

Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Synergy: A Mixed Method Study¹

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the levels of organizational synergy perceived by teachers working in high schools. The research was designed using the convergent parallel design, one of the mixed methods research approaches. The study population consisted of teachers working at the high school level in the Esenyurt district of Istanbul, while the sample comprised 400 teachers. The qualitative sample included 185 teachers, selected from those who voluntarily responded to open-ended questions after completing the scale. Quantitative data were collected using the Organizational Synergy Scale for Teachers, while qualitative data were gathered using a two-question form developed by the researchers.

The results indicated that teachers' levels of organizational synergy were high. It was found that organizational synergy levels did not differ significantly by gender, age, school type, or experience at the current institution. However, a significant difference was identified in the sub-dimension of *Interaction and Appreciation* based on total years of professional teaching experience, in favor of teachers with 6–10 years of experience. Within the qualitative strand, the analysis of teachers' responses revealed that perceived barriers to the development of organizational synergy were mostly related to a lack of democracy in the *Integration* dimension and a lack of communication in the *Interaction and Appreciation* dimension. Regarding recommendations for enhancing organizational synergy, teachers most frequently emphasized collaboration, the organization of social activities, and participatory leadership under the *Integration* dimension, and effective communication and fair administrative practices under the *Interaction and Appreciation* dimension. It was concluded that the qualitative findings supported and complemented the quantitative results.

Keywords: Organizational synergy, synergy, barriers to synergy, secondary education, mixed methods

INTRODUCTION

In organizations, the increasing emphasis on collective success over individual achievement has rendered the concept of synergy significant both theoretically and practically. Synergy, in its simplest form, is defined as a condition in which the total impact capacity of a group exceeds the mere sum of individual contributions (Duman, 2021). This perspective aligns with the systems theory principle that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Particularly in the context of organizational synergy, it is described on a global scale as a lever that enhances institutional performance in achieving shared goals (Goold & Campbell, 1989). Within this framework, synergy assumes that when individuals collaborate and coordinate toward a common goal, the collective output—whether quantitative or qualitative—will surpass what could be achieved individually (Aksoy, 2022; Ersoy, 2019). In high-synergy environments, individual learning transforms into team learning, a process explained by Senge (1990) through the concept of the "learning organization." According to Senge, true organizational transformation occurs only when a culture of collaboration is internalized. In an organizational context, synergy is regarded

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as a dynamic that enhances overall system efficiency by promoting cooperation, creativity, and effective communication among institutional members. In this regard, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) emphasized that in effective schools, teacher participation and collaboration enhance the sense of collective efficacy, which leads to high levels of synergy. In this sense, synergy is not merely cooperation; it refers to the added value created through mutual interaction. A review of the literature reveals that synergy is not based on structural merger but rather on functional integration, and as such, it has become a strategic element shaping organizational success.

Akpolat and Levent (2018) examined organizational synergy as a four-dimensional construct. These dimensions include interaction and appreciation, strategy, integration, and renewal and empowerment. In this study, the scale developed was adapted into a five-axis structure based on these four dimensions. The interaction and appreciation dimension encompasses processes such as empathetic communication, recognition of tasks, and appreciation among organizational members. The strategy dimension refers to the clarification of roles and responsibilities and the enhancement of efficiency through a well-structured strategic planning process. The integration dimension aims to mobilize both internal and external resources of the organization in a holistic structure aligned with strategic goals. The renewal and empowerment dimension reflects a process that encourages both individual and professional development, enabling both the individuals and the organization to continually renew and strengthen themselves within a learning structure. These dimensions offer a fundamental framework for the formation and sustainability of synergy within organizations.

When applied in educational institutions, this framework demonstrates that a synergistic management approach facilitates the achievement of organizational goals through participatory and inclusive processes. This view is grounded in Hargreaves' (2003) model of a "school culture based on emotional intelligence." According to this model, trust, sharing, and emotional support among teachers constitute the core components of synergy. Gruber and Wallace (1999) argue that synergistic management practices enable different units within and outside the school to collaborate, resulting in more effective qualitative and quantitative outcomes. In this context, synergy in educational organizations supports the achievement of institutional goals by improving the quality of educational activities. For instance, a school climate that enables teachers to share their experiences and intuition fosters the development of creative and sustainable solutions to emerging problems (Töremen & Karakuş, 2007). Additionally, as Töremen and Pekince (2011) have emphasized, encouraging individual creativity among teachers is a key factor in supporting synergistic collaboration. This, in turn, enables teachers to contribute more effectively to organizational goals by enhancing mutual interaction and innovative efforts in educational institutions.

Research on teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy has gained increasing importance in the educational management literature. Studies consistently show that teachers who perceive higher levels of synergy in their schools also report stronger job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and workplace contentment. For instance, Sansar (2024) found a moderate positive relationship between teachers' perceived levels of organizational happiness and synergy, while Yeşil (2022) revealed that organizational synergy significantly predicts teachers' commitment to their institutions. These findings indicate that synergy enhances teachers' professional effectiveness and motivation by creating an environment of mutual support and shared purpose. Likewise, Balcı and Şahin (2024) demonstrated that teachers' perceptions of synergistic management significantly predict organizational culture and learning orientations, further underscoring the integrative role of synergy in school communities. Taken together, this growing body of research suggests that developing a culture of synergy in schools strengthens both individual and collective capacities, ultimately fostering a more cohesive and sustainable educational environment.

An examination of the existing literature reveals that studies on organizational synergy within the field of educational administration remain limited. Most of the existing studies compare teachers' levels of perceived synergy with demographic or other organizational variables;

however, there are very few studies that explore the phenomenon of synergy in depth through teachers' own experiences and perceptions. Moreover, qualitative investigations into the factors that hinder or enhance synergy within educational organizations are almost nonexistent. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the levels of organizational synergy among teachers working at the high school level, as well as the factors influencing these levels. Understanding and explaining organizational synergy, and identifying the barriers to its development, will contribute both to the academic literature and to practical applications in school management. The findings of this study are expected to guide school leaders and policymakers in developing synergy-enhancing strategies that foster teacher collaboration and commitment. Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to the limited body of literature on synergy within pedagogical contexts by offering innovative perspectives at both the theoretical and practical levels.

The main objective of this study is to determine the organizational synergy levels of teachers working in high schools and to reveal how these levels are shaped by teachers' experiences, perceptions, and internal institutional dynamics. In line with this objective, general trends were identified through quantitative data, while qualitative data provided in-depth insights into teachers' perceptions, experiences, and perceived barriers regarding organizational synergy. In doing so, a holistic perspective was developed to evaluate organizational synergy.

The main problem of this study is to examine teachers' perceptions and experiences of organizational synergy in schools and to identify the factors that enhance or hinder the development of synergy within educational settings. In addressing this problem, the study seeks to answer three sub-problems. The first concerns teachers' levels of perception regarding organizational synergy based on quantitative data. The second explores how teachers experience organizational synergy in practice, as well as the positive and negative factors influencing these experiences. The third sub-problem focuses on integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings to determine the extent to which they complement one another and to generate recommendations for fostering synergy in educational institutions.

METHOD

This study was designed using the convergent parallel mixed methods design, which is one of the mixed method research approaches. The convergent parallel design allows for the simultaneous collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, with each data set being analyzed separately. This research adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, based on the understanding that quantitative and qualitative data offer different yet complementary insights into the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2017). In this design, both strands of data are collected and analyzed independently, and their results are compared to examine the extent of convergence or divergence between them. The purpose of this process is to integrate the two sets of findings during the interpretation stage, allowing the researcher to develop a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2017). Therefore, the data in this study were collected concurrently but analyzed separately. The findings obtained from both strands were integrated and discussed under distinct headings in the 'Results, Discussion, and Recommendations' section. Thus, the research design formulation is represented as QUAN + QUAL.

Quantitative Design

In the quantitative strand of the study, the general survey model was employed. General survey models are designed to draw conclusions about a population consisting of many elements, either by covering the entire population or a selected sample group (Büyüköztürk, 2004).

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 1,709 teachers working at the high school level in the Esenyurt district of Istanbul during the 2024–2025 academic year. The sample was determined through a simple random sampling method. In this process, the data collection instruments were distributed to all teachers within the population, and participation was based on voluntarism.

Although teachers participated voluntarily, each individual in the population had an equal opportunity to take part in the study, which preserves the principle of randomness (Ural & Kılıç, 2011). According to the sample size table developed by Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan (2004), the required minimum sample size was calculated as 333, based on a 0.05 sampling error ($p = 0.05$, $q = 0.5$). To enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings, data were collected from a total of 400 teachers.

Of the teachers in the sample, 214 (53.50%) were female and 186 (46.50%) were male. Regarding age distribution, 103 teachers (25.80%) were aged 21–30, 154 (38.50%) were aged 31–40, 88 (22%) were aged 41–50, and 55 (13.80%) were aged 51 and above. Regarding school type, 134 teachers (33.50%) worked in Anatolian High Schools, 143 (35.80%) in Anatolian Imam Hatip High Schools, and 123 (30.80%) in Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools. Concerning overall teaching experience, 123 teachers (30.80%) had 1–5 years of experience, 91 (22.80%) had 6–10 years, 99 (24.80%) had 11–15 years, and 87 (21.80%) had 16 or more years. Regarding institutional experience at their current school, 204 teachers (51%) had 1–5 years of experience, 87 (21.80%) had 6–10 years, 54 (13.50%) had 11–15 years, and 55 (13.80%) had 16 or more years.

Data Collection Tool

To measure teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy within the scope of the quantitative strand, the Organizational Synergy Scale for Teachers (OSST), developed by Akpolat and Levent (2018), was utilized. OSST is a Likert-type scale based on the understanding of scaling by summing degrees of agreement. The scale consists of 29 items and four sub-dimensions: Interaction and Appreciation, Integration, Strategy, and Renewal and Empowerment. According to Akpolat and Levent (2018), the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.97. The coefficients for the sub-dimensions were as follows: Interaction and Appreciation = 0.951, Integration = 0.947, Strategy = 0.911, and Renewal and Empowerment = 0.854. A new reliability analysis was conducted for the sample group of the present study, and the following Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were obtained: Overall Scale = 0.947; Interaction and Appreciation = 0.882; Integration = 0.874; Strategy = 0.843; Renewal and Empowerment = 0.779. These results indicate that the OSST demonstrated high reliability for the current sample.

Collection of Quantitative Data

For the data collection process, permission to use the scale was first obtained from the academics who owned the scale. Research approval was obtained from the Ministry of National Education with an approval letter coded MEB.TT.2024.007743. The scale was administered to high school teachers in the Esenyurt district of Istanbul during the 2024-2025 academic year, in line with the predetermined population and sample. A guide/explanation was prepared for teachers on the ÖYÖSÖ used in the study, including separate definitions of the terms synergy and organizational synergy. The written explanations on the measurement tool informed teachers about the purpose of the study and the definition of organizational synergy. Considering the forms that might not be returned and those that might be filled out incorrectly, the ÖYÖSÖ was duplicated in 450 copies, and the researcher visited the schools to ensure that the teachers completed them. To avoid disruption to the educational process, the application was carried out at times and in environments approved by the institution's principals and the teachers who volunteered to participate in the sample. The scale was administered in a manner not exceeding one lesson period (maximum 40 minutes). Each scale form was individually checked and received by the researcher. Scales with missing or incomplete markings were immediately returned to the participating teachers to ensure no missing data were generated. To ensure the confidentiality of the participating teachers and to prevent confusion, the participants were assigned codes K1, K2, ..., and K400, according to the order of administration. Scales with outliers were removed from the sample size scales.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

The data were analyzed using a statistical software package developed for social sciences, specifically. In the first stage, frequency (f) and percentage (%) values were calculated to determine the distribution of participants' demographic characteristics. Demographic data obtained through personal information forms were analyzed accordingly. Before examining the main research questions and sub-questions, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to understand the general characteristics of the dataset. Mean scores for each variable and sub-dimension of the scale were calculated. The following interpretive intervals were used to evaluate the scores obtained from OSST (Turgut & Baykal, 1992):

- 1.00 – 1.80: Very Low
- 1.81 – 2.60: Low
- 2.61 – 3.40: Medium
- 3.41 – 4.20: High
- 4.21 – 5.00: Very High

To determine the normality of the data distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were calculated for each sub-dimension of the scale. Skewness indicates the symmetry of the distribution, while kurtosis shows the peakedness or flatness of the data (Büyüköztürk, 2004). In the subsequent step, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were conducted to assess the normality of data distributions.

Table 1. Normality Distributions of the Organizational Synergy Scale for Teachers

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Kurtosis	Skewness
	Statistic	N	P		
Organizational Synergy Scale for Teachers	0.032	400	0.200	-0.210	-0.042
Interaction and Appreciation	0.055	400	0.006	-0.188	-0.385
Integration	0.054	400	0.006	-0.212	-0.318
Strategy	0.077	400	0.000	-0.596	0.166
Renewal and Empowerment	0.096	400	0.000	-0.410	-0.164

When Table 1 is examined, the skewness value of OSST is -0.210, and the kurtosis value is -0.042. In social sciences research, values of skewness and kurtosis between -1.5 and +1.5 are accepted as indicating a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). It is seen that the coefficients fall within these reference ranges. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the data exhibits a normal distribution. Since the assumptions of normality were met for the overall scale and for all sub-dimensions with respect to all independent variables, parametric tests were employed in the analysis. The methods used for data analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Data Analysis Methods and Techniques for the Sub-Questions of the Study

Sub-Question	Analysis Technique
1. What are the organizational synergy levels of teachers working in high schools?	Descriptive Analysis
2. Do organizational synergy levels of high school teachers significantly differ based on:	Independent Samples t-Test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Post-hoc analyses were conducted using Scheffe's test.
a) Gender	
b) Age	
c) School type	
d) Teaching experience	
e) Institutional experience?	

Qualitative Design

In the qualitative strand of the study, a case study design was employed, as the aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences regarding organizational synergy within a specific context (i.e., high schools) (Creswell, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Study Group

The study group for qualitative design consisted of 185 teachers who had previously completed the Organizational Synergy Scale and voluntarily responded to the open-ended questions appended to the same scale. Descriptive information regarding the participants is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Teachers in the Qualitative Study Group

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	86	46.48
	Male	99	53.52
Age	21-30	56	30.27
	31-40	65	35.13
	41-50	42	22.71
	51 and above	22	11.89
School Type	Anatolian High School	69	37.29
	Anatolian Imam Hatip High School	59	31.89
	Vocational and Technical High School	57	30.82
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	56	30.28
	6-10 years	53	28.64
	11-15 years	40	21.63
	16 years and above	36	19.45
Institutional Experience	1-5 years	91	49.18
	6-10 years	51	26.48
	11-15 years	25	13.51
	16 years and above	18	9.72

According to Table 3, among the teachers in the qualitative study group, 86 (46.48%) were female, and 99 (53.52%) were male. In terms of age, 56 (30.27%) were between 21-30 years, 65 (35.13%) between 31-40 years, 42 (22.71%) between 41-50 years, and 22 (11.89%) were 51 years or older. Regarding school type, 69 (37.29%) worked in Anatolian High Schools, 59 (31.89%) in Anatolian Imam Hatip High Schools, and 57 (30.82%) in Vocational and Technical High Schools. In terms of overall teaching experience, 56 (30.28%) had 1-5 years, 53 (28.64%) had 6-10 years, 40 (21.63%) had 11-15 years, and 36 (19.45%) had 16 or more years of experience. Regarding institutional experience, 91 teachers (49.18%) had worked in their current institution for 1-5 years, 51 (26.48%) for 6-10 years, 25 (13.51%) for 11-15 years, and 18 (9.72%) for 16 or more years.

Data Collection Tool

The qualitative data collection tool consisted of two open-ended questions added to the end of the OSST, aimed at identifying and overcoming the barriers to organizational synergy. To ensure content validity, feedback was obtained from one expert and one teacher, and the final version of the questions was revised accordingly. The qualitative data were collected concurrently and on the same page as the quantitative data.

Collection of Quantitative Data

The application was tried to be carried out by personally visiting the schools and providing a quiet environment in various departments within the school, such as guidance, administrative or teacher rooms. The data was obtained with the questionnaire on the scale after the scale study with the teachers. The opinions and thoughts formed in line with the answers given by the teachers were recorded in writing on the same scale and then transferred to the computer environment.

Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data obtained in the study were analyzed using the content analysis method. According to Hansen (2003, as cited in Taylan, 2011), content analysis entails a systematic process of coding participants' responses into meaningful units, organizing these codes into themes, and interpreting the resulting thematic structure within a conceptual framework. In line with this approach, the teachers' statements collected in the study were first separated into small meaning units and coded with close attention to their contextual significance. The resulting codes were then assembled under broader themes that captured the core meanings emerging from the data. For one of the sub-problems examined, some of these themes showed conceptual convergence with the theoretical sub-dimensions of the Organizational Synergy Scale for Teachers (OSST) but this overlap was not the result of a predefined categorization but rather emerged naturally through inductive coding. In analyzing the second qualitative question, the themes were developed entirely from participants' expressions without reference to the OSST framework. This analytic procedure allowed the study to interpret teachers' perspectives in depth while maintaining conceptual consistency between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

To enhance the reliability of the analysis process, expert feedback was obtained from an independent academic with experience in qualitative research. The processes of coding and theme development were collaboratively reviewed, and inter-rater agreement was achieved. This ensured a validity- and reliability-enhancing analysis procedure for the qualitative findings.

Quantitative Findings

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study.

Findings Related to Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Synergy

The arithmetic means and standard deviations of the scores obtained from the OSST and its sub-dimensions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Total Score and Sub-Dimensions of the Organizational Synergy Scale for Teachers

Dimensions	n	Min	Max	Mean (\bar{x})	SD
Total Organizational Synergy	400	1.45	5.00	3.5639	0.70317
Interaction and Appreciation	400	1.20	5.00	3.5604	0.76845
Integration	400	1.22	5.00	3.4678	0.78403
Strategy	400	1.00	5.00	3.7146	0.82910
Renewal and Empowerment	400	1.00	5.00	3.5638	0.88817

As shown in Table 4, the overall mean score for the OSST was $\bar{x} = 3.5639$, indicating that teachers generally perceived a high level of organizational synergy. The standard deviation for the total score was calculated as 0.70317.

At the sub-dimension level, the highest mean score was found in the strategy dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.7146$; SD = 0.82910), while the lowest mean score was observed in the integration dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.4678$; SD = 0.78403). The mean scores for the interaction and appreciation and the

renewal and empowerment dimensions were $\bar{x} = 3.5604$ ($SD = 0.76845$) and $\bar{x} = 3.5638$ ($SD = 0.88817$), respectively. The fact that all mean scores exceeded 3.50 suggests that teachers perceive organizational synergy positively and at a high level overall.

Findings Related to Gender Variable

This section presents the findings regarding teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy in relation to their gender.

Table 5. Independent Samples t-Test Results for OSST Scores and Sub-Dimensions by Gender

Dimensions	Gender	n	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	t ₍₄₀₀₎	p
Total Organizational Synergy	Female	214	3.5811	0.737	0.522	0.602
	Male	186	3.5452	0.662		
Interaction and Appreciation	Female	214	3.5692	0.781	0.244	0.808
	Male	186	3.5504	0.755		
Integration	Female	214	3.4725	0.852	0.130	0.896
	Male	186	3.4624	0.699		
Strategy	Female	214	3.7625	0.866	1.248	0.213
	Male	186	3.6595	0.782		
Renewal and Empowerment	Female	214	3.5829	0.899	0.463	0.644
	Male	186	3.5417	0.876		

As seen in Table 5, the mean scores for total organizational synergy and all sub-dimensions do not show statistically significant differences according to the gender variable ($p > 0.05$). Although female teachers scored slightly higher than male teachers in all dimensions, these differences were not statistically significant. This finding suggests that both male and female teachers perceive organizational synergy at similar levels.

Findings Related to Age Variable

This section presents the findings regarding teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy in relation to their age.

Table 6. ANOVA Results for Teachers' Organizational Synergy Levels According to Age

Dimensions	Age Group	n	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	F _(3,396)	p
Total Organizational Synergy	21–30 years	103	3.4631	0.7487	1.983	0.116
	31–40 years	154	3.6673	0.6577		
	41–50 years	88	3.5174	0.7426		
	51+ years	55	3.5379	0.6526		
Interaction and Appreciation	21–30 years	103	3.5639	0.7031	2.191	0.089
	31–40 years	154	3.4334	0.8208		
	41–50 years	88	3.6721	0.7168		
	51+ years	55	3.5571	0.8039		
Integration	21–30 years	103	3.4909	0.7224	1.812	0.144
	31–40 years	154	3.5604	0.7684		
	41–50 years	88	3.4078	0.8281		
	51+ years	55	3.5801	0.7447		
Strategy	21–30 years	103	3.3649	0.8220	0.991	0.397
	31–40 years	154	3.4303	0.7242		
	41–50 years	88	3.4678	0.7840		

	51+ years	55	3.6149	0.8701		
Renewal and Empowerment	21–30 years	103	3.7944	0.7927	1.620	0.184
	31–40 years	154	3.6932	0.8137		
	41–50 years	88	3.7121	0.8739		
	51+ years	55	3.7146	0.8291		

As shown in Table 6, no statistically significant differences were found in the total OSST scores or in any of the sub-dimensions based on age ($p > 0.05$). Although the highest mean score was observed in the 31–40 age group ($\bar{x} = 3.6673$) and the lowest in the 21–30 age group ($\bar{x} = 3.4631$), these differences were not statistically significant. Similarly, small variations in the sub-dimension scores were observed; however, none reached statistical significance. This finding suggests that teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy are generally similar across different age groups.

Findings Related to School Type Variable

This section presents the findings regarding teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy in relation to their school type.

Table 7. ANOVA Results for Teachers' Organizational Synergy Levels According to School Type Variable

Dimensions	School Type	n	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	F _(2,397)	p
Total Organizational Synergy	Anatolian High School	134	3.4792	0.63030	1.469	0.231
	Anatolian Imam Hatip High School	143	3.6096	0.81672		
	Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School	123	3.6031	0.62905		
Interaction and Appreciation	Anatolian High School	134	3.4742	0.76036	1.277	0.280
	Anatolian Imam Hatip High School	143	3.5986	0.85876		
	Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School	123	3.6099	0.65596		
Integration	Anatolian High School	134	3.3574	0.73189	2.013	0.135
	Anatolian Imam Hatip High School	143	3.5190	0.90467		
	Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School	123	3.5285	0.67351		
Strategy	Anatolian High School	134	3.6231	0.75508	1.862	0.157
	Anatolian Imam Hatip High School	143	3.8135	0.87825		
	Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School	123	3.6992	0.84140		
Renewal and Empowerment	Anatolian High School	134	3.5504	0.82648	0.269	0.764
	Anatolian Imam Hatip High School	143	3.5350	1.00290		
	Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School	123	3.6118	0.81306		

As shown in Table 7, there were no statistically significant differences in the total scores or in any of the sub-dimensions of the Organizational Synergy Scale based on the school type variable ($p > 0.05$). The highest overall mean score was observed among teachers from Anatolian Imam Hatip High Schools ($\bar{x} = 3.6096$), while the lowest was seen among teachers from Anatolian High Schools ($\bar{x} = 3.4792$). Similarly, although minor differences were found across the sub-dimensions, none of these reached statistical significance. This finding suggests that teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy are similar regardless of the type of school they work in.

Findings Related to Professional Experience Variable

This section presents the findings regarding teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy in relation to their professional experience.

Table 8. ANOVA Results for the Organizational Synergy Scale According to Professional Experience

Dimensions	Professional Experience	n	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	F _(3,396)	p
Total Organizational Synergy	1–5 years	123	3.5019	0.7401	2.495	0.060
	6–10 years	91	3.6881	0.6155		
	11–15 years	99	3.4543	0.7386		
	16+ years	87	3.6465	0.6753		
Interaction and Appreciation	1–5 years	123	3.4548	0.7983	2.723	0.044
	6–10 years	91	3.6967	0.7283		
	11–15 years	99	3.4740	0.7821		
	16+ years	87	3.6655	0.7265		
Integration	1–5 years	123	3.4417	0.8444	1.773	0.152
	6–10 years	91	3.6007	0.6980		
	11–15 years	99	3.3468	0.8062		
	16+ years	87	3.5032	0.7428		
Strategy	1–5 years	123	3.6707	0.8534	2.453	0.063
	6–10 years	91	3.8425	0.7312		
	11–15 years	99	3.5606	0.8957		
	16+ years	87	3.8180	0.7898		
Renewal and Empowerment	1–5 years	123	3.5020	0.9389	0.972	0.406
	6–10 years	91	3.6319	0.7695		
	11–15 years	99	3.4899	0.9298		
	16+ years	87	3.6638	0.8816		

According to the findings in Table 8, a statistically significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of interaction and appreciation ($p = 0.04$) whereas the total score of the Organizational Synergy Scale approached but did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.06$). No statistically significant differences were observed in the other sub-dimensions ($p > 0.05$).

Levene's test, conducted to assess the homogeneity of variances across groups, revealed no significant differences ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was upheld, and Scheffé's post-hoc test was preferred for further analysis. The test results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Scheffé Test Results for Differences Between Groups Based on Teachers' Professional Experience (Interaction and Appreciation Dimension)

Professional Experience (I)	Professional Experience (J)	Mean (I-J)	Difference Std. Error	Sig.	95% Interval	Confidence
1–5 years	6–10 years	-0.24187	0.10557	0.156	[-0.5383, 0.0545]	
	11–15 years	-0.01913	0.10309	0.998	[-0.3086, 0.2703]	
	16+ years	-0.21068	0.10696	0.276	[-0.5110, 0.0896]	
6–10 years	1–5 years	0.24187	0.10557	0.156	[-0.0545, 0.5383]	
	11–15 years	0.22274	0.11088	0.259	[-0.0886, 0.5340]	

11-15 years	16+ years	0.03119	0.11449	0.995 [-0.2902, 0.3526]
	1-5 years	0.01913	0.10309	0.998 [-0.2703, 0.3086]
	6-10 years	-0.22274	0.11088	0.259 [-0.5340, 0.0886]
16+ years	16+ years	-0.19156	0.11220	0.406 [-0.5066, 0.1235]
	1-5 years	0.21068	0.10696	0.276 [-0.0896, 0.5110]
	6-10 years	-0.03119	0.11449	0.995 [-0.3526, 0.2902]
	11-15 years	0.19156	0.11220	0.406 [-0.1235, 0.5066]

As shown in Table 9, the Scheffé test results indicate that the highest difference was observed between teachers with 6-10 years of experience and those with 1-5 years. However, this difference was not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level ($p > .05$). Nevertheless, this difference may be considered a noteworthy trend. These findings suggest a potential increase in the perception of interaction and appreciation with increasing teaching experience, although the difference remains limited in scope.

Findings Related to Institutional Experience Variable

This section presents the findings regarding teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy in relation to their institutional experience.

Table 10. ANOVA Results for Organizational Synergy Levels by Institutional Experience

Dimensions	Institutional Experience	n	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	F _(3,396)	p
Total Organizational Synergy	1-5 years	204	3.6003	0.7136	1.064	0.364
	6-10 years	87	3.5578	0.6809		
	11-15 years	54	3.4106	0.7538		
	16+ years	55	3.5893	0.6429		
Interaction and Appreciation	1-5 years	204	3.5723	0.7937	0.479	0.697
	6-10 years	87	3.5405	0.7459		
	11-15 years	54	3.4685	0.7635		
	16+ years	55	3.6382	0.7214		
Integration	1-5 years	204	3.5169	0.7959	2.304	0.076
	6-10 years	87	3.5364	0.7286		
	11-15 years	54	3.2263	0.8247		
	16+ years	55	3.4141	0.7546		
Strategy	1-5 years	204	3.7712	0.8053	1.291	0.277
	6-10 years	87	3.6341	0.8967		
	11-15 years	54	3.5648	0.8875		
	16+ years	55	3.7788	0.7335		
Renewal and Empowerment	1-5 years	204	3.6017	0.9078	0.452	0.716
	6-10 years	87	3.5374	0.8243		
	11-15 years	54	3.4491	0.9521		
	16+ years	55	3.5773	0.8591		

Table 10 reveals no statistically significant differences in the total scores or sub-dimensions of the Organizational Synergy Scale based on the length of institutional experience ($p > .05$). This indicates that teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy remain similar regardless of how long they have been employed at the same institution. Although the highest average was observed among teachers with 1-5 years of experience, the difference was not statistically significant. Therefore, it was concluded that the length of institutional tenure does not have a determinative effect on perceptions of organizational synergy.

Qualitative Findings

This section presents the qualitative findings of the study.

Table 11. Teachers' Views on Barriers to Organizational Synergy

Themes	Codes	f
Interaction and Appreciation	Lack of communication	28
	Discrimination	10
	Lack of empathy	9
	Teachers' unwillingness	9
	Injustice	7
	Gossip	5
	Misuse of power by administrators	5
	Strict attitudes of administrators toward teachers	5
	Disrespectful language used by administrators	5
	Lack of trust in the administrator	4
	Lack of tolerance	3
	Jealousy	3
	Salary differences based on title	3
	Negative organizational climate	2
	Mobbing	2
Integration	Lack of democracy	28
	Lack of cooperation among teachers	11
	Limited social activities	11
	Conflict	9
	Cliques among teachers	9
	Selfishness	7
	Lack of support from administrators	6
	Avoidance of responsibility	5
	Competitiveness	3
	Low professional commitment	2
Strategy	Lack of shared goals	5
	Avoiding taking initiative	5
	Bureaucratic tasks	4
	Lack of coordination	2
	Centralized management approach	2
	Lack of professional ethics	2
Updating and Empowerment	Resistance to change	5
	Teachers' professional inadequacy	5
	Incompetence of administrators	3
Management Policies	Excessive course load	16
	Block course schedule	9
	Overcrowded classrooms	6
	Frequent staff turnover	5
	Use of substitute teachers	3
	Intense curriculum	2

Other Barriers	Individual differences among teachers	6
	Student behavioral problems	5
	Lack of appreciation for teachers	2
	Violence against teachers	2
	Disrespect for personal space	2
	Incompatibility	2

As a result of the content analysis conducted to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of organizational synergy, the data were categorized under five main themes: interaction and appreciation, integration, strategy, updating and empowerment, management policies, and other barriers. These themes reveal a range of structural, administrative, and individual factors that constrain organizational synergy.

1. Interaction and Appreciation The most frequently cited issue within this theme was a lack of communication ($f = 28$). Teachers indicated that adequate communication was not established with administrators or among colleagues. This was followed by discrimination ($f = 10$), lack of empathy ($f = 9$), and teachers' unwillingness ($f = 9$). Additionally, administrative issues such as injustice ($f = 7$), gossip, misuse of power, and strict attitudes by administrators also weakened interaction. These data suggest that the sustainability of synergy is challenged when social relations and teacher-administrator interactions are weak.

Sample participant statements: *"In the school where I work, a major barrier to organizational synergy is the lack of communication with other teachers outside our subject group. I think this results from the inability of teachers from different branches to connect around common topics. That is, I can say there is a lack of communication and interaction. Overall, I think our school has a low level of organizational synergy."* (K78)

"I believe that the main factors preventing the formation of organizational synergy at our school are jealousy, prejudice, and disrespect for personal space among teachers." (K38)

"A positive organizational climate is not being established, which hinders synergy." (K130)

2. Integration The most emphasized issue under this theme was the lack of democracy ($f = 28$). Participants expressed discomfort about not being included in decision-making processes or having their opinions ignored. They also drew attention to the limited cooperation among teachers ($f = 11$) and the scarcity of social activities ($f = 11$). Other interpersonal issues such as conflict, cliques, *selfishness*, and avoidance of responsibility negatively affected integration.

Sample participant statements: *"When making decisions about the school, management should gather input from all staff members. However, they fail to do this and are not as transparent as they should be."* (K1)

"Especially, the biggest obstacle to organizational synergy is that administrators do not consider the suggestions and ideas provided by teachers." (K4)

"Events, organizations, celebrations, etc., planned by the school administration should be arranged well in advance. However, when such plans are communicated too late, it hinders synergy and causes problems among stakeholders." (K35)

3. Strategy The key issues highlighted under this theme were the lack of shared goals ($f = 5$) and reluctance to take initiative ($f = 5$), which point to a lack of common vision. Teachers stated they were excluded from planning processes and, as a result, could not contribute to the institution's strategic direction. Furthermore, bureaucratic tasks and a centralized management approach limited organizational flexibility.

Sample participant statements: *"In line with hierarchical relationships, inexperienced administrators fail to build team spirit."* (K332)

"Employees at the institution act unprofessionally and let their emotions interfere with their work, which hinders collaboration." (K283)

"The reluctance of the administrative staff to take initiative and responsibility is the biggest obstacle to embedding organizational synergy into the institutional culture." (K77)

4. Updating and Empowerment The key obstacles cited under this theme were resistance to change ($f = 5$) and professional inadequacy ($f = 5$), highlighting the challenges teachers face in their professional development. The incompetence of administrators ($f = 3$) also pointed to a lack of innovative and supportive leadership. These findings suggest that school environments often fail to adequately support a culture of professional growth.

Sample participant statements: *"Teachers tend to continue their routines and believe that their years of experience are sufficient, which prevents them from coming together for a common purpose." (K3)*

"In line with hierarchical relationships, inexperienced administrators fail to build team spirit." (K332)

"Teachers believe that their profession does not support advancement, which hinders their development and the formation of new processes." (K167)

5. Management Policies Participants indicated that current educational policies negatively impact organizational synergy. In particular, excessive course loads ($f = 16$), block scheduling ($f = 9$), overcrowded classrooms ($f = 6$), and frequent staff turnover ($f = 5$) diminish teachers' motivation and willingness to collaborate. These findings highlight the need for structural reforms.

Sample participant statements: *"Due to the intensity of course hours in terms of both time and content, teachers focus on covering the syllabus, which prevents them from participating in positive organizational activities." (K136)*

"Block scheduling at our school reduces break times, limiting opportunities for teachers to interact and build synergy." (K139)

"Rather than being an internal issue, the national education system's practice of dividing teachers into categories such as substitute, contract, expert, or head teacher prevents professional unity and hinders organizational synergy." (K104)

6. Other Barriers Individual differences among teachers ($f = 6$), student behavioral problems ($f = 5$), and violence against teachers emerged as indirect but significant personal and environmental barriers to organizational synergy. Especially, the lack of appreciation and disrespect for personal space weakened teachers' sense of belonging to the institution.

Sample participant statements: *"Differences in perspectives and mindsets among administrators, staff, and teachers can prevent the emergence of organizational synergy." (K47)*

"The lack of necessary precautions and sanctions regarding discipline problems in schools is a barrier to organizational synergy." (K51)

"Bullying and disrespect from students toward teachers hinder the development of organizational synergy." (K295)

The findings of the content analysis demonstrate that organizational synergy is shaped by multiple dimensions beyond individual behavior, encompassing structural, managerial, and cultural factors. Notably, deficiencies in communication, participation, strategic vision, and professional development hinder teachers' integration with their institutions and impede collective success.

Table 12. Teachers' Suggestions for Overcoming Barriers to Organizational Synergy

Themes	Codes	f
Interaction and Appreciation	Healthy communication	19
	Fair management	15
	Empathetic administrator	5
	Empathetic colleagues	5
	Trustworthy administrator	5
	Enhancing motivation	3
	Preventing mobbing	3
	Elimination of hierarchical titles	3
Integration	Collaboration	22
	Organizing social activities	19
	Participatory management	15
	Informative meetings	14
	Respect for differences	3
	Flexible management	3
Strategy	Unity of purpose	5
Updating and Empowerment	In-service training	13
	Openness to innovation	6

Through content analysis of teachers' suggestions for eliminating barriers to organizational synergy, the data were categorized under four main themes: interaction and appreciation, integration, strategy, and updating and empowerment.

Interaction and Appreciation

Teachers emphasized the need to improve the quality of internal communication in schools to strengthen organizational synergy. The most frequently mentioned suggestion was creating healthy communication environments ($f = 19$). Additionally, adopting a fair management approach ($f = 15$) highlights the importance of administrators making equitable decisions without favoritism. Suggestions such as empathetic administrators and colleagues ($f = 5$ each) and trustworthy administrators ($f = 5$) point to an expectation of emotionally safe leadership. Suggestions like preventing mobbing ($f = 3$), enhancing motivation ($f = 3$), and removing hierarchical titles ($f = 3$) emphasize psychological safety.

Integration

Teachers stressed the need to increase unity and solidarity within the school. Building a culture of collaboration ($f = 22$) and organizing social activities ($f = 19$) were proposed as structures that enhance peer interaction and sense of belonging. Moreover, implementing participatory management ($f = 15$) and holding informative meetings ($f = 14$) were suggested to support synergy by involving teachers in decision-making processes. Respect for differences ($f = 3$) and flexible management ($f = 3$) reflect the need for a more inclusive school culture that values individual differences.

Strategy

The core strategic recommendation was the establishment of unity of purpose ($f = 5$). Teachers stated that bringing all stakeholders together around shared goals is important for aligning personal and institutional efforts. This suggestion underlines the need for strategic communication processes that actively engage teachers in the school's vision and mission.

Updating and Empowerment

Teachers highlighted the crucial role of continuous professional development in enhancing organizational synergy. Accordingly, increasing opportunities for in-service training ($f = 13$) was suggested. Openness to innovation ($f = 6$) was also seen as essential for improving both individual development and institutional learning capacity. These suggestions support the formation of learning school culture.

Overall, teachers' suggestions indicate that improving organizational synergy requires not only changes in individual attitudes but also a transformation in management philosophy and school culture. Participants offered concrete and applicable solutions in fundamental areas such as communication, participation, trust, fairness, collaboration, and professional development. These findings provide constructive feedback for school administrators and offer guidance for building a more democratic, participatory, and development-oriented school environment.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study are evaluated together, it is evident that the two data sets largely overlap in terms of teachers' experiences of organizational synergy. Quantitative findings revealed that teachers generally perceive high levels of organizational synergy. Similarly, existing literature also points to high levels of synergy among teachers (Aksoy, 2022; Yeşil, 2022). While this indicates a considerable degree of collaboration and shared goals within schools, it also suggests that certain dimensions still present areas for improvement.

Specifically, analysis of the sub-dimensions of the OSST showed the highest mean score in the Strategy dimension, followed by Updating and Empowerment, Interaction and Appreciation, and finally Integration, which had the lowest mean score. These results suggest that teachers experience relatively stronger synergy in terms of strategic planning and task distribution, but comparatively weaker synergy in areas such as interaction, appreciation, and integration. The low score in the Integration dimension points to a lack of social cohesion and participatory culture within schools. This aligns with the concept of "social capital" emphasized by Hargreaves and Fullan (2015) in their professional capital model. A lack of trust, collaboration, and sense of belonging among teachers directly weakens organizational synergy. In fact, the notion of organizational synergy refers to a collective effect achieved when individuals unite their efforts to generate an impact greater than the sum of individual contributions. For such an effect to emerge, strategic alignment must be supported by strong communication networks and an atmosphere of trust (Aktan, 2012a; Akpolat & Levent, 2018). Hence, while high scores in the Strategy dimension suggest a shared understanding in terms of school vision and planning, the lower scores point to potential deficiencies in the human and cultural components of synergy.

Qualitative findings further support this interpretation. The themes and codes derived from teacher interviews reveal that the most cited barriers to synergy correspond to the sub-dimensions with the lowest quantitative scores. Notably, under the theme of Integration, teachers frequently highlighted the lack of democratic processes—referring to limited involvement in decision-making. In the theme of Interaction and Appreciation, poor communication and lack of appreciation emerged as key concerns. These qualitative findings are in full alignment with the quantitative data, which also showed these two sub-dimensions as having the lowest means. In other words, teachers articulated during interviews the specific reasons behind the synergy deficiencies they had previously indicated through survey scores. This consistency strengthens the validity of the claim that the lack of a participatory climate and poor communication negatively affect synergy. Teachers reported that in the absence of democratic participation, they feel less integrated within the school community. Similarly, insufficient communication and appreciation erode interpersonal trust and motivation, weakening a critical aspect of synergy.

The solutions proposed by teachers further reinforce the alignment between the quantitative and qualitative findings. Under the theme of Integration, teachers emphasized the need for collaboration and increased social and participatory practices. Under the theme of Interaction

and Appreciation, they called for healthy communication environments and fair recognition. These suggestions reveal that teachers expect improvements in teamwork, communication, and inclusive, fair leadership. Comparing these expectations with the quantitative results shows that teachers are especially focused on improving the dimensions with the lowest scores. Thus, the qualitative data both aligns with and enhances the interpretation of the quantitative results. This convergence confirms the success of the mixed methods design, in which both data types together paint a comprehensive picture (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Moreover, the teachers' suggestions clearly reflect a desire for a working environment where they can interact more frequently with colleagues, feel valued, and experience a culture of collaboration. Developing policies aligned with these perspectives is crucial to unlocking the latent potential within schools. As noted by Alp and Şen (2021), increasing teachers' sense of synergy significantly contributes to school effectiveness and efficiency. In this sense, addressing issues in communication and collaboration will not only improve teachers' professional satisfaction but also positively impact overall school performance (Alp & Şen, 2021).

In contrast, the high scores in the Strategy dimension were also supported by qualitative data. Teachers did not express significant concerns about strategic planning, vision-setting, or task distribution, suggesting a satisfactory level of functioning in these areas. As the quantitative findings also show the Strategy dimension having the highest mean score, it is reasonable to infer that school administrators are implementing effective leadership and planning strategies. Literature also supports the idea that effective leadership behaviors enhance organizational synergy (Aykit, 2023; Yıldırım, 2021). Visionary and participatory school leaders, in particular, have been found to foster synergy by uniting teachers around shared goals. The strong performance in the Strategy dimension in this study may stem from successful practices in creating institutional vision and clarifying roles and responsibilities. The absence of improvement suggestions in this area confirms teachers' general satisfaction.

The dimension of Updating and Empowerment had the second-highest mean score after Strategy. This dimension refers to support for teachers' professional and personal development, renewal, and collective empowerment. Teachers did not express major concerns in this regard during interviews, which suggests that they do not perceive significant problems in accessing growth opportunities at school. This finding is consistent with the relatively high scores in the quantitative data. However, literature emphasizes that a culture of continuous learning and renewal is vital for sustainable organizational synergy (Aker, 2022; Senge, 1990). Thus, even if not currently problematic, ongoing support in this area is necessary to maintain long-term synergy.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative results also provides meaningful insights in relation to demographic variables. The quantitative analysis showed no significant differences in organizational synergy levels based on teachers' gender, age, school type, or institutional experience. This finding is supported by previous studies (Aksoy, 2022; Aykit, 2023; Duman, 2021).

The qualitative data likewise contained no comments indicating demographic differences. Teachers did not suggest that gender, age, or school type had any impact on their synergy experiences. This silence itself can be taken as indirect evidence of the irrelevance of these variables (Çelik et al., 2020). Thus, the lack of demographic variation in both data types strengthens the conclusion that organizational synergy is a shared experience across teacher groups. As synergy reflects a collective organizational climate, it is more sensitive to institutional characteristics and leadership practices than to individual demographic traits (Aktan, 2012b).

On the other hand, the variable of professional seniority revealed a noteworthy difference. While the overall synergy scores did not significantly vary, a meaningful difference emerged in the Interaction and Appreciation sub-dimension. Specifically, teachers with 1–5 years of experience had the lowest mean score, while those with 6–10 years of experience scored the highest. This quantitative pattern was supported and clarified by qualitative data. In interviews, experienced

teachers mentioned that newly appointed teachers sometimes face exclusion or are not taken seriously, encountering difficulties integrating into the existing school culture and gaining recognition. These challenges may negatively influence their perceptions of interaction and appreciation, thereby reducing their overall synergy experience. The observation that “new teachers feel left out,” frequently cited in interviews, helps explain the lower scores among this group. This shows how the mixed methods approach enables meaningful interpretation of such patterns. It also puts into perspective the inconsistent findings in literature regarding the relationship between seniority and synergy (e.g., Aksoy, 2022; Bostancı & Koçak, 2022; Yeşil, 2022). While this study could not compare educational levels as it focused only on high school teachers, the pattern based on years of experience underscores the significance of organizational socialization. Structured mentorship, orientation programs, and support for organizational citizenship can enhance synergy among novice teachers. Institutional culture plays a decisive role in this process. Bostancı and Koçak (2022) emphasized that a school’s “DNA profile” or culture is critical to enabling synergy, and that a strong culture facilitates synergy while also serving as a tool to resolve institutional problems.

In conclusion, integrating the quantitative and qualitative results provided a deeper understanding of organizational synergy within its theoretical framework. Quantitative data identified areas of strength and weakness, while qualitative data offered contextual explanations. Overall, both data sets complemented and reinforced one another.

Recommendations

- Since the Integration dimension had the lowest synergy score and qualitative data pointed to a lack of democratic participation, school leaders should adopt transparent, democratic, and stakeholder-oriented governance practices that actively involve teachers in decision-making processes.
- Weak communication and lack of appreciation among teachers emerged as major barriers. Schools should establish regular feedback mechanisms and facilitate communication through teacher collaboration meetings and briefings.
- Teachers emphasized the value of social environments that allow for collaboration and mutual familiarity. Activities that strengthen interpersonal ties among teachers (e.g., breakfasts, trips, workshops) should be regularly organized.
- The lower synergy perceptions among teachers with 1–5 years of experience are linked to gaps in orientation and socialization. Schools should implement structured mentorship programs led by experienced teachers to support the integration of novice staff.
- Although the Strategy dimension showed strong results, maintaining synergy requires support not only in planning but also in relational leadership skills such as communication, appreciation, and empathy. In-service training should emphasize organizational synergy, communication, and participatory leadership.
- As institutional culture is critical for synergy, schools should make their core values visible and develop shared projects and rituals to foster collective identity among teachers.
- Sustaining organizational synergy requires regular input from teachers. Annual synergy assessment surveys could be conducted and integrated into school development planning.

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