Discriminatory Behaviors of School Administrators and Their Reflections on Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the reflections of school principals' discriminatory behaviors on schools based on the views of teachers working at different educational levels. The study group consisted of 14 teachers working in Malatya province. Designed using qualitative research methods, the study followed a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher and focus group interviews. The data were analyzed using content analysis, initially categorized, and evaluated based on the emerging themes. The research findings revealed three main themes: discriminatory behaviors in the school environment, how teachers perceive these discriminatory behaviors, and suggestions for preventing such behaviors. It was found that some teachers experienced exclusion, injustice, unfair treatment, loss of motivation, loneliness, and low school attachment due to discriminatory behaviors. Teachers participating in the study emphasized that the most critical measures for eliminating discriminatory behaviors include training for school administrators, performance-based evaluation, establishing institutional school structures, and implementing inclusive practices. The recommendations are developed based on research findings. School administrators must develop the ability to treat all teachers equitably, regardless of gender, culture, political ideology, or other factors. Clear policies to prevent discrimination in school environments should be implemented, and staff members should be actively involved in decision-making processes. The selection and training of school administrators should prioritize merit and qualifications to ensure effective leadership.

Keywords: Discrimination, teacher, school administrators.

Introduction

In schools where the human element is central, the expectations, interests, socio-cultural characteristics, and psychological states of teachers must also be taken into account (Can, 2018). School administrators need to pay attention to these differences to better understand their teachers and establish healthy human relationships (İmrek, 2004; Keskinkılıç Kara, 2016). In general, the attitude of administrators towards the differences among teachers in an educational institution is a factor that affects teachers' teaching performance (Şahin, 2014).

School environments bring together individuals with diverse characteristics, requiring administrators to navigate these differences effectively, especially in dynamic educational settings. From an educational management perspective, ensuring mutual respect, integration, and tolerance in the shared spaces of individuals with varied backgrounds is crucial. This is especially significant in schools, which serve as microcosms of society and thus play a pivotal role in fostering a positive outlook among students and staff

(Bakaç et al., 2019). School administrators should integrate the differences of individuals in a manner that aligns with the school's objectives, allowing employees to contribute meaningfully to the institution without restrictions and to become an integral part of the school culture. Recognizing, understanding, and accepting these differences within the organization is essential for effective leadership (Gül & Türkmen, 2018).

However, the presence of discrimination can significantly undermine these efforts, leading to recurring problems and conflicts within school environments. Discrimination in this context often manifests when administrators prioritize personal relationships over principles of justice and fairness, resulting in unethical behaviors. Such favoritism towards friends, relatives, or individuals who share similar characteristics, regardless of their qualifications, can create an inequitable environment that hampers the school's overall mission.

Discrimination involves providing resources, services, and goods to certain individuals based on interpersonal similarity and closeness. In organizations, favoritism is

defined as administrators using their discretion to support, protect, and promote individuals they are close to in a manner that is not compliant with the law (Erdem & Meriç, 2013). Favoritism in organizational settings refers to the preferential treatment of certain individuals based on personal relationships rather than professional qualifications, leading to an unfair and unethical work environment (Öztürk, 2015; Polat & Hiçyılmaz, 2017). Regardless of its form, favoritism is undesirable and negatively affects employees. When favoritism occurs, authority is misused, which can be seen as a form of corruption (Argon, 2016). Research shows that favoritism undermines the sense of justice in society and leads to distrust (Polat, 2012). It negatively impacts employees' motivation, performance, and job satisfaction (Günel, 2005).

Employees should be made aware of discriminatory practices that negatively affect school life, and necessary measures should be taken by assessing the situation in schools (Argon, 2016). The problem at hand is that discriminatory practices within school administrations can lead to a toxic work environment, impacting not only teacher morale but also student outcomes. Treating similar individuals differently in a work environment can harm them personally and reduce their productivity, as well as significantly damage the functioning and sustainability of the organization. This situation also leads to numerous problems in terms of organizational ethics, justice, and morality (Demirel, 2011; Fritzsche, 1997; Yamak & Topbaş, 2004). However, the mission of modern organizations includes valuing all employees, treating them equally and fairly, and respecting their differences. This study aims to raise awareness among educational administrators and teachers regarding favoritism in school environments. By providing evidence-based strategies, it seeks to promote an inclusive culture that prioritizes merit and equitable treatment. The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to a more equitable educational environment, ultimately enhancing both teacher satisfaction and student achievement.

Purpose of the Study
The primary purpose of this research is to determine teachers' views on the concept of discrimination, identify examples of discriminatory behaviors exhibited by school principals, and determine teachers' suggestions for eliminating discriminatory behaviors. In line with this aim, the research questions are as follows:

1. Have teachers experienced instances of discrimination in their respective institutions? (Yes/No) If 'Yes,' could you please describe the discriminatory

situations you encountered?
2. How do their colleagues feel in situations of discrimination?
3. What are the teachers' suggestions regarding discrimination in schools?

Method

This section includes the research model, study group and population, data collection, data analysis, the role of the researcher, and validity and reliability.

Research Design
This study employs the phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods. The phenomenology method is used to reveal and interpret individual thoughts or perspectives in line with a specific phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Moustakas (1994) states that phenomenological research methods are effective in revealing individuals' perceptions and experiences from a perspective free of hypotheses and preconceptions. The study aims to explore teachers' experiences of discrimination in school settings. The choice to use a phenomenological design is appropriate because it allows for a deeper understanding of how these experiences shape participants' perceptions and interactions. The study took place in urban schools with diverse teachers from various backgrounds and levels of experience. Understanding the social and cultural dynamics of these settings is essential in comprehending how participants perceive discrimination and favoritism. To ensure the validity of the phenomenological approach, it is important to provide rich and detailed descriptions of the school demographics and the specific characteristics of the participant groups. By fostering an open and reflective discussion environment, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences of discrimination in schools. In qualitative research, data collection methods such as document analysis, observation, and interviews are used. To collect in-depth data, this study employed focus group interviews, a key qualitative research method. Focus group interviews are significant for conducting in-depth research and drawing inferences based on group dynamic process. In this method, participants can freely discuss and express their thoughts according to a plan, allowing new and different ideas to emerge (Çokluk et al., 2011). This method was preferred over individual interviews as it leverages group dynamics, fostering richer discussions by encouraging participants to expand on each other's ideas and experiences. Furthermore, the group setting facilitates theidentification of shared experiences and perceptions of

discrimination, which may remain unexpressed in individual interviews. This approach provides a broader and more nuanced perspective on the phenomenon under investigation.

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is crucial as they can guide the process and reflect their own experiences. Therefore, the researcher is obligated to explain their role and demographic characteristics in the process (Creswell, 2016). The researcher's involvement in the research process is important for obtaining the most valid information about the process. In this study, the researcher did not intervene with the participants and supported their interactions with each other. Questions were posed by the researcher to encourage discussion. Efforts were made to ensure that each participant took part in the discussions, that everyone's views were included, and that a balance was maintained among participants.

The questions in the focus group interview form aimed to gather each teacher's views on the questions. Guidance was provided for discussing concepts or topics, emphasizing the importance of participants expressing their own views rather than general opinions. During the interviews, participants were given the opportunity to speak in a structured manner, allowing for both sequential and spontaneous contributions. Each teacher was encouraged to provide their perspective on every question posed, ensuring that all voices were heard and valued. While the majority of participants actively engaged in the discussion, there were instances where a few individuals were more reticent, requiring prompts to share their insights. A total of three sessions were conducted, each lasting approximately 30 to 40 minutes. This structured approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of the topics, enabling participants to reflect critically on their experiences and viewpoints. It was specifically noted that no opinion would be judged to ensure teachers could express their views comfortably. When teachers wished to express their opinions, their ideas were collected, thereby attempting to address different aspects of the topic.

Study Group

To select participants, maximum variation sampling, one of the purposeful sampling techniques, was used. This approach aims to examine the situation meeting a certain criterion from various perspectives. The primary criteria for selection were based on the teachers' years of experience, teaching level, and the socio-cultural diversity of their respective schools. This diversity was ensured by selecting participants from different age groups, teaching areas, and backgrounds, with the aim of obtaining a comprehensive range of perspectives on the subject of discrimination. The focus groups were comprised of teachers from various schools within the same urban area, with some participants having prior professional familiarity, while others were initially unacquainted, which fostered both a sense of ease and interaction within the discussions. The goal of maximum variation is to reflect the diversity of individuals relevant to the researched topic to the maximum extent possible within a small group. The purpose here is not to generalize by ensuring diversity, but to identify shared phenomena and differences among diverse situations and reveal different dimensions of the problem according to the variety (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

A semi-structured interview form and focus group interviews were conducted with 14 teachers involved in the study. The demographic information of the participants in the focus group interview, conducted with 14 teachers using the interview form, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Interview Participants

Participants	Gender	School Type	Branch	Seniority (Years)
P1	Male	High School	English	8
P2	Female	Middle School	Science	12
P3	Female	High School	Guidance	13
P4	Female	High School	Mathematics	9
P5	Male	Middle School	Mathematics	17
P6	Female	Middle School	Turkish	21
P7	Female	Middle School	Turkish	15
P8	Male	Primary School	Religious Education	15
P9	Female	High School	Music	14
P10	Male	High School	Physical Education	12
P11	Male	Primary School	Classroom Teacher	20
P12	Male	Primary School	Classroom Teacher	18
P13	Female	Primary School	Classroom Teacher	10
P14	Female	Primary School	Classroom Teacher	10

When examining Table 1, it is observed that out of the 14 teachers consulted, 8 are female and 6 are male; 5 teachers work in primary schools, 4 in middle schools, and 5 in high schools; and the teachers represent various subjects and seniority levels.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was used as a qualitative data collection tool. Prior to designing the interview form, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, and the questions were formulated accordingly by the researcher Following expert evaluations in the field of educational sciences, necessary modifications were implemented, resulting in a refined three-question teacher interview form.

It was planned to collect and evaluate in-depth data from 14 teachers working at the pre-school, primary, middle, and high school levels in Malatya. The study was conducted by administrating the interview form to teachers participating in the focus group interview.

According to Çokluk et al. (2011), in focus group interviews, the first step is to define the research topic and thoroughly examine and delineate it. In the second step, the participants and their characteristics, the main topics to be discussed, and the questions to be asked should be determined. Third, the location, time, moderator, rapporteur, and other personnel, if any, for the focus group interview should be identified, and the interview should be conducted. In the final stage, the interview should be summarized, reports and notes should be reviewed, data should be examined, interviews should be analyzed, and a report should be prepared.

In line with these stages, the questions in the interview form were posed to the participants. Care was taken toensure a similar number of participants in the study. The interview was conducted on a day and time previously agreed upon with the teachers. To ensure a comfortable and open environment, the interviews were conducted in a neutral setting outside the school, minimizing potential workplace influences on participants' responses. The interviews were recorded on video and audio. Since a focus group interview was to be held, teachers were informed beforehand that the topic would not be disclosed and that the discussion would be on a subject related to their field. Teachers participated on a voluntary basis. Participants were required to have at least one year of work experience. The first part of the interview form included questions to determine the demographic information of the participants. The second part of the interview form contained the following questions relevant to the purpose of the research.

The ethical process in the study was as follows:
- Ethics committee approval was obtained from Inonu University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Academic Committee (Date: 06.01.2022, Number: E-2022-1/27)
- Informed consent has been obtained from the participants.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the focus group interview were analyzed using the content analysis method. Content analysis is an analytical method that allows the classification of similar data under specific themes and concepts to be organized meaningfully (Akbulut, 2014). The primary purpose of using this method is to reach appropriate concepts and themes that can explain the obtained data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

After transcribing the responses from the teachers in the focus group interview, they were coded as P1, P2, P3,…,P14 to maintain confidentiality and distinguish individual responses. Finally, the classifications made were interpreted and evaluated within the framework of the themes identified.

Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the researcher is the person who participates directly in data collection, conducts individual interviews with participants, and interacts with them. Qualitative researchers have their own opinions on the subject being studied. However, during the data collection phase, they should not influence the participants with **their** own ideas and thoughts. Qualitative researchers must provide an environment where participants can express their own views and thoughts freely. They should be able to express their own views and thoughts clearly and transparently when necessary and maintain impartiality. They should explain in detail the methods and techniques they used, the numerical information about the data sources, and the results obtained.

Validity and Reliability

In this study, the points emphasized by Creswell (2016) to ensure validity and reliability were carefully considered. Participant trust was established, facilitating the detection of consistencies in their statements. The research process was closely monitored and controlled throughout the study. As the research progressed, the questions were refined in response to contradictory or negative evidence.

Additionally, to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, participants were asked to review the results and interpretations derived from their input. To enhance research validity the findings were presented objectively, incorporating direct quotations from the teachers' responses.

To ensure the reliability of the research, the teachers participating in the study were coded with the letter "P," which stands for "principal. " Their responses were presented through direct quotations. Similarly, the interview forms were analyzed in detail. To verify the control of the obtained data, the prepared interview form, raw data, and notes taken by the researcher during the reporting phase were reviewed by field experts. As a result of the consistency review, a high level of agreement was observed among the field experts, with a consensus rate of 85%, indicating strong reliability in the interpretation of the data.

Results

The data were coded into various themes and presented with direct quotations. Three main themes were identified: a) discriminatory behaviors in the school environment; b) the feelings of teachers regarding discriminatory behaviors; and c) suggestions for preventing discriminatory behaviors. The relationship between the themes and codes is illustrated with figures. The theme of discriminatory behaviors in the school environment and the associated codes are shown in Figure 1.
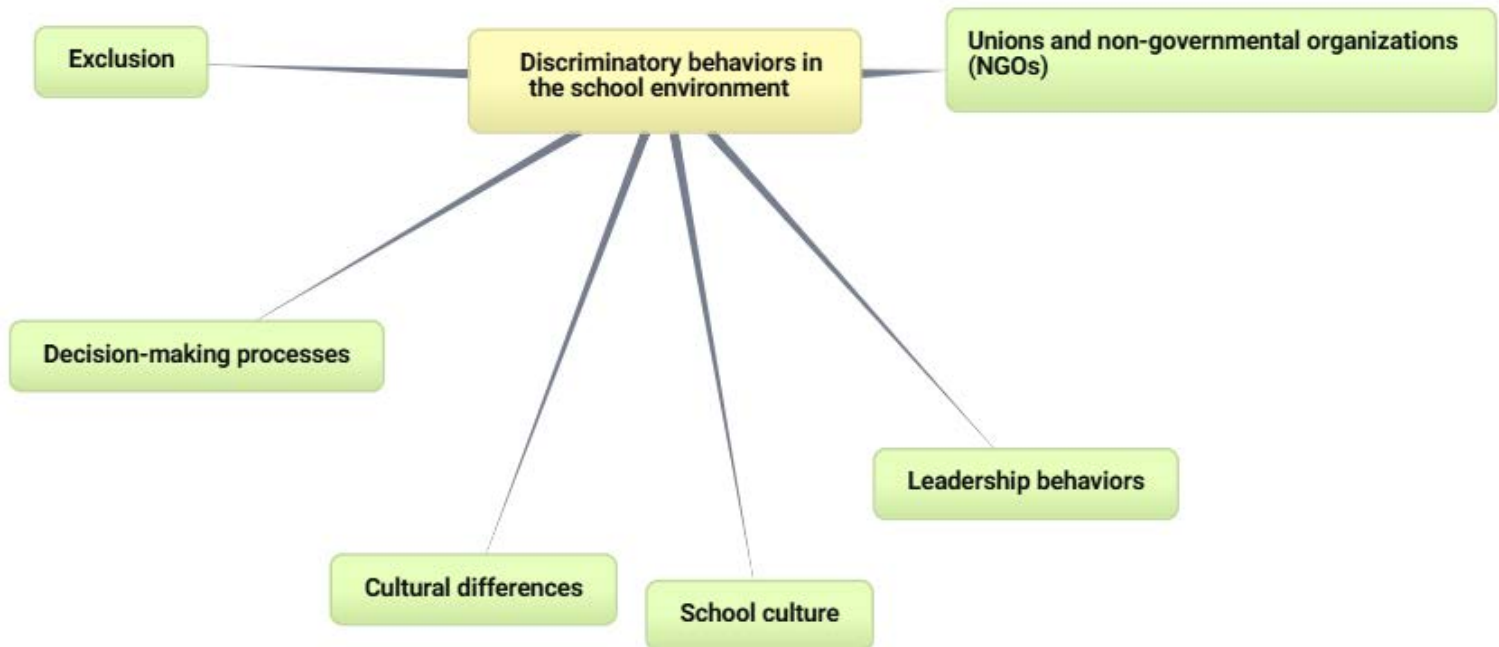

Figure 1.

Relationship Between the First Theme and Codes

Teachers encountering discriminatory behaviors frequently express feelings of exclusion and being placed in undesirable teaching positions.

P6: "At our school, the administrator and their spouse work together and every year they exclude the newcomer, and any characteristic of the person is sufficient for this, such as financial status, beauty, work performance, or educational background, independent of the actual work done. The last woman who joined our school was very beautiful, charming, and a competent worker, but the administrator's spouse was jealous and caused her to be excluded. The administrator started a rumor in the school, which ended in a fight. The teacher had to request a transfer and ended up at a school with worse conditions because she couldn't seek her rights. "

P14: "Different behavior based on gender, attire, and age leads to discrimination. Even if you are at the same status as others, you face different treatment. You encounter exclusion and humiliation, which makes you feel sad and hurt. I agree with everything my colleagues have said. "

In particular, the success of employees in organizations centered on people depends on the effective

implementation of communication skills. Good communication requires understanding people, recognizing their expectations, and empathizing with them. Teachers and administrators should use these skills effectively in decision-making processes within the school environment.

P5: "I believe a managerial team should be formed. Training in areas such as 'I' language, positive communication, and psychology should be provided. Regular training and testing should be conducted. If there are good managers in institutions, discriminatory situations will be eliminated. "

P4: "At a friend's institution, she, as a preschool teacher, mentioned that they were not given the right to speak, their issues were not heard, and even the preschool group was not invited to meetings. Their efforts were overlooked. We don't know the reason, but it was experienced as a group. They were constantly assigned tasks outside their work. "

Teachers with different lifestyles, education, economic status, ethnic backgrounds, beliefs, ideologies, and physical and emotional characteristics work together in a school environment. School administrators are responsible for balancing this process.

P2: "Administrators approach those with similar views more protectively and sympathetically. They pay more attention to the requests of these individuals. "

P11: "Individuals experiencing discriminatory behaviors may develop feelings of worthlessness and think they are incapable of defending themselves. Some may even experience fear, threat, and insecurity in their socio-cultural environments due to these negative experiences. "

P5: "It was related to a dispute between two teachers. Both teachers had similar worldviews, and since the principal had a different view, he did not intervene in the dispute and remained silent against the injustice. "

Organizational culture reflects the recognition, values, and circumstances of the organization and its members. Organizational culture is crucial for the organization's success and progress.

P7: "The institution we work at is a school built entirely on discriminations. Our principal and a few colleagues have worked in village schools for years, and the only important thing for them is their rights; nothing else matters. Everything is set up to find faults and group people. "

P8: "Senior teachers and the school administration adjusted the class schedules as they wished because of

their closeness, but they did not help my friend, even though she had a special situation, leaving her in a very difficult position. "

The leadership attitudes, policies, and practices of administrators determine the process.

P13: "I think our administrator colleagues are qualified individuals. I believe they act fairly towards all employees without any discrimination and work diligently to ensure that no colleague faces injustice or difficult situations. "

P1: "Last year, my class had many unruly students, and no solution was found for me, but now they are trying to find a solution for this colleague. In schools, everything varies; some are treated well, some have their classes selected, and those not close to the administration are excluded. Our principal is good; we have been working together for 15 years, and he always helps us as much as he can. Teaching is a job of the heart; I have been doing it with love for 35 years. "

P3: "I actually work at a school with low socioeconomic status, but the school administration and teachers have adapted very well to the environment. I was on duty in the yard, and it was very cold. The administrator came and told me I could go inside if I wanted, and another teacher wanted to take over. Although we were both female teachers, offering it to me first seemed like positive discrimination. "

P8: "Yes, I have experienced both positive and negative. I commute to school by my own car, and sometimes I am late in winter conditions, but our principal tolerates minor delays even though commuting by car is my choice. If he wanted, he could not be so lenient. "

Teachers' opinions predominantly focus on managerial skills and union codes. The fact that political views are prioritized in the selection of administrators, or that individuals gain managerial status due to political proximity, can reflect on their managerial skills. The tendency of administrators to protect and favor those with similar views supports this situation.

P10: "Yes, it happened. I have been working at the same school for 11 years, and colleagues who faced discrimination, just like me, were those who did not join the union that the majority were members of. "

P8: "I am currently on maternity leave, but in my first institution, all the teachers stayed in the dormitory, and I commuted by my own car. There was a lot of grouping among the teachers, and they did not even greet those outside their group. "

P12: "It happens in every institution because the work

done is not considered; political thoughts are always prioritized, as in all institutions. Jobs requiring benefit are not given to that person. "

P13: "Colleagues were subjected to it due to union and political thoughts. "

The theme of the feelings of teachers regarding discriminatory behaviors and the associated codes are shown in Figure 2.
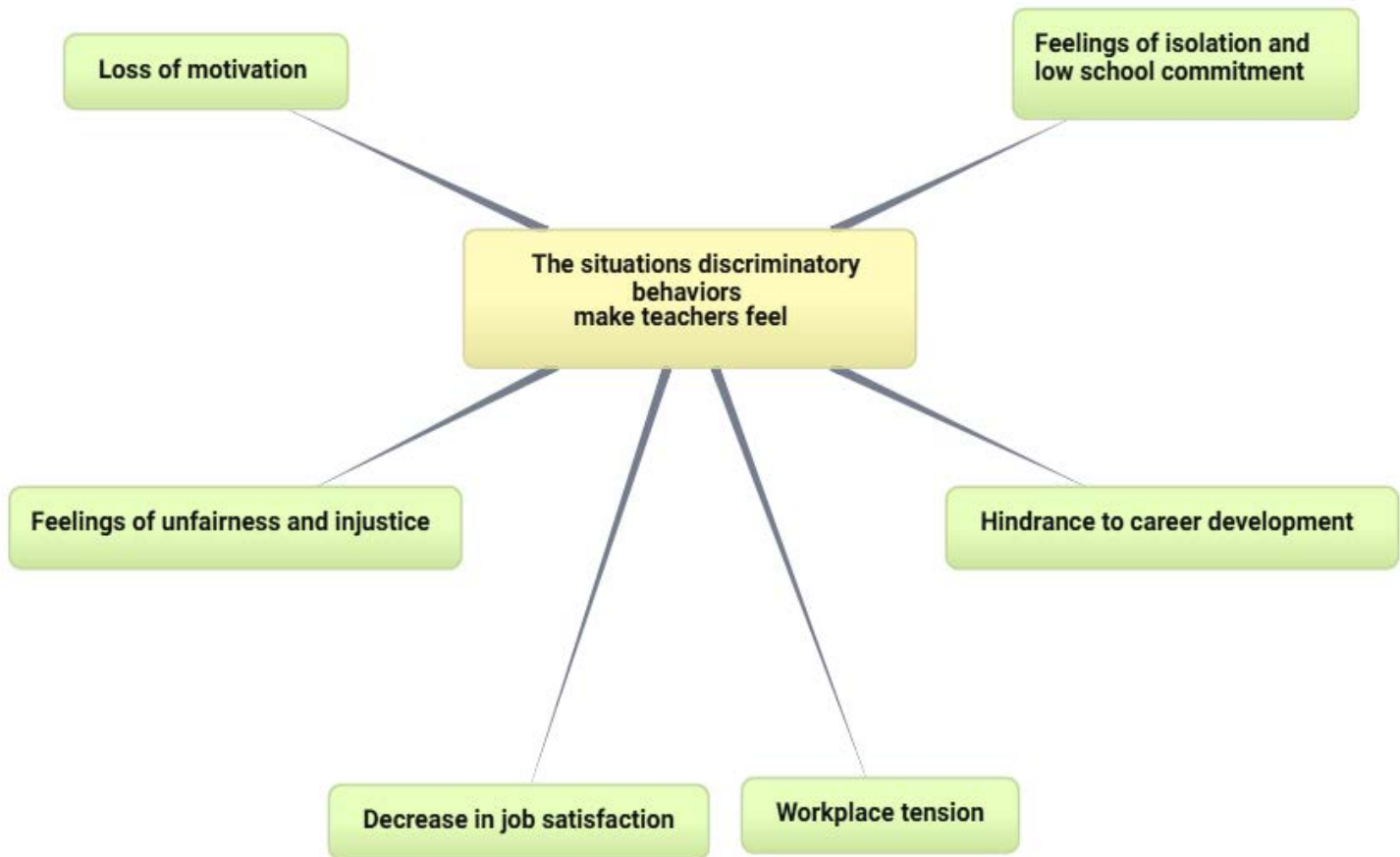

Figure 2.
Relationship Between The Second Theme and Codes

Discriminatory behaviors among teachers can lead to decreased motivation, which in turn causes psychological problems, negative work environments, and lower service quality.

P14: They feel a sense of failure, their self-esteem drops, and they become unhappy.

P11: Motivation completely drops, they lose interest in work, and cannot be productive.

P4: They don't feel belonging to the school and lose their enthusiasm and excitement for their profession.

Instances like unfair treatment in arranging schedules and unfairness in how students are distributed among classes stand out. The main reason for unfair treatment is attributed to administrators, such as not being fair in the distribution of students to classes or not treating teachers equally in scheduling their teaching programs.

P10: I believe our school is currently being managed fairly, but being a project school, we may encounter some issues. These issues are related not to fairness, but rather to the expectations individuals have of you. Understanding is not always met regarding health problems or situations related to children. We do not encounter problems in situations such as duty or lesson schedules. Of course, there have been many unfair treatments in the past regarding duty, lesson schedule, or those who are not members of their own groups.

P9: The workload at school falls on docile teachers, while the school administration gives much less work to questioning and troublesome teachers.

P7: . . . there is unfairness even in student distribution.

Responses indicate that discriminatory behaviors negatively affect job satisfaction. Feeling insignificant and undervalued damages the sense of justice of employees, leading to a lack of trust and job dissatisfaction towards

their institution.

P11: They felt worthless and inadequate. They felt angry sometimes against the administration and sometimes against other teachers. Of course, this also reflected on the teachers. For example, the issue of the lesson schedule was a problem caused by the administration, but it also affected the teachers, and friend groups were shaped accordingly. Some had empty lessons, some had classes one after the other, and their days were easier.

P2: Everyone can be late for school, but while the administrator tolerates everyone, there were veiled insults to the teacher who had personal problems.

P3: In some schools, personal problems between administrators and teachers have affected school work and the worst problem has been made, and the teacher's lessons have been broken into pieces and scattered throughout the day.

Teachers who share their thoughts on how discriminatory behaviors make them feel often indicate feelings such as hurt, sadness, anger, and resentment, indicating tension in the workplace.

P1: Of course, they get hurt, feel upset, and feel incomplete when others are protected.

P4: Their motivation dropped significantly. They didn't even want to go to school, so their productivity at school dropped, they couldn't contribute to their students, and they struggled a lot during lessons.

P5: They feel inadequate and bad. They question what they did wrong and affect their lives during that period. Perhaps after a while, they accept discrimination or fight against it. They are sad and upset in all negative discriminations.

The relationship between school administrators and teachers, the practices administrators implement towards teachers. In schools where clear and attainable goals are established, a supportive learning environment is fostered, and respect is shown for teachers' career progression, their teaching competencies tend to improve. Some participants highlighted that personal closeness to the principal and alignment in political views can lead to certain colleagues receiving preferential treatment, while others face challenges as a result.

P2: Of course, it happened. For example, they gave all the difficult children to my friend's class. While there should have been 2 integration students in the classroom, they gave 5 integration students. They discriminate a lot about the awards given to teachers. Usually, the awards are shared among the principals and their assistants. That

situation is rare because they propose among themselves and take them.

P11: Some branches are considered worthless by teachers, administrators, and students in schools. A visual arts teacher friend of mine was called to the room because of a grade given by a student, and it was dictated that the student's grade should be raised in a very bad tone.

P10: In our school, the lesson schedule of the group close to the administration was very good, but the lesson schedules of those who were not close to the administration were created as the first hour-last hour. One of our friends who was receiving colon cancer treatment was experiencing a serious health process, but he had to stay at school for long hours or go back and forth between home and school because of the lesson schedule. Our principal had created groups of good and bad teachers and created an unjust order. Working in such an environment negatively affected us.

P5: There are groups in our school as well, those close to the administration and those who are not. Similarly, scheduling regular lessons, having empty days, and unfair treatment of people who are not members of the group like other friends. One teacher experienced a similar situation and objected to the administration about the imbalance in the lesson schedule, but no solution was found. The principal had created groups of good and bad teachers and created an unjust order like this. Working in such an environment negatively affected us.

Employees who do not feel attached to their institution feel low commitment while doing their job, do not have the desire and excitement to do their job, as seen from the answers, negative feelings affect different areas as a result of discriminatory behaviors.

P3: They made cups for all teachers in school with their names for Teacher's Day to give away, but they separated us as two guidance teachers and didn't find us suitable. I felt excluded. It was a simple and small gift, but I was hurt in my first year. I didn't ask why and I thought I didn't feel enough to myself.

P3: They feel wronged, excluded, and worthless. Their commitment to the institution decreases, and they lose their sense of belonging.

Recommendations for preventing discriminatory behavior and related codes are shown in Figure 3.
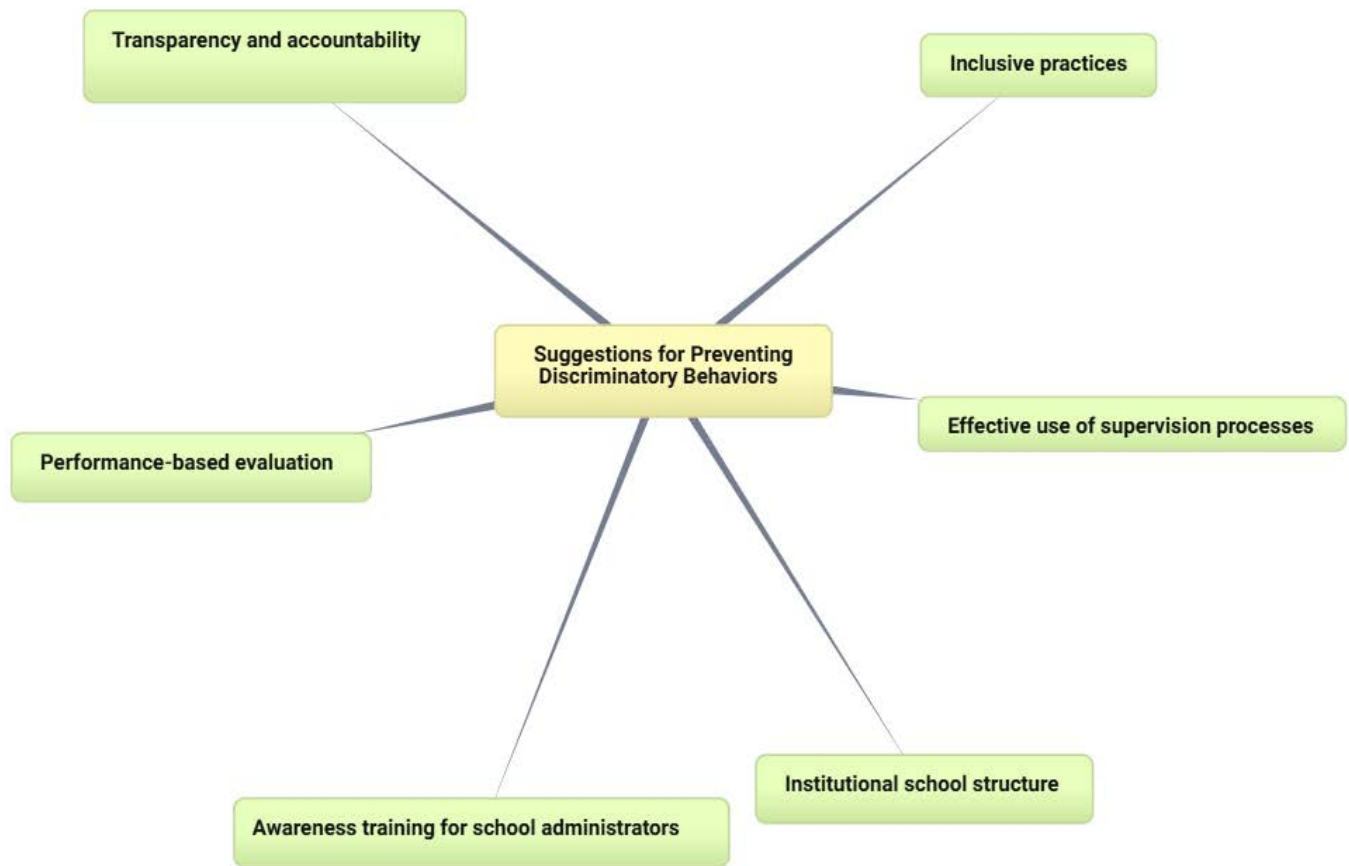
Figure 3.
Relationship Between The Third Theme and Codes

Discriminatory behaviors by school administrators create doubts about the transparency of teachers' rights and their ability to defend those rights. Teachers feel valued when treated positively and report that their happiness improves their job performance.

P10: "I currently work in a very fair institution where decisions are made conscientiously, and academic success is prioritized. I have previously worked in institutions that were not managed fairly. I believe I am working in a fair environment regarding our school's class schedule and gender equality. "

P12: "I work in a large school with 65 staff members, and I believe it is managed well at a rate of 95%. Our class schedules are suitable for us, we enjoy going to our school, we do not experience Monday syndrome. We do not have problems with duty schedules. In previous administrations, of course, there were periods when we had problems. "

P6: "There is good cop, bad cop being played in schools. If the principal is good, the vice principal is forced to play the bad cop. Instead, if rules are established in schools down to the finest details, everyone will behave without crossing their limits, and problems will disappear. These rules should not exhaust both the teacher and the administration and should be protective rules. They should be organized by the Ministry of Education so that equality can be achieved in all schools. "

Teachers who say their institutions are managed fairly emphasize performance evaluation based on performance, equal evaluation, and monitoring concepts.

P9: "Teachers should work diligently, and people who do the work and know the job should take over. People who can maintain work peace, protect team spirit should be chosen as administrators. Rotation should be applied in schools, and people should not stay in their current schools for many years. "

P3: "I am in the first school I was assigned to, and since I came, our administrators have been very helpful, treating everyone friendly and equally. Despite our school being crowded, everyone tries to support and help each other. Our administrators behave well with us unless there are extreme demands, I think my institution is managed fairly. "

Efforts are emphasized to raise awareness among school employees for a fair approach through in-service training activities related to discriminatory practices against school administrators and their results.

P8: "Administrators must have good knowledge and skills.

Administrators need to have new understandings in education, research, and improvement skills. It is clear that our education work is not going well because we do not have administrators with these qualities. "

P7: "Qualified people who can take responsibility should be selected as school administrators; otherwise, when there is a 'Bal tutan parmağını yalar' (like the finger that dipped in honey, like other friends. People do everything to keep in power for their comfort. There must be those who understand education. Some teachers are good at education but cannot be made to understand. Our director's educational leadership is good, and our school is very good.

P2: There should be a professional principal in schools. Principals should not be selected from teachers because they often come into the role with political influence. Conversely, principals should be trained and begin their career as principals. The vice principal should follow the same path. Leadership and administrative roles should come from separate schools because these individuals need to be both managers and educators. Some teachers are excellent educators but not effective administrators, while others are skilled managers but lack educational expertise. Our current principal demonstrates both educational and managerial capabilities well, and our school currently operates like a private school with a strong focus on quality and continuity in education.

The institutional structure of the school represents the organizational and managerial framework established to ensure educational quality and continuity in line with the school's mission, vision, values, and strategic objectives.

P13: "The institution I currently work in is managed very fairly with ethical considerations, and academic success is prioritized. I have previously worked in institutions where fairness was lacking. I must say that differential treatment towards individuals outside their own groups can be very demoralizing, and I would like to discuss these issues further in the future. As for my current school, whether it's the class schedule or gender equality, I work in a fair environment. "

P6: "I serve on the school's strategic planning committee. We have set goals and missions to improve the quality of education in our school. . . Effective use of audit processes ensures continuous improvement in school management and educational quality. These processes are regularly conducted to identify barriers the school faces in achieving its goals and to develop strategic solutions to overcome these barriers. "

P1: "Yes, of course. The most common issue I see in all

schools is placing high-achieving students in one class. If a teacher has a reputation for excellence, parents always prefer that teacher, and high-achieving students are grouped together in that class. The principal often feels powerless and may move other students to other classes. Upper management needs to monitor these practices. "

P9: "Because my specialization is music, it is often treated as less important compared to other subjects. During parent meetings, everyone would have separate tables or rooms, but parents would often turn up their noses and not even bother to meet if it was about music. There were instances where I received verbal notifications from the administration urging me to increase grades, saying, 'Let's raise the grades, this is important for the school and the student. ' In my opinion, schools should prioritize core subjects like art, music, and physical education; I do not think being so exam-oriented is correct. "

School administrators must consider differences and effectively manage conflicts. Therefore, administrators should emphasize inclusive practices and possess leadership skills.

P14: "Administrators' records should be checked, and they should not work in their hometowns. They should not work in the same institution for many years, and the teams they work with should change. Administrators should develop and improve themselves. "

P6: "I faced difficulties in my duty at the canteen due to my pregnancy, and when I requested, my duty location was changed. Our duty locations change every three weeks anyway, and after me, another pregnant colleague was assigned to the canteen, even though she did not want to. She was not given such an option. I felt sorry for her in this situation. I had no special connection with the administration; we had the same conditions, but her duty location was not changed. Despite no issue being related to me, there was a negative attitude towards me. "

Discussion

This study identifies three key themes discriminatory behaviors experineced by teachers in the workplace, the emotional impact of these behaviors, and potential solutions for addressing them.

The first theme of the study focuses on discriminatory behaviors observed in the school environment. This theme specifically highlights teachers' experiences of exclusion, limited participation in decision-making processes, cultural differences, school culture, leadership behaviors, and the effects of participation in unions and civil society organizations. According to Gül and Türkmen (2018),

differences among individuals aim to foster unity for common goals within an organization, necessitating managers to ensure employees work harmoniously. Schools, as the fundamental organizational structure in education, should create an environment where individuals are content. When teachers are happy in their workplaces, they exhibit enhanced job performance, integration with the school, increased motivation, and improved performance. Teachers have defined discrimination as "some school administrators showing tolerance to some teachers while not treating others equally and fairly, exclusion, favoritism, and marginalization" (Çelenk, 2010).

The second theme explores the effects of discriminatory behaviors on teachers. It particularly addresses unjust and unfair practices, resulting in loss of motivation, decreased job satisfaction, workplace tension, effects on career development, feelings of loneliness, and low organizational commitment. The findings emphasize the importance of competent school administrators transparent rules, and a predominant belief in equal treatment. Among the recommendations stated by teachers, multiple sub-views exist, emphasizing not only the educational aspect but also personal skills of the manager. Being fair, successful in communication skills, and having knowledge of psychology are mentioned as expected qualities alongside managerial competence.

The third theme of the research focuses on the recommendations of participants to prevent discriminatory behaviors. This theme highlights transparency and accountability, performance-based evaluations, training for school administrators, establishment of a corporate school structure, effective use of audit processes, and inclusive practices. Employees assume greated, responsibility and engage more collaboratively and flexiblywhen they experience a supportive and secure work environment.This type of environments allows group members to freely express their emotions and thoughts, thereby enhancing group productivity (Bökeoğlu & Yılmaz, 2008). Effective school leadership requires administrators to engage in self-assessment, uphold ethical standards, and demonstrate honesty, realism, and fairness in protecting employees' rights. If a school administrator expects ethical behavior aligned with values from teachers within the organization, they should exemplify the same behaviors. Ethical principles should be integral to school culture, necessitating school administrators to adopt these principles first (Kalaz, 2016).

Discrimination refers to treating individuals unequally without a valid reason. Furthermore, a study by Günbayı

et al. (2014) found that teachers experience problems such as pressure, unjust criticism, blaming, lack of consideration of their opinions, unplanned procedures, inequality, unresolved issues, and not taking their opinions seriously in official relationships with school administrators. In informal relationships, issues such as excessive familiarity, injustice, and communication deficiencies were reported. Tuna and Türkmen (2015) found that individuals experiencing discrimination within an organization suffer from decreased productivity and lower job performance. These findings indicate that teachers' views on the discrimination by administrators point to organizational justice issues in schools. Organizational justice is defined as employees' belief in being treated fairly (Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003).

Cohen et al. (2009) emphasize that relationships within schools form the foundation of the school climate and should respect differences. Teachers in schools often differentiate themselves based on political views, gender, age, religion, and race. School administrators should treat teachers with different qualifications equally (Polat & Hiçyılmaz, 2017). From this perspective, organizational justice can be described as a concept related to how employees perceive fairness within an organization (İnce & Gül, 2005). When employees perceive they work in a fair environment, they are likely to show commitment to the organization and collaborate willingly. Conversely, if not, employees are likely to demonstrate low levels of commitment and cooperation, and their trust in the organization will be low (Cremers, 2004).

A key limitation of this study is its focus on the perspectives of teachers working in a single province of Turkey, many of whom had previous experience in different provinces. Due to the qualitative nature of the study and the limited sample size, the generalizability of the findings remains restricted. However, the insights obtained may provide valuable contributions to understanding school leadership dynamics and may inform futureresearch and policy development. The study's results could be informative not only for schools but also for other institutions that aim to improve management practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study highlight significant issues regarding discriminatory behaviors in schools, their impact on teachers, and potentiel solutions to address these challenges. Discriminatory practices, including exclusion, favoritism, and unequal treatment, negatively affect teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. These behaviors often lead to workplace tension, feelings of loneliness, and hindered career

development. To mitigate these issues, the study underscores the importance of fostering organizational justice through transparent and fair practices. Recommendations include promoting ethical leadership, implementing performance-based evaluations, and creating a collaborative and inclusive school environment. Establishing trust and fairness within schools is essential to enhancing teacher well-being, motivation, and overall performance. The study's results could be informative not only for schools but also for other institutions that aim to improve management practices. Furthermore, the negative influence of politics on administrator-teacher relationships in schools should be addressed, and union affiliations should not take precedence in decision-making. School administrators must develop the ability to treat all teachers equitably, regardless of gender, culture, political ideology, or other factors. Clear policies to prevent discrimination in school environments should be implemented, and staff members should be actively involved in decision-making processes. The selection and training of school administrators should prioritize merit and qualifications to ensure effective leadership.

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