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## The Relationships between Teachers' Psychological Contract Violation, Job Alienation, and Counterproductive Work Behaviors\*

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### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between teachers' psychological contract violation, work alienation, and counterproductive work behavior. This quantitative research included 476 teachers working in public and private secondary schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The research findings revealed that teachers' perceptions of psychological contract violation and job alienation levels were found to be low. Teachers' perceptions of psychological contract violation and their level of work alienation did not differ according to gender and educational status. There is a significant difference according to the school type, seniority, and working time at school. Teachers had low levels of counterproductive work behavior. The psychological contract had a significant and positive effect on work alienation but did not have a significant effect on counterproductive work behaviors. Lastly, school type was not found to be a significant mediator variable. Even low levels of psychological contract breach among teachers can be problematic if not fully addressed. School administrators should communicate openly with teachers and make realistic promises, particularly in private schools. Efforts should be made to strengthen teachers' psychological contracts and support their professional development.

**Keywords:** Psychological contract violation, work alienation, counterproductive behaviors, teachers

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## Introduction

Extensive prior research has delved into the intricate relationship between counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) and a multitude of contributing factors, which encompass psychological contract violation (PCV) (e.g., Fettahlioğlu, 2015), work alienation (WA) (e.g., Kanten & Ülker, 2014; Uysal, 2018), and the prevailing influence of organizational cynicism (Li & Chen, 2018). At the heart of this narrative, PCV emerges as a clandestine catalyst, crystallizing when employees firmly perceive that their organization is failing to fulfill its commitments, as eloquently expounded by Robinson and Rousseau in 1994. Empirical evidence substantiates the notion that this perception, triggered by perceived organizational shortcomings, acts as a potent catalyst for behaviors that jeopardize an organization's overall well-being, taking the form of CWB within the organizational context, as exemplified by Özdemir and Demircioğlu in 2015. Furthermore, PCV cultivates a pervasive sense of WA, a phenomenon aptly demonstrated by Demirkiran, Taşkaya, and Yorulmaz in 2016. Thus, PCV occupies a central role in this intricate web of interconnected variables, serving as both a precursor to CWB and a nurturer of WA. Collectively, these consequences cast a profound shadow over the organization itself, affecting its very essence and fabric. Despite extensive scholarly research on PCV, WA, and CWB, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding their complex interactions in the context of teachers' situational factors, especially concerning differences between private and public schools. This study aims to fill this gap by simultaneously examining these variables and their intricate relationships within a comprehensive model, including the mediating role of school type. Furthermore, it seeks to expand our understanding by delving deeper into teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward these crucial variables. This expansion involves examining these variables across various independent factors such as school type (public and private), gender, educational status, seniority, and length of service. PCV leaves an indelible mark on teachers' beliefs and commitments, corroding their dedication to educational institutions. These behaviors encompass chronic tardiness, absenteeism, neglect of work duties, and even deliberate harm to the institution's assets and infrastructure (Akbiyık, 2018; Demircioğlu & Özdemir, 2014; Kickul & Lester, 2001; Spector et al., 2006; Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Consequently, PCV poses a profound threat to the educational mission by undermining teacher commitment and fostering behaviors that are detrimental to the institution's success.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the complex interplay among PCV, WA, and CWB of public and private secondary school teachers in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). To achieve this overarching goal, the study addresses key research questions:

1. What are the levels of PCV, WA, and CWB of teachers working in public and private secondary education schools and what are the relationships between these variables?
2. Do PCV, WA, and CWB of teachers working in public and private secondary education institutions differ significantly according to a) school type (public and private), b) gender, c) education level, d) seniority, and e) working time in the school?
3. Are psychological contract violation levels a significant predictor of alienation and counterproductive work behaviors?
4. Does school type have significant direct effects on PCV, WA, and CWB of teachers working in public and private secondary schools?

## **Literature**

Under this heading, the basic variables of the research are explained.

### **Psychological Contract Violation**

The psychological contract is portrayed as an unspoken, implicit, and perceptual agreement (Rousseau, 1998), a set of expectations grounded in prior experiences and observations regarding what employees anticipate in their roles (Robinson, 1996), and a conceptual framework facilitating the comprehension of the employment relationship (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). However, violations in this contract, termed as Psychological Contract Violation (PCV), occur when one party believes the other has not fulfilled obligations. PCV often arises from failures like inadequate training support, disparities in promised and actual rewards, inaccurate job information, and neglecting employee input during organizational changes (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). In a study on PCV among private school teachers, Onarıcı (2021) found that PCV worsened due to competitive managerial practices and unmet material expectations. Bal et al. (2008) discovered that older employees were less affected by PCV. Past research established links between PCV in teachers and negative relationships with organizational justice (Oğul Selekler, 2007), job satisfaction, and engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors. Additionally, PCV was positively associated with turnover intentions (Yiğit, 2015). The influence of organizational factors on PCV is evident in research findings. Studies involving over 800 managers emphasized the role of contextual variables, such as employment conditions. PCV pays a special attention to job security, compensation, and career advancement (Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

### **Work Alienation**

The concept of WA has wide-ranging consequences, affecting both individuals and organizations, impairing their continuity and effectiveness (Elma, 2003). Seeman (1959) provides a socio-psychological perspective, outlining five sub-dimensions of alienation. "Powerlessness" pertains to an individual's sense of being unable to influence or manage their life circumstances (Şimşek et al., 2001). "Meaninglessness" refers to individuals' struggle to comprehend events, leading to indecision and unresolved situations. "Isolation" expresses that individuals see themselves as undesirable, potentially withdrawing from social interactions and society. "Self-alienation" refers to reduced motivation, enthusiasm for work, and a diminished sense of the value of one's labor while "isolation" refers to individuals' withdrawal tendency from social interactions and society (Seeman, 1959). Teachers experience alienation through a perception of their work as lacking meaning, shaped by the conditions in schools and the broader societal context (Ak, 2019; Elma, 2003; Kasapoğlu, 2015). This sense of meaninglessness is coupled with feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness, leading to a negative outlook on both their school and profession. JA also results in teachers distancing themselves from the school environment, indicating disengagement from the educational community. These factors collectively highlight the multifaceted nature of job alienation among teachers

### **Counterproductive Work Behavior**

CWB encompasses deliberate actions occurring within an organizational context, with the intent to inflict harm upon the organization itself or its constituents (Spector & Fox, 2002). This multifaceted phenomenon has been referred to using various terminologies in academic discourse, including 'deviant behaviors' (Hollinger, 1986), 'maladaptive behaviors' (Puffer, 1987), 'organizational negligence' (Hogan & Hogan, 1989), 'workplace deviance' (Robinson & Bennet,

1995), and 'antisocial behavior' (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997), among others (Güllü, 2018; Gültaş & Erigüç, 2018). Robinson and Bennett (1995) have defined CWB as instances of workplace deviance wherein behaviors deliberately contravene organizational norms and pose a threat to the well-being of employees. In educational settings, CWB include actions like tardiness, theft, property damage, declining academic performance, and apathy towards school-related matters (Akkaya, 2019).

### **The Relationships between the Variables of the Study and School Type**

A psychological contract emerges when individuals believe their contributions obligate the organization to reciprocate in some way. Reciprocity is a key element, where cognitive evaluations of promises versus actual outcomes contribute to perceptions of contract violation. In cases where the perception of a PCV persists or intensifies, teachers may respond to these perceptions through negative behaviors that run counter to the objectives of the organization. These behaviors, which can also be categorized as manifestations of CWB, encompass actions such as chronic tardiness, unexcused absences, neglect of job-related duties, and deliberate harm to organizational assets (Akbıyık, 2018; Demircioğlu & Özdemir, 2014; Kickul & Lester, 2001; Spector et al., 2006; Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

The primary rationale behind the comparative analysis of public and private secondary school teachers, as well as the examination of school type as a mediating variable in this research, stems from the assertion made by De Cuyper, Rigotti, Witte, and Mohr (2008) that employees' psychological contracts are influenced by the terms stipulated in their legal employment contracts. Accordingly, the duration specified in legal employment contracts affects the formation and shaping of the psychological contract. In TRNC education system, teachers working in public schools are employed in permanent status subject to the Issue 25/1985 Teachers Law, while private school teachers are employed according to the Issue 22/1992 Labor Law. Private school teachers have contractual agreements with schools for at least a year, subject to performance evaluations, while public school teachers have greater job security with permanent positions. This contrast results in a more competitive landscape for private school educators.

This study aims to use public school teachers as representatives of educators in secure, permanent positions and private school teachers as examples of those in more transient, competitive employment situations. The research expects that these differing work conditions will have varying impacts on the attitudes and behaviors of public and private school teachers. Previous evidence suggests differences in PCV between public and private sector employees in various occupational groups. The study hypothesizes that school type plays a mediating role in the relationship between PCV and variables like WA and CWB (Figure 1).

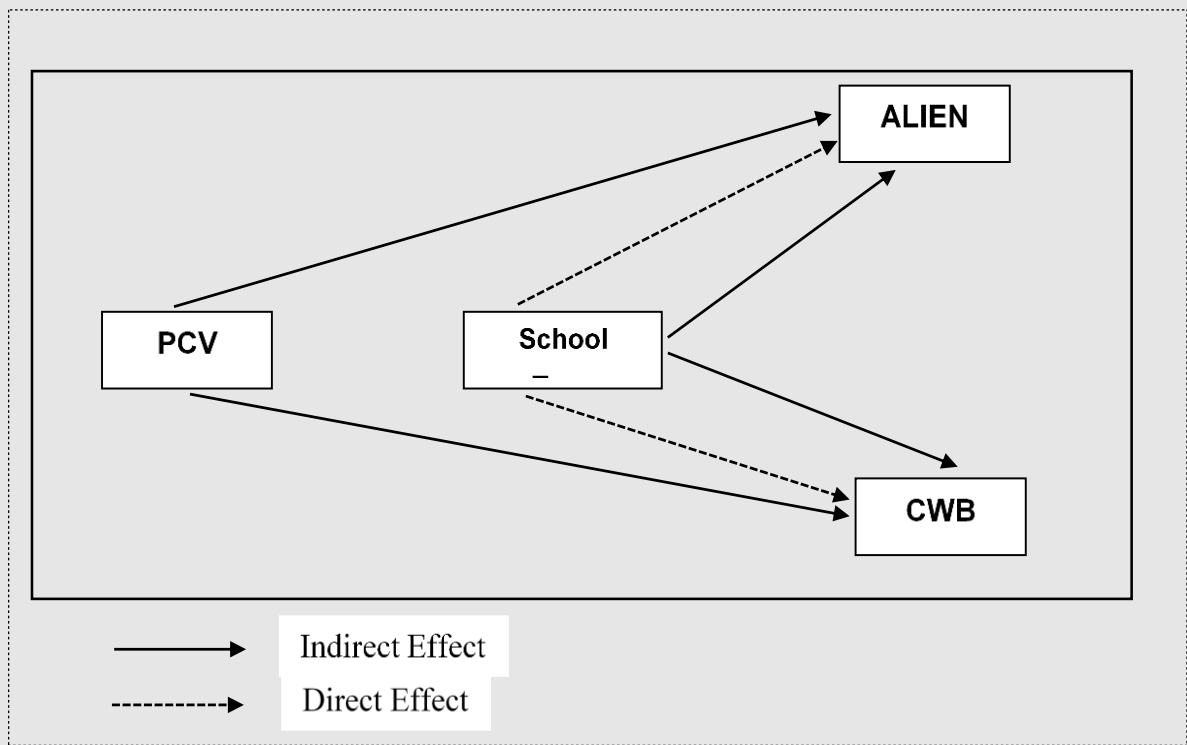


Figure 1. The Hypothesized Model

### Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate the relationships among PCV, WA, and CWB of teachers in secondary schools within the districts of the TRNC through a correlational survey model. Meanwhile, the independent variables encompassed gender, years of professional experience, educational attainment, school type, and seniority within the educational institution.

### Sample and Population

The population of this study consists of teachers working in public and private secondary schools in TRNC in the 2021-2022 academic year. Accordingly, the statistics of population and sample size in TRNC districts are given in Table 1 (TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture statistics).

Table 1. Population and sample

Districts		Number of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Teachers Sampled
Lefkosia	Public	21	1275	160
	Private	5	268	138
Famagusta	Public	11	567	71
	Private	1	47	24
Kyrenia	Public	10	399	50
	Private	4	107	55
Guzelyurt	Public	4	196	25
	Private	0	0	0
Iskele	Public	6	275	35
	Private	0	0	0
Lefke	Public	2	117	15
	Private	0	0	0
Total	Public	54	2829	356
	Private	10	422	217

As Table 1 displays, public and private schools were treated as separate populations. The stratified sampling technique was used to ensure each element in the populations was adequately represented in the sample, enhancing proportionate and independent selection. Out of 2,829 teachers, a sample of 356 public teachers was determined as sufficient representation, considering a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05 and a tolerance level of 5% (Balci, 2005). For the second population of 422 teachers in private secondary schools, a sample of 217 teachers was posited. Almost all of the public school teachers ( $n=347$ ) sampled within the scope of the research were reached. Among private school teachers, 59% ( $n=129$ ) of the sampled teachers volunteered to participate. As a result, a total of 476 secondary school teachers volunteered to participate in the study.

### Data Collection Tool

#### Psychological Contract Violation (PCV-S)

PCV-S developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000) and consisting of nine items were used to determine the perceptions of PCV. It includes items such as "I am disappointed with my employer's behavior towards me", "Everything promised to me has not been fulfilled", and "I feel great anger towards the organization". The participants are expected to respond to the 5-point Likert-type scale items on the scale of "1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Neutral, 3=Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree". It was determined that the original psychological contract breach scale, consisting of nine items in total, formed a two-factor structure with seven items after the elimination of items 5 and 7. These two factors are "perceived breach towards management" and "perceived breach towards the organization". The internal consistency coefficient of the original scale was 0.92. The scale was adapted to Turkish culture by Oğul Selekler (2007). As a result of the reliability analysis, the internal consistency coefficient was determined as 0.94. These results showed that the scale is reliable. Considering the factor loadings of the Work Alienation scale in this study, the factor loadings in the powerlessness dimension range from 0.50 to 0.70, in the meaninglessness dimension from 0.43 to 0.70, in the isolation dimension from 0.52 to 0.70, and in the alienation from school dimension from 0.49 to 0.78.



### **WA Scale (WA-S)**

WA-S consisting of 38 items developed by Elma (2003) was used. It is graded with a five-point Likert scale, consists of (5) always, (4) most of the time, (3) sometimes, (2) rarely, and (1) never. The item-total correlations of the scale consisting of four dimensions vary between .45 and .75 in the first factor, .41 and .69 in the second factor, .34 and .61 in the third factor, and .21 and .42 in the fourth factor. Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the scale were determined as .86, .84, .80, and .62 respectively. It is reported that the scale is a valid and reliable data collection tool. In the CFA analysis within this study, the factor loadings of the items in the first dimension, called powerlessness, range between 0.50 and 0.70. The factor loadings of the items in the meaninglessness dimension range between 0.43 and 0.70; the factor loadings of the items in the third dimension, or isolation, range between 0.52 and 0.70. Finally, the factor loadings of the items in the fourth dimension, referred to as alienation from school, vary between 0.49 and 0.78

### **CWB Scale (CWB-S)**

Developed by Spector et al. (2006), the original version of the CWB-S is a five-point Likert-type scale consisting of 33 items. The scale was rated using a five-point Likert scale consisting of the options: (5) always, (4) most of the time, (3) sometimes, (2) rarely, (1) never. It consists of five dimensions: abuse (18 items), deviation from production (3 items), sabotage (3) items, stealing (5 items), and withdrawal (4) items. According to the factor analysis results in this study, the factor loadings of the items in the first factor range from 0.50 to 0.92, the factor loadings of the items in the second factor range from 0.77 to 0.82, and the factor loadings of the items in the withdrawal factor range from 0.52 to 0.91. Cronbach Alpha reliability values of the original scale were calculated as .81, .61, .42, .58, .63, and .87, respectively.

### **Data Collection**

Researchers administered a data collection instrument comprising three scales to participating teachers. The surveys were distributed to teachers face-to-face and they were collected after the teachers filled them out. The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. Before collecting data, approvals were obtained from the Ethical Board of Hacettepe University and the TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture.

### **Data Analyses**

JASP (Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program) was used to analyze the data. It is a free and open-source application used for statistical analysis, particularly for those already accustomed to working with SPSS.

The results of the Shapiro Wilk Normality Test, which was conducted to measure whether the data obtained from the scales had normal distribution, revealed that the scales or subtest scores did not show normal distribution (D values > 0.300 and all p values < .000). For this reason, the multivariate normality test analysis suggested by Burdinski (2000) was carried out, considering the possibility of conducting the analyzes to be used in the study in the context of multiple variances. The analysis used is based on the graphing of Mahanalobis distances and  $\chi^2$  values generated from the dependent variables. Mahanalobis Distances and Chi-Square Values were calculated based on the scores of the data. The results revealed that the data did not show a multivariate normal distribution (Burdinski, 2000). Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to detect possible changes in main and subtest scores based on independent variables. In the Kruskal-Wallis tests, the Dwass-Steel-Critchlow-Flinger test was used when pairwise

comparisons were required (Hollander, Wolfe, & Chicken, 2014). Structural equation modeling (SEM) using JASP was performed to explore the relationship between variables

Cohen  $r$  ( $r = z / \sqrt{n}$ ) and  $\epsilon^2$  effect size values were used to see the explanatory power of each independent variable. Cohen (1988) interpreted values close to  $r = 0.2$  as “small”, values close to  $r = 0.3$  as “moderate” and values close to or greater than  $r = 0.5$  as “large” effect sizes. Cohen (1988) interpreted values close to  $d = 0.2$  as “small”, values close to  $d = 0.3$  as “moderate” and values close to or greater than  $d = 0.5$  as “large” effect sizes. Rea and Parker (1992) interpreted,  $0.00 < \epsilon^2 < 0.01$  as can be ignored;  $0.01 < \epsilon^2 < 0.04$  as weak;  $0.04 < \epsilon^2 < 0.016$  as intermediate;  $0.16 < \epsilon^2 < 0.36$  as partially strong;  $0.36 < \epsilon^2 < 0.64$  as strong and  $0.64 < \epsilon^2 < 1.00$  as very strong effect values. Accordingly, a .05 ( $p < .05$ ) significance level was used in all analyses performed within the framework of the research.

### EFA Results

EFA and CFA were tests were applied on different data sets. EFA was conducted on 476 participants and CFA on 377 participants. In Table 2, the factor values of the EFA analysis were given.

Table 2. EFA Results of The Scales

<i>Test</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Original Measurement Value</i>	<i>Changes</i>
			Items 5 and 7 were eliminated because they had overlapping factor loads.
PCV	KMO	0.76	0.70
	$p$	.000	.000
	Factor number	2	2
	Explained Variance	%47.1	%56.7
			Items 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 31 and 32 were eliminated because they had low factor loadings, and items 21 and 22 were eliminated because they had overlapping factor loads.
WA	KMO	0.84	0.83
	$p$	.000	.000
	Factor number	4	4
	Explained Variance	%34.9	%39.0
			Items 1, 2, 19, 21, 22, and 23 were eliminated because they had low factor loads, items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 14 did not fit the theoretical model, and items 16 and 27 were eliminated because they had similar factor loads.
CWB	KMO	0.84	0.80
	$p$	.000	.000
	Factor number	3	3
	Explained Variance	%50.82	%63.6



As seen in Table 2, a two-factor structure explain 56.7% of the variance in the PCV test, a four-factor structure that explained 39% of the variance in the WA test, and a three-factor structure that explained 64% of the variance in the CWB test. However, items with close overlap and factor loadings below 0.40 were eliminated.

### CFA Results

The fit indices of the models as a result of the analyzes are given in Table 3. All scales are suitable for the observed structure, based on the fact that all chi-square/degrees of freedom are less than 5. CFA goodness-of-fit results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. CFA Fit Measures

Fit Indices	PCV Measurement Values	WA Measurement Values	CWB Measurement Values
$\chi^2$	14.469	846.890	68.144
$p$	.272	<.001	.670
$df$	12	371	74
$\chi^2/df$	1.21	2.27	0.92
RMSEA	0.023	0.056	0.000
CFI	1.000	0.968	1.000
NFI	0.999	0.965	1.000

As can be seen from Table 3, 0.90-0.95 is acceptable for goodness-of-fit indices. A value above 0.95 indicates a high level of agreement (Dickey, 1996). The fact that the CFI and NFI fit index values in Table 3 are greater than 0.95 indicates that all models are compatible with the data. As a result of the EFA and CFA, the  $\alpha$  reliability coefficients of all the tests that took their final form are given in Table 4. Additionally, the Combined Reliability (CR) coefficient of each scale was calculated. CR is a less biased estimate of reliability than the Cronbach Alpha values. The CR value of 0.7 and above indicates that the reliability is sufficient (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. Cronbach Alpha and Combined Confidence Coefficients of Scales

Scale	Cronbach Alpha	Combined Confidence	Number of Items
PCV	0.50	0.60	7
WA	0.88	0.97	28
CWB	0.74	0.93	14

Table 4 shows that Cronbach's Alpha of the PCV was calculated as 0.60, and the combined reliability was calculated as 0.60. The Cronbach's Alpha of the WA was 0.88 and the combined reliability value was 0.97. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the third scale, CWB, was 0.74 and the combined reliability coefficient value was 0.93. Thus, the WA scale and the CWB have a high degree of reliability as a result of Cronbach's Alpha values (Tavşancıl, 2006, p.29). In the original PCV scale, the Cronbach Alpha value was .80. In the current study, it was calculated as .50. and the combined reliability value was .60.

## Data Analysis

JASP (Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program) was used to analyze the data. , is a free, open-source application tailored for statistical analysis. It is a user-friendly experience, particularly for those already accustomed to working with SPSS. The results of the Shapiro Wilk Normality Test, revealed that the scales or subtest scores did not show normal distribution (D values > 0.300 and all p values < .000). For this reason, the multivariate normality test analysis suggested by Burdinski (2000) was carried out, considering the possibility of conducting the analyzes to be used in the study in the context of multiple variances. The analysis used is based on the graphing of Mahanalobis distances and  $\chi^2$  values generated from the dependent variables. Mahanalobis Distances and Chi-Square Values were calculated based on the scores of the data. The results revealed that the data did not show a multivariate normal distribution (Burdinski, 2000). Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to detect possible changes in main and subtest scores based on independent variables. In the Kruskal-Wallis tests, the Dwass-Steel-Critchlow-Flinger test was used when pairwise comparisons were required (Hollander, Wolfe, & Chicken, 2014). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using JASP was performed to explore the relationship between variables.

Cohen  $r$  ( $r = z / \sqrt{n}$ ) and  $\epsilon^2$  effect size values were used to see the explanatory power of each independent variable. Cohen (1988) interpreted values close to  $r = 0.2$  as “small”, values close to  $r = 0.3$  as “moderate” and values close to or greater than  $r = 0.5$  as “large” effect sizes. Rea and Parker (1992) interpreted,  $0.00 < \epsilon^2 < 0.01$  as can be ignored;  $0.01 < \epsilon^2 < 0.04$  as weak;  $0.04 < \epsilon^2 < 0.016$  as intermediate;  $0.16 < \epsilon^2 < 0.36$  as partially strong;  $0.36 < \epsilon^2 < 0.64$  as strong and  $0.64 < \epsilon^2 < 1.00$  as very strong effect values. Accordingly, a .05 ( $p < .05$ ) significance level was used in all analyses performed within the framework of the research.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables

To answer first question of the research (What is the level of PCV, WA, and CWB of teachers working in public and private secondary schools, and what are the relations between them?), the average scores calculated for these three variables and the descriptive statistics for the relationships between the variables are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables

Variables	School Type	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. PCV	Public	2.46	.46	1		
	Private	2.68	.61	1		
2. WA	Public	1.95	.44	.317**	1	
	Private	2.14	.62	.464**	1	
3. CWB	Public	1.07	.23	.143**	.399**	1
	Private	1.04	.13	.166	.270**	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows that the mean scores of teachers for PCV (M=2.46; M=2.68) and WA (M=1.95, SD = .44; M=2.14, SD = .62) were found to be at low levels both for public and private school teachers. Besides, the CWB mean scores of both public (M=1.95; SD = .44) and private (M=2.14; SD = .62) school teachers' were the lowest (It corresponds to the "never" range in the Likert-type rating) among the three variables meaning that teachers are not exhibiting CWB. As PCV and WA perceptions of teachers were rare, CWB is also consistently negligible. When the scales used in the research are evaluated on a five-point Likert scale, the 4.20 - 5.00 point ranges are definitely agree/always; 3.40 - 4.19 score ranges agree/most of the time; 2.60 - 3.39 point ranges I am undecided/sometimes; 1.80 - 2.59 point ranges disagree/rarely; The 1.00 - 1.79 point ranges correspond to the strongly disagree/strongly disagree ratings. Accordingly, teachers' PCV and WA levels are relatively higher than their QWB levels. This suggests that although teachers experience low levels of PCV and WA, they do not respond to these experiences with CWB. The relatively highest significant relationship among the research variables is the moderately positive relationship between the PCV and WA perceptions of private school teachers. As the perception of WA of private school teachers increases, the perception of PCV increases and vice versa. In sum, teachers' PCV perceptions are relatively more dominant in school settings than in WA and CWB.

Table 5 shows the significant positive relationships between teachers' PCV, WA, and CWB using Spearman correlation coefficient ranging from .14 to .46. As predicted, WA and CWB were positively and significantly related to PCV with some differentiating levels and aspects in private and public schools. According to Cohen (1988, p. 115), a correlation of .50 is high, .30 is medium and .10 is low. While public school teachers' PCV has a medium correlation with WA ( $r = .31$ ,  $p < .01$ ), private school teachers' PCV has a higher level of correlation with WA. Besides, public school teachers' PCV has a weak relationship ( $r = .14$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with CWB but this is not the case for private school teachers ( $r = .16$ ;  $p > .01$ ). Both public ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and private school teachers' WA ( $r = .27$ ,  $p < .01$ ) perception has a moderate relationship with CWB. The relatively

highest significant relationship among the research variables is the moderately positive relationship between the PCV and WA perceptions of private school teachers ( $r = .46$ ). This means that as the perception of WA of teachers increases, the perception of PCV increases and vice versa. Overall, despite low rates, these results verify that WA and PCV have a connection with CWB in school settings.

### Comparison of Independent Variables

The calculations related to the different tests for the second question of the study, "Do the PCV, WA, alienation levels and counterproductive work behaviors of teachers working in secondary education institutions differ significantly according to the variables of a) school type (public and private), b) gender, c) educational status, d) seniority, e) working time in the school?" are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Comparison of independent variables

Variables	School Type		Gender		Education Level		Seniority		Working Time at School	
	Mann-Whitney U	p*	Mann-Whitney U	p*	Kruskal-Wallis Test $\chi^2$ <sup>a</sup>	p*	Kruskal-Wallis Test $\chi^2$	p*	Kruskal-Wallis Test $\chi^2$ <sup>a</sup>	p*
PCV	17103	0.000	23934	0.917	2.16	0.339	37.7	0.01	11.0	0.026
WA	19050	0.027	21412	0.084	0.66	0.717	11.6	0.020	8.62	0.071
CWB	18863	0.023	21351	0.664	1.28	0.527	5.09	0.279	8.15	0.086

Note: <sup>a</sup>df = 2; df = 4, \*p < .05

**School type.** As shown in Table 6, significant differences were found between private and public school teachers PCV ( $U = 16.2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), WA ( $U = 17.8$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ) and CWB ( $U = 18863$ ). Public school teachers felt higher levels of PCV and alienation than private school teachers ( $p < .001$ ). The fact that the effect size ( $r$ ) value is less than 0.3 ( $r = 0.205$ ) shows that the difference between the PCV perceptions of teachers working in public and private schools is at a low level. Cohen's  $r$  effect size value ( $r = 0.133$ ) showed that the difference between public and private secondary school teachers' perceptions of PCV was at a low level. Contrastly, public teachers' CWB scores are significantly higher than private school teachers. Public school teachers' higher level of CWB may be due to the fact that they have stronger job security than private sector teachers and therefore they are less likely to be harmed.

**Gender.** Teachers' PCV ( $U = 16.2$ ,  $p = 0.91$ ), WA ( $U = 16.2$ ,  $p = 0.84$ ), and CWB ( $U = 16.2$ ,  $p > 0.66$ ) scores do not differ significantly according to gender.

**Education level.** Public and private school teachers' perceptions of PCV ( $\chi^2 = 2.16$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), WA ( $\chi^2 = 2.16$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), and CWB ( $\chi^2 = 2.16$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) do not differ significantly according to educational status.

**Seniority.** While CWB ( $\chi^2 = 0.279$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) perceptions of public and private school teachers do not differ significantly according to seniority, PCV ( $\chi^2 = 2.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), WA ( $\chi^2 = 2.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and CWB ( $\chi^2 = 2.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) perceptions differ significantly according to educational status. According to the Dwass-Steel-Critchlow-Flinger results calculated for pairwise

comparison, teachers with 1-5 years of seniority have a lower level of PCV perception than teachers with 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 20 years or more of seniority. Specifically, The PCV perceptions of teachers in the first years of the profession (1-5 years) are the lowest. In the later years of the profession, this perception increases slightly at a significant level. Among the two groups with only 1-5 years and 11-15 years of experience, those with 11-15 years of experience have higher WA scores ( $W=4.604$ ;  $p=0.010$ ) and the effect size is low ( $\epsilon^2=0.025$ ).

**Working time at school.** While teachers' perceptions of WA ( $\chi^2=0.071$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and CWB ( $\chi^2=0.086$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) do not differ significantly according to the length of time they work at the school, their perceptions of PCV ( $\chi^2=11.0$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) differ. Dwass-Steel-Critchlow test showed that the group with less than one year of working experience at a specific school has a lower PCV score than the group with more than 16 years of working experience at the same school. No significant difference was determined in other groups.

### **The Mediator Role of School Type in the Effect of Psychological Contract Breach on Work Alienation and Counterproductive Work Behaviors**

To address the third and fourth research questions (To what extent do the levels of Psychological Contract Violation (PCV) in teachers working in public and private secondary schools serve as significant predictors of Work Alienation (WA) and Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWB)?" and "Do the types of schools exert notable direct effects on PCV, WA, and CWB among teachers in both public and private secondary institutions?), the JASP statistical software package was used. This software was employed to assess hypotheses within the context of mediator analysis. Our analytical procedures involved conducting 5,000 bootstrap samples, following a bootstrapping methodology, while maintaining a confidence level of 95%. This bootstrapping technique is commonly utilized in statistical applications such as confidence interval estimation and non-parametric estimation problems (Efron, 1979). The comprehensive results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Findings of hypothesis tests on mediation analysis

					95% Confidence Interval	
Hypothesis	Effect	SH	$z$	$p$	LLI	ULCI
<i>Direct Effect</i>						
School Type → WA	0.085	0.041	2.040	0.041	-0.002	0.175
PCV → WA	0.115	0.011	10.685	< .001	0.084	0.147
WA → CWB	0.106	0.047	-2.272	0.023	-0.195	-0.032
PSI → CWB	0.024	0.012	1.973	0.049	-0.003	0.057
PSI → School Type	0.045	0.012	3.807	< .001	0.019	0.068
<i>Testing the Intermediate Model</i>						
<i>Indirect Effect</i>	Effect	SH	$z$	$p$	LLCI	ULCI
PCV → School Type → WA	0.004	0.002	1.798	0.072	0.0001	0.00
PCV → School Type → CWB	-0.005	0.002	-1.951	0.051	-0.010	-0.001
<i>Total Effect</i>	Effect	SH	$z$	$p$	LLCI	ULCI
PCV → WA	0.119	0.011	11.158	<.01	0.088	0.11

PCV	→	0.019	0.012	1.595	0.11	-0.068	0.01
CWB							

As Table 7 displays the PCV exert a statistically significant and positively oriented influence on WA scores ( $\beta = 0.115$ ,  $z = 10.685$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, in the relationship between PCV and OCB, PCV did not have a significant and positive effect on OCB ( $\beta = 0.024$ ,  $z = 1.973$ ,  $p > .001$ ). School type (public-private) has a significant and positive effect on OCB ( $\beta = -0.106$ ,  $z = -2.272$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ). A comprehensive representation of SEM is presented in Figure 2.

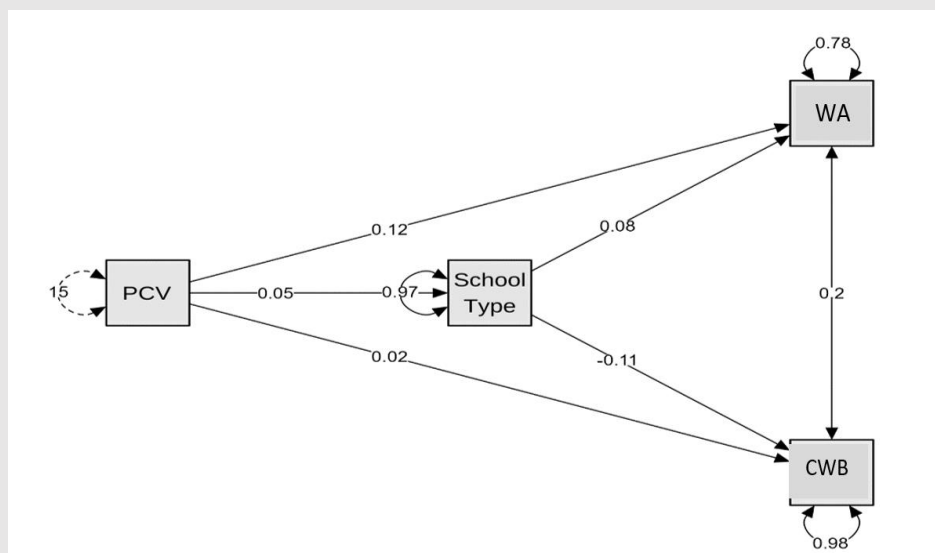


Figure 2. The SEM Results

### Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

The first question of the study aimed to determine the level of PCV, WA and CWB of teachers working in public and private secondary schools in TRNC and the relationship between these variables. While teachers' perceptions of PCV, alienation, and CWB are low in two school types, PCV violation perceptions are relatively more dominant in school settings than are WA and CWB. Although these findings are consistent with some past research (e.g. Çalışır, 2006; Elma, 2003; Emir, 2012), there is also contrary evidence that teachers have high levels of WA (Erdem, 2014; Kurtulmuş & Karabıyık, 2016). As PCV and WA perceptions of teachers were rare, they are almost non-existent in CWB. This suggests that although teachers experience low levels of PCV and WA, they do not always respond to these experiences with CWB. The relatively highest significant relationship among the research variables is the moderately positive relationship between the psychological contract and alienation perceptions of private school teachers. This means that as the WA perceptions of private school teachers increase, PCV perceptions increase and vice versa. As predicted, WA and CWB were positively and significantly related to PCV with some differentiating levels and aspects in private and public schools. Overall, despite low rates, these results verify that WA and PCV have a connection with CWB in school settings.

For the second research question, it was tested whether PCV, WA, and CWB differ according to some variables. The fact that teachers working in private schools have higher perceptions of PCV than public teachers can be interpreted in two ways. The first reason may be due to the nature of the psychological contracts that private school teachers have formed with the school administration and the legal paradox in their working conditions. Private school teachers in TRNC work with a fixed-time contract according to the provisions of Teachers Law No. 25/1985



and they are in a fragile position when compared to public school teachers in terms of job security. A qualitative research reported that the problems of private school teachers (Cerev & Coşkun, 2020) are not valued enough due to the high number of alternatives in the job market. Also, administrators demand more work with less money (a participants' expression), which in turn, educational institutions act as market-like organizations. In another study (Onarıcı, 2021), it was reported that the facts that private school teachers' assignments outside the working hours, the uncertainty of raise in their salaries, and inequality in-class hours negatively affect their psychological contracts. The fact that private school teachers experience higher levels of PCV than public school teachers can be attributed to the uncertainties about the responsibilities and expectations that are not written in their formal contracts dependent on their working status. In summary, the competitive structure and job insecurity in private schools may have a great potential to lead PCV preceptions.

Gender and education level are not variables with a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of PCV, WA, and CWB. These results are in line with the PCV findings of Selekler (2007) and Mimaroğlu (2008), Elma (2003), Atay and Gerçek (2017). While the PCV perception of new teachers is lower than all other seniority groups, it is highest in WA. Robinson (1996) states that psychological contracts are formed in a process due to their nature and can change over time. So, it can be thought that the psychological contracts of teachers with low seniority have not yet encountered such a negative experience. Mimaroğlu (2008) reported an insignificant difference in terms of PCV. The reason for these conflicting findings can be connected to the different country contexts between Turkey and TRNC.

A significant positive relationship between teachers' PCV and their WA found within the current research, aligning with previous studies (Demirkıran et al. 2016; Li and Chen, 2018; Shen et al. 2019). However, contrary to Özdemir and Demircioğlu (2015), who suggested that a part of the psychological contract can explain CWB, this study concluded that PCV does not directly lead to CWB; the relationship between them is indirect and weak. Nonetheless, according to Yavuzsan (2020), there is a moderate positive relationship between PCV perception and CWB, suggesting that increased PCV perception may contribute to individuals' CWB.

Lastly, school type (public or private) significantly effected teachers' perceptions of PCV and their WA. In a previous study, Yıldırım (2018) reported that the psychological contract had a positive relationship with WA. Additionally, teachers in public high schools were found to exhibit CWB. However, it is not clear if this negative perception among teachers will lead to CWB, and more research is needed with different variables to understand this in school settings. Similarly, Onarıcı (2021) found that teachers perceiving PCV might display negative behaviors at work and school, but the evidence is not strong that PCV will directly lead to CWB. Therefore, further research is required to uncover the relationship between undesirable behaviors, PCV, and CWB in the school environment.

### **Implications and Suggestions**

1. The PCV perceptions, WA, and CWB of teachers working in public and private secondary schools in TRNC districts are very low. Public teachers have a relatively higher perception of PCV than private school teachers. Teachers working in public secondary schools have a higher tendency toward CWB than teachers working in private secondary education institutions.
2. While teachers' PCV perceptions did not differ significantly according to the independent variables of gender, seniority, and educational status, it was revealed that the PCV

perception of new teachers was the lowest. Similarly, teachers who have worked in the same school for less than a year have the lowest PCV perception, which means that PCV is not an instantaneous reaction and develops over time. The difference between public and private school teachers' perceptions of PCV implies that contextual factors, such as employment conditions, may influence PCV. Addressing any disparities between public and private school teachers can help improve the working environment and job satisfaction, particularly in private schools.

3. Teachers' WA levels do not differ significantly according to gender and educational status. On the other hand, as the seniority of teachers increases, their level of WA also increases. The same applies to working time at school. New teachers and those with less than a year of experience have the lowest PCV perception suggests that PCV may develop gradually over time. School administrators and human resources departments should consider providing support and clear communication to new teachers to prevent PCV from developing early in their careers. Additionally, ongoing efforts to manage PCV perceptions are crucial for retaining experienced teachers.
4. Schools should focus on strategies to reduce WA, especially for experienced teachers. Creating a positive and engaging work environment can help mitigate the negative effects of WA.
5. Private school administrators and policymakers should be aware of these differences and consider implementing strategies to improve well-being where CWB levels are lower. This may include initiatives to reduce work-related stress and enhance teacher satisfaction.
6. School administrators and policymakers should consider tailoring interventions to address PCV and WA differently in public and private schools. Additionally, addressing factors beyond school type is essential for understanding and mitigating CWB among teachers.
7. Lastly, our findings offer insightful information for academics and practitioners in the TRNC, as well as perhaps in other settings. They highlight the importance of addressing PCV, WA, and well-being among teachers and offer guidance for developing targeted interventions to improve their working conditions and job satisfaction.

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### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author conducted the study alone. There is no conflict of interest. If there is more than one author, please detail the information about this title.

### **Ethics committee approval process**

The ethics application for the study was made on 08/04/2021 and the research was carried out with the approval of Hacettepe University Ethics Commission dated 20/09/2021 and numbered E-35853172-300-00001599543.

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