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MANAGERIAL INNOVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TURKEY AND UKRAINE

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Abstract. This study examines the relationship between managerial innovation and organizational creativity in schools and tests whether the strength of this relationship differs between Turkey and Ukraine. Using a cross-national, quantitative correlational design, data were collected in the 2025–2026 academic year from 569 teachers (Turkey n=282; Ukraine n=287) with the Managerial Innovation Scale and the Organizational Creativity Scale. Because subgroup distributions were uneven, nonparametric analyses were applied, Spearman's rho to estimate associations, Fisher's z to compare correlations across countries, and Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis H tests (with Bonferroni post hoc comparisons) to examine group differences. Results showed a strong positive association between managerial innovation and organizational creativity overall. The relationship was moderate in Turkey and stronger in Ukraine and the difference was significant. Ukrainian teachers reported higher levels of both managerial innovation and organizational creativity, and significant differences emerged by gender, professional seniority, and teaching field. Findings suggest that innovation-oriented leadership, school autonomy, and an innovation-supportive climate can strengthen teachers' creative capacities, highlighting the role of system-level reforms in enabling creative school cultures. Practically principals can foster creativity by involving teachers in decisions, lowering organizational barriers, and recognizing experimentation and collaboration. For policymakers, the cross-national pattern implies that decentralization and sustained professional support may amplify the creativity gains associated with managerial innovation.

Keywords*:* managerial innovation, organizational creativity, teacher perception, comparative education, innovative management.

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era shaped by rapid technological advancements, digitalization, and globalization, all sectors of professional life are experiencing significant transformations. To survive in highly competitive environments and achieve strategic objectives, organizations are increasingly compelled to adopt innovative and creative strategies (Eren & Gelmez, 2022; Gemici & Öztürk, 2020). Individuals, too, are inclined to design new products and processes not only to meet their essential needs but also to achieve more comfortable lives with less effort. Within this context, innovation is perceived as a 'tool for sustainable growth,' providing organizations with energetic, creative work environments while generating new employment opportunities (Vrande et al., 2009). Innovation now occupies a critical place in national development strategies, as progress and sustainability have become indispensable. Widely acknowledged as a foundational component of long-term organizational success, innovation plays a vital role in enhancing global competitiveness, fostering economic growth, and improving social welfare

(Camisón & Villar-López, 2014; Chang & Hughes, 2012; Iturrioz et al., 2015). While innovation offers cost and profitability advantages to both institutions and individuals, a high concentration of innovative enterprises within a country is directly associated with an elevated quality of life (Soumitra et al., 2020).

The concept of innovation encompasses various dimensions ranging from the design, development, and operation of new products to the implementation of novel processes (Smith et al., 2008). A study conducted by the Stanford Research Institute in the United States found that enterprises open to innovation tend to grow more rapidly and assume leading positions in their respective sectors (Terzioğlu, 2008). This underscores innovation's decisive role in ensuring growth, development, and competitive advantage. The impact of innovation is also distinctly observable in the public sector, particularly in health and education services (Kurtuluş, 2012). Like education, innovation is an ongoing process of change and evolution. Hence, understanding how innovation manifests within educational institutions is critical for both institutional advancement and broader social transformation (Karaca Akarsu, 2022).

Innovation in schools refers to the process of creating, adopting and implementing new ideas, systems, behaviors, technologies or services (Amabile, 1988a; Damanpour & Aravind, 2012). In educational institutions, both managerial innovation and teachers' organizational creativity levels are of critical importance in terms of increasing school success and improving teacher effectiveness. While managerial innovation enables the development and implementation of dynamic and effective management strategies, organizational creativity reflects the level of teachers' production of innovative ideas, practices and approaches that will contribute to the development of the institution. Empirical findings reveal that there is a strong relationship between teachers' organizational creativity and the overall performance of schools (Akan & Kılıç, 2019). As emphasized by the PISA 2015 results, today's education systems need a radical transformation, and innovation is positioned as the main driving force of this change (OECD, 2016). The integration of innovative practices in education makes it possible to produce faster, more effective and more creative solutions to new challenges (Çelik, 2022; Erdoğan, 2012). Creativity, which is at the core of innovation, is one of the most important elements to consider when evaluating how innovation emerges in schools. In this context, supporting and strengthening organizational creativity in the strategic management of educational institutions is of great importance. School principals who exhibit innovative leadership behaviors can significantly encourage the creative capacities of teachers; thus, they can make meaningful contributions to the quality of education by supporting a culture of continuous development.

1.1. The Importance of Managerial Innovation in Educational Organizations

Since educational institutions are the structures that shape the human resources of the future and directly affect social development, they are institutions where the search for innovation and improvement is constantly on the agenda. It is seen that traditional educational management approaches may be insufficient to respond to the rapidly changing 21st century needs. For this reason, the necessity of managerial innovation in schools and universities is felt more and more every day. Especially in education systems with centralized and bureaucratic structures, the cumbersome decision-making processes, inefficient use of resources and obstacles in the transmission of innovative ideas from the bottom up are the main factors that lead to the need for administrative innovation. In order for educational institutions to operate successfully and in accordance with the requirements of the age, it has become a necessity to make innovative arrangements in management mechanisms (Çelik, 2021). The service quality and desirability of a modern school depends to a large extent on the school management developing innovative strategies and implementing these strategies with determination.

One of the most important reflections of managerial innovation practices in educational institutions is their positive effects on teachers' commitment and motivation. The innovative approach of school management enables teachers to become active stakeholders of school development rather than just implementers of educational programmes. For example, making administrative decision-making

processes in a school transparent and involving teachers in these processes is a managerial innovation that makes teachers feel valued and strengthens their commitment to the institution (Altun, 2017; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). The flexible and participatory working environment brought by innovative practices can increase teachers' job satisfaction and professional commitment (Day & Gu, 2007). As a matter of fact, research shows that teachers' strong commitment to school and profession enables them to teach more effectively and increase students' academic achievement (Klassen & Chiu, 2011). Teacher engagement is at the center of the quality of education and has a decisive impact on teaching quality, school performance, and student achievement. Manea (2015) considers innovation as an indispensable element of educational management and sees it as the basic condition for educational institutions to adapt to the needs of the age. He states that innovation is not limited to technical innovations; school principals should take an active role in strategic areas such as restructuring the curriculum, strengthening school-family-community cooperation, and teacher selection by exhibiting pedagogical leadership.

Innovation, in this context, both increases managerial efficiency and improves the quality of education, enabling a more effective response to the individual needs of students. In particular, innovative approaches such as school-based curriculum development, increasing the autonomy of institutions, and greater participation of administrators in decision-making processes in teacher appointments contribute to the democratisation and decentralisation of the education system (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2020). Manea's findings reveal that innovation is not only a choice but also the key to success and sustainability in educational management. The participatory and supportive management climate created in the school through managerial innovation encourages teachers' wholehearted commitment to organisational goals. The systematic solicitation of teachers' views and suggestions by school principals when adopting a new pedagogical approach is an innovative practice that gives teachers a voice in change management. Such practices reinforce the feeling that teachers are valued and increase their sense of belonging to the school. Research shows that active participation of teachers in school development and change processes leads to more successful and sustainable change (Ersöz et al., 2023).

1.2. Managerial Innovation in the Contexts of Turkey and Ukraine

Despite the predominantly centralized nature of the Turkish education system, a range of initiatives to support managerial innovation have been launched, particularly since the early 2000s. Among these, the concept of school-based management alongside instructional leadership and personnel development has been proposed as a key component in enhancing school effectiveness (Akan & Kılıç, 2019). The Ministry of National Education's quality awards, strategic planning initiatives, and practices inspired by Total Quality Management are all indicative of efforts to promote innovative managerial practices at the school level. However the centralized framework continues to restrict the decision-making autonomy of school principals, creating challenges in the implementation of innovative measures. Developments in areas such as decentralized decision-making, technology integration, and continuous quality improvement suggest that managerial innovation in Turkey is gradually gaining ground.

In contrast, Ukraine has embraced a more radical reform-oriented approach over the past decade. The "New Ukrainian School" reform initiative, launched in 2016 and implemented in 2018, aims to decentralize educational governance by granting schools substantive autonomy (Eurydice Ukraine Unit, 2023). The Education Act of 2017 legally transformed schools into autonomous units with expanded authority in areas such as leadership, budget management, and curriculum design (Ukraine Crisis Media Center, 2017). Competitive selection processes for school principals and the introduction of professional standards have driven a cultural shift toward more innovative leadership practices (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2024). Professional development for teachers, the dissemination of modern pedagogical methods, and incentive mechanisms have broadened the scope of managerial innovation in the Ukrainian context. The reform process has faced constraints, particularly in rural areas,

where economic limitations and infrastructural deficiencies have hindered full implementation. Despite these challenges, Ukraine has made significant strides toward fostering a more flexible, participatory, and modern management culture. When the two national contexts are compared, it becomes evident that Ukraine has implemented more comprehensive and systemic reforms, while Turkey has opted for a more gradual and controlled innovation strategy. Both countries, however, share similar aspirations: to align managerial innovation with enhanced teacher commitment and overall school success.

1.3. The Place of Creativity in Educational Organizations

Educational organizations must transform from structures that merely convey existing knowledge into dynamic environments that prepare the ground for individuals to develop their creative thinking and problem-solving abilities. Creativity forms the basis for individuals' ability to produce original ideas, develop innovative practices, and create different perspectives (Temizkalp, 2010). Therefore, strategies and practices that support creativity must be prioritized in the organizational structures of educational institutions. Creativity in educational institutions requires the active participation of teachers, administrators, and students. In cases where teachers can engage in creative initiatives, the curriculum allows for flexibility, and learning environments encourage diversity, the innovation capacity of educational institutions increases (Gök, 2019). In particular, teachers who develop flexible approaches to classroom management, try different teaching methods, and adopt student-centered practices are seen to encourage creative thinking in students more effectively.

Leadership has a significant impact on the strengthening of organizational creativity in educational institutions. Supportive leadership, understanding that sees making mistakes as part of learning, and open communication channels allow teachers to express their creative ideas more easily (Baloğlu, 2020). When administrators take teachers' original suggestions into consideration, support creative projects, and reward innovative practices, they directly contribute to the increase in institutional creativity. Educational institutions that support organizational creativity aim to reveal the creative potential of not only teachers but also students. Providing students with opportunities to develop different solutions, encouraging them to take active roles in multidisciplinary projects, and using experiential learning methods contribute to the development of creative individuals (Çalış, 2023). As emphasized by Bakan et al. (2014), the creation of a creative culture in educational organizations makes significant contributions to the long-term success of the organization and the general innovation capacity of society. In this context, supporting the creative initiatives of teachers, providing students with creative thinking and creating an innovative vision at the institutional level should be among the basic goals of educational organizations.

As a result, the place of creativity in educational organizations is not limited to the development of individual skills; it also plays a critical role in making the structure of the institution open to innovation and change. The realization of this transformation depends largely on administrative innovation practices. The adoption of innovative approaches by school leaders in management strategies, democratization of decision-making processes and creation of flexible structures that support the creative initiatives of teachers directly strengthen organizational creativity. Systematic support of creativity in education and integration of it into institutional culture together with administrative innovation will make significant contributions to the development of innovative, productive and solution-oriented individuals of the future.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Innovation and creativity are increasingly recognized as foundational elements in organizational development and have gained growing importance within the field of education. The European Council's declaration of 2009 as the "Year of Creativity and Innovation" reflects the strategic significance attributed to these concepts at a global level (European Commission, 2009). A substantial body of

research supports the premise that both creativity and innovation contribute to advancement at both individual and institutional levels (Legrenzi, 2010; Ghosh, 2014; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Werner & Tang, 2017; Genlott et al., 2019). Within educational institutions, the proliferation of managerial innovation plays a crucial role in enhancing school leadership and in bolstering teacher motivation and creativity (Werner & Tang, 2017; Karakuş, 2014; Karaca Akarsu, 2022).

Managerial innovation involves the integration of new practices, processes, and decision-making frameworks into educational settings, thereby enabling schools to respond more swiftly and effectively to external demands. Teacher involvement in such innovation processes not only enhances implementation success but also positively influences organizational creativity. The concept of organizational creativity refers to the ability of individuals and groups within an institution to generate novel and useful ideas, processes, or solutions that contribute to organizational effectiveness (Amabile, 1988a). Considering these two variables in tandem yields critical insights into school effectiveness and teacher performance (Fidan, 2018; Damanpour& Aravind, 2012).

Although recent studies increasingly acknowledge the positive effects of managerial innovation on workplace dynamics, the direct relationship between managerial innovation and organizational creativity in educational settings remains underexplored particularly from a cross-national perspective. Managerial innovation refers to the application of novel administrative strategies, processes, and governance models aimed at increasing institutional adaptability and efficiency (Ganter & Hecker, 2014; Vaccaro et al., 2012). In schools, such innovations may include decentralizing decision-making, encouraging participatory governance, and empowering teachers through autonomy and feedback mechanisms. These practices can stimulate an environment conducive to idea generation and creative problem-solving.

Organizational creativity, in this context, is defined as the ability of an institution to produce novel and useful ideas through the dynamic interaction of individuals, leadership, and organizational culture (Anderson et al., 2014). Creative outcomes are significantly influenced by the internal processes shaped by managerial behaviors, especially in knowledge-intensive environments such as schools. Studies have shown that managerial practices that foster collaboration, autonomy, and innovation orientation lead to enhanced employee creativity (Jankelová et al., 2021; Shafi et al., 2020). Based on these findings, it is reasonable to assume that managerial innovation is positively associated with organizational creativity in educational institutions. Yet, little is known about whether this association is consistent across national settings especially when examined through teacher perceptions. Addressing this gap, this study proposes the following main hypothesis:

- H1: According to teachers in Turkey and Ukraine, there exists a significant relationship between managerial innovation and organizational creativity in schools.

Given the different institutional contexts, policy frameworks, and leadership cultures in the two countries, it is likely that the strength of this relationship varies. Accordingly, the following sub-hypotheses are proposed to examine national differences:

- H1a: In Turkey, as perceived managerial innovation increases, organizational creativity among teachers also increases.
- H1b: In Ukraine, as perceived managerial innovation increases, organizational creativity among teachers also increases.
- H1c: The strength of the relationship between managerial innovation and organizational creativity differs significantly between Turkey and Ukraine.

In addition, literature exploring the effects of demographic variables on innovation and creativity perceptions has yielded mixed results (Bayrakçı& Eraslan, 2014; Eroğlu Bozkurt, 2019; Damanpour& Schneider, 2006; Jolles et al., 2016; Muñoz-Doyague et al., 2012; Shalley & Gilson, 2017). While some studies highlight the influence of gender, professional seniority, or academic background on how individuals perceive innovation processes, others report negligible or context-specific effects. These inconsistencies warrant further exploration within cross-cultural educational contexts.

Based on this, the following hypotheses were proposed to examine demographic differences in perceptions of managerial innovation and organizational creativity:

- H4a: There is a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of managerial innovation based on gender.
- H4b: There is a significant difference in organizational creativity levels based on professional tenure.
- H4c: Teachers' perceptions of managerial innovation differ significantly by field of study.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to explore the relationship between managerial innovation and teachers' organizational creativity in schools, based on the perspectives of educators in Turkey and Ukraine. Additionally, the study aims to determine whether this relationship significantly differs across the two national contexts. While the main hypothesis centers on the strength and nature of this relationship, sub-hypotheses were formulated to allow for a more nuanced analysis of contextual factors influencing creative capacities within organizational environments.

Although managerial innovation and organizational creativity have been widely studied in the literature, they are often treated as independent constructs. The mutual interaction between these two variables, especially from the perspective of teacher perceptions, has not been sufficiently examined. Accordingly, this study not only investigates the direct relationship between innovation and creativity, but also analyzes how this relationship is shaped by structural, managerial, and cultural differences between the two countries.

In line with this aim, the following comparative hypotheses were proposed to examine perceptual variations among teachers:

- H2: There is a significant difference between Turkish and Ukrainian teachers in terms of their perceptions of managerial innovation in schools.
- H3: There is a significant difference between Turkish and Ukrainian teachers regarding their perceived levels of organizational creativity.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the existing body of literature by clarifying the relationship between managerial innovation and organizational creativity through teacher-reported data. From an applied perspective, the study provides data-driven recommendations for educational leaders and policymakers, emphasizing the importance of contextual and cultural factors in fostering creative environments within schools. The findings may inform reform initiatives by analyzing how various managerial approaches across different educational systems influence teachers' creative capacities and innovative contributions.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND DATA

3.1. Research Design

This study was designed using a relational survey model to examine the association between managerial innovation and organizational creativity among teachers working in Turkey and Ukraine. The relational design is frequently employed in educational research to determine the direction and strength of associations between two or more variables (Creswell & Creswell 2017). Particularly suitable for the investigation of constructs such as attitudes, perceptions, and tendencies, this model offers a robust framework for identifying inter-variable dynamics through observational data. Given the cross-national structure of the study, a comparative relational design was also adopted. This approach enables the examination of structural differences in variable relationships across diverse educational contexts. Since factors such as governance structures, cultural norms, and policy frameworks may influence these relationships, the model is especially valuable for international comparative education research.

3.2. Study Group

The population of the study comprised approximately 1600 teachers from Bafra, Samsun (Turkey), and 650 teachers from central Cherkasy (Ukraine), during the 2025–2026 academic year. The final sample consisted of 569 teachers (282 from Turkey and 287 from Ukraine) selected through simple random sampling. The sampling process ensured representativeness in terms of school type (primary, secondary, and high school) and gender distribution. To enhance generalizability and accessibility, efforts were made to achieve balanced participation across teaching branches and professional seniority levels. The sample size exceeded the minimum recommended threshold (n > 200) for social science research involving multivariate analyses such as Confirmatory Factor Analysis or Structural Equation Models (Kline, 2023). Thus, the sample was deemed statistically sufficient for the empirical analyses conducted in this study. Demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Tab. 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

		Turkey		Ukraine	
		f	**%**	**f**	**%**
Gender	Female	165	58.5	245	85.4
	Male	117	41.5	42	14.6
Age	21-30	21	7.4	19	6.6
	31-40	177	62.8	100	34.9
	41-50	84	25.5	126	43.9
	51 years and above	12	4.3	42	14.6
Marital Status	Married	243	86.2	168	58.5
	Single	39	13.8	119	41.5
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	243	86.2	210	73.2
	Postgraduate Degre	39	13.8	77	26.8
Professional Seniority	1-5 years	30	10.6	28	9.8
	6-10 years	84	29.8	42	14.6
	11-20 years	123	43.6	84	29.3
	21 years and above	45	16.0	133	46.3
Field of study	Preschool Teaching	36	12.8	63	22.0
	Primary School Teaching	90	31.9	56	19.5
	Branch Teaching	156	55.3	168	58.5

3.3. Data Collection Tools

The data collection instrument consisted of three sections. The first section included a six-item demographic form capturing participants' personal and professional background information.

Managerial Innovation Scale

Developed by Aslan and Kesik (2016), this 19-item scale is structured around three dimensions identified through factor analysis: Management Support (7 items), Innovative Climate (6 items), and Organizational Barriers (6 items). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) were reported as α = .91 for Management Support, α = .90 for Innovative Climate, α = .79 for Organizational

Barriers, and α = .85 for the overall scale, indicating high reliability.

Organizational Creativity Scale

The Organizational Creativity Scale, developed by Balay (2010), consists of 38 items grouped into three factors: Individual, Managerial, and Societal Dimensions of creativity perceptions. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's Alpha values of α = .92 (Individual), α = .93 (Managerial), α = .95 (Societal), and α = .94 for the overall scale, confirming its internal consistency.

3.4. Data Collection Process

Data collection was conducted during the first semester of the 2025–2026 academic year in Bafra (Turkey) and central Cherkasy (Ukraine). To reduce seasonal effects, data were gathered in both countries around the same time frame. Formal permissions were obtained from relevant authorities, and participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation principles.

The survey was administered digitally via Google Forms. To ensure content and semantic equivalence, forward-backward translation was applied for the Turkish and Ukrainian versions of the questionnaire. Experts from Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy assisted in the Ukrainian translation process. The survey was shared with teachers through school administrations, allowing participants to complete it at their convenience.

Direct communication between the researcher and the teachers was maintained throughout the process. On average, completion took 10-15 minutes. Participation was voluntary, no personal identifiers were collected, and all data were stored anonymously in accordance with ethical guidelines.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using the statistical software package SPSS 22.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequency (f) and percentage (%) distributions, were calculated to describe participants' demographic characteristics. Mean scores ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviations (sd) were computed to identify general trends in responses across the scales. Prior to conducting the main analyses, the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were examined. All values were within the acceptable range of –1 to +1, indicating a normal distribution. However, due to the lack of homogeneity across subgroups and unequal group sizes, non-parametric statistical methods were deemed more appropriate. This methodological choice ensured more reliable group comparisons (Adams & McGuire, 2022).

To test the main hypothesis regarding the relationship between managerial innovation and organizational commitment, Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was utilized. Additionally, Fisher's z-transformation method was applied to determine whether the strength of this correlation significantly differed between the Turkish and Ukrainian samples. In assessing perceptual differences across demographic variables, specifically gender, professional seniority, and field of study, only these three were included in the comparative analysis. This selection was based on the frequency of these variables in the literature and their balanced distribution in the current data set. Other demographic variables such as age, marital status, and education level were excluded due to group imbalances that could compromise statistical validity. For binary comparisons, the Mann–Whitney U test was employed. For variables with more than two categories, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was applied. In cases where Kruskal–Wallis results indicated significant differences, Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons were conducted to identify the specific groups contributing to the differences.

Finally, the internal consistency of the measurement instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α). Both the Managerial Innovation Scale and the Organizational Creativity Scale demonstrated high reliability across Turkish and Ukrainian samples. These values are presented in Table 2, confirming the cultural validity and statistical robustness of the instruments used.

The findings in Table 2 show the internal service levels of the educational institution used in the

study. The general reliability of the scale and the Cronbach Alpha values of the sub-dimensions were calculated separately for both Turkish and Ukrainian records. Cronbach Alpha values of all dimensions were generally high because they were both Turkish and Ukrainian, indicating that the reliability of the performance was strong. Although the lowest reliability value was observed in the "Organizational Barriers" results, even these values were within acceptable limits ($\alpha > .70$). This is an important indicator that the performance is measured in different cultural connections.

Tab. 2

Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) for the Managerial Innovation and Organizational Creativity Scale and Its Subdimensions

Dimensions	**Items**	**Turkey Cronbach's Alfa (α)**	**Ukraine Cronbach's Alfa (α)**
Managerial Innovation	19	,89	,87
Management Support	7	,93	,91
Innovative Climate	6	,89	,88
Organizational Barriers	6	,73	,71
Organizational Creativity	38	,95	,91
Individual Creativity	16	,96	,89
Managerial Creativity	11	,95	,92
Social Creativity	11	,95	,90

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings section presents the key results of the study, systematically analyzing the relationship between managerial innovation and organizational creativity among teachers in Turkey and Ukraine. Statistical analyses were conducted to test the study's hypotheses and explore variations across demographic factors.

Correlation Between Managerial Innovation and Organizational Creativity

Spearman's correlation analysis provided strong support for the primary hypothesis (H1), revealing a statistically significant and positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of managerial innovation and their levels of organizational creativity ($\varrho = .729$, $p < .001$). This result affirms that as perceptions of managerial innovation increase, organizational creativity also increases, suggesting a substantive interdependence between innovative managerial practices and the creative capacities within schools.

When examining the country-specific correlations, notable differences emerged. In the Turkish sample, a moderate positive correlation was observed ($\varrho = .574$, $p < .001$), supporting hypothesis H1a. The Ukrainian sample demonstrated an even stronger positive correlation ($\varrho = .795$, $p < .001$), providing robust support for hypothesis H1b. These findings indicate that while the innovation-creativity relationship exists in both educational contexts, its strength varies considerably, potentially reflecting differences in institutional support for creative practices.

Cross-National Comparison

Further analysis using Fisher's z-test confirmed hypothesis H1c, revealing that the correlation between managerial innovation and organizational creativity was significantly stronger in the Ukrainian context compared to Turkey ($z = -5.12$, $p < .001$). The magnitude of the cross national difference in correlation strength was also substantive, corresponding to Cohen's $q = 0.43$, indicating a medium to large difference in effect size between the two contexts. This substantive difference suggests that systemic educational factors, institutional structures, and reform orientations may moderate the relationship between innovation and creativity. The stronger correlation in Ukraine may be attributed to the comprehensive "New Ukrainian School" reform initiative, which emphasizes teacher participation in decision-making processes, fosters creative autonomy, and promotes innovation-driven school environments.

Differences by Country

Mann-Whitney U test results demonstrated statistically significant differences in both managerial innovation perceptions ($U = 25{,}273.5$, $p < .001$) and organizational creativity levels ($U = 29{,}977.5$, $p < .001$) between countries, confirming hypotheses H2 and H3. Ukrainian teachers reported significantly higher levels in both domains, with mean ranks indicating a substantial difference in perception patterns. These findings suggest that the educational reform trajectory in Ukraine, characterized by decentralization and increased school autonomy, may foster higher perceptions of innovation and promote stronger creative capacities among teachers compared to the more centralized Turkish education system.

Gender-Based Differences

With respect to gender (H4a), the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that female teachers had significantly higher perceptions of managerial innovation than their male counterparts ($U = 29{,}110.5$, $p = .0474$). This finding indicates that gender may be a meaningful factor in how teachers perceive innovative practices within educational settings. Female educators demonstrated greater receptivity to change and innovative leadership approaches, which aligns with previous research highlighting gender differences in perceptions of organizational innovation.

Professional Seniority-Based Differences

Regarding professional seniority (H4b), Kruskal-Wallis analysis revealed significant differences in organizational creativity levels ($H = 24.01$, $p < .001$). Post-hoc comparisons showed that teachers with over 21 years of experience exhibited notably higher levels of creativity compared to less experienced groups. This finding supports the hypothesis that organizational creativity varies by professional seniority, suggesting that longevity in the profession may enhance creative engagement and innovation capacity within educational institutions. The accumulated experiences, deeper understanding of pedagogical practices, and broader professional networks that develop over time may collectively contribute to higher levels of creative output and idea generation among veteran educators.

Field of study Differences

Finally, Kruskal-Wallis test results confirmed hypothesis H4c, revealing significant differences in perceptions of managerial innovation based on field of study ($H = 11.08$, $p = .0039$). Post-hoc analysis indicated that preschool teachers reported significantly higher perceptions of innovation than both primary school teachers and branch teachers. This finding suggests that the inherent nature of early childhood education, characterized by flexibility, creativity, and child-centered approaches, may create an environment more conducive to innovative managerial practices. No significant differences were observed between primary school teachers and branch teachers, indicating similar innovation perceptions across these groups despite their different instructional focuses.

Discussion

This section interprets the findings within the broader context of educational management literature, examining the implications of the relationship between managerial innovation and organizational creativity in cross-national educational settings.

The present study investigated the relationship between managerial innovation and organizational

creativity among teachers in Turkey and Ukraine, providing valuable insights into how managerial practices can foster creative capacities within educational institutions. The findings supported the main hypothesis, revealing a strong, positive, and statistically significant association between teachers' perceptions of managerial innovation and their organizational creativity levels. These results align with the theoretical frameworks emphasizing that innovation-oriented managerial practices cultivate organizational environments conducive to creativity and idea generation (Amabile, 1988a; Anderson et al., 2014).

The study's results corroborate previous research asserting that dynamic leadership, participatory governance, and decentralized decision-making are essential drivers of organizational creativity in schools (De Jong et al., 2022; Gök, 2019). The strong correlation found particularly in the Ukrainian context highlights how structural reforms—such as those introduced by the "New Ukrainian School" initiative – can amplify the positive effects of managerial innovation on organizational creativity (Eurydice Ukraine Unit, 2023; Ukraine Crisis Media Center, 2017). These systemic changes, which emphasize teacher autonomy, participative decision-making, and innovation-driven school environments, appear to create a fertile ground for creative engagement among educators.

Conversely, although Turkey has introduced initiatives aimed at promoting school-level innovation (Akan & Kılıç, 2019; Çelik, 2021), the centralized structure of its educational governance seems to moderate the extent to which managerial innovation can fully translate into enhanced organizational creativity. This finding is consistent with Damanpour and Schneider's (2006) assertion that institutional and policy-level constraints can significantly inhibit the internalization of innovation practices.

Demographic variables also contributed to nuanced understandings of innovation-creativity dynamics. Female teachers exhibited significantly higher perceptions of managerial innovation, aligning with findings by Shafi et al. (2020) that suggest gender differences in receptiveness to organizational change and innovation. Furthermore, teachers with over 21 years of experience reported higher organizational creativity levels, consistent with Muñoz-Doyague and Nieto's (2012) view that cumulative professional experience fosters deeper cognitive engagement and creative performance.

The observed differences across fields of study where preschool teachers demonstrated greater innovation perceptions highlight the importance of pedagogical contexts in shaping creative behaviors. This supports earlier studies suggesting that flexible, student-centered educational environments are more likely to nurture creativity (Bakan et al., 2014; Çalış, 2023).

From a broader perspective, the study affirms Amabile's (1988b) and Anderson et al. (2014) models, which argue that both individual-level factors (e.g., professional experience, motivation) and organizational-level factors (e.g., leadership style, institutional autonomy) interact dynamically to influence organizational creativity. It also substantiates the claim by Manea (2015) that innovation is not merely a technical adjustment but a strategic necessity for the sustainability and relevance of educational institutions in the 21st century.

In light of these findings, it becomes clear that fostering organizational creativity in educational settings requires not only promoting managerial innovation but also addressing broader systemic structures, leadership practices, and cultural dynamics that collectively shape teachers' engagement with innovative and creative processes (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2020).

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides compelling evidence for the pivotal role of managerial innovation in fostering organizational creativity within educational institutions. The findings demonstrate that innovation-oriented leadership practices significantly enhance teachers' creative engagement, emphasizing that managerial innovation is not a peripheral administrative concern but a central driver of educational transformation. Importantly, the study revealed significant cross-national differences, with Ukrainian teachers perceiving higher levels of managerial innovation and organizational creativity than their

Turkish counterparts, likely due to systemic reform efforts prioritizing school autonomy and participatory governance.

Moreover, the influence of demographic factors such as professional seniority and field of study underscores the multifaceted nature of creativity development within educational settings. Senior teachers, benefiting from accumulated pedagogical experiences and stronger professional networks, exhibited higher creative capacities, emphasizing the need to leverage veteran educators as catalysts for institutional innovation. As a result, the study contributes to a growing body of literature positioning organizational creativity as both a reflection of internal leadership practices and an outcome of broader systemic reforms. Cultivating creativity in schools thus requires not only visionary leadership at the micro-level but also strategic reforms at the macro-institutional level to dismantle bureaucratic barriers and promote a culture of innovation and experimentation.

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of creativity in educational organizations by affirming the foundational role of managerial innovation as a key enabler of organizational creativity. By bridging the constructs of innovation and creativity, the findings offer empirical support for the Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1988b) and its organizational extensions (Anderson et al., 2014), emphasizing that creative performance is contingent upon supportive managerial structures and innovation-driven leadership behaviors. Additionally, the results validate Damanpour and Schneider's (2006) framework regarding the moderating role of contextual factors such as organizational structures and national reform trajectories. The cross-national differences observed underscore that managerial innovation does not operate in a vacuum; rather, its effects on creativity are significantly conditioned by institutional flexibility, cultural openness to change, and policy-level support for decentralization and autonomy.

By integrating demographic variables such as professional seniority into the analysis, the study also extends theoretical discussions beyond organizational structures, suggesting that individual career trajectories and accumulated professional experiences are critical antecedents of creativity development in educational settings. Future theoretical models should thus adopt a multilevel approach that captures the dynamic interplay between individual, organizational, and systemic drivers of innovation and creativity.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer actionable insights for educational leaders, policymakers, and institutional reformers seeking to foster innovation and creativity in schools. First, leadership development programs should be restructured to explicitly incorporate innovation management competencies, including skills related to participatory decision-making, distributed leadership, and fostering psychologically safe environments where experimentation and risk-taking are encouraged. Second, systemic reforms aimed at decentralizing educational governance and enhancing school-level autonomy should be prioritized. As evidenced by the Ukrainian context, granting schools greater control over decision-making processes empowers teachers, nurtures their creative engagement, and leads to more dynamic and adaptive school cultures. Third, targeted professional development initiatives should be designed for senior teachers, recognizing their potential as "creative mentors" who can lead innovation initiatives and model creative problem-solving behaviors for less experienced colleagues. Institutions should create platforms for knowledge sharing, interdisciplinary collaboration, and project-based innovation to leverage the collective creativity of their teaching staff.

Finally, educational innovation policies must be holistic, addressing not only technical infrastructure or curriculum redesign but also the softer elements of school culture, leadership styles, and organizational climate that are essential for sustained creativity and change.

Practical Implications

For school leaders and principals

- Strengthen participatory decision making: Establish teacher led committees and working groups for instructional improvement and innovation and delegate clear authority for implementation.

- Create psychological safety: Normalize constructive feedback and learning from errors, and explicitly protect experimentation from punitive reactions.
- Provide time and space for creativity: Allocate scheduled time blocks for collaborative planning, peer observation and prototyping new practices within the school timetable.
- Reduce organizational barriers: Streamline internal approvals and paperwork for small scale innovations and assign a single coordination point to support teacher initiatives.
- Use recognition and micro incentives: Publicly recognize innovative practices, support peer sharing events, and introduce small, transparent micro awards for collaborative projects.
- Build professional learning communities: Institutionalize PLC routines and co design workshops where teachers jointly develop and refine creative instructional solutions.

For policymakers and system-level leaders

- Increase school level autonomy: Expand schools' decision latitude in budgeting, planning, and instructional initiatives so that managerial innovation can translate into sustained creative practice.
- Invest in innovation oriented leadership development: Redesign principal training to include distributed leadership, change management, and building innovation supportive climates.
- Provide light-touch resources: Offer small flexible school grants and protected time for innovation cycles instead of only large, centralized programs.
- Enable cross school collaboration: Support networks and communities of practice across schools to diffuse effective innovations and reduce isolation.
- Align accountability with creativity: Encourage improvement oriented evaluation models that reward learning, collaboration and documented innovation rather than only compliance.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite providing valuable insights into the interplay between managerial innovation and organizational creativity in cross national educational contexts, this study has certain limitations. First, the cross sectional nature of the research limits causal inferences. Longitudinal studies are needed to understand how sustained exposure to innovation practices shapes and nurtures teachers' creative capacities over time. Second, while the sample size was statistically adequate, data were collected from specific regions in Turkey, Bafra and Ukraine, Cherkasy, which may not fully capture the broader diversity of educational environments, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas where creative practices might vary significantly. Third, the use of self-reported measures introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, despite efforts to ensure anonymity and voluntary participation. Fourth, only a limited number of demographic variables, gender, professional seniority and field of study, were analyzed. Other potentially influential factors, age, education level and prior innovation experience, were not included in the present analyses. Because age may be closely associated with professional seniority, some seniority related differences might partially reflect unobserved age variation, that is, potential confounding. Accordingly, interpretations of demographic differences should be made cautiously and future studies should model age and seniority jointly, for example through covariate-adjusted or multivariate robustness analyses. As part of the revision, we additionally plan to conduct a sensitivity analysis including age when available to examine whether the focal associations remain stable after accounting for age seniority overlap. Lastly, while the scales used were reliable and culturally adapted, subtle translation related variations may still have influenced the cross national comparability of creativity assessments.

Future comparative studies could expand the scope by including countries with diverse reform trajectories and different levels of school autonomy, thereby enriching the understanding of how innovation ecosystems influence organizational creativity in education. Mixed methods approach, combining teacher interviews with policy analyses, could provide more nuanced insights into how innovation is interpreted, adapted and creatively enacted by educators within their unique school contexts. Furthermore, longitudinal research designs would be particularly valuable for capturing the developmental trajectory of organizational creativity as schools are increasingly exposed to innovation-

oriented leadership practices.

Theoretically, the findings support contemporary models such as Amabile and Pratt's 2016 Componential Theory of Creativity, which emphasize the dynamic interplay between innovation practices and the emergence of creativity within organizations. Future research should integrate mediating contextual variables such as institutional autonomy, policy orientation, innovation climate, and reform intensity into these models to more comprehensively explain variations in organizational creativity. Additionally, incorporating psychological constructs such as perceived autonomy support, creative self-efficacy and professional identity could further enhance explanatory models of creativity development in educational settings.

Practically, this study underscores the importance for educational policymakers, particularly in centralized systems like Turkey's, of promoting school level autonomy and cultivating participatory management structures that empower teachers as creative agents. Inclusive decision making, the establishment of innovation teams, and the promotion of professional learning communities focused on creative practice can significantly contribute to embedding creativity into school cultures. Tailored in service training programs emphasizing creative leadership, design thinking and change management skills could be particularly beneficial in fostering a vibrant creative environment among novice and mid-career teachers.

In conclusion, advancing innovation in education should be viewed not merely as an administrative reform, but as a holistic, culturally responsive and context driven transformation that actively nurtures organizational creativity. Institutionalizing creativity as a shared value within school culture holds significant potential for enhancing teacher engagement, fostering innovation and elevating educational quality at the systemic level.

Ethical approval. This study was carried out in compliance with ethical research standards and principles regarding human participants. Prior to data collection, official ethical clearance was obtained. Specifically, the research was approved by the Trabzon University Ethics Committee with the decision dated 19.08.2025 and numbered 2500049103. The ethical committee reviewed the study's methodology, instruments, and participant protection measures to ensure compliance with international and national ethical research standards. Participation in this research was voluntary, and all respondents were fully informed about the study's purpose, confidentiality measures and their right to withdraw at any stage. No personal identifiers were collected and the data were analyzed and reported anonymously.

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Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review & editing were carried out by the sole author.

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Йилдирим Ахмет. Менеджерські інновації та організаційна креативність в освітній сфері: порівняльний аналіз Туреччини та України. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника,* **13** (1) (2026), 68-85.

Анотація. В цьому дослідженні здійснено аналіз взаємозв'язку між управлінськими інноваціями та організаційною креативністю в школах і показано, чи відрізняється сила цього взаємозв'язку між Туреччиною та Україною. Використовуючи міждержавний кількісний кореляційний дизайн, дані були зібрані в 2025–2026 навчальному році від 569 вчителів (Туреччина n=282; Україна n=287) за допомогою Шкали управлінських інновацій та Шкали організаційної креативності. Оскільки розподіл підгруп був

нерівномірним, було застосовано непараметричний аналіз: коефіцієнт Спірмена для оцінки асоціацій, коефіцієнт Фішера для порівняння кореляцій між країнами, а також тести Манна-Уїтні та Крускала-Уолліса (з пост-гок порівняннями Бонферроні) для вивчення відмінностей між групами. Результати показали сильний позитивний зв'язок між управлінськими інноваціями та організаційною креативністю в цілому. Цей зв'язок був помірним у Туреччині та сильнішим в Україні, і різниця була значною. Українські вчителі повідомили про вищий рівень як управлінських інновацій, так і організаційної креативності, і були виявлені значні відмінності за статтю, стажем роботи та сферою викладання. Результати дослідження засвідчують, що орієнтоване на інновації лідерство, автономія шкіл і середовище, сприятливе для інновацій, можуть посилити креативні здібності вчителів, підкреслюючи роль реформ на системному рівні у створенні креативної шкільної культури. На практиці директори шкіл можуть сприяти розвитку креативності, залучаючи вчителів до прийняття рішень, знижуючи організаційні бар'єри та визнаючи експерименти та співпрацю. Для політиків міждержавна закономірність означає, що децентралізація та постійна професійна підтримка можуть посилити креативність, пов'язану з управлінськими інноваціями.

Ключові слова: менеджерські інновації, організаційна креативність, сприйняття вчителів, порівняльна освіта, інноваційний менеджмент.