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Exploring Teachers' Psychological Well-Being Through Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of teachers' perceptions of their administrators' leadership styles (transformational, subscriber, and releasing) on their psychological well-being, and to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction in this relationship. Data were collected online from 328 teachers (mean age = 40.16, SD = 8.76) working in public schools in Türkiye. Data were obtained using the Psychological Well-Being Scale, the School Principle as Leadership Styles Scale, and the Job Satisfaction Scale. Analyses were conducted using structural equation modelling. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between releasing leadership and psychological well-being. The positive relationship between transformational leadership and psychological well-being became insignificant when job satisfaction was taken into account, and the negative relationship between transactional leadership and psychological well-being similarly disappeared. In both models, job satisfaction was determined to be a full mediator. The findings indicate that teachers' psychological well-being is affected not only by their managers' leadership styles but also by the effects of these styles on job satisfaction. Consequently, it is recommended that school administrators strengthen their transformational leadership behaviors and provide organizational conditions that support teachers' job satisfaction.

Keywords: transformational leadership, subscriber leadership, releasing leadership, job satisfaction, psychological well-being.

1. Introduction

The concept of psychological well-being provides a comprehensive framework through which individuals find meaning in life, realize their potential, and sustain inner balance. Psychological well-being is not limited to the absence of distress; rather, it reflects a holistic condition that encompasses the individual's capacity to direct their life, experience satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, and function effectively in professional contexts. Conceptualized as an optimal level of psychological functioning, psychological well-being includes six dimensions: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). These dimensions indicate that well-being develops not only through one's personal agency but also through interactions within social and organisational environments. In educational settings, for instance, the dimension of positive relations with others highlights the potential influence of school leaders on teachers' well-being. Previous research has demonstrated that transformational leadership is positively associated with teachers' subjective well-being (Arslan & Zincirli, 2022) and psychological well-being (Cemaloğlu & Çoban, 2019; Yarar & Babaoğlan, 2025). Beyond leadership, the satisfaction individuals derive from their profession—an activity that occupies 7–8 hours of the day and spans approximately 30–35 years of life—also constitutes an important determinant of psychological well-being. The link between job satisfaction and psychological well-being has been consistently supported in empirical studies (Günel & Aydın, 2022; Olatunde & Odusanya, 2015).

1.1. Psychological Well-Being and Leadership Styles

Psychological well-being, in its broadest sense, is a multidimensional construct that reflects an individual's capacity to lead a meaningful, purposeful, and balanced life. Rather than merely representing the absence of negative emotions, it encompasses the realisation of one's potential through personal growth, life satisfaction, autonomy, positive relationships with others, and harmonious interaction with the environment (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Accordingly, psychological well-being is closely linked to individuals' ability to take responsibility for their own lives, sustain internal control, and pursue life goals with intrinsic motivation.

Ryff's (1989) six-dimensional model—autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and positive relations with others—holds particular relevance for the teaching profession. Among these dimensions, autonomy and positive relationships with others are especially influential in shaping the quality of teachers'

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psychological experiences at work. Considering this framework, the leadership styles teachers perceive from their school administrators can play a significant role in determining their overall level of psychological well-being.

Within educational contexts, leadership constitutes a central organisational factor that influences teachers' perceptions of the school climate, their job satisfaction, and their emotional resilience. Studies have shown that democratic leadership enhances teachers' psychological well-being by involving them in decision-making processes, valuing their perspectives, and strengthening their sense of belonging (Yalçın et al., 2024). In contrast, autocratic leadership—characterised by control, unilateral decision-making, and limited participation—has been associated with diminished psychological well-being among teachers (Yarar & Babaoğlan, 2025).

More recently, transformational leadership has gained prominence as a leadership style that effectively supports teachers' psychological well-being. Transformational leaders contribute to teachers' professional motivation and sense of meaning by articulating a clear vision, inspiring staff, respecting individual differences, and fostering employees' potential. Consistent with this view, research has reported a positive association between transformational leadership and teachers' psychological well-being (Kelloway et al., 2012). These findings suggest that transformational leadership not only facilitates organizational functioning but also enhances teachers' emotional and cognitive well-being.

1.2. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a state of contentment shaped by the level of alignment between the opportunities an individual gains from their profession and their own expectations, needs, and values. An individual experiences professional satisfaction to the extent that they can meet their psychological and physiological needs through their work, utilise their talents, and work in a safe and supportive environment. In other words, the level of satisfaction increases when the profession offers opportunities for self-actualization, recognition, economic security, and meaningful social relationships. However, this satisfaction varies according to the meaning and importance that the individual attaches to these conditions rather than the objective conditions themselves. Therefore, job satisfaction is a subjective experience influenced by individual differences (Kuzgun et al., 1999).

It is also emphasized that job satisfaction is closely related to the individual's overall life satisfaction and subjective well-being. Judge and Locke (1993) stated that job satisfaction plays a causal role in subjective well-being, which can be explained within the framework of the "part-whole relationship." Accordingly, work is an important part of an individual's life, and individuals consider their satisfaction with work when evaluating their overall life satisfaction. In this context, it is expected that individuals with high levels of job satisfaction will also have higher levels of overall life satisfaction and psychological well-being.

Recent studies have shown that individuals' levels of job satisfaction are significantly influenced by organizational factors, particularly the leadership styles employed by managers. Studies conducted in the context of educational institutions have determined that transformational leadership style is meaningfully related to teachers' job satisfaction and that this leadership approach increases teachers' professional motivation, sense of belonging, and satisfaction with their work (Azimli & Ada, 2022; Kouni et al., 2018; Menon, 2014; Hariri et al., 2016). Transformational leaders help teachers recognize their potential, align their personal values with the school's vision, and pursue their profession in a more meaningful way.

In contrast, professional satisfaction levels are generally lower in school environments where maintenance-oriented leadership focused on preserving the status quo or releasing leadership styles that do not intervene with teachers are dominant. This situation is associated with teachers' perception that they are not sufficiently supported and included in decision-making processes. However, some studies have reported low-level positive relationships between these two leadership styles and professional satisfaction (Doğan, 2022). Similarly, another study found that transformational leadership was positively related to job satisfaction, but that the releaising leadership style did not show a significant relationship with this variable (Gürbetoğlu & Yücel, 2019). These findings suggest that leadership styles are a significant factor influencing how teachers perceive their profession and, consequently, their psychological well-being.

1.3. The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

The literature emphasises that job satisfaction may be an important mediating variable in explaining the effect of leadership styles on employees' psychological well-being. In particular, it has been shown that transformational leadership enhances positive emotional and psychological well-being by increasing the meaning employees attribute to their work. For example, in two separate studies, transformational leadership was found to be related to psychological well-being through individuals' levels of finding meaning in their work. In the first study, a sample of Canadian

healthcare workers found that meaningful work perception partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and positive emotional well-being; in the second study, meaningful work perception was found to fully mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and psychological well-being among service sector employees. These findings suggest that leadership styles can enhance employees' psychological well-being through job satisfaction and perceived meaning (Abbas et al., 2016; Arnold et al., 2007; Cansoy, 2019).

1.4. Current Study

The present study aims to examine the relational structure between leadership styles perceived by teachers—namely transformational, subscriber, and releasing leadership—job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Rather than formulating a priori directional hypotheses, the study adopts an explanatory mediation framework to investigate whether job satisfaction statistically accounts for the association between perceived leadership styles and teachers' psychological well-being. In this respect, the proposed model is tested to determine the presence and nature of indirect relationships among the study variables, based on existing theoretical and empirical literature.

Within this framework, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1.Are there meaningful relationships between the leadership styles (transformational, subscriber, and releasing) that teachers perceive from their managers and their levels of job satisfaction and psychological well-being?

2.Does professional satisfaction mediate the effect of leadership styles on teachers' psychological well-being?

Previous research has consistently demonstrated associations between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being in educational settings. Transformational leadership has been linked to higher levels of job satisfaction and well-being among teachers, whereas less supportive leadership styles have been associated with lower occupational satisfaction and poorer psychological outcomes. Drawing on this body of literature, the present study examines the relational structure between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and teachers' psychological well-being by testing a mediation model without imposing a priori directional hypotheses. The proposed model is intended to explore whether job satisfaction statistically accounts for the relationship between perceived leadership styles and psychological well-being.

2. Method

In this study, a predictive correlational design was employed to examine the relationships among perceived leadership styles (independent variables), job satisfaction (mediating variable), and teachers' psychological well-being (dependent variable). Structural equation modeling was used to test the proposed mediation models and to evaluate both direct and indirect relationships among the study variables. Psychological well-being levels, managerial leadership styles, and job satisfaction variables. After examining the relationships between these three variables , the study investigated whether job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between leadership styles and psychological well-being using Structural Equation Modeling.

2.1. Participants

The participants in the study were teachers working in public schools in Turkey. A total of 328 teachers participated in the study, including 230 women (70.1%) and 98 men (29.9%). The average age of the participants was calculated as 40.16 (Range= 23-64, SD= 8.76). Twenty-eight teachers (8.5%) have been working for 1-3 years, 21 (6.4%) for 4-6 years, 38 (11.6%) for 7-9 years, and 241 (73.5%) for 9 years or more. When examining the years of service with current administrators, 239 (72.9%) have been working for 1-3 years, 65 (19.8%) for 4-6 years, 10 (3%) for 7-9 years, and 14 (4.3%) for 9 years or more. Sample Size and Power Considerations

The adequacy of the sample size was evaluated based on established guidelines for structural equation modeling (SEM). Methodological recommendations suggest that SEM analyses generally require a minimum sample size of 200 cases to obtain stable and reliable parameter estimates, particularly for models of moderate complexity (Kline, 2016). With a total sample of 328 teachers, the present study exceeds this recommended threshold. Considering the number of latent variables and estimated parameters in the proposed mediation models, the sample size was deemed sufficient to detect medium effect sizes with adequate statistical power. Therefore, the sample size was considered appropriate for testing both the measurement and structural models.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

2.2.1. Personal Information Form

Participants were asked about their gender, age, years of professional experience, and years of working with their current administrators.

2.2.2. Psychological Well-Being Scale

The scale developed by Diener et al. (2010) was adapted into Turkish by Telef (2013). The scale consists of eight items. An example item for the scale is "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life." The scale is a 7-point Likert scale, with the lowest possible score being 8 and the highest possible score being 56. In the confirmatory factor analysis of the adaptation studies of the scale, the fit indices were found to be RMSEA= 0.08, SRMR= 0.04, GFI= 0.96, NFI= 0.94, RFI= 0.92, CFI= 0.95, and IFI= 0.95. The Cronbach's alpha value was calculated as .80. In this study, it was calculated as .92.

2.2.3. School Principle as Leadership Styles Scale

The scale was developed by Akan et al. (2014). The scale consists of 35 items and three factors. The factors of the scale are transformational, subscriber, and releasing leadership styles. An example item for the scale is "Gives due importance to scientific principles." The analysis showed that the three-factor version of the scale explained 54.19% of the total variance. It was emphasized that the three subscales could be used independently due to the structure of the scale. Therefore, based on the DFA results for each subscale, it was concluded that the scale had good fit values. When examining the Cronbach's alpha values, they were calculated as .96 for transformational leadership, .85 for subscriber leadership, and .82 for releasing leadership. In this study, transformational leadership was calculated as .98, releasing leadership as .91, and subscriber leadership as .71.

2.2.4. Job Satisfaction Scale

The Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) was developed by Kuzgun and colleagues in 1999. The scale consists of a total of 20 items, each of which is scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Never" to 5 = "Always." This scoring system allows participants to score a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 100 points on the scale. The scale consists of two subscales: "Quality of Work" (13 items) and "Opportunity/Desire for Development" (7 items). However, the high loading value of the first factor in the exploratory factor analysis indicates that the scale can also be used as a single dimension. In the study in which it was developed, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .90. In this study, the scale was also used as a single dimension, and the Cronbach's alpha value for the entire scale was calculated as .91.

2.3. Procedure

For this research, individuals working as teachers in state institutions in Turkey were reached. Data for this study was collected online. Before proceeding to the research questions, participants were presented with an "informed consent form" regarding the purpose of the research, their right to withdraw from the research, information about the researchers, and the duration of the research. Participants were included in the study after reading and approving this form. The study did not include questions containing participants' personal information. This ensured anonymity. Furthermore, the study was conducted in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration.

2.4. Data Analysis

SPSS 20.0 and AMOS software packages were used to analyze the data. Since the data was collected online, there was no missing data. Then, reverse items were coded before the analyses. Subsequently, outlier analysis was performed. Z scores were found to be in the range of -3 to +3. After that, skewness and kurtosis coefficients were examined for normality values. Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficient values were examined for the correlation values between variables. For simple mediation, three different models were tested for each of the managerial leadership styles. In the first model, transformational leadership was considered as the independent variable, psychological well-being as the dependent variable, and job satisfaction as the mediating variable. In the second model, maintenance leadership was considered as the independent variable, psychological well-being as the dependent variable, and job satisfaction as the mediating variable. In the third model, releasing leadership was considered as the independent variable, psychological well-being as the dependent variable, and job satisfaction as the mediating variable. In addition to the reported fit indices, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was also considered as an indicator of model fit.

Consistent with recommendations in the SEM literature, SRMR values below .08 were interpreted as indicating acceptable model fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Kline, 2016).

3. Findings

Prior to the analyses, skewness and kurtosis values were examined to determine whether the data were normally distributed. Information on the means, correlation values, and skewness-kurtosis values of the participants' scores on the scales is presented in Table 1.

Table-1 Information on the means, standard deviations, skewness-kurtosis values, and correlations of the scores obtained from the scales

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3	4	5
1. Transformational Leadership	76.15	20.74	-1.01	.40	1				
2.Releasing Leadership	16.32	7.35	1.05	.86	-.84*	1			
3.Subscriber Leadership	18.53	5.29	.14	.05	-.86*	.91*	1		
4.Job Satisfaction	75.93	14.34	-.75	.65	.27*	-.24*	-.27*	1	
5. Psychological Well-Being	45.56	8.03	-1.22	2.62	.17*	-.08	-.16*	.53*	1

Note: * p<0.05

When examining the skewness and kurtosis values in the analysis results, it was observed that the distributions of the scores obtained from the leadership styles and job satisfaction scale were within the range of -2 to +2. In the psychological well-being scale, however, the kurtosis value was found to be outside the +2 limits. In relation to this situation, Bryne (2010) suggested that data is considered normal when the skewness is between -2 and +2 and the kurtosis is between -7 and +7. Therefore, the distributions were found to be normal. When examining the correlations between variables, it was observed that there was no significant relationship only between psychological well-being and releasing leadership. Since this condition is a prerequisite in studies examining the mediating effect, model 3 planned in the study was not established. Analyses were performed with two models. In these analyses, the simple mediating relationship was first examined, and then the job satisfaction variable was included in the model as a mediating variable.

Model 1: The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership style and psychological well-being

Figure 1 presents the baseline model examining the direct association between transformational leadership and psychological well-being. Standardized path coefficients are reported for the structural paths.

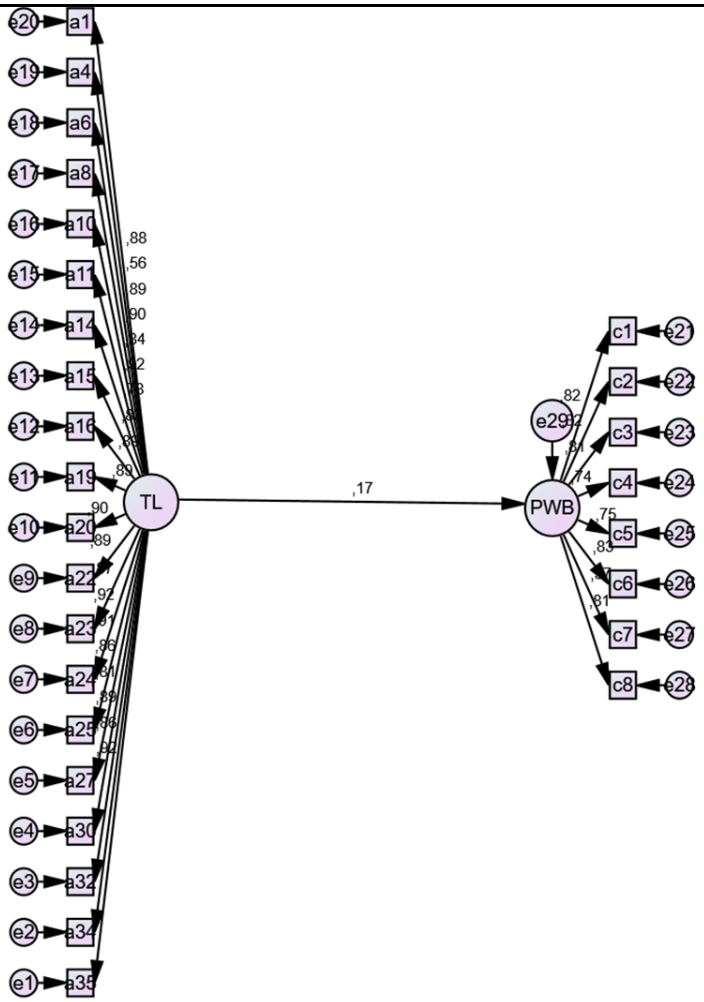


Figure 1. Direct relationship model between transformational leadership and psychological well-being (TL= Transformational Leadership, PWB= Psychological Well Being)

Figure 1 shows that transformational leadership positively and significantly predicts teachers' psychological well-being (β= .17, p<0.05). When examining the fit values of the simple mediation, χ2/df = 2.62, CFI = .95, NFI = .91, RMSEA = .07, SRMR=.04 were calculated. The model was found to show good fit. In the second stage, job satisfaction was added as a mediating variable. The measurement model results indicated that all observed variables loaded significantly onto their respective latent constructs. Standardized factor loadings ranged from .56 to .92, exceeding the recommended minimum threshold and indicating adequate representation of the latent variables by their observed indicators. Information about the results is presented in Figure 2.

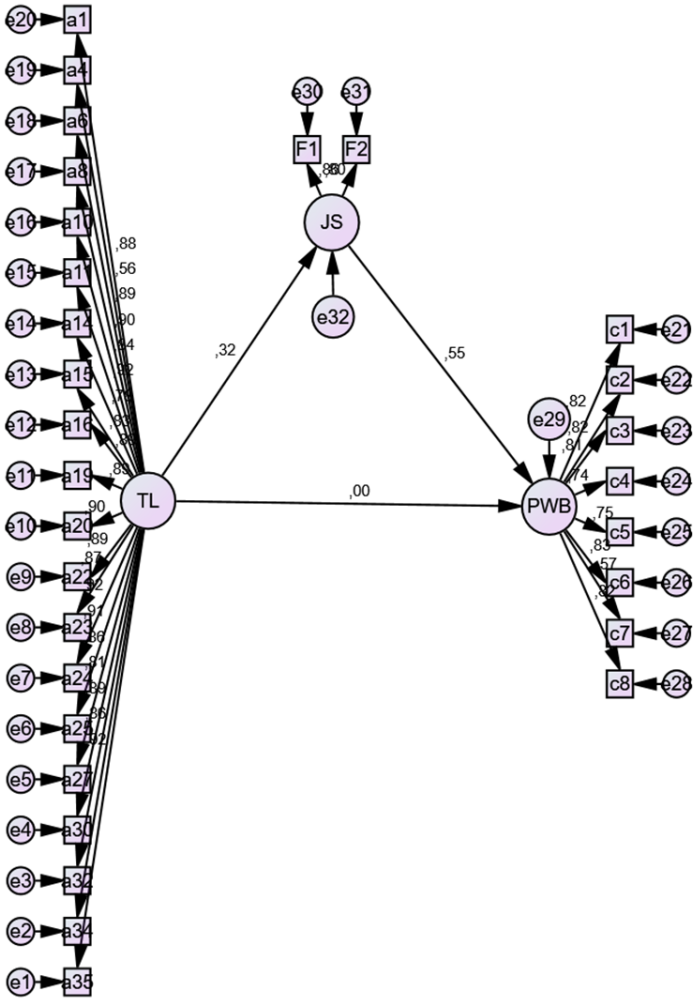


Figure 2. Analyses of the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership and psychological well-being (T.L. = Transformational Leadership, P.W.B. = Psychological Well-Being, J.S. = Job Satisfaction)

Examination of the analyses revealed that the direct relationship between transformational leadership and psychological well-being decreased from .17 to .00 and became statistically non-significant ($p > .05$) once job satisfaction was added to the model. The disappearance of this direct effect following the inclusion of the mediating variable indicates the presence of full mediation. Detailed estimates for both direct and indirect pathways are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Data on Direct and Indirect Relationships

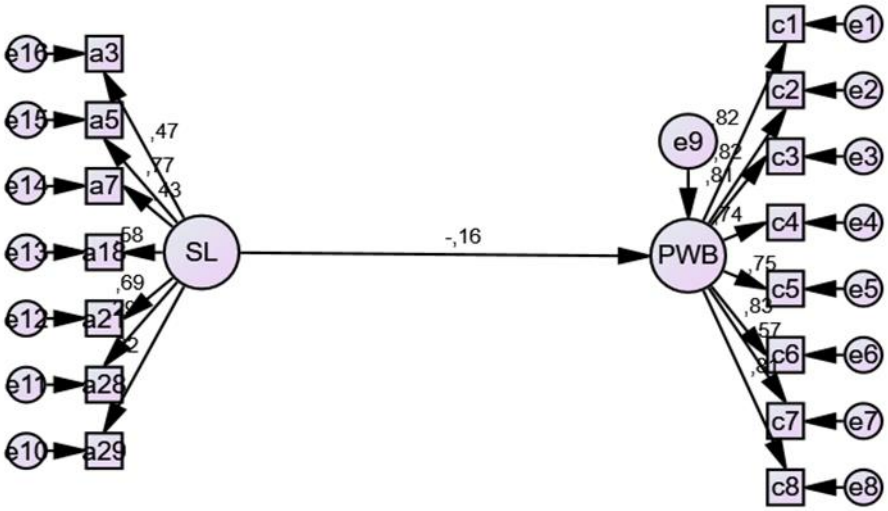
Direct Relationship	**Standardized Coefficients**	**Non-standardized Coefficients**	**p**
T.L.→ P.W.B.	-.002	-.002	.97
T.L.→ J.S.	.55	2.59	.00
J.S.→ P.W.B.	.32	.06	.00

Indirect Relationship	**Standardized Coefficient**	**Confidence Interval (95%)**	
		Lower Limit	**Upper Limit**
T.L.→ J.S.→ P.W.B.	.18	.09	.27

Table 2 indicates that transformational leadership explains 18% of teachers' psychological well-being through job satisfaction. Examination of the confidence interval confirms that this indirect effect is statistically significant. The overall model demonstrated acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.56$, CFI = .94, NFI = .91, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .04), indicating that the proposed mediation model was adequately supported. Standardized factor loadings (standardized regression weights) ranged from .56 to .92, indicating adequate representation of the latent constructs by their observed indicators. For the job satisfaction construct, standardized factor loadings (standardized regression weights) for the two dimensions were .85 and .79, indicating strong measurement properties of the mediating variable.

Model 2. The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between subscriber leadership style and psychological well-being

In this model, the direct association between subscriber leadership and psychological well-being was first examined as a baseline model. The standardized path coefficients for this model are shown in Figure



3.

Figure 3. Simple relationship model between Subscriber Leadership and Psychological Well-Being. (S.L. = Subscriber Leadership, P.W.B. = Psychological Well-Being)

Figure 3 shows that transformational leadership positively and significantly predicts teachers' psychological well-being (β= -.16, p<0.05). When examining the fit values of the simple mediation, χ2/df = 2.70, CFI = .93, NFI = .89, RMSEA = .07, SRMR=.05 were calculated. The model was found to be acceptable and well-fitted. In the second stage, job satisfaction was added as a mediating variable. Information about the results is presented in Figure 4. In Model 2, standardized factor loadings (standardized regression weights) ranged from .30 to .83. Although one indicator exhibited a relatively low loading, all observed variables were retained in the model due to their theoretical relevance and acceptable overall model fit. The measurement model demonstrated adequate fit, supporting the inclusion of all indicators in the mediation analysis.

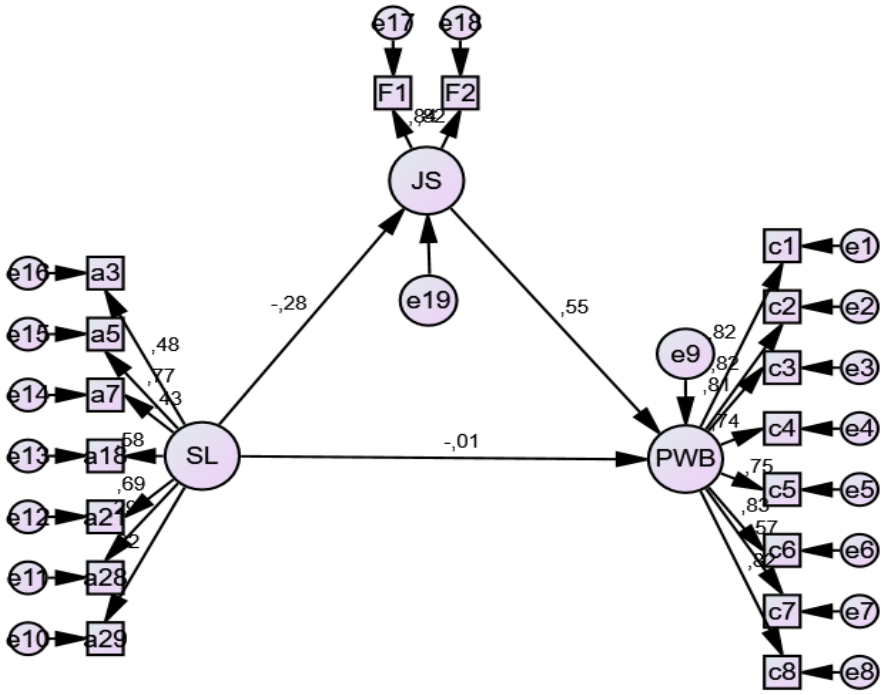


Figure 4. The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between sustaining leadership and psychological well-being. (S.L. = Subscriber Leadership, P.W.B. = Psychological Well-Being, J.S. = Job Satisfaction)

The analyses demonstrated that the direct relationship between Subscriber Leadership and psychological well-being decreased from −.16 to −.01 and became statistically non-significant ($p > .05$) when job satisfaction was included in the model. The disappearance of the direct effect following the introduction of the mediating variable indicates the presence of full mediation. Detailed coefficients for both direct and indirect effects are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Data on Direct and Indirect Relationships

Direct Relationship	**Standardized Coefficients**	**Non-standardized Coefficients**	**p**
S.L.→ P.W.B.	-.01	-.03	.84
S.L.→ J.S.	-.27	-6.29	.00
J.S.→ P.W.B.	.55	.06	.00
Indirect Relationship	**Standardized Coefficient**	**Confidence Interval (95%)**	
		Lower Limit	**Upper Limit**
S.L.→ J.S.→ P.W.B.	-.15	-.23	-.07

Table 3 shows that transformational leadership explains 15% of psychological well-being through job satisfaction. When the confidence interval is examined, it is concluded that this relationship is significant. When the model's fit values are examined, $\chi 2/df = 2.62$, CFI = .92, NFI = .88, RMSEA = .07, SRMR= .05 are found. These fit values are seen to be acceptable and good values. In Model 2, standardized factor loadings (standardized regression weights) ranged from .30 to .83. Although one indicator exhibited a relatively low loading, all observed variables were retained in the model due to their theoretical relevance and the acceptable overall fit of the measurement model. Importantly, the measurement properties of the mediating variable were strong, with standardized factor loadings of .84 and .82 for the two dimensions of job satisfaction, supporting the adequacy of job satisfaction as a mediator in the model.

4. Discussion

4.1. Model 1: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Psychological Well-Being

The findings of Model 1 demonstrated that transformational leadership was positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction, and through the full mediating role of job satisfaction, teachers' psychological well-being improved. When job satisfaction was included in the model, the direct effect of transformational leadership on psychological well-being became non-significant, indicating full mediation. This result suggests that transformational leadership contributes to teachers' psychological well-being primarily by enhancing their satisfaction with their profession rather than exerting a direct effect.

This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that transformational leadership supports organisational success and strengthens employees' commitment by fostering motivation, meaning, and a shared vision (Laohavichien et al., 2009; Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). In educational settings, transformational leadership behaviours—such as providing support, recognising individual differences, and encouraging professional development—have been repeatedly associated with higher levels of teachers' job satisfaction (Azimli & Ada, 2022; Kouni et al., 2018; Menon, 2014; Hariri et al., 2016). The present findings extend this body of literature by demonstrating that job satisfaction serves as a critical mechanism through which transformational leadership translates into improved psychological well-being among teachers.

4.2. Model 2: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship Between Subscriber Leadership and Psychological Well-Being

The findings of Model 2 indicated that decreases in subscriber leadership were associated with increases in teachers' job satisfaction, which in turn led to higher levels of psychological well-being through the full mediating effect of job satisfaction. Similar to Model 1, the direct relationship between subscriber leadership and psychological well-being became non-significant after job satisfaction was included in the model, highlighting the central role of job satisfaction in this relationship.

Subscriber and releasing leadership styles, which emphasise maintaining existing structures or limiting managerial intervention, may reduce opportunities for feedback, guidance, and professional support in school environments. Such leadership approaches have been associated with lower levels of job satisfaction, although some studies have reported inconsistent findings (Doğan, 2022; Gurbetoğlu & Yücel, 2019). The present study contributes to this discussion by showing that when subscriber leadership behaviours decrease, teachers' job satisfaction increases, which subsequently

enhances their psychological well-being. These findings align with evidence suggesting that leadership practices characterised by guidance, feedback, and counselling skills are more supportive of teachers' occupational satisfaction and psychological well-being than passive or status quo–oriented leadership approaches (Bryant et al., 2018; Shah et al., 2024).

4.3. Theoretical Implications of the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Across both models, job satisfaction emerged as a full mediator in the relationship between leadership styles and teachers' psychological well-being. In line with the mediation framework proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), the disappearance of direct effects after the inclusion of job satisfaction underscores its explanatory power in understanding how leadership styles influence psychological well-being. These findings suggest that teachers' job satisfaction may be a more proximal determinant of psychological well-being than leadership styles alone.

Previous research has similarly identified work-related attitudes as key mediators between leadership behaviours and well-being outcomes (Abbas et al., 2016; Arnold et al., 2007). Moreover, job-related satisfaction has been recognised as a protective factor for teachers' psychological well-being, with higher levels of satisfaction associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety (Padmanabhanunni & Pretorius, 2022). Comparable mediation effects have also been observed in academic contexts, where self-efficacy beliefs fully mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and psychological well-being (Malik & Tariq, 2015). Taken together, these findings emphasise that leadership practices in educational settings are most effective in promoting teachers' psychological well-being when they enhance teachers' satisfaction with their professional roles. In the context of educational institutions, these findings highlight the central role of job satisfaction as a mechanism through which leadership practices influence teachers' psychological well-being.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between teachers' psychological well-being and school principals' leadership styles and job satisfaction. The findings indicate that transformational leadership has a positive predictive effect on teachers' psychological well-being, whereas transactional leadership hurts it. However, professional satisfaction was found to be a full mediator in the relationship between both leadership styles and psychological well-being. This finding shows that teachers' levels of psychological well-being are closely related not only to their managers' leadership styles but also to their job satisfaction. Transformational leadership increases job satisfaction by strengthening teachers' feelings of commitment, meaning, and motivation, which in turn supports psychological well-being. On the other hand, it has been observed that maintenance leadership, due to its structure focused on preserving routines, leads to a decrease in teacher satisfaction and, consequently, psychological well-being. In conclusion, to enhance teachers' psychological well-being, school administrators should develop transformational leadership characteristics and provide organisational conditions that foster professional satisfaction.

6. Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design of the study restricts the ability to draw causal inferences regarding the relationships among leadership styles, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Although the proposed mediation models are theoretically grounded and statistically supported, longitudinal or experimental designs would be necessary to establish causal pathways more definitively.

Second, the data were collected using self-report measures, which may be subject to common method bias and social desirability effects. Teachers' perceptions of leadership styles, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being may have been influenced by individual response tendencies or contextual factors at the time of data collection. Future research could benefit from incorporating multiple data sources, such as administrator evaluations or observational measures, to strengthen the robustness of the findings.

Third, the sample consisted solely of teachers working in public schools in Turkey, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other educational contexts, such as private schools or different cultural settings. Leadership practices and their psychological implications may vary across institutional structures and cultural norms. Replicating the study with diverse samples would enhance the external validity of the findings.

Finally, although the study examined multiple leadership styles simultaneously, other organisational and individual variables—such as school climate, workload, or teachers' personal coping resources—were not included in the models.

These factors may also play a role in shaping teachers' job satisfaction and psychological well-being and could be integrated into future research models to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, various recommendations can be made for both practice and future research. In terms of practice, it is important to develop the transformational leadership skills of school administrators. The relationship that leaders establish with teachers directly affects their professional satisfaction and, consequently, their psychological well-being. In this context, in-service training for school administrators should focus on topics such as vision development, guidance, motivation, and providing individual support to employees. To increase teachers' professional satisfaction, it is recommended that elements such as recognition, participation in decision-making processes, fair evaluation systems, and work-life balance be strengthened.

In terms of research, the preference for longitudinal or experimental designs in future studies will enable the clearer revelation of causal relationships between variables. Furthermore, it is recommended that leadership styles be evaluated not only based on teachers' perceptions but also on the views of administrators and other school stakeholders. Including contextual factors such as school climate, organisational support, or workload in the analyses using multilevel models will provide a more holistic perspective. Furthermore, examining the mediating or moderating roles of variables such as self-efficacy, burnout, job demands, and psychological resilience can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the processes affecting teachers' psychological well-being. Overall, considering that transformational leadership and job satisfaction play a central role in teachers' psychological well-being, it is recommended that school management policies be structured accordingly.

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