

The Relationship Between Teachers' Informal Communication Levels And Organizational Commitment (Case Of Kayseri Province)

Öğretmenlerin İnfomal İletişim Düzeyleri Ve Örgütsel Bağlılıkları Arasındaki İlişki (Kayseri İli Örneği)

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to examine the relationship between informal communication and organizational commitment of teachers working in Kayseri during the 2022-2023 academic year, as well as their changes according to certain variables. The study utilizes a quantitative research method, specifically a correlational survey model.

The perception of teachers towards all sub-dimensions of informal doesn't vary according to gender. However, there're differences in perception of teachers in influence dimension based on marital status. Teacher perceptions vary in all sub-dimensions according to professional seniority, placement type, and educational levels. Furthermore, teacher perceptions change in all dimensions except for entertainment dimension based on the total years of working in their school.

A significant difference in perception of organizational commitment based on gender has only been found in the dimension of personal interest. The perception doesn't vary in any dimension according to marital status. A significant difference has been identified in the dimension of personal interest based on the total years of working. Teacher perceptions vary in all dimensions according to professional seniority, placement type, and educational level.

There's a high level of positive correlation between friendship and entertainment dimensions of informal communication and moral and personal interest dimensions of organizational commitment. In dimension of coercion, there's a high level of negative correlation. There's a high level of positive correlation between influence and information dimensions of informal communication and personal interest dimension of organizational commitment, while there's a high level of negative correlation in dimensions of coercion and moral commitment.

Keywords: informal communication, organizational commitment, teacher.

ÖZET

Araştırmanın amacı; 2022-2023 eğitim-öğretim yılında Kayseri ili merkez ilçelerinde görevli öğretmenlerin infomal iletişim ve örgütsel bağlılıkları arasındaki ilişkiyi ve bunların bazı değişkenlere göre değişimini incelemektir. Araştırmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel (korelasyonel) tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama araçları olarak 'Kişisel Bilgi Formu', 'İnfomal İletişim Ölçeği' ve 'Örgütsel Bağlılık Ölçeği' kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın evrenini Kayseri il merkezinde görev yapan 4508, örneklem grubunu ise basit tesadüfi örnekleme metodu kullanılarak evrenden alınan 395 öğretmen oluşturmaktadır.

İnfomal iletişimin tüm alt boyutlarına (arkadaşlık, eğlenme, etkileme ve bilgi) yönelik öğretmen algısı cinsiyete göre değişmemektedir. Medeni duruma göre; etkileme boyutunda öğretmen algısında farklılık gözlenmiştir. Mesleki kıdeme, işe yerleştirilme tipine ve eğitim düzeylerine göre öğretmen algılarının tüm alt boyutlarda değiştiği görülmektedir. Buldukları okuldaki toplam çalışma yılına göre ise eğlenme boyutu hariç tüm boyutlarda öğretmen algısının değiştiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Cinsiyete göre örgütsel bağlılığa yönelik algının yalnızca çıkar boyutunda anlamlı bir fark tespit edilmiştir. Medeni duruma göre algının hiçbir boyutta değişmediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin buldukları okuldaki toplam çalışma yılına göre çıkar boyutunda anlamlı bir fark tespit edilmiştir. Mesleki kıdeme, işe yerleştirilme tipine ve eğitim düzeyine göre öğretmen algılarının tüm boyutlarında değiştiği görülmektedir.

İnfomal iletişimin arkadaşlık ve eğlenme boyutları ile örgütsel bağlılığın ahlaki ve çıkar boyutlarında yüksek düzeyde pozitif bir ilişki, zoraki boyutunda yüksek düzeyde negatif bir ilişki görülmektedir. Etkileme ve bilgi boyutları ile çıkar boyutunda yüksek düzeyde pozitif ilişki, zoraki ve ahlaki boyutunda yüksek düzeyde negatif bir ilişki bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnfomal İletişim, Örgütsel Bağlılık, Öğretmen.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential prerequisite for meeting the social needs of human beings. Even in the mother's womb, an individual is in contact with their environment from the 10th week and communicates with their parents through gestures and mimics from childhood, which helps them assimilate social rules and values and obtain information for life (Kılınçarslan, 2018). Communication has been one of the most basic skills of human beings since creation, and it is crucial for the continuity of human existence. Throughout history, people have communicated through various means, from the smoke of the fire and hieroglyphic tablets to letters carried by postal pigeons. Some African tribes still use percussion instruments, called "tamtam", to communicate through cryptic strokes. Communication can be expressed in many ways, such as paintings in caves, sounds, stances, sights,

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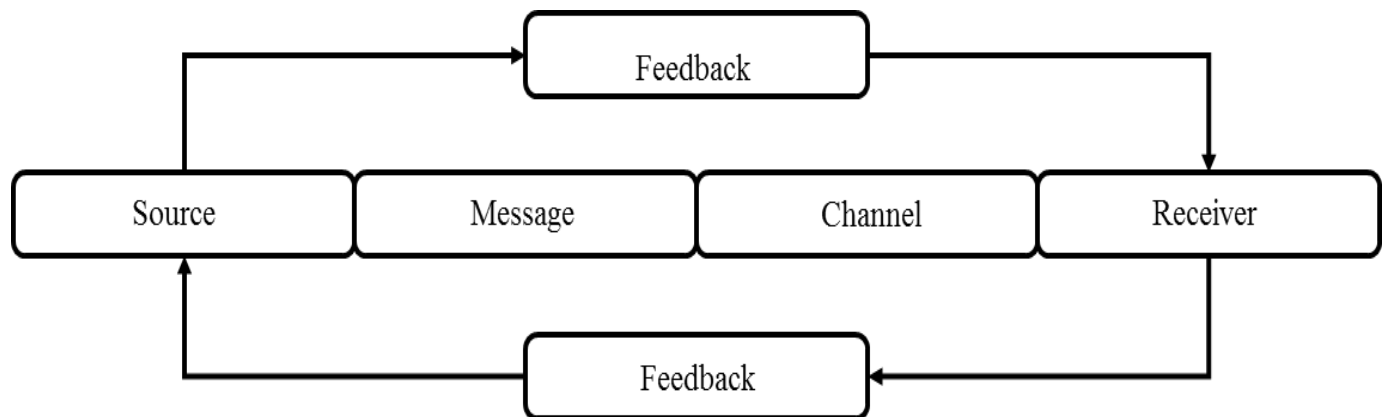
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and touches. Communication takes various forms and can be found in many forms of art, such as Beethoven's music, Michelangelo's paintings, and Shakespeare's poetry. In today's world, written, visual, and social media are just some of the many means of communication available (Gonenc, 2014).

Communication is the process of sharing information from one system, known as the source, to another system, the receiver, using different methods and making it understandable. Communication is not limited to human beings but is also used by other living things in various ways. For example, dogs communicate with each other through barking when there is danger. To establish communication, two systems are needed, and information must be exchanged between them. The basic communication model (Figure 1) shows that the communication process involves encoding information from the source and sending it through different channels to the receiver, who then decodes the message and provides feedback. If the communication is one-sided, where the message cannot be decoded by the receiver, then it is not effective communication. Effective communication requires the message to be understood and feedback to be provided (Aytekin, 2021).



Şekil 1: Basic Communication Process

The source is a crucial element in the communication process, as it is responsible for initiating the process and encoding the message in a way that the recipient can understand. Examples of sources include cell phones, lyrics, television, or a teacher. While sources can use intermediaries to communicate, they must also attract their target audience. This can be achieved through a social media channel for a phenomenon or a poetry book for a poet. In a healthy communication process, the source must send messages that are coded in a way that the receiver can understand, with a command of the information or idea they want to convey and high self-confidence. Additionally, it is expected that the source will use body language that aligns with their purpose when conveying the messages coded to the target audience (Tuna, 2014). For the message to be effective, the general attitude of the source, their self-confidence and communication ability, reliability, prestige and diction, beliefs and values, status, and personality are all influential in achieving the purpose of the message (Kılınçarslan, 2018).

The message is a vital component of the communication process, as it represents the coded form of the information that the source intends to convey to the receiver (Aytekin, 2021). In a communication process that involves mutual understanding, the message must be coded in a way that the receiver can understand. Verbal and nonverbal expressions used in a chat environment between two people are examples of messages. These expressions can include facial, hand, and arm movements, which are interpreted by the receiver. In a classroom setting, the teacher serves as the source, the student as the receiver, and the lesson as the message, which is explained using various materials and methods in the classroom environment. Successful communication between the teacher and student can lead to a desired behavior change in the student, such as learning. In school environments with students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, teachers can use various materials and teaching methods that appeal to different sensory organs of the students to achieve the educational and teaching objectives.

Channels and vehicles are important in the communication process as they facilitate the transfer of data between the source and the receiver. The channel represents the means through which the message is transferred, while the vehicle refers to the element that creates the message. In verbal communication, for example, the air serves as the channel, while the sense organs function as the vehicle. The appropriate selection of the channel and vehicle depends on factors such as the message, the receiver, and the time. In the past, homing pigeons were used as a means of communication, but they have since been replaced by mobile phones in the 21st century. For a successful communication process, it is crucial to understand the characteristics of the receiver and select a suitable channel at the source. For instance, using visual channels for a visually impaired individual or verbal channels for a hearing impaired individual can negatively impact the communication process.

Receiver: The receiver is the intended recipient of the message sent by the source, whether it is communicated verbally or in writing. A successful communication process involves interaction between the source and the receiver after the message is transmitted through channels and tools that are appropriately coded by the source and suitable for the characteristics of the receiver. The feedback given by the receiver after this interaction determines whether the communication has achieved its goal or not. The receiver can be anyone, from a child watching cartoons, to an individual reading a newspaper, to an animal that produces sounds to warn the herd of danger. They all play the role of the receiver in the communication process (Aytekin, 2021).

Feedback is an essential component of healthy communication. It enables the source to understand if the message has been received by the receiver and if it has been correctly interpreted. Feedback can be either verbal or nonverbal, and it can be provided immediately or at a later time. Essentially, feedback confirms that the message has been received by the receiver. During communication, the active source becomes passive while the passive receiver becomes active. Once the message reaches the receiver, it is decoded and interpreted. Feedback from the receiver can be provided through either dialogue or body language (Kocel, 2011).

Healthy communication is crucial in schools where educational training activities are carried out to increase institutional motivation and coordination and to promote information exchange between stakeholders. This process occurs in two ways, formal and informal (Eginli and Bitirim, 2019).

Formal communication refers to the type of communication that is established by authorities in accordance with organizational goals. It is based on predetermined rules and takes into account the relationship between status, duties, subordinates, and superiors (Bektas and Erdem, 2015).

Informal communication, also known as the grapevine, is communication that happens without following formal rules and procedures and isn't bound by any specific program created by authorities in the organizational hierarchy. It's a form of communication that spontaneously forms between groups due to a lack of formal communication channels. Although informal communication has positive aspects such as creating synergy, increasing motivation, fostering team spirit, and preventing conflicts by eliminating misunderstandings, it can also have negative aspects such as gossip, slander, and spreading fake news when it's not controlled. Education is one of the most important indicators of a country's development level, and schools are where expectations about education turn into action. To increase the success and quality of education, all stakeholders in the system, including teachers, must perform their duties with motivation, dedication, faith, and love. Teachers are one of the most important stakeholders in the education system because they're the provincial representatives of national education whose goal is to educate and teach students. A successful education system requires teachers who love their profession, are appreciated by their superiors, are happy to spend time at school, have a high sense of belonging, and see teaching as a calling, not just a job.

Organizational commitment refers to the employee's desire to continue working in the organization, utilizing their time effectively, meeting the organization's expectations, and acting in line with its mission and vision (Et Oltulu and Iraz, 2022). According to Etzioni, who classified the concept of organizational commitment based on the attitudinal commitment approach, it develops in response to various organizational forces on employees. These forces are categorized as coercive, utilitarian, and normative powers (Ergun and Celik, 2019). Organizational commitment is further divided into three categories by Etzioni: forced commitment, self-seeking commitment, and moral (normative) commitment (Surucu and Maslakci, 2018).

Forced commitment is a type of attachment where the member feels like they are in a prison, and their movements are severely restricted by the organization. The member has a negative orientation towards the organization but is forced to stay despite these difficulties (Balay, 2000).

Self-seeking commitment, also known as transactional commitment, refers to a type of commitment where the member sees the organization as a means to an end. In other words, the loyalty of members to the organization is based on the payor reward they receive for their work (Surucu and Maslakci, 2018). Simply put, self-seeking commitment means that a person is committed to their work only for their personal interests.

Moral (normative) commitment refers to the member's dedication to the organization's goals, taking on duties and responsibilities for its success, and volunteering for organizational activities (Bakan, 2018). According to Topçu (1960), teachers bear the greatest responsibility for the change and development of societies. They can have a constructive or destructive effect on the achievement of contemporary civilization by societies. Societies, where teachers are valued and respected, are happy and virtuous, while those where teachers lose their value and their profession is underestimated are unhappy and unfortunate (Topcu, 2022). Therefore, it's imperative for the Turkish education system to determine the professional and organizational commitment levels of teachers, as well as the

causes and consequences of the factors that affect this level, to meet expectations and achieve its goals. In conclusion, this study aims to determine the level of the relationship between teachers' informal communication levels and their organizational commitment levels.

Problem Status

In today's rapidly changing world, where products, trade, technology, interstate interaction, and integration are constantly evolving, global competition has turned into international competition. It is crucial for companies to integrate their employees into the system and ensure their continuity in the organization. However, offering a competitive salary is not the only way for businesses to retain their intellectually knowledgeable employees. In some cases, individuals are willing to work for other organizations even if the salary is not as high, and one reason for this is their lack of affiliation with their current organizations or a sense of belonging to the institution where they work.

The Importance of Research

Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey and the first head teacher recognized the importance of education and teaching in 1925 when he said, "It is only teachers who save nations." The educational process starts in the family and continues in schools, which are critical components of human capital. Schools help individuals adapt to society and offer opportunities for development, change, employment, and prosperity through skilled labor. Achieving success in the education process requires all stakeholders to work in harmony, with teachers playing a crucial role. Teaching involves much more than transferring knowledge from teacher to student based on a curriculum. Teachers also have the responsibility of preparing students for the educational environment, instilling concepts such as trust, belonging, responsibility, and happiness in them. For a teacher to manage all these processes effectively, they must have a sense of belonging to their profession and their organization. If a teacher feels happy and peaceful in their working environment and enjoys spending time with colleagues, this will have a positive effect on their relationship with students and contribute to the expected success of education.

This research aims to investigate the relationship between teachers' informal communication levels and organizational commitment to further the field.

METHODOLOGY

In the study, the relationship between teachers' informal communication and organizational engagement levels was examined using a correlation screening model. The research focused on teachers working in the official secondary education of the Ministry of National Education in the central districts of Kayseri province during the 2022-2023 academic year. The sample for the study was selected using the simple random sampling method, which involves selecting each item in the population with the same chance and including it in the sample. This method is often used when access to the entire population is difficult or costly. The sample size consisted of 395 teacher groups from the selected universe. It is important to ensure that the sample is representative of the population by selecting a sample with similar characteristics to the population (Kilic and Burgaz, 2014).

Data Collection Process and Tools

Collecting data is a crucial step in the research process of social sciences. Data collection tools are utilized to test the research question or hypothesis and gather the necessary data. Generally, data collection tools in social sciences are categorized into two types: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative tools are designed to collect numerical data and analyze it statistically, whereas qualitative tools are utilized to obtain open-ended responses and explore the participants' experiences and opinions in-depth.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the research findings related to the relationship between teachers' informal communication and organizational commitment levels. The section includes the basic results of the research and the data analysis. The collected research data were analyzed statistically to answer the research questions or hypotheses. The results of the analysis are presented in tables and interpreted as text.

Demographic Data of Teachers

This section details the demographic characteristics of the teachers who participated in the research. The information includes their gender, marital status, job placement type, total time spent in school, professional experience, and educational qualifications.

Table 1: The gender of the teachers involved in the study.

Gender	F	%
Female	187	47.3
Male	208	52.7
Total	395	100.0

According to Table 1, 187 (47.3%) of the teachers are female and 208 (52.7%) are male.

Table 2: Marital status of the teachers participating in the research.

Marital Status	F	%
Married	237	60.0
Single	158	40.0
Total	395	100.0

Table 2 shows that out of the total number of teachers, 237 (60%) are married while 158 (40%) are single.

Table 3: The type of job placement of the teachers participating in the research.

Type of Job Placement	F	%
Permanent	333	84.3
Contracted	27	6.8
Paid	35	8.9
Total	395	100.0

Table 3 shows that out of the total number of teachers surveyed, 333 (84.3%) are employed as staff, 27 (6.8%) are paid, and 35 (8.9%) are employed on a contract basis.

Table 4: Education level of the teachers participating in the research.

Graduation	F	%
Associate Degree	9	2.3
Bachelor Degree	380	96.2
Bachelor's Degree	6	1.5
Total	395	100.0

Based on Table 4, it is observed that out of the teachers, 380 (96.2%) hold undergraduate degrees, 9 (2.3%) have associate degrees, and 6 (1.5%) have graduate degrees.

Table 5: Total working years.

Total working years	F	%
1-3	32	8.1
4-6	30	7.6
7-10	74	18.7
11-15	109	27.6
16-20	130	32.9
20 +	20	5.1
Total	395	100.0

Table 5 provides information on the teaching experience of a group of teachers. The data indicate that the teachers have been grouped based on their years of teaching. Specifically, 32 (8.1%) teachers have taught for 1 to 3 years, 30 (7.6%) teachers have taught for 4 to 6 years, 74 (18.7%) teachers have taught for 7 to 10 years, 109 (27.6%) teachers have taught for 11 to 15 years, 130 (32.9%) teachers have taught for 16 to 20 years, and 20 (5.1%) teachers have taught for more than 20 years.

Table 6: Total working years of the teachers participating in the study in their schools.

Total working years	N	%
1-3	101	25.6
4-6	112	28.4
7-10	81	20.5
11-15	54	13.7
16-20	37	9.4
20 +	10	2.5
Total	395	100.0

According to Table 6, it can be observed that among the teachers, 101 (25.6%) have been working for 1 to 3 years, 112 (28.4%) for 4 to 6 years, 81 (20.5%) for 7 to 10 years, 54 (13.7%) for 11 to 15 years, 37 (9.4%) for 16 to 20 years, and 10 (2.5%) have been working for 20 or more years at their current school.

Table 7: Sample number, mean, and standard deviation values of teachers' informal communication and organizational commitment.

	X	ss	N
Informal Communication	3.4119	.49612	395
Organizational Commitment	3.0937	.22950	395

Table 7 shows that the average score for teachers' informal communication is 3.42, while the average score for their organizational commitment is 3.09.

Table 8: Informal communication and organizational commitment by gender.

Independent Samples Test	F	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Informal communication	8.099	.706	.480
Organizational commitment	12.948	2.869	.004

According to the data in Table 8, there is no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level according to the results of the t-test performed according to the gender variable of teachers' informal communication ($r = .480$). According to the t-test results of the teachers' organizational commitment according to the gender variable, a significant difference was found at the $p < .05$ level ($r = .004$).

Table 9: Informal communication and organizational commitment by marital status.

Independent Samples Test	F	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Informal communication	.285	-.465	.642
Organizational commitment	.621	1.916	.056

According to the data in Table 9, there is no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level according to the t-test results made according to the marital status variable of teachers' informal communication ($r = .642$). According to the t-test results of the teachers' organizational commitment according to the marital status variable, there is no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level ($r = .056$).

Table 10: Informal communication and organizational commitment by type of job placement.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Informal communication	Between Groups	27.918	79.235	.000
	Within Groups	69.058		
	Total	96.975		
Organizational commitment	Between Groups	3.693	42.427	.000
	Within Groups	17.059		
	Total	20.752		

According to the data in Table 10, there is a $p < .05$ significant difference according to the results of the ANOVA test conducted according to the type of job placement of the teachers' informal communication ($r = .000$). There is a significant difference $p < .05$ according to the results of the ANOVA test conducted according to the type of job placement of teachers' organizational commitment ($r = .000$).

Table 11: Informal communication and organizational commitment by total time spent in school.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Informal communication	Between Groups	4.175	3.500	.004
	Within Groups	92.801		
	Total	96.975		
Organizational commitment	Between Groups	.384	1.465	.200
	Within Groups	20.368		
	Total	20.752		

According to the data in Table 11, there is a $p < .05$ significant difference according to the results of the ANOVA test conducted according to the total time spent in the school of the teachers' informal communication ($r = .004$). There isn't a significant difference $p < .05$ according to the results of the ANOVA test conducted according to by total time spent in the school of the teachers' organizational commitment ($r = .200$).

Table 12: Informal communication and organizational commitment by professional seniority.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Informal communication	Between Groups	25.909	28.364	.000
	Within Groups	71.066		
	Total	96.975		
Organizational commitment	Between Groups	4.054	18.887	.000
	Within Groups	16.698		
	Total	20.752		

According to the data in Table 12, there is a $p < .05$ significant difference ($r = .000$) according to the results of the ANOVA test performed according to the professional seniority of the informal communication of the teachers. There is a significant difference between $p < .05$ ($r = .000$) according to the results of the ANOVA test conducted according to the professional seniority of the teachers' organizational commitment.

Table 13: Informal communication and organizational commitment by education level.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Informal communication	Between Groups	10.255	23.177	.000
	Within Groups	86.721		
	Total	96.975		
Organizational commitment	Between Groups	1.584	16.194	.000
	Within Groups	19.168		
	Total	20.752		

According to the data in Table 13, there is a significant difference ($r = .000$) of $p < .05$ according to the results of the ANOVA test conducted according to the education level of teachers' informal communication. There is a significant difference between $p < .05$ ($r = .000$) according to the results of the ANOVA test made according to the educational level of the teachers' organizational commitment.

Table 14: Correlation values of teachers' informal communications and organizational engagement.

		Informal communication	Organizational commitment
Informal communication	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	395	
Organizational commitment	Pearson Correlation	.817**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	395	395

Based on the results presented in Table 14, it can be concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between teachers' informal communication levels and their organizational commitment, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.817$.

Research suggests that there is a positive relationship between teachers' informal communication and organizational commitment levels. Informal communication helps to create emotional connections and solidarity among teachers, leading to higher levels of organizational commitment. It also facilitates communication and collaboration between teachers, which can improve their integration into the school culture and their working relationships. As teachers' commitment to the school increases through informal communication, they become more satisfied and motivated, leading to improved performance and retention. This ultimately leads to higher quality education for students.

Informal communication among teachers can increase organizational commitment and positively impact the school's culture, operations, and employee satisfaction. Therefore, both school administrators and teachers should prioritize and improve informal communication. Here are some suggestions for administrators to enhance teachers' informal communication.

To improve informal communication among teachers, school administrators should encourage collaboration and teamwork. This can be achieved by creating a culture of cooperation among teachers, providing opportunities for collaboration such as joint projects or activities, and organizing team meetings where teachers can come together and share their ideas. By working collaboratively, teachers can interact more with each other and develop stronger bonds, which can positively affect the culture, operation, and employee satisfaction of the school.

Organize social events: As administrators, it is essential to understand that social activities can help teachers establish closer and more intimate relationships with each other. You can organize various social events that allow teachers to come together and have a good time. These events can include picnics, meals, sports tournaments, etc. that can be organized within or outside the school premises. Such events can help to break down barriers and encourage informal communication between teachers.

Develop mentoring programs: A mentoring program can be created to help experienced teachers mentor less experienced ones.

Communication skills training: Teachers can benefit from training in effective communication skills to improve their ability to communicate sincerely with both colleagues and students. By participating in this type of training, teachers can learn the skills necessary to establish clear and effective communication, fostering a positive and productive learning environment. These programs can facilitate communication between teachers and help them establish closer relationships with one another.

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