolcu, 2017). The reliability analysis conducted for this study revealed that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the entire scale was 0.94, signifying that the scale was a valid instrument for use in this study (Kline, 2011).

Data Collection and Analysis

The study involved the participation of teachers from primary and secondary educational institutions in the Uşak province. Legal permissions were obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education to collect data. A total of 407 teachers participated voluntarily in the data collection process, which took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The collected data were subjected to missing data and outlier analyses, and the reliability of the scales was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Additionally, analyzing the kurtosis and skewness coefficients and scatter diagrams of the data revealed that the coefficients ranged between -1 and +1. The related coefficients indicated that the data followed a normal distribution.

In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics such as arithmetic averages and standard deviations were utilized. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to ascertain the relationships between variables, while multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the impact of empowering leadership and work meaningfulness on proactive teacher behaviors. Before the regression analysis, the tolerance, VIF, and Durbin Watson values were examined to identify potential multicollinearity issues among the independent variables. The study findings indicated that the tolerance value was greater than 0.1, the VIF value was lower than 10, and the Durbin-Watson coefficient was under 2. Based on this evidence, it was deduced that there was no multicollinearity problem (Çokluk, 2010). Regression analysis was conducted through the enter method. The initial step of the analysis involved the inclusion of "control variables," namely gender, seniority (categorized as 1-10 years and 11 years and above), school level (primary and secondary education), and educational level (undergraduate and graduate), which were coded as dummy variables. In the second step of the analysis, empowering leadership behaviors and job meaningfulness variables were added.

Results

Depending on the first research question of the study, arithmetic means and standard deviations were calculated for the levels of empowering leadership behaviors, work meaningfulness, and proactive teacher behavior. Table 2 contains descriptive statistics for each variable.

Table 2. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the variables

	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Sd
Empowering Leadership Behaviors		
Authority and responsibility	3.70	.919
Self-determination	3.74	.979
Information sharing	3.71	.965
Skill development	3.71	.990
Coaching for innovative performance	3.72	.963
Work Meaningfulness	4.14	.550
Proactive Teacher Behavior	4.00	.592

As indicated in Table 2, the opinions expressed by teachers suggest that the average scores for empowering leadership behaviors are relatively high. In other words, teachers believe that school leaders exhibit behaviors of "authority and responsibility, self-determination, information sharing, skill development, and coaching for innovative performance" at a high level. On further analysis, it is observed that self-determination has the highest average score ($\bar{X}$=3.74), while authority and responsibility receive the lowest average score ($\bar{X}$=3.70), although the differences between them are not relatively considerable. Similarly, based on teachers' perceptions, the averages of work meaningfulness ($\bar{X}$=4.14) and proactive teacher behavior ($\bar{X}$=4.00) are also found to be at high levels.

Secondly, the relationships between proactive teacher behavior and other variables were revealed. Table 3 presents correlation coefficients between variables.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients for the relationships among empowering leadership behaviors, work meaningfulness and proactive teacher behavior

	Proactive Teacher Behavior
Empowering Leadership Behaviors	
Authority and responsibility	.101*
Self-determination	.091
Information sharing	.097
Skill development	.104*
Coaching for innovative performance	.121*
Work Meaningfulness	.421*

N=407, *p* < .01

In Table 3, correlation coefficients indicate that there are low-level, positive, and significant relationships between the empowering leadership behaviors of "authority and responsibility, skill development, and coaching for innovative performance" and proactive teacher behavior [($r_{aar \times ptb}$ = .101; p < .01), ($r_{sd \times ptb}$ = .104; p < .01), ($r_{cfip \times ptb}$ = .121; p < .01)]. However, there was no correlation between self-determination, information-sharing behaviors, and proactive teacher behavior. On the other hand, there was a Significant, moderate and positive correlation between work meaningfulness and proactive teacher behavior [($r_{wm \times ptb}$ = .421; p < .01)].

Table 4 presents the regression analysis results based on the last research question.

Table 4. Regression analysis results for predicting proactive teacher behavior

	Proactive Teacher Behavior			
	β	t	R^2	ΔR^2
			.041	-
Gender	-.002	-.043		
Seniority	.065	1.322		
School Level	-.041	-.830		
Educational Status	.189	3.860*		
			.210	.169
Authority and Responsibility	.017	.197		
Self-determination	-.019	-.176		
Information Sharing	-.057	-.483		
Skill Development	-.026	-.213		
Coaching for Innovative Performance	.148	1.343		
Work Meaningfulness	.396	8.489*		

N=407, *p* < .05

With reference to Table 4, it was determined that gender, seniority, and school level, which were included as control variables in the initial phase of the regression analysis, did not influence teachers' proactive behaviors. On the other hand, the education status variable accounted for 4.1% of the variance in proactive behavior (R^2= .041, p<0.05). In this context, it was determined that the educational status variable, which was coded as a dummy variable, significantly predicted proactive teacher behavior, and that having a postgraduate education positively influenced proactive behavior. In the second stage, the empowering leadership behaviors and work meaningfulness were included in the analysis. Consequently, it was determined that empowering leadership behaviors were not a significant predictor of proactive teacher behaviors, whereas work meaningfulness accounted for 17% of the variance in proactive teacher behavior (ΔR^2= .169, p<0.05). In general, the educational status variable and the work meaningfulness were found to be significant predictors of proactive teacher behavior, accounting for 21% of the variance (R^2= .210, p<0.05).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

The study investigated the relationship among empowering leadership behaviors, work meaningfulness, and proactive teacher behavior based on teachers' views, and their perception levels of the variables were determined first. The findings indicate that the teachers perceive high levels of empowering leadership behaviors exhibited by school administrators, find their work meaningful, and exhibit proactive behaviors. When the studies on related variables in the literature are examined, it is seen that school administrators exhibit high levels of empowering leadership behaviors in parallel with the current study (Akkaya, 2023; Dağlı & Kalkan, 2021; Karagözoğlu, 2022; Koçak & Burgaz, 2017; Sert, 2021; Soylu &Okçu, 2022; Töre & Uysal, 2022); teachers exhibit high level of work meaningfulness perception (Balcı & Ağ, 2019; Toptaş, 2018) and high level of proactive behavior (Atalay-Mazlum, 2019; Bozbayındır & Alev, 2018; Halıcı-Karabatak, 2018; Hatipoğlu, 2019; Kalkan, 2019; Uncuoğlu-Yolcu & Çakmak, 2017). Based on the present

study and recent studies conducted in similar cultural samples, it can be concluded that school administrators in Türkiye promote teacher participation in management processes by supporting their decision-making processes. Teachers who are satisfied with their work life, which is compatible with their personal goals, also proactively contribute to school development in order to improve their schools.

Secondly, this study investigated the associations among proactive teacher behavior and sub-dimensions of empowering leadership and work meaningfulness. The findings of the analyses reveal that there exist low-level positive and statistically significant relationships between teachers' proactive behaviors and empowering leadership behaviors, including authority and responsibility, skill development, and coaching for innovative performance. Consequently, it can be asserted that giving authority and responsibility to teachers, provision of support for their skill development, and mentoring for innovative performance by school administrators contribute to the development of teachers' proactive behaviors at a low level. It is worth noting that proactive teacher behaviors are self-initiated and not prompted by school administrators (Ghitulescu, 2013), which may explain the observed low-level relationship between these variables. One of the study's findings is that there is no significant correlation between the self-determination and information-sharing behaviors of empowered leadership and proactive teacher behaviors. Additionally, the definitions of proactiveness highlight individuals' decision-making abilities (Engel & Etzion, 2011). In this context, it is apparent that the current study's finding differs from previous research. It can be said that this difference arises from the fact that individuals with proactive personalities work with their own desire and determination, without needing to be motivated by anyone else (Robbins & Judge, 2013). In other words, individuals with proactive personalities can demonstrate high performance without needing the support of their leaders. The research found that the work meaningfulness variable has a significant, moderate, and positive relationship with proactive teacher behaviors. Consequently, it can be noted that teachers' perceptions of the meaning of their work enhance proactive teacher behaviors, which is crucial to sustaining the organizational success of schools (Cerit, 2017).

Based on the regression analysis results of the study, it is found that gender, seniority, and school-level variables do not demonstrate any significant impact on the proactive behavior of teachers. Conversely, the educational status variable is found to be a significant predictor of proactive behavior. Further analysis of this finding reveals that teachers having graduate education positively correlate with their level of proactivity. As per the results of the regression analysis, it is observed that the empowering leadership behaviors exhibited by school administrators do not significantly affect the proactive behavior of teachers. Conversely, teachers' perceptions regarding the meaningfulness of their jobs emerge as a significant predictor of proactive teacher behavior. Additionally, the correlation between graduate education and work meaningfulness as a predictor of proactive teacher behavior indicates that personal factors effectively determine the level of proactivity exhibited by teachers. Research indicates that teachers enhance their personal development and cultivate proactive personality traits by pursuing graduate education (Halıcı-Karabatak, 2018). Moreover, it is observed that perceiving their job as meaningful can bolster their work motivation (Yöndem, 2019) and job performance (Özkan, 2017), as well as elevate their sense of finding their lives meaningful (Balcı & Ağ, 2019).

In line with the findings of the study, receiving a graduate degree is one of the factors that increase teachers' proactivity. For this reason, it is crucial for policymakers to make decisions that encourage teachers to pursue graduate education, and for school administrators to provide the necessary resources to teachers who are willing to pursue such education. Additionally, within the

scope of the present study, it was determined that teachers' work meaningfulness is an additional factor that increases their tendency to exhibit proactive behavior. Therefore, it must be ensured that the factors that encourage teachers to find their jobs meaningful are identified and that educational policies are structured accordingly. For future research, it is suggested that qualitative studies to be conducted in order to examine the factors that contribute to the development of teachers' proactive behaviors in depth. Researchers are also encouraged to identify the specific course contents within graduate education programs that contribute to the development of proactive behavior tendencies in teachers and contribute to in this area.

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