



## INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHER MOTIVATION AND PROFESSIONALISM WITH AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS<sup>i</sup>

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### Abstract:

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators and teacher professionalism and motivation. In the quantitative research, the relational survey model was used. The population of the study consists of 1040 teachers working in 44 primary schools in Kayapınar, Diyarbakır during the 2018-2019 academic year. Data collection tools were the "Authentic Leadership Scale", "Teacher Professionalism Scale", and "The Work Motivation Scale". Descriptive statistics, correlation, and path analysis of variables were made. SPSS 21 and AMOS 22 package programs were used in the analysis of the research. As a result of the research, it was determined that the school administrators were moderate according to the perceptions of the teachers who participated in the research on authentic leadership behaviour. In addition, the professionalism and motivation levels of teachers were found to be at good level. As a result of the correlation analysis, a positive and medium level between authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators and teacher motivation and a positive and low-level relationship was found between authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators and teacher professionalism. The relationship between teacher professionalism and teacher motivation was found to be positive and moderate. As a result of the path analysis, as the teachers' perceptions about authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators become positive, both the motivations and professional perceptions of teachers increase. In addition, it was found that teacher

<sup>i</sup> This study was supported by Siirt University Scientific Research Project Coordination Unit (BAP) during the 2018-2020 academic years.

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professionalism had a stronger predictive effect on teacher motivation than authentic leadership.

**Keywords:** authentic leadership, teacher motivation, teacher professionalism, primary school

## 1. Introduction

Globalization paved the way for very rapid and complex changes in economic, political, cultural, and social life. This general change not only causes the complex structure of educational institutions but also brings in different personality traits for teachers. High levels of motivation and professional professionalism play an important role in the relationship between teachers with different personality traits and success in their profession. The high level of motivation and occupational professionalism among teachers has a unifying effect on teachers. This unifying effect is also seen in the style of authentic leadership.

Administrators who are leaders of the school have a great influence on the behavior, perceptions, and comments of employees in the workplace (Djibo, Desiderio & Price, 2010). The school administrator behaviors to be displayed by the school principal are driven by moral values which not only enhance trust in themselves as well as the school but also ensure that a healthy working environment is established. School administrators are the main figures with the strongest influence and potential who can turn schools into successful institutions. Another variable that has a significant impact on the academic success of schools is teachers. Teachers also expect school administrators to exhibit effective leadership behaviors in today's era of change. In this context, authentic leadership is one of the leadership styles that have been the focus of researchers in recent years (Okçu & Anık, 2017). Avolio, Luthans & Walumbwa (2004, 4) defined authentic leaders as *“those individuals who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on the moral character”*.

The authentic leadership model stood out with the reliability of leadership becoming a subject of discussion again. In this sense, the key roles of authentic leaders in creating confidence are crucial in terms of their deep desires to reach their goal and their self-worth. It is also important that these leaders undertake a role with the organizational climate they created and that all members of the organization exhibit a steadfast attitude towards meeting their needs. Today, the importance given to personal interests and the increasing need for leaders we can trust, the feeling of uncertainty and insecurity have directed us to leaders who have the characteristics of hope, optimism, self-awareness, and flexibility (Kesken & Ayyıldız, 2008). In this sense, there is a need for leaders who create the basis of positive leadership styles and who are honest (Kesken & Ünnü, 2011). The leaders in organizations must be authentic to be effective and successful in the long

term. Since ancient times, philosophers, religious leaders, and thinkers have pointed out that if effective governance is desired, leaders should focus on both a trustworthy structure and ethical values.

Individuals in organizations have different desires and needs. Administrators are expected to make use of such differences to motivate employees of their organization. Administrators are those who are expected to ensure that the mental, physical and spiritual power of employees stays focused on the goals of the organization. Individual traits bring in different needs. The administrator should motivate employees correctly and rationally for the organization. There are two basic types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. While intrinsic motivation is related to the intrinsic dynamics of the individual, extrinsic motivation depends on factors other than individual factors, such as wages, pleasant treatment of the individual, seniority, and promotion. While some employees are motivated by intrinsic stimuli and some others are motivated by extrinsic stimuli, both types of motivation are expected to be more effective on employees (řahin, 2016, 38). Intrinsic motivation can be defined as the individual's motivation to behave under the influence of a person's own internal factors rather than the effects of some external factors while the person exhibits a certain type of behaviour. An internally motivated individual does not seek urges, pressures, or rewards, instead, is motivated to act with an inner impulse because s/he enjoys or likes it or wants to challenge (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 56). Extrinsic motivation is composed of environmental motives such as benefits/gains or rewards that are important for the individual as driving forces for the individual to act. In other words, the person acting with extrinsic motives tends to have externally supported motives rather than intrinsic motives. There may be tools such as external support, money, facilities, rewards, approval, etc. External motives necessarily require an incentive because it is an autonomic result or desire of the person. While the material gain is a matter of priority for some individuals, spiritual gain is priority matter of priority for some individuals (Keser, 2019, 15). The increasing complexity of organizational life makes it necessary for employees to act professionally, not amateurishly (Altınkurt & Yılmaz, 2014). It is one of the indicators of professionalism to perform a job most properly and carefully, but with the least error. One of the indicators of professionalism is to understand and apply the work to the smallest details and to reveal a work that exceeds expectations by knowing all its details (Altınkurt & Yılmaz, 2014; Adıgüzel, Tanrıverdi, & Sönmez Özkan, 2011). In this sense, professionalism is internalized beliefs about professional qualifications, attitudes, interactions, and behaviors (Swisher & Page, 2005). Occupational professionalism, on the other hand, is the dimension of professionalism reaching an organizational behaviour rather than individuality. In other words, it is not only that the employees are individual professionals, but all employees are professional as an organization (Adıgüzel, Tanrıverdi, & Sönmez Özkan, 2011; Karacaođlu Vicdan, 2010). In today's world, it is an accepted fact that teaching is a profession that requires professionalism.

From the past to the present, the basic element of the education system has been teachers. Therefore, when taking a glance at the historical pages related to education, it

is observed that thinkers attributed a special value to teaching while generating ideas about social and individual development. While Diogenes pointed out that diogenous teaching is an honourable profession, Farabi purported that it would only be possible to create a virtuous society through education. While Plato stated that teachers are the ones who can make peace in the world, Ibni Sina (Avicenna) emphasized the importance of the teaching profession in terms of society, adding that education is a field that does not fit everyone as it requires expertise (MEB, 2017, 4). It is emphasized that teachers have a crucial role in schools and are effective in improving student quality. Thus, it is stated that teachers also contribute significantly to the development of a country's socioeconomic situation (Ibrahim & Iqbal, 2015, 64). Some factors such as classroom size, physical conditions of the school, and educational materials in the school are thought to be effective in shaping education given in schools, but teacher professionalism has the highest level of impact on students receiving a quality education. From this point of view, it is understood that teaching is an important profession for the future of society and requires professionalism. The conditions that will make teaching become a professional occupation in a modern sense are as follows: having a predefined service area and being legally served in this area, having legal assurance, having a wide service area, having undergone a comprehensive professional education, having sufficient expert knowledge, going through the evaluation process before starting the profession, having professional acceptance by the society, having professional ethics and culture, organizing as a professional institution and having a periodical publication with professional writings (řimsek, 2010, 244). It is highly important in terms of professionalism that teachers fulfil their duties and responsibilities with the concern of qualification. If teachers adopt qualification anxiety as a principle, they can positively affect their colleagues, students, and administrators.

Teacher professionalism is examined under three main dimensions in the studies of Carlgren (1999), Furlong (2001) and Lai and Lo (2007). The first dimension is related to the knowledge and skills that teachers have about the profession. The second dimension is related to the teacher's responsibilities and powers over the students. The third dimension is related to teachers' autonomous action areas in fulfilling the requirements of the profession. Hoy and Miskel (2010) argued that teacher professionalism should be examined under four headings. These are (1) Specialization, (2) Student-centeredness, (3) Autonomy, and (4) Self-Control. While specialization includes knowledge and skills, student-centeredness involves self-sacrifice and striving for student development. Autonomy includes the ability of teachers to make their own decisions, while self-control involves teachers not being subject to any control other than their colleagues. In this context, regarding teacher professionalism of teachers in Turkey, it can be concluded that they are not sufficient particular in decision-making and in professional autonomy.

In the studies conducted on the effect of authentic leadership on the performance of the organization, it has been determined that authentic leadership behaviour is positively associated with employees' job performance, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors and work participation (Walumbwa, Avolio,

Gardner, Wernsing & Peterson, 2008; Walumbwa, Wang, Wang, Schaubroeck & Avolio, 2010; Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey & Oke, 2011). The success of a school administrator is closely related to the motivational performances of the teachers they work with (Küçükali, 2011). Authentic leadership behaviors displayed by school administrators can ensure that a positive and trust-based working environment is established. In such an environment, teachers are expected to be highly motivated, strive to professionally carry out their profession, able to establish healthy relationships with their colleagues and other stakeholders, internalize the values of the school, and thus contribute to the quality of education. Thus, it may be proposed that authentic leadership has a positive relationship with teacher professionalism and motivation. This study is expected to contribute both to the practical studies in schools and the literature, based on the understanding that increasing the professionalism and motivation of teachers can only be realized if leadership behaviors are displayed by school administrators.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the authentic leadership of primary and secondary school administrators and teacher motivation and professionalism according to the perceptions of teachers. For this purpose, the following questions were addressed:

- 1) What is the perceived level of the teachers regarding authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators?
- 2) What is the perceived level of the teachers regarding teacher motivation and teacher professionalism?
- 3) Is there a meaningful relationship between authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators and teacher motivation and teacher professionalism?
- 4) How and at what level do authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators affect teacher motivation and teacher professionalism?

## **2. Methods**

In the study, the relational survey model was used. Therefore, the relational survey model is what is deemed as an appropriate model for this type of research (Tekbıyık, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

### **2.1 Participants**

The population consists of a total of 1020 teachers who work in 44 primary schools in Kayapınar, Diyarbakir, during the 2018-2019 academic year. The sample consists of a total of 524 classroom teachers in 29 primary schools selected using the simple random sampling method. 276 (52.7%) of the teachers participating in the study were male and 248 (47.3%) were female. 473 (90.3%) of the teachers participating in the study had an undergraduate degree and 51 (9.7%) had a graduate degree. 100 (19.1%) of the teachers had a professional experience of 1-5 years, 129 (24.6%) 6-10, 147 (28.1%) 11-15 years, and 148 (28.2%) 16 years.

## 2.2 Instruments

There are 4 parts in the form of data collection tools used in this study. The first part includes statements that determine the personal characteristics of the teachers (gender, educational status, and professional experience), the second part includes authentic leadership behaviors for school administrators, the third section part includes statements about teacher professionalism, and the last part includes statements that measure the work motivation of teachers.

In this study, the scale developed by Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing & Peterson (2008) was used to determine the authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators. The Scale was adapted to Turkish by Tabak, Sıđrı, Arlı & Cořar (2010). The scale consists of 16 questions and four sub-dimensions. The *Authentic Leadership Scale* appears to have four dimensions: Self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency. The scale designed as a 5-point Likert scale is graded as "1- Never", "2- Very rare", "3- Sometimes", "4- Often" and "5- Always".

"*The Teacher Professionalism Scale*" developed by Karaca (2015) was used in the study. The scale consists of 22 items and five sub-dimensions. The validity and reliability study of the scale was performed by the author that developed the scale. As a result of the factor analysis, it was observed that the scale consists of five factors, and the variance explained by five factors regarding the scale was 64.36%. The factors found were named professional commitment, student-centeredness, professional development, relationships with colleagues, and autonomy.

"*The Work Motivation Scale*" developed by Mottaz (1985), is widely used to determine the motivation levels of teachers. "The Work Motivation Scale" Mottaz (1985) consists of "intrinsic and extrinsic motivation" dimensions adapted to Turkish by Ertan (2008). It is a scale with 24 items and two sub-dimensions and is designed as a 5-point Likert type. In this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of all three scales are calculated and presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Cronbach alpha coefficients of authentic leadership, teacher motivation and teacher professionalism and sub-dimensions

	Cronbach Alpha Coefficients
<b>Sub-dimensions of Authentic Leadership</b>	
Relational Transparency	.81
Internalized Moral Perspective	.81
Balanced Processing	.82
Self-awareness	.81
<b>Sub-dimensions of Motivation</b>	
Extrinsic Motivation	.82
Intrinsic Motivation	.81
<b>Sub-dimensions of Teacher Professionalism</b>	
Professional Development	.82
Relationships with Colleagues	.82
Autonomy	.83

Student Centeredness	.83
Professional Commitment	.83

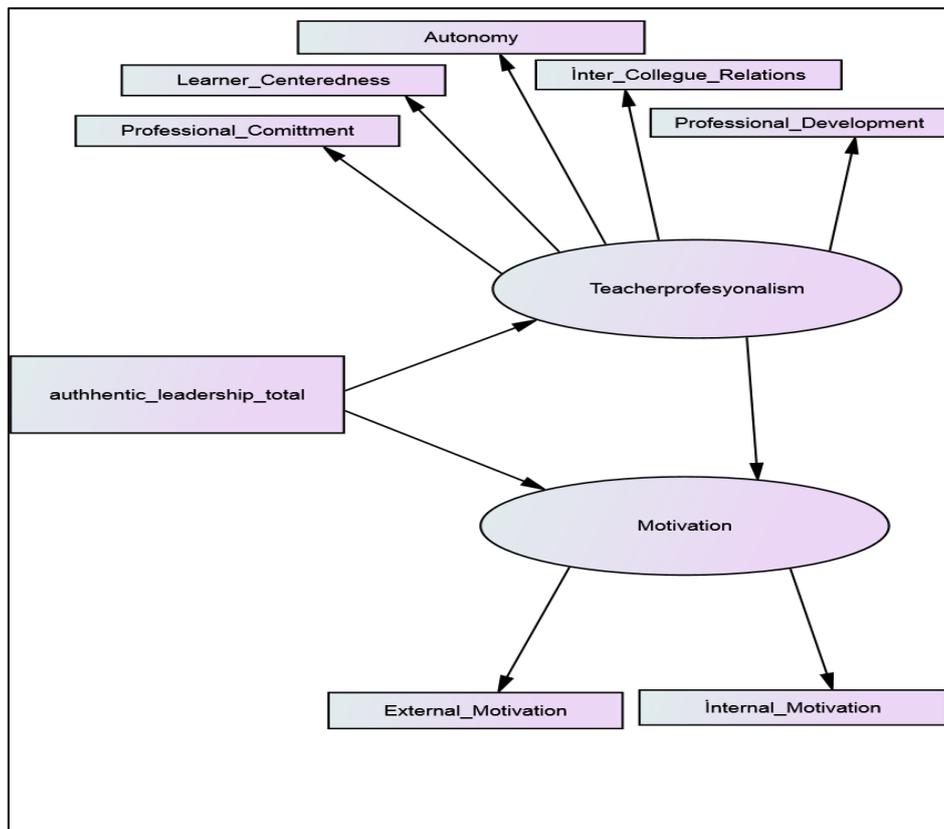
As seen in Table 1 above, all three scales are thought to be reliable.

### 2.3 Procedure

Research data were collected by the second author by visiting selected schools. The official approval of the research was obtained from the Diyarbakır Provincial Directorate of National Education dated 22 November 2018 and numbered 30769799.02-E.2239721. Teachers in all schools included in the study were visited and were also informed to fill out the scales. The research was conducted on a voluntary basis and in accordance with ethical standards. Participation in the study was carried out on a voluntary basis. In the study, face-to-face interviews with teachers were conducted by visiting 29 schools selected by the simple random method.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

550 scales were distributed to the teachers participating in the study, and as 26 of them were incomplete or incorrectly filled, the remaining 524 data were analysed. The analysis was conducted using SPSS 21 and AMOS programs.



**Figure 1:** Structural Equation Model of the Research

In this research model, there are three variables, two of which are independent and one of which is dependent. Authentic leadership is a part of the independent variables of the research model. However, as teacher professionalism has a direct and indirect effect on teacher motivation, it was addressed as both an independent and dependent variable. It is presumed in the study that the perception of teachers regarding authentic leadership behaviors of the school administrators affects teacher professionalism directly and teacher motivation both directly and indirectly through teacher professionalism. The model tested in the research study is shown in Figure 1.

### 3. Results

The findings obtained from the analyses of the data collected from teachers are presented in this section.

#### 3.1. Results Regarding the First, Second, and Third Sub-problems of the Study

The results on the teachers' perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators and teacher professionalism and motivation are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Mean and standard deviation values for teachers' perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviour of school administrators and teacher professionalism and teacher motivation

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	The level of perception
Relational Transparency	524	3.51	.85	High Level
Internalized Moral Perspective	524	3.42	.82	High Level
Balanced and Objective Processing of Information	524	3.20	.91	Moderate Level
Self-Awareness	524	3.34	.90	Moderate Level
<b>Authentic Leadership Behaviors (Total)</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>.87</b>	<b>Moderate Level</b>
Extrinsic Motivation	524	3.25	.69	Moderate Level
Intrinsic Motivation	524	3.64	.52	High Level
<b>Teacher Motivation (Total)</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>.61</b>	<b>High Level</b>
Professional Development	524	3.41	.69	High Level
Relationships with Colleagues	524	4.09	.72	High Level
Autonomy	524	4.09	.68	High Level
Student-Centeredness	524	4.24	.60	Very High Level
Professional Commitment	524	3.72	.86	High Level
<b>Teacher Professionalism (Total)</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>.76</b>	<b>High Level</b>

It was found that the participating teachers' perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators were generally graded as "undecided" ( $\bar{X}=3.37$ ), which indicates a "moderate level" of perception. Teachers' perceptions of "relational transparency" ( $\bar{X}=3.51$ ) and "internalized moral perspective" ( $\bar{X}=3.42$ ) were determined as "Agree", which indicates a "high level" of perception. Regarding the "self-awareness" ( $\bar{X}=3.34$ ) and "balanced and objective processing of information" ( $\bar{X}=3.20$ ), teachers'

perceptions were determined as “undecided”, which indicates a “moderate level” of perception.

The results indicated that the teachers have high levels of motivation. Regarding the sub-dimensions of teacher motivation, teachers have “high levels” of ( $\bar{X}$ =3.64) intrinsic motivation and “moderate levels” of extrinsic motivation ( $\bar{X}$ =3.25).

Moreover, the teachers have “high levels” of teacher professionalism. Regarding the sub-dimensions of teacher professionalism, the teachers displayed “very high levels” of student-centeredness ( $\bar{X}$ =4.24) and “high levels” of relationships with colleagues ( $\bar{X}$ =4.09), autonomy ( $\bar{X}$ =4.09), professional commitment ( $\bar{X}$ =3.72), and professional development ( $\bar{X}$ =3.41).

### 3.2 Results Regarding the Third Sub-Problem of the Study

The findings obtained from the correlation analysis conducted between primary teachers’ perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators and teacher professionalism and motivation are given in Table 3.

**Table 3:** The correlation between the primary teacher’s perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators and teacher professionalism and motivation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Authentic Leadership	1									
2. Teacher Motivation (Total)	.38**	1								
3. Extrinsic Motivation	.32**	.93**	1							
4. Intrinsic Motivation	.37**	.87	.63**	1						
5. Teacher Professionalism (Total)	.23**	.51**	.38**	.57**	1					
6. Professional Development	.21**	.39**	.32**	.38**	.69**	1				
7. Relationships with Colleagues	.22**	.40**	.31**	.42**	.70**	.46**	1			
8. Autonomy	.21**	.30**	.19*	.30**	.50**	.20**	.49**	1		
9. Student-Centeredness	.14**	.30**	.18**	.37**	.73**	.38**	.49**	.46**	1	
10. Professional Commitment	.18**	.45**	.33**	.50**	.82**	.45**	.37**	.33**	.39**	1

The results of the correlation analysis indicate that a positive moderate correlation was found between school administrators’ behaviors and teacher motivation ( $r$ =.38,  $p$  <.01) and intrinsic motivation ( $r$ =.37,  $p$ <.01) and extrinsic motivation ( $r$ =.32,  $p$ <.01). Moreover, a low positive correlation was found between school administrators’ behaviors and teacher professionalism ( $r$ =.23,  $p$ <.01) and all sub-dimensions. Furthermore, a positive moderate correlation was found between teacher motivation and teacher professionalism ( $r$ =.51,  $p$ <.01).

While a positive moderate correlation was found between the extrinsic motivation levels of the teachers and the professional development ( $r$ =.32,  $p$ <.01), relationships with colleagues ( $r$ =.31,  $p$  <.01), and professional commitment ( $r$ =.33,  $p$ <.01) sub-dimensions of teacher professionalism, a low positive correlation was found between the extrinsic motivation levels of teachers and the autonomy ( $r$ =.19,  $p$ <.01) and student-centeredness ( $r$ =.18,  $p$ <.01) sub-dimensions of teacher professionalism. Finally, the results showed that a positive moderate correlation was found between the intrinsic motivation levels of the

teachers and the professional development ( $r=.38$ ,  $p<.01$ ), relationships with colleagues ( $r=.42$ ,  $p<.01$ ), autonomy ( $r=.30$ ,  $p<.01$ ), student-centeredness ( $r=.37$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and professional commitment ( $r=.50$ ,  $p <.01$ ) sub-dimensions of teacher professionalism.

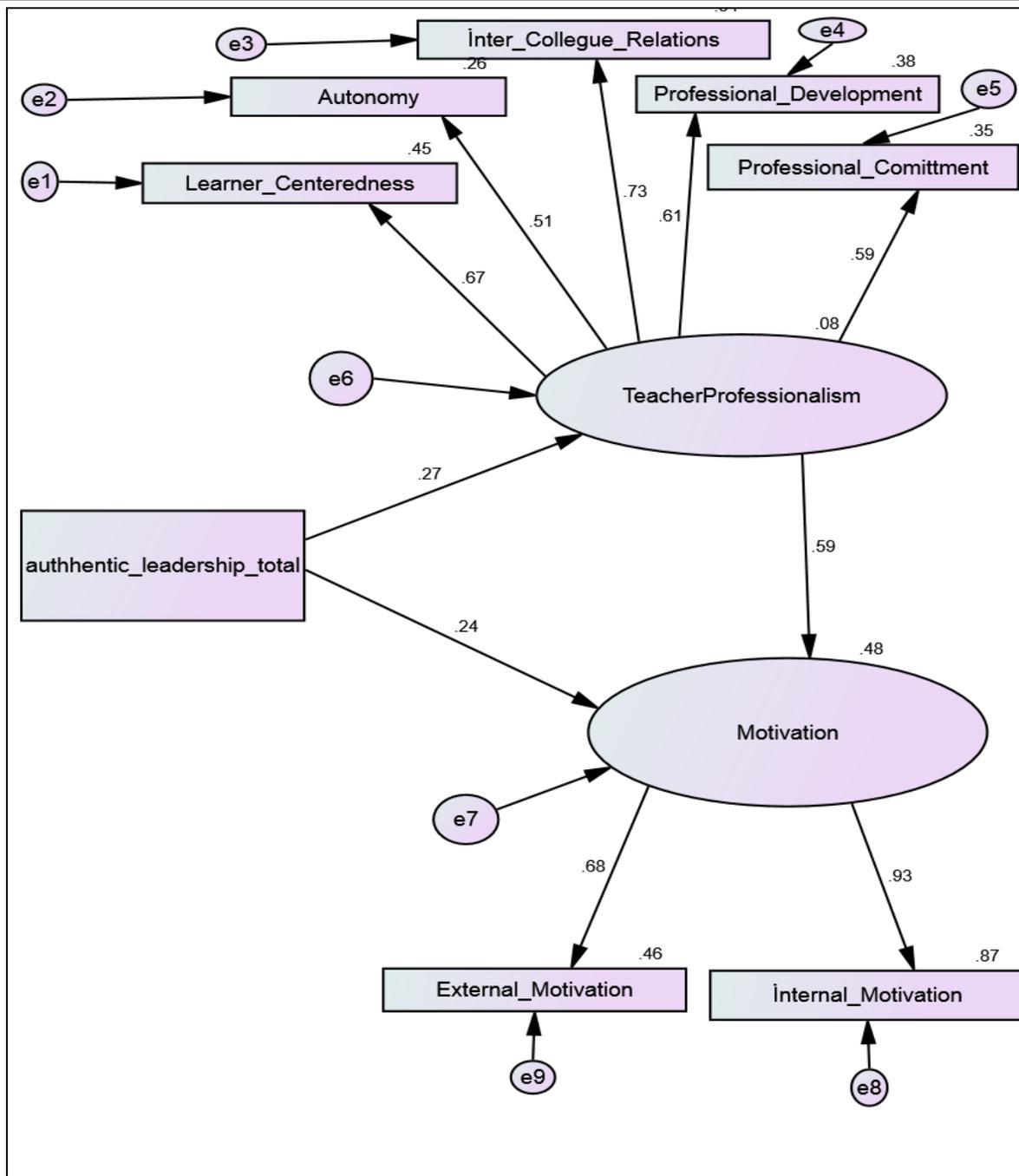
### 3.3. Results Regarding the Fourth Sub-Problem of the Study

A path analysis was conducted to calculate the effect size and direction of the primary teacher's perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators on the variables of teacher professionalism and teacher motivation. The direct and indirect effects of the predictor variables on the dependent variables were examined through path analysis.

In this research, for the CFA, the condition, which requires the Chi-Square and the degree of freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/df$ ) should be less than 5, was sought in this study. According to the CFA results, the calculated  $\chi^2/df$  ratio was 3.895, which indicated that the proposed factor model displayed an acceptable correspondence (Bayram, 2010; Kline, 2005; Sümer, 2000; Şimşek, 2007). For the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), an RMSEA value below .080 indicates an acceptable fit, and values less than .05 indicate a perfect fit. The values demonstrated that the RMSEA and  $\chi^2/df$  values are within the acceptable ranges. Moreover, for GFI, AGFI, CFI, and NFI indexes, a value between 0.90-0.95 indicates an acceptable fit, and a value between 0.95-1.00 indicates a perfect fit (Bayram, 2010; Byrne and Cambell, 1999; Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008; Sümer, 2000; Steiger, 2007; Şimşek, 2007; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2011). Considering these criteria, the obtained values in the current study, GFI (.91), AGFI (.93), CFI (.91), and NFI (.92) indicated an acceptable fit. Although a certain range of the values is presented regarding the correspondence criteria of the fit values in the literature, these ranges of values are generally close to each other (Bayram, 2010; Çelik and Yılmaz, 2013, 39; Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008; Hu ve Bentler, 1999; Meydan and Şeşen, 2011, 31-37; Raykov and Markoulides, 2006).

The standardized path coefficients calculated to determine the effect direction and size of the primary teacher's perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators on the variables of teacher professionalism and teacher motivation are shown in Figure 2.

As shown in Figure 2, according to the standardized path coefficients, the powerful predictor for teacher professionalism is the relationships with colleagues (.73) sub-dimension and the powerful predictor of teacher motivation is the intrinsic motivation (.93) sub-dimension. It was found that teacher professionalism is more effective on teacher motivation ( $\beta=.59$ ) compared to authentic leadership behaviors ( $\beta=.24$ ). This finding makes it clear that teacher professionalism is a more powerful predictor than authentic leadership for teacher motivation. Moreover, it has a direct effect on teacher motivation and an indirect effect through the variable of teacher professionalism. As the teachers' perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators become more positive, the teachers' perceptions of their professionalism and motivation increase.



**Figure 2:** The standardized path coefficients

Considering the fact that teacher professionalism has a direct and significant effect on teacher motivation, it can be argued that the higher levels of teachers' relationships with colleagues, autonomy, student-centeredness, professional development, and professional commitment indicate a higher teacher motivation. Moreover, the results show that authentic leadership has a direct significant effect on teacher professionalism ( $\beta = .27$ ). Based on this finding, it can be stated that as the teachers' perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators become more positive, teacher professionalism increases. In other words, as school administrators display higher such behaviors, teachers' levels of both professionalism and motivation increase.

The results show that teacher professionalism is a more powerful predictor than authentic leadership for teacher motivation. Moreover, 8% of the total variance of the teacher professionalism variable can be explained by such behaviors. On the other side, 48% of the total variance of the teacher motivation variable can be explained using the direct effect of the latent variables of authentic leadership behaviors and teacher professionalism as well as the indirect effect of the authentic leadership variable obtained through the variable of teacher professionalism with a mediating effect.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Teacher Perceptions Regarding School Administrators' Authentic Leadership Behaviors**

The teachers' perceptions towards authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators were generally at moderate levels. A moderate level of perception reveals that the teachers generally believe that their school administrators are insufficient in displaying such behaviors. Therefore, it is considered critical and remarkable to find out that school administrators do not display a high or sufficient level of behaviors such as displaying transparency in their relations with other school staff, being sincere, honest and open, having an internalized moral perspective, balanced and objective processing of information before making decisions in schools, and being aware of their strengths and weaknesses. These findings are consistent with several prior studies carried out in Turkey. For example, the results of the studies carried out by Boz (2016), Cořar (2011), Çeri Booms (2009), Keser & Kocabař (2014), and Yeřiltař, Kanten & Sormaz (2013) indicated that school administrators display "moderate levels" of authentic leadership behaviors. On the contrary, the reports of Franklin (2010), Giallonardo, Carol & Carroll (2010), Okçu & Anık (2017), Ergül, Okçu & Adıgüzel Gök, (2020) demonstrated that school administrators exhibit "high levels" of authentic leadership behaviors and therefore, the results presented in these studies do not support the findings of this study. In the present study, it was determined that the teachers believe that their school administrators display "high levels" of relational transparency. To display authentic leadership skills, school administrators should be transparent, sincere, honest, and open in their relations with the school staff (Eid, Mearns, Laberg, Larsson & Johnsen, 2012; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Accordingly, school administrators are believed to exhibit high levels of moral character, true, sincere, and honest behaviors in accordance with the principle of transparency. The findings presented in the studies carried out by Boz (2016), Gül & Alacalar (2014), Okçu & Anık (2017) support these results. In a study carried out by Cořar (2011), it was found that administrators "sometimes" display "relational transparency" which means that such behaviors are at a "moderate level".

The teachers were found to believe that their school administrators display "high levels" of "internalized moral perspective". This reveals that school administrators generally act in accordance with the relevant moral values and norms, and ethical principles and avoid acting against these principles even in difficult circumstances.

Similar results were obtained in the studies carried out by Boz (2016), Okçu & Anık (2017), and Ayça (2016).

It was found that teachers believe that their school administrators have “moderate levels” of self-awareness. Accordingly, it can be argued that school administrators lack behaviors associated with self-awareness such as knowing their own strengths and weaknesses, and goals, being aware of how their behaviors will affect employees, and adjusting their behaviors accordingly. Therefore, this finding reveals that school administrators may have difficulty in providing a positive working environment in school for teachers. Previous reports indicated that administrators with authentic leadership skills and high levels of self-awareness are expected to lead to big changes (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Consistent with our findings, a literature survey revealed that the studies carried out by Boz (2016), Gül & Alacalar (2014), and Çořar (2011) indicated that teachers’ perceptions of the “self-awareness” of administrators were at a “moderate level”. On the other side, these findings differ from studies by Ayça (2016), Keser & Kocabař (2014), Okçu & Anık (2017), who found that teachers’ perceptions of the same dimension were at a “high level”.

It was also determined that the teachers believe that their school administrators display “moderate levels” of “balanced and objective processing of information”. In other words, it can be argued that school administrators lack leadership behaviors while making decisions such as balanced and objective evaluation of all aspects of the relevant information, taking teachers’ opinions into account, and acting fairly among school staff. Therefore, it can be said that school administrators fail to take decisions that other employees agree on and make an objective evaluation of all aspects of the decision. Consistent with our findings, similar results were reported in a study carried out by Boz (2016). However, the results of the current paper were not consistent with the findings presented in the studies conducted on the same sub-dimension by Keser & Kocabař (2014) and Okçu & Anık (2017). The teachers’ perceptions were found to be at “high levels” in those studies.

#### **4.2 Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Their Motivation Level**

According to the obtained results, the participating teachers generally have “high levels” of teacher motivation. Considering the sub-dimensions of teacher motivation, while intrinsic motivation was found to be at a “high level”, extrinsic motivation was found to be at a “moderate level”. A high level of job motivation is very essential for teachers to work efficiently and effectively, and also to display higher levels of job satisfaction and job performance. Teachers with higher motivation affect students’ success positively (Recepoglu, 2013). Therefore, it was determined that teachers consider themselves as important school personnel. The results of the previous studies revealed that especially intrinsic motivation had a positive impact on a better teaching experience, displaying higher performance, and being healthier in school (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Fry, 2003). Accordingly, “high levels” of participating teachers’ job motivation can be recognized as an encouraging finding in this study. This result may indicate that teachers consider

education as a respectable and important job and strongly internalize their job. A teacher with a high job motivation would seek methods and techniques to improve his/her teaching performance and make efforts to apply such methods in the classroom (Aydın & Özçelik, 2015). Therefore, the education process can be more productive. The findings presented in the previous studies by Can (2015), Demirtaş & Canpolat (2017), Okçu, Adıgüzel & Gök, (2018), Okçu & Çoğaltay (2019), Okçu, Ergül & Ekmen, (2020), Tanrıverdi (2007), Tiryaki (2008) and Yılmaz (2009) support our results. However, in a study carried out by Ertürk (2016), teachers' perception on their intrinsic motivation was found to be at a "high level", the extrinsic motivation was found to be at a "moderate level", and the overall job motivation was found to be at a "moderate level". Ertan (2008), Okçu & Anık (2017) found that while teachers have "high" levels of overall job motivation and "high" levels of intrinsic motivation, they have "moderate" levels of extrinsic motivation. The finding obtained in a study by Kaya, Yıldız & Yıldız (2013) indicated that teachers' level of intrinsic motivation is higher than their extrinsic motivation.

#### **4.3 Teacher Perceptions of Regarding Teachers' Professionalism**

The analysis results reveal that the participating teachers have high levels of teacher professionalism. Teacher professionalism plays an important role in increasing the quality of educational activities and improving the overall effectiveness of the school environment. Teachers should be provided with possibilities to improve educational practices and standards, additionally, positive environments should be established allowing them to exchange information. Higher teacher perceptions of teaching as a profession can be considered as a promising result for higher-quality in education. Today, since educational activities in schools are more complex, many problems require different knowledge and skills, and the implementation of more learner-centred and interactive curriculums requires teachers to have higher levels of professionalism (Gesilva, 1994, 63). The results of some previous studies carried out by Altinkurt & Ekinci, (2016), Bayhan (2011), Çelik Yılmaz (2017), Hořgörür (2017), Karaca (2015), Kořar, (2015), Tukonic & Harwood, (2015) and Yorulmaz, Altinkurt & Yılmaz (2015) indicated that teachers have high levels of professionalism. Similar to these findings, Kılınç, Cemalođlu & Savař (2015) and Kılınç (2014) reported that teachers' perceptions of professionalism were above the moderate level. These findings support the result obtained in the present study. On the contrary, Aydemir (2019) determined that teachers have very high levels of teacher professionalism. According to the studies of Altinkurt & Yılmaz (2014), Çelik & Yılmaz (2015) and Ray (1997), teachers' perceptions of their professionalism were at a moderate level. In a study carried out by Cerit (2012) and Bayhan (2011), it was found that teachers' professionalism behaviors were below the moderate level. Therefore, the results presented in the above-mentioned reports do not support our findings. Moreover, in a qualitative study carried out by Gencer (2018) on professionalism, the participants stated the powerful aspects of the teaching profession as social service, compliance with ethical standards, openness to innovation, specialized knowledge, professional

commitment, and internalizing the profession. They also defined the weaknesses of the teaching profession as social status, the existence of professional associations, qualified education, the existence of a reward system, and autonomy. Moreover, in the same study, the factors affecting teacher professionalism were stated as the teacher himself, the ministry of education, income level, experience, school administration, students, parents, faculties of education, and professional associations.

The student-centeredness was determined to be at “very high levels” and the mean scores of this sub-dimension were higher than other sub-dimensions. The fact that the teachers’ perceptions towards the student-centeredness sub-dimension of teacher professionalism were at very high levels is a promising finding for a modern and qualified education system. Based on this finding, it can be argued that teachers interact with students, guide them, establish a positive environment allowing students to express their thoughts freely, and provide possibilities that are tailored to the needs and interests of the students for their development. The most distinctive feature of teachers with teacher professionalism is that they feel responsible for student learning (Kořar, 2015). Moreover, Evans (2011) argued that to have professionalism, teachers should have a perception that can contribute to student learning with their professional knowledge and teaching skills. Furthermore, the result obtained in a study carried out by Karaca (2015) supports the finding of the current study.

It was determined that the teachers have high levels of relationships with colleagues. Relationships with colleagues are an important sub-dimension of teacher professionalism. Accordingly, professional teachers, who can establish effective relations and collaborations with their colleagues, improve their professional knowledge and skills in this way (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The results obtained in the study carried out by Bayhan (2011) support our findings. Moreover, while Karaca (2015) found that teachers have very high levels of relationships with colleagues, Ray (1997) and Edstam (1998) found that they establish low levels of relationships with colleagues. Hargreaves (2000) emphasized that teachers can improve their expertise through communication and collaboration with their colleagues. Moreover, Harris & Lambert (2003) stated that schools can become learning communications through effective communication and collaboration of teachers with their colleagues. Furthermore, Altınkurt & Yılmaz (2014) highlighted that teachers can be flexible to change and improve themselves by receiving continuous feedback on learning and teaching processes. Besides, Tařdan (2008) argued that establishing a common understanding in schools through relationships with colleagues can improve the success of training new teachers and also current teachers’ teaching skills. Additionally, teachers’ good relationships with their colleagues in schools also enable them to connect emotionally. A professional teacher is aware of the fact that s/he should act in accordance with the norms of the school and behaviors expected from a professional (Day & Lee, 2011).

The results reveal that teachers have high levels of autonomy, which is a sub-dimension of teacher professionalism. Despite the centralized structure of the Turkish National Education System, high levels of autonomy perceived by teachers indicate that

teachers have a school environment allowing them to make their own decisions and school administrators give teachers the freedom to decide what is best regarding their expertise and students. Karaca (2015) found that teachers have very high levels of autonomy. Hargreaves (1994) argued that professional teachers need autonomy to improve their teaching, design advanced teaching practices, and implement these practices in the classroom. For, professional teachers take responsibility for teaching by relying on their professional knowledge and skills and reflecting on their own decisions in the in-class activities (as cited in Kořar, 2015). The education system should give professional teachers the freedom to seek the best solution for problems and support teachers' decisions (Ray, 1997).

It was determined that teachers have high levels of professional commitment, which is a sub-dimension of teacher professionalism. Accordingly, it can be argued that teachers, as professionals, love their job, try to be more professional teachers, feel proud of doing their job, and do not hesitate to work even outside of working hours. Swann, Donald, Pell, Hargreaves & Cunningham (2010) found that the most important part of teacher professionalism includes shared values and professional commitment. According to the results of the studies by Karaca (2015) and Edstam (1998), teachers have high levels of professional commitment. These findings support the results of the present study.

Moreover, the obtained results indicated that teachers have high levels of professional development, which is a sub-dimension of teacher professionalism. The continuous and conscious effort of teachers towards their professional development is an essential and fundamental requirement for teaching professionalism. This sub-dimension is related to the employee's efforts to perform his/her job better and to improve him/herself as well as his/her organization. Teachers who display professional development can follow rapid changes and new information in their field. To keep up with new developments, teachers should increase their professionalism and adopt lifelong learning. Toh, Diong, Boo & Chia (1996) determined that professional development is the most powerful predictor for teacher professionalism. Moreover, in a study carried out by Yirci (2017), it was found that teachers believe that the main obstacles to their professional development include the current status quoist approach, ministerial practices, economic reasons, and the physical structure of the school. Teachers also stated that the biggest obstacle to their personal development is the teachers themselves. Kaçan (2004) found that teachers have the desire for professional development and make efforts for this purpose. Moreover, in a study carried out by Karaca (2015), it was determined that teachers' perception of professional development was at high levels. This finding is consistent with our results.

#### **4.4 Relationship between Authentic Leadership Behaviors of School Administrators and Teacher Motivation and Teacher Professionalism**

The results of the correlation analysis revealed a positive moderate correlation between school administrators' authentic leadership behaviors and teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When administrators behave honestly, frankly, transparently,

trustworthy, and in accordance with moral values, their acts will positively affect the teachers' motivation. Therefore, it is believed that the expected results were obtained in the current study. A similar result was determined in the study carried out by Okçu & Anık (2017). Moreover, Özerten & Otrar (2019) found a positive high correlation between school administrators' authentic leadership behaviors and teachers' professional motivation. Ilies et al. (2005) emphasized that authentic leadership behaviors increase the happiness levels of the employees and help them present their real capacity. According to the results of the study carried out by Gül & Alacalar (2014), there is a positive correlation between administrators' authentic leadership behaviors and employees' organizational commitment and performance. Ada et al. (2013) stated that teachers' motivation and success in their jobs depend on social needs such as the support of a dependable administrator, satisfying human relationships, and experiencing a sense of success. Büyükses (2010) pointed out that some factors in schools such as lack of appreciation by school administrators, lack of educational materials, and lack of professional respect affect teachers' motivation negatively. According to the results obtained in several studies, there is a positive correlation between authentic leadership behaviors and employees' job performance, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, and participation behaviors (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Walumbwa et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011).

The teachers' perceptions indicate that there is a low positive correlation between authentic leadership behaviors and teacher professionalism and all sub-dimensions. Accordingly, it is believed that some behaviors associated with authentic leadership behaviors such as displaying transparency in their relations with other school staff, being sincere, honest and open, having an internalized moral perspective, and balanced and objective processing of information while making decisions in the school have a positive impact on teacher professionalism. Consistent with our argument, the results obtained in the studies carried out by Tschannen-Moran (2009) and Dean (2011) revealed that teachers exhibit more professional behaviors in school environments if they trust their school principals. Boz (2016) found that as the teachers' perceptions of authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators become more positive, academic optimism levels of the school increase, and the teachers' perceptions towards organizational cynicism decrease.

Moreover, a positive moderate correlation was found between teacher professionalism and teacher motivation. According to this result, it can be argued that as teachers behave more professionally while doing their job, their motivation also increases. In other words, higher levels of teacher professionalism indicate greater teacher motivation. On the other hand, Yılmaz & Altinkurt (2014) argued that teacher professionalism is more about intrinsic motivation and is activated by employees' own will and curiosity. Çelik Yılmaz (2017) determined that there is a positive moderate correlation between teachers' perceptions of professionalism and the need for teachers' leadership behaviors and displaying these behaviors. Another study by Altinkurt & Yılmaz (2014) demonstrated that there is a positive significant correlation between

teacher professionalism and job satisfaction. Moreover, Çelik & Yılmaz (2015) determined a negative significant correlation between teacher professionalism and burnout.

#### **4.5 Conclusions Regarding How and What Level Affect Authentic Leadership Behaviors of School Administrators, Teachers' Motivation, and Levels of Professionalism**

The results of the path analysis indicated that as the teachers' perceptions of authentic leadership behaviors of school administrators become positive, teachers' perceptions of their motivation and professionalism increase. In other words, higher levels of school administrators' authentic leadership behaviors indicate greater teacher motivation and professionalism. Our results showed that teacher professionalism is a more powerful predictor than authentic leadership behaviors for teacher motivation. Moreover, 8% of the total variance of the teacher professionalism variable can be explained by such behaviors. Additionally, 48% of the total variance of the teacher motivation variable can be explained by the direct effect of the latent variables of authentic leadership behaviors and teacher professionalism as well as the indirect effect of authentic leadership variable obtained through the variable of teacher professionalism with a mediating effect. Accordingly, it can be argued that as school administrators exhibit more authentic leadership behaviors, teachers' levels of motivation and professionalism increase. Besides, the findings indicated that as teachers' perceptions regarding their professionalism become more positive, their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may increase. Additionally, the teachers' perceptions of their professionalism were determined as a powerful predictor for their motivation.

Finally, the school administrators such as displaying ethical value-oriented behaviors, wearing their hearts on their sleeves, in short, being honest and confidential, may contribute to teachers' professionalism and motivation by providing a better school environment. Thus, positive environments can be provided allowing students to develop based on their abilities and capacities by contributing to a better organizational atmosphere and supporting teachers to give a more qualified education service.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The authors made the following recommendations based on the findings of the current study:

- 1) Since it was found that the school administrators' authentic leadership behaviors increased teachers' professionalism and motivation; to make a contribution to the mission and vision of the schools, seminars, conferences, in-service training, and similar activities can be conducted and public service announcements can be made through mass media to increase the awareness of the school administrators by establishing collaboration with the National Education Directorates and Universities.

- 2) Legal arrangements can be made to activate the Teachers Academy within the Ministry of National Education, and thus, both teachers and school administrators can be trained more professionally.
- 3) Both individual and administrative arrangements (for example, increasing teachers' salaries, rewarding successful teachers, revising the rewards directive, making performance-based evaluations, introducing a merit-based promotion mechanism for all teachers, etc.) can be made to increase teachers' motivation.

### Conflicts of Interest Statement

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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