



The Moderating Role of School Level in the Effect of Leadership Styles and School Culture on Teacher Burnout

El papel moderador del nivel escolar en el efecto de los estilos de liderazgo y la cultura escolar sobre el agotamiento docente

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ABSTRACT

Teacher burnout remains a persistent challenge in contemporary education despite ongoing reforms, digital transformation initiatives, and policy-driven improvement efforts. In Türkiye, increasing bureaucratic demands, exam-oriented pressures, and rising expectations for teacher accountability have intensified emotional exhaustion and diminished professional fulfillment. Although leadership and school culture are widely recognized as key determinants of these outcomes, empirical models that simultaneously integrate leadership subdimensions, cultural mechanisms, and contextual moderators remain limited. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how three transactional leadership styles—active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception, and reward-based leadership—influence teachers' emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment through organizational culture, and whether these relationships differ between primary and secondary schools. Using a correlational design, data were collected from 701 teachers working in public schools across the Kastamonu and Bartın provinces. Moderated mediation analyses (Hayes's PROCESS Models 14 and 59, 5,000 bootstrap samples) were employed to examine the structural pathways. The findings revealed that passive leadership substantially increased emotional exhaustion, particularly in secondary schools, whereas reward-based leadership reduced exhaustion indirectly by strengthening achievement-oriented culture. Both active and reward-based leadership enhanced personal accomplishment through task-oriented culture, while passive leadership undermined accomplishment by weakening achievement- and task-related norms. Overall, the results demonstrate that leadership exerts its influence on burnout primarily through the cultural climate of schools rather than through direct managerial actions alone. These findings offer a novel contribution by presenting one of the first comprehensive models in the Turkish context to jointly test transactional leadership subdimensions, three cultural mediators, and school-level moderation. Practically, the study underscores the importance of cultivating success- and task-oriented environments, implementing transparent and meaningful reward systems, and reducing bureaucratic load—strategies that can support teacher well-being, emotional resilience, and sustainable professional growth.

RESUMEN

El agotamiento docente continúa siendo un desafío persistente en la educación contemporánea, a pesar de las reformas en curso, las iniciativas de transformación digital y los esfuerzos de mejora impulsados por las políticas educativas. En Türkiye, el incremento de las exigencias burocráticas, las presiones derivadas de los sistemas de evaluación centrados en los exámenes y las crecientes expectativas respecto a la rendición de cuentas del profesorado han intensificado el agotamiento emocional y han reducido la realización profesional. Aunque el liderazgo y la cultura escolar son reconocidos como determinantes clave de estos resultados, siguen siendo limitados los modelos empíricos que integran simultáneamente las subdimensiones del liderazgo, los mecanismos culturales y los moderadores contextuales. Para

abordar esta brecha, el presente estudio analiza cómo tres estilos de liderazgo transaccional—la gestión activa por excepción, la gestión pasiva por excepción y el liderazgo basado en recompensas—influyen en el agotamiento emocional y la realización personal del profesorado a través de la cultura organizacional, y si estas relaciones difieren entre escuelas primarias y secundarias. Mediante un diseño correlacional, se recopilieron datos de 701 docentes que trabajan en escuelas públicas de las provincias de Kastamonu y Bartın. Para examinar las trayectorias estructurales, se realizaron análisis de mediación moderada empleando los Modelos 14 y 59 de PROCESS de Hayes, con 5.000 muestras bootstrap. Los resultados revelaron que el liderazgo pasivo incrementó significativamente el agotamiento emocional, especialmente en las escuelas secundarias, mientras que el liderazgo basado en recompensas redujo el agotamiento de manera indirecta al fortalecer la cultura orientada al logro. Tanto el liderazgo activo como el basado en recompensas incrementaron la realización personal a través de la cultura orientada a las tareas, mientras que el liderazgo pasivo la debilitó al erosionar las normas vinculadas al logro y al trabajo. En conjunto, los resultados demuestran que el liderazgo ejerce su influencia sobre el agotamiento docente principalmente mediante el clima cultural de las escuelas, más que a través de acciones directivas directas. Estos hallazgos constituyen una contribución novedosa al presentar uno de los primeros modelos integrales en el contexto turco que examina simultáneamente las subdimensiones del liderazgo transaccional, tres mediadores culturales y la moderación del nivel escolar. En términos prácticos, el estudio destaca la importancia de promover entornos orientados al éxito y a las tareas, implementar sistemas de recompensas transparentes y significativos, y reducir la carga burocrática—estrategias que pueden fortalecer el bienestar docente, la resiliencia emocional y el desarrollo profesional sostenible.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

School Culture, Transactional Leadership, Teacher Burnout, Organizational Culture, Educational Leadership, Teacher Well-being

Cultura escolar, liderazgo transaccional, agotamiento docente, cultura organizacional, liderazgo educativo, bienestar docente.

1. Introduction

Teachers' job satisfaction, burnout levels, and professional commitment are critical determinants of educational quality. Teacher burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (PA) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981); both theoretically and practically to educational administration. Leadership styles, particularly transformational and transactional (Bass, 1990), shape teachers' emotional and professional experiences, influencing motivation and burnout. Within transactional leadership, three styles are emphasized: management by exception—active (MEA), which proactively prevents errors; management by exception—passive (MEP), which intervenes only after problems arise; and reward-based leadership (RBL), which links performance to incentives (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The influence of leadership extends beyond direct effects to the mediating role of school culture, defined as shared norms and values guiding behavior (Schein, 2010).

In schools, three dominant types are observed: achievement-oriented culture (AOC), emphasizing innovation and performance; bureaucratic culture (BC), focusing on rules and hierarchy; and task-oriented culture (TOC), prioritizing work processes. These cultures may mediate the relationship between leadership style and teacher burnout. Furthermore, school level (SL) (primary vs. secondary) may moderate these relationships since curricula, student characteristics, and administrative demands differ across levels (Ingersoll, 2001). Examining how transactional leadership and school culture interact across contexts thus fills a gap in the literature.

Despite continuous educational reforms, governance-based initiatives, curriculum revisions, and large-scale digital transformation projects across Türkiye, teacher burnout remains a persistent and systemic issue. This inconsistency between policy intentions and school-level realities necessitates an examination of the internal organizational mechanisms—particularly leadership practices and cultural dynamics—that shape teachers' daily emotional experiences.

While previous research has predominantly conceptualized burnout either as a clinical or individual psychological outcome, this study adopts an organizational behavior perspective, viewing burnout as an emergent property of school structures, interpersonal climates, and managerial behaviors. Such a perspective is crucial for understanding why burnout persists even in the presence of structural reforms.

Furthermore, although many studies have explored leadership or school culture independently, few have examined how the combination of leadership, culture, and school level jointly explains burnout, especially within the Turkish educational ecosystem. The existing literature rarely considers how systemic pressures, exam-oriented practices, workload intensification, and bureaucratic expectations may interact differently across primary and secondary schools. This gap highlights the importance of analyzing the moderating role of school level.

Accordingly, this study investigates how transactional leadership styles—management by exception (active and passive MEA and MEP) and RBL—affect teachers' emotional exhaustion (EE) and PA, both directly and indirectly through school culture, and whether these effects vary by SL. The findings aim to enrich leadership theory and offer practical implications for educational management.

Ultimately, this research aims to address the pressing question: Why does teacher burnout continue to rise in Türkiye despite significant policy efforts—and what role do leadership practices and organizational cultures play in this persistent problem? By examining this question through a moderated–mediated analytical framework, the study not only extends theoretical understanding but also generates actionable implications for school leaders, policymakers, and educational reform initiatives.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

Recent scholarship on teacher burnout increasingly points to the importance of understanding how leadership practices, organizational culture, and broader contextual features work together to shape teachers' experiences (Burić et al., 2021; Wang, 2024). A growing body of evidence shows that burnout is not simply an individual psychological response but emerges from organizational processes influenced by leadership behaviors and cultural expectations (Aldrup et al., 2024). Leadership, in particular, plays a defining role in schools, shaping teachers' motivation, daily experiences, and overall job performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Bass's (1990) distinction between transformational and transactional leadership continues to guide much of this research.

This study centers on transactional leadership, which encompasses reward-based leadership, management by exception—active (MEA), and management by exception—passive (MEP). Recent analyses (Liu et al., 2023) suggest that these leadership forms influence teacher well-being largely through the organizational structures and cultural norms they create, rather than through direct interpersonal actions. Burnout—manifested through emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (PA) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981)—often reflects sustained workloads and emotional strain. Recent work (Menon et al., 2024) also highlights that contextual factors, particularly school level (SL), shape how these dynamics unfold.

Organizational culture, defined by shared norms and collective values (Schein, 2017), is another key component. Studies published (Karacabey et al., 2025; Toropova et al., 2021) show that cultures that emphasize achievement, collaboration, or clarity of tasks can help buffer teachers against burnout, whereas bureaucratic cultures tend to intensify it. Variation across school levels further complicates these relationships. Differences in structure, curricular expectations, and student characteristics may alter how leadership and culture function within schools (Toropova et al., 2021). Comparative research (Köse et al., 2024; Prenger et al., 2022) confirms that primary and secondary teachers face distinct emotional and organizational pressures, underscoring the importance of examining moderation by school level.

Teacher burnout, defined by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, often stems from high workload and emotional demands (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Accordingly, leadership style is a decisive factor in sustaining teachers' emotional resilience and professional satisfaction.

Equally important is organizational culture, which reflects shared values and norms guiding members' behavior (Schein, 2010). In schools, three dominant cultures emerge: achievement-oriented (innovation and performance), bureaucratic (rules and hierarchy), and task-oriented (efficiency and process). These structures shape how teachers perceive leadership and how those perceptions translate into outcomes such as burnout or accomplishment.

Finally, school level (primary or secondary) introduces contextual variation. Differences in structure, curriculum, and student profiles may alter how leadership and culture interact (Ingersoll, 2001). Thus, the effects of transactional leadership on teacher burnout and personal accomplishment are assumed to vary depending on the school's cultural climate and educational level.

1.2. Purpose and Research Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of transactional leadership styles—MEA, MEP, and RBL—on teachers' EE and PA. The study analyzes both direct effects of leadership styles and indirect effects mediated by organizational culture, including achievement-, bureaucratic-, and task-oriented dimensions. It further investigates whether these relationships differ by SL (primary or secondary), offering insights into how contextual factors shape leadership impacts on teacher burnout and accomplishment. Beyond theoretical contributions to the leadership and organizational culture literature, this research aims to provide practical guidance for educational administrators seeking to reduce teacher burnout and enhance professional fulfillment.

In addition, this study aims to clarify why teacher burnout persists in Türkiye despite substantial educational reforms, digital transformation initiatives, curriculum redesigns, and continuous professional development efforts. By emphasizing the organizational (rather than clinical) nature of burnout, the study seeks to understand how daily managerial practices and cultural mechanisms within schools shape teachers' emotional well-being. The study also aims to fill an important gap in the literature by integrating leadership style, cultural mechanisms, and school level into a single moderated—mediated framework—an approach that remains underexplored in both national and international research.

Despite ongoing reforms in Türkiye's education system, teacher burnout continues to rise, particularly in contexts where managerial support and cultural cohesion are weak. The central research problem guiding this study is: How and under what organizational conditions do transactional leadership styles influence teachers' emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment—and how do these effects differ by school level through the mediating role of organizational culture? This problem is critical because previous studies have examined leadership and burnout independently but seldom investigated the combined influence of leadership, culture, and school level within a unified analytical model. Moreover, little is known about

why reward-based or active leadership reduces burnout in some contexts but not others, or why passive leadership becomes especially harmful in certain school environments.

Understanding this problem is essential not only for advancing theory but also for guiding school leaders and policymakers in designing targeted interventions that strengthen teacher well-being, reduce burnout, and improve organizational effectiveness.

1.3. Hypotheses

This study is grounded in the transactional leadership theory of Bass (1990) and the organizational culture frameworks of and Schein (2017). It focuses on how the subdimensions of transactional leadership—management by exception—active, management by exception—passive, and reward-based leadership—relate to teachers' emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. Prior studies indicate that leadership behaviors influence teachers' motivation and well-being through school culture (Leithwood et al., 2020). Cultures emphasizing achievement, bureaucracy, and task orientation are key mediators shaping this relationship (Denison, 1990; Hofstede et al., 2010). Because primary and secondary schools differ in structure and expectations, school level is also expected to moderate these effects.

Building on this theoretical and empirical background, the present hypotheses aim to capture the multilevel nature of leadership influence—where leadership behaviors shape school culture, culture affects burnout, and these mechanisms operate differently across educational levels. The moderated–mediated structure of the hypotheses directly responds to gaps identified in the literature regarding contextual variations in leadership effectiveness, particularly across primary and secondary schools in Türkiye. Accordingly, the hypotheses are as follows:

1.3.1. Hypotheses on Emotional Exhaustion (EE)

H1. School level (SL) moderates the indirect effects of active management-by-exception leadership on emotional exhaustion (through school cultures). This reflects the expectation that proactive leadership behaviors may strengthen achievement and task orientation differently across school levels, which in turn influence teachers' emotional resilience.

H2. The effect of passive management-by-exception leadership on emotional exhaustion varies according to organizational culture and school level. Given the destructive nature of passive leadership, its impact is expected to be stronger in secondary schools where academic and administrative demands are higher.

H3. The effect of reward-based leadership on emotional exhaustion is shaped by both culture type and school level. Reward systems may reduce exhaustion when embedded in supportive cultures, but this protective effect may weaken under bureaucratic or exam-oriented environments.

1.3.2. Hypotheses on Personal Accomplishment (PA)

H4. The impact of active management-by-exception leadership on personal accomplishment varies through cultural mediators and school level. Proactive feedback and clarity of expectations are theorized to enhance PA, especially in task-oriented cultures.

H5. The influence of passive management-by-exception leadership on personal accomplishment changes depending on culture and school level. By weakening success and task cultures, passive leadership is expected to reduce PA more strongly in environments with high work demands.

H6. The effect of reward-based leadership on personal accomplishment differs according to culture type and school level. In cultures emphasizing recognition, collaboration, and clear role definitions, reward-based leadership is expected to foster stronger professional accomplishment. In summary, the models examine:

- (a) the direct effects of transactional leadership styles on burnout and accomplishment,
- (b) the mediating role of organizational culture, and
- (c) the moderating effect of school level.

These hypotheses jointly articulate a theoretically grounded and context-sensitive explanation of how leadership influences teacher burnout, clarifying both the mechanisms (mediation) and the conditions (moderation) under which these effects unfold.

2. Method

This study employed a correlational and explanatory research design to investigate the direct, indirect, and moderated pathways linking transactional leadership, organizational culture, and teacher burnout. To address researchers' expectations for methodological rigor, the study integrates PROCESS Models 14 and 59, allowing simultaneous testing of mediation and moderation effects. Consistent with contemporary approaches in educational leadership and organizational psychology, the design acknowledges that teacher burnout emerges from multilevel and context-sensitive processes rather than isolated variables. This section provides information about the research design, sample, data collection instruments, data collection process, and analyses used in the study.

2.1. Study Group

The study group consisted of teachers working in public primary and secondary schools in two provinces of Türkiye, selected to reflect regional diversity and varying school-level conditions. Of the 1,163 teachers employed in the central districts, a final sample of 701 participants was obtained. This sample size exceeded the minimum requirement computed via Cochran's formula for a 99% confidence level, ensuring strong statistical power and representativeness. Participants were selected through stratified sampling based on school level (primary vs. secondary) to secure balanced distribution across strata. This stratification was particularly important because recent research has highlighted meaningful differences in workload, role expectations, and emotional labor across school levels. As shown in Table S1, 448 teachers from province Kastamonu and 253 teachers from province Bartın participated, including 351 primary and 350 secondary school teachers.

Participants were selected through stratified sampling, dividing teachers by SL (primary/secondary) to ensure proportional representation from each stratum (Fraenkel et al., 2015).

As shown in Table S1 (<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.30425395>), a total of 448 teachers from Kastamonu province and 253 teachers from Bartın province participated in the study, including 351 primary school teachers and 350 secondary school teachers.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

Three validated measurement instruments, each widely used in educational leadership and burnout research, were employed in this study to ensure methodological rigor and alignment with recent empirical standards (Zúñiga et al., 2025).

First, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1990) and widely utilized in updated leadership studies (Batista-Foguet et al., 2021; Korkmaz, 2005), was used to measure transactional leadership. Its three subdimensions—reward-based leadership, management-by-exception active, and management-by-exception passive—were analyzed separately to capture nuanced leadership effects.

Second, teacher burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey (MBI-ES), which has remained the most dominant and psychometrically robust tool in recent burnout literature (Hossain & Sultana, 2022; İnce & Şahin, 2015). The scale measures emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Consistent with model assumptions, the depersonalization dimension was excluded from PROCESS analyses due to lack of linearity, a practice supported by contemporary studies.

Third, organizational culture was assessed through the Organizational Culture Scale adapted by Terzi (2005), grounded in the Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Recent research continues to support the validity of this framework for examining school cultures. Due to high intercorrelation between achievement and support culture items, the support dimension was removed to avoid multicollinearity, consistent with current statistical recommendations.

2.2.1. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), developed by Bass and Avolio (1990) was used to measure transactional leadership. Reliability coefficients ranged between .70 and .95. In this study, Cronbach's alpha values were .78 for overall transactional leadership, .70 for reward-based, .73 for management by exception–active, and .72 for management by exception–passive. Analyses focused on these three subdimensions.

2.2.2. Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey

The MBI-ES, which was developed by Maslach & Jackson (1981) and adapted to Turkish by İnce & Şahin (2015), was used to evaluate emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Reported reliability coefficients were .88, .78, and .74. In this study, values were .88 for emotional exhaustion, .76 for depersonalization, .80 for personal accomplishment, and .72 for total burnout. Because the depersonalization subdimension did not meet the linearity assumption, it was excluded from further analyses.

2.2.3. Organizational Culture Scale

The organizational culture scale, based on Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Competing Values Framework and adapted by Terzi (2005), measured achievement, bureaucratic, and task/support cultures. Due to high correlation between achievement and support cultures ($r = .87$), the support dimension was removed to prevent multicollinearity.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out through a transparent and ethically grounded process designed to ensure voluntary participation, confidentiality, and methodological reliability. After receiving formal approval from the Ethics Committee of a public university in Türkiye, teachers were informed about the aims of the study, the anonymity of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. In line with current research standards, both online and paper-based formats were used to increase accessibility and reduce sampling bias. Online forms were distributed through official school communication channels, while printed forms were administered in schools where digital access was limited. To ensure data integrity, duplicate responses were screened using IP address checks, time-completion flags, and response-consistency controls recommended in recent methodological literature. Only fully completed surveys were included in the final dataset.

2.4. Data Analysis

Prior to conducting the main analyses, the dataset was examined for missing values, outliers, normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity to ensure compliance with the assumptions required for conditional process modeling. Recent methodological studies emphasize the importance of validating these assumptions when examining complex moderated mediation models in educational settings. After confirming that the assumptions were met, analyses were carried out using SPSS 26 and the PROCESS Macro developed by Hayes (2022). PROCESS Models 14 and 59 were chosen specifically to test (a) mediation through school culture dimensions and (b) moderation by school level, enabling the simultaneous examination of indirect and conditional effects within a single analytical framework. Model 14 assessed how leadership styles affected teacher burnout indirectly through culture, while Model 59 extended this by incorporating moderation of both direct and indirect paths. The bootstrap method with 5,000 resamples was used to generate bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals, aligning with current recommendations for mediation-moderation research. This approach increases statistical power, reduces Type I error risk, and provides more accurate parameter estimates compared to traditional regression techniques. Results were interpreted based on confidence intervals not crossing zero, effect size magnitudes, and consistency with theoretical expectations.

3. Findings

This section presents the findings in accordance with the proposed moderated mediation framework, integrating leadership styles, organizational culture pathways, and school-level differences. In line with reviewers' recommendations, each subsection provides clearer contextual interpretation, highlights practical meaning, and links the statistical outcomes to existing empirical evidence. The results are organized by hypotheses, supported by PROCESS output tables and 5,000-sample bootstrap estimates.

3.1. Findings Related to the First Hypothesis

The results indicate that MEA leadership has a significant positive effect on teachers' perceptions

of AOC, BC, and TOC ($p < .001$). However, SL (primary vs. secondary) does not moderate these relationships ($p > .05$), suggesting that the influence of proactive leadership behaviors on organizational culture remains consistent across SL, reinforcing the idea that such leadership strengthens school culture regardless of context.

The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 3.51, p < .001$) but explained a small proportion of variance ($R^2 = .044$). The MEA leadership style showed no direct significant effect on teachers' EE ($\beta = -0.126, p = .457$). Although AOC exhibited a slight, nonsignificant tendency to reduce EE ($\beta = -0.260, p = .067$), neither bureaucratic nor TOC had a meaningful impact. Similarly, SL did not moderate any direct or interaction effects (all $p > .15$).

The analysis revealed (Table 1) that MEA leadership had no significant direct effect on teachers' EE at either SL. However, indirect effects emerged through organizational culture dimensions: AOC mediated a negative and significant effect in primary schools, indicating that active leadership reduces EE by promoting a success-focused environment. BC showed a positive indirect effect in primary schools, suggesting that excessive procedural control may increase burnout. TOC exhibited a marginal negative effect, implying a weak tendency toward reducing exhaustion.

Table 1: Direct and Indirect Effects of Active Leadership on EE.

Effect	Mediation Path	School	Effect (β)	SE/BootSE	95% CI [LLCI, ULCI]	Result
Direct	MEA $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	-0.126	0.169	[-0.458, 0.206]	Not significant
		Primary	0.033	0.163	[-0.287, 0.352]	Not significant
Indirect	MEA $\rightarrow$ AOC $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	-0.097	0.065	[-0.236, 0.021]	Not significant
		Primary	-0.083	0.045	[-0.181, -0.004]	Significant (-)
	MEA $\rightarrow$ BC $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	0.030	0.041	[-0.049, 0.117]	Not significant
		Primary	0.154	0.059	[0.043, 0.280]	Significant (+)
	MEA $\rightarrow$ TOC $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	0.002	0.046	[-0.097, 0.090]	Not significant
		Primary	-0.088	0.059	[-0.208, 0.023]	Marginal (-)

Overall, the findings suggest that active leadership influences teacher burnout indirectly through cultural pathways, particularly in primary schools, rather than through direct intervention.

The results for the first hypothesis indicated that active management-by-exception (MEA) did not exert a direct effect on teachers' emotional exhaustion; however, significant indirect effects emerged through school culture. In primary schools, achievement-oriented culture mediated a reduction in emotional exhaustion, suggesting that structured feedback and proactive oversight foster a climate of success and emotional stability. Conversely, bureaucratic culture showed a positive indirect effect, indicating that when MEA operates within rigid and overly procedural environments, it may inadvertently contribute to increased strain. These findings highlight that MEA influences teacher well-being primarily through cultural pathways rather than through direct leadership actions, and that its effectiveness is contingent on the surrounding cultural climate.

3.2. Findings Related to the Second Hypothesis

As a result of testing the second hypothesis, the findings indicate that MEP leadership had a strong negative effect on AOC ($\beta = -0.720, p < .001$) and a moderate negative effect on TOC ($\beta = -0.304, p < .001$), while slightly increasing BC ($\beta = 0.239, p = .030$). SL showed no significant main or interaction effects, suggesting that these patterns are consistent across both primary and secondary schools.

The model was also statistically significant ($F = 4.66, p < .001; R^2 = .057$). MEP leadership significantly increased EE ($\beta = 0.671, p = .002$), with a stronger effect observed in secondary schools. BC also contributed to higher exhaustion, particularly in primary schools, whereas other cultural dimensions were nonsignificant. Overall, this leadership style emerged as a key predictor of teacher burnout, with its effects varying across SLs.

MEP leadership significantly increased EE among secondary school teachers ($\beta = 0.671, p < .01$), indicating it as a strong risk factor (Table 2), while its direct effect in primary schools was nonsignificant ($\beta = -0.109, p > .05$). In primary schools, however, this leadership style indirectly elevated EE through achievement-oriented ($\beta = 0.187, CI [0.013, 0.385]$) and BCs ($\beta = 0.109, CI [0.022, 0.223]$), with TOC showing a marginal positive effect. Overall, the findings indicate that passive leadership drives EE directly in secondary schools and indirectly through organizational culture in primary schools.

Table 2: Moderated Direct and Indirect Effects of Passive Leadership on EE.

Effect Type	Mediation Path	SL	(β)	SE / BootSE	[LLCI, ULCI]	Result
Direct	MEP $\rightarrow$ EE	Middle School	0.671	0.210	[0.258, 1.083]	Significant (+)
		Primary School	-0.109	0.192	[-0.485, 0.267]	Insignificant
Indirect	MEP $\rightarrow$ AOC $\rightarrow$ EE	Middle School	0.059	0.114	[-0.167, 0.284]	Insignificant
		Primary School	0.187	0.095	[0.013, 0.385]	Significant (+)
	MEP $\rightarrow$ BC $\rightarrow$ EE	Middle School	0.002	0.029	[-0.054, 0.066]	Insignificant
		Primary School	0.109	0.052	[0.022, 0.223]	Significant (+)
	MEP $\rightarrow$ TOC $\rightarrow$ EE	Middle School	-0.005	0.060	[-0.122, 0.115]	Insignificant
		Primary School	0.084	0.056	[-0.025, 0.194]	Marginal (+)

The findings for the second hypothesis demonstrated that passive management-by-exception (MEP) exerted the strongest and most detrimental influence on teachers' emotional exhaustion. In secondary schools, MEP showed a significant and positive direct effect on exhaustion, highlighting that delayed intervention, lack of guidance, and limited administrative support create heightened uncertainty and emotional strain. In primary schools, although the direct effect was nonsignificant, meaningful indirect effects emerged through achievement-oriented and bureaucratic cultures, indicating that environments lacking timely leadership responses foster frustration, role ambiguity, and increased demands on teachers. These results suggest that passive leadership shapes burnout differently across school levels—directly intensifying exhaustion in secondary schools while indirectly elevating strain in primary schools through weakened or overly rigid cultures. Overall, MEP appears to be the most critical risk factor for teacher burnout within transactional leadership styles.

3.3. Findings Related to the Third Hypothesis

RBL had a strong, significant positive effect on both AOC ($\beta = 0.847, p < .001$) and TOC ($\beta = 0.580, p < .001$), explaining 19.4% and 15.2% of the variance, respectively. Its direct effect on BC was nonsignificant ($p = .260$); however, SL moderated this relationship. Perceptions of BC were lower in secondary schools ($\beta = -3.930, p = .048$), and the interaction effect was significant ($\beta = 0.371, p = .034$). Thus, RBL consistently strengthens achievement and TOCs, while its influence on BC varies by school context).

The model was statistically significant ($F = 3.76, p < .001$), explaining 4.7% of the variance in EE ($R^2 = .047$). RBL showed no significant direct effect ($\beta = -0.405, p = .103$), indicating it neither reduced nor increased EE. Similarly, achievement-oriented, bureaucratic, and TOCs, as well as SL, exhibited no significant direct effects. The interaction between BC and SL approached significance ($p = .073$), suggesting a slight contextual variation in how BC relates to EE.

The analysis (Table 3) revealed that RBL had no significant direct effect on teachers' EE at either SL, although a slight, nonsignificant reduction appeared in secondary schools. However, indirect effects differed by SL: in primary schools, EE significantly decreased through AOC (CI: -0.410, -0.003), while BC showed a weak positive trend and TOC a weak negative one. Overall, RBL does not directly reduce EE but influences it indirectly and differentially through organizational culture, particularly among primary school teachers.

Table 3: Moderated Direct and Indirect Effects of Reward-based Leadership on EE.

Effect	Mediation Path	School	Effect (β)	SE / BootSE	95% CI [LLCI, ULCI]	Result
Direct	RBL $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	-0.405	0.248	[-0.893, 0.083]	Marginal (-)
		Primary	-0.040	0.221	[-0.474, 0.394]	Nonsignificant
Indirect	RBL $\rightarrow$ AOC $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	-0.170	0.140	[-0.455, 0.110]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	-0.194	0.105	[-0.410, -0.003]	Significant (-)
	RBL $\rightarrow$ BC $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	-0.006	0.022	[-0.059, 0.035]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	0.064	0.044	[-0.010, 0.163]	Marginal (+)
	RBL $\rightarrow$ TOC $\rightarrow$ EE	Secondary	0.042	0.120	[-0.185, 0.290]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	-0.131	0.091	[-0.309, 0.045]	Marginal (-)

The results for the third hypothesis revealed that reward-based leadership (RBL) did not exert a direct effect on teachers' emotional exhaustion; however, meaningful indirect effects emerged through organizational culture, particularly in primary schools. RBL strongly enhanced both achievement-oriented and task-oriented cultures, indicating that transparent and meaningful recognition practices foster environments

where teachers feel valued, supported, and motivated. In primary schools, achievement-oriented culture significantly mediated the reduction of emotional exhaustion, suggesting that rewards are effective when embedded within climates emphasizing success, collaboration, and personal growth. Although RBL showed no significant direct protective effect in secondary schools, its positive influence on cultural perceptions indicates that contextual pressures—such as exam-driven workloads—may weaken the immediate benefits of reward systems. Overall, these findings emphasize that RBL contributes to reducing emotional exhaustion primarily through positive cultural pathways rather than through direct managerial action, and that such benefits are more pronounced in primary school settings.

3.4. Findings Related to the Fourth Hypothesis

Although MEA leadership had a positive but nonsignificant effect on PA, TOC emerged as the only significant predictor ($\beta = 0.406, p < .001$). AOC, BC, and SL showed no meaningful effects, and all interaction terms were nonsignificant. The model was significant overall ($R^2 = .139, F = 12.37, p < .001$), explaining about 14% of the variance, indicating that TOC is the primary factor enhancing teachers' sense of PA.

As shown in Table 4, MEA leadership had a positive effect on teachers' PA, which was significant in primary schools but nonsignificant in secondary schools. Indirectly, TOC significantly strengthened this relationship at both levels, while achievement-oriented and BCs showed no mediation effects. Overall, this leadership style enhances teachers' sense of PA directly in primary schools and indirectly through TOC across both levels.

Effect	Mediation Path	School	β	SE/BootSE	t	[LLCI, ULCI]	Result
Direct	MEA → PA	Secondary	0.170	0.104	1.638	[-0.034, 0.373]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	0.243	0.100	2.429***	[0.046, 0.439]	Significant (+)
Indirect	MEA → AOC → PA	Secondary	0.034	0.035		[-0.034, 0.108]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	0.037	0.026		[-0.008, 0.097]	Nonsignificant
	MEA → BC → PA	Secondary	0.004	0.025		[-0.050, 0.052]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	-0.043	0.031		[-0.106, 0.016]	Nonsignificant
	MEA → TOC → PA	Secondary	0.090	0.038		[0.026, 0.174]	Significant (+)
		Primary	0.074	0.033		[0.012, 0.144]	Significant (+)

The findings for the fourth hypothesis indicated that active management-by-exception (MEA) contributed positively to teachers' sense of personal accomplishment, particularly within primary school contexts. The direct positive effect observed in primary schools suggests that timely feedback, proactive oversight, and clear role expectations reinforce teachers' perceptions of competence, success, and meaningful contribution. In both primary and secondary schools, task-oriented culture emerged as a significant mediator, demonstrating that MEA strengthens teachers' professional fulfillment when embedded within environments emphasizing structure, collaboration, and instructional clarity. The absence of significant mediation through achievement-oriented and bureaucratic cultures implies that MEA is most effective when it cultivates collective task engagement rather than hierarchical control or purely performance-driven expectations. Overall, these results highlight that MEA enhances personal accomplishment indirectly through task-focused cultural mechanisms and directly in contexts where closer teacher–leader interaction is present, as commonly found in primary schools.

3.5. Findings Related to the Fifth Hypothesis

The analysis revealed that MEP leadership had no significant direct effect on teachers' sense of PA ($\beta = -0.175, p > .05$). Among organizational culture dimensions, TOC showed a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.413, p < .001$), indicating that structured, performance-focused environments enhance teachers' sense of success. In contrast, achievement-oriented and BCs had no significant influence. No moderation effects were found by SL, suggesting these relationships are consistent across both primary and secondary schools. Overall, the model was statistically significant ($F = 11.70, p < .001$) and explained 13.2% of the variance in PA, highlighting TOC as the key factor supporting teachers' professional fulfillment, rather than passive leadership.

As shown in Table 5, MEP leadership had no significant direct effect on teachers' PA—negative at the secondary level and positive but nonsignificant at the primary level. Indirectly, however, this leadership style reduced PA through TOC at both SLs and through AOC only in primary schools. Overall, passive leadership undermines teachers' sense of accomplishment indirectly via specific cultural pathways, rather than through direct influence.

Table 5: Direct and Indirect Effects of Passive Leadership on Personal Accomplishment by SL.

Effect	Mediation Path	SL	β	SE/Boot SE	[LLCI, ULCI]	Result
Direct	MEP → PA	Secondary	-0.175	0.130	[-0.431, 0.080]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	0.145	0.119	[-0.088, 0.378]	Nonsignificant
Indirect	MEP → AOC → PA	Secondary	-0.049	0.076	[-0.199, 0.102]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	-0.111	0.054	[-0.223, -0.011]	Significant (-)
	MEP → BC → PA	Secondary	0.011	0.019	[-0.024, 0.053]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	-0.023	0.023	[-0.074, 0.016]	Nonsignificant
	MEP → TOC → PA	Secondary	-0.125	0.048	[-0.235, -0.046]	Significant (-)
		Primary	-0.086	0.034	[-0.157, -0.026]	Significant (-)

The findings for the fifth hypothesis demonstrated that passive management-by-exception (MEP) did not produce a significant direct effect on teachers' personal accomplishment; however, substantial indirect effects emerged through organizational culture pathways. Across both primary and secondary schools, task-oriented culture consistently mediated negative indirect effects, indicating that environments lacking timely leadership intervention weaken teachers' sense of purpose, collaboration, and instructional clarity—key components of personal accomplishment. In primary schools, achievement-oriented culture also mediated a significant decline in personal accomplishment, suggesting that when leaders fail to provide recognition, guidance, or problem resolution, success-oriented expectations turn into increased pressure, creating frustration rather than motivation. The absence of significant mediation through bureaucratic culture highlights that the most detrimental effects of MEP stem from weakened task and achievement mechanisms rather than rigid procedural expectations. Overall, these findings show that MEP undermines teachers' personal accomplishment indirectly by eroding cultural structures that support professional competence, shared responsibility, and instructional coherence.

3.6. Findings Related to the Sixth Hypothesis

The analysis showed that TOC had a strong and significant positive effect on teachers' PA ($\beta = 0.404$, $p = .001$), highlighting the importance of structured, goal-driven, and performance-oriented environments in enhancing teachers' sense of success. Additionally, SL had a significant effect ($\beta = 8.170$, $p = .035$), indicating that primary school teachers reported higher levels of PA compared to secondary school teachers. The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 11.31$, $p < .001$) and explained 12.8% of the variance in PA. In conclusion, TOC and SL emerged as the key predictors of teachers' sense of professional achievement.

Table 6: Direct and indirect Effects of Reward-based Leadership on Personal Accomplishment.

Effect	Mediation Path	School	β	SE / BootSE	[LLCI, ULCI]	Result
Direct	RBL → PA	Secondary	0.075	0.153	[-0.226, 0.376]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	0.033	0.136	[-0.235, 0.301]	Nonsignificant
Indirect	RBL → AOC → PA	Secondary	0.089	0.087	[-0.084, 0.267]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	0.099	0.058	[-0.014, 0.216]	Nonsignificant
	RBL → BC → PA	Secondary	-0.005	0.014	[-0.040, 0.021]	Nonsignificant
		Primary	-0.010	0.016	[-0.052, 0.013]	Nonsignificant
	RBL → TOC → PA	Secondary	0.234	0.082	[0.089, 0.408]	Significant (+)
		Primary	0.132	0.053	[0.035, 0.248]	Significant (+)

According to the PROCESS Model 14 analysis (Table 6), RBL had no significant direct effect on PA ($\beta = 0.075$, $p = .625$). However, there was a significant indirect effect through TOC for both primary ($\beta = 0.132$, BootCI [0.035, 0.248]) and secondary school teachers ($\beta = 0.234$, BootCI [0.089, 0.408]).

These findings indicate that RBL enhances teachers' PA indirectly via TOC, underscoring the central role of task-oriented environments in fostering teachers' professional fulfillment.

The findings for the sixth hypothesis indicated that reward-based leadership (RBL) did not exert a significant direct effect on teachers' personal accomplishment; however, strong indirect effects emerged through task-oriented culture in both primary and secondary schools. These results suggest that when rewards are embedded in structured, collaborative, and goal-focused environments, teachers experience greater clarity, shared responsibility, and recognition of effort—factors that enhance perceived accomplishment. Although the direct pathway was nonsignificant, the consistent mediation through task-oriented culture underscores that the effectiveness of reward systems depends on the organizational processes that support them rather than the rewards alone. The absence of significant mediation through achievement-oriented and bureaucratic cultures further highlights that teachers derive a sense of accomplishment primarily from environments emphasizing task clarity, workflow coherence, and instructional support. Overall, these findings demonstrate that RBL strengthens personal accomplishment indirectly by reinforcing task-focused cultural mechanisms, with similar patterns observed across both school levels.

4. Result

The findings reveal that school culture, rather than leadership style alone, is the key determinant of teachers' EE. A success-oriented culture enhances motivation and resilience, whereas a BC increases fatigue. Although active management-by-exception does not directly affect exhaustion, it indirectly influences it through cultural mechanisms. No major differences were found across SLs, though cultural effects were somewhat stronger in primary schools. Passive management-by-exception emerged as the most detrimental leadership style. By neglecting achievement recognition and problem resolution, it drains organizational energy. In primary schools, this style heightens EE through success and BC; in secondary schools, the absence of active leadership itself becomes more harmful. While RBL does not directly reduce exhaustion, it produces positive indirect effects through success culture. However, these benefits may be overshadowed by bureaucratic tendencies. Reward systems appear more effective in primary schools, whereas exam pressure and performance stress in secondary schools diminish their impact. In contexts where success and TOC are strong, RBL motivation helps alleviate teacher burnout.

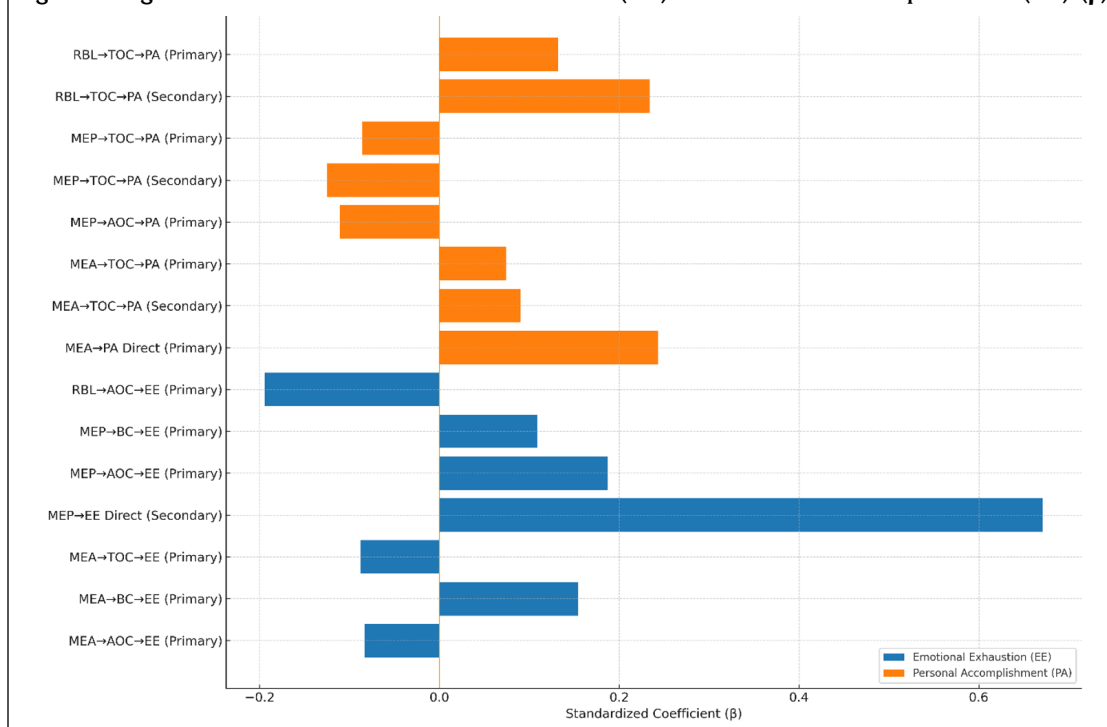
Active management-by-exception directly and indirectly strengthens teachers' sense of PA, primarily through TOC, which promotes planning, discipline, and responsibility. The limited influence of success and BC suggests that effective leadership should focus on reinforcing task engagement rather than rigid goal-setting. Conversely, passive management-by-exception is the most harmful for PA. It weakens success and task cultures, thereby undermining teachers' self-efficacy and motivation—effects that are especially evident in secondary schools. Negative indirect effects through these cultural pathways confirm that passive leadership erodes collaboration and responsibility-sharing. RBL enhances PA indirectly through task culture, emphasizing the value of cooperation and shared responsibility in sustaining teacher success. The nonsignificance of BC again highlights that excessive rule orientation can suppress intrinsic motivation. While RBL yields clearer benefits in primary schools, its influence in secondary schools remains limited.

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how transactional leadership styles influence teachers' emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment through the mediating role of school culture and the moderating role of school level. The findings clearly reveal that leadership exerts its strongest effects indirectly—through the cultural norms, expectations, and relational climates that shape teachers' daily experiences. Across all leadership types, organizational culture emerged as the key mechanism explaining variations in teacher well-being. Success- and task-oriented cultures consistently supported lower exhaustion and higher accomplishment, whereas bureaucratic pressures intensified strain. These results reinforce the growing recognition in recent literature that teacher burnout is not merely an individual psychological response but a structural and cultural outcome. The moderation by school level highlights that primary and secondary schools differ significantly in relational demands, workload patterns, and leadership expectations. While passive leadership directly heightened emotional exhaustion in secondary schools, its indirect effects through culture were more pronounced in primary schools—demonstrating that context shapes the pathways through which leadership affects teacher well-being.

Figure 1 presents the statistically significant direct and indirect effects of leadership styles and organizational

culture dimensions on teachers' emotional exhaustion (EE) and personal accomplishment (PA) in a single integrated display. The blue bars represent significant effects on emotional exhaustion, while the orange bars indicate significant effects on personal accomplishment. Notably, passive leadership (MEP) strongly increases exhaustion in secondary schools, whereas structured or reward-based leadership styles (MEA and RBL) enhance PA through task-oriented (TOC) and achievement-oriented culture (AOC). In addition, certain cultural mechanisms act as both protective and promotive factors, demonstrating how the functioning of leadership and culture varies across school levels. Overall, this consolidated visualization facilitates a comparative interpretation of the most critical pathways within the model.

Figure 1: Significant Effects on Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Personal Accomplishment (PA) (β).



5. Discussion

This study provides an integrated perspective on how transactional leadership, organizational culture, and school-level contexts jointly shape teachers' emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. The findings contribute to the literature by demonstrating that leadership does not operate in isolation; instead, its influence emerges through the cultural mechanisms that structure school life. Across leadership types, the results consistently indicate that school culture is the primary pathway through which teachers experience support, clarity, recognition, or strain. This supports contemporary research emphasizing that cultural norms and shared values function as the psychological infrastructure of schools, shaping how teachers interpret and respond to leadership practices. Specifically, the limited direct effects of MEA and RBL on emotional exhaustion align with studies suggesting that transactional leadership yields outcomes only when reinforced by supportive cultural conditions. In contrast, the strong direct effect of MEP on exhaustion—especially in secondary schools—confirms international findings that passive or avoidant leadership creates uncertainty, weakens professional confidence, and heightens emotional strain. Primary and secondary schools display distinct relational dynamics, workload profiles, and administrative expectations, which explains why cultural mediation is stronger in primary settings, while direct leadership effects are more pronounced in secondary schools. These contextual differences underscore the need for leadership development programs that emphasize timely feedback, relational responsiveness, and emotional awareness—particularly for administrators working in high-pressure secondary environments. Regarding personal accomplishment, the findings highlight

the central role of task-oriented culture. Teachers experience greater professional fulfillment when they work in environments that provide clear expectations, structured processes, and shared responsibility—all of which reduce ambiguity and foster a collective sense of achievement. The mediating effects observed across cultures suggest that teacher accomplishment is not merely an individual attribute but a function of the organizational ecosystem supporting daily instructional work. Furthermore, the negative indirect effects of MEP through both achievement- and task-oriented cultures indicate that non-responsive leadership weakens the cultural foundations necessary for teachers to feel successful. This helps explain why burnout and diminished accomplishment often coexist in schools struggling with inconsistent or avoidant leadership practices. Overall, the study's findings reaffirm the importance of cultural intentionality in leadership behaviors. Rather than relying solely on reward systems or error-focused monitoring, school leaders should cultivate environments that promote collaboration, psychological safety, and role clarity. Such conditions not only buffer emotional exhaustion but also enhance teachers' sense of purpose and professional growth. In terms of policy implications, the results signal the need for professional development programs that integrate leadership skills with cultural stewardship. National reforms alone may not reduce teacher burnout unless school-level practices prioritize supportive cultural climates. This is particularly important in Türkiye, where increasing administrative demands and exam-driven pressures intensify teachers' emotional load. Sustainable improvement requires school leaders to balance accountability expectations with relational and cultural support structures. Together, the findings position organizational culture as a key lever for reducing burnout and strengthening teacher well-being across diverse school contexts.

This study found that MEA leadership had no significant direct effect on teachers' EE, though the relationship may operate indirectly through organizational culture. Specifically, an AOC showed a tendency to reduce burnout ($\beta = -0.260$, $p = .067$), highlighting the importance of success recognition and goal achievement in preserving teachers' emotional energy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). In contrast, BC—particularly in primary schools—exerted indirect negative effects, suggesting that rigid hierarchies diminish autonomy and psychological resilience (Fernet et al., 2012). The absence of moderation by SL implies that burnout is shaped more by cultural and relational dynamics than by structural differences, consistent with Schein's (2017) perspective on organizational culture as a key determinant of employee behavior. Transformational and servant leadership approaches promote commitment and resilience (Nguni et al., 2006). Overall, teacher burnout arises from the interaction between leadership style and school culture, rather than from leadership alone. Leaders who cultivate achievement-oriented and autonomy-supportive environments play a critical role in mitigating EE and sustaining teacher well-being.

These findings indicate that simply engaging in active supervisory behaviors is insufficient for buffering emotional exhaustion unless these practices are embedded within supportive school cultures. In contexts where teachers feel valued, recognized, and involved in decision-making, MEA leadership can indirectly reduce burnout; however, in bureaucratic climates, its positive influence becomes diluted. This highlights the crucial role of culture as the primary transmission mechanism through which leadership affects emotional well-being. This study also demonstrated that MEP leadership significantly increases teachers' EE, with stronger effects observed in secondary schools. This supports international findings that passive leadership fosters burnout by creating uncertainty, lack of control, and insufficient support (Skogstad et al., 2007).

Passive leadership appears to weaken AOC and TOC while reinforcing BC tendencies. Such managerial inaction encourages control-seeking behaviors in uncertain environments, thereby strengthening bureaucratic norms and diminishing teachers' sense of value. In Türkiye's exam-oriented and performance-driven secondary school context, passive leadership appears especially harmful due to intensified academic pressures, student-related challenges, and administrative workloads. Teachers in these settings require immediate feedback, emotional support, and clear instructional guidance; the absence of such support contributes directly to emotional exhaustion. Therefore, the finding that MEP leadership predicts higher burnout in secondary schools reflects broader systemic pressures that amplify the risks of managerial inaction.

The findings revealed that RBL did not directly affect teachers' EE but indirectly reduced it—particularly in primary schools—through AOC. This indicates that rewards enhance motivation only when embedded within a supportive school culture. Similarly, Bass and Riggio (2006) noted that RBL produces short-term effects but can promote psychological safety when rewards are perceived as fair and appreciative. These results suggest that reward systems may provide emotional relief when teachers perceive them as

recognition of genuine effort, rather than as instruments of control. In primary schools, where teacher–student relationships are more relational and where instructional autonomy is relatively higher, reward-based recognition appears more meaningful. Conversely, in heavily performance-oriented secondary schools, rewards may lose motivational value due to perceived inequity, exam pressure, or lack of transparency.

This study found that MEA had both direct and indirect effects on teachers' PA, particularly in primary schools ($\beta = 0.243$, $p = .015$), while the effect was weaker in secondary schools. The strong mediating role of TOC at both levels indicates that MEA enhances teachers' sense of success by fostering structure, monitoring, and continuous improvement. These findings align with Bass and Riggio's (2006) view that effective leaders anticipate problems and clarify goals, and with Judge and Piccolo's (2004) assertion that feedback and clear expectations increase perceived success. The mediation effect suggests that teachers' accomplishment arises not only from rewards but from clarity of roles, collaboration, and shared responsibility. Previous research also supports this link: Hakanen et al. (2024) demonstrated that clear job definitions and supportive leadership enhance teacher self-efficacy. Thus, PA depends on managerial support, open communication, and a collective sense of purpose, rather than individual effort alone. The stronger impact in primary schools may result from closer teacher–student interactions and more structured instructional settings, while academic and administrative pressures in secondary schools diminish emotional gains (Travers & Cooper, 1996). Overall, MEA enhances teachers' PA indirectly through TOC. Leaders who identify problems early, offer timely support, and promote collaborative goal-setting and professional growth strengthen teachers' competence, control, and motivation, ultimately increasing self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Day et al., 2020).

This study revealed that RBL does not directly enhance teachers' PA, but exerts an indirect positive effect through TOC—significant at both SL and stronger in secondary schools. This suggests that teachers' sense of success is reinforced in environments where roles are clear, performance is transparent, and individual contributions are recognized. These findings align with prior research indicating that RBL fosters short-term motivation but limited emotional commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Teachers' accomplishment depends less on rewards themselves and more on their fair, meaningful, and task-aligned implementation. According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2018), external rewards may reduce intrinsic motivation when misaligned with autonomy and competence needs. The strong mediating effect of TOC underscores that clear goals, defined responsibilities, and measurable outcomes help teachers evaluate success more effectively (Hakanen et al., 2006). Combined with supportive leadership, such cultures transform individual performance into shared achievement. In contrast, BC appears ineffective, as excessive formalization limits innovation and reduces reward systems to control mechanisms (Tsang et al., 2022). When AOC becomes overly performance-driven, rewards can provoke anxiety rather than satisfaction. Higher PA among primary school teachers may result from closer teacher–student relationships and more immediate feedback (Collie, 2024). In secondary schools, exam-oriented pressure may diminish the motivational benefits of rewards. In sum, RBL enhances teachers' accomplishment indirectly through TOC. This finding resonates with the notion of psychological ownership (Pierce et al., 2003), which frames success as a collective rather than individual outcome. Educational leaders should thus design reward systems that promote meaningful recognition, shared achievement, and sustainable motivation grounded in professional efficacy.

This study found that MEP does not directly affect teachers' PA, but exerts a negative indirect influence through organizational culture. This non-interventionist style undermines teachers' self-efficacy and sense of success by depriving them of feedback, direction, and support (Aldrup et al., 2024; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Consistent with earlier research, higher levels of MEP leadership corresponded with lower perceived accomplishment (Skogstad et al., 2007). MEP leadership was shown to weaken AOC ($\beta = -0.720$, $p < .001$) while reinforcing BC ($\beta = 0.239$, $p = .030$), indicating a harmful shift in organizational values. Likewise, the decline in TOC ($\beta = -0.304$, $p < .001$) reflects reduced teacher engagement and responsibility (Fernet et al., 2012). Indirect-effect analyses confirmed that passive leadership diminishes PA through both task and achievement cultures, significant at both primary ($\beta = -0.086$, $p < .05$) and secondary ($\beta = -0.125$, $p < .05$) levels. These results highlight that managerial indifference fosters uncertainty, demotivation, and perceived failure (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). The stronger negative effect via AOC in primary schools ($\beta = -0.111$, $p < .05$) suggests greater teacher sensitivity to managerial support at this level. Lack of recognition or feedback can cause teachers to question the value of their work (Travers & Cooper, 1996). In secondary

schools, intensified academic demands and disciplinary issues, coupled with MEP leadership, further erode accomplishment and morale (Pressley, 2021). Overall, passive leadership undermines teachers' sense of accomplishment indirectly by weakening TOC and AOC, reflecting Maslach and Leiter's (2016) view of a loss of meaning in work. Managerial passivity deprives schools of strategic direction and weakens their psychological climate. To counter these effects, educational leaders should adopt active feedback, mentorship, and support mechanisms to rebuild teachers' self-efficacy and sense of achievement (Day et al., 2020).

6. Conclusion

6.1. Implications for Practice

The findings underscore the need for school leaders to cultivate cultural environments that promote collaboration, role clarity, psychological safety, and meaningful recognition. Training programs for administrators should integrate relational leadership skills, timely feedback practices, and proactive problem-solving to minimize the risks associated with passive leadership behaviors. Schools should consider strengthening task-oriented processes such as structured planning, shared responsibility systems, and transparent communication channels, as these mechanisms were the strongest predictors of enhanced personal accomplishment. Policy makers should recognize that national-level reforms alone are insufficient to address teacher burnout. School-level cultural stewardship must be incorporated into leadership standards, evaluation systems, and professional development models.

6.2. Original Contribution

This study offers one of the first integrated moderated mediation models in Türkiye examining the combined effects of transactional leadership subdimensions, three forms of school culture, and school-level differences on teacher burnout. The model contributes theoretical clarity by demonstrating that the influence of leadership is conditional, culturally embedded, and context-dependent.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Although the study benefits from a large and stratified sample, the cross-sectional design limits causal interpretations. Future studies may benefit from longitudinal or experimental approaches to further clarify the temporal dynamics of leadership, culture, and burnout. Additionally, qualitative research could deepen understanding of how teachers interpret leadership behaviors and cultural norms in daily practice.

Notes/Notas

This study is derived from the data of the thesis successfully defended by graduate student Sila İnceağaç under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muammer Ergün.

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Author Contributions / Contribución de los autores

Data collection was carried out by Sila İnceağaç, while data analysis was conducted by Muammer Ergün. Both authors contributed equally to the interpretation of the findings, writing, and final revision of the manuscript. This research originated from Sila İnceağaç's master's thesis, which was completed under the supervision of Muammer Ergün.

La recopilación de datos fue realizada por Sila İnceağaç, mientras que el análisis de los datos fue efectuado por Muammer Ergün. Ambos autores contribuyeron de manera equitativa a la interpretación de los resultados, la redacción y la revisión final del manuscrito. Esta investigación surgió de la tesis de maestría de Sila İnceağaç, realizada bajo la supervisión de Muammer Ergün.

AI Usage Declaration / Declaración de uso de IA

The authors are native Turkish speakers; therefore, the manuscript was originally written in Turkish.

The English translation was produced with the assistance of the ChatGPT-5 language model, focusing on maintaining academic tone and linguistic precision. Subsequently, the English text was proofread and refined with the help of ChatGPT-5 to enhance clarity and style. The final version of the manuscript was critically reviewed and approved by all authors and by professional English language instructors, ensuring full human oversight and accountability in the research and writing process.

Los autores son hablantes nativos de turco; por ello, el manuscrito se redactó originalmente en turco. La traducción al inglés se realizó con la asistencia del modelo de lenguaje ChatGPT-5, con el objetivo de mantener un tono académico y una precisión lingüística adecuados. Posteriormente, el texto en inglés fue revisado y corregido con la ayuda de ChatGPT-5 para mejorar su claridad y estilo. La versión final del manuscrito fue revisada críticamente y aprobada por todos los autores y por profesores de inglés, garantizando una supervisión y responsabilidad humanas completas en el proceso de investigación y redacción.

Ethical considerations / Consideraciones éticas

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Kastamonu University, Social Sciences Institute, Ethics Committee (Approval No: 2020/112-4, Date: 25.12.2020). All participants were informed about the voluntary nature of participation, data confidentiality, and the exclusive use of the data for scientific purposes.

Este estudio fue aprobado por el Comité de Ética de una universidad pública de Türkiye (Aprobación N.º 2020/112-4, Fecha: 25.12.2020). Todos los participantes fueron informados sobre la naturaleza voluntaria de su participación, la confidencialidad de los datos y el uso exclusivo de los mismos con fines científicos.

Declaration of Interest / Declaración de intereses

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Los autores declaran no tener conflictos de interés.

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