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Sustainable Leadership: Example of Bursa Textile Sector

Sürdürülebilir Liderlik: Bursa Tekstil Sektörü Örneği

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Abstract

Sustainability means creating economic, environmental, and social growth not only in line with today's needs but also by taking steps towards the future while considering the past. In the organizational context, sustainability means ensuring that internal and external stakeholders of the organization benefit from the values created, and also ensuring that the organizational policies and strategies are ethical. In this context, leaders who can achieve this are urgently needed. In this frame, the aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of textile sector employees towards sustainability in relation to their organizational leaders. As data collection tool, a survey form consisting of demographic questions and the "Sustainable Leadership Scale", developed by McCann and Holt (2011) was prepared and delivered to the white collar employees of textile sector in Demitaş Organized Industry Zone (DOSAB) participants as both hard copies and via e-mail. The gathered data were analyzed in the SPSS 22.0 package program. The findings show that, there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between gender and age characteristics and *culture and human resources* dimension and income characteristic and both dimensions.

Keywords: Sustainability, leadership, contemporary leadership, sustainable leadership

Jel Code: M10

Öz

Sürdürülebilirlik, ekonomik, çevresel ve sosyal büyümeyi sadece bugünün ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda değil, geçmiş de göz önünde bulundurup geleceğe yönelik adımlar atarak değer yaratmaktır. Örgütsel bağlamda ise sürdürülebilirlik, örgütün iç ve dış paydaşlarını yaratılan değerlerden faydalandırmak, ayrıca örgüt politika ve stratejilerinin etik olmasını sağlamaktır. Bu bağlamda bunu sağlayabilecek liderlere şiddetle ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu kapsamda bu çalışmanın amacı, tekstil sektörü çalışanlarının örgütlerindeki liderlerin sürdürülebilir olup olmadığına ilişkin tutum ve algılarını araştırmaktır. Veri toplama aracı olarak demografik sorulardan ve McCann ve Holt (2011) tarafından geliştirilen "Sürdürülebilir Liderlik Ölçeği"nden oluşan bir anket formu hazırlanıp Demitaş Organize Sanayi Bölgesindeki (DOSAB) tekstil sektörü beyaz yaka çalışanlarına elden ve elektronik posta aracılığıyla ulaştırılmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS 22.0 paket programında analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, katılımcıların cinsiyet ve yaş karakteristikleri ve *kültür ve insan kaynakları* boyutu arasında, gelir karakteristiği ile tüm boyutlar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sürdürülebilirlik, liderlik, çağdaş liderlik, sürdürülebilir liderlik

Jel Kodu: M10

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of the first meeting of the United Nations, on the environment in 1972 and the subsequent combined report titled "Our Common Future" in 1986, which introduced sustainable development, the concept of sustainability began to become the focus of attention in academic circles (Peterlin, Dimovski and Penger, 2013). Thus, it came to the fore that the incentive mechanisms required including corporate sustainability in addition to sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development states that humanity has the ability to make development sustainable, ensuring that it meets today's needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin, 2019). This means that, in terms of sustainability, the main purpose of organizations is to create value for all society and stakeholders they operate within, while aiming to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Rodriguez, Ricart and Sanchez, 2002). Sustainable leadership can be considered a multidimensional process in terms of economic, cultural, social and ethical aspects, that not only direct today's followers but also shapes the future. In addition, it considers not only organization-environment relationship, but also the impact of the organization on environment (Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin, 2019). Therefore, sustainable leadership is much more than the phenomenon of organizational sustainability. It balances the environment, society and economy in order to maintain the existence of organizations through proven management practices and thus applying a comprehensive perspective on organizational sustainability (Avery and Bergsteiner, 2011; Çiçeklioğlu, 2023).

The primary aim of this research is to find out employees' perceptions and attitudes towards their leaders' sustainability characteristics in their organizations. In this context, Bursa city textile sector was determined as universe. Organizations that are active in textile sector are divided into two groups as home textile organizations and clothing fabric organizations. As a sample, home textile organizations that are active in Demirtaş Organized Industry Zone (DOSAB) are defined. There are 19 small and medium-scale organizations in DOSAB. According to the information gathered from the owners and top management team of these organizations, there are approximate 500 white collar employees in total.

Textile sector is one of the leading sectors in terms of being have to provide sustainability because of the fact that they use certain several chemicals in their production processes, which constitutes great importance in terms of environmental sustainability. Apart from this primary reason, there is the problem of disposal of waste products. In addition, there arises the problem of employee health and employee rights. Therefore, the attitudes of employees in the sector towards sustainability constitutes importance no matter in which level of organizational hierarchy they operate. The research was carried out via survey method, which consists of a questionnaire form with demographical questions and Sustainable Leadership Scale with 15 items developed by McCann and Holt (2011) and adapted to Turkish by Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin (2019). The data gathered were analyzed in SPSS 22.0 package programme. According to the findings, there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between gender and age characteristics and *culture and human resources* dimension and income characteristic and all two dimensions.

Although there are studies on sustainable leadership in the literature, the fact the concept is started to be given importance especially in the 21st century, makes the number of researches limited. In addition, the researches on textile sector in the frame of sustainability are limited accordingly. These situations constitute a limitation for the current study because comparing the findings with other studies in the literature becomes difficult. On the other hand, it is thought that this study constitutes originality and it is also expected that the current

study will shed light on both academicians doing research in the field and professionals, mainly the managers. Both academicians and professionals in the sector can scrutinize the results of the current study. Furthermore, academicians can compare their results with the results of the current study.

2. THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY, ITS DEFINITION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sustainability, a natural subject for economists, addresses resource scarcity, which is a fundamental concern for the economy. In the history of sustainability, Thomas Malthus's population theory, which explains the insufficient population in existing agricultural areas in 1798, has an important place (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010). Then, as a common goal of the international committee, in 1987, the United Nations Environment and Development Commission, under the chairmanship of Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, published the "Common Future" report, and this report later became known as the Brundtland Report (Ricketts, 2010). Sustainability is defined by the Brundtland Commission as "meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), placing it in social, economic and political contexts to ensure that both current and future generations can be successful. The concept describes the respectful use of natural resources in order to leave future generations with the same or even better opportunities on earth (Cabezas and Diwekar, 2012; Çayak and Çetin, 2018). Today, the adoption of sustainability processes has been made possible by this report (Yılmaz, 2023). On the other hand, the road map for sustainability was drawn with the "Agenda 21" decisions taken with the Rio declaration in 1992 and a 15-year plan was prepared at the World Sustainable Development Conference held in Johannesburg in 2002 (Çemrek and Bayraç, 2013)

Sustainability, as a concept, is used in different disciplines and political discussions and can be applied in a wide area. It is mainly based on the idea that "less capital or resources should be consumed than what is produced" (Ehnert, Harry and Zink, 2014). Sustainability, as an alternative to short-term and "myopic" planning, can be defined as a conscious effort to promote the development of sustainable activities and transform the status quo (Britannica, n.d.). Furthermore, it can be defined in terms of ecological/environmental, social and economic aspects, is a form of ethics and accountability system that aims at the efficient use and sustainability of resources (İrge and Özkan, 2019).

In the ecological context, sustainability is the ability of an ecosystem to maintain its ecological processes, functions, biodiversity and productivity over time. Sustainability in a social context means meeting the needs of the present without risking the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. When applied to the economic context, sustainability can be defined as a business adapting its practices to the use of renewable resources and being accountable for the effects of its activities on the environment (Schwalb, 2011; Çayak and Çetin, 2018).

3. SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

Leadership, which is actually a concept as old as human history, began to be researched scientifically in the 1900's. The principle of leadership "above all, do no harm" is thought to have been derived from Hippocrates and was first named by Plato (Şahne and Şar, 2015). It is also stated that Julius Caesar talked about his leadership qualities in his speeches to the Roman Senate (58-52 BC). Leadership in ancient times, on the other hand, was remembered with

people who had a great influence on the masses and was sometimes identified with the gods in mythology (Çakıroğlu and Başpınar, 2021; Mısırdalı Yangil and Başpınar, 2022).

Leadership is a concept that has been the subject of many studies for a long time and contains a great mystery. Various definitions on leadership have been made based on the person's quality, characteristics and behavior. According to Turkish Language Association (Türk Dil Kurumu-TDK), leadership is defined as the pioneer, the chief. (TDK, 2019). Şimşek, Çelik and Akgemci (2014) defines leadership as the person who has the power to make others do something by making them adopt it, that is, the set of mutual relations that arise in certain situations and are expressed as interaction between the leader and the followers (Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin, 2019). Courtice (2011), on the other hand, mentions the vitality of leadership, especially in terms of creating effective visions for the future.

However, today, common goals have become more complex and the methods of bringing people together and taking action towards these goals have increased, and have caused the phenomenon of leadership to become a much more dynamic and complex process. At the same time, leaders are a part of social structures consisting of certain rules, and changes in the social structure also cause changes in leadership understanding and styles. Creativity and innovation coming to the fore, the intensity of competition gradually increasing and sustainable competitive advantage gaining importance, the formation of new business and working patterns, and the rapid change in the dynamics of the business world also have serious effects on the phenomenon of leadership (İbicioğlu, Özmen and Taş, 2009; Çiçeklioğlu, 2023).

In addition, since the 1980's, the dynamics of the business world have changed rapidly and a new order began to emerge. In the new order, competition has intensified, innovation and creativity have become priorities, businesses have started to carry out their activities in the international arena and expectations from businesses have also formed at the international level. In addition to all these situations, the world has begun to worry about the future, this concern has reached a point that affects the activities of businesses and the understanding of corporate sustainability has reached the point of being reflected in the business methods of organizations/businesses. Corporate sustainability refers to the efforts of organizations to reduce their negative impacts on humanity, on the environment and on the economies in which they operate (Barut and Onay, 2017). Thus, it is possible for businesses to make the world a better place by increasing social welfare beyond their profit-oriented perspectives and for this, businesses need to focus on social and environmentally focused activities (Malovics, Weerawardena and Carnegiee, 2008). However, in order for businesses to implement this perspective, individuals with a new leadership approach, which is sustainable leadership, is needed. The European Commission (2011) defines a sustainable leader as a person who represents the organization by collaborating with its stakeholders in efforts to integrate the organization's social, environmental, human rights and consumer concerns with its business activities and core strategy (Knight, 2017). According to another definition, sustainable leaders are people who extend the idea of sustainability beyond their personal interests and base their operations on ethic codes in addition to believing that people will create the future by interacting together (Ferdig, 2007; Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin, 2019). Waldman and Siegel (2008), underlines that if a leader carries sustainable individual characteristics, he/she can create a sustainable organization and they can integrate sustainability in the culture of organization. Accordingly, Renwick, Redman and Maguire (2013) underlines the cruciality of sustainable characteristics of individuals. Casserley and Critchley (2010), on the other hand,

suggests that the more the leaders watch their psychological and physical needs in terms of health, the more they develop sustainable characteristics within themselves.

A sustainable leader develops and implements actions in cooperation with other individuals, supporting them and ensuring their adaptation to unexpected environmental changes. Therefore, the sustainable leader brings people together and creates opportunities for them to discover, learn, design, and solve sustainability problems (Ferdig, 2007). A sustainable leader is a leader who shares the responsibility of not wasting human and financial resources and preventing damage to both social and physical environment (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003). Thus, they extend the idea of sustainability beyond their own interests, and personal ethics become the basis for their actions (Ferdig, 2007; Yangil, 2016).

The purpose of sustainable leadership is to lead an organization and its members towards sustainable development, implement socially responsible activities and use socially responsible business methods. Therefore, sustainable leadership is not easy to implement. It is important to maintain attention and efforts that seek continuous improvement in sustainable leadership and it is clear that the overall performance of the entire organization depends on the effectiveness of the manager's performance, but it would not be right to attribute this only to the ability of the leader; because most of the leaders and supporters often burn out in this process, and the leaders who replace them cannot always continue the work started and maintain the results achieved (Šimanskienė and Župerkienė, 2014). For this reason, effective sustainable leadership behavior can only emerge when there are friendly and cooperative behavioral interactions among team members (Jahanshahi and Brem, 2017; Çayak and Çetin, 2018).

Furthermore, nowadays, organizations see their employees as capital and attach serious value to them as the most important building block of the organization. Therefore, organizations are aware that the most important element in maintaining the continuity and success of organizations is their employees, but that efforts must be made to ensure that employees are satisfied not only in their work life but also in their family life. In this sense, the main goal of sustainable leadership is to ensure that organizational goals are achieved by creating the human resources infrastructure and it stands for the planned practices that require effectively meeting the current needs of organizations and societies without harming their ability to meet the needs in the future, ensuring and increasing the organizational learning capacity in the long term and establishing a balance between human resources and their family lives (Çiçeklioğlu, 2023).

To sum up, corporate sustainability, means that businesses realize their economic, social and environmental responsibilities in integrity, establish a sustainable balance among these responsibilities (Pelinescu and Rădulescu, 2011). Successfully addressing and implementing corporate sustainability on a business basis, is possible only via leaders who carry the necessary qualifications to manage this process. This situation stands for the concept of sustainable leadership (Middlebrooks et al., 2009). Sustainable leaders are leaders who build harmony among economical, social and environmental facts (Pelinescu and Rădulescu, 2011). In addition, as it is afore mentioned, a sustainable leader is a visionary leader who sees the transfer of existing resources to the next generation as his/her primary goal (Yangil, 2016).

3.1. The Characteristics of Sustainable Leadership

To solve the new problems that they face every day, organizational managers need new ideas on issues such as how to manage the organization, how to communicate and how to design the future activities of the organization. Thus, the internal and external pressures faced

by organizations lead managers to develop new methods to maintain product/service quality and boost employee morale in ensuring the stability of the organization. To achieve these goals, a new leadership style such as sustainable leadership is needed (Šimanskienė and Župerkienė 2014), as mentioned earlier. Therefore, as a shift towards sustainable values and vision continues in organizations, societies and governments, sustainable leadership will become increasingly important (Middlebrooks et al., 2009; Yangil, 2016).

Especially in a world dominated by change and chaos, sustainable leaders who encourage, inspire and support better actions are needed and leaders are expected to have these characteristics (Visser and Courtice, 2011; Aktaş, 2015; Yangil 2016; İrge and Özkan, 2019):

Business vision: The vision is clearly stated and focused on sustainability, with long-term goals.

Responsibility: They have responsibilities towards the individual, groups, organization, and society.

Organizational culture: There is a strong organizational culture oriented towards sustainable development. Solidarity is mutual aid based on common effort.

Trust: There is a high level of trust and goodwill.

Activity results: The synergy of the joint efforts of group members emerges.

Cooperation: There is regular cooperation.

Team-centered orientation: There is teamwork.

Quality: It is possible to achieve success through a sustainable-oriented organizational culture. The concept of sustainability is based on sustainability principles.

Loyalty: Employees are loyal to the organization. Their needs are met and their safety is assured.

Employee development: All employees are trained. Professional development takes place regularly.

Innovation/Creativity: Funds required for systematic, regular and creativity are distributed.

Business Relations: Cooperation is sought

In addition, the seven principles of sustainable leadership constitute great importance. These principles are defined as *depth, length, breadth, justice, diversity, resourcefulness and protection*. (Hargreaves and Fink, 2003). In this respect, sustainable leadership aims to lead to broad and permanent learning rather than acquiring tried and little-known knowledge. It is continuous and it flourishes the most valuable aspects of life from one leader to the next from year to year. It is also a distributed leadership that forms and expands on the leadership of others and a leadership style that does not cause any harm to its immediate environment, but rather develops and supports interconnected diversity. By developing material and human resources, the organization discovers leadership ability in the early stages of the career process and creates a better future by learning from the past. Sustainable leaders have the ability to communicate effectively and set clear goals and apply persuasive approaches to achieving those goals. Additionally, sustainable leadership reflects team-building capacity and skills, social collective identity for followers, and the leader's ability to inspire followers. Beyond all this, sustainable leadership builds a motivated workforce by showing extraordinary levels of effort and energy (Zorlu and Korkmaz, 2020).

In addition, in Smith, Senge and Kruschwitz's (2010) work titled "The Necessary Revolution: Working Together to Create a Sustainable World", three characteristics that today's leaders must have are explained as *system thinking*, *collaboration* and *adaptation*.

System thinking: While traditional leaders focus on parts, sustainable world leaders are systems thinkers who can connect the parts to see the whole and see how these parts come together.

Collaboration: While traditional leaders adopt a scarcity-oriented, competitive perspective, sustainable world leaders think with the "help development" method based on collaboration across business and social boundaries.

Adaptation: While traditional leaders focus directly on problem solving and detailed plans, sustainable world leaders have a more creative orientation, recontextualizing old problems by looking at the relationship between the future vision and the current situation to achieve important goals.

Furthermore, when Luenburger and Goleman (2010) examined how leadership is formed in companies aiming for sustainability, they identified three stages. Each of these stages requires different organizational skills and leadership competencies. In the first stage, if the organization is not yet ready for sustainability, it will have a hard time in the change process. Therefore, sustainable leaders should influence employees through collaboration until the understanding of sustainability becomes a strong business skill. The second stage is the institutional vision. It is reduced to the behavioral level of employees in a way that becomes a sustainable business plan with environmental, economic and social dimensions. In the third stage, the organization constantly raises the bar and uses sustainability to create competitive advantage, increasingly sees sustainability as a strategic opportunity and evaluates performance results accordingly. Therefore, sustainable leaders should predict and evaluate long-term sustainability trends, see opportunities and make strategic decisions that can be good for the organization and develop them. Tideman, Muriel, and Zandee (2013), on the other hand, proposed the 6C model consisting of *context*, *consciousness*, *connectedness*, *creativity*, *collaboration* and *continuity* for the sustainable leadership model (Ricgard 2010; Yilmaz, 2023).

4. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHES ON SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP IN TEXTILE SECTOR

A review of the literature reveals several researches, both international and national, on sustainable leadership and textile sector. Although the number of researches on sustainable leadership in textile sector is limited, the most relevant ones are tried to be explained in this section.

Ahmad and Zia (2023), aimed to investigate the effects of sustainable leadership through the intermediate mechanism of structural empowerment on sustainable performance, in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan, which are active in textile sector. According to the findings, sustainable leadership affected on sustainable performance, via structural empowerment. In this sense, the authors suggest that because of the fact that sustainable leadership pays attention to empowering employees through opportunities such as decision making and skill building, it contributes to sustainable performance.

Gull, Qamar, Bukhari and Tanvir (2022), aimed to research the role of transformational leadership in establishing a sustainable environment, in ISO-14001 certified textile

organizations in Lahore, Pakistan. According to the findings, transformational leadership significantly affects on the strategies of enabling sustainability.

Van Hong, Thi Le, Ngoc Huy and Nguyen (2021), aimed to research the moderating effect of psychological safety within the relationship of entrepreneurial leadership and job performance of textile industry in Vietnam. They found that, entrepreneurial leadership positively affected on both team task performance and individual job performance. They also suggested that Vietnam textile need to increase both individual and group task performances for sustainable leadership. They also underlined that there was an important relation between sustainable leadership and psychological security in the textile sector.

In national studies, Yontar and Zengin (2023), aimed at researching the variables affecting sustainability in supply chain management in textile sector. These variables are determined as customer-oriented approach, use of resources and delivery oriented approach. According to the findings, the most significant effects were the techniques of effective risk management, fulfillment of customer requests, order tracking, use of recyclable packaging and accuracy of forecasting.

Telli (2019), in her PhD dissertation, aimed at researching the effect of environmental type on organizational types according to organizational DNA via leadership style, in textile sector that are active in Denizli, Bursa, İstanbul and Tekirdağ. According to the findings, the type of organizations are affected from the type of environment, in accordance with their organizational DNA, through leadership style. In this sense, the author suggests that leadership styles are affected from the type of the environment.

Can ve Ayvaz (2017), scrutinized sustainability in the frame of ecology and they aimed at contributing to sustainable development via drawing attention to sustainable fashion and providing producers, consumers and researchers with awareness. The authors, throughout their paper, draws attention especially to deterioration of human health and scarce natural resources and wastes in the environment, which hinders environmental sustainability. In this sense, the importance of continuing activities for textile sector, by taking into account of both human and environmental health, comes to the fore. In the sector, the use of natural resources and chemical materials have to be as minimized as possible. In this sense, "Sustainable Fashion", "Eco Fashion", "Slow Fashion" etc. approaches have emerged as a reaction to the sustainability problems.

5. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study, is to find out the perceptions and attitudes of textile sector employees towards sustainable leadership in their organizations. The primary aim of this research is to find out employees' perceptions and attitudes towards their leaders' sustainability characteristics in their organizations. In this sense, one main hypothesis and four sub-hypotheses are developed to analyze demographic qualities (gender, marital status, age, income) and put forward the attitudes of participants on the basis of each demographical quality. In this context, Bursa city textile sector was determined as universe. Organizations that are active in textile sector are divided into two groups as home textile organizations and clothing fabric organizations. As sample, home textile organizations that are active in Demirtaş Organized Industry Zone (DOSAB), are defined. There are 19 small and middle scale organizations in DOSAB. According to the information gathered from the owners and top management team of these organizations, there are approximately 500 white collar employees in total. Textile sector is one of the leading sectors in terms of being have to provide sustainability because of the fact that they use certain several chemicals in their production

processes, which constitutes great importance in terms of environmental sustainability. Apart from this primary reason, there is the problem of disposal of waste products. In addition, there is the issue of employee health and employee rights. Therefore, the attitudes of employees in the sector towards sustainability constitutes importance no matter in which level of organizational hierarchy they operate. In this sense, because of the fact that it is impossible to reach all the organizations that are active in textile sector in terms of both budget and time, the organizations in the city of Bursa, Demirtaş Organized Industry District, Türkiye, are taken as sample. The study was approved by Bursa Technical University Research Ethics Committee, dated and numbered 25.10.2023-E.24101. In the scope of the research, a survey form that consists demographical questions and “Sustainable Leadership Scale” with 15 items that is developed by McCann and Holt (2011) and adapted to Turkish by Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin (2019), is formed and delivered to the potential participants both as hardcopies and as e-mail. 241 individuals filled the survey forms. The gathered data were analyzed via SPSS 22.0 package programme. According to the reliability analysis, the reliability of the scale (Table 1) is 0.959.

Table 1: Reliability of the Scale

Sustainable Leadership Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Value
	0.959

As for demographical findings (Table 2), 119 (49.4%) participants are women, 122 (50.6%) participants are men. In terms of marital status, 158 (65.6%) participants are married and 83 (34.4%) participants are single. As for age groups, 13 (5.4%) participants take place 18-29 age group, 74 (30.7%) participants take place 30-39 age group, 93 (38.6%) participants take place in 40-49 age group, 35 (14.5%) participants take place in 50-59 age group and 26 (10.8%) participants take place in 60+ age group. In terms of monthly income, 38 (15.8%) participants earn 15000-25000 Turkish Liras (TL), 49 (20.3%) participants earn 26000-55000 TL, 64 (26.6%) participants earn 36000-45000 TL, 55 (22.8%) participants earn 46000-55000 and 35 (14.5%) participants earn 56000+ TL.

Table 2: Demographical Findings

Gender:	Women	Men			
	119 (49.4%)	122 (50.6%)			
Marital status:	Married	Single			
	158 (65.6%)	83 (34.4%)			
Age:	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
	13 (5.4%)	74 (30.7%)	93 (38.6%)	35 (14.5%)	26(10.8%)
Income:	15,000-25,000	26,500-55,000	36,000-45,000	46,000-55,000	56,000+
	38 (15.8%)	49 (20.3%)	64 (26.6%)	55 (22.8%)	35 (14.5%)

5.1. Hypothesis

H₁: There is statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic (gender, marital status, age, income) qualities of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h₁: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₂: There is statistically significant difference between gender quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h₁: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₃: There is statistically significant difference between marital status quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h₁: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₄: There is statistically significant difference between age quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h₁: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₅: There is statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic income quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. $\mu_1 > \mu_2$

5.2. Research Findings

5.2.1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics (Table 3) of the Sustainable Leadership Scale show that the most important item according to the participants is item 1 with average of 3.9502, "My leader acts with a sustainable social responsibility awareness.". Secondly, there is the idea "My leader acts with sustainable moral responsibility awareness" which is item 3 and which has an average of 3.7261. In the third place of importance, there is the idea "My leader balances sustainable social responsibility with profit", which is item 10 with an average of 3.6100.

It can be concluded that the participants feel that their leaders are sustainable, especially in environmental and social contexts, which implies that their leaders are truly devoted to sustainability. Furthermore, it can also be inferred that profitability is not in the primary concern for the leaders. This indicates that, sustainability in social responsibility, which stands for sustainability in organizational culture as well, is crucial for the leaders.

On the other hand, the least important item for the participants is item 11, "My leader ensures sustainability by striving for all kinds of change," with an average of 3.3776. This item has the lowest average of all items.

In this context, it can be understood that the participants again do feel that their leaders focus on future via adapting to changes, which is a must for survival in the competitive global environment. The fact that the averages of the items are approximately the same, proves that the leaders of the sample organizations are sustainable leaders according to the employees.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Items		Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree	x	SD
1- My leader acts with a sustainable social responsibility awareness.	fi	14	8	24	125	70	3.9502	1.02348
	Y.fi	5.8	3.3	10.0	51.9	29.0		
2- My leader acts with awareness of sustainable environmental responsibility.	fi	22	23	44	95	57	3.5892	1.20819
	Y.fi	9.1	9.5	18.3	39.4	23.7		
3- My leader acts with sustainable moral responsibility awareness.	fi	15	30	18	121	57	3.7261	1.14004
	Y.fi	6.2	12.4	7.5	50.2	23.7		
4- My leader makes decisions by considering the entire organization.	fi	23	17	65	76	60	3.5519	1.21037
	Y.fi	9.5	7.1	27.0	31.5	24.9		
5- The management to which my leader reports	fi	13	42	47	115	24	3.3942	1.05584

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officially recognizes when a mistake is made that will affect sustainability.	Y.fi	5.4	17.4	19.5	47.7	10.0		
6- My leader is willing to correct mistakes that affect sustainability.	fi	21	34	56	52	78	3.5477	1.30656
	Y.fi	8.7	14.1	23.2	21.6	32.4		
7- My leader takes initiative to use unique innovative methods to solve sustainability problems.	fi	23	40	28	104	46	3.4564	1.24129
	Y.fi	9.5	16.6	11.6	43.2	19.1		
8- My leader tries to create prosperity through sustainable efforts.	fi	18	46	16	129	32	3.4606	1.16167
	Y.fi	7.5	19.1	6.6	53.5	13.3		
9- My leader thinks about the purpose before pursuing profit	fi	18	46	16	129	32	3.4606	1.16167
	Y.fi	7.5	19.1	6.6	53.5	13.3		
10- My leader balances sustainable social responsibility with profit.	fi	42	25	25	42	107	3.6100	1.54561
	Y.fi	17.4	10.4	10.4	17.4	44.4		
11- My leader ensures sustainability by striving for all kinds of change.	fi	26	42	20	121	32	3.3776	1.22583
	Y.fi	10.8	17.4	8.3	50.2	13.3		
12- My leader takes into account how sustainability affects employees	fi	28	27	24	95	67	3.6058	1.31268
	Y.fi	11.6	11.2	10.0	39.4	27.8		
13- My leader communicates with all participants regarding sustainability decisions.	fi	29	11	55	98	48	3.5187	1.21135
	Y.fi	12.0	4.6	22.8	40.7	19.9		
14- My leader tries to establish a culture of sustainability through communication efforts	fi	32	39	16	109	45	3.3983	1.31934
	Y.fi	13.3	16.2	6.6	45.2	18.7		
15- My leader has a plan that takes sustainability into account in hiring, promoting employees, and replacing leaders.	fi	33	37	18	94	59	3.4523	1.36885
	Y.fi	13.7	15.4	7.5	39.0	24.5		

*fi: Data frequency; Y.fi: Frequency value percent; STD: Standart deviation

5.2.2. Factor Analysis

The original Sustainable Leadership Scale has 5 dimensions and these are *ethics and social responsibility, change, innovation and profitability, culture and human resources management and sustainable leadership* (McCann and Holt, 2011; Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin, 2019). However, according to the results of factor analysis (Table 4), the Sustainable Leadership Scale was grouped under 2 dimensions in the current research. The reason for this can be dependent on the sample. As mentioned in the introduction section, the sample is defined as home textile organizations. In this sense, the participants could have evaluated the scale items in the way that they grouped them under two dimensions. In addition, the number of participants could have affected the evaluation of the scale items.

The dimensions were named as *culture and human resources management*, and *ethics and social responsibility*, in accordance with the original scale. While *culture and human resources management* dimension explains the Sustainable Leadership Scale with a percentage of 47.983, the dimension of *ethics and social responsibility* explains with a percentage of 34.200. The cumulative percentage of 2 dimensions was found as 82.183.

Table 4: Explained Total Variance

Component	Calculated Sum of Squares			Rotated Sum of Squares		
	Total	%Variance	Cumulative%	Total	%Variance	Cumulative%
1	10.171	72.653	72.653	6.718	47.983	47.983
2	1.334	9.529	82.183	4.788	34.200	82.183

5.2.3. Comparative Statistics

Since the data distribution is not normal according to the normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) test (Table 5), non-parametric Mann-Whitney U and non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were applied to the data so as to analyze whether there was a statistical difference in the answers given by the participants according to their socio-demographic findings regarding the dimensions obtained as the result of factor analysis (Table 6). According to the analysis results, there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between gender and age qualities and *culture and human resources* dimension and income quality and both dimensions. On the other hand, it is found out that there is not a statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between gender and age qualities and *ethics and social responsibility* dimension and marital status quality and both dimensions.

Hence, H₂ hypothesis, *There is statistically significant difference between gender quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h1: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ is accepted.*

H₃ hypothesis, *There is statistically significant difference between marital status quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h1: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ is rejected.*

H₄ hypothesis, *There is statistically significant difference between age quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h1: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ is accepted.*

H₅ hypothesis, *There is statistically significant difference between the socio-demographic income quality of textile sector employees and their attitudes towards sustainable leadership. h1: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ is accepted.*

Table 5: One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Statistic	df	Sig.
Sustainable Leadership Scale	0.238	241	0.000

Table 6: Comparative Statistics

Variable	Dimension	Test	Statistics	P
Gender	Culture and Human Resources Management	Mann-Whitney U	5168.500	0.000
	Ethics and Social Responsibility		6767.000	0.361
Marital Status	Culture and Human Resources Management	Mann-Whitney U	5837.000	0.159
	Ethics and Social Responsibility		5613.500	0.065
Age	Culture and Human Resources Management	Kruskal-Wallis	44.697	0.000
	Ethics and Social Responsibility		8.665	0.070
Income	Culture and Human Resources Management	Kruskal-Wallis	40.045	0.000
	Ethics and Social Responsibility		63.702	0.000

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Sustainability requires the harmonizing environmental and social issues with the organization's values, mission and vision. It aims to increase all opportunities to meet the needs of individuals and increase their level of welfare, to meet their wishes and expectations, to control the use of natural resources and to renew the environmental resources used (Shrivastava, 1995). In this sense, sustainable leadership constitutes an important aspect of sustainable development in the organizational context. It directs the organization and its members to development, is evaluated as implementing social activities and using social entrepreneurship methods (Silalay, Ratanaolarn and Thawisook, 2018; Çiçeklioğlu, 2023).

Sustainable leadership is a managerial perspective that enables reducing employee turnover, accelerating innovations, and achieving more efficient results (Kalkavan, 2015). Sustainable leadership is the key force that affects change and continuity in the long term (Hargreaves and Fink, 2004). Sustainable leadership is a type of leadership that is based on continuity and aims to lead groups in a managerial sense. Sustainable leadership is a concept where the sense of responsibility is experienced intensely. Institutions need sustainable leaders to achieve their goals. Leaders who unite groups around a compelling idea to realize long-term plans must also have sustainable strategies. In today's conditions, where sustainability has become a corporate value, individuals leading the institution need to improve themselves in this direction and continue their education in this sense. The main goal of institutions that are open to continuous improvement is to ensure their sustainability (Mısırdalı Yangil and Dil Şahin, 2019).

The analysis results of the current research show that there is a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between gender and age qualities and *culture and human resources* dimension and income quality and all two dimensions. On the other hand, the results also show that there is not a statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between gender and age qualities and *ethics and social responsibility* dimension and marital status quality and all two dimensions.

This implies that, regarding their demographical characteristics, the attitudes and perceptions of textile sector employees towards sustainability in their organizations can differ. Additionally, according to the scale items that are considered the most important for the participants, it can be inferred that the participants do feel that their leaders focus on future by adapting to changes, which is a must for survival in the competitive global environment. The fact that the averages of the items are approximately the same, proves that the leaders of the sample organizations are sustainable leaders according to the participant employees. The participants feel that their leaders are sustainable especially in environmental and social contexts, which implies that their leaders are truly devoted to sustainability. Furthermore, it can also be inferred that profitability is not in the first place for the leaders and without

sustainability in social responsibility, which stands for sustainability in organizational culture as well, is more important for their leaders.

On the other hand, when these results are compared to the other research findings in the literature, it is seen that the sustainability characteristic of the leaders significantly influence employees' positive attitudes towards organizations, in accordance with the current research. The fact that they are empowered and supported for team work, creates an environment of trust, which also leads to psychological well-being and high performance of the employees' in individual terms. In addition, in terms of textile sector, organizations create sustainable environment both internally and externally through their sustainable leadership characteristics. Especially in the use of natural resources and chemical materials, leaders seem to be very careful and pay attention to sustainability. They pay attention to the factors such as recycling and human health.

As mentioned in the previous sections, there is a limited number of researches in literature in the context of sustainable leadership. In addition, as afore mentioned again, the number of researches on textile sector in the frame of sustainable leadership are limited. Therefore, although the findings of the current study represents the sample of textile sector, it is not sufficient enough to draw conclusions about the whole sector. In order to be able to compare different findings, new researches both in textile sector and in other sectors should be conducted. Thus, comparisons on sectoral basis would be possible. Especially professionals/managers need these kind of researches in order to be able to make long term plans and strategies in the global competitive business world.

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