

Do Paternalist Approaches of School Principals Kill Teachers' Autonomy?

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the relationship between school principals' paternalist leadership behaviours and teacher autonomy. The research is a descriptive study in which causal comparison and correlational method are used together. 292 teachers were determined by using disproportionate sampling method. In this research, the Paternalist Leadership Behaviours Scale developed by Saylık & Aydın (2020), and the Teacher Autonomy Scale developed by Çolak (2016) were used. As a result, it was revealed that school principals show moderate paternalist leadership behaviours according to teacher perceptions. It is concluded that there is a moderate and negative relationship between school principals' paternalist leadership approaches and teacher autonomy. As the paternalist leadership behaviours of school principals increase, teachers' autonomous behaviour decreases. Another result of the research is that there is a positive relationship between family atmosphere and benevolence dimensions and teacher autonomy.

Keywords: Paternalist Leadership, Teacher Autonomy, School Principals

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership that is as old as human history derives from natural tendencies of people such as living together. This social drive creates many interactional structures from small groups to large social associations. Interaction between people has enabled some individuals to be more dominant than others over time. Dominant individuals become leaders with the acceptance of other individuals in the group. Therefore, leadership can be evaluated as social culture in general, and the differentiation is a result of the individual's behaviour in the group and interaction with other individuals.

Paternalist leadership, which is a relatively new approach in leadership and management literature, is a common form of leadership in regions such as Pacific Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, especially in the context of intercultural leadership (Martinez, 2003; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006).

It is stated that the value of paternalist social culture in Turkey was significantly higher (Aycaan et al., 2000, 192-221). The distance between compassion and the power structure in the family of father and son together with collectivist and hierarchical structure in Turkey reflects to working life in time. This shapes the identity of the organization manager (Canbolat, Beraha, Çeliksoy, & Türker, 2010). It can be stated that this kind of informal structure and relationships are common especially in schools with its unique structure.

Paternalism, which is known to come from the word "pater" (peder), which is used in Latin as the meaning of the father (Mill, 2009). Paternalism is defined as the behaviour of limiting the freedom or autonomy of a person, organization for the good of the other person or group (Dworkin, 2002). According to Sinha (1990), paternalist leaders are like a traditionalist father who cares and encourages with an authoritarian distinctiveness. There is an authoritarian father figure who knows the needs and makes the best decisions for their children in a traditional father-child relationship (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008: 569).

Analysis of paternalism raises some controversial issues. It is a matter of debate that the paternal approach imposes some limitations on freedom and autonomy. In addition, the precise boundaries of the basic features of paternal actions, such as including some kind of interventionism, seeing the person exposed to the intervention as inadequate, and the problem of consent, seem to be open to debate.

It is truth that effective leaders raise the motivation and confidence of the employees. In such educational environments, the teacher can feel the freedom to choose their own teaching strategies, determine their personal development needs, and go towards professional development. Can school principals with the paternalist leadership qualities provide teachers the ability to decide on their own (Reich, 2002)?

Castle & Aichele (1994), and Barfield et. al. (2002) defined teacher autonomy as a continuous research process that promotes the learning autonomy of students in the best manner including principles, action, negotiation, understanding limitations, and collaborative support. Similarly, Aoki (2000) defines teacher autonomy as the responsibility and or freedom and capacity of a teacher to make choices regarding their teaching.

School employees, who have strong emotional ties within the school, communicate face to face, and are friendly enough to be in contact with each other, can also come together outside the school and engage in some social sharing. The collectivist culture, in which face-to-face, private and natural relationships are the determinants of the principals' paternal behaviours also evaluates all kinds of activities and approaches in the classroom as teachers' private areas. This makes it difficult for school principals to enter this field as they wish.

Teacher autonomy is a concept of how much authority teachers have in performing their profession and what roles they should take. Teacher autonomy includes teachers' ability to plan and implement instruction, participate in educational decisions, evaluate students' academic achievements independently, organize the classroom environment, prepare an environment in which they can use different methods and techniques, and plan activities inside and outside the classroom. Teachers must have sufficient professional autonomy to plan new activities freely (Ingersoll, 2007).

The ethical problem with paternalism was how a person see the right to behave with a paternalist approach to individuals under the protection of anyone, regardless of the situation. Therefore, paternalism is seen as a violation of individual rights such as autonomy and the right to choose (Blokland, 1997). According to Gray (2013, 633), paternalism is that it tries to protect people from themselves as if their safety is more important than their freedom. However, Mill (2009, 18) states that it is not acceptable to give up autonomy for the beneficence principle, therefore, individual paternalism should be absolutely avoided. As an organizational and managerial approach, paternalist leadership is seen to be considered as a positive value and functional approach in general, based on a deep cultural heritage in Asian societies.

Although the studies for determining the dimensions of paternalist leadership keep the concept limited to the dimensions of benevolence, morality and authoritarianism, it is stated that paternal approaches are essentially exploitative, have some limitations on autonomy, and have some kind of interventionism, finding inadequacy, mask authoritarianism with father compassion and love (Saylık & Aydın, 2020). This research is important in terms of revealing how the paternalist leadership approaches individuals' autonomy without getting stuck in the blind spots of the emic context and without succumbing to the eurocentric instinct of positivism.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, the method for the solution of the research problems is explained. Accordingly, the research model, population and sample, data collection tools, data analysis and interpretation are discussed.

Research model

This research is a descriptive study in which correlational method, and causal comparison method of quantitative research models are used together.

It is aimed to describe the relationship between two or more variables within the context of the subject being investigated (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). With correlational method, the relationship between teachers' views about school principals' paternalist leadership approaches and teachers' autonomy levels was examined. With causal comparison method, the relationships between variables, and estimations of possible reasons are examined (Balci, 2013, 260)

Population and sample

The research sample consists of 292 teachers working in primary, secondary and high schools in the city center of Siirt/ Turkey. Sampling was determined by the disproportionate cluster sampling, which is the sampling type in which all elements in the population have the chance to be selected equally.

The number of samples representing the population was calculated as 371 for 95% reliability level. Forms with missing and imprecise data, and unilateral and multilateral extreme values were excluded from the evaluation. As a result, analyses were made with 292 questionnaire forms.

Demographic profile of the participants

Percentage and frequency information regarding the distribution of teachers participating in the research according to independent variables (generation, residential area, seniority, branch and length of service at school) are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Personal Information Regarding Participants

Variables	Group	n	%
Generation	Generation X	25	8,6
	Generation Y	267	91,4
Residential area	Village-Town/ District	134	45,9
	City	158	54,1
Seniority	1-3 years	122	41,8
	4-6 years	68	23,3
	7-9 years	39	13,4
	10 years and over	63	21,6
Branch	Class teacher	93	31,8
	Branch teacher	199	68,2
Length of service at school	0-1 year	109	37,3
	2-3 years	110	37,7
	4 years and over	73	25,0
Total		292	100

As can be seen in Table 1, 25 (8.6%) of the participants are from X generation (those who were born between 1965-1979) and 267 (91.4%) from Y generation (those who were born between 1980-1999). It is observed that 134 (45.9%) participants spent their lives in relatively small residential areas such as villages, towns and districts, while 158 (54.1%) participants spent their lives in relatively larger residential areas such as cities and metropolitan areas. While 93 participants are working as class teachers, and 199 are working as branch teachers.

The distribution of participants to seniority groups is different from each other. While 122 people (41.8%) are in the first three years of their working life, others have at least 4 years and above. Considering the length of service at school, it is seen that the number of teachers working at the same school for 4 years or more are less than the other groups. The region where the sample was chosen is a living area where teacher mobility is experienced quite a lot.

Data collection tools

The data collection tool consists of three parts. In the first part, there is demographic information of the participants regarding various variables, in the second part, paternalist leadership behaviour levels are determined, and in the third part, teacher autonomy levels are determined. The data of the research were obtained by using the Paternalist Leadership Behaviour Scale developed by Saylık & Aydın (2020) and the Teacher Autonomy Scale developed by Çolak (2016).

Paternalist leadership behaviour scale: The Paternalist Leadership Behaviours Scale (Saylık & Aydın, 2020) is a measurement tool consisting of 30 items and 5 sub-dimensions, developed to measure the paternalist leadership behaviour of school principals. The family atmosphere measures the level of creating a family atmosphere among those working inside and outside the school. The high score that can be obtained from this sub-dimension, which consists of 4 items, indicates that school principals have a high level of behaviour towards creating a family atmosphere among those working inside and outside the school. The benevolence dimension measures the level of goodwill in school principals' managerial attitudes and behaviours. There are 9 items in this sub-dimension and the high score that can be obtained indicates that the level of benevolence is high in the paternalist behaviour of school principals. The authoritarianism dimension measures the level of authoritarian behaviour of school principals. The high score that can be obtained from this dimension, which consists of 4 items, indicates that school principals have high levels of authoritarian behaviour. The interventionism

dimension measures school principals' level of intervention. There are 5 items in this sub-dimension. The high score indicates that school principals have high levels of interventionist behaviour. Finding inadequacy measures the level of school principals' finding teachers inadequate. There are 8 items in this sub-dimension. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 30, and the highest score is 150. High score indicates that school principals have high level of paternalist behaviours. There are no negative statements on the scale and therefore no reverse scoring. The high alpha coefficients related to the sub-dimensions of the scale (Family atmosphere=. 82, Benevolence =. 90, Authoritarianism = .85, Intervention = .89 and Finding inadequacy= .92) show that the items in the sub-dimensions are consistent. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results also confirmed the validity of the scale.

Teacher autonomy scale: The other scale used in collecting research data is the Teacher Autonomy Scale (TAS). The scale was developed by Çolak (2016). The scale is a Likert-type scale that is answered within the range of 1-Strongly disagree and 5- Strongly agree. Scale consists of four sub-dimensions and a total of 17 items: teaching process autonomy (6 items), curriculum autonomy (5 items), professional development autonomy (3 items) and professional communication autonomy (3 items). There are no reverse scored items in the scale.

Factor loads of items .51 to .85 and item total correlations range between .47 and .74. The total variance rate explained by the sub-dimensions of the scale is 59.49%. The increase in the score obtained from each factor in the TAS or in which the total score is obtained, means the increase of the autonomy behaviours of the teachers. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the scale range between .78 and .85.

Data analysis

While deciding which of the parametric or non-parametric test methods to use in the analysis of the data, the normality and homogeneity of the item scores were examined. Data set scores arithmetic averages distribution were analyzed according to each variable. As a result of the analysis, the sample consisted of 292 ($n > 50$) people; mean, median, and mod values are close to each other in all dimensions. Q-Q plot forms close to 45 degree line. It was observed that the skewness coefficients were distributed between -1 and +1. When the Levene test results were examined according to independent variables for the homogeneity of the data, it was found that the p value was greater than .05 ($p > .05$) in all dimensions. Similarly, Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality analysis was found significant at the level of $p > .05$ according to the variables. In the light of all these results, it was decided to use parametric test methods in the analysis of research data.

Teachers' views on the research objectives were analyzed according to arithmetic mean, standard deviation and dependent coefficient of variation. In the research, t-test and anova analysis were used, and the relationship between paternalist leadership and teacher autonomy was examined by Pearson correlation coefficient.

FINDINGS

In this section, the views of teachers' about school principals' paternalist leadership behaviour and teacher autonomy, comparison of these views with the variables of residential area, generation, branch, seniority and length of service at school are included. Then, the results of the correlation analysis between the paternalist leadership behaviours of school principals and the autonomy behaviours of the teachers were included. In Table 2, descriptive statistics on the paternalist leadership behaviours of school principals and the autonomy levels of teachers according to the participants' opinions are presented.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Variables

Variable and Dimensions	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Paternalist Leadership	292	3.08	.40	.46	.94
Family Atmosphere	292	3,87	.89	-.97	.76
Benevolence	292	3,68	.87	-.62	-.19
Authoritarianism	292	3.28	.80	-.27	-.33
Interventionism	292	2.38	.83	.69	.24
Finding inadequacy	292	2.34	.87	.81	.47
Teacher Autonomy	292	3.96	.56	-.23	.94
Teaching Process Autonomy	292	4.11	.54	-.59	.20
Curriculum Autonomy	292	3.10	.96	-.91	.88
Professional Development Autonomy	292	3.54	.94	-.56	-.26
Professional Communication Autonomy	292	3.57	.97	-.38	-.68

As can be seen in Table 2, according to the opinions of teachers, it was found that school principals show paternalist behaviours at a medium level ($\bar{X} = 3.08$). According to the teachers participated in the research, school principals demonstrate behaviours regarding family atmosphere at highest level in all dimensions [($\bar{X} = 3,87$, $ss = .89$) Benevolence dimension ($\bar{X} = 3,68$, $ss = .87$). Authoritarianism ($X = 3.28$, $ss = .80$), Interventionism ($\bar{X} = 2.38$, $ss = .83$) and finding inadequacy ($\bar{X} = 2.34$, $ss = .87$)]. It has been observed that all sub-dimensions of teacher autonomy are perceived at a high level, the Teaching Process Autonomy dimension has the highest ($\bar{X} = 4.11$), and Professional Development Autonomy dimension has the lowest ($\bar{X} = 3.54$) mean.

The results of the t-test regarding whether the opinions of the teachers participating in the study differ according to the residential area, generation and branch variables are given in Table 3.

Table 3. T-Test Results on Residential area, Generation and Branch variables

Variable	Level	N	\bar{X}	SS	Sd	T	p	
Residential Area	Paternalist Leadership	Village/Town	134	3.01	.39	290	-2.47	.01*
		City	158	3.13	.40			
	Teacher Autonomy	Village/Town	134	3.94	.51	290	-.584	.55
		City	158	3.98	.59			
Generation	Paternalist Leadership	Generation X	25	3.27	.43	290	2.60	.01*
		Generation Y	267	3.05	.39			
	Teacher Autonomy	Generation X	25	3.79	.54	290	-1.60	.11
		Generation Y	267	3.97	.56			
Branch	Paternalist Leadership	Class Teacher	93	2.99	.38	290	-2.35	.02*
		Branch Teacher	199	3.11	.40			
	Teacher Autonomy	Undergraduate	93	3.99	.53	290	.716	.47
		Graduate	199	3.94	.56			

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

As seen in Table 3, there is significant difference between residential area and paternalist leadership behaviours [$t(290) = -2.47$; $p < .05$]. Accordingly, the participants who spent their lives mostly in relatively large settlements such as city and metropolitan stated that school principals show a higher level of paternalist behaviour.

Large metropolitans can have a more individualistic social life relationship and network, whereas small rural settlements such as villages and towns can have a more collectivist life. For this reason, it can be stated that the participants who have a relatively more individualistic lifestyle are

more sensitive in perceiving the paternalist approaches of school principals. On the other hand, There is no significant difference between levels of teacher autonomy according to the residential area [$t(290) = -.584$; $p < .05$]. Accordingly, teachers' rural or urban life are not determinants in the teacher autonomy.

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that there is significant difference between the teacher opinions related to the paternalist behaviour of school principals and the generation variable [$t(290) = 2.60$; $p < .05$].

According to this, generation X representatives expressed a more positive view regarding the level of the school principals' paternalist leadership behaviours compared to generation Y representatives. According to the participants' opinions related to the levels of teacher autonomy, no significant difference was determined according to the generation variable [$t(290) = -2.47$; $p < .05$].

When Table 3 is analyzed, it was seen that there is significant difference between the participants' opinions related to school principals' paternalist approaches in managerial process and branch variable [$t(290) = -2.35$; $p < .05$]. Accordingly, branch teachers (such as mathematics, science, social studies, Turkish, physics, history, geography teachers) compared to the primary school teachers who are working in primary schools (teachers starting from the 1st grade to the end of 4th grade) find school principals more paternalists. However, teachers' branches are not determinant at teacher autonomy levels [$t(290) = .716$; $p < .05$].

The results of anova whether the opinions of the teachers participating in the study differ according to the professional seniority, and length of service at school variables are given in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA Test Results of Professional Seniority and Length of Service at School Variables

Dimensions	Variables	Level (year)	n	\bar{X}	ss	Sum of squares	d	Mean of squares	F	p	Difference (Tukey)
Paternalist Leadership Behaviours	Length of service at school	0-1	109	3.03	.39	1.335	2	.668	4.23	.01	2-3
		2-3	110	3.16	.43	45.590	289	.158			
		4 and over	73	3.00	.35	46.925	291				
	Professional seniority	1-3	122	3.11	.40	.322	3	.107	.663	.57	-
		4-6	68	3.08	.37	46.603	288	.162			
		7-9	39	3.05	.48	46.925	291				
Teacher Autonomy	Length of service at school	10 and over	63	3.03	.37						
		0-1	109	4.06	.53	1.923	2	.962	3.156	.04	1-3
		2-3	110	3.93	.63	88.069	289	.305			
	Professional seniority	4 and over	73	3.86	.45	89.992	291				
		1-3	122	4.04	.59	1.197	3	.399	1.294	.28	-
		4-6	68	3.91	.48	88.795	288	.308			
		7-9	39	3.94	.52	89.992	291				
		10 and over	63	3.89	.57						

When Table 4 is analyzed, it can be seen that the paternalist leadership behaviours of school principals show a statistically significant difference according to the professional seniority variable.

When we compare the results of the Tukey test, it can be said that there is a significant difference between the ones who have 2-3 years service length at school and those who are 4 or more years in the total of the paternalist leadership behaviour scale ($p < .05$). Accordingly, those who have a 2-3 year of professional seniority perceive school principals more paternalist than those who are 4 years or more.

As seen in Table 4, the paternalist leadership behaviours of school principals do not demonstrate a statistically significant difference according to teachers' professional seniority variable. When the findings are analyzed, it can be seen that teachers with different professional seniority have similar views regarding the level of school principals' paternalist leadership behaviours. Considering that the high scores obtained from the scale represent a high level of paternalist behaviours, it can be said that as the time spent in the profession increases, the teachers consider the school principals less paternalists or those who are new in the profession consider the school principals more paternalists.

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that teacher autonomy shows a statistically significant difference according to the length of service at schools variable.

When we compare the Tukey test results, it is seen that there is a significant difference in the total of teacher autonomy scale ($p < .05$) between those who have a 0-1 years of professional seniority and those who are 4 years or more. Accordingly, teachers who have a 0-1 year of professional seniority think that they are more autonomous than teachers who have 4 years or more. Considering that the high scores obtained from the scale represent a high level of autonomy, it can be said that as the time spent by teachers in the same school increases, their perception of autonomy decreases or those who are new in the profession perceive themselves more autonomous.

As seen in Table 4, teachers' perception of autonomy does not show a statistically significant difference according to teachers' professional seniority variable. When the findings in the table are analyzed, it can be seen that teachers with different professional seniority have similar views on the level of autonomy. Considering that the low scores obtained from the scale represent low level of teacher autonomy, it is seen that the new teachers who have just started have the highest level of autonomy, and the ones with high professional experience have the lowest perception of autonomy.

Table 5. Correlation Values between Paternalist Leadership in Total and Sub-Dimensions; Teacher Autonomy in Total and Sub-Dimensions.

		Paternalist Leadership					
		Family Atmosphere	Benevolence	Authoritarianism	Interventionism	Finding inadequacy	Scale Total
Teacher Autonomy	Teaching process autonomy	r ,135*	,163*	-,100	-,211*	-,203**	-,283**
		p ,014	,003	,068	,000	,000	,001
	Curriculum autonomy	r ,125	,145**	-,145	-,229**	-,236**	-,250**
		p ,064	,003	,051	,000	,000	,000
	Professional development autonomy	r ,226**	,262**	-,144**	-,378**	-,441**	-,460**
		p ,000	,000	,009	,001	,000	,000
	Professional communication autonomy	r ,492**	,212**	-,517**	-,574**	-,576**	-,534**
		p ,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	Scale Total	r ,235*	,263**	-,410**	-,411**	-,403**	-,483**
		p ,016	,003	,007	,000	,000	,001

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

In the research, there is a moderate ($r = 0, -483, p < .05$) negative relationship between the autonomy of teachers and paternalist leadership approaches of school principals. Accordingly, the increase of paternalist leadership behaviours of school principals decreases teachers' level of autonomous behaviour. In the research, it is seen that there is a positive relationship between the school principals' family atmosphere and benevolence dimensions and teacher autonomy. However, there is a negative relationship between school principals' authoritarianism, interventionism and finding inadequacy in total and sub-dimensions of teacher autonomy.

DISCUSSION

In Turkey, instructional programs are regulated by commissions in the centralized structure of Ministry of National Education. It is known that students or parents who are in the main focus of education don't have any impact in this process. What is striking is that, apart from rarely getting opinions of teachers online in last few years, even teachers do not have an active role in determining the content of the curriculum. This makes the teacher only a transmitter of the course content and outcomes determined by the center.

As a result of the research, it was revealed that school principals show moderate paternalist behaviour according to teacher perceptions. In his research, Cerit (2013) found that the primary school principal's paternalist leadership behaviour was moderate. Arslan (2016) stated a similar finding based on the perceptions of teachers working in secondary and high schools.

Aycan et. al. (2000, 206) stated that Turkey's perception of paternalism is quite high in their comparative leadership and culture study among ten countries. Additionally, Aktaş & Can (2012), Çalışkan (2015), Alabak (2016), Demirer (2012), Erben (2004), Karşu Cesur (2015), Mutlu, (2010), Paşa et.al. (2001, 574), Samsun (2016), Sünneli Erden (2014), Şahin (2015), Türesin (2012), Uslu & Çam (2010), Wasti & Erdil (2007) revealed in their studies that the participants have stated their principals are highly paternalist leaders.

It is seen that traditional cultural value is clearly reflected in the forms of relationship (school principal-teacher, teacher-student and parent-student) among all stakeholders of the school. The teachers stated that school principals mostly show behaviours towards family atmosphere and benevolence dimensions. Karşu Cesur (2015), Saylık (2017), and Şahin (2015) also determined in their studies that the perceptions of the participants about the family atmosphere are high. Aycan (2006) states in the research of sorting the qualifications of paternalist leaders that they are trying to create a family atmosphere by giving advice to their employees in the workplace. Martinez (2003) in the research on Mexican managers also emphasizes that the effort to create a family atmosphere within the organization is a paternalist factor. On the other hand, Arslan (2016) revealed that school principals showed behaviours related to benevolence at a moderate level. Similarly, Türesin (2012) determined the level of paternalist behaviour perceptions of employees' leaders towards creating a family atmosphere in the workplace at medium level.

Teachers' perceptions of the principals' authoritarian paternalist behaviour are moderate. According to this, school principals are moderate to tolerate behaviours such as teachers' decision-making, criticism of the tasks given. They sometimes behave strictly to works which are not done in accordance with the rules. Arslan (2016) found that school principals showed their authoritarian behaviours at a medium level.

Teachers think that school principals "rarely" show behaviours related to interventionism and finding inadequacy. The principals see the right to decide on behalf of teachers. Erben (2004) states that the leader or manager can sometimes make and implement a number of decisions on behalf of employees without asking them because they have paternalist approach, and they think as a family with their employees. According to Harris (1985, 194), the person who acts as a paternalist does not respect the wishes and decisions of others, and sees the right to intervene in their lives.

It can be argued that a shift towards autocratic approach, country governments in macro level, and organizational management in micro level in the last few years has strengthened the authoritarian dimension of paternalist leadership. And this may diminish its moral dimension.

In the study, it was concluded that there was a significant difference between the paternalist behaviours of school principals and residential area, generation, branch and professional seniority.

However, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the paternalist leadership behaviours of the school principals and the professional seniority variable of the teachers.

In a study conducted by Çetin, Özalp & Akkaya (2019) in contrast to this result of the research, it was found that teachers with 0-5 years of seniority in the profession differ significantly from those who have paternalist leadership perceptions of 16 years or more.

When the results in this study related to teacher autonomy are examined, it is seen that teacher autonomy is perceived at a high level. Similarly, Garvin (2007) concluded that 86% of teachers feel a high level of autonomy in the research in the USA. Ingersoll (1997) states that an advantage of improving teacher autonomy has a potential effect to improve standards.

Çolak, Altınkurt & Yılmaz (2017) in their study in Turkey found out that teachers have autonomy behaviours above the average level. Additionally, it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between the professional seniority at schools and teacher autonomy.

In the study, it was concluded that teacher autonomy showed a significant difference according to the length of service at school variable. Teachers with less service time consider themselves more autonomous than teachers with more service time.

In another study supporting this result of the study (Çolak, 2016), it was concluded that teachers with 5 years and less seniority have more autonomy behaviours in the curriculum than teachers with 11-15 years seniority. In the research, Whitty (2006) found that teachers with more than 30 years of seniority experience a decrease in their autonomy. However, Forrester (2000) stated how experienced teachers maintained their autonomy unlikely less experienced teachers. Şakar (2013) explained that teachers with longer professional seniority are more autonomous than those who have just started working. Although Pearson & Hall (1993) stated that the length of the teaching experience was not related to teacher autonomy, the evidence of Jiang & Ma (2012) is in the opposite side. In the literature, there are studies indicating that there is a relationship between teachers' length of service and their autonomy levels, and there are research results advocating the opposite of this situation, as well.

It is concluded that there is a moderate and negative relationship between school principals' paternalist leadership approaches and teacher autonomy. Accordingly, as the paternalist leadership behaviours of school principals increase, the autonomous behaviour of teachers decreases. It can be stated that the positive and negative view of paternalism is based on reading from different cultural lenses, which is essentially related to the family structure and the attitude of parents in raising children (Saylık, 2017).

As a matter of fact, there are studies (Tuncer, 2005) showing traditional family values significantly predict that they play an intermediary role between the autonomy of the individual and their attitude towards paternalist leadership. According to Fisek (1991), Turkey continued protection of traditional family values in spite of economic, social and cultural change for many years.

Another result of the research is that school principals have a positive relationship between family atmosphere and benevolence dimensions and teacher autonomy dimensions. This result coincides with the research results of Weichun, May & Avolio (2004).

It is seen that paternalist leaders transform the working environment into a family environment, build individual relationships with their employees, optimize the environments that the groups will benefit, and join the groups outside of the working environment. This type of leadership creates an environment of trust that appreciates the employees and protects their rights (Weichun, May & Avolio, 2004). However, the research revealed that school principals had a negative relationship between authoritarianism, interventionism, and finding inadequacy, and teacher autonomy.

Based on the results of the research, the following recommendations can be made:

- In this study, the dimensions of cultural values and paternalist leadership are discussed. Research can be conducted on how paternalist leadership influences other school context factors (performance, commitment, motivation, success, school culture, school climate, image, etc.). In these studies, culture can be considered as a mediator variable.
- Although paternalist leadership is a concept that is perceived as positive alone, the increase of paternalist approach level negatively affects the autonomy which is a motivating factor for teachers. In this case, it can be ensured that school principals receive seminars and trainings that will enable them to manage paternalist leadership behaviours well.
- By expanding the sample of this research, regional differences may be revealed regarding the relationship between paternalist leadership and some other organizational variables.
- Paternalism is mostly common in collectivist cultures. At this point, mixed design research may be conducted to reach clear results in small residential areas.

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