



The Relationship Between School Administrators' Open Leadership Characteristics and Teachers' Organizational Creativity*

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Received:</i> 06.06.2025</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 24.06.2025</p> <p><i>Online First:</i> 15.07.2025</p> <p><i>Published:</i> 15.07.2025</p>	<p>The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between school principals' open leadership behaviors and teachers' organizational creativity, as perceived by educators in primary and secondary schools in the province of Balıkesir. The research sample comprises 372 teachers employed in schools located in the Altıeylül and Karesi districts, selected through a non-probability convenience sampling strategy. The Open Leadership Scale was used to assess teachers' perceptions regarding school administrators' open leadership behaviors. At the same time, the Organizational Creativity Scale was administered to evaluate their perceived levels of organizational creativity. The data obtained from the measurement tools were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, as well as inferential procedures including the independent samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson product-moment correlation, and linear regression techniques. Teachers' perceptions of open leadership and their organizational creativity levels were examined about variables such as gender, age, years of service, educational level of assignment, and teaching branch. The findings reveal that as teachers' age increases, their perception of open leadership also increases, whereas their organizational creativity decreases. Regarding the variable of years of service, more experienced teachers reported higher levels of open leadership perception but lower levels of organizational creativity. When examined in terms of the level of educational assignment, it was observed that primary school teachers reported higher perceptions of open leadership and greater levels of organizational creativity. Likewise, in terms of teaching branch, preschool and classroom teachers demonstrated significantly higher scores on both constructs compared to their peers in other subject areas. Additionally, the findings revealed a statistically significant, moderate, and positive correlation between school principals' open leadership practices and teachers' organizational creativity. The results suggest that as principals exhibit more open leadership behaviors, teachers' organizational creativity is likely to increase correspondingly.</p> <p>Keywords: Open leadership, organizational creativity, school administrators</p>

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1. INTRODUCTION

School administrators play a vital role in managing both the tangible and intangible resources of schools, aligning with the goals of the education system. They shape the institutional environment and support students' academic, social, and cultural development. The decisions and practices of administrators can strongly affect the organizational climate and teachers' creative capacities. This study examines the relationship between principals' open leadership characteristics and teachers' organizational creativity. The aim is to provide insights that can guide leadership practices and improve teaching and learning processes. In this context, school leaders must foster environments that promote teachers' individual, managerial, and social creativity. In today's rapidly evolving world, where knowledge accumulates and changes continuously and technology advances at an unprecedented pace, globalization of competition has brought creativity to the forefront for both individuals and organizations. Therefore, the primary condition for adapting to the demands of the current century is the ability to cultivate creative individuals and organizations. The capacity of all employees within an educational institution to renew themselves and manifest their creativity is directly linked to the leadership qualities of the institution's administrators.

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Moreover, globalization, accompanied by increased competition and a faster pace of change, has led to distinctions among schools within the education sector. Rapid technological changes affect organizational models and management styles. In all these processes, it is possible to assert that teachers' levels of organizational creativity play a key role in school success. Recent studies recognize creativity as one of the most valuable resources possessed by organizations and generally accept the necessity of being a creative organization to enhance competitive advantage. However, becoming a creative organization is a complex process requiring long-term and systematic effort (Çavuşoğlu, 2007).

In this regard, all teachers need to recognize the significance of creativity within the educational process. As the primary agents responsible for enacting innovations and implementing pedagogical reforms, teachers play a pivotal role in acquiring and applying contemporary instructional strategies. Their ability to effectively integrate new approaches is fundamental to advancing the overarching goals of the education system (Karacabey, 2011). For these reasons, high levels of effectiveness and creativity are expected from both administrators and teachers working in schools. From this perspective, administrators and teachers should internalize the concept of creativity and be able to apply every method and technique that fosters creativity throughout their professional lives.

Like all living organisms and institutional systems, schools are shaped by ongoing interactions with their external environments and must adapt to constant change. As educational organizations, they are directly influenced by technological and societal developments. To navigate these dynamics, schools require administrators who actively engage with stakeholders, foster curiosity, demonstrate accountability, and effectively leverage social networks.

It is essential to acknowledge that the concept and practice of leadership have undergone a continuous process of evolution and remain subject to transformation in contemporary contexts. This progression compels 21st-century school leaders to consider situational dynamics, adopt contextually appropriate leadership styles, and actively seek innovative strategies to foster a collaborative and inclusive institutional environment (Sarier, 2013).

In this context, 21st-century school administrators must cultivate open leadership in addition to other essential qualities. Mastery of technological tools—especially online social networks such as EBA, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and school websites—is crucial for promoting openness, accountability, and effective school management. These technologies foster continuous sharing, curiosity, and collaboration (Polat, 2015). Open leadership represents the approach that integrates these competencies and meets the demands of contemporary educational environments.

A review of the literature suggests that open leadership and organizational creativity are individually significant factors in achieving success in school management and enabling teachers to fulfill their objectives. However, studies that examine both open leadership and organizational creativity together in the context of school administrators are scarce both in Turkey and internationally. Since educational institutions, whose primary capital is human, are social and open systems, they have a significant impact on a broad segment of society. As a result, the capacity of educational organizations to fulfill their institutional objectives exerts a significant influence on the wider social structure.

In conclusion, given that contemporary management paradigms responsive to evolving modes of communication necessitate both open leadership and organizational creativity, it is essential that administrators and educators at the primary and secondary levels internalize and actively embody these competencies within their institutional practices.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is formulated as follows: *Is there a significant relationship between the open leadership characteristics of administrators working in public schools and the organizational creativity of teachers?*

1.2. Sub Problems

1. What is the level of teachers' perceptions regarding the open leadership of school administrators?
2. Do teachers' perceptions of school administrators' open leadership differ according to the following variables?
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Seniority
 - Educational level of the assignment
 - Teaching branch
3. What is the level of teachers' organizational creativity?
4. Does the organizational creativity of teachers differ according to the following variables?
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Seniority
 - Educational level of the assignment

- Teaching branch
5. According to teachers' perceptions, is there a significant relationship between the open leadership characteristics of school administrators and teachers' organizational creativity?

2. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a correlational survey design to investigate the relationship between school administrators' open leadership traits and teachers' organizational creativity, drawing on data collected from educators working in public primary and secondary schools located in the central districts of Altieylül and Karesi in Balıkesir Province.

The study population comprised teachers working in public primary and secondary schools located in the Altieylül and Karesi districts of Balıkesir during the 2019–2020 academic year. According to official data from the Balıkesir Provincial Directorate of National Education, a total of 2,814 teachers constituted the target universe. Based on the sampling table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the minimum required sample size was calculated to be 338. Within this framework, 524 teachers were initially contacted, and the research instruments—used with appropriate permissions—were administered voluntarily between November 4, 2019, and June 6, 2020. Of the responses collected, 413 questionnaires were returned; 41 were excluded due to missing or inconsistent data to preserve the integrity and accuracy of the dataset. As a result, the final sample consisted of 372 fully completed and usable questionnaires. Before applying the scales, approval numbered "03" was obtained from the Sakarya University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee meeting dated October 7, 2020, and numbered 27.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were employed to examine the demographic profiles of teachers working in the central districts of Balıkesir who participated in the study. Among the participants, 66.1% were female and 33.9% were male; 37.6% were assigned to the primary education level, while 62.4% were assigned to the secondary education level. Regarding the length of service, 14.8% had 1–6 years of experience, 45.2% had 7–12 years, and 40.1% had 13 years or more of experience. The majority of participants (66.9%) were preschool and classroom teachers, while 33.1% were teachers of other branches.

2.1. Data Collection Instruments

Three distinct instruments were employed for data collection in this research. First, a "Personal Information Form" was used to gather background information on the participants. Second, the "Open Leadership Scale," developed by Polat and Arabacı (2016), was administered to evaluate teachers' perceptions of school administrators' open leadership behaviors. This instrument comprises 23 items distributed across three sub-dimensions and is formatted using a five-point Likert-type response scale. Third, the "Organizational Creativity Scale" by Balay (2010) was applied to measure the level of organizational creativity among teachers. This scale comprises 38 items across three sub-dimensions and employs a five-point Likert-type structure.

The questionnaire used in this study comprises three main sections, totaling 66 items. The first section includes five items intended to capture the sociodemographic profile of the participating teachers. The second section features 23 items that assess teachers' perceptions of school administrators' open leadership practices. The third section contains 38 items developed to evaluate the organizational creativity capacities demonstrated by teachers. Further details regarding the content and structure of each section are presented below.

2.2. Open Leadership Scale (OLS)

In this research, the Open Leadership Scale developed by Polat and Arabacı (2014) was utilized to assess the characteristics associated with open leadership. Comprising a total of 23 items, the scale is structured around three sub-dimensions and is administered using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "never" (1) to "always" (5). Polat and Arabacı reported internal consistency coefficients of .91 for Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing (APCS), .90 for Supporting Curiosity and Accountability (SCA), .87 for Effective Use of Social Networks (EUSN), and .95 for the entire scale, demonstrating a high level of reliability. These coefficients suggest that the instrument yields consistent and dependable data. In the current study, the reliability estimates for the Open Leadership Scale are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1.
Reliability Analysis Results for the Open Leadership Scale

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Overall Open Leadership	.93
Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing	.88
Supporting Curiosity and Accountability	.91
Effective Use of Social Networks	.94

2.3. Organizational Creativity Scale (OCS)

To evaluate teachers' organizational creativity traits, this study employed the Organizational Creativity Scale developed by Balay (2010). The instrument comprises 38 items distributed across three sub-dimensions and utilizes a 5-point Likert scale, offering response options ranging from "never" (1) to "always" (5). As reported by Balay, *the internal consistency values for each sub-dimension are: .92 for the Individual Dimension, .93 for the Managerial Dimension, and .95 for the Social Dimension.* These results suggest that the scale produces reliable data. In the current research, the reliability coefficients associated with the Organizational Creativity Scale are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Reliability Analysis Results of the Organizational Creativity Scale

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Overall Organizational Creativity	.94
Individual Dimension	.89
Managerial Dimension	.94
Social Dimension	.92

The overall Cronbach's alpha value calculated for the Organizational Creativity Scale was determined to be .94, indicating a high level of internal consistency. When the sub-dimensions are examined, the reliability coefficients were calculated as .89 for the Individual Dimension, .94 for the Managerial Dimension, and .92 for the Social Dimension. These results indicate that the scale has a high level of reliability.

2.4. Data Analysis

To identify the levels, descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, and relative variation coefficients (*V*) were computed for each item individually. To compare two distinct groups, an independent samples t-test was applied. Comparisons across three or more groups were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). In addition, correlation and regression analyses were used to examine potential relationships between the variables, including the direction and strength of any identified associations.

The data were analyzed in the sequence of the research sub-problems. To address the first sub-problem—namely, teachers' perceptions of school administrators' open leadership traits—overall scores were calculated by averaging the total, and these means were interpreted using a five-point scale. *In line with the structure of the five-point Likert scale*, the categorization of open leadership levels was made using interval values calculated as $(5-1=4)$ and $(4/5=0.80)$.

3. FINDINGS

Table 3 illustrates that teachers participating in the study perceived school administrators' open leadership qualities to be at a very high level ($\bar{X} = 4.21-5.00$) in several areas. These include: the presence of transparent communication channels allowing stakeholders to share their views ($\bar{X} = 4.26$); the school's encouragement of innovation-friendly environments ($\bar{X} = 4.22$); opportunities provided for all staff members to express their opinions ($\bar{X} = 4.23$); the lack of limitations on the responsible use of social media both within and outside the institution ($\bar{X} = 4.29$); and the value placed on the input of all service recipients within the organization ($\bar{X} = 4.29$).

The perception regarding the institution's investment in strategic economic goals was found to be at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.36$). The remaining items were rated in the high range ($\bar{X} = 3.41-4.20$). No items in the Open Leadership Scale were found to be rated at a very low or low level.

In general, teachers' perceptions of open leadership characteristics were found to be high ($\bar{X} = 3.97$). *These results suggest that teachers perceive their school administrators as demonstrating a considerable degree of open leadership behavior.*

Table 3.

Teachers' Opinions Regarding the Open Leadership Scale

Item	\bar{x}	SS	V
Availability of open channels for stakeholders to share ideas/content	4.26	.73	17,30
Support for environments open to innovation	4.22	.78	18,57
Communicating with stakeholders, even if their opinions are negative	4.13	.77	18,79
Communicating with employees, even if their opinions are negative	4.10	.80	19,59
Availability of open channels for employees to share ideas/content	4.23	.76	18,10
Supporting platforms that allow stakeholders to share their ideas	3.92	.89	22,83
Making financial investments to create platforms for strategic gains	3.36	1.16	34,63
Allowing employees to use social media technologies inside and outside the institution	4.29	.78	18,21
Valuing feedback and suggestions from stakeholders (students, parents, etc.)	4.29	.78	18,22

Encouraging information sharing among employees	4.15	.844	20,36
Actively supporting employees who exhibit potential leadership behaviors	3.94	.97	24,81
Creating a comfortable environment for informational sharing among employees	4.13	.80	19,53
Positively supporting employees who exhibit potential leadership behaviors	4.01	.86	21,64
Allocating time to explain managerial decision-making processes to employees	3.81	.95	25,08
Encouraging employees to develop their leadership skills	3.79	.97	25,65
Administrators acknowledging their mistakes in front of everyone	3.56	1.04	29,18
Encouraging employees to reflect on failures by asking "What did we learn?"	3.68	.86	23,53
Carefully listening to all different viewpoints	4.03	.90	22,49
Making announcements via social media technologies	3.97	1.05	26,58
Using social networks to stay informed about knowledge updates	3.85	1.07	27,85
Use of social networks by administrators for internal communication	3.92	1.07	27,31
Encouraging the use of social technologies within the organization	3.79	1.09	28,98
Use of social networks by all staff to facilitate communication	4.10	.98	24,09
Total Scale (N=372)	3.97	.59	14,93

When examining the coefficients of variation (CV), it is evident that participants' perceptions regarding the following items demonstrate a homogeneous structure and consensus ($CV < 20$): the availability of open channels through which service recipients can express their opinions, the support for environments open to innovation, the consideration of stakeholders' views even if they are negative about institutional operations, the consideration of employees' opinions even if they are negative, the availability of open channels for all employees to express their views, the absence of restrictions on the use of social media technologies inside or outside the institution provided responsible behavior is maintained, and the comfort of employees in sharing information within the institution. In contrast, perceptions regarding all other items in the scale are heterogeneous ($CV > 20$), indicating a lack of consensus. An examination of the overall Open Leadership Scale indicates that participants demonstrate a strong level of agreement in their perceptions of open leadership, as reflected by the coefficient of variation ($CV = 14.93$; $CV < 20$).

3.1. Examination of Perceptions of Open Leadership According to Independent Variables

To determine whether the scores obtained by participating teachers from both the sub-dimensions and the overall Open Leadership Scale varied significantly based on gender, an independent samples t-test was performed. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4.

Examination of Open Leadership by Gender

Sub-Dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing	Female	246	4.09	.61	370	-.253	.801
	Male	126	4.07	.59			
Encouragement of Curiosity and Accountability	Female	246	3.49	.63	370	.285	.776
	Male	126	3.51	.61			
Effective Use of Social Networks	Female	246	3.97	.91	370	-1.267	.206
	Male	126	3.83	1.03			
Total	Female	246	3.98	.60	370	-.379	.705
	Male	126	3.96	.57			

As illustrated in Table 4, the independent samples t-test results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of open leadership or its sub-dimensions based on gender ($p > .05$). The absence of statistically significant differences across all sub-dimensions indicates that gender does not have a meaningful effect on teachers' perceptions of open leadership.

A one-way ANOVA was performed to examine whether teachers' scores on the sub-dimensions and overall Open Leadership Scale differed significantly based on age. The group coding for age categories is provided in the table description, and the findings from the ANOVA are presented in Table 5. Furthermore, the outcomes of the LSD *post hoc analysis*—carried out to identify the specific age groups that exhibit statistically significant differences—are presented in Table 5 under the section titled "Significant Differences (LSD)," with reference to the corresponding age group codes.

Table 5.

Examination of Open Leadership by Age

Sub-Dimensions	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	LSD
Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing	Between Groups	2,07	2	1,03	2,85	,05	
	Within Groups	133,70	369	,36			
	Total	135,77	371				

Encouragement of Curiosity and accountability	Between Groups	4,17	2	2,08	5,50	,00*	C**-B
	Within Groups	139,83	369	,37			
	Total	144	371				
Effective Use of Social Networks	Between Groups	12,41	2	6,20	6,99	,00*	C**-B
	Within Groups	327,18	369	,88			
	Total	339,60	371				
Total	Between Groups	5,13	2	2,56	7,53	,00*	C**-B
	Within Groups	125,86	369	,34			
	Total	130,96	371				

* $p < .05$, ** C: Age 46 and above, B: Age 32–45. Age groups are coded as follows: A = 18–31, B = 32–45, and C = 46 and above.

The analysis indicated a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of open leadership with respect to age [$F = 7.530$; $p < .05$]. The results of the LSD multiple comparison test, conducted to identify which age groups differed significantly, are presented in the corresponding table. When examining the overall scale scores, teachers aged 46 and above reported significantly higher perceptions of open leadership compared to those in the 32–45 age group. Regarding the sub-dimensions, no significant difference was observed in perceptions related to the *Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing* dimension across age groups ($p > .05$). However, in both the *Encouragement of Curiosity and Accountability* and *Effective Use of Social Networks* sub-dimensions, findings mirrored the overall scale, indicating a significant advantage for teachers aged 46 and above relative to their 32–45-year-old counterparts.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the scores obtained by participating teachers from the sub-dimensions and the overall Open Leadership Scale differed significantly based on their years of professional experience. The codes assigned to the service year groups are explained in the table description, while the findings obtained from the ANOVA test are presented in Table 6. To identify which groups the significant differences favor, the results of the LSD post hoc test are included under the heading "Significant Differences (LSD)" in Table 6, based on the codes assigned to the years of service.

Table 6.
Examination of Open Leadership in Terms of Years of Service Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	LSD
Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing	Between Groups	,10	2	,05	,14	,86	
	Within Groups	135,67	369	,36			
	Total	135,77	371				
Encouragement of Curiosity and Accountability	Between Groups	1,46	2	,73	1,89	,15	
	Within Groups	142,54	369	,38			
	Total	144,00	371				
Effective Use of Social Networks	Between Groups	6,29	2	3,15	3,48	,03*	C**-B
	Within Groups	333,30	369	,90			
	Total	339,60	371				
Total Score	Between Groups	1,18	2	,59	1,67	,18	
	Within Groups	129,78	369	,35			
	Total	130,96	371				

* $p < .05$, ** The group in favor of which a significant difference was found. Years of service were coded as follows: 1–6 years = A, 7–12 years = B, 13 years and above = C.

The analysis of the data revealed *no statistically significant difference* in teachers' perceptions of open leadership based on their years of professional experience [$F = 1.678$; $p > .05$]. Similarly, *no significant variation was identified* in the sub-dimensions of *Acceptance and Continuous Sharing of Power* [$F = 0.314$; $p > .05$] and *Supporting Curiosity and Accountability* [$F = 1.898$; $p > .05$]. *In contrast, a significant difference emerged* in the sub-dimension "Effective Use of Social Networks" [$F = 0.903$; $p < .05$], favoring teachers with 13 or more years of service over those with 7–12 years of service. Based on mean scores, it can be inferred that teachers with 7–12 years of experience demonstrated the lowest perception in this sub-dimension. Additionally, *to examine whether teachers' scores on the sub-dimensions and total scale differed by educational attainment*, an independent samples t-test was conducted, and the results are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7.
Examination of Open Leadership According to the Variable of Educational Level

Dimensions	Level of Educational	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	p
Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing	Primary School	140	4.15	0.66	370	1.64	.10
	Middle School	232	4.04	0.56			
Encouragement of Curiosity and Accountability	Primary School	140	3.61	0.61	370	2.79	.00*
	Middle School	232	3.43	0.61			
Effective Use of Social Networks	Primary School	140	4.12	0.80	370	3.04	.00*

Total	Middle School	232	3.81	1.02	370	3.02	.00*
	Primary School	140	4.09	0.62			
	Middle School	232	3.90	0.56			

*p < .05

The findings indicate a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of open leadership and the type of institution where they work [$t(370) = 3.027, p < .05$]. When examining all sub-dimensions, teachers' perceptions of open leadership show statistically significant differences in favor of those working in primary schools, particularly in the dimensions of supporting curiosity and accountability ($\bar{X} = 3.61$) and the effective use of social networks ($\bar{X} = 4.12$), depending on the educational level of their institution.

An independent samples t-test was performed to assess whether teachers' scores on the sub-dimensions and the overall Open Leadership Scale varied according to their subject area. The results are provided in Table 8.

Table 8.

Analysis of Open Leadership According to the Educational Level Variable

Dimensions	Branch	N	\bar{X}	SS	Sd	t	p
Acceptance of Power and Continuous Sharing	Branch Teachers	249	4.01	.60	370	-3.21	.00*
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	4.22	.57			
Supporting Curiosity and Accountability	Branch Teachers	249	3.41	.63	370	-4.16	.00*
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	3.69	.56			
Effective Use of Social Networks	Branch Teachers	249	3.81	1.01	370	-3.33	.00*
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	4.15	.78			
Total	Branch Teachers	249	3,88	.46	370	-4.47	.00*
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	4,17	.49			

*p < .05

The analysis of Table 8 indicates a statistically significant relationship between the teachers' perceptions of open leadership and their subject areas ($p < .05$). Concerning the sub-dimensions, the mean scores reported in Table 8 demonstrate that preschool and primary classroom teachers hold significantly higher perceptions across the overall scale as well as within each dimension.

3.2. Investigation of Teachers' Levels of Organizational Creativity

The third sub-problem of the study aimed to address the following research question: "What is the level of teachers' organizational creativity?" Within this scope, descriptive statistics, including the number of participants, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation, were calculated, and the resulting values are presented in Table 9.

Table 9.

Views on the Organizational Creativity Scale

Item	\bar{x}	SD	V
Curiosity about new experiences and closely engaging with various topics	4.28	.62	15
Considering risk-taking and encountering unexpected outcomes as part of the job	3.80	.91	24
Taking individual initiative and acting courageously	3.87	.79	21
Recognizing and evaluating different relational points between events and phenomena	4.14	.58	14
Attempting to act flexibly to internalize new ideas	4.11	.69	17
Competing to convert potential opportunities into tangible benefits	3.59	.90	25
Valuing trying/applying new things and behaving entrepreneurially	4.05	.73	18
Striving to use new knowledge and skills each time	4.23	.64	15
Continuously seeking ways to improve oneself through learning	4.18	.63	15
Attempting to go beyond current limits to achieve new goals	3.94	.83	21
Utilizing unstructured, different work processes	3.59	.75	21
Adopting an open attitude toward change to implement new methods	4.05	.65	16
Trying to perform beyond and above expectations	3.94	.70	18
Endeavoring to act with versatility and dynamism	4.03	.67	17
Abandoning routine behavior patterns to develop different solutions for problems	3.94	.71	18
Striving to produce original ideas and inventions beyond ordinariness	3.83	.76	20
Managers relax rules when necessary for the emergence and application of new ideas.	3.64	.97	27
Ease of sharing new thoughts/practices with managers when possessing innovative ideas	3.94	.80	20
Management takes new ideas seriously and seeks development paths when new ideas are proposed	3.84	.94	25
Management immediately rewards employees' extraordinary inventions or practices	3.34	1.11	33
Management prepares an environment for employees to think and act freely	3.66	.99	27

Management encourages employees not to fear mistakes and to take risks	3.49	1.12	32
Management views and evaluates mistakes as learning tools	3.43	1.06	31
Management adopts democratic leadership that encourages different thinking and behaviors	3.62	1.10	30
Management takes pride in personnel achieving outstanding successes.	3.98	.98	25
Managers respect the different thinking styles of diverse individuals	3.98	.93	23
Management continuously provides training services to develop employees' knowledge and skills	3.64	.97	27
Colleagues resist stereotypical thoughts/practices when necessary to overcome the status quo	3.37	1	30
Colleagues attempt to benefit even from dissenting opinions	3.36	.95	28
Colleagues generally exhibit an open attitude toward criticism	3.48	.95	27
Colleagues strive to develop alternative solutions in problem-solving	3.74	.82	22
Colleagues try to balance different expectations in providing effective service	3.79	.76	20
Colleagues questioning existing policies and procedures when necessary for change	3.64	.85	24
Colleagues comfortably share their views with those who hold different beliefs and opinions.	3.79	.85	22
Colleagues showing a tendency toward flexible thinking rather than prejudices	3.72	.86	23
Colleagues emphasize a culture that respects differences	3.84	.80	21
Colleagues always leave the door open to learning from mistakes	3.68	.8	22
Colleagues act with an awareness of the importance of diverse knowledge and skills	3.91	.75	20
Total Scale (N=372)	3.80	.48	13

An examination of Table 9 reveals that the participating teachers reported very high levels of agreement—within the range of 4.21–5.00—for the items “I am curious about new experiences and closely interested in various topics” ($\bar{X} = 4.28$) and “I always try to use new knowledge and skills” ($\bar{X} = 4.23$). In contrast, the items “When the administration sees extraordinary inventions or practices from employees, it immediately rewards them” ($\bar{X} = 3.34$), “Colleagues try to benefit from opposing views when necessary” ($\bar{X} = 3.36$), and “My colleagues resist stereotypical thoughts and practices when necessary to overcome the current situation” ($\bar{X} = 3.37$) are perceived at a moderate level. The remaining items fall within the 3.41–4.20 range and are perceived at a high level. Overall, no very low or low levels were observed in the participants' perceptions regarding the organizational creativity scale. The average perception score for the overall scale is 3.80, which falls within the high-level range (3.41–4.20). Based on these findings, it may be concluded that teachers exhibit a strong perception of school administrators' organizational creativity competencies.

When the coefficient of variation (V) is examined, it is determined that the perceptions related to the following items indicate a homogeneous structure and consensus ($V < 20$): “Being curious about new experiences and closely interested in various topics,” “Identifying and evaluating different points of connection between events and phenomena,” “Being flexible to internalize new ideas,” “Valuing trying/implementing new things and acting entrepreneurially,” “Always striving to use new knowledge and skills,” “Continuously seeking ways to improve oneself through learning,” “Adopting an open attitude towards change to implement new methods,” “Striving to perform beyond expected levels,” “Making an effort to act with versatility and dynamism,” “Abandoning routine behavior patterns to develop alternative solutions to problems,” and “Going beyond ordinariness to generate original ideas and make inventions.” In contrast, perceptions regarding the remaining items on the scale indicate a heterogeneous structure and lack of consensus ($V > 20$). However, for the overall scale, the participants' views on organizational creativity reflect a shared understanding ($V = 12.82$, $V < 20$).

3.3. Examination of Organizational Creativity According to Independent Variables

The fourth sub-problem of the study explored whether teachers' organizational creativity levels varied based on gender, age, years of professional experience, the educational level of the school where they work, and their teaching branch. To determine whether there were significant differences in the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions and overall Organizational Creativity Scale based on gender, an independent samples t-test was performed. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 10.

Table 10.
Examination of Organizational Creativity in Terms of Gender Variable

Dimension	Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Individual	Male	126	39,69	,43	370	-,17	,87
	Female	246	39,78	,47			
Managerial	Male	126	36,91	,84	370	,06	,96
	Female	246	36,86	,78			
Social	Male	126	37,14	,59	370	1049	,30
	Female	246	36,39	,67			
Total	Male	126	38,15	,47	370	,36	,72
	Female	246	37,95	,50			

An analysis of Table 10 indicates that the independent samples t-test results revealed no statistically significant differences in teachers' perceptions of organizational creativity or its sub-dimensions based on gender ($p > .05$). The lack of significant

variation across all sub-dimensions suggests that gender does not play a determining role in shaping teachers' perceptions of organizational creativity.

To examine whether teachers' scores on the sub-dimensions and the overall Organizational Creativity Scale varied by age group, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The coding for age groups is provided in the corresponding table notes, and the ANOVA results are reported in Table 11. The age groups showing significant differences, as identified through the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test, are detailed under the section titled "Significant Differences (LSD)" in accordance with the specified group codes.

Table 11.
Examination of Organizational Creativity in Terms of the Age Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	LSD
Individual	Between Groups	1,88	2	,94	4,58	,01*	A**-B,C
	Within Groups	75,76	369	,20			
	Total	77,64	371				
Managerial	Between Groups	6,09	2	3,04	4,83	,00*	A**-B C**-B
	Within Groups	232,44	369	,63			
	Total	238,53	371				
Social	Between Groups	2,90	2	1,40	3,51	,03*	C**-B
	Within Groups	152,12	369	,41			
	Total	155,02	371				
Total	Between Groups	2,15	2	1,07	4,62	,01*	A**-B
	Within Groups	1,88	369	,23			
	Total	75,76	371				

* $p < .05$, **The group with a significant difference: Age groups were coded as A = 18–31 years, B = 32–45 years, C = 46 years and above.

The analysis of the data revealed a *statistically significant difference* in teachers' organizational creativity scores based on age [$F = 4.620$; $p < .05$]. The outcomes of the *post hoc LSD test*, conducted to identify which age groups differed significantly, are presented in Table 11. Considering the total scale scores, a notable difference was observed between teachers aged 18–31 and those aged 32–45, favoring the younger cohort. These results suggest that teachers in the 18–31 age group perceive themselves as exhibiting higher levels of organizational creativity.

An analysis of the sub-dimension scores indicated that teachers aged 18–31 reported significantly higher levels of individual creativity compared to all other age groups ($p < .05$), suggesting a stronger sense of personal creative capacity among younger educators. In the managerial creativity dimension, differences emerged between teachers aged 18–31 and those aged 32–45, as well as between the 46+ group and the 32–45 group, with higher scores in both cases favoring the younger and older cohorts. As for the social creativity sub-dimension, teachers aged 46 and above demonstrated a notably higher perception compared to those aged 32–45.

To examine whether teachers' organizational creativity scores—both in the overall scale and across its sub-dimensions—vary according to their years of professional experience, a one-way ANOVA was applied. The groupings based on length of service are defined in the accompanying table notes, and the corresponding ANOVA findings are displayed in Table 12. Additionally, the LSD post hoc analysis was used to identify which experience groups differed significantly, with the results reported under the section titled "Significant Differences (LSD)" according to the established group codes.

Table 12.
Examination of Organizational Creativity in Terms of Years of Service Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	LSD
Individual	Between Groups	2,40	2	1,19	5,87	,00*	A**-B,C
	Within Groups	75,24	369	,204			
	Total	77,64	371				
Managerial	Between Groups	3,14	2	1,57	2,46	,08	
	Within Groups	235,38	369	,63			
	Total	238,53	371				
Social	Between Groups	,55	2	,27	,65	,52	
	Within Groups	154,48	369	,41			
	Total	155,02	371				
Total	Between Groups	1,58	2	,79	3,37	,03*	A**-B,C
	Within Groups	86,60	369	,23			
	Total	88,18	371				

* $p < .05$, **The group in favor of which the significant difference was found is indicated. Years of service are coded as follows: 1–6 years = A, 7–12 years = B, 13 years and above = C.

An analysis of the data revealed that teachers' organizational creativity levels significantly varied based on their years of professional experience [$F = 3.370$; $p < .05$]. The LSD post hoc analysis, which was conducted to identify the experience groups in which the differences emerged, is detailed in Table 12. The findings indicate that teachers with 1–6 years of service demonstrated notably higher levels of organizational creativity compared to those in the other experience categories.

In the analysis of the sub-dimensions of organizational creativity, no statistically significant variations were observed in the dimensions of managerial creativity [$F = 2.464$; $p > .05$] and social creativity [$F = 0.651$; $p > .05$]. However, a significant difference was identified in the individual creativity dimension, with teachers possessing 1–6 years of professional experience reporting higher levels of perceived creativity compared to their more experienced peers [$F = 5.872$; $p < .05$].

Additionally, an independent samples t-test was conducted to investigate whether participants' organizational creativity scores—both overall and across sub-dimensions—differed according to their educational attainment. The corresponding statistical results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13.

Examination of Organizational Creativity in Terms of the Educational Level Variable

Dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Individual	Primary School	140	4	.40	370	.86	.38
	Middle School	232	3.95	.48			
Managerial	Primary School	140	3.75	.77	370	1.25	.20
	Middle School	232	3.64	.81			
Social	Primary School	140	3.79	.66	370	3.07	.00*
	Middle School	232	3.58	.62			
Total	Primary School	140	3.87	.48	370	2.11	.03*
	Middle School	232	3.76	.48			

* $p < .05$

Analysis of the data revealed a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of organizational creativity based on the type of institution in which they work, favoring those employed in primary schools ($\bar{X} = 3.87$) [$t(370) = 2.118$, $p < .05$]. When examining the sub-dimensions, no significant variation emerged in either the individual or managerial creativity components across school levels. However, a meaningful difference was detected in the social creativity dimension, again in favor of primary school teachers ($\bar{X} = 3.79$), suggesting a more favorable perception of social innovation within these institutions.

To further assess whether teachers' organizational creativity scores—across both the total scale and its sub-dimensions—differ according to their area of specialization, an independent samples t-test was performed. The detailed results of this analysis are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14.

Examination of Organizational Creativity in Terms of the Field of Specialization

Dimensions	Branch	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p
Individual	Branch Teachers	249	3.97	.48	370	.02	.98
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	3.97	.39			
Managerial	Branch Teachers	249	3.61	.83	370	-2.40	.01
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	3.82	.71			
Social	Branch Teachers	249	3.58	.61	370	-3.33	.00*
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	3.82	.67			
Total	Branch Teachers	249	3.75	.48	370	-2.42	.01*
	Preschool and Classroom Teachers	123	3.88	.49			

* $p < .05$

As indicated in Table 14, teachers' perceptions of organizational creativity varied significantly by their field of specialization, with preschool and primary classroom teachers reporting higher levels of creativity than their subject-area counterparts ($p < .05$).

Although no statistically meaningful differences were identified across the sub-dimensions of individual and managerial creativity about teachers' specialization areas ($p > .05$), the mean scores suggest that preschool and classroom teachers exhibit greater social creativity compared to branch teachers, highlighting a potential association between educational context and collaborative innovation practices.

3.4. Examining the Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions of Open Leadership and Their Organizational Creativity

The results of the correlation analysis, conducted to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of open leadership and the three sub-dimensions of the Organizational Creativity Scale, are presented in Table 15.

Table 15.

Examination of the Relationship Between Open Leadership and the Sub-Dimensions of Organizational Creativity

	r/p	Individual	Managerial	Social
Open Leadership	r	.29	.79	.51
	p	.00**	.00**	.00**

N=372 *p<.05 ; **p<.01

A correlation value of +1.00 reflects a perfectly linear positive association between two variables, whereas a value of -1.00 denotes a perfectly inverse relationship. A value of 0.00 indicates the absence of any linear association. Regarding the interpretation of correlation strength, coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 1.00 (in absolute terms) are classified as strong, those between 0.30 and 0.70 as moderate, and values between 0.00 and 0.30 as weak (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2011).

A comparison of the scores obtained by teachers from the Open Leadership Scale and the sub-dimensions of the Organizational Creativity Scale revealed varying degrees of positive and statistically significant correlations. Specifically, a weak yet significant positive correlation was identified with the individual creativity sub-dimension ($r = .290$, $p < .01$); a strong positive correlation was found with the managerial creativity sub-dimension ($r = .795$, $p < .01$); and a moderate positive association was observed with the social creativity sub-dimension ($r = .517$, $p < .01$).

Table 16.

Examination of the Relationship Between Organizational Creativity and the Sub-Dimensions of Open Leadership

		ACSP	ECA	EUSN
Organizational Creativity	r	.62	.79	.29
	p	.00**	.00**	.00**

N=372 *p<.05 ; **p<.01

An examination of the teachers' scores on the Organizational Creativity Scale, specifically regarding the sub-dimensions of the Open Leadership Scale, revealed varying levels of statistically significant positive correlations. A moderate positive correlation was found with the Acceptance and Continuous Sharing of Power sub-dimension ($r = .626$, $p < .01$). In contrast, the strongest correlation emerged with the Encouraging Curiosity and Accountability sub-dimension ($r = .795$, $p < .01$). Additionally, a weak yet statistically meaningful positive correlation was identified with the Effective Use of Social Networks sub-dimension ($r = .297$, $p < .01$).

Table 17.

Examination of the Correlation Between Open Leadership and Organizational Creativity

		Organizational Creativity
Open Leadership	r	.69
	p	.00**

N=372 *p<.05 ; **p<.01

Lastly, the comparison of the scores obtained by the participating teachers from the Open Leadership Scale and the Organizational Creativity Scale demonstrated a statistically significant, moderately strong, and positive correlation between the two constructs ($r = .692$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that higher levels of perceived open leadership among school administrators are associated with greater levels of perceived organizational creativity among teachers.

Table 18.

Regression Analysis of the Relationship Between Open Leadership and Organizational Creativity

Variables	B	SE	β	t	p
Organizational Creativity (Constant)	.775	.175		4.41	.00
Open Leadership	.843	.046	.692	18.41	.00

R=0.692 R²=0.478 F=339.212 P=.000

The simple linear regression analysis results, as summarized in Table 18, reveal that school administrators' open leadership behaviors account for approximately 47.8% of the variance in teachers' organizational creativity levels ($R = .692$, $R^2 = .478$). This indicates a statistically significant predictive relationship between principals' open leadership traits and teachers' organizational creativity ($F = 339.212$, $p < .05$). In essence, the presence of open leadership practices among school leaders serves as a significant predictor of the extent to which teachers demonstrate organizational creativity.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate that school administrators in Balıkesir exhibit open leadership behaviors at a notably high level. Among the sub-dimensions assessed, "Acceptance and Continuous Sharing of Power" yielded the highest average score, followed by "Effective Use of Social Networks" and "Encouraging Curiosity and Accountability." These results reflect that primary and middle school teachers in the region perceive their administrators' open leadership practices positively and at a high level. Supporting this conclusion, prior studies have also reported frequent demonstration of open leadership among school leaders (Uçar, 2016; Gürler, 2020). Similarly, Piaw and Ting (2014) found that a significant proportion of school leaders exhibit characteristics associated with open leadership. Conversely, Polat's (2015) findings revealed moderate perceptions in the domains of encouraging curiosity and accountability, while the use of social networks was reported as infrequent. Caz (2018), likewise, concluded that school administrators occasionally adopted open leadership behaviors. When compared with the present study, the results appear consistent with those of Uçar and Dağlı (2015), Piaw and Ting (2014), and Gürler (2020); however, they contrast with the findings of Polat (2015) and Caz (2018). This divergence may be attributed to the different target populations of the studies in question, as the latter focused on higher education staff rather than school-based educators. Based on these findings, several implications for educational policy and practice emerge. First, education authorities should embed open leadership principles into school policies to promote inclusive and innovative environments. Second, in-service training should strengthen school leaders' skills in power-sharing, digital communication, and accountability, while offering practical strategies for using social networks to enhance collaboration and creativity. Third, teacher education and principal preparation programs should emphasize open leadership as key to fostering organizational learning and adaptability. Theoretically, this study highlights open leadership as a driver of organizational creativity in schools. It highlights the importance of transparency, shared decision-making, and the effective use of technology in educational leadership. Practically, the results inform leadership development and policy efforts aimed at enhancing school effectiveness and teacher innovation, demonstrating that open leadership can directly improve teacher engagement and school improvement.

The analysis revealed a statistically significant association between teachers' age and their perceptions of open leadership. Specifically, as age increased, so did the levels of perception in the sub-dimensions of "Encouraging Curiosity and Accountability" and "Effective Use of Social Networks." This pattern may be interpreted as a result of older teachers' broader professional experiences, including prolonged exposure to various leadership styles and a more refined sense of administrative practice. Supporting this interpretation, Polat (2015) also found that participants' perceptions of open leadership became more pronounced with age. In contrast, Caz (2018) reported no age-related differences in perceptions of open leadership, and Yıldız (2019) similarly identified no significant variation in either the overall scale or its sub-dimensions with respect to age. Accordingly, while the current study's findings are partially consistent with those of Polat (2015), they diverge from the results of Caz (2018) and Yıldız (2019). The discrepancy observed in Caz's research may be attributable to the distinct characteristics of the sample, which comprised academic personnel rather than school-based educators. Based on the outcomes of the present studies, it can be concluded that the age group with the highest mean score exhibited the most favorable perceptions of open leadership. The age-related differences in perceptions of open leadership suggest that professional development programs should be tailored to address the diverse experiences of different age groups. Older teachers' more positive views highlight the potential of involving them as mentors to foster intergenerational collaboration. Additionally, leadership training must accommodate the digital communication and accountability needs of educators across all ages.

Theoretically, this study underscores age as a key factor influencing perceptions of open leadership in education. Practically, it supports the design of differentiated leadership and teacher development initiatives that enhance organizational creativity and adaptability.

The study further indicated that teachers employed in primary education institutions demonstrated higher levels of perception in the sub-dimensions of "Encouraging Curiosity and Accountability" and "Effective Use of Social Networks" within the context of open leadership. This outcome may be interpreted in light of the unique professional roles of primary school educators—particularly classroom teachers—who typically exercise a broader scope of pedagogical autonomy and managerial responsibility within their classrooms when compared to subject-specific (branch) teachers. The increased level of individual discretion and sustained interaction with students may contribute to the development of stronger perceptions related to leadership dimensions emphasizing initiative, communication, and relational accountability. These findings underscore the need for targeted leadership development programs that acknowledge the unique roles and autonomy of primary education teachers. Encouraging leadership styles that foster initiative, communication, and accountability in these educators may further enhance their engagement and perception of open leadership.

Teachers with longer professional experience in Balıkesir expressed more substantial support for integrating social networks into educational environments. *This outcome may be attributed to the possibility that more experienced educators engage less frequently with digital communication platforms and allocate comparatively limited time to social media tools.* Gürler (2020) similarly emphasized that as teachers' tenure increased, administrators were more likely to demonstrate open leadership behaviors. In Polat's (2015) research, *notable differences emerged favoring individuals with 11–16 and 17 or more years of professional experience in the "Acceptance and Continuous Sharing of Power" dimension.* Furthermore, in the "Effective Use of Social Networks" sub-dimension, *participants with over 17 years of experience displayed significantly higher scores compared to those with 1–5 and 6–10 years of experience.* However, Polat also reported that teachers with 1–5 and 11–16 years of experience

indicated a greater use of social networks than those with more than 17 years of experience, highlighting a nuanced pattern. On the other hand, Caz (2018) found no significant association between professional seniority and open leadership, suggesting that teachers across different experience levels shared comparable perceptions. Similarly, Yıldız (2019) *did not identify tenure as a significant variable influencing either open leadership or its associated dimensions*. Consequently, the present study's results are consistent with those of Polat (2015), while they diverge from the findings reported by Gürler (2020), Yıldız (2019), and Caz (2018). The results suggest professional development initiatives should address experience-related differences in digital communication habits. Providing support tailored to varying levels of familiarity with social networks can help integrate these tools more effectively into educational practice, thereby strengthening open leadership behaviors across all experience groups.

An examination of the sub-dimensions revealed that *teachers employed in primary and lower secondary schools in Balıkesir* displayed elevated perceptions of organizational creativity. Among all teaching fields, preschool and classroom teachers scored the highest in creativity. *This outcome aligns with the results reported by Fidan (2018), Özdemir (2013), Meriç (2018), and Yurter (2016), all of whom identified a strong presence of organizational creativity among their study participants*. In contrast, Kendir (2013) found that organizational creativity was perceived at a moderate level, suggesting a deviation from the present study's conclusions. The elevated creativity perceptions among preschool and classroom teachers call for tailored support to sustain and expand these capacities. Policymakers and school leaders should consider differentiated strategies that nurture organizational creativity, tailored to the specific characteristics of the school level and the teaching field.

It was found that teachers with fewer years of service exhibited higher levels of creativity in the "Individual Creativity" sub-dimension. This can be attributed to their higher energy levels and their lack of exposure to long-term occupational dissatisfaction. Similar results were reported by Çavuşoğlu (2007), Kendir (2013), and Yurter (2016), who found that organizational creativity was affected by years of service and was higher among novice teachers. These results are consistent with the findings of the current study. Teachers with less experience were more open to innovation, which likely contributed to their higher levels of organizational creativity. Conversely, studies by Eroğlu (2014) and Meriç (2018) found that teachers with more years of service exhibited higher levels of organizational creativity. In this respect, the present findings diverge from those studies. Findings indicate that novice teachers' higher creativity levels could be harnessed through targeted mentoring and innovation-focused programs. At the same time, conflicting results in the literature suggest a need for further research to understand how experience influences creativity over time.

A significant relationship exists between open leadership and organizational creativity. Open leadership is also related to the sub-dimensions of individual, managerial, and societal creativity. Teachers with high levels of organizational creativity tend to support the use of social networks, encourage curiosity, and emphasize the importance of accountability. As school administrators exhibit open leadership behaviors, both their own and their teachers' levels of organizational and societal creativity are likely to increase. These results reinforce the importance of promoting open leadership as a strategy to boost various dimensions of organizational creativity. Leadership development programs should emphasize the integration of social networks, encourage curiosity, and promote accountability to maximize creative potential in schools.

Finally, the finding that younger teachers exhibit higher levels of organizational creativity suggests the importance of collaborative efforts between younger and more experienced teachers in schools. Initiatives such as joint educational, social, artistic, and sports activities may enhance the organizational creativity of senior teachers. Furthermore, it is recommended that school administrators be selected from among younger teachers when appropriate. The higher creativity levels among younger teachers highlight the value of fostering collaboration between novice and experienced educators. Schools should promote joint activities and consider younger teachers for leadership roles when appropriate to sustain organizational creativity and innovation.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Sakarya University granted formal ethics approval. We conducted the study in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration in 1975.

The study was approved by the Sakarya University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (Approval Number/ID: 27/10/2020/27-3). Hereby, we as the authors consciously assure that for the manuscript, the following is fulfilled:

- This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

Both authors contributed equally.

Statement of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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