



The Relationship between Social Justice Leadership and Sense of School Belonging

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the correlation between students' sense of school belonging and social justice leadership behaviours of school principals. This research is conducted in correlational screening model. Research data are collected by "Students' Sense of School Belonging Scale" and "Social Justice Leadership Scale". Data social obtained from scales, which were applied on 510 high school students, are analyzed in the research. In the research, it is determined that students' sense of school belonging is at moderate level and that school principals exhibit social leadership behaviours in moderate level. No significant difference is determined in students' sense of school belonging in terms of the gender of students, socio-economical level of school and grade level of students. While any significant difference was not found in terms of socio-economical status of the school in terms of the way that students' perceive the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals, a significant difference was determined in terms of the gender of students and grade levels. A positive significant correlation of moderate level was found between the way students' perceive the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals and students' sense of school belonging. It was determined that the way that students' perceive the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals predict their sense of school belonging and that it clarifies 17% of the variance related with their sense of school belonging.

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Keywords:

social justice leadership, school belonging, school principal, student

1. Introduction

In social sphere and education, there are inequalities between individuals due to various differences, such as race, socio-economical status, gender, sexual orientation, language, and physical and mental skills etc. With the increase of the awareness on such inequalities, it is prioritized to show an effort for a world order, in which there are no inequalities and which is fair for everyone. Schools are also expected to do their bit in this respect. Such situation caused traditional leadership approaches, which fail to pay sufficient amount of interest in inequalities in schools, to be criticized, and occurrence of various leadership models that focus on inequalities. One of these leadership models is social justice leadership (Ryan, 2006).

Today, social justice has become the focus of interest of many scientists and implementers engaged in the field of education, and in terms of leadership researches, many researches were conducted to conceptualize and practices related with the understanding of social justice leadership (Furman, 2012). However, it is criticized that case studies were conducted mostly and that certain inequalities were neglected therein by focusing on one or two types of inequities. Another criticism is that researches are mostly focused on the

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roles of school principals for establishing more fair schools and that the roles of school stakeholders are neglected (DeMatthews, 2014). Furthermore, the insufficiency of researches related with the type of effects that school principals' exhibiting social justice leadership behaviours may make on students may be considered as another issue, which must be criticized.

Although there is an extensive literature on the effect of teacher-student relations to student outputs, the effect of administrator-student relationship is not a subject that is researched frequently. In this context, sufficient amount of data is not available on the effect of administrator-student relationship to student outputs (Cemalcilar, 2010). However, the effect of the leadership of administrators on student outputs is being prioritized recently. One of the reasons for that is the fact that, it is believed that school administrators play a critical role in decreasing the difference between academic achievements of students from groups that are different on social and ethnical basis. Thus, there are evidences that prove the direct or indirect effects of school principals' leadership on student outputs (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). Furthermore, in a research that analyzed the effect of the leadership of school administrators and teachers on the student engagement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999), it was determined that the leadership of administrators had a significant effect on the student engagement, although it was weak, and that the leadership of teachers had no effect on the student engagement. In another research, it was determined that the social justice leadership of school principals had a positive moderate level correlation with the attitudes of students towards school and their engagement (Özdemir, 2017). In another research, it was determined that there was a significant correlation of moderate level between social justice leadership behaviours of school principals and student engagement (Büyükgoze, Şayır, Gülcemal & Kubilay, 2018). In this research, it was aimed to analyze the correlation between social justice leadership behaviours of school principals and students' sense of school belonging, and thus, to make a contribution to the literature in this field.

1.1. Social Justice Leadership

Social justice is a concept where social and cultural inequalities, which source from various differences, are criticized, such as racism, sexism, poverty and disability etc. People, who adopt the concept of social justice, believe that the fact that certain groups that are available in a society have a more disadvantageous livelihood opportunities compared to others make a negative effect on the members of such group, and they lay emphasis on impartiality, equality and justice (Berkovich, 2014). In this respect, social justice is an umbrella concept that contains several concepts, which may have various meanings in different nations, such as impartiality, affirmative action, equality of opportunity, inequality and diversity etc. Thus, it makes it difficult to define social justice explicitly (Furman, 2012). Also, one may not state that inequalities, which are observed in today's conditions, may continue to exist in the future, whether different inequalities shall be experienced in the future in a way that is different than the ones we experience today or that inequalities are/shall be experienced on same issues in every society. In this respect, we may not provide a single definition of social justice that suits to any circumstance. Therefore, the concept and understanding of social justice must be renewed continuously, and must be defined transiently on situational basis (Turhan, 2010).

There is a common understanding on the fact that social justice leaders are focused on equality and that they work towards establishing equality (McKenzie et al., 2008). Social justice leaders are leaders, who address the marginalizing conditions that existed in the past and that exist today in their leadership practices and visions, who support disadvantageous individuals and who endeavour to destroy marginalization (Theoharis, 2007). In this respect, they are considered as the architects of a social order, in which equal education and social opportunities are offered to all of the individuals (Jean-Marie, Normore & Brooks, 2009). Social justice leaders question school policies, cultures and expectations of the society, and they determine oppressive and unfair practices, and they replace unfair practices by ones that are suitable and fair culturally (DeMatthews, 2014, 2015). Social justice leaders aim to increase the success levels of all of the students (Capper & Young, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2008), and they have a critical perspective, and they create conditions required to create such critical consciousness in their personnel and students. Also, they believe that all of the students have the right to receive education with their peers in the same class, no matter what their educational requirements are, and they ensure that all of the students receive education in heterogeneous classes (McKenzie et al., 2008).

All of the stakeholders, particularly disadvantaged groups, must be involved in corporate practices and processes significantly in order to secure social justice (Ryan, 2006). In this respect, as social justice leaders, school principals perform inclusive practices for students from different races, sexual identities, languages, social classes, disabilities, religions and skills (Capper & Young, 2014). By performing inclusive and democratic practices, they endeavour to create a society that is comprised of individuals from different cultural groups (Furman, 2012). They lay emphasis on collaboration and solidarity (Theoharis, 2007). They believe that all of the stakeholders are important (DeMatthews, 2014). They realize social justice not by themselves, but in collaboration with school's stakeholders (Capper & Young, 2014). In this respect, they establish trust-based relations with the school's stakeholders and with different cultural groups mutually (Furman, 2012). Therefore, social justice leaders must have various characteristics, i.e. they must have effective communication skills, must have emotional awareness and must be capable of establishing long-term relations etc. (DeMatthews, 2014).

1.2. School Belonging

The sense of belonging, which sources from the need of people to get in contact with each other and to maintain such relationship (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), is a subject that is researched by educational researchers frequently. One of the reasons of giving importance to the sense of school belonging is that schools provide academic information and they also support the psychological development of students (Chiu, Chow, McBride, & Mol, 2016). School is defined as a social process, which ensures that students learn by establishing relationships with and by interacting with the persons around them, particularly with their teachers and classmates (S'anchez, Col'on & Esparza, 2005). In this respect, schools play a critical role in allowing individuals to establish social relations, and they provide unique opportunities that affect the sense of belonging and that ensure satisfaction of the need to establish relationships (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Cemalcilar, 2010). Furthermore, as long as the school is perceived as a society, various concepts related with the society, such as school belonging, must be discussed and analyzed. Since an individual's sense of belonging to a society and group shall produce the sense of protecting and improving such structure, it is critical for any student to feel like a part of the school so that he/she may protect and improve the school (Akar-Vural, Yılmaz-Özelçi, Çengel & Gömleksiz, 2013). Thus, the sense of school belonging is prioritized due to the increase in the rate of violence at schools (Ma, 2003). Also, the sense of belonging to the class is positively related to students' intrinsic motivation, task value (i.e. that they consider any academic events performed in the class as important and beneficial) and academic self-efficacy (Freeman, Anderman & Jensen, 2007). In another research (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007), it was concluded that the sense of school belonging was negatively related to depression, and that the same was positively related to self-efficacy. S'anchez et al. (2005) determined that school belonging predicted academic motivation, absence and academic effort, which was included to academic output classification. Lam, Chen, Zhang and Liang (2015) emphasized that school belonging was related to academic achievements. Thus, we may state that the sense of school belonging is prioritized in education due to its correlation with psychological and academic factors.

Belonging, which has a crucial role in internalization and transfer of cultural norms and values (Johnson, 2009), is defined in various ways in the field of education. For example, according to Hamm and Faircloth (2005), school belonging determines the students' perceptions, which source from their interpersonal relations with the individuals at school, with regards to their being loved, respected and valued by others. According to Booker (2004), it refers to the students' emotions with regards to them being important and respectable members of schools; and according to Goodenow and Grady (1993), it is a personal mood state with regards to a student's level of acceptance, being respected, being included and supported by their teachers and other persons in the school.

In the literature, there is a general consensus that the sense of belonging is a need and that positive results are obtained by meeting this need (Anderman, 2002). In case the sense of belonging is met, then individuals become happy, satisfied, joyful and peaceful (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Students, whose school belonging is high, believe that school more fun and beneficial (Gillen-O'Neal & Fuligni, 2013), and they have a high self-esteem, and their general health condition is good (Ma, 2003), and they perceive themselves as more competent and independent, and their internal motivation levels are higher, and they have a stronger sense of identity, and they are keen to conform to established norms and values, and to adopt the same. They have more positive attitudes towards the school, class, their teachers and peers. They have a higher potential to

love school, and they participate to school activities more and they are more committed to the school (Osterman, 2000). In case the sense of belonging is not met, student may endeavour to satisfy his/her need for belonging in a gang (Akar-Vural et al., 2013). Also, such individuals may come up with various psychological, academic and behavioural problems, such as jealousy, anxiety, stress, depression, loneliness, sadness, suicide, dissonance, neurotic behaviours (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), violence, low level of interest in the school, low level of success, leaving school (Osterman, 2000), and exhibiting illegal behaviours (Doğan, 2015) etc.

1.3. The Relationship between Social Justice Leadership and Sense of School Belonging

Social justice is about ensuring individuals who are disadvantaged in terms of race, social class, economic level, culture, gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc for developing their opportunities and possibilities and having equal opportunities and possibilities with other individuals (Chiu & Walker, 2007). Especially in schools, where students have characteristics of different race, religion, culture, socioeconomic level etc., school principals should adopt social justice leadership to offer educational opportunities with equal opportunities to all students and to implement inclusive practices for all students (Zembylas & Lasonos, 2017). Social justice leadership requires creating an environment where individuals respect each other's differences, care for each other, and include inclusive and democratic practices (Furman, 2012). Such an environment can increase students' belonging to school. As a matter of fact, belonging is to feel that the individual is connected to a community without being worried that she/he will be exposed to any exclusionary behavior due to gender, culture, race, language, sexual orientation and other differences (Gardiner, Tenuto & Yamamoto, 2015). Belonging of individuals increases in the school environment where individuals are accepted by others, their needs are given importance, respected, included and supported (Johnson, 2009). On the other hand, it is emphasized that an environment based on belonging should be created in order to ensure social justice in schools (Theoharis, 2009). So, one of the focal points of the actions of the school principals trying to provide social justice in the school is to make the student feel belonging to the school (Arar, 2015). In this case, it can be said that the relationship between social justice leadership and school belonging is theoretically stated. However, there is a deficiency in supporting this relationship with empirical evidence. This research contributes to the elimination of this deficiency by revealing the relationship between school principals 'social justice leadership behaviors and students' belonging to school with empirical evidence.

1.4. Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to analyze the correlation between students' sense of school belonging and social justice leadership behaviours of school principals. Thus, in this research, school belonging of students and the level of the perceptions of school principals towards social justice leadership behaviours were analyzed, whether these perceptions vary on the basis of certain variables (gender and grade level of students and socio-economic status of the school), whether there is a significant correlation between school belonging of students and social justice leadership behaviours of school principals, and whether social justice leadership behaviours of school principals is the predictor of school belonging of students.

2. Method

This research is in correlation screening model. In correlation screening model, it is analyzed whether two or more variables affect each other, and the correlation between variables is analyzed without making any interference to these variables in order to determine how they are affected from each other (Walliman, 2011), and the direction and degree of this correlation are determined (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). In this respect, the correlation between social justice leadership behaviours of school principals and school belonging of students were analyzed, and the direction and degree of this correlation were determined. Also, the prediction level of social justice leadership behaviours of school principals for school belonging of students were examined.

2.1. Participants

The population of the research is comprised of the students, who are studying in official secondary education institutions available within the borders of Central district, Adiyaman province. Cluster sampling method is used in the research. Population is divided into clusters in the cluster sampling method, and

sample is created out of the clusters selected randomly out of these clusters (Bhattacharjee, 2012). It may be required often to divide clusters into sub-clusters and to make selections out of these sub-clusters randomly. Therefore, there may be more than one stage in cluster sampling methods, and in this case, it may also be referred to as multistage cluster sampling method (Babbie, 2011). In this respect, high schools were grouped as low-moderate and high socio-economic levels, and two schools were selected randomly from each socio-economic level, and one class was selected randomly from each grade level in each school. Thus, total of 625 students, who were receiving education in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 in 6 schools, was subjected to the scales in the 1st semester of 2017-2018 academic year. The scales that were completed incompletely (more than 10%) and deficiently and the scales with extreme value were cleaned, and the data obtained from remaining 510 scales was analyzed. 294 of the students, who participated to the research, were female, and 216 of the same were male. 146 of the students were studying in 9th grade, 153 of the same were studying in 10th grade, 112 of the same were studying in 11th grade, 99 of the same were studying in 12th grade, and 134 of these students were studying in schools, in which socio-economic status was low, 221 of the same were studying in schools, in which socio-economic status was moderate, and 155 of the same were studying in schools, in which socio-economic status was high.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

In the research, "Students' Sense of School Belonging Scale" and "Social Justice Leadership Scale" were used as data collection tool. "Social Justice Leadership Scale" was developed by Özdemir and Kütüküt (2015), and it is a 5-point Likert scale comprised of three dimensions and 24 items in total. Support dimension of the scale is comprised of 12 items, and critical consciousness dimension was comprised of 9 items, and participation dimension was comprised of 3 items. The increase in scale scores indicates that the level of school principals' to exhibit social justice leadership behaviours has increased. While the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .94, it is determined as .92 in this study. "Sense of School Belonging Scale" was developed by Goodenow (1993), and this scale was adapted to Turkish by Sarı (2015) on students studying in the second level of primary education. Then, Sarı (2013) adapted the scale to high school students, and the "Sense of School Belonging Scale" that high school students were subjected is used in the research. Scale is a 5-point Likert scale that is comprised of 2 dimensions and 18 items in total, including rejection dimension (5 items) and belonging dimension (13 items). While the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .89, it is determined as .83 in this study. An increase in scores related with the rejection dimension of the scale indicates that the sense of belonging has decreased, and an increase in scores related with the belonging dimension indicates that the sense of belonging has increased. As the total score of the scale was being calculated, the scores related with the items of rejection dimension were reversed. Mean scores, which were used in assessment of the scales, were shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean scale scores used in scales for assessment of arithmetic averages

Scale	Dimension	Number of items	Not True at all	Not True	I am Hesitant	True	Completely True
Sense of school belonging scale	Rejection dimension	5	5-9	9.1-13	13.1-17	17.1-21	21.1-25
	Belonging dimension	13	13-23.4	23.5-33.8	33.9-44.2	44.3-54.6	54.7-65
	Total	18	18-32.4	32.5-46.8	46.9-61.2	61.3-75.6	75.7-90
Scale	Dimension	Number of items	I disagree	I agree very little	I agree a little	I mostly agree	I totally agree

Social justice leadership scale	Support dimension	12	12-21.6	21.7-31.2	31.3-40.8	40.9-50.4	50.5-60
	Critical consciousness dimension	9	9-16.2	16.3-23.4	23.5-30.6	30.7-37.8	37.9-45
	Participation dimension	3	3-5.4	5.5-7.8	7.9-10.2	10.3-12.6	12.7-15
	Total	24	24-43.2	43.3-62.4	62.5-81.6	81.7-100.8	100.9-120

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The scales that are used in the research were applied by the researcher by visiting schools in 2017-2018 academic year. The scales that consisted of extreme data (32 units) as well as incomplete and defective scales (83 units), were removed from the data set. Since the skewness values of data (between $-.367$ and 1.158) were below 3 and Kurtosis values (between $-.980$ and $.376$) were below 10, it was considered that data distributed normally (Kline, 2011). Also, the fact that the bivariate correlation value between independent variables is below $.80$ (between $.346$ and $.737$), that the tolerance value is above $.20$ (between $.438$ and $.844$), that the VIF value is below 10 (between 1.185 and 2.285) and that the CI value is below 30 (between 5.114 and 14.359), it may indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem between independent variables (Büyüköztürk, 2012). Data are analyzed by using descriptive statistical analyzes, t-test, one-way analysis of variance, correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis. The r value of the correlation and regression analysis was interpreted as for values $.00$ and $.29$ low, $.30$ and $.69$ average, and $.70$ high (Büyüköztürk, 2012).

3. Results

In Table 2, you may find the level of the students' perception of the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals and of their school belonging.

Table2. Students' perception of social justice leadership and school belonging

Dimensions of the scales	N	Min	Max	\bar{X}	SS	Level
Rejection dimension	510	5.00	22.00	12.70	3.88	Not true
Belonging dimension	510	19.00	65.00	43.76	9.63	I am Hesitant
Sense of school belonging scale	510	31.00	89.00	61.06	12.07	I am Hesitant
Support dimension	510	12.00	60.00	38.24	10.02	I agree a little
Critical consciousness dimension	510	9.00	45.00	30.10	9.06	I agree a little
Participation dimension	510	3.00	15.00	6.31	3.35	I agree very little
Social justice leadership scale	510	31.34	118.00	74.64	19.35	I agree a little

According to Table 2, the students' perception of the rejection dimension of the sense of school belonging scale was categorized under the option of "Not True", and the students' perception in the belonging dimension and the sense of school belonging was categorized under the option of "I am Hesitant". The students' perception in the entire social justice leadership scale and in the dimensions of support and critical consciousness were categorized as "I agree a little", and their perception of the participation dimension was categorized under the option of "I agree very little".

In Table 3, you may find the results of the analysis made on students' perception of school principals' social justice leadership behaviours and their school belonging by gender.

Table 3. Social justice leadership and school belonging by gender

Dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Rejection dimension	Female	294	12.53	3.80	508	-1.152	.250
	Male	216	12.93	3.98			
Belonging dimension	Female	294	44.19	9.73	508	1.160	.247
	Male	216	43.19	9.48			
Sense of school	Female	294	61.65	11.90	508	1.296	.195

belonging scale	Male	216	60.25	12.28			
Support dimension	Female	294	39.91	9.82	508	4.476	.000
	Male	216	35.96	9.86			
Critical consciousness dimension	Female	294	31.36	9.32	487.024	3.757	.000
	Male	216	28.39	8.41			
Participation dimension	Female	294	6.45	3.34	508	1.169	.243
	Male	216	6.10	3.35			
Social justice leadership scale	Female	294	77.72	19.60	481.044	4.307	.000
	Male	216	70.46	18.21			

Note. Critical consciousness (Levene=7.096, $p=.008$), social justice (Levene=4.631, $p=.032$).

According to the findings in Table 3, there were significant differences in the students' perception of the social justice leadership scale in its entirety ($t(481.044)=4.307$, $p<.05$), and of the dimensions of support ($t(508)=4.476$, $p<.05$) and critical consciousness ($t(487.024)=3.757$, $p<.05$). This significances were in favour of the female students.

In Table 4, you may find results of the analysis made on students' perception of school principals' social justice leadership behaviours and their school belonging in terms of socio-economic status of the school.

Table 4. Social justice leadership and school belonging in terms of socio-economic status of the school

Dimensions	Socio-economic Status	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	F	P	Difference
Rejection dimension	Low	134	13.19	4.06	2	1.488	.227	
	Moderate	221	12.59	3.84	507			
	High	155	12.45	3.77	509			
	Total	510	12.70	3.88				
Belonging dimension	Low	134	42.20	9.67	2	2.531	.081	
	Moderate	221	44.11	9.65	507			
	High	155	44.62	9.47	509			
	Total	510	43.76	9.63				
Sense of school belonging scale	Low	134	59.01	12.19	2	2.766	.064	
	Moderate	221	61.52	12.01	507			
	High	155	62.17	11.91	509			
	Total	510	61.06	12.07				
Support dimension	Low	134	36.91	10.11	2	3.503	.031	Low-High
	Moderate	221	37.87	9.99	507			
	High	155	39.90	9.82	509			
	Total	510	38.24	10.02				
Critical consciousness dimension	Low	134	31.31	8.57	2	4.591	.011	Low-Moderate
	Moderate	221	28.73	8.98	507			
	High	155	31.02	9.37	509			
	Total	510	30.10	9.06				
Participation dimension	Low	134	5.13	2.65	2	23.240	.000	Low-Moderate, Moderate-High
	Moderate	221	7.34	3.46	2			
	High	155	5.85	3.30	486.989			
	Total	510	6.31	3.35				
Social justice leadership scale	Low	134	73.34	18.48	2	1.388	.250	
	Moderate	221	73.94	19.63	507			
	High	155	76.77	19.62	509			
	Total	510	74.64	19.35				

Not: Participation (Levene= 5.414, $p=.005$)

According to Table 4, there were significant differences in students' perception of the dimensions of social justice leadership in terms of socio-economic status of the school, i.e. support ($F(2, 507)= 3.503, p<.05$), critical consciousness ($F(2, 507)= 4.591, p<.05$) and participation ($Brown-Forsythe (2, 486.989)= 23.240, p<.05$). According to the Scheffe test, which was performed for the support dimension of social justice leadership, there was a significant difference between low socio-economic status ($\bar{X}=36.91$) and high socio-economic status ($\bar{X}=39.90$) in favour of high socio-economic status, and in the critical consciousness dimension, there was a significant difference between low socio-economic status ($\bar{X}=31.31$) and moderate socio-economic status ($\bar{X}=28.73$) in favour of low socio-economic status. According to the Dunnett's C test, which was performed for the participation dimension of social justice leadership, there was a significant difference between moderate socio-economic status ($\bar{X}=7.34$) and low socio-economic status ($\bar{X}=5.13$) and high socio-economic status ($\bar{X}=5.85$) in favour of moderate socio-economic status.

In Table 5, you may find results of the analysis made on students' perception of school principals' social justice leadership behaviours and their school belonging in terms of grade levels of students.

Table 5. Social justice leadership and school belonging in terms of grade levels of students

Dimensions	Grade Level	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	F	P	Difference
Rejection dimension	9 th Grade	146	13.09	4.00				
	10 th Grade	153	12.41	3.72	3			
	11 th Grade	112	12.34	3.92	506	1.316	.268	
	12 th Grade	99	13.01	3.88	509			
	Total	510	12.70	3.88				
Belonging dimension	9 th Grade	146	44.24	9.27				
	10 th Grade	153	43.88	10.43	3			
	11 th Grade	112	43.67	9.60	506	.339	.797	
	12 th Grade	99	42.99	8.99	509			
	Total	510	43.76	9.63				
Sense of school belonging scale	9 th Grade	146	61.15	11.64				
	10 th Grade	153	61.48	13.03	3			
	11 th Grade	112	61.33	11.77	506	.345	.793	
	12 th Grade	99	59.98	11.59	509			
	Total	510	61.06	12.07				
Support dimension	9 th Grade	146	40.12	9.70				
	10 th Grade	153	38.45	9.81	3			
	11 th Grade	112	39.31	9.57	506	8.716	.000	9-12, 10-12, 11-12
	12 th Grade	99	33.91	10.18	509			
	Total	510	38.24	10.02				
Critical consciousness dimension	9 th Grade	146	31.59	8.37				
	10 th Grade	153	29.66	8.93	3			
	11 th Grade	112	31.26	9.30	506	5.430	.001	9-12, 11-12
	12 th Grade	99	27.26	9.35	509			
	Total	510	30.10	9.06				
Participation dimension	9 th Grade	146	6.20	3.27				
	10 th Grade	153	6.58	3.38	3			
	11 th Grade	112	6.69	3.72	470.964	2.347	.072	
	12 th Grade	99	5.61	2.86				
	Total	510	6.31	3.35				
Social justice leadership scale	9 th Grade	146	77.92	18.05				
	10 th Grade	153	74.70	18.98	3			
	11 th Grade	112	77.26	19.40	506	7.831	.000	9-12, 10-12, 11-12
	12 th Grade	99	66.78	19.75	509			
	Total	510	74.64	19.35				

Note. Participation (Levene= 3.598, p=.014)

According to Table 5, there were significant differences in students' perception of the social justice leadership scale in its entirety ($F(3, 506) = 7.831, p < .05$) and of the dimensions of support ($F(3, 506) = 8.716, p < .05$) and critical consciousness ($F(3, 506) = 5.430, p < .05$) in terms of grade levels of students. According to the Scheffe test, which was performed for the social justice leadership scale in its entirety, there was a significant difference between students of 12th Grade ($\bar{X} = 66.78$) and 9th Grade ($\bar{X} = 77.92$), 10th Grade ($\bar{X} = 74.70$) and 11th Grade ($\bar{X} = 77.26$) against students of 12th grade; in support dimension, there was a significant difference between students of 12th Grade ($\bar{X} = 33.91$) and 9th Grade ($\bar{X} = 40.12$), 10th Grade ($\bar{X} = 38.45$) and 11th Grade ($\bar{X} = 39.31$) against students of 12th grade; in critical consciousness dimension, there was a significant difference between students of 12th Grade ($\bar{X} = 27.26$) and 9th Grade ($\bar{X} = 31.59$) and 11th Grade ($\bar{X} = 31.26$) against students of 12th grade.

In Table 6, you may find results of the analysis made on the correlation between students' perception of school principals' social justice leadership behaviours and their school belonging.

Table 6. Correlation analysis results of variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rejection dimension	1						
Belonging dimension	-.506**	1					
Sense of belonging scale	-.725**	.961**	1				
Support dimension	-.191**	.413**	.391**	1			
Critical consciousness dimension	-.173**	.401**	.376**	.737**	1		
Participation dimension	-.049	.194**	.171**	.384**	.346**	1	
Social justice leadership scale	-.189**	.435**	.408**	.930**	.910**	.534**	1

According to Table 6, there was a significant negative correlation of low level between the rejection dimension and support ($r = -.191, p < .01$) and critical consciousness ($r = -.173, p < .01$), and there was no significant correlation with the participation dimension ($p > .05$). There was a significant positive correlation of moderate level between the belonging dimension and support ($r = .413, p < .01$) and critical consciousness ($r = .401, p < .01$), and there was a significant positive correlation of low level with the participation dimension ($r = .194, p < .01$). There was a significant positive correlation of moderate level between the sense of school belonging and social justice leadership behaviours of school principals ($r = .408, p < .01$).

In Table 7, you may find results of the analysis made on the prediction of students' perception of the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals in terms of their perception of school belonging.

Table 7. Multiple linear regression analysis results

Dependent variable	Variables	B	Standard Error B	β	t	p
Rejection dimension	Stable	15.627	.681		22.932	.000
	Support	-.058	.025	-.150	-2.275	.023
	Critical Consciousness	-.032	.028	-.074	-1.142	.254
	Participation	.039	.055	.034	.717	.474
		R = .200 R ² = .040 F(3.506) = 6.992 p = .000				
Belonging dimension	Stable	27.465	1.553		17.684	.000
	Support	.239	.058	.248	4.107	.000
	Critical Consciousness	.222	.063	.209	3.513	.000
	Participation	.077	.125	.027	.617	.538
		R = .438 R ² = .191 F(3.506) = 39.942 p = .000				
Sense of belonging scale	Stable	41.838	1.972		21.216	.000
	Support	.297	.074	.246	4.021	.000
	Critical Consciousness	.254	.080	.191	3.161	.002
	Participation	.038	.159	.010	.238	.812

R= .412	$R^2 = .170$	$F(3,506)= 34.463$	$p= .000$
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According to Table 7, in consideration of the three dimensions of social justice leadership, there was a significant correlation of low level with rejection dimension ($R=.200$, $R^2 = .040$, $p < .01$), there was a significant correlation of moderate level with belonging dimension ($R=.438$, $R^2 = .191$, $p < .01$) and the sense of school belonging ($R=.412$, $R^2 = .170$, $p < .01$). Social justice scale with its three dimensions predicted the dimensions of rejection, belonging, and sense of school belonging significantly. By the three dimensions of social justice leadership, 4% of total variance correlated with rejection dimension was explained; approximately 19% of the total variance correlated with belonging dimension was explained; and 17% of the total variance correlated with the sense of school belonging was explained. While only support dimension was a significant predictor of rejection dimension, support and critical consciousness dimensions were a significant predictor of belonging dimension and the sense of school belonging.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the research, it was detected that students' perception of the sense of school belonging scale was categorized as "I am Hesitant" in its entirety. Accordingly, it may be concluded that students' school belonging is at moderate level. This finding that was obtained may indicate that students' need for school belonging is not satisfied sufficiently. It is believed that emotional requirements of students are satisfied out of the class or school, and required level of emphasis is not laid on the sense of belonging (Sánchez, Colón & Esparza, 2005). However, it is determined that it is important to satisfy the need for belonging in schools at any age and in any level of education (Osterman, 2000). In the researches conducted in the past, it may be observed that different results were obtained in relation with school belonging of high school students. For example, school belonging levels of high school students was found as high by Aşlamacı and Eker (2016) and Altınsoy and Karakaya-Özyer (2018), while Sarı (2013) determined that the same was above average. Moreover, in a qualitative research conducted on vocational high schools (Ulusoy & Erkuş, 2017), it was observed that the number of students, who feel that they belong to the school and who do not feel like that, were close to each other. When social relations in schools predict students' school belonging was considered (Cemalcılar, 2010), this difference in the literature may be correlated with the character of the social relations in the schools of individuals included to the sample group.

The level of the perception of students' on school principals' exhibiting social justice leadership behaviours was categorized as "I agree a little". According to this finding, it may be concluded that school principals exhibit social justice leadership behaviours at a moderate level. This finding is consistent with the findings obtained in other researches (Büyükgöze et al., 2018; Özdemir, 2017). Accordingly, it may be concluded that school principals do not exhibit social justice leadership behaviours at a sufficient level. School principals may across to various impeding factors that source internally and externally as they perform social justice leadership practices, such as impeding attitudes and beliefs of the personnel, privileged and narrow minded expectations of parents, bureaucratic practices, lack of funds and laws and regulations etc. (Theoharis, 2007). In Turkey, legal regulations are determined as the factors that prevent social support studies the most. Other factors are not being able to obtain sufficient level of information of disadvantaged students, unsuitability of the physical facilities of the school, social insensitivity and restricted economic opportunities in schools (Tomul, 2009).

In the research, no significant difference was found in the school belonging of students by gender. This finding is consistent with certain researches (Sánchez et al., 2005; Sarı, 2013). However, Aşlamacı and Eker (2016) determined that school belonging of female students was higher than male students. Babakhani (2014) concluded that the sense of school belonging of males was higher than female students. The inconsistency in the literature may make us comment that there is a need to make more number of researches on whether gender is an effective variable on belonging or not.

Another finding that was obtained from the research was that there is a significant difference in favour of female students in the perception of students' with regards to the social justice leadership of school principals by students' gender. When findings are analyzed in terms of dimensions, it may be observed that there was a significant difference in favour of female students in terms of the dimensions of "support" and "critical consciousness". This situation may indicate that school principals are more understanding, interested and supportive in female students. The fact that female students are more satisfied in their

relations with school administration in comparison to male students may support this idea. Furthermore, this finding may be correlated with the study of Özdemir (2012) which addresses that female students and male students perceive the school. Female students perceive schools more like a place for protection-development and a home, but male students perceive schools as a place of oppression.

In the research, it was determined that students' school belonging do not differ in terms of the socio-economic status of the school. This finding indicated that the sense of school belonging of students studying at schools, which have different socio-economic statuses, is similar. Likewise, Cemalcilar (2010) obtained the same finding in secondary school students. However, according to Sarı (2013), who analyzed the school belonging of high school students, there was a significant difference between schools, in which socio-economic status was low, and schools, in which socio-economic status was moderate and high, against schools, in which socio-economic status was low. According to Özgök (2013), who studied school belonging of secondary school students, there was a significant difference between schools, in which socio-economic status was high, and schools, in which socio-economic status was moderate and low, in favour of schools, in which socio-economic status was high. This inconsistency in the literature may indicate that, it is not clarified whether the socio-economic status of a school may be considered as an effective variable on school belonging of students.

In the research, it was determined that the perceptions of students, who were studying in schools with different socio-economic statuses, with regards to the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals were similar. However, it must be considered that, in support dimension of social justice leadership, there was a significant difference between schools of low socio-economic status and schools of high socio-economic status in favour of the schools of high socio-economic status; in critical consciousness dimension, that there was a significant difference between schools of low socio-economic status and schools of moderate socio-economic status in favour of schools of low socio-economic status; and in participation dimension of social justice leadership, that there was a significant difference between schools of moderate socio-economic status and schools of low socio-economic status and schools of high socio-economic status in favour of schools of moderate socio-economic status. This situation may indicate that social justice leadership practices are different in schools with different socio-economic statuses. The difference between schools in terms of social justice leadership practices (Slater, Potter, Torres & Briceno, 2014) may source from the fact that individual, social, politic and organizational variables that affect schools and societies are different from each other (DeMatthews, 2015).

According to this research, there was no significant difference in students' perception of school belonging in terms of grade levels of students. However, according to the research conducted by Sarı (2013), 9th grade students had the sense of school belonging more than 10th and 11th grade students. Furthermore, according to Aşlamacı and Eker (2016), there was a significant difference between the school belonging levels of students studying in 12th grade and school belonging levels of students studying in 10th and 11th grade in favour of 12th grade students. This difference in the literature may source from the factors that affect the sense of belonging of students from different grade levels. For example, Ma (2003) determined that the sense of belonging and self-esteems of 6th and 8th grade students were different. When the variables that affect the sense of belonging were analyzed, it was determined that self-esteems of students were a strong predictor of their sense of belonging. In this respect, examination of the variables, which affect school belonging of students, at grade level comparatively may clarify such inconsistency in the literature.

Another finding that was obtained from the research is that there was a significant difference between 12th grade students and 9th, 10th and 11th grade students, against students studying in 12th grade, in terms of students' perception of the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals in terms of the grade level of students. According to this finding, 12th grade students believed that school principals exhibit social justice leadership behaviours less in comparison to students studying in other grade levels. When one considers that social justice leaders exhibit relative behaviours towards students and that they care about them (Slater et al., 2014), this finding may indicate that school principals are less caring and supportive towards 12th grade students. These students may be considered as graduates since it will be their last academic year in their schools.

In this research, it was found a positive correlation of moderate level between students' perception of the social justice leadership behaviours of school principals and their school belonging. Students' perception of the social justice leadership of school principals correspond to approximately 17% of the variance related with their school belonging. This finding may indicate that, students may feel that they belong to the school more, in case school principals exhibit social justice leadership behaviours. In the literature, although it is emphasized that teachers and peer groups are important in general in the development of the sense of school belonging, it was determined that students' value their relations with their administrators, and that their social interactions with their administrators affect their feelings towards the school (Cemalcilar, 2010). On the other hand, according to Ma (2003), when compared with teachers, administrators also make a great impact to affect the sense of belonging of students. Although school administrators do not establish one-on-one relations with students, the affect of administrators must be considered in development of school belonging since they affect the atmosphere of the school as the final legal regulators and decision-makers of the school (Cemalcilar, 2010). Thus, it was determined that the climate of the school is related with the leadership behaviours of school principals (Şentürk & Saġnak, 2012), and that the sense of belonging may develop in a school climate, in which students are treated fairly and which makes students feel safe (Ma, 2003). School principals, who exhibit social justice leadership behaviours, exhibit caring behaviours towards students and they care about students (Slater et al., 2014), and they aim to create a warm and reliable climate, and an equal and fair environment in schools (Theoharis, 2007). In this context, it may be stated that it would be expected for the school belonging of students to increase as a result of realization of social justice leadership behaviours by school principals.

In the research, it was concluded that the school belonging of students shall increase, in case school principals exhibit social justice leadership behaviours. In this context, school principals may exhibit sensitive behaviours as social justice leaders; they may treat students respectfully. They may include students to decision-making processes by laying emphasis on collaboration and solidarity. They may endeavour to meet the requirements of students, and they may ensure that students are relaxed and happy in the school; and they may try to adopt that education is beneficial for them. They may spare time to listen to and discuss the ideas of students in order to show that they care about students. They may develop new ways to include families to education by laying emphasis on the families of students. By organizing various events and activities in the school, in which students may improve their skills (sports activities and music activities etc.), they may ensure that students adopt the school and that they perceive the school as a place, in which they may improve their skills. Furthermore, it is advised to school principals to treat students as individuals, to lay emphasis on their emotions, to ignore the mistakes they made in the past, and to not to judge them by their looks and place they come from (Slater et al., 2014).

Social justice leaders are the leaders, who focus on any inequalities that disadvantageous groups experience in their lives, design and implement the policies that shall eliminate such inequalities (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014). Inequalities that are in question for disadvantageous groups may bring a negative perspective to the school community, and may decrease the sense of belonging (Booker, 2004). For example, students coming from different races and ethnic groups may come across to negative templates due to their social identities. Therefore, such persons may be trivialized in social groups. In this case, concerns of a group may increase in connection with negative intellectual template stereotypes that target them, and individuals, who are among the members of such labelled groups, may have concerns that they do not belong to such environments. Such situation may make negative effects on the school belonging and performance of students included to the group (Murphy & Zirkel, 2015). Thus, the sense of school belonging is analyzed as one of the reasons of the difference between the achievements of minority and majority students (Booker, 2006). Therefore, one may analyze the effect that social justice leadership behaviours, which are exhibited by school principals, make on the school belonging of disadvantageous students. Furthermore, one may make a contribution to the literature in terms of the effect of social justice leadership on students by researching the correlation between social justice leadership justice of school principals and students' burnout, critical thinking competencies and problem solving competencies etc. Also, one may analyze in detail the effect of social justice leadership behaviours exhibited by school principals by conducting qualitative researches.

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