



www.ijpes.com

ISSN: 2148-9378



# Perception of Organizational Uncertainty as a Predictor of Teacher Inertia

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0000-0001-5907-6972

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article History

Received 14.05.2022

Received in revised form  
18.11.2022

Accepted 08.12.2022

Article Type: Research  
Article

## ABSTRACT

The ability of organizations to adapt quickly to change and take action in uncertain situations brought about by a crisis or change is vital for their development and continuity. Teachers, who are education workers, form the basis of the education system by producing education services. Therefore, the power of the education system to take action against uncertainties is determined by whether teachers take action in the face of uncertainties. The purpose of this study is to look into the impact of teachers' perceptions of organizational uncertainty on organizational inertia. An explanatory and predictive pattern, one of the correlational research designs, was used in the study. The study sample consists of 307 teachers, determined by a simple random sampling method from the teachers working in the Eyüp District of İstanbul. Organizational Inertia Scale and Organizational Uncertainty Scale were used as data collection tools. As a result of the research, it was seen that there were significant differences in the perception of inertia and organizational uncertainty according to the demographic characteristics of the teachers. However, it was concluded that teachers' perceptions of organizational uncertainty predicted their inertia attitudes.

### Keywords:

Organizational stagnation, inertia, uncertainty.

## 1. Introduction

An epidemic that has affected the world in the last few years has brought rapid changes in the structuring of organizations in almost all sectors. Educational organizations also tried to ensure the sustainability of teaching activities by switching to distance education in this process. Although this sudden and compulsory change did not give educational organizations the right to choose, teachers and students who lacked knowledge and experience in distance education put a lot of effort into productive processes. Studies have shown that the distance education process creates a digital divide due to socio-economic factors, that teachers experience problems with students' learning (Çakın & Akyavuz, 2020), and that the distance education system should be strengthened in terms of infrastructure, access, content, design, implementation, and pedagogy (Can, 2020). Educational organizations are of great importance for realizing social, cultural, social, and economic goals. Technological and social changes and crises experienced with the information revolution make it necessary to keep up with the changes experienced for the sustainability and efficiency of organizations. On the other hand, educational organizations should have the power to adapt quickly and effectively to the changes experienced due to their social mission. With the driving force created by technological and social changes for the transformation of educational organizations, crisis periods bring with them situations of uncertainty. In this context, how the organization's leaders manage uncertainty will impact whether they take action or not, as will how the organization's employees perceive uncertainty.

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**Citation:** Akpolat, T. (2023). Perception of organizational uncertainty as a predictor of teacher inertia. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 10(1), 159-173. <https://dx.doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2023.10.1.928>

### **1.1. Organizational Inertia**

The law of inertia, which Newton defines as the desire of a stationary object to stop and a stationaryly moving object to maintain its constant motion, points to the concept of routine and makes it possible to understand it (Bhardwaj & Momaya, 2006). Of course, routine is important in establishing and maintaining stability. In addition, every organic being has to evolve and renew in order to survive. This tension between stability and renewal creates a comfort zone and a development area for organizations, which are organic entities. The comfort zone can be defined as the routine that results from the continuation of the work done in the same ways for a long time, depending on the satisfaction of the result (Baz, 2021). The continuation of this situation will create significant inertia because it is always easy to use existing roads (Becker, 1995). The concept of inertia is used in many fields, such as management, health, and psychology, to describe many phenomena related to resistance to change. Inertia can be defined as the tendency to perform tasks by repeating a decision or avoiding action (Alos-Ferrer, Hügelschafer, & Li, 2016).

When people are faced with a new problem, they tend to make decisions based on their past experiences. Although this situation provides comfort to individuals in making quick decisions in the normal flow of life and easily predicting the results of the decision, it can also be counted as one of the obstacles to rational thinking (Liao, 2002). However, a previously used decision for problem-solving that yielded good results can help stabilize the current situation by giving a similar result when used in relation to an unknown problem (Amiripour et al., 2017). However, the chronicity of this situation creates an imperceptible obstacle to change, renewal, updating, and empowerment. It is possible to say that the tendency to repeat the same routine will reveal inertia.

The concept of inertia can be defined at the individual and organizational levels. Individual inertia can be defined as adherence and persistence to existing behavior patterns (i.e., the status quo) even if there are better alternatives or incentives for change (Polites & Karahanna, 2012). At this point, it is necessary to talk about the nuance between habit and inertia. It is not possible to speak of a choice at the conscious level when it comes to habits. However, inertia includes a conscious effort to maintain the current situation. Therefore, inertia is based on beliefs about the sustainability of the comfort zone. Individual inertia is generally examined under two headings: physiological and psychological inertia. Physiological inertia refers to the slowness and clumsiness of individuals in the same routine to act physically and maintain themselves. On the other hand, psychological inertia means that the decisions taken at the mental level or the plans made are interrupted during the implementation phase (Sekman, 2009). It is possible to say that physiological and psychological inertia, which define individual inertia, feed each other and create an unnoticed cycle.

Similar to individual inertia, organizational inertia can be defined as the organization's ability to make internal changes in response to external changes (Moradi, Jafari, Doorbash, & Mirzaei 2021). Organizational inertia is defined by Türkan and Esmer (2019) as the inability of the organization to adapt to changes due to the desire to preserve the current situation and become inoperable by failing to renew itself due to being closed to innovations. Therefore, the insistence on maintaining the current situation manifests itself as the continuity of inefficient practices and methods and hinders the organization's competitiveness (Rumelt, 1995). In an organization, at the organizational level, inertia can appear as insight, action (Tsai, 2007), and information inertia (Wang & Yang, 2013). Insight inertia is the organization's delay in adapting itself to the demands of environmental changes due to not being able to read the signals in time (Godkin & Allcorn, 2008). Action inertia occurs when the required response to changes in the environment is too slow. However, it can be said that the lack of information that will enable the organization to take action in the face of change will also reveal action inertia (Godkin, 2010). Information inertia can be defined as using existing information instead of updating it in the face of changes (Wang & Yang, 2013).

Türkan and Esmer (2019) listed the reasons for organizational inertia as follows: (a) excessive adherence to tradition; (b) reaction to change; (c) misleading effects of success and overconfidence; (d) interruption of the learning cycle; (e) advancing age of the organization. According to Şevik and Aksu (2020), organizational inertia is defined by organizational employees' attitudes toward organizational inertia. They say that the inertia experienced by the organization's employees at the level of cognition is the continuation of the existing one. However, it is known that there is a better method or more useful information. They defined affective inertia as the tendency to avoid the stress of new practices or information due to an emotional connection with

existing practices or information, and behavioral inertia as conscious repetition of what is customary or what is always done.

## 1.2. Organizational Uncertainty

Uncertainty is an essential feature of the real world that naturally exists in life. In general, it can be said that uncertainty is the state of "not knowing for sure" due to incomplete or unclear information (Grote, 2015). In the organizational context, Knight (1921) defines uncertainty as the lack of knowledge about the possibilities of the future state of events affecting the organization. Polat (2015) described organizational uncertainty in three dimensions. These are (a) general uncertainty about causal relationships, (b) feedback takes a long time, and (c) information is unclear. The fact that the causal relations network for obtaining information about any situation or event involving the employees of the organization is not known by the members of the organization creates organizational uncertainty. Again, the lack of information flow among the members of the organization and the long wait for feedback create a perception of organizational uncertainty.

Uncertainty in organizations arises in several ways. It is possible to say that the first of these is the organizational uncertainty created by environmental changes. In today's changing business environments, organizations often have to change and improve their strategies, structures, and employee competencies to maintain their existence and competitiveness. These environmental changes force organizations to change to remain dynamic, and this situation creates uncertainty (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004). An example of this is the COVID-19 pandemic. The emerging global epidemic revealed the necessity of making structural changes in organizations and accordingly brought new expectations regarding employee qualifications to the table. It can be said that intra-organizational changes also create organizational uncertainty. Whether the internal factors such as personnel rights, organizational culture, and performance evaluation are variable within the organization or there is insufficient information about these issues, this also creates uncertainty (Polat, 2015).

Hui and Lee (2000) reveal that two factors that cause organizational uncertainty are the perception of change and job insecurity. Organizational transformations associated with post-industrial transformation have demonstrated that organizations are not static structures but rather dynamic structures influenced by changes in their environment. The outcome of this situation has been that organizational life has become more complex, uninterrupted, and rapidly changing. The uncertainty created by all this change can be perceived as a risk and an obstacle to be overcome for employees, or it can be perceived as a liberating and exciting situation (Helsing, 2007). The relationship between the uncertainty approach of the organization and the employee's perception of uncertainty affects the organizational climate. Clampitt and Williams (2005) stated that an approach that avoids the uncertainty of the employee and the organization would reveal the status quo climate in the organization, and they stated that the approach of both embracing uncertainties will create a dynamic organizational climate. However, they stated that the difference between the organization and the employee's approach to uncertainty would cause the employee to perceive an uneasy or stifling organizational climate.

## 1.2. Current Study

This study aims to examine whether teachers' perception of uncertainty is a predictor of teacher inertia. Organizations often have to deal with the challenges created by uncertainty, threat, and time pressure during a crisis (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021). The high perception of uncertainty by the employees will cause them to interpret future situations as threatening and to show avoidance or inaction by showing discomfort and anxiety about the events arising from the threatening situation (Stoycheva, 2003). However, it is possible to say that situations where there is no uncertainty and the future is clear and predictable reduce the ability to act toward change. However, it is evident that uncertainty will naturally find its place in the natural flow of life (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). In this context, it is thought that the employees' perception of their own uncertainty is effective in influencing their inertia attitude. It is said that teachers' behaviors related to organizational inertia are in the form of poor performance, procrastination, and resistance to change (Arlı, Ceylan, & Yetim, 2012). However, educational organizations, which are open systems, need renewal and inevitably experience change. Being able to adapt to change in an environment of uncertainty is important for organizations to respond quickly to the expectations of the future (Yazar, 2020). This situation reveals that the attitudes and behaviors of the organization's employees are essential. The attitudes of the employees of the organization towards inertia, which are defined by terms such as laziness, clumsiness, solidity, and slowness

based on maintaining the current situation, are important for organizations to fulfill the requirements of the age and maintain their existence. In addition, it is thought that revealing whether the perceived uncertainty of teachers motivates them will increase the administrators' awareness of the steps related to uncertainty management and the policy makers' regulations regarding uncertainty and inertia. In this context, the sub-purposes of the purpose of the research are as follows:

- Does the perception of organizational uncertainty and organizational inertia differ according to the demographic characteristics of teachers?
- Is there a relationship between teachers' perception of organizational uncertainty and organizational inertia?
- Does teachers' perception of organizational uncertainty predict organizational inertia?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Pattern

In this study, correlational design, which is one of the quantitative research methods, was used. In relational research, relationships between two or more variables are studied without trying to influence them. A correlational study has two purposes. These are predictions and clarifications of our understanding of important phenomena by describing relationships between variables (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Therefore, the explanatory-predictive pattern of correlational research was used in this study.

### 2.2. Population and Sample

The study population consists of 2729 teachers working in the Eyüp district of Istanbul. The study sample consists of 307 teachers selected by a simple random sampling method, one of the probability sampling methods. "A simple random sample is one in which each and every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected" (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). 20 scale forms were left for each of the primary, secondary, and high schools (40 schools in total) in Eyüp district, and the forms of those who volunteered to participate in the study were collected. The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic		N	%
Gender	Female	230	75
	Male	77	25
Seniority	1-5 years	137	45
	6-10 years	77	25
	11-15 Years	42	14
	16 years and above	51	16
School Type	State	197	64
	Private	110	36
Employment Type	Regular	118	38
	Contractual	116	37
	Paid	73	25
Marital Status	Single	170	55
	Married	137	45

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

Teacher Inertia Attitude Scale: Şevik and Aksu (2020) created a three-dimensional scale with 13 items. There are four items measuring the cognitive dimension, six items measuring the affective dimension, and three items measuring the behavioral dimension. As a result of CFA, it was seen that the scale had acceptable goodness-of-fit values. The internal consistency coefficient for the cognitive dimension is .721, the internal consistency coefficient for the affective dimension is .829, and the internal consistency coefficient for the behavioral dimension is  $\alpha=.722$ . When the goodness of fit values of the scale after Confirmatory Factor analysis are examined, it can be said that it has an acceptable fit and presents a valid model ( $X^2/sd=2.51$ , GFI=.93, CFI=0.91, RMSEA=.07).

Organizational Uncertainty Perception Scale: The scale was developed by Schweiger and DeNisi (1991). The scale, consisting of 21 items and one dimension, was adapted into Turkish by Tinaztepe (2010). The adapted scale exhibits a one-dimensional structure with 21 items as in the original scale. The internal consistency coefficient is  $\alpha = .93$ . Polat (2015), on the other hand, conducted a validity and reliability study to use the scale to measure teachers' perceptions of uncertainty. As a result of the analyses, it was seen that the scale consisted of 17 items and three sub-dimensions. The three sub-dimensions were named as General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships, Long-Time Feedback, and Unclear Information. The internal consistency coefficient for each sub-dimension was determined as  $\alpha = .86$ ,  $\alpha = .76$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ , respectively, and the internal consistency coefficient for the whole scale was determined as  $\alpha = .90$ . When the goodness of fit values of the scale after Confirmatory Factor analysis are examined, it can be said that it has an acceptable fit and presents a valid model ( $X^2/sd=3.83$ , GFI=.93, CFI=0.98, RMSEA=.06).

## 2.4. Analysis of Data

The data obtained within the scope of the research were transferred to the SPSS24 statistical program. The internal consistency coefficient was calculated for the sub-dimensions of the data collection tools and the total scales. Accordingly, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the Cognitive Dimension, which is one of the sub-dimensions of the Teacher Inertia Attitude Scale, is  $\alpha = .71$ ; the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the Affective Dimension is  $\alpha = .78$ ; the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the Behavioral Dimension is  $\alpha = .72$ ; and the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the whole scale is  $\alpha = .70$ . The internal consistency coefficients for the Uncertainty Scale sub-dimensions are  $\alpha = .86$  for the General Uncertainty of Causal Relations sub-dimension,  $\alpha = .80$  for the Long Time Feedback sub-dimension,  $\alpha = .79$  for the Unclear Information sub-dimension, and  $\alpha = .91$  for the whole scale. A coefficient of internal consistency of .70 or higher indicates that the data collection tools are reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2002). Before beginning the data set analysis, it was verified that it met the assumption of normality. It was decided whether the data set assumed normality by looking at the kurtosis-skewness values. Table 2 displays the kurtosis skewness values of the scales and their sub-dimensions.

**Table 2.** Kurtosis and Skewness Values of the Scales and their Sub-Dimensions

Dimensions	Skewness	Kurtosis
Cognitive Inertia	-.142	.256
Affective Inertia	.826	.672
Behavioral Inertia	.568	.438
Organizational Inertia	.234	.319
General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships	.016	.070
Feedback Takes a Long Time	.209	-.053
Lack of information	.326	.139
Organizational Uncertainty	-.003	.156

It was seen that the kurtosis skewness values of the sub-dimensions of each scale were in the range of  $\mp 1.5$ , and it was decided that the data set met the assumption of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

T-test and ANOVA, which are difference tests from parametric tests, were used. The relationship between the related variables was analyzed with the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the direction and level of organizational uncertainty perception that predicted organizational inertia attitudes. Before running multiple regression, it was determined whether there was a problem with multicollinearity between the independent variables. In this context, the VIF value was examined, and it was seen that the said value was below 10. This indicates that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables (Büyükuysal & Öz, 2016).

## 2.5. Ethical

The research was approved by the Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee of the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University by evaluating the date 23.12.2021 and the number 41.503.

### 3. Findings

Whether there is a difference in the organizational inertia attitudes of teachers according to gender, marital status, branch, and school type was analyzed with the t-test, and the results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes to Organizational Inertia by Gender, Marital Status, and School Type

Variable	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	sd	t	p	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )
Cognitive Inertia	Female	230	3.06	.62	305	2.415	.016	.02
	Male	77	2.83	.97				
Affective Inertia	Female	230	2.08	.61	305	-5.051	.000	.08
	Male	77	2.55	1.03				
Behavioral Inertia	Female	230	1.79	.56	305	-3.204	.001	.03
	Male	77	2.04	.86				
Organizational Inertia	Female	230	2.32	.40	305	-3.782	.000	.05
	Male	77	2.52	.58				
Cognitive Inertia	Single	170	2.95	.75	305	-1.319	.188	
	Married	137	3.07	.72				
Affective Inertia	Single	170	2.24	.79	305	1.158	.248	
	Married	137	2.15	.66				
Behavioral Inertia	Single	170	1.89	.67	305	.1.206	.229	
	Married	137	1.81	.53				
Organizational Inertia	Single	170	2.38	.46	305	.668	.505	
	Married	137	2.35	.39				
Cognitive Inertia	State	197	2.98	.75	305	-.947	.345	
	Private	110	3.06	.72				
Affective Inertia	State	197	2.18	.75	305	-.495	.621	
	Private	110	2.23	.73				
Behavioral Inertia	State	197	1.91	.58	305	2.165	.031	.02
	Private	110	1.75	.65				
Organizational Inertia	State	197	2.36	.43	305	-.138	.890	
	Private	110	2.37	.43				

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference in teacher inertia attitude according to the gender of the teachers ( $p < .05$ ). The differences are seen to be moderately effective in favor of male teachers ( $\eta^2 = .05$ ). There is a statistically significant difference in the sub-dimensions of the teacher inertia attitude scale based on the gender of the teachers. It is seen that there is a low-level effective difference in favor of women in the cognitive inertia dimension ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .02$ ), a moderately effective difference in favor of males in the affective inertia dimension ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .08$ ), and a low effective difference in favor of men ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .03$ ), in behavioral inertia dimension. However, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference in the behavioral inertia dimension according to the type of school in which the teachers work ( $p < .05$ ). This difference is seen to be small and in favor of public school employees ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ).

Whether there is a difference in the perceptions of organizational uncertainty according to the gender, marital status, and school type of the teachers was analyzed with the t-test, and the results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Uncertainty by Gender, Marital Status, and Type of School

Variable	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SS	sd	t	p	Effect size ( $\eta^2$ )
General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships	Female	230	3.63	.89	305	3.595	.000	.04
	Male	77	3.20	.92				
Feedback Takes a Long Time	Female	230	3.39	1.05	305	.327	.744	
	Male	77	3.34	1.21				
Lack of Information	Female	230	2.70	.93	305	.280	.779	
	Male	77	2.66	.91				
Organizational Uncertainty	Female	230	3.36	.82	305	2.227	.027	.02
	Male	77	3.11	.86				
General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships	Single	170	3.66	.93	305	2.986	.003	.03
	Married	137	3.35	.87				
Feedback Takes a Long Time	Single	170	3.47	1.09	305	1.631	.104	
	Married	137	3.27	1.08				
Lack of Information	Single	170	2.80	.98	305	2.128	.034	.02
	Married	137	2.57	.85				
Organizational Uncertainty	Single	170	3.41	.85	305	2.808	.034	.03
	Married	137	3.14	.80				
General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships	State	197	3.43	.92	305	-2.515	.012	.02
	Private	110	3.70	.89				
Feedback Takes a Long Time	State	197	3.24	1.01	305	-2.949	.003	.03
	Private	110	3.62	1.18				
Lack of Information	State	197	2.65	.89	305	-1.099	.273	
	Private	110	2.77	.98				
Organizational Uncertainty	State	197	3.20	.81	305	-2.653	.008	.02
	Private	110	3.46	.86				

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that teachers' perceptions of organizational uncertainty differ statistically according to their gender ( $p < .05$ ). It is seen that this difference is in favor of women and at a low level ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ). On the other hand, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of women in the general uncertainty of causal relationships sub-dimension of the organizational uncertainty scale according to the gender of the teachers ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .04$ ). According to the marital status of the teachers, organizational uncertainty perceptions differ in favor of single teachers, at a low level and are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .04$ ). Again, in the sub-dimensions of organizational uncertainty, general uncertainty of causal relationships ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .03$ ), and lack of clarity of information ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .02$ ), there appears to be a low-effectiveness difference, statistically significant in favor of single teachers. It is seen that there is a low-level effect, statistically significant difference in favor of those working in private schools in the perceptions of organizational uncertainty ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .022$ ) and the general uncertainty of causal relationships of organizational uncertainty ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .02$ ) and feedback taking a long time sub-dimensions, according to the type of school they work in ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .03$ ).

In order to determine whether there is a difference in the inertia attitudes of the teachers according to their seniority, the ANOVA test was performed, and the results are shown in Table 5.

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference in the cognitive inertia and affective inertia sub-dimensions according to the seniority of the teachers ( $p < .05$ ). In order to determine the source of the difference, Tukey used posthoc tests. According to the results of the Tukey test, it is seen that there is an effective low-level difference in the cognitive inertia dimension in favor of teachers with 1-5 years of seniority when we make comparisons between teachers with 1-5 years of seniority and teachers with 6-10 years of seniority ( $\eta^2 = .04$ ). In the affective inertia dimension, it is seen that there is an effective low-level difference in favor of the first group when we make comparisons between teachers with 6-10 years of seniority, teachers with 11-15 years of seniority, and teachers with 16 years and more seniority ( $\eta^2 = .04$ ).

**Table 5.** Comparison of Organizational Inertia Attitudes of Teachers by Seniority

Variable	Seniority	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Fark	$\eta^2$
Cognitive Inertia	1-5 years	137	3.12	.74	Between Groups	5.832	3	1.944	3.659	.013	1*-2	.04
	6-10 years	77	2.82	.71	Within Groups	160.970	303	.531				
	11-15 years	42	3.11	.61	Total	166.803	306					
	16 years and above	51	2.87	.81								
Affective Inertia	1-5 years	137	2.18	.65	Between Groups	7.339	3	2.446	4.623	.004	2*-3 2*-4	.04
	6-10 years	77	2.43	.95	Within Groups	160.335	303	.529				
	11-15 years	42	1.98	.61	Total	167.674	306					
	16 years and above	51	2.08	.59								
Behavioral Inertia	1-5 years	137	1.88	.64	Between Groups	1.002	3	.334	.887	.448		
	6-10 years	77	1.85	.65	Within Groups	114.081	303	.377				
	11-15 years	42	1.71	.49	Total	115.084	306					
	16 years and above	51	1.90	.55								
Organizational Inertia	1-5 years	137	2.40	.43	Between Groups	1.233	3	.411	2.204	.088		
	6-10 years	77	2.43	.42	Within Groups	56.507	303	.186				
	11-15 years	42	2.27	.44	Total	57.740	306					
	16 years and above	51	2.28	.46								

In order to determine whether there is a difference in the perceptions of organizational uncertainty according to the seniority of the teachers, the ANOVA test was performed, and the results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Comparison of Organizational Uncertainty Attitudes of Teachers by Seniority

Variable	Seniority	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Difference	$\eta^2$
General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships	1-5 years	137	3.94	.74	Between Groups	45.001	3	15.000	21.212	.000	1*-2 1*-3 1*-4	.17
	6-10 years	77	3.23	.93	Within Groups	214.268	303	.707				
	11-15 years	42	3.25	.89	Total	259.269	306					
	16 years +	51	3.06	.89								
Feedback Takes a Long Time	1-5 years	137	3.69	.99	Between Groups	25.742	3	8.581	7.646	.000	1*-2 1*-4	.07
	6-10 years	77	3.16	1.14	Within Groups	340.049	306	1.122				
	11-15 years	42	3.23	1.10	Total	365.791	306					
	16 years +	51	2.98	1.09								



Lack of Information	1-5 years	137	3.00	.89	Between Groups	21.523	3	7.174	8.917	.000	1*-2 1*-3 1*-4	.08
	6-10 years	77	2.48	.91	Within Groups	243.786	303	.805				
	11-15 years	42	2.44	1.03	Total	265.309	306					
	16 years +	51	2.44	1.06								
Organizational Uncertainty	1-5 years	137	3.66	.67	Between Groups	33.819	3	11.273	18.905	.000	1*-2 1*-3 1*-4	.16
	6-10 years	77	3.04	.84	Within Groups	180.676	303	.596				
	11-15 years	42	3.06	.87	Total	214.495	306					
	16 years +	51	2.90	.82								

There is a highly effective, statistically significant difference in perceptions of organizational uncertainty based on teacher seniority ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .16$ ). On the other hand, there is a highly effective, statistically significant difference according to the seniority of the teachers ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .17$ ) in the general uncertainty of causal relationships sub-dimension, which is one of the sub-dimensions of organizational uncertainty, and it is seen that there is a moderately effective, statistically significant difference according to the seniority of the teachers in the feedback takes a long time ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .07$ ) and unclear information ( $p < .05$ ;  $\eta^2 = .08$ ) sub-dimensions. The Tukey test, one of the Post-Hoc tests, was used to determine the source of the difference. As a result, there was a significant difference in favor of the first group in the sub-dimensions of organizational uncertainty perception, general uncertainty of causal relationships, and lack of clarity of information. On the other hand, there is a significant difference in favor of the first group when we make comparisons between teachers with a seniority of 1–5 years and teachers.

In order to determine whether there is a difference in the organizational inertia attitudes of teachers according to employment types, ANOVA test was performed, and the results are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Comparison of Teachers' Organizational Inertia Attitudes According to Employment Types

Variable	Emp. type	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Cognitive Inertia	Regular	118	2.94	.75	Between Groups	.839	2	.419	.768	.465
	Contractual	116	3.05	.71	Within Groups	165.964	304	.546		
	Paid	73	3.03	.71	Total	166.803	306			
Affective Inertia	Regular	118	2.25	.79	Between Groups	1.505	2	.753	1.377	.254
	Contractual	116	2.22	.72	Within Groups	166.169	304	.547		
	Paid	73	2.07	.66	Total	167.674	306			
Behavioral Inertia	Regular	118	1.91	.58	Between Groups	1.241	2	.620	1.657	.192
	Contractual	116	1.77	.64	Within Groups	113.843	304	.374		
	Paid	73	1.87	.59	Total	167.674	306			
Organizational Inertia	Regular	118	2.39	.45	Between Groups	1.206	2	.103	.544	.581
	Contractual	116	2.37	.42	Within Groups	57.534	304	.189		
	Paid	73	2.32	.40	Total	57.740	306			

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference in teacher inertia attitude and sub-dimensions according to the employment type of teachers ( $p > .05$ ).

In order to determine whether there is a difference in the perceptions of organizational uncertainty according to the employment type of the teachers, the ANOVA test was performed, and the results are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes to Organizational Uncertainty by Employment Types

Variable	Seniority	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	Difference	$\eta p^2$
General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships	Regular	118	3.11	.86	Between Groups	34.205	2	17.103	23.101	.000	1-2* 1-3*	.13
	Contractual	116	3.90	.80	Within Groups	225.063	304	.740				
	Paid	73	3.70	.88	Total	259.269	306					
Feedback Takes a Long Time	Regular	118	3.04	1.02	Between Groups	22.491	2	11.245	9.958	.000	1-2* 1-3*	.06
	Contractual	116	3.53	.96	Within Groups	343.300	304	1.129				
	Paid	73	3.63	1.15	Total	365.791	306					
Lack of Information	Regular	118	2.53	.90	Between Groups	5.503	2	2.751	3.219	.041	1-2* 1-3*	.02
	Contractual	116	2.81	.85	Within Groups	259.806	304	.855				
	Paid	73	2.79	.99	Total	265.309	306					
Organizational Uncertainty	Regular	118	2.95	.81	Between Groups	22.056	2	11.028	17.421	.000	1-2* 1-3*	.10
	Contractual	116	3.56	.67	Within Groups	192.439	304	.633				
	Paid	73	3.47	.85	Total	214.495	306					

Table 8 reveals a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of organizational uncertainty by employment type and all sub-dimensions of organizational uncertainty ( $p < .05$ ). The Tukey test, one of the Post-Hoc tests, was used to determine the source of the difference. Accordingly, it is seen that there is a moderately effective difference in favor of the second group when we make comparisons between regular teachers and contractual and paid teachers according to the perception of organizational uncertainty ( $\eta p^2 = .10$ ), the sub-dimension of the uncertainty of causal relationships ( $\eta p^2 = .13$ ) and the long-term feedback sub-dimension ( $\eta p^2 = .06$ ). Furthermore, an effective low-level difference in favor of the second group between regular teachers and contractual and paid teachers is observed in the sub-dimension of lack of information ( $\eta p^2 = .02$ ).

Pearson Product Moment coefficient was calculated to analyze the relationship between teachers' organizational inertia attitudes and their perception of organizational uncertainty, and the results are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Relationships Between Teachers' Organizational Inertia Attitudes and Perceptions of Organizational Uncertainty

Dimensions		Cognitive Inertia	Affective Inertia	Behavioral Inertia (3)	Organizational Inertia
General Uncertainty of Causal Relationships	r	.144*	.037*	.083	.128*
Feedback Takes a Long Time	r	.151*	.204**	.129**	.278**
Lack of Information	r	.060	.332**	.359**	.378**
Organizational Uncertainty	r	.145*	.172**	.157**	.260**

\* $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .001$

It is seen that there is a significant low-level relationship between teachers' organizational inertia attitudes and the general uncertainty of causal relationships, which is one of the sub-dimensions of organizational uncertainty, and the long-time feedback sub-dimension. On the other hand, a moderately significant relationship exists between teachers' inertia attitude and the sub-dimension of lack of clear information ( $p < .05$ ).

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether teachers' perception of organizational uncertainty predicts organizational inertia attitudes. The results are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Multiple Regression Results

Variable	B	Standard Deviation	$\beta$	t	P	VIF
(Constant)	1.983	.092		21.463	.000	
General						
Uncertainty of						
Causal	-.111	.034	-.235	-3.227	.001	1.955
Relationships						
Feedback Takes a						
Long Time	.082	.029	.207	2.866	.004	1.918
Lack of						
Information (7)	.185	.031	.397	5.925	.000	1.651
R <sup>2</sup> = .177; Corrected R <sup>2</sup> = .169; F=21.754; p<.001						

\*\* p<.001, Dependent variable = Organizational Inertia

When Table 10 is examined, it is seen that the sub-dimensions of organizational uncertainty predict teacher inertia (p<.05). It is seen that the perception of organizational uncertainty explains about 17% of teacher inertia. It is seen that the sub-dimension of the general uncertainty of the causal relations of the perception of organizational uncertainty negatively affects the organizational inertia, while the dimensions of the feedback taking a long time and the lack of information affect the inertia positively.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Another factor that is as important as the structure of the education system and the approach of education administrators in the ability of educational organizations to adapt to uncertain and changing environments is to what extent teachers perceive uncertainty and to what extent and in what direction their perceptions activate them. Teachers are stakeholders who directly fulfill the aims of education by spending long, one-on-one time with students throughout the education process. Therefore, it is important for teachers to find the strength in themselves to adapt to changes and take action for development.

As a result of the study, it was observed that the inertia attitude of male teachers was generally higher than that of female teachers. However, while the cognitive inertia levels of female teachers were higher, it was observed that male teachers had higher emotional and behavioral inertia levels. This means that female teachers are more cognitively dependent on their past experience and knowledge than male teachers. On the other hand, it can be said that male teachers are more reluctant to assign a job out of routine, lazier in things such as coming to school and class, and more closed to changes in behaviors such as using new teaching methods. Karayel (2014) also states that male teachers have a higher inertia attitude. From another point of view, behavioral inertia seems to be closely related to loafing behavior by expressing intentional resistance to what is new or taking part in the change process. In this context, when the literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies indicating that men exhibit more loafing behavior than women (Tsaw, Murphy, & Detgen, 2011).

It has been concluded that the behavioral inertia of teachers working in public schools is higher than that of teachers working in private schools. Behavioral inertia can be defined as the reluctance of teachers to use new teaching methods and techniques in their lessons and to access information from various sources in a versatile way. In this context, it is thought that the difference in understanding of education between private and public schools may explain the difference in teachers' behavioral inertia. Private schools follow the same service quality standards as institutions that primarily seek profit and therefore prioritize the satisfaction of their stakeholders, the students (Gürler, 2020). For this reason, it is essential for teachers working in private schools to feel confident about the quality of the service they provide in order to survive in their schools and not be indifferent to innovations in this context. As a matter of fact, the fact that private school and public school teachers do not differ from each other in cognitive and affective inertia dimensions shows that teachers have similar perceptions in cognitive and affective aspects such as caring and continuing to use their old knowledge and experience and feeling unhappy and tired about taking on a task outside of routine. On the other hand, it

is seen that teachers working in private schools tend to show less inertia at the behavioral level than public school teachers.

As a result of this research, it was seen that the cognitive and affective inertia levels of teachers with less experience were higher. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are findings that contradict this finding (Kajs & McCollum, 2009; Karayel, 2014). It is said that as teachers' seniority increases, their confidence in their own knowledge and experience will cause inertia (Karayel, 2014). However, when teachers enter the process of perceiving and making sense of the difference between the theoretical knowledge they acquired prior to service and the practice, they experience a shock (Hoy, 2000). In this stage, called the career entry stage, teachers spend more energy understanding their organization (Bakioğlu, 1996). It's understandable that teachers prefer routine when it comes to understanding and making sense of the organization's work. In addition, teachers at the entry stage of the profession may perceive the information they have acquired in their educational lives as new and sufficient. All these reasons can explain the cognitive inertia of teachers with less experience. However, it is known that in this phase, teachers feel more alone in the organization (Bakioğlu & Korkuz, 2014) and are less committed to their organizations (Kurşunoğlu, Bakay & Tanrıoğen, 2010). The fact that teachers feel alone and not connected to their organizations explains their emotional inertia, such as reluctance to go to work and reluctance to take on a new responsibility.

It has been observed that female teachers' perception of organizational uncertainty is higher than male teachers'. Female teachers perceive a higher level of uncertainty in the dimension of general uncertainty about causal relationships. Male dominance continues in school administration in Turkey (Çekten, 2004). Informal relations between male teachers and their fellow school administrators may be more developed. This situation enables male teachers to overcome uncertainty by getting information more easily in the context of the functioning of the organization and the rights and responsibilities of teachers.

Teachers working in private schools have a higher perception of organizational uncertainty than teachers working in public schools. However, the perception of organizational uncertainty among contracted and paid teachers is higher than that of regular teachers. This situation can be explained by the teachers' perception of insecurity. It is stated that teachers who work on a contract basis in private schools or as paid teachers in public schools perceive a higher level of job insecurity (Günerigok & Oğur, 2018). The perception of job insecurity manifests itself in teachers' concerns about their future and dissatisfaction with their personal rights. In this context, it seems that contracted and paid teachers are more likely to perceive uncertainty about their future in the organization than regular teachers.

It is seen that the perception of organizational uncertainty among teachers who have just started their profession is higher. It can be said that teachers who have just started their profession experience uncertainty since they have less information about how, when, and under what conditions the changes related to their personal rights will occur. However, thinking that they will not contribute to organizational changes and that they have no control over their own work also strengthens their perception of organizational uncertainty. When the literature is examined, it is said that as age and seniority increase, the tolerance for uncertainty decreases (Kajs & McCollum, 2009). Therefore, more senior teachers may perceive organizational uncertainty less because they feel more autonomous in the organization and think that they have more knowledge about the structure of the organization and their rights and responsibilities.

As a result of the study, it was concluded that the organizational uncertainty perceived by the teachers predicted their inertia attitudes. As teachers' perceptions of the sub-dimensions of organizational uncertainty, that the feedback takes a long time and that the information is not clear—increase, their attitudes toward organizational inertia also increase. However, as the perceptions in the general uncertainty of causal relationships sub-dimension increased, the inertia attitude decreased. The general uncertainty of causal relationships means that teachers perceive their working lives as secure and that the rewards or punishments they will receive for their work are certain (Polat, 2015). The uncertainty experienced at the intersection of these elements may reveal the necessity of taking action to maintain the employees' existence in the organization. Accordingly, teachers can find the motivation to act in themselves. However, a lack of clear information in the organization and long-term feedback may lead to teachers developing an inertia attitude. Employees are likely to be uncertain about their jobs (job roles, the application process, etc.), and this uncertainty is a stressful psychological state; however, it is said that employees seek information to reduce

uncertainty (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007). Therefore, to overcome organizational inertia, ways to enable employees of the organization to access information transparently should be developed. However, educational organizations have a structure in which the success of the output can be evaluated after a long time due to the service they provide. This situation creates uncertainty in terms of evaluating future success or failure due to the efforts of teachers today. Therefore, the fact that the feedback takes a long time creates an obstacle for the teachers to evaluate their own routines and causes the development of an inertia attitude.

## 5. Recommendations

Schools cannot be expected to be successful if teachers maintain their attitude of inertia. Therefore, ways to overcome teacher inertia in schools should be sought. In this context, the recommendations to the practitioners are as follows, taking into account the results indicated by the study findings:

It is known that organizational uncertainty predicts teachers' inertia attitudes. It has been observed that in educational organizations, a lack of clarity of information and long-term feedback increase teacher inertia. As a result, alternative methods for teachers to access information should be developed in order to avoid teacher inertia. In this context, it is recommended that school administrators manage the school by adopting the principle of transparency. Due to the cultural structure of educational organizations, feedback takes a long time, causing teacher inertia. However, it is said that school administrators play a major role in overcoming organizational inertia (Türkan & Esmer, 2019). In this context, it is recommended that school administrators make an effort to create a synergetic organizational culture. In addition, school-level performance evaluation practices will allow teachers to evaluate themselves by getting feedback more quickly.

As a result of the study, it was seen that both the organizational inertia attitudes and organizational uncertainty perceptions of the teachers at the entry stage of the profession were higher. Opening the way for teachers who have just started their profession to obtain information on both professional development and personal rights and organizational relations will provide the power to take action by reducing their perceptions of uncertainty. However, the fact that junior teachers differ more in their inertia attitude at the cognitive and affective levels, while developing similar attitudes to more senior teachers at the behavioral level, suggests that identifying them is difficult. Therefore, it is possible to say that the teachers in question will be affected at a psychological level by the damages caused by inertia. For this reason, orientation programs for these teachers should be created and implemented in a multi-faceted manner.

In this study, it is aimed to investigate the level and direction of the perception of organizational uncertainty as a predictor of teacher inertia, which is one of the major obstacles to the development of educational organizations. Of course, it is obvious that there are many parameters that affect the organizational inertia attitude. In this context, suggestions for researchers are as follows:

It has been observed that female teachers have a higher perception of organizational uncertainty and cognitive inertia. However, male teachers' affective and behavioral inertia attitudes are higher. In this context, teachers' inertia attitudes and perceptions of organizational uncertainty can be examined from the perspective of gender roles.

Studies can be conducted to determine the factors that contribute to teachers' inertia attitudes. In addition, studies on organizational behaviors that are thought to affect inertia can be made. In this study, using the quantitative method, a snapshot of the teachers was taken in general about the variables in question. In future studies, the situations related to the subjects can be examined in depth by using the qualitative method.

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