



School and teacher level predictors of organizational loyalty in an era of school reform

Murat Özdemir¹ · Könül Abaslı² · Duran Mavi³ · Gamze Tuti⁴ · Erdem Karataş⁵

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Abstract

Teachers' organizational loyalty plays a critical role in the success of reforms in periods when educational reforms gain momentum. This study examined the effects of charismatic leadership, trust in leader, and teacher engagement on teachers' organizational loyalty based on data collected from 872 teachers in 77 public schools in Türkiye. We examined the predictors of organizational loyalty at the school and teacher levels via multilevel analysis. Using structural equation modeling and bootstrapping test, we also investigated the mediating role of teacher engagement and trust in leader in the relationship between charismatic leadership and organizational loyalty. The results of multilevel analysis demonstrated that school- and teacher-level variables were significant predictors of organizational loyalty. The mediation test results revealed that the relationship between charismatic leadership and organizational loyalty is realized through teacher engagement and trust in leader. Based on the findings, we discussed the effects of charismatic leadership, engagement, and trust in leader on teachers' loyalty.

Keywords Charismatic leadership · Teacher engagement · Trust in leader · Organizational loyalty · Multilevel analysis

Introduction

Education reforms that aim to build the capacity to support the development of students (Gross et al., 2009) have gained momentum in many western and non-western countries over the last two decades (Gunter, 2008; Pagès & Prieto, 2020; Yin et al., 2014). In this context, the effective administration of schools is vital for the success of educational reforms. An important reason for this notion is that effective schools are more ready for change and foster cultures of learning (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). In this process, principals and teachers are key actors in the implementation of educational reforms as they directly influence learning outcomes

in schools (Mulcahy, 2019; Olsen & Kirtman, 2002). According to the effective school perspective (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Cheng, 2022; Edmonds, 1979; Sebastian et al., 2019), the distinguishing features of effective schools include strong principal leadership and positive teacher attitudes. One of these attitudes, which can facilitate the acceptance of educational reforms, is organizational loyalty (OL).

OL, which refers to the willingness of employees to stay with an organization even if it is against their interests (Niehoff et al., 2001), is associated with many positive organizational outcomes (Dipaola & Hoy, 2005). Fostering OL reduces turnover intention (Moynihan & Landuyt, 2008), contributes to employee engagement (Ensari et al., 2022), and high performance (Blau & Scott, 1962; Hidayati et al., 2019). OL, one of the primary sources of motivation for the devoted work of teachers (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), increases school effectiveness (Hoy et al., 1978). Furthermore, OL is a significant and positive predictor of teacher job performance (Hidayati et al., 2019; Sincer, 2021), organizational citizenship behavior (Yildirim et al., 2012), teacher commitment (Hidayati et al., 2019), and student loyalty (Ganic et al., 2018).

Previous research has demonstrated that various organizational and individual factors have a positive and significant impact on OL. Organizational variables that contribute

✉ Könül Abaslı
k.abasli@arti.edu.az

¹ Department of Educational Science, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Türkiye

² Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, Azerbaijan

³ Elbistan Science and Art Center, Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye

⁴ Professor İhsan Koz Primary School, Trabzon, Türkiye

⁵ Department of Educational Sciences, Kırıkkale University, Kırıkkale, Türkiye

to OL include organizational climate (Syed et al., 2013), organizational justice (Fischer, 2004), interactional justice (Wang et al., 2017), organizational identification (Tseng & Wu, 2017), organizational commitment (Yao et al., 2019). Moreover, individual factors, including employee motivation (Nadeak & Naibaho, 2020), employee–job fit (Edwards, 1991), job satisfaction (Ding et al., 2012; Matzler & Renzl, 2006), employee engagement (Ghanbari & Abdolmaleki, 2020), and psychological contract fulfillment (Tseng & Wu, 2017), positively influence OL.

Although researchers have noted that employee loyalty greatly influences organizational effectiveness (Dutta & Dhira, 2021; Hidayati et al., 2019; Yee et al., 2010), few studies have examined the factors that influence the loyalty of teachers to their schools. Educational research on OL has provided evidence that teachers' commitment (Ting & Yeh, 2014), job satisfaction (Sihombing & Berlianto, 2017), relationship quality, organization identity (Chen & Liu, 2019), organizational image, and organizational attraction are positive and significant predictors of teachers' OL (Akman & Ozdemir, 2019). Additionally, the research on leadership and OL has tended to examine the predictive effects of certain styles of leadership, such as ethical leadership (Ghanbari & Abdolmaleki, 2020; Tseng & Wu, 2017; Wang et al., 2017), transformational leadership (Alrayes et al., 2021), servant leadership (Ding et al., 2012), and paternalist leadership (Ensari et al., 2022); however, fewer studies have investigated the link between charismatic leadership (CL) and the loyalty of teachers (Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021).

Given the crucial role of principals in fostering the positive attitudes and practices of teachers for achieving educational goals (Bektas et al., 2022; Ross & Gray, 2006), we propose that CL, which is a critical leadership style in the initiation and institutionalization of school-wide innovation and change, may contribute significantly to fostering OL among teachers. Weber (2019) puts forward that charismatic leaders are the pioneers of change, and the change they initiate becomes institutionalized and permanent in the process. The theoretical foundation of this study was based on the CL model (Conger, 1985, 1989; Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1988) and the motivational theory of CL (Choi, 2006), which emphasize that charismatic leaders produce positive outcomes at the individual and organizational levels. Previous studies have indicated that CL positively supports school culture (Ozgenel, 2020) and improvement (Kazan & Ozgenel, 2021) while creating an organizational learning climate (Berson et al., 2015). Moreover, CL is positively related to teachers' job performance (Sincer, 2021), organizational commitment (Sayadi, 2016), job satisfaction (Nyenembe et al., 2016; Sayadi, 2016), and organizational citizenship behavior (Johnson, 2008), and is negatively related to teacher turnover (Tavares et al., 2021). Given the positive outcomes of CL as cited by these previous studies,

the current study aims to examine the impact of CL on OL among teachers.

In this study, we argue that teacher engagement (TE) and trust in leader (TL) mediate the relationship between charismatic leadership and organizational loyalty. An important reason for this notion is that both TE (Lee et al., 2019) and TL (Li et al., 2016) have been examined as mediating variables in several studies. These studies reported that TE and TL played a mediating role between leadership and various organizational behaviors. However, there is a gap in the literature on whether teacher engagement and trust in leader have a mediating effect on the relationship between CL and teachers' OL. Investigating such mediating links can help to clarify the complex relationship between principal leadership and teachers' OL. The argument of the current study is based on several empirical studies that demonstrate positive predictive links between (i) teacher engagement and teacher loyalty (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016), (ii) charismatic leadership and employee engagement (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Gozukara & Simsek, 2015; Zhao & Sheng, 2019), (iii) trust in leader and teacher loyalty (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016), (iv) charismatic leadership and trust in leader (Tuti, 2021), and (v) charismatic leadership and teacher loyalty (Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021).

Based on behavioral CL theory by Conger and Kanungo and motivational theory of CL by Choi (2006), the present study investigates how school- and teacher-level characteristics affect organizational loyalty with data collected from Türkiye. Elucidating the multifaceted relationships between charismatic leadership, teacher engagement, trust in leader, and teachers' OL in the sample of Türkiye is critical. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) introduced extensive educational reforms in the Turkish national education system, which has a highly centralized and hierarchical structure. One of the pillars of these reforms is the 2023 Education Vision Document (MoNE, 2018) with which MoNE switched to a data-based management approach, focused on the development of human resource management, and adopted the school development model. The success of all kinds of reform and efforts for improvement in the Turkish education system, especially in education policies, curriculum, and technology, depends largely on the principal leadership and dedication of teachers (MoNE, 2018). In this sense, charismatic leaders, who are more likely to emphasize the necessity of radical change (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Yukl, 1999), can contribute positively to teachers' OL by building teachers' trust in leader and ensuring teacher engagement. Increased OL among teachers may also lead to positive outcomes for school effectiveness. Previous studies in the Turkish context showed that principals' CL behaviors contribute positively to school culture (Ozgenel, 2020) and improvement (Kazan & Ozgenel, 2021). CL is a positive predictor of teachers' OL (Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021),

trust in principals (Tuti, 2021), and teacher engagement (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015). In addition, leader–member exchange (Cekmecelioglu & Ulker, 2014), teachers' work engagement (Ozkeskin, 2019), and trust in leader (Yilmaz, 2019) are significant predictors of organizational commitment. In this context, the current study sought answers to the following research questions:

RQ1 How much of the variation in teacher loyalty is explained by school– (CL) and teacher-level (TE and TL) variables?

RQ2 Do TE and TL mediate the relationship between CL and OL?

The present study on the relationship between charismatic leadership and teacher loyalty has been conducted to explore the underlying mechanisms that may mediate this relationship. The study aims to investigate how trust in leader and teacher engagement can act as mediators in the relationship between CL and OL. The rationale behind this study lies in the significance of the teacher–leader relationship in educational organizations in which a positive relationship can enhance the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers. CL is considered a critical factor that may contribute to the establishment of such a relationship and, therefore, understanding the underlying mechanisms that drive this relationship can provide valuable insight for educational leaders. The findings of the current study can inform leadership practice, identify methods for enhancing teacher loyalty by

fostering trust in leaders and promoting teacher engagement. Moreover, the results can contribute to the development of effective leadership models that can improve teacher retention and student outcomes in educational organizations.

Theoretical framework

Underpinning theory

This study examined the relationship between research variables using the assumptions of charismatic leadership theory (CLT) (Choi, 2006; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). According to CLT, leaders motivate followers to stick to their goals by sharing a vision, exhibiting charismatic behavior, and providing a compelling personal example. Thus, charismatic leaders have a significant impact on individuals and organizations (Choi, 2006; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Based on the assumptions of the CLT, we suggest that school principals who exhibit charismatic leadership behavior would increase teacher loyalty through trust in leader and engagement (See Fig. 1).

Charismatic leadership

One of the key findings of educational leadership research is that the leadership functions of principals are strongly related to various school outcomes (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004). In this study, we focused on the outcomes of charismatic leadership on teachers' emotions and attitudes in educational organizations. Charismatic

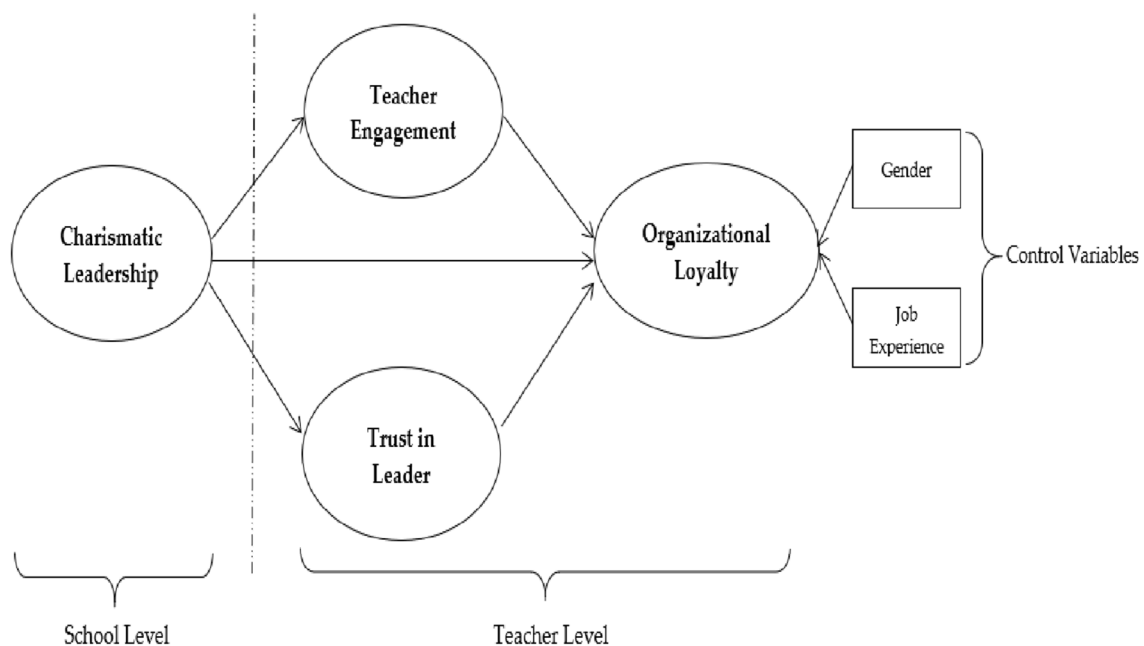


Fig. 1 Conceptual model of the study

leaders illuminate the path for followers, offer explanations when uncertainties arise, solve problems, and inspire change by setting clear strategic goals (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). CL is characterized by the attribution of extraordinary qualities to a leader by followers who identify themselves with the leader (Yukl, 1999). According to the CL model developed by Conger (1985, 1989) and Conger and Kanungo (1987, 1988), the CL process consists of three successive stages. In the first stage, the leader analyzes the current situation by assessing available resources, limitations, and the needs of followers. In the second stage, the leader transforms the current opportunities into a strategic vision and explains the defined organizational goals. In the third stage, the leader gains the trust of the followers by taking risks and using the right impression management, and motivates them to perform effectively (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Moreover, the motivational theory of CL by Choi (2006) emphasizes that charismatic leaders address the needs of their followers by motivating them through developing vision, engaging in empathic behavior, and empowerment. Charismatic leaders develop clear goals, policies, and visions (Cheng, 1994), focus on the needs of teachers (Crawford, 2002), and motivate teachers to perform effectively (Eres, 2011; Sincer, 2021). A growing body of research provides evidence that CL contributes to teacher-level factors such as job satisfaction (Nyenyenbe et al., 2016; Sayadi, 2016), teacher engagement (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015), trust in leader (Tuti, 2021), organizational citizenship behavior (Johnson, 2008), and teacher loyalty (Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021). Thus, based on the CL model developed by Conger and Kanungo (1988) and the motivational theory of CL (Choi, 2006), we infer that charismatic school leaders can exert a positive influence on teacher engagement, trust in leader, and teacher loyalty.

This study evaluated principal leadership based on the six-dimensional conceptual model of Conger and Kanungo (1994). Accordingly, charismatic school leaders refer to administrators who (i) set and explain visions, (ii) have environmental sensitivity, (iii) exhibit extraordinary behavior, (iv) take risks, (v) are sensitive to the needs of teachers, and (vi) change the status quo. In this context, charismatic leaders can be much more effective in periods when educational reforms are implemented intensively. Intense reform and change processes can put the school organization in educational turbulence (Johnson, 2013), and the uncertainty due to such turbulence can increase the need for charismatic leaders among teachers. In this setting, charismatic leaders are accepted by their followers more readily in times of uncertainty (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Considering that eastern societies, including Türkiye, exhibit a low tolerance for uncertainty (Hofstede, 1991), we found it worthwhile to investigate how charismatic leadership affects teacher

engagement, trust in leader, and teachers' OL in educational organizations in Türkiye.

Teacher engagement

Teacher engagement, based on job engagement theory (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010), refers to a multifaceted motivating notion that reflects the concurrent investment of teachers' physical, emotional, and cognitive energy in active job performance. Kahn (1990) categorized engagement into three dimensions as physical engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement. Physical energy, hard work, and determination at work are associated with physical engagement. Employees' emotions toward their workplaces, organizations, and leaders can be positive or negative, which is referred to as emotional engagement. Finally, cognitive engagement occurs when employees devote their full attention to their work (Kahn, 1990). Similar to Kahn's (1990) definition of job engagement, Schaufeli et al., (2002: 74) conceptualized engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption."

Although previous studies have revealed that principal support (Klusmann et al., 2008), authentic leadership (Bird et al., 2009, 2012), and transformational leadership contribute positively to teacher engagement (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018), research examining the influence of CL on teacher engagement has been limited (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015). CL leads to personal identification with the leader, strong bonding with the leader, and a positive image of the leader among followers (Choi, 2006), which, in turn, may contribute to employees' job engagement. Although the positive impact of CL on employee engagement was verified in various studies (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Zhao & Sheng, 2019), few studies focused on how CL affects teacher engagement in educational organizations (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015). Teacher engagement, one of the main factors that increase teacher performance (Hakanen et al., 2006) and student satisfaction (Kangas et al., 2017), is reciprocally linked to self-efficacy and satisfaction among teachers (Granziera & Perera, 2019). Moreover, teacher engagement which is negatively related to burnout (Hakanen et al., 2006), and the intention to quit (Eldor & Shoshani, 2017), has a positive influence on teacher loyalty (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016). On the basis of these results, the current study proposes that the direct impact of CL on teacher loyalty may differ when the indirect effect of charismatic leadership on teacher engagement is considered.

Trust in leader

One of the critical issues that educational leadership researchers have focused on is trust (Berkovich, 2018;

Byrk & Schneider, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Within the context of the current study, trust in leader refers to the belief teachers hold about principals as being fair, respectful, consistent, honest, and keeping their promises (Byrk & Schneider, 2002). Trust in principals is critical in terms of organizational performance and effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Specifically, trust in school leaders facilitates teachers' social interactions with principals, and, as a result, effective communication between teachers and principals contributes to school effectiveness (Berkovich, 2018). Furthermore, TL, which is a critical factor in creating a healthy school (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015), is positively associated with teacher commitment (Kilinc et al., 2022) and teacher well-being (Liu et al., 2022).

This study investigates how teachers' trust in the principal may affect the relationship between charismatic leadership and teachers' OL. Previous studies indicate that principal leadership, such as distributed leadership (Bektas et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022) and authentic leadership have a positive impact on TL (Bird et al., 2009). However, studies examining the link between principal CL and teachers' trust in leader are limited (Tuti, 2021). Previous studies indicate that CL increases teachers' trust in leader (Tuti, 2021), and trust in leader contributes to teacher loyalty (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016). The motivational theory of CL also emphasizes that the emphatic behaviors of charismatic leaders stimulate TL among followers (Choi, 2006). Thus, it is reasonable to expect CL to increase teacher trust in leader, which may in turn contribute positively to teachers' OL.

Organizational loyalty

Organizational loyalty, the dependent variable, refers to employees' willingness to stay with the organization even if it is against their best interests (Niehoff et al., 2001). Hirschman (1970), who laid the theoretical foundations of employee loyalty, argues that dissatisfied employees can exhibit reactions through three organizational behaviors, namely, *exit*, *voice*, and *loyalty*. Based on the analytical framework of Hirschman (1970), Farrell and Rusbult (1985) presented a behavioral approach to the concept of loyalty. This approach includes four understandings, which are *exit*, *voice*, *loyalty*, and *neglect*. The concept of exit refers to quitting a job and thinking about looking for a new one. Voice means that employees negotiate a problem they encounter in the organization with an employer and make suggestions for potential solutions. Loyalty includes various situations such as constantly supporting the organization in a consistent manner and defending it when faced with criticism. Finally, neglect refers to situations such as procrastination, developing negative attitudes toward work, and making less effort than necessary (Farrell &

Rusbult, 1985). In this study, we focused on teachers' loyalty towards the school in line with Hirschman (1970)'s definition of loyalty. Hirschman (1970) defined loyal employees as those who put up with hardships without complaining as they have hope for a better future.

OL indicates the degree of the faithfulness of employees to the organization (Tseng & Wu, 2017). Allen and Meyer (1990) consider the concept of loyalty as a form of emotional commitment. Barnard (1966: 84) defines OL as the willingness of employees to cooperate. Based on this willingness, the informal aspect of the organization is crucial for employee loyalty (Hoy et al., 1978). Loyal employees unilaterally contribute to the organization consciously and voluntarily without expecting anything in return from the organization (Coughlan, 2005). For this reason, loyalty has a place above the economic interest relationship between the organization and employee. In addition, loyalty is considered a critical factor for managers to be recognized and respected as leaders by employees (Blau & Scott, 1962). Employees with high levels of OL are willing to follow the leader (Bernston et al., 2010; Tseng & Wu, 2017) act with a strong sense of commitment and responsibility toward the organization (Avey et al., 2012; Niehoff et al., 2001), and strive for the benefit of the organization (Coughlan, 2005).

Akman (2017) revealed that OL in schools consists of three basic structures, namely, loyalty to the administrator, loyalty to colleagues, and loyalty to students. Teachers' organizational loyalty entails teachers tolerating their administrators', colleagues', and students' mistakes, supporting them without expecting anything in return, and maintaining a positive attitude toward them (Akman, 2017). Matzler and Renzl (2006) argue that trust in colleagues and management are strong predictors of employee satisfaction, which affects employee loyalty positively.

The formation of loyalty in organizations depends on various factors. Organizational factors, such as leadership (Alrayes et al., 2021; Ding et al., 2012; Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021), organizational justice (Fischer, 2004; Wang et al., 2017), organizational climate (Syed et al., 2013) as well as individual factors, such as motivation (Nadeak & Naibaho, 2020), job satisfaction (Ding et al., 2012), engagement (Ghanbari & Abdolmaleki, 2020), and trust in leader (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016) play a critical role in the formation of OL. Previous studies indicate that charismatic leadership (Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021), teacher engagement (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016), and trust in leader (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016) are positive predictors of teachers' OL. However, we have not encountered a study in the literature that examines the mediating role of teacher engagement and trust in leader in the relationship between CL and OL. Thus, we believe that this study can enrich the educational literature by elucidating the factors that explain teacher loyalty at the school and teacher levels.

Relationship between charismatic leadership, teacher engagement, trust in leader, and organizational loyalty

Charismatic leaders exhibit effective leadership by establishing a strong bond with followers (Shamir et al., 1993), which leads to organizational loyalty of employees (Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021). Charismatic leaders have a positive emotional impact on followers by being sensitive to their values and needs (Choi, 2006; Shamir et al., 1993). In return, followers who feel cared for by their leaders feel more engaged and, thus, work more actively at their jobs to achieve organizational goals (Zhao & Sheng, 2019). Charismatic leaders can instill a sense of work engagement and organizational citizenship through their influence and referent power (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010). Furthermore, charismatic leaders elicit admiration and identification from their followers as they act with high levels of self-confidence, take chances, and challenge the existing quo (Jacobsen & House, 2001). Thus, charismatic leaders build trust in leader among followers (Choi, 2006; Tuti, 2021), which, in turn, leads to employee well-being (Liu et al., 2022), commitment (Kilinc et al., 2022), and loyalty (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016).

Educational leadership scholars have recently focused on investigating how teachers' impressions of their leaders affect their work-related attitudes and actions (Kilinc et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). Accordingly, the current study examined how principal charismatic leadership affects teacher organizational loyalty through the mediating role of teacher engagement and trust in leader. Studies conducted in educational organizations provided evidence that CL is a positive predictor of the OL (Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021), teacher engagement (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015), and trust in leader (Tuti, 2021). Additionally, teacher engagement, one of our mediating variables, is a positive predictor of teachers' OL (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016), and has a negative relationship with teacher burnout (Hakanen et al., 2006) and intention to quit (Eldor & Shoshani, 2017). Another mediating variable in our study, trust in leader, also contributes positively to teachers' OL (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016). Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the study. The reason for proposing such a model is that CL fosters a positive school environment (Kazan & Ozgenel, 2021; Ozgenel, 2020) in which teachers have trust in leader (Tuti, 2021) and feel engaged in the teaching profession (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015), which, in turn, can contribute to teacher loyalty (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016). This model can be attributed to social exchange theory, which suggests that how leaders treat their employees has a substantial impact on the behavior of employees at work (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Charismatic leaders motivate employees and create an environment of trust; in return, employees who trust the leader and feel engaged in their profession are more loyal to their organization.

Method

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design of the quantitative research paradigm to investigate the relationship between charismatic leadership and teachers' organizational loyalty with the mediating effects of teacher engagement and trust in leader. We conducted multilevel analysis (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) to answer RQ1. We ran a mediation test (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) for RQ2. In this subsection, we describe the context of the study, participants, data collection tools, and strategies for data analysis.

Study context

The Turkish education system serves over 18 million students with approximately one million teachers. It is managed with a very centralized management approach (Ozdemir, 2008). Attending primary, secondary, and high schools is compulsory in the Turkish education system. The education period for each level is four years, and compulsory education period is 12 years in total (MoNE, 2017). MoNE prepares the national curriculum, which is implemented in a standard way in all schools. Teachers (MoNE, 2015) and principals (MoNE, 2021a) in public schools are assigned based on their central exam scores. The forms of employment in schools affiliated with the MoNE can be in the form of permanent (tenure) and contractual assignments or in a temporary status when necessary. The most common application forms are permanent and contractual status. Permanent teachers and contractual teachers who have completed their 4 + 2 years of duty and are entitled to permanent status can have a lifetime employment guarantee (MoNE, 2017). The settlements in which paid teachers are generally assigned are mainly rural areas such as villages, towns, and districts. These areas frequently cover regions in which a problem exists in recruiting teachers. Today, the majority of teachers working in schools affiliated with the MoNE are permanent teachers (Kavakli & Gul, 2021). The current study did not ask the participants whether they were permanent or contracted and paid. Therefore, regardless of their status, teachers working in schools affiliated with the MoNE have participated in the research.

Participants and procedures

The research population consists of 14,573 teachers (MoNE, 2021b). Convenience sampling was used for sample selection. A total of 872 teachers participated in the study. We collected research data from a total of 77 public schools at the primary, secondary, and high school levels in six cities (Trabzon, Kahramanmaraş, Kirikkale, Kirsehir, Kayseri, and Agri) in the central and northern regions of Türkiye. Each

level of education has its goals and, in this context, different organizational cultures. For this reason, we considered it was necessary to control the opinions of teachers working at the three levels of education during data analysis. For the implementation of the study, we obtained legal permission from MoNE. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, we applied the data collection tool to teachers online. The demographic information of the participants is as follows: the sample is composed of 388 (44.5%) male and 484 (55.5%) female. A total of 272 (31.2%) of the participants had one year of seniority, 424 (48.6%) participants had between two and four years of seniority, and 176 (20.2%) of participants had a seniority of 5 years or more.

Instruments

We obtained permission from the developers of all scales and the researchers who conducted the adaptation study for the Turkish forms of the scales.

Charismatic leadership

We used the Conger–Kanungo Charismatic Leadership Scale (CK-CLS) to measure the CL behaviors of principals (Conger & Kanungo, 1994). Ozdemir and Pektas (2020) conducted the Turkish adaptation of the CK-CLS, which consists of 25 items. It evaluates leader behaviors in six dimensions: vision and articulation, environmental sensitivity, unconventional behavior, personal risk, sensitivity to member needs, and does not maintain the status quo (Conger & Kanungo, 1994). As recommended by Byrne (2012), the correlated six-factor model showed a good fit to the data ($\chi^2(df=226)=2154.270$; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA]=0.08; comparative fit index [CFI]=0.94; Tucker–Lewis index [TLI]=0.94; root mean square residual [SRMR]=0.05). Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.97 for the total scale. We defined CL as a school level variable in RQ1, thus, scores related to leadership were aggregated in multi-level analysis. We calculated interrater agreement (R_{wg}) and interrater reliability (ICC) to justify aggregation (James et al., 1984). The results provided a reasonable justification for aggregation with $R_{wg}=0.78$, $ICC(1)=0.12$, $ICC(2)=0.59$ for the CK-CLS. According to these results, teachers' views on individual CL were aggregated as a school level variable.

Teacher engagement

The job Engagement Scale (JES) developed by Rich (2006) was used to measure TE. Ongore (2013) conducted the Turkish adaptation of the JES, which consists of 18 items. JES evaluates the engagement behaviors of participants in three dimensions: physical engagement, emotional engagement,

and cognitive engagement (Rich, 2006). As recommended by Byrne (2012), the correlated three-factor model fit the data well ($\chi^2(df=129)=1041.055$; RMSEA=0.08; CFI=0.95; TLI=0.94; SRMR=0.05). Internal consistency reliability was 0.96 for the total scale.

Trust in leader

We used the Trust in Leader Scale (TLS) developed by Tuti (2021) to measure the trust levels of teachers in leaders. The TLS is a one-dimensional data collection tool consisting of 20 items. As recommended by Byrne (2012), the single-factor model fit the data well ($\chi^2(df=164)=1411.587$; RMSEA=0.08; CFI=0.96; TLI=0.95; SRMR=0.02). Internal consistency reliability was 0.98.

Organizational loyalty

We used the Organizational Loyalty Scale (OLS) developed by Akman (2017) to measure teachers' OL levels. OLS is an 11-item tool and measures teachers' OL behaviors in three dimensions: loyalty to the administrator, loyalty to colleagues, and loyalty to students. As recommended by Byrne (2012), the three-factor model fit the data well ($\chi^2(df=30)=229.847$; RMSEA=0.08; CFI=0.96; TLI=0.93; SRMR=0.05). The internal consistency reliability of the total scale was 0.84.

Analytic strategy

In this study, we sought answers to the two research questions. Therefore, we used two strategies for analysis. First, we applied multilevel analysis to answer RQ1. We included CL as the second level (school level) and analyzed teacher engagement and trust in leader as first-level (individual level) independent variables in the multilevel analysis. Within the scope of RQ1, we aimed to measure how much of the variability in teachers' loyalty was explained by school- and teacher-level variables. Next, we conducted SEM analysis and tested the mediating effect of TE and TL in the relationship between CL and OL to answer RQ2. We employed the bootstrapping method for the mediation test and used the confidence intervals suggested by Preacher et al. (2010) to evaluate the results (95%). Multilevel analysis and mediation tests were employed using *Mplus* 8.3. The maximum likelihood (ML) method was used for analysis (Muthen & Muthen, 2017). Model fit was examined with the RMSEA, TLI, CFI, and SRMR. RMSEA values of 0.08 or less and 0.05 or less indicate adequate and good fit, respectively. TLI and CFI values of 0.90 or greater and 0.95 or greater indicate adequate and good fit, respectively (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Gender (female = 0; male = 1), and job experience

(1–19 years = 0; 20 and above = 1) were coded as dummy variables.

We took several steps to minimize the possibility of common method bias since the data was collected from a single source (i.e., teachers). First, we performed Harman's (1967) single-factor test. For this purpose, we conducted exploratory factor analysis using all items. The result indicated that the items were not collected under a single-factor. The first factor explained 32% of the total variance (less than 50%). Nine factors with eigenvalues over 1.0 emerged, which collectively explained 73% of variance. These results indicated that the threat of common method bias is low. Principals were excluded from this study and, therefore, did not evaluate themselves. The teachers evaluated the leadership behavior of principals. Therefore, there was no social desirability problem in this study (Conway & Lance, 2010). As a result, common method bias did not pose a significant problem in this study although the research data was collected from a single source.

Results

Preliminary analyses

Table 1 presents the outcomes of the descriptive and reliability analyses of the variables used in the measurement model. The reliability coefficient values of all scales in the analyses were above 0.70. In addition, the mean values of all constructs are relatively high in five-point Likert-type scales (CL 3.74, TE 4.56, TL 4.28, OL 4.15). As seen in Table 1, CL was significantly correlated to TE ($r=0.73$, $p<0.001$), TL ($r=0.81$, $p<0.001$), and OL ($r=0.63$, $p<0.001$). Similarly, the study found statistically significant and positive correlations between TE and OL ($r=0.56$, $p<0.001$) and between TL and OL ($r=0.62$, $p<0.001$).

Multilevel analysis

Prior to the multilevel analysis, we analyzed the unconditional models at each school level. Accordingly, at the primary school level, we found that a relatively large

Table 2 Multilevel analysis of the prediction of organizational loyalty

	Est	S.E	Est./S.E	Sig	R ²
Between Level					
Charismatic Leadership	.736	.218	3.372	.001*	.541
Within Level					
Teacher Engagement	.316	.037	8.581	.000*	.491
Trust in Leader	.521	.031	17.079	.000*	

Note: 872 teachers from 77 schools

* $p<.001$

part of the variability in teachers' OL occurs within the school ($\sigma^2=0.280$, $SE=0.041$, $p<0.001$), while the variance between schools regarding OL was relatively low ($\tau_{00}=0.072$, $SE=0.034$, $p<0.05$). Similarly, at the secondary school level, a large part of the variance in OL occurs within the school ($\sigma^2=0.274$, $SE=0.024$, $p<0.001$), and the variance between schools regarding OL was relatively low ($\tau_{00}=0.026$, $SE=0.011$, $p<0.05$). At the high school level, we found that a large part of the variability in OL occurs within the school ($\sigma^2=0.365$, $SE=0.066$, $p<0.001$); but no-between school variance regarding OL was noted ($\tau_{00}=0.000$, $SE=0.022$, $p>0.05$). In the unconditional model, which examined the views of all teachers, the study found that a relatively large part of the variability in OL occurs within the school ($\sigma^2=0.290$, $SE=0.022$, $p<0.001$). The variance between schools regarding OL was relatively low ($\tau_{00}=0.038$, $SE=0.010$, $p<0.05$). Following the unconditional models, we examined the ICC values at each school level on the data set. The results pointed to ICC values of 0.205 (21%) at the primary school level, 0.087 (9%) at the secondary school level, and 0.001 (1%) at the high school level, respectively. ICC, which is calculated by dividing the variance between schools in teacher loyalty by the total variance, was 0.117 (12%). At this point, we conducted conditional model analyses at the primary and secondary school levels and for all teachers due to the ICC values exceeding 0.05 (Brown, 2015). For multilevel analyses at primary and secondary school levels, the data did not fit the model well (RMSEA >0.08 , CFI <0.90 , TLI <0.90 , and SRMR >0.08). Therefore, multilevel analysis was calculated using only the

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability of the measurement model

	M	SD	α	CL	TE	TL	OL
Charismatic leadership	3.74	.89	.97				
Teacher engagement	4.56	.50	.96	.73**			
Trust in leader	4.28	.89	.98	.81**	.39**		
Organizational loyalty	4.15	.60	.84	.63**	.56**	.62**	

Abbreviations. CL, charismatic leadership; TE, teacher engagement; TL, trust in leader; OL, organizational loyalty

** $p<.001$

total scores. As seen in Table 2, a one-unit increase in the CL score at the school level led to an increase of 0.736 in the OL score. CL explained 54% of between-group variance in OL. Moreover, a one-unit increase in TE and TL scores at the teacher-level led to an increase of 0.316 and 0.521 in teacher loyalty, respectively. Engagement and trust explained 49% of within-group variance in OL.

Mediation analysis

The study performed SEM using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation to indicate direct and indirect relationships with a 95% confidence interval (CI). At the primary school level and for all participants, the indexes showed that model fit the data well (Table 3). However, the data did not fit the model well at the secondary and high school levels (RMSEA > 0.08, TLI < 0.90) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For this

reason, we conducted analyses only at the primary school level and on all participants (Fig. 2).

We first analyzed the direct effects of CL on TE, TL, and OL. In this process, the study found no statistically significant relationships between the control and the other variables. According to the results of the analysis presented in Table 3, at the primary school ($\beta = 0.306$, $SE = 0.048$, 95% CI[0.214–0.396]), and all participant levels ($\beta = 0.373$, $SE = 0.029$, 95% CI[0.323–0.419]), the effect of CL on TL was statistically significant. Accordingly, the CL of principals would increase TE. Second, at the primary school ($\beta = 0.857$, $SE = 0.018$, 95% CI[0.818–0.888]), and all participant levels ($\beta = 0.812$, $SE = 0.012$, 95% CI[0.790–0.830]), the effect of CL on TL was statistically significant. Accordingly, the CL of principals increased the teacher trust in principal. Third, at the primary school level, the effect of CL on OL was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.309$, $SE = 0.129$,

Table 3 Bootstrapping results of the mediating models of charismatic leadership and organizational loyalty ($N = 872$)

Levels	Standardized direct effects	Product of coefficients			95% Bootstrap CI			Model fit indexes
		Est	S.E	Est./S.E	Lower	Upper	Sig	
I-Primary School (n=342)	Gender → OL	.024	.038	.625	− .049	.101		$\chi^2(df=12)=771.81$ RMSEA = .04 CFI = .99 TLI = .98 SRMR = .03
	Job experience → OL	.016	.038	.423	− .058	.092		
	TE → OL	.242	.043	5.679	.161	.325	**	
	TL → OL	.351	.123	2.854	.113	.594	**	
	CL → TE	.306	.048	6.425	.214	.396	**	
	CL → TL	.857	.018	48.113	.818	.888	**	
	CL → OL	.309	.129	2.399	.051	.558	**	
	Standardized indirect effects							
	CL → TE → OL	.074	.017	4.478	.046	.113	**	
	CL → TL → OL	.301	.104	2.909	.100	.500	**	
	Standardized total indirect effects							
	CL → OL	.371	.107	3.498	.167	.580	**	
	Standardized total effects							
	CL → OL	.685	.036	18.915	.604	.748	**	
II-All Participants (N=872)	Gender → OL	.055	.020	2.699	− .022	.089		$\chi^2(df=18)=2310.62$ RMSEA = .08 CFI = .97 TLI = .94 SRMR = .04
	Job experience → OL	.025	.020	1.247	− .058	.006		
	TE → OL	.370	.029	12.953	.324	.418	**	
	TL → OL	.229	.049	4.653	.150	.315	**	
	CL → TE	.373	.029	12.793	.323	.419	**	
	CL → TL	.812	.012	65.433	.790	.830	**	
	CL → OL	.315	.047	6.762	.235	.389	**	
	Standardized indirect effects							
	CL → TE → OL	.138	.017	8.342	.112	.168	**	
	CL → TL → OL	.186	.040	4.701	.122	.254	**	
	Standardized total indirect effects							
	CL → OL	.324	.041	7.836	.257	.393	**	
	Standardized total effects							
	CL → OL	.639	.022	29.356	.600	.672	**	

5000 bootstrapped samples; significant at the ** $p < .001$ level

CI confidence interval; OL organizational loyalty; TE teacher engagement; TL trust in leader; CL charismatic leadership

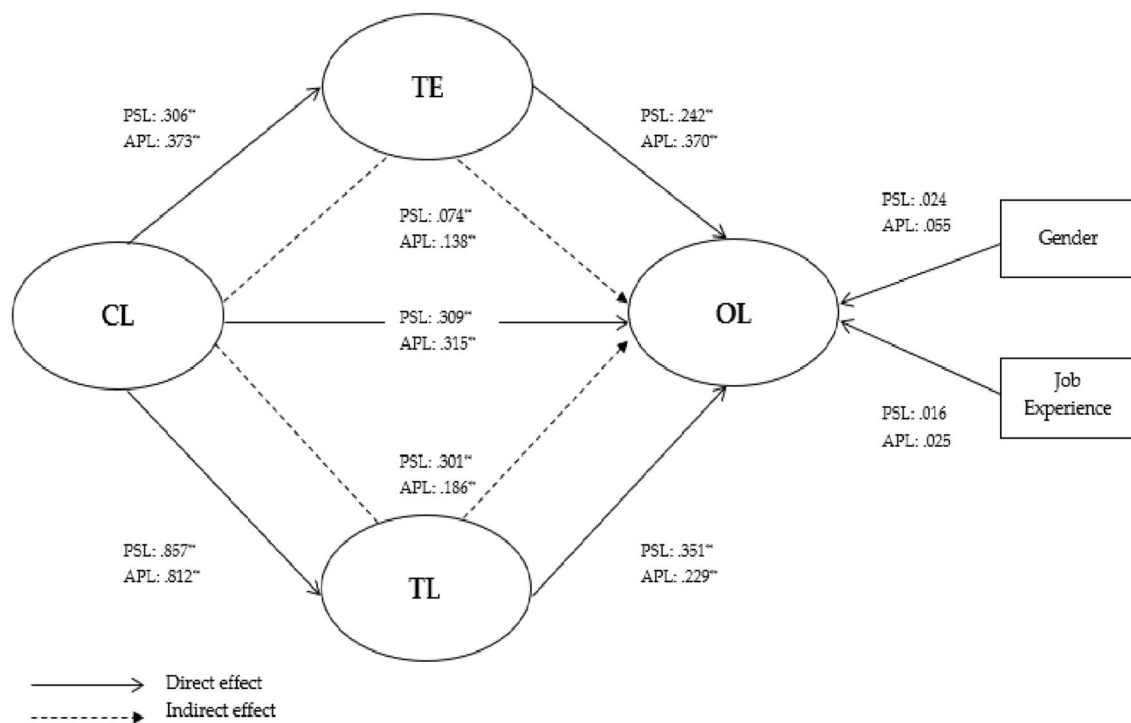


Fig. 2 Mediation model of charismatic leadership and organizational loyalty in schools. Abbreviations: *PSL* primary school level; *APL* all participant levels; *OL* organizational loyalty; *TE* teacher engagement; *TL* trust in leader; *CL* charismatic leadership. Note: Significant at. ** $p < .001$

95% CI[0.051-0.558]); however, at all participant levels, the effect of CL on OL was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.315$, $SE = 0.047$, 95% CI[0.235-0.389]). Accordingly, the CL of principals increased the loyalty of teachers to their schools. We then analyzed the direct effects of the mediating variables on the dependent variable. At the primary school ($\beta = 0.242$, $SE = 0.043$, 95% CI[0.161-0.325]), and all participants levels ($\beta = 0.370$, $SE = 0.029$, 95% CI[0.324-0.418]), we found that the effect of TE on OL was statistically significant. Accordingly, TE would increase teacher loyalty to the school. Lastly, at the primary school ($\beta = 0.351$, $SE = 0.123$, 95% CI[0.113-0.594]) and all participant levels ($\beta = 0.229$, $SE = 0.049$, 95% CI[0.150-0.315]), the direct effect of TL on OL was also statistically significant.

This study applied the bootstrapping method proposed by Preacher et al. (2010) for examining the indirect effects. After 5000 replications, the results indicated a weak but positive and statistically significant indirect effect of CL on OL, which was mediated by TE at the primary school ($\beta = 0.074$, $SE = 0.017$ 95% CI[0.046-0.113]), and all participant ($\beta = 0.138$, $SE = 0.017$ 95% CI[0.112-0.168]) levels. According to this finding, the CL behaviors of the principals increased TE at a moderate level, while the moderate increase in TE led to a small increase in OL. Finally, the results showed a weak but positive and statistically significant effect of CL on OL, as mediated by TL at the primary school ($\beta = 0.301$, $SE = 0.104$ 95% CI[0.100-0.500]), and all

participant ($\beta = 0.186$, $SE = 0.040$ 95% CI[0.122-0.254]) levels. Accordingly, CL increased teachers' trust in leader at a high level, while TL increased teachers' OL at a low level. At the primary school level, the indirect effect of CL on OL explained 54.1% of the total effect. The indirect effect of CL on OL explained 50.7% of the total effect at all participant levels. The overall effect of CL on OL was moderate, positive, and statistically significant at the primary school ($\beta = 0.685$, $SE = 0.036$, 95% CI[0.604-0.748]), and all participant ($\beta = 0.639$, $SE = 0.022$, 95% CI[0.600-0.672]) levels. Similar to the direct effects, the study found no statistically significant relationship between the control and all other variables after mediation analysis.

Discussion

This study sought answers to two research questions. First, we examined how much of the variability in teachers' organizational loyalty in the context of Türkiye was explained by school-level and teacher-level variables. The findings of multilevel analysis revealed that 6.48% of variability in teachers' organizational loyalty was due to charismatic leadership, while 43% was due to teacher engagement and trust in leader. In previous studies, the factors that lead to teacher loyalty include leadership (Alrayes et al., 2021; Gunduz, 2021; Sincer, 2021), engagement

(Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016), and trust in leader (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016). Thus, the result of the current study was in line with those of the literature on teacher loyalty. Moreover, this result supports the literature that argues that principal leadership contributes to the development of the positive attitudes of teachers toward the school (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Gunduz, 2021; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Liu et al., 2022; Sincer, 2021).

In this study, we tested the mediating effect of teacher engagement and trust in leader on the relationship between charismatic leadership and organizational loyalty. The findings supported the research model. Accordingly, the relationship between CL and teacher loyalty occurs through teacher engagement and trust in leader. We observed that relative differences existed among the variables discussed in terms of school level. Previous studies found differences in the findings of studies that examine the research variables at different school levels in Türkiye (Demir & Yirci, 2021; Kose & Uzun, 2018). Therefore, the current study is parallel with the studies on different school levels in Türkiye. Previous research has revealed that trust in leader is a result of effective leadership (Bektas et al., 2022; Bird et al., 2009; Li et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2022; Weinstein et al., 2020). The findings of this study are in line with Tuti's (2021) findings, confirming that CL is a significant positive predictor of trust in leader. Similarly, leadership is a critical source of teacher engagement (Bird et al., 2009, 2012). The current study found charismatic leadership as a positive and significant predictor of teacher engagement, which is similar to the findings of Gozukara and Simsek (2015). Finally, the current study provided evidence that trust in leader and teacher engagement positively predict the OL of teachers, which was confirmed by previous studies (Ludviga & Kalvina, 2016).

In line with the arguments of behavioral CL theory (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) and motivational CL theory (Choi, 2006), the present study confirmed that charismatic leaders have positive effects on followers' organizational attitudes, behaviors, and emotions. In addition, this study revealed that charismatic school leaders contributed to positive outcomes on teacher attitudes in a process that educational reforms are intensively continued. Therefore, the current findings supported the basic assumptions of the CL literature (Cheng, 1994; Choi, 2006; Conger & Kanungo, 1988, 1998; Eres, 2011). Conger and Kanungo (1988) report that charismatic leaders are more accepted by their followers in uncertain and turbulent times. Thus, the findings provided empirical support for the CL approach by Conger and Kanungo. A notable reason for this result in the Turkish context may be the low tolerance for uncertainty in the Turkish culture (Hofstede, 1991). Anxiety due to uncertainty may increase teachers' need for charismatic leaders (Boydak Ozan & Sener, 2014).

Conclusion

This study revealed two major results. First, organizational and individual factors determine teachers' OL in the Turkish sample. Among the organizational factors that determine teacher loyalty, principal leadership plays a critical role (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Gunduz, 2021; Li et al., 2016; Sincer, 2021). We focused on the effect of the CL behaviors of principals on teacher loyalty in the context of the reform process. As a result, this study revealed that charismatic leadership contributed to teacher loyalty in the context of low tolerance for uncertainty. Second, we concluded that teacher engagement and trust in leader mediated the effect of principals' charismatic leadership on teacher loyalty. Therefore, it was concluded that the effect of leadership on various teacher outcomes is determined by various mediating variables (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). We specifically determined that the effect of CL on teacher loyalty is achieved through teacher engagement and trust in leader. Based on these results, we deduce that CL makes a significant contribution to teacher outcomes in reform periods and in eastern societies such as Türkiye, in which uncertainty is experienced intensely. In this respect, we deem that this research presents a unique contribution to the educational leadership literature.

Implications

The results of the present study have some implications. First, this study has revealed that leadership is a critical factor for developing the positive attitudes of teachers toward school. However, in eastern countries such as Türkiye, principals are still unaware of the power they hold over various school outcomes, especially teacher attitudes. In this context, the research demonstrated that leadership rather than managerial behavior affects teachers more and motivates them toward the organizational goals of the school. Especially principals who display charismatic leadership behaviors gain the trust of teachers, contribute to their engagement, and, ultimately, increase teacher loyalty. The results of the present study have the potential to raise awareness, especially for policymakers, practitioners, and educational leadership scholars. Although the MoNE has recently taken significant steps to implement comprehensive reforms (MoNE, 2018), it is clear that policymakers and practitioners need to create better conditions for teacher motivation and increase the academic focus on uncovering the ways in which teachers' organizational loyalty is developed in schools. Moreover, improving the processes of supporting and evaluating the leadership potential of candidates during the training and

selection of educational leaders is crucial. Therefore, this study presents empirical data to policy makers in terms of the training and selection processes of educational leaders. Apart from the contribution to policy makers and practitioners, this study also made a unique contribution to the educational leadership literature by providing evidence that CL contributes to positive outcomes in reform periods, especially in eastern societies. Once again, this result supported the necessity of conducting leadership research on a cultural and contextual bases.

Limitations

The study has some limitations although it has made an important contribution to the educational leadership literature. The research data were collected from public school teachers in Türkiye. Therefore, generalizing the results of this research to other countries and private-sector educational organizations is inappropriate. Moreover, establishing causal relationships between the variables would be incorrect since we conducted this study with cross-sectional survey design. The study was conducted based on data from 872 teachers working in 77 schools. However, collecting data from more schools and teachers could have contributed much more. We suggest that future studies should be conducted on larger and diverse samples. Qualitative or mixed-method studies can contribute to elucidating the effect of CL on teacher attitudes and behaviors and school outcomes. We investigated the role of teacher engagement, and trust in leader as mediators in the relationship between charismatic leadership and teachers' organizational loyalty. However, the effects of other organizational mediating variables, such as organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and motivation, may also be examined. This research context only focused on teacher outcomes of charismatic leadership, which is an important limitation. We thus recommend that future research in this context be extended to include student outputs, which would provide notable contribution to the literature.

Declarations

Conflict of interest All authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical approval This study was carried out by obtaining the necessary permissions from the Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Kirikkale University of the Republic of Turkey (Session No: 02/Decision No: 07, date 18.02.2021).

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