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Article

An examination of organizational justice and the leadership styles of administrators according to teachers' perceptions

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Abstract: In this study, the teachers' perceptions about organizational justice and the leadership styles of school administrators were examined. The study was conducted using correlational survey model within the framework of a quantitative research approach, and the sample consisted of 300 teachers. The data were collected electronically using the Leadership Styles Scale and the Organizational Justice Scale and were analyzed with the SPSS 25.0 software. The results of the analyses indicated that a strong positive relationship was found between teachers' perceptions transformational leadership and of organizational justice. According to gender, statistically significant differences were found in perceptions of transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and organizational justice in favor of male teachers, whereas no statistically significant differences were identified according to educational level or professional experience. It is recommended to increase leadership development programs for educational administrators and to support practices aimed at creating a more just school environment.

Keywords: organizational justice; leadership styles; transformational leadership; transactional leadership; laissez-faire leadership; teachers

1. Introduction

Educational organizations are complex social systems in which school administrators' leadership behaviors and teachers' perceptions of fairness play a critical role in determining organizational effectiveness. Schools are expected not only to achieve academic goals but also to create supportive, equitable, and collaborative working environments. Within this context, leadership and organizational justice are two fundamental concepts that significantly influence teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and professional performance. Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions regarding the fairness of organizational decisions, procedures, and interpersonal interactions (Greenberg, 1987). Although the concept originated from Adams' Equity Theory, Greenberg introduced organizational justice into organizational behavior literature as a comprehensive framework for understanding fairness perceptions. Research has consistently linked organizational justice to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, motivation, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee performance (Akgündüz & Güzel, 2014; Kalay, 2016; Karavardar, 2015). In educational settings, teachers who perceive their schools as fair are more likely to demonstrate higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, and positive professional behaviors, contributing to a healthier school climate and more effective educational outcomes (Cansoy & Polatcan, 2018; Yıldızbaş et al., 2023).

Organizational justice is commonly conceptualized through three dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Colquitt et

al., 2001). Distributive justice concerns the fairness of outcomes such as rewards, responsibilities, and opportunities; procedural justice concerns the fairness of decision-making processes; and interactional justice focuses on respectful, transparent, and fair interpersonal treatment during the implementation of organizational procedures (Bobocel & Holmvall, 2001; Cropanzano et al., 2002). Positive perceptions across these dimensions strengthen trust in management and favorable organizational attitudes, whereas perceived injustice may contribute to alienation, cynicism, silence, burnout, and intentions to leave the organization (Kurtulmuş & Karabıyık, 2016; Tokgöz, 2011; Kıranlı Güngör & Potuk, 2018).

Leadership is likewise recognized as an important determinant of organizational success. It can be defined as a process through which individuals influence, motivate, guide, and direct others toward organizational goals (Akın, 2023). In educational organizations, school leaders are expected to manage administrative processes while also inspiring teachers, supporting professional development, fostering collaboration, and establishing a positive organizational culture. Thus, leadership behaviors substantially shape teachers' perceptions of their work environment and organizational experiences.

Among the most widely studied leadership approaches are transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leaders inspire followers through vision, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and motivational support. Transactional leaders emphasize established rules, performance expectations, and reward systems, whereas laissez-faire leadership is characterized by limited intervention and passive managerial behavior. Previous research has associated transformational leadership with teacher motivation, school culture, professional development, organizational effectiveness, organizational happiness, creative thinking, and professional performance (Akçekoce & Bilgin, 2016; Aytaç & Usta, 2023; Heenan et al., 2023; He et al., 2024; Yada et al., 2025; Yüksel & Bilgivar, 2024).

The relationship between leadership and organizational justice has received increasing attention. Research suggests that supportive, transparent, participative, and ethical leadership behaviors can foster positive perceptions of organizational justice among teachers (Aykanat & Yıldırım, 2012; Oğuz, 2011). Transformational leadership, in particular, has been identified as an important predictor of organizational justice because it promotes participation, trust, communication, and equitable treatment (Güneş & Buluç, 2012).

International research further supports the association between leadership and organizational justice. Khan et al. (2023) reported that organizational justice mediates the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance, while Alimansyah and Takahashi (2023) found that perceived organizational justice mediates the relationship between talent management practices and outcomes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. In educational contexts, Nwankwo and Nwakanma (2025) demonstrated that transformational leadership and organizational justice significantly predict teachers' work engagement, while Li et al. (2025) found that spiritual leadership positively influences teachers' well-being through increased trust and perceptions of organizational justice. Research across different educational systems also indicates that leadership styles shape school climate, teacher motivation, and organizational effectiveness (Veletić et al., 2023; Heenan et al., 2023).

Despite this growing body of research, relatively few studies have simultaneously examined school administrators' transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles and teachers' organizational justice perceptions within the same framework. This limitation is particularly relevant in geographically and socio-culturally distinctive educational contexts, where organizational conditions may shape how leadership behaviors and fairness

are perceived. Further empirical evidence is also needed regarding how these perceptions vary across demographic characteristics.

Based on this rationale, the present study examines the relationship between school administrators' leadership styles and teachers' perceptions of organizational justice. By considering multiple leadership styles within the same empirical framework, the study seeks to provide current evidence from educational organizations and offer insights into leadership practices that may promote fairness, trust, and organizational effectiveness in schools.

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Organizational justice in educational organizations

Organizational justice has become a central concept in organizational behavior because of its influence on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and organizational outcomes. Originating from Adams' Equity Theory, the concept was introduced into organizational research by Greenberg (1987), who defined it in terms of employees' perceptions of the fairness of organizational procedures, decisions, and interpersonal treatment. Organizational justice is generally conceptualized through distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions (Bies & Moag, 1986; Colquitt et al., 2001). Distributive justice concerns the fairness of outcomes such as rewards, responsibilities, promotions, and opportunities; procedural justice focuses on the fairness of decision-making processes; and interactional justice emphasizes respectful, dignified, honest, and transparent interpersonal treatment. In educational organizations, these perceptions are particularly important because they are associated with teachers' commitment, motivation, trust, job satisfaction, and school effectiveness. Previous research has shown that perceived organizational justice is positively related to organizational commitment, motivation, trust, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee performance (Bal, 2014; Büyükyılmaz & Tunçbiz, 2015; Cansoy & Polatcan, 2018; Cihangiroğlu & Yılmaz, 2010; Eroğlu, 2014; Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022; İşcan & Sayın, 2011; Yıldızbaş et al., 2022). Conversely, perceived injustice has been associated with work alienation, organizational silence, cynicism, burnout, and other negative organizational outcomes (Kıranlı Güngör & Potuk, 2018; Kurtulmuş & Karabıyık, 2016; Tokgöz, 2011).

Within educational settings, organizational justice is therefore not merely an individual perception but also an important organizational resource that can contribute to a healthy school climate and effective school functioning. Cansoy and Polatcan (2018) and Yıldızbaş et al. (2022) reported that organizational justice promotes organizational citizenship behaviors and supports overall school effectiveness. Similarly, Bal (2014) emphasized its role in strengthening teachers' commitment, while Cihangiroğlu and Yılmaz (2010) highlighted its contribution to motivation, morale, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. Research has also demonstrated that fair managerial practices strengthen trust and confidence in organizational decision-making (Eroğlu, 2014; İşcan & Sayın, 2011). Recent international evidence reinforces the importance of organizational justice, showing that it remains a strong predictor of employee attitudes and workplace behavior and that distributive and procedural justice are associated with affective commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Adamovic, 2023; Alimansyah & Takahashi, 2023). Hermanto and Srimulyani (2022) similarly found that organizational justice positively influences organizational citizenship behavior and employee performance among teachers. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that organizational justice plays a critical role in shaping teachers' professional experiences and the effectiveness of educational organizations.

1.1.2. Leadership styles in educational organizations

Leadership is a fundamental concept in organizational and educational research and generally refers to the process of influencing, motivating, guiding, and directing individuals toward organizational objectives (Akın, 2023). In educational institutions, leadership extends beyond administrative functions to include establishing a shared vision, supporting teachers' professional development, fostering collaboration, and creating positive organizational cultures. Among the various leadership approaches, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership have received considerable attention. Transformational leadership is characterized by visionary thinking, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation; transactional leadership emphasizes organizational stability through rewards, sanctions, and performance monitoring; and laissez-faire leadership involves limited managerial involvement and avoidance of decision-making responsibilities. Research generally indicates that transformational leadership is associated with more positive organizational outcomes, as transformational school administrators encourage innovation, collaboration, professional development, and higher levels of teacher performance. Heenan et al. (2023), in a systematic review of studies conducted between 2012 and 2022, concluded that transformational leadership enhances teacher motivation and contributes to positive school cultures. Similarly, He et al. (2024) found that instructional leadership positively predicts teachers' professional development and participation in professional learning activities, while Yada et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of clear vision, teacher participation in decision-making, and balanced communication in successful school leadership.

The effects of leadership extend beyond motivation and professional development to teachers' broader organizational experiences. Aytaç and Usta (2023) found that transformational leadership positively predicts teachers' organizational happiness, whereas laissez-faire leadership negatively affects organizational happiness. Yüksel and Bilgivar (2024) similarly demonstrated that transformational leadership contributes significantly to teachers' creative thinking tendencies, while Akçekoce and Bilgin (2016) reported that effective leadership behaviors enhance teacher performance through professional development, ethical conduct, and positive school cultures. International evidence also highlights the organizational significance of leadership. Using TALIS 2018 data from 37 countries, Veletić et al. (2023) found that school leadership styles significantly influence perceptions of school climate, with distributed leadership having particularly strong effects on teachers' evaluations of their school environment. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that leadership behaviors play a central role in shaping teachers' professional experiences, school climate, and organizational perceptions.

1.1.3. Relationship between leadership styles and organizational justice

The relationship between leadership and organizational justice has attracted increasing scholarly attention because of its implications for organizational effectiveness. As primary representatives of organizational authority, leaders influence how employees interpret organizational decisions, procedures, and interpersonal interactions. Leadership behaviors characterized by transparency, participation, consistency, and ethical conduct are therefore likely to strengthen perceptions of organizational justice, whereas passive or inconsistent leadership may undermine them. In educational settings, empirical evidence supports this relationship. Oğuz (2011) and Aykanat and Yıldırım (2012) found positive associations between school administrators' leadership behaviors and teachers' perceptions of organizational justice, while Güneş and Buluç (2012) demonstrated that transformational leadership significantly enhances perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. These findings suggest that the way school administrators exercise authority and interact with teachers may be an important

factor in shaping perceptions of fairness within schools.

International research further supports the interconnected nature of leadership and organizational justice. Khan et al. (2023) found that organizational justice mediates the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance, suggesting that leadership may influence organizational outcomes partly through fairness perceptions. Similarly, Nwankwo and Nwakanma (2025) reported that transformational leadership and organizational justice jointly predict teachers' work engagement, particularly through inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, while Li et al. (2025) found that spiritual leadership contributes to teacher well-being through increased trust and perceptions of organizational justice. Related evidence indicates that organizational justice also mediates the effects of organizational practices on employee outcomes (Alimansyah & Takahashi, 2023) and contributes to performance through organizational citizenship behavior (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). Collectively, these findings indicate that leadership and organizational justice function as interconnected organizational resources that shape employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance. Transformational leadership, in particular, appears consistently associated with more positive justice perceptions and organizational outcomes. However, examining transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership simultaneously in relation to teachers' organizational justice perceptions may provide a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship in educational organizations.

1.1.4. Research gap and the current study

A review of the literature indicates that organizational justice and leadership have been extensively examined both as independent constructs and in relation to a range of organizational outcomes. Organizational justice has been associated with important teacher-related outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational trust, performance, organizational citizenship behavior, work alienation, organizational silence, and organizational cynicism (Bal, 2014; Cansoy & Polatcan, 2018; Karavardar, 2015; Kurtulmuş & Karabıyık, 2016; Tokgöz, 2011). Similarly, leadership styles have been shown to influence teachers' organizational happiness, creative thinking tendencies, crisis management processes, organizational synergy, and performance (Akçekoce & Bilgin, 2016; Aytaç & Usta, 2023; Karaağaç et al., 2022; Kuru & Kahveci, 2024; Yüksel & Bilgivar, 2024). These findings establish the importance of both constructs in educational organizations. However, the literature also reveals several areas that warrant further investigation.

First, although previous research has established associations between leadership and organizational justice, much of the literature has examined these constructs in relation to other organizational outcomes or has focused on a single leadership approach, such as transformational, ethical, instructional, or spiritual leadership (He et al., 2024; Heenan et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025; Yada et al., 2025). Consequently, comparatively less attention has been devoted to examining transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles simultaneously in relation to teachers' perceptions of organizational justice. Considering that these leadership styles represent substantially different patterns of managerial behavior, examining them together may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how school administrators' leadership practices are associated with teachers' perceptions of fairness.

Second, the existing literature does not provide a consistent picture regarding the role of demographic characteristics in teachers' perceptions of leadership and organizational justice. Findings concerning gender, educational level, and professional experience vary across studies, suggesting that these

characteristics may be associated with perceptions of leadership and justice in context-dependent ways. However, relatively few studies have examined these demographic differences alongside the relationship between multiple leadership styles and organizational justice within the same study. Further empirical evidence is therefore needed to clarify whether teachers with different demographic characteristics perceive leadership practices and organizational justice differently.

Third, international studies have reported positive associations between leadership behaviors and organizational justice and have linked organizational justice to outcomes such as employee performance, work engagement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Alimansyah & Takahashi, 2023; Khan et al., 2023; Nvankwo & Nwakanma, 2025). Nevertheless, these findings emerge from diverse national, cultural, and institutional contexts. Differences in organizational structures, school cultures, administrative practices, and sociocultural expectations may influence how leadership behaviors are interpreted and how organizational justice is perceived. Therefore, evidence from Türkiye is needed to assess the extent to which established relationships are observable within the Turkish educational context.

Within Türkiye, an additional contextual consideration is the relative concentration of educational administration research in metropolitan and comparatively developed settings. Less is known about whether established patterns between leadership and organizational justice are similarly evident in educational settings characterized by distinctive geographical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural conditions. In this respect, Hakkari provides a contextually informative setting rather than constituting the research gap by itself. Examining this relationship in Hakkari can contribute evidence from an underrepresented educational context and allow the findings to be considered alongside evidence from other Turkish and international settings. Against this background, the present study addresses these gaps by examining the associations between teachers' perceptions of school administrators' transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles and organizational justice within a single empirical framework. It further examines whether teachers' perceptions of these leadership styles and organizational justice differ according to gender, educational level, and professional experience. By integrating multiple leadership styles, organizational justice, and demographic characteristics in one study, the research seeks to provide a more comprehensive account of how leadership practices are associated with teachers' perceptions of fairness in educational organizations.

The contribution of the present study is therefore not based solely on its geographical setting. Rather, its contribution lies in integrating three major leadership styles with organizational justice and demographic characteristics within the same empirical framework, while providing evidence from an underrepresented educational context in Türkiye. The findings may help determine whether relationships identified in previous national and international research are also observed in this context, identify areas of convergence and divergence, and generate context-sensitive implications for leadership development and fair management practices in schools.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

Do teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and school administrators' leadership styles differ significantly according to gender?

Do teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and school administrators' leadership styles differ significantly according to education status?

Do teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and school administrators' leadership styles differ significantly according to professional experience?

Is there a statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceptions

of organizational justice and school administrators' leadership styles?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

This study was designed as a quantitative research employing a correlational survey model to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and school administrators' leadership styles, as well as to determine whether these perceptions differ according to demographic variables. The correlational survey model is a research design that enables researchers to describe existing situations as they are and to statistically examine relationships among variables (Karasar, 2014).

2.2. Population and sample

The accessible population of the study consisted of primary school teachers working in Hakkari, Türkiye. The sample comprised 300 teachers selected through simple random sampling. In simple random sampling, all units in the population have an equal chance of being selected. In practice, all units are listed and randomly selected from the list. When the population is not excessively large or complex, the selection process is relatively easy. Furthermore, because statistical analyses in simple random sampling are conducted without weighting, the evaluation process and sampling error can be calculated easily (Dawson & Trapp, 2001; Özdamar, 2001).

Of the participants, 62.7% were male and 37.3% were female teachers. Regarding educational attainment, the majority of teachers held a bachelor's degree (84.7%), while the remaining participants held a master's degree (15.3%). The sample included teachers from a wide range of subject areas, including classroom teaching, Turkish language, Religious Culture and Ethics, special education, preschool education, science, social studies, physical education, English, and other branches. In terms of professional experience, approximately half of the participants had between 1 and 5 years of experience (48.3%), followed by those with 6–10 years (26.7%) and 11–15 years (18.3%) of experience, while teachers with 16 years or more of experience constituted a smaller proportion of the sample.

2.3. Data collection instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data in this study:

2.3.1. Leadership styles scale

Teachers' perceptions of school administrators' leadership behaviors were measured using the Leadership Styles Scale developed by Oğuz (2008). The scale was designed to assess how teachers perceive the leadership behaviors of school administrators and to measure leadership practices within educational organizations.

The scale consists of 49 items and three dimensions: Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, and Laissez-faire Leadership. It enables the evaluation of different leadership behaviors through teachers' perceptions.

The instrument is a five-point Likert-type scale. Participants are asked to indicate their opinions for each statement by selecting one of the following options: 1 = Never, 2 = Very Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Usually, and 5 = Always. Higher scores indicate that teachers perceive their school administrators as exhibiting the relevant leadership behaviors more frequently.

In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated as ,96 for Transformational Leadership ,81 for Transactional Leadership, and ,85 for Laissez-faire Leadership. These values indicate a high level of internal consistency for the scale.

2.3.2. Organizational justice scale

Teachers' perceptions of organizational justice within their schools were measured using the Organizational Justice Scale, adapted into Turkish by Taştan and Yılmaz (2008).

The scale consists of 10 items and a single dimension designed to assess the extent to which teachers perceive organizational practices as fair. The items measure teachers' perceptions regarding issues such as participation in decision-making processes, fairness of administrative decisions, and the extent to which administrators' attitudes and behaviors comply with principles of equality and fairness.

The instrument employs a five-point Likert-type format, with response options ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Moderately Agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher scores indicate stronger perceptions of fairness in organizational practices.

For the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Organizational Justice Scale was calculated as ,96.

2.4. Data collection procedure

Prior to data collection, the necessary ethical approvals were obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Hakkari University. At its meeting dated September 19, 2024 (Decision No. 2024/156), the committee approved the study as ethically appropriate. In addition, permission to conduct the research in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education was obtained from the Ministry. Data were collected electronically from teachers on a voluntary basis. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and responses regarding demographic characteristics and scale items were gathered. Throughout the data collection process, ethical principles were strictly observed, and participant confidentiality was ensured.

2.5. Data analysis

Microsoft Excel and SPSS 25.0 software packages were used to analyze the data obtained from the scales. Prior to the main analyses, the suitability of the data and relevant statistical assumptions were examined.

Normality assumptions were initially tested using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, which indicated that the data did not meet the normality assumption. However, there is increasing support in the literature for the view that normality tests alone may be insufficient when analyzing Likert-type scale data (Hair et al., 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, skewness and kurtosis values were also examined. The skewness and kurtosis values for all scales were found to fall within the range of -1 to +1 suggested by Büyüköztürk (2018), indicating that the distributions could be considered normal.

Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients range between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 indicating higher reliability and internal consistency (Cronbach, 1990). In this study, high alpha coefficients were obtained for both the sub-dimensions and total scores of the scales (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and alpha values of scale.

Scales	Factors	X̄	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Alpha
Leadership Styles Scale	Transformational Leadership	89,77	24,44	-,399	-,751	,96
	Transactional Leadership	53,67	10,54	-,485	,719	,81
	Laissez-faire Leadership	11,08	2,88	,364	,358	,85
Organizational Justice Scale	Total	36,05	11,70	-,526	-,836	,96

Accordingly, Independent Samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether leadership styles and organizational justice levels differed according to gender and educational level. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine differences according to professional experience. In addition, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was used to determine the relationships between leadership styles and organizational justice scores.

When **Table 1** is examined, the skewness and kurtosis values for the obtained scores were considered for the assumption of normal distribution, and it was observed that these values were in the range of ± 1 (Büyüköztürk, 2018). Accordingly, it was assumed that the data obtained from both scales were normally distributed. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency value takes values between 0 and 1, and consistency/reliability increases as the values approach 1 (Cronbach, 1990).

3. Results

This section presents the findings related to the research questions:

Independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether leadership styles and organizational justice scale scores differed significantly according to participants' gender. The results are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Independent samples t-test results of leadership styles scale and organizational justice scale scores according to gender variable.

Scales	Factors	Gender	N	X̄	SD	t	P
Leadership Styles Scale	Transformational Leadership	Male	188	92,38	23,82	2,417	,02
		Female	112	85,38	24,93		
	Transactional Leadership	Male	188	54,38	10,65	1,528	,13
		Female	112	52,46	10,29		
	Laissez-faire Leadership	Male	188	11,38	2,83	2,381	,02
		Female	112	10,57	2,91		
Organizational Justice Scale	Total	Male	188	37,49	11,00	2,792	,01
		Female	112	33,63	12,46		

According to the statistical analysis conducted between the gender variable and the scores obtained from the Leadership Styles Scale and the Organizational Justice Scale, no significant difference was found in the Transactional Leadership sub-dimension ($p > ,05$). However, statistically significant differences were identified in the Transformational Leadership and Laissez-faire Leadership sub-dimensions, as well as in the total scores of the Leadership Styles Scale and the Organizational Justice Scale ($p < ,05$). The gender differences observed in transformational and laissez-faire leadership perceptions may be related to differences in teachers' expectations, workplace experiences, and interpretations of leadership behaviors. Female and male teachers may respond differently to participatory, supportive, and motivational leadership practices because of differences in their experiences of authority, communication, and professional relationships within schools. In contrast, laissez-faire leadership may be perceived differently depending on teachers' expectations regarding administrator availability, support, and decision-making. These differences may also reflect gendered experiences within organizational settings, whereby the same leadership behavior can be interpreted differently by male and female teachers. However, these explanations should be interpreted cautiously, as the present study did not

directly examine the underlying mechanisms of these gender differences. Further qualitative and mixed-methods research could provide a deeper understanding of why teachers' gender is associated with different perceptions of transformational and laissez-faire leadership.

With respect to teachers' gender, no significant difference was observed in their perceptions of school administrators' transactional leadership behaviors. This finding suggests that male and female teachers perceive leadership behaviors based primarily on rules, regulations, and reward–punishment systems in a similar manner.

In contrast, the significant differences found in the transformational and laissez-faire leadership dimensions indicate that teachers' perceptions of these leadership styles vary according to gender. In other words, male and female teachers do not evaluate their administrators' visionary, motivational, or hands-off leadership behaviors in the same way.

Similarly, the significant difference observed in the total scores of the Organizational Justice Scale demonstrates that teachers' perceptions of fairness within the school environment also differ by gender. This finding suggests that male and female teachers may experience issues related to justice, equality, and fairness in administrative processes differently.

Overall, these findings suggest that gender is an important factor associated with teachers' perceptions of school administrators' leadership styles and organizational justice. The differences observed particularly in transformational and laissez-faire leadership indicate that leadership behaviors are not necessarily interpreted uniformly across gender groups. This finding highlights the importance of considering teachers' diverse experiences and expectations when developing leadership practices and organizational justice initiatives in schools.

Independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether leadership styles and organizational justice scale scores differed significantly according to participants' educational status. The results are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Independent samples t-test analysis results of leadership styles scale and organizational justice scale scores according to educational status variable.

Scales	Factors	Education Status	N	X̄	Ss	t	P
Leadership Styles Scale	Transformational Leadership	Undergraduate	254	90,26	24,44	,814	,42
		Master	46	87,07	24,50		
	Transactional Leadership	Undergraduate	254	53,54	10,71	-,491	,62
		Master	46	54,37	9,67		
	Laissez-faire Leadership	Undergraduate	254	11,12	2,85	,538	,51
		Master	46	10,87	3,04		
Organizational Justice Scale	Total	Undergraduate	254	36,46	11,60	1,431	,15
		Master	46	33,78	12,10		

The analysis conducted between teachers' educational level and the sub-dimensions of the Leadership Styles Scale as well as the total scores of the Organizational Justice Scale revealed no statistically significant differences ($p > ,05$).

No significant differences were found between teachers' educational levels (bachelor's degree or graduate degree) and their perceptions of school administrators' transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors. This finding suggests that differences in formal educational attainment may not necessarily lead to substantially different evaluations of administrators'

leadership practices. One possible explanation is that teachers' perceptions of leadership are shaped more strongly by their direct experiences with administrators, school climate, interpersonal relationships, and organizational practices than by their academic qualifications. In addition, postgraduate education may increase teachers' professional knowledge and critical awareness; however, such differences may not be sufficient to alter their perceptions of leadership when teachers operate within similar organizational and institutional conditions.

Similarly, the absence of a significant difference in organizational justice perceptions across educational levels indicates that teachers with bachelor's and graduate degrees evaluate fairness, equality, and justice within the school environment in a broadly similar manner. This may be because perceptions of organizational justice are primarily influenced by teachers' actual experiences of decision-making processes, resource distribution, interpersonal treatment, and administrative procedures rather than by their level of formal education.

These findings are also noteworthy in light of the inconsistent results reported in previous research regarding the role of educational level in perceptions of leadership and organizational justice. The present findings suggest that educational attainment alone may not be a sufficient predictor of these perceptions. Instead, contextual and organizational factors, such as leadership practices, school climate, participation in decision-making, and the quality of administrator–teacher relationships, may play a more important role. However, this interpretation should be treated cautiously because the present study did not directly examine these potential mechanisms. Future research could investigate how educational level interacts with organizational and contextual factors to shape teachers' perceptions of leadership and organizational justice.

Overall, the findings indicate that teachers' educational attainment is not significantly associated with their perceptions of school administrators' leadership styles or organizational justice in the present sample. This finding suggests that leadership and fairness-related perceptions may be relatively consistent across educational groups when teachers share similar institutional and organizational environments. One-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether leadership styles and organizational justice scale scores differed significantly according to participants' professional experience. The results are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA analysis results of the leadership styles scale and organizational justice scale sub-dimension and total scores according to professional experience variable.

Scales	Factors	Seniority	N	X̄	SD	df	F	P
Leadership Styles Scale	Transformational Leadership	1-5 Years	145	86,96	24,12	3 296 299	1,367	, 25
		6-10 Years	80	91,58	25,35			
		11-15 Years	55	94,02	22,84			
		16 Years and Above	20	91,20	26,52			
	Transactional Leadership	1-5 Years	145	53,19	10,76	3 296 299	,303	, 82
		6-10 Years	80	53,68	10,54			
		11-15 Years	55	54,38	9,46			
		16 Years and Above	20	55,10	12,24			
	Laissez-faire Leadership	1-5 Years	145	10,89	2,79	3 296 299	,413	, 74
		6-10 Years	80	11,29	3,26			
		11-15 Years	55	11,22	2,69			

Continued table:

Scales	Factors	Seniority	N	X̄	SD	df	F	P
Organizational Justice Scale	Leadership Styles Scale Total	16 Years and Above	20	11,25	2,51	3 296 299	1,061	, 36
		1-5 Years	145	151,04	33,72			
		6-10 Years	80	156,54	35,65			
		11-15 Years	55	159,62	30,74			
	Total	16 Years and Above	20	157,55	38,71	3 296 299	1,324	, 267
		1-5 Years	145	34,74	12,21			
		6-10 Years	80	36,65	11,28			
		11-15 Years	55	37,96	10,72			
		16 Years and Above	20	37,85	11,80			

According to the analysis conducted between teachers' professional experience (seniority) and the sub-dimensions of the Leadership Styles Scale as well as the total scores of the Organizational Justice Scale, no statistically significant differences were found ($p > ,05$).

With regard to professional experience, teachers did not differ significantly in their perceptions of school administrators' transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leadership behaviors. This finding suggests that both novice and experienced teachers evaluate administrators' leadership practices in broadly similar ways. One possible explanation is that teachers' perceptions of leadership may be shaped more strongly by their current interactions with school administrators, school climate, and prevailing management practices than by the length of their professional experience. In addition, teachers working within the same institutional context are exposed to similar leadership practices and organizational procedures, which may reduce differences associated with seniority.

Similarly, the absence of significant differences in organizational justice perceptions across levels of professional experience indicates that teachers with different levels of seniority perceive fairness, equality, and justice-related practices in the school environment in a comparable manner. This finding may suggest that perceptions of justice are influenced primarily by shared organizational experiences, such as decision-making procedures, distribution of responsibilities and resources, and interpersonal treatment, rather than by professional experience alone.

These findings are noteworthy because previous research has reported inconsistent results regarding the role of professional experience in perceptions of leadership and organizational justice. The present findings suggest that seniority alone may not be a sufficient predictor of teachers' perceptions of leadership or fairness. Instead, organizational culture, administrative practices, school climate, and the quality of administrator–teacher relationships may play a more influential role. Nevertheless, these explanations should be interpreted cautiously because the present study did not directly examine these potential mechanisms. Future research could investigate how professional experience interacts with organizational and contextual factors to shape teachers' perceptions of leadership and organizational justice.

Overall, the results indicate that teachers' professional experience is not significantly associated with their perceptions of school administrators' leadership styles or organizational justice in the present sample. Rather than being determined by seniority, these perceptions may reflect the broader organizational environment and teachers' shared experiences within their schools.

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between leadership styles and organizational justice scale scores. The results are presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Results of pearson product-moment correlation analysis regarding leadership styles scale and organizational justice scale scores.

Scales		Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership	Laissez-faire Leadership
Organizational Justice	r	,763	,441	,180
	p	,000*	,000*	,002*

According to the correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationships between teachers' scores on the Leadership Styles Scale subdimensions and the total score of the Organizational Justice Scale, statistically significant positive relationships were identified between the total organizational justice score and transformational leadership ($r = ,763$, $p < ,05$), transactional leadership ($r = ,441$, $p < ,05$), and laissez-faire leadership ($r = ,180$, $p < ,05$).

These findings indicate that as teachers perceive their school administrators as exhibiting more positive leadership characteristics, their perceptions of organizational justice within the school environment also increase.

When the sub-dimensions are examined individually:

A strong positive relationship, approaching a high level, was found between transformational leadership and organizational justice ($r = ,763$). This result suggests that administrators' visionary, supportive, and motivational leadership behaviors substantially enhance teachers' perceptions of fairness within the organization.

A moderate positive relationship was identified between transactional leadership and organizational justice ($r = ,441$). This finding indicates that a leadership approach based on rules, rewards, and sanctions also contributes to strengthening perceptions of organizational justice, although not as strongly as transformational leadership.

A low-level positive relationship was found between laissez-faire leadership and organizational justice ($r = ,180$). This result suggests that even in situations where administrators adopt a more passive and non-interventionist approach, perceptions of organizational justice may increase slightly; however, the effect is relatively weak.

Overall, it can be concluded that teachers' perceptions of organizational justice are most strongly associated with transformational leadership. These findings demonstrate that school administrators' adoption of transformational leadership behaviors may play a significant role in strengthening teachers' perceptions of organizational justice.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that, according to teachers' perceptions, the relationships between school administrators' leadership styles and organizational justice perceptions vary across different variables. First, regarding the gender variable, the results revealed that teachers' perceptions of transactional leadership did not differ significantly by gender, whereas perceptions of transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership, overall leadership, and organizational justice differed significantly. This finding suggests that male and female teachers experience transformational leadership behaviors, which emphasize interaction, vision, and motivation, as well as laissez-faire leadership characterized by managerial passivity, in different ways. Furthermore, the

observed differences in organizational justice perceptions indicate that practices related to ensuring fairness within the school environment may be interpreted differently depending on gender. In contrast, the absence of a significant difference in transactional leadership suggests that this leadership style, which is primarily based on rules and standardized practices, is evaluated similarly by both male and female teachers. A study by Yılmaz and Gülmez (2024) reported that male teachers tend to perceive school principals as more just than female teachers. The authors attributed this finding to the fact that most school principals are male and that men may communicate more easily with one another, creating what they referred to as a "same-gender advantage." Furthermore, Özdemir (2020) reported significant differences in teachers' perceptions of school principals' leadership styles according to professional seniority, whereas Ertürk (2018) found no significant differences in organizational justice perceptions based on seniority.

The findings related to educational level demonstrate that teachers' evaluations of leadership styles and organizational justice are not significantly influenced by their educational background. The fact that teachers with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees perceived their administrators similarly suggests that these perceptions are shaped more by school experiences and administrators' observable behaviors than by academic qualifications. Likewise, the absence of significant differences according to professional experience indicates that both novice and experienced teachers share similar perceptions regarding leadership styles and organizational justice. This finding suggests that the organizational structure and management approach of schools may affect teachers in a similar manner regardless of individual characteristics. Polat (2007) similarly reported that teachers' organizational justice perceptions did not differ significantly according to educational level and that undergraduate and postgraduate degree holders exhibited comparable perceptions of organizational justice. The researcher explained this finding by arguing that teachers evaluate organizational justice primarily through concrete administrative practices and daily organizational experiences rather than their academic backgrounds. Likewise, Özdemir (2020) found no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of school principals' leadership styles based on educational attainment.

One of the most notable findings of this study concerns the relationships between leadership styles and organizational justice perceptions. The results revealed positive and significant relationships between all leadership styles and organizational justice, with the strongest relationship observed for transformational leadership. This finding indicates that administrators who display visionary, supportive, and developmental leadership behaviors contribute substantially to teachers' perceptions of a fair school environment. The relatively weak relationship between transactional leadership and organizational justice suggests that a rule-based management approach supports perceptions of fairness but is insufficient on its own. Similarly, the weak relationship between laissez-faire leadership and organizational justice implies that managerial passivity has only a limited influence on teachers' justice perceptions.

Research conducted in primary schools found positive and significant relationships between school administrators' transformational and transactional leadership styles and teachers' organizational justice perceptions (Oğuz, 2011). Likewise, Kavrayıcı (2021) reported that ethical leadership positively influences teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and that such leadership behaviors are perceived as fair, equitable, and impartial. Similarly, Han, Abdullah, and Hwang (2023) found that transformational leadership positively influences employees' organizational citizenship behaviors and that organizational justice strengthens this relationship. Khuzwayo, Flotman, and Mitonga-Monga (2023) also reported positive associations between transformational leadership,

organizational justice, and employee commitment, indicating that transformational leadership behaviors strengthen employees' perceptions of fairness. These findings support the positive relationship identified between transformational leadership and organizational justice in the present study.

Research on virtuous leadership has similarly demonstrated a strong, positive, and significant relationship between school principals' virtuous leadership behaviors and teachers' organizational justice perceptions, emphasizing that leaders' behaviors play a critical role in strengthening justice perceptions (Gökyer & Demir, 2024). Likewise, Güneş and Buluç (2012) identified significant positive relationships between transformational leadership and organizational justice in primary schools, showing that transformational leadership particularly enhances procedural and interactional justice perceptions among teachers.

In addition, Sunaryo, Tukiran, Yusmita, and Wulandari (2021) reported that transformational leadership behaviors positively and significantly influence teachers' job satisfaction. Similar findings were reported by Purwanto and Sulaiman (2023), who found that transformational leadership contributes positively to teachers' job satisfaction. These results indicate that transformational leadership is associated with a variety of positive organizational outcomes in educational settings. A study conducted among primary school teachers found a positive but relatively weak relationship between school administrators' transactional leadership behaviors and teachers' organizational justice perceptions. The study suggested that administrators' reliance on clear reward and punishment systems was perceived as fair by teachers and contributed to a more predictable and orderly organizational environment. However, transactional leadership was found to have limited effects on strengthening trust in management, fostering organizational commitment, and encouraging voluntary participation in decision-making processes (Kazancı, 2010). Similarly, Kinter and Seymen (2020) reported that transformational leadership exhibited strong and significant relationships with organizational justice, whereas transactional and laissez-faire leadership demonstrated weaker associations. Other studies have likewise identified transformational leadership as the leadership style that most strongly promotes teachers' participation in decision-making processes and enhances their sense of justice (Ayık et al., 2014; Karip, 1998).

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that teachers' perceptions of organizational justice are closely associated with the leadership behaviors exhibited by school administrators. In contrast, individual characteristics such as educational level and professional experience do not appear to play a significant role in shaping these perceptions. The gender-based differences identified in the study highlight the importance of implementing more inclusive and sensitive management practices in schools. In this context, enhancing school administrators' transformational leadership competencies may be considered a critical factor in strengthening teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and fostering a more positive school climate.

5. Conclusion

The findings indicate that school administrators' leadership styles are significantly associated with teachers' perceptions of organizational justice, with transformational leadership showing the strongest relationship. Gender differences were observed in transformational and laissez-faire leadership perceptions and in overall organizational justice perceptions, whereas no significant differences were found according to educational level or professional experience. These results suggest that strengthening transformational leadership practices while considering teachers' diverse experiences may contribute to more equitable and effective school management.

Leadership and organizational justice: Given the observed association between school administrators' leadership styles and teachers' perceptions of organizational justice, transformational leadership practices could be further encouraged, particularly through participatory decision-making, transparent communication, individualized support, and recognition of teachers' contributions. Such practices may help create a more supportive and equitable organizational environment.

Gender differences: The observed gender differences in perceptions of transformational and laissez-faire leadership and overall organizational justice suggest that administrators may benefit from being attentive to how leadership behaviors and administrative decisions are experienced by teachers with different backgrounds. Regular opportunities for both male and female teachers to provide feedback could contribute to more inclusive communication and decision-making processes.

Educational level: Since teachers' perceptions did not differ significantly according to educational level, leadership and organizational justice practices may be approached consistently across teachers with different academic qualifications, while remaining responsive to individual needs and professional contexts.

Professional experience: Given the absence of significant differences based on professional experience, administrators could focus primarily on shared organizational conditions, such as fair procedures, equitable resource allocation, transparent decision-making, and respectful interpersonal relationships, rather than differentiating leadership practices mainly according to teachers' years of experience.

Transactional leadership: Clear expectations, procedures, and fair reward or recognition practices may continue to play a useful role in school administration. However, these practices could be complemented by supportive, participatory, and relationship-oriented leadership behaviors to address teachers' broader organizational and professional needs.

Laissez-faire leadership: The findings may suggest the value of maintaining an appropriate level of administrative involvement. Regular communication, timely guidance, and accessibility when teachers encounter problems or require decisions could help ensure that administrative autonomy is balanced with adequate organizational support.

Overall organizational justice: Schools could periodically monitor teachers' perceptions of organizational justice through anonymous feedback mechanisms. Attention to distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions of justice may provide administrators with useful information for reflecting on and, where appropriate, improving existing administrative practices.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the findings are limited to the teachers included in the sample and should therefore be generalized to other teachers and educational institutions with caution. Comparative studies involving different regions and educational levels, including primary, middle, and high schools, may provide broader evidence and help identify contextual and cultural differences.

Second, the study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional relational survey design. Although the findings demonstrate significant associations between leadership styles and organizational justice, they do not permit causal interpretations or conclusions about changes over time. In addition, the data were collected exclusively through teachers' self-reports using the Leadership Styles Scale and the Organizational Justice Scale. The reliance on a single respondent group and self-reported measures may increase the risk of common

method bias and may not fully capture the complexity of leadership and organizational justice. Future studies could address these limitations through longitudinal and mixed-methods designs and by incorporating the perspectives of school administrators, students, and parents.

Finally, the study examined a limited set of demographic and organizational variables. Future research could incorporate factors such as school type, teaching branch, organizational culture, school climate, administrator characteristics, and teacher–administrator relationships to better explain differences in leadership and organizational justice perceptions. Qualitative research may also help clarify the reasons underlying the gender differences identified in transformational and laissez-faire leadership perceptions, while further studies could re-examine the non-significant effects of educational level and professional experience using different samples. Mediation or moderation models could additionally investigate the mechanisms through which transformational leadership is associated with organizational justice and whether these relationships vary across contextual conditions. Finally, future research could examine how leadership styles and organizational justice jointly relate to outcomes such as teacher performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and well-being.

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