



# The effect of secondary school administrators' social justice leadership behaviors on the level of teachers' organizational fit

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the structural relationship of social justice leadership with the person-organization fit. One of the methods applied to test the relational situations is the structural equation modeling. In addition, the sample consists of 318 secondary school teachers found by the simple random method. In the study, the Personal Information Form has been developed by the researchers, and the Social Justice Leadership Scale and the Person-Organization Fit Scale have been used to collect data. The Cronbach Alpha value of the Social Justice Leadership Scale has been found as 98 for all items, and the value of the Person-Organization Scale has been found as 93. In analysis of the data, the programs called IBM SPSS 25 and AMOS 24 have been used. First of all, the extreme data analysis has been made, and the distribution of normality has been tested. In conclusion, it has been found that critical consciousness, stakeholder support, participation and distributive justice dimensions predict the organizational fit positively and moderately, and that the model formed is acceptable.

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**Keywords:** Social justice leadership, organizational fit, school administrator, teacher, structural equation modeling.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Introduce the problem

*Social justice* refers to the protection of people with low socioeconomic status against people with high socioeconomic status, the elimination of inequality in the distribution of income, the

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achievement of a welfare level which is compatible with human dignity, and the maintenance of economic and social insurance (Baser, Kırılıoğlu and Kırılıoğlu, 2017: 1008). Justice values and being fair are the important factors required for a social organization. It is important to be fair and to show necessary attention to personal rights when regulatory activities are implemented by laws and regulations in a social structure. Rules, which have been formed by avoiding arbitrariness in practices, should be distributed in accordance with the principle of equality, without providing any privilege to individuals. Individual rights should be guaranteed, and principles which are free from favoritism should be established (Eren, 1998: 160). Bozkurt (2018:16) defines social justice as a summary of educational policies, and considers social justice leadership as a moral virtue which prevents injustice in schools. In addition, he emphasizes that school administrators should take care of students, adapt themselves to social changes, develop a perspective which includes all stakeholders in the environment, reject racism, and respect differences in order to provide social justice in education. An administrator, who considers human rights and liberties, makes no concessions of honesty and dedicates herself/himself to people in the relevant institution, constitutes important criteria of being a fair administrator (Cetin, 2006: 57). At this point, it is highly important that the leader has the relevant principles. It is possible to say that a leader who exhibits such behaviors administers social justice.

In addition, person-organization fit is defined as the compatibility with the values which indicate the similarity between main characteristics, aims, needs or preferences of individuals and organizations, between organizational system and structure, and between organizational climate and personal characteristics of individuals (Kristof, 1996). In this respect, values are important factors in the person-organization fit. These values may vary by situations experienced in the organization, and refers to the beliefs directed towards the awareness of positive and negative behaviors. As a part of the organization culture, values included in a permanent and long period can eliminate potential problems in an organization with an appropriate solution method. Values constitute targets, and compatibility can be mentioned when personal values and organizational values coincide with each other. The role of these values in an individual's preferences for an organization is significant (Inkaya, 2019).

The efficiency of organizations depends on adaptation of its members to the work environment. Undoubtedly, behaviors of the administrator will be effective in formation of this adaptation officially or unofficially and in compatibility with the roles required for the work performed (Ergun and Tasgit, 2010: 42). According to John Rawls who states that justice forms a basic structure of a society, the main principles of being fair are equal basic liberties and fair equality of opportunity. The first principle is about individuals' equal basic rights and liberties, and the second principle is about the elimination of socioeconomic inequalities. The opportunities of the organization should be made available for the benefit of the individuals with disadvantages and suitable for the formation of equality in opportunities. Rawls emphasizes that the rights should be used equally. Philosophers divide the concept of justice, which means the achievement of equality and fairness, as distributive justice and corrective justice. *Distributive justice* refers to the equal distribution of resources among the members of an organization, and *corrective justice* describes involuntary behaviors of an individual. Social justice is considered as a state order which provides individuals with an opportunity to have a minimum level of living. On the other hand, Aristotle defines justice as a balanced manner towards individuals (Source, 2017: 257). Educational effects of social justice are seen also in schools. The phenomenon of social justice has become important in managing differences and inequalities within

multicultural formations in education which has started to increase in recent years. In this regard, the main aim is to provide social justice in school organizations. As open systems, schools are structures that consist of individuals who are different in gender, race, socioeconomic status, culture and ideology. These individuals do not always have the same equality of opportunity in education (Goren, 2019: 13).

In Turkey, there is a socio-cultural opinion that ideology stands out and affects the perception of justice in school organizations (Titrek, 2010: 195). It may cause inequality in school environments, and prevent adaptation of the students with disadvantages to their schools. For this reason, it has been thought that social justice leadership will have a positive effect on prevention of problems which cause inequality in school organizations (Ozdemir 2017: 268). Administrators who have the characteristic of social justice leadership are important in inequality situations. The achievement of both equality and adaptation of all different groups requires the behavior of social justice leadership. Individuals, who have no difficulty in being adapted to the organizational culture, provide more contribution to the organization (Robbins and Judge, 2012: 152). Individuals whose personality traits are different from each other affect general work performance of the organization, positively or negatively. If the values of the organization are compatible with personal values, a strong and high organizational performance can be expected from individuals (Kart, 2015: 44).

In continuity of the organization, it is important for an individual to prefer the most appropriate organization for the fulfillment of the organizational activities more easily. Resolution of potential intra-organizational conflicts can be achieved through the person-organization fit. A good level of theoretical knowledge of individuals in school organizations will not be a sufficient criterion in being adapted to the organization. Their professional values, loyalty to the organization, and voluntary participation are very important (Yucel and Cetinkaya, 2016: 18). In this respect, as a leader who defends social justice, a school administrator who has included social justice behaviors in the organization can form the fit of the teachers with the organization positively. For this reason, in this study, it is aimed to examine the theoretical model formed to explain the structural relationships between social justice leadership behaviors of the school administrators, who work in secondary schools, and the teachers' level of organizational fit.

### *1.2. State hypotheses and their correspondence to research design*

Within this scope, the hypotheses examined in accordance with the model formed structural regression in order to explain whether social justice leadership behaviors of the secondary school administrators predict the teachers' level of organizational fit significantly are as follows:

The first hypothesis:

H1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of critical consciousness predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.

The second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of stakeholder support predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.

The third hypothesis:

H1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of participation predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.

The fourth hypothesis:

H1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of distributive justice predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.

## **2. Method**

In this study, the relational survey model, has been used. One of the methods applied to examine the relational situations is the structural equation modeling (SEM). The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is considered as a combination of the multiple regression, and is defined as a statistical method which aims to reveal direct and indirect effects of change in the model (Bayram, 2016: 2). In the study, the SEM analysis has been preferred and quantitative data has been used to test the goodness of fit of the model formed to examine the structural relationship of social justice leadership with the organizational fit.

### *2.1. Sample*

The population of the study consists of 1158 teachers who work in official secondary schools in Uskudar, Istanbul within the academic year between 2019 and 2020. In addition, the sample consists of 318 secondary school teachers found by the simple random method. This technique is a sampling which provides every individual in the population with an opportunity to be selected with an equal probability (Buyukozturk, Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2013: 85).

### *2.2. Measures*

The Personal Information Form, which has been developed by the researchers and consists of demographic information, and the Social Justice Leadership Scale, which has been developed by Bozkurt (2018) and consists of four dimensions and 34 items, have been used to collect the data. The dimensions of the scale have been determined as 11 items for stakeholder support, 7 items for critical consciousness, 6 items for distributive justice, and 10 items for participation. The Social Justice Leadership Scale is a five-point likert-type scale, and the point scale is as follows: “strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). In terms of the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha value for all items of the scale has been calculated as

.98. In addition, critical consciousness has been found as 0.94, stakeholder support has been found as 0.95, participation has been found as 0.95, and distributive justice has been found as 0.95 (Bozkurt, 2018). In this study, critical consciousness has been found as 0.94, stakeholder support has been found as 0.95, participation has been found as 0.95, distributive justice has been found as 0.96, and social justice has been found as 0.98, and the same values have been achieved.

The other scale used in the study is the Person-Organization Fit Scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1997). It has been adapted by Turunc and Celik (2012) to Turkish, and it is a five-point likert-type scale. The items of the scale are as follows: “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “agree”, “strongly agree”, and the total Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient of the scale which consists of one dimension and four items has been found by Turunc and Celik (2012) as .81. The Cronbach Alpha value has been found as .93 in this study.

*Analytical strategy* For analysis of the data, the packaged programs called IBM SPSS 25 and AMOS 24 have been used. Reliability level of the scales has been tested by the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient. Any factor analysis has not been applied to discover or confirm factorial structures of the scales used in the study, and the factors acquired from the analyses made in the previous studies have been used. A structural equation model (SEM) has been formed and tested to determine the relative effects and prediction capacities of independent variables on dependent variables (Byrne, 2016; Gurbuz, 2019; Kline, 2016). As the data shows a normal distribution for analyses made within the scope of the structural equation modeling, the maximum likelihood calculation method has been preferred (Gurbuz, 2019). In the SEM analyses made with the maximum likelihood, reporting of  $X^2/df$  (Chi-Square/degrees of freedom), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) goodness of fit index is found enough (Gurbuz, 2019; Kline, 2016), it has been preferred to report the relevant values in this study.

#### 2.4. Experimental manipulations or interventions

First of all, normal distribution condition of the data has been examined. Normal or abnormal distribution of the data has been decided in accordance with the values of skewness and kurtosis of the scale dimensions. Tabachnick and Fidell (2014) indicate that the values of skewness and kurtosis between the range of -1.5 and +1.5 are the indicator of normality, and Gurbuz and Sahin (2018) indicate that the values between the range of -1 and +1 are the indicator of normality. When the values of skewness and kurtosis in the Table 1 are examined, it has been determined that the values of skewness and kurtosis belonging to all dimensions are below  $\pm 1$ , and that the data shows a normal distribution.

### 3. Results

As a result of the SEM “path” analysis made to determine the prediction capacities of the dimensions of social justice leadership considered as an independent variable on the organizational fit considered as a dependent variable it has been found that some values for goodness of fit index are not within the threshold values which are acceptable in the literature ( $\chi^2 [655, N=318] = 2367.74; p < .01; \chi^2/df = 3.63; CFI = 0.87; RMSEA = 0.09; SRMR = 0.07$ ). In addition, suggestions for correction on the covariance and regression coefficients have been examined carefully, and error variance of some items in the same dimension has been combined in accordance with these suggestions (Gurbuz, 2019). After the corrections, the SEM analysis has been made again. In the final phase, the path diagram on the SEM model tested has been shown in the Figure-1.

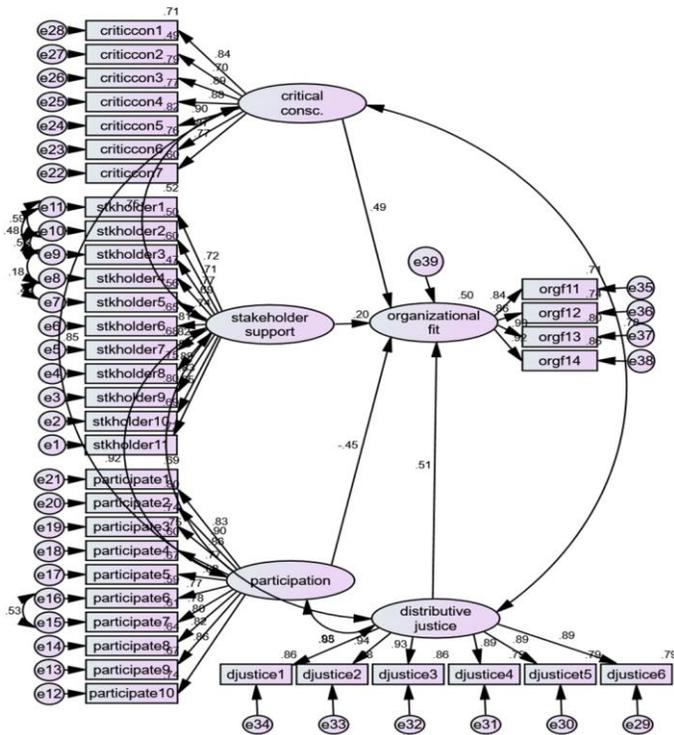


Figure -1: The Path Diagram on the Final SEM Model

#### 3.1. Statistics and data analysis

Table 1: The Path Coefficients in the Structural Model, and the Variances Explained

Direct Effects	$\beta$	$R^2$
Critical Consciousness → Organizational Fit	0.45**	0.50
Stakeholder Support → Organizational Fit	0.20**	

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Participation	→ Organizational Fit	-0.45**
Distributive Justice	→ Organizational Fit	0.51**

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**Explanation:** \*\*significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$ ; \*significant at the level of  $p < 0.05$

According to the SEM results, it has been found that the critical consciousness ( $\beta = 0.49$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), stakeholder support ( $\beta = 0.20$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), participation ( $\beta = -0.45$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and distributive justice ( $\beta = 0.51$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) dimensions have a positive effect on the organizational fit (Table 1). The Beta ( $\beta$ ) values indicate the path coefficients between the variables in the SEM model. In other words, the relevant values refer to the effects or prediction capacities of an independent variable on a dependent variable (Gurbuz, 2019). In these findings, it is remarkable that the path coefficient on the participation dimension is negative. In the SEM model, a negative coefficient between these two variables does not mean that the participation dimension has a negative effect on the organizational fit. As a result of a positive correlation ( $r = 0.54$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between the participation dimension and the organizational fit, this situation results from the multicollinearity problem occurred in the correlation relationship of the participation dimension with other social justice leadership dimensions at a high level (Gurbuz and Sahin, 2018). These four dimensions in social justice leadership explain 50% ( $R^2 = .50$ ) of the change (variance) in the organizational fit. In other words, the teachers' behaviors on organizational fit depend on the dimensions of social justice leadership at the rate of 50%.

**Table 2: Accepted and Rejected Hypotheses**

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1 <sup>st</sup> hypothesis	H0: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of critical consciousness do not predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Rejected
	H1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of critical consciousness predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Non-rejectable**
2 <sup>nd</sup> hypothesis	H0: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of stakeholder support do not predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Rejected
	H1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of stakeholder support predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Non-rejectable**
3 <sup>rd</sup> hypothesis	H0: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of participation do not predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Rejected
	H1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of participation predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Non-rejectable**
4 <sup>th</sup> hypothesis	H0: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of distributive justice do not predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Rejected.
	H1: School administrators' behaviors in the dimension of distributive justice predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.	Non-rejectable**

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Therefore, all H1 hypotheses have been accepted in the study.

Table 3: Goodness of Fit Values regarding the Final Model Tested

Fit Statistics	Values regarding the Model	Acceptable Values in the Literature
$\chi^2/df$	2.98	$\leq 5$
CFI	0.90	$\geq 0.90$
SRMR	0.04	$\leq 0.08$
RMSEA (90% CI)	0.07(0.07-0.08)	$\leq 0.08$
P	0.00	$> 0.05$

The fit index values regarding the final SEM model are shown in the Table 3. In the SEM analyses made with the maximum likelihood, the data of  $X^2/df$  (Chi-Square/degrees of freedom), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) goodness of fit indices is found enough (Gurbuz, 2019; Kline, 2016), and it has been preferred to report the relevant values in this study. The goodness of fit values indicate how well the model tested is compatible with the data collected. In the Table 3, the acceptable threshold values of the goodness of fit values are shown. As the goodness of fit values acquired as a result of the analysis are within the threshold values which are acceptable in the literature (Gurbuz, 2019), it has been found that the model is acceptable and compatible with the data ( $X^2$  [649, N=318] =1936.74;  $p < .01$ ;  $X^2/df = 2.98$ ; CFI= 0.90; RMSEA= .07; SRMR=.04).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of the modeling formed by the Structural Equation Model, it has been found that the sub-dimensions of social justice leadership predict the organizational fit positively and mildly. In this respect, it can be said that secondary school administrators' behaviors on social justice leadership will have a positive effect on the teachers' level of organizational fit. In other words, when a school administrator's behaviors on social justice leadership are at a high level, the teachers can adapt themselves to their schools.

In addition, it has been found that critical consciousness, stakeholder support and distributive justice which are the sub-dimensions of social justice leadership predict the organizational fit positively though the dimension of participation predicts the organizational fit negatively. In this respect, it has been found that the secondary school administrators' behaviors, which form the dimensions of critical consciousness, stakeholder support and distributive justice, indicate that they have the understanding of social justice leadership, and that such behaviors will have a positive effect on the teachers' level of organizational fit, significantly.

On the other hand, when the participation dimension of social justice leadership is found negative, it can be said that this situation has a positive and inversely proportional

effect on the organizational fit. It has been thought that the relationship between the organizational fit level and the participation dimensions results from a high correlation of the dimension of participation with the dimension of social justice leadership because of the multicollinearity problem. In addition, it has been thought that this negative effect results from a strong statistical relationship, and that the negative effect is not related to the negativity of the behaviors in the participation dimension of social justice leadership on the teachers' organizational fit. As the correlation relationship is strong, it is possible to state that the secondary school administrators' behaviors in the participation dimension of social justice leadership have a positive and significant effect on prediction of the teachers' organizational fit. Goren (2019: 130), in her study, has emphasized that the participation dimension of social justice leadership has a significant effect on the students' sense of belonging in school. For this reason, it can be stated that the model is well compatible when the SEM model tested is considered in general. Bozkurt (2018), in his study, has reached a similar result, and found that the structural equation modeling and social justice leadership have a significant effect for prediction on loyalty to the administrator. In addition, he has found that loyalty to the administrator has a similar effect for prediction on organizational citizenship. Ozdemir and Pektas (2017: 592) have stated that social justice leadership is a significant predictor for school academic optimism. Serefhanoglu (2014: 74), in his study focused on the relationship between school administrators' mentorship functions and organizational fit, has found that the increase in the school administrators' mentorship functions explains the teachers' behaviors on the organizational fit, mildly. In accordance with similar data obtained through this study, it is possible to state that the administrators' behaviors on social justice leadership explain the teachers' organizational fit, significantly. In this respect, it can be stated that the school administrators' positive behaviors will develop the teachers' compatible behaviors.

Therefore, it can be stated that an administrator's behaviors on social justice leadership predict the teachers' level of organizational fit, positively. On the other hand, it has been seen that false behaviors which direct the individuals to have the same form have affected their perception on the social rights and brought them to the point of rebellion (Halil, 1993: 31). Confucius said that he who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it (Cetin: 2006: 36).

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that social justice is considered as a virtue in schools, and thus, showing social justice leadership can be considered as a virtuous attitude for school administrators. For this reason, it is possible to indicate that social justice leadership will have a significant role in settlement between the individuals and the organizations, and that the administrators' social justice roles will increase and develop the teachers' organizational fit.

In this regard, the following suggestions have been made in accordance with the results of the study:

\*School administrators' critical consciousness is a significant predictor for the person-organization fit as an important dimension of social justice leadership. Sometimes, discussions on subjects which contradict the individuals' values may be experienced in schools. In this case, it is important that the administrators can be open to such objections and develop the level of consciousness, as a social justice leader. The administrators should develop their abilities to analyze the objections reasonably. For this reason, school administrators can be provided with a seminar on "the development of critical consciousness". For example, the Ministry of National Education can plan and apply this program in academies for administrators, as an educational process.

\*School administrators' effective behaviors in the dimension of stakeholder support are a requirement of social justice leadership, and such behaviors occur as a significant predictor in the achievement of the person-organization fit. For this reason, the teachers' support should be taken for management of the educational activities without any discrimination, and the person-organization fit should be provided by creating a fair working environment. When school administrators need to assign the teachers a task, they should behave the teachers equally. For example, a stakeholder support can be taken from the teachers by making an equal distribution when activities are organized.

\*The dimension of participation in decision of social justice leadership has occurred as a significant predictor in organizational fit. The teachers should be able to participate in making school-related decisions. Thus, an equal right to speak can be granted. The teachers' opinions can be taken through questionnaires or interview forms, their participation in decisions can be provided, and their level of organizational fit can be developed.

\*School administrators' ability to provide the distributive justice in the school environment is another significant predictor in the establishment of the person-organization fit. For example, they should behave all teachers equally when they invite the teachers to project activities. For this purpose, the administrators should behave the teachers regardless of their differences or extraordinariness.

\*School administrators' approaches to different groups at school should be fair and egalitarian. Individuals with different ideologies, language, religion and race can work in the same school environment. It is important that school administrators consider individual needs of all teachers and plan course hours according to their needs. For this purpose, the administrators should assemble monthly meetings to provide the teachers with an opportunity to state their expectations and to develop their organizational fit.

\*Teachers may have socioeconomic, belief or cultural differences. For the purpose of the elimination of such differences, special meeting days should be organized to develop the person-organization fit.

\*Behaviors towards social justice leadership can be used as a scoring criterion for the assignment of school administrators. The question to be formed for that purpose should be open-ended in order to measure the level of respect to differences.

\*School administrators' behaviors should be observed through short-term "guest administrator" programs in the schools where the person-organization fit is strong and the administrators who focus on social justice work. In addition, the program outcomes should be turned into a project with a pilot school scheme.

\*The person-organization fit is important, and an individual, whose values are compatible with the organization, feels herself/himself as a part of the organization. When this situation is considered, various projects should be prepared to develop the administrators' understanding of personal values of the individuals. First of all, the awareness of the school administrators on the relevant project should be raised, "the Department for Respect to Personal Values" should be established in schools, and a system which can meet the individuals' expectations for social justice should be formed.

\*Teachers, students and their parents should be asked for their opinions on whether the administrators are fair to evaluate the behaviors on social justice leadership within the duration they have worked. For this purpose, a scoring should be made, and the points received should be given to them as a performance award.

\*This study is limited with the opinions of the secondary school teachers who work in Uskudar. However, it can be applied by taking various samples from other districts in Istanbul, and thus, some differences can be found on the basis of districts.

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