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The Pattern of Relationship between Virtuous Leadership and Organizational Reputation: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship pattern between school administrators' virtuous leadership behaviors and organizational prestige of schools. In order to examine the relationship pattern between variables, relational survey model (predictive design) was preferred among quantitative research methods. The study group of the research consists of 489 teachers actively working in Maltepe, Kartal, Pendik and Tuzla districts in 2023. Personal information form, Virtuous Leadership Scale and Organizational Respectability Scale were used to collect the data. Pearson correlation and regression analyses were used to analyze the data. According to the findings of the study, according to teachers' perceptions, the level of virtuous leadership of school administrators is high and the level of respectability of schools is medium. There is a positive and moderately significant relationship between the virtuous leadership behaviors of school administrators and the organizational prestige of schools. It was determined that virtuous leadership has the ability to predict the organizational prestige of schools positively. This study has made theoretical contributions to the field by identifying the virtuous leadership of school administrators and the organizational prestige of schools and revealing the relationship pattern between these two variables. Considering the findings and results, inferences were made about the virtuous leadership behaviors of school administrators and the dignity of schools and suggestions were made for practitioners, decision makers and researchers.

Keywords: Virtuous leadership, Organization, Respectability, Administrator, School.

Introduction

In modern times and at the global level, it is seen that people's life satisfaction has decreased due to the problems faced by the world and the increase in the problems that need to be solved. Organizations also take their share from the global challenges and increasing problems. For this reason, it is possible to say that a number of unethical and unlawful practices manifest themselves in organizations. The unethical and unlawful practices that people encounter in individuals or organizations that they are in contact with break people's trust in these people and institutions (Yiğit & Ağalday, 2020). In education, this loss of trust occurs at the level of teachers, school administrators and schools. The increase in people's negative attitudes and behaviors towards teachers, administrators and schools, the decrease in trust in the teaching profession, and the discussions about the damage to the reputation of educational organizations make themselves felt more and more today. Increasing negative attitudes towards the professional prestige of education employees also change the perspective of the society. For this reason, the issue of what moral virtues teachers and administrators should possess and how to increase these virtues gain more importance. In today's world where trust in leaders has decreased, legal regulations, professional norms and codes of conduct, and supervision practices are not sufficient to prevent misbehavior of contemporary leaders (Bragues, 2008). In the business world, organizations seem to focus on competition for efficiency and rarely emphasize virtue in their struggle (Cameron & Winn, 2012). For this reason, researchers have turned their attention to examining the virtues of leaders. Considering the research and findings, virtuous leadership is seen as very important in management processes (Caldwell et al., 2015; Cameron, 2011; Cameron & Spreitzer, 2013). For this purpose, "What are leader virtues? How are virtues acquired? In which context are virtues most often expressed as behaviors? In which leader behaviors do virtues manifest themselves?" (Hackett & Wang, 2012).

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The answers to the questions about virtuous leadership are important for the quality of the educational process and practices. Virtuous leadership involves a constant quest, and leaders strive to be virtuous as long as they continue to breathe. For virtuous leaders, the purpose of life is the pursuit of personal excellence. Leaders who aspire to achieve this lofty goal are virtuous leaders. These are people who are prudent, courageous, self-controlled, just, prudent, know how to say no, generous and humble (Havard, 2007). According to Aristotle, virtue is classified as courage, temperance, justice, generosity, magnanimity, magnificence, magnanimity, humility, truthfulness, wit, friendliness, temperance, decency, anger control, prudence and wisdom (Hackett & Wang, 2012). Plato, on the other hand, categorizes virtuousness, prudence, justice, courage and self-control as the basis of all human qualities. Wang & Hackett (2015) categorized moral virtues as courage, temperance, justice, prudence, prudence, humanity and integrity. On the other hand, virtuous leaders always have dreams based on volunteerism that they transform into a vision and mission, which is more than just thinking big. Even if a leader abandons humility and exhibits high communication skills, even if he or she uses strategies and tactics to get people to do what he or she wants, the flaws in the leader's character, the hypocrisy and insincerity of his or her behavior do not mean that he or she is successful (Covey, 2003). For this reason, virtuous leaders prefer to lead without resorting to manipulation and power. Their biggest goal is to elevate their vision to higher levels, raise their performance to high standards and build their personalities beyond normal limits. Like managers, they try to do the job right, while like leaders, they try to do the right job (Drucker, 2005). However, the right jobs sometimes bring negativities and risks.

While virtue contributes strongly to professional and personal life, it does not guarantee success. At the end of virtuous behavior, the leader may even be in danger of being ostracized or even facing death. Nevertheless, the virtuous leader who encounters failure, although sometimes driven to despair, endeavors to stay on the path and continue the search (Havard, 2007). Indeed, self-cultivation means that despite some difficulties, people continuously put into practice what they have learned until they make virtue a habit (Bragues, 2006). The virtuous leader must engage in ethical actions for consistent and intrinsic reasons as part of the goal of becoming a virtuous person by continuously practicing moral virtues (Whetstone, 2001). In this way, virtuous leaders should be seen as officials who know how to create value and build strong systems by building high trust and transforming the relational capital of the organization for the benefit of the organization (Caldwell et al., 2002). Nevertheless, there is an increase in unethical behaviors of leaders in management processes today. For this reason, it is important for leaders to exhibit transformative leadership in which higher values and organizational commitment are strengthened (Caldwell et al., 2015). Many researchers and academicians have made findings in their research on the role of leaders in strengthening values and commitment in organizations. Virtuous leadership is defined as virtue-based leadership or character-based leadership (Crossan, Mazutis, & Seijts, 2013; Wang & Hackett, 2020) and there are studies that reveal the importance of the virtue aspect of leadership (Thun & Kelloway, 2011; Wang & Hackett, 2015; Wang & 2020). Considering the studies on the virtuous aspect of leadership, leadership approaches such as moral leadership (Walker et al., 2007), ethical leadership (Brown & Trevin, 2006), servant leadership (Sarayrah, 2004), spiritual leadership (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002), which are thought to be related to virtuous leadership, include virtue, morality and ethics components. Considering these studies, it is understood that there is a need for studies that reveal the importance of leadership with moral virtue for organizations. This study, on the other hand, makes theoretical and practical inferences about the role of virtuous leadership in increasing organizational reputation.

The purpose of this study is to reveal the impact of school administrators' virtuous leadership behaviors on the prestige of educational organizations. In line with this purpose, the first thing that is done is to develop suggestions about the importance of virtuous leadership and the value it adds to its followers, as well as propositions that will help researchers, policy makers and decision makers to measure the practical value of virtuous leadership. On the other hand, this research will provide a theoretical contribution to the gap in the literature on the role of virtuous leadership in increasing organizational prestige. The findings obtained through the survey method will be analyzed and the results will be presented in a comparative manner with the findings of different studies. As explained above, it is stated that the virtuous leadership behaviors of managers will be effective in enabling employees to build a virtue-centered moral identity (Wang & Hackett, 2020). By developing and/or nurturing moral character, a leader can bring about a change in the self-perception of both himself and his followers (Lord & Brown, 2004). The display of moral virtues by the leader is the basis for the mobilization of the moral virtues of the followers. The display of moral virtues has a transformative role that increases efficiency, productivity, quality and excellence while building commitment and trust (Caldwell et al., 2012). Virtuous leadership can create a trusting organizational culture with a high level of respect and trust through high level relationships (Cameron, 2003). This situation contributes to the increase in trust in human capital, which is the most important capital of the organization, and contributes to the productivity, quality and ultimately the reputation of the organization. In this direction, the following questions are sought to be answered:

1. To what extent do school administrators have virtuous leadership behaviors?
2. To what extent is there a relationship between the virtuous leadership behaviors of school administrators and the organizational prestige of schools?
3. To what extent does virtuous leadership predict organizational prestige?

Method

Research Model

Relational survey design, which is one of the quantitative research methods, was used to reveal the relationship between the virtuous leadership behaviors of administrators and the professional reputation of schools. Quantitative research is used to test theories by examining the relationship between variables or in the context of cause and effect. Quantitative research uses countable and measurable data to explain the group to which individuals belong. The hypothesis of the researcher is tested with the collected data. In this research, the virtuous leadership characteristics of school administrators and the characteristics of the prestige of schools were revealed by obtaining numerical data. On the other hand survey research, is the application of researchers to a sample group that will represent the universe in order to collect information about attitudes, opinions and behaviors (Creswell, 2017). For this, measurement tools were applied to a sufficient number of participants and care was taken to ensure that the sample represents the universe.

Research Group

The study group of this research consists of 489 teachers actively working in Maltepe, Kartal, Pendik and Tuzla districts in 2023. Stratified sampling method was preferred in the selection of districts. Families residing in the selected districts are considered to have "low-middle-high" socio-economic levels. For this reason, care was taken to select schools at an equal level from each district. The sampling type used to form the research group is simple random sampling. The selection is determined by giving each of the units in the sampling population list an equal chance of being selected. Considering that approximately 350 people are sufficient for correlational studies (Creswell, 2017), it is seen that the number of participants is sufficient. The participants' filling out the scale and answering the questions were based on complete voluntariness.

The distribution of the participants according to their demographic characteristics shows that 289 (59,1%) of the 489 participants were female and 200 (40,9%) were male; 34 (7%) were 25 years old or younger, 262 (53.6%) were 26-35 years old, 146 (29.9%) were 36-45 years old, 40 (8.2%) were 46-55 years old, and 7 (1.4%) were over 56 years old; 4 (0.8%) had higher education, 418 (85.5%) had bachelor's degree, 66 (13.5%) had bachelor's degree, and 1 (0.1%) had doctoral degree. 1 had a doctorate degree; 21 (4.3%) worked in kindergarten, 185 (37.8%) in primary school, 243 (49.7%) in secondary school, and 40 (8.2%) in high school.

Data Collection Tools

In addition to the personal information form created by the researcher, the Virtuous Leadership Scale and Organizational Respectability Scale were used to collect the data obtained from this study.

Personal information form: This form includes the variables of gender, age, graduation status and school type of the researchers.

Virtuous leadership scale: The scale, which was developed by Wang (2011) and consists of five dimensions (courage, humanity, justice, prudence, moderation), was adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım & Kahveci (2019). The scale consists of 18 items. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 90 and a high score indicates that administrators have high virtuous leadership characteristics according to teacher perceptions. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as .94 in this study. Considering this level, the scale is suitable for use in the study.

Organizational Respectability Scale: The scale was developed by Hatipoğlu (2022). The scale consists of one dimension and 12 items. The maximum score of the scale is 60 points. A high score indicates that the prestige of organizations is high according to participant perceptions. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .76 in this study. Considering this level, the scale is suitable for use in the research.

Data Analysis

In this study, correlation analyses were conducted to determine the relationship pattern between school administrators' virtuous leadership behaviors and the level of respectability of organizations. Before proceeding to the analyses that determine the relationship between the variables, it was examined whether the data were normally distributed. The suitability of normal distribution was reviewed by taking the -1.5 and + 1.5 intervals determined by Tabachnick & Fidel (2007) as reference. Skewness and kurtosis values for both variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Normality values for virtuous leadership and organizational reputation

		Statistic	Std. Error
Virtuous leadership	Mean	4.03	.028
	Std. Deviation	.626	
	Skewness	-.394	.110
	Kurtosis	-.453	.220
Organizational prestige	Mean	3.20	.024
	Std. Deviation	.530	
	Skewness	-.285	.110
	Kurtosis	-.298	.220

Table 1 shows that the kurtosis and skewness values of the two variables were between -1.5 and +1.5, indicating a normal distribution. After the normal distribution was determined and verified, the data on the reliability coefficients of the measurement tools used in the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability coefficients for virtuous leadership and organizational prestige variables

Scales	Cronbach-Alpha	N or Items
Virtuous leadership	$\alpha = .937$	18
Organizational prestige	$\alpha = .754$	12

Table 2 shows that the reliability coefficients of the scales used in the study are .754 and .937. According to Özdamar (2017), it can be said that these values are sufficient for the scales to be used safely. After confirming the normal distribution of the data and the reliability of the scales, correlation analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between the variables.

Findings

According to teachers' perceptions, the levels of principals' virtuous leadership and schools' organizational prestige are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation values of virtuous leadership and organizational prestige variables

Variables	N	M	SD	Assessment
Virtuous leadership	489	4.04	.626	High
Organizational prestige	489	3.20	.530	Medium

Table 3 shows that, according to teachers' perceptions, administrators have a high level of virtuous leadership ($M=4.03$; $SD=.626$) and schools have a moderate level of organizational prestige ($M=3.20$; $SD=.530$). Pears on correlation analyses showing the relationship between the variables are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Pearson correlation analysis results on virtuous leadership and organizational reputation

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2
1- Virtuous leadership	4.04	.626	1	
2- Organizational prestige	3.20	.530	.414**	1

** $p < .01$; $N=489$

Table 4 shows that there is a positive and moderately significant relationship between virtuous leadership and organizational prestige ($r = .414$; $p < .01$). In other words, an increase in the virtuous leadership behaviors of school administrators positively affects the prestige of schools. The effect level of virtuous leadership on organizational prestige was examined and the direct effect value is shown in Figure 1.

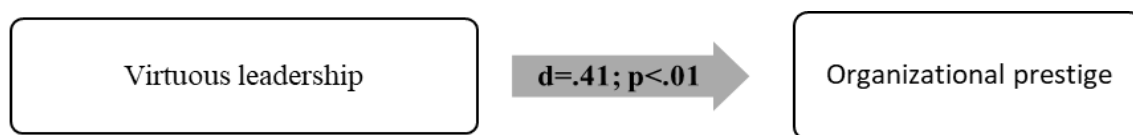


Figure 1. Direct impact of virtuous leadership on organizational reputation

Figure 1 shows that virtuous leadership has a direct effect on organizational reputation ($d=.22; p<.01$). However, regression analysis was conducted to determine whether virtuous leadership predicts organizational reputation.

Table 5. Regression analysis on the effect of virtuous leadership on organizational reputation

Model	Non-standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t	p
	B	Standard Error	β		
Virtuous leadership	1,784	.143		12,489	,000
	.350	.035	.414	10,023	,000

$N = 489, R = .414, R^2 = .171, Adjusted R^2 = .169$

Table 5 shows that virtuous leadership has a positive predictive feature on organizational reputation ($R^2 = .171$). In other words, the virtuous leadership variable explains 17.1% of the total variance of the organizational dignity variable. A one point increase in teachers' perceptions of virtuous leadership leads to a .171 point increase in their perceptions of organizational respectability.

Discussion and Conclusion

Considering the perceptions of teachers regarding the levels of virtuous leadership and organizational prestige, it was found that school administrators showed a high level of virtuousness. In addition, the level of respectability of educational organizations is at a medium level according to teacher perceptions. The high level of virtuous leadership characteristics of administrators shows that they are advantageous for organizations to be successful and achieve their goals. According to Senge (2006), leadership has a critical role in the success of organizations and the successful implementation of their strategies. Senge (2006) states that exemplary leader behaviors are effective in increasing the commitment of employees to the organization and in the formation of a supportive organizational culture in the organization. With the commitment of employees to the leader and the vision created by the leader, the organization can survive for a long time.

In the study, it is seen that there is a significant positive relationship between virtuous leadership and organizational prestige. In other words, when the level of virtuous leadership of school administrators increases, the prestige of schools also increases. In the increase of organizational prestige, it is effective that virtuous leaders are significantly different from other leaders in continuity based on their sense of responsibility towards the organization and themselves. One of the most important differences of virtuous leaders is that they empower their followers and the people they work with. The leader considers people as a key to creating value in an environment based on knowledge, wisdom and information (Covey, 2004). On the other hand, the virtuous leader has the obligation not only to create value for their organization but also to leave a legacy of a good world for future generations (Friedman, 2009). In addition to creating value for the organization, the highly qualified virtuous leader tends to protect the future of the organization without harming it (Lennick & Kiel, 2007).

Leader virtue has a critical role in increasing the prestige level of organizations and building a strong culture based on continuous development. The virtue of leaders is proportional to their success in increasing the competitiveness of the organization, creating long-term wealth, contributing to the sustainable growth of the organization, and contributing to the well-being of society (Caldwell, et al., 2015). In order to increase the organization's prestige and acceptance by society, the leader can create wealth when they understand the basis of both internal and external integration and the problems they need to overcome (Schein, 2010). This shows that in order to build organizational prestige, it is important for the leader to have the ability to ensure interpersonal communication as well as technical skills.

The existence of continuous improvement movements is valuable for the dignity, competitiveness, growth, acceptance and respectability of organizations. Here, the leader seeks opportunities for continuous improvement and does not shy away from experimentation and risk-taking. Continuous improvement is absolutely necessary for organizations (Collins, 2001). For this, one of the most important virtues expected from leaders is courage (Bennis & Nanus, 2007, Caldwell, 2015; Chirstensen, 2011). For this reason, every organization desires to have courageous and virtuous leaders. The problems that the world faces on a global scale and the new problems that

need to be solved require courage to address them. Virtuous leaders' courageously addressing problems and successfully fulfilling their roles not only ensure their personal success but also the success of their organizations. In this context, school administrators are expected to increase their moral virtues and put these virtues into practice in their behaviors. Administrators should know that they will create a climate of trust within the organization thanks to the virtuous behaviors they exhibit. It should be calculated that it will be possible to maximize interpersonal communication inside and outside the organization. In this context, practitioners and decision makers have important duties in increasing the level of sensitivity of school administrators regarding virtuous behaviors. Virtuousness should be considered as an important variable in shaping administrator training, selection and appointment processes. Managers' virtuous behavior during the performance of their profession should be made measurable. Virtuousness should be encouraged and contrary behaviors should be taken under control. Virtuousness should be the subject of continuous research by policy makers and researchers in different aspects for organizational prestige, organizational efficiency and continuity. In this study, only the relationship between virtuous leadership and organizational prestige can be considered as a limitation. For this reason, the concept should also be addressed in the context of administrators, teachers and other educational employees.

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Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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