

The Relationship Between Teacher Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, and Perceived Stress

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Teacher leadership has recently attracted the attention of scholars and practitioners due to its promotion of student learning and school improvement. Thus, there is a need for investigating the construct of teacher leadership and its relationship with various organizational and personal variables. Considering the fact that research on teacher leadership is scarce, the present study may serve as an important data source for policy makers in regard to developing high-quality teaching and learning in schools.

Purpose of the Study: This study sought to examine the relationships between teacher leadership, teacher professionalism, and perceived stress. Teacher leadership was the dependent variable of the study, whereas teacher professionalism and perceived stress were the independent variables.

Method: The present study employed a correlational research model where two independent variables and one dependent variable were used. A total of 302 teachers participated in the study. The Teacher Leadership Scale, Teacher Professionalism Scale, and Perceived Stress Scale were used to gather data. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's product-moment correlation

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coefficients, and a stepwise multiple-regression analysis were used to analyze the data.

Findings: Results indicated that there were positive and significant relationships between teacher professionalism and dimensions of teacher leadership, such as institutional improvement ($r = .35, p < .01$), professional improvement ($r = .36, p < .01$), and collaboration among colleagues ($r = .20, p < .01$). However, there were negative and significant relationships between perceived stress and dimensions of teacher leadership, such as institutional improvement ($r = -.28, p < .01$), professional improvement ($r = -.35, p < .01$), collaboration among colleagues ($r = -.30, p < .01$), and teacher professionalism ($r = -.21, p < .01$). Professionalism and perceived stress together explained 16% of the total variance in the institutional-improvement dimension, 21% in the professional-improvement dimension, and 11% in the collaboration-among-colleagues dimension.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Results confirmed that teacher professionalism and perceived stress were important variables predicting teacher leadership. In this regard, an organizational structure supporting the professional behaviors of teachers and minimizing the factors causing them to experience stress should be created, and a school's organizational structure should be supported by a healthy organizational climate to promote teacher leadership.

Keywords: Teacher leadership, teacher professionalism, perceived stress, teacher

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed the discussions about readdressing the concept of leadership within the scope of school as increases in the expectations for student achievement and the demands for the creation of a more accountable school structure have gradually been growing. In this regard, schools have embarked upon reviewing their leadership potential and developing a structure where all school members contribute to the leadership process (Lambert, 1998). The roles of school administrators become more complicated and problematic every passing day (Barth, 1990). Therefore, the demand from school administrators for improved knowledge and skills has gradually increased and they are expected to have competencies in different fields (Thomson & Blackmore, 2006).

The findings from a range of studies revealed that teacher leadership was associated with building a more positive school climate (Xie, 2008) and improving students' commitment to school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Leithwood, 2003). There is also a line of theoretical research on teacher leadership (Frost, 2008; Frost & Harris, 2003; Grant, 2006; Harris, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2005; Harris & Muijs, 2003a; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lambert, 2003b;

Lashway, 1998). Research on teacher leadership has gained momentum in Turkey in recent years (Beycioğlu, 2009; Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2010, 2012; Can, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). In addition, there are research findings revealing that the exhibition of leadership behaviors by teachers may improve the effectiveness of teachers in both the school-development process and student learning, which may make teachers more open to change (Gordon, 2004). There are also positive relationships between teacher leadership, school development, and high-quality student learning (Rutledge, 2009). Thus, it may be argued that teacher leadership has gradually been subjected to more discussion and research. This is probably because of the fact that teacher leadership is mainly concerned with improving the organizational capacity of a school and contributing to building a democratic school community (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

Childs-Bowen, Moller, and Scrivner (2000) argue that the management models adapted from industrial enterprises to schools in the early twentieth century have given rise to a management structure where administrators and teachers work independently in a hierarchical order, the leadership responsibility is laid on school principals alone, and a one-way communication system exists. In addition, they claim that such school management and leadership processes have lost validity and that there is a need for more flexible school structures and a more participative leadership mentality for the effective functioning of a school. Harris (2002a) emphasizes that more diversified and complicated tasks await school administrators in the present context, where intense and rapid changes are being experienced. Beachum and Dentith (2004) articulate that there is a need for developing alternative leadership models and practices that may activate leadership potentials of all school members. It may therefore be suggested that school-leadership practices need a sharp transformation from heroic actions to more dispersed leadership practices to achieve a higher level of student success and school improvement.

It is quite important that teachers adopt leadership behaviors and contribute to the school processes requiring leadership with their knowledge, skills, and experiences. Thus, schools can fulfill their functions more effectively and a positive learning-focused school culture can be established (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In this regard, it is necessary to examine the variables which influence teachers' perceptions of teacher-leadership behaviors.

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership refers to displaying leadership behaviors inside and outside of the classroom and participating in the process of creating a learning-focused culture in school; colleagues motivating one another; and the development, implementation, and evaluation of high-quality teaching practices (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Can (2009a) depicts teacher leadership as playing voluntary roles for the improvement of learning and teaching in school, producing independent projects, and supporting the professional improvement of colleagues. Harris and Muijs (2003b) further point out that the basic principle of teacher leadership is to accept that all teachers have leadership skills and a tendency to take the lead.

Therefore, teacher-leadership behaviors are crucial for ensuring the professional improvement of teachers and the potential benefits that can be gained from their knowledge and skills in school-development activities (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Teacher leaders have important roles in schools. Harris (2002b) states that teacher leaders conduct the principles developed for ensuring school development and improving student success in the classroom, influence and guide other teachers to contribute to school-development efforts, and exert effort and time to foster healthy relationships among school members. Lambert (2003a) states that teacher leaders help to create the most appropriate learning environment for themselves, their students, and their colleagues; work in accordance with organizational purposes; and make an attempt to have other employees adopt such purposes. Harris and Muijs (2003a) emphasize that teacher leaders coach and mentor students and other teachers, lead action teams in school, contribute to the improvement of learning and teaching, and lead in the use of effective teaching methods. It is therefore probable that teacher-leadership behaviors are quite important for creating a positive work environment in a school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

Teacher Professionalism

Teacher professionalism has been a subject of growing interest in recent years because of its emphasis on developing standards for the teaching profession and on improving the knowledge, skills, and capabilities that teachers need to effectively meet the varying needs of students (Demirkasımoğlu, 2010). The related literature includes a growing body of theoretical (Calgren, 1999; Coleman, Gallagher, & Job, 2012; Demirkasımoğlu, 2010; Grady, Helbling, & Lubeck, 2008; Hall & Schulz, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000; Helsby, 1995; Rizvi & Elliott, 2007) and empirical studies on the construct (Cerit, 2013; Day et al., 2007; Dowling, 2006; Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011; Locke, Vulliamy, Webb, & Hill, 2005; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Theoretical research on this subject generally deals with the definition of the concept, the determination of its scope and historical development, reasons for its emergence, and its relationship with teacher training. Empirical research, on the other hand, focuses on the relationships between teacher professionalism and the bureaucracy of school structure (Cerit, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2009), teacher autonomy (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005), and job performance (Dowling, 2006). Other studies also deal with the factors influencing teachers' perceptions of professional behaviors (Day et al., 2007; Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011; Locke et al., 2005).

Professionalism can be defined as an employee's attitudes and behaviors towards his or her job (Boyt, Lusch, & Naylor, 2001). Grady et al. (2008) treat professionalism as an individual's having knowledge and skills peculiar to a specific field and taking the responsibility for his or her professional improvement. Professionalism is also associated with the teacher as an employee. Day (1999) deals with teacher professionalism within the scope of a teacher's creating effective teaching practices, creating an environment suitable for learning, and improving professional knowledge and skills to provide students with richer learning experiences. Another study regards teacher professionalism as having the knowledge and skills required

by the teaching profession, meeting the learning needs of students, developing a high-level commitment to the teaching profession, and having an adequate level of autonomy in the decision-making process (Day, 2002; cited in Cerit, 2013).

When teaching is addressed from a professional perspective, the expectations from teachers vary and increase. Evans (2011) examines teacher professionalism in three dimensions: behavior, attitude, and intellectuality. The dimension of behavior regards the degree to which teachers could fulfill the requirements of the profession. In other words, the actions planned, implemented, evaluated, and developed by teachers for improving student learning can be examined under this dimension. The dimension of attitude refers to the perspective and perception of a teacher concerning the profession. The dimension of intellectualism involves teachers having the knowledge and skills required by the profession, improving themselves continuously, having a command of their field, and following closely the developments in the field. The classification of Evans regarding teacher professionalism may be considered important in that it reveals expectations from a professional teacher.

Furlong (2001) focuses on the concept of autonomy in teacher professionalism and suggests that teachers, being professionals, should behave autonomously in the processes of planning, implementing, and evaluating teaching. Contributing to school-related decision-making processes with one's knowledge, skills, and capabilities (Day et al., 2007); creating classroom practices based on one's knowledge; and the theoretical foundations of relevant fields (Carlgen, 1999) are considered among the basic requirements of teacher professionalism. It may therefore be argued that professionalism, which affects the attitudes and behaviors of teachers towards their profession, is a construct that must be regarded for transforming a school into an effective learning community and for improving student success.

Perceived Stress

Emerging as a result of the interaction of an individual with the environment, stress negatively affects the mood and motivation of the individual (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress mainly refers to the situations where demands upon an individual exceed the knowledge, skill, and capability levels of the individual (Lazarus, 1990). Folkman and Moskowitz (2000) regard stress as a negative process that brings about depression, excessive anxiety, physiological problems, and - in rare cases - even death.

Based on the approach that treats stress as a process, Lazarus (1993, 2006) states that there are four main elements. The first dimension is one's interaction with the environment. The relations of an individual with the environment initiate the stress process. The second dimension is about a mental-evaluation process where the individual separates the good and safe from the bad and threatening. The third dimension refers to an individual's coping with stressful situations effectively. The fourth dimension is about the effects of stress on an individual. From this point of view, stress can be regarded as a process that starts with the contact that an

individual has with the environment that leaves some psychological and physiological traces.

Stress has been intensely discussed in education, just as it has been in the fields of health sciences, economy, politics, and business management (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Evidence from a line of research reveals that teachers are exposed to considerable stress in school (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001; Erçetin et al., 2008; Tsiakkios & Pashiardis, 2006). Kyriacou (2001) regards teacher stress as being exposed to demoralizing feelings and thoughts and having one's self-consistency disrupted, which can cause a person to experience excessive anxiety, mental fatigue, and burnout.

There are various factors causing teachers to experience stress in their profession. Teachers may undergo stress due to organizational reasons such as work overload in school, a role conflict, the huge demands of school administration, and negative working conditions (Pithers & Soden, 1998). Townsend (1998; cited in Burchielli & Bartram, 2006) argues that the roles of teachers have changed and that teachers are now expected not only to teach, but also to guide students, actively participate in community-service projects, and support the school-development process, and that the role conflict caused by this situation may cause teachers to experience stress. Furthermore, the relationships of teachers with colleagues (Tsiakkios & Pashiardis, 2006), time pressure (Chan, 1998), negative student behaviors (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni Jr., 1995), crowded classrooms, and limited professional-development opportunities (Travers & Cooper, 1996) are among other factors causing teachers to experience stress in their professional lives.

Relationships between Teacher Leadership, Teacher Professionalism, and Perceived Stress

There is a series of variables that influences teacher-leadership behaviors due to the stereotyped role perceptions of school members including school administrators and teachers (Galland, 2008). One of them is teacher professionalism. It can be said that teacher professionalism refers to developing a high-level commitment to the profession and having a tendency to improve personal and professional knowledge and skills to fulfill the requirements of the job more effectively (Day, 2000). In other words, a professional teacher is expected to improve personal and professional skills for contributing well to student learning, to exert effort that influences student learning, and to design effective classroom practices (Calgren, 1999; Cerit, 2013; Demirkasimoğlu, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

Teacher leadership represents a mentality where the teaching and learning processes in a school are supported by all school members whether they are engaged in teaching or not. The relations and interactions among school members are considered to be the fundamental determiners of the leadership process (Harris & Muijs, 2003b). Fullan (1994) argues that teacher leadership is associated with a positive learning and teaching environment in the school, positive relations among colleagues, continuous professional learning, a change in management, and organizational values. Thus, it may be expected that the teachers approaching their jobs with a professional perspective will make a greater contribution to school

processes by displaying leadership behaviors. Day, Flores, and Viana (2007) support this argument and suggest that professional teachers are more willing to actively participate in school decision-making processes. Stating that teacher leadership and professionalism are closely associated with one another, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) report that professional teachers have more of a tendency to display leadership behaviors inside and outside the classroom, guide inexperienced teachers, participate in school decision-making processes, collaborate with colleagues and parents, and develop effective teaching practices. Grant (2006) argues that the improvement of teacher professionalism may enable teacher leadership to become widespread in a school and positively affect the perceptions of teachers in regard to taking responsibility for leadership behaviors. Highlighting the parallelism between the concepts of teacher leadership and professionalism in terms of augmenting collaboration, questioning and improving teaching, and increasing student learning, Harris and Muijs (2003b) suggest that professionalism may have a positive influence on the improvement of teacher leadership. Thus, it may be proposed that teacher professionalism has a positive relationship with teacher leadership and a positive influence on the perceptions of teachers regarding leadership behaviors.

The stress experienced in schools is another concept that may influence how teachers exert their leadership roles. Teaching is a stressful profession (Işıkhan, 2004; Kyriacou, 2001). The related literature contains a theme in the research findings that reveals the high levels of stress teachers experience in school (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Van Dick & Wagner, 2001; Erçetin, Hamedoğlu, & Çelik, 2008; Klassen, 2010; Platsidou & Agaliotis, 2008; Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2006; Zurlo, Pes, & Cooper, 2007). Kyriacou (2001) states that teachers experiencing excessive stress develop negative perceptions concerning school and the teaching profession, get psychologically tired, and are excessively angry and anxious. The research findings provided by Mearns and Cain (2003) and Kokkinos (2007) demonstrate that teachers exposed to excessive stress experience higher level of burnout. In this sense, it may be harder for teachers exposed to stress to focus on student learning, to develop teaching practices aimed at improving student learning, and to collaborate and communicate with their colleagues (Lambert, McCarthy, O'Donnell, & Wang, 2009). Therefore, it is more likely that teachers experiencing excessive amount of job stress have a poorer job performance and encounter some difficulties in creating an effective learning environment.

Teacher leaders are specialized teachers who spend a large part of their time in the classroom and contribute to school development and innovation efforts voluntarily (Harris & Muijs, 2003a). Can (2009a) reports that teacher leaders are expected to fulfill certain roles, including taking the lead inside and outside of the classroom, maintaining their professional improvement, and contributing to the professional improvement of their colleagues. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) also state that clear communication among school members, collaborative colleague relations, participation in decision-making processes, and a healthy and supportive school climate are of critical importance for the development of teacher leadership. Thus, it may be inferred that the primary expectation upon teacher leaders is to

develop effective classroom practices to facilitate student learning. Therefore, it seems difficult for teachers who experience heavy stress in the workplace and develop negative perceptions regarding their school and job to exert leadership roles and make an extra contribution to the school-development process.

The Present Study

The present study examined the relationships between teacher leadership, professional behaviors, and the perceived stress levels of primary-school teachers. It was thought that the small number of studies on teacher leadership and the scarcity of the empirical research on this subject conducted in Turkey (Beycioğlu, 2009; Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2010, 2012; Can, 2009a, 2009b) would increase the significance of the present study. Furthermore, a range of studies suggests that there is a need for further research findings concerning teacher leadership, which is regarded as a potential strength for school development and student learning (Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2012; Frost & Harris, 2003; Grant, 2006; Muijs & Harris, 2007). Thus, it was thought that the findings obtained in the present study would contribute to the improvement of learning and the teaching environment in schools and build a more positive school climate. In addition, the findings of the current study may serve as an important data source for policy makers in regard to teacher collaboration and relations among teachers. In this regard, the present study made an attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are primary-school teachers' perceptions of their leadership roles, professional behaviors, and the stress they are exposed to?
- 2) Are there significant relationships between primary-school teachers' perceptions of leadership roles, professional behaviors, and the stress they are exposed to?
- 3) Do the primary-school teachers' perceptions of their professional behaviors and stress levels significantly predict their perceptions of leadership roles?

Method

Research Design

This study was designed using a correlational research model to empirically examine the relationships between teacher professionalism, perceived stress, and the dimensions of teacher leadership. The subscales of teacher leadership (institutional improvement, professional improvement, and collaboration among colleagues) were dependent, whereas teacher professionalism and perceived stress were the independent variables of the study.

Procedure and Participants

A questionnaire with four parts was used to gather data in this study. The first part elicited personal data related to such demographic variables as gender, age, branch, and total teaching experience. The second part of the questionnaire included a *Teacher Leadership Scale* to determine primary-school teachers' perceptions of

leadership. The third part comprised a *Teacher Professionalism Scale*, and the fourth part included a *Perceived Stress Scale* to measure the degree to which individuals consider their lives unpredictable and uncontrollable. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to primary-school teachers. The necessary instructions and explanations were printed at the beginning of the questionnaire, and teachers were asked to complete them voluntarily. Each participant completed the questionnaire in about 10-12 minutes.

The participants of the current study, chosen through a convenience sampling method, were 302 primary-school teachers employed in 16 primary schools located within the borders of the central district of the Kastamonu province in the 2012–2013 academic year. Out of these 302 teachers, 195 (64.6%) were female and 107 (35.4%) were male. While 147 (48.7%) teachers were in the 31–40 age range, only 24 were over 50. There were 113 (37.4%) primary-school teachers and 189 (62.6%) were from various branches. Ninety-six (31.85%) teachers had six to ten years of total teaching experience, whereas 190 (62.9%) had one to five years of total teaching experience.

Instrumentation

Teacher Leadership Scale. Having a range from *Always* (5) to *Never* (1), this Likert-type scale was developed by Beycioğlu and Aslan (2010). The scale measures both the perceptions and the expectations of teachers regarding leadership. As the present study aimed at examining the relationships between the perceived stress and the professionalism levels of teachers and their perceptions regarding leadership, only the perception dimension of the Teacher Leadership Scale was employed. The scale comprised a total of 25 items, namely institutional improvement (nine items), professional improvement (11 items), and collaboration among colleagues (five items). The total variance explained by the dimensions of the scale was 57.23%. The item-total correlations of the scale items varied between .47 and .92. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for determining the reliability of the scale were found to be .87 for the institutional-improvement dimension, .87 for the professional-improvement dimension, and .92 for the collaboration-among-colleagues dimension (Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2012). In this study, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each subscale were calculated. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be .90 for the institutional-improvement dimension, .91 for the professional-improvement dimension, and .92 for the collaboration-among-colleagues dimension.

Teacher Professionalism Scale. Having a range from *I Strongly Disagree* (1) to *I Strongly Agree* (5), the Teacher Professionalism Scale was a Likert-type scale composed of eight items. It was developed by Tschannen-Moran, Parish, and DiPaola (2006) and adapted into Turkish by Cerit (2013). Cerit (2013) performed the validity and reliability analyses of the scale. The author revealed that items related to teacher professionalism yielded a single-factor structure and that the factor-load values of the items varied between .55 and .90. A total of eight items explained 61.62% of the variance in the teacher-professionalism scores. Furthermore, the author found that the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .90 and that the item-total correlations varied between .45 and .84. Because the Teacher Professionalism

Scale was adapted into Turkish from a different language and culture, it was deemed suitable to examine the factor structure of the scale in the present study. Results indicated that the scale yielded a single-factor structure and was composed of eight items that collectively explained 63.73% of the total variance. Factor loads of eight items varied between .66 and .85. The internal consistency coefficient calculated for the reliability of the scale was found to be .92, while the item-total correlations varied between .58 and .79.

Perceived Stress Scale. This scale was developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstain (1983) and was adapted into Turkish by Yerlikaya and İnanç (2007). The scale aimed at measuring the degree to which individuals considered their lives unpredictable and uncontrollable. Having a range from *Never* (0) to *Very Often* (4), this scale requested participants to evaluate certain feelings and thoughts they had experienced in the last month. The scale consisted of 14 items in total. The items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13 were subjected to reverse coding. Yerlikaya and İnanç (2007) performed the validity and reliability analyses of the scale. The Turkish form of the scale was administered to 246 university students. The students were in the 17–28 age group. One hundred and seventeen of them were female and 129 were male. The participants were also requested to respond to the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), which measures depressive symptoms, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-I and II), which measures state and trait anxiety. The average of the scores achieved by the students in the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was 27.66, while the standard deviation was 6.96. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .84. Positive correlations at the levels of .65, .56, and .66 were detected between the PPS scores and BDI, STAI-I, and STAI-II scores, respectively. As a result, it was concluded that the Turkish translation of the PPS had an internal consistency and criterion validity high enough to make possible its usage in the field (Yerlikaya & İnanç, 2007).

The present study investigated the factor structure and reliability of the PPS. Three items (4, 8, and 12) whose item-total correlations were found to be below .20 were removed from the scale. Thus, 11 items remained in the scale, and the related internal consistency coefficient was .71. The item-total correlations of the remaining 11 items varied between .20 and .53. The results of the analyses concerning the factor structure of the scale indicated that 11 items constituting the scale had a single-factor structure and 11 items explained 39.95% of the total variance collectively. Furthermore, factor loadings of 11 items varied between .41 and .76.

Data Analysis

Data of the study were analyzed in two steps. First, data were examined in terms of missing values, outliers, and multicollinearity. The second step consisted of the analysis of research problems. An EM (expectation-maximization) algorithm was used to replace missing values with estimated values. Ten subjects that were determined to be outliers according to Mahalanobis' distance values were removed from the data set. Furthermore, we examined multicollinearity among variables, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), the Condition Index (CI), and the Tolerance Value (TV). Results of the analyses indicated that there were no variables whose VIF value

was over 10 and whose TV was under .20. Furthermore, the highest CI value was 17.07. Therefore, the final data set included 302 subjects.

The mean scores for teacher-leadership dimensions, teacher professionalism, and perceived stress were calculated by dividing the sums into the number of items in each scale. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to find out the relationships among variables. Then, a stepwise multiple-regression analysis was performed to find out the most effective predictors in predicting the dependent variable. The Beta (β) coefficient and results for the t-test were also considered to render the regression analysis results.

Results

Correlations between variables

The means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients among variables for all primary-school teachers that participated in the study are given in Table 1.

As can be seen from Table 1, the highest rated dimension of teacher leadership was collaboration among colleagues ($\bar{X} = 4.04$), whereas the lowest rated was institutional improvement ($\bar{X} = 3.73$). On the other hand, while the perceptions of teachers concerning professional behaviors ($\bar{X} = 3.96$) were over the medium level, their perceptions regarding stress ($\bar{X} = 1.80$) were close to the medium level.

Table 1

The Means and Standard Deviations of Subscales and the Correlations between Variables for All Teachers

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher leadership							
Institutional improvement	3.73	.71	-	.85**	.58**	.35**	-.28**
Professional improvement	3.85	.69		-	.76**	.36**	-.35**
Collaboration among colleagues	4.04	.78			-	.20**	-.30**
Teacher professionalism	3.96	.68				-	-.21**
Perceived stress	1.80	.45					-

* $p < .05$; ** $p > .01$

As to the correlations in Table 1, there were positive and significant relationships between teacher professionalism and the teacher-leadership dimensions of institutional improvement ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), professional improvement ($r = .36$, $p <$

.01), and collaboration among colleagues ($r = .20, p < .01$). However, there were negative and significant relationships between perceived stress and the teacher-leadership dimensions of institutional improvement ($r = -.28, p < .01$), professional improvement ($r = -.35, p < .01$), collaboration among colleagues ($r = -.30, p < .01$), and teacher professionalism ($r = -.21, p < .01$).

Results of regression analyses for the institutional-improvement component of teacher leadership

Table 2 reveals the results of the stepwise multiple linear-regression analysis for variables predicting the institutional-improvement component of teacher leadership.

Table 2

The Results of the Stepwise Multiple-Regression Analysis Concerning the Prediction of the Institutional-Improvement Dimension of Teacher Leadership and the Relevant Regression Equations

Variables	B	β	R	R ²	SH _B	ΔF	p
1. Teacher prof.	.32	.30	.35	.12	.67	40.96	.00
2. Perceived stress	-.34	-.21	.40	.16	.66	15.53	.00
Constant	3.082						

Institutional improvement = 3.082 + .32 Teacher professionalism - .34 Perceived stress

As is seen in Table 2, the stepwise multiple-regression analysis was conducted in two steps. In the regression analysis, teacher professionalism was first included in the equation. This variable explained 12% ($\beta = .30, p < .05$) of the total variance in the institutional-improvement scores. Secondly, perceived stress was included in the equation. This variable explained 4% ($\beta = -.21, p < .05$) of the variance in the predicted variable. According to the regression coefficients, there was a positive relationship between professionalism behaviors and institutional improvement, and a negative relationship between perceived stress and institutional improvement. Professionalism and perceived-stress levels included in the regression equation collectively explained 16% of the total variance.

Results of the regression analyses for the professional-improvement component of teacher leadership

Table 3 reveals the results of the stepwise multiple linear-regression analysis for variables predicting the professional-improvement component of teacher leadership.

Table 3

The Results of the Stepwise Multiple-Regression Analysis Concerning the Prediction of the Professional-Improvement Dimension of Teacher Leadership and the Relevant Regression Equations

Variables	B	β	R	R ²	SH _B	ΔF	p
1. Teacher prof.	.31	.30	.36	.13	.65	44.28	.00
2. Perceived stress	-.45	-.29	.46	.21	.62	29.99	.00
Constant	3.44						

Professional improvement = 3.44 + .31 Teacher professionalism - .45 Perceived stress

As can be seen in Table 3, the stepwise multiple-regression analysis for the prediction of the professional improvement was performed in two steps. In the regression analysis, teacher professionalism was first included in the equation. This variable explained 13% ($\beta = .30, p < .05$) of the total variance. Secondly, perceived stress was included in the equation. This variable explained 8% ($\beta = -.29, p < .05$) of the total variance. These two variables collectively explained 21% of the total variance concerning the professional-improvement dimension. Furthermore, there was a positive relationship between professional improvement and professionalism, but there was a negative relationship between professional improvement and perceived stress.

Results of the regression analyses for the collaboration-among-colleagues component of teacher leadership

Table 4 reveals the results of the stepwise multiple linear-regression analysis for variables predicting the collaboration-among-colleagues component of teacher leadership.

Table 4

The Results of the Stepwise Multiple-Regression Analysis Concerning the Prediction of the Collaboration-among-Colleagues Dimension of Teacher Leadership and the Relevant Regression Equations

Variables	B	β	R	R ²	SH _B	ΔF	p
1. Perceived stress	-.46	-.27	.30	.09	.74	28.53	.00
2. Teacher prof.	.17	.15	.33	.11	.74	6.89	.00
Constant	4.20						

Collaboration among colleagues = 4.20 - .46 Perceived stress + .17 Teacher professionalism

As can be seen from Table 4, the stepwise multiple-regression analysis for the prediction of the collaboration-among-colleagues dimension was conducted in two steps. In the regression analysis, perceived stress was first included in the equation. This variable explained 9% ($\beta = -.27, p < .05$) of the total variance. Secondly, teacher professionalism was included in the equation. This variable explained only 2% ($\beta = .15, p < .05$) of the total variance. The independent variables of the study collectively explained 11% of the total variance in this subscale. Results also indicated that there was a negative relationship between collaboration among colleagues and perceived stress, and a positive relationship between collaboration among colleagues and teacher professionalism.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationships between primary-school teachers' perceptions of professionalism, perceived stress, and leadership. The results confirmed that teacher professionalism and perceived stress were two important variables predicting teacher leadership. They also illustrated that primary-school teachers' perceptions of the collaboration-among-colleagues dimension of teacher leadership were higher than institutional improvement and professional improvement. This finding may be indicating that the primary-school teachers mostly associated teacher-leadership behaviors with collaborating with their colleagues, sharing their observations and experiences about student learning, supporting one another, and conducting projects together. The present study showed that the professionalism perceptions of teachers were over the medium level. This finding is understandable when it is considered that teacher professionalism is associated with teachers' high commitment to their profession and with their desire to improve their professional knowledge and skills to achieve high-quality teaching (Day, 2000). However, evidence from several studies (Bayhan, 2011; Cerit, 2013) is not congruent with the findings of the present study. In this regard, it may be argued that more research findings are needed to make sound analyses on this subject. Furthermore, the descriptive findings of the present study showed that primary-school teachers had an almost medium stress level. It has been known that stress is a factor causing an individual to encounter negative situations such as anxiety and depression that can threaten an individual's psychological, social, and physical health (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). It was also reported in a range of studies that teaching is a stressful job and that teachers are exposed to a considerable amount of stress (Van Dick & Wagner, 2001; Erçetin et al., 2008; Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2006). In consideration of the excessive stress and the negative situations likely to occur as a result of it, the finding of the study suggesting that teachers had an almost medium stress level may be deemed worrisome. As a matter of fact, teachers experiencing excessive stress, fatigue, and burnout may not foster student learning and achievement.

The present study illustrated that the institutional-improvement, professional-improvement, and collaboration-among-colleagues dimensions of teacher leadership

were positively correlated with teachers' professional behaviors. Professional teachers have a tendency to improve their personal and professional skills to foster student learning and achievement (Calgren, 1999). Furthermore, they are more willing to play active roles outside the classroom to support school-improvement practices (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2006). In this regard, it may be expected that professional teachers tend to lead both in and out of the classroom. In line with this argument, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) emphasize the similarity between the basic assumptions of the concepts of teacher leadership and teacher professionalism, because both concepts focus on practices associated with school improvement, such as participation in the decision-making processes, the improvement of teaching practices, collaboration among colleagues, effective communication with school-community members, and guidance for new teachers. Harris and Muijs (2003b) state that the professional behaviors of teachers are one of the basic determiners of the increase in the effectiveness and expansion of teacher leadership. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the positive and significant relationship between teacher professionalism and teacher leadership is congruent with the expectations in this matter.

Another finding of the study was that the sub-dimensions of teacher leadership had a negative and significant relationship with perceived stress. This finding corroborates the research findings provided by Pearson and Moomaw (2005). Teacher leaders establish an effective communication with their colleagues, cooperate with them, and play roles aimed at building a learning-focused culture in school (Harris, 2003). Harris and Muijs (2003a) state that teacher leaders play various roles, including guiding colleagues outside the classroom, collecting and evaluating data for improving student learning, and supporting innovative practices in school. Hence, it would be difficult for stressful teachers to take the responsibility of leading. Sezgin (2012) articulates that teachers having high stress and anxiety levels may have difficulty in fulfilling the requirements of the profession. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), teachers must trust in their knowledge and skills and have a strong self-esteem to perform leadership roles in school, and a teacher experiencing heavy stress cannot be expected to take responsibility for leadership behaviors. Evidence from a number of studies also confirmed that teachers exposed to a high level of stress in their professional lives experienced burnout (Kokkinos, 2007; Mearns & Cain, 2003) and job dissatisfaction (Borg & Falzon, 1989; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). In this sense, it can be suggested that the finding of the present study showing that there is a negative and significant relationship between perceived stress and teacher leadership is congruent with the related literature and expectations.

This study's findings demonstrated that, collectively, teacher professionalism and perceived stress significantly predicted institutional improvement. In addition, it was seen that teacher professionalism positively predicted institutional improvement, whereas perceived stress predicted it negatively. It was also found that teacher professionalism was a stronger predictor of institutional improvement in comparison to perceived stress. The institutional-improvement dimension of teacher leadership is

associated with teachers' playing active roles in school-improvement activities outside the classroom, the allocation of necessary school resources, and planning and implementing effective school-based practices to promote student learning (Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2012; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In other words, teacher leaders not only improve their classroom teaching practices but also contribute well to the other processes concerning school improvement (Tschannen-Moran, Parish, & DiPaola, 2006). Professional teachers lead the processes related to school development and take responsibility for developing school-focused activities to improve student learning by using their knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Kincheloe, 2004). This research finding may also be explained by referring to the relationship between professionalism and autonomy. One of the important components of professionalism, autonomy refers to the self-determination of professionals in planning, implementing, and evaluating their works (Furlong, 2001). In this regard, a professional teacher is expected to participate in the decision-making processes concerning their knowledge, skills, and disposition. It was also clear from the findings that perceived stress, along with teacher professionalism, made significant contributions to the prediction of institutional improvement. Teachers experiencing excessive stress, anger, and anxiety in school may develop negative perceptions regarding their school and profession (Kyriacou, 2001). Therefore, teachers experiencing intense stress might not succeed in teaching effectively or in contributing to school improvement.

The findings also demonstrated that, collectively, teacher professionalism and perceived stress significantly predicted professional improvement. Teacher professionalism positively predicted professional improvement, while perceived stress predicted it negatively. Moreover, teacher professionalism was a stronger predictor of professional improvement in comparison to perceived stress. This finding suggests that the professional behaviors of teachers are an important variable predicting professional improvement. From the perspective of employees, professional behaviors denote to working effectively and continuously increasing the quality of services provided (Day, 2000; Demirkasımoğlu, 2010; Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011). In this regard, a professional employee must improve his or her knowledge and skills. A number of related studies (Calgren, 1999; Cerit, 2013; Day et al., 2007; Demirkasımoğlu, 2010; Grady et al., 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2009) suggest that professional improvement is one of the key elements and sources of professionalism. Sacks (1997) emphasizes that professionals closely follow the developments in their fields and have a tendency to learn continuously. Considering the above-mentioned relationship between professionalism and professional improvement, it is apparent that the finding of the present study suggesting that teacher professionalism is a significant and important predictor of professional improvement is congruent with both the study's expectations and the related literature. On the other hand, the finding of the present study indicating that perceived stress is a negative and significant variable predicting professional improvement may mean that teachers fail to maintain their professional improvement due to the intense stress they experience. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), teachers may develop mistrust in their professional knowledge and skills as a result of the intense stress they experience;

thus, they may prefer to be passive in school. Based on the research findings revealing that there is a positive relationship between teacher stress and burnout (Kokkinos, 2007; Mearns & Cain, 2003), it can be suggested that the professional expectations and motivations of teachers experiencing burnout may decrease; thus, these teachers are less likely to maintain their professional improvement.

The study's findings indicated that, collectively, teacher professionalism and perceived stress significantly predicted the collaboration among colleagues. Teacher professionalism positively predicted collaboration among colleagues, whereas perceived stress predicted it negatively. It was further determined that perceived stress was a more important predictor of the collaboration-among-colleagues dimension. This finding suggests that stress is more important than teacher professionalism in regard to the collaboration of teachers with their colleagues for improving teaching and increasing student success. Based on this finding, it can also be argued that teachers exposed to stress in their professional lives may have negative perceptions in regard to leadership behaviors. The related literature contains statements supporting this finding. For example, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) state that teachers under stress may be unwilling to take the lead. Lambert et al. (2009) emphasize that the stress experienced by teachers may have a negative effect on their communication and collaboration with colleagues. It is therefore possible to argue that stress prevents teachers from sharing, cooperating, and communicating with their colleagues.

The findings of the present study evidenced that teacher professionalism and perceived stress were important variables explaining teacher leadership. In this regard, an organizational structure supporting the professional behaviors of teachers and minimizing the factors causing them to experience stress should be created that is supported by a healthy climate. Considering the negative relationship between teacher leadership and perceived stress, more attention should be focused on efforts aimed at revealing the factors causing teachers to experience stress. A more participative, democratic, professional, and healthy school environment created through the common efforts of school members and based on the basic assumptions of teacher leadership may make a positive contribution to the quality of teaching. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the sample of the current study consisted of only primary-school teachers. This limitation should be taken into consideration when interpreting the research results. The results should be supported by qualitative methods such as observations and interviews. Future studies may investigate the relationships between teacher leadership and various variables including school structure, school culture, and school climate, thereby collecting more data in regard to the properties of a school that are appropriate for the improvement of teacher leadership.

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Öğretmen Liderliği, Öğretmen Profesyonelizmi ve Algılanan Stres Arasındaki İlişki

Atıf:

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Özet

Problem Durumu: Son yıllarda okula yönelik baskıların ve hesap verebilir bir okul yapısının oluşturulmasına yönelik taleplerin yoğunlaşması, liderlik kavramının okul bağlamında yeniden ele alınmasına yönelik tartışmaları beraberinde getirmektedir. Okullar, bu süreçte sahip oldukları liderlik potansiyelini gözden geçirme ve tüm okul üyelerinin liderlik sürecine katkıda bulunabileceği bir örgüt yapısı geliştirme çabası içine girmiştir. Okul yöneticilerinin rolleri ise giderek daha karmaşık ve problemleri bir hal almış, sahip olmaları gereken bilgi ve beceriler giderek artmış ve farklı alanlarda yeterliklere sahip olmaları beklenmeye başlanmıştır. Mevcut araştırmada, ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin profesyonel davranışları ve algıladıkları stres ile öğretmen liderliği arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Öğretmen liderliğine ilişkin yapılan çalışmaların oldukça sınırlı olmasının ve özellikle Türkiye'de konuya ilişkin gerçekleştirilen ampirik çalışmaların yetersizliğinin, mevcut çalışmanın önemini ve alana sağlayacağı katkıyı artırdığı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, okul gelişimi ve öğrenci öğrenmesine yönelik potansiyel bir güç olarak kabul edilen öğretmen liderliğine ilişkin daha fazla araştırma bulgusuna ihtiyaç duyulduğu bir dizi çalışmada vurgulanmıştır. Bu bağlamda mevcut çalışmadan elde edilecek bulguların, okulda öğrenme ve öğretme ortamının geliştirilmesine, öğretmen liderliğinin yaygınlaşmasına ve daha olumlu bir okul iklimi oluşturulmasına katkı sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Mevcut araştırmada şu sorulara yanıt aranmıştır: (1) İlköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin öğretmen liderliği rollerine, profesyonel davranışlarına ve maruz kaldıkları strese yönelik algıları nasıldır? (2) Öğretmenlerin öğretmen liderliği rollerine, profesyonel davranışlarına ve strese yönelik algıları arasında anlamlı ilişkiler var mıdır? (3) Öğretmenlerin profesyonellik ve stres düzeyleri, öğretmen liderliğine yönelik algılarını anlamlı bir biçimde yordamakta mıdır?

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Bu araştırma, ilişkisel tarama modelinde tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmada iki bağımsız ve bir bağımlı değişken bulunmaktadır. Araştırmanın bağımsız değişkenlerini öğretmen profesyonelizmi ve algılanan stres oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını 2012-2013 eğitim-öğretim yılında Kastamonu il merkezi sınırları içinde bulunan 16 ilköğretim okulunda görev yapan toplam 302 öğretmen oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma verilerinin toplanmasında

Öğretmen Liderliği Ölçeği, Öğretmen Profesyonelizmi Ölçeği ve Algılanan Stres Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma amaçlarına uygun olarak gerçekleştirilen analizlere geçmeden önce, veri seti dikkatli bir biçimde incelenerek eksik ve hatalı verilerden arındırılmıştır. Analiz aşamasında ilk olarak bağımlı ve bağımsız değişkenlere yönelik aritmetik ortalama ve standart sapma değerleri incelenmiştir. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek amacıyla ise Pearson momentler çarpımı korelasyon katsayıları hesaplanmıştır. Bir sonraki aşamada öğretmen liderliğinin kurumsal gelişme, mesleki gelişim ve meslektaşlarla iş birliği boyutlarının algılanan stres ve öğretmen profesyonelizmi tarafından ne derece yordandığını belirlemek amacıyla aşamalı çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. İlgili analiz öncesinde bağımsız değişkenler arasında çoklu bağlantı ile her bir bağımsız değişkenin bağımlı değişkenle doğrusal bir ilişkisinin olup olmadığı incelenmiştir. Analiz sonucunda, bağımsız değişkenler ile bağımlı değişken arasında doğrusal bir ilişkinin olduğu ve bağımsız değişkenler arasında çoklu bağlantı (multicollineality) sorunu oluşturacak bir ilişkinin olmadığı görülmüştür.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Araştırma bulguları, öğretmenlerin profesyonel davranışlara yönelik algılarının ($\bar{X} = 3.96$) orta düzeyin üstündeyken stres algılarının ($\bar{X} = 1.80$) orta düzeye yakın olduğunu göstermektedir. Değişkenler arasındaki korelasyon katsayıları incelendiğinde, öğretmen profesyonelizmi ile öğretmen liderliğinin kurumsal gelişme ($r = .35, p < .01$), mesleki gelişim ($r = .36, p < .01$) ve meslektaşlarla iş birliği ($r = .20, p < .01$) boyutları arasında pozitif yönde ve anlamlı bir ilişkilerin olduğu görülmektedir. Öte yandan, algılanan stresle öğretmen liderliğinin kurumsal gelişme ($r = -.28, p < .01$), mesleki gelişim ($r = -.35, p < .01$), meslektaşlarla iş birliği ($r = -.30, p < .01$) boyutları ve öğretmen profesyonelizmi arasında ($r = -.21, p < .01$) negatif yönde ve anlamlı ilişkilerin olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca araştırma bulguları, öğretmen profesyonelizmi ile algılanan stres birlikte öğretmen liderliğinin kurumsal gelişme boyutunun %16'sını, mesleki gelişme boyutunun %21'ini ve meslektaşlar arası iş birliği boyutunun %11'ini açıklayabildiğini göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Araştırma sonuçları, öğretmen profesyonelizminin ve algılanan stresin öğretmen liderliğini yordayan önemli değişkenler olduğu düşüncesini doğrular niteliktedir. Araştırma sonuçlarına dayalı olarak öğretmen profesyonelizmi ve algılanan stres değişkenlerinin öğretmen liderliğini açıklayan önemli değişkenler olduğu söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda, okulda öğretmen liderliğinin daha etkili olabilmesi için öğretmenlerin profesyonel davranışlarını destekleyecek ve stres yaşamalarına neden olan etmenleri en aza indireyecek bir örgüt yapısının oluşturulması ve bunun sağlıklı bir örgüt iklimiyle desteklenmesi önemli görülebilir. Öğretmenlerin liderlik becerilerini sergileyebilecekleri ve okul gelişimine katkı sağlayabilecekleri okul temelli proje, araştırma ve uygulamalarda görev almaları, öğretmen liderliğinin etki alanının genişlemesine ve okulun bir bütün olarak öğrenci öğrenmesine daha fazla odaklanmasına yardımcı olabilir. Öğretmen liderliği ile algılanan stres arasındaki negatif yönlü ilişki göz önünde bulundurularak öğretmenlerin stres yaşamalarına neden olan etmenlerin ortaya çıkarılmasına daha fazla önem verilmelidir. Öğretmen liderliğinin temel varsayımlarından hareketle, okul üyelerinin ortak çabalarıyla oluşturulacak daha katılımcı, demokratik, profesyonel ve sağlıklı bir okul ortamı,

okulda gerçekleştirilen öğretimin kalitesine olumlu yönde etki edebilir. Bununla birlikte araştırma örnekleminin yalnızca ilköğretim okullarında görev yapan öğretmenlerden oluşmuş olması bir sınırlılık olarak kabul edilmeli ve bu durum araştırma sonuçları yorumlanırken göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğretmen liderliği, öğretmen profesyoneliizmi, algılanan stres, öğretmen