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The Relationship between School Administrators' Social Justice Leadership and Teachers' Stigmatization Tendencies

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between school administrators' social justice leadership and the stigmatization tendencies of teachers. To achieve this aim, the study employed a correlational survey design within the scope of quantitative research methods. The population of the study comprises 2,075 teachers employed in the Arnavutköy district of İstanbul Province in the 2023–2024 academic year. The study sample consists of 385 teachers selected through the simple random sampling method. Two measurement tools—the Social Justice Leadership Scale and the Stigma Scale—were utilized to obtain the research data. Descriptive statistical techniques and Pearson correlation analysis were employed to analyze the data. Results indicated a low but significant negative correlation between the social justice leadership practices of school administrators and the stigmatization tendencies exhibited by teachers. Considering the potential of social justice leadership in combating stigmatization, it is recommended to provide social justice leadership training to school administrators.

Key Words

Social justice leadership
Stigma
School administrator

About Article

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Introduction

Schools are experiencing a multi-faceted social, economic, environmental and academic crisis. Many studies have been conducted to support academic learning and social/emotional development in this multi-crisis environment. In this context, it can be said that equality and justice-oriented teaching in schools is becoming increasingly important. Social justice leadership has started to attract the attention of more researchers as a concept emphasized and examined in the field of educational administration (Berkovich, 2014; Büyükgöze et al., 2018; Canlı & Demirtaş, 2022; Feng & Chen, 2018; Furman, 2012; Kondakçı et al., 2021; Özdemir & Pektaş, 2017; Theoharris, 2007; Wang, 2018). Accordingly, social justice leadership is important for more effective distribution of academic and social resources in schools and creating a sustainable educational environment.

Social justice leadership encompasses school-based efforts to provide fair and inclusive learning experiences, particularly for students from disadvantaged populations (Özdemir & Pektaş, 2017). Social justice leadership, which addresses the educational needs of disadvantaged students, is about the fair distribution of educational resources (Feng & Chen, 2018). On the other hand, although social justice is closely related to the distribution of resources, social justice may not only be achieved by distributing resources equally among individuals. It is also in touch with the norms that determine how members of society treat each other and how they relate to others. Students can also experience exclusion from interactions in the learning environment, not only because of their lack of access to resources, but also because of their disadvantages. The exclusion of students and their parents from educational processes is also an obstacle to social justice (Ryan, 2006).

The experience of stigmatization stands out as a problem that can lead to exclusion in educational processes. Stigmatization means the negative differentiation, exclusion and isolation of an individual or a group by society due to a certain situation (Arboleda-Flórez & Stuart, 2012; Yaman & Güngör, 2013b). From this point of view, it can be said that stigmatization is a relational process. As a relational process, stigmatization occurs at the level of words, gestures, meanings and emotions in the interpersonal field (Yang et al., 2007). Although stigmatization has a micro view in terms of focusing on relational issues, it is seen that this concept also has macro and systemic dimensions. Various researchers have pointed out that stigmatization produces and sustains material and immaterial inequalities (Arboleda-Flórez, & Stuart, 2012; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2022; Link & Phelan, 2001; Pescosolido & Martin, 2015). In this context, it is reasonable to assume that social justice leadership, which aims to eliminate inequalities, should also address issues related to stigmatization.

It is understood that stigmatization can also be seen in schools (Atmaca, 2020; Kondakçı, et al., 2021; McNulty & Roseboro, 2009; Yaman & Güngör, 2013b). It can be thought that this situation will cause negative consequences for other educational stakeholders, especially students. According to Shields (2004), when educators implicitly place the responsibility for school failure on disadvantaged families and students through generalizations and labels based on socially constructed stereotypes, many students begin to believe that they cannot achieve academic success. McNulty and Roseboro (2009) point out that once the patterns of failure in stigmatized students become entrenched, it is generally difficult to change. Therefore, it is important to prevent stigmatization experiences that lead to academic and social inequalities in schools. At this point, school administrators also have a role to play. As a matter of fact, various researchers emphasize that school administrators should make efforts to prevent such negativities by developing awareness against stigmatization behaviors within the school (Yaman & Güngör, 2013b; Önk & Cemaloğlu, 2016).

Social justice leadership can be considered an effective leadership approach in combating stigmatization. In this regard, social justice leaders are considered to play a pivotal role in mitigating stigmatizing attitudes and behaviors within educational environments. Indeed, Berkovich (2014) states that social justice leaders strive to eliminate prejudices, while Whang (2019) emphasizes that they contribute to teachers' professional development by being aware of their own biases and treating all school members fairly. Additionally, Theoharis (2007) highlights that social justice leaders adopt strategies such as questioning unjust practices and guiding staff through this process.

In this context, examining the relationship between school administrators' social justice leadership and teachers' stigmatization tendencies emerges as an important research area. Nevertheless,

the existing literature offers limited empirical insight into the association between these two constructs. Accordingly, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature and is anticipated to contribute meaningfully to academic discussions on the subject.

Social Justice Leadership

Social justice leadership represents a form of contextually grounded activism that seeks to reshape educational settings into inclusive and supportive environments where both teachers and students are empowered to succeed, regardless of prevailing challenges (García-Carmona et al., 2021). It is stated in the literature that social justice leadership has unique and distinctive basic characteristics. Theoharis (2007) stands out as a researcher who developed a theory of social justice leadership. In this context, it is understood that the social justice leader tries to make sense of diversity by giving importance to it. Creating a positive school climate where all educational stakeholders feel valued and accepted is considered as one of the components of social justice practices of administrators (Wang, 2018). Social justice leaders respect differences among people and support disadvantaged students (Whang, 2019).

It is understood that social justice leaders do not only focus on raising the academic achievement of each student, but also contribute to raising students as critical-thinking citizens in society by raising awareness about the concept of justice. In this framework, the first goal of social justice leaders is to cooperate to ensure that every child succeeds and to try to increase the academic achievement of students in different ways. Equipping students to become active and engaged members of society is regarded as a secondary essential objective of educational leaders (Shaked, 2020).

Professional development of teachers is also considered important within the scope of social justice leadership practices in schools. Indeed, school administrators who are committed to social justice principles are reported to closely monitor the professional and emotional needs of teachers (Towers, 2022). To effectively implement the principle of social justice within the school environment, professional development must involve recognizing staff members' strengths and areas for growth, fostering attitudinal and behavioral change toward social justice, and equipping them with the capacity to take initiative and responsibility (Wang, 2018). In addition, reviewing teacher-student relationships and guiding teachers to meet the needs of the changing student population can be considered among the prominent practices in this context (Silva et al., 2021; Whang, 2019). The social justice leader guides school staff in addressing inequalities, thereby fostering learning that emphasizes staff development and equity in the use of available resources (Theoharis, 2007). Accordingly, it may be inferred that school leaders committed to social justice principles emphasize teacher development to ensure a fairer and more inclusive educational setting.

Although it is emphasized that social justice leadership plays an important role in many areas from a theoretical perspective, it can be said that school administrators may face various difficulties due to the structural, cultural and individual obstacles they face in putting this ideal into practice. According to Szeto & Cheng (2018), school administrators' leadership practices are influenced by contextual factors, and macro-level contextual factors create certain difficulties. At this point, Arar et al. (2017) emphasize that administrators working in a centralized education system may also face various obstacles in terms of social justice. In addition, micro-level contextual factors may also pose obstacles to social justice leadership. According to Ryan (2016), organizational realities affect the practices of social justice leaders. The daily routines, tight schedules, and unexpected disruptions that affect managers' days, as mentioned by Miller and Martin (2015), may reflect organizational realities. Due to these various obstacles and challenges, it can be said that there is a need to provide various professional development opportunities for school administrators to develop their understanding of social justice.

It is important for school leaders to promote an inclusive pedagogy, to identify and address prejudice and discrimination, to provide a positive learning climate for a diverse student population, and to transform schools to ensure equity in learning for all students. In order to realize these goals, school administrators need to possess critical leadership skills based on moral and ethical values such as trust, respect and adaptation to diversity. They also need awareness and motivation (Forde & Torrance, 2017; Miller & Martin, 2015; Szeto & Cheng, 2018).

In the Turkish context, there are some problems related to social justice leadership. First of all, there is no training that prepares school administrators for social justice in Türkiye (Canlı & Demirtaş, 2022). The absence of both theoretical and practical frameworks regarding social justice leadership within centralized educational systems in Türkiye complicates the role of school administrators. Furthermore, the lack of professionalization in school leadership and the limited authority granted to administrators present significant barriers to the effective execution of social justice-oriented practices in schools (Kondakçı et al., 2021). School administrators, who have limited authority in realizing social justice leadership (Arar et al., 2017), experience problems such as insufficient resources in addition to limited authority due to the centralized education system (Canlı & Demirtaş, 2022). Since there is no legal obligation for school administrators to exhibit social justice leadership in the Turkish education system, social justice leadership is completely dependent on the personal efforts of school principals. The main power for school administrators to take action in this regard is their personal beliefs and dedication (Arar et al., 2017; Kondakçı et al., 2021).

Stigmatization

Stigmatization is an interdisciplinary issue. Various disciplines including psychology, sociology and anthropology have contributed to this issue. For this reason, the concept of stigmatization has been approached from different angles; many conceptualizations have emerged, making the concept of stigmatization complex (Link & Phelan, 2001). Goffman (2014) approached the concept of stigmatization from a sociological perspective and stated that stigma is an unexpected and unwanted difference. Stigmatization reflects a social process that is experienced from time to time in certain periods of life in line with relationships, which leads everyone to play both roles: stigmatized on the one hand and normal people on the other. In this respect, stigmatization is addressed within the framework of roles played in an interaction process.

The concept of stigmatization comes from the ancient Greek word -*stizein*. The word stizein refers to a mark placed on slaves in Greek society to determine their position in the social structure and to reflect that they were fewer valuable members of society. These marks, which are cut or burned on the body and make the person distinctive, aim to exclude the relevant person or groups from social acceptance (Arboleda-Flórez, 2002; Arboleda-Flórez, & Stuart, 2012; Goffman, 2014; Weidner, 1981). Accordingly, it is understood that in the process of stigmatization, the individual first differentiates and then the process of exclusion follows.

Stigmatization refers to a sense of being set apart in a negative way because of one's circumstances or group affiliation (Arboleda-Flórez, & Stuart, 2012). Stigmatization means that a person or group is pushed out of society and isolated due to experiences that are not accepted by society (Yaman & Güngör, 2013b). People who are aware of stigmatization see themselves as different from the group identity and perceive themselves in a mold, even if they do not believe that a negative stereotype is true (Spruyt et al., 2015).

It is pointed out that stigmatization is an issue that should be examined especially by social scientists. It is argued that stigmatization is the main determinant of many issues related to life, from psychological well-being to employment and housing (Link & Phelan, 2001). It can be said that this issue also has reflections in the field of education. For example, within the scope of status loss in the stigmatization process; it is seen that the person is placed downward in the status hierarchy with negative labeling and stereotypes. Having a devalued status in society also leads to concrete inequalities in the context of social interactions within small groups. Reflections of these inequalities can be seen in details such as taking the floor, referring to the contributions of others, nodding and interrupting. Low status is a barrier to participating in social activities or undertaking various activities (Link & Phelan, 2001). In schools, in classrooms, in the relationship between teachers and students, it is possible to encounter inequalities in the context of social interactions with the process of loss of status.

The positioning of some students in a lower status group in the classroom reflects status differences in the learning environment. Status differences can occur implicitly without even being recognized (Ronksley-Pavia et al., 2019). However, teaching for social justice requires attention to pedagogies that provide equitable learning opportunities in the classroom and school practices that sustain these opportunities (McNulty & Roseboro, 2009). Accordingly, as Lafleur and Srivastava (2019)

emphasize, it is important to conduct research on the interactions between teachers, students, and peers in schools and classrooms to ensure that disadvantaged children have quality access to education.

In schools, the stigmatization of student behaviors that do not conform to dominant behavior patterns by school administrators and teachers is considered as an important stigmatization process in educational environments. Students who do not stand out academically and do not show behaviors in line with the expectations of the school are subjected to stigmatization. Especially in schools where academic achievement is low, it can be said that students who do not have high expectations for their success and who are thought not to exhibit normal behaviors are likely to be stigmatized (Atmaca, 2020). In addition to stigmatization experiences in the learning environment, it is understood that stigmatization can also be experienced among different educational stakeholders in schools.

It is noted that stigmatization experiences are a concept that leads to negative consequences for the organization (Yaman & Güngör, 2013b). It is also possible to experience these negative experiences in the context of school organization. For example, in the context of a school located in a socioeconomically disadvantaged region, a school administrator drew attention to the issue of stigmatization. It was stated that families were stigmatized and self-criticism was made regarding this issue (Kondakçı et al., 2021). In this context, it can be said that stigmatization is not only limited to students, but can also occur in the relationships between school administration and parents or between teachers and parents.

Stigmatization is also seen in peer interactions in schools. In schools, some students are subjected to ongoing experiences of labeling by their peers. Misbehavior, academic weakness, slow learning, incompetence, disobedience and guilt are labels that lead to social exclusion. Teachers' tacit acceptance of these exclusionary peer attitudes and failure to intervene reinforce the stigmatization process (Lafleur & Srivastava, 2019). It can be said that these processes start with labeling, and the process leads to exclusion and discrimination. As emphasized by Link and Phelan (2001), stigmatization depends primarily on the social power that leads to labeling, stereotyping, separation and rejection of labeled people into different categories, exclusion and discrimination.

Remembering that stigmatization occurs because the individual has a different characteristic, it can be said that individuals with special needs can also experience this process in schools. For example, not having enough information about learning disabilities causes stigmatization. In the study conducted by Ronksley-Pavia et al. (2019), according to the experiences of both gifted students and students with learning disabilities; it was found that the student who experienced this situation tried to hide it in the first place due to the lack of sufficient information about learning disabilities. Although the disadvantage of the participant was not recognized at the first stage, this became clear over time. The process brought stigmatization and exclusion. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), for example, is also a condition associated with misconceptions and beliefs that can lead to stigmatization. It has been revealed that the level of misinformation about ADHD treatment is high, especially among teachers, and drug treatment is stigmatized (Karabekiroğlu et al., 2009). Therefore, stigma in educational contexts may stem from challenges associated with psychological, behavioral, or neurodevelopmental conditions.

It is noted that the process of stigmatization can also lead to the perpetuation of delinquency. Students who are frequently disciplined for inappropriate behavior are more likely to receive complaints, appear in court and build a history in the juvenile court system. It is also emphasized that students are not only frequently blamed and perpetuate the cycle of the bad child, but also that students cannot escape their past mistakes to change their behavior (McNulty & Roseboro, 2009).

Teachers' stigmatizing tendencies can negatively affect the healthy functioning of schools and the educational lives of students (Yaman & Güngör, 2014). Teachers are an important source of information especially for disadvantaged students. Therefore, there is a need for more information on how teachers form their expectations and whether they are biased (Gershenson et al., 2016). If teachers' expectations are systematically biased, this can deepen educational inequalities (Gershenson et al., 2016). For stigmatized students, patterns of failure in school are often difficult to change once they have become entrenched (McNulty & Roseboro, 2009). Consequently, stigma poses a significant threat to children's psychological well-being, self-perception, and long-term educational trajectories (Lafleur & Srivastava, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the relationship between school administrators' social justice leadership and teachers' stigmatization tendencies. In line with this objective, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of school administrators' social justice leadership as perceived by teachers?
2. What is the level of teachers' stigmatization tendencies?
3. Is there a significant relationship between school administrators' social justice leadership and teachers' stigmatization tendencies?

Method

Research Design

This research utilized a quantitative correlational survey design to explore potential associations between variables. Such a design enables the examination of whether a meaningful connection exists and how strong it is between two or more constructs (Karasar, 2020). Correlational design offers the opportunity to explain the relationship between variables. In this design, researchers can relate two or more variables instead of trying to manipulate variables as in an experiment (Creswell, 2012). This study focuses on two key variables: school administrators' social justice leadership and teachers' stigmatization tendencies, and investigating the relationship between them.

Quantitative research, which generally uses structured methods and is based on statistics, reaches more people and communicates faster than qualitative research (Dawson, 2002). This study, which aims to examine the relationship between school administrators' social justice leadership and teachers' stigmatization tendencies based on teachers' perceptions, was designed using a quantitative research method.

Study group

The study group of the research consists of 2075 teachers working in Arnavutköy district of İstanbul province in the 2023-2024 academic year. It can be said that the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of schools in the province of İstanbul differ in general. In this sense, when the research on the socioeconomic development ranking of districts is examined, it is seen that Arnavutköy district ranks 36th among 39 districts in İstanbul province (Ministry of Industry and Technology, 2022). In this regard, the Arnavutköy district, known for its socioeconomically disadvantaged structure, was considered suitable for the research.

The study employed simple random sampling as the method for selecting participants. Simple random sampling is a form of sampling in which all elements in the population have equal probability of selection (Creswell, 2017; Karasar, 2020). Considering the table of Cohen et al. (2007; p. 104) for the sample size, it is understood that 385 participants in the population between 2000 and 2500 is sufficient for the sample size at 95% confidence level.

Data Collection Process

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Yıldız Technical University. Data were collected in person and on a voluntary basis from teachers employed in public schools located in the Arnavutköy district of İstanbul during April of the 2023–2024. To account for potential issues such as incomplete or inaccurately completed responses, a total of 500 data collection instruments were distributed.

Prior to data collection, participants were informed that no identifying information would be requested, that their responses would remain confidential, and that participation was entirely voluntary. On average, it took participants approximately 10 minutes to complete the demographic information form and the scales.

In total, responses were obtained from 406 teachers. However, 21 of these were excluded from the analysis due to missing or inaccurate information. As a result, data analysis was conducted on the remaining 385 valid responses.

Data Collection Tool

The demographic form prepared by the researcher, Social Justice Leadership Scale (Bozkurt, 2017) and Stigma Scale (Yaman & Güngör, 2013a) are the data collection tools of this study. Permissions for the use of the scales were obtained from the respective researchers. The Social Justice Leadership Scale (Bozkurt, 2017) was prepared to evaluate the social justice leadership behaviors of school administrators according to the perceptions of teachers. Within the scope of the measurement tool development studies, the draft form of the scale was designed with 39 items to be applied to a sample group of 136 people. Based on the analysis, five items displaying overlapping characteristics were excluded, reducing the total number of items to 34. The scale is based on a five-point Likert scale was used to score the scale (Bozkurt, 2017).

Based on the exploratory factor analysis performed by Bozkurt (2017), the items in the scale were grouped into four distinct sub-dimensions. The dimensions are classified as stakeholder support, critical consciousness, distributive justice and participation. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the four-factor structure. Stakeholder support dimension covers the efforts of managers to support disadvantaged groups. This dimension consists of 11 items. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the stakeholder support dimension was .95. Critical consciousness dimension consists of seven items measuring awareness of social, economic and political pressures and taking action accordingly. In this dimension, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated as .94 (Bozkurt, 2017).

The distributive justice dimension deals with the fair allocation of resources and tasks within the school and is represented by six items. Cronbach's Alpha value for the distributive justice dimension was .95. The participation dimension consists of 10 items that emphasize the participation of teachers, students and other stakeholders in decision-making processes. Cronbach Alpha coefficient for this dimension was calculated as .95. In the reliability analysis of the scale, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found to be .98. This shows that the scale has a reliable structure (Bozkurt, 2017).

The Stigma Scale developed by Yaman and Güngör (2013a) was prepared to measure stigmatization tendency. The validity and reliability analyses of the scale were conducted with 780 administrator and teacher participants. A 35-item measurement form was created within the scope of the study. As a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), 13 items with factor loadings below .30 were removed, the analysis was repeated and a scale consisting of 22 items was formed. This instrument, created by Yaman and Güngör (2013a), utilizes a five-level Likert response system.

Within the scope of Yaman and Güngör's (2013a) stigmatization scale development studies, the scale items were grouped into four factors and each factor was named by associating it with the concepts involved in the stigmatization tendency process. The first dimension of the scale is discrimination and exclusion, which consists of six items with factor loadings ranging from .69 to .47. The items in this dimension include discrimination and exclusion perceptions in general. The second dimension is labeling, which ranges between .59 and .52 and consists of six items. This dimension includes the tendency to label individuals according to variables such as gender, marital status and age.

The third dimension, called psychological health, ranges between .66 and .49 and consists of five items. The items in this factor include elements of stigmatization tendency towards individuals with psychological distress and communication problems. The fourth dimension represents the prejudice dimension, which ranges between .63 and .46 and consists of five items. This dimension includes items assessing the tendency to stigmatize and develop prejudice against individuals based on criminal tendency, world view, seniority, lifestyle and individual characteristics (Yaman & Güngör, 2013a).

As a result of reliability analyses, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients were .77 for discrimination and exclusion, .68 for labeling, .66 for psychological health and .54 for prejudice. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the whole scale was calculated as .84. According to this result, it is stated that the scale is generally reliable (Yaman & Güngör, 2013a).

Validity and Reliability Studies of the Scales

Within the scope of this study, the validity and reliability analyses of the two data collection instruments — the Social Justice Leadership Scale and the Stigma Scale — were re-examined. The number of items, factor structures, and reliability coefficients for each scale are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of items, factor analysis and reliability results of the scales

Scale	Number of Items	KMO	Bartlett's X^2	Variance Explained%	Factor Loadings		Cronbach's Alpha
					Lowest	Highest	
Social Justice Leadership	30	.98	15579.02 $p < .00$	81.64	.78	.88	.98
Stigma	18	.78	1375.98 $p < .00$	47.58	.31	.70	.76

Following the validity and reliability analyses of the Social Justice Leadership Scale, four items (18, 19, 20, and 22) that did not align with the identified dimensions were excluded, resulting in a final scale composed of 30 items. Similarly, based on the findings from the validity and reliability evaluation of the Stigma Scale, items 4, 5, 10, and 15 were removed due to their misalignment with the factor structure, and the scale was finalized with 18 items.

The Social Justice Leadership Scale measures four dimensions. As a result of the validity and reliability analyses conducted within the scope of the current study, it was found that the KMO value was .98, Bartlett's (X2) coefficient was 15579.02 (p <.00) and the explained variance was 81.64%. Factor loadings ranged between .78 and .88 and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was .98. The Stigma Scale measures four dimensions. It is seen that the KMO value is .78, Bartlett's (X2) coefficient is 1375.98 (p <.00) and the explained variance is 47.58%. Factor loadings ranged between .31 and .70 and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was .76.

Data analysis

The data collected during the research process were first organized using Microsoft Excel and subsequently analyzed through the SPSS 26 statistical software package. Data entry into the SPSS program was completed and reliability and validity analyses of the scales used in the research were performed first. Statistical techniques are generally categorized into parametric and nonparametric methods. If the data obtained from the sample exhibit normal distribution, parametric methods should be applied (Pallant, 2023). Therefore, in this process, normality tests of the social justice leadership and stigmatization tendency data were also conducted in order to decide which analyses to perform. As the data exhibited normal distribution, parametric statistical methods were employed in the analysis. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze the data. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine whether a significant relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of their school administrators' social justice leadership and their own stigmatization tendencies.

Normality Analyses

Skewness and kurtosis values were examined to evaluate the conformity of the data collected from the social justice leadership scale and the stigma scale to normal distribution. It is understood that skewness and kurtosis values are acceptable at a value between ±2.0 (George & Mallery, 2016). Table 2 presents the skewness and kurtosis values derived from the data obtained through the measurement scales utilized in this study.

Table 2. Skewness and kurtosis values of social justice leadership and stigma scales

Scale	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Justice Leadership	-1.106	.891
Stigma	.222	-.125

The skewness value of the social justice leadership scale is -1.106 and the kurtosis value is .891. The skewness value of the stigma scale is .222 and the kurtosis value is-.125. Accordingly, it was found that the data showed normal distribution.

Findings

In order to shed light on the research questions, this section presents the findings obtained as a result of analyzing the data collected during the research process.

Table 3. Teachers' perceptions of social justice leadership and their levels of stigmatization tendencies

Variables	*n*	Minimum	Maximum	$\bar{X}$	SD
Social Justice Leadership	385	1.00	5.00	3.89	.97
Stigma	385	1.00	3.33	2.03	.46

When Table 3 is examined, it is observed that teachers' perceptions of social justice leadership are at a level of (X = 3.89) out of a full score of 5. On the other hand, participants' stigmatization tendencies are at a level of (X = 2.03) out of 5. According to the standard deviation values, the most homogeneous distribution is seen in the variable of stigmatization tendency (SD = .46), whereas the most heterogeneous distribution is observed in the variable of social justice leadership (SD = .97).

Table 4. The relationship between school administrators' social justice leadership and teachers' stigma tendencies

	Social Justice Leadership	Stigma
Social Justice Leadership	1	-.11*
Stigma		1

As shown in Table 4, the Pearson correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant negative and weak correlation between the level of social justice leadership and teachers' stigmatization tendencies ($r = –.11$, $p < .01$). Therefore, within the scope of the study, a negative and low-level relationship was found between school administrators' social justice leadership and teachers' stigmatization tendencies.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

This section presents a discussion of the research findings. First, the results regarding teachers' perceptions of social justice leadership and their levels of stigmatization tendency are addressed. Then, the findings concerning the relationship between these two variables are discussed. This study reveals that, from the teachers' perspective, school administrators exhibit a high level of social justice leadership. According to Kondakçı et al. (2021), since there is no legal obligation concerning social justice in Türkiye, its implementation generally depends on the personal efforts of school administrators. Therefore, within the scope of this study, it is possible that administrators' individual initiatives and awareness may have led them to take an active stance on social justice. Indeed, there are also studies in the literature indicating that perceptions of social justice leadership are generally high (Adışen, 2022; Arslan, 2019; Bozkurt, 2018; Doğan, 2021; Feng & Chen, 2018; Gürel, 2022; Küçük, 2023; Özdemir & Pektaş, 2017; Yıldırım, 2021).

The teaching profession, by its nature, requires empathy, tolerance, and sensitivity to differences; this may contribute to teachers generally having lower tendencies to stigmatize. Studies in the literature also show that teachers tend to have low stigmatization tendencies (Akın Bayramlık & Uluğ, 2019; Güngör, 2013; Önk & Cemaloğlu, 2016; Yaman & Güngör, 2014). Additionally, the increasing diversity in schools can encourage teachers to adopt inclusive attitudes and avoid stigmatizing behaviors.

The present study points to the potential of social justice leadership practices to have a negative effect on stigmatization tendencies. As emphasized by Feng and Chen (2018), an administrator who demonstrates social justice leadership may be considered to make efforts to prevent various inequalities, particularly discrimination in schools. Social justice leaders also strive to eliminate prejudices and guide teachers to become aware of such biases (Berkhovich, 2014; Whang, 2019; Theoharris, 2007). In this context, it can be said that social justice leadership can play a role in reducing teachers' stigmatization tendencies.

It is important to consider social justice as encompassing abstract elements such as norms (Ryan, 2006) and particular forms of relationships (Gewirtz, 1998). Stigmatization, as Link and Phelan (2001)

note, is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by multiple factors. The present study suggests that social justice leadership has the potential to positively impact social dynamics and contribute to reducing stigmatizing behaviors. It also highlights the importance of understanding social justice within its broader social and relational context.

The literature indicates that social justice leadership in schools is positively associated with favorable attitudes such as ethical climate, teachers' commitment to administrators, organizational citizenship behaviors, academic optimism, and motivation, while it is negatively associated with unfavorable attitudes such as organizational cynicism and students' alienation from school (Arslan, 2019; Bozkurt, 2018; Canlı & Demirtaş, 2022; Feng & Chen, 2018; Gürel, 2022; Küçük, 2023; Özdemir & Pektaş, 2017; Yalçın, 2022; Yıldırım, 2021). Moreover, another important result consistent with this research is the finding of Önk and Cemaloğlu (2016), who identified a significant and negative relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and their stigmatization tendencies. The results of the present study similarly indicate the potential of social justice leadership to reduce stigmatization tendencies. In this context, the study contributes to the literature by highlighting the relationship between social justice leadership and stigmatization, and provides recommendations for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.

Further research is needed to explore how various factors influence stigmatization in educational settings and how stigmatization can be prevented. Future studies may investigate the relationship between teachers' participation in professional learning and their stigmatization tendencies. In addition, examining how different leadership styles adopted by school administrators are related to teachers' propensity for stigmatizing attitudes could be valuable. To understand this complex phenomenon more comprehensively, qualitative or mixed-method research approaches may also be employed to explore stigmatization in schools in greater depth.

It can be said that the efforts of an administrator exhibiting social justice leadership to prevent inequalities such as stigmatization tendency, discrimination and prejudice in schools are effective to some extent. In this context, school administrators can be given social justice leadership training. These trainings can enable administrators to improve their prevention skills by recognizing stigmatization tendency, discrimination and prejudice. In faculties of education, pre-service teachers can be offered critical pedagogy courses that contribute to strengthening social justice perception and critical consciousness.

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