THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' ETHICAL BEHAVIORS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT[1]

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Abstract: The primary aim of this study is to examine the relationship between teachers' ethical behaviors and their organizational commitment. The study sample consists of 400 teachers working in public primary, secondary, and high schools located in the city center of Trabzon and the districts of Akçaabat, Arsin, Yomra, Araklı, and Sürmene during the 2022–2023 academic year. Implementing a relational survey model, data were collected through the "Personal Information Form," the "Teacher Ethical Behaviors Scale," and the "Organizational Commitment Scale". The collected data were analyzed using t-tests, ANOVA, and correlation analysis via a statistical software package.

The findings indicated that, among the variables measured, the Teacher Ethical Behaviors Scale attained the highest mean scores, whereas the compulsive commitment dimension of the Organizational Commitment Scale recorded the lowest. Further analyses revealed statistically significant differences across several demographic variables. A significant difference was identified only in the moral commitment dimension of the Organizational Commitment Scale with respect to gender. In relation to age, a significant difference emerged in the compulsive commitment dimension. Regarding years of service, a significant difference was found in the opportunistic commitment dimension. Concerning branch groups, significant differences were observed both in the Teacher Ethical Behaviors Scale and in the compulsive and opportunistic commitment dimensions of the Organizational Commitment Scale. Additionally, with respect to school type, a significant difference was detected exclusively in the compulsive commitment dimension.

Overall, a weak but statistically significant negative correlation was found between teachers' ethical behaviors and the compulsive commitment dimension of organizational commitment. In contrast, a moderate and statistically significant positive correlation was observed between teachers' ethical behaviors and the moral commitment dimension.

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1. Introduction

Education is a process that begins with the discovery of the human ability to learn and continues throughout one's life, aimed at making the world a better and more livable place (Aydın, 2021). In this process, teachers are fundamental actors in the transmission of knowledge, helping individuals adapt to society, and transferring cultural values to new generations (Özden, 2021). Teaching has historically maintained its importance not only as a profession that imparts academic knowledge but also as one that touches the soul of students, shapes society, and plays a key role in the development of civilizations (Topçu, 2022). The profound esteem for knowledge inherent in Turkish culture has significantly enhanced the prestige of the teaching profession, as exemplified by the well-known saying "I will be the servant of the one who teaches me a letter for forty years." (Ministry of National Education, 2017).

Throughout history, philosophers have drawn attention to the moral essence of the teaching profession. Eminent figures such as Plato, Al-Farabi, and Avicenna articulated the pivotal role of education in transforming societies, positioning teaching as a highly specialized and distinguished field of practice (Topçu, 2022). Accordingly, the ethical responsibilities of teachers acquire heightened importance due to their lasting impact on both individuals and communities. Ethical values, rather than being inherent, are nurtured through the process of learning. Hence, a teacher's commitment to professional ethics serves to magnify their positive influence within the educational and societal spheres.

With the influence of globalization, teachers are now entrusted not only with pedagogical expertise but also with the responsibility to act with ethical consciousness (Campbell, 2003). Ethical education serves as a guide for individuals to exercise their free will in choosing what is right (Pieper, 2012). In this context, teachers' ethical behaviors facilitate not only the transmission of academic content but also the conveyance of values throughout educational processes. Given their public roles, it is imperative that teachers' actions remain within an ethical framework; otherwise, their conduct may exert negative influences on society (Campbell, 2008; Aydın, 2022).

On the other hand, for teachers' ethical behaviors to be truly effective, their commitment to the institutions they serve is equally essential. Organizational commitment supports teachers' dedication to ethical principles, their sense of responsibility, and their professional motivation (Balcı, 2003; Çetin et al., 2011). A high level of organizational commitment contributes to teachers acting more responsibly and selflessly toward their schools and students (Balay, 2014). Furthermore, teachers' sense of institutional belonging significantly influences their professional efficacy and plays a critical role in shaping students' academic achievement (İnce & Gül, 2005; Usta, 2013).

Within this framework, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between teachers' ethical behaviors and their levels of organizational commitment. Additionally, the study seeks to explore whether the levels of these two variables differ according to demographic characteristics. The research seeks to address the following questions:

1. What are the levels of teachers' ethical behaviors and organizational commitment?

2. Do teachers' ethical behaviors and levels of organizational commitment differ according to demographic variables?

3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' ethical behaviors and their organizational commitment?

1. METHOD

1.1. Research Model

This study adopted a relational survey design, a quantitative research approach, to explore the association between teachers' ethical behaviors and their levels of organizational commitment. The relational survey model aims to ascertain the direction and magnitude of relationships among variables (Karasar, 2020). In this investigation, participants' perceptions regarding ethical behavior and organizational commitment were evaluated based on existing circumstances, free from interpretive influence or subjective bias. During the data collection phase, in addition to gathering individual demographic information, the "Teacher Ethical Behaviors Scale" and the "Organizational Commitment Scale" were administered as principal instruments.

1.2. Population and Sampling

The target population comprised classroom and branch teachers employed across all educational levels under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Education during the 2022–2023 academic year, specifically within Trabzon city center and the districts of Akçaabat, Arsin, Yomra, Araklı, and Sürmene. A simple random sampling technique was utilized, ensuring that every individual within the population had an equal probability of selection (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). Upon obtaining official approval from the Trabzon Provincial Directorate of National Education, data collection instruments were disseminated electronically to a total of 411 teachers. The demographic profile of the study sample is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

Variable	Sub Variables	N	%
School Type	Preschool	31	7.8
	Primary School	53	13.3
	Secondary School	137	34.3
	High School	179	44.8
Gender	Woman	211	52.8
	Man	189	47.3
Age	20–30	30	7.5
	31–40	199	49.8
	41–50	132	33.0
	51 and above	39	9.8
Branch	Verbal	190	47.8
	Quantitative	107	26.8
	Foreign Language	50	12.5
	Vocational	23	5.8
	Talent	30	7.5
Tenure	5 years and less	26	6.5
	6–10 years	92	23.0
	11–15 years	92	23.0
	16–20 years	83	20.8
	21–25 years	72	18.0
	26 years and above	35	8.8
Total Participants		**400**	**100**

A total of 400 teachers participated in the study. 52.8% of the participants were female and 47.3% were male. When the age distribution is analyzed, it is seen that the largest group is in the 31-40 age range with 49.8%. In terms of school type, the highest participation rate was 44.8% among high school teachers. In terms of branch distribution, it was determined that 47.8% of the teachers worked in verbal fields and 26.8% in quantitative fields. In terms of years of service, the most intense group was found to be in the 6-10 years and 11-15 years ranges with 23%. These data show that the sample has a balanced distribution according to various demographic characteristics.

1.3. **Data Collection Tools**

In this study, which examines the relationship between teachers' ethical behaviors and organizational commitment, the data collection tools used included the Personal Information Form, the Teacher Ethical Behaviors Scale (TEBS) developed by Çelebi and Akbağ (2012), and the Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) adapted into Turkish by Ergün and Çelik (2019).

The Personal Information Form, developed by the researcher, was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants, such as school type, gender, age, subject area, and years of service. These data were evaluated in solving the sub-problems of the research.

The TEBS consists of 5 sub-dimensions and 26 items to measure the ethical behaviors of teachers working in preschool, primary, secondary, and high school. The sub-dimensions are: awareness of duty (items 1-8), virtue (items 9-13), human sensitivity (items 14-18), professional responsibility (items 19-22), and moral reasoning (items 23-26). The scale uses a 5-point Likert type scale, and the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$ (Çelebi & Akbağ, 2012). The same internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$) was obtained in the present study.

To measure teachers' organizational commitment, the OCS, developed by Penley and Gould (1988) and adapted into Turkish by Ergün and Çelik (2019), was used. This scale, based on Etzioni's organizational commitment model, is a three-dimensional and 15-item measurement tool. The dimensions are: alienative commitment (items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13), calculative commitment (items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14), and moral commitment (items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15). In the study conducted by Penley and Gould (1988), Cronbach's α was found to be .86 for moral commitment, .86 for alienative commitment, and .78 for calculative commitment. In the current study, the internal consistency coefficients were .70 for the first dimension, .76 for the second dimension, and .69 for the third dimension. These results indicate that the sub-dimensions of the scale have adequate internal consistency (Kılıç, 2016).

1.4. Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, data were collected electronically from teachers working in official preschool, primary, secondary, and high schools located in Trabzon city center, as well as the districts of Akçaabat, Arsin, Yomra, Araklı, and Sürmene during the 2022-2023 academic year. After obtaining the necessary permissions from the Provincial Directorate of National Education and the scale developers, the scales were distributed to schools through the District Directorates of

National Education. To ensure the confidentiality of the scales, teachers were encouraged to provide honest responses. A total of 411 scales were returned; however, 11 of them were excluded from analysis due to incomplete or incorrect responses, leaving 400 valid scales for analysis.

The data obtained from the scales were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. To examine the distribution of the data, skewness and kurtosis coefficients were calculated, and it was found that they ranged between -1.5 and +1.5. This indicates that the data follow a normal distribution and that the skewness and kurtosis values are within acceptable limits (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). To determine whether there were significant differences in the scales and sub-dimensions based on the gender variable, t-tests were performed. To examine significant differences according to school type, age, subject area, and years of service, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Additionally, correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between teachers' ethical behaviors and organizational commitment.

2. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings obtained from the analysis of the collected data.

2.1.Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment

The mean and standard deviation values related to the Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Scales for teachers working in preschool, primary, secondary, and high schools are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Values for the Scales

Scale	N	$\bar{\mathrm{X}}$	Ss
Ethical Behavior	400	4,67	0,34
Alienative Commitment	400	1,46	0,58
Calculative Commitment	400	3,91	0,80
Moral Commitment	400	4,11	0,62

According to Table 2, teachers reported the highest mean score for ethical behavior ($\bar{\mathrm{X}}$=4.67) and the lowest for alienative commitment ($\bar{\mathrm{X}}$=1.46). The levels of calculative commitment ($\bar{\mathrm{X}}$=3.91) and moral commitment ($\bar{\mathrm{X}}$=4.11) were found to be moderate. These findings suggest

that teachers place significant importance on ethical principles while maintaining a distance from alienative commitment.

2.2. Examination of Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Levels in Relation to Various Demographic Variables

The findings reveal that teachers' ethical behaviors and forms of commitment are influenced by certain demographic variables; however, this influence appears more pronounced particularly in the dimensions of alienative and calculative commitment. The statistical results regarding the teachers' levels of ethical behavior and organizational commitment in terms of gender, age, years of service, subject area, and school type are presented below.

2.2.1. Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Levels in Relation to Gender

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences between male and female teachers in terms of ethical behavior, compulsive commitment, opportunistic commitment, and moral commitment scores. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: t-test Results on the Variation of Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Levels According to Gender

Scale	Gender	N	X̄	Ss	t-Test t	Sd	p
Ethical Behavior	Woman	211	4,66	0,33	-,125	398	,901
	Man	189	4,67	0,36			
Alienative Commitment	Woman	211	1,48	0,59	,707	398	,480
	Man	189	1,43	0,57			
Calculative Commitment	Woman	211	3,88	0,78	-,681	398	,496
	Man	189	3,94	0,81			
Moral Commitment	Woman	211	4,05	0,63	-2,099	398	,036
	Man	189	4,18	0,60			

No significant differences were found in teachers' levels of ethical behavior, alienative commitment, and calculative commitment based on gender. However, a significant difference in moral commitment was detected in favor of male teachers (t = -2.099; p = .036). These results suggest that gender does not have a significant impact on ethical behavior, alienative commitment, or calculative commitment.

2.2.2. Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Levels in Terms of Age Variable

A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether teachers' levels of ethical behavior and organizational commitment differ significantly based on the age variable. In terms of the age variable, significant differences were observed only in the dimensions of alienative and calculative commitment ($F(3, 396) = 3.451$, $p < 0.05$). Teachers in the 31–40 age group ($\bar{X} = 1.54$) reported higher levels of alienative commitment compared to those in the 41–50 age group ($\bar{X} = 1.33$). Additionally, both the 31–40 ($\bar{X} = 3.98$) and 41–50 age groups ($\bar{X} = 3.92$) demonstrated higher levels of calculative commitment than those aged 51 and above ($\bar{X} = 3.57$). The results obtained are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Results Regarding the Age Variable

Scale	Gender	N	X̄	Ss	A One-Way Analysis of Variance [ANOVA]					
					Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	SD	Mean Squares	F	p	LSD
Ethical Behavior	20-30 (1)	30	4,72	0,33	Between Groups	,166	3	,055	,460	,710	
	31-40 (2)	199	4,65	0,34	Within Groups	47,748	396	,121			
	41-50 (3)	132	4,68	0,35	Total	47,914	399				
	51 + (4)	39	4,65	0,35							
	Total	400	4,67	0,34							
Alienative Commitment	20-30 (1)	30	1,48	0,64	Between Groups	3,476	3	1,159	3,451	,017	2>3
	31-40 (2)	199	1,54	0,65	Within Groups	132,956	396	,336			
	41-50 (3)	132	1,33	0,45	Total	136,432	399				
	51 + (4)	39	1,43	0,45							
	Total	400	1,46	0,58							
Calculative Commitment	20-30 (1)	30	3,84	0,72	Between Groups	5,599	3	1,866	2,957	,032	2>4
	31-40 (2)	199	3,98	0,79	Within Groups	249,934	396	,631			3>4
	41-50 (3)	132	3,92	0,78	Total	255,532	399				
	51 + (4)	39	3,57	0,87							
	Total	400	3,91	0,80							
Moral Commitment	20-30 (1)	30	4,08	0,71	Between Groups	1,632	3	,544	1,389	,246	
	31-40 (2)	199	4,07	0,64	Within Groups	155,066	396	,392			
	41-50 (3)	132	4,14	0,57	Total	156,698	399				
	51 + (4)	39	4,28	0,64							
	Total	400	4,11	0,62							

2.2.3. Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Levels in Terms of Tenure Variables

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether teachers' ethical behaviors and organizational commitment levels differed significantly based on years of service. A significant difference was found only in the dimension of calculative commitment ($F(5, 394) = 4.683$, $p < 0.05$); teachers with 26 or more years of service ($\bar{X} = 3.40$) reported lower levels of calculative commitment compared to other groups. No significant differences were observed in ethical behavior or other types of commitment across years of service. The detailed results are presented in Table 5.

Scale	Tenure	N	X̄	Ss	One-Way Analysis of Variance [ANOVA]						
					Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	SD	Mean Squares	F	p	LSD
Ethical Behavior	5 years and less (1)	26	4,68	0,33	Between Groups	,509	5	,102	,847	,517	
	6–10 years	92	4,65	0,31	Within Groups	47,405	394	,120			
	11–15 years (2)	92	4,67	0,36	Total	47,914	399				
	16–20 years (3)	83	4,62	0,37							
	21–25 years (4)	72	4,73	0,32							
	26 years and above (5)	35	4,66	0,34							
	Total	400	4,67	0,34							
Alienative Commitment	5 years and less (1)	26	1,63	0,77	Between Groups	2,972	5	,594	1,755	,121	
	6–10 years	92	1,52	0,60	Within Groups	133,460	394	,339			
	11–15 years (2)	92	1,49	0,64	Total	136,432	399				
	16–20 years (3)	83	1,45	0,55							
	21–25 years (4)	72	1,32	0,47							
	26 years and above (5)	35	1,35	0,40							
	Total	400	1,46	0,58							
Calculative Commitment	5 years and less (1)	26	3,89	0,73	Between Groups	14,333	5	2,867	4,683	,000	1>6
	6–10 years (2)	92	3,80	0,80	Within Groups	241,199	394	,612			2>6
	11–15 years (3)	92	4,09	0,75	Total	255,532	399				3>2
	16–20 years (4)	83	3,98	0,80							3>6
	21–25 years (5)	72	4,00	0,77							4>6
	26 years and above (6)	35	3,40	0,78							5>6
	Total	400	3,91	0,80							
Moral Commitment	5 years and less (1)	26	4,00	0,68	Between Groups	4,162	5	,832	2,150	,059	
	6–10 years	92	4,21	0,60	Within Groups	152,536	394	,387			
	11–15 years (2)	92	4,01	0,68	Total	156,698	399				
	16–20 years (3)	83	4,01	0,54							
	21–25 years (4)	72	4,21	0,61							
	26 years and above (5)	35	4,24	0,64							
	Total	400	4,11	0,62							

2.2.4. **Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Levels in Terms of Subject Area**

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether teachers' ethical behaviors and organizational commitment levels differed significantly based on branch area. The analysis revealed that the branch variable led to significant differences in both ethical behaviors and types of commitment ($F(4, 395) = 4.933$, $p < 0.05$). Talent teachers ($\bar{X} = 4.85$) demonstrated the highest levels of ethical behavior, whereas foreign language teachers ($\bar{X} = 4.51$) reported the lowest. Regarding calculative commitment, teachers in the foreign language ($\bar{X} = 4.68$) and talent teachers ($\bar{X} = 4.62$) exhibited significantly higher scores than those in other branches. Furthermore, teachers of quantitative subjects ($\bar{X} = 1.67$) had the highest mean score in cmpulsory commitment. The detailed results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: ANOVA Results in terms of Branch Variable

Scale	Branch	N	X̄	Ss	One-Way Analysis of Variance [ANOVA]						
					Source of Variance	**Sum of Squares**	**SD**	**Mean Squares**	**F**	**p**	**LSD**
Ethical Behavior	Verbal (1)	190	4,68	0,32	Between Groups	2,280	4	,570	4,933	,001	1>3
	Quantitattive (2)	107	4,67	0,31	Within Groups	45,635	395	,116			2>3
	Foreign Language (3)	50	4,51	0,47	Total	47,914	399				5>1
	Vocational (4)	23	4,64	0,26							5>2
	Talent (5)	30	4,85	0,31							5>3
	Total	400	4,67	0,34							5>4
Alienative commitment	Verbal (1)	190	1,42	0,55	Between Groups	8,857	4	2,214	6,856	,000	1>3
	Quantitattive (2)	107	1,67	0,67	Within Groups	127,575	395	,323			2>1
	Foreign Language (3)	50	1,22	0,44	Total	136,432	399				2>3
	Vocational (4)	23	1,48	0,57							2>5
	Talent (5)	30	1,30	0,35							
	Total	400	1,46	0,58							
Calculative Commitment	Verbal (1)	190	3,69	0,80	Between Groups	60,860	4	15,215	30,872	,000	3>1
	Quantitattive (2)	107	3,85	0,66	Within Groups	194,672	395	,493			3>2
	Foreign Language (3)	50	4,68	0,40	Total	255,532	399				3>4
	Vocational (4)	23	3,39	0,74							5>1
	Talent (5)	30	4,62	0,42							5>2
	Total	400	3,91	0,80							5>4
Moral Commitment	Verbal (1)	190	4,10	0,63	Between Groups	2,864	4	,716	1,839	,121	
	Quantitattive (2)	107	4,16	0,63	Within Groups	153,833	395	,389			
	Foreign Language (3)	50	4,14	0,70	Total	156,698	399				
	Vocational (4)	23	4,25	0,56							
	Talent (5)	30	3,84	0,36							
	Total	400	4,11	0,62							

2.2.5. **Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment Levels Based on School Type**

In order to determine whether there are significant differences in teachers' ethical behaviors and organizational commitment levels based on school type, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied. A significant difference was found only in the dimension of alienative commitment ($F(3, 396) = 3.864$, $p < 0.05$), where preschool teachers ($\bar{X} = 1.14$) showed significantly lower levels of alienative commitment compared to teachers in other school types. The obtained results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: ANOVA Results in terms of School Type Variable

| Scale | School Type | N | X̄ | Ss | One-Way Analysis of Variance [ANOVA] | | | | | | |
					Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	SD	Mean Squares	F	p	LSD
Ethical Behavior	Preschool (1)	31	4,71	0,33	Between Groups	,109	3	,036	,300	,826	
	Primary School (2)	53	4,65	0,36	Within Groups	47,806	396	,121			
	Secondary School (3)	137	4,65	0,33	Total	47,914	399				
	High School (4)	179	4,67	0,34							
	Total	400	4,67	0,34							
Alienative Commitment	Preschool (1)	31	1,14	0,37	Between Groups	3,880	3	1,293	3,864	,010	2>1
	Primary School (2)	53	1,53	0,69	Within Groups	132,552	396	,335			3>1
	Secondary School (3)	137	1,43	0,54	Total	136,432	399				4>1
	High School (4)	179	1,51	0,59							
	Total	400	1,46	0,58							
Calculative Commitment	Preschool (1)	31	3,99	0,73	Between Groups	,732	3	,244	,379	,768	
	Primary School (2)	53	3,85	0,78	Within Groups	254,801	396	,643			
	Secondary School (3)	137	3,87	0,87	Total	255,532	399				
	High School (4)	179	3,94	0,76							
	Total	400	3,91	0,80							
Moral Commitment	Preschool (1)	31	4,01	0,66	Between Groups	,318	3	,106	,269	,848	
	Primary School (2)	53	4,12	0,67	Within Groups	156,379	396	,395			
	Secondary School (3)	137	4,11	0,61	Total	156,698	399				
	High School (4)	179	4,12	0,62							
	Total	400	4,11	0,62							

2.2.6. Examining the Relationship Between Teachers' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Commitment

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between teachers' ethical behaviors and organizational commitment levels. According to the results of the correlation analysis regarding the relationships between ethical behavior, alienative commitment, calculative commitment, and moral commitment scales; a weak but significant negative relationship was found between ethical behavior and alienative commitment ($r = -0.116$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that teachers with high ethical behavior levels have lower alienative commitment. A positive, moderate, and significant relationship was found between ethical behavior and moral commitment ($r = 0.242$, $p < 0.01$); this finding indicates that as the level of ethical behavior increases, teachers' moral commitment also increases. Additionally, a moderate negative and significant relationship was identified between alienative commitment and moral commitment ($r = -0.346$, $p < 0.01$). This result shows that teachers with high alienative commitment have lower levels of moral commitment. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis Results of The Relationship Between Teacher' Ethical Behaviors and Organizational Levels

Scales	Ethical Behavior	Alienative Commitment	Calculative Commitment	Moral Commitment
Ethiical Behavior	1			
Alienative Commitment	-,116[*]	1		
Calculative Commitment	,055	,055	1	
Moral Commitment	,242[**]	-,346[**]	,061	1

*p<.05; **p<.01

3. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the results of the research are evaluated in light of the findings, and comparisons are made with the relevant literature. Additionally, recommendations are provided for practitioners and researchers.

3.1.Results and Discussion on Teachers' Ethical Behavior

According to the research findings, teachers' ethical behavior levels are quite high ($\bar{X} = 4.67$). This indicates that teachers are strongly committed to professional ethical principles. Indeed, this result aligns with numerous studies that highlight teaching as a profession deeply rooted in ethical values (Colnerud, 2006; Uğurlu, 2008; Altınkurt & Yılmaz, 2011; Erdem & Şimşek, 2013; Al-Hottali, 2018; Kanat & Erkan, 2021). The high level of teachers' commitment to professional ethical principles may be associated with their organizational commitment, which is more likely to be based on voluntary, intrinsic, or extrinsic motivation.

No significant difference was found in teachers' ethical behavior according to school type, gender, and age variables. These findings suggest that ethical behaviors are adopted independently of these demographic variables. Indeed, this result aligns with similar findings from studies by Maher (2005), Aydemir (2012), Şengül (2013), Duran (2014), and Melik (2018). However, some studies have pointed out that teachers' ethical attitudes may vary depending on school type (Sakin, 2007; Şengül, 2013), gender (Stedham et al., 2007; Manolova, 2011; Çelebi & Akdağ, 2012), and age (Sakin, 2007; Kepenek, 2008). This suggests that ethical behaviors may develop in interaction with individual, institutional, and cultural factors.

According to the branch variable, it was found that teachers in the talent group had significantly higher ethical behavior levels compared to other groups. This result is consistent with studies by Manolova (2011), Tunca (2012), and Thomas (2012). This can be explained by the fact that values education is more prominent in these disciplines. However, there are also studies (Göksoy, 2023) that indicate no significant differences based on the branch variable.

Although no significant difference was found in terms of tenure, previous studies suggest that both novice and experienced teachers may value ethical behaviors in different ways, and their ethical attitudes may change over time (Sakin, 2007; Ergin, 2014; Çinkılıç, 2018). In conclusion, it appears that ethical behaviors are shaped by teachers' individual values and professional understanding and are maintained independently of certain demographic variables.

3.2.Results and Discussion on Organizational Commitment

According to the research findings, the highest mean organizational commitment level among teachers was found in the moral commitment ($\bar{X}$=4.11), while the lowest mean was observed in the alienative commitment ($\bar{X}$=1.46). This result indicates that teachers develop an intrinsic commitment to their institutions but tend to avoid commitment based on obligation. Similarly,

studies by researchers such as Ergün (2017), Cheung & Wong (2011), Çoban & Demirtaş (2011), Natarajan & Nagar (2011), and Özdemir (2012) reveal that teachers generally exhibit moderate levels of organizational commitment.

The high moral commitment reflects that teachers value their work emotionally and ethically, adopting the values and goals of the institution (Bayram, 2005; cited in Sezgin & Koşar, 2010). This is supported by studies by Önder & Ateş (2017), Demir (2016), and Abdurrezzak & Üstüner (2020). It can be stated that teachers with high organizational commitment are able to go beyond their duties by embracing institutional goals, so this type of commitment is critical for institutional stability (Awamleh, 1996).

In this context, the high level of moral commitment and the low level of alienative commitment among teachers are positive indicators for the healthy functioning and sustainability of organizations. The low average of alienative commitment is a favorable sign for the efficiency of educational organizations, as employees with high alienative commitment tend to be more likely to leave the organization and are only inclined to perform mandatory tasks. This finding supports Etzioni's (cited in Ergün, 2017) classification of organizational commitment.

When considering demographic variables, no significant differences were found in moral and calculative commitment based on school type, while teachers in preschool education exhibited a significantly lower average alienative commitment compared to other groups. This finding is related to teachers' willingness to perform their duties and aligns with previous research (Yalçın, 2014; Özsüer, 2019; Aksakal, 2020; Çeliker, 2021). However, there are also studies where no differences based on school type were found (Akar, 2015; Selbi, 2019; Battal & Demirtaş, 2021). These results suggest that the variation in teachers' organizational commitment levels by school type may be influenced by factors such as school culture, ethical values, teacher and student numbers, administrative attitudes towards teachers, and student age groups.

Regarding the gender variable, no significant difference was observed in teachers' calculative and alienative commitment levels. However, a higher average of moral commitment was found among male teachers compared to female teachers. This may indicate that family responsibilities outside of work might influence the commitment levels of female teachers. Research indicating that male teachers tend to show higher organizational commitment supports

this finding (Balay, 2000; Ergün, 2017; Norşenli, 2021). On the other hand, studies that find no effect of gender on commitment or that suggest female teachers demonstrate higher commitment are also available (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Akdemir, 2016; Bıçak, 2021; Tekinarslan, 2019).

In terms of age, while no significant difference was found in moral commitment, significant differences were observed in the calculative and alienative commitment. Particularly noteworthy is the higher alienative commitment among the 31–40 age group compared to other age groups. Studies suggesting that commitment levels increase with age support this finding (Özkaya, 2006; Yeşilyurt, 2015; Yavuzkılıç, 2021). It can be stated that older teachers tend to develop a stronger commitment to their institutions and think less about leaving the institution compared to their younger colleagues. However, some studies argue that age does not significantly affect commitment (Çakır, 2007; Ergen, 2015; Şenay, 2017). This suggests that teachers across different age groups may experience and perceive the organizational climate similarly.

In the analysis based on branch variable, significant differences were found in the alienative and calculative commitment, while no significant difference was observed in moral commitment. Similarly, Gören (2012), Çelik (2013), Tan (2017), Gök (2018), and Çeliker (2021) also identified significant differences in organizational commitment perceptions across disciplines. On the other hand, studies by Çakır (2007), Akar (2014), Sevgin (2015), Ağırbay (2018), and Tekinarslan (2019) found no such differences. This suggests that the levels of commitment based on specialization may be shaped by factors such as responsibilities, organizational justice, and the structure of the school.

In this study it is revealed no significant difference in alienative and moral commitment levels based on teachers' years of service; however, a noteworthy distinction was found in calculative commitment. These findings are corroborated by the works of Budak (2009), Gören (2012), Cansu (2019), Bıçak (2021), and Aslan & Terzi (2023), whereas studies by Özcan (2008), Sevgin (2015), Sönmez (2016), Bozkurt (2017), and Şenay (2017) did not identify a significant relationship between years of service and organizational commitment. This suggests that teachers with higher seniority exhibit a deeper alignment with the school culture, which in turn fosters a higher degree of organizational commitment. In this context, as teachers' years of service increase, their connection to educational institutions intensifies, thereby contributing to the long-term stability and sustainability of these institutions.

3.3. **Results and Discussion on the Relationship between Teachers' Ethical Behavior and Organizational Commitment**

According to the findings of the study, a negative, weak and significant correlation was found between the ethical behavior scale and the alienative commitment (r = -0.116, p < 0.05). This result shows that teachers with higher levels of ethical behavior tend to exhibit lower levels of alienative commitment. On the other hand, a weak but statistically insignificant positive relationship was found between ethical behavior and the calculative commitment (r = 0.055, p > 0.05), indicating that no significant relationship exists between ethical behavior and calculative commitment. However, a positive, moderate, and significant correlation was found between the ethical behavior scale and the moral commitment (r = 0.242, p < 0.01). This suggests that teachers with higher ethical behavior levels also tend to demonstrate higher moral commitment.

In the literatüre review, it was observed that studies directly examining the relationship between teachers' ethical behavior and organizational commitment are limited. Çoloğlu (2018) states that teachers with high organizational commitment tend to display more ethical behavior. This finding is consistent with the expectation that employees adapt to the organization ethically will be more committed. Similarly, Gül (2014) found a medium-level positive correlation between school administrators' ethical behavior and teachers' organizational commitment, suggesting that ethical behavior by school administrators influences teachers' commitment. Similar results have been observed in international studies. Cullen, Parboteeah, and Victor (2003), in their study on business ethics, found a positive relationship between employees' organizational commitment and their individual perceptions of ethical climates. Furthermore, Fritz, Arnett, & Conkel (1999) noted that the strong application of ethical standards by the organization and support from managers increased employees' organizational commitment. Oz (2001) observed that although employees in information systems demonstrated high organizational commitment, they were less sensitive to ethical issues. Finally, Baker et al. (2006) emphasized that as organizational commitment increases, especially among employees who strongly share the ethical values adopted by the institution, ethical behavior also increases.

In conclusion, professional responsibility is tightly linked not only to knowledge and competencies but also to ethical values. Ethical standards cannot compensate for deficiencies in professional skills, just as strong competencies cannot make up for a lack of ethical principles (Monteiro, 2015). When professional ethics are internalized, individuals develop the capacity

to think, make decisions, and act responsibly. This emphazes the importance of setting ethical objectives in processes such as curriculum design, the implementation of pedagogical practices, and the inculcation of values (Choo, 2021).

3.4.Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed for practitioners and future researchers:

Recommendations for Practitioners:

- Sustainability of Ethical Behavior: School administrations should integrate ethical principles into the organizational culture and reinforce them through regular training programs.
- Reducing Alienative Commitment: Teachers should be more actively involved in decision-making processes, and voluntary collaboration should be encouraged.
- Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation in Specific Disciplines: In fields with high calculative commitment, such as foreign languages and skill-based courses, career development opportunities that promote intrinsic motivation should be offered.
- Experience-Based Support Programs: Support programs and leadership approaches should be adapted to teachers' age and tenure to strengthen organizational commitment at different career stages.
- Strengthening Commitment through Job Satisfaction: Institutions should value teachers' opinions and provide social, cultural, and economic support to enhance job satisfaction and organizational loyalty.
- Evaluating Ethical Behavior and Commitment: Teachers should be encouraged to evaluate themselves, colleagues, and administrators in terms of ethical behavior and organizational commitment, beyond academic success.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Exploring Commitment Types: Future studies should use qualitative methods to examine the underlying factors of different commitment types and conduct comparative research across regions and sectors.
- Developing Updated Scales: New measurement tools reflecting current conditions should be developed to better assess ethical behavior and organizational commitment.

- Including Stakeholder Perspectives: Future research should incorporate the views of students, parents, and administrators to build strategies that promote ethical values in education.

Publication Ethics Statement and Ethics Committee Approval Information

This research adhered to all rules and guidelines outlined in scientific research and ethics directives throughout the planning, implementation, data collection, and analysis phases. The writing process followed ethical standards, and this research has not been submitted for evaluation in any other academic publication forum. Ethics approval for this research was obtained from the Social and Humanities Ethics Committee of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, with approval number 2023/067 from the meeting held on March 1, 2023.

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